



REGIONAL FOSTER CARE and ADOPTION REPORT 2007



Executive Summary

◆ CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

By the end of 2007, there were 4,430 children in foster care in the region. Nearly half of these children were in the District of Columbia's child welfare system. Prince George's County had the second largest number with 586 children. Fairfax County had 471 children in foster care.

A total of 1,097 of the children in the region's child welfare systems were placed in residential facilities or group homes. The District of Columbia had the most children in facilities or group homes (470) followed by Prince George's County (161) and Fairfax County (135). The number of children in residential placements and group home settings are significant, as these placements can be as much as ten times more expensive than family foster homes and usually require the child to be out of the community resulting in making permanency more difficult.

There were a total of 1,204 children who entered foster care in 2007.

◆ FOSTER HOMES

By the end of 2007, there were a total of 2,154 foster families in the region. Recruitment of foster homes continues to be a regional challenge. In this region, more than 80% of the children adopted from the foster care system are adopted by their foster parents. Recruiting more foster families increases the chances that children who become available for adoption will be placed in an adoptive family. The District of Columbia has the greatest number of approved foster homes (1,260), followed by Montgomery County (304), and Fairfax County (170).

The District of Columbia also had the highest net gain of foster families, with 152 families, followed by Montgomery County's net gain of 20 families, and Arlington's net gain of 9 families.

About 60% of foster homes serving the District's children are located in Prince George's County. The majority of these homes are contracted by the District from private agencies. Of the homes licensed by the District, 68% of them are in DC and 27% are in Prince George's County and 25% are in other jurisdictions.

◆ FOSTER PARENT REIMBURSEMENT

The District of Columbia has the highest reimbursement rate to foster parents. It's regular rate is \$28.58 per day, approximately \$767.40 per month. Of note during calendar year 2007, the District had nineteen contracted agencies. More specifically for traditional foster families, the District paid between \$23.72 and \$73.72. For specialized care the District paid between \$14.12 and \$80.58.

The foster parent reimbursement rates have increased for the Maryland jurisdictions, from \$635 per month in 2006 to \$735 in 2007. In April 2008, rates increased by \$140 in Prince George's and Charles counties to make each jurisdiction more competitive with the District of Columbia. Virginia's reimbursement rate continues to be one of the lowest in the country at \$431.00 per month. The Virginia state legislature has recently approved a 15% increase in room and board rates for FY09 and an 8% increase in rates for FY10.

Arlington County adds an additional \$100.00 per month to the state's rate providing their foster families with a higher rate of \$531.00 per month.

◆ STATUS OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

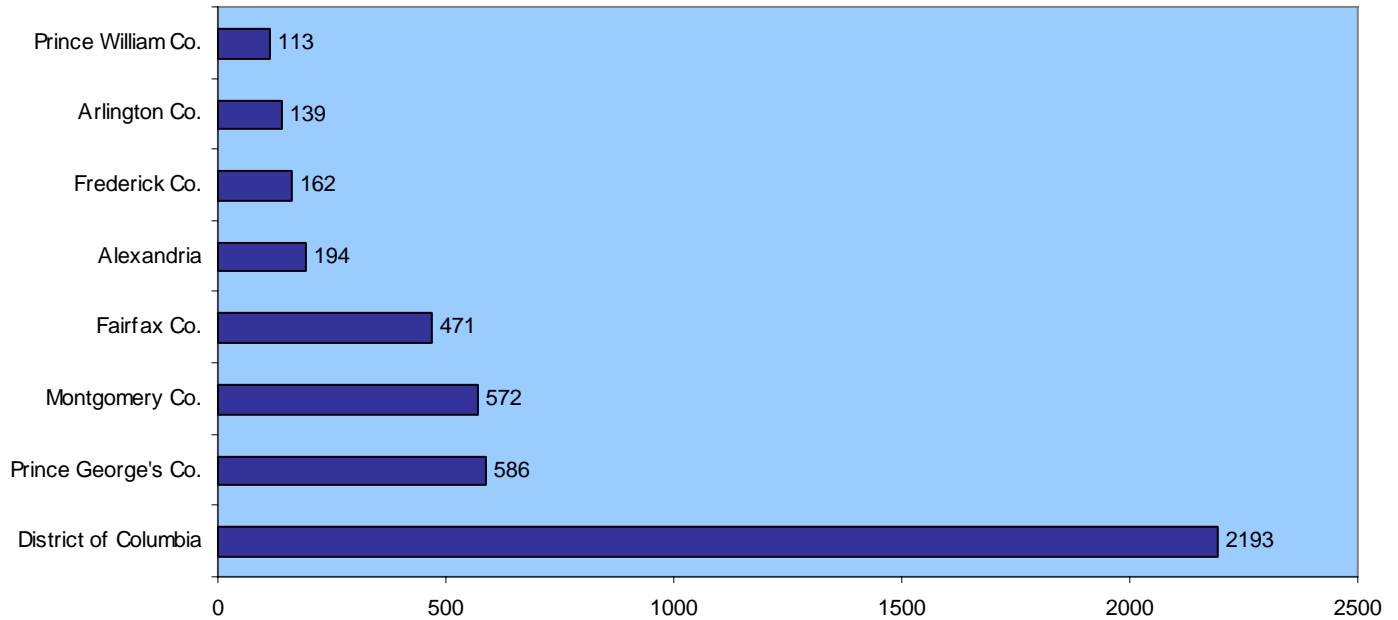
There are a total of 631 children who were reunited with their families. There were 768 children waiting to be adopted, and a total of 299 youth were emancipated from the foster care system without being adopted or reunited with their families. In the Washington metropolitan region, youth can stay in foster care until their 21st birthday as long as they are in school/vocational program, have a documented disability or are in transition to independence, but are free to leave after their 18th birthday.

With the success of the Wednesday's Child program and other recruitment activities in 2007, the region's social service agencies have completed adoptions for a total of 264 children. The District of Columbia had 130 children adopted, followed by Fairfax County (40), and Prince George's County (25). The majority of the adopted children are African-American, as they comprise the largest share of children in the region's foster care system. A slightly greater number of boys (137) were adopted rather than girls (127).

Children in Foster Care

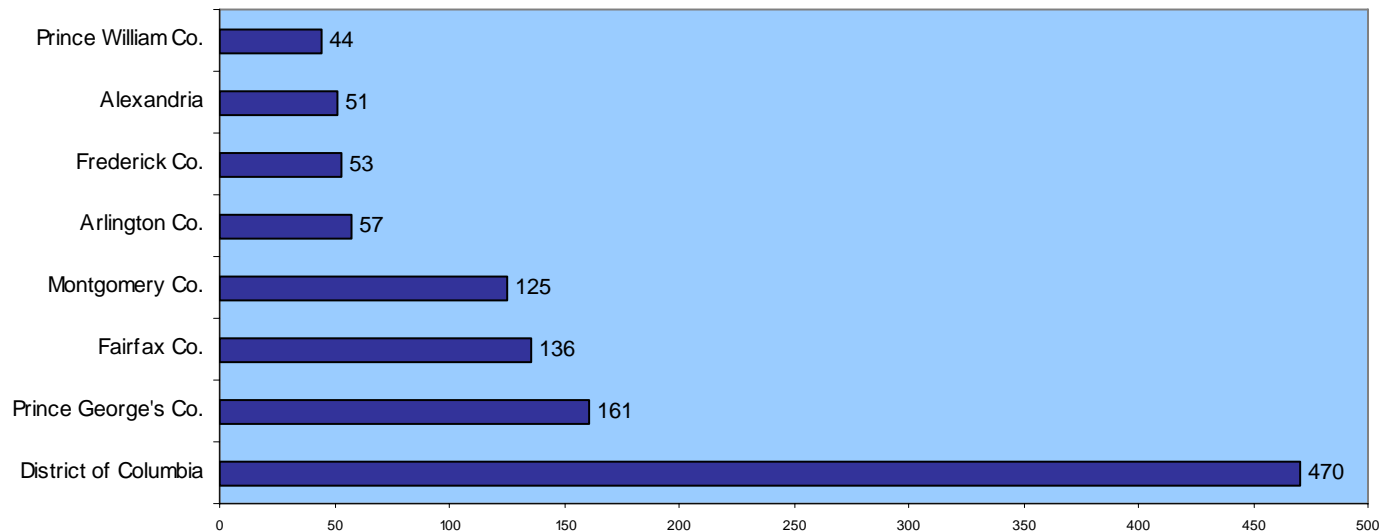
By the end of 2007, there were 4,430 children in foster care in the region. Nearly half of these children were in the District of Columbia's child welfare system. Prince George's County had the second largest number with 586 children, followed by Fairfax County with 471. The majority of the children in foster care are African American and represent about 50% female and 50% male.

Total Number of Children in Foster Care in 2007



There were a total of 1097 children in residential placements and group home settings in 2007. Agencies are consistently trying to decrease the number of children in these placements, (often called "congregate care"). These placements can be as much as ten times more expensive than family foster homes and usually require the child to be placed out of the community resulting in making reunification or other permanency plans more difficult. There are not enough local treatment programs for this population and virtually no residential treatment programs in the region for pre-teen foster children who were sexually abused and in turn, developed sexual offender behaviors.

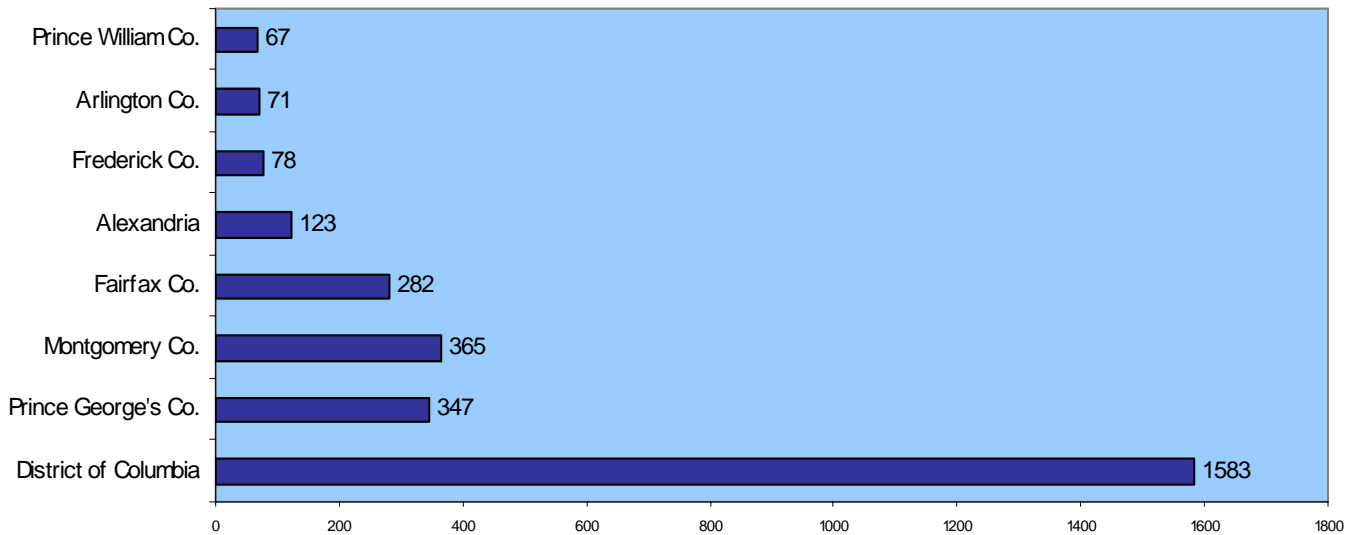
Number of Children in Residential or Group Homes in 2007



Foster Parents

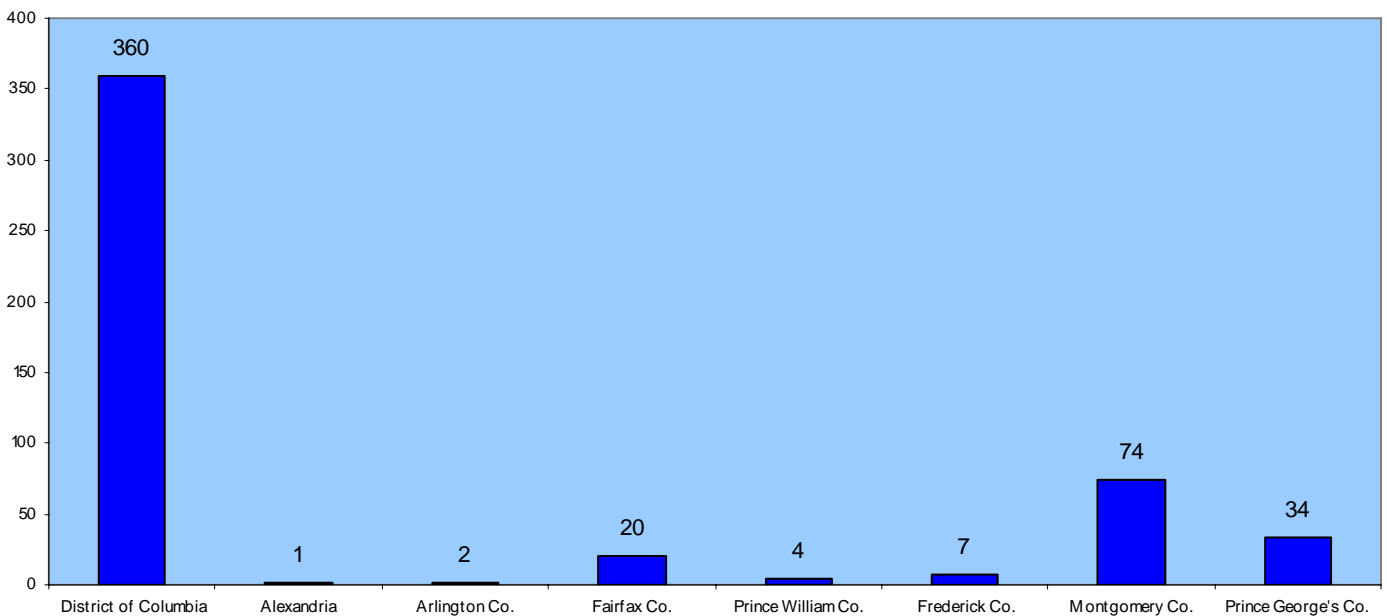
In 2007, there were 2,916 children in family foster homes in the region. Family foster homes are defined as foster families who have received basic foster parenting training, participated in the home study process, completed criminal history background checks, received and passed inspections and received a licensed or certification from their local social service agency or a licensed child placement agency. These families are usually unrelated to the foster child, however, in some cases, relatives do get licensed as foster parents and care for their relatives who are in the foster care system. These families, often called “kinship” foster parents, are included in the total number of children in family foster homes.

Number of Children in Family Foster Homes in 2007



Relative foster homes or kinship foster families, receive the same financial and agency support that foster parents receive. Most studies indicate that children who are placed in family foster homes have better outcomes than children placed in congregate care, and children placed with kin or relatives, have better outcomes than children placed in unrelated family foster homes. Most local social service agencies have kinship homes that do not receive financial reimbursement like foster parents, but do receive some agency services. They too, are caring for their relatives in the foster care system, but they are not licensed as foster parents.

Relative Foster Families w/ Reimbursement in 2007

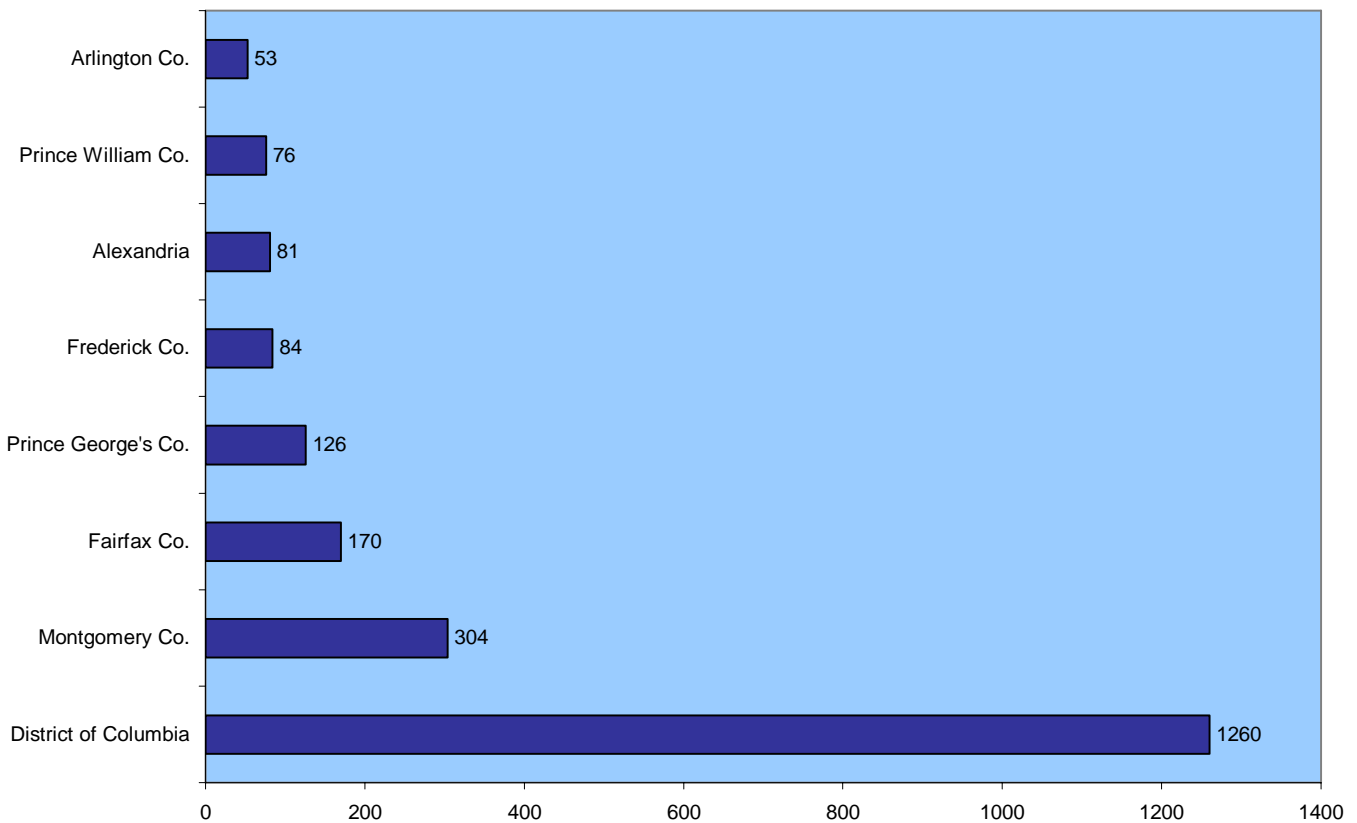


Foster Parents

There were a total of 2,154 foster parents in the region by the end of 2007. Relative foster families or kinship foster families who receive reimbursement are included in this total. Relatives or kinship families who do not receive reimbursement are not included in this total. The District of Columbia has the greatest number of foster families with 1,260 families. About 60% of foster homes serving the District's children are located in Prince George's County. The majority of these homes are contracted by the District from private agencies. Of the homes licensed by the District, 68% of them are in DC and 27% are in Prince George's County and 25% are in other jurisdictions. The District does not actively recruit foster homes outside of the city line.

Montgomery County has the next greatest number of homes with 304 families, followed by Fairfax County with 170 families. Although all jurisdictions have some foster families across county and city lines, with the exception of the District, all jurisdictions have the majority of their homes within their counties.

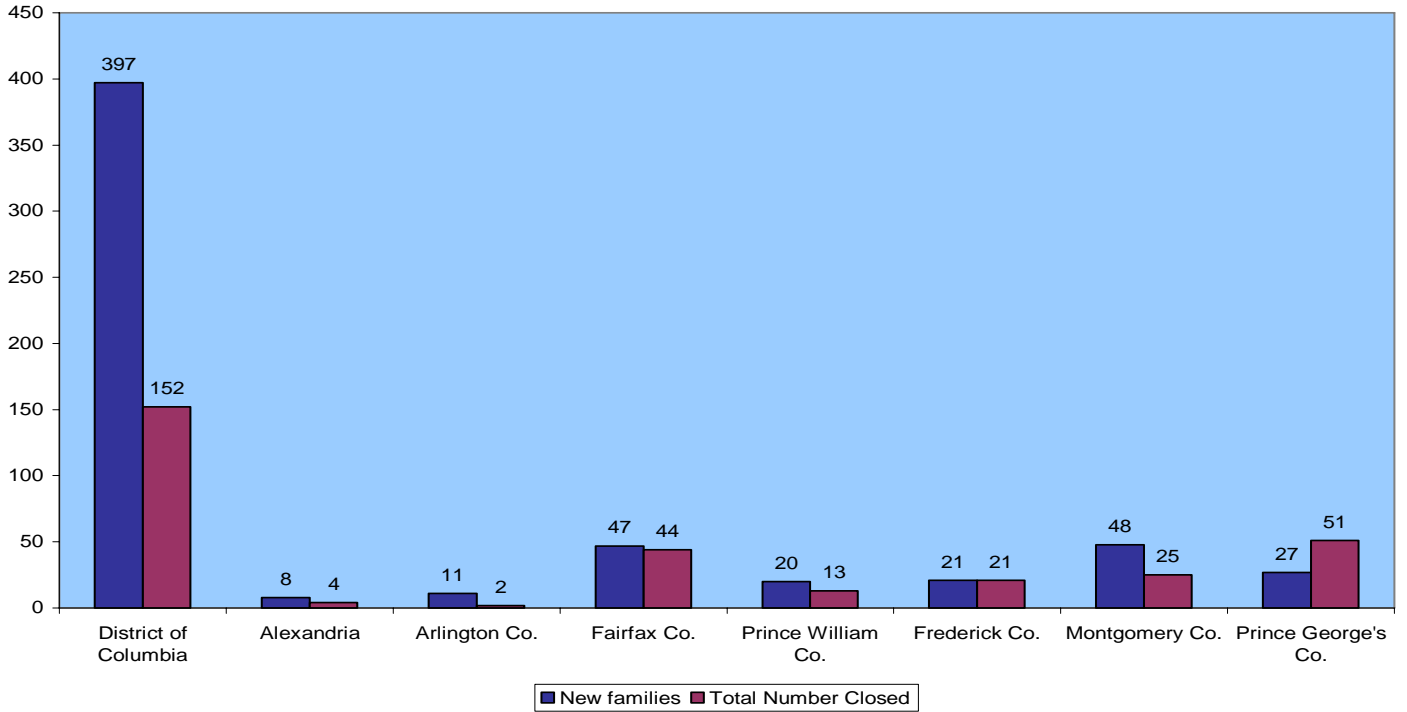
Total Number of Approved Foster Families



Foster Parents

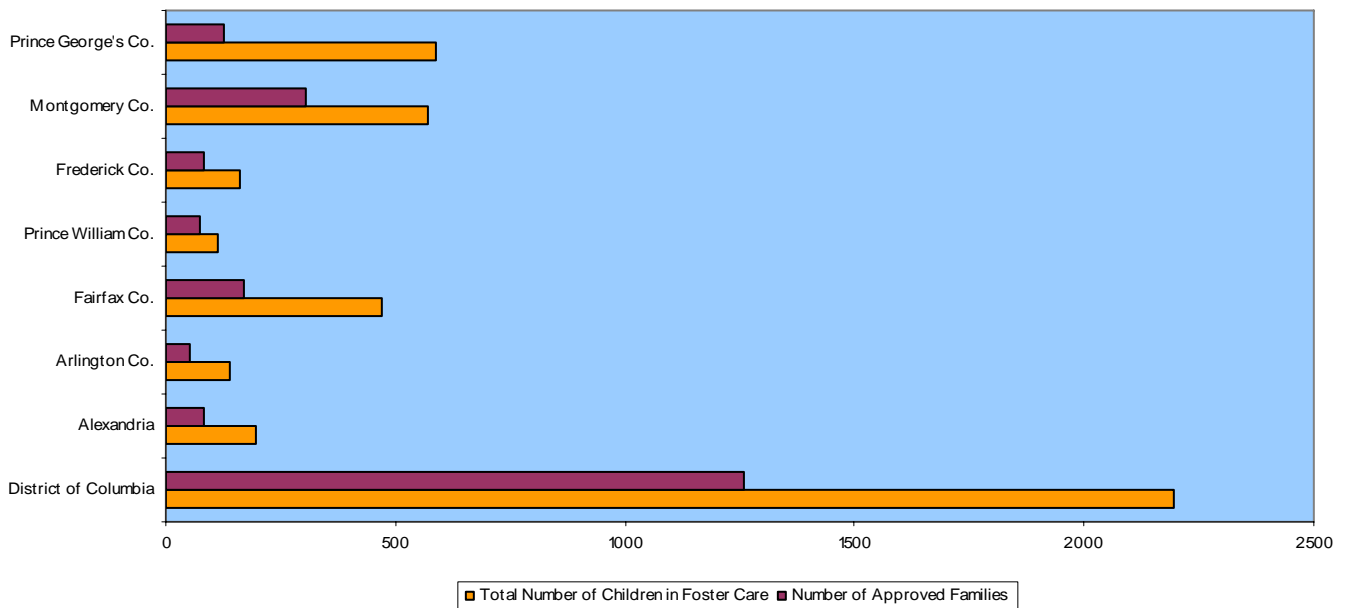
By the end of 2007, 579 new foster families were approved in the region. The District approved the most families. With this gain, however, the region's agencies closed 312 foster families. The reason for closing families could include: the foster parent's request, the foster family moved, the foster family was out of compliance, the health of the foster family, the foster family adopted child(ren), divorce, etc. The District of Columbia had the highest net gain of foster families. The District of Columbia's net gain was 152 families, followed by Montgomery County's net gain of 20 families, and Arlington's net gain of 9 families.

New Foster Families and Closed Foster Families



The region does not have enough foster families to care for the number of children in foster care.

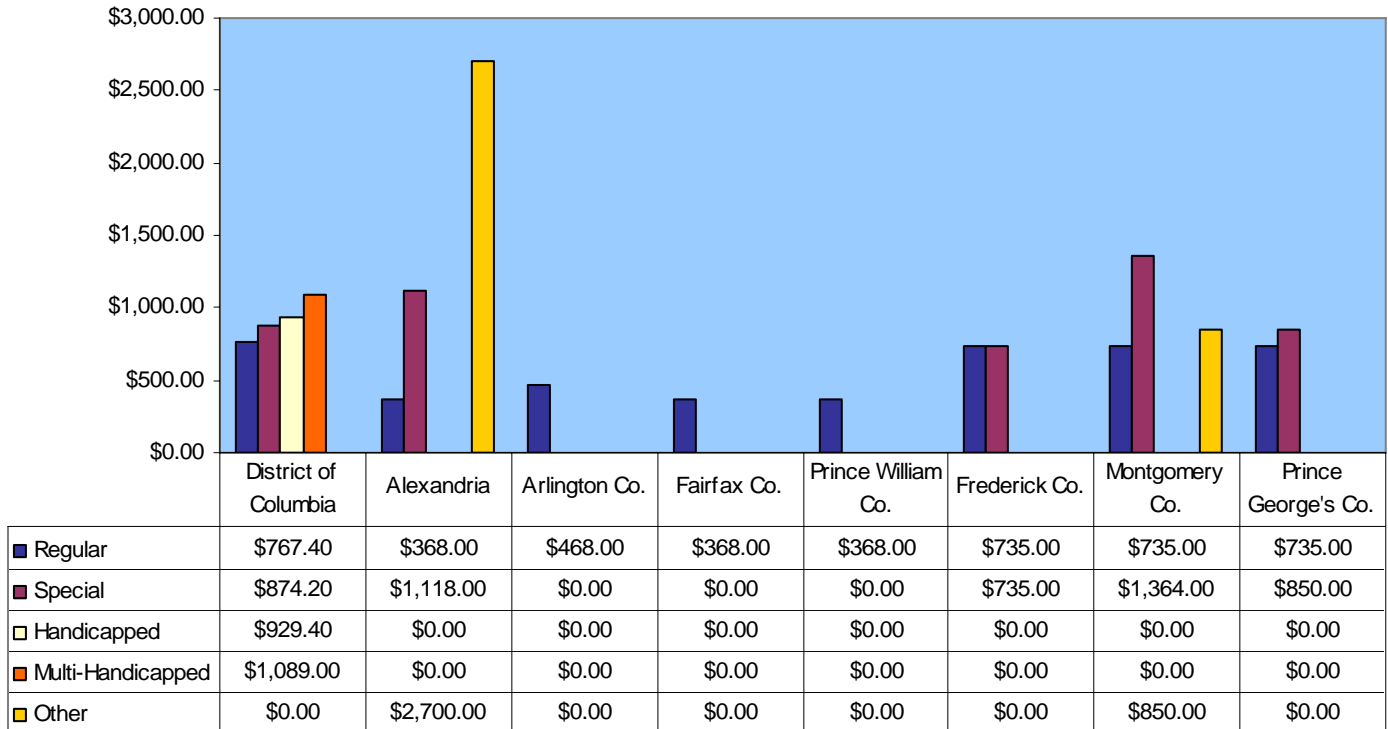
Number of Foster Families and Number of Foster Children in 2007



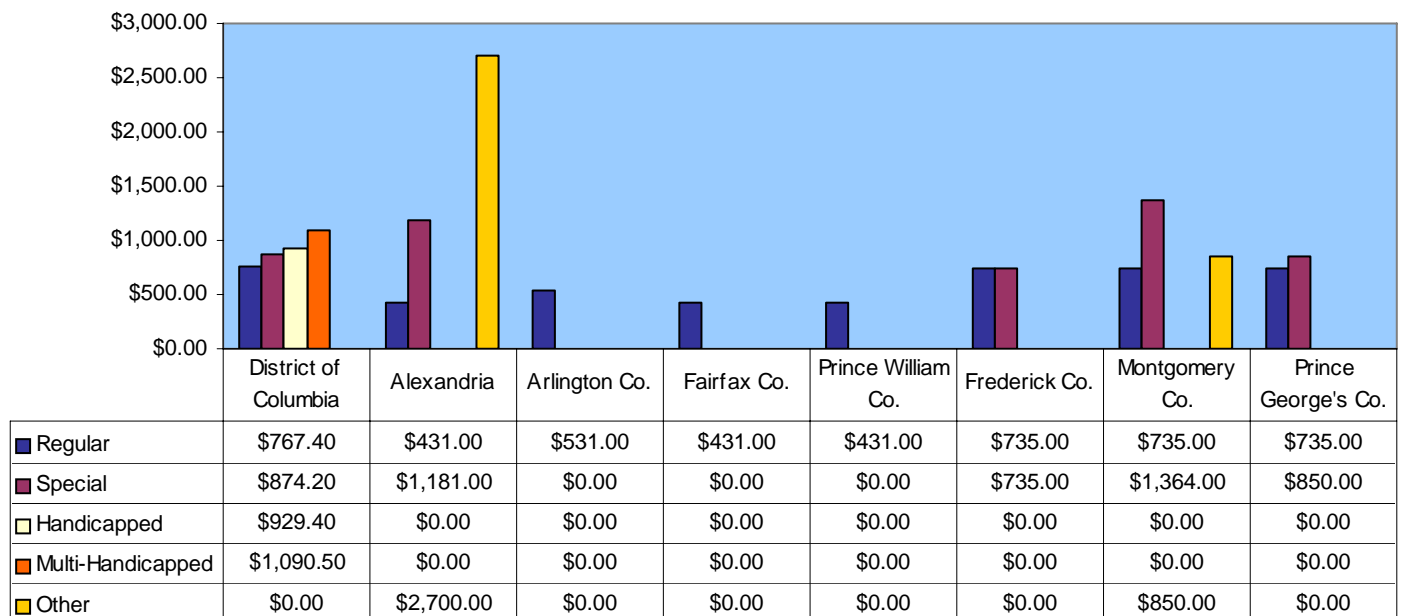
Foster Parent Reimbursement Rates (Room and Board)

The District of Columbia has the highest reimbursement rate to foster parents. It's regular rate is \$28.58 per day, approximately \$767.40 per month. During calendar year 2007, the District had 19 contracted agencies. More specifically for traditional foster families, the District paid between \$23.72 and \$73.72. For specialized care it paid between \$14.12 and \$80.58.

Foster Parent Reimbursement Rates - Ages 4 and Under



Foster Parent Reimbursement Rates-Ages 5-12



Foster Parent Reimbursement Rate (Continued)

The City of Alexandria has a therapeutic foster home program that provides a stipend of \$2,700 per month to ten families that care for children with extreme behaviors. These foster parents receive specialized training and provide very intensive services. Alexandria also provides from \$10 to \$50 per day (the average of \$25.00 is reflected on the chart), in addition to the room and board rate, to foster parents who care for children with various levels of need.

The foster parent reimbursement rates have increased for the Maryland jurisdictions, from \$635 per month in 2006 to \$735 in 2007. In April 2008, rates increased by \$140 in Prince George's County (and Charles County) to make each jurisdiction more competitive with the District of Columbia. Virginia's reimbursement rate continues to be one of the lowest in the country at \$431.00 per month. Arlington County adds an additional \$100.00 per month to the state's rate providing their foster families with a higher rate of \$531.00 per month. The Virginia state legislature has recently approved a 15% increase in room and board rates for FY09 and an 8% increase in rates for FY10.

In the District of Columbia and Frederick County, the child's clothing allowance is included in the monthly reimbursement rate. In Virginia, each foster child receives \$300.00 per year for clothing, and in Maryland each child receives from \$60 - \$100 once per lifetime in care.

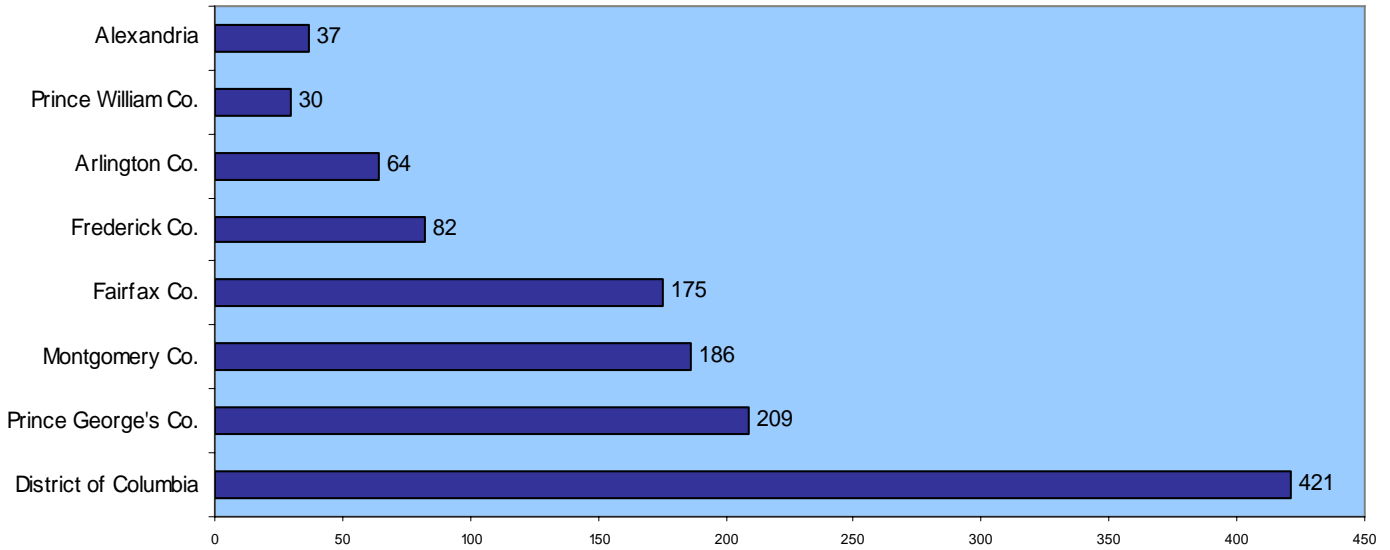
Foster Parent Reimbursement Rate-13 and Up



Status of Children in Foster Care

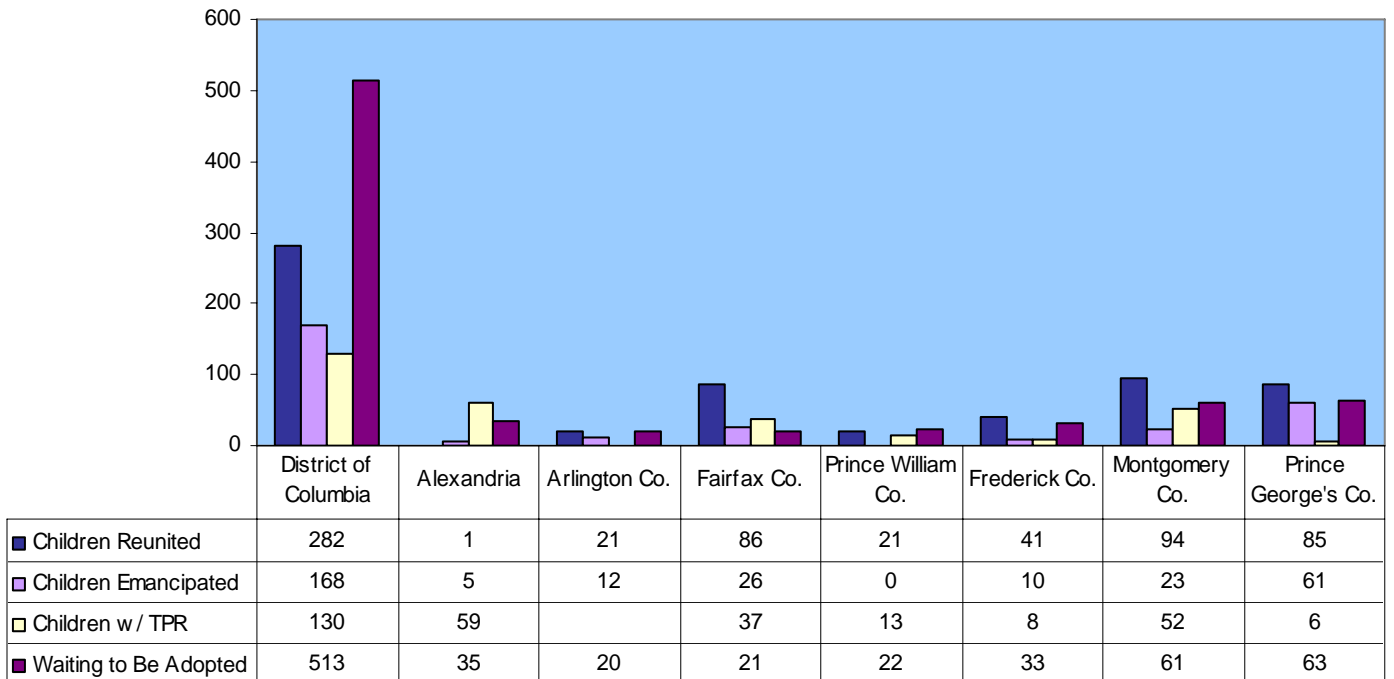
The number of children who entered foster care in 2007 decreased from 2006 in all jurisdictions except Prince George's and Frederick Counties. There were a total of 1,204 children who entered foster care in 2007.

Total Number of Children Who Entered Foster Care in 2007



There are a total of 631 children who were reunited with their families. There were 768 children waiting to be adopted, and a total of 305 youth were emancipated from the foster care system without being adopted or reunited with their families. In the Washington metropolitan region, youth can stay in foster care until their 21st birthday as long as they are in school/vocational program, have a documented disability or are in transition to independence, but are free to leave after their 18th birthday.

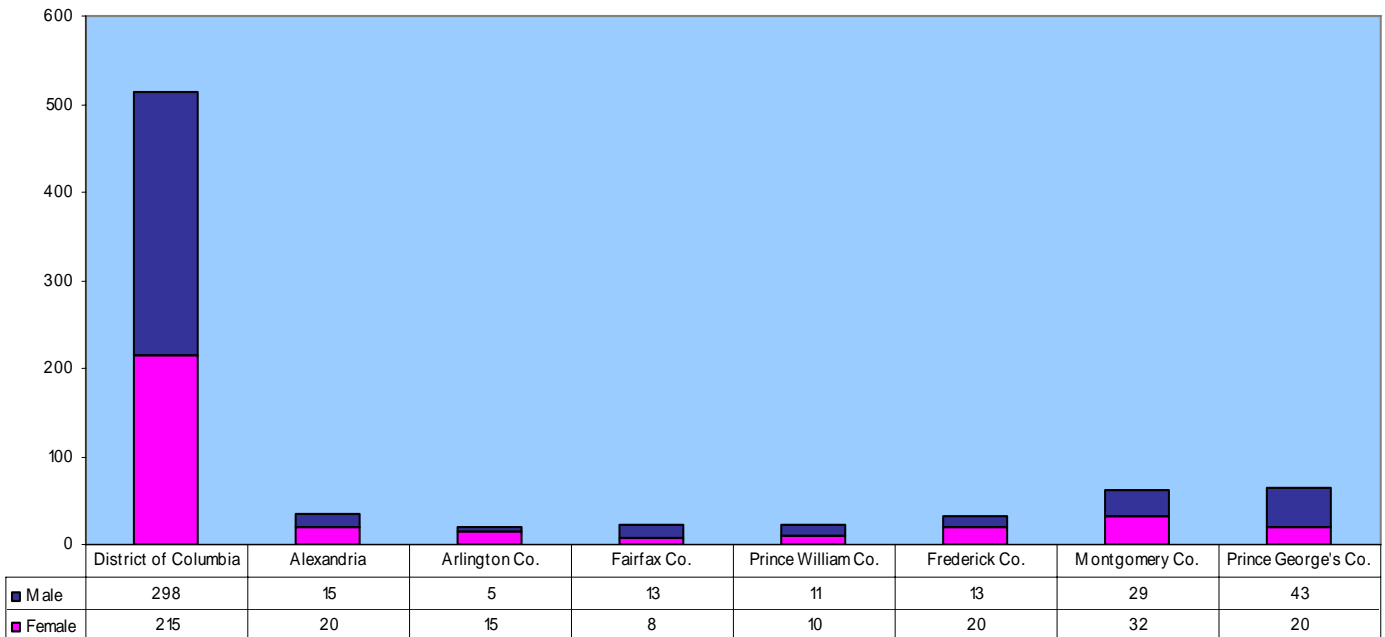
Status of Children in Foster Care in 2007



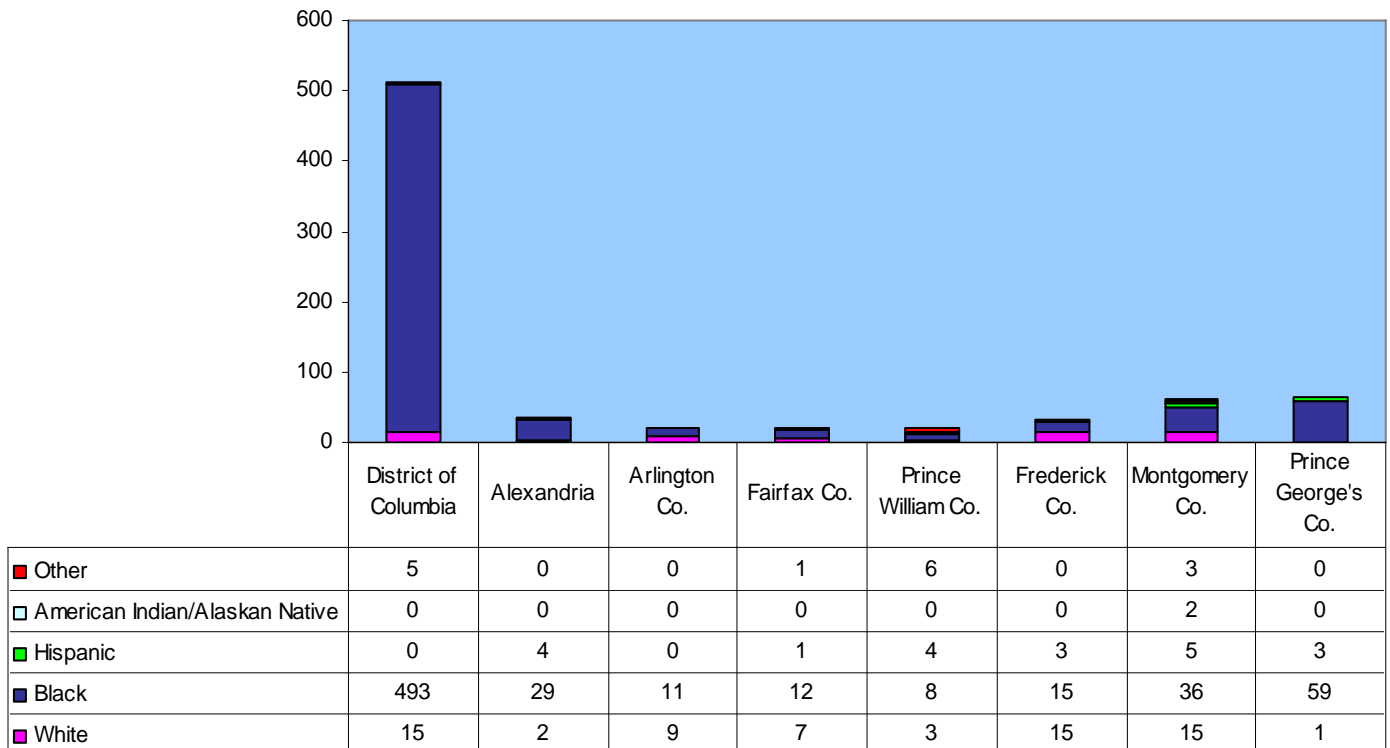
Status of Children in Foster Care

There were 768 children waiting to be adopted in the region. The District of Columbia has the most waiting children (513), followed by Prince George's County (63) and then Montgomery County (61). More than 86% of the waiting children are African American, almost 11% are White, and only 20 (less than 1%) of the waiting children are Hispanic/Latino.

Children Waiting to Be Adopted in 2007



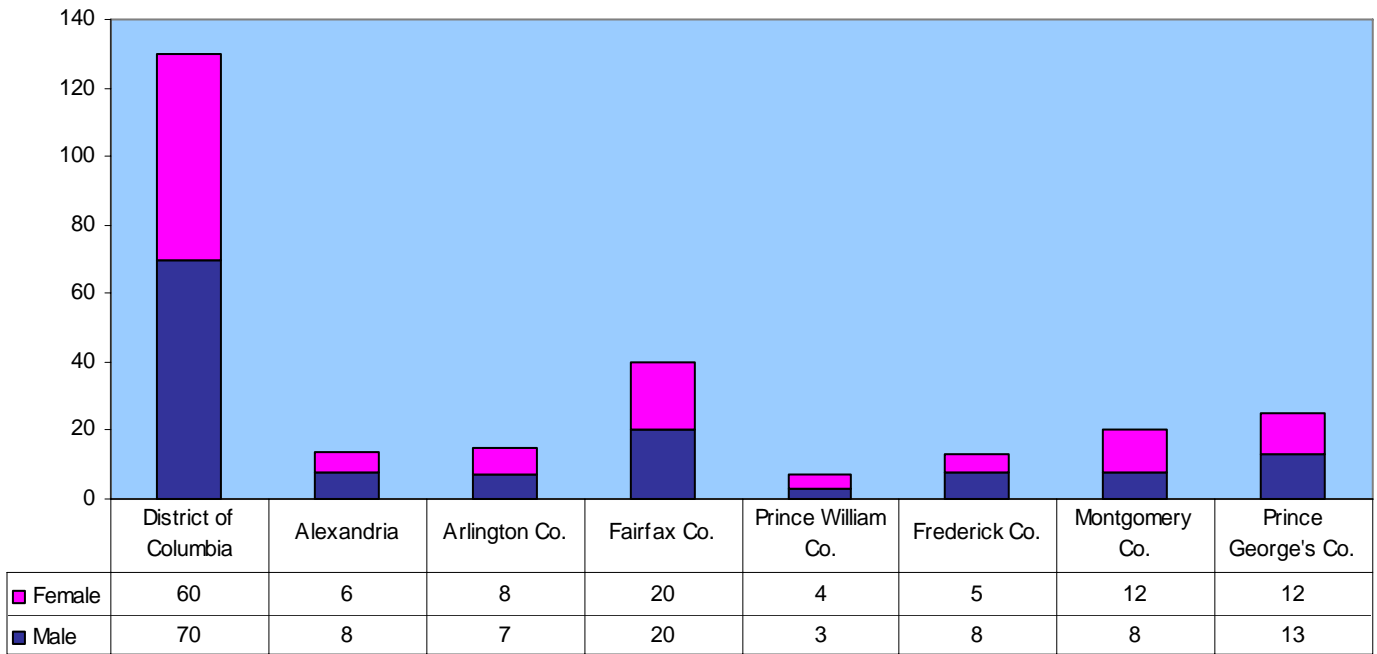
Children Waiting to Be Adopted-by Race in 2007



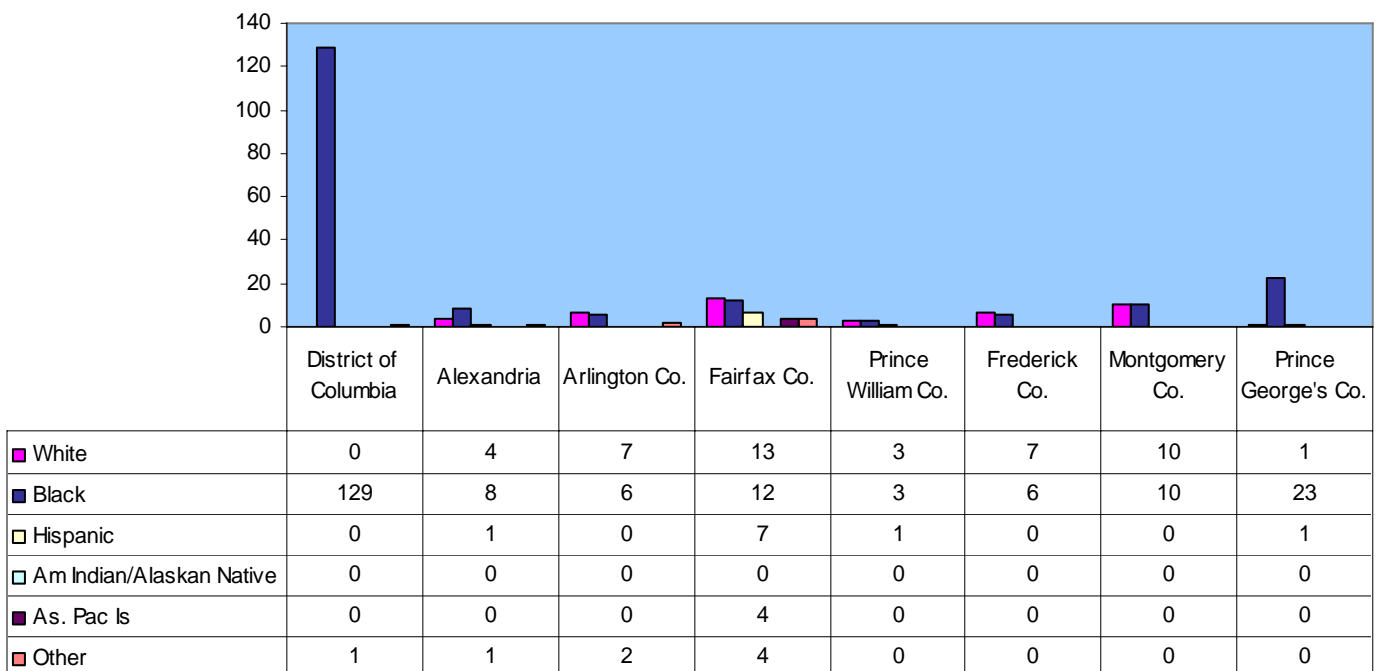
Adoption

With the success of the Wednesday's Child program and other recruitment activities, the region's social service agencies have completed adoptions for a total of 264 children in 2007. The District of Columbia had 130 children adopted, followed by Fairfax County (40), and Prince George's County (25). The majority of the adopted children are African-American, as they comprise the largest share of children in the region's foster care system. A slightly greater number of boys (137) were adopted rather than girls (127).

Number of Children Adopted in 2007



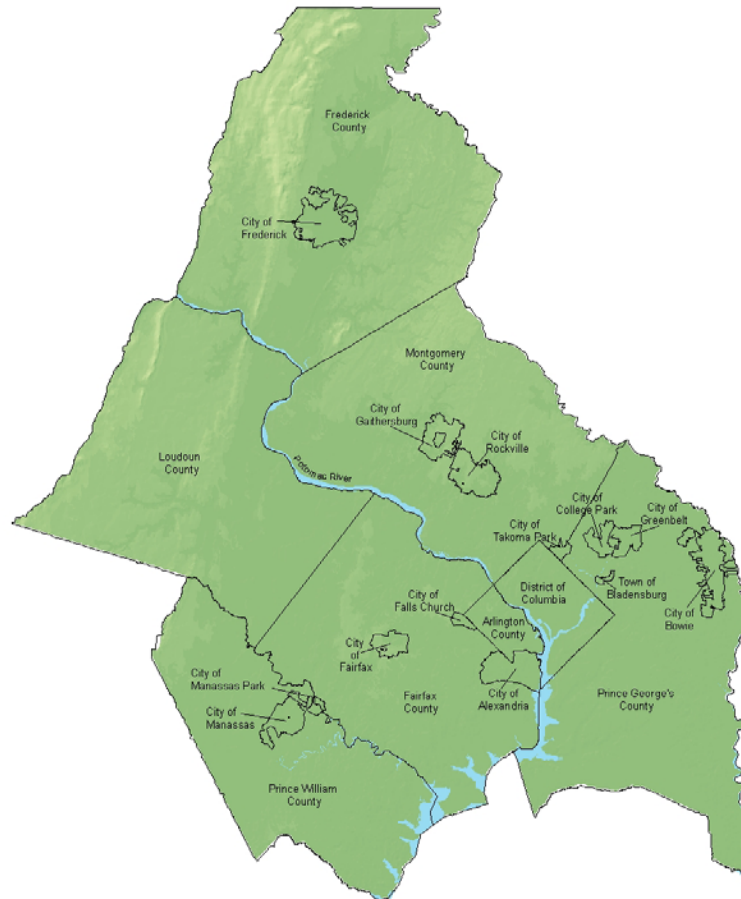
Number of Children Adopted-by Race





Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Membership of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments



The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is the regional organization of the Washington region's 21 major local governments.

COG provides a focus for action and develops sound regional responses to such issues as the environment, affordable housing, economic development, health and family concerns, human services, population growth, public safety, and transportation.

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