



Administration for Children and Families Office of Refugee Resettlement Unaccompanied Children Program

Understanding the Need & Identifying Opportunities
to Partner Together



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



Meeting Goals

- Share details of the UC program context and current response
 - Discuss how states and counties can support children post release
 - Discuss opportunities to partner on long-term wellbeing of UC within communities
-



How the Current UC Response is Different

- The Biden Harris Administration believes that **families belong together.**
- We are making an intentional pivot to treat this **as a humanitarian effort that addresses child wellbeing.**
- Engaging partners nationally through a **broad-sweeping effort to swiftly place thousands of UCs into safe, licensed community-based providers and provide timely case management to facilitate reunification.**
- **Ensure UC are supported in the same way we want our own children to be treated** – with care, dignity and respect.

Principal Federal Legislation Supporting UC



1997

Flores Settlement Agreement

Key points:

- Obligates the government to:
- **Release children without unnecessary delay** to parents and adult relatives as well as licensed programs willing to accept custody.
 - **Place children in the least restrictive setting** appropriate to age and special needs.
 - **Implement standards relating to the care and treatment of migrant children in custody.**

2008

Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA)

Key points:

- **Exempt UC from contiguous countries,** unless there is potential human trafficking, fear of return.
- **Codify many Flores agreement provisions,** including transfer of UC to ORR care within 72 hours.
- Authorize HHS to **determine eligibility as trafficking victims.**

Who is a Unaccompanied Child (UC)?



- Child under the age of 18
- Has no lawful immigration status in the U.S.
- When entering with no parent or legal guardian in the U.S. or with no parent or legal guardian in the U.S. available to provide care or legal custody
- Referred to ORR by other federal agencies, predominately the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

UC Program: Basic Process Flow



UC apprehension by a federal agency (usually the Department of Homeland Security)

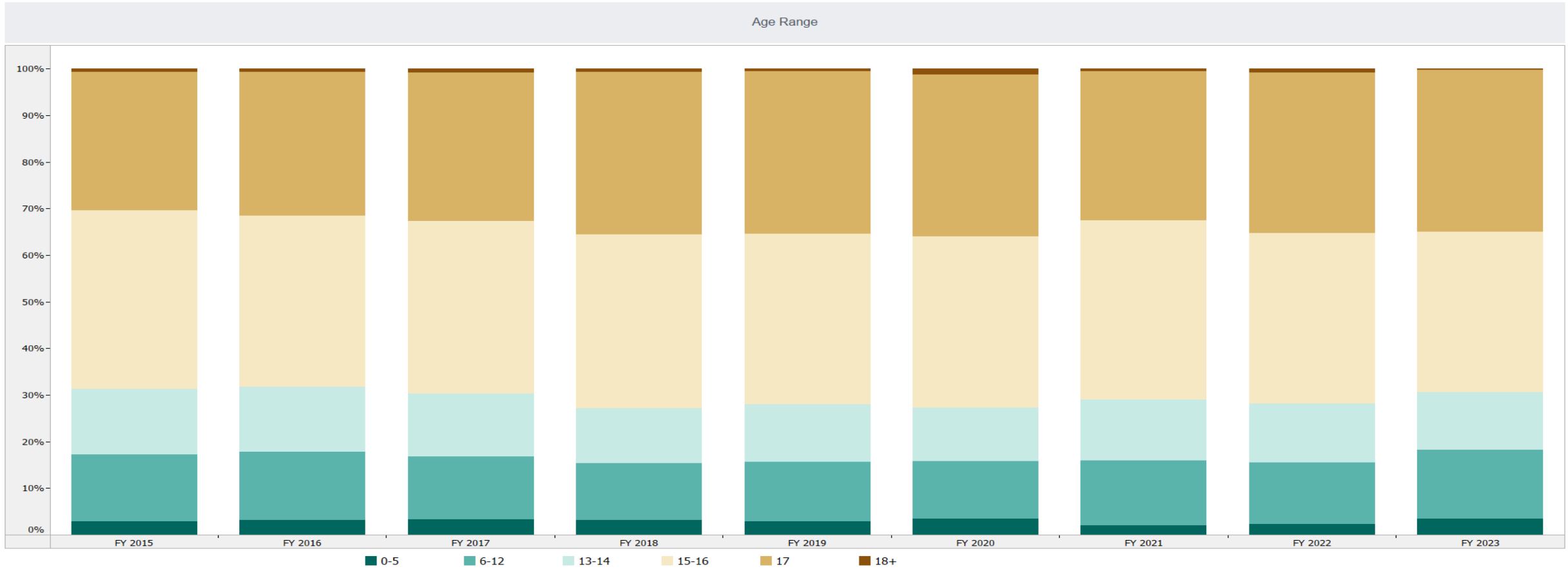


Transferred to care and custody of the UC Program within 72 hours



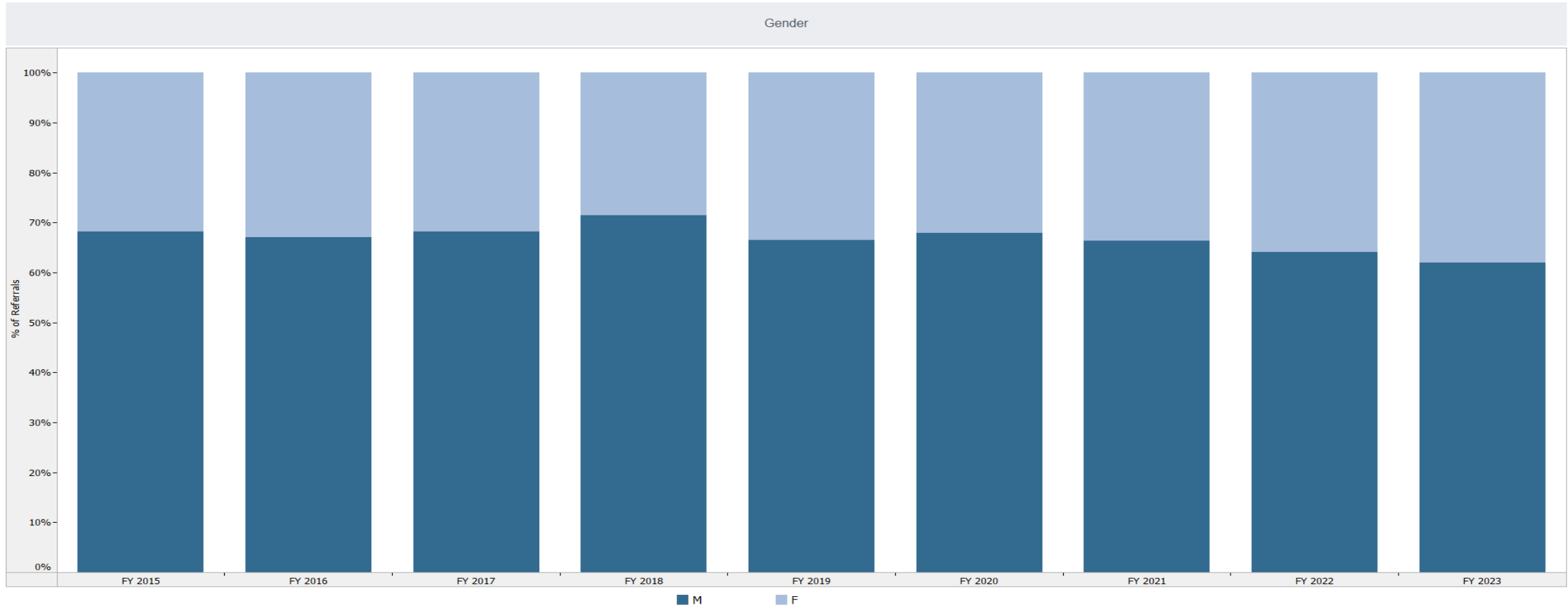
UC Program places UC in the least restrictive setting that is in the best interests of the child

Trends in UC Characteristics Over Time



- Ages of children have remained consistent
- Majority of children are 15yrs and older

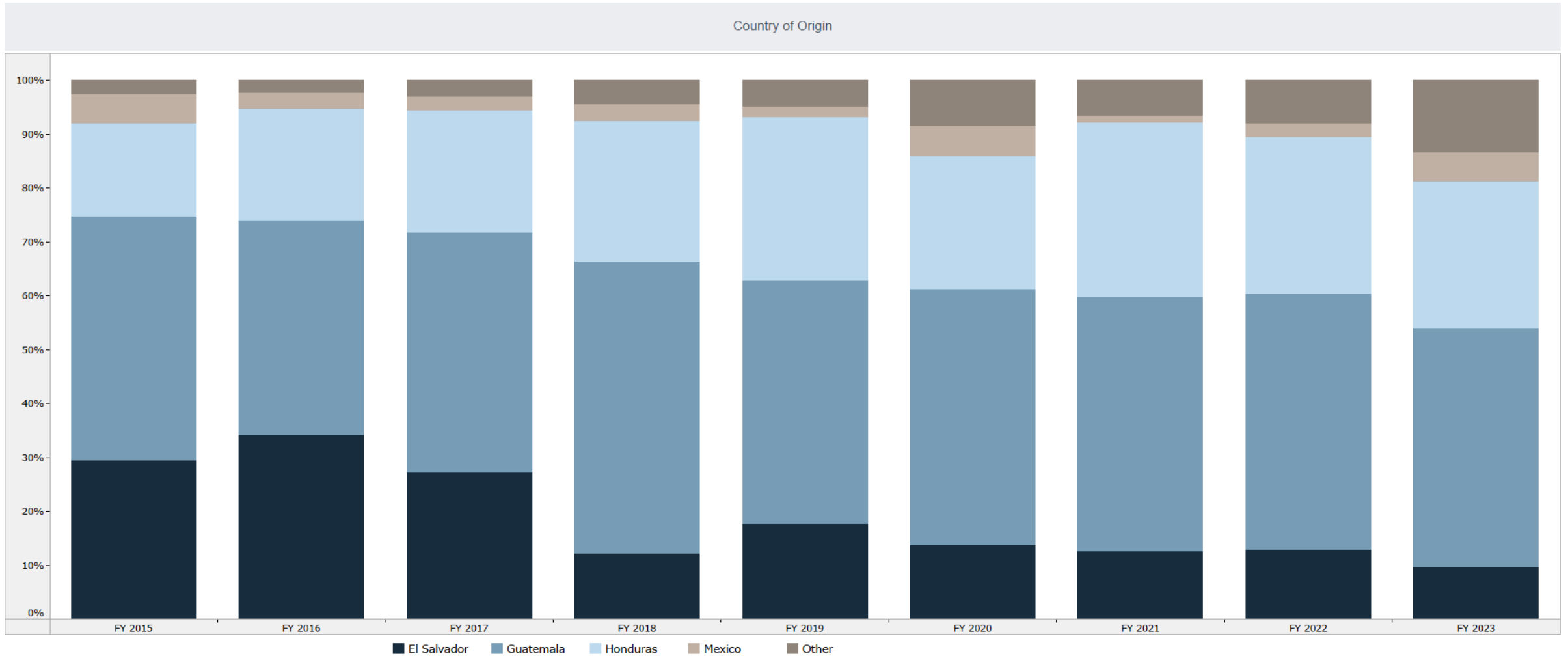
Trends in UC Characteristics Over Time



Key Points:

- Males are consistently the larger portion of UC
- There is an increasing proportion of female UC

Trends in UC Characteristics Over Time



- The greatest proportion are consistently from Guatemala

UC program admissions

- Ensuring that the child receives food and beverages and bathes or showers within two hours of entering the care provider facility.
- Providing the child, at a minimum, with the following items: clean clothing, clean bedding, and personal hygiene items.
- Assisting the child in contacting family members or other relatives, if contact is considered safe, following ORR and the care provider's internal safety procedures.
- Ensuring that to the extent practical under the circumstances, the child eats and bathes before interacting with other children.
- Ensuring that the child receives a complete initial medical exam, including screening for infectious diseases by a licensed physician or physician's assistant, within 48 hours of admission (excluding weekends and holidays).
- Creating an inventory list for all cash and other property obtained from the child upon admission.



UC program provides required services

- Classroom education
- Health care
- Socialization/recreation
- Vocational training
- Mental health services
- Family reunification
- *Access to **legal services**; and
- Case management.

*All UC receive the following legal information:

- Mandated "Know Your Rights" workshop
- Pro bono legal service provider lists
- **Notification of Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) eligibility guidelines**

UIC Program: Basic Process Flow



ORR's Unaccompanied Children Program

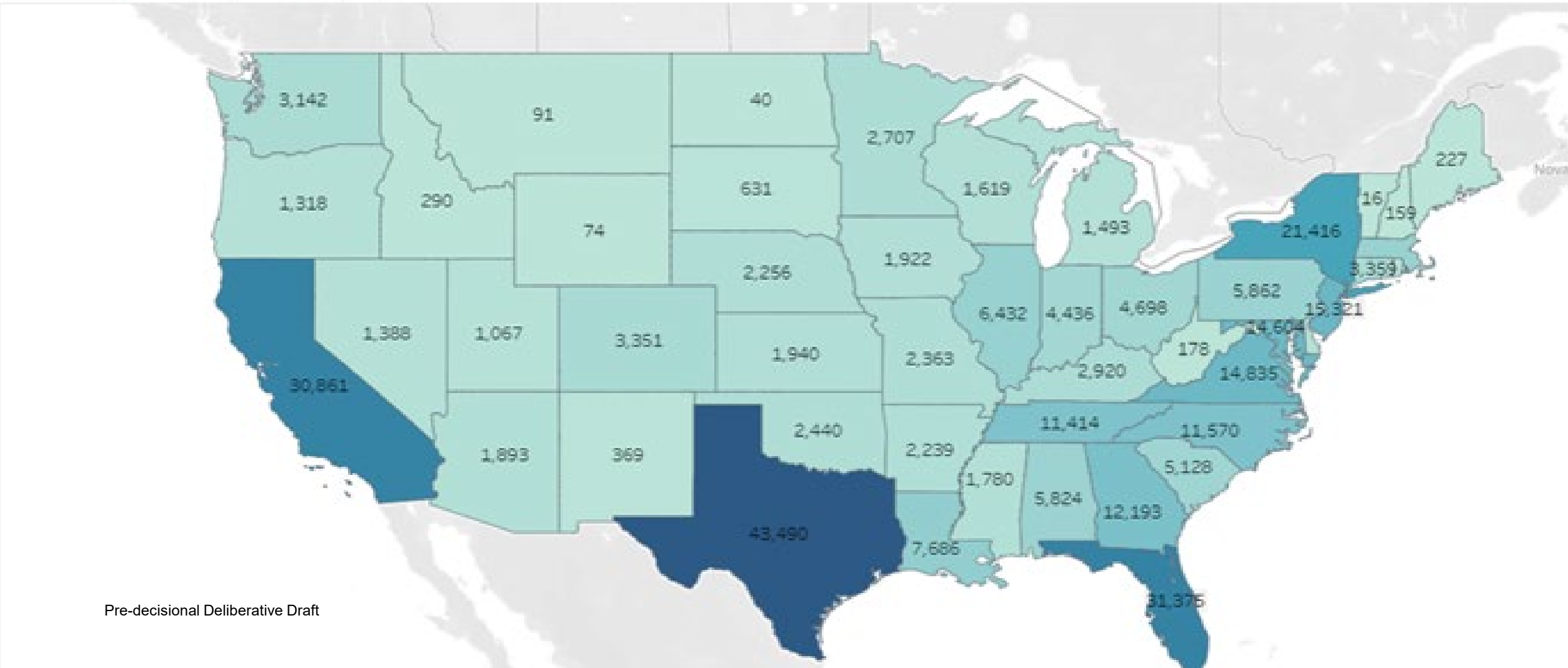
Sponsor Care Agreement

- Sponsors sign a Sponsor Care Agreement, agreeing to:
 - Provide for the physical and mental well-being of the minor, including but not limited to, food, shelter, clothing, education, medical care, and other services as needed;
 - If not the parent or legal guardian, make best efforts to establish legal guardianship with local court within a reasonable time;
 - Ensure the minor's presence at all future immigration proceedings;
 - Notify local law enforcement or state/local Child Protective Services if the minor is at risk of being subjected to abuse, abandonment, neglect, or maltreatment or if the minor has been threatened, has been sexually or physically abuse or assaulted or has disappeared.

Mapping of Releases Fiscal Years 2020-2023



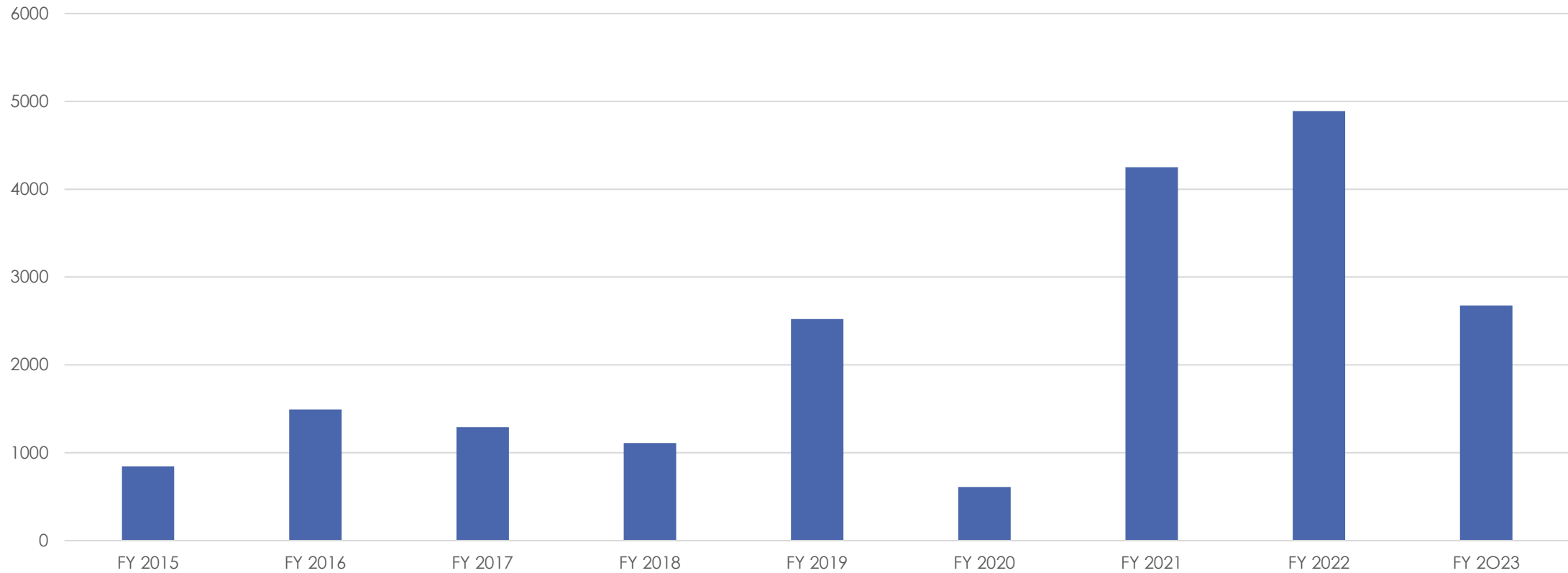
Discharges 10/1/2020-4/12/2022



UC Released in North Carolina over the years



Release UC





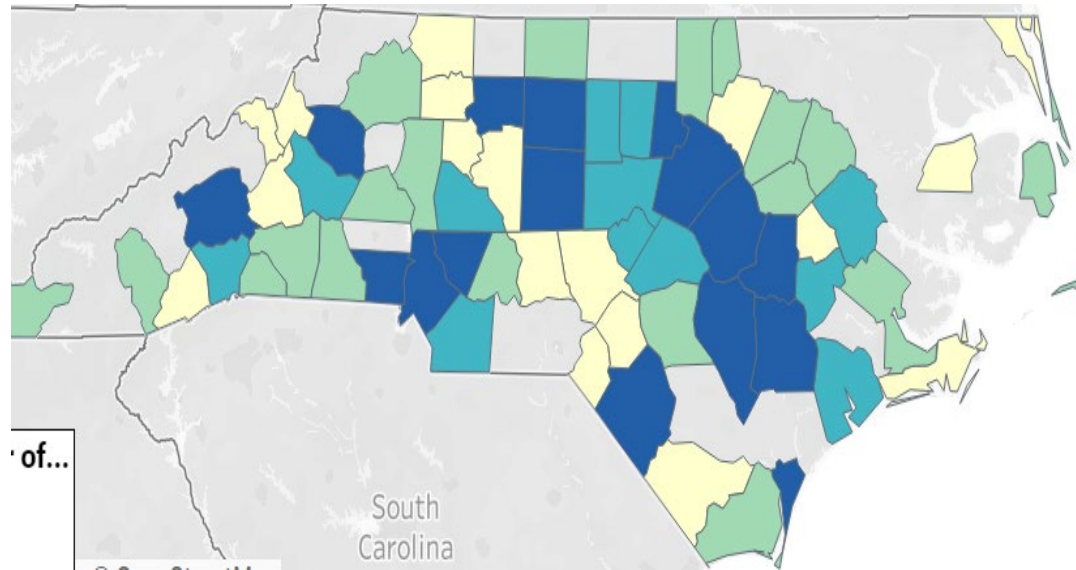
Services Available After Release

Services Available Post Release



- ORR Call Center
- Safety and Well-being Follow Up Calls
- Post Release Services

PRS Presence in North Carolina



County/State	Active
Mecklenburg, NC	222.00
Wake, NC	77.00
Durham, NC	64.00
Gulford, NC	19.00
New Hanover, NC	19.00
Duplin, NC	19.00
Forsyth, NC	25.00
Robeson, NC	12.00
Burke, NC	8.00
Buncombe, NC	16.00
Johnston, NC	23.00
Wayne, NC	13.00
Gaston, NC	9.00
Union, NC	7.00
Lee, NC	7.00
Caldwell, NC	11.00
Pitt, NC	6.00
Orange, NC	5.00
Sampson, NC	10.00
Brunswick, NC	2.00
Henderson, NC	6.00
Alamance, NC	9.00
Cumberland, NC	4.00
Cabarrus, NC	16.00
Rowan, NC	9.00
Chatham, NC	5.00
Iredell, NC	5.00
Wilkes, NC	3.00
Onslow, NC	7.00
Harnett, NC	8.00
Randolph, NC	10.00
Granville, NC	4.00
Catawba, NC	2.00
Dare, NC	3.00
Lenoir, NC	5.00
Hoke, NC	1.00
Davidson, NC	1.00
Edgecombe, NC	4.00
Vance, NC	2.00
Surry, NC	1.00
Nash, NC	4.00



Post release services- Current

ORR provides PRS in order to promote the safety and well-being of UC after release from ORR custody.

All minors who have had a HS receive PRS.

- **PRS that follow a TVPRA HS**
- **All other PRS cases**

Post release services- New

- Expanding PRS to all UC by 2024
- Three Levels of Post Release Services:
 1. Safety and Well-Being Virtual Check Ins – 7, 14 and 30 days
 2. Case Management (based on previous model)
 3. Intensive In-home Engagements

What is Post Release Services?



Virtual and Comprehensive case management focusing on PRS service areas

- Regularly scheduled virtual and/or in-home visits
- Ongoing needs assessments of UC (Levels 2 & 3)
- Ensure monthly contact with sponsor and UC separately (Levels 2 & 3)
- Access to therapeutic supports (Level 2 & 3)

What Areas of Support does PRS Provide?

PRS providers must be culturally and linguistically appropriate when connecting the child and sponsor to resources within their local community. The PRS provider coordinates services that promote access to services in the areas of:

- Legal Services
- Education and English Language Classes
- Medical Care and Behavioral Healthcare
- Youth Programming
- Services Related to Cultural and other Traditions
- Supporting Integration and Independence

Opportunities for Communities to Engage



Provide Outreach and Education to Stakeholders

- Share information about the unique needs of the UC population with human service agencies in your community.
- Provide education regarding UC/Sponsor relationships
- Ensure supportive relationships with community stakeholders
- Work collaboratively with PRS providers in your community
- Support trauma-informed approach to supportive services.

Support Identifying Resources

- Identify and share supportive community resources with minors and sponsors you encounter in your work
- Assist and support the development of supportive resources in communities where resources are scarce.
- Partnership with federal, state and local stakeholders to improve support for this population in your community

Future Endeavors/Opportunities

- Regional representation to support UC/Sponsors after release
- Opportunity to improve service coordination and collaboration around minors who may be victims of trafficking or who have suffered trauma.
- Education, outreach and resource development opportunities.

Post Release Key Take Aways



- ORR's successful provision of post release services is dependent upon community partnerships with the domestic child welfare system in every community.
- Post Release providers have no legal authority to remove children who may be at risk post release.
- Post Release providers are all mandated reporters. They are legally required to involve law enforcement and child protective services as necessary to ensure the safety of the child.
- Sponsors are not legal guardians unless they apply for guardianship through the courts.



Questions