



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

PENNSYLVANIA



ADOPTION EXCHANGE

2019 Annual Report





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Introduction

Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN)

The Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) works to find permanent homes for children in Pennsylvania's foster care system. The network is recognized nationally for its accomplishments in helping these children find families.

SWAN helps implement the permanency process by coordinating the work of the various professionals who help find permanent homes for children in foster care. The network is led by the Department of Human Services (DHS), and is composed of a prime contractor; county children and youth agencies; private child welfare agencies; organizations; advocates; attorneys; family courts; foster, kinship, permanent legal custodianship and adoptive parents; and others who recognize that all children need and deserve permanent loving homes.

Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE)

The Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE), established in 1979, has played a key role in the Commonwealth's adoption system for the past 40 years. PAE provides adoption matching services for children:

- Who are, legally free for 90 days and have no report of intention to adopt filed.
- For whom, termination of parental rights is being pursued.

Services provided by PAE include registering children and families in the database so electronic matching can be performed, referring potential matches to the child's and the family's agencies, and providing training for workers and families at SWAN/Independent Living (IL) quarterly meetings and conferences.

The children served by PAE often face challenges such as: a history of abuse and neglect, a history of multiple placements, drug and alcohol exposure, special education needs, emotional challenges, intellectual

disability, special medical care, physical disability or a history of runaway history. These children often face more than one of these challenges.

The data contained in this report reflects information about the children and families served by PAE from January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019. Pennsylvania had 2,777 adoptions finalized in calendar year 2019. Of these finalizations, 1,543 were children registered with PAE. Not all children who are adopted require PAE's services.

Registering Children and Families

PAE accepts the registration of waiting children from Pennsylvania's county children and youth agencies and from private adoption agencies. PAE also accepts registrations from agency-approved adoptive families, regardless of the state where the adoptive family lives. This policy helps Pennsylvania meet the Adoption and Safe Family Act requirements to eliminate all geographic boundaries that may hinder permanency for a child. SWAN policy requires that all waiting families who receive family profiles paid by the prime contractor be registered with PAE to maximize the opportunity for these waiting children to find a family. Database searches for waiting children and families are also conducted regularly to maximize placement opportunities.

Referrals for Waiting Children

PAE makes referrals for potential matches for Pennsylvania's waiting children with registered families. Using demographic and behavioral characteristics, computer-suggested matches between registered children and families are forwarded to their respective agencies. Telephone and internet inquiries received from families or adoption caseworkers about specific children or families are also forwarded to the appropriate agency for potential matching considerations.



Training and Recruitment at SWAN/ Independent Living Quarterly Meetings and Conferences

PAE provides education and training to permanency professionals at SWAN/IL quarterly meetings and the Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference. PAE's training and recruitment initiatives include:

- Providing monthly reviews of waiting children with SWAN county contacts and quarterly reviews of all recruitment efforts with the child's county caseworker.
- Providing semi-annual on-site reviews of all children with a goal of adoption.
- Assisting agencies to develop recruitment tools such as posters and child biographies with high-quality photos.
- Assisting with computer searches for suggested matches.
- Providing children's posters for local community recruitment events.
- Contributing articles to the Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association's newsletter.
- Showcasing waiting children on the PAE website, www.adoptpakids.org.
- Facilitating television filming of waiting children on local stations.
- Facilitating matching events at the Summer and Winter SWAN/IL Statewide Meetings.
- Assisting agencies with local recruitment efforts.

Pennsylvania Adoption Information Registry (PAIR)

On October 27, 2010, Act 101, which amended the Adoption Act was signed into law. Act 101 of 2010 established the Pennsylvania Adoption Information Registry (PAIR), a statewide information registry for records and documents associated with all adoptions finalized or registered in Pennsylvania. The PAIR allows adoptees and birth parents to register information about themselves so adoptees can better understand their own past and its potential impact on their lives and the lives of their descendants. DHS developed procedures and forms for birth parents and adoptees to register with the PAIR which allows them to specify if identifying or non-identifying information may be released.

The PAIR expands the registration and search capabilities of those impacted by adoption. Siblings, if both are over 21, may register and search for each other. Descendants of deceased adoptees may register and search for medical and social information. For children under 18 years old, an adoptive parent or legal guardian may search on behalf of the adoptee. All agencies involved in adoptions finalized or registered in the Commonwealth are required to register medical and social information with the PAIR.

2019 PAIR Statistical Information (Jan. 1, 2019 - Dec. 31, 2019):

- 57 new birth families registered with PAIR.
- 46 new adoptees registered and inquired about PAIR.





- 49 birth family requests were registered with PAIR.
- 179 adoptee requests were registered with PAIR.
- 2,700 adoptees were registered by agencies with PAIR.

Resource Family Registry (RFR)

The department is required to maintain a Resource Family Registry (RFR) in which all foster, formal kinship, and adoptive parent applicants must be registered. Support for the RFR is provided by the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network's prime contract with Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries in partnership with Family Design Resources. Families can be approved in multiple categories: a total of 16,397 applicants are currently available and approved in one or more of the following categories:

- 5,042 approved for adoption.
- 9,122 approved for foster care.
- 6,093 approved for formal kinship care.

The Office of Children, Youth and Families Bulletin #00-03-03, Kinship Care Policy, defines formal kinship care as "The full-time nurturing and protection of a child who is separated from his parents and placed in the home of a caregiver who has an existing relationship with the child and/or the child's family." The existing relationship is:

- A relative of the child through blood or marriage.
- A godparent of the child as recognized by an organized church.
- A member of the child's tribal organization.
- A significant positive relationship with the child or the child's family.

In federal fiscal year 2019, 54.35% of children adopted from the Pennsylvania foster care system were adopted by their foster/kinship family.

SWAN Helpline 1-800-585-7926 (SWAN)

The toll-free SWAN Helpline, 1-800-585-SWAN (7926), began in 1996 to respond to inquiries about adoption. Today, the SWAN Helpline is a central pathway for SWAN's

outreach efforts to families, often serving as the first point of contact for inquiring parents and potential adoptive and foster families. The SWAN Helpline averaged 378 calls per week in 2019, with higher volumes during media campaigns. Calls are fielded by a team of SWAN technical specialists. In addition to answering incoming calls, the specialists also make follow-up calls to families who have requested information about becoming a resource parent and who have requested additional support in the permanency process, provide callers with informational SWAN Family Packets, and make referrals to other agencies. They monitor the state Facebook page and make reminder and survey calls for matching events across the state.

2019 SWAN Helpline Statistical Information (Jan. 1, 2019 - Dec. 31, 2019)

- 18,188 Total Calls:
 - 10,458 Incoming Calls
 - 7,730 Outgoing Calls
- 695 SWAN Family Packets mailed to callers
- 289 Referrals made to other agencies

SWAN Connect Facilitated by PAE and SWAN Helpline

In SWAN Connect (formerly known as Pennsylvania's Seamless System), PAE and the SWAN Helpline work together with county children and youth agencies and SWAN affiliate agencies to bridge the gap between waiting children and waiting, approved adoptive families. Qualified families who would like to learn more about a waiting child can contact the SWAN Helpline and receive additional information about a child who is posted to the www.adoptpakids.org website.

PAE coordinators work directly with the child's caseworker to get additional details about the child and review that information with the family. If the family remains interested in that child, PAE then notifies the child's caseworker.

County caseworkers and SWAN affiliate agencies are also critical to the success of SWAN Connect, as they routinely update information about the availability and status of children and families. Current information is



Outreach Initiatives

key to keep the process moving and to assure that in-depth information on each child is available to approved families.

Media Campaign 2019

#MeetTheKids, the department's successful media campaign featuring youth from Pennsylvania's foster care system, continued to be a popular recruitment tool to finding foster and adoptive families for our waiting children and youth. A targeted television advertisement campaign ran in March – June 2019 and then September – November 2019 in the Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Harrisburg/Lancaster/Lebanon/York area markets. Online advertisements ran during the same months across the commonwealth. Radio advertisements ran during the months of September, October, March and April.

In addition to the media campaign, OCYF's media contracts include subcontracts with three television stations: WHTM in Harrisburg, KDKA in Pittsburgh and WBRE in Wilkes-Barre. All three stations run waiting child segments and their reporters participate in unique child interviews that feature the interests of the child.

Website

The Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange's website (www.adoptpakids.org) was created in 1999 to assist in matching waiting children with prospective, approved adoptive families. Administered by DHS, the website helps eliminate geographic boundaries as it recruits families who live outside Pennsylvania.

The most popular feature of the website is the photo album of Pennsylvania's waiting children, which features photographs and personal stories about the children and serves as a powerful recruitment tool. The website also features:

- Information on how to become a foster parent.
- Information on how to become an adoptive parent.
- Information about the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network.
- Information about the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange.
- Access to a variety of forms.
- Information about Post-permanency services.
- Frequently asked questions.

The website offers links to additional services and support group organizations, including:

- Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association;
- National adoption organizations;
- Medical and health related links;
- Search and reunion services;
- Organizations serving families and children with challenges; and
- Additional photo listing websites.

2019 Website Statistical Information: (Jan. 1, 2019 - Dec. 31, 2019)

- 426,145 Total website visits
- 1,422,942 Waiting Kids album visits
- 415,573 New visitors
- Device traffic:
 - 15.7% Desktop computer
 - 84.3% Mobile/Tablet

Demographics of website users:

- Gender:
 - 30% Male
 - 70% Female
- Age Range:
 - 5% between 18-24
 - 24.5% between 25-34
 - 26.2% between 35-44
 - 44.3% were 45 or older



- Top five cities include:
 - 16.2% Philadelphia, PA
 - 6.9% Washington, DC
 - 3.7% Pittsburgh, PA
 - 3% New York, NY
 - 1.3% Mount Laurel Township, NJ

Social Media

SWAN operates a Facebook page, www.facebook.com/adoptpa, which includes profiles of waiting children, inspirational quotes and frequently asked questions. In 2019, SWAN's Facebook page had over 19,949 likes, a 7.5% increase from 2018. This method of social media accounts for 97% of visitors to our website, www.adoptpakids.org.

SWAN also hosts a YouTube page, www.youtube.com/adoptpakids, where videos of the media campaigns are housed.

Waiting Child



KDKA's Waiting Child segment began in 1982 as a child-specific recruitment tool for children in the Pittsburgh area. Rick Dayton, a news anchor with CBS affiliate KDKA,

engages and films the featured child in a chosen activity. The segments are shown in conjunction with commercials from SWAN and Wendy's®. Families interested in adoption are encouraged to contact the SWAN Helpline or visit www.adoptpakids.org.

Val's Kids



Val's Kids was established by SWAN in 2000 to recruit more central Pennsylvania families for specific waiting children, often teenagers. Children are taken to a favorite

location (mall, sports arena, a local park, etc.) and videotaped doing a fun activity. Valerie Pritchett, a news anchor/reporter for WHTM abc27, a Harrisburg affiliate, talks to the children and their caseworkers about their needs, interests, what they are looking for in a family, and how long they have been waiting for permanency. During the segment, information was provided on how to inquire about these waiting children through the website; (www.adoptpakids.org); and through the SWAN Helpline at 1-800-585-SWAN. The show airs on ABC27 Wednesdays during the 7 p.m. news and again Sundays during the 6 p.m. news.

A Little Love



On February 14, 2007, WBRE-TV 28, an NBC affiliate, aired the first segment of A Little Love in the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton area. A Little Love is the third waiting-child segment funded

through SWAN to help recruit families to adopt children in foster care and provide caseworkers with an additional recruitment tool for the children they work to serve.

A Little Love focuses on the featured children's desires and ambitions. The host, Chris Langlois, works closely with community partners and the children's caseworkers to decide on an exciting activity or event for the children to participate. Each segment provides the opportunity to take the children's desires and ambitions and turns them into a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Some activities and events chosen by the children include:

- Visiting a college campus,
- Volunteering at a local animal shelter,
- Working on cars in an auto body shop,
- Racing the clock to escape in an Escape Room,
- Spending the day at a water park, and
- Constructing the perfect ice cream sundae.



Throughout the segment, Mr. Langlois talks with the children and their caseworkers about the children’s interests and what type of families they hope to become a part of. Families interested in adopting a child featured on A Little Love or who want to

learn more about adoption are encouraged to contact the SWAN Helpline at 1-800-585-SWAN. A Little Love airs once a month on Wednesdays between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m., during the 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. news.

2019 Segment Statistical Information: (Jan. 1, 2019 - Dec. 31, 2019)

TV Segment	Children Taped	Still Searching for Permanency	# Achieving Permanency	% of Taped Achieving Permanency
KDKA Waiting Child	20	20	0	0
WHTM Val’s Kids	9	9	0	0
WBRE A Little Love	3	3	0	0
<i>Cumulative Segment Statistical Information: (2010 - 2019)</i>				
KDKA Waiting Child	131	32	29	25.4
WHTM Val’s Kids	179	30	32	32.9
WBRE A Little Love	84	21	21	33.8
TOTAL	396	71	68	27.8

Source: SWAN Portal closure information



Key Findings - 2019

Children Served by PAE in 2019

- 4,240 children were served (Chart 1)
- 1,968 new child registrations were received (Chart 1)
- 1,096 of the 4,240 children, or 25.8%, were age 13 to 18 (Chart 3)
- 707 of the 4,240 children, or 16.7%, were placed in adoptive homes (Chart 1)
- 1,677 of the 4,240 children, or 39.6%, were finalized for adoption (Chart 1)

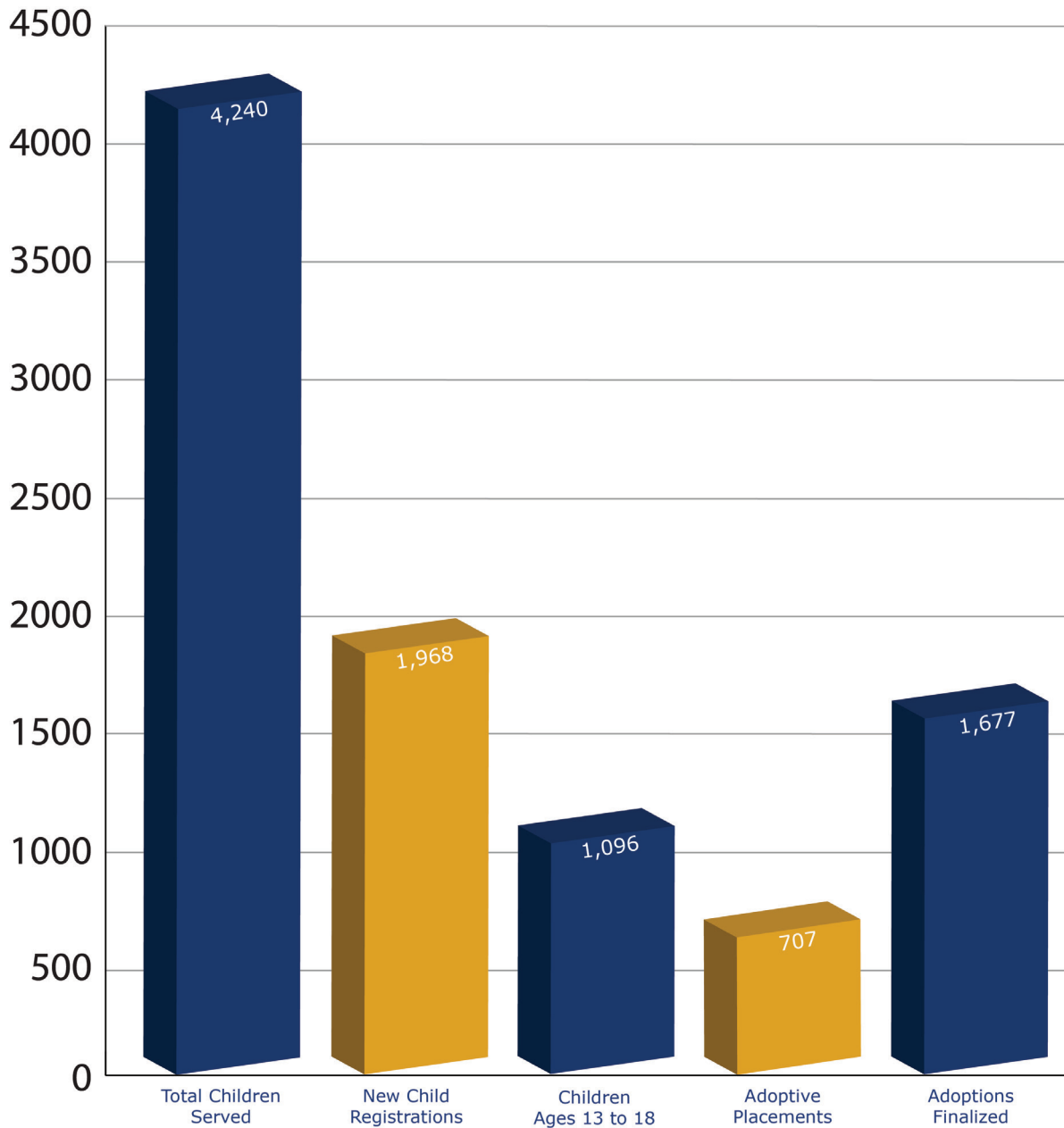
Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2019

- 3,298 families were served (Chart 2)
- 948 families, or 28.7%, were active and still waiting for an adoptive placement at the close of the calendar year (Chart 2)
- 944 of the 3,298 families, or 28.6%, accepted an adoptive placement (Chart 2)
- 1,156 new families were registered (Chart 2)





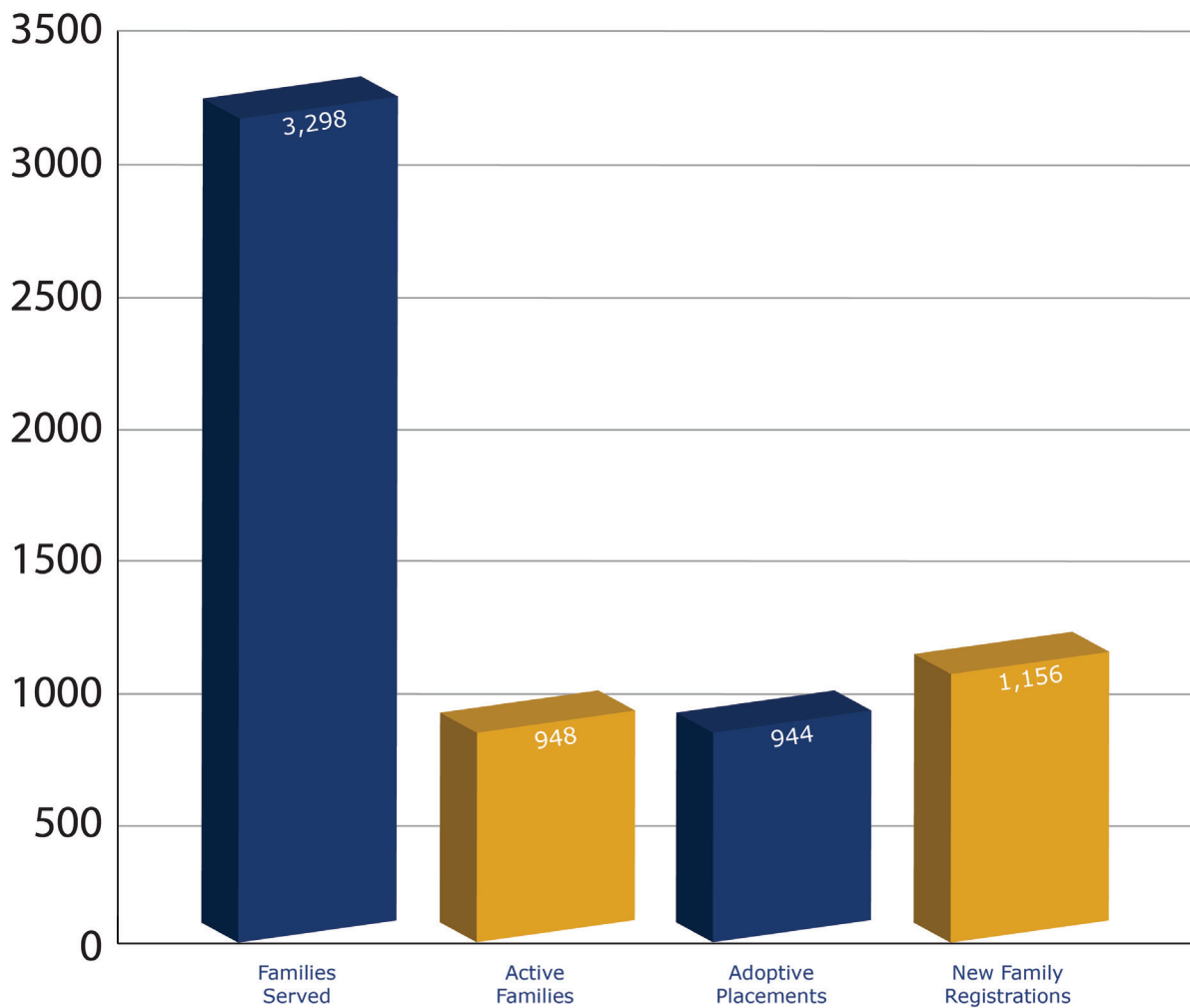
Children Served by PAE in 2019 Total Children Served - 4,240 (Chart 1)



Note: Not all children who are available for adoption are registered with PAE. (See page 5 for registration requirements.)



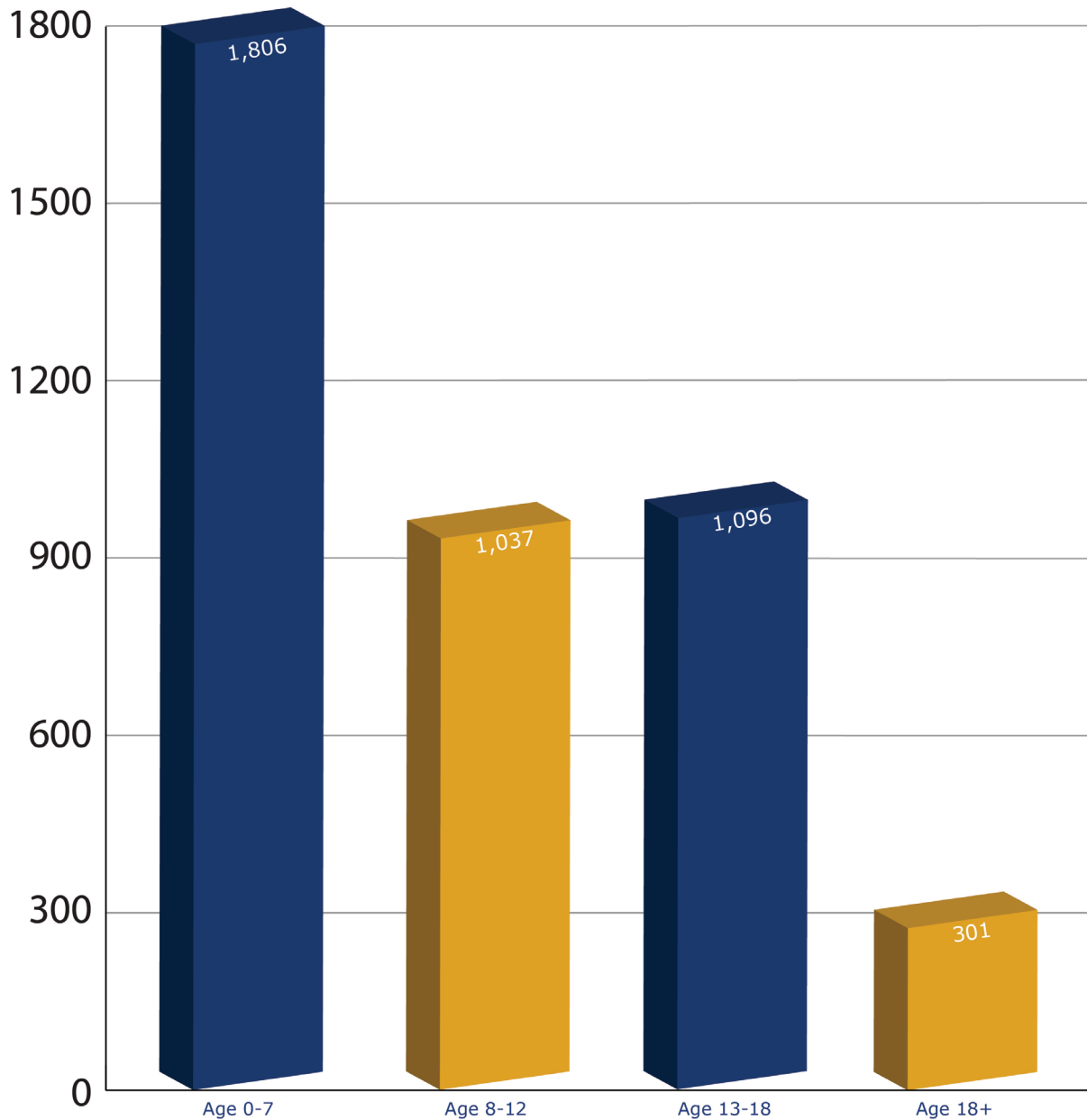
Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2019 Total Families Served – 3,298 (Chart 2)





Age of Children Served by PAE in 2019 (Chart 3)

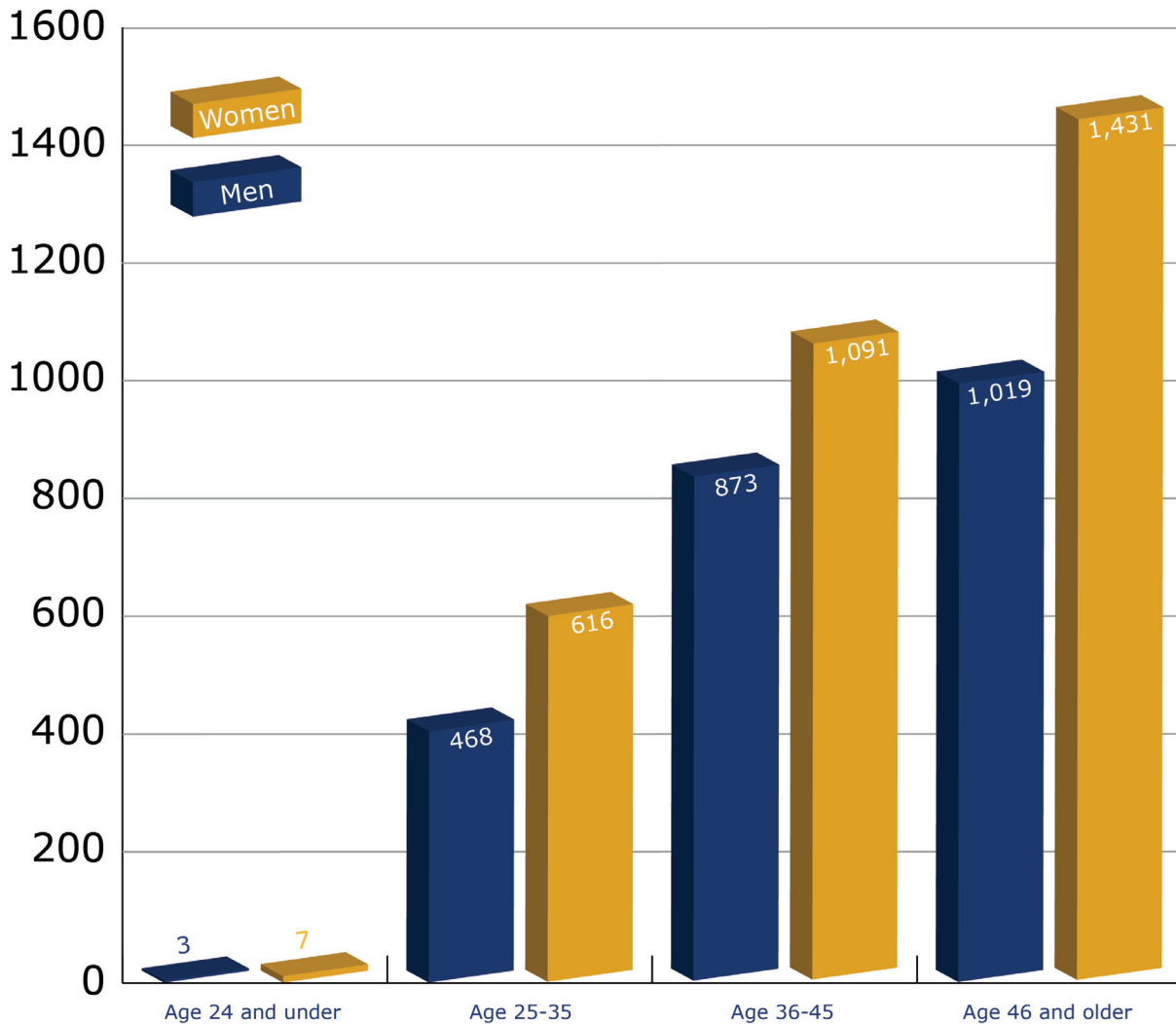
- 1,806 of the 4,240 children, or 42.6%, were age 0 to 7
- 1,037 of the 4,240 children, or 24.5%, were age 8 to 12
- 1,096 of the 4,240 children, or 25.8%, were age 13 to 18
- 301 of the 4,240 children, or 7.1%, were over age 18





Age and Gender of Prospective Adopters Served by PAE in 2019 (Chart 4)

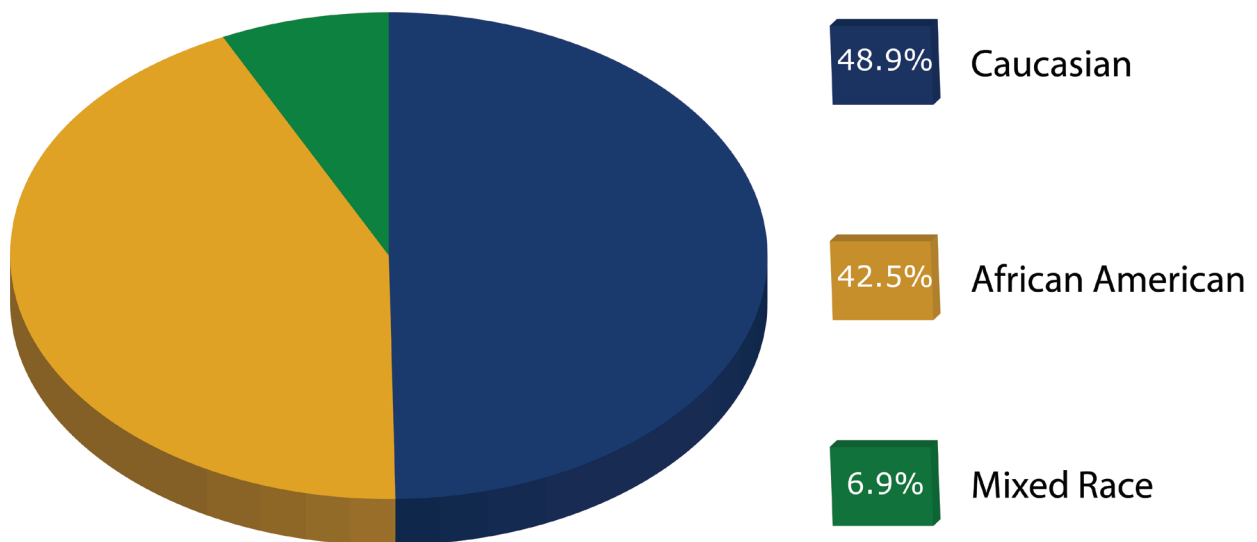
- 2,363 prospective adopters were male
 - o Three men were age 24 and under, representing 0.1% of the total
 - o 468 men were age 25 to 35, representing 19.8% of the total
 - o 873 men were age 36 to 45, representing 36.9% of the total
 - o 1,019 men were age 46 and older, representing 43.1% of the total
- 3,145 prospective adopters were female
 - o Seven women were age 24 and under, representing 0.2% of the total
 - o 616 women were age 25 to 35, representing 19.6% of the total
 - o 1,091 women were age 36 to 45, representing 34.7% of the total
 - o 1,431 women were age 46 and older, representing 45.5% of the total





Race of Children Served by PAE in 2019 (Chart 5)

- 4,240 children were served
 - o 2,073 children, or 48.9%, were Caucasian
 - o 1,801 children, or 42.5%, were African American
 - o 293 children, or 6.9%, were of mixed race
 - o 16 children, or 0.4%, were Asian
 - o Five children, or 0.1%, were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
 - o One child, or 0.02%, was American Indian/Alaskan Native

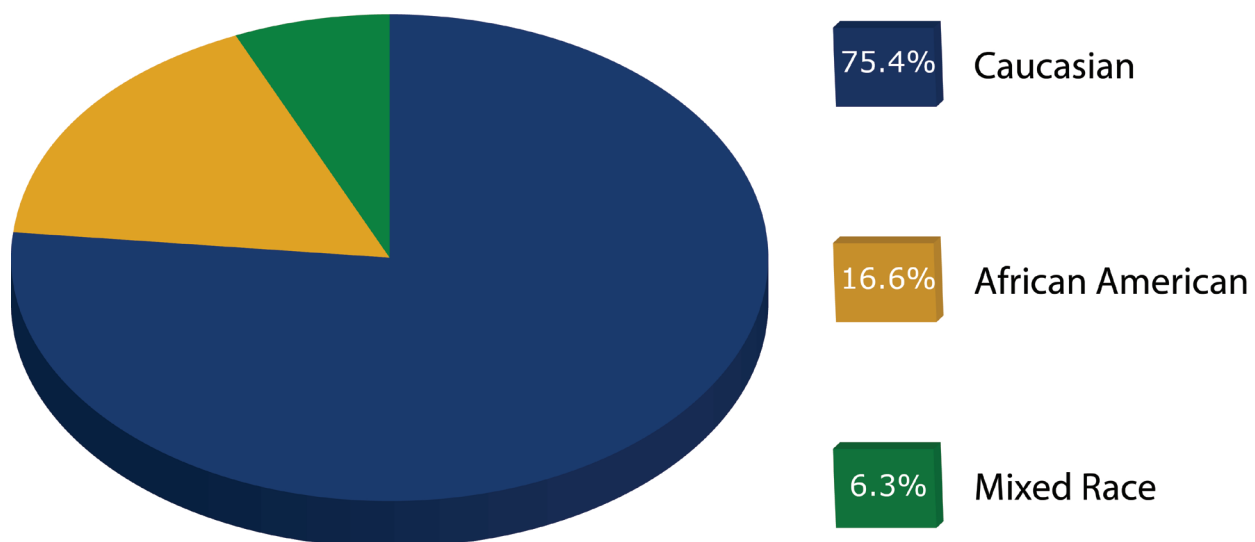


Note: The races of 51 children (1.2 percent) are unknown. Hispanic children are not included in the pie chart because this characteristic is collected as a component of ethnicity and is not a part of race. These children are categorized as White in the pie chart. Sixteen Asian children, five Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children, and one American Indian/Alaskan Native child are not included in the pie chart above because they represent less than one percent of the children served.



Race of Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2019 (Chart 6)

- 3,298 adoptive families were served
 - o 2,486 of the families, or 75.4%, were Caucasian
 - o 549 of the families, or 16.6%, were African American
 - o 208 of the families, or 6.3%, were of mixed race
 - o Two of the families, or 0.06%, were Asian
 - o Two of the families, or 0.06%, were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
 - o Two of the families, or 0.06%, were American Indian/Alaskan Native

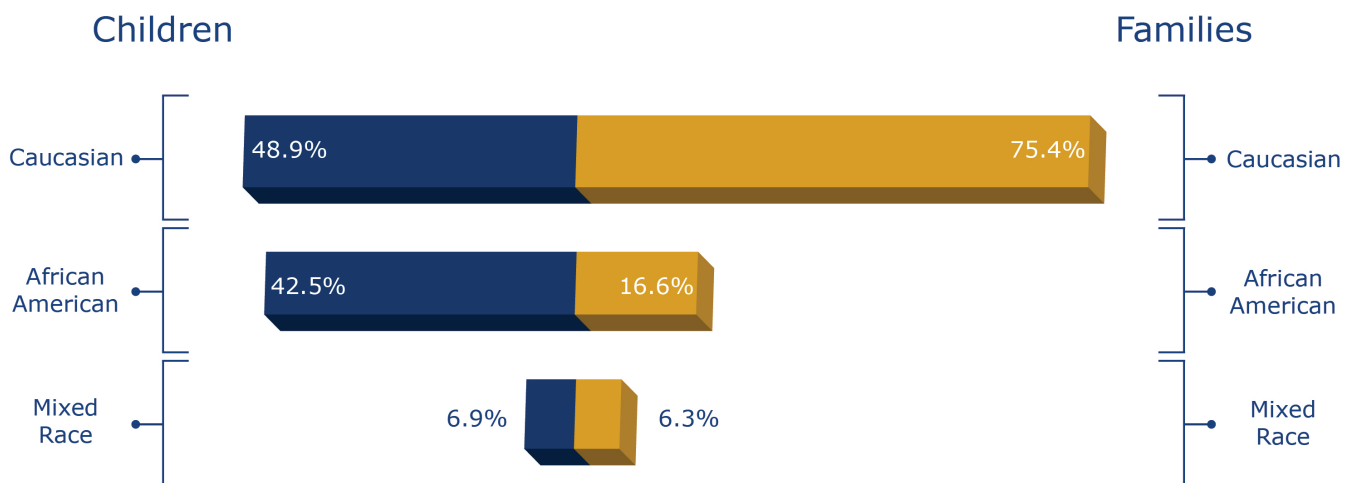


Note: Forty-nine families did not provide race. Hispanic families are not included in the pie chart because this characteristic is collected as a component of ethnicity and is not a part of race. These families are considered White. Two Asian families, two Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and two American Indian/Alaskan Native families are not included in the pie chart above because they represent less than one percent of the families served.



Comparison of the Race of Families and the Race of Children Served by PAE in 2019 (Chart 7)

- 2,073 children, or 48.9%, were Caucasian
 - 2,486 of the families, or 75.4%, were Caucasian
- 1,801 children, or 42.5%, were African American
 - 549 of the families, or 16.6%, were African American
- 293 children, or 6.9%, were of mixed race
 - 208 of the families, or 6.3%, were of mixed race
- 16 children, or 0.4%, were Asian
 - Two of the families, or 0.06%, were Asian
- Five children, or 0.1%, were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
 - Two of the families, or 0.06%, were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- One child, or 0.02%, were American Indian/Alaskan Native
 - Two of the families, or 0.06%, were American Indian/Alaskan Native

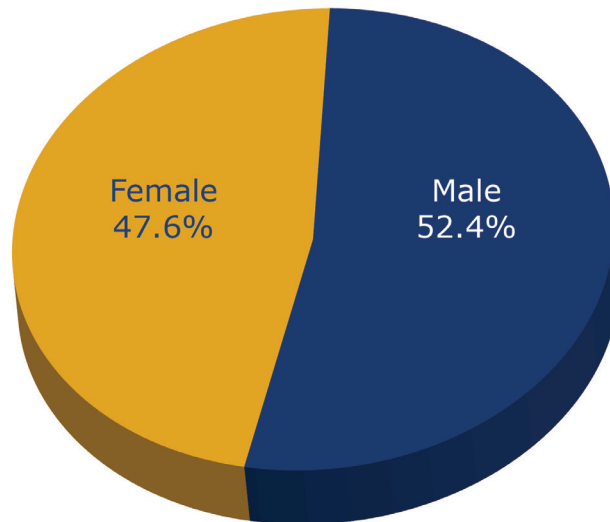


Note: The races of 51 children and 49 families are unknown. Sixteen Asian, one American Indian/Alaskan Native child and five Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children, as well as two Asian families, two American Indian/Alaskan Native families and two Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander families are not included in the chart above because they represent less than one percent of the children and families served.



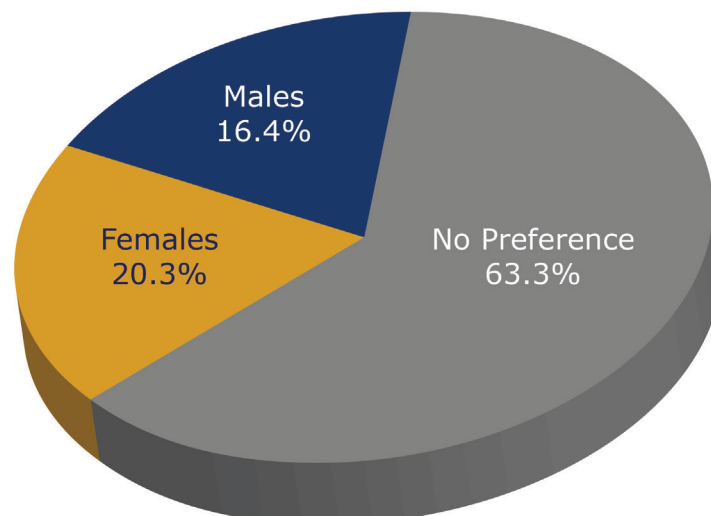
Gender of Children Served by PAE in 2019 (Chart 8)

- 2,223 children were male, representing 52.4% of the total
- 2,017 children were female, representing 47.6% of the total



Gender Preferences of Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2019 (Chart 9)

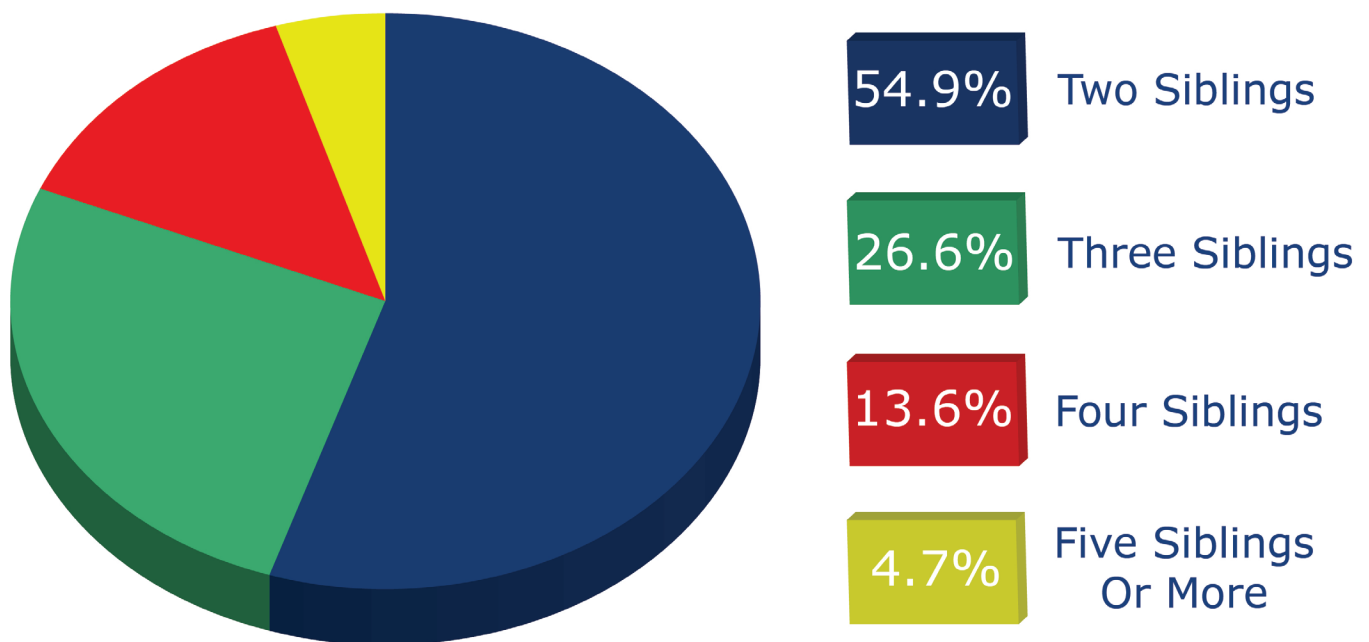
- 2,088 families, or 63.3%, did not have a gender preference
- 668 families, or 20.3%, preferred to adopt a female child
- 542 families, or 16.4%, preferred to adopt a male child





Size of Sibling Groups Served by PAE in 2019 (Chart 10)

- Of the 4,240 children served
 - o 935 or 22.1%, belonged to a sibling group:
 - 514 children, or 54.9%, belonged to a sibling group of two
 - 249 children, or 26.6%, belonged to a sibling group of three
 - 128 children, or 13.6%, belonged to a sibling group of four
 - 44 children, or 4.7%, belonged to a sibling group of five or more
 - o The 935 children belonged to a total of 380 individual sibling groups



Note: All members of a sibling group do not necessarily receive PAE services.



Race of Sibling Groups Served by PAE in 2019 (Chart 11)

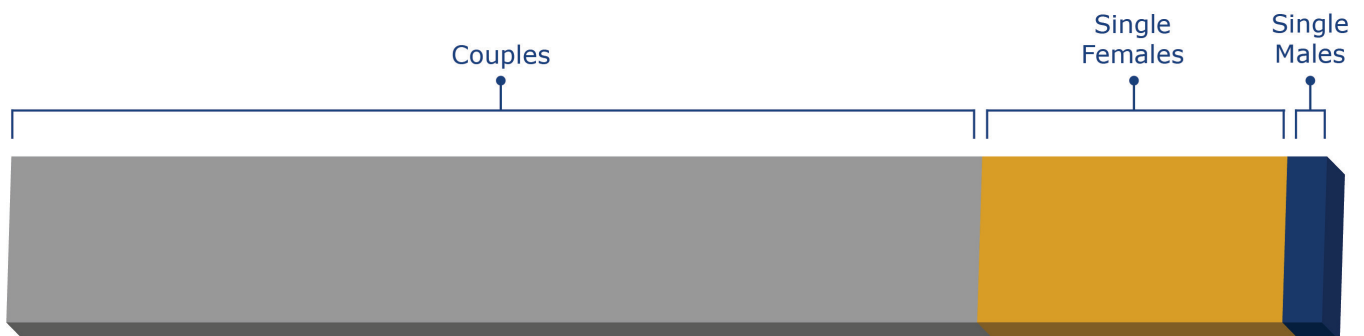
- Of the 935 children in sibling groups:
 - o 352 children, or 37.6%, were Caucasian
 - o 347 children or 37.1%, were African American
 - o 61 children or 6.5%, were mixed of race
 - o Six children or 0.6%, were Asian



Note: Hispanic children are not included in the pie chart because this characteristic is collected as a component of ethnicity and is not a part of race. These children are categorized as White in the chart. One hundred and sixty-nine children are not included in the list above because they may not be receiving services.

Marital Status of Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2019 (Chart 12)

- Of the 3,298 adoptive families served:
 - o 2,380 families were couples, representing 72.2% of the total
 - o 831 families were single females, representing 25.2% of the total
 - o 84 families were single males, representing 2.5% of the total





Directory of Services

Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families

HEADQUARTERS

Office of Children, Youth and Families

Department of Human Services

P.O. Box 2675

Harrisburg, PA 17105

(717) 787-4756

www.dhs.pa.gov

REGIONAL OFFICES

SOUTHEAST REGION

Office of Children, Youth and Families

801 Market St.

Suite 6112

Philadelphia, PA 19107

(215) 560-2249

(215) 560-2823

CENTRAL REGION

Office of Children, Youth and Families

Hilltop Building, 2nd Floor

3 Ginko Drive

Harrisburg, PA 17110

(717) 772-7702

NORTHEAST REGION

Office of Children, Youth and Families

100 Lackawanna Ave.

Room 301, 3rd Floor

Scranton, PA 18503

(570) 963-4376

WESTERN REGION

Office of Children, Youth and Families

11 Stanwix St.

Room 260

Pittsburgh, PA 15222

(412) 565-2339

STATEWIDE ADOPTION AND PERMANENCY NETWORK

Prime Contractor for SWAN

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries /

Family Design Resources

P.O. Box 4560

471 JPL Wick Drive

Harrisburg, PA 17111

1-888-793-2512

www.diakon-swan.org

Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange

P.O. Box 4469

Harrisburg, PA 17111

1-800-227-0225

www.adoptpakids.org

SWAN Helpline

1-800-585-SWAN (7926)

LOCAL AGENCY CONTACTS

For a list of County Children and Youth agencies, follow this link :

<http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/findfacilsandlocs/countychildrenandyouthdirectory/index.htm>

(From here click "County Children and Youth Agencies" and then click "Submit Search" button)

For a list of SWAN Adoption Agency Affiliates, follow this link:

<http://www.diakon-swan.org/swan/contacts/affiliate/>



Websites

Government	
<p>Administration for Children and Families Department of Health and Human Services www.acf.hhs.gov</p> <p>Commonwealth of Pennsylvania www.pa.gov</p> <p>The Department of Human Services www.dhs.pa.gov</p> <p>DHS Forms and Publications www.dhs.pa.gov/publications/findaform/index.htm</p>	<p>Child Welfare Information Gateway www.childwelfare.gov</p> <p>U.S. Department of State www.travel.state.gov</p> <p>Pennsylvania Code Online www.pacode.com</p> <p>Pennsylvania General Assembly www.legis.state.pa.us</p>
Children and Youth Services	
<p>Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators www.pcy.org</p>	<p>Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association www.psrfa.org</p>
Child Welfare Resources	
<p>Child Protection in Pennsylvania www.keepkidsafe.pa.gov</p> <p>Child Welfare League of America www.cwla.org</p>	<p>Center for Schools and Communities www.center-school.org</p> <p>Pennsylvania Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics www.paaap.org</p>
Parenting and Family Resources	
<p>Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance www.pa-fsa.org</p> <p>The National Fatherhood Initiative www.fatherhood.org</p>	<p>Parent to Parent www.parenttoparent.org</p> <p>The Juvenile Law Center www.jlc.org</p>
Adoption Resources	
<p>AdoptUSKids www.adoptuskids.org</p> <p>Adoption Knowledge Affiliates www.adoptionknowledge.org</p> <p>Dave Thomas Foundation www.davethomasfoundation.org</p> <p>North American Council on Adoptable Children www.nacac.org</p> <p>Three Rivers Adoption Council www.3riversadopt.org</p>	<p>Adoption.com www.adoption.com</p> <p>American Academy of Adoption Attorneys www.adoptionattorneys.org</p> <p>Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute www.ccaainstitute.org</p> <p>National Adoption Center www.adopt.org</p> <p>Spaulding for Children www.spaulding.org</p> <p>Together as Adoptive Parents www.taplink.org</p>



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