



CABINET FOR HEALTH
AND FAMILY SERVICES

Interim Joint Committee on Families and Children
Foster Care and Adoption in Kentucky

Commissioner Lesa Dennis, DCBS

Director Melanie Taylor, DCBS Division of Protection & Permanency

June 19, 2024

The DCBS Child Welfare Mission

Protect children from abuse and neglect through collaborating with community partners.

- Community partners include:
 - Biological families
 - Foster/adoptive families
 - Court system
 - Other professionals, such as physicians, law enforcement, teachers, and more.

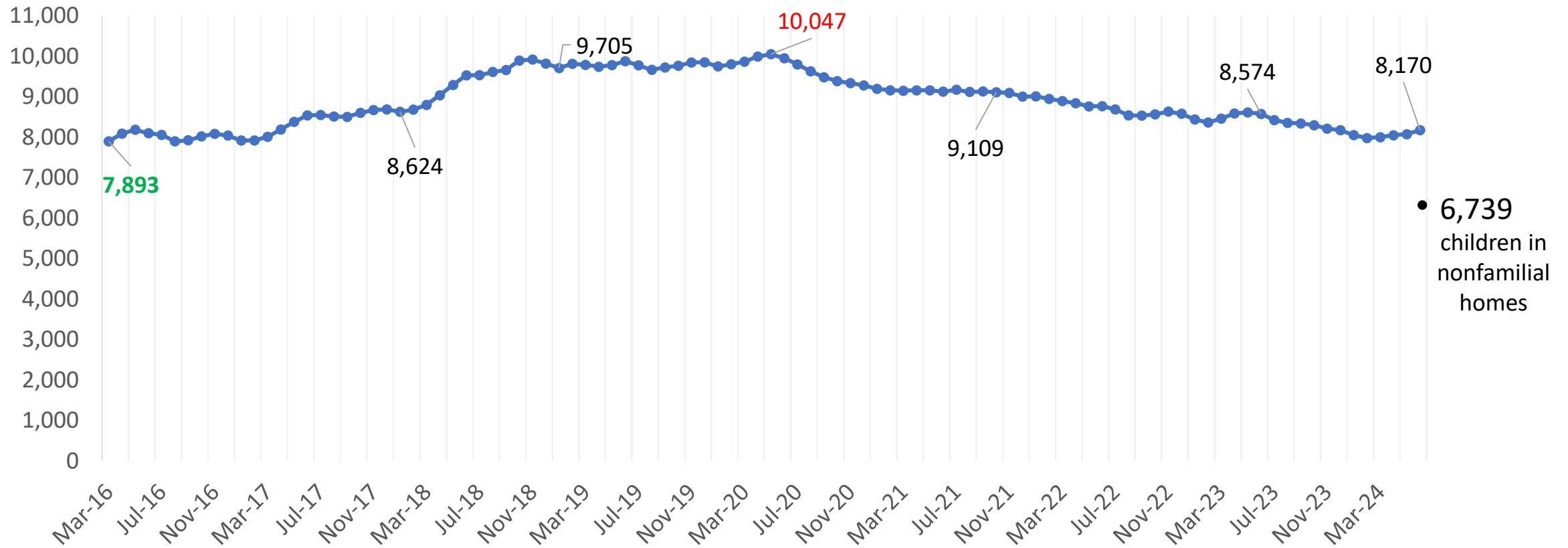
- Foster care is meant to be short-term and is for children whose permanency goal is to be reunited with their birth families.



The DCBS Child Welfare Mission (continued)

- DCBS prioritizes reunifying children with their biological families once these families are deemed appropriate, safe, and secure.
- 75% of children are returned to their birth parents or are placed with relatives/fictive kin.
- A smaller percentage experience longer stays.
- Of the approximately 25% of children who do not return to their biological families, more than 80% are adopted by their foster parents. There are many foster homes that want young children and not enough homes for older youth.
- DCBS is not an adoption agency. We promote foster care with the goal of reunification. If reunification does not occur, then foster parent adoption is considered.

Out-of-Home Care, Children Removed From Their Families



Children Removed From Their Families

Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (OOHC): **8,170**

Number of Public and Private Foster Homes: **4,555**

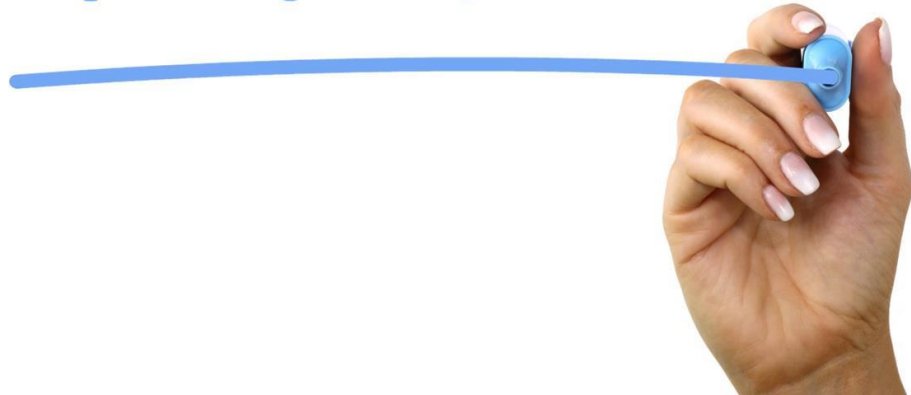
Age of Children in Care	# of Children	% of Need Met
Birth to 5 Years	2,484	155%
6 to 11 Years	1,911	159%
12 to 21 Years	3,775	89%

Children in OOHC are also placed with caregivers or in residential facilities, hospitals, and independent living programs.

There are not enough foster families for older youth.

(Date from Diligent Recruitment report, dated 6/10/2024)

APPROVAL PROCESS



Expectations and
Approval Process for
Foster/Adoptive
Parents

KY FACES

- An interested individual can submit an inquiry through KY FACES and will receive an automated email with information about the program and foster/adoptive process.
- After an inquiry has been submitted through KY FACES or by speaking with a worker, an individual can create a KY FACES account.
- This account will allow an applicant to register for classes, submit an application, and complete pre-approval paperwork in their online account.
- A progress chart will update as requirements are completed and approved.

TEAM KENTUCKY
CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

KY FACES
Kentucky Foster Adoptive Caregiver Exchange System

Home Foster Care/Adoption Kinship Contact Us My Account KY COVID-19

Find a Foster C

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in learning more about foster care and adoption with the Commonwealth of Kentucky. We applaud you for your willingness to want to make a difference in the lives of children.

It is amazing what a life-changing moment it is for you and a child when you choose to open your heart to a young person in need of a temporary home! Most of the children simply need a place to reside temporarily before they are returned to their biological families. For those children who cannot return home, adoption provides them with a permanent family to call their own. Foster and adoptive parents are a valuable resource for children, their biological families, and the entire community.

In addition to foster care and adoption, the state of Kentucky values relative and fictive kin caregivers and their dedication to children. Familial and fictive relationships and attachments are paramount for a child's wellbeing. Relatives and fictive kin caregivers undertake the responsibility of caring for their loved ones and are a valuable resource to the Commonwealth. These caregivers also need resources and support to ensure their success.

Indicators

Foster Care/Adoption Kinship Navigator Get Started Success Stories

Training Requirements

(Nonfamilial Foster Homes)

- Completion of a 6-session course titled National Training and Development Curriculum.
- In addition to the 6 sessions, applicants will also need to complete 5 web-based trainings:
 - Medication Administration
 - Pediatric Abusive Head Trauma
 - Non-Certified First Aid Skills
 - Medical Passport
 - Reasonable and Prudent Parenting

Approval Process

(Nonfamilial Foster Homes)

- Background checks
 - KY State Police
 - Child Abuse or Neglect Registry check (CA/N Check)
 - FBI fingerprint check
 - Sex Offender Registry check
- Participate in 3 or more home visits.
 - Includes a home environment check
- Complete application, questionnaires, references, and other home study evaluation requirements.
- Health information assessment for all applicants and household members (adults and dependent children)
- Financial statement
- Verification of marriage, divorce, or household death

Foster Parent Survey Results

Annual Satisfaction Surveys, Exit Surveys, Withdraw Surveys

- Feedback from survey
 - Quicker processes (approval and permanency)
 - Improved communication
 - Varied training availability and platform
 - Satisfaction with the online application process
 - Quicker process for relatives/fictive kin
 - More availability of services
 - Experience with staff and training were mostly positive. Feedback was provided on additional training to make available.
 - 83% would recommend their agency's foster/adoption program to others.

Adoption Statistics

- 2,622 children have a permanency goal of adoption
- 1,510 are legally available for adoption (parental rights have been terminated - TPR)
 - 858 are on track to be adopted by their foster parents
 - 652 children are legally available for adoption with no identified adoptive home
- Kentucky Adoption Profile Exchange:
<https://www.adoptuskids.org/states/ky/browse.aspx>

Adoption Process

- After TPR, the cabinet completes a presentation summary packet within 10 working days
- KRS 620.180 requires a copy of the presentation summary be filed with the Court within 30 working days
- The purpose of the presentation summary packet is to provide adoptive parents with information about the child prior to their entry into OOHC, information about the biological family, placement history, and current needs
- If applicable, foster family signs Intent to Adopt

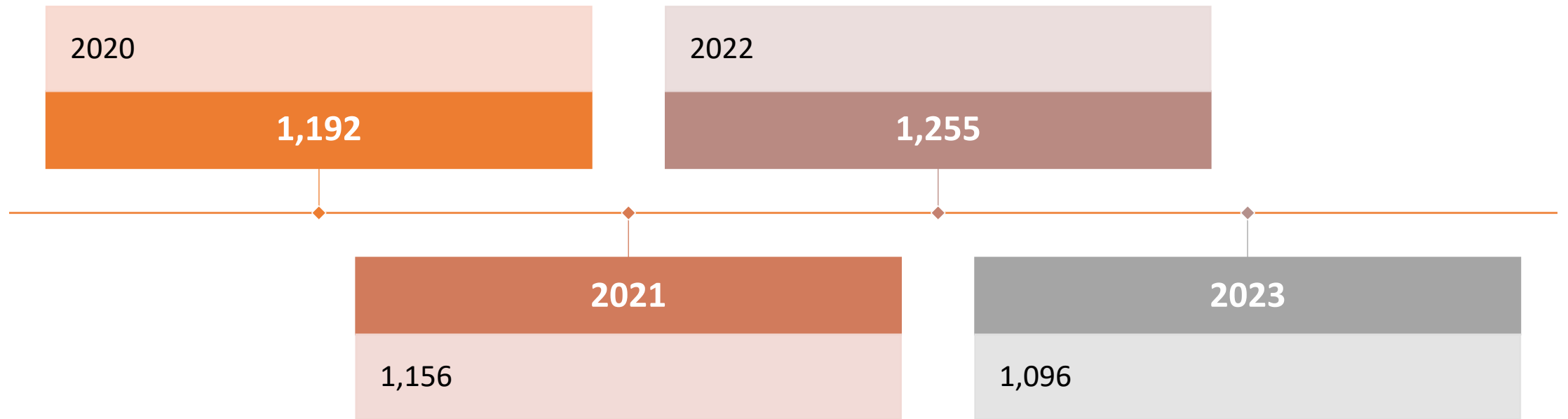
Adoption Process (continued)

- Subsidy is agreed upon
- Adoption petition is filed by the adoptive family's attorney.
- DCBS Recruitment and Certification (R&C) staff complete a court report and a consent to adoption. KRS 199.510 requires the cabinet to file the court report no later than 90 days
- Court appoints a Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) who is responsible for completing a court report with the 90-day timeframe as well
- An adoption hearing is held and the Judgement must be entered into the record
- The timeframe for finalization is dependent upon the attorneys involved and the availability of court dates

Adoption Subsidy

- Pursuant to KRS 199.555(1), a child will receive an adoption subsidy if he or she:
 - Has a physical or mental disability
 - Has an emotional or behavioral disorder
 - Has a recognized risk of physical, mental or emotional disorder
 - Is a member of a sibling group in which the siblings are placed together
 - Has had a previous adoption disruption or multiple placements
 - Is a member of a racial or ethnic minority and is 2 years old or older
 - Is age 7 or older
- Subsidy consists of coverage of non-recurring fees, monthly maintenance payments, and extraordinary medical coverage
- Other benefits include Medicaid, adoption tax credit, tuition waiver, and educational training voucher

Finalized Adoptions (Calendar Year)



Adoption Disruption Supports

- Adoption Services Branch also focuses on Post Adoption Placement Stabilization Supports (PAPSS) – supports for families at risk of adoption disruption
- Between 2021 and 2023, 33 – 46 youth received these supports each year (7 so far in 2024)
- Since the launch of Aetna SKY, DCBS has established a communication loop with Aetna and cases are being identified more readily. DCBS is implementing measures to monitor and track post adoption needs and adoption disruptions

Adoption Barriers

- Increased number of TPR appeals, process is lengthy
- Difficulty and delay in courts changing a permanency goal and obtaining court dates
- Delays in completion of Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) reports
- DCBS and private agency turnover, which has been improving

Exciting Changes for Caregivers

Relative and Fictive Kin Foster Home Standards

For the first time, the federal Children's Bureau is allowing states to have separate standards for nonfamilial foster homes than relative and fictive kin foster homes.

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) encouraged states to adopt separate approval standards for relative/fictive kin, reducing requirements for these caregivers.

Different Standards

- Foster parent training needs to look different for these caregivers because:
 - Relatives/fictive kin foster parents often receive placement of children in emergency situations and have the child prior to being an approved foster parent
 - Relatives/fictive kin become certified to care for a specific child, not because they want to be a foster parent to children in foster care
 - Reduction of non-safety documentation, such as income requirements and health documentation
 - Nonfamilial foster parents may need training about how to integrate a child into their home or how to determine the child's interests and skills that relatives/fictive kin typically do not need

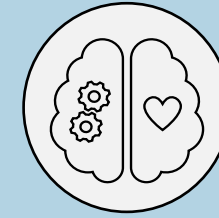
Benefits of Kinship Care

When placed with kin, children experience more stability, less trauma, and stronger connections to family, community, and culture.

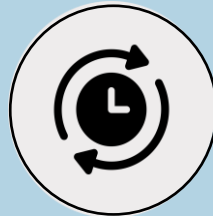
Placement with kin is associated with:



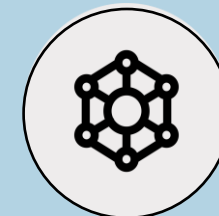
Reduced trauma and improved child well-being



Better behavioral and mental health outcomes



Higher placement stability and improved permanency

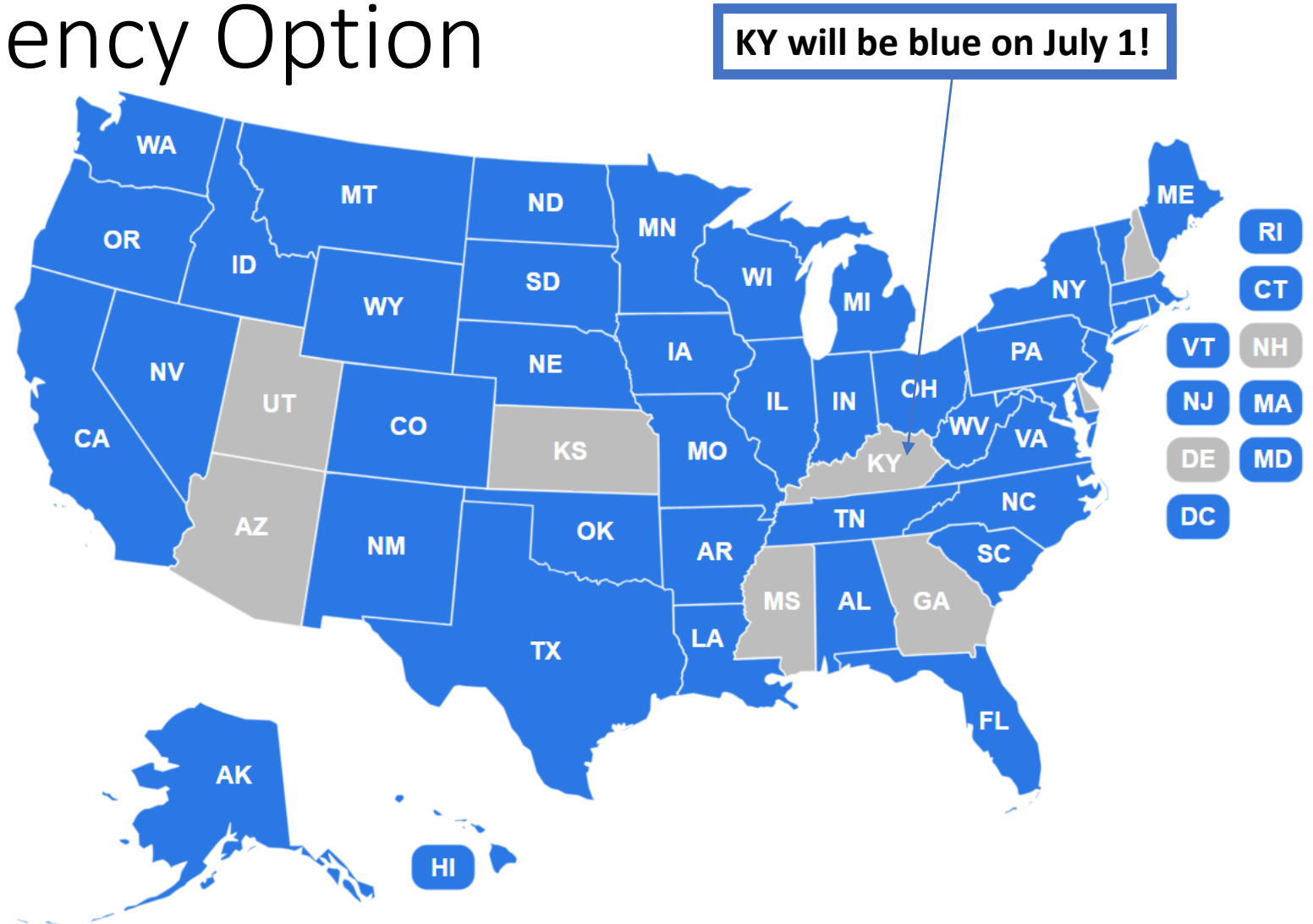


Preservation of family, culture, and community

A New Permanency Option

States with a federally recognized Guardianship Assistance Program

There are 42 states including the District of Columbia that have implemented GAP, in KY we are calling the program Subsidized Permanent Custody (SPC)



Overview of Subsidized Permanent Custody (SPC)

- New permanency option/goal for children who have been in a relative or fictive kin foster home for 6 months
- SPC will provide a subsidized monthly payment to the caregiver and Medicaid will be included
- Return to parent and adoption must not be the appropriate permanency option
- Primary difference between SPC and Adoption is that SPC does not require termination of parental rights
- SPC contract must be approved (signed) by the Cabinet prior to the relative/fictive kin receiving custody in court (DNA-9 form)
- Provides families with the similar benefits as those who have adopted

Benefit Comparison

Relative/Fictive Kin Foster Parent

- \$723.00 per month (1)
- \$1,446.00 per month (2)
- \$2,169.00 per month (3)
- Medical
- Childcare
- KY KINS
- All other additional foster care benefits/supports

Temporary Custody

- KTAP \$372.00 per month (1)
- KTAP \$450.00 per month (2)
- KTAP \$524.00 per month (3)
- Medical
- Childcare
- KY KINS

July

Questions