



CRBC

Citizens Review
Board for Children

**THIRD QUARTER
FISCAL 2015 REPORT**

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Our Mission Statement

To conduct case reviews of children in out-of-home care case reviews, make timely individual case and systemic child welfare recommendations; and advocate for legislative and systematic child welfare improvements to promote safety and permanency.

Our Vision Statement

We envision the protection of all children from abuse and neglect, only placing children in out-of-home care when necessary; and providing families with the help they need to stay intact; children will be safe in a permanent living arrangement.

Discrimination Statement

The Citizens Review Board for Children (CRBC) renounces any policy or practice of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, or sexual orientation that is or would be applicable to its citizen reviewers or staff or to the children, families, and employees involved in the child welfare system (CRBC, 2013).

Confidentiality

CRBC local board members are bound by strict confidentiality requirements. Under Article 88A, § 6, all records concerning out-of-home care are confidential and unauthorized disclosure is a criminal offense subject to a fine not exceeding \$500 or imprisonment not exceeding 90 days, or both. Each local board member shall be presented with the statutory language on confidentiality, including the penalty for breach thereof, and sign a confidentiality statement prior to having access to any confidential information.

CRBC Acknowledgements

The Citizens Review Board for Children (CRBC) as always would like to take the time to acknowledge those who make its mission work! The CRBC program is extremely grateful to all of the people who remain committed to making an effort to keep Maryland's children safe and protected against abuse and neglect.

- ★ CRBC Governor Appointed Volunteers
- ★ The Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Social Services Administration (SSA).
- ★ All 24 Local Departments of Social Services
- ★ The Circuit Courts of Maryland
- ★ The Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children

*Thank
You*



The Honorable Sam Malhotra, Secretary
Maryland Department of Human Resources
314 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Re: Third Quarter FY2015 Report

Dear Secretary Malhotra:

Pursuant to the requirements of Article – Family Law Section 5 539.1 Annotated Code of Maryland, we are respectfully submitting the Citizens Review Board for Children’s Third Quarter Fiscal Year 2015 Report.

CRBC has conducted targeted individual case reviews of foster care children in out-of-placement in accordance with an agreement reached between the Department of Human Resources, the Social Services Administration, and the State Board.

In addition, we have maintained our mission of making timely individual and systemic child welfare recommendations; and advocating for legislative and systematic child welfare improvements to promote safety and permanency.

Thank you for your leadership, service, and attention to this report!

Sincerely,

Nettie Anderson-Burrs

Nettie Anderson-Burrs
State Board Chair

Denise E. Wheeler

Denise E. Wheeler
Administrator



CRBC Legislative Advocacy Efforts

During the 2015 Legislative Session CRBC continued its legislative child welfare advocacy efforts by being an active organizational member of the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Children (CPMC). The State Board's Children's Legislative Advocacy Committee voted for CPMC to take a position on the following 2015 proposed legislation.

- SB150/HB171 Courts–Child Abuse and Neglect–Waiver of Reunification Efforts.
(SB150 Passed in both Chambers, but HB171 was vetoed by the Governor)

Altering the circumstances under which a local department of social services may ask the court in a child in need of assistance proceeding to find that reasonable efforts to reunify the child with the child's parent or guardian are not required.

- SB157/HB662 Consultation, Diagnosis, & Treatment of Mental and Emotional Disorders–Consent by Minors *(CPMC did not have enough votes to take a position)*

Altering the health care providers who provide consultation, diagnosis, and treatment of a mental or emotional disorder to which minors who are 16 years old and older have the same capacity as an adult to consent; providing that the capacity to consent does not include the capacity to refuse consultation, diagnosis, or treatment for a mental or emotional disorder by health care providers for which a specified individual has given consent .

- SB225/HB029 Higher Education–Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Tuition Exemption–Modification *(Passed in both Chambers)*

Altering the definition of unaccompanied homeless youth by requiring specified documentation that establishes that the child or youth has had a consistent presence in the State for at least 1 year before enrollment in a public institution of higher education that is documented by school, employment, or other records; requiring a determination of homelessness by a specified individual; and requiring a financial aid administrator to annually make a specified verification.

- SB525/HB1146 Child Abuse and Neglect–Failure to Report
(NO VOTE in the House Judiciary Committee, passed the Senate)

Requiring an agency that is participating in a child abuse or neglect investigation and that has reasonable grounds to believe that a person has failed to report child abuse as required under a specified provision of law to file a specified complaint with a specified board, agency, institution, or facility.

- SB567/HB643 Department of Human Resources–State Child Welfare System–Report

(Passed in both Chambers)

Requiring the Department of Human Resources, on or before December 1 of each year, to report to the General Assembly specified information regarding children and foster youth in the State child welfare system; requiring the Department to maintain the confidentiality of specified information and disaggregate the information by county, age, gender, race, and ethnicity; requiring the Department to publish specified reports on the Department's Web site within 30 days of submission of the report to the General Assembly .

- SB609/HB1022 State Government–Office of the Child Welfare Ombudsman–Pilot Program

Establishing the Office of the Child Welfare Ombudsman Pilot Program in the Office of the Attorney General; providing that the purpose of the Pilot Program is to investigate in specified counties whether the needs of children and families are being met by local departments, the rights of children and families are being upheld, and children under the jurisdiction of local departments are being protected from abuse and neglect; requiring the Governor to provide funds in the State budget for the Office to employ specified staff .

- SB668/HB725 Civil Actions–Child Sexual Abuse–Statute of Limitations

Extending from 7 to 20 years the statute of limitations in specified civil actions relating to child sexual abuse.

- SB669/HB788 Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Orphans and Foster Care Recipients

Establishing the Maryland Loan Assistance Repayment Program for Orphans and Foster Care Recipients; requiring that to be eligible for participation in the Program an applicant must be employed full-time by the State, have received a graduate, professional, or undergraduate degree from an institution of higher education in the State and meet other requirements as specified; providing for the amount, duration, renewal, and uses of specified awards; providing for the retroactive application of the Act.

- SB685/HB439 Family Law Information and Services for Foster Children and Former Foster Children *(Approved by Governor)*

Requiring the juvenile court to determine whether a local department made a reasonable effort, for a child at least 18 years of age, to enroll the child in health insurance that will continue after the child is emancipated, screen and assist the child with eligibility for public assistance, and establish a plan for stable housing for

at least 12 months and sufficient income after emancipation; requiring a local department to advise a child before emancipation of the right to reenter care and procedures for reentering care; etc. (Effective OCTOBER 1, 2015)

- HB347 Courts–Child Abuse and Neglect–Waiver of Reunification Efforts (*Withdrawn due to an unfavorable report*)

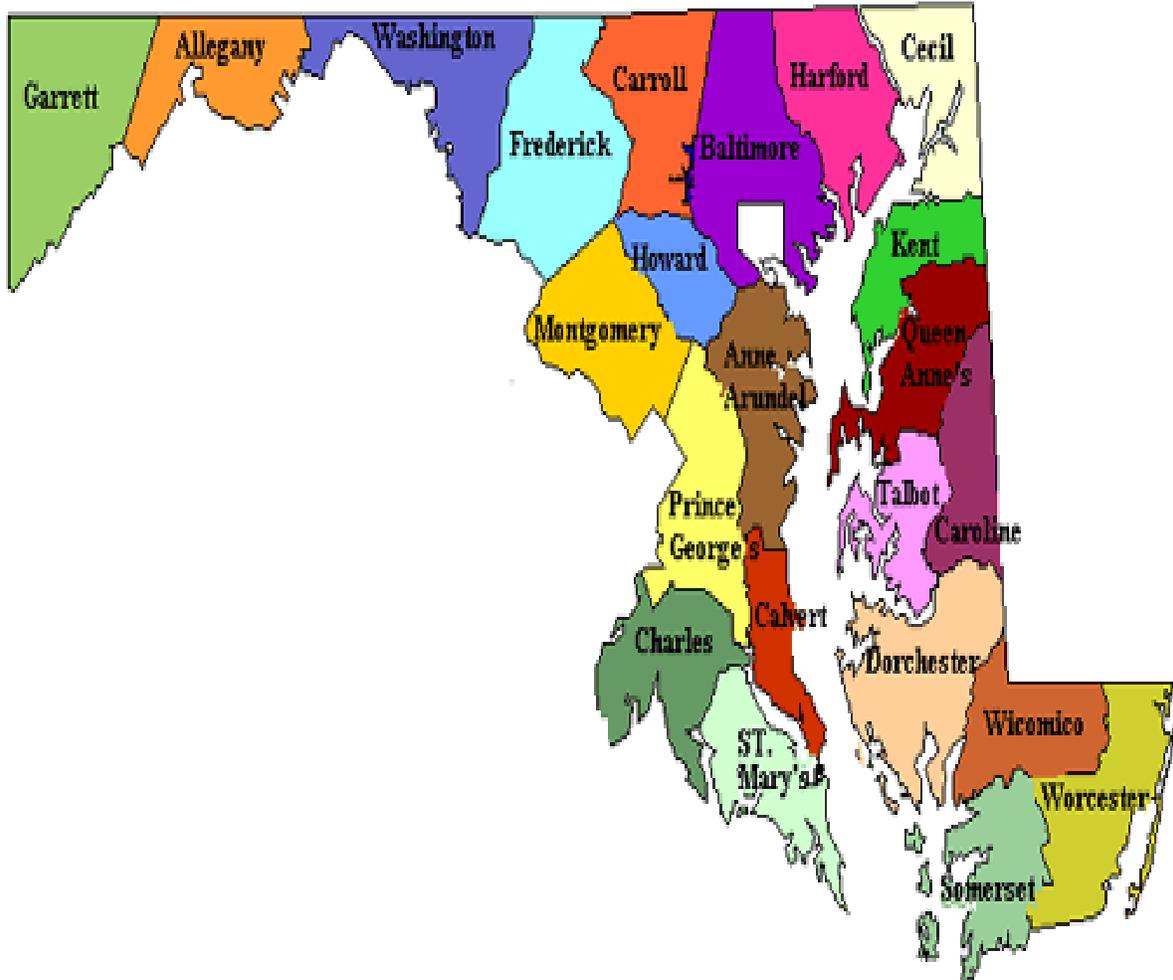
Altering the circumstances under which a local department of social services may ask the court in a child in need of assistance proceeding to find that reasonable efforts to reunify the child with the child's parent or guardian are not required.

- HB955 Child Protection–Reporting Requirements–Threat of Harm

Requiring a specified individual acting in a professional capacity to notify the local department of social services or the appropriate law enforcement agency if the individual has reason to believe that a verbal threat of a substantial risk of imminent harm to a child has been made; prohibiting a person from preventing or interfering with the making of a report under the Act; providing specified immunity to a person who participates in specified activities relating to a report made under the Act .

Introduction

The Citizens Review Board for Children (CRBC) is proud to release its 3rd Quarter Fiscal 2015 Report. The following pages contain data from CRBC's out-of-home-placement case review findings, and recommendations.



CRBC conducts regular out-of-home placement case reviews in all 23 Maryland counties and Baltimore City throughout the year. For the 3rd quarter of fiscal year 2015 the following counties did not have regularly scheduled case reviews. Allegany, Caroline, Carroll, Garrett, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester counties. Therefore this 3rd quarter fiscal 2015 report only contains review findings and recommendations on the other 13 Maryland counties and Baltimore City that had regularly scheduled reviews.

Targeted Review Criterion

The Social Services Administration (SSA) and the Citizens Review Board for Children (CRBC) together have created a review work plan for targeted reviews of children in out-of-home-placement. This work plan contains targeted review criteria based on out-of-home-placement permanency plans.

Reunification:

- ★ Already established plans of Reunification for youth 10 years of age and older. CRBC will conduct a review for a child 10 years of age and older who has an established primary permanency plan of Reunification, and has been in care 12 months or longer.

Adoption:

- ★ Existing plans of Adoption. CRBC will conduct a review for a child that has had a plan of Adoption for over 12 months. The purpose of the review is to assess the appropriateness of the plan and identify barriers to achieve the plan.
- ★ Newly changed plans of Adoption. CRBC will conduct a review of a child within 5 months of the establishment of Adoption as a primary permanency plan. The purpose is to ensure that there is adequate and appropriate movement by the local departments to promote and achieve the Adoption.

Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA):

- ★ Already established plans of APPLA for youth 16 years of age and younger. CRBC will conduct a full review for a child 16 years of age and younger who has an established primary permanency plan of APPLA. The primary purpose of the review is to assess appropriateness of the plan and review documentation of the Federal APPLA requirements.
- ★ Newly established plans of APPLA. CRBC will conduct a review of a child within 5 months of the establishment of APPLA as the primary permanency plan. Local Boards will review cases to ensure that local departments made adequate and appropriate efforts to assess if a plan of APPLA was the appropriate recourse for the child.

Older Youth Aging Out

- ★ Older youth aging-out or remaining in the care of the State at age 17 and 20 years old. CRBC will conduct a review of youth that are 17 and 20 years of age. The primary purpose of the review is to assess services provided to prepare the youth to transition to adulthood.

Re-Review Cases:

- ★ Assessment of progress made by LDSS. CRBC will conduct follow-up reviews during the fourth quarter of the current fiscal year of any cases where the Local Board identified barriers to adequate progress. The purpose of the review is to assess status and any progress made by LDSS to determine if identified barriers have been removed.

Permanency Plan Hierarchy

In 2005, Maryland House Bill 771 adjusted the state permanency goals to align with the federal standards. The permanency plan hierarchy in Maryland is as follows: (Social Services Administration, 2012):

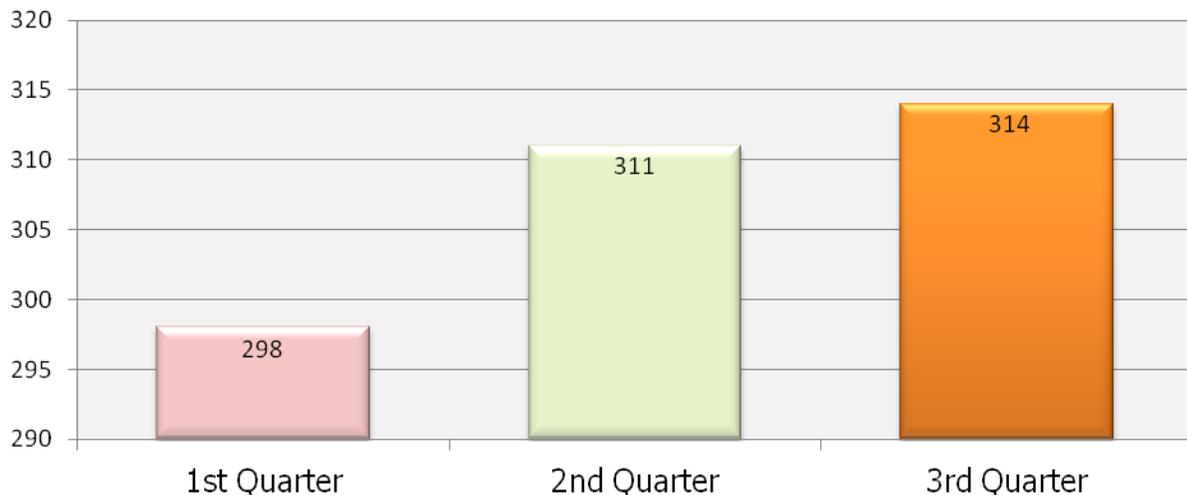
- Reunification with parent(s) or guardian
- Placement with a relative for adoption or guardianship
- Adoption by a non-relative
- Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)

Family Centered Practice Model

According to the Social Services Administration, Family Centered Practice assures that the entire system of care engages the family in helping them to improve their ability to adequately plan for the care and safety of their children. The safety, well-being and permanence of children are paramount. The strengths of the entire family are the focus of the engagement (2010).

Year-to-Date Statistics

Case Review Totals



CRBC has conducted a Year to Date total of 923 individual out-of-home case reviews throughout the state of Maryland.

3rd Quarter FY2015 Case Review Statistics

Total Reviewed (314)

Gender Totals

Male	Female
168 (54%)	146 (46%)

Gender By Plan

Male(168):

Reunification	Adoption	APPLA	Guardianship
61 (36%)	34 (20%)	66 (39%)	7 (4%)

Female(146):

Reunification	Adoption	APPLA	Guardianship
45 (31%)	32 (22%)	58 (40%)	11 (7%)

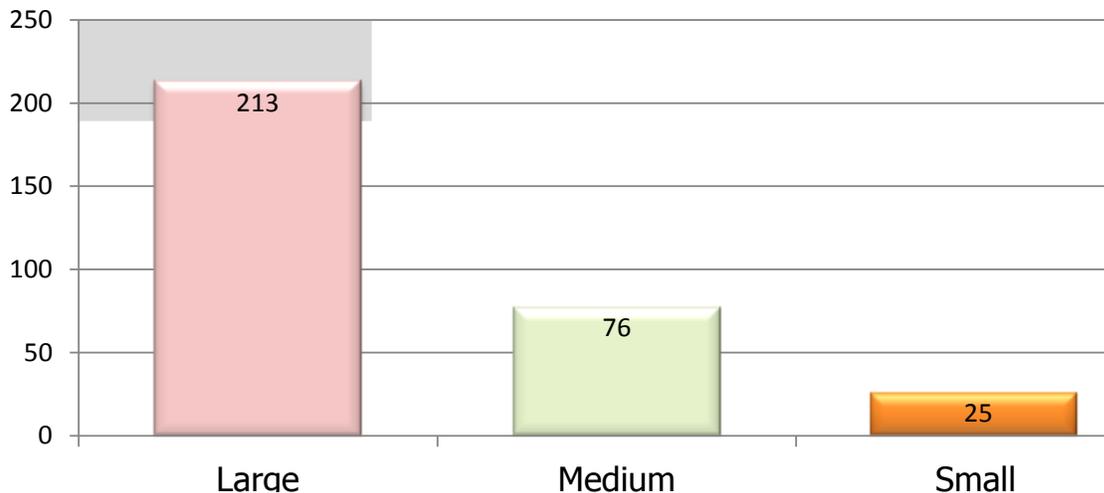
Ethnicity Overall

African American	Caucasian	Asian	Other
206 (66%)	96 (31%)	4 (1%)	8 (2%)

JURISDICTIONAL CASE REVIEW STATISTICS

Jurn #	County	Reunification	Relative Placement	Guardianship	Adoption	APPLA	TOTALS
02	Anne Arundel	1	2	0	11	1	15
03	Baltimore County	20	0	1	3	16	40
04	Calvert	2	0	0	6	0	8
07	Cecil	9	0	0	0	0	9
08	Charles	2	0	1	0	3	6
09	Dorchester	8	0	0	0	0	8
10	Frederick	4	0	0	4	7	15
12	Harford	8	1	0	1	4	14
13	Howard	2	1	0	2	4	9
15	Montgomery	13	0	0	4	16	33
16	Prince George's	10	0	1	5	14	30
18	Saint Mary's	6	0	0	3	0	9
21	Washington	0	0	0	3	5	8
49	Baltimore City	19	10	2	24	55	110
	TOTALS	104	14	5	66	125	314
	PERCENTAGES	33%	4%	2%	21%	40%	100%

Case Review Totals by Jurisdictional size

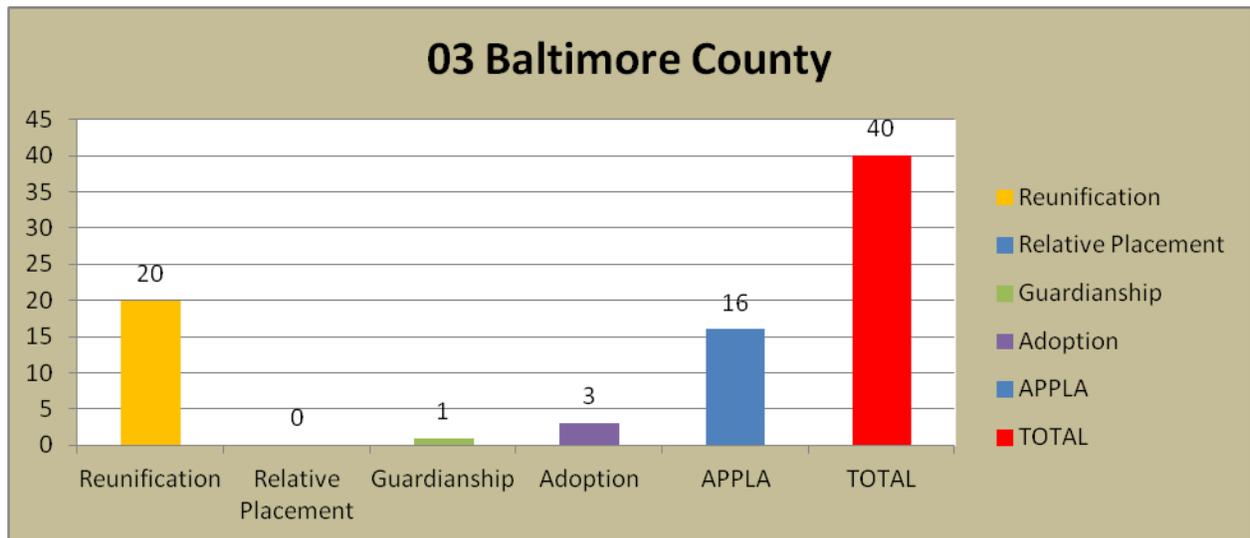


There were a total of 213 (68%) cases reviewed in the large jurisdictions, 76 (24%) cases reviewed in the medium jurisdictions, and 25 (8%) cases reviewed in the small jurisdictions.

LARGE JURISDICTIONS							
Jurn #	County	Reunification	Relative Placement	Guardianship	Adoption	APPLA	TOTALS
03	Baltimore County	20	0	1	3	16	40
15	Montgomery	13	0	0	4	16	33
16	Prince George's	10	0	1	5	14	30
49	Baltimore City	19	10	2	24	55	110
TOTALS		62	10	4	36	101	213
PERCENTAGES		29%	5%	2%	17%	47%	100%

***Large: 500 cases or more per jurisdiction*

Baltimore County



There were a total of 40 out-of-home-placement case reviews conducted in Baltimore County.

**Recommendations by Plan:
Permanency Plan**

- **Reunification (20):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in all 20 cases reviewed.
- **Guardianship (1):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in the 1 case reviewed.
- **Adoption (3):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in all 3 cases reviewed.
- **APPLA (16):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in all 16 cases reviewed.

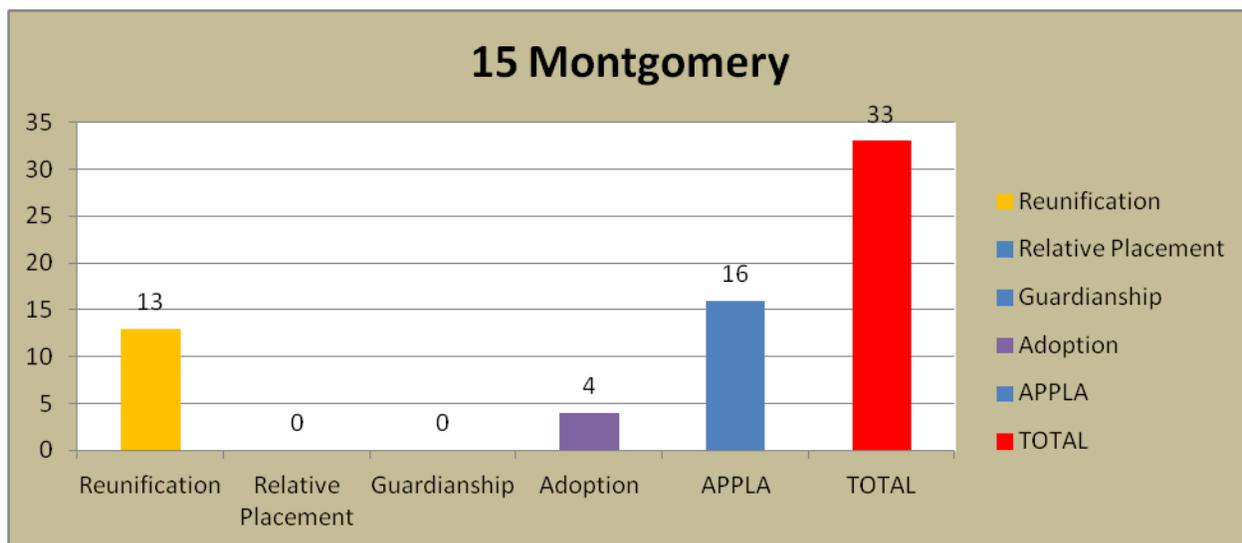
Baltimore County Reunification case reviews made up (50%) of the 40 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Baltimore County Guardianship case reviews made up (2.5%) of the 40 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Baltimore County Adoption case reviews made up (7.5%) of the 40 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Baltimore County APPLA case reviews made up (40%) of the 40 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Montgomery County



There were a total of 33 out-of-home-placement case reviews conducted in Montgomery County.

Recommendations by Plan: Permanency Plan

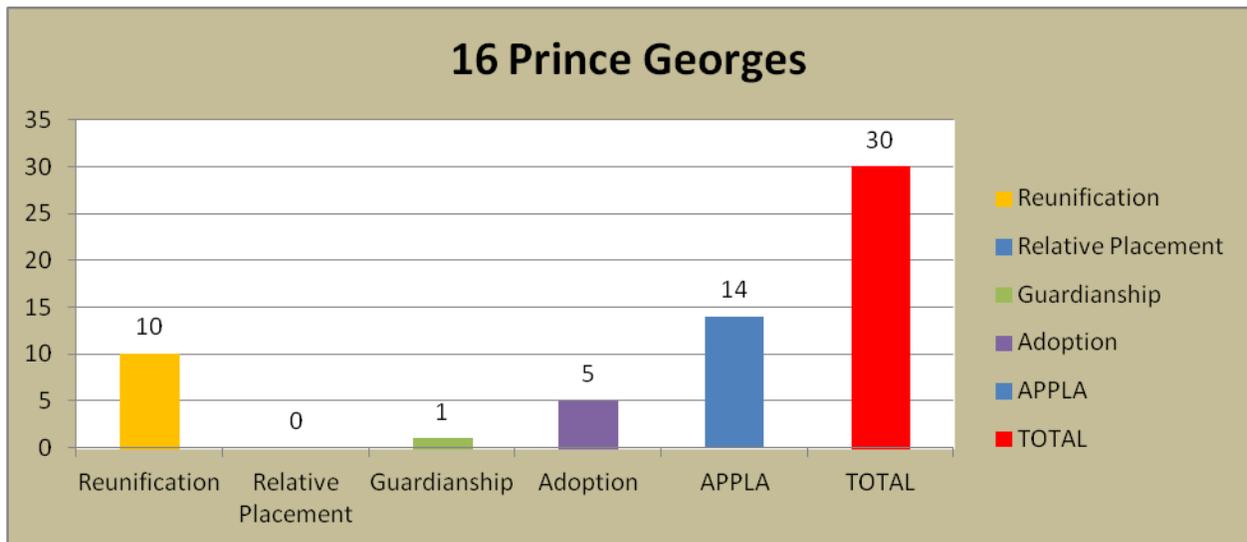
- **Reunification (13):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in 6 out of 13 cases reviewed.
- **Adoption (4):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in all 4 cases reviewed.
- **APPLA (16):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in 12 out of 16 cases reviewed.

Montgomery County Reunification case reviews made up (39.4%) of the 33 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Montgomery County Adoption case reviews made up (12.1%) of the 33 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Montgomery County APPLA case reviews made up (48.5%) of the 33 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Prince George's County



There were a total of 30 out-of-home-placement case reviews conducted in Prince Georges County.

**Recommendations by Plan:
Permanency Plan**

- **Reunification (10):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in all 10 cases reviewed.
- **Guardianship (1):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency

plan in the 1 case reviewed.

- **Adoption (5):** The Local Board agreed with the Department’s permanency plan in all 5 cases reviewed.
- **APPLA (14):** The Local Board agreed with the Department’s permanency plan in all 14 cases reviewed.

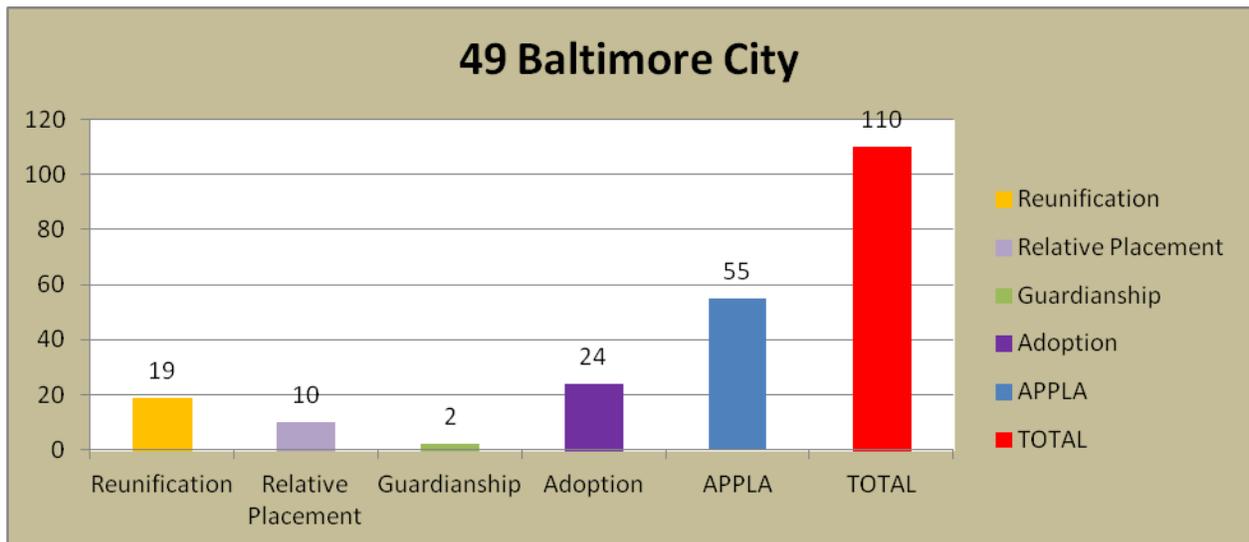
Prince Georges County Reunification case reviews made up (33.3%) of the 30 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Prince Georges County Guardianship case reviews made up (3.3%) of the 30 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Prince Georges County Adoption case reviews made up (16.7%) of the 30 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Prince Georges County APPLA case reviews made up (46.7%) of the 30 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Baltimore City



There were a total of 110 out-of-home-placement case reviews conducted in Baltimore City.

Recommendations by Plan:

Permanency Plan

- **Reunification (19):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in 13 out of 19 cases reviewed.
- **Relative Placement (10):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan for Relative Placement in 9 out of 10 cases reviewed.
- **Guardianship (2):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan for Guardianship in both cases reviewed.
- **Adoption (24):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in all 24 cases reviewed.
- **APPLA (55):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan for APPLA in 54 out of 55 cases reviewed.

Baltimore City Reunification case reviews made up (17%) of the 110 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Baltimore City Relative Placement case reviews made up (9%) of the 110 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Baltimore City Guardianship case reviews made up (2%) of the 110 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

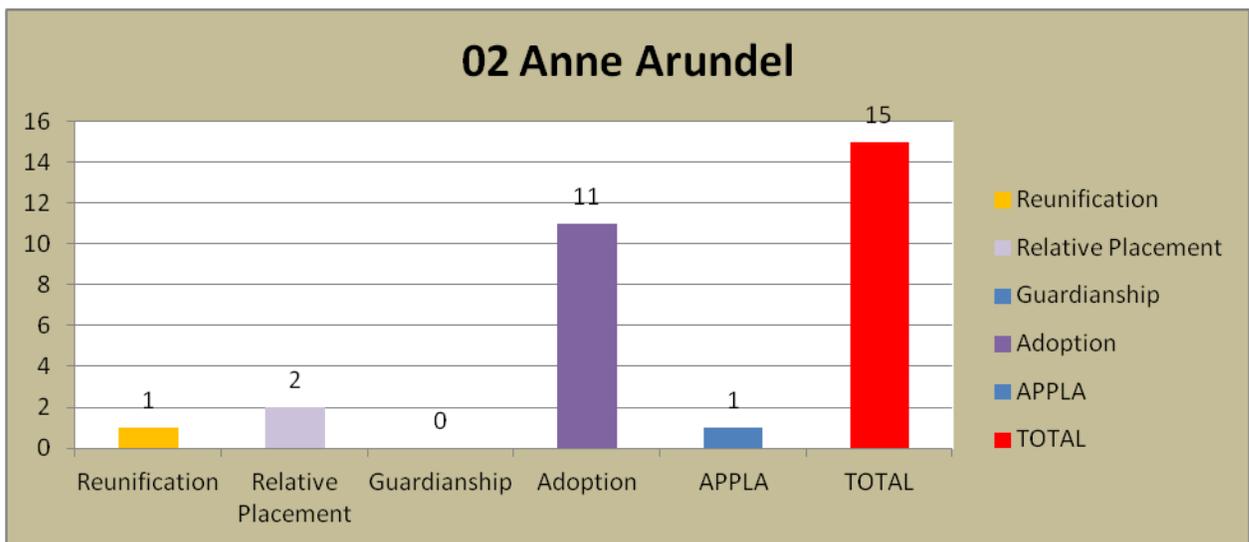
Baltimore City Adoption case reviews made up (22%) of the 110 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Baltimore City APPLA case reviews made up (50%) of the 110 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

MEDIUM JURISDICTIONS							
Jurn #	County	Reunification	Relative Placement	Guardianship	Adoption	APPLA	TOTALS
02	Anne Arundel	1	2	0	11	1	15
07	Cecil	9	0	0	0	0	9
08	Charles	2	0	1	0	3	6
10	Frederick	4	0	0	4	7	15
12	Harford	8	1	0	1	4	14
18	Saint Mary's	6	0	0	3	0	9
21	Washington	0	0	0	3	5	8
TOTALS		30	3	1	22	20	76
PERCENTAGES		39%	4%	1%	29%	26%	100%

*** Medium: 300-500 cases per jurisdiction*

Anne Arundel County



There were a total of 15 out-of-home-placement case reviews conducted in Anne Arundel County.

Recommendations by Plan:

Permanency Plan

- **Reunification (1):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in the 1 case reviewed.
- **Relative Placement (2):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in the 2 cases reviewed.
- **Adoption (11):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in all 11 cases reviewed.
- **APPLA (1):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in the 1 case reviewed.

Anne Arundel County Reunification case reviews made up (6.7%) of the 15 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

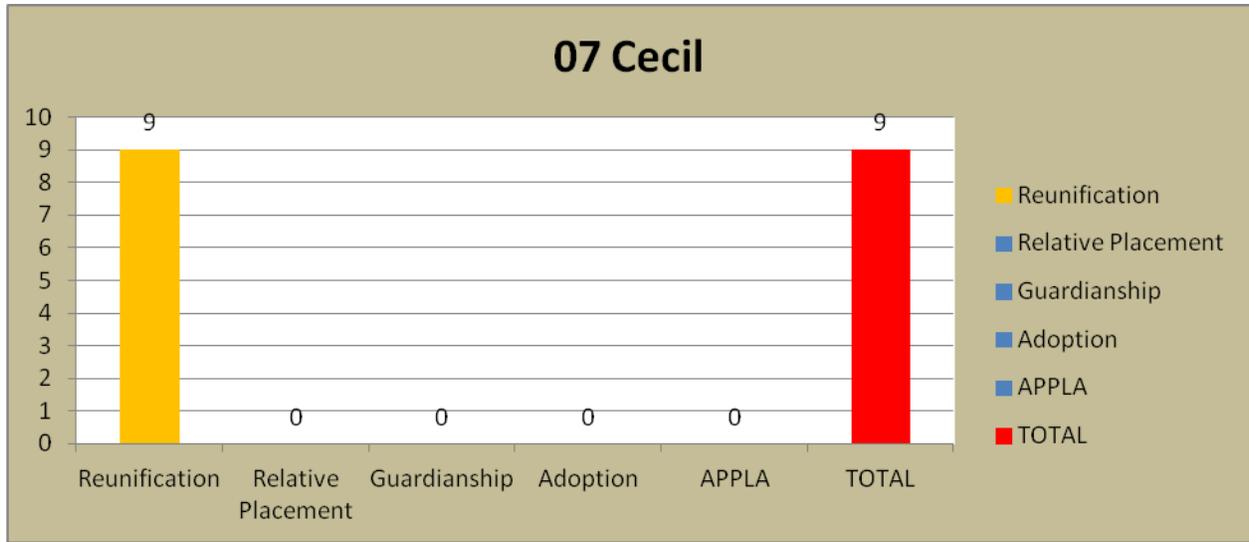
Anne Arundel County Relative Placement case reviews made up (13.3%) of the 15 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Anne Arundel County Adoption case reviews made up (73.3%) of the 15 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Anne Arundel County APPLA case reviews made up (6.7%) of the 15 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Cecil County





There were a total of 9 out-of-home-placement cases reviews conducted in Cecil County.

Recommendations by Plan:

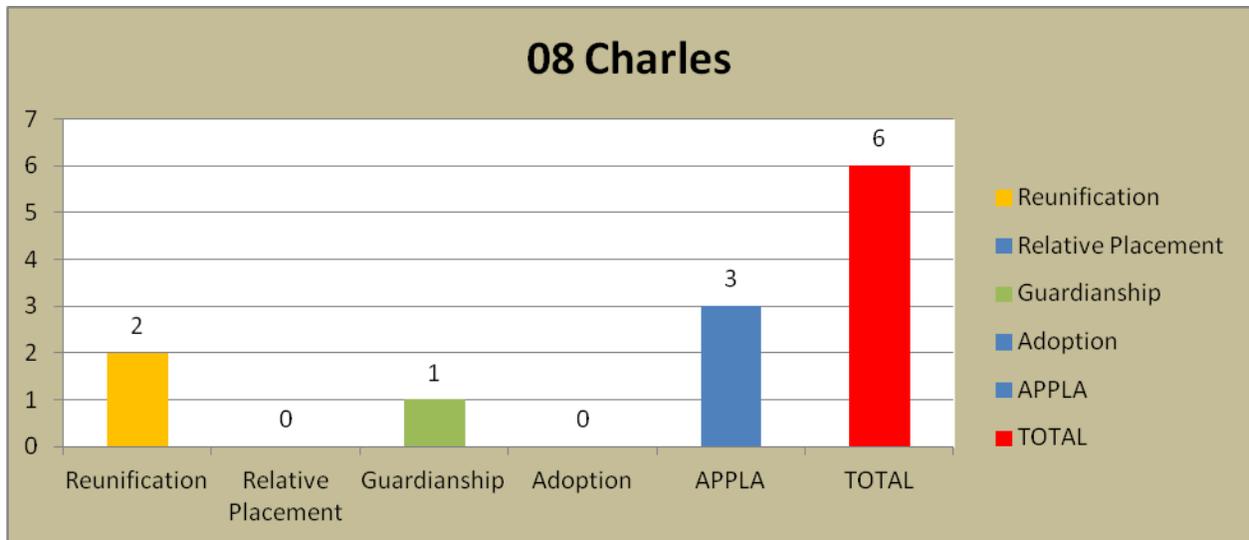
Permanency Plan

- **Reunification (9):** The Local Board did not agree with the Department’s permanency plan in all 9 cases reviewed.
- The 9 cases each had concurrent plans set by the Juvenile Courts and the LDSS was implementing 8 of the concurrent plans.
- The Local Board recommended a plan of Adoption for 8 out of 9 cases and Relative Placement for 1 case.

Cecil County Reunification case reviews made up (100%) of the 9 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Charles County





There were a total of 6 out-of-home-placement case reviews conducted in Charles County.

Recommendations by Plan:

Permanency Plan

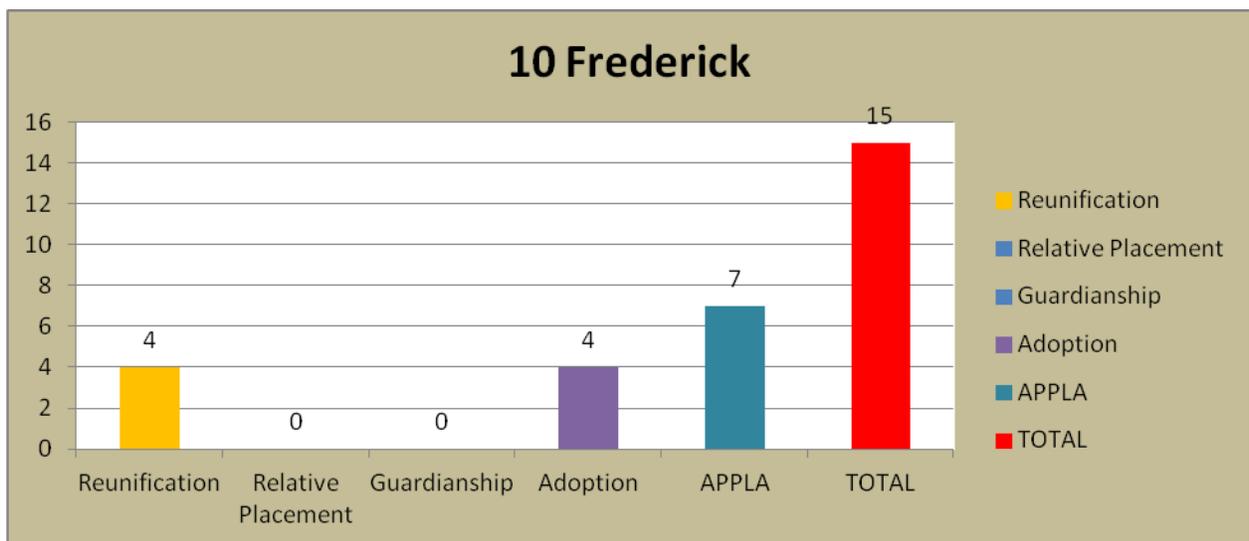
- **Reunification (2):** The Local Board agreed with the Department’s permanency plan in the 2 cases reviewed.
- **Guardianship (1):** The Local Board agreed with the Department’s permanency plan in the 1 case reviewed.
- **APPLA (3):** The Local Board agreed with the Department’s permanency plan in the 3 cases reviewed.

Charles County Reunification case reviews made up (33.3%) of the 6 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Charles County Guardianship case reviews made up (16.7%) of the 6 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Charles County APPLA case reviews made up (50%) of the 6 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Frederick County



There were a total of 15 out-of-home-placement case reviews conducted in Frederick County.

Recommendations by Plan: Permanency Plan

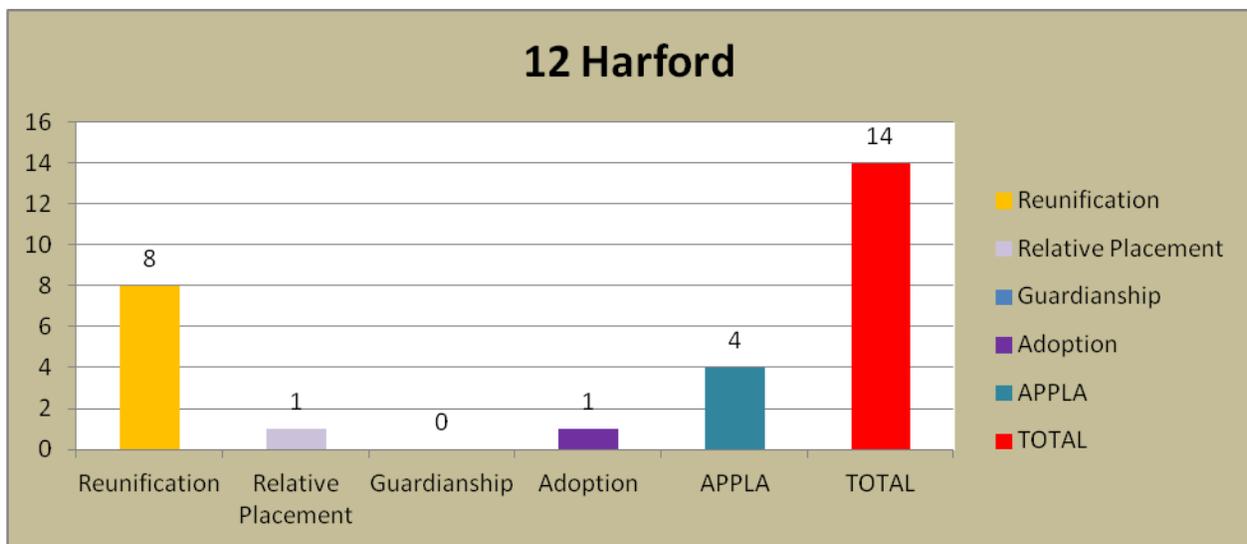
- **Reunification (4):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in 3 out of 4 cases reviewed.
- **Adoption (4):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in all 4 cases reviewed.
- **APPLA (7):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in 5 out of 7 cases reviewed.

Frederick County Reunification case reviews made up (26.7%) of the 15 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Frederick County Adoption case reviews made up (26.7%) of the 15 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Frederick County APPLA case reviews made up (46.6%) of the 15 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Harford County



There were a total of 14 out-of-home-placement case reviews conducted in Harford County.

Recommendations by Plan: Permanency Plan

- **Reunification (8):** The Local Board agreed with the Department’s permanency plan in all 8 cases reviewed.
- **Relative Placement: (1):** The Local Board agreed with the Department’s permanency plan in the 1 case reviewed.

- **Adoption (1):** The Local Board agreed with the Department’s permanency plan in the 1 case reviewed.
- **APPLA (4):** The Local Board agreed with the Department’s permanency plan in all 4 cases reviewed.

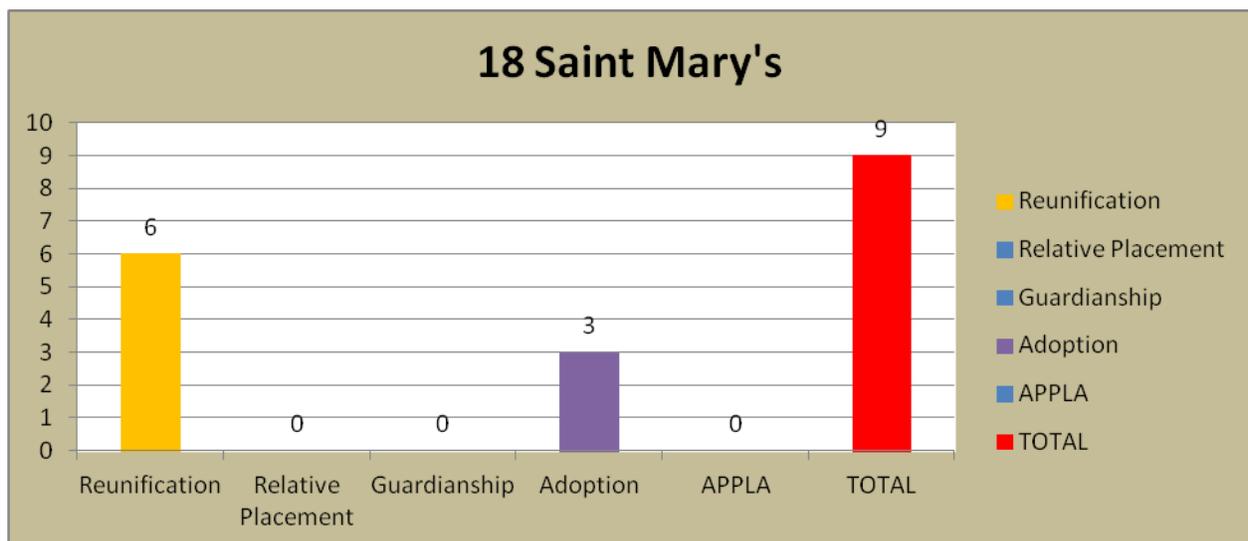
Harford County Reunification case reviews made up (57.2%) of the 14 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Harford County Relative Placement case reviews made up (7.1%) of the 14 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Harford County Adoption case reviews made up (7.1%) of the 14 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Harford County APPLA case reviews made up (28.6%) of the 14 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Saint Mary’s County



There were a total of 9 out-of-home-placement case reviews conducted in Saint Mary's County.

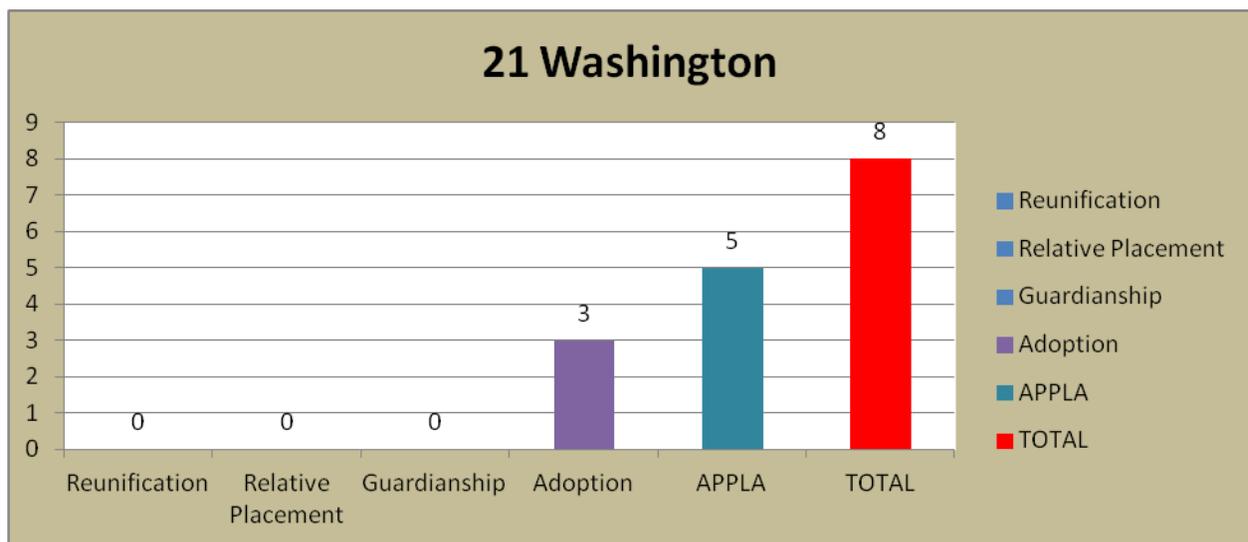
**Recommendations by Plan:
Permanency Plan**

- **Reunification (6):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in all 6 cases reviewed.
- **Adoption (3):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in all 3 cases reviewed.

Saint Mary's County Reunification case reviews made up (66.7%) of the 9 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Saint Mary's County Adoption case reviews made up (33.3%) of the 9 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Washington County



There were a total of 8 out-of-home-placement case reviews conducted in Washington County.

Recommendations by Plan:

Permanency Plan

- **Adoption (3):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in all 3 cases reviewed.
- **APPLA (5):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in all 5 cases reviewed.

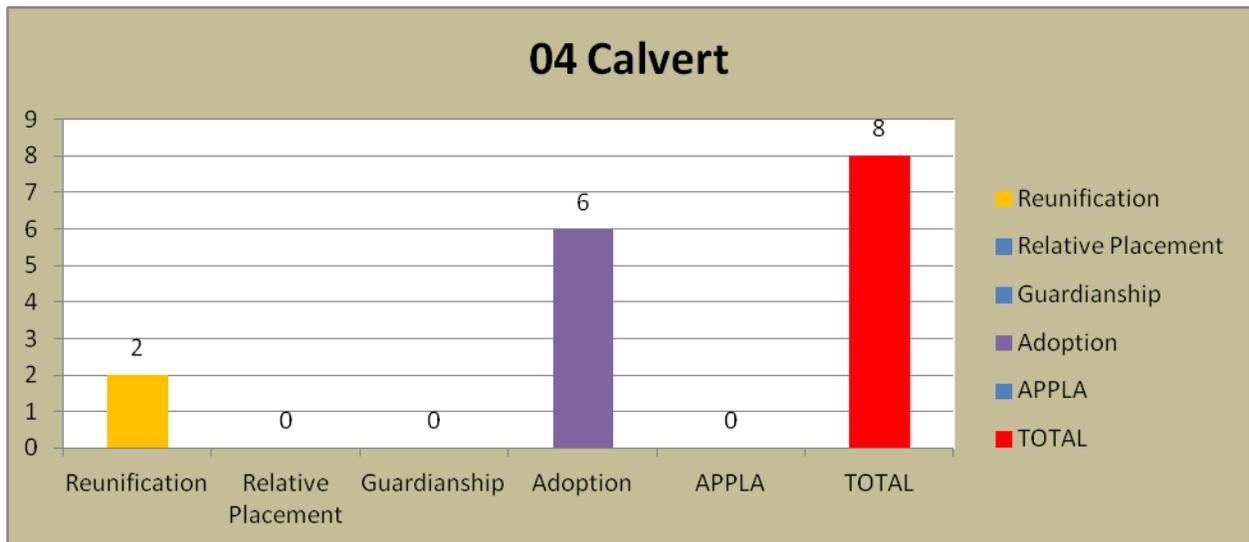
Washington County Adoption case reviews made up (37.5%) of the 8 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Washington County APPLA case reviews made up (62.5%) of the 8 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

SMALL JURISDICTIONS							
Jurn #	County	Reunification	Relative Placement	Guardianship	Adoption	APPLA	TOTALS
04	Calvert	2	0	0	6	0	8
09	Dorchester	8	0	0	0	0	8
13	Howard	2	1	0	2	4	9
TOTALS		12	1	0	8	4	25
PERCENTAGES		48%	4%	0%	32%	16%	100%

*** Small: less than 100 cases per jurisdiction*

Calvert County



There were a total of 8 out-of-home-placement case reviews conducted in Calvert County.

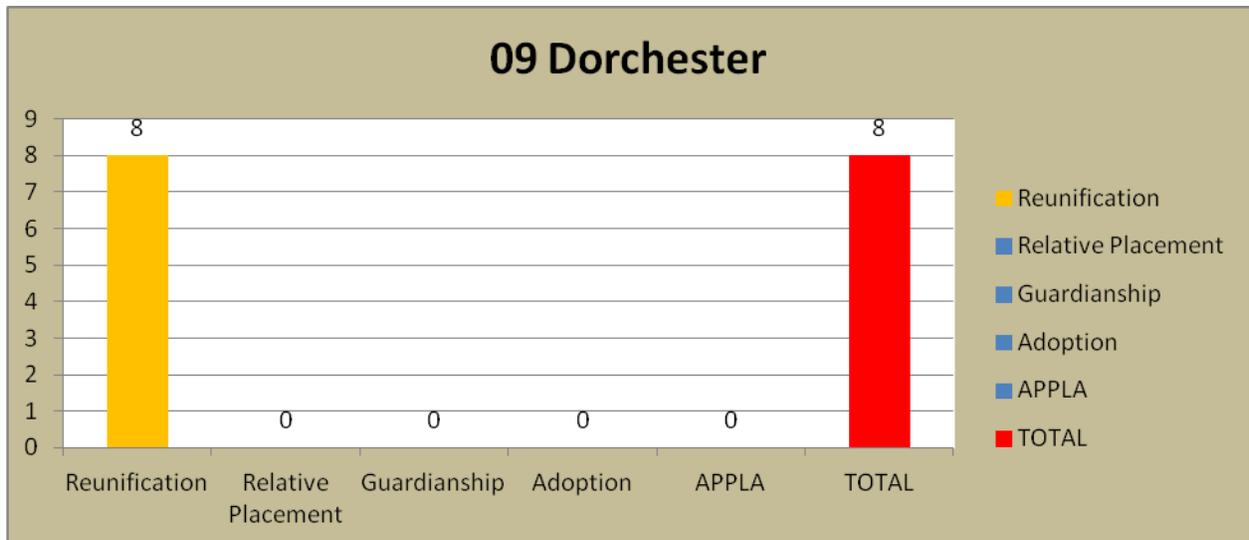
**Recommendations by Plan:
Permanency Plan**

- **Reunification (2):** The Local Board agreed with the Department’s permanency plan in the 2 cases reviewed.
- **Adoption (6):** The Local Board agreed with the Department’s permanency plan in all 6 cases reviewed.

Calvert County Reunification case reviews made up (25%) of the 8 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Calvert County Adoption case reviews made up (75%) of the 8 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Dorchester County



There were a total of 8 out-of-home-placement case reviews conducted in Dorchester

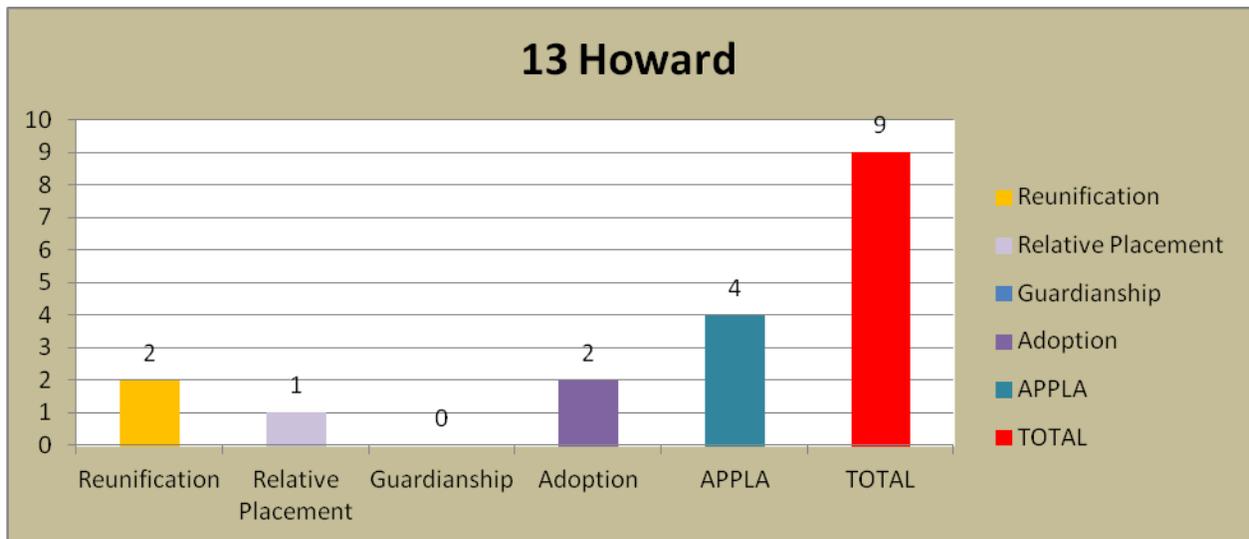
County.

**Recommendations by Plan:
Permanency Plan**

- **Reunification (8):** The Local Board agreed with the Department’s permanency plan in all 8 cases reviewed.

Dorchester County Reunification case reviews made up (100%) of the 8 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Howard County



There were a total of 9 out-of-home-placement case reviews conducted in Howard County.

Recommendations by Plan:



Permanency Plan

- **Reunification (2):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in the 2 cases reviewed.
- **Relative Placement (1):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in the 1 case reviewed.
- **Adoption (2):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in the 2 cases reviewed.
- **APPLA (4):** The Local Board agreed with the Department's permanency plan in all of the 4 cases reviewed.

Howard County Reunification case reviews made up (22%) of the 9 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Howard County Relative Placement case reviews made up (11%) of the 9 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Howard County Adoption case reviews made up (22%) of the 9 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Howard County APPLA case reviews made up (44%) of the 9 cases reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Permanency Plan Recommendation Guidelines **Out-of-Home-Placement**

Reunification Guidelines

In accordance with Family Law § 5-539.1, a plan of Reunification shall be pursued with a reasonable expectation that the plan will be achieved within 15 months from the date of entry into out-of-home placement excluding trial home visits and runaway episodes (Social Service Administration, 2012). The goal of having Reunification as a permanency plan is to expeditiously return the child safely to their own family whenever possible.

- All Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) are required to make reasonable efforts to improve outcomes for children by reducing the median length of time children stay in out-of-home placement (COMAR 07.02.11.02 B 2); and increase the number of reunifications achieved within 12 months of entry into an out-of-home placement (COMAR 07.02.11.02 C 1).
- All (LDSS) are required to make reasonable efforts to increase the identification and development of an appropriate concurrent permanency plan (COMAR 07.02.11.13 B 1).
- All (LDSS) are required to make reasonable efforts to have appropriate documentation on health care information.
- All (LDSS) are required to make reasonable efforts to improve substance abuse services to all children identified as having a problem with substance abuse (COMAR 07.02.11.08 S 1 and 2).

Adoption Guidelines

In accordance with Family Law § 5-539.1, and the Social Service Administration, Adoption is the preferred placement when a child cannot be returned to his or her parents or relatives because it gives the child a new permanent legal family with the same legal standing and protection as a family created by birth (SSA, 2012). However, Adoption by a relative is preferred over Adoption by a non relative; a growing number of children are adopted by their relatives, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and older siblings (SSA, 2012).

- All Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) are required to have all children with a permanency plan of Adoption move in a timely and effective manner through the legal process to obtain permanence. (Family Law § 5–545).
- All (LDSS) are required to have all children that have a permanency plan of Adoption who are age appropriate, to receive adoption counseling services and provide adoption supportive services to the child. (COMAR 07.02.12.04).
- All (LDSS) are required to have all children with a permanency plan of Adoption receive needed medical services for discharge. Caseworkers should ensure that any child whose placement changed from foster care placement to pre-adoptive out-of-home-placement receive appropriate physical and mental health care services. (COMAR 07.02.11.08).
- All (LDSS) are required to have all children with a permanency plan of Adoption receive needed educational services for discharge. (Social Services Administration, 2013).
- All (LDSS) are required to have all children with a permanency plan of Adoption have an identified pre-adoptive resource. The local departments are responsible for making every effort to locate an adoptive family for any child who cannot be reunited with his/her birth family (Social Services Administration, 2014).

APPLA Guidelines

In accordance with Family Law § 5-539.1, APPLA requires an individual plan for permanency that aims for the most secure and stable arrangement possible, considers not just the child’s immediate needs but future needs and promotes the development of supportive community relationships. The establishment of APPLA as a permanency plan for a youth requires the caseworker to document reasonable efforts made to finalize a preferred permanency plan and must clearly articulate the plan to maximize stability. (Social Services Administration, 2012).

The permanency plan of APPLA is not achieved until the youth exits care. APPLA is the least preferred choice among the permanency plan hierarchy and should be used only when all other plans have been completely exhausted. (Social Services Administration, 2012).

- All Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) are required to have all children involved in the case planning process. Every youth 14 years of age or older shall have Family Involvement Meetings (FIM) that includes transitional planning or independent living services. These meetings should be held annually after the youth’s 14th birthday up until commitment is rescinded (Social Security

Administration, 2009).

- All (LDSS) are required to have a signed service agreement with all youth who are 14 years of age or older.
- All (LDSS) are required to have caseworkers have a face-to-face visit with the child as least once a month. (COMAR 07.02.11.17).
- All (LDSS) are required to have an identified permanent connection for all children with a permanency plan of APPLA. When a youth has a permanent adult connection the youth experiences less rejection, trauma, and emotional instability because of failed placements. (Social Services Administration, 2012).
- All (LDSS) are required to have all children with a permanency plan of APPLA assessed for life skills. Every youth age 14 to 21 must have a life skills assessment to determine their strengths and needs in order to develop steps for preparation toward adulthood. (Social Services Administration, 2013).
- All (LDSS) are required to have complete medical records for all children in out-of-home-placement. The child's case record should contain the child's medical history and the most recent copies of the child's health care documents. (COMAR 07.02.11.08).
- All (LDSS) are required to have all children with a permanency plan of APPLA have an appropriate transitioning plan that includes identified housing. To properly identify the needs of Maryland's youth and ensure that youth obtain the resources and skills needed to be self-sufficient, local departments should be administering the Maryland Youth Transitional Plan at age 14 to align with the Maryland's Ready by 21 Benchmarks. (Social Services Administration, 2013).

Recommendations to All Local Department of Social Services (LDSS)

CRBC Refresher:

- Each jurisdiction is being asked to be amenable to an upcoming CRBC request to be periodically placed on an All-Staff meeting agenda. The purpose of CRBC visiting each jurisdiction will be to provide an updated overview about CRBC's mission, and how each (LDSS) plays a crucial role in the case review process.

Supportive Documentation:

- Each (LDSS) is required to continue to bring the child's complete case records and/or supportive documentation to all CRBC case reviews.
- Each (LDSS) should improve their efforts with documenting a concurrent permanency plan.
- Each (LDSS) should improve their efforts with getting parents to sign service agreements for those youth with a permanency plan of reunification.

Interested Parties:

- Each (LDSS) should continue supplying CRBC with the most recent and current contact information for all interested parties, including professionals and family members.
- Each (LDSS) is required to include the paternal family members as possible resources for all youth who are in out-of-home-placement care.
- Each (LDSS) should encourage all youth who are 10 years of age and older to attend his/her scheduled CRBC case review.

Independent Living:

- Each (LDSS) is required to improve their efforts with preparing youth that have a plan of APPLA to meet their employment goals.

Permanent Connections:

- Each (LDSS) is encouraged to improve their efforts with identifying permanent connections for those youth with a plan of APPLA.

Adoption:

- Each (LDSS) should ensure that age appropriate youth with a permanency plan of Adoption are linked with Adoption Counseling Services.

The State Board

Nettie Anderson-Burrs (Chairperson)
Representing Allegany, Garrett, and Washington Counties

James Trent (Vice Chairperson)
Representing Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties

Delores Alexander
Representing Baltimore and Harford Counties

Heidi Busch
Representing Anne Arundel, Carroll, and Howard Counties

Doretha Henry
Representing Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties

Sheila Jessup, PhD
Representing Baltimore City

Helen Diane Johnson, MSW
Representing Frederick and Montgomery Counties

Sylvia Smith
Representing Baltimore City

CRBC Staff

Denise E. Wheeler
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Crystal Young, MSW
Assistant Administrator

Jerome Findlay
IT Officer

Fran Barrow
Staff Assistant

Michele Foster, MSW
Staff Assistant

Eric Davis, MSW
Staff Assistant

Marlo Palmer-Dixon
Volunteer Specialist

Cindy Hunter-Gray
Lead Secretary

Desiree Gold
Clerk

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