LOUISIANA’S CHILDREN 2017

Louisiana’s Children at a Glance

State Population 4,670,724
Population, Children Under 18 1,116,185
State Poverty Rate 19.6%

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2015, Louisiana had 46,002 total referrals for child abuse and neglect. Of those, 25,364 reports were referred for investigation.

- In 2015, there were 12,631 victims of abuse or neglect in Louisiana, a rate of 11.3 per 1,000 children, an increase 4.8% from 2014. Of these children, 85.4% were neglected, 15.5% were physically abused, and 5.4% were sexually abused.

- The number of child victims has increased 32.3% in comparison to the number of victims in 2011.

- In 2015, there were 39 child deaths resulting from abuse or neglect reported in Louisiana

- 4,545 children in Louisiana lived apart from their families in out-of-home care in 2015, compared with 4,531 children in 2011. Of the children living apart from their families in 2014, there were 2,011 aged 5 or younger, and 409 were 16 or older.

- The number of children living apart from their families in out-of-home care has increased 0.3% in comparison to the number of children in out-of-home care in 2011.

- In 2015, of children in out-of-home care in Louisiana, 51% were white, 42% were black, 2% were Hispanic, <.5% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, <.5% were Asian or Pacific Islander and 5% were of more than one race or ethnicity/undetermined race or ethnicity.

ADOPTION, KINSHIP CARE, AND PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 3,613 children exiting out-of-home care in 2014 in Louisiana, 54% were reunited with their parents or primary caretakers.

- 662 children were legally adopted through a public child welfare agency in Louisiana in 2015, an increase of 6.4% from 622 in 2014.

- Of the 4,545 children in out-of-home care in 2015, there were 1,220 or 26.8% waiting to be adopted.
In 2015, approximately 55,046 grandparents in Louisiana had the primary responsibility of caring for their grandchildren.\textsuperscript{18}

1,507 of the children in out-of-home care in 2014 were living with relatives while in care.\textsuperscript{19}

**CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT**

The monthly average number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Louisiana increased from 11,859 in 2015 to 13,359 in 2016, a 11.2% change. There was a 5,657 monthly average of families received TANF in 2016, an increase of 6.9% from 2015.\textsuperscript{20}

In Louisiana in 2015, 549,000 children lived below 200% of poverty.\textsuperscript{21}

$213,462,335 was spent in 2015 on TANF assistance in Louisiana, including 8.2% on basic assistance, 32.1% on child care, 0.4% on transportation, and 4.8% on nonassistance.\textsuperscript{22}

$74,324,501 was spent in 2015 on WIC (the Special Supplement Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) in Louisiana, serving 128,935 participants.\textsuperscript{23}

In 2014, Louisiana distributed $394,004,210 in child support funds, an increase of 1.4% from 2013.\textsuperscript{24}

359,000 children in Louisiana lived in households with a high housing burden in 2014, where more than 30% of monthly income is spent on housing costs.\textsuperscript{25}

In December of 2016, the unemployment rate in Louisiana was 6.1.\textsuperscript{26}

17.6% of households in Louisiana were food insecure on average from 2012 to 2014, meaning that the family experienced difficulty providing enough food due to lack of resources at some point during the year.\textsuperscript{27}

**CHILD CARE AND HEAD START**

In 2015, Louisiana had a monthly average of 18,400 children served by subsidized child care. An average of 19,100 children received subsidized child care per month in 2014 and 24,000 were recipients in 2013.\textsuperscript{28}

In 2016, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Louisiana, a family of three could make no more than $31,860 at application, which is equivalent to 53% of the state’s median income.\textsuperscript{29}

As of early 2016, Louisiana had no children on its waiting list for child care assistance.\textsuperscript{30}

In 2015, Head Start served 21,655 children in Louisiana, a decrease of 0.5% from 2014.\textsuperscript{31}

Through federal grants from the Home Visiting Program, in fiscal year 2015, home visitors in Louisiana made 20,950 home visits to 3,431 parents and children in 1,965 families, as well as enrolled 1,857 new parents and children to the program.
HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- 685,163 children in Louisiana were enrolled in Medicaid in 2015, an increase of 3.2% from 2014.32

- In 2015, Louisiana had 135,614 children enrolled in its State Children’s Health Insurance Program, a decrease of 0.5% from 2014, when 136,263 children were enrolled.33

- In 2015, Louisiana had 39,923 uninsured children.34

- 6,839 babies were born weighing less than 2,500 grams in Louisiana in 2015.35

- 498 infants under age 1 died in Louisiana in 2015.36

- In 2015, the birth rate for teens ages 15 to 17 in Louisiana was 14.9 births per 1,000 girls. The rate was 65.1 for teens ages 18 to 19. This reflects a total rate of 34 births for girls ages 15 to 19.37

- Cumulative through 2015, there were 24,323 adults and adolescents and 145 children younger than 13 reported as having HIV/AIDS in Louisiana.38

- In 2015, an estimated 3,000 children ages 12 to 17 were alcohol dependent in the past year and 139,000 adults age 18 and older were dependent on alcohol or used heroin in the past year in Louisiana.39

- In 2014, approximately 8,000 children ages 12 to 17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.40

- In 2014, approximately 12,000 children ages 12 to 17 needed but had not received treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.41

- In 2015, health care costs related to opioid abuse in Louisiana reached $269,901,908.

VULNERABLE YOUTH

- 166 children in Louisiana aged out of out-of-home care—exited foster care to emancipation—in 2015.42

- 74% of high school students in Louisiana graduated on time at the end of the 2012-13 year.43

- 28,000 teens ages 16 to 19 in Louisiana were not enrolled in school and not working in 2015.44

- 89,000 young adults ages 18 to 24 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school in 2015.45

- 31.4% of young adults in Louisiana ages 25 to 34 had an associate’s degree or higher from 2011 to 2013.46

- In 2015, there were 10 reports of children in Louisiana aged 10 to 14 committing suicide, and 34 reports of suicide among children aged 15 to 19.47
JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

- 92 children under age 19 were killed by a firearm in Louisiana in 2015, compared to 94 in 2014.48
- 10,775 children younger than 18 were arrested in Louisiana in 2015. Violent crimes were the reason for 558 of the arrests in 2015.49
- 774 children lived in juvenile correction facilities in Louisiana in 2013.50

CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE51

- The federal Child and Family Service Reviews have clearly demonstrated that the more time a caseworker spends with a child and family, the better the outcomes for those children and families.52
- According to a 2003 GAO report, the average caseload for child welfare/foster care caseworkers is 24–31 children; these high caseloads contribute to high worker turnover and insufficient services being provided to children and families. CWLA recommends that foster care caseworkers have caseloads of 12–15 children.53
- Average turnover rates for child welfare agencies range from 20% to 40%.54 Turnover rates at around 10% are considered to be optimal in any agency.55
- Caseworker turnover has negative outcomes for children in the child welfare system, including placement disruptions and increased time in out-of-home care.56
- According to the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being II baseline report, 75% of caseworkers earned a salary between $30,000 and $49,999.57
- The majority of caseworkers hold a bachelor’s degree (52.3%) or a bachelor of social work degree (21.9%). Only 25% of caseworkers hold a master’s degree.58
- A workload model in Colorado found that approximately 574 additional caseworkers were needed in their state to adequately provide child welfare services, due to estimated time requirements for meaningful services. This number represents a 49% increase that is needed on top of hours already spent on case related tasks.59

SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

- In 2014, Louisiana’s sum of expenditures for services totaled $19,616,266. The most utilized service in Louisiana was Foster Care Services for Children totaling $11,763,413.60

FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR LOUISIANA’S CHILDREN

- In 2014, Louisiana spent $188,781,870 for child welfare services. Child welfare services are all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families. Of this amount, $138,401,577 was from federal funds and $50,380,293 was from state and local funds.61
• In 2014, of the $138,401,577 in federal funds received for child welfare, 42.2% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 8.1% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 2.7% was from Medicaid, 14.2% came from Social Services Block Grant, 30.4% was from TANF, and 2.4% came from other federal sources.62

• Louisiana received $39,437,110 in federal funds for IV-E foster care expenditures in 2014, including $9,077,345 for maintenance payments and $30,359,765 for administration, the statewide automated child welfare information system, and training.63

1 “At A Glance” statistics are from 2014.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid
7 Ibid.
Note: The percentage difference is a CWLA calculation. Overlap in the percentages of types of abuse is possible as a child may have experienced more than one type of abuse.

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