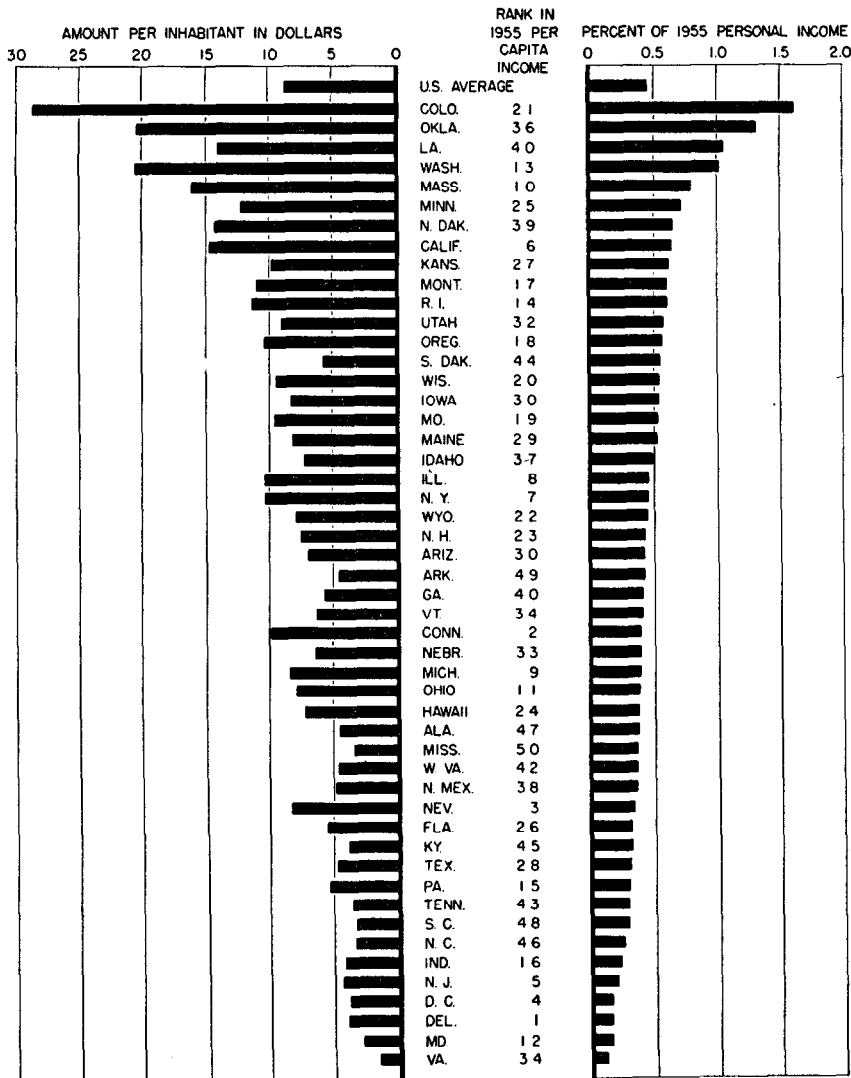


**Expenditures per inhabitant for public assistance payments from State and local funds in relation to personal income, by State, fiscal year 1955-56**



cents for public assistance out of every \$100 of personal income. The States are grouped below according to the amount spent for assistance from State and local funds per \$100 of personal income.

Less than 30 cents.....	10
30-49 cents .....	22
50-69 cents .....	12
70-89 cents .....	2
90 cents or more .....	4

Per capita income is an extremely important factor in determining a State's ability to finance the non-Federal share of public assistance. A high-income State and a low-income State, each making approximately the same fiscal effort, will have vastly different amounts per inhabitant available for expenditure. Thus the low-income State of South Dakota, where fiscal effort exceeded that of New York, spent only \$6.77 per inhabitant; New York, with less fiscal effort, spent \$10.27. The accompanying chart shows the variation among the States in fiscal effort and in the per inhabitant amount spent from State and local funds. The chart also gives the relative position of the States when ranked from high to low in per capita income.

### Adoptions in 1955\*

Adoption petitions for about 93,000 children were filed in courts in the United States during 1955—about 3,000 more than the number filed in 1953. The 1955 estimate is based on reports made to the Children's Bureau by 39 State public welfare agencies, and the 1953 estimate on reports from 37.

The data in the reports were obtained by the 39 States either through the voluntary cooperation of the courts or under provisions of State law requiring reports from the courts. Thirty-one of the States reporting in 1955 submitted the detail requested about the characteristics of the adoptions, and their reports

\*Prepared by Henry C. Lajewski, Division of Research, Children's Bureau. See the report, *Adoptions in the United States and its Territories, 1955* (Children's Bureau Statistical Series, No. 39), 1957.

in these States were accompanied by a smaller rise in personal income in nine States and a decline in personal income in four States.

Shifts in fiscal effort from 1954-55 to 1955-56 left the States in much the same relative positions when they are ranked each year according to the ratio of assistance expenditures from State-local funds to personal income. Eleven of the 12 States with the highest fiscal effort and 11 of the 12 States with the lowest fiscal effort were the same in both years. Moreover, only three States changed their rank by more than four places. Ala-

bama's shift from forty-third place in 1954-55 to thirty-third in 1955-56 was the most substantial change in rank.

The individual States continued to vary widely in 1955-56 in the effort they made to finance public assistance payments. Assistance expenditures per \$100 of personal income, for example, ranged from 10 cents in Virginia to \$1.62 in Colorado. Colorado was one of four States that spent 90 cents or more from State and local funds per \$100 of personal income. Almost two-thirds of the States, however, used less than 50

were the basis of this analysis except where otherwise noted.

It is important, in considering the significance of adoption statistics, to distinguish between children adopted by stepparents or relatives and children adopted by persons not related to them. In the reporting States in previous years about half the adoptions have been made by persons not related to the child. In 1955 this situation was the same; stepparents filed about 36 percent of all petitions, other relatives filed 11 percent, the child's own parents, 1 percent,<sup>1</sup> and persons not related to the child filed the remaining 52 percent. Because adoptions by nonrelated persons are of the greatest social significance, the data available on them are presented in some detail below.

The auspices under which a child is placed for adoption—whether he is placed by a recognized social agency or independently without the participation of a social welfare agency in the process—are also important. About 2 out of every 5 children for whom adoption petitions were filed in 1955, however, did not need placement because they were already in the homes of stepparents or other relatives who filed petitions for their adoption. More than half of the remaining 60 percent were placed independently, and fewer than half by social welfare agencies; of the former, many were adopted by relatives.

### *Adoptions by Nonrelatives*

The States providing detailed information answered the following questions about the 52 percent of the children for whom adoption petitions were filed by persons not related to the child. What was the birth status? Who placed them for adoption? How old were they when the adoption petitions were filed? How were they distributed racially?

The reports show that 73 percent of these children were born out of wedlock; the mother may have been married or unmarried. Of the 27 percent who were born in wedlock, 12 percent had divorced parents, 6 percent had parents who were living

<sup>1</sup> In some instances parents have previously lost their parental rights and can regain them only through adoption proceedings.

together, and about 4 percent were children who had lost one or both parents through death. For about 5 percent the parental status was unknown, but the available data indicate that most of them were children whose parents were divorced or who had lost one or both parents.

Fifty-six percent of the children adopted by nonrelated petitioners were placed by public or voluntary agencies; nearly 3 out of 5 in this group were placed by voluntary agencies.<sup>2</sup> Of the remaining 44 percent, almost half (21 percent) were placed by parents or relatives and the others placed independently by other persons.

The ages of the children at the time they were placed in adoptive homes of nonrelated petitioners during 1955 were not reported. Data are available, however, on their ages at the time the petition for adoption was filed, and they indicate a median age of 14.7 months. The median age for children for whom relatives filed adoption petitions was much higher—7.0 years. It is also lower by 2.3 months than the median age reported in 1951 by the 24 States reporting comparable data for both years.

Most of the children adopted are white. In 1955, 93 percent of those adopted by unrelated persons were white, and the proportion was similar among all children for whom adoption petitions were filed. It is significant, however, that the proportion adopted by relatives other than stepparents was larger for nonwhite children (25 percent) than for white children (10 percent).

### *Placement*

Although placement was not necessary for all children for whom adoption petitions were filed, it was required for 3 out of every 5. About these children the reporting States provided data to answer the following questions: By whom were they placed? Did they differ in characteristics according to the type of placement made? To what extent

<sup>2</sup> Data on placement of all children for whom petitions were filed indicates that a majority were placed independently. Most of those for whom petitions were filed by nonrelatives, however, were placed by social agencies.

did social agencies place children? Were all independent placements with unrelated persons?

Social welfare agencies placed 49 percent of all children for whom placement for adoption was necessary; voluntary agencies made 29 percent of the placements and public agencies 20 percent. Because adoption by relatives usually can be arranged within a family, without agency help, almost all (99 percent) of the placements in 1955 made by social welfare agencies were with nonrelated persons. Most of these children had been born out of wedlock. The 21 percent born in wedlock were placed for adoption because of the death, divorce, or separation of parents or for other causes. Almost a third of the children placed by public social agencies and about a tenth of those placed by voluntary agencies had been born in wedlock. Most of them were children whose parents were divorced.

The average age at which children were placed in adoptive homes by social welfare agencies was 5.0 months. At the time of placement the children placed by public agencies were older on the average (10.0 months) than those placed by private agencies (3.5 months). This wide difference is partly explained by the fact that a larger proportion of the children placed by the public agencies were born in wedlock and became the subject of adoption petitions after the death or divorce of their parents.

One reason for the early age at which voluntary agencies made placements is the recent emphasis on early placement. In 24 States reporting comparable data for 1951 and 1955, children placed in 1951 for adoption by voluntary agencies were aged 5.2 months, on the average, and those placed in 1955 had an average age of 3.3 months. The median age of children placed by public agencies in these 24 States remained relatively constant; it was 11.4 months in 1951 and 11.6 months in 1955.

The age at time of petition reflects the variations in age at which the children were made available for adoption, agency policies and practices concerning probationary periods before the final petition is filed, and

**Table 1.—Children for whom adoption petitions were filed: Percentage distribution by type of placement, 31 States reporting completely, 1955<sup>1</sup>**

State	Number of children named in adoption petitions filed	Percentage distribution <sup>2</sup>						No placement made
		Agency placement			Independent placement			
		Total	Public	Private	Total	By parents or other relatives	By others	
Total, 31 States reporting completely <sup>3</sup>	436,528	29	12	17	31	19	12	40
Arkansas	568	27	27		32	25	7	41
Connecticut	1,170	35	12	23	26	13	13	39
Delaware	185	50	7	43	12	11	1	38
District of Columbia	504	35	13	22	31	28	3	34
Florida <sup>4</sup>	2,063	15		15	53	18	35	32
Georgia	1,419	15	8	7	53	38	15	32
Hawaii	611	10	6	4	43	34	9	47
Indiana	2,972	31	23	8	32	26	6	37
Iowa	1,767	24	5	19	29		29	47
Kentucky	903	30	20	10	42	34	8	28
Louisiana	1,017	32	9	23	29		29	39
Maine	881	100	54	46				
Minnesota	1,616	49	8	41	11	8	3	40
Missouri <sup>5</sup>	1,666	33	25	8	29	22	7	38
Nevada	191	9	5	4	63	57	6	28
New Hampshire	312	48	23	25	26	21	5	26
New Mexico	673	14	8	6	50	32	18	36
North Carolina	1,378	39	28	11	18	18		43
North Dakota	252	42	1	41	16	13	3	42
Oregon	1,649	15		15	39	8	31	46
Puerto Rico	190	4		(?)	55	82	3	11
Rhode Island	351	28	13	15	11	7	4	61
South Dakota	347	27	17	10	34	22	12	39
Tennessee <sup>6</sup>	1,040	39	27	12	39	34	5	22
Texas	6,399	27	4	23	23	19	4	50
Utah	528	31	9	22	28	4	24	41
Vermont	285	47	14	33	19	13	6	34
Virgin Islands	22				23	23		77
Virginia	1,794	30	19	11	38	24	14	32
Washington <sup>6</sup>	2,158	28	3	25	24	6	18	48
Wisconsin <sup>6</sup>	1,617	45	19	25	17	16	1	38

<sup>1</sup> Reporting period represents the calendar year ended Dec. 31, 1955, with the following exceptions: Connecticut, Louisiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, North Dakota, and Rhode Island reported for year ended June 30, 1955, and Texas for year ended Aug. 31, 1955.

<sup>2</sup> Based on data for children for whom type of placement was reported.

<sup>3</sup> States "reporting completely" are those whose reports include data for 90 percent or more of the children for whom adoption petitions were filed.

<sup>4</sup> An estimated 93,900 children were named in adoption petitions filed throughout the United States. This estimate is based on reports from 39 States. In addition to the States listed in the table

California, Kansas, Montana, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and West Virginia also transmitted reports. The first 4 States reported the total number of children but provided no additional data about their adoption; the last 4 reported data for less than 90 percent of the children named in adoption petitions filed in their States.

<sup>5</sup> Report based on data for all children placed by licensed child-placing agencies for whom a petition was filed during 1955 and for all children placed independently for whom the investigation of the petition was completed in 1955.

<sup>6</sup> Report based on data for adoptions completed rather than for petitions filed.

<sup>7</sup> Less than 0.5 percent.

statutory provisions on adoption. Generally, there is about a 12-month interval between placement and filing of the petition for adoption of children placed by social agencies. For children placed by public agencies in 1955 the median age was 21.6 months at the time of petition, and for those placed by voluntary agencies it was 15.1 months.

White children predominate among those placed by social agencies. Private agencies placed 60 percent of the white children, and public agencies placed 58 percent of the nonwhite children.

Children requiring placement in

an adoptive home and who are not placed by a recognized social agency are said to be placed independently. One of the most significant facts about such children is that only 74 percent were placed with persons not related to them. (Almost 100 percent of the placements made by social agencies in 1955 were with persons not related to the children.)

Of the children placed independently for adoption, 57 percent were born out of wedlock; the percentage was 51 for those placed by relatives and 69 for those placed by nonrelatives. A high proportion of those born in wedlock and placed independently

were children whose natural parents had been divorced or separated.

The data on birth status and on the relationship of the persons making the placements suggest that children placed by relatives may be older than those placed by nonrelatives, since 36 percent of the children placed by relatives were from homes broken by the divorce, separation, or death of the parents. The finding is substantiated by the data on age at time of placement, which shows that these children had a median age of 3.1 months and the median age of those placed independently by nonrelatives was less than 1 month.

The interval between the child's age at time of placement and his age at the time the petition is filed varies considerably for the children placed independently, but the average age at time of filing was 17.6 months and the interval between placement and petition was 16.6 months. For children placed in the adoptive home by a relative, however, the interval between placement and petition was 24.5 months, and for those placed independently by nonrelatives it was about 5.0 months.

More nonwhite than white children were placed independently. The proportions were 67 percent and 49 percent, respectively.

## Trustees Report on Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Disability Insurance Trust Funds

*The Board of Trustees of the old-age and survivors insurance trust fund recently submitted to Congress its seventeenth annual report. The report shows old-age and survivors insurance trust fund operations for the fiscal year 1955-56 and, as required by statute, estimates of projected operations of the old-age and survivors insurance and the disability insurance trust funds during the next 5 years, as well as an analysis of the funds' long-range actuarial status. The Board is composed of the Secretary of the Treasury, who is the funds' Managing Trustee; the Secretary of Labor; and the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. The*