



DCFS Northern Region Permanency Enhancement Project

FY 20 Annual Report – July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Center for Child Welfare
and Education**

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Introduction to the Permanency Enhancement Project

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) collaborates with local communities to address issues on behalf of children and families. The primary mission of the Permanency Enhancement Project (PEP) continues to be improving permanency outcomes for youth in foster care and reducing disproportionality and disparity of African-American and Hispanic children and families involved with the child welfare system.

The four overarching goals established from the inception of PEP are:

- 1. Family Preservation - Reduce the rate at which children are brought into the child welfare system.**
- 2. Reduce disproportionality and disparity of children and families of color.**
- 3. Reunification - Increase the number of children who are returned home in a timely manner.**
- 4. Improve adoption/guardianship permanency outcomes.**

Guided by these goals, action teams develop objectives and engage in activities they believe will benefit children and families in their local communities.

The composition of the local county action team typically includes a DCFS appointed co-leader, a voluntary community co-leader, and various community stakeholder representatives (agencies, DCFS, court, caregivers, schools, churches, law enforcement, etc.). The co-leaders share the responsibility of planning and facilitating the action team meetings, keeping the team focused on objectives and activities that impact the mission of improving permanency and reducing racial disparity and disproportionality. This report provides an overview of the composition of the youth in care, permanency, and disproportionality data in the DCFS Northern Region counties that have had local county action teams during the period of July 1, 2019, to March 31, 2020 (hereafter, “FY20”). Even though this is an annual report, the data collected and used in this report is from July 2019 through March 2020.

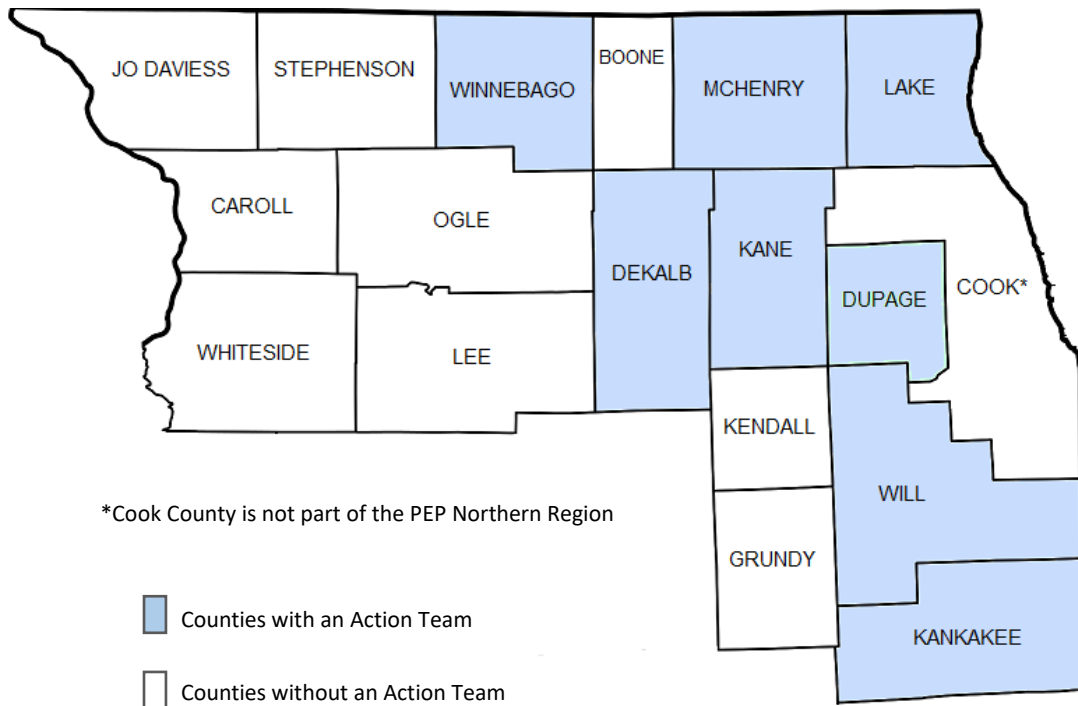
Introduction to the Report

The FY20 DCFS data used in this report was provided by DCFS Quality Assurance. As of August 31, 2020, DCFS had 18,614 youth in care with 3,131 of those children being in or from the Northern Region.

DCFS' Northern region spans 17 counties (see **Figure 1, below**). In FY20, Winnebago had the largest number of youth in care (1046). Two counties, Lake and Will, each had over 350 youth in care. All other counties had less than 270 youth, ranging from 28 in Grundy to 263 in Kane.

Eight of the largest counties in the Northern Region have had local county action teams: DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kankakee, Lake, McHenry, Will, and Winnebago.

Figure 1: Map of Northern Region Counties



Northern Region Action Team Counties by the Numbers

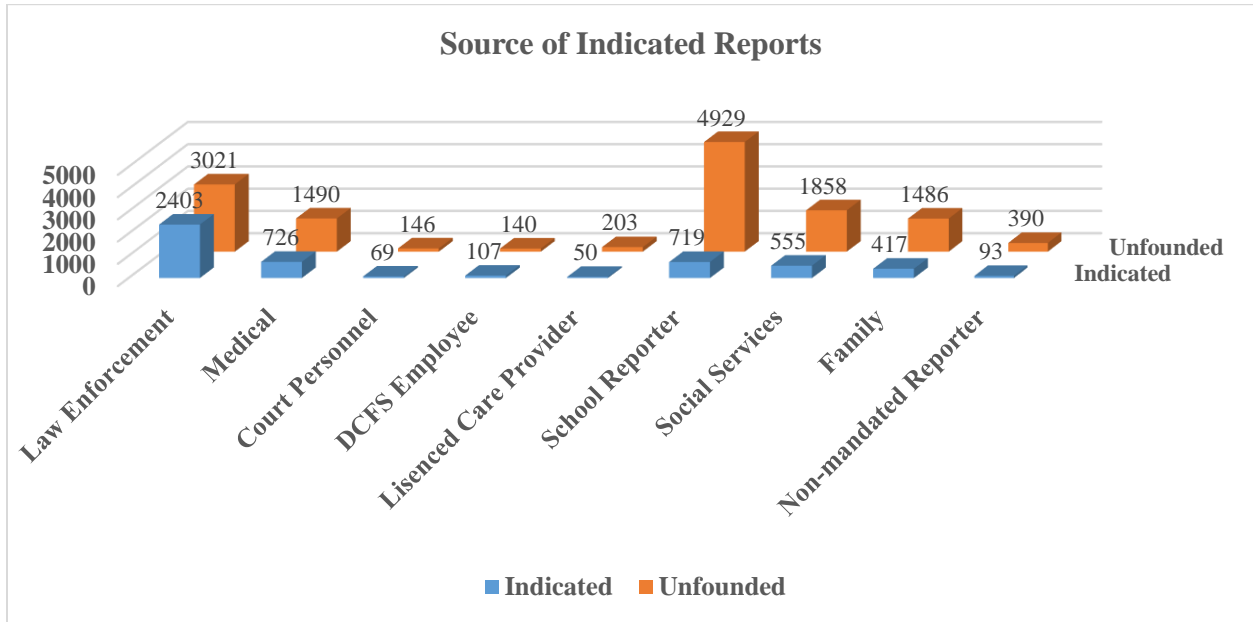


Why children come into care: Allegations and Source of Reports

When DCFS receives a hotline call alleging that a child has been abused or neglected, they use required criteria to make a decision whether or not to investigate the report in order to determine the credibility of the allegation. An indicated report is filed if the investigation reveals credible evidence supporting the alleged abuse or neglect. Following the indication (i.e., a determination that child abuse or neglect is occurring in the home), a decision is made whether or not to remove the child from the home of the caregiver and place the child in the care and custody of the state (foster care). The child remains in foster care until DCFS is able to achieve the permanency goal either of returning the child into his/her family or community (specifically reunification with family), adoption or guardianship, or independence (aging out for older youth).

The graph below shows total indicated allegations in the eight Northern Region action team counties combined. As is common, the majority of indicated allegations were from law enforcement (47%). Another 14% were from medical sources, 14% from schools and 11% from social services. The source of reports for each county is shown in Appendix I. The data on this report did not contain sufficient information to determine the percentages of indicated allegations that were in the abuse versus neglect categories.

Figure 2: Total Indicated Allegations



Youth in Foster Care System in Action Team Counties

Figure 3: Age and Race of Youth in Foster Care System

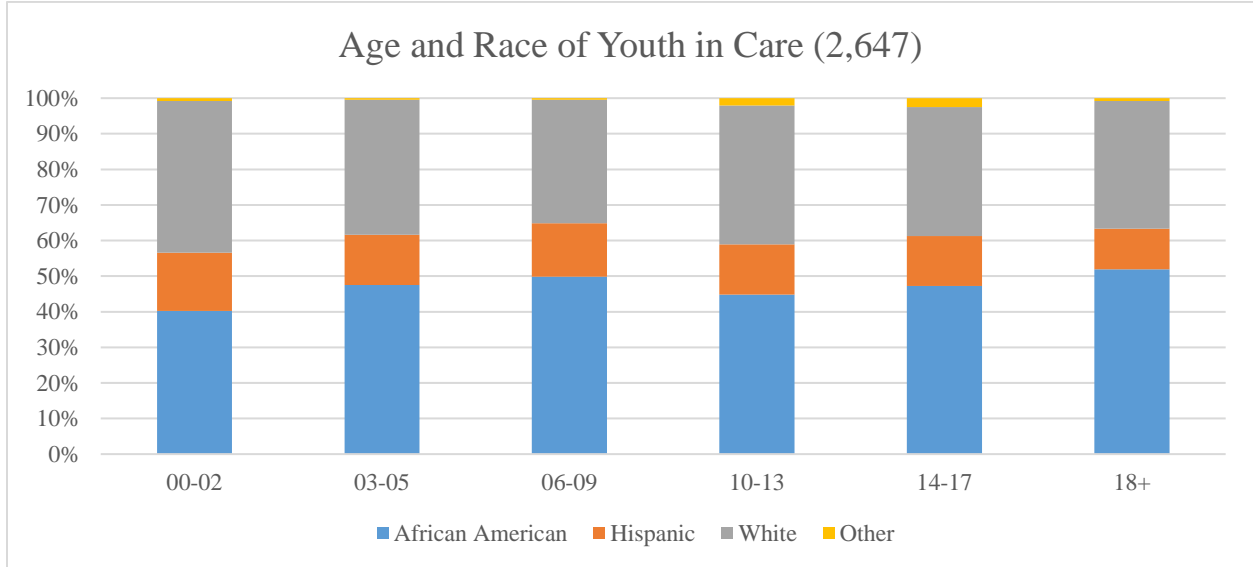


Figure 3 shows the age distribution of youth for all the action team counties combined; the actual numbers are demonstrated in Appendix II. About 43% of youth in care in these counties were birth to age five and approximately one in five children were under three years of age. One in four (25%) of the youth were 14 and over. Additionally, the number of children in each age category varied by county, with McHenry County having a larger percentage of youth 10 to 13, as compared to other counties. (See Appendix II for number of youth by age group and race for each action team county).

Youth in the Foster Care System in Action Team Counties

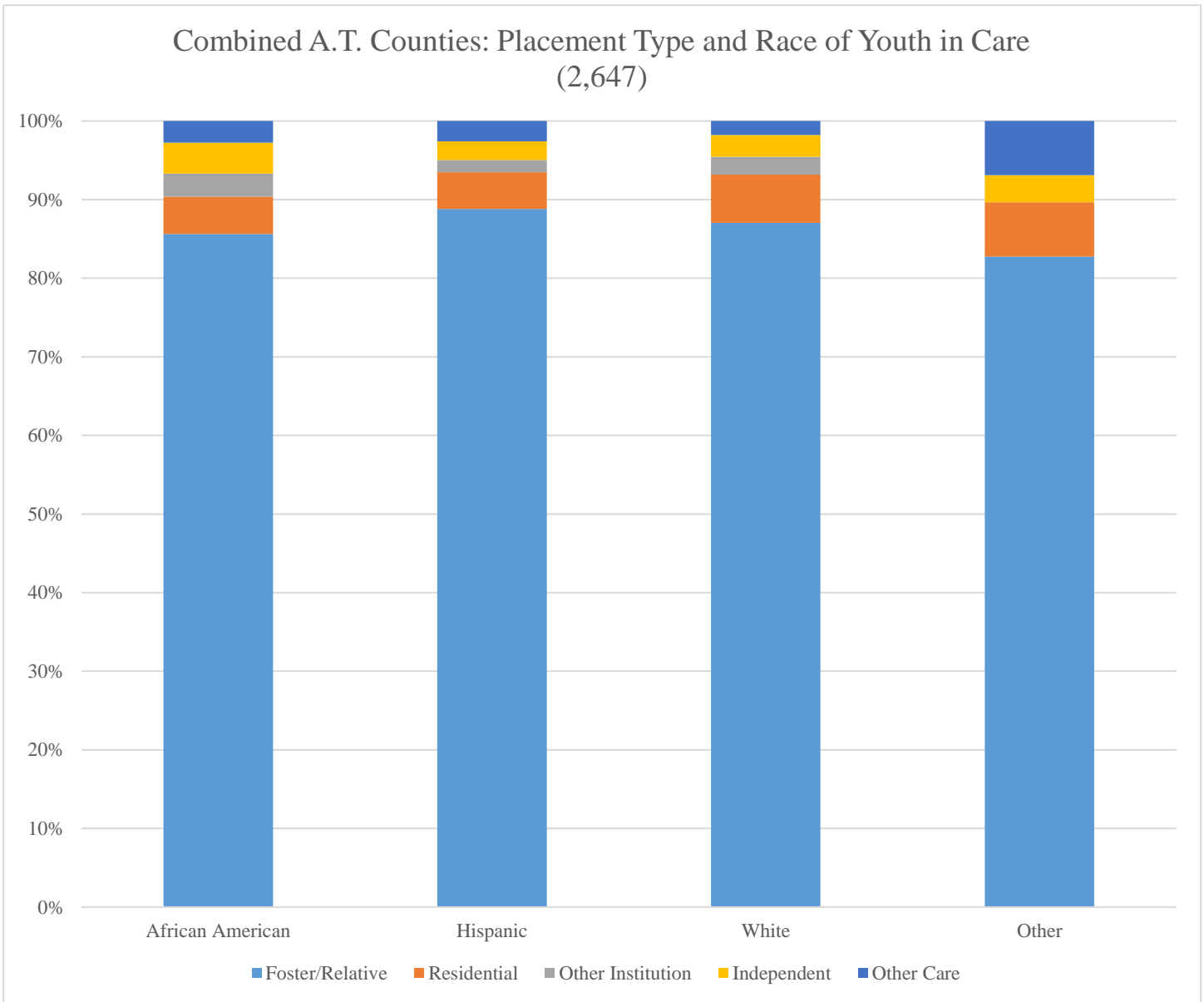
The combined total number of youth in foster care in action team counties at the time of data retrieval was 2,647. The following table (**Figure 4**) shows the 2016 population estimates (the most recent population estimate available), retrieved from the US Census Bureau, for each county with a local county action team and the number of youth in care as of March 30, 2020.

Figure 4: Northern Region Local Action Team Counties

County	Population under 18	Youth in Foster Care
Winnebago	68,958	1046
Lake	178,933	513
Will	182,617	374
Kane	142,590	263
McHenry	76,861	164
DuPage	218,352	112
Kankakee	26,710	91
DeKalb	22,814	84

Figure 5 illustrates the home placement type for youth in foster care in the combined action team counties; actual numbers are in Appendix III. The largest percentage (86.6%) of the youth in care were placed either in a traditional foster home or relative care. Lake and Winnebago had the highest percentage of children residing with foster or relative caregivers (89%) whereas DuPage had the lowest (75%). Residential care made up for 5.3% of homes for youth in care. McHenry had the highest percentage of children in residential care (10%). The remaining placements included Independent (3.2%), Institution (2.5%), and other (2.4%).

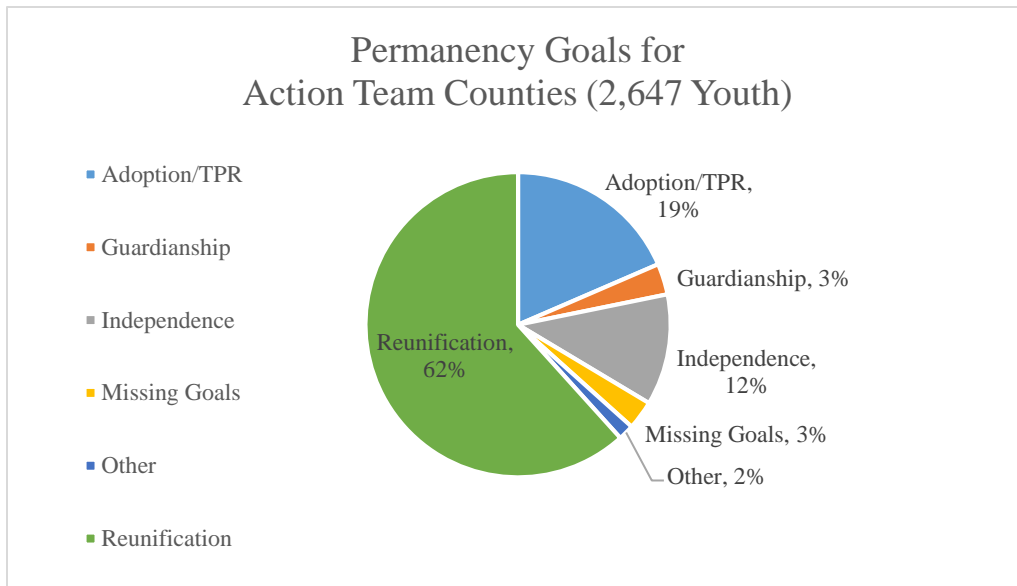
Figure 5: Youth by Placement Type in Total Action Team Counties



Generally, the permanency goals for children and youth to exit the state foster care system are either (1) reunification with their families, (2) adoption and termination of parental rights (TPR), (3) guardianship, or (4) independence (which is attained when a youth ages out of and is emancipated from foster care at or between ages 18 and 21). **Figure 6** demonstrates the percentage of youth in care in the combined action team counties within each permanency goal category; actual numbers are in Appendix IV. The majority of children in the eight counties had permanency goals of reunification (62%) or adoption (19%). Given that the largest proportion of children in

each county were under 14 years old, it is reasonable to expect fewer children with independence as a permanency goal. At the time of data collection, 3% of the youth in care in these counties were missing permanency goals.

Figure 6: Percentage of Youth by Permanency Goal



Demographics of Youth in Foster Care System in Action Team Counties

Figure 7: Gender of Youth Distribution by County

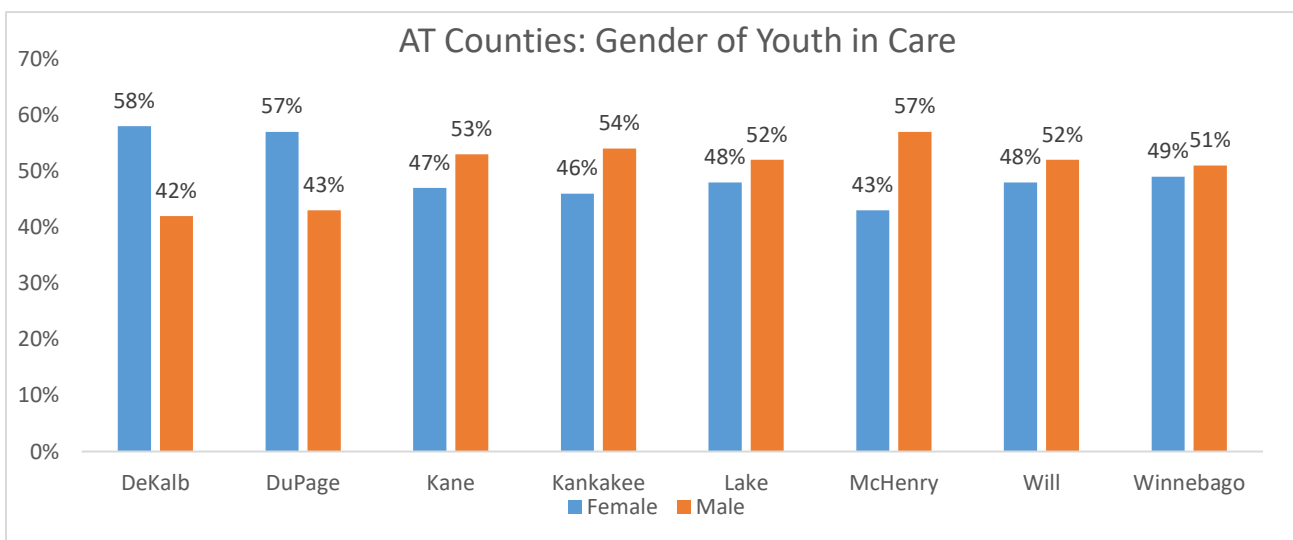


Figure 7 demonstrates the gender distribution of youth in care in each of the eight counties. The gender ratio varied among the counties with McHenry County having the largest proportion of males (57%) by comparison. DeKalb and DuPage were the only counties with more females than males, 58% and 57% respectively.

Youth Exiting the Foster Care System in Action Team Counties

Figure 8: Permanent Placement Type for Youth in Care

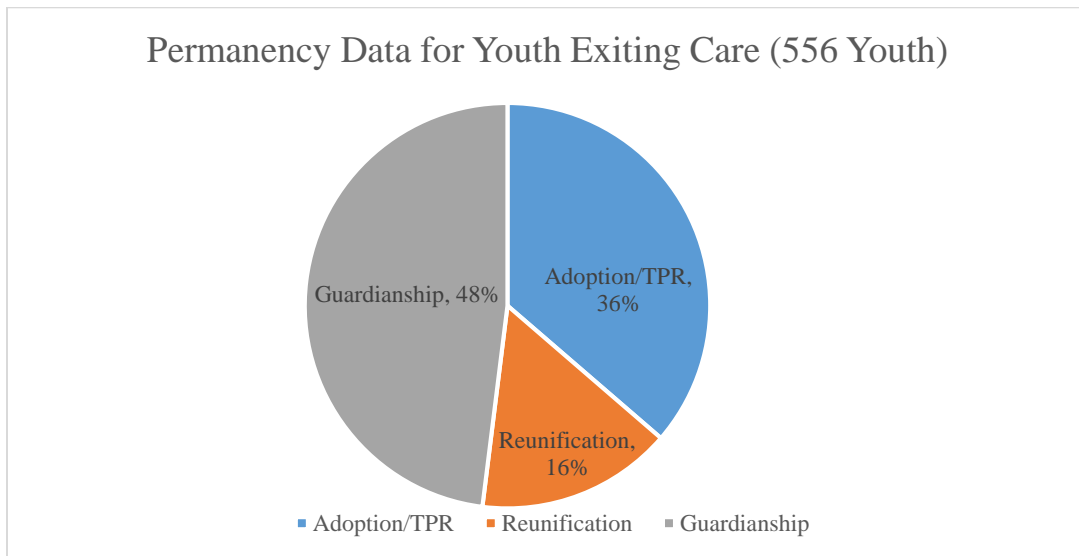
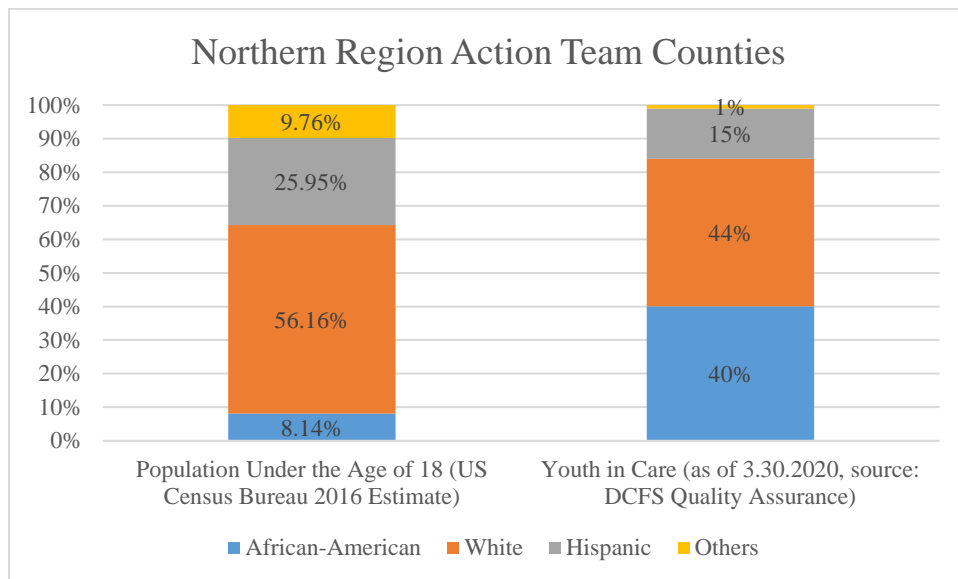


Figure 8 displays the percentage of youth who attained permanency (i.e., exited foster care into a permanent living arrangement) in each of the eight action team counties during the 2020 fiscal year, and shows the percentage of youth who attained a permanent living arrangement in each category; actual numbers are in Appendix V. In the combined action team counties, a total of 556 youth in care exited foster care (“attained permanency”). These youth attained permanency through reunification, adoption, and guardianship. About half of these youth obtained guardianship (48%), 36% obtained adoption, and 16% obtained reunification. The number of youth who attained permanency for each action team is shown in Appendix V.

Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality in Foster Care

Disproportionality refers to the over or underrepresentation of a particular race or ethnic group in a program or system. Disproportionate representation of African American children in foster care has been a major, ongoing concern for DCFS.

Figure 9: Northern Region Disproportionality



African-American youth are disproportionately represented in the Northern Region counties with action teams. The above graph (**Figure 9**) demonstrates the population distribution in the general population as compared with that of the population of youth in care. It demonstrates the following: 1) African American youth make up 8.14% of the general population in action team counties and 40% of the youth in care; 2) Hispanic youth make up 25.95% of the general population in action team counties and 15% of the youth in care; and 3) White youth make up 56.16% of the general population and 44% of the youth in care.

Figure 10: Disproportionality Indices by Race

	African-American	White	Hispanic
Lake	5.67	0.56	0.91
Kane	6.55	0.53	0.77
DuPage	6.22	0.77	0.94
DeKalb	4.29	0.84	0.41
Will	4.3	0.71	0.49
Winnebago	3.38	0.65	0.32
Kankakee	2.62	0.76	0.21
McHenry	6.10	1.05	0.62

As shown by the above table (**Figure 10**), disproportionality indices are over 1 for African-American youth for all counties and less than 1 for Hispanic and White youth for almost every county. This means that African American youth are overrepresented in each of these counties. Kane County has the highest disproportionality index for African-American youth (6.55) and Kankakee has the lowest (2.62). White youth are also underrepresented in every county, with the exception of McHenry, where the number of youth in the general population is roughly proportional to the number of youth in foster care. For disproportionality visuals for each action team county, see Appendix VI.

Disparity at key decision points often contributes to the disproportionality of youth in care in a race cohort and that of the general population. Disparity in child welfare refers to differences in treatment and outcomes, observed by comparing proportionality of two or more race cohorts at key decision points.

Permanency Enhancement Project - Action Team Activities



Action Team Activities

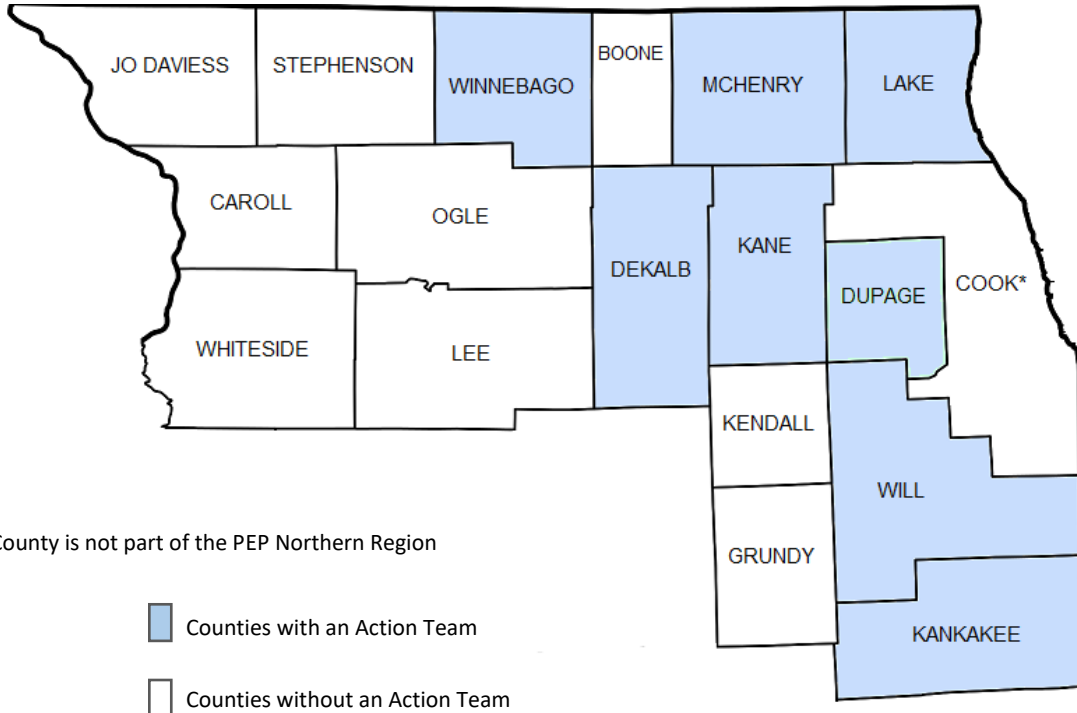
In FY20, DCFS continued its efforts to improve permanency outcomes and address disproportionality for youth in the Northern Region. Several action teams continued to meet, plan and execute activities to reach their goals. Many of the teams had activities planned for the spring. Then in March 2020 COVID 19 happened which cancelled all the in person activities that were scheduled. Here is a highlight of one action team that had an activity in September 2019.

DuPage County



DuPage County held a very successful resource fair on September 24th. Community families, especially foster care parents. The speakers were speak about differentiating appropriate developmental behavior from behavior that indicates mental illness or trauma. Families did participate, but one of the biggest successes of the event was the fact that many of the area social service organizations took a turn at the microphone to introduce themselves and give a brief description of their services. This was very valuable, because the organizations became aware of each other, and of how they can give each other referrals and avoid unnecessary overlap and confusion in services. The resource fair had strong buy in from community providers, and

afforded an opportunity for community engagement, while continuing to create awareness about the action team's commitment to the community.

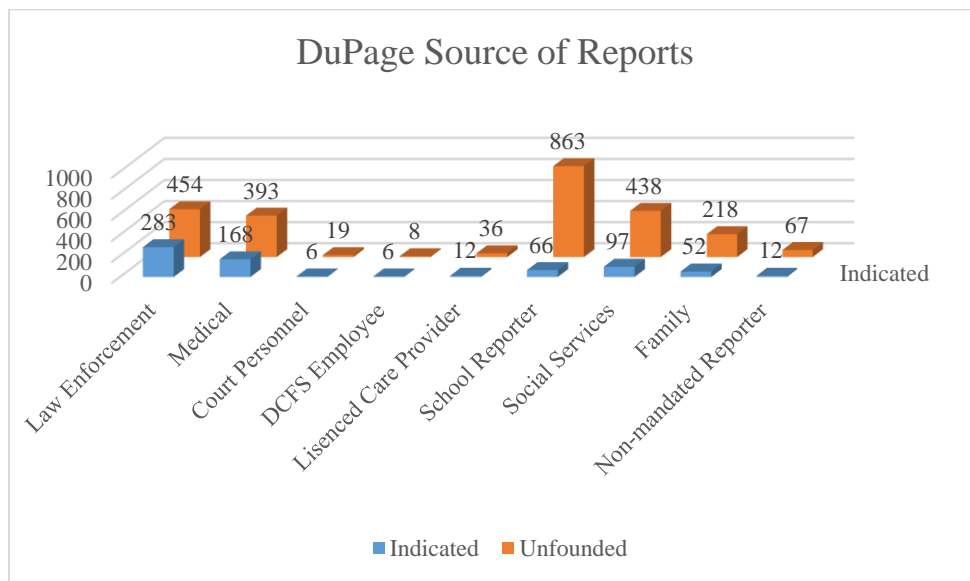
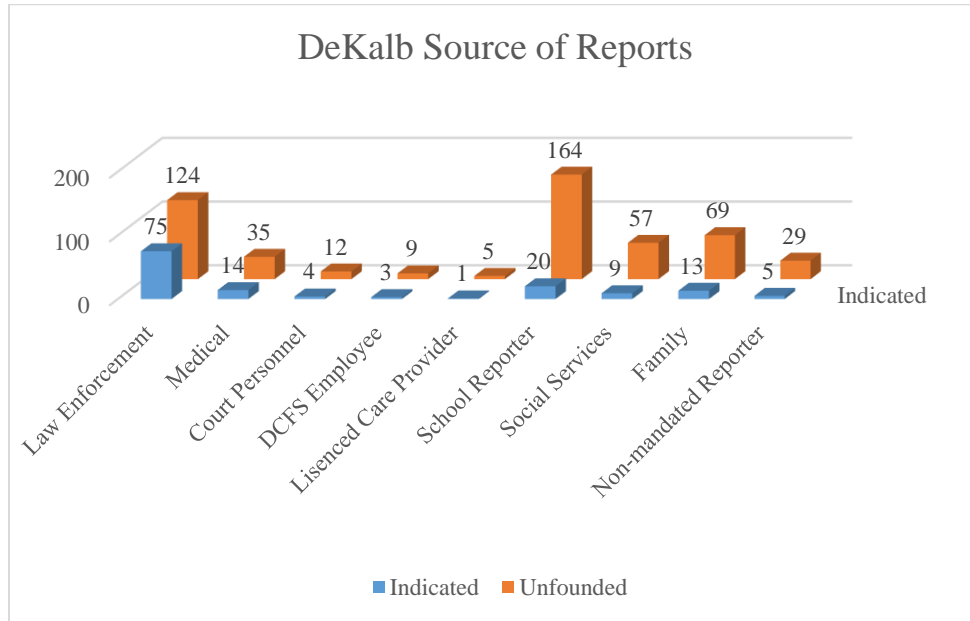
Appendix Northern Region Action Team Counties Graphical Data

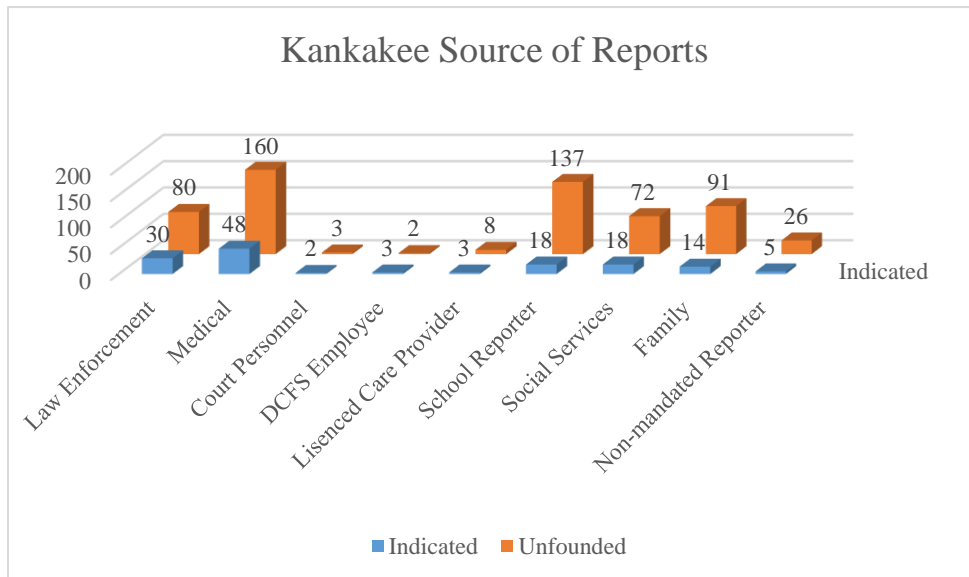
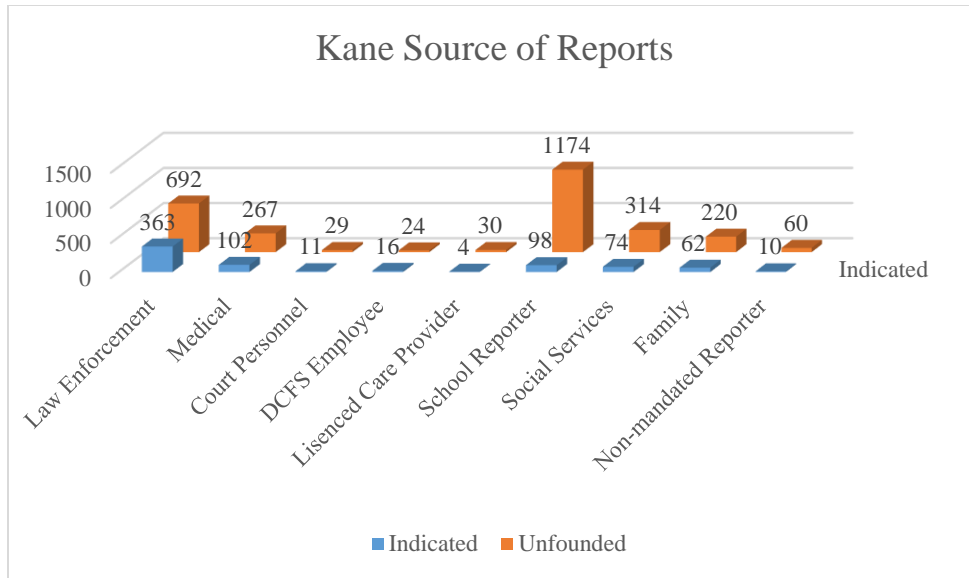


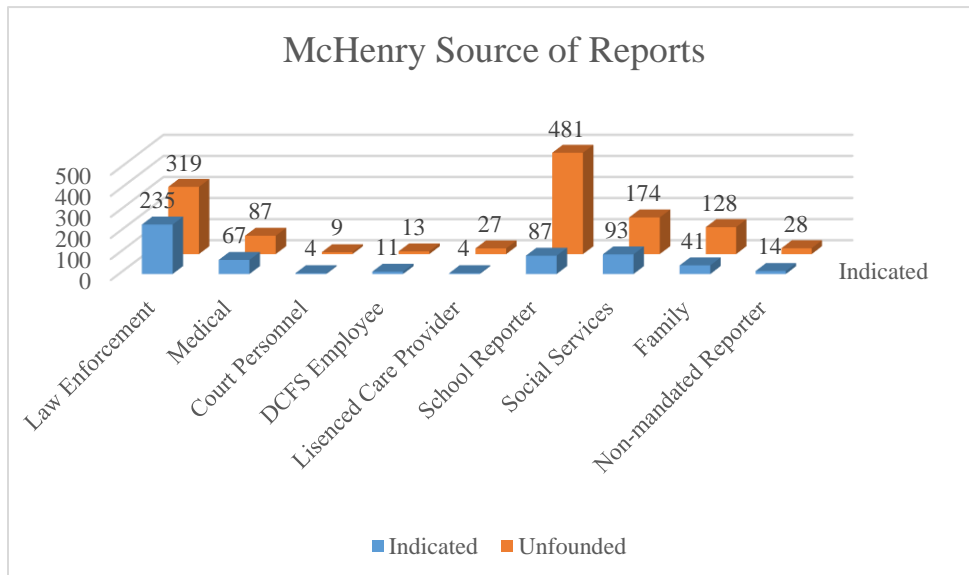
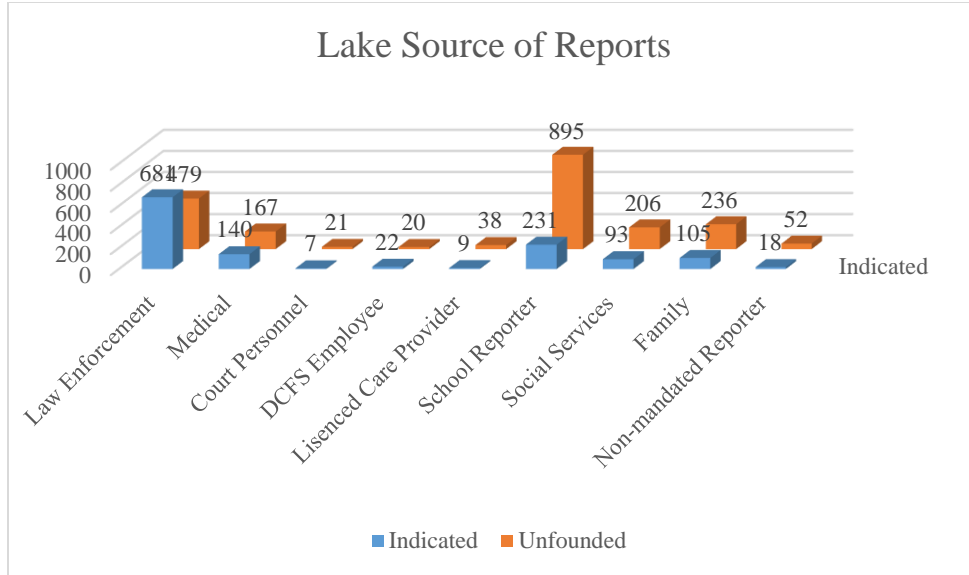
*Cook County is not part of the PEP Northern Region

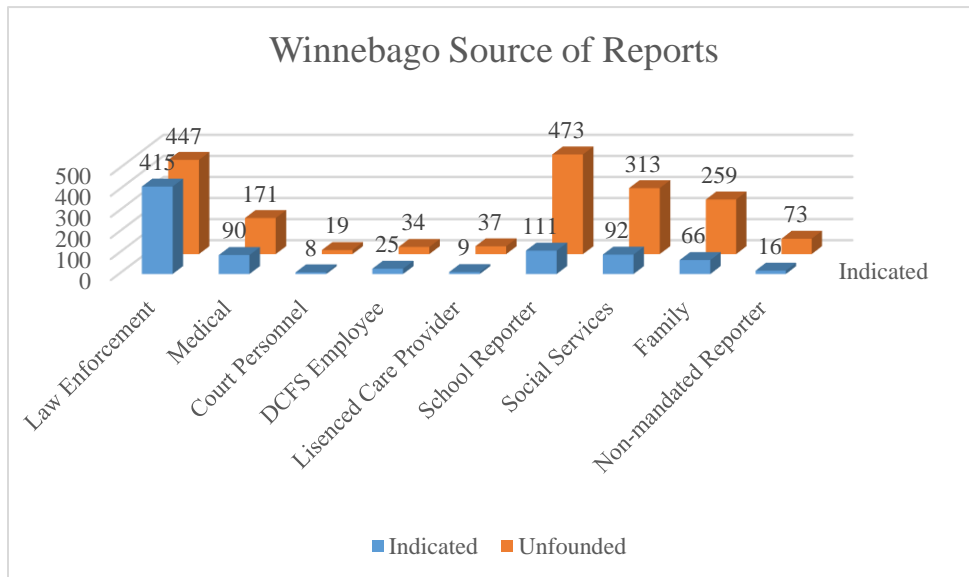
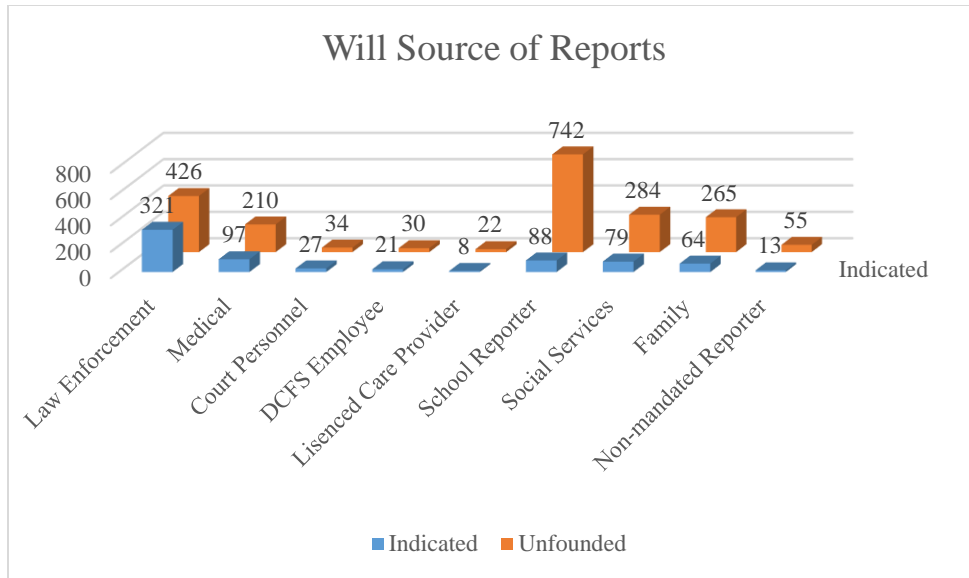
-  Counties with an Action Team
-  Counties without an Action Team

Appendix I Northern Region Action Team Counties Source and Indicated Reports

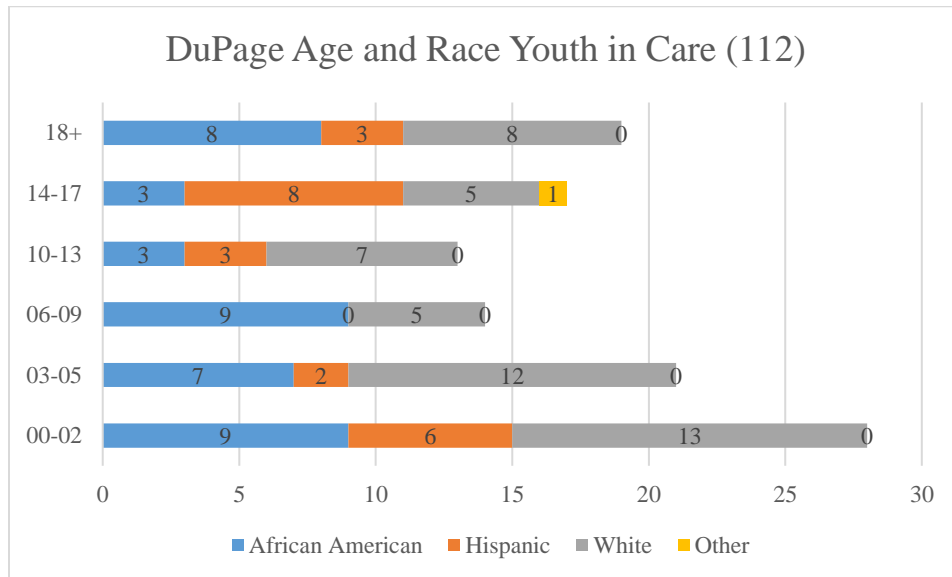
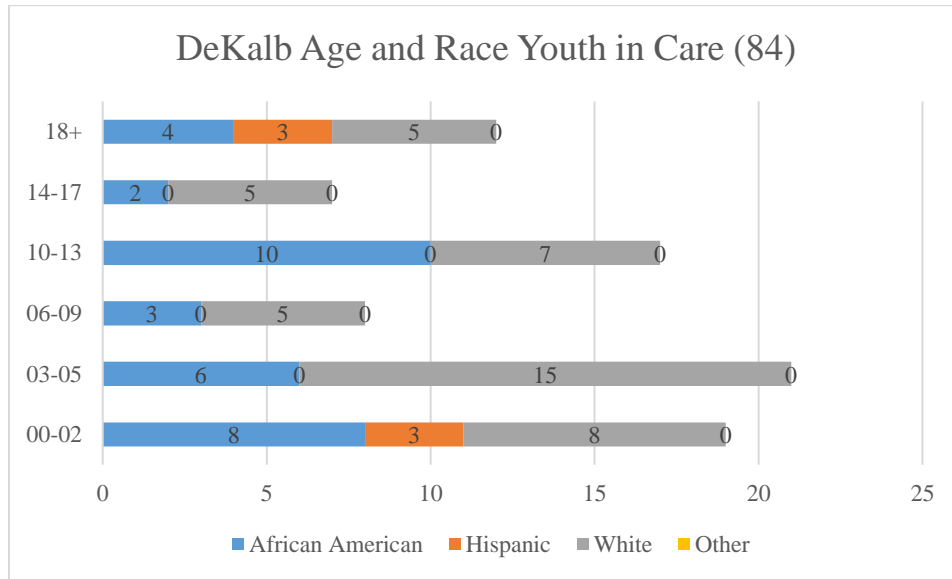


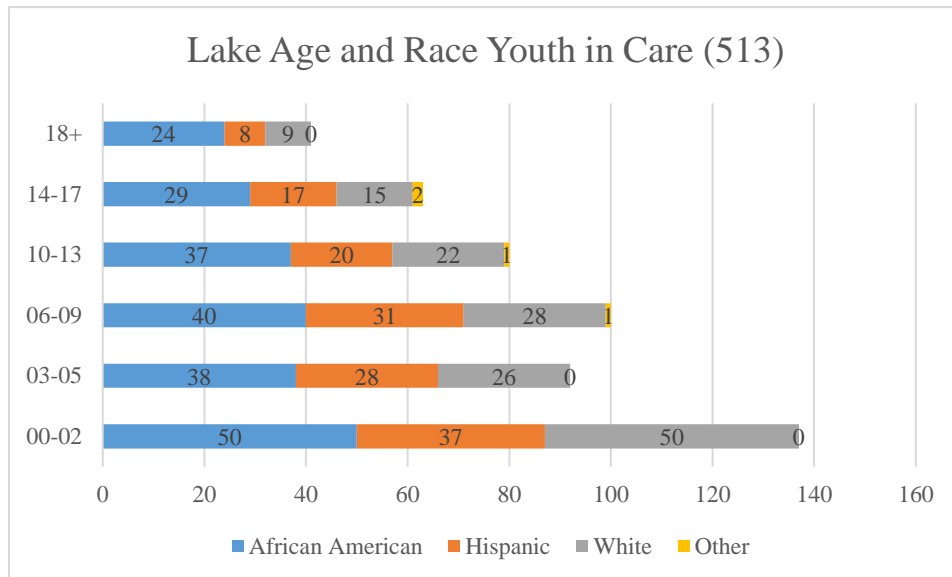
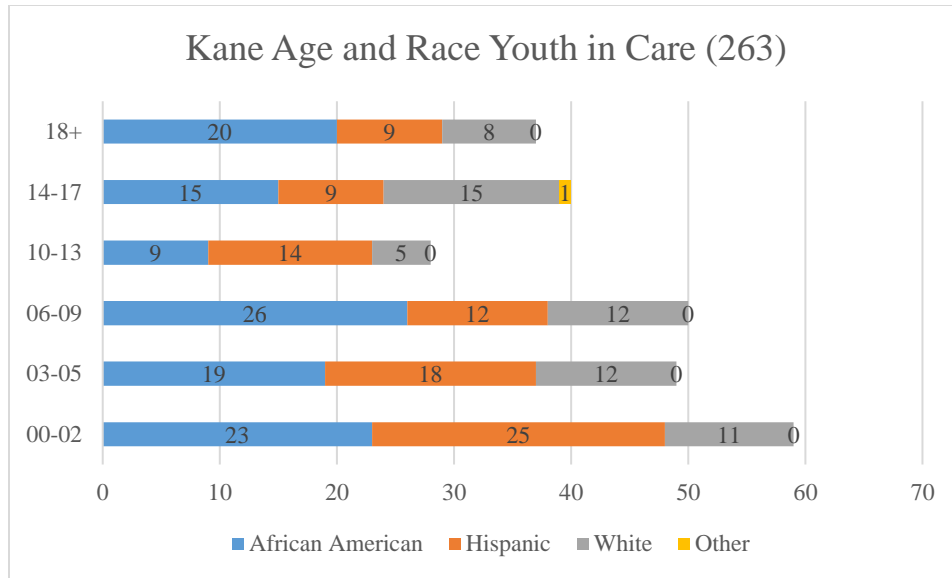


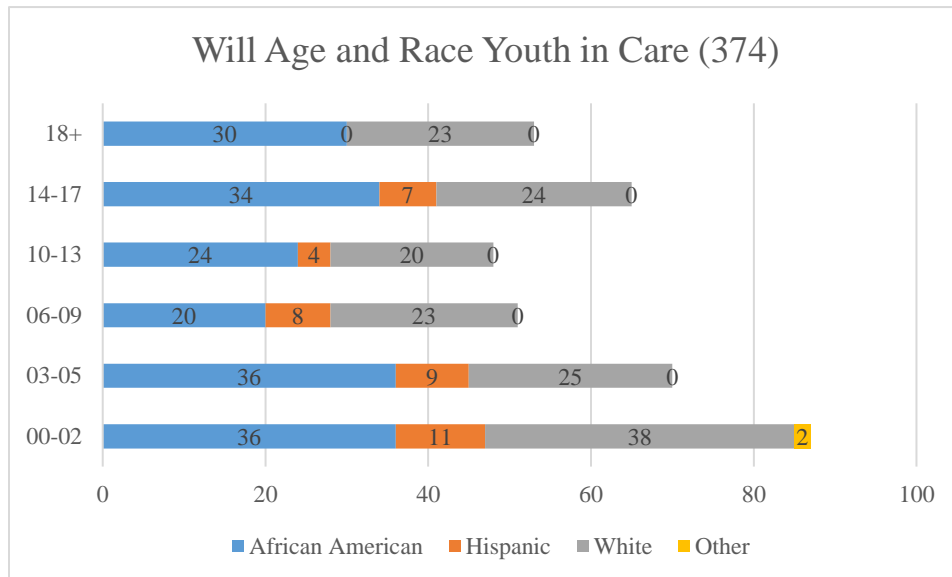
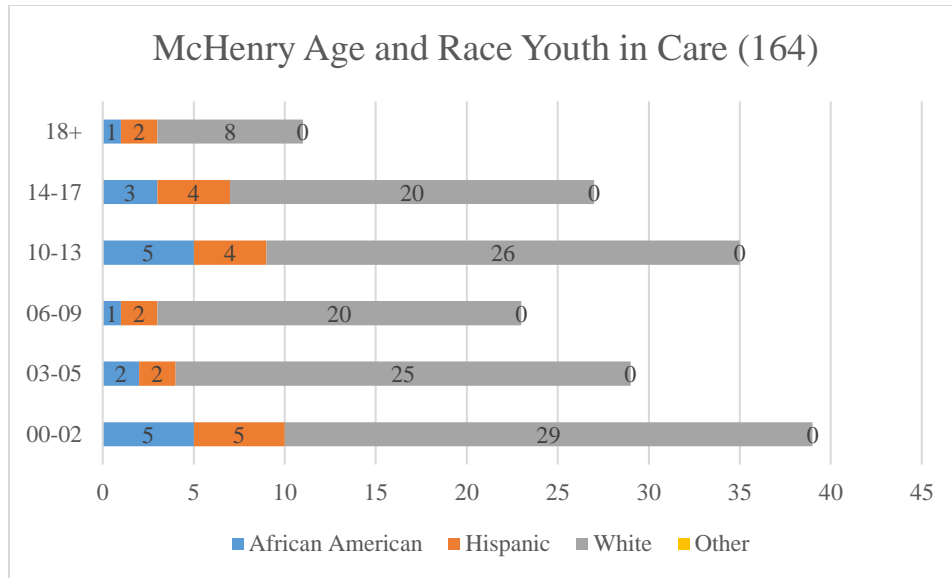


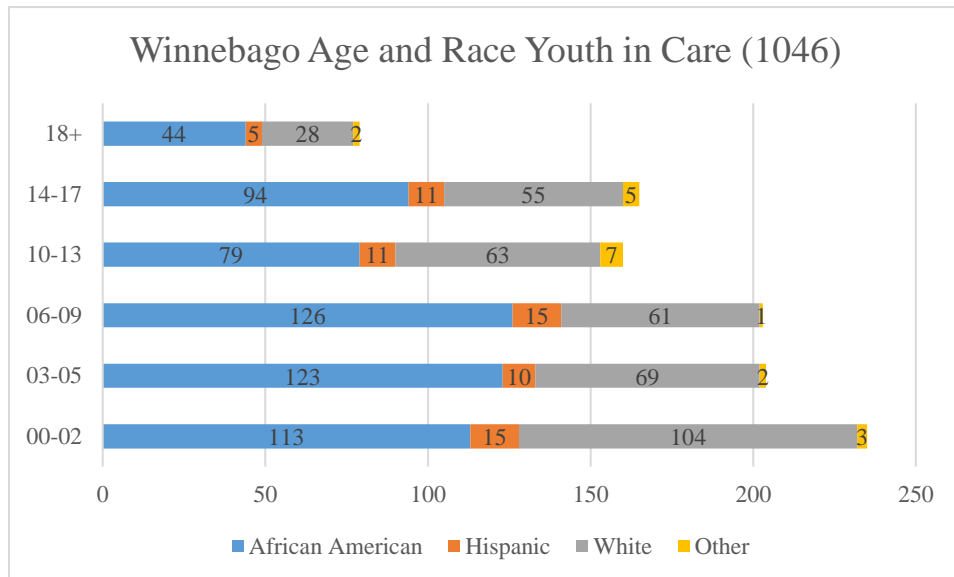
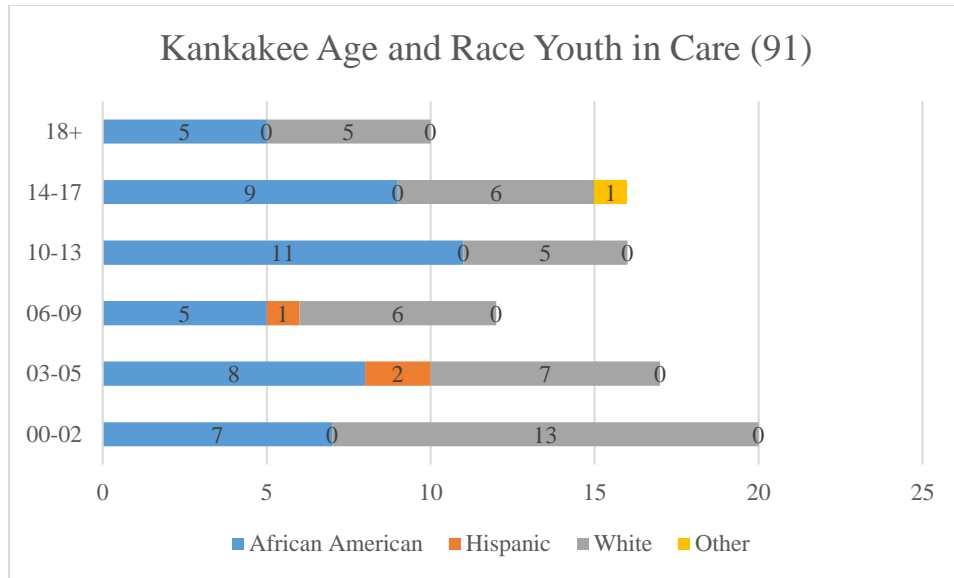


Appendix II Northern Region Action Team Counties Age and Race

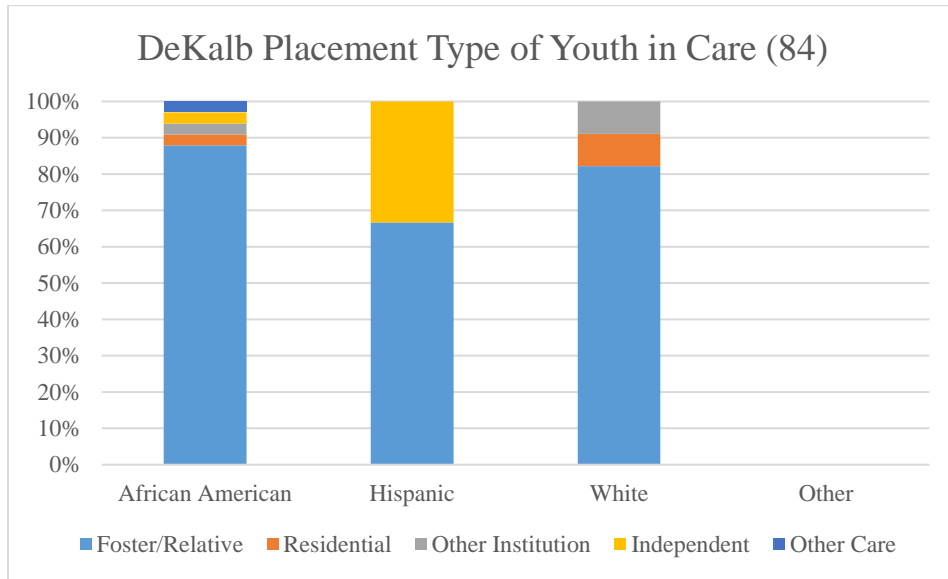




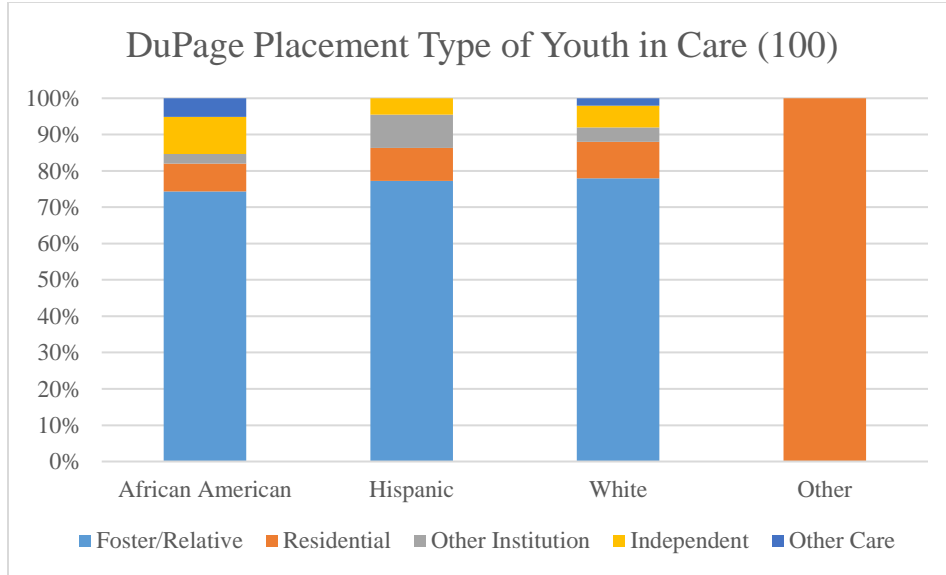




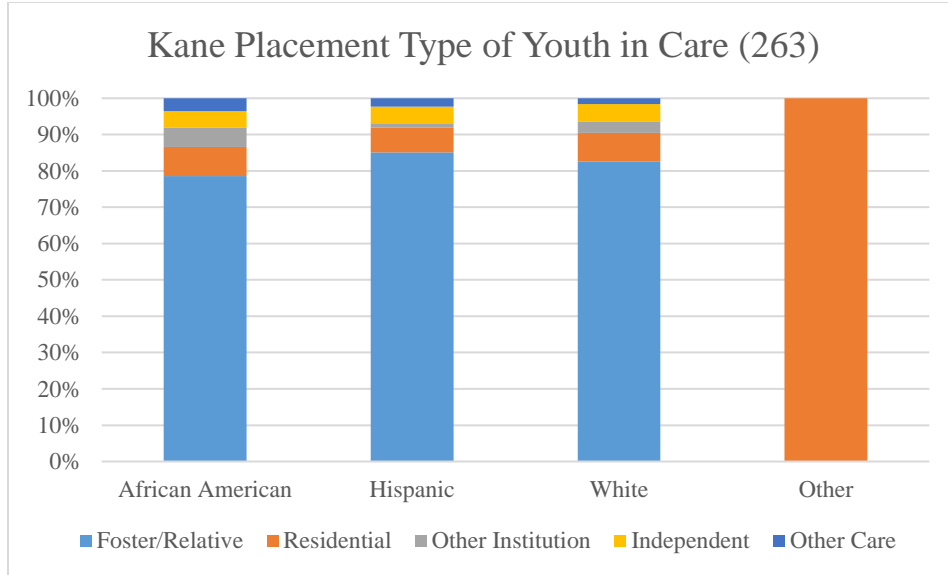
Appendix III Northern Region Action Team Counties Placement and Race



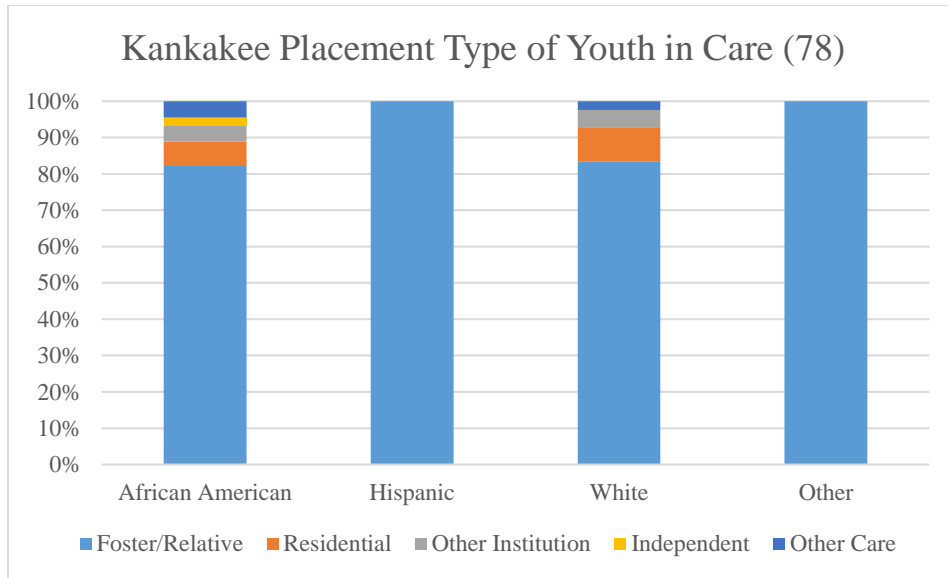
DeKalb	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	totals
Foster/Relative	29	4	37	0	70
Residential	1	0	4	0	5
Other Institution	1	0	4	0	5
Independent	1	2	0	0	3
Other Care	1	0	0	0	1



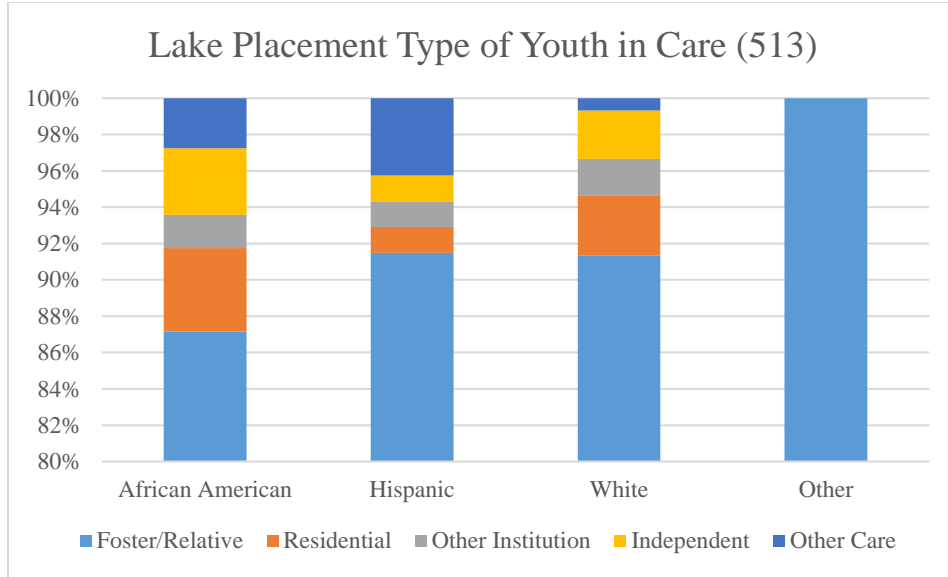
DuPage	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	totals
Foster/Relative	29	17	39	0	85
Residential	3	2	5	1	11
Other Institution	1	2	2	0	5
Independent	4	1	3	0	8
Other Care	2	0	1	0	3



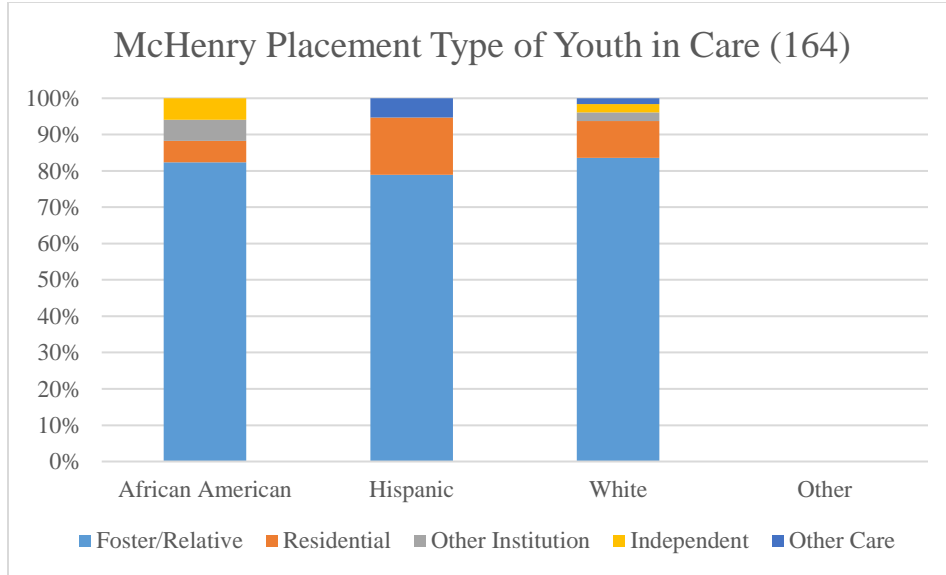
Kane	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	totals
Foster/Relative	88	74	52	0	214
Residential	9	6	5	1	21
Other Institution	6	1	2	0	9
Independent	5	4	3	0	12
Other Care	4	2	1	0	7



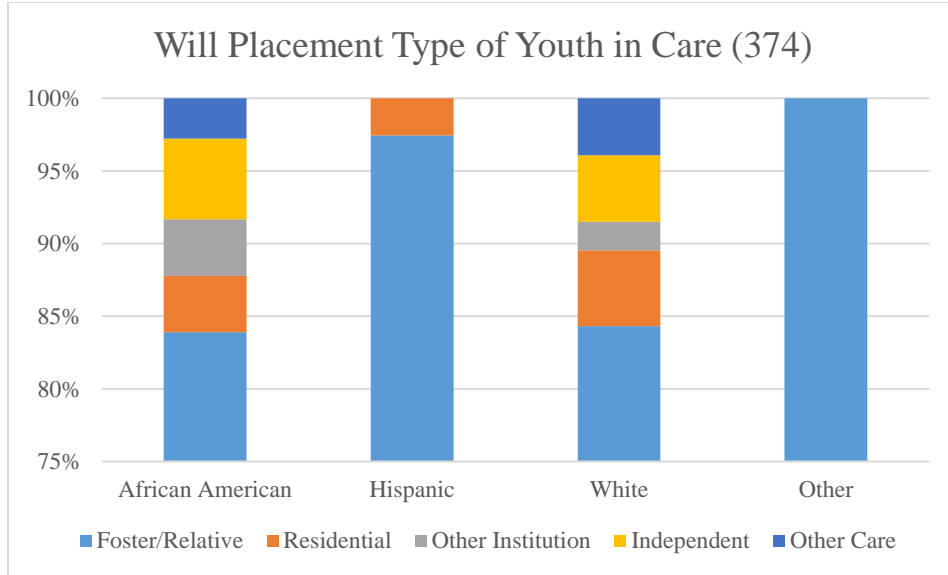
Kankakee	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	totals
Foster/Relative	37	3	35	1	76
Residential	3	0	4	0	7
Other Institution	2	0	2	0	4
Independent	1	0	0	0	1
Other Care	2	0	1	0	3



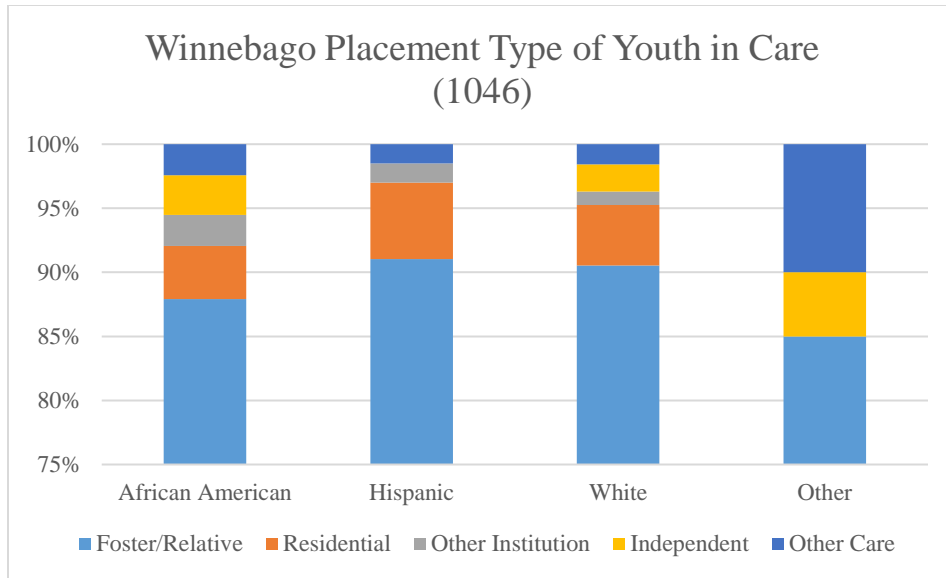
Lake	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	totals
Foster/Relative	190	129	137	4	460
Residential	10	2	5	0	17
Other Institution	4	2	3	0	9
Independent	8	2	4	0	14
Other Care	6	6	1	0	13



McHenry	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	totals
Foster/Relative	14	15	107	0	136
Residential	1	3	13	0	17
Other Institution	1	0	3	0	4
Independent	1	0	3	0	4
Other Care	0	1	2	0	3

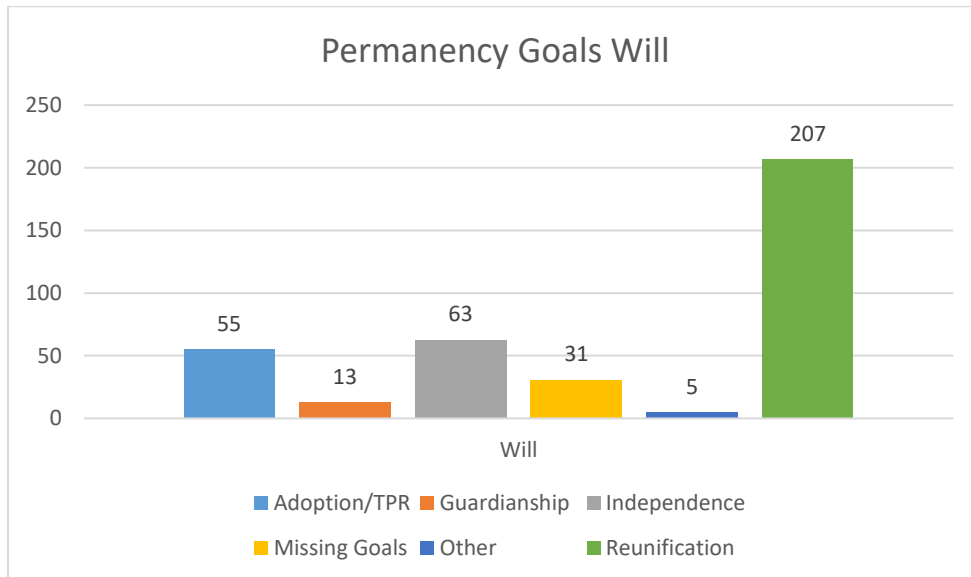
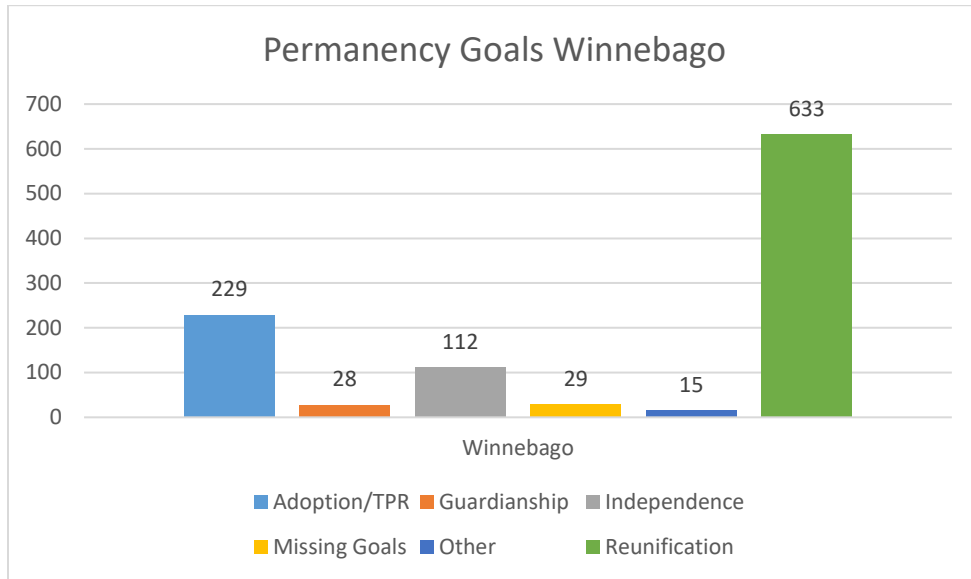


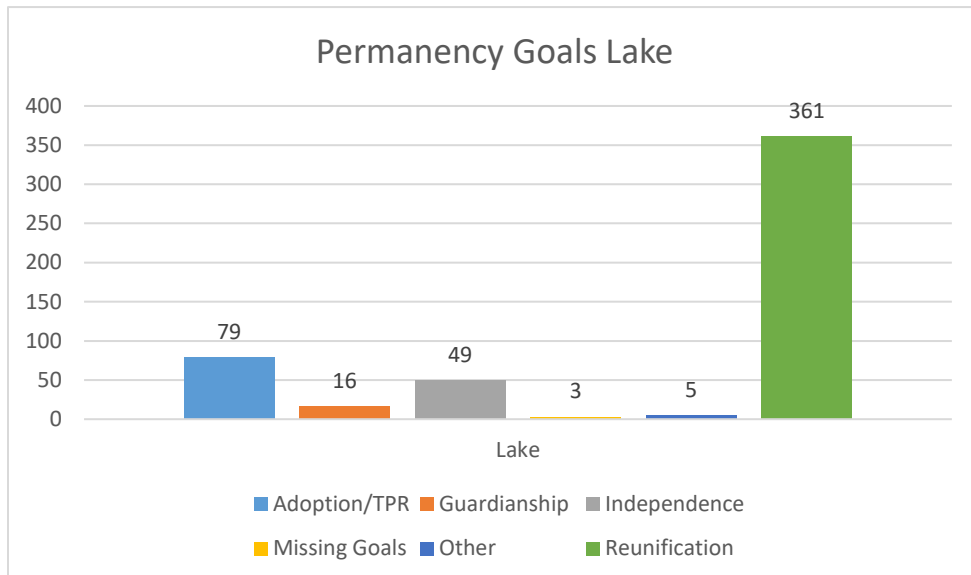
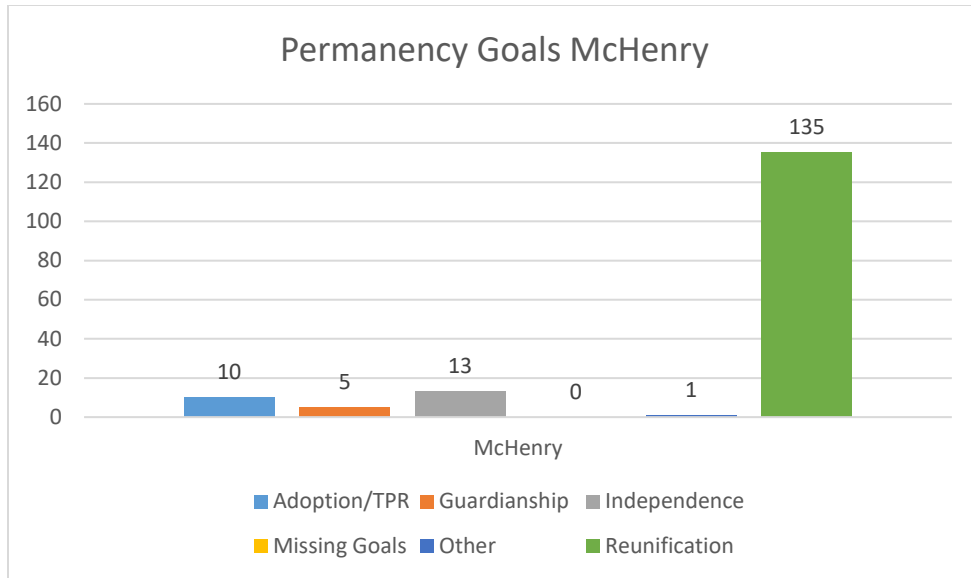
Will	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	totals
Foster/Relative	151	38	129	2	320
Residential	7	1	8	0	16
Other Institution	7	0	3	0	10
Independent	10	0	7	0	17
Other Care	5	0	6	0	11

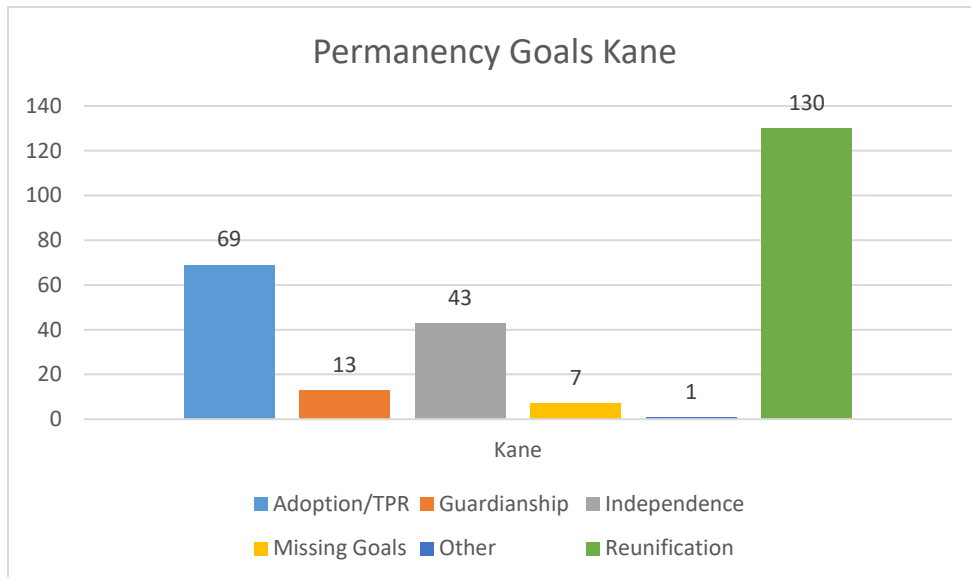
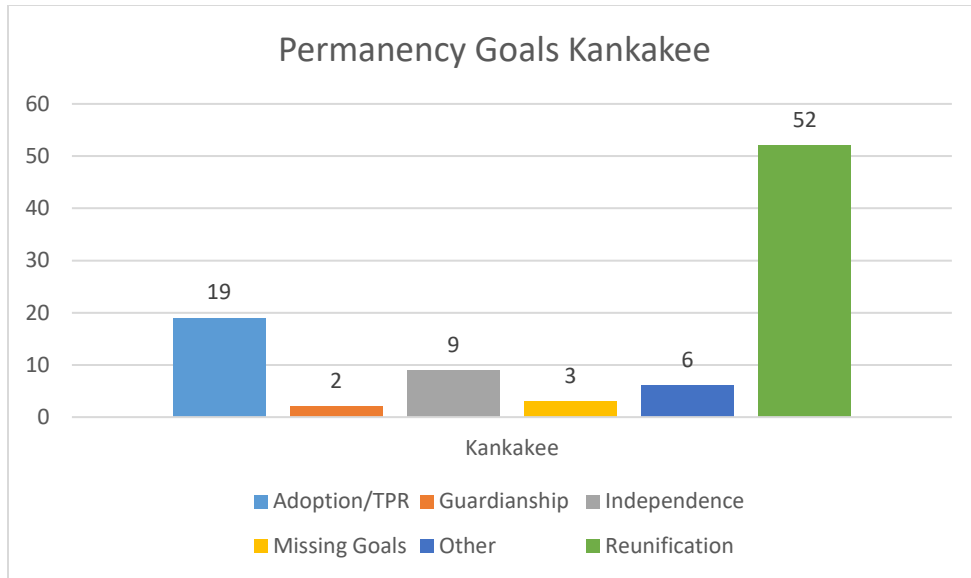


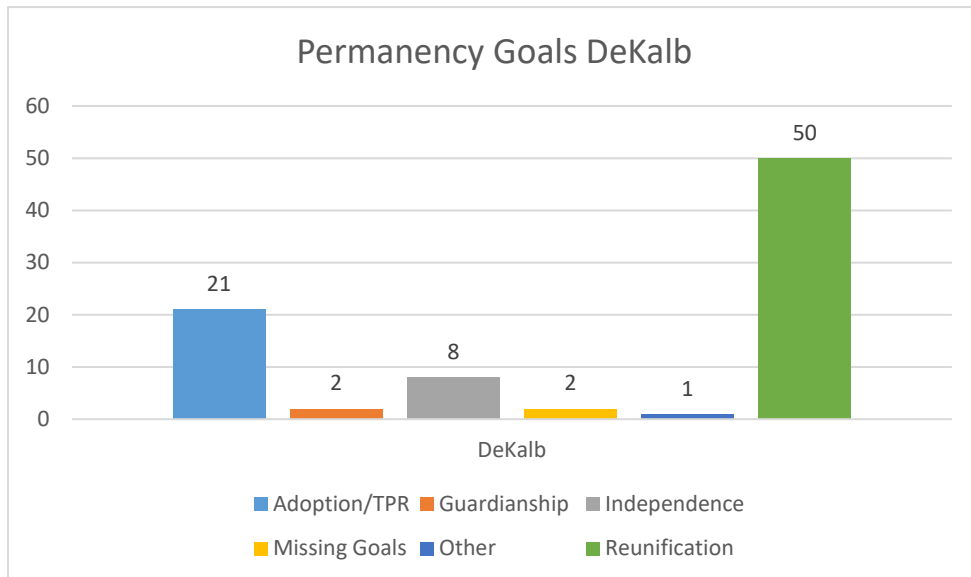
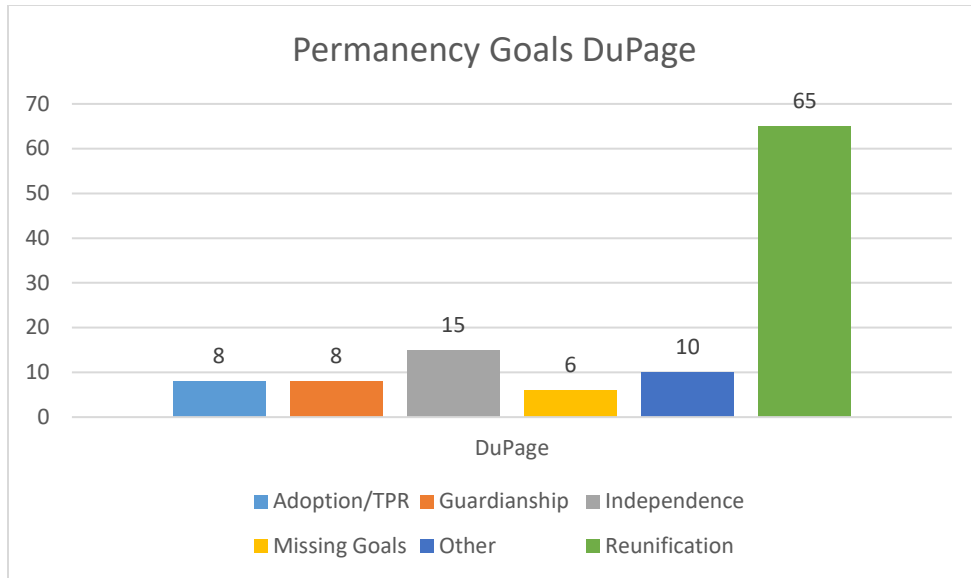
Winnebago	African American	Hispanic	White	Other	totals
Foster/Relative	509	61	344	17	931
Residential	24	4	18	0	46
Other Institution	14	1	4	0	19
Independent	18	0	8	1	27
Other Care	14	1	6	2	23

Appendix IV Northern Region Action Team Counties Permanency Goals

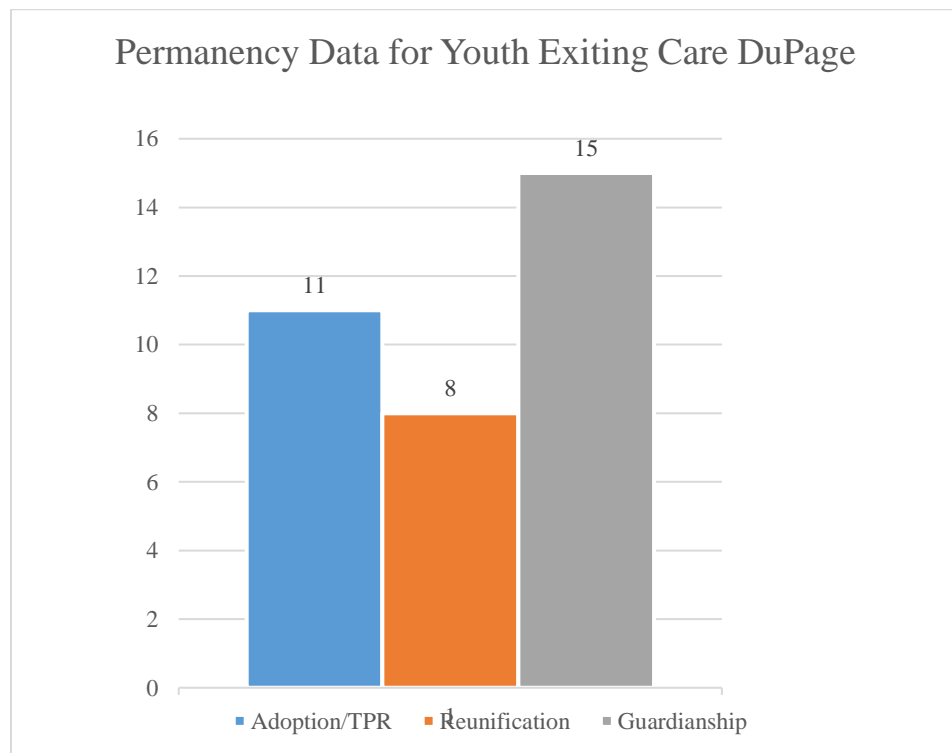
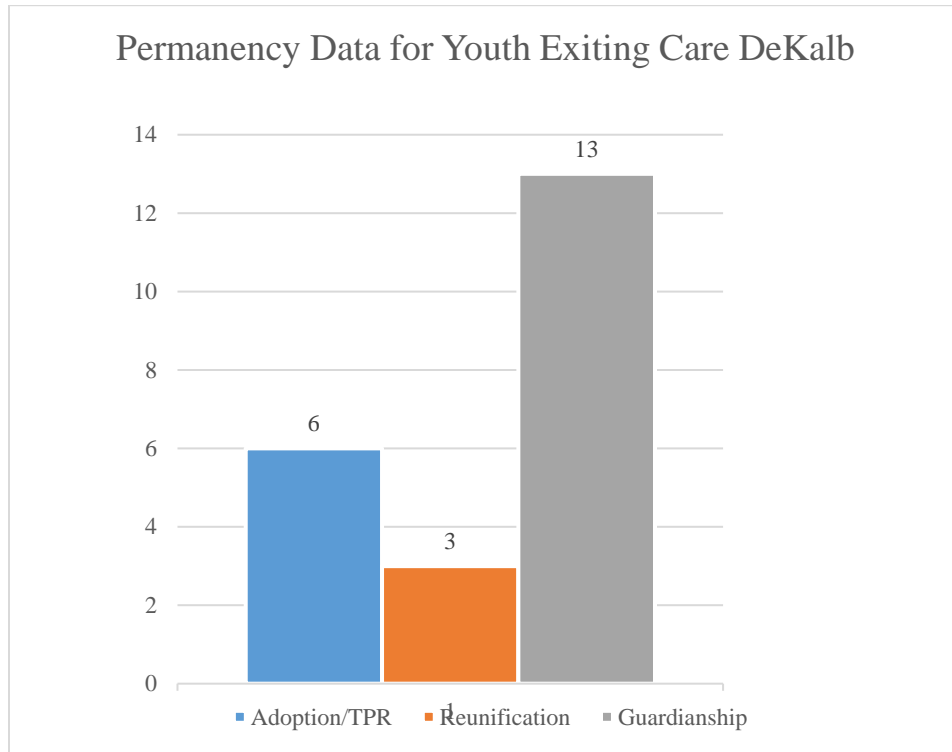


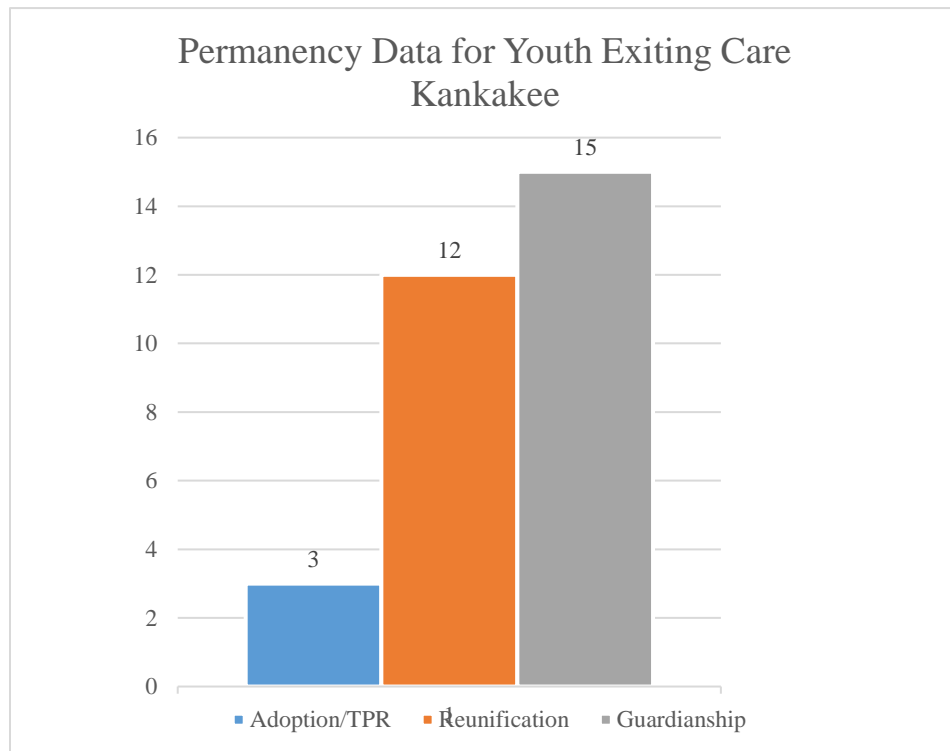
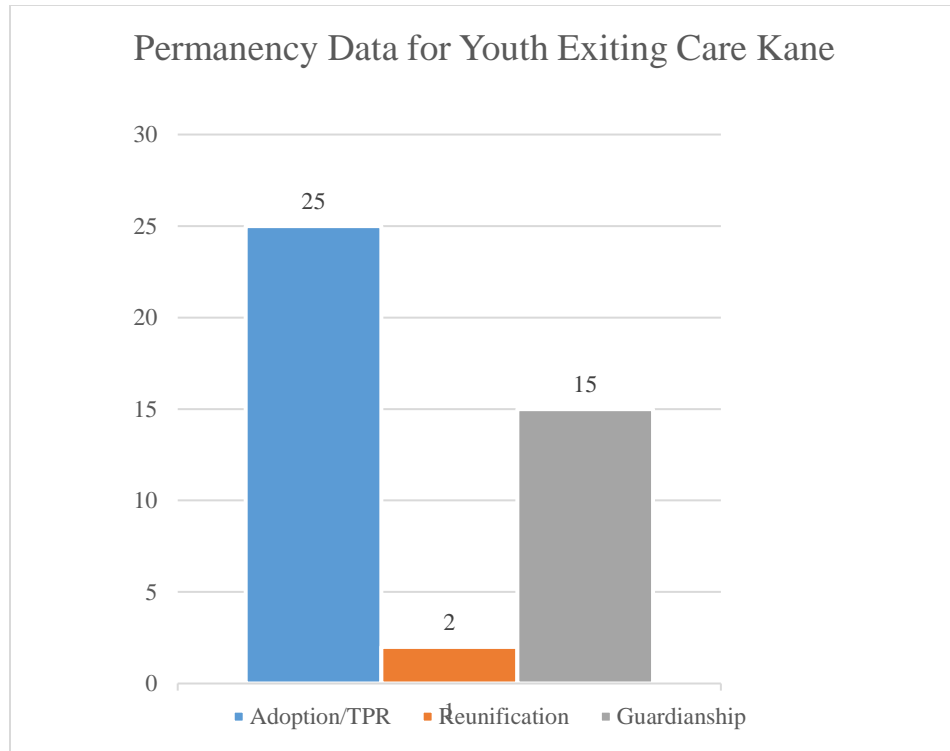


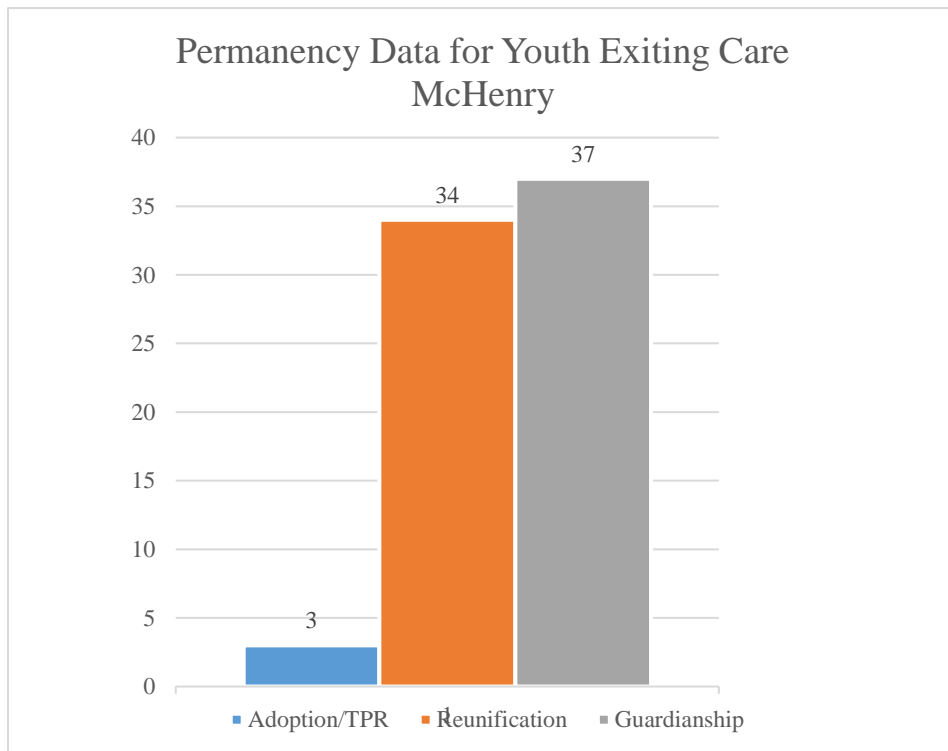
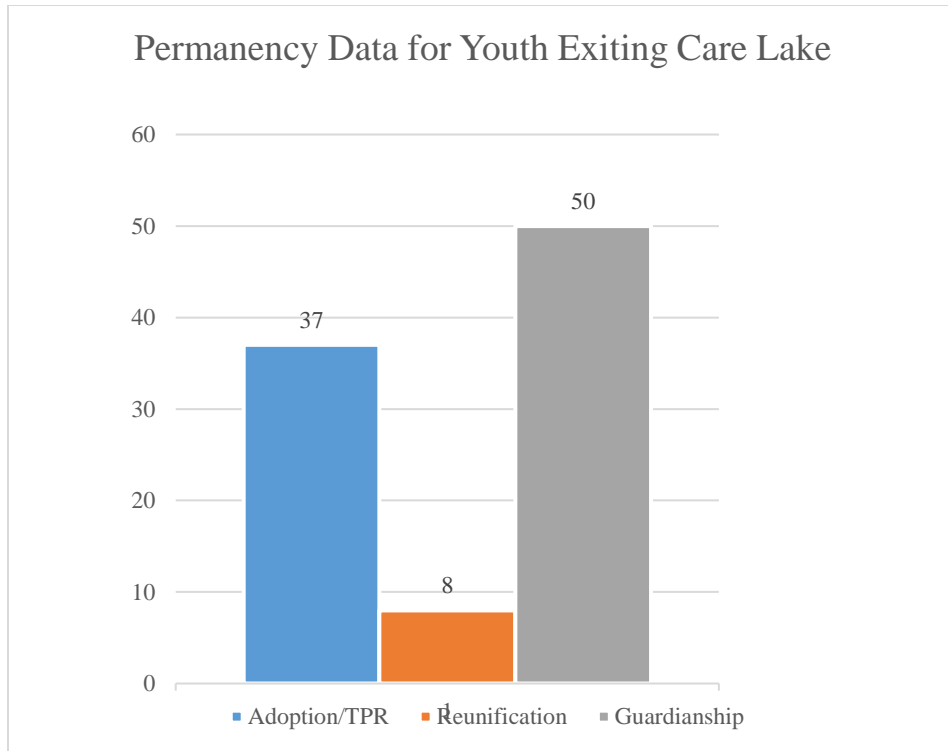


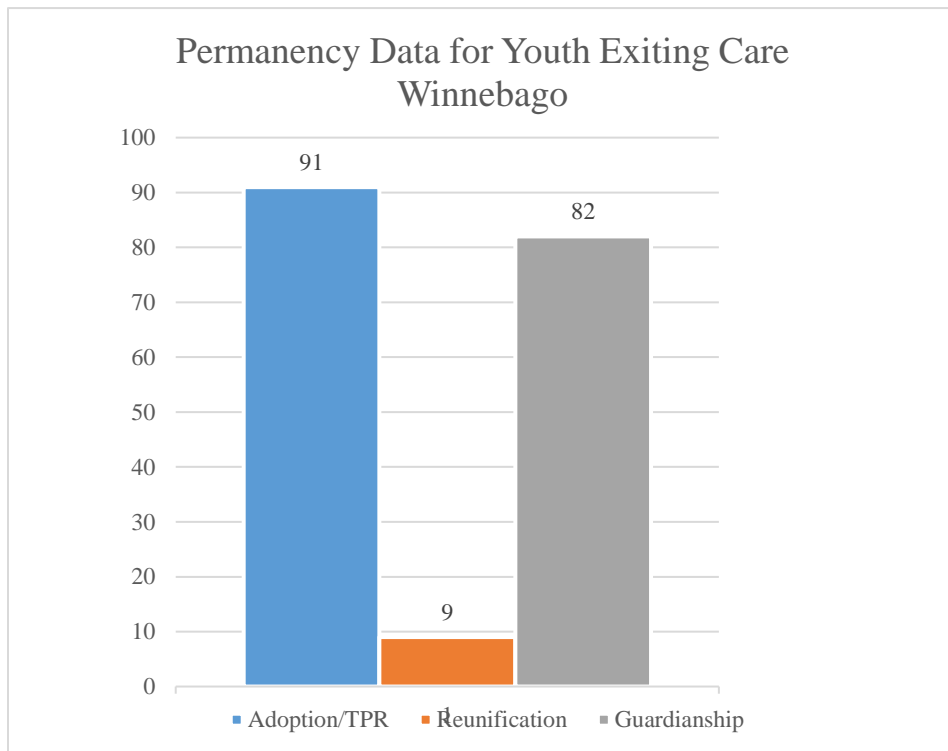
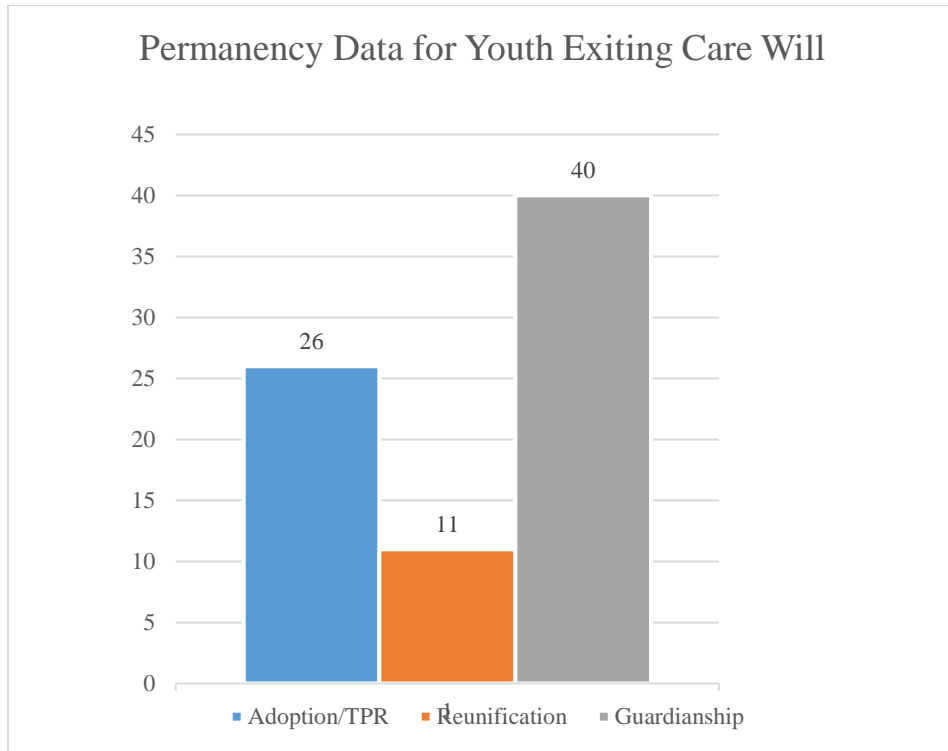


Appendix V Northern Region Action Team Counties Permanency Exits









Appendix VI Northern Region Action Team Counties Disproportionality

