



State vs. County Administration of Child Welfare Services

The administrative framework for child welfare services and programs varies from State to State. All States are responsible for compliance with Federal and State requirements; however, they may differ in the way child welfare services are operated and delivered.

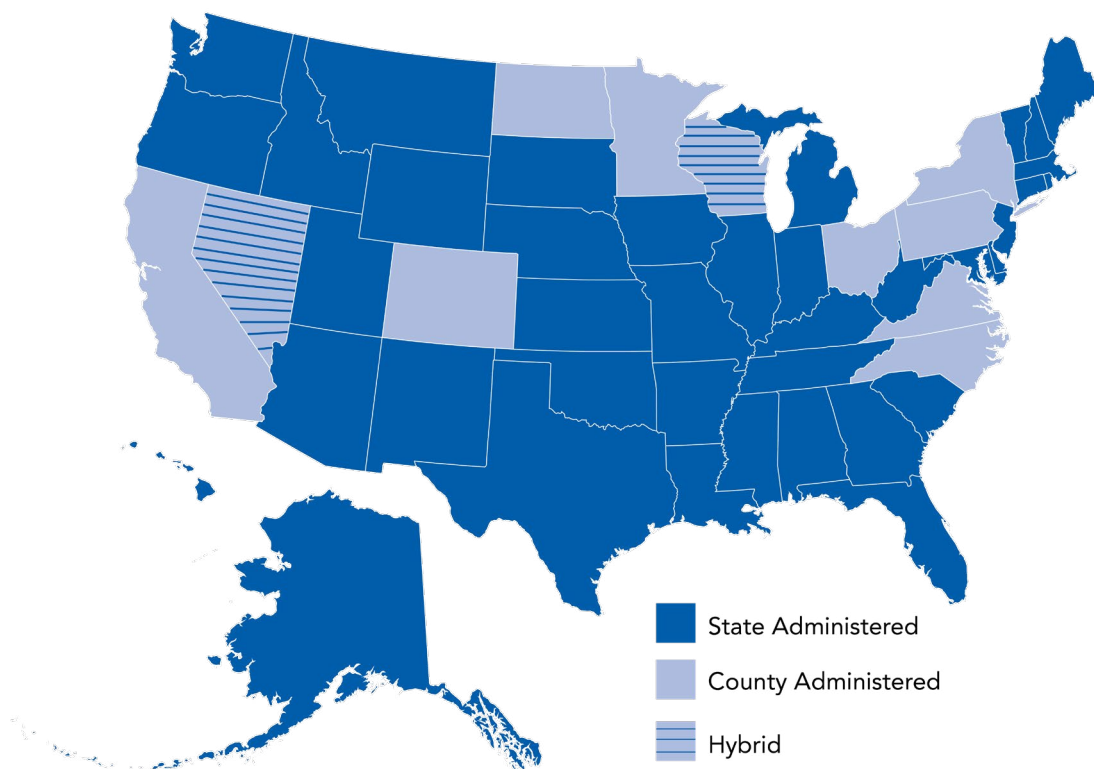
The majority of States have established a centralized administrative system and can be classified as State administered: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming.¹

Nine States can be described as county administered: California, Colorado, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

Two “hybrid” States are partially administered by the State and partially administered by counties: Nevada and Wisconsin.

The different types of administration determine the degree of centralization of authority and responsibility for child welfare funding, policymaking, licensing, training for workers, and more. A 2001 National Study of Child Protective Services Systems and Reform Efforts found a number of differences between State- and county-administered child welfare systems.

¹ For the purposes of title IV-B and IV-E, Puerto Rico is considered a State, and it is a State with a centralized administration of child welfare services that can be considered State administered.



The configuration of the administrative structure of each State presented in this publication is based on data provided by the Children’s Bureau as of August 2017, supplemented by information in States’ Child and Family Services Plans, which are narrative plans submitted by States that outline each State’s vision, goals, and objectives for child welfare services.

For more information on general child welfare service delivery or key Federal legislation addressing child abuse and neglect, see the following resources from Child Welfare Information Gateway:

- [About CAPTA: A Legislative History](#)
- [How the Child Welfare System Works](#)

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