



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



2016

PENNSYLVANIA
ADOPTION EXCHANGE



ANNUAL REPORT





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pennsylvania
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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. SWAN 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; 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 37 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 foster care placements, drug and alcohol exposure, special education needs, emotional challenges, intellectual disabilities, special

medical care, physical disabilities or a history of running away. 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, 2016 through December 31, 2016. Pennsylvania had 2,017 foster care adoptions finalized in calendar year 2016. Of these finalizations, 1,145 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/Independent Living (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 with the development of 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 *SWAN/IL Network News* and the Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association's newsletter.
- Showcasing waiting children on the PAE website, www.adoptpakids.org.
- Facilitating television filming of waiting children at 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.

2016 PAIR Statistical Information (Jan. 1, 2016 - Dec. 31, 2016):

- 68 new birth families registered with PAIR.
- 111 new adoptees registered and inquired about PAIR.





- 52 birth family requests were registered with PAIR.
- 275 adoptee requests were registered with PAIR.
- 1,968 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 20,837 applicants are currently available and approved in one or more of the following categories:

- 5,570 approved for adoption.
- 12,138 approved for foster care.
- 6,677 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 2016, 73.88% 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, 1-800-585-7926 (SWAN), 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 295 calls per week in 2016, with higher volumes during media campaigns. Calls are fielded by a team of information and permanency referral specialists. In addition to answering incoming calls, the specialists also make follow-up calls to families who have requested additional support in the permanency process, provide callers with informational SWAN Family Packets, and make referrals to other agencies.

2016 SWAN Helpline Statistical Information (Jan. 1, 2016 - Dec. 31, 2016)

- 15,320 Total Calls:
 - 6,998 Incoming Calls
 - 8,322 Outgoing Calls
- 1,093 SWAN Family Packets mailed to callers
- 1,151 Referrals made to other agencies

Pennsylvania's Seamless System Facilitated by PAE and SWAN Helpline

In 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 Pennsylvania's Seamless System, as they routinely update information about the availability and status of children and families. Current information is key to keep the process moving and to ensure that in-depth information on each child is available to approved families.



Outreach Initiatives

Media Campaign 2016

#MeetTheKids, the department's 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 in 2016. A targeted television advertisement campaign ran May to June 2016 in the Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, and Harrisburg/Lancaster/Lebanon/York area markets. Facebook and Google advertisements ran throughout the year across the Commonwealth as well.

In celebration of National Foster Care Month, print advertisements ran to promote foster care and adoption awareness in May 2016. Print advertisements targeting African-American and LGBTQ communities ran in five newspapers and magazines including: Philadelphia Gay News, Philadelphia Tribune, Pittsburgh Courier, Out In Pittsburgh, and G-Philly. The advertisements ran the entire month of May 2016. Online radio advertisements, through Pandora Radio, also ran during National Foster Care Month.

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 ran 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.

Website Statistical Information 2016: (Jan. 1, 2016 - Dec. 31, 2016)

- 3,683,027 Total website visits
- 1,238,993 Waiting Kids album visits
- 222,634 New visitors
- Device traffic:
 - 36% Desktop computer
 - 64% Mobile/Tablet

Demographics of website users:

- Gender:
 - 54% Male
 - 46% Female



- Age Range:
 - 27.5% between 18-24
 - 33.5% between 25-34
 - 15.5% between 35-44
 - 23.5% were 45 or older
- Top five cities include:
 - 11.8% Philadelphia, PA
 - 5.8% Pittsburgh, PA
 - 4.3% Washington, DC
 - 2.5% Lancaster, PA
 - 2.3% New York, NY

Social Media

SWAN operates a Facebook page; (www.facebook.com/adoptpa); which includes profiles of waiting children, inspirational quotes and frequently asked questions. In 2016, SWAN's Facebook page had over 14,700 likes, a 49.5 percent increase from 2015. This method of social media accounts for 44 percent of visitors to our website.

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. Lynne Hayes-Freeland, 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 at 1-800-585-SWAN or visit www.adoptpakids.org. The segment airs on the 6 p.m. news every other Tuesday, at noon the next day, and again on the *Lynne Hayes-Freeland Show*, which airs on Saturdays and Sundays.

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 were 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, talked to the children and their caseworkers about their needs, interests, what they were looking for in a family, and how long they had 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 at 7 p.m. and again at 6 p.m. Sundays.

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 serve.

A Little Love focuses on the featured children's desires and ambitions. The host, Tim Kelchner, works closely with the community and the children's caseworkers to decide on an exciting activity or event for the children to participate in. Each segment provides the opportunity to take the children's desires and ambitions and turns them into an unforgettable experience. Some activities and events chosen by the have children included:

- Minor league sports
- Spas
- Guitar and singing lessons
- Amusement or water parks
- Magic shows



Throughout the segment, Mr. Kelchner 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 or visit www.adoptpakids.org. A Little Love airs Wednesdays between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m. and during the 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. news.

2016 Segment Statistical Information: (Jan. 1, 2016 - Dec. 31, 2016)

TV Segment	Children Taped	Still Searching for Permanency	# Achieving Permanency	% of Taped Achieving Permanency
KDKA Waiting Child	6			
WHTM Val's Kids	3			
WBRE A Little Love	4			
<i>Cumulative Segment Statistical Information: (2010 - 2016)</i>				
KDKA Waiting Child	72	25	18	25
WHTM Val's Kids	62	19	24	39
WBRE A Little Love	42	17	14	33
TOTAL	176	61	56	32

Source: SWAN Portal closure information



Key Findings - 2016

Children Served by PAE in 2016

- 3,081 children were served (Chart 1)
- 1,800 new child registrations were received (Chart 1)
- 638 of the 3,081 children, or 20.7%, were age 13 to 18 (Chart 3)
- 726 of the 3,081 children, or 23.6%, were placed in adoptive homes (Chart 1)
- 1,145 of the 3,081 children, or 37.2%, were finalized for adoption (Chart 1)

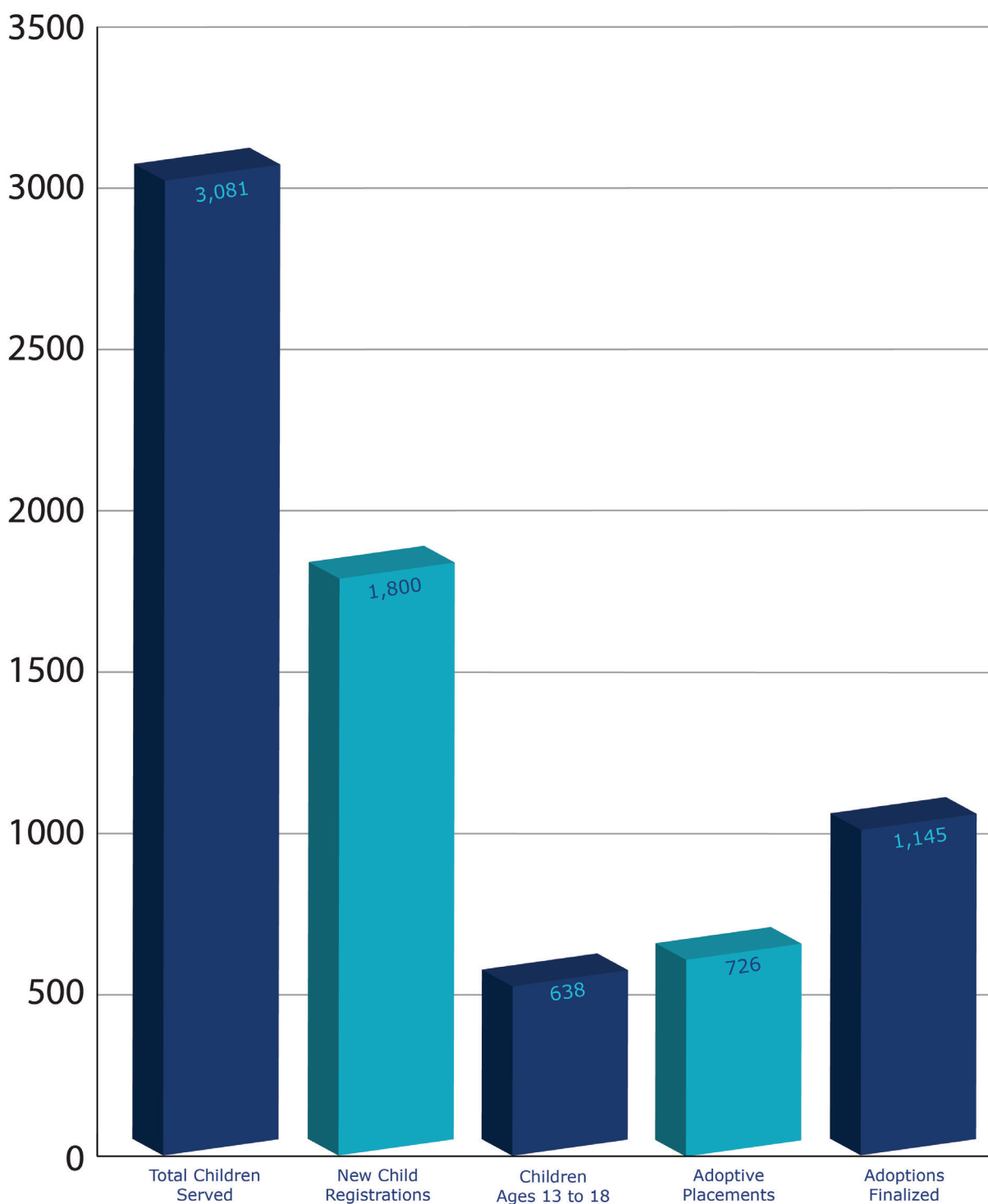
Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2016 (Chart 2)

- 2,483 families were served (Chart 2)
- 933 families, or 37.6%, were active and still waiting for an adoptive placement at the close of the calendar year (Chart 2)
- 667 of the 2,483 families, or 26.9%, accepted an adoptive placement (Chart 2)
- 909 new families were registered (Chart 2)





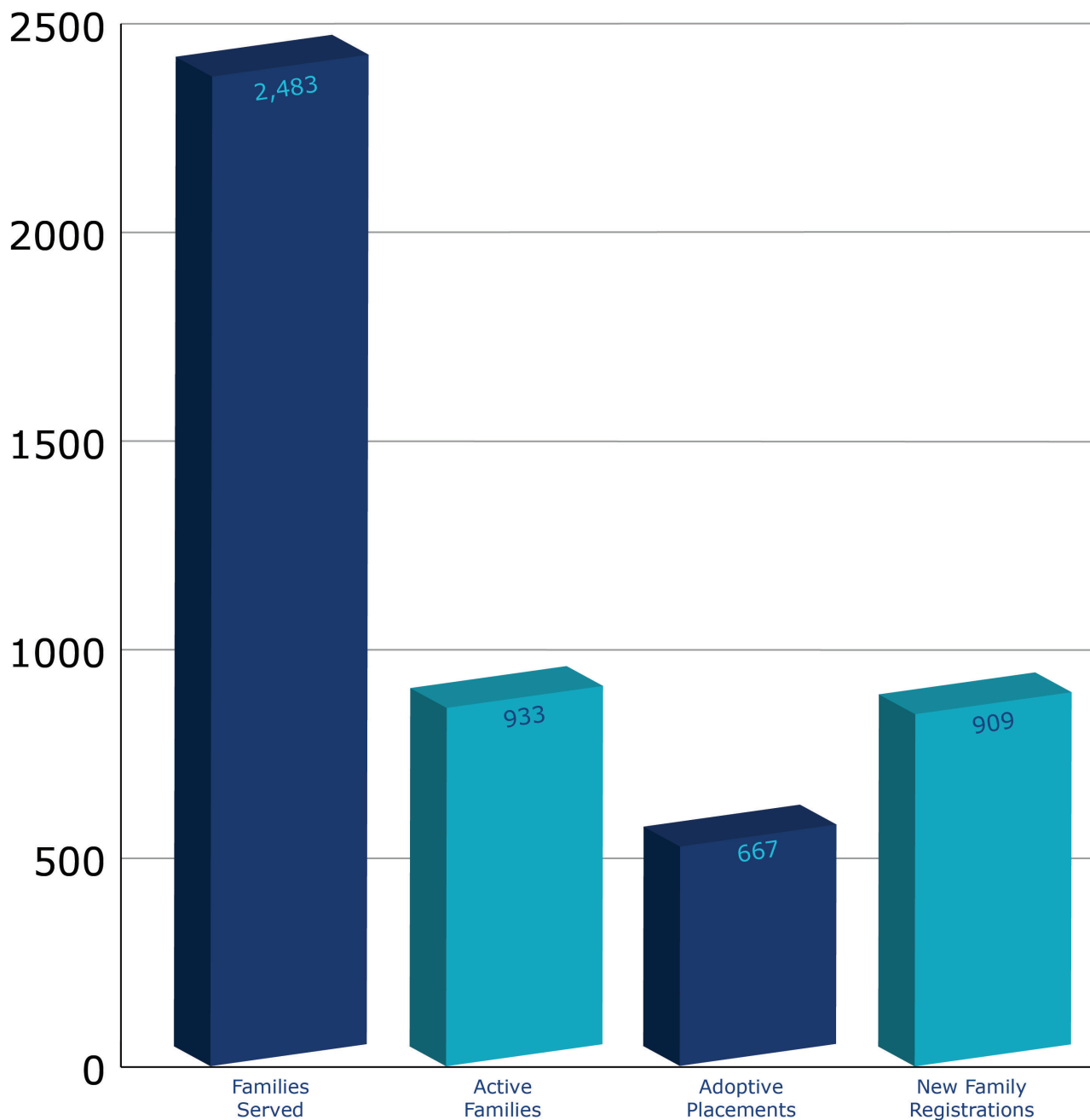
Children Served by PAE in 2016 Total Children Served - 3,081 (Chart 1)



Note: Not all children who are available for adoption are registered with PAE. (See page 3 for registration requirements)



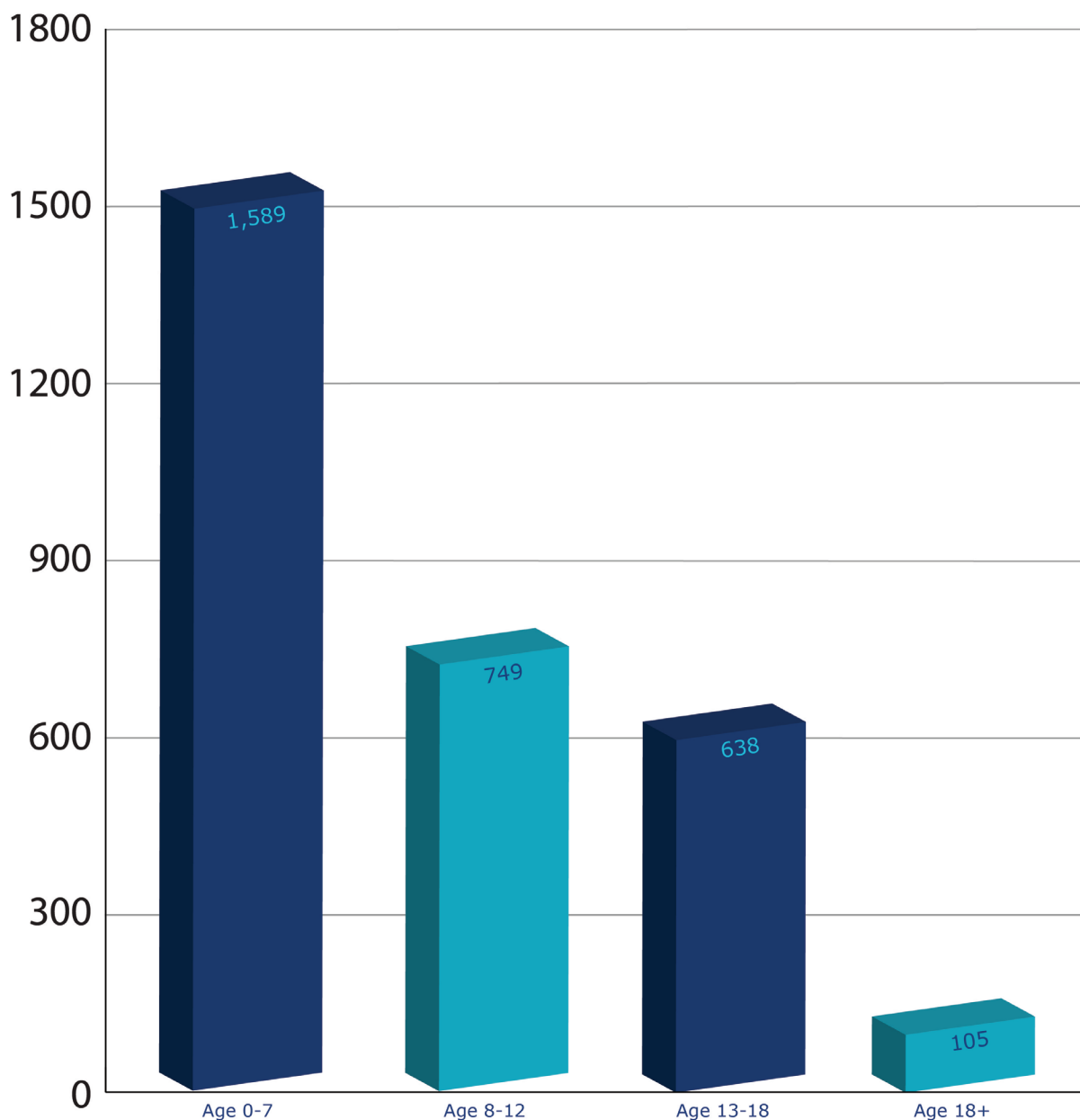
Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2016 Total Families Served – 2,483 (Chart 2)





Age of Children Served by PAE in 2016 (Chart 3)

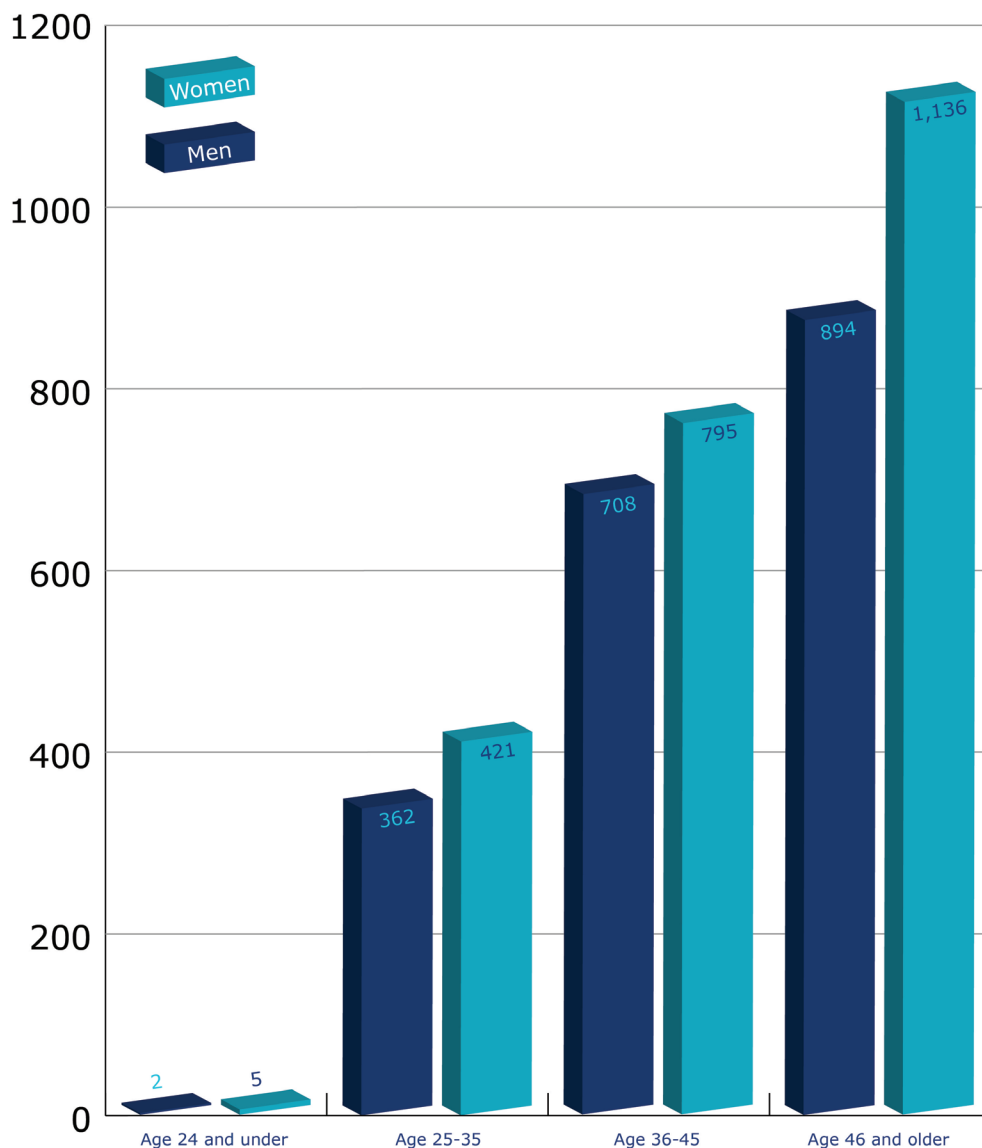
- 1,589 of the 3,081 children, or 51.6%, were age 0 to 7
- 749 of the 3,081 children, or 24.3%, were age 8 to 12
- 638 of the 3,081 children, or 20.7%, were age 13 to 18
- 105 of the 3,081 children, or 3.4%, were over age 18





Age and Gender of Prospective Adopters Served by PAE in 2016 (Chart 4)

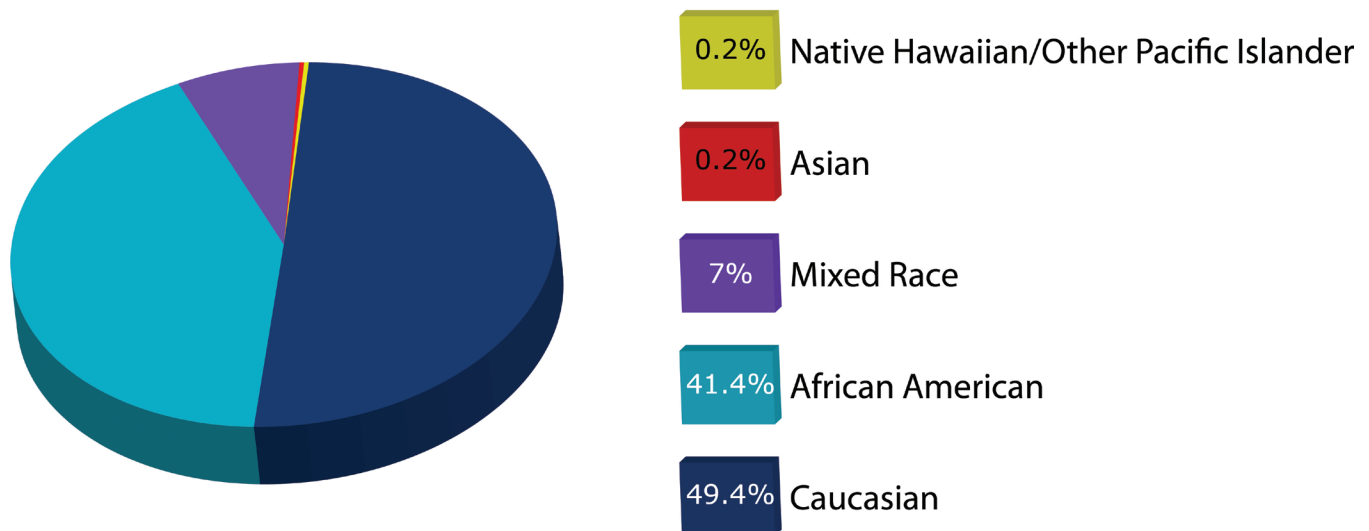
- 1,966 prospective adopters were male
 - Two were age 24 and under, representing 0.1% of the total
 - 362 were age 25 to 35, representing 18.4% of the total
 - 708 were age 36 to 45, representing 36% of the total
 - 894 were age 46 and older, representing 45.5% of the total
- 2,357 prospective adopters were female
 - Five were age 24 and under, representing 0.2% of the total
 - 421 were age 25 to 35, representing 17.9% of the total
 - 795 were age 36 to 45, representing 33.7% of the total
 - 1,136 were age 46 and older, representing 48.2% of the total





Race of Children Served by PAE in 2016 (Chart 5)

- 3,081 children were served
 - o 1,523 children, or 49.4%, were Caucasian
 - o 1,275 children, or 41.4%, were African American
 - o 216 children, or 7%, were of mixed race
 - o Five children, or 0.2%, were Asian
 - o Five children, or 0.2%, were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
 - o Three children, or 0.1%, were Native American

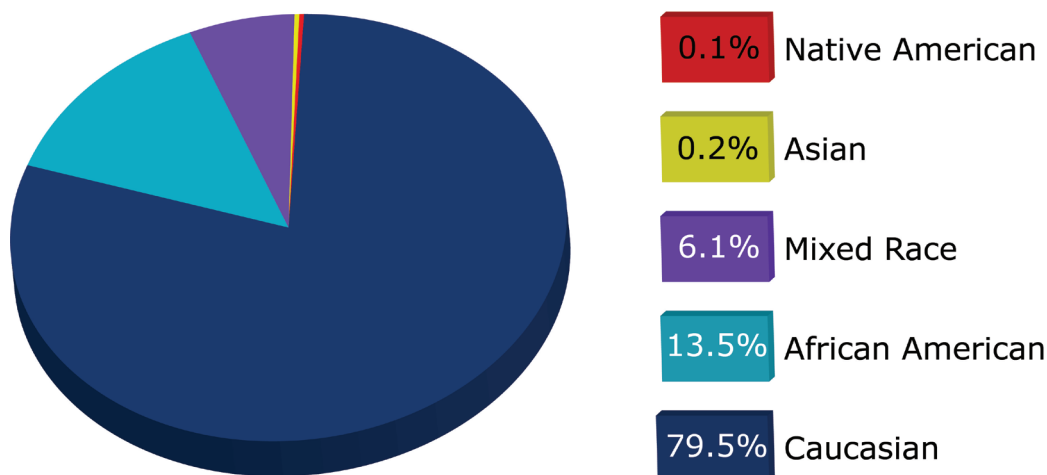


Note: The races of 54 children (1.7 percent) are unknown. Three Native American children are not included in the chart above. Hispanic children are not included in the pie chart because this characteristic is collected as a component of ethnicity and not as a part of race. These children are categorized as Caucasian in the pie chart.



Race of Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2016 (Chart 6)

- 2,483 adoptive families were served
 - o 1,975 of the families, or 79.5%, were Caucasian
 - o 334 of the families, or 13.5%, were African American
 - o 152 of the families, or 6.1%, were of mixed race
 - o Four families, or 0.2%, were Asian
 - o Two families, or 0.1%, were Native American
 - o One family, or .04%, were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

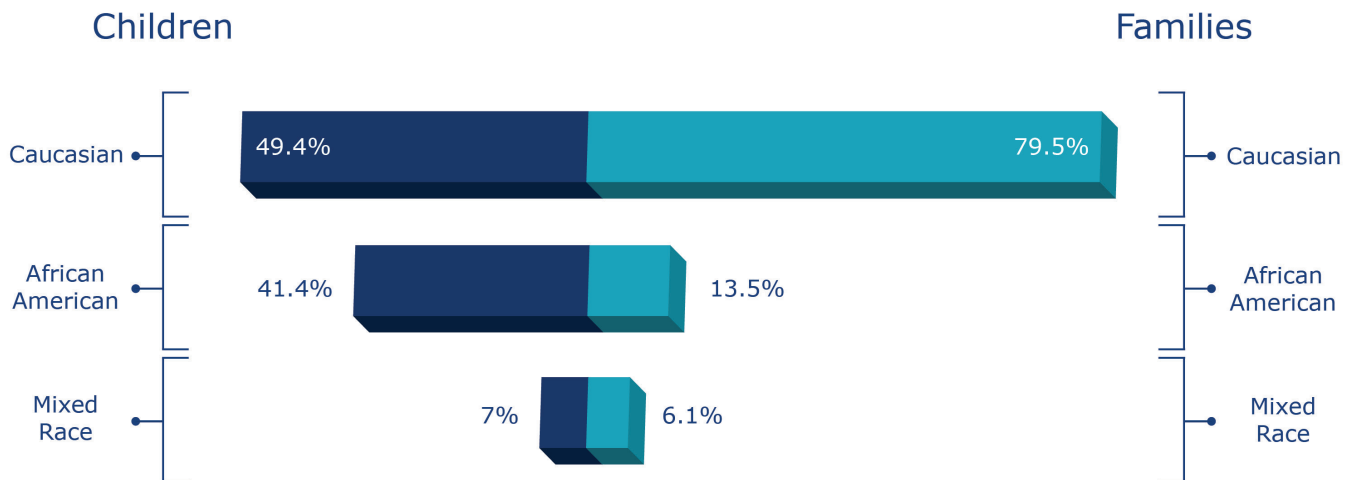


Note: Fifteen families did not provide race. One Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander family is not included in the chart above. Hispanic families are not included in the pie chart because this characteristic is collected as a component of ethnicity and is not a part of race. These families are considered Caucasian.



Comparison of the Race of Families and the Race of Children Served by PAE in 2016 (Chart 7)

- 1,523 children, or 49.4%, were Caucasian
 - 1,975 of the families, or 79.5%, were Caucasian
- 1,275 children, or 41.4%, were African American
 - 334 of the families, or 13.5%, were African American
- 216 children, or 7%, were of mixed race
 - 152 of the families, or 6.1%, were of mixed race
- Five children, or 0.2%, were Asian
 - Four families, or 0.2%, were Asian
- Three children, or 0.1%, were Native American
 - Two families, or 0.1%, were Native American
- Five children, or 0.2%, were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
 - One family, or .04%, were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

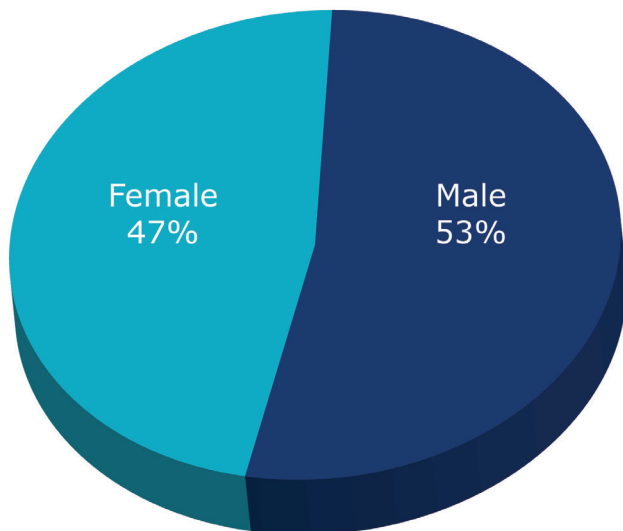


Note: The races of 53 children and 15 families are unknown. Five Asian children, three Native American children, five Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children, four Asian families, two Native American families, and one Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander family are not included in the chart above because they represent less than one percent of the children and families served.



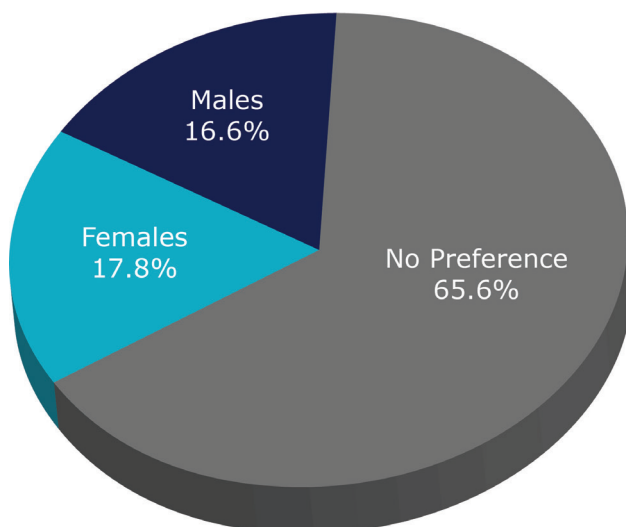
Gender of Children Served by PAE in 2016 (Chart 8)

- 1,632 children were male, representing 53% of the total
- 1,449 children were female, representing 47% of the total



Gender Preferences of Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2016 (Chart 9)

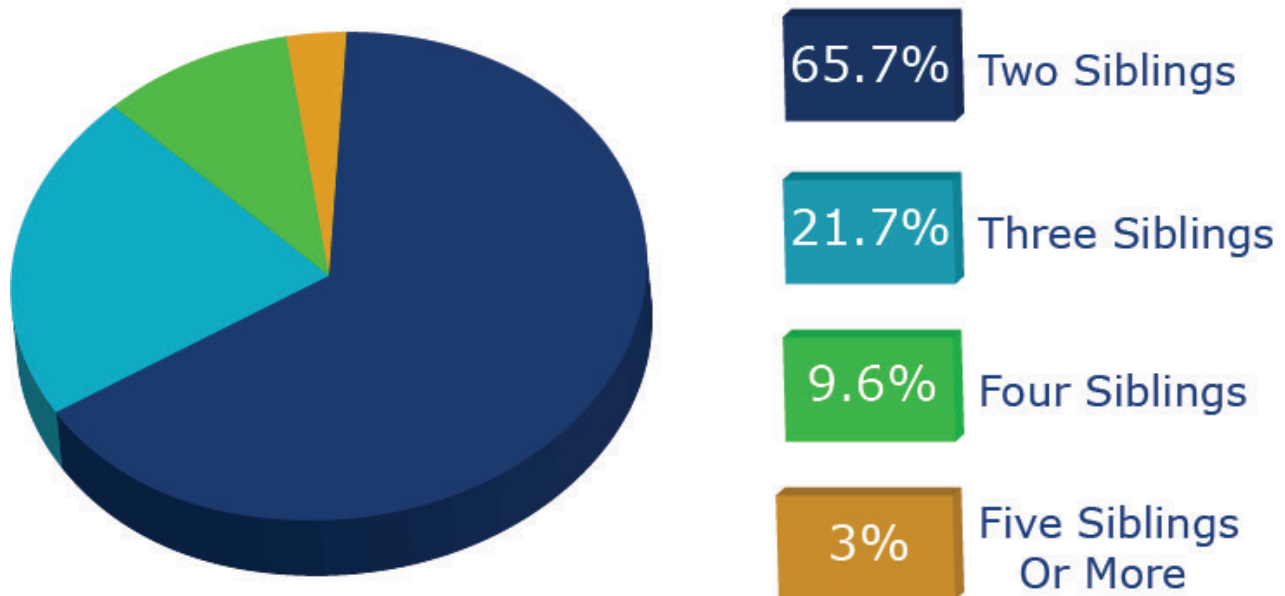
- 1,628 families, or 65.6%, did not have a gender preference
- 443 families, or 17.8%, preferred to adopt a female child
- 412 families, or 16.6%, preferred to adopt a male child





Size of Sibling Groups Served by PAE in 2016 (Chart 10)

- Of the 3,081 children served
 - o 847 or 27.5%, belonged to a sibling group:
 - 557 children, or 65.7%, belonged to a sibling group of two
 - 184 children, or 21.7%, belonged to a sibling group of three
 - 81 children, or 9.6%, belonged to a sibling group of four
 - 20 children, or 2.4%, belonged to a sibling group of five
 - Five children, or 0.6%, belonged to a sibling group of six
 - o The 847 children belonged to a total of 519 individual sibling groups

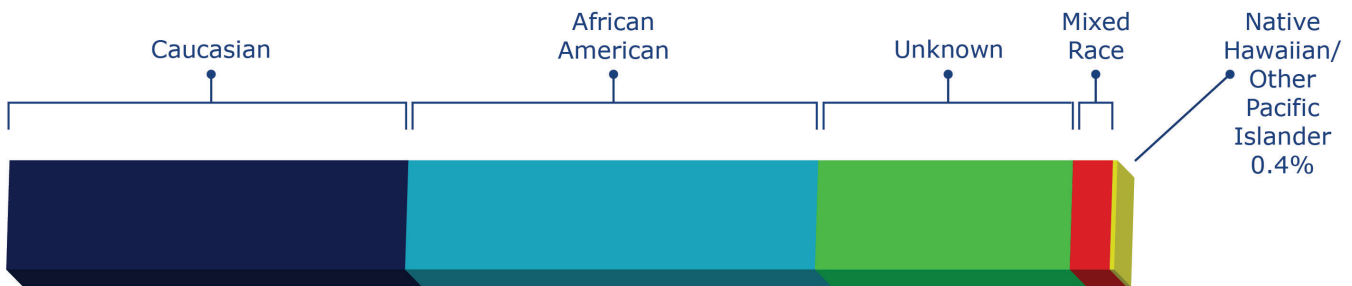


Note: All members of a sibling group do not necessarily receive PAE services.



Race of Sibling Groups Served by PAE in 2016 (Chart 11)

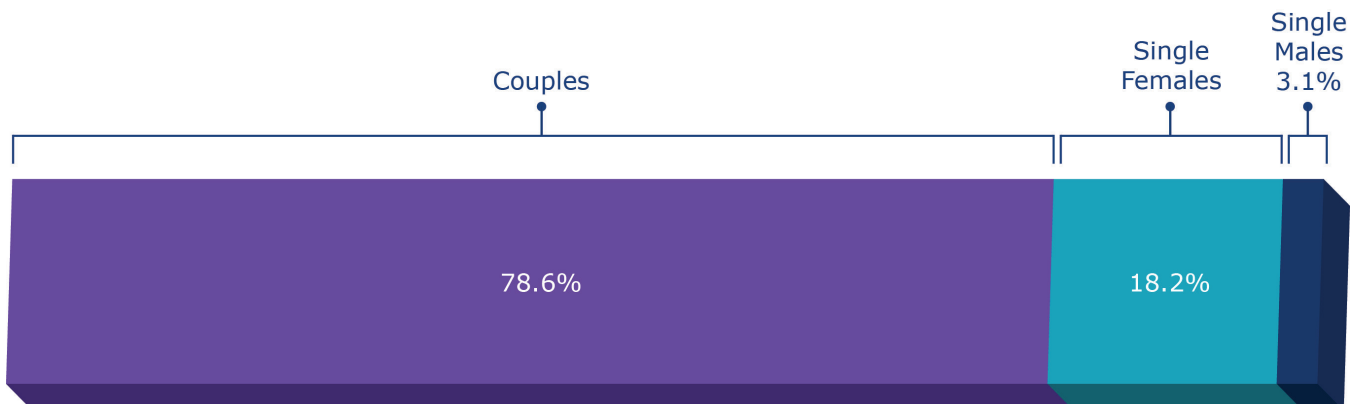
- Of the 847 children in sibling groups:
 - o 305 children, or 36%, were Caucasian
 - o 313 children or 37%, were African American
 - o 31 children or 3.6%, were mixed race
 - o Three children or 0.4%, were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
 - o 195 children or 23% had an unknown race



Note: Hispanic children are not included in the chart because this characteristic is collected as a component of ethnicity and is not a part of race. These children are categorized as Caucasian in the chart. Three Native American sibling groups are not included in the chart above because they represent less than one percent of the children served in a sibling group.

Marital Status of Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2016 (Chart 12)

- Of the 2,483 adoptive families served:
 - o 1,952 families were couples, representing 78.6% of the total
 - o 453 families were single females, representing 18.2% of the total
 - o 78 families were single males, representing 3.1% 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

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>

(Click "County Children and Youth Agencies", and then click "Submit Search").

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.keepkidssafe.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>Joint Council on International Children's Services www.jointcouncil.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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