



PENNSYLVANIA ADOPTION EXCHANGE



2021 Annual Report





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Introduction

Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network

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

The Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE), established in 1979, has played a key role in the Commonwealth's adoption system for the past 42 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. 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, 2021, through December 31, 2021. Pennsylvania had 2,051 adoptions finalized in calendar year 2021. Of these finalizations, 1,113 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 de-





ceased 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.

2021 PAIR Statistical Information (Jan. 1, 2021 – Dec. 31, 2021):

- 47 new birth families registered with PAIR.
- 24 new adoptees registered and inquired with PAIR.
- 33 birth family requests were registered with PAIR.
- 124 adoptee requests were registered with PAIR.
- 2,094 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 Voce (formally known as Family Design Resources). Families can be approved in multiple categories: a total of 14,053 applicants are currently available and approved in one or more of the following categories:

- 4,413 applied for adoption.
- 7,283 applied for foster care,
- 5,953 applied 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 2021, 68.04% 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 473 calls per week in 2021, with higher volumes during media campaigns. A team of SWAN technical specialists fields calls. 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-managed SWAN Facebook page and make reminder and survey calls for matching events across the state.



2021 SWAN Helpline Statistical Information (Jan. 1, 2021 – Dec. 31, 2021):

- 22710 Total Calls:
 - o 738 Incoming Calls
 - o 11,977 Outgoing Calls
- Includes 2,087 email correspondences
- 888 SWAN Family Packets mailed to callers.
- 1,684 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 key to keep the process moving and to assure that in-depth information on each child is available to approved families.

Outreach Initiatives

Media Campaign

#MeetTheKids, the department's successful media campaign featuring youth from Pennsylvania's foster care system, continued to be a popular recruitment tool for finding foster and adoptive families for our waiting children and youth. A targeted television advertisement campaign ran May, June, November and December 2021 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 April – December 31, 2021.

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.
- Age range:
 - o 9.94% between 18-24
 - o 21.62% between 25-34
 - o 21.18% between 35-44
 - o 47.26% were 45 or older
- Top five cities include:
 - o 18.99% Philadelphia, PA
 - o 6.08% Pittsburgh, PA
 - o 1.93% Lancaster, PA
 - o 1.33% Altoona, PA
 - o 1.24% Greensburg, PA

The website 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 2021

(January 1, 2021 – Dec. 31, 2021)

- 4,193,714 Total website visits
- 250,880 Waiting Kids album visits
- 447,125 New visitors
- Device traffic:
 - o 17.35% Desktop computer:
 - o 82.65% Mobile/Tablet:

Demographics of website users:

- Gender:
 - o 36.66% Male
 - o 63.34% Female

Social Media

SWAN operates a Facebook page, www.facebook.com/adoptpa, which includes profiles of waiting children, inspirational quotes and frequently asked questions. In 2021, SWAN's Facebook page had 25.9 thousand followers and reached over 1 million users which is a 476.4 % increase from 2020. This method of social media accounts for 99% 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. Mikey Hood, news anchors with CBS affiliate KDKA, engage and film 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.



munity 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
- Water park
- Constructing the perfect ice cream sundae

Throughout the segment, Ms. Kelly 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.

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.



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and staff shortages, WBRE was only able to complete two new featured child tapings in 2021.

A Little Love focuses on the featured children's desires and ambitions. The host, News Anchor Candice Kelly, works closely with com-



Segment Statistical Information 2021: (Jan. 1, 2021 – Dec. 31, 2021)

TV Segment	Children Taped	Still Searching for Permanency	# Achieving Permanency	% of Taped Achieving Permanency
KDKA Waiting Child	12	12	0	0
WHTM Val's Kids	10	10	0	.0
WBRE A Little Love	2	2	0	0
Cumulative 2010 - 2021				
KDKA Waiting Child	156	37	32	21
WHTM Val's Kids	215	46	38	18
WBRE A Little Love	97	15	26	27
TOTAL	468	98	96	21

Source: SWAN Portal closure information

Key Findings - 2021

Children Served by PAE in 2021

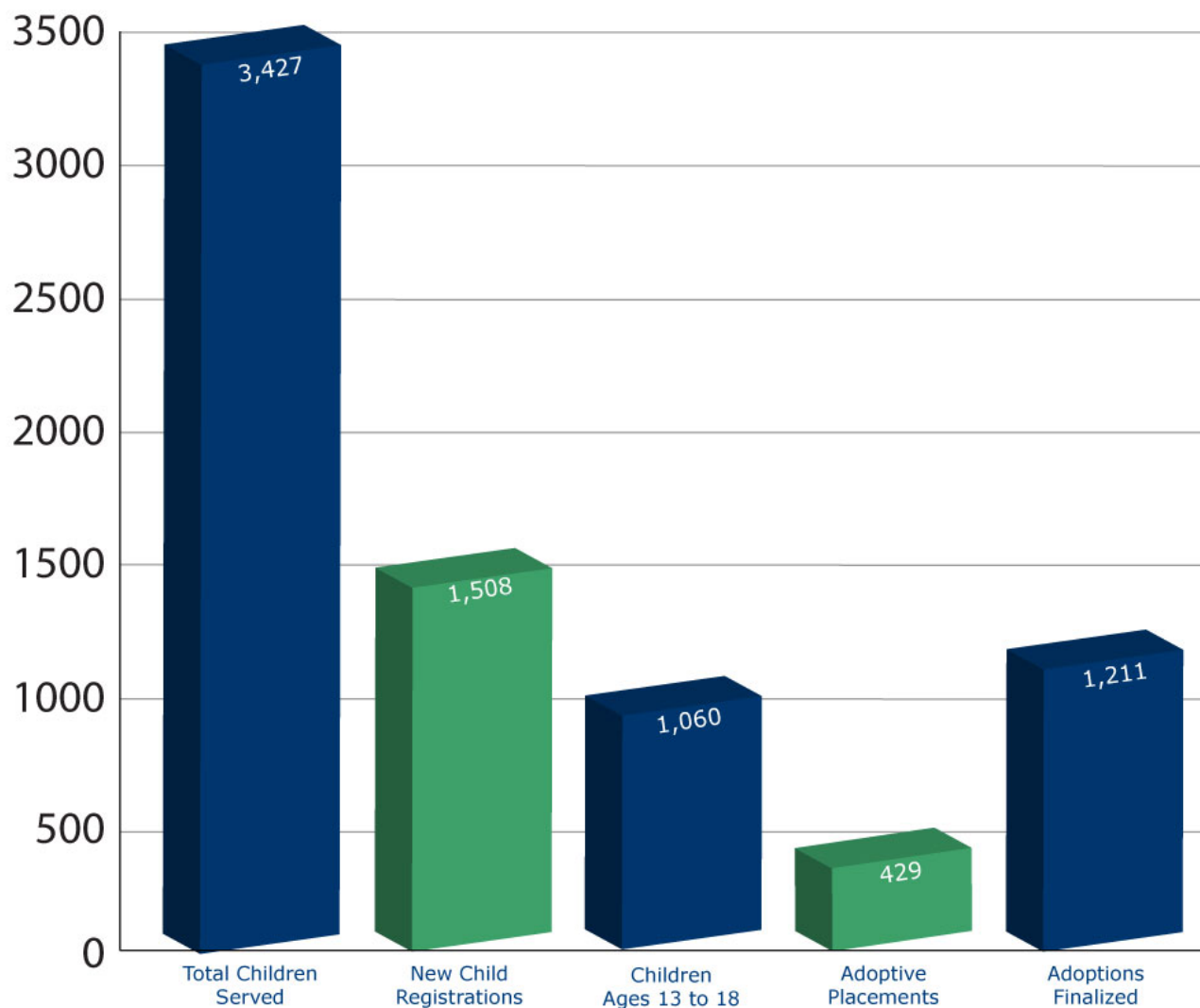
- 3,427 children were served (Chart 1)
- 1,508 new child registrations were received (Chart 1)
- 1,060 of the 3,427 children, or 30.93%, were age 13 to 18 (Chart 3)
- 429 of the 3,427 children, or 12.52%, were placed in adoptive homes (Chart 1)
- 1,211 of the 3,427 children, or 35.34%, were finalized for adoption (Chart 1)

Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2021

- 2,570 families were served (Chart 2)
- 543 families, or 21.13%, were active and still waiting for an adoptive placement at the close of the calendar year (Chart 2)
- 866 of the 2,570 families, or 33.70%, accepted an adoptive placement (Chart 2)
- 785 new families were registered (Chart 2)



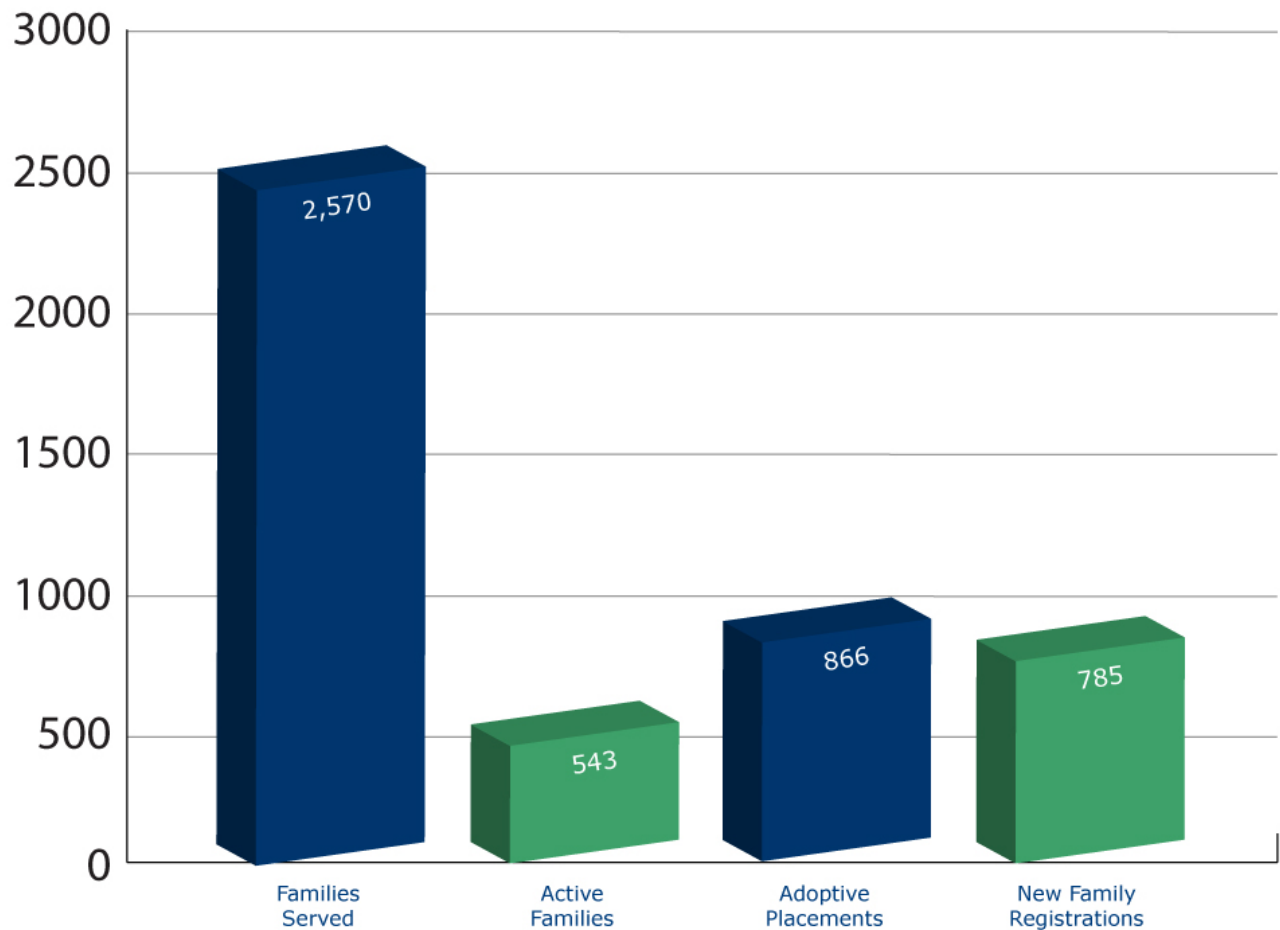
Children Served by PAE in 2021
Total Children Served - 3,427
(Chart 1)



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



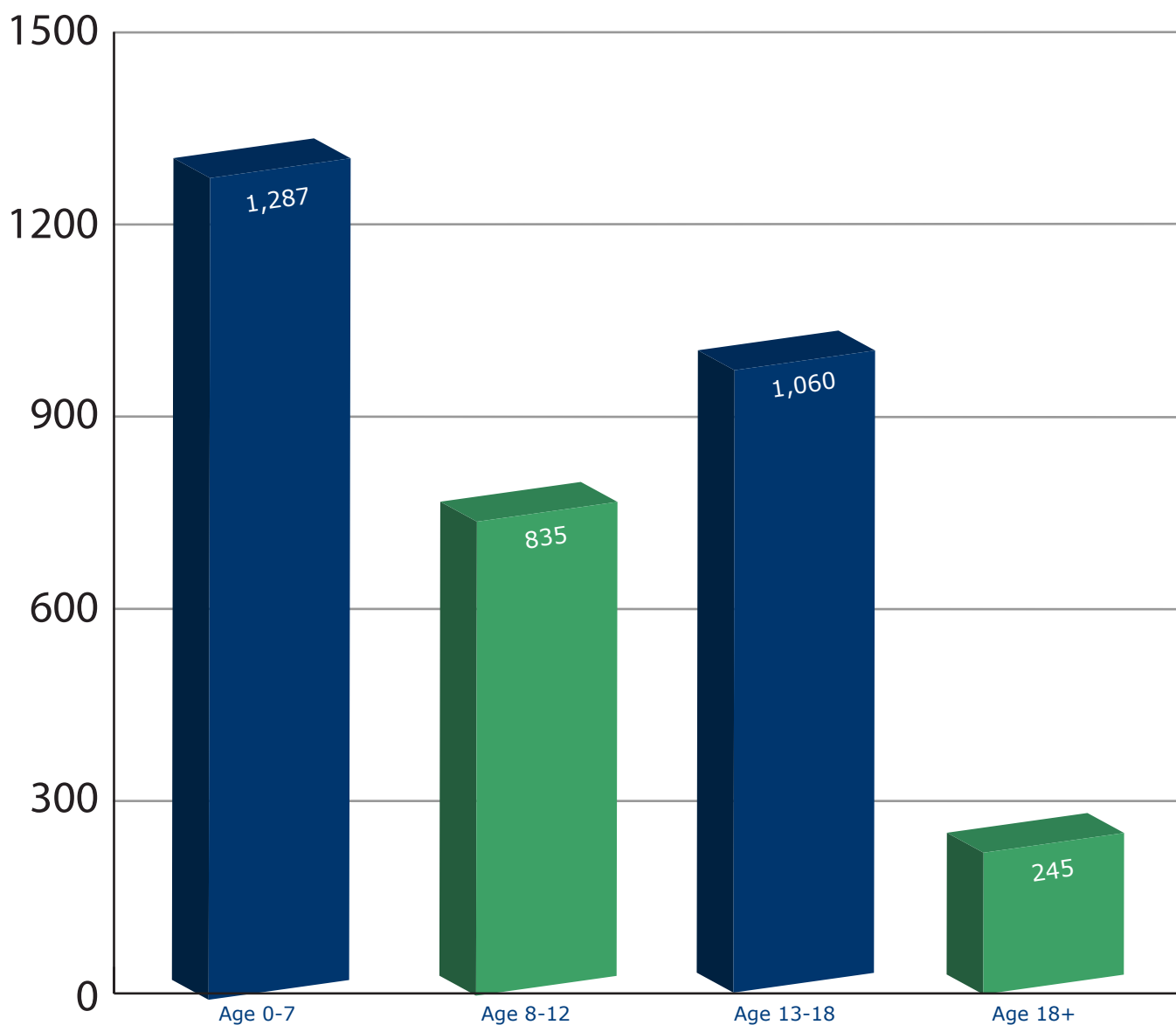
Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2021
Total Families Served – 2,570
(Chart 2)





Age of Children Served by PAE in 2021 (Chart 3)

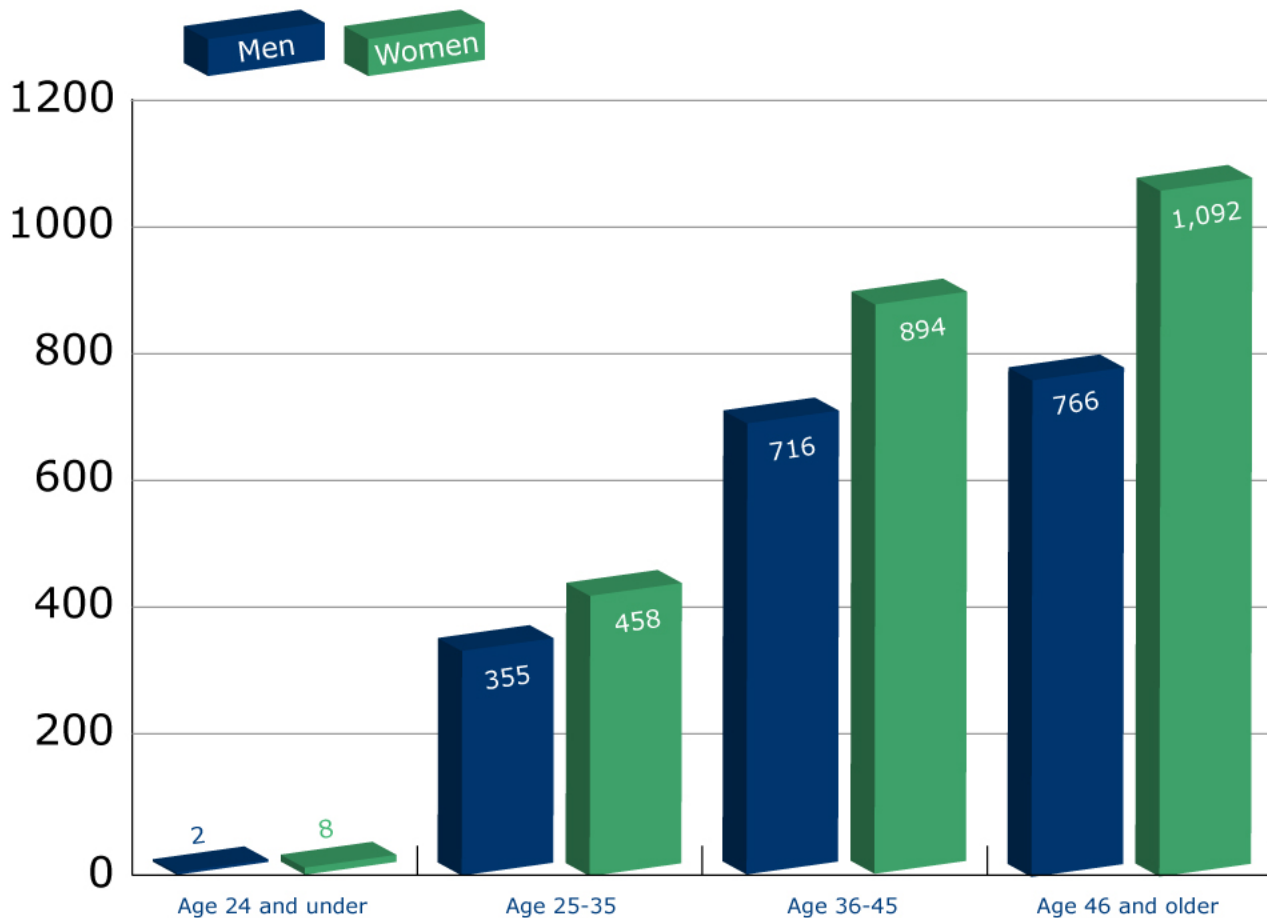
- 1,287 of the 3,427 children, or 37.55%, were age 0 to 7
- 835 of the 3,427 children, or 24.37%, were age 8 to 12
- 1,060 of the 3,427 children, or 30.93%, were age 13 to 18
- 245 of the 3,427 children, or 7.15%, were over age 18





Age and Gender of Prospective Adopters Served by PAE in 2021 (Chart 4)

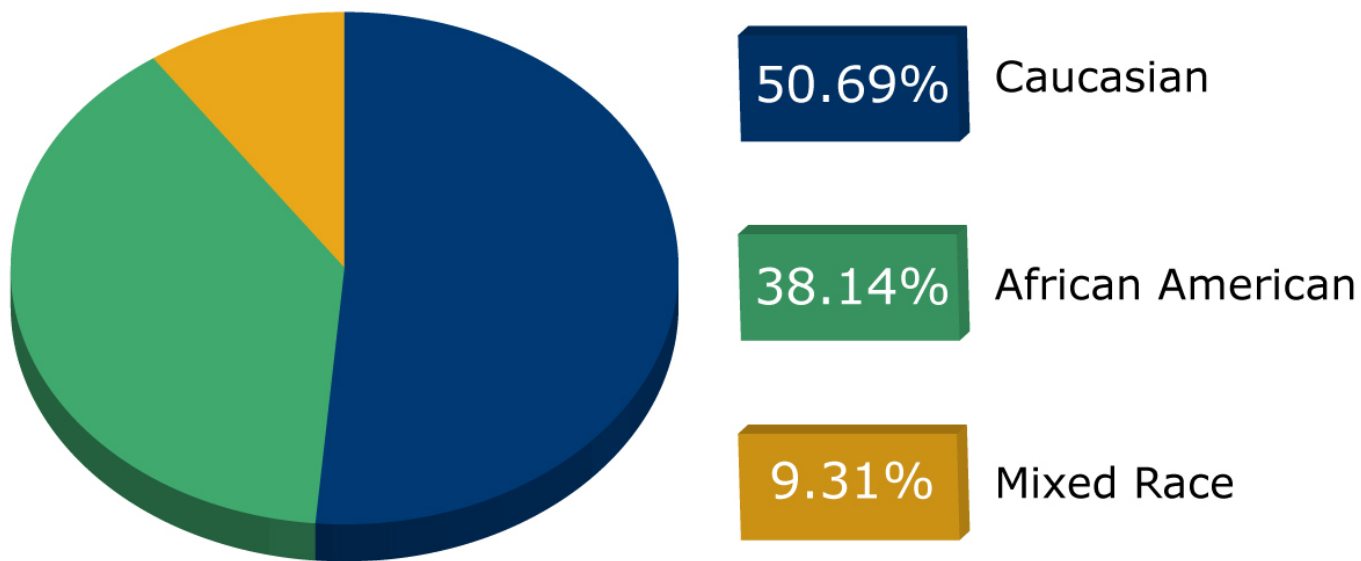
- 1,839 prospective adopters were male
 - o Two were age 24 and under, representing 0.11% of the total
 - o 355 were age 25 to 35, representing 19.30% of the total
 - o 716 were age 36 to 45, representing 38.93% of the total
 - o 766 were age 46 and older, representing 41.65% of the total
- 2,452 prospective adopters were female
 - o Eight were age 24 and under, representing 0.33% of the total
 - o 458 were age 25 to 35, representing 18.68% of the total
 - o 894 were age 36 to 45, representing 36.46% of the total
 - o 1,092 were age 46 and older, representing 44.54% of the total





Race of Children Served by PAE in 2021 (Chart 5)

- 3,427 children were served
- 1,737 children, or 50.69%, were Caucasian
- 1,307 children, or 38.14%, were African American
- 319 children, or 9.31%, were of mixed race
- Ten children, or 0.29%, were Asian
- Three children, or 0.09%, were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- One child, or 0.03%, was American Indian/Alaskan Native

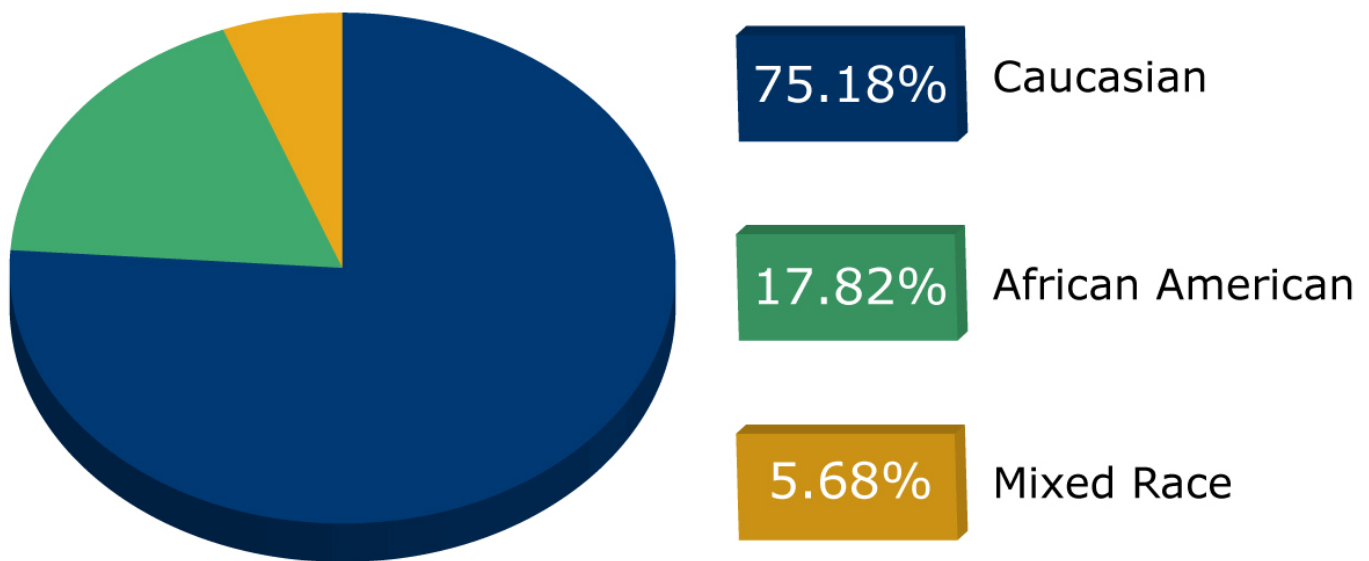


Note: The races of 50 children (1.46 percent) are unknown. Hispanic children are not included in the pie chart because this characteristic is collected as a component of ethnicity and is not a part of race. These children are categorized as Caucasian in the pie chart. Ten Asian children, three Native 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 2021 (Chart 6)

- 2,570 adoptive families were served
- 1,932 families, or 75.18%, were Caucasian
- 458 families, or 17.82%, were African American
- 146 families, or 5.68%, were of mixed race
- Five families, or 0.19%, were Asian
- Two families, or 0.08%, were American Indian/Alaskan Native
- One family, or 0.04%, was Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

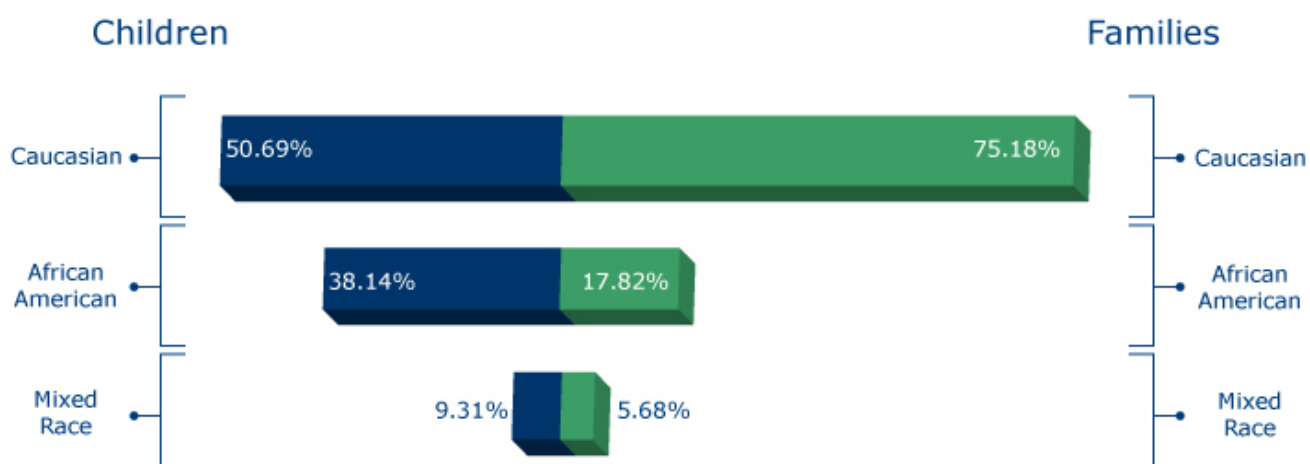


Note: Twenty-six families did not provide race. Hispanic families are not included in the pie chart because this characteristic is collected as a component of ethnicity and is not a part of race. These families are considered Caucasians. Five Asian families, one Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander 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 2021 (Chart 7)

- 1,737 children, or 50.69%, were Caucasian
 - 1,932 families, or 75.18%, were Caucasian
- 1,307 children, or 38.14%, were African American
 - 458 families, or 17.82%, were African American
- 319 children, or 9.31%, were of mixed race
 - 146 families, or 5.68%, were of mixed race
- Ten children, or 0.29%, were Asian
 - Five families, or 0.19%, were Asian
- Three children, or 0.09%, were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
 - One family, or 0.04%, was Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- One child, or 0.03%, was American Indian/Alaskan Native
 - Two families, or 0.08%, were American Indian/Alaskan Native

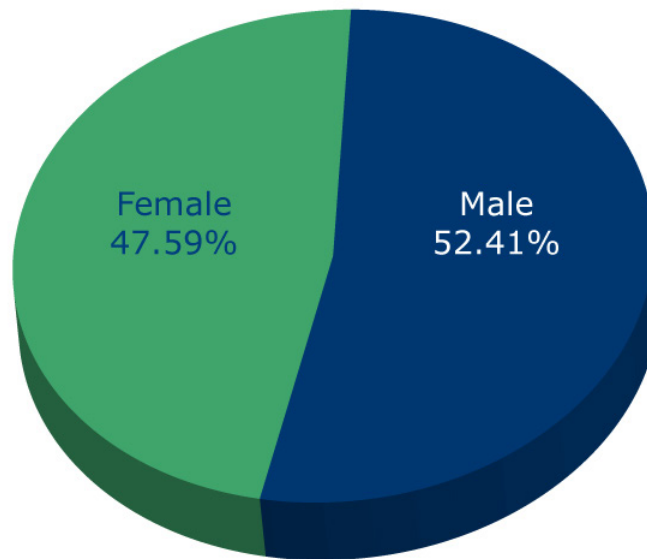


Note: The races of 50 children and 26 families are unknown. Ten Asian, one American Indian/Alaskan Native child and three Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children, as well as five Asian families, two American Indian/Alaskan Native families and one Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander family are not included in the chart above because they represent less than one percent of the children and families served.



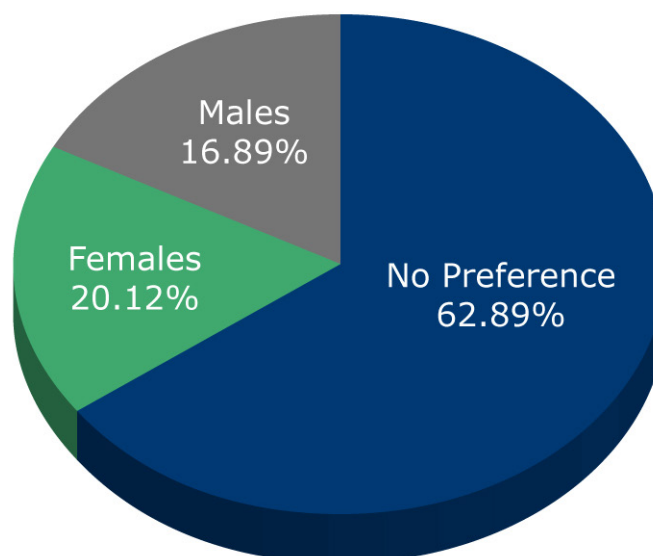
Gender of Children Served by PAE in 2021 (Chart 8)

- 1,796 children were male, representing 52.41% of the total
- 1,631 children were female, representing 47.59% of the total



Gender Preferences of Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2021 (Chart 9)

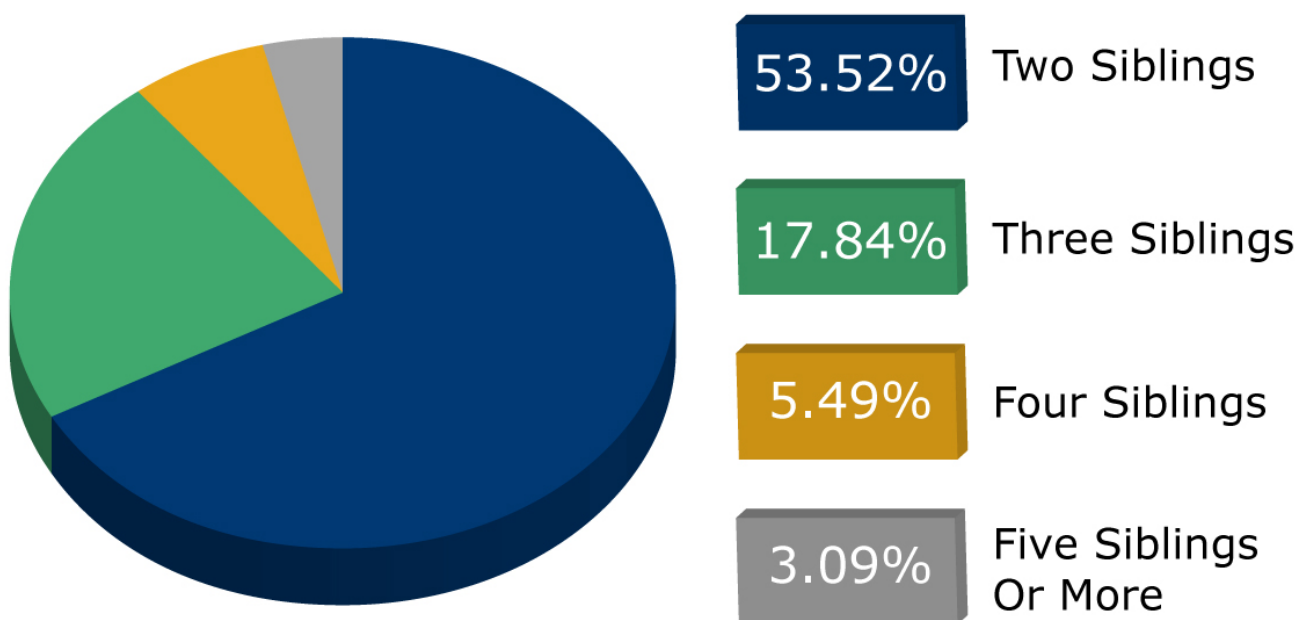
- 1,617 families, or 62.92%, did not have a gender preference
- 517 families, or 20.12%, preferred a female child
- 434 families, or 16.89%, a preferred male child





Size of Sibling Groups Served by PAE in 2021 (Chart 10)

- Of the 3,427 children served
 - o 583 or 17.01%, belonged to a sibling group:
 - 312 children, or 53.52%, belonged to a sibling group of two
 - 104 children, or 17.84%, belonged to a sibling group of three
 - 32 children, or 5.49%, belonged to a sibling group of four
 - 18 children, or 3.09%, belonged to a sibling group of five or more
 - o The 583 children belonged to a total of 233 individual sibling groups

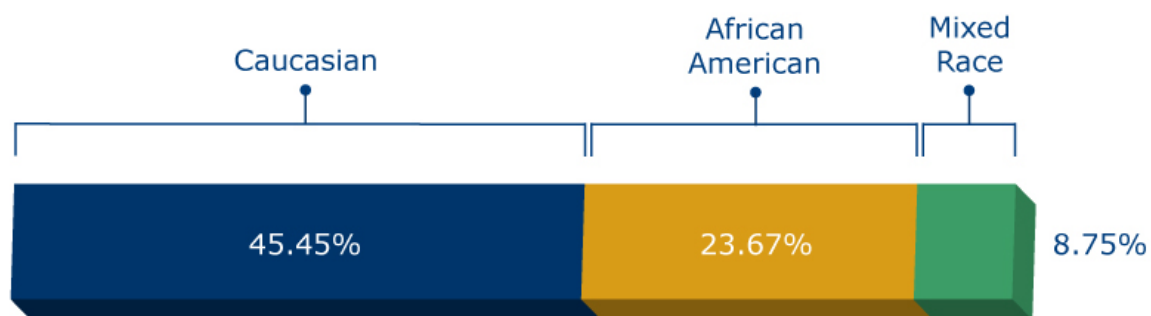


Note: All members of a sibling group do not necessarily receive PAE services.



Race of Sibling Groups Served by PAE in 2021 (Chart 11)

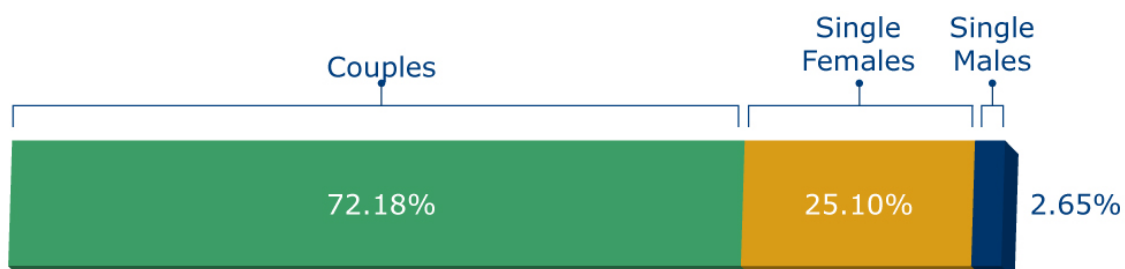
- Of the 583 children in sibling groups:
 - o 265 children, or 45.45%, were Caucasian
 - o 138 children or 23.67%, were African American
 - o 51 children or 8.75%, were mixed of race
 - o Zero children or 0.0%, were Asian



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 Caucasian in the chart. One hundred and twenty-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 2021 (Chart 12)

- Of the 2,570 adoptive families served:
 - o 1,855 families were couples, representing 72.18% of the total
 - o 645 families were single females, representing 25.10% of the total
 - o 68 families were single males, representing 2.65% 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 :

[Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Provider Directory Search Page \(state.pa.us\)](http://state.pa.us/Pennsylvania%20Department%20of%20Human%20Services%20Provider%20Directory%20Search%20Page)

(From here click "County Children and Youth Agencies" and then click the 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.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>North American Council on Adoptable Children www.nacac.org</p> <p>TRAC Services for Families 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.ccainstitute.org</p> <p>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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