



# *Annual Report*

*Court Year 2018 - 2019*







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## New Jersey Child Placement Advisory Council Executive Board

### Executive Board

Chair	Lorene S. Wilkerson	Middlesex County
Vice Chair	Eunice I. Salton	Middlesex County
Secretary	Adele Polomski	Ocean County
Treasurer	Penelope Rone	Ocean County

### Voting Members

Lila Bernstein	Morris County
Ummil-Khair Sameerah Lewis-Diaab	Middlesex County
Ronald Keith England	Essex County
Judith Foley	Salem County
Michael Krasner	Union County
Sandra Wilson Moss	Passaic County
Mary Parham	Middlesex County
Frank E. Petrucci	Essex County
Mary “Twinkie” Polizzi	Bergen County

### Non-Voting Members

Emeritus	Connie D. Jenkins-Buwa	Middlesex County
	William T. Noll	Monmouth County
	Susan Rodgers	Mercer County
Honorary	Darrell L. Armstrong	Mercer County
	Greg Rapport	Mercer County





# Letter from the Chair

## **To the Esteemed Members of the New Jersey Supreme Court, Governor and Legislators:**

During Court Year (CY) 2019, the New Jersey Child Placement Advisory Committee (NJ CPAC) progressed with the initiative identified in the CY 2018 Annual Report by establishing the NJ CPAC Partners Moving Forward Committee. As stated in the section entitled “NJ CPAC Activities for Court Year 2019”, the committee has identified its vision for the future and goals. This committee will continue to work throughout CY 2020 to identify specific housing issues affecting children facing removal from their homes.

Of concern to NJ CPAC, the Judiciary and all child welfare stakeholders throughout New Jersey is the overrepresentation of African American and Hispanic children in foster care in the state. During CY 2019, the Children in Court Improvement Committee (CICIC) and the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) reviewed data to identify and evaluate the variables that could contribute to racial inequities. Strategies are being developed to address racial inequities at decision-making points from a child's removal from the home to permanency. The NJ CPAC chair, through her membership on the race equity subcommittee of the CICIC, keeps NJ CPAC apprised of the work being done in this area. We are confident that through the diligent efforts of CICIC and the state Department of Children and Families (DCF), sustainable strategies will evolve to reduce racial inequities at every stage of a child's case through the child welfare system.

The Legislative Committee of NJ CPAC submitted letters of support for S1505 and A1707: Expand membership of the New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect to the appropriate legislative committees. It is anticipated the bill will be signed and approved by the governor in CY 2020. NJ CPAC looks forward to participating on the Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, another avenue for being instrumental in the development of recommendations to benefit children receiving services from CP&P.

As NJ CPAC forges relationships and partnerships with child advocacy groups in New Jersey, we are becoming more recognized in the child welfare community. This recognition enables us to be more effective advocates for the safety and well-being of all of New Jersey's children. As chair, I commend the executive board of NJ CPAC for its dedication to these efforts.

**Lorene S. Wilkerson**

Chair, New Jersey Child Placement Advisory Council



### **NJ CPAC Activities for Court Year 2019**

NJ CPAC held its annual full-day training event, For New Jersey Children: Building Healthy Minds, Schools and Families, at the DCF Training Academy in New Brunswick on June 28, 2019. Katherine Stoehr, DCF deputy commissioner of operations, was the keynote speaker. She provided an overview of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act signed into law on Feb. 9, 2018. The goal of the new law is to reduce the number of children entering foster care by prioritizing prevention services and treatment of out-of-home care. Attendees selected from the following workshops:

1. **Staying United: How the Department of Education (DOE) and the DCF Collaborate to Improve Results for Children and Youth in Foster Care.** The workshop leaders were Barbara Pugh, state DOE education program development specialist with the Office of Supplemental Education Programs in the Division of Student Services; Michele Safran, DCF administrator of the Office of Educational Support and Programs; and Andrea Sunderville, DOE Title I program coordinator in the Office of Supplemental Education Programs, Division of Student Services.
2. **The Role of Culture and Racial Trauma in the Psychological Evaluation of Parents.** Denise M. Williams Johnson, a contracted psychologist with CP&P who conducts psychological evaluations and provides consultation and psychotherapy for CP&P parents, led the workshop.
3. **How SPAN Empowers Caregivers to Advocate for Their Children.** Carolyn Hayer, director of family and professional development for the SPAN Parent Advocacy Network, led the workshop.
4. **Behind-The-Scenes Primer on the Critical Role of the Clinical Consultant.** Laura Leigh Smith, Union County Care Management Organization's clinical consultant to CP&P, led the workshop.
5. **What's Next? Solving the Problems of Aging-Out: An Interactive Experience.** Greg Rapport, founder/executive director of Age-Out Angels and honorary member of the NJ CPAC Executive Board, led the workshop.





### **NJ CPAC Partners Moving Forward Committee**

The inaugural meeting of the NJ CPAC Partners Moving Forward Committee occurred on Oct. 25, 2018. Joanne M. Dietrich, assistant director of the family practice division at the Administrative Office of the Courts, was the keynote speaker.

NJ CPAC's vision is to develop a statewide coordinated system to quickly transition New Jersey children from homeless to housed. Based on the feedback from the committee, the goal is to provide fair and equal access to affordable housing opportunities unrestricted by county borders.

The committee has developed a survey to be distributed during the 2020 court year to all New Jersey agencies and interested parties that deal with families in crisis. The survey, prepared by Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ), will identify specific housing issues faced by families with children.



***“Everyone needs a house to live in, but a supportive family is what builds a home.”***

***-Anthony Liccione  
author, poet, national guardsman***



# Trends in New Jersey Foster Care

## Facts, Figures and Analyses

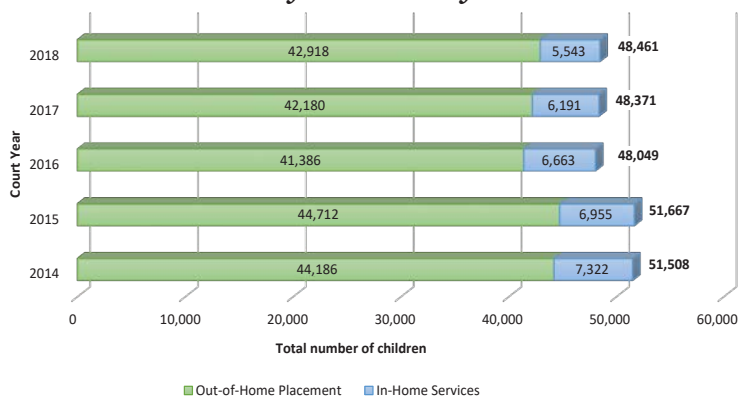
This report measures the performance of the child welfare and protection system pertaining to children in out-of-home placement during the period July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019. The intent is to provide accountability through public transparency and make recommendations for improvements as per NJ CPAC’s mandates under the CPR Act. The findings use court data collected from the Judiciary, the DCF and other government sources. There are some differences between sources in the manner in which data is collected and reported. For example, the Judiciary reports data collected during the court year (July 1 to June 30) and the DCF reports data collected during the calendar year (Jan.1 to Dec. 31). Differences in reporting periods are noted. Percentages and fractions are rounded up to whole numbers.

### **More children are receiving CP&P services while living at home.**

In recent years, the DCF has begun placing greater emphasis on strengthening family bonds and working with communities to identify and help at-risk families before they are in crisis. Chart 1 indicates that the number of children and youth receiving services from the DCF increased during the 2018 calendar year by 5,090 and the number of children receiving services in an out-of-home living arrangement decreased by 648, from 6,191 to 5,543.

The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) was passed in 2018. The DCF has not yet formally implemented FFPSA. Beginning in early 2019, New Jersey began to shift federal funds from treatment programs to evidence-based prevention services and programs for children at imminent risk of entering foster care. The DCF also redirected funds to parenting and other programs for biological parents, expectant and parenting youth, resource parents, grandparents and other kinship caregivers.

**Chart 1:**  
***Children and youth served by the CP&P***



\*Source: [www.jchilddata.rutgers.edu/portal/entering-placement-reports](http://www.jchilddata.rutgers.edu/portal/entering-placement-reports).  
All data is based on calendar year v. court year.



**Fewer children are entering foster care (out-of-home placement).**

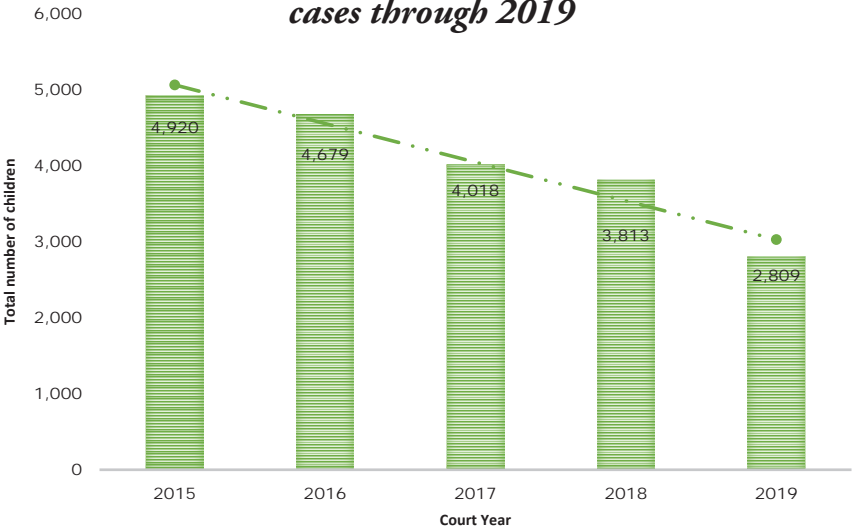
Chart 2, utilizing statistics collected by the Judiciary, shows that the statewide percentage of all children removed and placed into New Jersey’s child welfare and protection system, commonly referred to as “out-of-home placement,” has dropped by 56.2 percent over a five-year period. The decline is likely due to more families and children receiving prevention programs, supports and in-home services.

Last year, NJ CPAC pointed to the possibility of another factor that could be contributing to the continuing drop in children entering all types of placement, specifically the concern among some communities that reporting child abuse, child neglect and/or incidences of domestic violence might lead to questions about immigration status. In April 2019, the *Star Ledger* reported that agents from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations had conducted a month-long sweep that spanned 14 New Jersey counties.

*New Jersey’s immigrant population between 2010-2014: More than one in four residents are immigrants and one in 11 children is a US citizen living with at least one undocumented family member.*

\*Source: American Immigration Council

**Chart 2:**  
***Children with new out-of-home placement cases through 2019***



\*Source: New Filings Dashboard.

[www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us:10443](http://www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us:10443), run August 16, 2019.



Table 1 specifies the total number of new placements (FC court case filings) opened in all of New Jersey’s 21 counties. In 2019, Cape May was the only county to open more new cases than in the prior year.

**Table 1:**  
***New Placements (FC) opened by County 2015 through 2019***

County	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	+/-
Atlantic	357	290	287	176	142	-34
Bergen	196	173	169	123	97	-26
Burlington	349	332	231	231	170	-61
Camden	744	709	584	690	509	-181
Cape May	111	109	99	84	89	+5
Cumberland	210	281	254	238	146	-92
Essex	550	496	527	502	347	-155
Gloucester	267	278	223	167	138	-29
Hudson	394	259	193	156	135	-21
Hunterdon	36	36	8	25	13	-12
Mercer	238	258	192	176	126	-50
Middlesex	223	236	185	189	112	-77
Monmouth	271	262	204	190	93	-97
Morris	85	89	58	78	40	-38
Ocean	278	269	209	201	192	-9
Passaic	249	240	174	185	122	-63
Salem	80	95	90	106	103	-3
Somerset	91	71	63	43	31	-12
Sussex	37	51	46	41	28	-13
Union	159	170	125	138	121	-17
Warren	67	57	97	74	55	-19
Total	4,992	4,761	4,018	3,813	2,809	-1,004

\*Source: New Filings Dashboard.  
[www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us:10443](http://www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us:10443), run August 16, 2019.

***Fewer children are in placement because of parental substance use.***

Children enter out-of-home placement for a variety of reasons. According to information documented on the Notice of Placement (NOP), the form used by CP&P to notify the courts that a child has been placed, the most common cause for placement in 2019 was parental abandonment. (Refer to Table 2 for a footnote for the legal definition of abandonment.) In 2018, NJ CPAC identified potential issues relevant to the manner in which information is retrieved and documented on the NOP. These concerns and recommendations remain relevant for 2019:

- For the past three years, not a single child entered placement as a result of a family’s “financial problems.” NJ CPAC finds this puzzling and concerning. According to the New Jersey chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and other primary sources, poverty, food insecurity, unemployment and parental job loss are common triggers that place a child at greater risk for abuse and neglect.
- Parental substance use disorder as a reason for placement has declined. The decline could be attributed to more parents receiving treatment as a result of their child entering placement, but without additional information NJ CPAC is unable to draw an unassailable conclusion.
- The Judiciary should continue to work with CP&P to ensure that forms used to collect, and document client data are current; use consistent terminology, definitions and measurements; and are comprehensive.

**Table 2:**  
***Reasons for placement in 2018***

Parent-Related Reason for Placement	2017 Total	2018 Total	2019 Total
Abandonment <sup>1</sup>	833	794	753
Abuse/Neglect	441	450	313
Death	71	83	78
Substance Use Disorder	165	166	124
Financial Problems	0	0	0
Inadequate Housing	543	537	477
Incarceration	415	387	328
Mentally Disabled	14	12	10
Physically Disabled	4	2	1
Surrender of Child	26	25	31
Child-Related Reason for Placement	2017 Total	2018 Total	2019 Total
Behavioral Issues	381	367	300
Delinquency/FJ Case	13	12	7
Disability	37	45	35
Substance Use Disorder	1	1	1
Other Reasons	37	25	17

<sup>1</sup> The legal definition of abandonment (NJSA: 9:6-8.21(c) (5)) includes failure “to care for and keep control and custody of a child so that the child shall be exposed to physical or moral risk without proper and sufficient protection” and failure to “care for and keep the control and custody of a child so that the child shall be liable to be supported and maintained at the expense of the public.”

\*Source: New Filings Dashboard. [www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us](http://www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us): 10443, run August 16, 2019.





**Schools are the primary reporters for suspected incidences of child abuse and neglect.**

In New Jersey, any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected has a legal responsibility to report it to CP&P (1-877 NJ ABUSE). CP&P receives reports of suspected abuse and neglect from multiple sources. The CP&P and the AOC are working to reconcile differences in the way data is captured.

Reporter	Total Children
Schools	18,389
Police	17,892
Health (Hospital)	12,347
Anonymous	10,859
Friend, Neighbor, Community	7,940
Parent	6,539
Agency	4,335
Relative	3,764
Legal and Court	1,969
Facility	715
Self	294
Other	5,013

**Table 3:**  
***Children referred to CP&P for an abuse/neglect investigation by source in 2018***

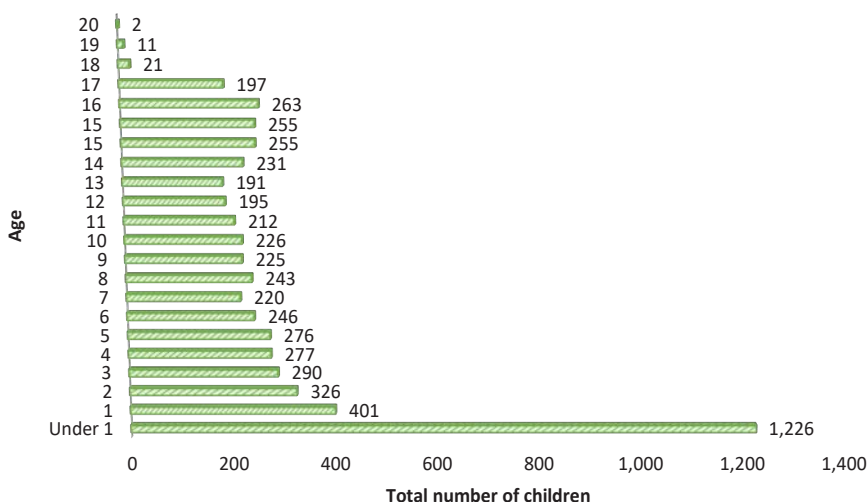
\*Source: <https://www.njchilddata.rutgers.edu/portal/cps-reports>, August 16, 2019.



**Most children entering placement are younger than 12 months.**

The primary goal for all children in foster care is the timely attainment of safe and healthy permanent homes, preferably with the parent (reunification) or with a family member or friend. A child can enter placement multiple times. The following chart illustrates that the total number of children entering placement drops precipitously for children at age one and does not appreciably rise until children enter adolescence.

***Chart 3:  
Ages of children with active court cases entering out-of-home placement and/or receiving services in the home in 2019***



\*Source: [webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us](http://webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us), Age at Time of Placement for Minors with Active Cases as of Court Year 2019, run December 4, 2019.

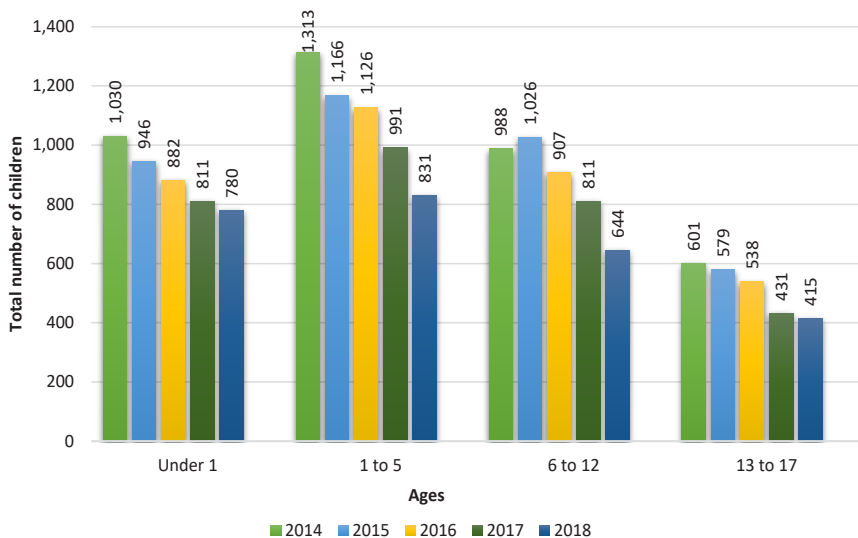


**Children are more likely to enter foster care for the first time between the ages of 12 months through five years.**

The total number of children entering out-of-home placement is declining across all age groups. Most children who entered out-of-home placement for the first time in calendar year 2018 did so between the ages of one and five years. This downward trend has been consistent for the past five years.

**Chart 4:**

***Ages of children entering out-of-home placement for the first time 2014 through 2018 (calendar year)***



\*Source: Data from New Jersey Department of Children and Families. [www.njchilddata.rutgers.edu/portal/entering-placement-reports](http://www.njchilddata.rutgers.edu/portal/entering-placement-reports), run August 6, 2019.



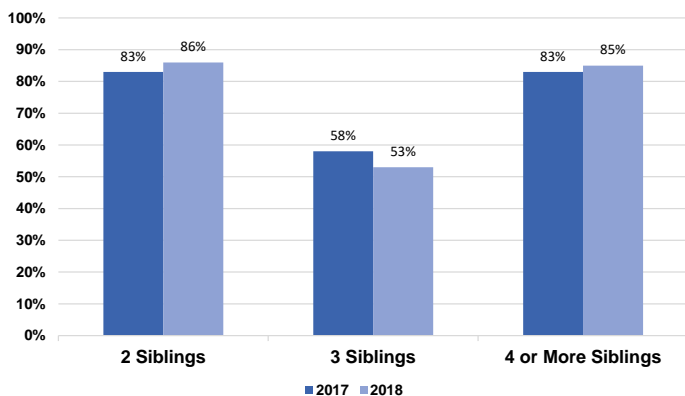


**More children with four or more siblings are placed in the same home.**

The DCF provides data on the number of siblings entering out-of-home placement together or within 30 days of one another. The most recent report of the federal monitor, released by the Center for the Study of Policy in February 2020, covered the monitoring period XXII (Jan.1, 2018 through June 30, 2018). The federal monitor reported during this period that CP&P maintained a solid pool of placement resource homes and group homes for children entering out-of-home placement. The federal monitor requires that all children in out-of-home placement be placed with siblings at least 80 percent of the time.

NJ CPAC commends CP&P for finding the least-restrictive, most family-like settings when children cannot remain with their biological parents for reasons of safety and for recruiting resource parents willing to accept siblings.

***Chart 5:  
Percentage of children placed with at least one sibling in  
2017 and 2018 (calendar year)***



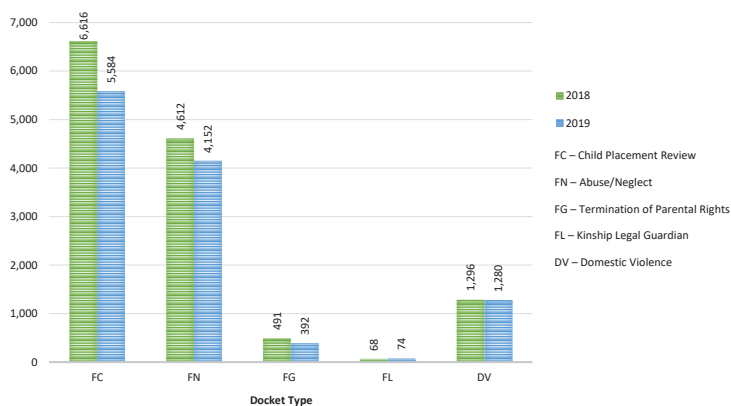
\*Source: Data from New Jersey Department of Children and Families. [www.njchilddata.rutgers.edu/portal](http://www.njchilddata.rutgers.edu/portal), August 6, 2019.



### **The number of active/pending court dockets (FC) has declined.**

A docket is the official summary of all court proceedings related to a court case. The family division has 11 docket types that encompass all aspects of family life. A case can have multiple dockets. Chart 6 captures the four docket types most familiar to CPR boards: FC, FN, FG and FL. According to Child Abuse America, intimate partner violence often occurs alongside child abuse and neglect, and its prevention is critical for child abuse prevention. Therefore, the domestic violence (DV) docket is included in Chart 6. However, without case-specific information NJ CPAC does not know how many of these cases involve children and/or youth residing in the home. A study published in the *Journal of Family Psychology* (Appel and Holden, 1988) found that when children are in the home, rates for the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse for the same family averages 40 percent.

**Chart 6:**  
***Number of active and pending cases by docket type  
for court year***



\*Source: Court year summaries of active pending cases (family division), June 2019.



**Approximately one in 10 abuse/neglect court cases (FN) are more than two years old.**

***Table 4:  
Number and age of cases by county for out-of-home  
and in-home supervision***

County	0-11 Months	12-14 Months	15-17 Months	18-20 Months	21-24 Months	More than 2 Years	Total
Atlantic	167	21	17	15	9	13	242
Bergen	118	30	17	8	12	15	200
Burlington	138	24	7	13	8	13	203
Camden	401	58	46	31	36	40	612
Cape May	71	7	10	4	5	6	103
Cumberland	142	13	7	7	6	11	186
Essex	241	45	29	31	31	76	453
Gloucester	119	18	10	8	5	10	170
Hudson	140	21	16	18	9	35	239
Hunterdon	19	4	1	1	2	1	28
Mercer	101	19	18	14	17	15	184
Middlesex	92	12	13	9	10	20	156
Monmouth	94	16	15	9	10	13	157
Morris	37	14	10	5	3	2	71
Ocean	164	26	18	11	11	18	248
Passaic	95	11	7	5	5	11	134
Salem	44	4	2	2	2	2	56
Somerset	36	5	4	7	3	9	64
Sussex	27	2	1	0	0	1	31
Union	118	24	15	5	5	30	197
Warren	33	3	3	1	4	4	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,397</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>3,782</b>

\*Source: New Filings Dashboard. [www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us](http://www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us), run Nov. 16, 2019.



*Administrative offices of  
NJ CPAC are located at the  
Richard J. Hughes Justice  
Complex in Trenton.*



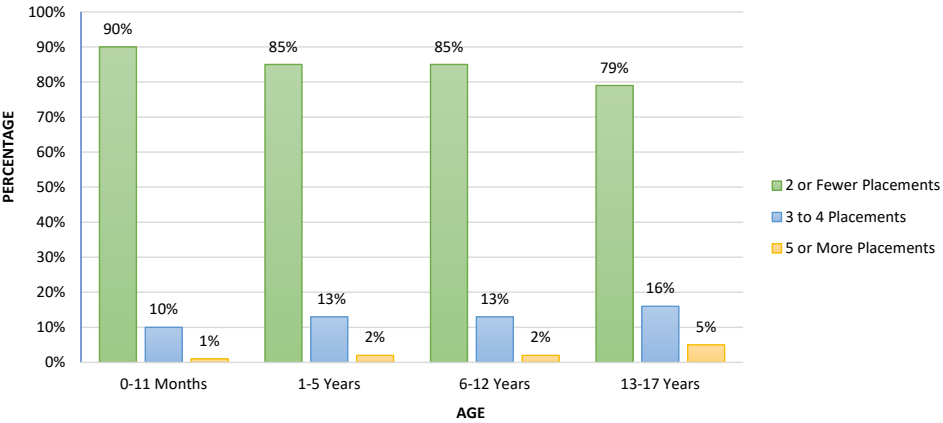




***Most children entering foster care for the first-time experience two or less placements in the first year.***

Providing insight into placement stability is Chart 7, which reveals the total percentage of placements experienced by all children placed out of the home for the first time during calendar year 2017, the last year such data was available on the DCF and Rutgers University joint data hub. Most children in all age groups experienced two or less placements. Youth ages 13-17 were the most likely to experience the greatest instability during the first year, with five percent experiencing five or more out-of-home placements.

***Chart 7:  
Percentage of placement changes by age group children experienced following their initial removal from the home in 2017***



\*Source: Data from New Jersey Department of Children and Families. [www.njchilddata.rutgers.edu/portal](http://www.njchilddata.rutgers.edu/portal), August 6, 2019.

**Slightly more than eight percent of children in foster care experience three or more placements.**

The Judiciary considers a placement a repeated placement when a child placed with a resource parent/family is returned to the biological parent, or reunified, and then removed again from the home into placement. The initial repeated placement means that the first attempt at reunification was unsuccessful. This could happen for a variety of reasons, such as when a parent experiences a relapse from recovery or a child continues to experience behavioral health and/or physical issues that an already fragile family is too ill-equipped to handle.

According to state law, each time CP&P returns a child into resource family care, the placement must be counted as a new placement. Whenever a child is again placed into foster care, CP&P will prepare a repeated placement plan to ensure that the goals of safety and permanency are met through the safe return of the child to the parents. If a return is not possible, the state files for guardianship in order to process the child for adoption. If termination of parental rights is not appropriate, CP&P will seek an alternative permanent placement, preferably with a family member.

NJ CPAC recognizes that older children, children with multiple siblings and children with disabilities requiring extensive supports and treatments are more challenging to place than their healthier and younger peers. In 2013, the Children and Family Research Center, School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, found that children with clinical diagnoses of emotional disturbance generally experience greater placement instability than their peers, and children with behavioral or physical health challenges or additional medical diagnoses are more likely to be moved. Nonetheless, a child with multiple repeated placements means that the system has somehow failed that child in attaining permanency. (Cross, Koh, Rolock, Eblen-Manning, Why do children experience multiple placement changes in foster care? *Journal of Public Child Welfare*).

***Table 5:  
Number of placements experienced by children with court cases for CY 2015 through 2018***

Court Year	In 1 <sup>st</sup> Placement	In 2 <sup>nd</sup> Placement	In 3 <sup>rd</sup> Placement	In 4 <sup>th</sup> Placement	In 5 <sup>th</sup> Placement	In 6 <sup>th</sup> Placement	In 7 <sup>th</sup> Placement
2015	6,015	1,597	359	85	28	7	4
2016	5,839	1,491	385	80	28	3	2
2017	5,160	1,429	382	89	25	0	4
2018	4,745	1,330	373	89	28	3	6
2019	3,950	1,132	331	89	26	1	5

\*Source: [www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us](http://www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us), run, June 30, 2019.



**Table 6:**  
*Number of placements experienced by children by county*

County	In 1 <sup>st</sup> Placement	In 2 <sup>nd</sup> Placement	In 3 <sup>rd</sup> Placement	In 4 <sup>th</sup> Placement	In 5 <sup>th</sup> Placement	In 6 <sup>th</sup> Placement	In 7 <sup>th</sup> Placement
Atlantic	213	52	10	7	2	0	0
Bergen	150	49	8	3	1	1	0
Burlington	178	52	15	5	0	0	0
Camden	464	132	53	18	10	0	0
Cape May	111	28	9	1	2	0	0
Cumberland	193	56	21	8	2	0	0
Essex	727	201	35	6	1	0	0
Gloucester	198	63	17	9	5	0	2
Hudson	217	75	13	5	0	0	0
Hunterdon	13	3	2	0	0	0	0
Mercer	263	57	18	2	0	0	0
Middlesex	161	40	23	3	0	0	1
Monmouth	155	48	29	7	2	0	0
Morris	76	17	1	0	0	0	0
Ocean	242	81	27	6	1	0	0
Passaic	168	49	14	6	0	0	0
Salem	71	26	9	0	0	0	2
Somerset	50	16	5	0	0	0	0
Sussex	33	14	4	0	0	0	0
Union	214	50	12	2	0	0	0
Warren	53	23	6	1	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,950</b>	<b>1,132</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>

\*Source: [www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us](http://www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us), run, June 30, 2019.

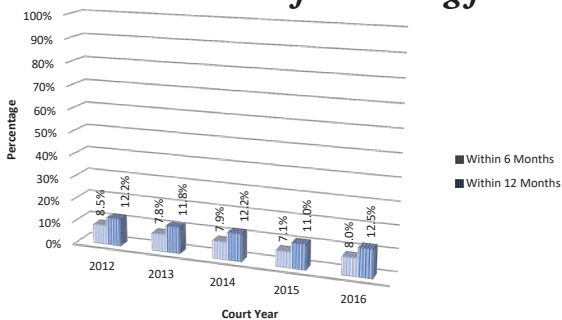


### **One year after returning home reunification is successful for most families.**

The DCF provides data through 2016 on the percentage of children who re-enter out-of-home placement after returning home, or reunification. Approximately one in eight return to the resource family six months after reunification occurs, suggesting that for these families either the parent was not ready to parent, the circumstances that led to the child's removal were not ameliorated or the families stopped participating in services. Twelve percent return to out-of-home placement one year after reunification. NJ CPAC does not have access to more current data to determine if CP&P should include additional circumstances and conditions that might have contributed to the initial placement of the child when attempting reasonable efforts to assist parents in making their home safe and healthy.

#### ***Chart 8:***

#### ***Percentage of children who re-enter out-of-home placement after exiting foster care***



***“In New Jersey, Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) have consistently maintained over 94 percent of children in their placement at the time of service, including children who are involved with the child welfare system.”***  
***-Casey Family Programs, 2017***

\*Source: Data from New Jersey Department of Children and Families. [www.njchilddata.rutgers.edu/portal](http://www.njchilddata.rutgers.edu/portal), run August 6, 2019.

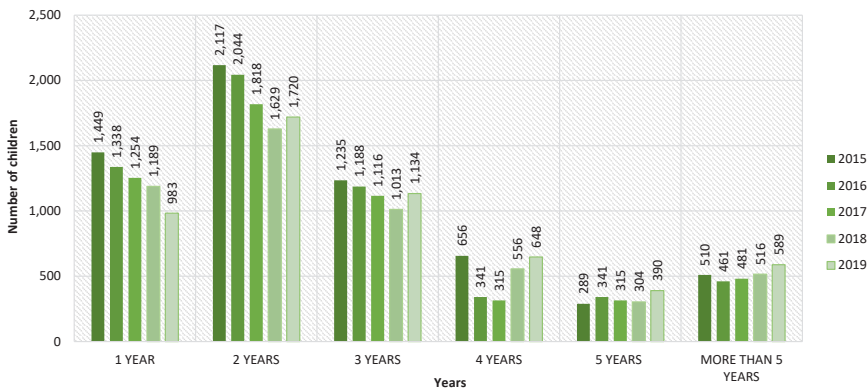




**Nearly half of the children ages 1 through 6 who became legal orphans in 2018 were adopted.**

Chart 9 shows that the number of children spending more than five years in placement has increased over a four-year period, while those spending 12 months or less in placement has steadily decreased over a span of five years. Meanwhile, the Judiciary is reviewing the case files of children who are in placement for three years or longer, including youth who are aging out, in long-term specialized care or waiting for adoption. Further analyses should improve understanding as to the reasons why these children have not obtained timely permanency.

***Chart 9:  
Number of years children spent in placement through 2019***



\*Source: [www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us](http://www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us).  
Minors: Length of Time on Placement, CY 2019, run January 2019.



**Older youth continue to exit the system unemployed and without documented housing plans.**

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness (*2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report*), within 18 months of exiting placement, 40 to 50 percent of aged-out youth become homeless.

The DCF reported that in 2018, 157 New Jersey youth 18 years of age or older exited foster care ([njchilddata.rutgers.edu/portal/exiting-placement-reports](http://njchilddata.rutgers.edu/portal/exiting-placement-reports)). The DCF collaborated with the federal monitor to review the records of 50 youth ages 18 through 21 who exited care between Jan. 1 and June 30, 2018 without achieving permanency.

The case review focused on housing, education and employment status at the time of exit. The federal monitor reported the study's findings in its February 2019 report, *Progress of the New Jersey Department of Children and Families Monitoring Period XXII Report for Charlie and Nadine H. v. Murphy*. For the 50 cases reviewed, the federal monitor concluded that the DCF did not meet its performance requirements for housing, education and employment.

Though the federal monitor conceded that the “universe of cases” to which these measures applied were “small and susceptible to fluctuations, results of case record reviews need to be conducted to improve practices to support older youth.” NJ CPAC shares the federal monitor's concerns and is pleased that the DCF is reevaluating its case practices for older children to improve outcomes.



**More than four-thousand unaccompanied immigrant children were released to New Jersey sponsors October 2018 through September 2019.**

In all placements, the best interests of a child are paramount. NJ CPAC would be remiss if it did not express concern for the well-being of immigrant children and youth placed in federal detention centers and the separation of undocumented immigrant families at our nation's southwestern borders. The psychological trauma and lifelong consequences of separating children from parents and institutionalizing children in large group settings are well documented. Multiple major media outlets such as CNN and NPR continue to report that the best interests of these children are not being met, including some who have been placed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in for-profit and not-for-profit shelters and group homes in New Jersey. While the goal is to safely place these children with approved family members while the child awaits immigration and/or deportation proceedings, undocumented family members could be reluctant to come forward as sponsors, unnecessarily prolonging a child's stay in a setting that cannot replicate the experience and support that comes from family and community.

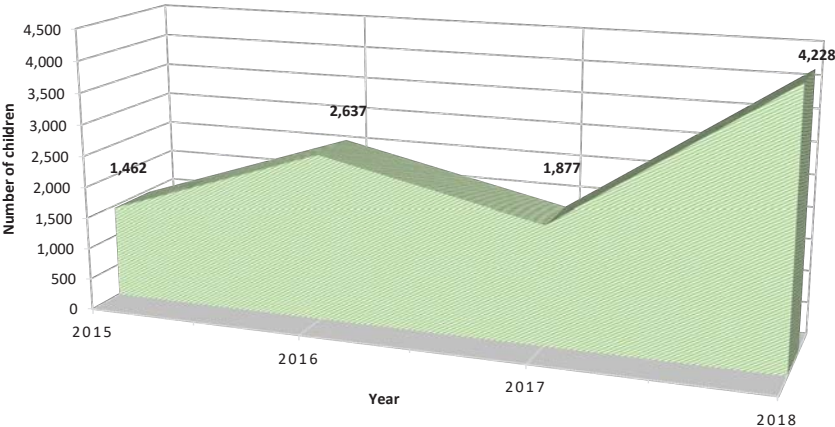
The DCF has policies and procedures on the out-of-home placement of children with kinship caregivers who are undocumented immigrants or in kinship homes with undocumented immigrants as household members. These policies, revised in February 2019, include the following caution: "Workers shall consider the unique challenges faced by undocumented immigrants when considering placement of a child in such a home. Undocumented immigrants are at risk of unanticipated detention and removal from the United States at any time, and their ability to provide long term stability for children in their care is therefore inherently uncertain." (CP&P-IV-B-1-125, Issuance 200: Evaluating Placement with Undocumented Immigrant Caregivers.) Lack of trust in the system could

further prohibit approved family members from accessing the medical and psychological help needed by the children temporarily placed under their care. To address these barriers, New Jersey needs to continue to engage and educate communities and stakeholders, including the DOE, on its placement policies and interventions.

As child advocates, NJ CPAC commends New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal for issuing General Directive 2018-6, which limits the voluntary assistance that New Jersey state and local police officers provide to Immigrations and Custom Enforcement (ICE) agents to strengthen trust between law enforcement officers and diverse immigrant communities. Victims and witnesses need to feel safe reporting crimes. NJ CPAC also applauds New Jersey Chief Justice Stuart Rabner for issuing Directive #07-19, which protects immigrants from being arrested inside courthouses and modifies rules for the collection of immigration-related data by court staff.

NJ CPAC does not endorse separating a child from a parent unless the child is in a dangerous situation. In January 2019, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued a report by the Office of Inspector General that nearly 3,000 immigrant children had been forcibly separated at the border from their parents under a zero-tolerance immigration policy. On Jan. 17, 2019, the *New York Times* reported claims by the American Civil Liberties Union that despite the 2018 official end to the federal zero tolerance approach to forcibly separating families, children were still being separated from parents and guardians. In the same article the *New York Times* reported that the lack of a coordinated formal tracking system between the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the arm of Health and Human Services that takes in the children, and the Department of Homeland Security, which separated them from their parents, led to delays in reuniting families. This is unacceptable.

**Chart 10:**  
***Number of unaccompanied children released to approved  
New Jersey sponsors***



\*Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement, US Administration of Children and Families, fiscal year October 2018 – September 2019.





*Child Placement Review is a statewide program. CPR board volunteers meet at local courthouses at least once a month to review cases and prepare recommendations for family court judges.*



## **CPR Board Activities for Court Year 2019: Facts and Figures**

CPR is a statewide program. CPR board volunteers meet at local courthouses at least once a month to review cases and prepare recommendations for family court judges.

### **CPR Board Initial Reviews**

When a court rules that a child should be placed outside the home, a child's case is subject to a review by the CPR board 60 days after the child is placed. Reviews of CIC cases are referred to as CPR initial reviews. CPR boards can conduct additional reviews for children who have been voluntarily placed, but data related to such reviews are not included in this report due to their relative rarity.

Prior to a scheduled initial review, CP&P determines if the child's family home is safe and whether in-home services are appropriate. As more children receive in-home services to avoid the psychological and emotional consequences and possible developmental delays associated with the trauma of family separation, the number of children entering out-of-home placement has steadily decreased. The number of 60-day initial reviews conducted by CPR boards statewide mirrors that decline. In court year 2019, the number of cases boards reviewed decreased by 832.



**Table 7:**  
**Summary of CPR board activities 2015 through 2019**

Court Year	CPR Board Meetings	Initial CPR Board Reviews
2015	429	3,435
2016	411	3,445
2017	342	2,831
2018	368	3,159
2019	353	2,327

\*Source: [www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us](http://www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us), 10443/7/26/, run August 6, 2019.

Chart 11 below captures the decrease in the number of cases reviewed statewide by CPR boards.

**Chart 11:**  
**CPR reviews 2015 through 2019**



\*Source: [www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us](http://www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us), 10443/7/26/, run August 6, 2019.



Table 8 shows that in 2019, the total number of cases reviewed by CPR boards decreased for most of the state’s 21 counties, with the exceptions of Cape May, Gloucester, Hudson and Salem.

**Table 8:**  
***CPR board meetings and cases reviewed by county vs. 2018***

County	2018 CPR Board Meetings	2019 CPR Board Meetings	+/-	2018 CPR Board Reviews	2019 CPR Board Reviews	+/-
Atlantic	15	15	0	149	110	-39
Bergen	16	17	+1	102	92	-10
Burlington	26	12	-14	179	132	-47
Camden	68	63	-5	540	383	-157
Cape May	6	14	+8	69	71	+2
Cumberland	12	10	-2	213	122	-91
Essex	24	23	-1	538	327	-211
Gloucester	18	20	+2	133	142	+9
Hudson	17	13	-4	107	122	+15
Hunterdon	6	5	-1	21	11	-10
Mercer	12	11	-1	143	108	-35
Middlesex	12	13	+1	150	105	-45
Monmouth	30	27	-3	144	81	-63
Morris	14	8	-6	73	19	-54
Ocean	18	22	+4	181	154	-27
Passaic	13	22	+9	117	89	-28
Salem	12	11	-1	75	79	+4
Somerset	7	5	-2	18	14	-4
Sussex	16	9	-7	32	15	-17
Union	6	17	+11	120	98	-22
Warren	20	16	-4	55	53	-2
Total	368	353	-15	3,159	2,566	-593

\*Source: [www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us](http://www.webfocusprod.courts.judiciary.state.nj.us), 10443/7/26/, run August 6, 2019.





## **Mandated Requirements for CPR Boards**

The CPR Act mandates that each county have at least one CPR board for every 200 reviews conducted the previous year. Each board must have at least five court-appointed volunteers. NJ CPAC commends the Judiciary for ensuring that counties meet the minimum requirements for the number of boards and volunteers. It is essential that vicinages conduct ongoing recruitment and training of additional volunteers to ensure that reviews are not cancelled due to a lack of enough board members to conduct a review. Ongoing recruitment also aids in broadening the racial/ethnic, cultural, economic and professional backgrounds of board members, which enhances the depth of reviews. Chart 13 on page 37 shows that CPR board volunteers are overwhelmingly Caucasian. NJ CPAC is aware that vicinages with multiple boards can share volunteers. For the purpose of accurate headcounts, vicinages must be vigilant about ensuring that CPR board members who volunteer on more than one board are counted only once. Beginning in 2018, the AOC began converting to the Volunteer Information Processing System (VIPS). It is imperative that all new data entry staff and fact checkers receive training in the new system to ensure continued data integrity.

**Table 9:**  
***Statute Requirements v. 2019 performance***

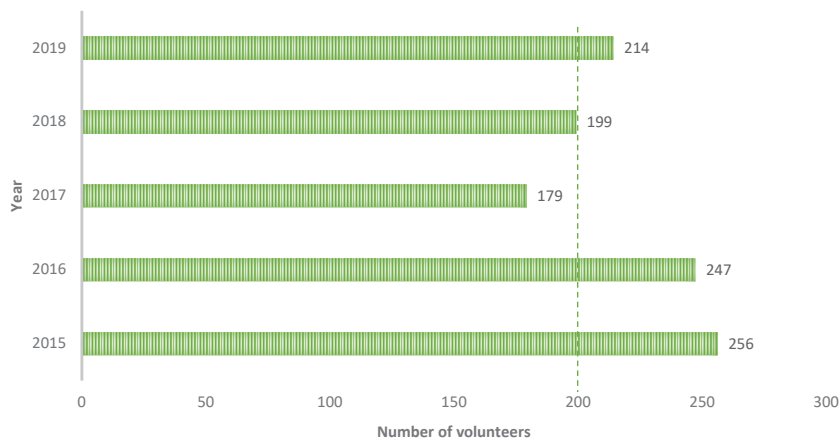
County	Reviews by CPR Board 2018	Minimum CPR Boards Required 2019	Actual CPR Boards 2019 <sup>a</sup>	Met Minimum Number of CPR Boards	Minimum CPR Board Volunteers Required 2019	Actual CPR Board Volunteers 2019 <sup>a</sup>	Met Minimum Number of CPR Volunteers
Atlantic	149	1	4	✓	5	13	✓
Bergen	102	1	3	✓	5	12	✓
Burlington	179	1	1	✓	5	18	✓
Camden	540	2	5	✓	10	4	
Cape May	69	1	2	✓	5	5	✓
Cumberland	213	1	2	✓	5	27	✓
Essex	538	2	2	✓	10	7	
Gloucester	133	1	4	✓	5	11	✓
Hudson	107	1	1	✓	5	6	✓
Hunterdon	21	1	1	✓	5	10	✓
Mercer	143	1	1	✓	5	10	✓
Middlesex	150	1	3	✓	5	27	✓
Monmouth	144	1	3	✓	5	11	✓
Morris	73	1	2	✓	5	7	✓
Ocean	181	1	2	✓	5	11	✓
Passaic	117	1	2	✓	5	8	✓
Salem	75	1	1	✓	5	8	✓
Somerset	18	1	2	✓	5	6	✓
Sussex	32	1	1	✓	5	4	
Union	120	1	1	✓	5	4	
Warren	55	1	1	✓	5	6	✓
Total	3,159	23	44	✓	115	214	

<sup>a</sup> Data for this column was collected by Volunteer Information Processing System (VIPS) September 2019 and January 2020 and provided to NJ CPAC by the Judiciary Office of Management and Administrative Services.



The total number of CPR board volunteers increased in court year 2019. There could be several reasons for the increase. For example, NJ CPAC is aware that several vicinages have held volunteer recruitment fairs. Increased attendance at NJ CPAC training programs also resulted in increased exposure and interest in the CPR program, based on attendee evaluations.

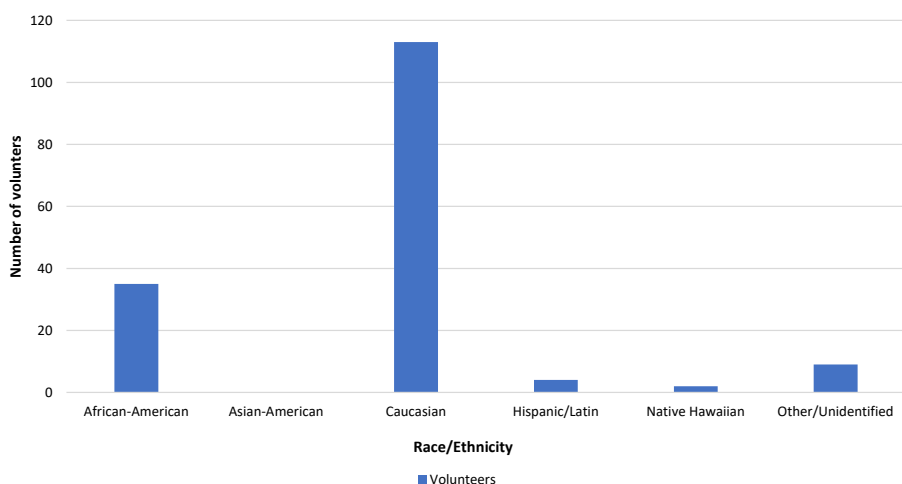
**Chart 12:**  
*CPR board volunteers 2015 through 2019*



\*Source: Volunteer Management Information System (VMIS), June 28, 2018.



**Chart 13:**  
***Race and ethnicity of CPR board volunteers***



\*Source: Volunteer Management Information System (VMIS), run Sept. 17, 2019.





*Advocates for  
children in  
foster care.*





**STUART RABNER**  
CHIEF JUSTICE

**GLENN A. GRANT, J.A.D.**  
ACTING ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COURTS

**APRIL 2020**