

Foster Parent Retention Report

(FY 2020 Appropriation Act - Public Act 67 of 2019)

March 1, 2020

Sec. 583. By March 1 of the current fiscal year, the department shall provide to the senate and house appropriations subcommittees on the department budget, the senate and house standing committees on families and human services, the senate and house fiscal agencies and policy offices, and the state budget office a report that includes:

(a) The number and percentage of foster parents that dropped out of the program in the previous fiscal year and the reasons the foster parents left the program and how those figures compare to prior fiscal years.

(b) The number and percentage of foster parents successfully retained in the previous fiscal year and how those figures compare to prior fiscal years.



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Foster Home Closures

In FY 2019, 1,835 foster homes closed. Thirty-two percent of the foster homes that closed were relative homes and 68 percent were non-relative foster homes. In FY 2018, 1,864 foster homes closed. Thirty-two percent of the foster homes that closed were relative homes and 68 percent were non-relative foster homes.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) remains committed to ensuring a sufficient and adequate array of foster homes for children entering foster care. The number of licensed foster homes that closed decreased from fiscal year 2018 to fiscal year 2019.

Reasons Foster Parents Left the Program - Foster Home Closure Surveys

Each month the Office of Child Welfare Policy and Programs sends surveys to MDHHS and private agency foster care (PAFC) foster parents whose foster home closed during the previous month¹. The survey inquiry includes questions, such as; the length of time as a foster parent, reasons for becoming a foster parent, issues and concerns associated with being a foster parent, and the reasons for not continuing as a foster parent. There was a 35 percent response rate to the FY 2019 closed foster care home survey. The following are the FY 2019 survey results:

- Top reasons foster parents closed their license:
 - Adopted the child(ren) placed with them
 - Family needs
 - Frustration

- Top three challenges of being a foster parent:
 - Child(ren)'s behavior
 - Visitation
 - Court processes

- Top three reasons for becoming a foster parent:
 - Wanted to help children
 - Wanted to make a difference
 - Love children

¹ Foster home closures are defined as parents who dropped out of the program due to the following reasons: adoption, death, lack of response to license renewal, voluntary withdrawal, and administrative closure.

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Foster Home Retention

On October 1, 2018, there were 6,336 licensed foster homes. On September 30, 2019, 4,616 of those licensed foster parents remained licensed, which is a 73 percent retention rate and a 1 percentage point retention rate increase from FY 2018.

In addition to a 73 percent retention rate for FY 2019, 93 percent of the 1,686 foster homes licensed during FY 2019 remained licensed as of September 30, 2019. This percentage is the same as the percentage reported in FY 2018 when 93 percent of the 1,862 foster homes licensed during FY 2018 remained licensed as of September 30, 2018.