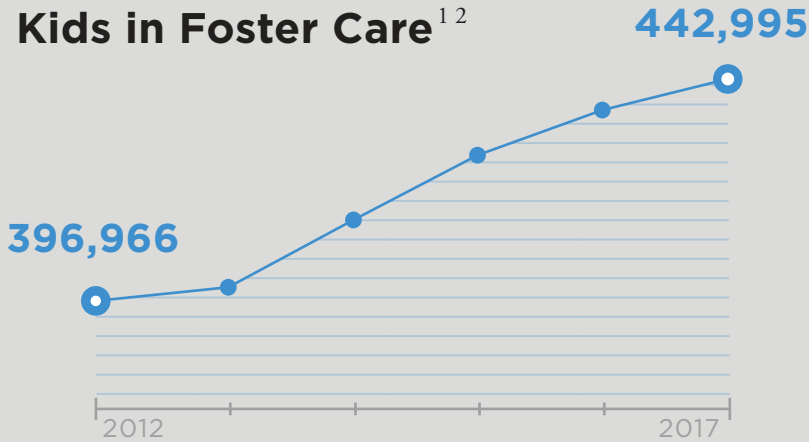


# The Truth about Today's Foster Care Crisis and the Role of Faith-Based Agencies

## THE FOSTER CARE CRISIS

Kids in Foster Care<sup>1,2</sup>



## A PROBLEM GETTING WORSE

**14 STATES AND D.C.** experienced a decline in the number of **beds or homes** from 2012 to 2017.<sup>5</sup>



Some states experienced up to a **20%** decrease.



**30-50%**<sup>6</sup>

OF FOSTER PARENTS LEAVE THE SYSTEM EACH YEAR.

## MASSACHUSETTS

(where faith-based agencies have been removed)

HAS LOST **2,000** FAMILIES IN THAT TIME FRAME.

Each year, around **20,000** kids age out of foster care<sup>3</sup> without an adoptive home.

The odds they face aren't good.



**20%**

WILL BE HOMELESS AT AGE 18.



**50%**

WILL BE UNEMPLOYED AT AGE 24.



**97%**

WILL NEVER GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE.<sup>4</sup>

### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> *The AFCARS Report #24*, U.S. Dep't of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, <https://perma.cc/55K7-WV8W>.

<sup>2</sup> *The AFCARS Report #25*, U.S. Dep't of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/afcarsreport25.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> *The AFCARS Report*, U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Services, Children's Bureau, <https://perma.cc/EJ5K-CBVY> at 3.

<sup>4</sup> Wayne Winston Sharp, *The Human, Social, And Economic Cost of Aging Out of Foster Care*, Adoption Advocate, May 2015, at 4, <https://perma.cc/KHP5-5YUZ>.

<sup>5</sup> John A. Kelly, *Who Cares: A National Count of Foster Homes and Families*, Chronicle of Social Change, October 15, 2018, <https://perma.cc/TRR2-Z5LE>.

<sup>6</sup> Haskins, Kohomban, Rodriguez, "Keeping up with the caseload: How to recruit and retain foster parents," Brookings Institute, April 24, 2019, <https://perma.cc/Z4G7-65XA>.

## Faith-based agencies are crucial to finding homes and helping children.

They serve children without regard to race, gender, or sexual orientation. Faith-based agencies work alongside secular and government agencies to recruit a diverse array of foster and adoptive parents.

### THE UNIQUE ROLE OF FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

**82%**

of families in one study pointed to **FAITH OR CHURCH SUPPORT** as a factor that facilitates successful fostering.<sup>11</sup>

Families recruited through church or religious organizations

**FOSTER**

**2.6**

**YEARS LONGER**

than other foster parents.<sup>10</sup>

Christians are roughly

**3X**

**MORE LIKELY** to have seriously considered **FOSTERING**<sup>9</sup>

Christians are

**2X**

**MORE LIKELY TO ADOPT**<sup>8</sup>



**FOR OVER  
200  
YEARS**

#### RELIGIOUS GROUPS

have cared for children and helped them find loving homes—often well before governments got involved.<sup>7</sup>



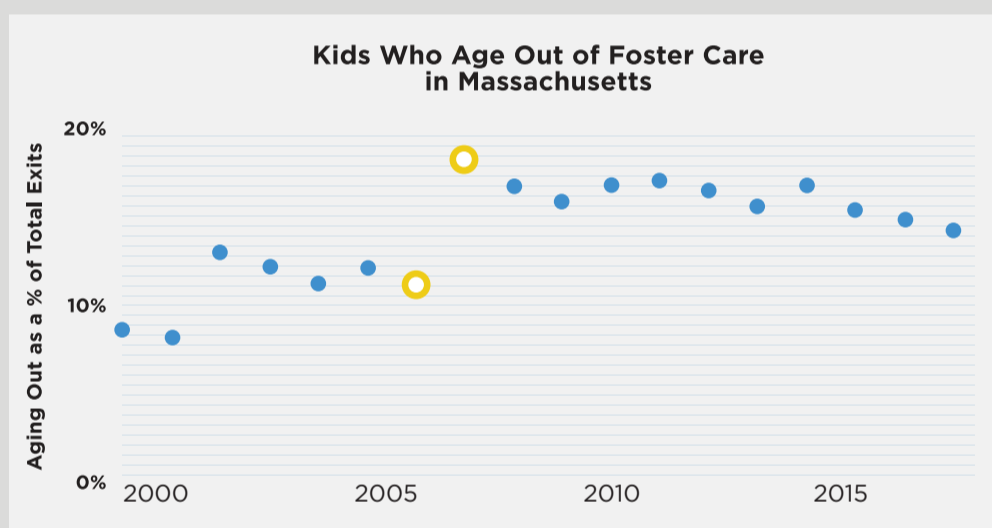
**36%**

of the families recruited by one Christian organization said they **would not have become foster or adoptive parents** were it not for that organization's efforts.<sup>12</sup>

#### Faith-based agencies perform vital work.

#### THE HARM TO CHILDREN IF FAITH-BASED AGENCIES CLOSE IS REAL.

Boston stopped partnering with faith-based providers in 2006. One year later, the percentage of children who aged out of the Massachusetts foster care system **rose by over 50%** and has not returned to pre-2006 levels.<sup>13</sup>



#### BETWEEN 2012 AND 2017,

**ILLINOIS LOST 1,547 FOSTER HOMES -** <sup>14</sup>

the most significant decrease in any state that reported this data.

#### Footnotes:

<sup>7</sup> Homer Folks, *The Care of Destitute, Neglected, and Delinquent Children* 9-11 (Herbert S. Brown ed., 1902) (citing examples from New Orleans, Bethesda, New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston).

<sup>8</sup> Jedd Medefind, "New Barna Research Highlights Christian Adoption and Foster Care Among Three Most Notable Vocational Trends," Christian Alliance for Orphans, February 12, 2014, <https://cafo.org/2014/02/12/new-barna-research-highlights-christian-adoption-foster-care-among-3-most-notable-vocational-trends/>. Institute, April 24, 2019, <https://perma.cc/Z4G7-65XA>.

<sup>9</sup> *5 Things You Need to Know About Adoption*, Barna: Frames (Nov. 4, 2013), <https://perma.cc/J26E-P629>.

<sup>10</sup> People who hear about fostering through a church or religious organization fostered for 2.6 years longer than other foster parents. Mary Ellen Cox, Cheryl Buehler, & John G. Orme, *Recruitment and Foster Family Service*, 29 J. Soc. & Soc. Welfare, no. 3, 2002, at 166-68, <https://perma.cc/P4SV-MTP4>.

<sup>11</sup> Cheryl Buehler, Mary Ellen Cox, & Gary Cuddeback, *Foster Parents' Perceptions of Factors That Promote or Inhibit Successful Fostering*, 2 Qualitative Social Work, no. 1, 2003, at 61-83, <https://perma.cc/F3KE-BU3F>. Many studies have demonstrated that faith is often a strong motivating factor in the decision to become a foster parent. See, e.g., Michael Howell-Moroney, *The Empirical Ties Between Religious Motivation and Altruism in Foster Parents: Implications for Faith-Based Initiatives in Foster Care and Adoption*, 5 Religions, no. 3, 2014, at 720-737; Jason D. Brown, Natalie George, David St. Arnault, & Jennifer Sintzel, *Cultural Worldviews of Foster Parents*, 14 Journal of Family Social Work, no. 1, 2011, at 21-42; Susan Rodgers, Anne Cummings, & Alan W. Leschied, *Who is Caring for Our Most Vulnerable Children?: The Motivation to Foster in Child Welfare*, 30 Child Abuse & Neglect, no. 10, 2006, at 1129-1142; Angela C. Baum, Sedahlia Jasper Crase, & Kirsten Lee Crase, *Influences on the Decision to Become or Not Become a Foster Parent*, 82 Families in Society, no. 2, 2001, at 202-213; Ramona Denby & Nolan Rindfleisch, *African Americans' Foster Parenting Experiences: Research Findings and Implications for Policy and Practice*, 18 Children and Youth Services Review, no. 6, 1996, at 523-551.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Howell-Moroney, *On the Effectiveness of Faith-Based Partnerships in Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Parents*, Journal of Public Management & Social Policy, No.19, Vol. 2, (2013), pp. 176-177.

<sup>13</sup> See generally, *Adoption & Foster Care Statistics*, U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Services, Children's Bureau, <https://perma.cc/H7TV-A7QM>.

<sup>14</sup> *Foster Care Housing Crisis*, The Chronicle of Social Change, Appendix A at 13-14, <https://perma.cc/9SK8-WFXA>.