

Annual Report

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Working For Kentucky's Future... Our Children



Citizen Foster Care Review Board



*Kentucky's foster children benefit
from the work of the
Citizen Foster Care Review Board*

There are more than 520,000 children in our nation's foster care system, with more than 6,000 of those children residing in Kentucky. Citizen Foster Care Review Boards play an important role in ensuring the safety, permanency and well-being of these children.

As mandated by state statute, Citizen Foster Care Review Board volunteers regularly review the case of every child during his or her commitment to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. During the past year, 142 Citizen Foster Care Review Boards conducted more than 15,000 case reviews of children in out-of-home care. The Administrative Office of the Courts, which oversees the CFCRB program, continues to support this important endeavor.

I invite you to read the 2006 Annual Report of the Citizen Foster Care Review Board to learn how children are faring in Kentucky's foster care system. I also extend my appreciation to the hundreds of CFCRB volunteers for contributing their valuable time and energy to children who deserve the opportunity to have safe and permanent homes.

*Joseph E. Lambert
Chief Justice of Kentucky*

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Kentucky continues to make strong progress in caring for its foster children

*Citizen Foster Care Review Board Executive Summary
July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006*

*Patrick Yewell, General Manager
Department of Juvenile Services, Administrative Office of the Courts*

The Citizen Foster Care Review Boards continue to provide an invaluable service to Kentucky's foster children. Today there are more than 800 volunteers serving on 142 local review boards statewide.

CFCRB volunteers review the case files that are maintained by the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services on the state's foster children. These dedicated individuals provide the presiding judge with findings and recommendations about the stability of the child's placement, the adequacy of services offered to the family and the progress being made toward achieving permanency for the child.

I am pleased to report that the Citizen Foster Care Review Board made significant progress in Fiscal Year 2006. With the implementation of the CATS electronic case management system, Kentucky became one of the first states to integrate data from the social service agency with data collected through the foster care review process. The ability to track all aspects of a foster child's case is greatly enhanced by sharing information from the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and the Citizen Foster Care Review Board.

The ongoing expansion of the Interested Party Review Program has given hundreds of children the benefit of an intensive and rigorous case review that provides judges with more detailed findings on which to base their decisions.

In FY 2006, the CFCRBs conducted 15,095 reviews of the case files on 6,333 children who were placed into the custody of or who were committed to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services due to dependency, neglect or abuse. An important measure of success is that Kentucky's foster children continue to achieve permanency more quickly. For FY 2006, the average length of stay of all children whose cases were reviewed was 23.75 months, which has decreased by 2.85 months.

In other encouraging news, the reason that children were released from care 35.95 percent of the time was through reunification with their parents or primary caregivers. Another 25.2 percent of the children achieved permanency through adoption. The children who exited care through a finalized adoption had spent an average of 35.8 months in care.

While statistics provide cold numbers, it takes the many CFCRB volunteers to put a warm face on what we do. The Administrative Office of the Courts commends the volunteers for helping to give hope and a bright future to Kentucky's foster children.

The Citizen Foster Care Review Board receives administrative support through the AOC's Department of Juvenile Services. Christopher Cecil, assistant general manager, oversees the daily operations of the program. The Administrative Office of the Courts is the operational arm of the Judicial Branch of Kentucky state government.



Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Board *2006 Legislative Committee Recommendations*

Kentucky Revised Statute 620.320(5) requires the state Citizen Foster Care Review Board to evaluate and make annual recommendations to the Supreme Court of Kentucky, the Governor of Kentucky and the Legislative Research Commission regarding the laws of the Commonwealth and the practices, policies and procedures within the Commonwealth affecting permanence for children in out-of-home placement.

1. Increase independent living services for Kentucky's foster youth including providing more consistent opportunities statewide and providing better documentation of independent living skills in Cabinet for Health and Family Services case files.
2. Require social service workers to document case files more thoroughly and consistently across the state.
3. Increase state funding to hire more social service workers.
4. Discourage the practice of accepting pleas of dependency when abuse or neglect is indicated.
5. Examine the status of the study of privatization of services for foster children.
6. Examine the use of psychotropic drugs and other medications in the treatment of foster children.
7. Provide additional funding for substance abuse treatment programs for parents whose children have been committed to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.
8. Allocate state funding for the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program so that every county may have a local program.
9. Implement policies and procedures that are designed to place sibling groups together in the least restrictive and most appropriate placement.
10. Provide funding for education in the area of child protection for all professionals who practice in the juvenile and family courts.
11. Increase the quantity and improve the quality of treatment and support services for children and families.
12. Implement the Recommendations of the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care.
13. Continue to support collaborative efforts between the Judicial Branch and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

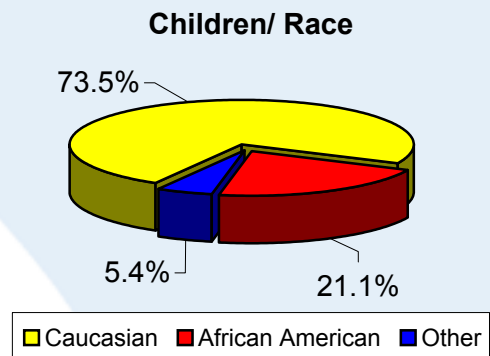
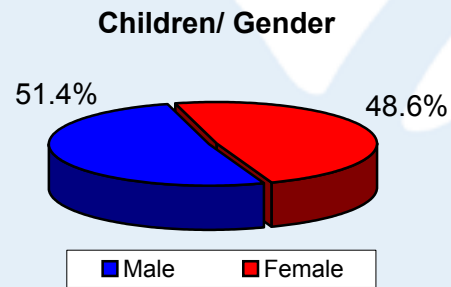
Providing Permanency and Stability for Foster Children

The focus of the Citizen Foster Care Review Board is to help Kentucky’s children find safe and permanent homes. Volunteers play a key role in ensuring that permanency for at-risk children remains the central objective of the courts and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

Local Citizen Foster Care Review Boards review the case of each child placed in the custody of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services by an order of temporary custody or commitment by the court in the county or counties the local CFCRB serves. This review occurs at least once every six months until the child is no longer in the custody of the Cabinet or until an adoption proceeding becomes final.¹

During each of these reviews, the local volunteers examine the placement status of the child; the efforts the parent has made to improve circumstances, conduct or conditions to make it in the child’s best interests to be returned home; the efforts the Cabinet has made to locate and provide services to parents; and the efforts the Cabinet has made to facilitate the return of the child to the home or to find an alternative placement if return to the parent is not feasible.² These reviews are sent to the presiding judge and placed in both the court file and in the Cabinet case file.

CFCRBs reviewed the case files of 6,333 children who were placed in the custody of or committed to the Cabinet due to dependency, neglect or abuse. The following charts describe the demographic makeup of the children whose cases were reviewed during Fiscal Year 2006.



The charts below show the ages of children whose cases were reviewed during FY 2006. Children who were in out-of-home care on June 30, 2006, may be described as “active” children while children who were released from custody at any time during the fiscal year may be described as “inactive” children.

Children Reviewed ³	Lowest Age	Highest Age
6,333	.68	22.39

By Age ³	Number of Children
0-5 Years	1,747
6-10 Years	1,337
11-15 Years	1,488
16-20 Years	1,705
21 Years and Over	56
Total	6,333
Average Age	10.94

Disclaimer on the Statistics Presented in this Report

Information received from the Children’s Automated Tracking System (CATS) electronic case management system is subject to changes, reprogramming, modifications of format and availability at the direction of the Administrative Office of the Courts and may not at any particular moment reflect the true status of court cases due to ordinary limitations, delays or errors in the system’s operation.

¹ KRS 620.270(1)

² KRS 620.270(2)

³ Age as of Dec. 19, 2006

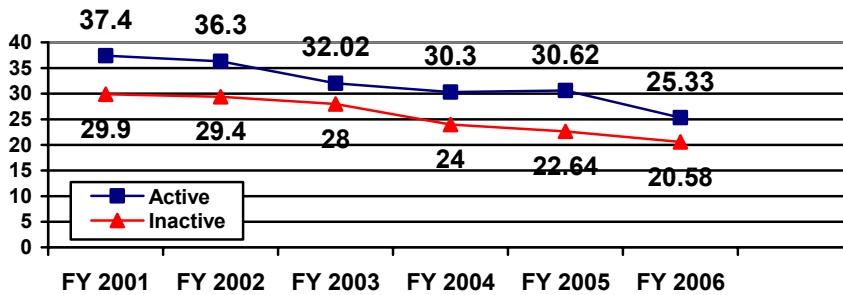
How Foster Children Fare in Kentucky

As the chart below illustrates, “active” children, those who were still in care at the end of the fiscal year, experienced an average length of stay of 25.33 months. “Inactive” children, those who were released at any time during the fiscal year, experienced an average length of stay of 20.58.

Average Length of Stay in Months ⁴

	Active	Inactive	All Children
0-5 Years	15.43	14.59	15.10
6-10 Years	18.46	17.27	18.07
11-15 Years	27.38	18.14	25.09
Over 15 Years	39.91	33.20	37.54
Overall	25.33	20.58	23.75

Average Length of Stay in Months



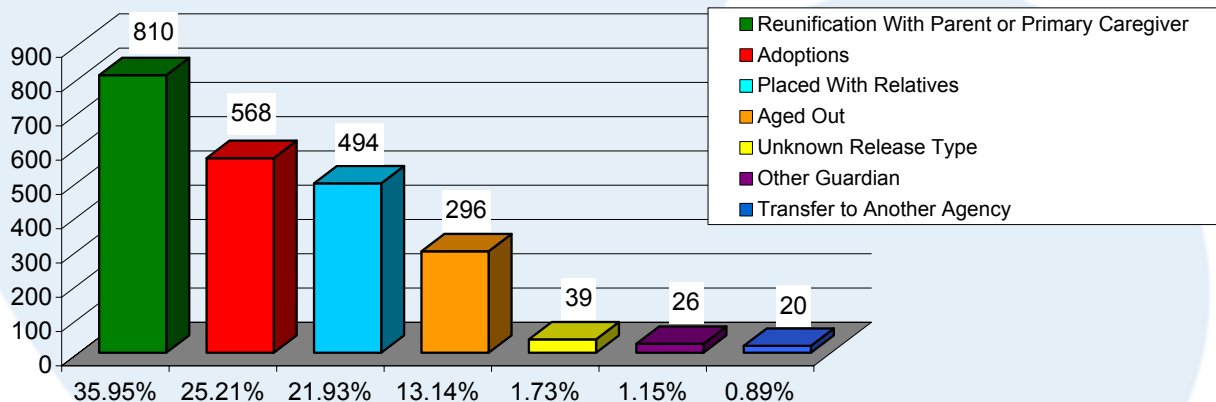
The chart above illustrates the average length of stay of children as defined by their ages. Although the average length of stay continues to decrease, older children experience longer stays in care than younger children.

How Foster Children Exit From Care

Children are released from foster care for a variety of reasons. In most cases, children are returned to the homes from which they were removed. Children are reunited with their parents/primary caregivers when the parents/primary caregivers complete the goals and objectives of their case plan and it is determined that the child will be safe if returned to the home.

The majority of the children whose cases were reviewed during FY 2006 were returned to their homes. In 35.95 percent of the cases reviewed, the children were released from care through reunification with their parents or primary caregivers. The chart below shows other reasons why children exit from care.

How Children Exit From Foster Care



⁴ Statistics pertain to all of the children whose cases were reviewed between July 1, 2005, and June 30, 2006. “Active” describes children whose cases were reviewed during the

fiscal year and who were still in care on June 30, 2006. “Inactive” describes children whose cases were reviewed during the fiscal year, but were released prior to June 30, 2006.

How Foster Children Exit From Care

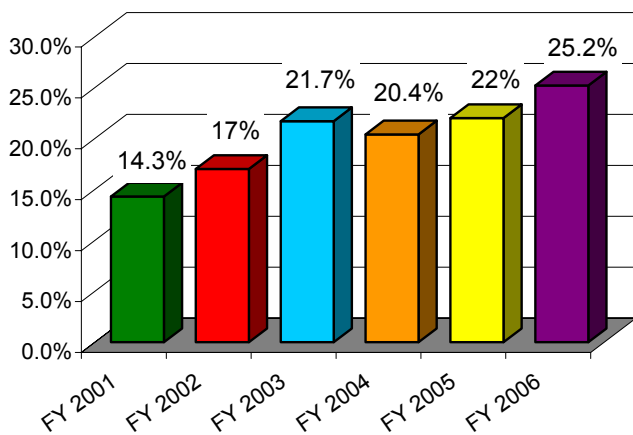
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During FY 2006, 25.2 percent of the children released from out-of-home care achieved permanency through adoption. The chart below compares the percentage of children who were released from care through adoption for the past six fiscal years.

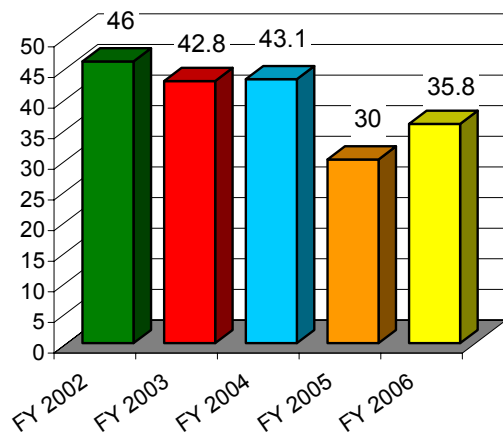
For all of the children who exited care through a finalized adoption, the child had spent, on average, 35.8 months in care. Although the percentage of

children who were released through a finalized adoption increased by 14 percent, these children had been in care 5.8 months longer than the children who were released through adoption in FY 2005. This indicates that even though more children exited care through adoption in FY 2006 than in FY 2005, those children had been in foster care for a longer period of time.⁵

Percentage of Adoptions by Fiscal Year



Average Months to Finalized Adoption by Fiscal Year

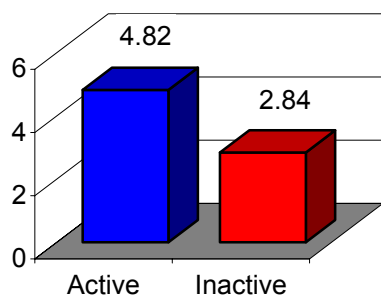


⁵ The variance in the statistical comparison between Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006 may be attributed to the implementation of CATS, the Children's Automated Tracking System, which is the electronic case management system for the Citizen Foster Care Review Boards. In FY 2005, the reasons for

release were taken from individual CFCRB case reviews. With CATS in place, the reasons for release are obtained primarily through downloads from TWIST, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services' data tracking system.

Determining Stable Placements for Foster Children

Average Placements⁶



When determining placement for a child, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services must consider the least restrictive and most appropriate placement.

The Cabinet may change the placement of a child for a number of reasons, such as safety concerns in the current placement, the need to provide more intensive, necessary services for the child or to protect the child. In FY 2006, children experienced 4.15 placements per episode in foster care.⁷

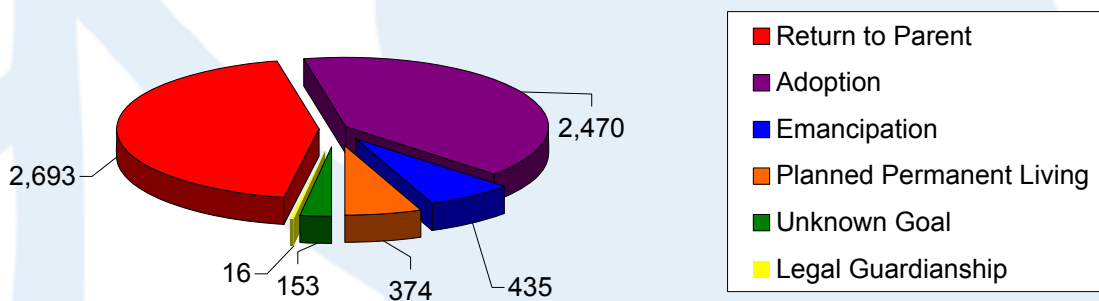
Establishing Permanency Goals

A permanency plan is established and filed with the court for each child who enters foster care. A permanency plan identifies decisions made by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services for the biological family and child.

The plan focuses on actions that need to be taken to ensure the child obtains a permanent home as quickly as possible. It also addresses why the child is in custody, what actions have been taken regarding the child and the proposed actions to be taken during the child's stay in foster care. If the child remains in the custody of the Cabinet for 12 months after the initial placement, the court holds a permanency hearing to determine the future status of the child. The court addresses whether the child should be returned to the parents, placed for adoption, placed with a permanent custodian or provided with another type of permanent living arrangement.



Permanency Goals of Children in Foster Care



⁶ Statistics pertain to all of the children whose cases were reviewed between July 1, 2005, and June 30, 2006. "Active" describes children whose cases were reviewed during the fiscal year and who were still in care on June 30, 2006. "Inactive" describes children whose cases were reviewed during the fiscal year, but were released prior to June 30, 2006.

⁷ This number indicates an increase in the placements experienced by children in care. However, the reader should note that discrepancies in the data may exist due to the

implementation of CATS, the Children's Automated Tracking System, which is the electronic case management system for the Citizen Foster Care Review Board. Prior placement figures were calculated based upon a child's initial entry into care through either the child's exit or the last day of the fiscal year, whichever was most applicable. CATS tracks children based upon "episodes" in care. For example, if a child exits and enters the foster care system multiple times during the fiscal year, CATS is able to track each individual placement while in care.

More than 800 CFCRB volunteers serve statewide

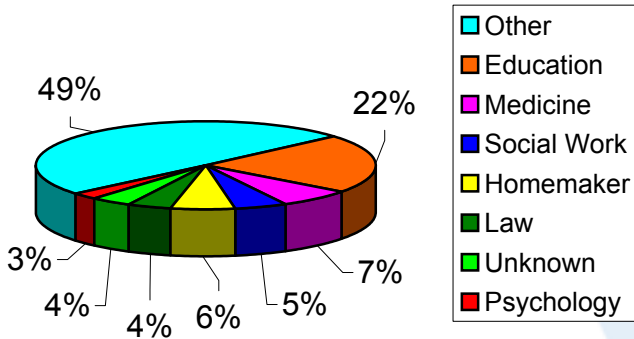
Citizen Foster Care Review Board volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds, but they all have in common a deep compassion for children. There are more than 800 volunteers who serve on 142 boards throughout the state. In 2006, volunteers conducted 15,095 reviews on 6,333 children in out-of-home care.

The majority of volunteers are female, the average age of volunteers is 51 and volunteers have served an average of 5.13 years.

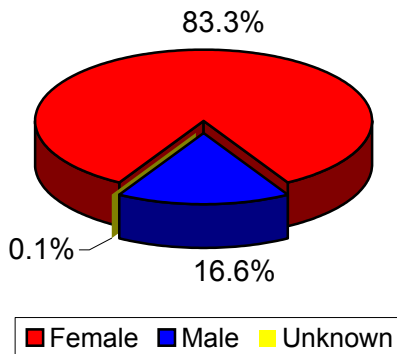
Those interested in serving as a Citizen Foster Care Review Board member must complete a six-hour initial training session and consent to a criminal record and central registry check. A recommendation is then made to the chief judge of the local District Court or Family Court for appointment. Judges appoint volunteers for three-year terms.

All volunteers receive a comprehensive handbook on the program and opportunities to earn the required six hours of annual continuing education.

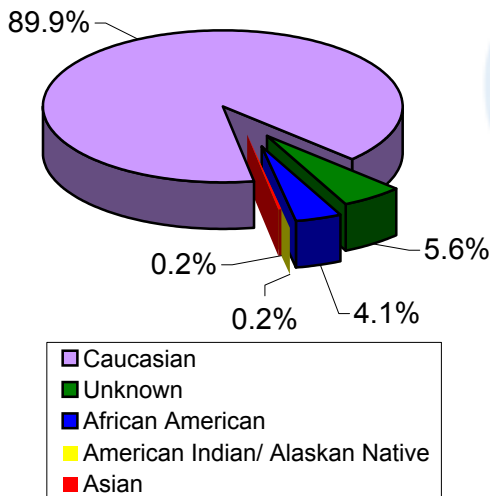
Professions of Volunteers



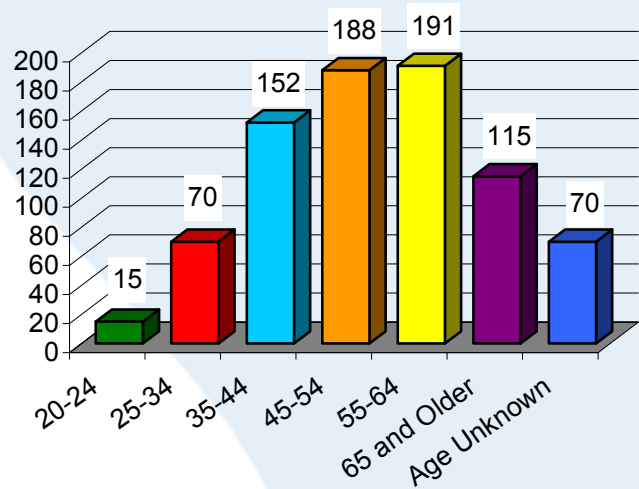
Gender of Volunteers



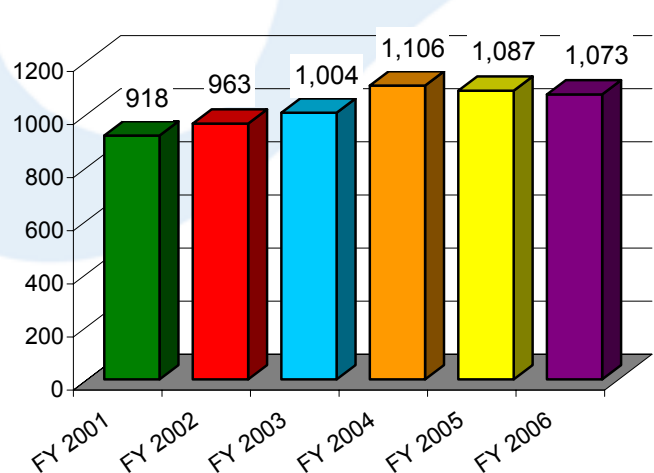
Race of Volunteers



Age Group of Volunteers



CFCRB Board Meetings Held by Fiscal Year



CFCRB Activity by Review Board for Fiscal Year 2006

	Reviews	Children Reviewed
ADAIR	18	11
ALLEN	57	27
ANDERSON	27	16
BALLARD/CARLISLE	17	7
BARREN	141	66
BATH/MENIFEE	42	30
BELL	37	19
BOONE/GALLATIN	325	89
BOURBON	124	45
BOYD	286	123
BOYLE	78	31
BRACKEN/ROBERTSON	34	17
BREATHITT	50	21
BRECKINRIDGE	68	40
BULLITT	78	41
BUTLER	54	32
CALDWELL	10	4
CALLOWAY	42	27
CAMPBELL A	121	76
CAMPBELL B	134	68
CARTER	68	29
CASEY	1	1
CHRISTIAN A	38	25
CHRISTIAN C	43	23
CLARK	230	65
CLAY	53	34
CLINTON	30	14
CRITTENDEN	30	10
DAVISS A	148	93
DAVISS B	156	83
EDMONSON	52	26
ELLIOTT	65	18
ESTILL	76	25
FAYETTE A	232	76
FAYETTE B	230	72
FAYETTE C	168	68
FAYETTE D	185	65
FAYETTE E	129	40
FAYETTE F	149	65
FAYETTE G	248	74
FAYETTE H	156	60
FAYETTE I	190	73
FAYETTE J	80	48
FLEMING	54	42
FLOYD	55	34
FRANKLIN	111	59
FULTON/HICKMAN	39	22
GARRARD	16	11
GRANT	61	20
GRAVES	119	53
GRAYSON	185	82
GREEN	14	10
GREENUP	115	32
HANCOCK	28	7
HARDIN A	244	101
HARDIN B	292	97
HARLAN	95	56
HARRISON/PENDLETON	60	20
HART	63	39
HENDERSON	78	55
HENRY	51	29
HOPKINS	153	86
JACKSON	38	17
JEFFERSON 01	391	157
JEFFERSON 02	288	136
JEFFERSON 03	330	137
JEFFERSON 04	289	132
JEFFERSON 05	232	111
JEFFERSON 06	356	149
JEFFERSON 07	196	89
JEFFERSON 08	205	94
JEFFERSON 09	152	81
JEFFERSON 10	207	80

	Reviews	Children Reviewed
JESSAMINE	130	49
JOHNSON	114	42
KENTON A	195	70
KENTON B	296	152
KENTON C	271	122
KENTON D	242	126
KENTON E	279	126
KNOTT	66	30
KNOX	113	47
LARUE	37	17
LAUREL	47	46
LAUREL 1	96	75
LAUREL B	26	18
LAWRENCE	75	29
LEE/OWSLEY	36	14
LESLIE	55	20
LETCHER	68	37
LEWIS	28	9
LINCOLN	83	59
LIVINGSTON	5	4
LOGAN	37	17
LYON	8	6
MADISON A	53	30
MADISON B	222	72
MAGOFFIN	116	50
MARION/WASHINGTON	54	24
MARSHALL	80	36
MARTIN	20	10
MASON	39	19
MCCRACKEN A	219	53
MCCRACKEN B	156	51
MCCREARY	158	95
MCLEAN	41	18
MEADE	35	16
MERCER	93	45
METCALFE	29	13
MONROE	31	13
MONTGOMERY	44	21
MORGAN	41	10
MUHLNBERG	75	32
NELSON	60	25
NICHOLAS	6	5
OHIO	43	24
OLDHAM	43	14
OWEN/CARROLL	59	20
PERRY	282	135
PIKE	197	70
POWELL	119	26
PULASKI	107	70
PULASKI A	31	29
PULASKI B	14	14
ROCKCASTLE	65	41
ROWAN	54	25
RUSSELL	25	18
SCOTT	145	66
SHELBY	177	90
SIMPSON	46	27
SPENCER	18	8
TAYLOR	48	25
TODD	17	6
TRIGG	29	10
TRIMBLE	47	15
UNION	9	6
WARREN A	167	105
WARREN B	188	104
WAYNE	30	20
WEBSTER	27	10
WHITLEY	108	85
WHITLEY A - CORBIN	15	15
WHITLEY B - WILLIAMSBURG	30	30
WOLFE	14	8
WOODFORD	45	18
STATEWIDE	15,095	6,333

Regional trainings offer continuing ed for volunteers

Citizen Foster Care Review Board volunteers were able to obtain their required six hours of annual continuing education at nine regional training sessions offered in the fall of 2005.

The CFCRB Training and Development Committee developed a practical, informative agenda and the Division of Dependent Children's Services of the Administrative Office of the Courts conducted the programs.

The sessions focused on the policies and processes used by the CFCRB and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, how to handle permanency planning, and what services are available for children and families in regions across the state.

The Recognition Committee also took advantage of the training programs to recognize and present service awards to CFCRB volunteers. The volunteers especially appreciated local judges

taking time to present the awards.

The regional trainings were located throughout the state to make them convenient for the volunteers. Overall comments from the 153 volunteers who attended the trainings were very positive. They found the sessions to be informative, pertinent and well-organized.



Interested Party Review Program expands statewide

Interested Party Review is an interactive interview process that involves Citizen Foster Care Review Board volunteers, parents, care providers, service providers, Cabinet for Health and Family Services personnel and attorneys.

The IPR focuses on the case plans for parents and their child and the progress being made to secure permanency for the child. After the review takes place, the field coordinator compiles the statements made by the parties into a comprehensive report for the judge.



The Interested Party Review process was applied to the reviews of 585 children from November 2004 through June 2006.

To illustrate how the project has grown, 18 IPR board meetings were conducted from November 2004 through June 2005, while 76 board meetings were held from July 2005 through June 2006.

Interested Party Review board meetings consist of day-long meetings that include reviews of up to five different cases of children in the Cabinet's custody due to abuse, neglect or dependency.

The IPR training curriculum was enhanced in FY 2006. CFCRB volunteers who participate in the Interested Party Review process now benefit from improved sections on cultural diversity, nonverbal communication and how to ask questions appropriately.

The debriefing form the volunteers review after each IPR board meeting was also modified to better meet the needs of the volunteers and improve the overall IPR process.

CATS system provides state-of-the-art case management program

The Administrative Office of the Courts completed full implementation of the new Children's Automated Tracking System in October 2005. CATS serves as a source of case information for the AOC, judges, the Citizen Foster Care Review Boards and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

It also fulfills the statutory reporting requirements that specify which data is to be reported to the chief justice, governor and legislature by the Administrative Office of the Courts on behalf of the review boards.

CATS data helps Kentucky determine what areas need to be improved in abuse, neglect and dependency proceedings, including the timely filing of termination of parental rights petitions, permanency goal changes and placement stability.

The system ensures that the case of every child in state custody is reviewed by a Citizen Foster Care Review Board in a timely manner.

CATS also improves the ability to notify review boards about the entry of children into the foster system through weekly downloads from TWIST, the information system operated by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. CATS has other major features, which include:

- Houses all reviews conducted by CFCRB volunteers. CFCRB review forms have been automated so that information that does not change from review to review is preprinted.
- Tracks key court dates for children in foster care, including adjudications, dispositions and permanency reviews.
- Tracks names and addresses of parties relevant to cases, such as guardians ad litem, social workers, supervisors and judges.
- Tracks training by hours and dates for CFCRB volunteers and individuals who have received training sponsored by the Court Improvement Program.
- Identifies those who have not received training and those in need of continuing education.
- Provides automatic notifications to parties of cases that will receive an enhanced review through the Interested Party Review process.



Court Improvement Program supports the CFCRBs

The Kentucky Court Improvement Program continues to support the Citizen Foster Care Review Boards through enhanced education, a new electronic case management system and an expanded Interested Party Review Program.

In addition to supporting the CFCRB volunteers, the Court Improvement Program has developed other initiatives to promote the safety, well-being and permanency for children in foster care.

- Educating court and Cabinet for Health and Family Services personnel
- Developing an enhanced electronic case management system
- Collaborating with the Cabinet for Health and Family Services
- Enhancing Citizen Foster Care Review Board processes
- Expediting appeals in termination of parental rights cases
- Developing an Integrated Juvenile Treatment/Drug Court

CFCRB Field Coordinators

Dolores Smith

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Area 1

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Work 866-712-8780
or 270-575-7167
ronmcgregor@kycourts.net

Counties: Ballard, Caldwell, Calloway, Carlisle, Christian, Crittenden, Daviess, Fulton, Graves, Henderson, Hickman, Hopkins, Livingston, Lyon, Marshall, McCracken, McLean, Muhlenberg, Todd, Trigg, Union, Webster

Area 2

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Bowling Green, Ky. 42101
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or 270-746-7168
Fax: 270-746-7170
julijaboasic@kycourts.net

Counties: Allen, Barren, Breckinridge, Butler, Cumberland, Edmonson, Grayson, Green, Hancock, Hardin, Hart, LaRue, Logan, Meade, Metcalfe, Monroe, Ohio, Simpson, Taylor, Warren

Area 3

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100 Justice Drive, Room 328
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melodierobinson@kycourts.net

Counties: Bath, Boyd, Breathitt, Carter, Elliott, Floyd, Greenup, Johnson, Knott, Lawrence, Lee, Letcher, Lewis, Magoffin, Martin, Menifee, Morgan,

Owsley, Perry, Pike, Powell, Rowan, Wolfe

Area 4

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Area 5

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or 502-595-3498
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Counties: Jefferson, Shelby, Spencer

Area 6

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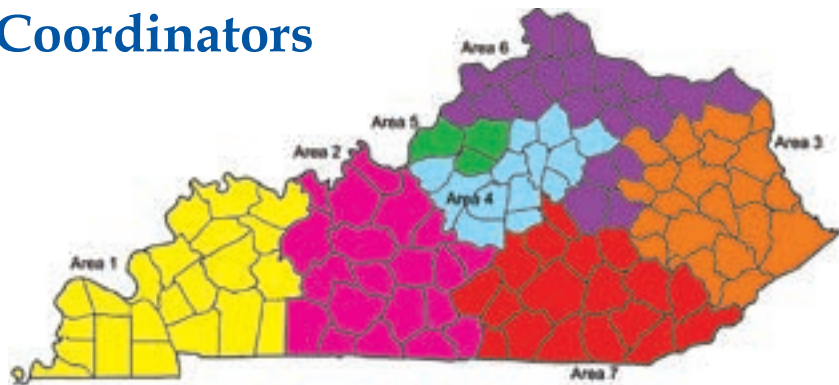
Counties: Bracken, Boone, Campbell, Carroll, Clark, Estill, Fleming, Gallatin, Grant, Harrison, Henry, Kenton, Madison, Mason, Montgomery, Nicholas, Oldham, Owen, Pendleton, Powell, Robertson, Scott, Trimble

Area 7

Deb Yates

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Counties: Adair, Bell, Casey, Clay, Clinton, Garrard, Harlan, Jackson, Knox, Laurel, Leslie, Lincoln, McCreary, Pulaski, Rockcastle, Russell, Wayne, Whitley



Interested Party Review Field Coordinators

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Bruce Jones

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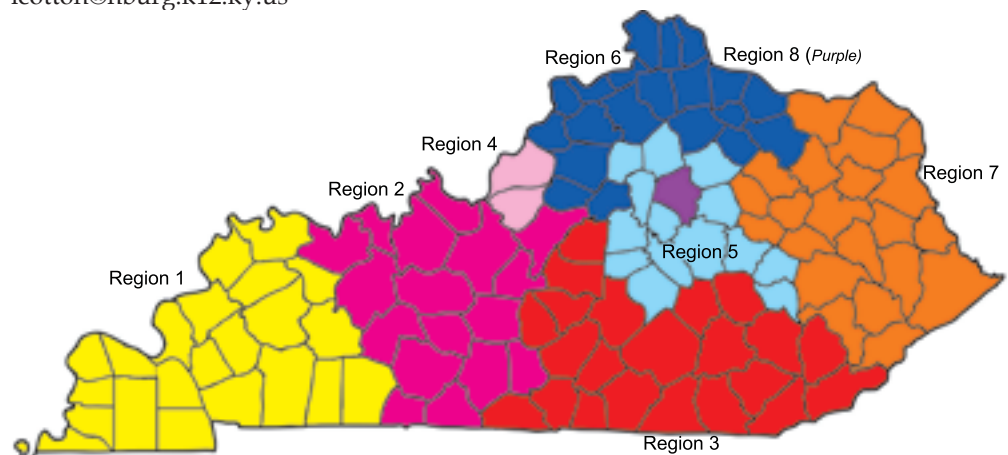
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