

Finding Families for Children in Care: Perspectives from the US and England

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About AdoptUSKids

- AdoptUSKids is a service of the U.S. Children's Bureau and has been in operation since 2002 by the Adoption Exchange Association
- The mission of AdoptUSKids is two-fold:
 - To raise public awareness about the need for foster and adoptive families for children and youth in the public child welfare system
 - To assist U.S. states, territories, and tribes to recruit, engage, assess, inform, develop and support foster and adoptive families and connect them with children and youth



How AdoptUSKids accomplishes its mission

- By providing tools & technical assistance to:
 - The general public
 - State, territory, & tribal child welfare agency staff
 - State, territory, & tribal public information officers
 - Private agencies that partner with & assist public agencies
 - Prospective foster, adoptive, & kin care families
 - Current foster, adoptive, & kin care families
- Each aspect of AUSK & NRCDR has a different “customer” focus from the above list

AdoptUSKids Key Activities



Child welfare services, England

- Responsible government dept – Education
- Services provided by a range of agencies, public, private and 3rd sector (inc social enterprise)
- Statutory duties for child welfare and protection services* fall to children's services directorates of local authorities (n=152!).
- Almost all LAs operate an adoption service
- Adoption services also provided by voluntary sector

The English Care system

- Major legislation remains the Children Act 1989 (though lots of supplement/amendment leg).
- Entry by voluntary or statutory means
- Stability and permanence key
- Placement options: (most can be kin or non-kin)
 - Residential Care
 - Foster Care
 - Child Arrangement Order
 - Special Guardianship Order
 - Adoption (inc Concurrent and Foster4Adopt).

Supporting Policy & Practice Development in England

- British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF – now CoramBAAF)
 - National Adoption Week
 - Operates National Adoption Registers
 - Produces good practice guidance and produces quarterly journal
 - Online resources, training and dissemination
- Active group representing adopters – Adoption UK
- Also Adoption Leadership Board
 - And other groups
- First4Adoption: national online recruitment resource
- Supporting linking: Link-Maker (Adoption Link)

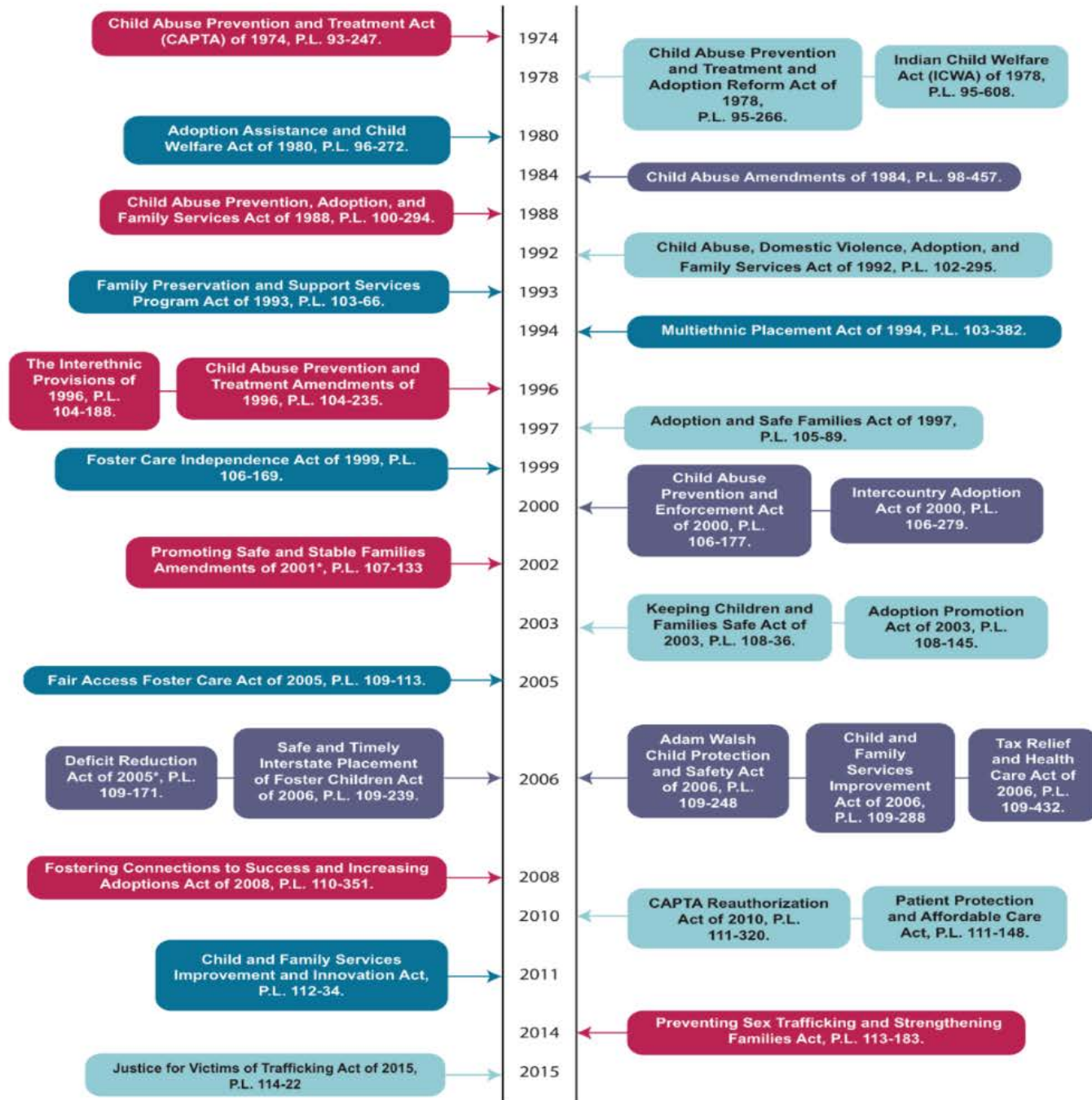


Adoption relevant legislation: England

- First legal basis – Adoption of Children Act 1926 (previously unregulated)
- Adoption Act 1976 (fully implemented 1988!)
- Children Act 1989 (major piece of legislation)
- Adoption and Children Act 2002 (imp 12/05)
- Children and Adoption Act 2006
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Education and Adoption Act 2016



Timeline of Major Federal Legislation Concerned with Child Protection, Child Welfare, and Adoption





Key adoption & foster care federal legislation in U.S. 1974 - present

1. 1974: Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act (CAPTA) & revisions
2. 1978: Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)
3. 1980: Adoption Assistance & Child Welfare Act
4. 1992: Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, Adoption & Family Services Act
5. 1992: MEPA/1996 IEP
6. 1997: Adoption & Safe Families Act (ASFA)
7. 1999: Foster Care Independence Act



Key adoption & foster care federal legislation in U.S. 1974 - present

8. ***2000: Children's Health Act**

9. (2000: Intercountry Adoption Act)

10. 2003: Adoption Promotion Act

11. 2006: Safe & Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act

12. 2006: Adam Walsh Child Protection & Safety Act

13. 2008: Fostering Connections to Success & Increasing Adoptions Act

14. 2010: Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act

15. 2016: (Currently being proposed: Family First Act)

Key adoption & foster care federal legislation England & US

What impact does legislation have on:

- Adoption policy at the local, county, state/territorial and tribal level?
- Adoption practices?
- Outcomes for children and youth who enter the public child welfare system in the US & England and are unable to return safely and permanently to their families?



What kinds of impact(s) have 30 years of legislation had on adoption policy, practice and outcomes?

- Professional & family “players” & other workforce issues
- Child’s itinerary for the journey to adoption: thinking about & planning it, embarking on it with baggage, arriving, unpacking & dealing with the baggage, staying
- How long does it take to get there?
- Who is adopting whom these days, and why?
- What do and don’t we tell prospective adopters – about the process, about the children? when do we tell them and why?
- Who is and who isn’t getting adopted, and why? Then what?
- Adoption in an electrified world: benefits & challenges

U.S. Foster Care & Adoption By the (AFCARS) Numbers

Numbers At A Glance

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number in foster care on September 30 of the FY	404,878	398,057	397,153	400,989	415,129
Number entered foster care during FY	256,092	251,958	251,850	255,080	264,746
Number exited foster care during FY	257,806	247,607	240,987	240,392	238,230
Number waiting to be adopted on September 30 of the FY	108,746	106,561	102,058	104,493	107,918
Number waiting to be adopted whose parental rights (for all living parents) were terminated during FY	65,747	62,852	59,147	59,662	60,898
Number adopted with public child welfare agency involvement during FY	53,547	50,901	52,046	50,841	50,644

Numbers (England)

- At 31 March 2015, 69,540 children looked after in England
- =60 per 10,000 children under 18.
- Gradual increase in last 5 yrs from 65,510

	Number	% of CIC
Looked after children w PO	7320	11%
Looked after children placed for adoption	3320 (+270 concurrent or FfA)	5%

- Recently numbers of children recommended for adoption falling.



Adoption from foster care in the U.S.:

The Players

1973

- Child (usually very young)
- Caseworker (generalist)
- Judge
- “Friend of the Court”
- Law enforcement (?)
- Mom’s grandma & auntie
- Foster-only parents
- Adoptive couples

2016

- Older child or youth with consent right; children of color; traumatized
- Press; staff ed; staff turnover
- Back to generalist CW; WWW
- Law enforcement (!)
- Judge + attorneys, CASA, licensers, trainers, ICPC, ICAMA
- Tribes, all relatives, faith communities
- Foster parent adopters
- Recruited couples, singles

Child's itinerary for the journey to adoption: First Leg

1973

- Pendulum in parents' favor; safety second
- Find mom's mom or aunt but apple doesn't fall far from the tree
- "Indians": race, right?
- First available bed; institutions & group care
- To FP: don't get attached; don't even think adoption!

2016

- Prevention; safety is paramount
- Reunification primary plan
- ICWA
- Urgency: 15/22
- Concurrent planning (?)
- M&P relatives first (& alone?)
- Attachment to fp, sibs, life
- Recruitment (DR, child specific, targeted, general)



Child's itinerary for the journey to adoption: Second Leg

1973

- Pendulum in parents' favor
- Apple doesn't fall far from the tree – ever!
- Prospective adopters: nice people, want kids
- Un-adoptability is an immutable trait
- To FP: don't even think adoption even if there's no alternative for child
- Baggage? What baggage?

2016

- ICWA & dad (1 more time!)
- Trauma: what you see may not be what you get!
- No family is an island
- Youth: unpacking the “no”
- Family: separated but connected
- Testing limits
- It's not final 'til we all agree
- Unpacking lasts forever



Who adopts whom, and why?

1973

- Childless married straight couples; closed adoption
- Fostering as backdoor to adoption discouraged
- Apple doesn't fall far from the tree
- Criminals
- Strangers
- Same race
- Same jurisdiction

2016

- Unmarried & married couples, singles, lesbian, gay, straight, empty nesters; open adoption
- Foster parents; conversion families; recruited families
- Maternal & paternal relatives
- Tribal; traditional adoption
- Case file mining; fictive kin
- Fewer criminals
- Transracial
- Interjurisdictional



What do and don't we tell prospective adopters – about the process, about the children? When do we tell them and why?

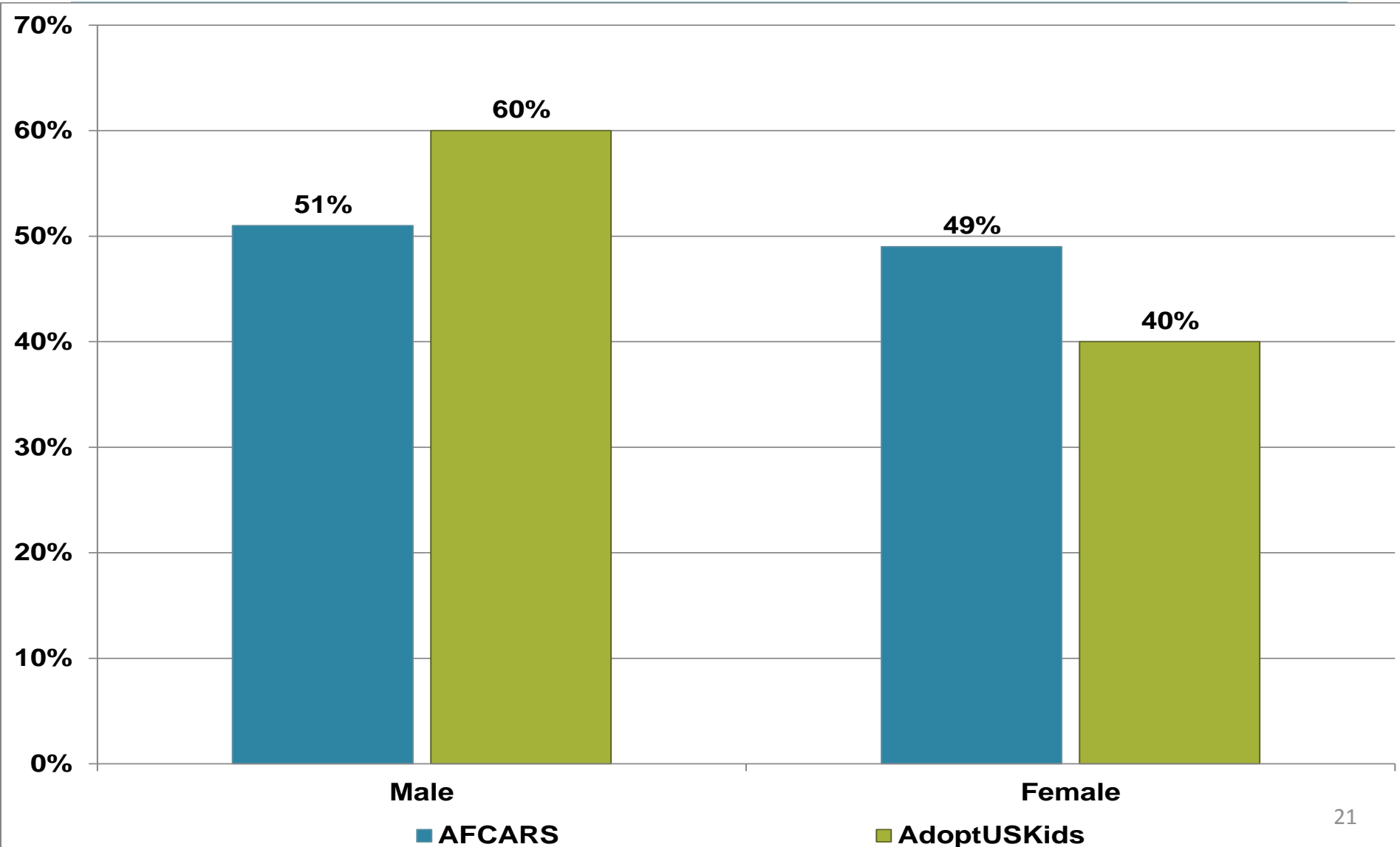
1973

- Effects of substances on fetus unknown
- Long-term effects of child trauma unknown
- Love heals all so ongoing support not so important
- Okay to split sibs
- Clean house=good home
- No dad

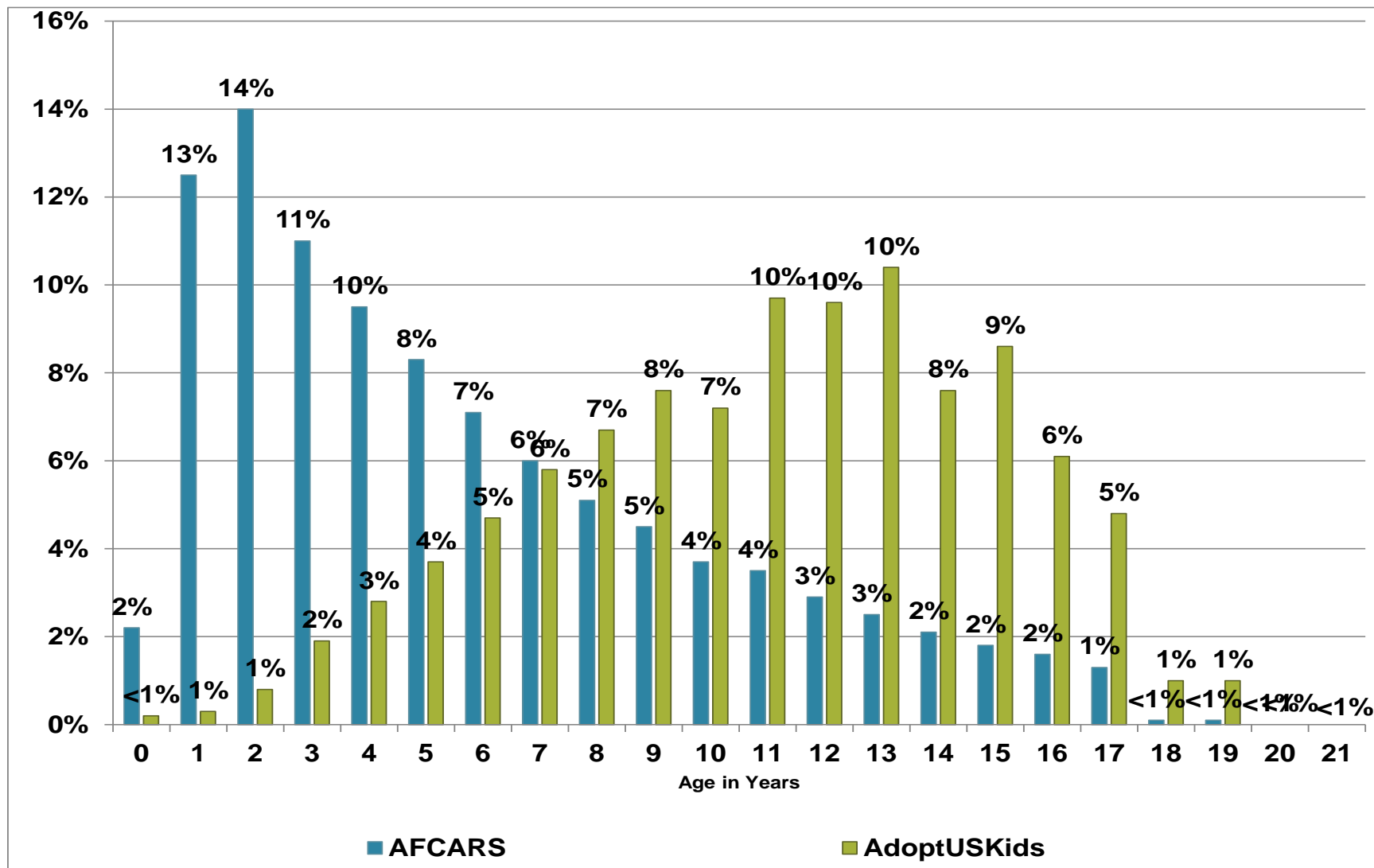
2016

- Pathologized & labeled trauma-related behaviors
- Over-medication
- Full disclosure but when?
- Continuum of recruit-engage-develop-support
- AUSK READiS model from first inquiry
- Photolisting narrative standards
- Financial supports

Who is getting adopted from U.S. foster care? AFCARS v AdoptUSKids 2014: by gender

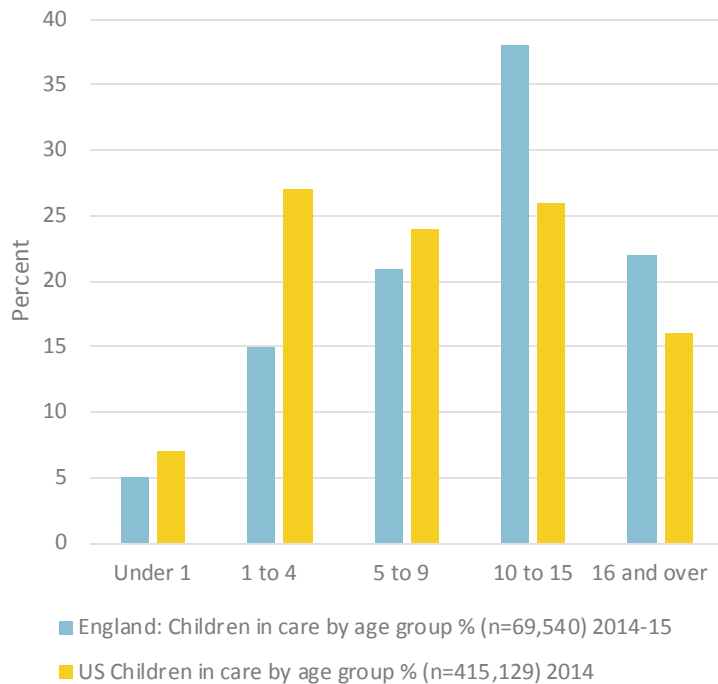


Who gets adopted from foster care? AFCARS v AdoptUSKids 2014: by age

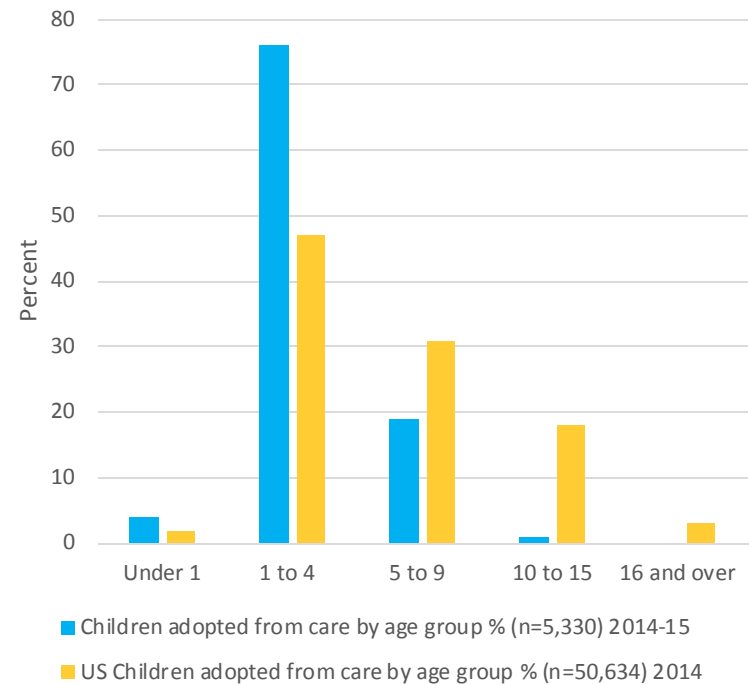


2014 England/US kids 2014 in care by age & adopted from care by age

Children in care by age group: US and England

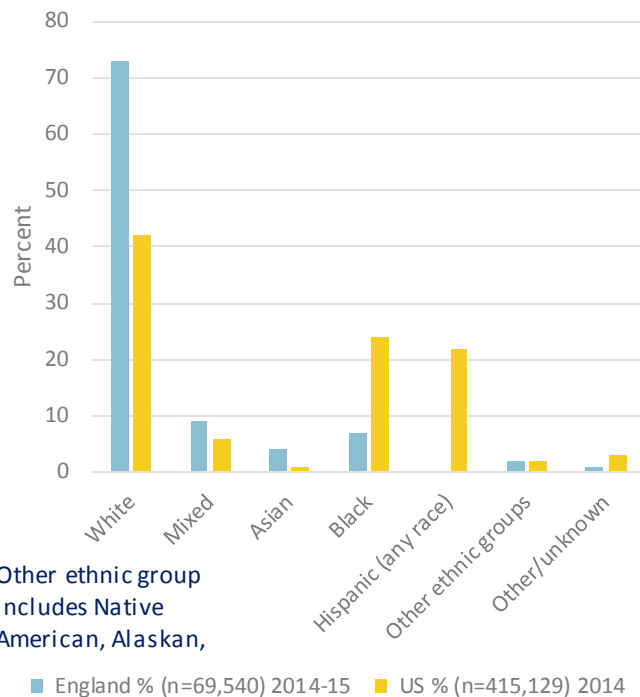


Children adopted from care by age group: US and England

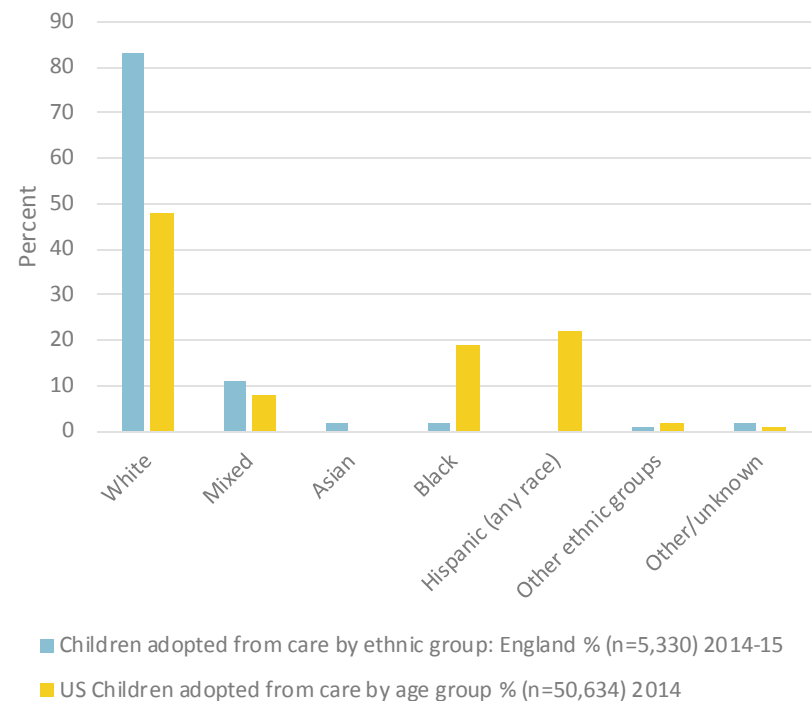


2014 England/US 2014 children in care by race & children adopted from care by race

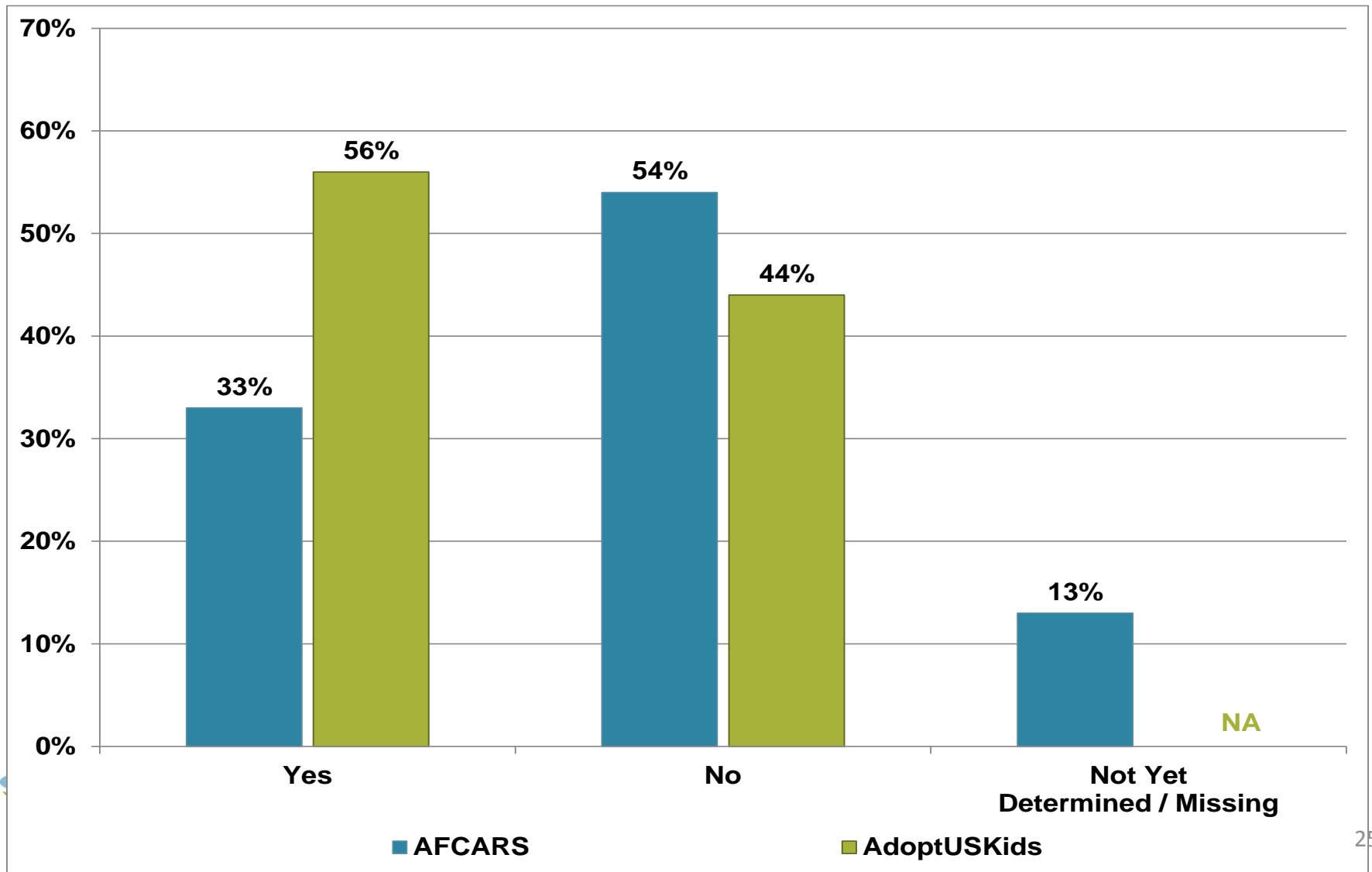
Children in care by Ethnic Group US and England



Children adopted from care by ethnic group: US and England



Who gets adopted from foster care? AFCARS v AdoptUSKids 2014: by disability



Who isn't getting adopted, and why?

Then what?

1973

- Adoption=healthy newborn white baby
- Children of color, esp African American
- Attached to fp who won't adopt (permanent fc)
- “Handicapped,” “mentally retarded” & mentally ill” kids in institutions
- Siblings together
- Interjurisdictional

2016

- Adoption=healthy newborn white baby, right?
- National Adoption Recruitment Campaign
- Older youth
- Kids of color, esp older African American males
- Siblings together
- Multiple special needs
- Interjurisdictional
- Option: support to 21, Medicaid to 24
- Guardianship option



Adoption in an electrified world: benefits & challenges

Benefits

- Can speed things up, e.g. NEICE
- Skype pre-placement visits, family connections
- Expansion of family resources for child
- Virtual matching events
- One button family inquiry on child

Challenges

- Inquiring families may benefit from
- Privacy of sensitive child information
- Predators
- Indirect disclosure of birth parent info via child info
- Openness whether sanctioned or not
- Can't un-ring a bell



Manchester
Metropolitan
University



AdoptUSKids

Together we hold their future

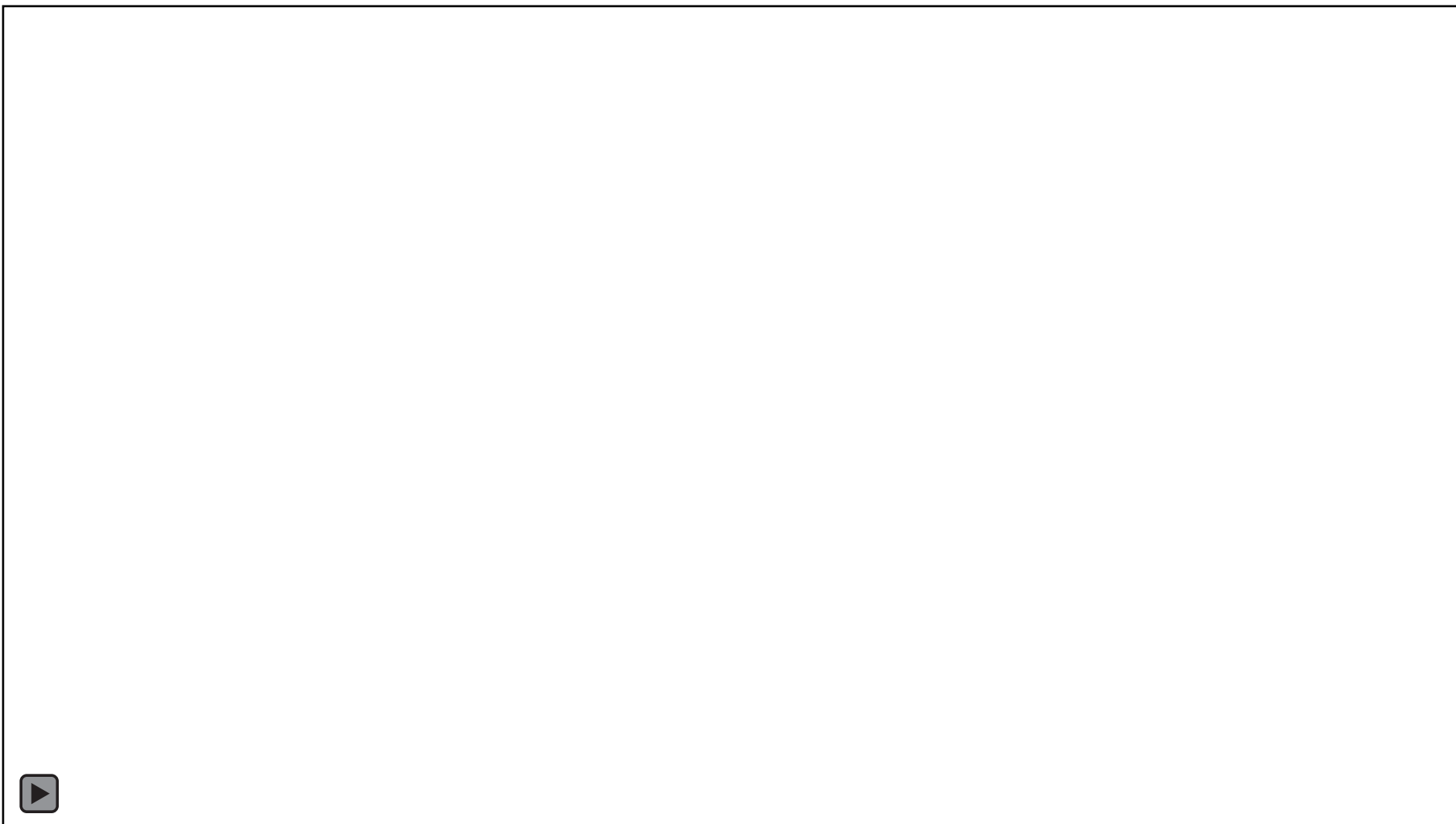
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National Adoption Recruitment Campaign

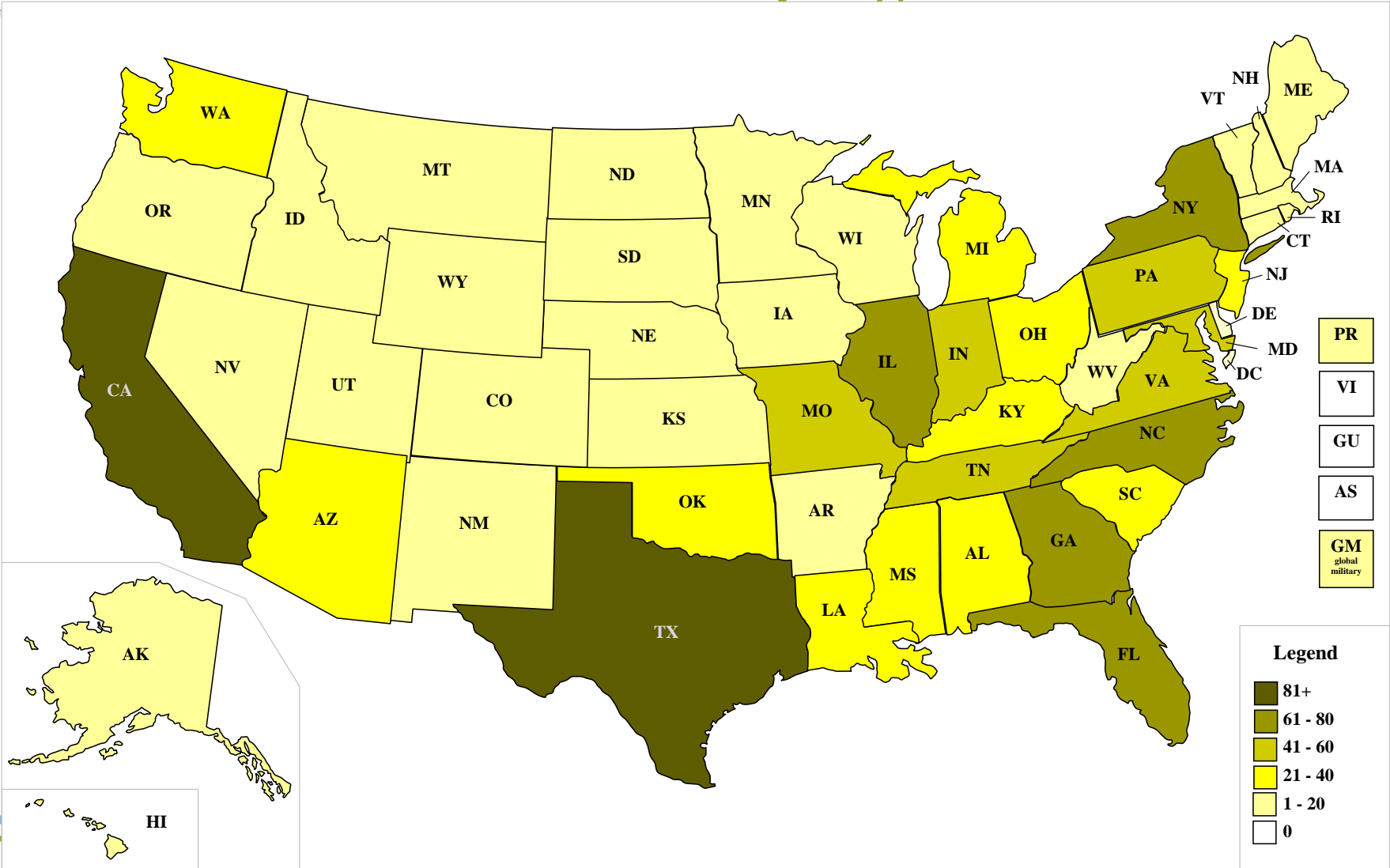
- What it is:
 - Multi-media campaign to raise public awareness
 - Each year focuses on recruiting families for different segment of waiting population
 - Support by social media campaign & speakers bureau
 - Campaign localization
- Who it serves:
 - General public; jurisdictions
 - Localization
- Results since 2002: \$50 million/year donated media



National Foster Care & Adoption Resource Exchange System (NAFCIES)

- What it is:
 - Exchange of exchanges; phone, email, web, chat
 - READiS (Recruit, Engage, Assess, Develop, inform, Support)
 - Family Tracking Database
- Who it serves: families, jurisdictions
- Results since 2002: 25K+ families/year

Families Contacting AdoptUSKids in January 2016 for Information about the Process of Fostering or Adopting from Foster Care



AdoptUSKids & NRCDR websites

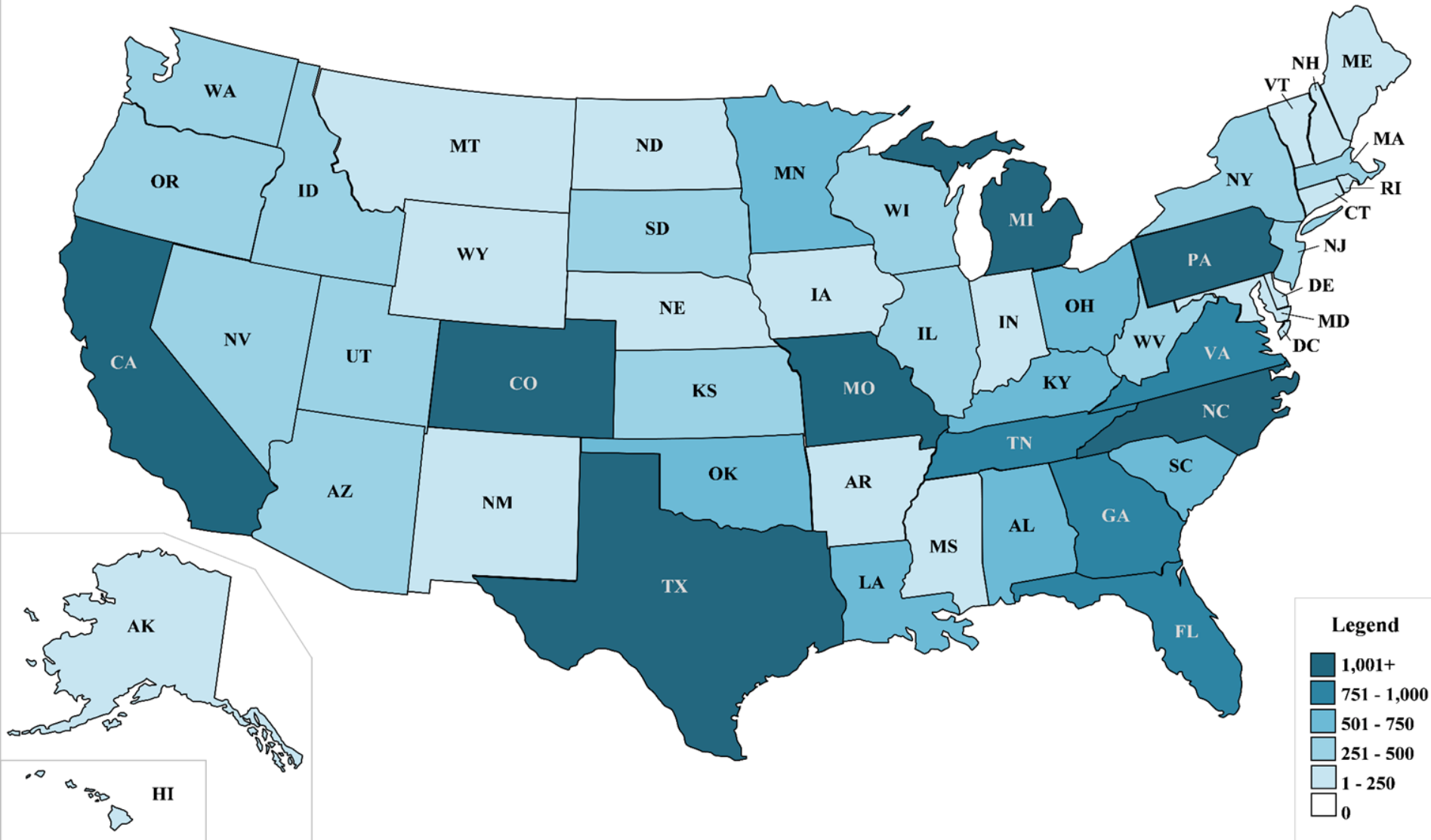
- What it is:
 - The go-to resource for families (ausk.org) & professionals (ausk.org & nr cdr.org)
 - State-specific information on fostering & adopting from foster care
 - Multiple two-way links with Gateway
- Who it serves:
 - Prospective & approved families; CW professionals; media
- Results since 2002:
 - Adoptuskids.org: nearly 20 million daily unique visitors in CY

National Adoption Photolisting Website

www.adoptuskids.org

- What it is:
 - Congressionally-mandated tool to increase pool of families available to children & youth waiting adoption “in and across state lines”
 - Used by all states & territories
 - Matching tool; Find a Family enhancements
- Who it serves:
 - Homestudy-approved families seeking to adopt & their workers
 - Children’s workers looking for adoptive families
- Results since 2002:
 - Children: 51K registered/26K placed; 38K families; 1600 agencies

National Adoption Photolisting Website





AdoptUSKids Social Media

- What it is:
 - Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, others
 - Facebook & Twitter events
 - Monthly e-communications
- Who it serves:
 - Families & professionals
- Results since 2002:
 - Over 180,000 Facebook followers; weekly reach of 150,000
 - Twitter: 4,000 new followers in CY 2015; Event reach 1M

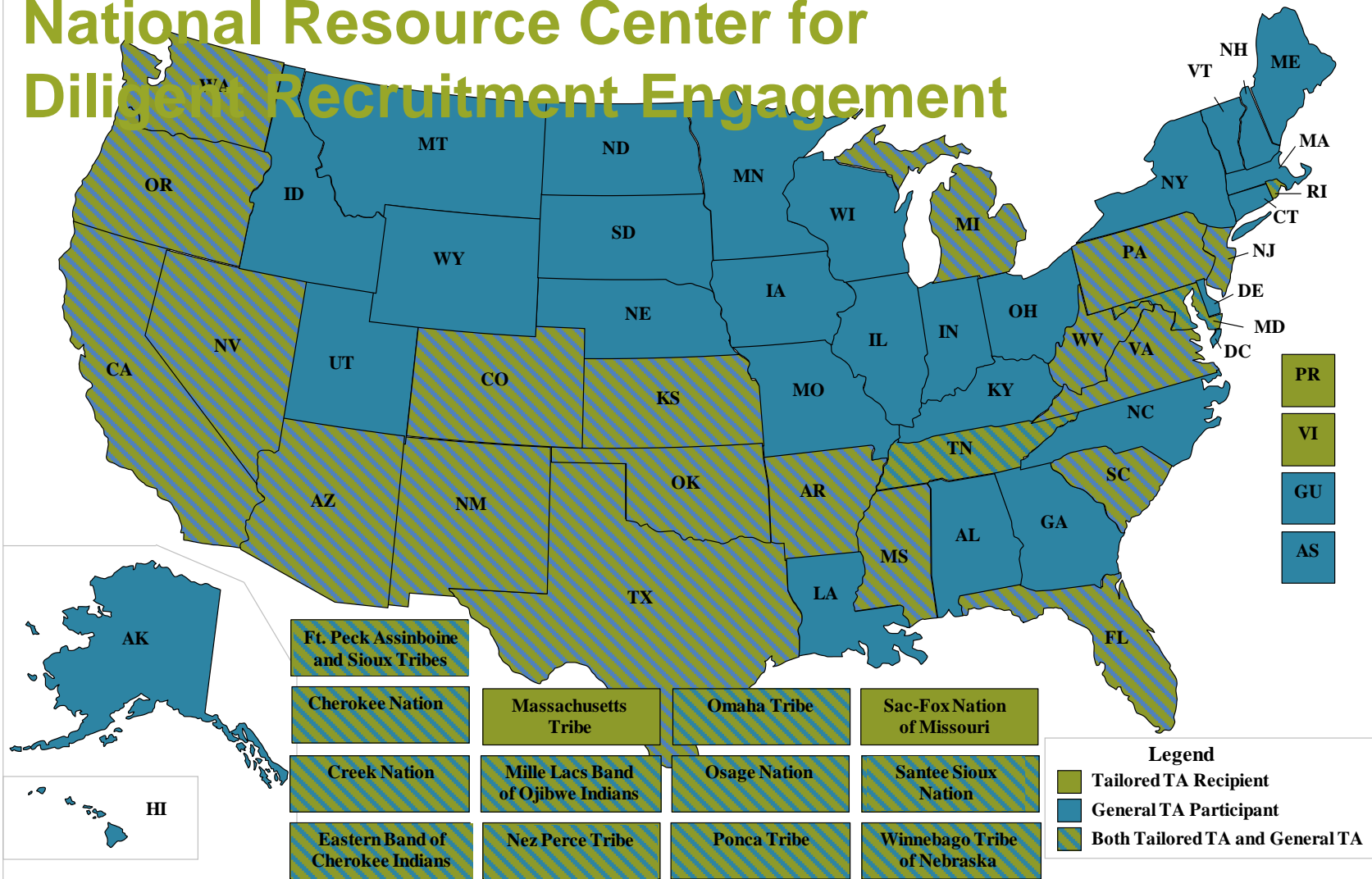
Research & Evaluation

- What it is:
 - Congressionally- commissioned Barriers & Success Factors study with supplemental studies
 - Rigorous independent look at reach & effectiveness of all AUSK & NRCDR services
 - Used for continuous quality improvement in own and states' services & outcomes
- Who it serves:
 - Primarily internal & for funder

National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment at AdoptUSKids

- What it is:
 - Provides capacity building technical assistance to states, territories & tribes re recruitment, engagement, development & support of foster, adoptive & kinship care families, including:
 - Capacity building services: diligent recruitment development, customer service, market segmentation, diligent recruitment navigator, data materials, family support
 - Tribal program development
 - Product development
 - Webinars
 - Peer to peer opportunities
- Who it serves:
 - Organizational & programmatic leadership

National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment Engagement



Alabama Coushatta; Acoma; Aleutian Pribilof Island Association; Assoc Vil Coun Pres; Blackfeet; Chickasaw; Citizen Potawatomi; Confederated Tribe of Grand Ronde; Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians; Confederated Tribe of Warm Springs; Crow Tribe; Eastern Shoshone Tribe; Forest County Potawatomi Community; Isleta; Kawerak; Keweenaw Bay Indian Community; Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma; Lac Du Flambeau; Makah; Maniilaq; Match E Be Nash She Wish Band Gun Lake Tribe; Navajo; Northern Arapaho Business Council; Northern Cheyenne; Orutsaramuit; Paiute; Pascua Yaqui; Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation; Penobscot; Poarch Creek Tribe; Port Gamble Sklallam Tribe; Ponca Tribe of Indians; Quileute Tribe; Salt River; Sandia Pueblo; Sault Ste Marie Chippewa; Seminole; Seneca Cayuga; Shashole Bannock Tribes; Sitka Tribe; Standing Rock Sioux Tribe North Dakota Portion; Standing Rock Sioux Tribe South Dakota Portion; Tanana Chiefs; Tlingit Haida; Tonkawa Tribe of Oklahoma; Tulalip Tribes; Turtle Mountain; Wampanoag of Gay Head; White Mt Apache; Yahama