

A photograph of two young children running away from the camera through a vast field of tall, golden-brown grass. The child in the foreground is a girl with brown hair, wearing a white and grey striped dress, with her arms outstretched. Behind her is another child, partially obscured. In the background, a dense line of green trees stretches across the horizon under a bright, slightly hazy sky.

State Progress on ACF's 'A Home For Every Child' Initiative

August 2026



Meet Your Presenters

*Mississippi Department of Child
Protection Services
Kenya Gatlin, LCSW*



*Child and Family Services Agency,
District of Columbia
Dr. Brandynicole Brooks*



Meet Your Facilitators

Elizabeth Black



Lisa Rich



The Challenge

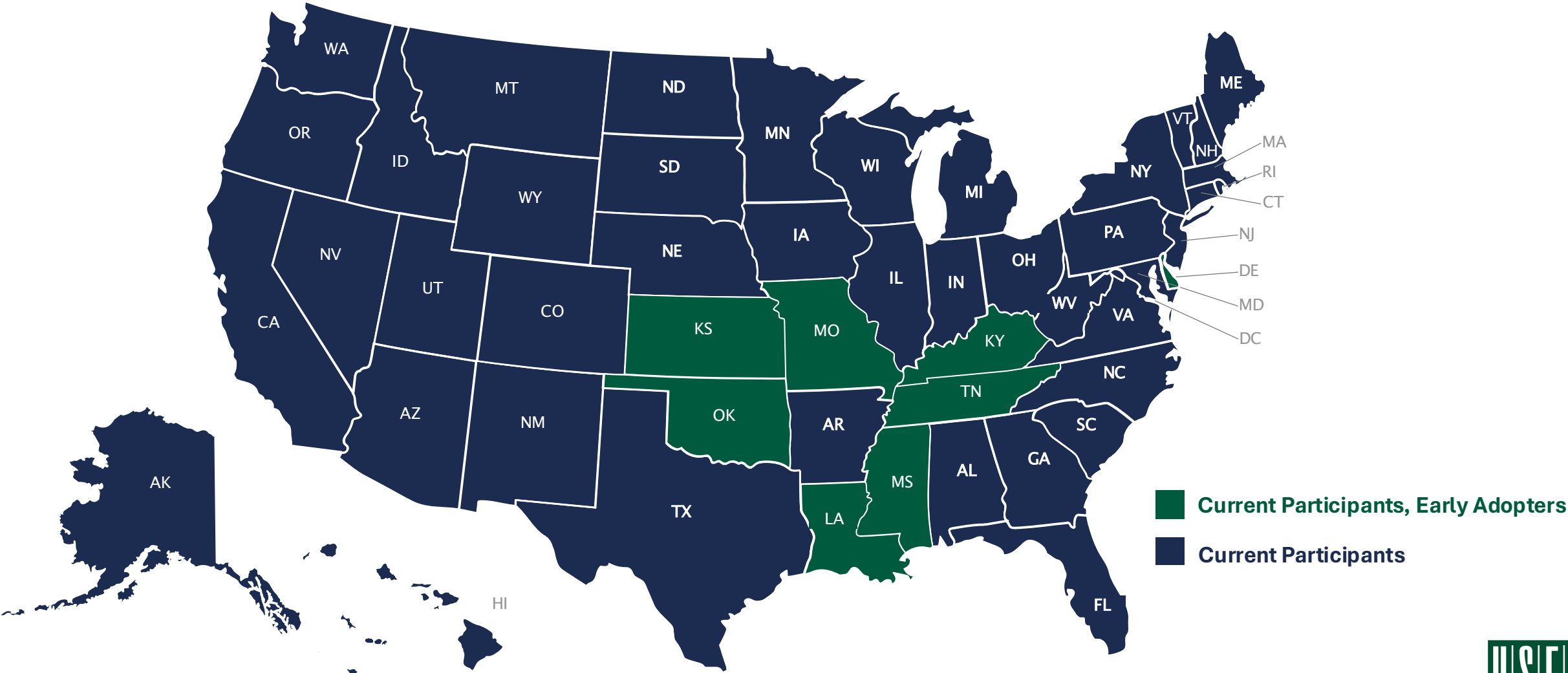
Identified Problems

- Not enough support for children and their own families
- Family separation used as a primary tool to address issues
- Limited use of kinship care
- Placement instability
- Inappropriate use of hotels or offices as placement
- Family separation
- Staff burnout

What ACF is Introducing

- A Home for Every Child
- Goal: 1:1 home-to-child ratio
- Focus on prevention, family-based care, and timely permanency
- Innovation Challenge and PIP pilot flexibility

Where States Are Now



A Home for Every Child - Balancing the 1:1 Ratio

Denominator: Number of Children in Foster Care

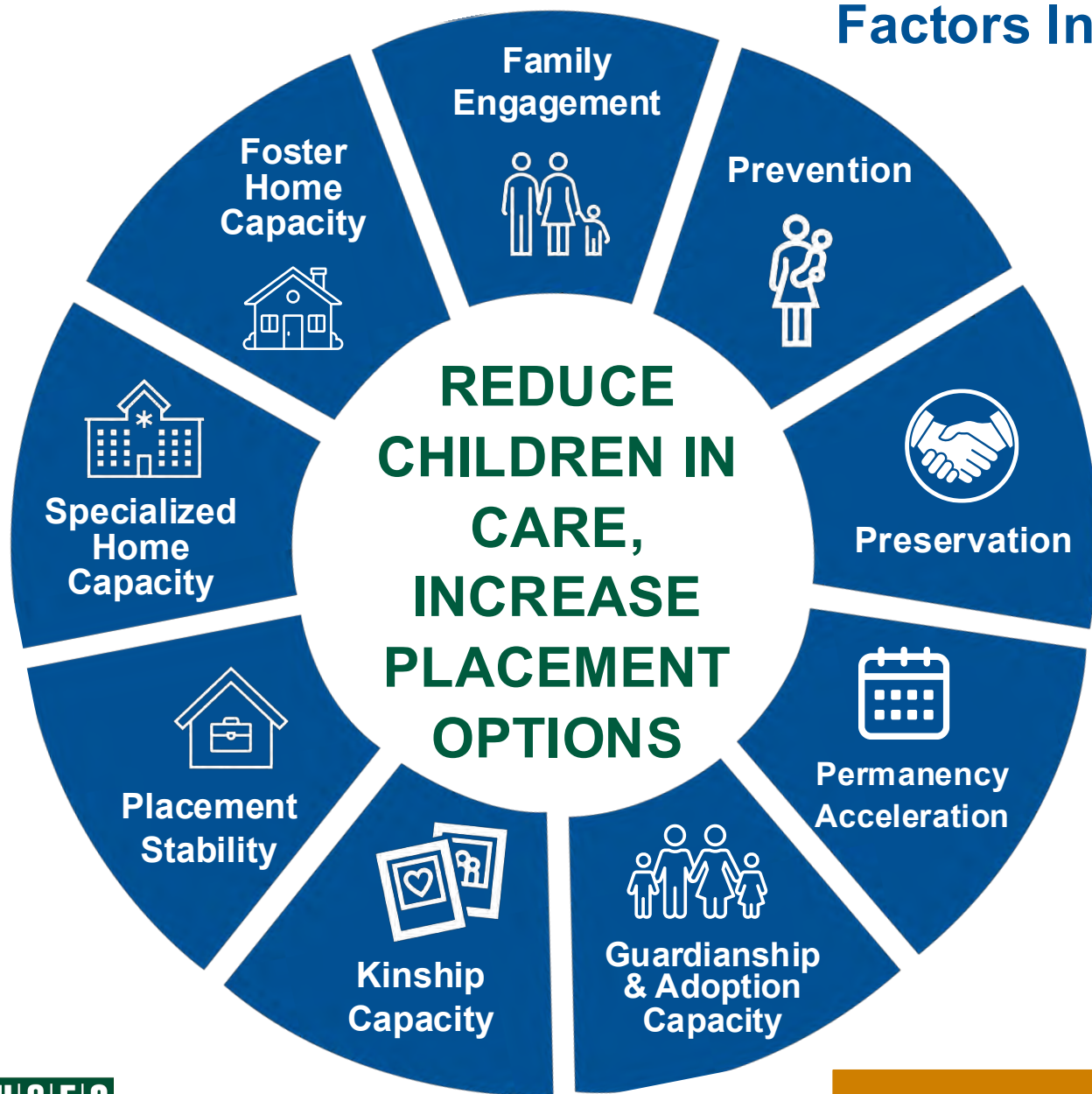
- Entries
- Length of stay
- Permanency timing
- Re-entry into foster care

Numerator: Families Identified and Available for Children

- Available, active homes
- Fit for child needs
- Stable and supported caregivers
- Kinship pathways and retention

These drivers work together: Reducing demand and sustaining the right family-based homes are both needed to move toward 1:1.

Factors Influencing the Numerator & Denominator



Family Engagement & Kin-First Practice

- Family Finding
- Family Team Meetings
- Relative Engagement
- Kin-First Decision Making

Foster Parent & Specialized Placement Recruitment

- Community Recruitment
- Digital Recruitment
- Targeted Recruitment

Prevention

- Prevention Programs
- Housing Stability
- Alternative Response
- Support Lines

Foster Parent & Retention/Placement Stability

- Foster Parent Support
- Peer Mentoring
- Respite Care
- Trauma-Informed Training

Family Preservation

- Family Preservation Services
- Concrete Supports

Kinship Capacity

- Kinship Financial Assistance
- Kinship Support Programs
- Navigator Programs
- Subsidized Guardianship
- Specialized Licensing Staff

Permanency Acceleration

- Reunification Services
- Guardianship
- Adoption



Mississippi: Current Landscape

July 2026

Ratio
.50:1



963 Foster Homes*



943 Relative Foster Homes



3,838 Children in Foster Care

*Traditional/therapeutic foster homes licensed by partner providers and CO placements are not yet included in the number shown above.

Mississippi: Measuring Progress



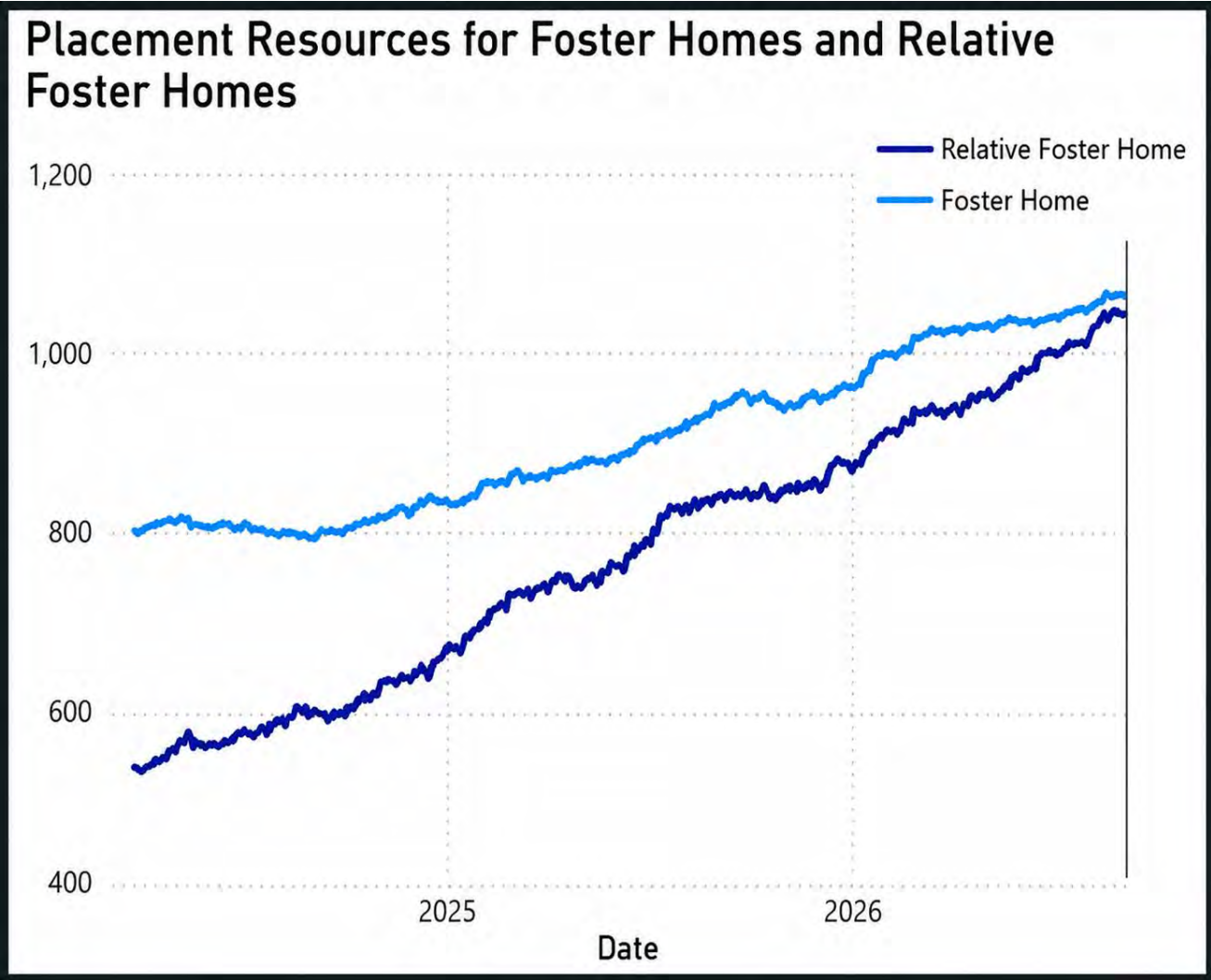
Power BI Dashboards

Mississippi uses interactive dashboards to monitor key measures, identify trends, and inform decisions that support a 1:1 home-to-child ratio.

- ✓ Changes in available homes
- ✓ Changes in children needing placement
- ✓ Placement stability
- ✓ Permanency signals
- ✓ Chaser measures and lead measures

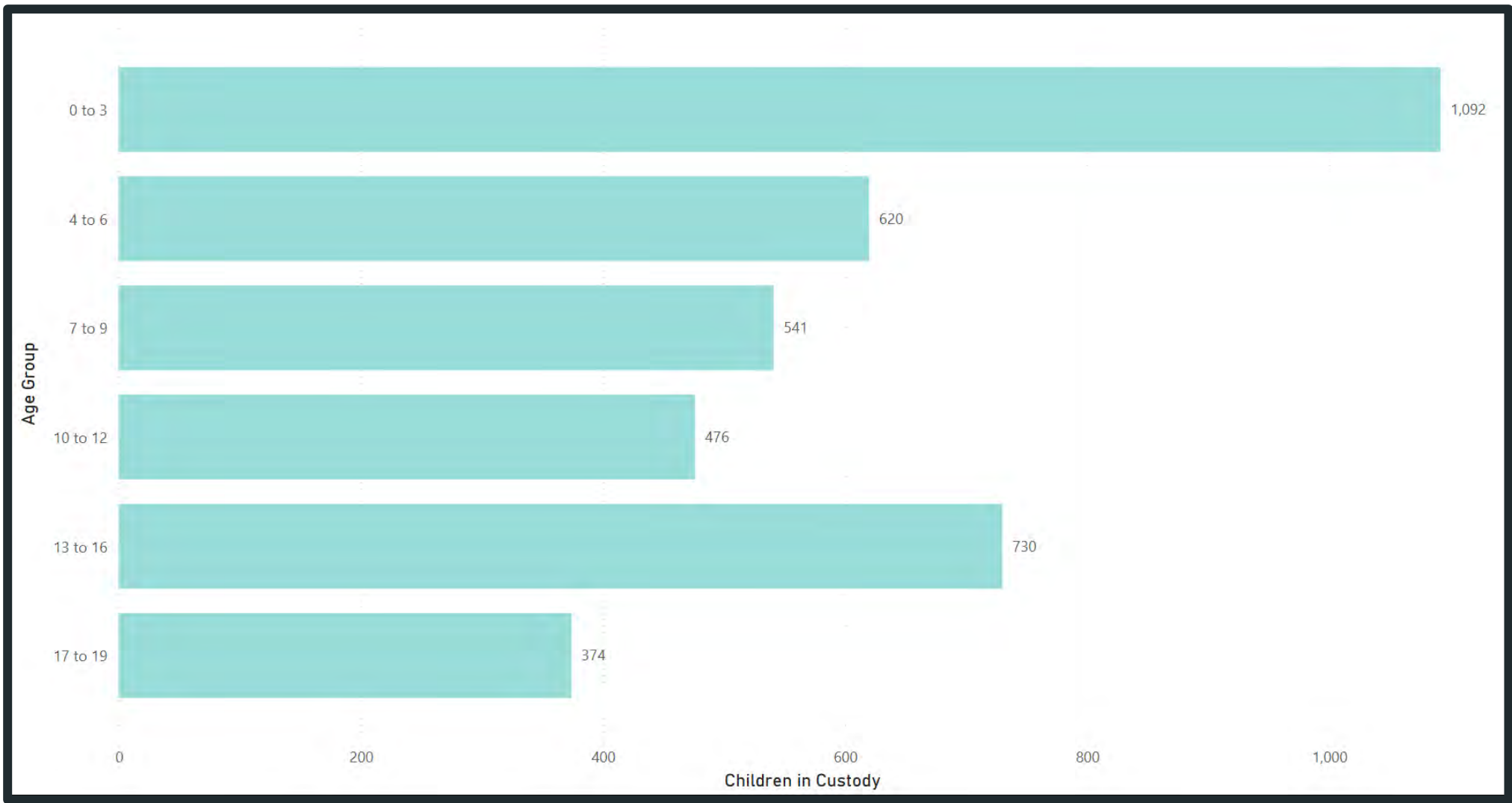
The following dashboards illustrate how Mississippi monitors these measures.

Mississippi: Building Family-Based Placement Capacity

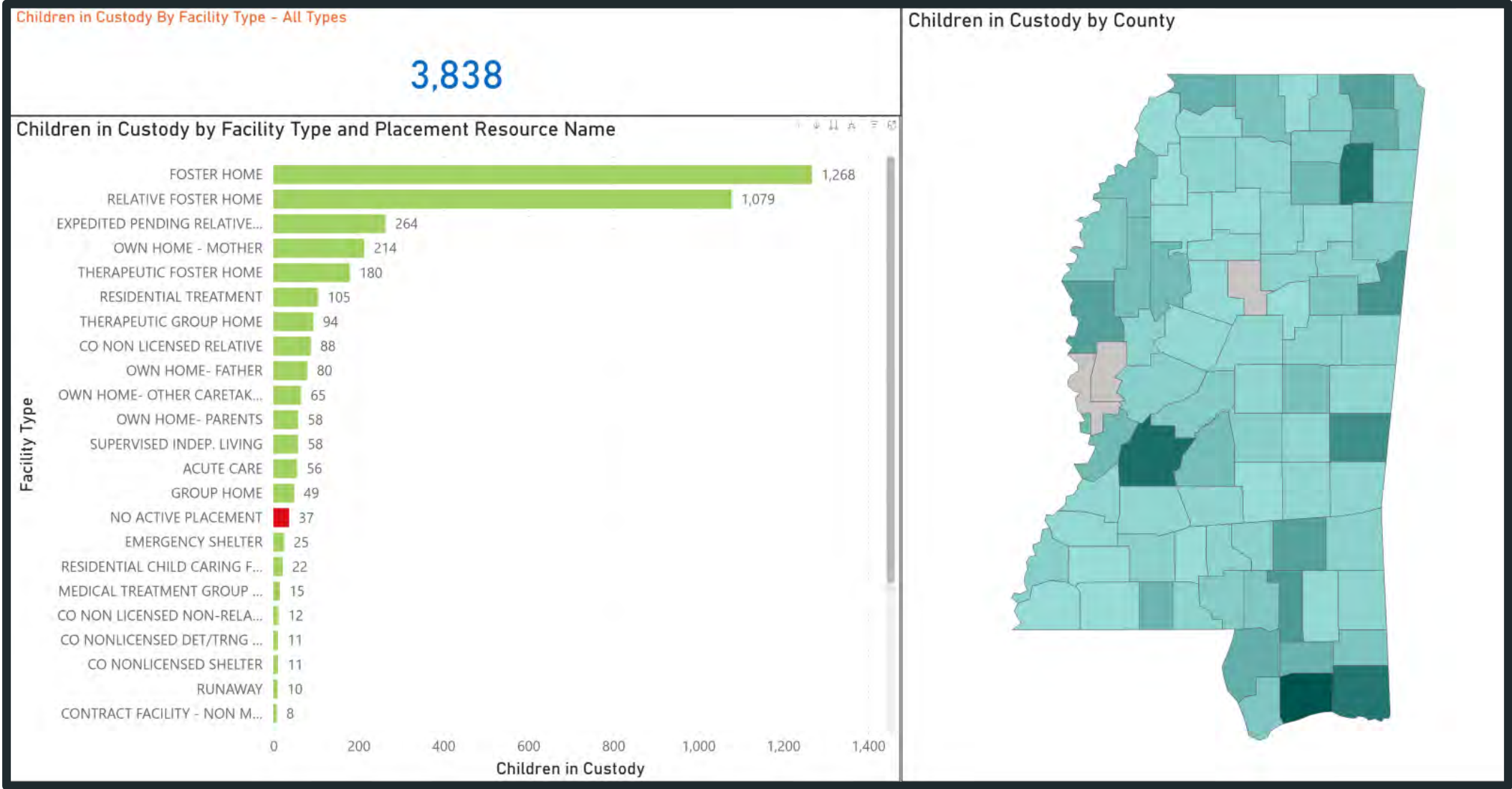


July 2026		
	Foster Home	963
	Relative Foster Home	943

Mississippi: Monitoring Children Needing Placement



Mississippi: Tracking Progress Toward a 1:1 Ratio



Mississippi: Goals

- 1 Children in custody will have access to licensed/vetted home-based settings
- 2 Children in custody are placed in homes that support stability, connection, and safety
- 3 Children remain safe at home whenever possible

Mississippi: Strategies to Reduce Entries into Foster Care (Denominator)

Expand Prevention Services

- Increase referrals to Evidence-Based and Community-Based Services
 - Healthy Families America
 - Intercept
- Increase use of the Kinship Navigator Program

Track Availability and Use

- Track the availability of prevention services
- Track utilization of prevention services

Mississippi: Strategies to Increase Available Homes (Numerator)

Room for One More Recruitment Campaign

- Recruit new foster families.
- Encourage existing foster families to accept one additional placement when appropriate.

Diligent Search

- Identify and engage relatives and kinship caregivers.
- Increase initial placements with family/fictive kin whenever possible.

Convert Kinship Homes to Foster Homes for Non-Relative Children

- Support licensed kinship caregivers in becoming foster homes.
- Increase long-term placement capacity for non-relative children.

Room For One More Campaign Update

3-Month Budget Allocation & Message Evolution

Total Budget
\$100K

\$25K
Content Creation & Data
Creative development,
campaign assets, data,
tracking & measurement

\$75K
Messaging / Media
Remaining budget allocated
across awareness, action
and conversion

	MONTH 1	MONTH 2	MONTH 3	ROW TOTAL
 1) Awareness Build recall for the campaign and the central tenet: <i>kids in Mississippi are waiting on a foster home today.</i>	\$15K	\$10K	\$5K	\$30K
 2) Action Prompt specific actions such as signing up to learn more or starting an application to generate quality leads.	\$5K	\$10K	\$10K	\$25K
 3) Conversion Concentrate on converting leads into foster parent applicants.	\$0K	\$5K	\$15K	\$20K



Month 1 Total:
\$20K



Month 2 Total:
\$25K



Month 3 Total:
\$30K



Total Messaging /
Media Budget:
\$75K



Strategic Focus: Front-load awareness, build action in Month 2, and maximize conversion in Month 3.

4 Chaser Measures

1

Maintain Family Connections

2

Use of Congregate Care

3

Recent Maltreatment History

4

Home Disruptions

6 Lead Measures

1

Increase the percentage of children whose initial placement is with relatives

2

Number of families referred to Intercept (the currently available Evidence Based Program)

3

Number of families referred to Community Based Services

4

Increase the number of newly licensed relative homes

5

Percentage of placements reaching 90 days with no safety concerns or corrective action plans

6

Increase the percentage of children attaining timely reunification, guardianship, or adoption

Mississippi: Lessons Learned

1

Every child who can stay with their own parents and family members matters.
This is the best option.

2

Kinship is a placement, permanency, and stability strategy.
Supporting relatives creates immediate placements, keeps children more stable and promotes permanency.

3

Data drives better decisions.
Dashboards help identify trends, measure progress, and prioritize resources.

No single strategy achieves a 1:1 ratio. Sustainable progress comes from combining recruitment, kinship, licensing, and data-informed decision making.



CHILD & FAMILY
— SERVICES AGENCY —
Keeping DC Families Together



A HOME FOR
EVERY CHILD

DC: Strategies to Reduce Entries into Foster Care (Denominator)

Keeping children safely with family through kin-first practice and prevention services.

Kin-First Practice

- Strengthen kin-first practice and holding a Family Team Meeting within 72 hours.

Family Finding

- Provide rapid licensing, training, and resource connections to kin.

Prevention Services

- Expand CFSA's evidence-based prevention continuum.

DC: Strategies to Increase Available Homes (Numerator)

Ensuring children are in stable, appropriate, well-supported family-based settings.

Licensing Pathway

- Maintain a seamless recruitment-to-licensing pathway that removes barriers and accelerates approval timelines.

Caregiver Readiness

- Strengthen caregiver readiness and stability through strong partnerships, data-driven recruitment, and targeted training and supports.

DC: Strategies to Keep Homes Stable (Numerator)

Strengthen resource parent retention through coaching, supports, peer networks, and responsive caregiver engagement.

Caregiver Engagement

- Utilize the National Center for Diligent Recruitment tools to understand and respond to caregiver needs.

Training & Supports

- Increase targeted training, shared parenting supports, crisis response, and respite coordination.

4 Chaser Measures

1

% of children in care at the end of the month who have a home with relatives or kin

2

% of days children are in congregate care settings

3

% of children harmed after Agency has confirmed abuse/neglect

4

% of children where a child's time in the homes ends unexpectedly, requiring a move

4 Lead Measures

1

% change month to month of newly licensed kinship homes.

2

% of CFSA-involved families who are receiving an evidence-based program rated as supported or well-supported by the Title IV-E Clearinghouse.

3

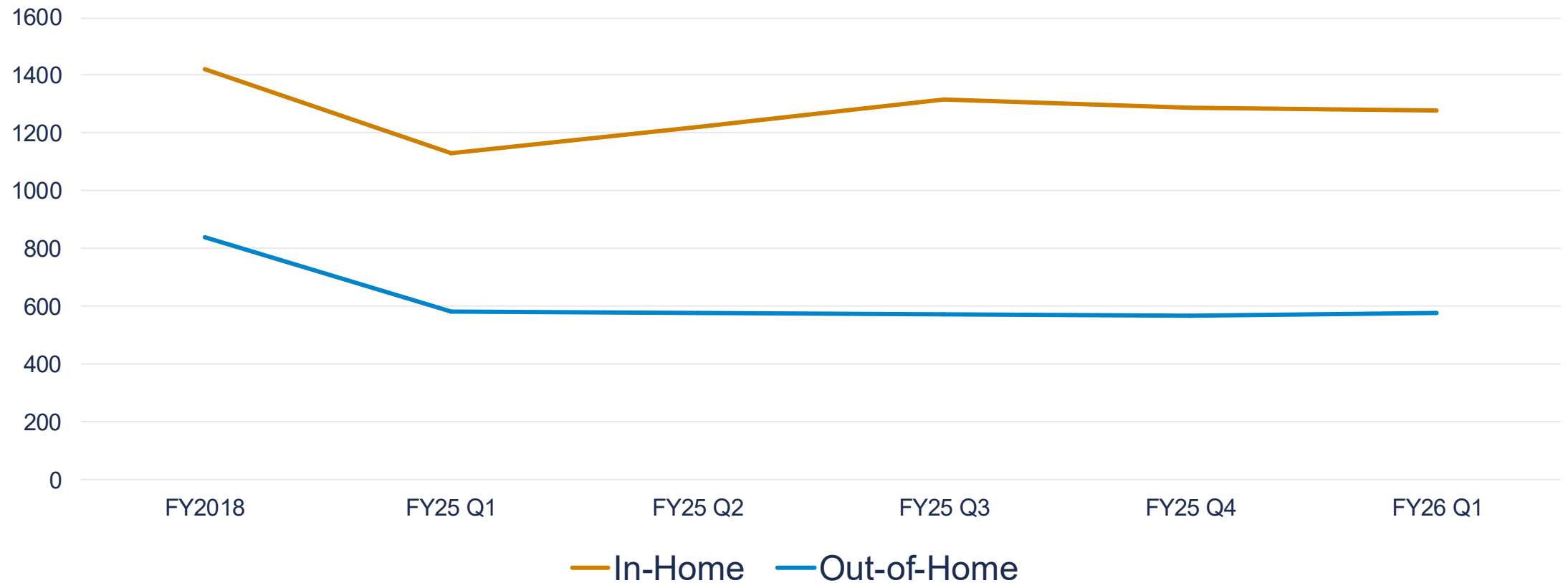
% change month to month of newly licensed homes.

4

% of foster homes that renew their license each year.

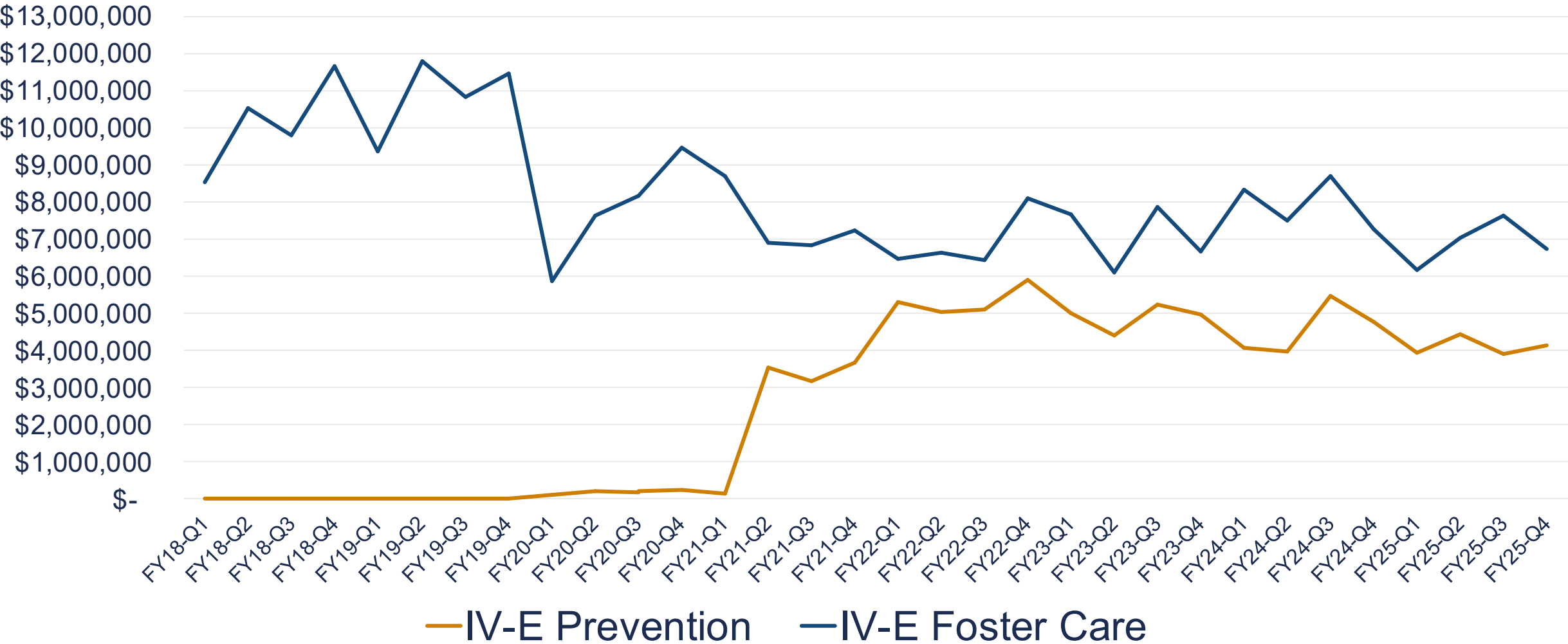
PREVENTION SERVICES vs FOSTER CARE

Families Served by DC CFSA



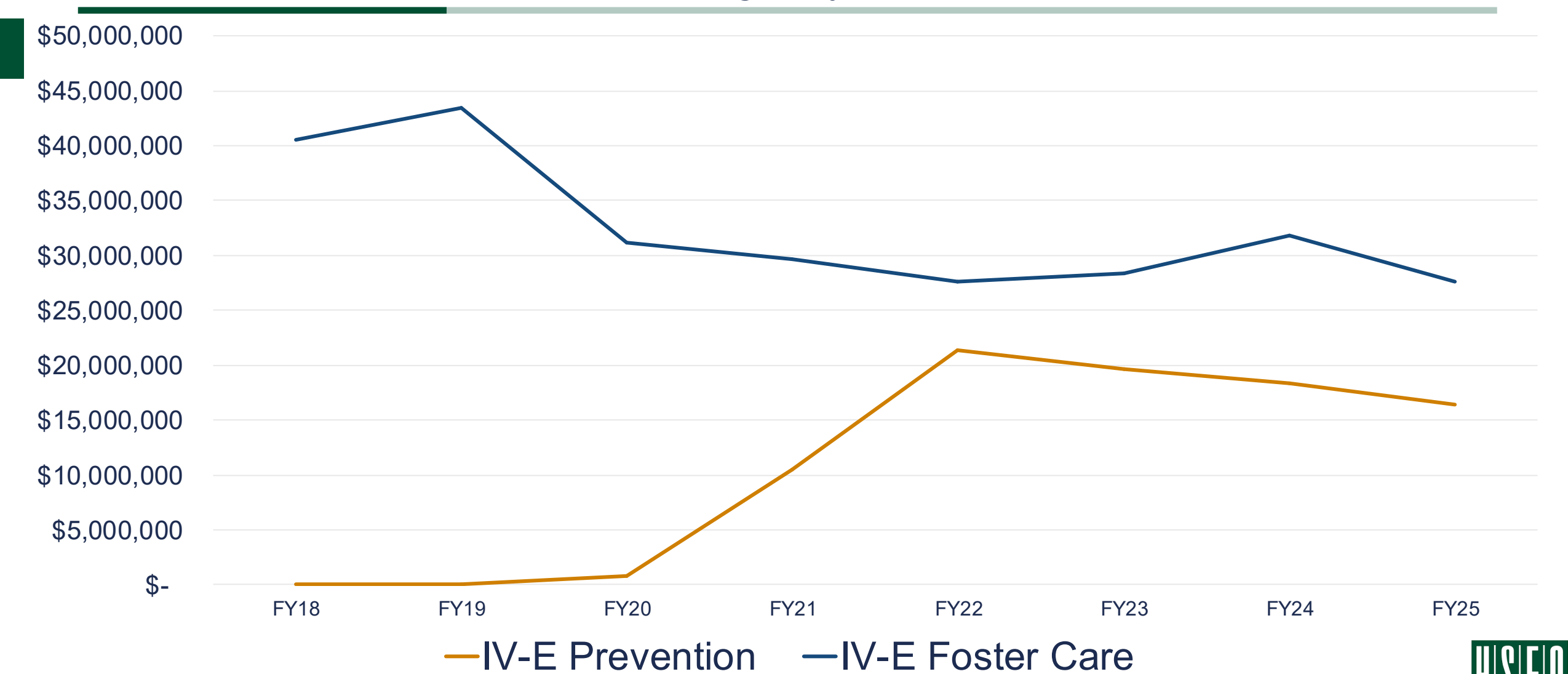
PREVENTION SERVICES vs FOSTER CARE

Total Agency Costs



PREVENTION SERVICES vs FOSTER CARE

Total Agency Costs



What initiatives are happening in your state to impact the numerator or denominator?

Thank You

Elizabeth Black
eblack@pubknow.com



Dr. Brandynicole Brooks
brandynicole.brooks@dc.gov



Kenya Gatlin
kenya.gatlin@mdcps.ms.gov



Lisa Rich
lisa.rich@sivicsolutionsgroup.com

