

# SAFELY SURRENDERED AND ABANDONED INFANTS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY 2002-2021



Prepared by  
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### **SAFE SURRENDER ADDENDUM:**

The data in this report cannot fully capture the stories, the undoubtedly compelling situations, that have led many women to make a lasting unselfish choice. However, their difficult decisions to surrender their newborns have affected many lives beyond their own. Although we do not know the full details of each of their situations, we are aware of many positive outcomes of their decisions. For example, ICAN works with Department of Children and Family Services Sensitive Case unit which assists in the matching of safely surrendered infants with adoptive families. “It’s like a miracle”, social worker Kelly Wilson says when she describes how these children “fit so perfectly in each of the homes where they are deeply wanted, cared for and loved”.

Another inspiring outcome is that, several high school seniors who were safely surrendered as newborns have each been awarded a \$5 thousand dollar college scholarship grant through the Don Knabe Safe Surrender Scholarship Fund, established in honor of the former Supervisor. This college scholarship fund is administered through the Long Beach Community Foundation. All children safely surrendered in LA County are eligible for this scholarship and must apply within three years of reaching age 17. LA County employees are able to contribute to this fund through their payroll deduction and any community members may contribute online to Don Knabe Safe Surrender Scholarship Fund.





## **SAFELY SURRENDERED AND ABANDONED INFANTS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY 2002-2021**



**“The Safe Surrender Program provides a safe, secure and anonymous way for mothers, who find themselves in a desperate situation, to get their baby into safe hands—at any fire station or hospital, any time—and protect them from abandonment: No Shame. No Blame. No Names.”**

**Don Knabe, Founder, Los Angeles County Safe Surrender Program**

**Since 2001, 227\* babies have been given a second chance at life and the opportunity to grow up in a loving family because of the Safe Surrender Program.**

\*This statement is updated with its corresponding number each year.



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## Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants in Los Angeles County 2002 - 2021

During an early February morning, maintenance staff walked into the public women's restroom of Holly Street Park ready to do a routine cleaning. Among a pile of toilet tissue a newborn is found. A baby! 911 is quickly called. The baby is determined to be lifeless and an investigation is quickly initiated. Sadly, whatever the investigation's outcome, the newborn is deceased. Could this baby's fate have been avoided if her mother was aware of her option to safely surrender her baby?

Since 2001, California has responded to the tragedy of infant abandonment by providing a life-saving alternative for distressed parents who are unwilling or unable to care for a newborn child, through the Safely Surrendered Baby Law (SSBL) program.

This report, in its nineteenth edition, highlights the effectiveness of this program in Los Angeles County. The following pages illustrate a downward trend in the number of abandoned deceased infants since the SSBL program began. Most noteworthy, is the fact that since 2012, there has not been a single year when more than one abandoned infant death has occurred. This is a vast contrast from 2001, the first year of the establishment of the law, when there were eleven of these tragic deaths in L.A. County. Public awareness has been key to this success. By the end of 2021, a total of 227 lives have been saved through the Safely Surrendered Baby Law.

### Background

In the year 2000, the California legislature passed Senate Bill 1368 (SB1368) (Brulte) partly to encourage parents who would otherwise abandon their infants in unsafe environments (e.g., trash dumpsters, public bathrooms, etc.), to instead, leave them in safer environments. The law decriminalized the act of infant abandonment, in very specific circumstances, specifying that an infant must be 72 hours of age or younger and surrendered at a hospital or other sites designated by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (BOS). Commonly known as the Safely Surrendered Baby Law (SSBL), or "Safe Haven" law, SB1368 became effective January 1, 2001. Unfortunately, during this same year, no infants were safely surrendered in Los Angeles County and 14 newborns were abandoned, three survived and 11 died. (This report uses these rates as baseline data to track the SSBL's progress in subsequent years). After the first year of the passage of the law, alarmed by the number of infants that continued to be abandoned despite SB1368, then Supervisor Don Knabe made a motion, unanimously carried by the BOS on February 5, 2002. The motion directed several agencies to jointly submit a report to the BOS with recommendations on how to best implement SB1368 in Los Angeles County. A multi-disciplinary task force met for several months to address this Board mandate. By June 4, 2002, the task force presented the BOS with twelve recommendations intended to best implement the law. The Board approved these recommendations which included proposals for a public information campaign, the establishment of a speakers' bureau, training and education, legal review for possible recommendations of legislative changes, and designation of additional safe surrender sites. The BOS requested ICAN's

involvement, adding the following:

“ICAN—with the support of the Director of DCFS and input from the District Attorney’s Office—and the directors of DHS and DMH (shall) identify a key set of data elements that will be collected regarding all newborns safely surrendered or abandoned in Los Angeles County, consistent with State instructions for data collection through the Child Welfare System/Case Management System”

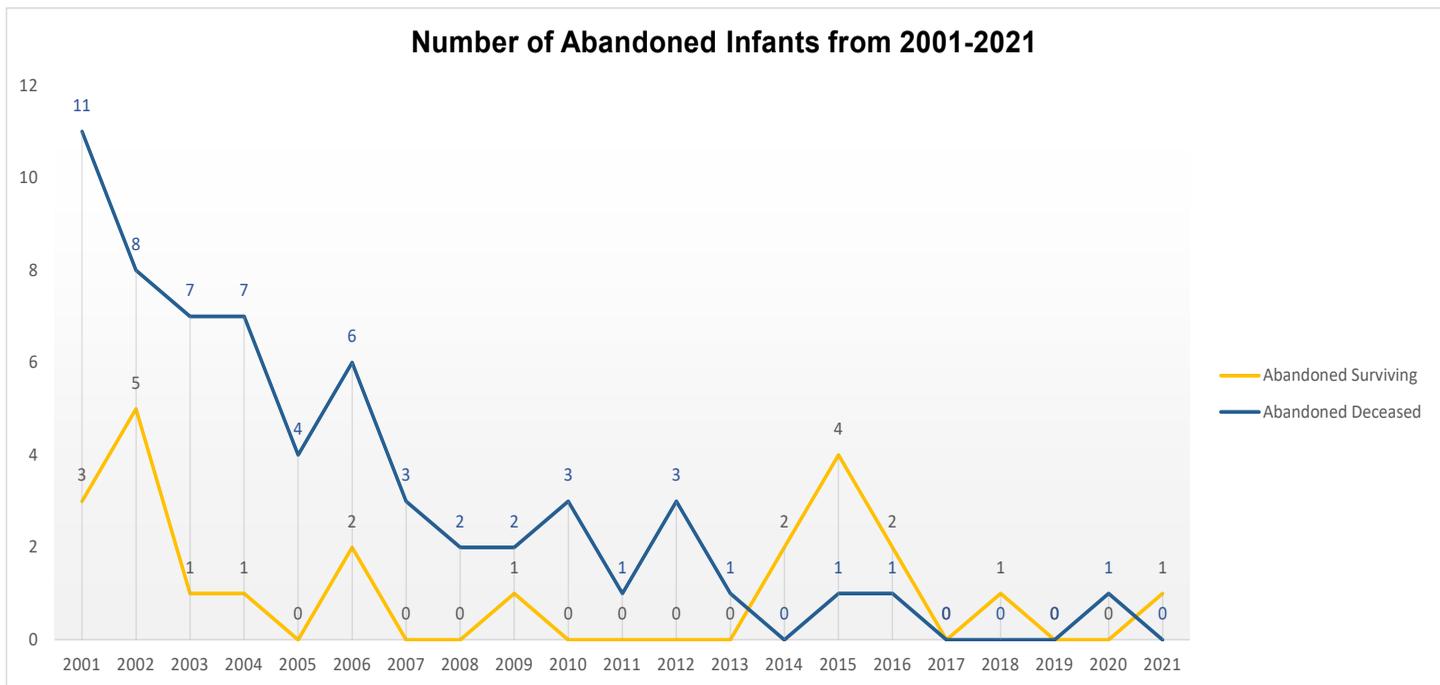
In July 2002, ICAN convened a multi-disciplinary group of interested agency representatives, to identify data elements to be collected for safely surrendered and abandoned infants (those who survive and those who do not) as well as from their parents. The group sought to determine the characteristics of women who safely surrendered their infants and the characteristics of women who abandoned their newborns in an unsafe manner. On a broader level, the group wanted to also collect data that would track public awareness and overall effectiveness of the law. Starting on page 91, this report includes the data elements established by the group.

As a result, and for the past nineteen years, ICAN has collected data with the assistance of the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner and the Department of Children and Family Services. This report presents a breakdown and analysis of the data collected for safely surrendered and abandoned infants for the years 2002 - 2021. This report also addresses the positive outcomes of the SSBL and Los Angeles County’s ongoing efforts to best implement this law. Other positive outcomes include, the final adoption of more than 175 safely surrendered infants and the safe reclamation of 19 infants.

Since SSBL went into effect on January 1, 2001, 227 infants have been safely surrendered in Los Angeles County. Tragically, during this same time period, 83 infants have been found abandoned in Los Angeles County; 22 of these infants survived and 61 were found deceased. It is promising to note that the number of abandoned infants has declined from 14 infants in 2001, to no more than six per year since 2007. There was one deceased abandoned infant in 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2016 and one this year, and no deceased abandoned infants in 2014 and 2017 and 2019. The number of safe surrenders increased from zero in 2001 to an all-time high of 18 in 2015. The chart on the next page shows that while the numbers of safely surrendered infants increased, there has been a downward trend in the number of abandonments. In fact, in 2011, 2013, and in 2018, 2020 and 2021 there was one abandoned infant. There were two infants abandoned in 2014 and three in 2016. Unfortunately, this downward trend was threatened in 2015 when despite having the highest number in safely surrendered infants, there were still five abandoned infants, including one deceased. The reason for this occurrence on this particular year is yet to be explored. Despite the spike in 2015, this law continues to be effective in providing a life-saving alternative for mothers who would otherwise abandon their newborn as illustrated in the following chart and graph.

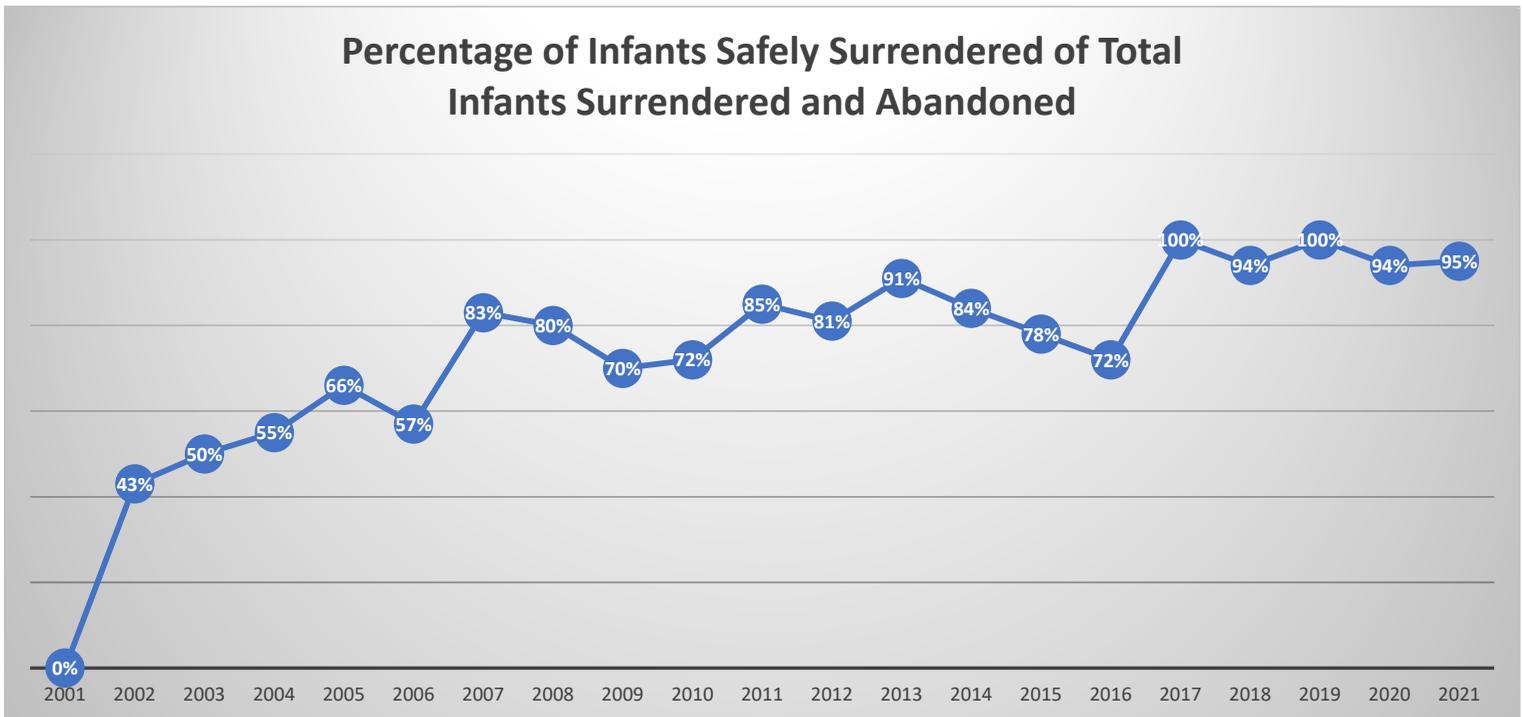
## Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Los Angeles County 2001–2021 Trend Chart

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Safely Surrendered	0*	10	8	10	8	11	15	8	7	8	6	13	9	11	18	8	9	15	15	16	22	227
Abandoned Surviving	3*	5	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	4	2	0	1	0	0	1	23
Abandoned Deceased	11*	8	7	7	4	6	3	2	2	3	1	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	61



## Percentage of infants safely surrendered of total infants surrendered and abandoned in Los Angeles County from 2001–2021

The data demonstrates an overall shift towards safe surrender from abandonment, with infants being surrendered safely 70% or more of the time since 2007. The data is charted below with a trend line which shows progression toward safe surrender.



## What Have We Learned from the Data?

Data on safely surrendered and abandoned infants is collected by ICAN in an effort to track public awareness and the ongoing effectiveness of SSBL in Los Angeles County. Efforts are also made to gather information about mothers who safely surrendered their infants and those who abandoned their infants in an unsafe manner, to see if there are differences in these two groups, and if either group fit an identifiable profile that can be targeted for preventive intervention or services. These data elements were not collected during our baseline year of 2001, but began to be tracked and are included since 2002 for the purpose of identifying at risk populations. The remainder will address data elements and incidents of safe surrender and abandonment in Los Angeles County between 2002 and 2021 (excluding 2001 baseline data). During this seventeen-year period, 227 infants were safely surrendered.

The data collected for 2002 – 2021 continues to indicate that mothers who surrender or abandon their children do not typically fit the expected stereotype profile of a young, unmarried teenager with no other children. We've found women who surrender come from different walks of life, many have been married, and some have had prior children. However, it should be pointed out, that more often than not, we are unable to obtain detailed information about them due to their unique circumstances, their continued struggles and their need for anonymity.

### **MOTHERS' AGES**

#### **2002**

The known age range of mothers who safely surrendered their infants in 2002 is from 17 to 42 years, with an average age of 28 years; four of the five mothers whose ages were known were age 25 or over. While the known ages of mothers who abandoned their infants in 2002 ranged from 16 to 34 years and averaged a somewhat younger age of 23, sample sizes are too small to indicate a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

#### **2003**

The known age range of mothers who safely surrendered their infants in 2003 is from 17 to 31 years, with an average age of 22 ½ years. Of the 8 mothers who abandoned their infants in 2003, ages of only two mothers are known; one mother was age 16 at the time she abandoned her child and the other mother was age 22.

#### **2004**

Ages for mothers who safely surrendered their infants in 2004 are known in only 3 of the 10 cases. These mothers were 16, 25 and 28 years of age, with an average age of 23 years. Of the 8 mothers who abandoned their infants in 2004, ages of 5 mothers are known. This age range is from 15 to 26 years, with an average age of 20 years. Again, sample sizes are too small to indicate a statistically significant difference between the two

groups.

### **2005**

Of the 8 mothers who safely surrendered their infants in 2005, ages are known in 5 cases. This age range is from 17 to approximately 33 years (“early 30s”), of age with an average age of 21 years. Ages of 3 of the 4 mothers who abandoned their infants in 2005 are known. These mothers were 17, 21 and 32 years of age, with an average age of 23 1/3 years.

### **2006**

Of the 11 mothers who safely surrendered their infants in 2006, ages are known in 7 cases. This age range is from 21 to 37 years of age with an average age of 27 years. Ages of 7 of the 8 mothers who abandoned their infants in 2006 are known. This age range is from 17 to 41 years of age, with an average age of 28 years.

### **2007**

The known age range of mothers who safely surrendered their infants in 2007 is from 20 to approximately 38 years of age with an average age of 25 1/2 years. Five of the six mothers whose ages were known were in their early to mid 20s. The three mothers who abandoned their infants in 2007, were ages 20, 23 and 25.

### **2008**

Ages for mothers who safely surrendered their infants are known in 5 of the 8 cases. All five of these women were in their 20s, with an average age of 25 years. The age for one mother who abandoned her infant in 2008 was 29 years of age. The other mother’s age was unknown.

### **2009**

Of the 7 mothers who safely surrendered their infants in 2009, only one mother’s age is known and she was 28 at the time she surrendered her infant. Ages of 2 of the 3 mothers who abandoned their infants in 2009 are known. These mothers were 17 and 32 years of age. The other mother’s age was unknown.

### **2010**

The known age range of mothers who safely surrendered their infants in 2010 is from 20 to the mid 30s. Three of the four mothers whose ages were known were in their 20s. The three mothers who abandoned their infants in 2010, were ages 18, 21, and 24.

### **2011**

Ages for mothers who safely surrendered their infants are known in only 1 of 6 cases.

This mother was 33 years of age. The age for the mother who abandoned her infant in 2011 was 35 years of age.

### **2012**

Of the 13 mothers who safely surrendered their infants in 2012, ages are known in 5 of the 13 cases. This age range is from approximately 21 to 34 years of age. Ages of 2 of the 3 mothers who abandoned their infants in 2012 are known. These mothers were 18 and 22 years of age. The other mother's age was unknown.

### **2013**

Ages for mothers who safely surrendered their infants are known for only one of the nine cases in 2013. This mother was 23 years old. The age for the mother who abandoned her infant, was 21 years of age.

### **2014**

Ages for mothers who safely surrendered their infants are known for only four of the 11 cases in 2014. This age range is from approximately 21 to 35 years of age. The age for one of the two mothers who abandoned their infants, was 32 years of age. The other mother's age was unknown.

### **2015**

Of the 18 mothers who safely surrendered their infant in 2015, only one mother's age is known and she was 17 at the time she surrendered her infant. Ages of two of the four mothers who abandoned their infant in 2015 are known. These mothers were 20 and 30 years of age.

### **2016**

Ages for mothers who safely surrendered in 2016, are known in only two of the eight cases. One mother was 36 years of age and the other was 34. The age for one of the two mothers who abandoned her infant was 38, the other mother's age was unknown.

### **2017**

Ages for mothers who safely surrendered in 2017, are known in three of the nine cases. One mother was 38, one was 23 and the third mother was age 28. There were no known instances of abandoned infants in 2017, thus age data is not applicable.

### **2018**

Ages for mothers who safely surrendered in 2018 are known in 4 of the 15 cases. One mother, who initially safely surrendered but later reclaimed her baby was 17; another mother who surrendered is 28; the third mom was 27, and one was 18. The age of the

mother who abandoned her infant was 47.

### **2019**

Ages for mothers who safely surrendered their newborn in 2019 are known in only five of the cases this year. One mother was eighteen, one nineteen, one was 20, one was 25 and one was 27. Two of these young mothers later reclaimed their babies (the 19 and the 20 year-old).

### **2020**

Of the 16 mothers who safely surrendered their newborns in 2020, five disclosed their ages. One mother was 21, one was 25, another reported being 27, another was 28. One mother reported being 39. There were two women who according to hospital staff, were reportedly in their 30s, and two were reportedly in their mid 20s.

### **2021**

Of the 22 mothers who safely surrendered their newborns in 2021. No one disclosed their ages. Upon review of the documentation there is evidence that one mother is 38 years old. Two mothers were thought by hospital staff to be in their mid to late thirties.

## **MOTHERS' FAMILY SITUATIONS**

Mothers who safely surrendered their infants were sometimes married and/or had other children, and in fact, those mothers who stated their motivation for surrendering their infants frequently mentioned an inability to care for another child. Other mothers were homeless with no mention of any family.

### **2002**

In 2002, two surrendering mothers are known to have been married at the time of surrender. For the five abandoning mothers who were identified in 2002, two had older children at the time of the abandonment. None of the identified abandoning mothers were married at the time of the abandonment.

### **2003**

In 2003, information about family circumstances is known for four of the eight surrendering mothers. Of these four, it is known that three mothers were unmarried and it is unknown if the fourth was married. Three surrendering mothers are known to have other children while one did not. Of the eight abandoning mothers in 2003 only two were identified, and both were single and had no other children.

### **2004**

In 2004, information about family circumstances is known for only two of the ten surrendering mothers. One of these women was married and both had older children. Of

the eight mothers who abandoned their infants, information is known about five mothers. All five of these women were single (one living with a common law husband); four had no other children and one had one older child.

### **2005**

In 2005, information about family circumstances is known for four of the eight surrendering mothers. Three of these four women were single, and two of these four women had older children. Of the four mothers who abandoned their infants in 2005, three women were single; two had no other children and one had three older children.

### **2006**

In 2006, information about family circumstances is known for seven of the eleven surrendering mothers. Four of these seven women were single, and five of these seven women had older children. Of the eight mothers who abandoned their infants in 2006, four women were single and four had older children.

### **2007**

In 2007, two surrendering mothers were known to have been married at the time of surrender; one mother was single and was separated. Four of the 15 surrendering mothers claimed to have other children. The marital status of the abandoning mothers in 2007 is unknown; one of these women had older children.

### **2008**

In 2008, information about family circumstances is known for three of the eight surrendering mothers. One of these women was divorced, and two of these seven had older children. Of the two mothers who abandoned their infants in 2008, one mother had older children and nothing is known about the other mother's family circumstances.

### **2009**

In 2009, information about family circumstances is known for only one of the seven surrendering mothers. This mother was married and had two older children. Of the three mothers who abandoned their infants in 2009, one mother lived at home with her mother and grandmother and nothing is known about the other two mothers' family circumstances.

### **2010**

In 2010, very limited information about family circumstances is known for five of the eight surrendering mothers. Two of the mothers were single, three had older children, and one mother lived with her parents. Of the three mothers who abandoned their infants, we only know that two lived with their families.

## **2011**

As in 2010, very limited information about family circumstances is known for the surrendering mothers. Two mothers reported having other children and one mother of unknown marital status, implied she was still involved with the infant's father. Nothing is known about the other three mothers. For the one mother who abandoned her infant in 2011, she lived with her husband and teenage daughter.

## **2012**

In 2012, very limited information about family circumstances is known for the surrendering mothers. Four of the mothers reported having other children. Two of the mothers were single and one mother was married; the married mother concealed her pregnancy from her husband. Of the three mothers who abandoned their infants, we know two lived with their families and one of these had another child.

## **2013**

In 2013, information about family circumstances is known for four of the nine surrendering mothers. One of these women was single and three of the women had older children. For the one mother who abandoned her infant in 2013, she lived with several family members.

## **2014**

In 2014, information about family circumstances is known for only four of the eleven surrendering mothers. One of these women was single, another was still involved with the baby's father, a third was homeless and finally, a fourth woman had nine other children. Of the two mothers who abandoned their infant in 2014, one of these was homeless and nothing is known about the other mother's family circumstances.

## **2015**

In 2015, information about family circumstances is known for only four of the 18 surrendering mothers. Two of these women lived with their parents, another was still involved with the baby's father, and a fourth woman had another child living with her at home. Of the four cases of abandonment, two mothers were homeless and a third woman had two older children.

## **2016**

In 2016, information about family circumstances is known for three of the eight surrendering mothers. One of these women lived with her mother and her three other children. Another lived with her boyfriend, and a third was married living with her husband and their two children. Of the two mothers who abandoned their infants, nothing is known about their family circumstances.

## **2017**

In 2017, information about the marital status of the nine mothers that safely surrendered their infants was undeclared. However, there was indication that two of the nine mothers had older children. Specific information related to their family circumstances was not available.

As indicated, there were no known instances of abandoned infants in 2017.

## **2018**

In 2018, At least 5 of the 15 mothers reported being homeless. One mother reported having surrendered an infant before about 4 years prior. We do not have any reports specifying that any of the mothers who surrendered their newborns were married.

The two mothers who initially surrendered but later reclaimed their infants were both around age 18. Their pregnancies were the result of casual encounters. The alleged fathers were no longer involved with them and their whereabouts unknown. Both mothers who reclaimed, faced similar circumstances; initially felt they did not have their family's support and no financial means to care for their infants. In both instances, either one of their parents stepped in, allowed them to move into their homes and provided their support once they found out about the surrendered babies. This allowed the young moms to reclaim their newborns. One of these mothers delivered her baby after having been assaulted by "three unknown women".

In 2018, the surviving abandoned infant's mother is homeless, with a chronic history of drug use, uses various aliases and has a criminal history including one prior child abandonment.

## **2019**

This year, we have little information about the ages of the surrendering parents, but we do know the following: A couple in their early 20s initially safely surrendered their baby because they felt that they did not have the financial means to care for their baby. They reclaimed their baby the next day. Another young mother initially safely surrendered her baby because as a 2nd year college student, she wanted to focus on her education and felt that she did not have the financial means to appropriately care for her child. She too, reclaimed her baby by the next day. There was a mother in her late 20s of Asian descent who specified being in a relationship with a Caucasian man (unknown if he's the baby's father) she disclosed that the man supports her financially but does not want to assume the care of the baby. Another couple, surrendered their baby claiming they did not know about the pregnancy until about a month prior to giving birth and felt they were not equipped to take care of their baby. There was also a young mother, approximately eighteen years of age, she and her grandmother insisted that they didn't realize the mother was pregnant until she was in labor at the hospital. The young mother lives at home with her family, and after going into early labor, left the hospital but returned the next day to deliver and surrender her baby.

## **2020**

One mother reported she had recently left her 8 year old son and his father and relocated

to another city where she surrendered her newborn.

Various mothers, at least three reported being in relationships where both parents jointly decided it was best to surrender their infant due to their current circumstances and limitations including homelessness, and substance abuse. One of these women, had an adult son in Mexico. The other had surrendered a baby at the same hospital previously and has an older son who was also adopted.

One mother reported hiding her pregnancy from the baby's father and from her own family.

Another mother returned to the hospital to reclaim the baby with her grandmother.

One mother reported having two older children not in her custody. Another mother reported having four children currently living with her.

## **2021**

This year, it was evident or reported that at least three mothers have an ongoing relationship with the surrendered infant's father. One mother described this relationship as "toxic" and wanting to end the relationship due to physical and verbal abuse. Similarly, another surrendering mother reported being in a long term abusive relationship with her surrendered infant's father stating "he is not a good person".

Two mothers did not want their extended family to find out about their pregnancy. One mother stated that she was not aware of her pregnancy, and was adamant about not wanting to take her baby home with her as she didn't want her own father to know that she'd had a baby. Another mother reported her family situation is "not ideal" and is afraid to admit her pregnancy to her family. Another mother reported that she has family but that they are not in her life.

Another mother reported not being aware of her pregnancy, but admitted to having had other children who are currently under their biological father's and paternal grandparents' care. This baby was reclaimed and DCFS is involved.

Another mother initially surrendered her baby but reclaimed the baby after receiving support from her own parents. Both her and the baby will be living with maternal grandparents.

One mother reported being overwhelmed with the care of her own mother and her five year old child as the main reason for surrendering her infant.

## **ETHNICITY**

### **2002**

In 2002, the majority of infants safely surrendered and abandoned were Hispanic (13 of 23); in Los Angeles County the Hispanic birth rate outpaces birth rates among African American, Caucasian and Asian/Pacific Islander women. African Americans represented 7 of the 23 infants; at almost a third of the infants, this number outpaces the number of

African American births in Los Angeles County. Caucasians represented 2 of the infants for whom data were collected, and one deceased abandoned infant was of unknown ethnicity.

### **2003**

As in 2002, in 2003, the most represented ethnic group of safely surrendered and abandoned infants were Hispanic (5 of 16), followed by Caucasian infants (4 of 16) and African American infants (3 of 16). In addition, two Asian/Pacific Islander (Filipino) infants and two infants of unknown ethnicity were abandoned.

### **2004**

As in 2002 and 2003, the most represented ethnic group of safely surrendered and abandoned infants were Hispanic (7 of 18), followed by Caucasian infants (5 of 18) and African American infants (3 of 18). In addition, one infant of mixed Asian/Pacific Islander (Filipino)/Hispanic ethnicity and two infants of unknown ethnicity were abandoned.

### **2005**

In 2005, Hispanic infants continued to be the most represented abandoned and surrendered (6 of 12) followed by Caucasian infants (4 of 12). In addition, one African American infant was safely surrendered and one Asian/Pacific Islander (Filipino)/Caucasian infant was abandoned.

### **2006**

As in the previous four years, the most represented ethnic group of safely surrendered and abandoned infants were Hispanic (12 of 19), followed by Caucasian infants (3 of 19) and African American infants (1 of 19). In addition, two infants of mixed heritage (one Hispanic/African American ethnicity, the other Hispanic/Caucasian ethnicity), were safely surrendered. One deceased abandoned infant was of unknown ethnicity.

### **2007**

In 2007, Hispanic infants continued to be the most represented surrendered and abandoned (10 of 18), while Caucasians represented three of the 18 infants. In addition, three infants of mixed heritage (one African American/Hispanic ethnicity, and two of Hispanic/Caucasian ethnicity) were safely surrendered. One abandoned infant was of Asian/Pacific Islander descent and one surrendered infant was of unknown ethnicity.

### **2008**

In 2008, Hispanics continued to be the most represented ethnic group of safely surrendered and abandoned infants. In terms of a percent of the population in Los Angeles County, they were over-represented having eight of the ten cases. One safely surrendered infant was of Asian/Pacific Islander ancestry and one was Caucasian.

## **2009**

As in the previous seven years, the most represented ethnic group of safely surrendered and abandoned infants were Hispanic (6 of 10), two were Caucasian, one was African-American, and one surrendered infant was of unknown ethnicity.

## **2010**

In 2010, Hispanic infants continued to be the most represented group among safely surrendered and abandoned infants (6 of 11) while Caucasians represented three of the 11 infants, and African-Americans represented two of the 11 infants.

## **2011**

In 2011, Hispanic infants continued to be the most represented group among safely surrendered and abandoned infants (5 of 7) while Asian and Caucasian each represented one of the 7 infants.

## **2012**

Since collecting these data, the majority of safely surrendered and abandoned infants were Hispanic. This trend carried into 2012 with Hispanic infants holding the majority (6 of 16) followed by Caucasian infants (3 of 16). There were two infants each of African-American and Asian/Pacific Islander descent as well as two of unknown ethnicity, and one infant was of mixed heritage (African-American/Caucasian).

## **2013**

For the first time since collecting these data, Hispanic infants shared the majority position; African Americans represented 3 of the 10 infants and so did Hispanics. Two infants were of Caucasian descent and one was Asian.

## **2014**

As in 2013, Hispanic infants shared the majority position; Caucasians represented 5 of the 13 infants and so did Hispanics. Two infants were African-American and one safely surrendered infant was of Middle Eastern descent.

## **2015**

As in most of the previous years, Hispanic infants continued to be the most represented ethnic group of surrendered and abandoned infants (13 of 24). African-Americans represented 7 of the 24. In addition, there was one each of Caucasian and Asian background. Finally, two of the surrendered infants were of unknown ethnicity.

## **2016**

In 2016, Hispanic infants continued to be the most represented among surrendered and abandoned infants (5 of 11). Caucasians represented 3 of the 11 infants. In addition, one infant was Asian/Pacific Islander. Finally, one surrendered infant was of mixed heritage (Eskimo, African-American and Caucasian).

### **2017**

In 2017, of the nine safely surrendered infants in LA County, four were Hispanic; one was of mixed Caucasian and Hispanic ethnicity; and two were African American. There were two infants whose ethnicity was unknown. This data is consistent with prior years.

### **2018**

In 2018, of the fifteen safely surrendered infants in LA County, six identified as Hispanic. Two identified as mixed Hispanic/Caucasian; One identified as Hispanic/African American; One was identified as mixed Caucasian and Filipino; Three safe surrendered infants were identified as Caucasian; One was identified as African American, and one newborn's ethnic identity was not specified.

The surviving abandoned newborn was of Hispanic descent.

### **2019**

In 2019, we know the ethnic background of 14 of the 15 mothers who surrendered their children. Six were Caucasian; five mothers were of Hispanic descent including one who reclaimed her baby. One mother was African American, she also reclaimed her baby. And there were two mothers of Asian descent.

### **2020**

In 2020, we know the ethnic background of 14 out the 16 mothers who surrendered their babies. Ten mothers were of Hispanic descent. One mother was Asian and three were Caucasian.

### **2021**

In 2021, we know the ethnic background of all twenty two moms who surrendered their infant. 11 moms were of Hispanic descent. Four were African American. Two were Caucasian. Four were of Asian descent including one mother from Laos, and one from the Philippines. The other two were unspecified Asian. One additional mother was South Asian or Bengali, from Bangladesh.

## **SOCIOECONOMIC/GEOGRAPHIC FACTORS**

### **2002**

In terms of socioeconomic/geographic factors, mothers of abandoned and surrendered infants crossed the spectrum in 2002. However, it is notable that in 2002, seven of the thirteen abandoned infants (two who survived and five who died) and seven of the ten

surrendered infants were found/surrendered in economically depressed neighborhoods in Service Planning Areas (SPAs)<sup>1</sup> 6, 7 and 8, SPAs with higher numbers of youth living below the poverty line. Further, six of these infants were found/surrendered within a few miles of the Harbor Freeway in more impoverished areas of the County. On the other hand, no infants were abandoned or surrendered in SPA 5, a SPA with significantly fewer children living below the poverty line. Finally, of the five surrendering parties who provided information as to their motivation to surrender, four indicated that they could not provide for the infant they were surrendering. One of these families indicated that they were homeless. In 2002, economic factors appeared to play a role in the cases of infant abandonment and surrender in Los Angeles County. This would indicate that impoverished living conditions, access to medical care and social service support should be addressed when looking at the issue of infant abandonment.

As seen in the 2002 map following this section, safe surrenders and infant abandonment occurred across Los Angeles County in 2002. However, as noted above and as the map depicts, a majority of the infants who were abandoned and surrendered in 2002 were from the central, more urban part of the County where higher numbers of children live in poverty. As the map also shows, no reports of surrendered or abandoned infants were reported in SPA 5 (West Los Angeles) and one infant was abandoned in SPA 1 (Antelope Valley).

### **2003**

As in 2002, mothers of abandoned and surrendered infants crossed the socioeconomic/geographic spectrum in 2003. However, unlike the infants abandoned and surrendered in 2002, there was no “clustering” of cases in specific SPAs, especially those with higher poverty levels, in 2003. It is of note that four infants were abandoned and three infants were safely surrendered in SPAs 6, 7 and 8, SPAs with higher levels of child poverty. However, no infants were abandoned and one infant was safely surrendered in SPA 4, which has one of the highest levels of child poverty in the County. In addition, the two SPAs with the lowest levels of children living in poverty, SPA 1 and SPA 5, experienced between them one case of safe surrender and two cases of abandoned deceased infants. It should be noted that one of the abandoned deceased infants in SPA 5 was found in the Marina del Rey Harbor, and it is unknown where this infant’s body was originally dumped or where the infant’s mother resided at the time of the infant’s birth/ death. Unfortunately, very little is known about mothers’ motivation for surrendering their infants in 2003; while economics is potentially a real factor, it cannot be stated with certainty that economic factors played a role in surrendering decisions in 2003.

As seen in the 2003 map following this section, safe surrenders and infant abandonment occurred across Los Angeles County, and events occurred in all eight SPAs. Although a number of these events occurred in more urban areas of the County where children live in poverty, incidents of abandonment and surrender also occurred in areas populated by those of middle and upper economic statuses in 2003.

### **2004**

1. See Los Angeles County Service Planning Areas Map on the last page of the report

As in 2002 and 2003, abandonment and safe surrender occurred across the County geographically and with regards to socioeconomics in 2004. However, it is of interest that no infants were abandoned or surrendered in SPA 1 or 5, the SPAs with the lowest levels of child poverty, while 7 infants were surrendered and 4 infants were abandoned in SPAs 6, 7, and 8 -- SPAs with higher levels of child poverty. In addition, both mothers who provided information as to their motivation to surrender indicated that financial concerns played a primary role in their decision. Both indicated they had other children and could not afford to care for the surrendered child.

As seen in the 2004 map following this section, safe surrenders and abandonment were spread out across Los Angeles County in 2004. However, no infants were surrendered or abandoned in the westernmost parts of the County, and, as previously stated, no infants were surrendered or found abandoned in SPAs 1 and 5.

### **2005**

While abandonment and surrender occurred throughout the County in 2005, there is a small “clustering” of cases in the South Bay area of SPA 8, and half of the incidents (5 surrenders and one abandonment) occurred in SPAs 7 and 8 – SPAs with higher levels of child poverty. In addition, one infant was surrendered and two abandoned infants were found deceased in a relatively small geographic area of SPA 4, the SPA with the highest level of child poverty.

### **2006**

As in previous years, mothers of abandoned and surrendered infants crossed the socioeconomic/geographic spectrum in 2006. However, no infants were abandoned or surrendered in SPA 5, which has one of the lowest levels of child poverty in the County. On the other hand, 6 infants were surrendered and 3 infants were abandoned in SPAs 6, 7, and 8 – SPAs with higher levels of child poverty. Finally, more than one quarter of the incidents in 2006 were experienced in SPA 3.

As seen in the 2006 map following this section, safe surrenders and infant abandonment occurred across Los Angeles County, and events occurred in seven of eight SPAs.

### **2007**

As in previous years, abandonment and safe surrender occurred throughout the County in 2007. However, a majority of the cases occurred in SPAs 2, 3, and 7 (12 of the 15 surrenders and one abandonment). On the other hand, no incidents of surrender or abandonment were experienced in SPA 1 or 8.

### **2008**

Similar to the past six years, mothers of abandoned and surrendered infants crossed the geographic spectrum in 2008. However, as seen in 2007, a majority of the cases occurred in SPAs 2, 3, and 7 (7 of the 8 surrenders and one abandonment). One

incident each was experienced in SPA 1 and 8. No incidents of surrender or abandonment took place in SPA 4, 5, or 6.

### **2009**

Unlike previous years, abandoned and safe surrender did not occur throughout the County. Instead incidents were concentrated in only four of the eight SPAs. Six incidents were experienced in SPA 3 (4 surrenders and 2 abandonments), two incidents were experienced in SPA 6, and one incident each in SPA 4 and SPA7. No incidents of abandonment or surrender took place in SPA 1, 2, 5, or 8.

### **2010**

Similar to 2009, abandoned and safe surrender did not occur throughout the County. Instead, incidents occurred in only five of the eight SPAs. Four incidents were experienced in SPA 3 and three incidents in SPA 2, two incidents in SPA 6, and one incident each in SPA 7, and SPA 8. No incidents of abandonment or surrender took place in SPA 1, 4, or 5.

### **2011**

In 2011, there were only seven incidents of safe surrender and abandoned infants (6 safe surrenders and 1 abandonment). Three of the safe surrenders occurred in SPA 8, two took place in SPA 3, and one in SPA 2. Finally, the one incident of abandonment took place in SPA 1. No incidents of safe surrender or abandonment took place in SPA 4, 5, 6, or 7.

### **2012**

Incidents of safe surrender and abandoned infants (13 safe surrenders and 3 abandonments) occurred throughout the County in 2012. However, unlike the infants abandoned and surrendered in recent years, there was no “grouping” of cases in specific SPAs. While SPAs 3 and 8 experienced the most of these events (4 each), the other incidents were scattered throughout the county. Every SPA, including SPA 5, experienced at least one surrendered infant.

### **2013**

Similar to other years, mothers of abandoned and surrendered infants crossed the geographic spectrum in 2013. However, a majority of the cases occurred in SPA 2 (4 of the 9 surrenders). Two incidents occurred in SPA 3. One incident each was experienced in SPAs 1,4,7 and 8. No incidents of surrender or abandonment took place in SPA 5 or 6.

### **2014**

As in previous years, mothers of abandoned and surrendered infants crossed the geographic spectrum in 2014. However, no infants were abandoned or surrendered in SPA 4. There were three incidents in both SPA 2 and 8, two incidents each in SPA 1 and

6, and one incident in SPA 3, 5 and 7.

### **2015**

Similar to 2014, abandonment and safe surrender occurred throughout the County in 2015. However, contrary to previous years, SPA 5 was in a majority position; shared with SPA 7 and SPA 8. Five incidents were experienced in SPA 4 and 6, two incidents in SPA 2 and one incident in SPA 1 and 3.

### **2016**

Consistent with the on-going trend, safe surrender and abandonment occurred throughout the County. However, unlike in years past, but similar to 2015, SPA 5 experienced three incidents of safe surrender. Two incidents each were experienced in SPAs 3 and 8. One incident was experienced in SPA 1, SPA 2 and SPA 7. No incidents were experienced in SPA 4 or 6.

In summary, a review of the most recent cases of infant abandonment and safe surrender, those that occurred in 2015 and 2016, would again suggest a broad countywide public information campaign.

### **2017**

The nine children that were safely surrendered this year, are from a range of geographic areas within LA County. Three infants were surrendered in the Antelope Valley area—SPA1 and two were surrendered in SPA 2 (Tarzana and Northridge). One infant was surrendered from SPA 8 (Long Beach), SPA 7 (Downey), SPA 3 (Pomona) and SPA 4 (Los Angeles, 90037) respectively. Consistent with the last two years, Countywide efforts appear to be effective. Ongoing county-wide public information campaigns are strongly recommended.

### **2018**

In 2018, the fifteen newborns that were safely surrendered come from a range of geographic areas within LA County including three from Los Angeles; three from San Fernando Valley; two from the Santa Monica area; two from the Antelope Valley; Two from Montebello; One from Pomona; One from Lynwood, and one from Glendale. At least 5 of the 15 mothers reported being homeless. Two reported having unstable housing situations, living temporarily with friends or relatives. At least seven reported having limited resources and/or an inability to financially care for their newborns.

In 2018, the surviving abandoned infant's mother is homeless, with a chronic history of drug use and criminal record.

### **2019**

In 2019, the fifteen infants that were safely surrendered came from a variety of geographic areas within LA County including Panorama City, Sylmar, West LA, West Hills, Long Beach as well as from areas in the greater LA area. We have minimal information about their

socio economic status. We do know, that in at least six instances, financial hardship and limited economic ability to care for a baby were cited as the main reason for deciding to surrender their child. In the two instances where both mother and father were present to deliver the baby, financial difficulty was cited as a factor in their decision to surrender. Only one of those couples later reclaimed their child. One mother stated that her companion supports her but is not willing to provide for a baby. Additionally, three mothers reported being college students, with few resources and support systems to assist in the care of their newborns. One of the three college students later reclaimed her newborn after realizing she had support including family willing to help her. In one instance, an Uber driver who drove mother to the hospital played a significant role in the mother's decision to keep her newborn.

## **2020**

In 2020, the fifteen infants that were safely surrendered came from different areas of LA County including Pomona, Covina, Northridge, Torrance, West Hills, Lancaster, etc. Two babies were surrendered in Pasadena, two were surrendered in the Hollywood area, two in the Sylmar area and three were surrendered in Lynwood.

The infant that was found abandoned and diseased was found at a park in Pasadena.

This year, the documentation shows that at least five of the mothers who surrendered were homeless or did not have a suitable place where they felt they could provide care for a newborn.

## **2021**

In 2021, similarly to prior years, the twenty two infants that were safely surrendered were surrendered in a various geographic areas within LA County, including areas near Westwood, Mission Hills, Pasadena, Arcadia, Lynwood, Pomona, etc.

There were at least four mothers who reported either being homeless or not having a proper home situation to take their baby to. One mother reported being homeless and not wanting her baby to "live in her homeless environment". Another mother was described by hospital staff as being "transient". The documentation reviewed indicates that various mothers implied or stated that they decided to surrender their infants because they were facing financial difficulties, and/or did not have a stable or suitable place to live.

One mother stated she is unable to take care of her baby, as she is completing college.

There were at least four mothers who felt they did not have the support of their family to care or provide a proper living situation for their newborn. At least two mothers reclaimed their infant once they verified their family was willing to provide them with support.

The infant who was abandoned and survived was found at a park in the Lynwood area.

## Awareness of The Safe Surrender Baby Law

While it has been somewhat difficult to obtain straightforward demographic information on mothers who safely surrendered and abandoned their children between 2002 and 2021, it has been equally difficult to obtain information regarding mothers' prior awareness of SSBL. We ask ourselves, how did those who safely surrendered their infants become aware of the Law? Conversely, were mothers who abandoned their infants unaware of the SSBL or did they know about the law but still had reasons to abandon their infant as opposed to surrendering? If the latter is the case, what were their reasons for not making effective use of the law? What are the barriers preventing women from safely surrendering their newborns rather than abandoning them?

This information would be most helpful in providing direction to best implement the SSBL, and to guide the public and professional agencies to further reduce the numbers of abandoned infants.

### PUBLIC INFORMATION EFFORTS

Even with inherent difficulties in gathering data, the data collected provides some direction in better implementing the law. We have learned that any public information campaign must be very broad; it must be directed to females of all childbearing ages, ethnicities, socioeconomic classes and geographic locations throughout Los Angeles County. Further, information must reach those individuals who surround women of childbearing age; families, friends and co-workers must be made aware of the option to surrender and should be encouraged to support women at risk for abandoning or harming their infants in choosing this option. Women who surrendered or abandoned their infants and were available to provide information, indicated a great need to deny their pregnancies. Some took tremendous effort to hide their pregnancies due to fear, primarily of their families' reactions. They were fearful of disappointing them or bringing shame on them. In some instances, they were afraid they would lose their family support or even their right to live with their families if their pregnancies became known.

The lesson learned from this data is that although it may be uncomfortable to ask a woman if she is pregnant and to offer support, ignoring red flags or signs of concealment can be detrimental to the mother and the newborn. Not checking in to see if a woman might be in denial of her pregnancy and in need of support, (as apparently occurred in some cases of infant abandonment), must be addressed. The message should highlight that even if a woman's unplanned pregnancy is upsetting or violates an individual's moral or religious values, there are options that that can help her move beyond her situation; failing to do so could mean a child's life.

Efforts to reach the public have included various forms of media coverage such as public service announcements (PSAs) and newspaper articles, as well as, the BabySafeLA.org website, public information materials, etc. Public information efforts must persevere to reach a broader cross section of the Los Angeles County community.

## TRAINING/SPEAKERS BUREAU

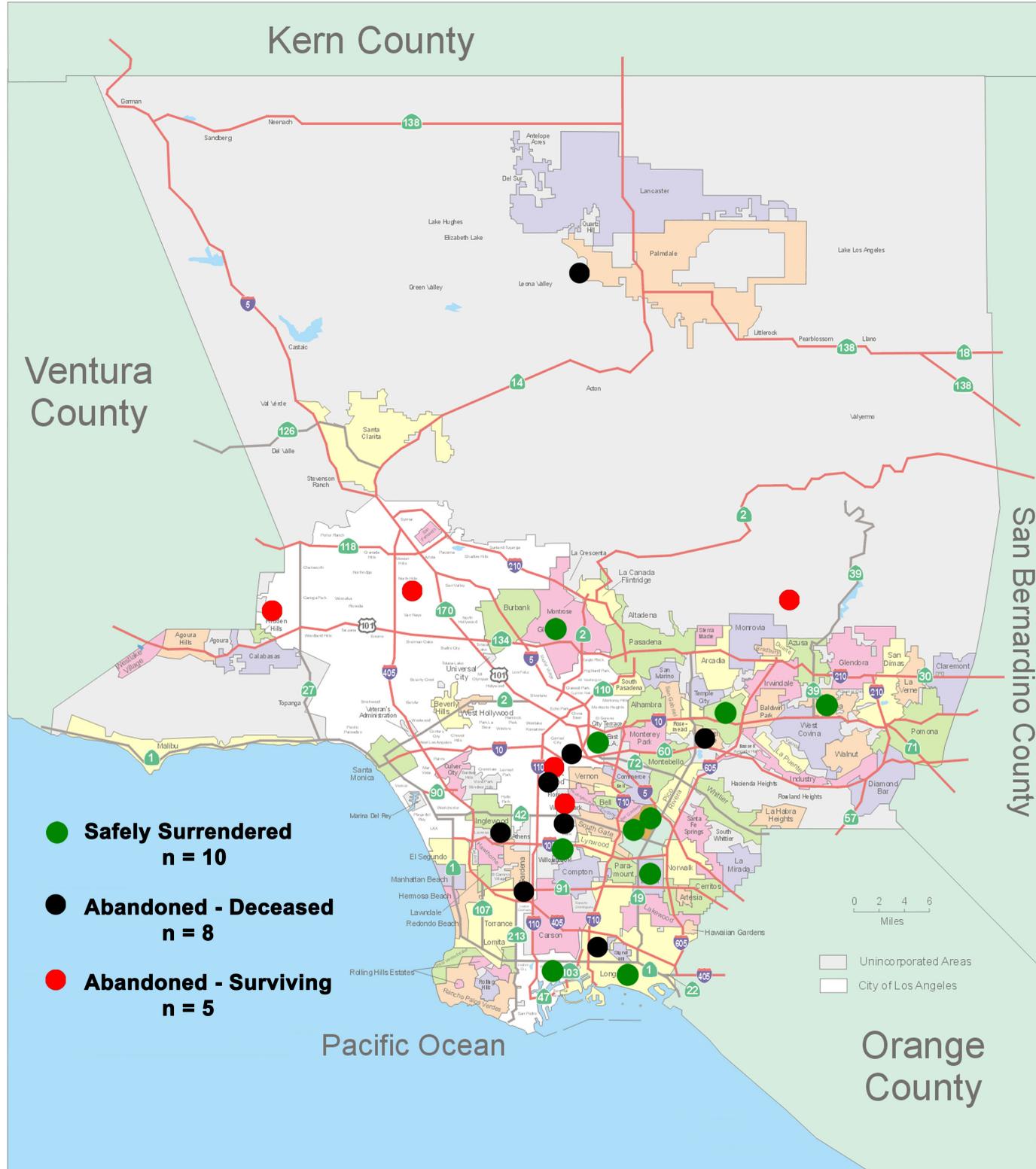
As ordered by the Board of Supervisors in March of 2005, ICAN convened a multi-agency effort to revise the training curriculum to be used by County staff and interested faith-based and community-based organizations. This revised curriculum provides an extensive “core” section for use by all County agencies with an emphasis on the ability of individuals to assist mothers who wish to safely surrender their infants and the legal protections for those individuals. In addition, those agencies most directly involved with safe surrenders [i.e., the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Health Services, and Fire] have continued efforts to provide specialized training for appropriate staff. Use of this curriculum will further expand awareness of SSBL.

ICAN established and continues to operate a Speakers Bureau available to provide presentations on the Law to public and private agencies. To date, over a thousand individuals from the public and private sector have been provided with information through this Speakers Bureau. Part of this effort consistently includes a request that those who have heard the information share the information with their colleagues, friends and family. In addition, a second “train the trainers” seminar was conducted in 2007 for staff from numerous County agencies so that these trainers could then provide information on the Law to staff in their agencies.

ICAN continues to work with the Coroner, DCFS, fire departments, and hospitals to collect data on safely surrendered and abandoned infants in Los Angeles County. It is hoped that, with continued efforts, additional information and answers to tougher questions will be forthcoming. This can serve to shed light on better ways to implement the Law.

The good news is that at least 227 infants have been safely surrendered in Los Angeles County between 2002 and 2021. Most have been placed with families for adoption through the Department of Children and Family Services. Nineteen surrendered children were reclaimed and safely returned to their mothers. Unfortunately two infants died following birth, as a result of medical complications and/or extreme prematurity. It is hoped that as public awareness increases about the SSBL, Supervisor’s Knabe’s goal of “no children thrown away ever” will be realized.

## Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Locations Los Angeles County – 2002



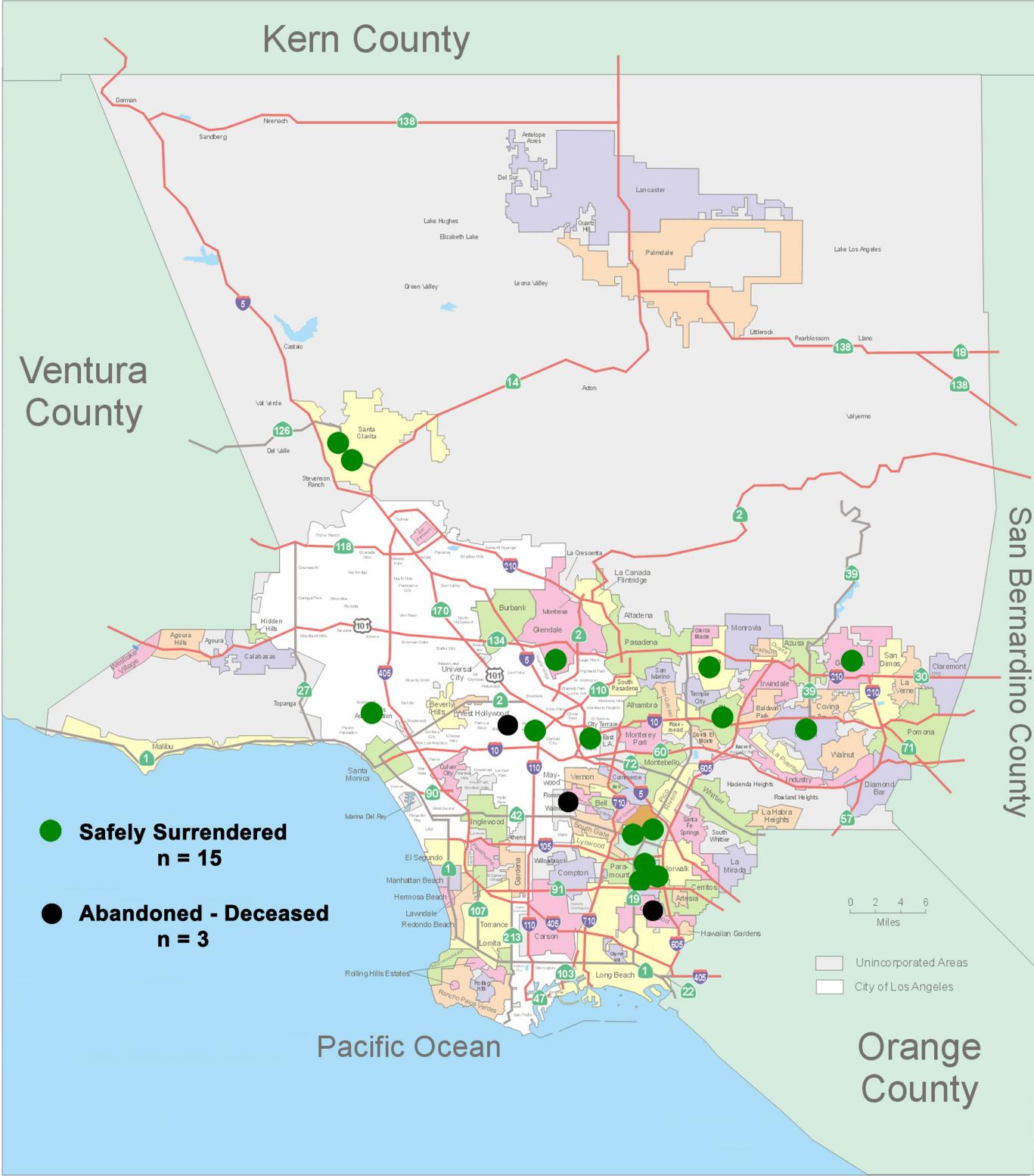




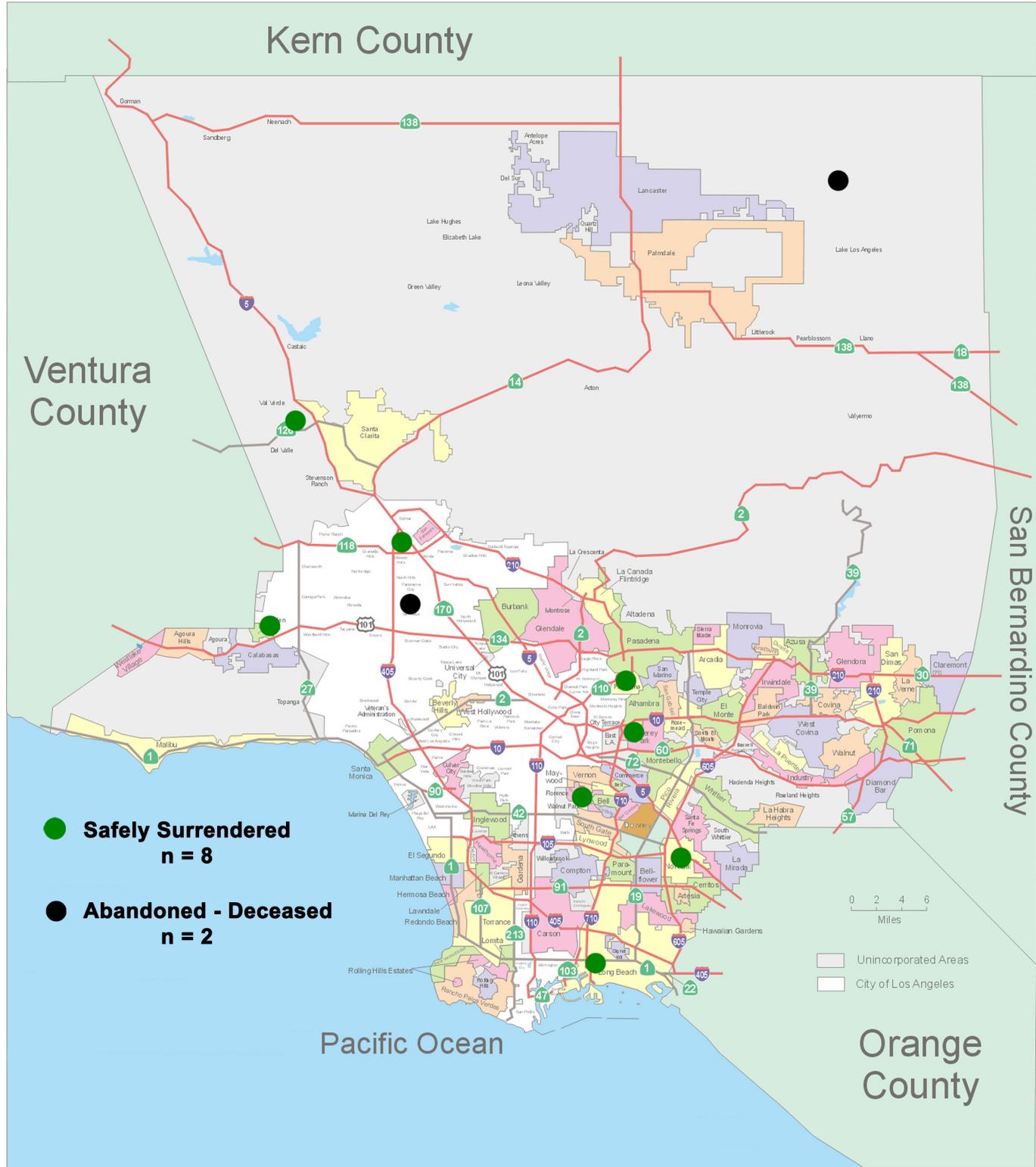




# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Locations Los Angeles County – 2007



# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Locations Los Angeles County – 2008

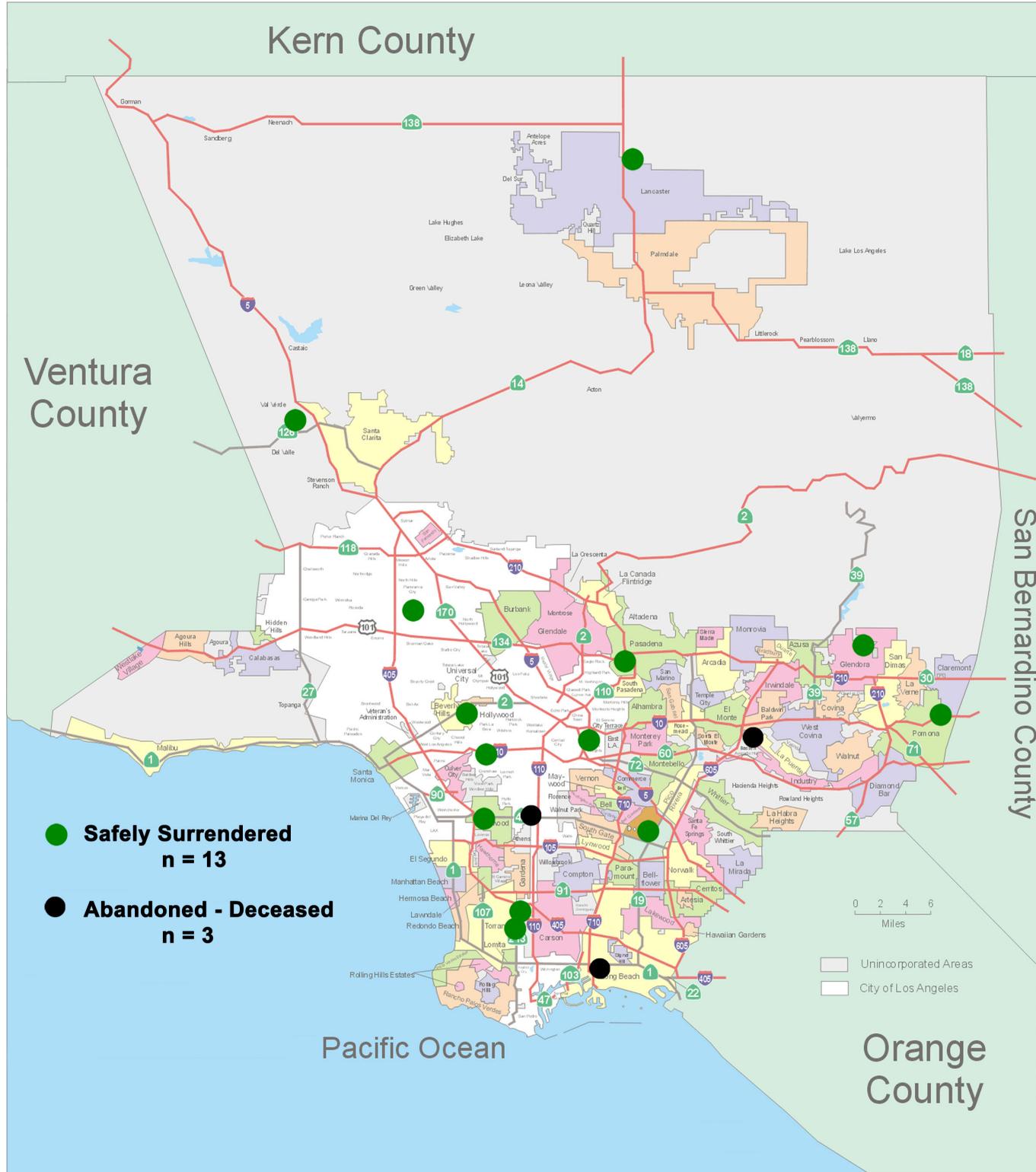








# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Locations Los Angeles County – 2012



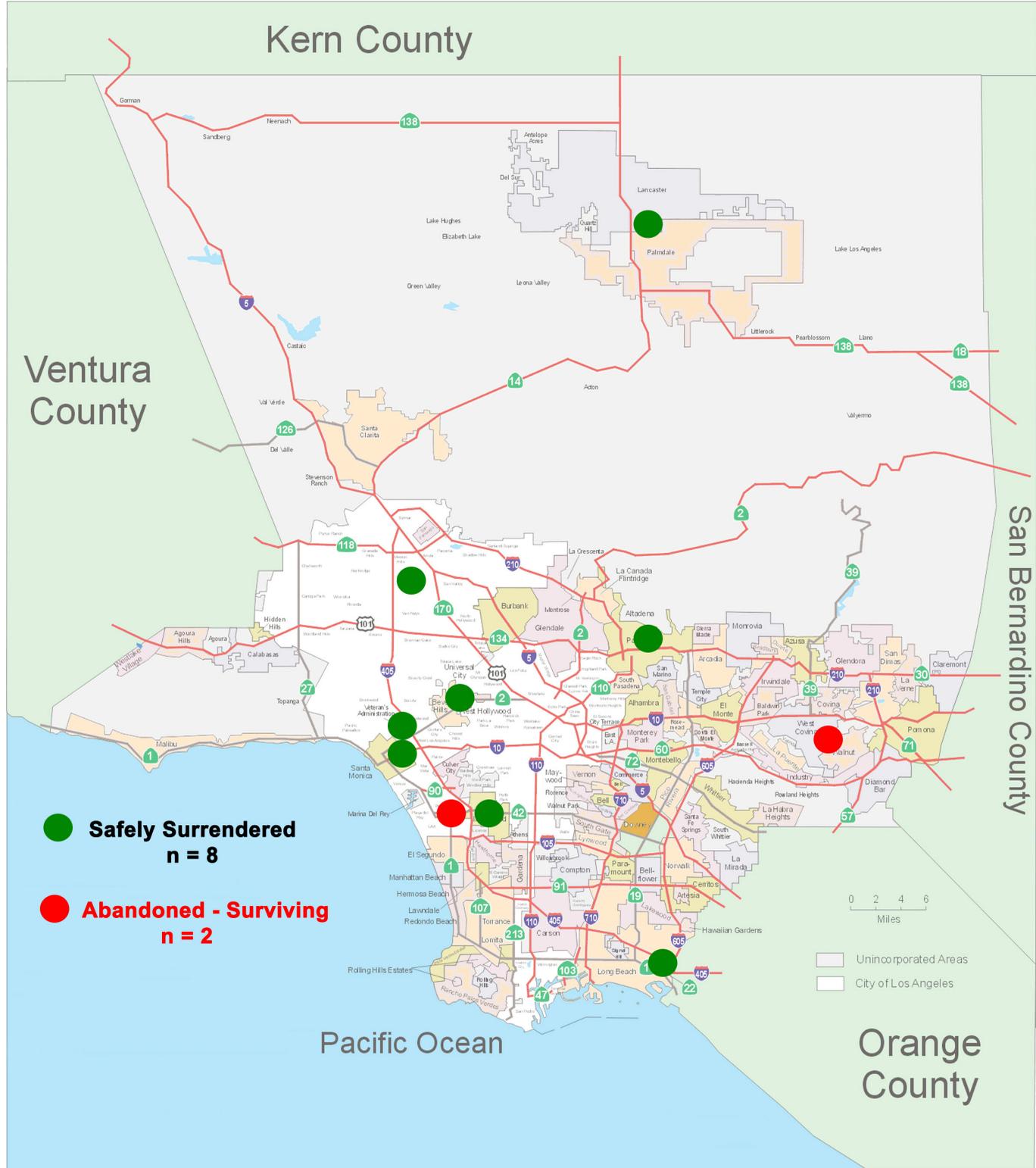


# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Locations Los Angeles County – 2014



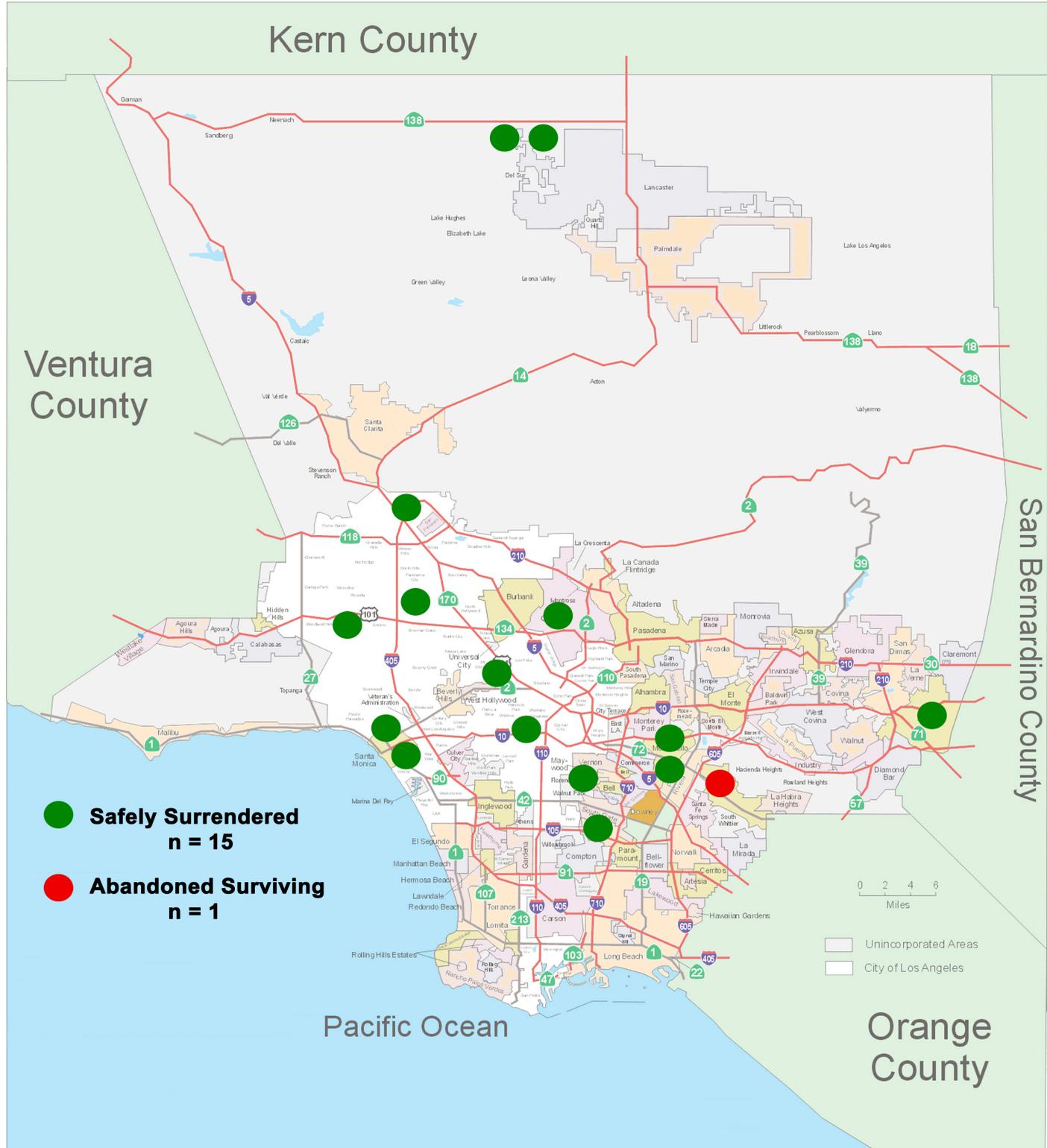


# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Locations Los Angeles County – 2016

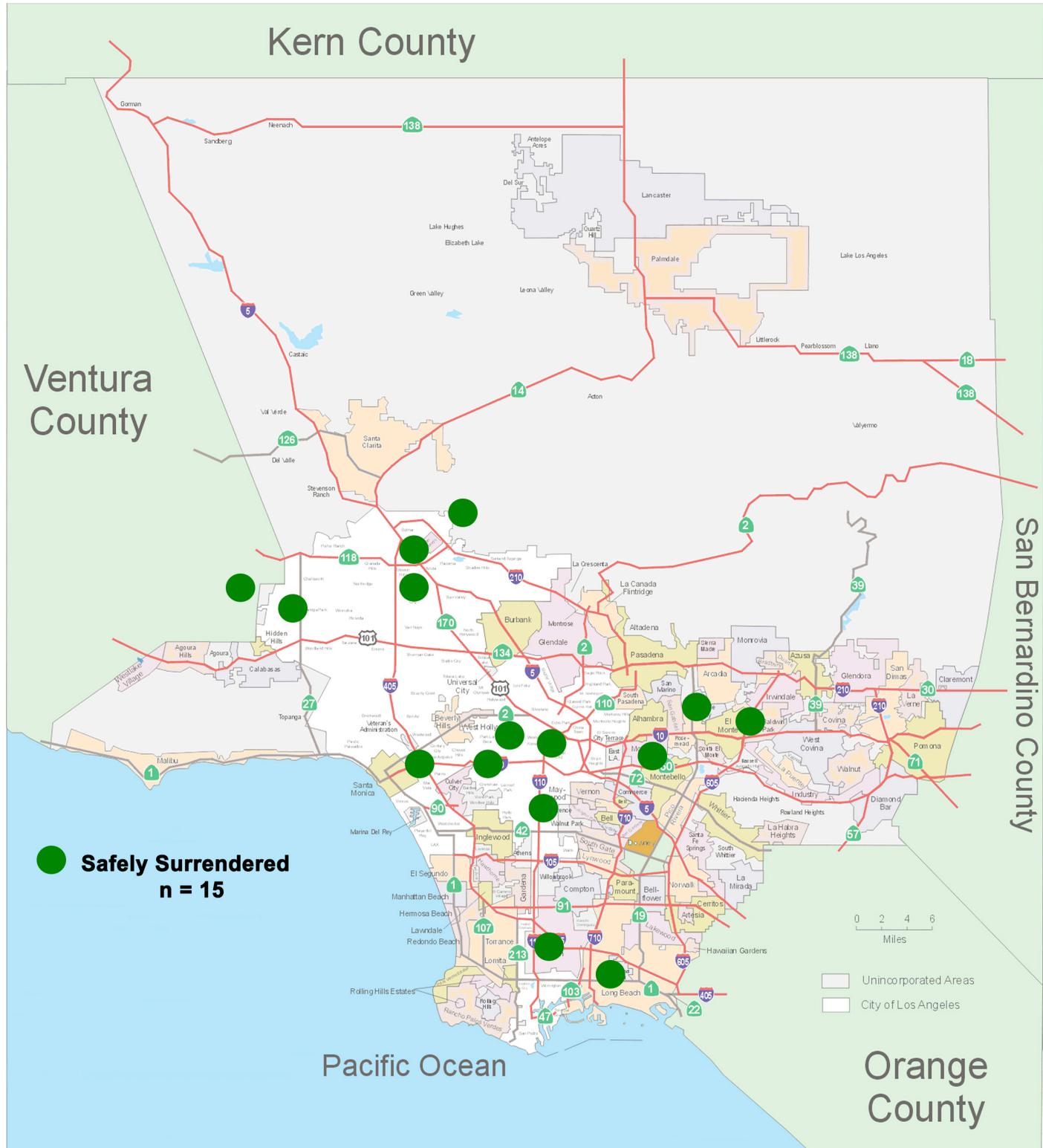




# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Locations Los Angeles County – 2018

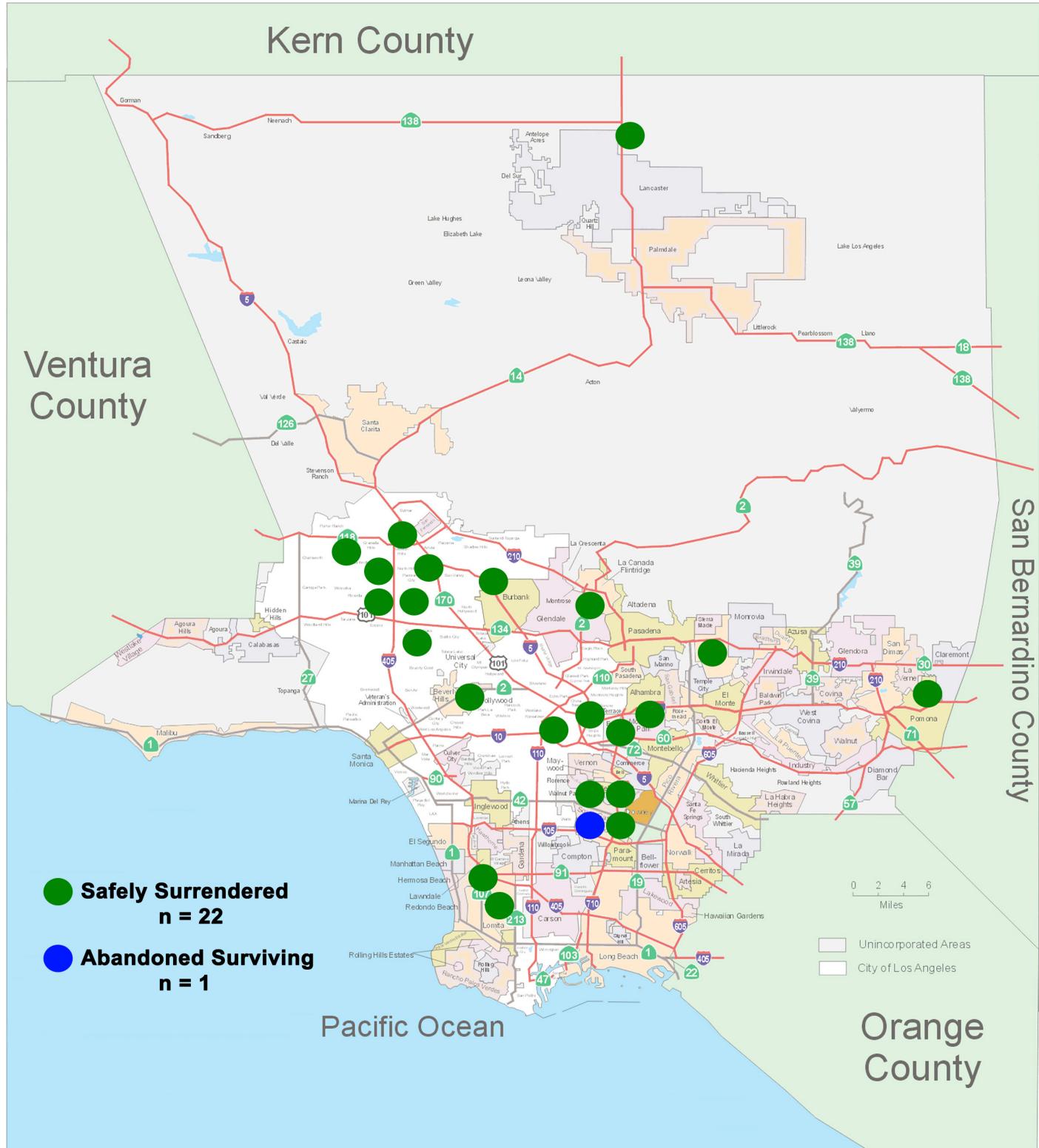


# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Locations Los Angeles County – 2019





## Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Locations Los Angeles County – 2021



## Safe Surrender Criteria

For data collection purposes and consistency across County Departments involved with safely surrendered children, specific criteria have been established to define safely surrendered infants.

In Los Angeles County, a safely surrendered baby is defined as:

- under 72 hours of age AND
- surrendered at a hospital, fire station or with paramedics OR
- delivered at a hospital and mother clearly indicates that she is aware of the SSBL and wishes to surrender her child under the law

*Excluded* from data collection as safely surrendered are:

- Infants with any evidence of abuse or neglect
- Instances in which hospital staff notify a mother, who was previously unaware of the law, of the option to safely surrender her infant upon learning that the mother may decide not to keep her baby.

### Safely Surrendered Infants 2002-2021 Gender

Between 2002 and 2021, 227 infants were safely surrendered in Los Angeles County, as follows:

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Female	6	2	4	4	5	9	4	4	4	4	6	5	8	9	3	6	7	8	9	12	119
Male	4	6	6	4	6	6	4	3	4	2	7	4	3	9	5	3	8	7	7	10	108

### Safely Surrendered Infants 2002-2021 Ethnicity

Between 2002 and 2021, 227 infants were safely surrendered in Los Angeles County, as follows:

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Hispanic	6	3	3	4	7	8	6	5	6	5	5	2	4	12	4	4	6	6	9	10	115
Caucasian	1	3	3	3	2	3	1	1	1	0	3	2	4	0	3	2	3	4	4	3	46
African American	3	2	3						1	0	1	3	2	3	0		1	1	0	4	24
Asian/Pacific Islander				1			1			1	2	1		1				1	1	3	12
Filipino																	1		0	1	2
Unknown			1			1		1			1	1		2		2	1	2	1	0	13
Mixed Ethnicities					2	3					1		1		1	1	3	1	1	1	15

## Locations of Surrenders – Geographic Area

### **2002**

- 1 infant was surrendered in Bellflower (zip code 90706)
- 2 infants were surrendered in Downey (both in zip code 90241)
- 1 infant was surrendered in El Monte (zip code 91731-1363)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Glendale (zip code 91204)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Long Beach (zip code 90801)
- 2 infants were surrendered in Los Angeles (zip codes 90033 & 90059)
- 1 infant was surrendered in West Covina (zip code 91723)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Wilmington (zip code 90744)

### **2003**

- 1 infant was surrendered in Arcadia (zip code 91006)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Gardena (zip code 90247)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Lakewood (zip code 90712)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Lancaster (zip code 93534)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Los Angeles (zip code 90027)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Northridge (zip code 91328)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pico Rivera (zip code 90660)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pomona (zip code 91767)

### **2004**

- 1 infant was surrendered in Carson (90746)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Downey (90242)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Long Beach (90807)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Los Alamitos (90720)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Los Angeles (90022)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Los Angeles (90044)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Panorama City (91402)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pomona (91769)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Santa Clarita (91351)
- 1 infant was surrendered in South Gate (90280)

### **2005**

- 2 infants were surrendered in Long Beach (90806)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Los Angeles (90017)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pomona (91766)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Santa Clarita (91355)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Torrance (90503)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Whittier (90605)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Whittier (90604)

**2006**

- 1 infant was surrendered in Compton (zip code 90221)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Covina (zip code 91723)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Downey (zip code 90241)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Glendora (zip code 91740)
- 3 infants were surrendered in Long Beach (zip codes 90806, 90813 & 90840)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Los Angeles (zip code 90033)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Norwalk (zip code 90650)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pomona (zip code 91767)
- 1 infant was surrendered in West Covina (zip code 91790)

**2007**

- 1 infant was surrendered in Arcadia (zip code 91007)
- 3 infants were surrendered in Bellflower (zip code 90706)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Brentwood (zip code 90049)
- 2 infants were surrendered in Downey (zip code 90241)
- 1 infant was surrendered in El Monte (zip code 91733)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Glendale (zip code 91204)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Glendora (zip code 91741)
- 2 infants were surrendered in Los Angeles (zip codes 90017 & 90033)
- 2 infants were surrendered in Valencia (zip code 91355)
- 1 infant was surrendered in West Covina (zip code 91790)

**2008**

- 1 infant was surrendered in Huntington Park (zip code 90255)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Long Beach (zip code 90813)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Mission Hills (91345)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Monterey Park (zip code 91754)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Norwalk (zip code 90650)
- 1 infant was surrendered in South Pasadena (zip code 91030)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Valencia (zip code 91355)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Woodland Hills (zip code 91367)

**2009**

- 1 infant was surrendered in Glendora (zip code 91741)
- 2 infants were surrendered in Los Angeles (zip codes 90003 & 90017)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Montebello (zip code 90640)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pasadena (zip code 91103)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pomona (zip code 91767)
- 1 infant was surrendered in West Covina (zip code 91790)

**2010**

- 1 infant was surrendered in the City of Industry (zip code 91746)
- 1 infant was surrendered in El Monte (zip code 91733)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Glendale (zip code 91204)
- 2 infants were surrendered in Los Angeles (zip codes 90037 & 90059)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Montebello (zip code 90640)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pasadena (zip code 91109)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Woodland Hills (zip code 91367)

**2011**

- 1 infant was surrendered in Pomona (zip code 91767)
- 3 infants were surrendered in Torrance (zip codes 90501 & 90502)
- 1 infant was surrendered in West Covina (zip code 91790)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Winnetka (zip code 91306)

**2012**

- 1 infant was surrendered in Downey (zip code 90241)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Glendora (zip code 91741)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Inglewood (zip code 90301)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Lancaster (zip code 93534)
- 3 infants were surrendered in Los Angeles (zip codes 90016, 90033 & 90048)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pasadena (zip code 91105)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pomona (zip code 91767)
- 2 infants were surrendered in Torrance (zip codes 90501 & 90502)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Valencia (zip code 91355)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Van Nuys (zip code 91405)

**2013**

- 1 infant was surrendered in Huntington Park (zip code 90255)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Lancaster (zip code 93534)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Los Angeles (zip code 90033)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Mission Hills (zip code 91345)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pomona (zip code 91767)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Torrance (zip code 90501)
- 2 infants were surrendered in Van Nuys (zip code 91405)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Valencia (91355)

**2014**

- 1 infant was surrendered in Culver City (zip code 90232)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Lancaster (zip code 93534)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Los Angeles (zip code 90044)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Lynwood (zip code 90262)

- 1 infant was surrendered in Palmdale (zip code 93551)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Panorama City (zip code 91402)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pico Rivera (zip code 90660)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pomona (zip code 91767)
- 2 infants were surrendered in Tarzana (zip code 91356)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Torrance (zip code 90509)

**2015**

- 1 infant was surrendered in Downey (zip code 90242)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Gardena (zip code 90249)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Glendale (zip code 91206)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Lancaster (zip code 93536)
- 2 infants were surrendered in Long Beach (zip codes 90806 & 90815)
- 6 infants were surrendered in Los Angeles (zip codes 90015, two in 90033, 90048, 90036 & 90095)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Lynwood (zip code 90262)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Montebello (zip code 90640)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Santa Monica (zip code 90404)
- 1 infant was surrendered in South Gate (zip code 90280)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Tarzana (zip code 91356)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Whittier (zip code 90602)

**2016**

- 1 infant was surrendered in Inglewood (zip code 90301)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Los Angeles (zip code 90048)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Montebello (zip code 90740)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Northridge (zip code 91328)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Palmdale (zip code 93551)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pomona (zip code 91767)
- 2 infants were surrendered in Santa Monica ( both in zip code 90404)

**2017**

- 1 infant was surrendered in Long Beach (zip code 90813)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Tarzana (zip code 91356)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Northridge (zip code 91328)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Downey (zip code 90242)
- 3 infants were surrendered in the Antelope Valley, Lancaster area (zip code 93534)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pomona (zip code 91767)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the LA area (zip code 90037)

**2018**

There were no infants surrendered at any fire stations. All fifteen infants were surrendered

at Hospitals.

- 1 infant was surrendered at a Hospital in Van Nuys (91405)
- 2 infants were surrendered in Montebello (90640), one was later reclaimed.
- 1 infant was surrendered in Tarzana (91356)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Hollywood (90027)
- 2 infants were surrendered in the Antelope Valley (93534)
- 2 infants were surrendered in Santa Monica (90404)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Glendale (91204)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Lynwood (90262)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Pomona (91768)
- 1 infant was surrendered in S. Los Angeles (90059)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Sylmar (91342), this infant was later reclaimed
- 1 infant was surrendered in Los Angeles (90015)

## **2019**

There were no infants surrendered at any fire stations, all fifteen were surrendered at hospitals

- 1 infant was surrendered in Los Angeles (90017)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Los Angeles (90059) but was reclaimed
- 1 infant was surrendered in Baldwin Park (91706)
- 1 infant was surrendered in West Hills (91307)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Rosemead/San Gabriel area (91770), but was reclaimed
- 1 infant was surrendered in Long Beach (90813)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Panorama City (91402)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Woodland Hills (91367)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Van Nuys (91405)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Sylmar (91342)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Los Angeles (90033)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Torrance (90502)
- 1 infant was surrendered in USC main need address
- 1 infant was surrendered in West LA (90034)
- 1 infant was surrendered in Arcadia (91007)

## **2020**

Of the 16 infants surrendered in 2020, there were none surrendered at any fire stations. All infants included in this data, were surrendered at hospitals

- 1 infant was surrendered in the Pomona area (91767)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Northridge area (91325)
- 3 Infants were surrendered in the Pasadena area (91105)
- 2 infants were surrendered in the Hollywood area (90027)
- 3 infants were surrendered in the Lynwood area (90262)
- 1 infant as surrendered in the West Covina/ Baldwin Park area (91790)

## Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect

- 2 infants were surrendered in the Sylmar area (91342)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the West Hills area (91307)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Lancaster area (93534)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Santa Monica area (90404)

### **2021**

Of the 22 infants surrendered in 2021, there were no infants surrendered at any fire stations, all infants that met safe surrendered criteria were surrendered at hospitals.

- 3 infants were surrendered in the Lynwood area (91262)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Westwood area (90095)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Lancaster area (93534)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Pasadena area (91105)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Pico Union Los Angeles area (90015)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Pomona area (91767)
- 2 infants were surrendered in the Torrance area (90503)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Inglewood area (90301)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Mission Hills area (91345)
- 2 infants were surrendered in the Van Nuys area (91405)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Silver Lake/Griffith park area (90027)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Burbank area (91505)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Metro Los Angeles area (90081)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Northridge area (91328)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Los Angeles area (90033)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Arcadia area (91007)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Van Nuys area (91404)
- 1 infant was surrendered in the Los Angeles area (90017)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Hospital	8	5	5	6	9	12	6	5	5	5	12	9	7	13	8	8	15	15	16	22	191
Fire Station	2	3	5	2	2	3	2	2	3	1	1	0	4	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	36

## Dates of Surrenders

### 2002

2 were surrendered in March (3/21 & 3/26/02)  
1 was surrendered in July (7/30/02)  
1 was surrendered in August (8/22/02)  
1 was surrendered in October (10/31/02)  
3 were surrendered in November (11/21, 11/26 & 11/27/02)  
2 were surrendered in December (12/16 & 12/26/02)

### 2003

2 were surrendered in January (1/11 & 1/20/03)  
1 was surrendered in May (5/2/03)  
2 were surrendered in June (6/12 & 6/24/03)  
1 was surrendered in November (11/11/03)  
2 were surrendered in December (12/23 & 12/25/03)

### 2004

2 were surrendered in January (1/2 & 1/21/04)  
2 were surrendered in March (3/18 & 3/20/04)  
2 were surrendered in April (4/8 & 4/9/04)  
1 was surrendered in May (5/24/04)  
2 were surrendered in September (9/6 & 9/27/04)  
1 was surrendered in November (11/13/04)

### 2005

1 was surrendered in January (1/13/05)  
3 were surrendered in February (2/4, 2/16 & 2/16/05)  
1 was surrendered in March (3/15/05)  
1 was surrendered in April (4/20/05)  
1 was surrendered in June (6/19/05)  
1 was surrendered in December (12/3/05)

### 2006

2 were surrendered in February (both on 2/24/06)  
2 were surrendered in March (3/7 & 3/14/06)  
1 was surrendered in April (4/3/06)  
3 were surrendered in May (5/5, 5/12 & 5/19/06)  
1 was surrendered in June (6/6/06)  
1 was surrendered in October (10/7/06)  
1 was surrendered in November (11/23/06)

**2007**

2 were surrendered in January (both on 1/17/07)  
4 were surrendered in February (two on 2/10, 2/26 & 2/27/07)  
1 was surrendered in March (3/26/07)  
4 were surrendered in April (4/8, 4/21, 4/26 & 4/29/07)  
1 was surrendered in May (5/25/07)  
1 was surrendered in September (9/4/07)  
2 were surrendered in October (10/1 & 10/27/07)

**2008**

3 were surrendered in January (1/9 & two on 1/15/08)  
1 was surrendered in February (2/29/08)  
1 was surrendered in March (3/30/08)  
1 was surrendered in August (8/14/08)  
2 were surrendered in September (9/1 & 9/9/08)

**2009**

1 was surrendered in February (2/9/09)  
1 was surrendered in April (4/13/09)  
2 were surrendered in June (6/16 & 6/25/09)  
2 were surrendered in September (9/7 & 9/25/09)  
1 was surrendered in October (10/21/09)

**2010**

1 was surrendered in April (4/21/10)  
1 was surrendered in May (5/27/10)  
1 was surrendered in July (7/2/10)  
2 were surrendered in August (8/5 & 8/15/10)  
3 were surrendered in December (12/6, 12/24, & 12/31/10)

**2011**

3 were surrendered in May (5/20, 5/29, & 5/31/11)  
2 were surrendered in August (8/24 & 8/27/11)  
1 was surrendered in October (10/31/11)

**2012**

2 were surrendered in January (1/10 & 1/15/12)  
2 were surrendered in July (both on 7/9/12)  
1 was surrendered in August (8/6/12)  
2 were surrendered in September (9/2 & 9/20/12)  
3 were surrendered in October (10/11, 10/17 & 10/29/12)

2 were surrendered in November (11/14 & 11/15/12)  
1 was surrendered in December (12/24/12)

**2013**

1 was surrendered in February (2/10/13)  
1 was surrendered in April (4/12/13)  
1 was surrendered in June (6/18/13)  
1 was surrendered in August (8/5/13)  
3 were surrendered in September (9/6, 9/17 & 9/30/13)  
1 was surrendered in November (11/16/13)  
1 was surrendered in December (12/29/13)

**2014**

2 were surrendered in January (1/4 & 1/2/14)  
1 was surrendered in March (3/1/14)  
1 was surrendered in May (5/26/14)  
3 were surrendered in June (6/2, 6/16 & 6/24/14)  
2 were surrendered in July (7/6, & 7/9/14)  
2 were surrendered in October (10/17 & 10/25/14)

**2015**

2 were surrendered in January (1/20, & 1/27/15)  
1 was surrendered in March (3/11/15)  
1 was surrendered in April (4/8/15)  
3 were surrendered in May (5/2, 5/8 & 5/27/15)  
1 was surrendered in July (7/2/15)  
2 were surrendered in August (8/11 & 8/15/15)  
3 were surrendered in September (9/11, 9/16 & 9/29/15)  
3 were surrendered in October (10/4, 10/6 & 10/17/15)  
2 were surrendered in December (both on 12/8/15)

**2016**

2 were surrendered in March (3/7 & 3/14/16)  
1 was surrendered in April (4/10/16)  
1 was surrendered in July (7/26/16)  
1 was surrendered in September (9/27/16)  
2 were surrendered in October (10/26 & 10/28/16)  
1 was surrendered in December (12/27/16)

**2017**

1 was surrendered in January (1/10/17)  
3 were surrendered in March (two on 3/14/17 and one on 3/21/17)

1 was surrendered in July (7/20/17)  
1 was surrendered in August (8/21/17)  
1 was surrendered in October (10/2/17)  
2 were surrendered in November (11/04/17 and 11/16/17)

## **2018**

1 was surrendered in January (1/13/18)  
1 was surrendered in February (2/22/18)  
1 was surrendered in March (3/8/2018)  
1 was surrendered in April (4/22/18)  
1 was surrendered in May (5/12/18)  
2 were surrendered in June (6/18/18) and (6/25/18)  
1 was surrendered in July (7/7/18)  
1 was surrendered in August (8/9/18)  
3 infants were surrendered in November (11/5/18, 11/11/18 and 11/23/18)  
3 infants were surrendered in December (12/1/18, 12/2/2018 and 12/22/18).  
The surviving abandoned infant was abandoned on 12/24/18

## **2019**

1 baby was surrendered in January (1/30/2019)  
2 babies were surrendered in February (2/9/2019) and (2/25/2019) one was reclaimed  
3 babies were surrendered in April ((4/2/2019), (4/8/2019), (4/16/2019) one was reclaimed  
1 baby was surrendered in May (5/14/2019)  
2 babies were surrendered in June (6/6/2019)  
3 babies were surrendered in August (8/20/2019), (8/21/2019) and (8/29/2019)  
1 baby was surrendered in September (9/9/2019)  
1 baby was surrendered in November (11/4/2019)  
1 baby was surrendered in December (12/30/2019)

## **2020**

2 babies were surrendered in January (1/1/2020 and 1/31/2020)  
3 babies were surrendered in April (4/8/2020, 4/10/2020, and 4/11/2020)  
2 babies were surrendered in May (5/22/2020 and 5/26/2020)  
3 babies were surrendered in June (6/4/2020, 6/6/2020 and 6/25/2020)  
1 baby was surrendered in August (9/29/2020)  
1 baby was surrendered in October (10/23/2020)  
1 baby was surrendered in November (11/6/2020)  
3 babies were surrendered in December (12/8/2020,12/12/2020 and 12/15/2020)

## **2021**

1 baby surrendered in January (1/15/2021)  
5 babies were surrendered in March (3/6/2021, 3/11/2021, 3/12/2021, 3/23/2021, and

3/25/2021)

3 babies were surrendered in April (4/3/2021, 4/12/2021,4/13/2021)

1 baby was surrendered in May (5/3/2021)

3 babies were surrendered in June (6/16/2021, 6/22/2021, 6/24/2021)

1 baby was surrendered in July (7/11/2021)

4 babies were surrendered in September (9/1/2021, 9/9/2021,9/17/2021,9/20/2021)

2 babies were surrendered in October (10/13/2021, 10/22/2021)

1 baby was surrendered in November (11/9/2021)

1 baby was surrendered in December (12/22/21)

## Relationship of Surrendering Party to Infant

The relationship of the surrendering party to the infant was identified by the surrendering party as follows:

### 2003

7 - Mother  
1 - Mother's Neighbor

### 2002

8 - Mother  
1 - Father  
1 - Mother's Friend

### 2004

5 - Mother  
2 - Mother's Friend/Neighbor  
1 - Aunt  
1 - An Acquaintance  
1 - Unidentified "Older Woman" (Not Mother)

### 2005

4 - Mother  
1 - Father  
1 - Mother's Friend  
1 - Unidentified Female  
1 - Unidentified Male

### 2006

8 - Mother  
1 - Uncle  
1 - Unidentified Female  
1 - Unknown (infant left in Hospital "Safe Surrender" cabinet)

### 2007

13 - Mother  
1 - Maternal Grandmother  
1 - Mother's Friend

### 2008

7 - Mother  
1 - Good Samaritan

### 2008

7 - Mother  
1 - Good Samaritan

### 2009

5 - Mother  
1 - Grandmother  
1 - Unknown (infant left in Hospital "Safe Surrender" cabinet)

### 2010

7 - Mother  
1 - Unidentified Female

### 2011

6 - Mother

### 2012

13 - Mother

### 2013

7 - Mother  
2 - Unidentified female

### 2014

7 - Mother  
1 - Father  
1 - Friend  
1 - Aunt  
1 - Grandmother

**2015**

- 14 – Mother
- 2 – Both Parents
- 1 – Unidentified Female
- 1 – Unidentified Person

**2016**

- 14 – Mother
- 2 – Both Parents
- 1 – Unidentified Female
- 1 – Unidentified Person

**2017**

- 9 – Mother

**2018**

- 15 – Mother

**2019**

- 12 –surrendered by Mother, one was later reclaimed
- 3- surrendered by both parents, one of these babies was later reclaimed

**2020**

- 14- Mother
- 2 –Both parents

**2021**

- 18 - Mother
- 3- Both Parents

**Adoption Case Disposition Update:**

“During 2021, DCFS received 26 safe surrender referrals, being the most that we have received in one year. The Adoption Division’s Matching Coordination Unit (MCU) receives the referrals directly from the Child Protection Hotline so we can immediately search for a prospective adoptive family that has been waiting to love and adopt a baby. We are happy to report that the MCU staff have been able to match each Safe Surrender Baby with an approved waiting prospective adoptive family within one business day of the referral. When the baby is released from the hospital, they can go directly to their new family”. Sari Grant

## Safely Surrendering Mothers

It is inherently difficult to obtain data about mothers who safely surrender their newborns in California. The Law is intended to assure confidentiality to mothers or other surrendering parties, and this assurance limits access to valuable information. What we know about the mothers who safely surrendered their newborns between 2002 and 2018, is based primarily on what they or the surrendering parties may have disclosed to those to whom they safely surrendered, e.g. hospital personnel or fire department staff.

Yet in 2002, three of the surrendering mothers were identified; one registered and gave birth at a hospital under her real name and two identified themselves at the time of surrender. In 2003, two mothers gave birth at hospitals and identified themselves. In addition, one surrendering party identified herself as someone who had “found” the infant abandoned in a public place. She provided her cell phone number to hospital staff and when law enforcement contacted her to obtain more information, she admitted to being the infant’s mother. In 2004, two mothers who did not give birth in the hospital identified themselves to personnel at the hospital at the time of surrender. In 2005, one mother gave birth at the hospital and identified herself. In 2006, two mothers who gave birth at the hospital identified themselves. Also, two mothers who did not give birth at the hospital identified themselves to personnel at the time of surrender. In 2007, two mothers identified themselves. In 2008, one mother identified herself. Also, another mother completed a birth certificate form but it is unclear whether she identified herself. In 2009, one mother identified herself. In 2010, two mothers identified themselves. For one mother it remains unclear when her identifying information was provided. The other mother contacted the Department of Children and Family Services and provided her name when attempting to reclaim her infant. In 2011, at least three mothers identified themselves while giving birth at the hospital. In 2012, at least one mother identified herself after giving birth at the hospital. This same mother reclaimed her infant. In 2013, it is unclear if any of the mothers identified themselves. In 2014, four mothers identified themselves. Also, one homeless mother was identified by relatives. In 2015, two mothers identified themselves and reclaimed their infant. In another case, both parents identified themselves. In 2016, only one mother identified herself. This same mother also identified the infant’s father. In 2017, none of the nine mothers who safely surrendered their infants identified themselves by name, but at least three provided valuable details about themselves including their age, ethnicity, and the circumstances surrounding their pregnancies. In 2018 and 2019, all of the fifteen mothers who surrendered requested anonymity. In 2020 and 2021 most of the surrendering mothers requested anonymity. There were two mothers who simply left the hospital against medical advice and did not specify safe surrender or adoption of their newborn but did not want anything to do with their infant. These two babies were not counted in the safely surrendered infant numbers since they did not meet the criteria defined on page 43.

Mother's of Safely Surrendered Infants  
2002-2021  
Mother's Age

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
	1 17- year old	1 17- year old	1 16- year old	1 17- year old	1 21- year old	1 20- year old	1 20- year old	1 28- year old	1 20- year old	1 33- year old	1 "in her 20s"	1 23- year old	1 "in her ear,y 20s"	1 17- year old	1 36- year old	1 38- year old	1 17- year old	1-18	1 27- year old	1 38- year old	
	2 25- year olds	2 19- year olds	1 25- year old	1 18- year old	2 24- year olds	1 22- year old	1 "in her 20s"	6 Unk	1 21- year old	5 Unk	1 21- year old	8 Unk	1 25- year old	18 Unk	1 39- year old	1 23- year old	1 28- year old	1-19	1 28- year old	1 30- year old	
	1 31- year old	1 23- year old	1 28- year old	1 19- year old	2 25- year olds	1 24- year old	1 25- year old		1 27- year old		1 22- year old		1 " Under 25 years of age		6 Unk	1 28- year old	1 27- year old	1-20	1 21- year old	1 26- year old	
	1 42- year old	1 26- year old	7 Unk	1 18-20- year old	1 35- year old	2 25- year olds	1 28- year old		1 "in her mid 30s"		1 "in her 30s"		7 Unk				1 18- year old	1-25	2 30- year olds	1 23- year old	
	5 Unk	1 31- year old		1 "early 30s"	1 37- year old	1 38- year old	1 29- year old		4 Unk		1 34- year old							1-27	1 39- year old	17 Unk	
		2 Unk		3 Unk	4 Unk	9 Unk	2 Unk				8 Unk							10 unkn (incl. 1 over 35)	1 25- year old		
																				1 20- year old	
																					8 Unk

Mother's of Safely Surrendered Infants  
2002-2021  
Mother's Ethnicity

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
5 Hisp.	2 Hisp.	3 Hisp.	3 Hisp.	3 Hisp.	5 Hisp.	7 Hisp.	5 Hisp.	3 Hisp.	2 Hisp.	1 Hisp.	4 Hisp.	3 African Am.	5 Cauc/	8 Hisp.	4 Cauc.	4 Hisp.	9 Hisp.	6 Hisp.	10 Hisp.	10 Hisp.
2 African Am.	2 African Am.	3 African Am.	2 Cauc.	4 Cauc.	4 Cauc.	4 Cauc.	1 Asian	4 Unk	2 Cauc.	1 Asian	4 Cauc.	2 Hisp.	4 Hisp.	3 African Am.	2 Hisp.	1 Mixed Heritage	1 Filipino	5 Cauc	4 Cauc.	4 Cauc
1 Cauc.	2 Cauc.	2 Cauc.	1 Asian	1 Mixed Heritage	1 African Am.	1 African Am.	1 Unk		1 African Am.	3 Unk	2 Asian	4 Unk	2 African Am.	1 Asian	1 Mixed Heritage	2 African Am.	1 African Am.	2 Asian	1 Asian	4 Asian*
2 Unk	2 Unk	2 Unk	2 Unk	3 Unk	3 Unk	3 Unk			2 Unk		1 African Am.		7 Unk	6 Unk	1 Unk	2 Unk	3 Cauc.	1 Afr. Am		4 African Am.
																	1 Unk	1 unkn	1 Unk	

\*Asian Including one mother who reported to be Filipino, One from Laos and one mother was from Biangladesh.

### **Marital Status**

In **2002**, marital status was unknown for 7 of the 10 surrendering mothers. Of the 3 with known status, 2 were reportedly married and one was single.

In **2003**, marital status was unknown for 7 of the 8 surrendering mothers. The remaining mother indicated that she was single.

In **2004**, marital status was unknown for 8 of the 10 surrendering mothers. Of the 2 with known status, one was reportedly married and one was single.

In **2005**, marital status was unknown for 5 of the 8 surrendering mothers. All three mothers with known status were reportedly single.

In **2006**, marital status was unknown for 7 of the 11 surrendering mothers. All four mothers with known status were reportedly single.

In **2007**, marital status was unknown for 11 of the 15 surrendering mothers. Of the four with known status, two were reportedly married, one was separated and one was single.

In **2008**, marital status was unknown for 7 of the 8 surrendering mothers. The remaining mother indicated she was divorced.

In **2009**, marital status was unknown for 6 of the 7 surrendering mothers. The remaining mother indicated she was married.

In **2010**, marital status was unknown for 6 of the 8 surrendering mothers. The remaining two mothers were both reportedly single.

In **2011**, marital status was unknown for all 6 of the 6 surrendering mothers.

In **2012**, marital status was unknown for 10 of the 13 surrendering mothers. Of the 3 with known status, 2 were reportedly single and one was married.

In **2013**, marital status was unknown for 8 of the 9 surrendering mothers. The remaining mother was reportedly single.

In **2014**, marital status was unknown for 10 of the 11 surrendering mothers. The remaining mother was reportedly single.

In **2015**, marital status was unknown for all 18 of the 18 surrendering mothers.

In **2016**, marital status was unknown for 6 of the 8 surrendering mothers. Of the two with known status, 1 was reportedly married and the other was divorced.

In **2017**, the marital status was unknown for all nine mothers who surrendered their infants.

In **2018**, the marital status was unknown/unspecified for all 15 mothers who surrendered their infants. But there was indication that at least two were in a new relationship.

In **2019**, the marital status was unspecified for all 15 mothers who surrendered their infants but at least five mothers reported being in a relationship.

In **2020**, the marital status was unspecified in the documentation reviewed for all 16 mothers. At least four mothers reported being in unstable relationships where the infant's father's lack of involvement played a role on their decision to surrender their infant. One mother reported being pressured by the baby's father to have an abortion but she wanted to give her infant a better chance at life.

At least two infants were surrendered by both their mother and father, who made a joint decision to surrender. One such couple cited substance abuse to be the main reason for surrendering their infant. Most mothers cited being separated or being in unstable situations where their infant's father was uninvolved. One mother reported having left the infant's father along with her 8 year old son and having moved to a different city. Another reported that she's homeless, living in a van and that the baby's father left her three months prior to the baby's birth. At least three mothers indicated hiding their pregnancies, including one mother who reported hiding her pregnancy from both her family and from the baby's father.

In **2021**, the marital status of the mothers who surrendered was not specified. One mother reported being in a relationship with the infant's father for three years but described their relationship as "toxic". Other mothers stated that the in infant's father was uninvolved.

## Employment

In **2002**, mother's employment status was unknown in 7 of the 10 cases of safe surrender. Of the three known, one was a homemaker, one was a student and one was a live-in domestic worker.

In **2003**, mother's employment status was unknown in 7 of the 8 cases of safe surrender. The remaining mother was an Emergency Medical Technician in the military at the time she safely surrendered her newborn.

In **2004**, mother's employment status was unknown for 8 of the 10 cases of safe surrender. One mother was an accounting clerk, and the other reported that she was unemployed.

In **2005**, mother's employment status was unknown in 6 of the 8 cases of safe surrender. One mother was a receptionist, and the other was a high school student.

In **2006**, mother's employment status was unknown in 8 of the 11 cases of safe surrender. Of the three known, two mothers were students and one reported that she was unemployed and receiving aid.

In **2007**, mother's employment status was unknown in 14 of the 15 cases. The known mother told hospital personnel that she had a job interview scheduled.

In **2008**, mother's employment status was unknown in 5 of the 8 cases. One mother reported she held a job but no other details were provided. Of the two other known, one mother worked for a cleaning service and the other worked in retail sales.

In **2009**, mother's employment status was unknown in all cases of safe surrender. In 2010, mother's employment status was unknown in all cases of safe surrender.

In **2011**, mother's employment status was unknown in 5 of the 6 cases. The known mother reported she was taking time off from work but no other details were provided.

In **2012**, mother's employment status was unknown in 9 of the 13 cases of safe surrender. Of the four known, one mother was a student, another mother was taking time off but returning to her job, and the remaining two had government jobs.

In **2013**, mother's employment status was unknown in 6 of the 9 cases. Two mothers were unemployed and the remaining mother was an attorney.

In **2014** and **2015**, mother's employment status was unknown in all cases of safe surrender.

In **2016**, mother's employment status was unknown in 7 of the 8 cases. The known mother reported that she was unemployed.

In **2017**, the mother's employment status was known in two of the cases, one mother worked at Starbucks and the other, at a motorcycle shop prior to becoming pregnant. The occupation of the seven others is unknown.

In **2018**, one mother specified working at her family's food truck, at least two specified being in school/college.

In **2019**, at least three mothers specified that they were college students with limited income and little to no support system. One mother was about 27 years old, is in a relationship with the baby's father who supports her, but does not want the baby. One mother specified having other children and working as a store clerk/cashier with limited income and no support system. One mother specified that she had an addiction to heroin, lives with her mother and has no financial means to care for her child. Another mother moved to LA County from Texas. She has three other children but limited resources and temporarily resides with extended family. One mother was young (18) and living with family, there was a denial of the pregnancy until arriving at the hospital to give birth.

In **2020**, there is none or very little documentation pertaining to the employment status of the mothers who surrendered their infants. One mother stated she is a senior in college, she learned of her pregnancy at 32 weeks gestation, this is her first child and she is not prepared to take care of her infant at this time she decided to safely surrender. At least half of the mothers who surrendered reported being homeless, in most of these cases there was evidence of drug use.

In **2021**, there is none or very little documentation pertaining to the surrendering mothers' employment status. One mother stated she has no job and is caring for her mother and another child.

### **Religious Affiliation**

In **2002**, mother's religious affiliation was known for only one of the 10 surrendering mothers. This mother reported that she practiced the Catholic faith.

In **2003**, **2004** and **2005**, the religious affiliation of all surrendering mothers is unknown.

In **2006**, mother's religious affiliation was known for only one of the 11 surrendering mothers. This mother reported that she was Christian.

In **2007**, two of the 15 surrendering mother's religious affiliation were known and both these mothers reported being Catholic.

In **2008**, mother's religious affiliation was known for only one of the 8 surrendering mothers. This mother reported that she was a "non-practicing Catholic."

In **2009**, **2010**, and **2011** the religious affiliation of all surrendering mothers is unknown.

In **2012**, mother's religious affiliation was known for only two of the 13 surrendering mothers. One mother reported that she was Jewish and another reported that she was Catholic.

In **2013**, one of the nine surrendering mothers' religious affiliation was known and she reported that she was Catholic.

In **2014**, **2015** and in **2016**, the religious affiliation of all surrendering mothers is unknown.

In **2017**, the religious affiliation of all nine surrendering mothers is unknown.

In **2018**, the religious affiliation of all fifteen surrendering mothers is unknown/unspecified.

In **2019**, the religious affiliation of all fifteen surrendering mothers is unspecified/unknown this year. Religious reasons for surrendering the baby was not specified in any of the surrenders this year.

**2020** - The religious affiliation of the surrendering mothers was unspecified and there was no mention of their religious affiliation in any documentation reviewed.

**2021** - There was no religious affiliations specified or mentioned in any of the documentation reviewed

## Family Circumstances

### 2002

For 5 of the 10 cases of safe surrender, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 5, the following was reported:

One 31-year old mother lived with the father of the surrendered infant along with their other 4 young children and the father's family.

One 25-year old mother and father were married and had 3 other children; they were reportedly homeless and unable to care for the surrendered infant.

One 42-year old mother with an unknown marital status had 5 other children. One 17-year old mother was single and lived with her own mother.

One 25-year old mother recently arrived from Mexico and reported no family or friends in this country.

### 2003

For 4 of the 8 cases of safe surrender, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 4, the following was reported:

One 26-year old mother indicated she had two older children. It is unknown if these children resided with their mother or with whom the mother resided.

One 23-year old mother lived with her parents and one older child.

One 19-year old mother lived in a military dormitory. She was single and had no other children.

One 31-year old mother had four older children, all of whom had been removed from her custody and adopted into other families due to the mother's long-standing substance abuse problems.

## **2004**

For 8 of the 10 cases of safe surrender, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 2, the following was reported:

One 25-year old of unknown marital status resided with her two older children.

One married 28-year old resided with her husband and three older children.

## **2005**

For 4 of the 8 cases of safe surrender, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 4, the following was reported:

One single 19-year old lived on her own with her 3-year old child.

One woman in her early 30's of unknown marital status resided with her two older children.

One single 18-year old lived with her parents and had no other children. One single 17-year old lived with her mother and had no other children.

## **2006**

For 4 of the 11 cases of safe surrender, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 7, the following was reported:

One 21-year old mother lived with a roommate while she was attending college.

One single woman of unknown age lived with her father, mother and her three children.

One 37-year old single mother lived with her grandparents and her five children.

One 25-year old mother of unknown marital status lived with her parents and her five-year old son.

One 24-year old mother of unknown marital status lived with her three sons. One 35-year old single mother lived with her common-law husband and two daughters along with another family of five in a 4-bedroom home.

One 25-year old mother of unknown marital status lived with her parents.

## **2007**

For 11 of the 15 cases of safe surrender, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 4, the following was reported:

One mother lived out of state with her four older children.

One mother had four older children; two had been given up for adoption, and she resided with the other two.

One 25-year old married mother lived with her husband and two children. One 38-year old mother was separated and homeless.

## **2008**

For 5 of the 8 cases of surrender, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 3, the following was reported:

One mother had family living in Mexico.

Two mothers had older children but provided no further details.

## **2009**

For 5 of the 7 cases of surrender, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 2, the following was reported:

One married mother lived in a hotel with her mother and two older children.

One mother of unknown marital status was believed to live with her mother.

## **2010**

For 2 of the 7 cases of surrender, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 5, the following was reported:

One single 20-year old had an older child by the same man who fathered the surrendered infant but she and the father were no longer involved.

One woman in her mid to late 30s had 4 older children but provided no other details.

One single mother had a boyfriend, but no details were provided about her living situation.

One 27-year old mother of unknown marital status had four older children all of whom were living with their father under DCFS supervision.

One 21-year old lived with her parents.

## **2011**

For 3 of the 6 cases of surrender, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 3, the following was reported:

One mother of unknown marital status, implied she was still involved with the baby's father.

One woman had one older child.

One mother had three older children.

## **2012**

For 6 of the 13 cases of surrender, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 7, the following was reported:

One 22-year old, student, lived nearby her parents.

One single mother lived with her three children, her brother, and her mother. One woman was still involved with the baby's father.

One 21-year old mother lived with her brother and her older child. One woman lived with her relatives.

Two of the women reported living with their mothers.

## **2013**

For 6 of the 9 cases of surrender, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 3, the following was reported:

One mother had five older children; two were living with the father, and the other three resided with the mother and her friend. One mother lived with her parents.

One single, 23-year old, grew up in foster care.

## **2014**

For 7 of the 11 cases of surrender, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 4, the following was reported:

One single mother was an exchange student from another country and had no other children.

One mother was still involved with the baby's father.

One mother, of an unknown age, had nine other children.

One woman was homeless but "drops by" to visit her mother and aunt.

## **2015**

For 14 of the 18 cases of surrender, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 4, the following was reported:

One woman still lived with her mother.

One mother was still involved with the baby's father. They came to the United States from China for the birth of their infant.

One 17-year old lived with her parents.

One mother lived on her own with her 6-year old child.

## **2016**

For 5 of the 8 cases of surrender, we know nothing of the mothers family situation. For the remaining 3, the following was reported:

One mother, of an unknown age, lived with her boyfriend.

One married, 39-year old, lived with her husband and their two children.

One mother, with three older children, lived with her mother.

## **2017**

In 2017, information about the marital status of the nine mothers that safely surrendered their infants was undeclared. However, there was indication that two of the nine mothers had older children. Specific information related to their family circumstances was not available.

## **2018**

In 2018, at least one mother reported this was an unplanned pregnancy, she already had “many children” and could not care for another; two young mothers had unplanned pregnancies which they tried to conceal. Both decided to surrender their newborn because of a perceived lack of family support but later reclaimed them. One mother had safely surrendered a prior baby and another one had had one prior baby who was given up for adoption; one mother specified this was her first pregnancy. At least three mothers claimed to not know they were pregnant until coming into the hospital/or going into labor but admitted knowing about the law and wanting to safely surrender.

## **2019**

A couple in their early 20s initially safely surrendered their baby because they felt they did not have the financial means to care for a baby. They reclaimed their baby the next day. Another young mother initially safely surrendered her baby because as a 2nd year college student, she wanted to focus on her education and felt that she did not have the financial means to appropriately care for her child. She too, reclaimed her baby by the next day. There was a mother in her late 20s who specified being in a relationship with a man (unknown if he’s the baby’s father) she reported that he supports her financially but does not want to assume the care of the baby. She surrendered the baby claiming they did not know about the pregnancy until about a month prior to giving birth and therefore were not equipped to take care of their baby. There was also a young mother, approximately eighteen years of age. The mother and her grandmother insisted that they didn’t realize she was pregnant until she was in labor at the hospital. She lives at home with her family, after finding out she was in early labor, she left the hospital but returned the next day to deliver and surrender. There was a mother who had moved here from Texas was

living with extended family and reported having older children in their teens but not in her custody. Another mother also reported having older children, becoming involved with her newborn's father who left her after finding out about her pregnancy. She had little income and was struggling to provide care for her older children. She too felt surrendering her newborn was her best option. There was another mother who was addicted to heroin and living with extended family but could not provide for her newborn due to her addiction and limited financial means. She also reported struggling for years with depression and anxiety.

## **2020**

In 2020, one couple who surrendered their child disclosed drug use and not wanting their baby to go through the DCFS system if they attempted to take care of their baby. Similarly, there was another mother who stated that she and the infant's father decided to surrender their infant as they are both unable to care for their him due to their ongoing substance abuse. This is the second infant they have surrendered. There was a mother who reported having left her infant's father and her older child after deciding to move to another city where she didn't yet have a stable place to take her newborn. Another mother reported living in a van and that her infant's father who is also homeless, left her three months ago. She stated she has an adult son in Mexico but has no resources or family to assist in her current situation. Another mother simply did not want to disclose her pregnancy to her family with whom she lives and especially to her father. Another mother who tested positive for drugs, left the hospital against medical advice after surrendering her infant and while still hooked up to an IV, then later returned with her own mother wanting to reclaim her baby. Both were referred to DCFS. Another mother stated that the baby's father was not supportive and wanted her to have an abortion but mother wanted to give the baby a chance at life. There were two mothers who reported having other children who are currently in the DCFS system and therefore decided to surrender their newborn as they are "unable to take care of the baby".

## **2021**

In 2021, the available information pertaining to surrendering mothers' family circumstances is as follows: One mother is from the Oakland area but delivered her infant locally and is reported wanting to safely surrender her infant due to being in a "toxic" and abusive relationship with the infant's father for the past three years. Another mother who surrendered her infant stated she is homeless and unable to care for her infant. She disclosed being unable to reunify with her older child through DCFS and admitted to drug use and no family support system. A mother was determined to surrender her infant stating she could not take the baby home with her because she does not want her father to know she was pregnant and had a baby. She declined to fill out any documentation and refused to even specify her ethnicity. The Hospital staff reported her to be Asian. A mother who was from Bangladesh reported that the baby's father and her own family are not in her life. The hospital reported there were no family members or baby's father at the hospital when she delivered. One Hispanic mother stated her pregnancy was a surprise to her and that she has other children currently in their father's care. She is currently separated from the baby's father. This mother later reclaimed her child and an assessment of the paternal family was initiated. A Caucasian mother reported not having

a job and caring for her own mother and an older child. She stated she is financially unable to take on the care of another child and her newborn's father is not involved. A Hispanic mother reported her current family living situation is not ideal and reported being afraid of admitting her pregnancy to her family. She reported not being able to take her infant home. She also reported being undocumented and a victim of rape but does not believe the infant's conception is from the rape incident.

A young African American mother safely surrendered her infant but reclaimed once she found her parents supportive and anxious to have her and her baby live with them at their home.

### Involvement of Fathers

We know very little about the involvement of fathers in these safely surrendered cases. In **2002**, we know only that fathers were involved and living with the mothers in two cases, as listed above.

In **2003**, we know that one father was stationed in the military on the East Coast and unaware of the mother's (his girlfriend's) pregnancy. For a second case, we have the father's name and age (28) only. For the remaining cases of safe surrender, we have no information on the fathers.

In **2004**, we know that one father was married to and living with the surrendered infant's mother and was aware of the pregnancy and birth.

In **2005**, we know only that two fathers were reported to be ex-boyfriends; one was aware of the pregnancy and birth and the other was not.

In **2006**, we know that one father, who fathered 3 other children with the surrendered infant's mother, was unaware of the pregnancy or birth. Another father left for Mexico when he learned of the surrendering mother's pregnancy.

In **2007**, we know only that one father was incarcerated.

In **2008**, we know that one father returned to Mexico, and another father was reported to be mother's "abusive" boyfriend.

In **2009**, we know that one father was involved with the mother in an "on and off" relationship over a three-year period. This father had prior arrests and a history of drug use.

In **2010**, we know that fathers were involved with mothers in two of the cases. One of these fathers had the mother's four older children placed in his care by the Juvenile Court.

In **2011**, we know that one father was Korean/Japanese descent.

In **2012**, we know that one father was 23 years old and living in China. For three of the cases, fathers were reported to be still involved with the surrendering mother. Two of these fathers also wanted to surrender. The other father was married to the mother but was unaware of her pregnancy.

In **2013**, we know that two fathers were no longer involved with the mother. For another case, the mother wasn't sure who got her pregnant because she had relations with three different men.

In **2014**, we know that one father was still involved with the surrendering mother.

In **2015**, we know that two of the fathers were still involved with the mother. In both instances, the fathers accompanied the mother to safely surrender the infant. For the remaining cases of surrender, we have no information on the fathers.

In **2016**, we know that fathers were still involved with mothers in two of the cases. One of these fathers, was 59 years old, disabled and married to the mother. For the other father, it is unclear how involved he was with the mother during her pregnancy. However, this father did come forward and the infant was placed in his care. For the remaining cases of surrender, we have no information on the fathers.

In **2017**, we learned that the fathers of three of the safely surrendered infants, were not involved with the pregnancy though they may have known about it, or became uninvolved with the mother once they found out about the pregnancy.

One mother disclosed that the pregnancy was the result of having been raped. In the other five instances, information on the infants' biological father is unknown.

In **2018**, One mother had safely surrendered an infant before and had other children; and four mother's reported having had at least one other child. one reported having given her prior child up for adoption.

In **2019**, we have reports of at least four fathers being present at the hospital for the delivery of the babies. A couple in their early 20s initially safely surrendered their baby because they felt they did not have the financial means to care for a baby. They reclaimed their baby the next day. There was a mother in her late 20s who specified being in a relationship (unknown if it was with the baby's father), who reportedly supports her financially but did not want to assume the care of the baby. Another couple, surrendered their baby claiming they did not know about the pregnancy they reported recreationally using Marijuana until about a month prior to giving birth. They felt strongly that they were not equipped to take care of their baby. At least two other women reported being involved in brief relationships where the baby's father left them after learning of their pregnancy. Another woman reported the baby was a product of a violent relationship.

In **2020**, at least four mothers reported being in unstable relationships where the infant's father's lack of involvement or absence played a role on their decision to surrender their infant. One mother reported being pressured by the baby's father to have an abortion but she wanted to give her infant a better chance at life. At least two infants were surrendered by both their mother and father, who seemed to have made a joint decision to surrender their infant. One such couple cited substance abuse to be the main reason for surrendering their infant. Most mothers cited being separated or being in unstable situations where their infant's father was uninvolved. Including one mother who reported that she's homeless, living in a van and that the baby's father left her three months prior to the baby's birth. One mother reported having left the infant's father along with her 8 year old son and

having moved to a different city. At least three mothers indicated hiding their pregnancies, including one mother who reported hiding her pregnancy from both her family and from the baby's father.

In **2021**, the information pertaining to the surrendered infant's father involvement is as follows: One mother reported being in a relationship with the infant's father for three years but described their relationship as "toxic" and abusive. One Hispanic mother stated her pregnancy was a surprise to her and that she has other children currently in their father's care. She is currently separated from the baby's father. This mother later reclaimed her child and an assessment of the paternal family was initiated. Most mothers stated that their infant's father was uninvolved and no longer in their lives. The hospital documentation describes them as delivering their infant on their own with no family or infant's father by their side.

### Other Children

In **2002**, three mothers reported having other children, one mother reported she had no other children, and it is unknown if the remaining six mothers had other children. Of those with children, one reported 3 other children, one reported 4 other children, and one reported 5 other children. These children all reportedly resided with their mothers.

In **2003**, three mothers reported having other children, one reported no other children, and it is unknown if the remaining four mothers had other children. Of those with children, one reported having 1 other child, one reported 2 other children, and one mother reported 4 other children.

In **2004**, two mothers reported having other children; one of these mothers reported that she had two older children, and the other reported that she had three older children.

In **2005**, two mothers reported having other children; one of these mothers reported that she had one older child, and the other reported that she had two older children. In addition, two mothers reported that they had no other children. Nothing is known about the remaining four mothers who surrendered their infants.

In **2006**, five mothers reported having other children; one of these mothers reported that she had 5 older children, two reported having 3 older children, one reported 2 other children, and one reported having 1 other child. In addition, one mother reported that she had no other children.

In **2007**, four mothers reported having other children; two of these mothers reported having four older children, the other two mothers reported having older children but did not state how many.

In **2008**, two mothers reported having other children; one of these mothers reported having 2 older children to whom she relinquished her parental rights. The other mother reported having older children but did not state how many.

In **2009**, three mothers reported having other children; one of these mothers reported having 2 older children, one reported having 3 older children, and one mother reported

having 4 older children.

In **2010**, three mothers reported having other children; one of these mothers reported having 1 older child, and two mothers reported having 4 older children.

In **2011**, two mothers reported having other children; one of these mothers reported having 1 older child, and another mother reported having 3 older children.

In **2012**, four mothers reported having other children, one of these mothers reported having 1 other child, one reported having 3 other children, and finally, another mother reported having other children but did not state how many.

In **2013**, three mothers reported having other children, two of these mothers reported having 1 other child, and another reported having 5 other children.

In **2014**, two mothers reported having other children, one of these mothers reported having 9 other children, and the other did not state how many children.

In **2015**, one mother reported having another child.

In **2016**, two mothers reported having other children. One of these mothers reported having two other children(ages 3 & 5), and another mother reported having 3 older children.

In **2017**, two mothers reported having other children. One stated that she already had children and “could not afford another child”. Another alluded to having children, although she was not specific about how many. She indicated that three of her prior four pregnancies were consensual and one, the result of having been raped, as she is homeless. One mother indicated this was her first pregnancy. The six additional mothers did not specify whether they had other children.

In **2018**, there was very little to no information on the newborns’ fathers. At least two women stated that father’s were uninvolved.

In **2019**, at least four mothers reported having older children and at least two mothers reported having given up prior children for adoption/safe surrender before. One mother stated her newborn was her 5th child, she had surrendered a baby before, and a history of DCFS involvement as mother is developmentally disabled.

In **2020**, There were at least five mothers who disclosed having had other children. One mother disclosed having separated from her family including her eight year old son; a couple who decided jointly to surrender their child due to their ongoing drug addiction, also disclosed having had another child whom they have previously surrendered; Another mother disclosed having an adult son who resides in Mexico. Additionally, there were two mothers who disclosed having other children currently in the custody of DCFS, the exact number of prior children is unknown.

In **2021**, In 2021, there were four mothers who disclosed having other children. One mother disclosed being unable to reunify with an older child after DCFS intervened due to her drug use. One mother disclosed having four other children and being separated

from her husband and the children. She later reclaimed her newborn after returning to her family home. One mother reported being financially unable to support her newborn due to the care she's providing to her elderly mother and older daughter.

### Known History of Domestic Violence

There is no reported history of domestic violence for the mothers in the cases of safe surrender between 2002 - 2007, but obtaining accurate information about such histories is difficult at best. In 2008 and in 2009, there is one mother who reported a history of domestic violence. In 2010 - 2012 there is no reported history of domestic violence. In 2013, there is one mother who reported a history of domestic violence. In 2014 to 2016, there is no reported history of domestic violence. In 2017, seven of the nine mothers did not report DV, while two mothers specifically denied any domestic violence. In 2018, there was one mother who appeared to have excessive bruising but did not report domestic violence. Another disclosed having been assaulted by three unknown women and immediately following the attack, went into labor and was taken to the hospital. There were no specific reports of domestic violence in 2018. In 2019, one mother reported the pregnancy was the result of a "violent relationship" and the mother stated that she knew this was the best option for her newborn. In 2020, Although unstable relationships, separations, and fear to disclose pregnancies were cited as contributing to the mother's decision to surrender their infants, specific incidents of domestic violence were not documented for any other the mothers who safely surrendered this year. In 2021, one mother reported being in a relationship with her infant's father for three years, stating she no longer wants to have further connection with him, due to their "toxic" relationship which she describes as verbally and emotionally abusive. Another mother reported being undocumented and a victim of rape. But did not think the pregnancy was the result of the rape incident. There were no specific incidents of domestic violence in the safely surrendered cases included in this report for this year.

### Known History of Substance Abuse

For **2002**, there is no reported history of substance abuse for the mothers in the 10 cases of safe surrender.

In **2003** (n=8) and **2004** (n=10), one of the safely surrendering mothers each year is reported to have had a history of methamphetamine abuse.

There is no known history of substance abuse for the mothers in the 8 cases of safe surrender in **2005**.

In **2006** (n=11), five of the surrendering mothers are reported to have had a history of substance abuse; two mothers had a history of methamphetamine abuse, one mother had a history of cocaine abuse, and one mother had a history of amphetamine abuse. For the other mother with a reported history of substance abuse, the drug of choice was unknown.

For **2007** (n=15) four of the surrendering mothers are reported to have had a history of substance abuse; two mothers had a history of methamphetamine abuse and the other two mothers had a history of amphetamine abuse. The infants born to these mothers

(n=4) all tested positive for drugs.

In **2008** (n=8), one infant tested positive for amphetamines and another infant experienced prenatal drug exposure. The prenatal drug-exposed infant was born to a mother who admitted to a history of drug use including crack cocaine, angel dust, and marijuana.

In **2009** (n=7), four of the surrendering mothers are reported to have had a history of substance abuse; two mothers had a history of amphetamine abuse, one mother had a history of cocaine and alcohol abuse and one mother's drug of choice was unknown.

In **2010** (n=8), two of the surrendering mothers are reported to have had a history of substance abuse; one mother had a history of cocaine and opiate abuse. For the other mother with a reported history of substance abuse, the drug of choice was unknown.

In **2011** (n=6), two of the surrendering mothers are reported to have a history of substance abuse; one mother had a history of marijuana abuse and the other mother had a history of marijuana and amphetamine abuse.

In **2012** (n=13), there is no known history of substance abuse for the mothers in the 13 cases of surrender.

In **2013** (n=9), two of the mothers are reported to have had a history of methamphetamine and marijuana abuse.

In **2014** (n=11), four of the mothers are reported to have had a history of drug use.

In **2015** (n=18), two of the mothers are reported to have had a history of drug use. One of these mothers tested positive for marijuana. For the other mother, the drug of choice is unknown.

In **2016** (n=8), three of the mothers are reported to have had a history of drug use. One of these mothers had a history of amphetamine use, one mother had a history of cocaine use and one mother reported a history of using pain reliever. For the other surrendering mothers over this fifteen-year period, it is unknown if there were issues of substance abuse; obtaining accurate information about substance abuse histories is very difficult.

In **2017** (n=9), three of the nine mothers denied substance abuse. One mother disclosed use of amphetamines, and her infant tested positive. One mother, disclosed use of Marijuana. Four mothers did not disclose any substance abuse.

In **2018**, (n=15), one mother disclosed using marijuana, alcohol and smoking cigarettes during her pregnancy but denied use of other drugs. Her baby did not show signs of drug withdrawal; five mothers tested positive for methamphetamines; One tested positive for amphetamines and disclosed taking Adderal; One mother admitted to drinking alcohol socially during her pregnancy but denied using other drugs; One mother tested positive for marijuana. Her baby did not show signs of drug withdrawal.

In **2019** (n=15), one mother disclosed being on Methadone at the time of the delivery. She reported having used heroin throughout the pregnancy, as she didn't realize she was pregnant until her water broke. She reported also being a smoker, with a history of

marijuana and opioid use, and reported that her own parents also abuse drugs and alcohol. She left the hospital before being connected to services. Another mother reported using heroin and being on Suboxone at the time of delivery. Her newborn was born full term with no health problems. She left the hospital immediately before being connected to services. Another mother admitted to using heroin, methamphetamines and methadone and being in an abusive violent relationship and unable to care for her newborn. Her child was born full term with no health problems but was being held in observation. Another mother reported having used marijuana.

In **2020** (n=16), Of the 16 mothers who safely surrendered their infant, seven disclosed using or tested positive for drugs at the time of delivering their infant. There were two instances, where both parents cited their substance abuse as being one of the primary reasons for surrendering their infant. One mother, reported occasional drinking and smoking but both mother and infant tested positive for methamphetamines. One mother tested positive for amphetamines and marijuana, and rushed to leave the hospital AMA with an IV still in her arm. The hospital documented having tried to stop mother and are under the impression that “mother left to get high”. One mother presented at the hospital in premature labor at 36 week, claimed she didn’t realize she was pregnant until six months into her pregnancy. Both mother and infant tested positive for methamphetamines and Marijuana. She is also homeless. One Caucasian mother moved to the Sta. Monica area from San Luis Obispo, she is homeless and tested positive for methamphetamines and Marijuana. Another mother of Hispanic descent tested positive for amphetamines and Marijuana and is homeless in the Lynwood area.

In **2021** (n=22), nine of the 22 mothers who safely surrendered their infants disclosed using drugs or tested positive for drugs. In all the instances where mother’s tested positive for drugs, the hospital staff documented following up later to confirm mothers’ decision to surrender. The only exceptions were when some mothers decided to leave against medical advice. There was one mother who is suspected of smoking and using drugs in the hospital room. She and her partner simply left the baby without specifying safe surrender, although they’d mentioned wanting to pursue adoption. Since they left without specifying anything further this case was not included in the safe surrender count. A Caucasian mother who surrendered in Lancaster tested positive for opioids, and amphetamines. A homeless Hispanic mother who surrendered her infant tested positive for Marijuana. She disclosed prior DCFS intervention and being unable to reunify with her child and is known to have surrendered a prior baby at the same hospital. Another mother tested positive for Marijuana. One Hispanic mother tested positive for methamphetamines, Marijuana, cocaine, and opiates. She disclosed a history of multiple drug use and disclosed a having a blood clotting disorder. One African American mother tested positive for methamphetamines, Marijuana, and ecstasy. She reported being familiar with the DCFS process, and wanted to see her baby before leaving the hospital. One African American mother disclosed having engaged in heroin use throughout her pregnancy. One Caucasian mother tested positive for Marijuana. She also disclosed a history of taking Xanax for her anxiety. An African American mother walked into the emergency room with a newborn who still had his umbilical cord attached. Her infant was struggling to breathe and tested positive for amphetamines. She reported receiving no prenatal care, and was admitted to labor and delivery since she still had her afterbirth.

She checked on her newborn then quickly left the hospital against medical advice. A Hispanic mother tested positive for methamphetamines arrived at the hospital in active labor transported by the paramedics. She was yelling that she did not know she was pregnant and saying “get him out of me”. She refused medical treatment even after losing an excessive amount of blood and quickly left the hospital.

### Status of Pregnancy

Again, very little is known about the pregnancy status for the mothers who safely surrendered. It is reported that one mother who safely surrendered in 2002 and one mother who safely surrendered in 2003 each indicated their child was the result of an unplanned pregnancy. In 2004, 2 mothers who safely surrendered indicated that their pregnancies were unplanned. In 2005, 3 mothers who safely surrendered reported their pregnancies were unplanned and in 2006, 5 mothers who safely surrendered reported that their pregnancies were unplanned. In addition, in 2006, one mother reported that her pregnancy was a result of rape. In 2007, one mother reported that her pregnancy was unplanned, one mother reported that her pregnancy was a result of rape, and a third surrendering mother reported that her pregnancy was the result of an affair. In 2008, one mother who safely surrendered indicated that her pregnancy was unplanned. In 2009, one mother reported that her pregnancy was a result of rape. In 2010, one mother reported her pregnancy was unplanned. In 2011, one mother reported her pregnancy was unplanned and another mother reported that her pregnancy was a result of rape. Five mothers who safely surrendered in 2012 and 4 mothers who safely surrendered in 2013, reported that their pregnancies were unplanned. Three of the mothers who safely surrendered in 2014, reported that their pregnancies were unplanned. In 2015, two mothers reported that their pregnancies were a result of rape. Two other mothers reported that their pregnancies were unplanned. Finally, another mother reported that her pregnancy was planned, but wanted to surrender due to the infant’s severe medical challenges. In 2016, two mothers reported that their pregnancies were unplanned and one mother reported that her pregnancy was the result of rape. In 2017, one mother specified that her pregnancy was unplanned, and another specified that her pregnancy was the result of having been raped and disclosed concealing her pregnancy. In 2018, at least one mother reported this was an unplanned pregnancy, she already had “many children” and could not care for another; two young mothers had unplanned pregnancies which they tried to conceal, decided to surrender their newborn because of a lack of family support but later reclaimed them. One mother had safely surrendered a prior baby and another one had had one prior baby who was given up for adoption; one mother specified this was her first pregnancy. At least three mother’s claimed to not know they were pregnant until coming into the hospital/or going into labor but admitted knowing about the law and wanting to safely surrender.

In 2019, there is evidence that at least three of the mothers who surrendered might have concealed their pregnancies from their immediate families. One couple appeared to be in denial; reporting they did not know about the pregnancy until a month prior to delivery and therefore continued to use Marijuana. One young girl was brought into the hospital by her grandmother, both insisted they did not know that she was pregnant. Another insisted on surrendering her baby stating her family did not know she was pregnant.

In 2020, at least five mothers reported not being aware of their pregnancy. At least two mothers stated they realized they were pregnant when they were already too far along to have an abortion or to plan for adoption. Only two mothers claimed to have received prenatal care. One mother filed safe surrender material on line in preparation for her delivery.

In 2021, one mother reported receiving prenatal care at 26 weeks gestation. One Asian mother stated that she went into the emergency room with abdominal pain and was then told she was pregnant. She therefore received no prenatal care. The baby was delivered at 36 weeks gestation. A mother who has had at least five prior children also claimed not knowing that she was pregnant. Her infant was delivered at 35 weeks. A mother of Filipino descent in her late 30s drove to the hospital emergency room and handed the newborn to the nurse with the placenta still attached. The baby was full term. She declined to provide additional information. A review of the documentation, does not indicate that any of these pregnancies were planned or wanted. Including one mother whose child was born extremely premature at about 24 week gestation. Mother also claimed not knowing that she was pregnant. There was no indication of substance abuse but the baby came too early and passed away at the hospital due to medical complications related to prematurity. Mother disclosed a history of high blood pressure, cancer and cleft palate.

### **Awareness of the Safely Surrender Baby Law (SSBL)**

In 2002, one mother contacted the hospital to ask for procedures to safely surrender her child. In 2003, one mother received prenatal care at a clinic where she saw “No Shame. No Blame. No Names.” posters publicizing the Law. In 2005, one mother indicated that she had seen the toll-free BABYSAFE number on a poster, but the location of the poster is unknown. In 2006, one mother learned of the Law in her child development class and another mother was informed about the Law by a friend. In 2007, nothing is known about the surrendering mothers’ awareness of the Law. In 2008, a Good Samaritan told one mother about the Law which prevented her from abandoning her newborn infant in a dumpster. One mother learned about the Law from her obstetrician, one mother learned about Safe Surrender from law enforcement, and finally, one mother learned about the Law from a brochure. In 2009, and in 2010, nothing is known about the surrendering parties’ awareness of the Law. In 2011, one mother indicated she knew about the Law from television. In 2012, one mother called several adoption agencies and learned about the Law through them. Two of the mothers had safely surrendered before. In 2013, one mother learned about the Law from seeing the metal sign that hospitals and fire stations place in their window. In 2014, one mother called the hospital two weeks prior to birth and learned about safe surrender from the hospital social worker. In 2015, nothing is known about the surrendering parties’ awareness of the Law. In 2016, one mother contacted the hospital prior to delivery to inquire about safe surrender and another mother learned about the Law from a friend. For all other surrendering mothers over this fifteen-year period, nothing is known about the surrendering parties awareness of the Law. In 2017, all nine mothers declared knowing about the SSBL. One specified having researched it following rape/sexual assault but did not specify exactly where she learned about it. In 2019, there were at least three mothers who did not know about the SSBL before presenting to the hospital and requesting a way to surrender or adopt their child. These

mothers had to be educated about the options they had and opted to surrender their babies. The other 15 women whose children have been included in this count, expressed knowing about the law and most requested this option upon delivery of their baby. At least two women expressed having surrendered/adopted previously. In 2020, the sixteen women who surrendered their infant and are included in this count expressed having some knowledge about the SSBL. They knew they would be able to surrender their infant upon delivery. Some required clarification about the difference between adoption and safely surrendering their child and they opted to surrender. There were at least two mothers who had surrendered previously and one who completed the paperwork on line prior to delivering her infant. In 2021, the mothers who surrendered their infant and are included in this count expressed directly or in their own words their knowledge of the safe surrender law. There was one mother and father, who might have been smoking/using drugs while still in the hospital. They left the baby without specifying safe surrender, although they had mentioned wanting to pursue adoption. Since they'd initiated adoption paperwork but left suddenly without specifying anything further, this case was not included in the safe surrender count. There were two other strictly adoptions cases, and one case that needed DCFS filing, that were not included in the safe surrender count.

### Medical Questionnaires

In **2002**, only one surrendering party out of ten completed a medical questionnaire regarding the surrendered infant. In addition, four surrendering parties provided some medical background information in other formats. Unfortunately, for five surrendered infants, no medical information was received from the surrendering party.

In **2003**, none of the eight surrendering parties completed a medical questionnaire. One mother "left medical information with the hospital."

In **2004**, one mother completed the questionnaire, one paramedic completed the form as mother provided verbal information, one hospital was unable to locate the form at the time of the surrender, and three surrendering parties took the questionnaire with them but did not complete and return the forms. One surrendering party refused to take the form, and it is unknown if the surrendering parties completed questionnaires in three cases.

In **2005**, three mothers completed the medical questionnaire at surrender sites (two at the hospital and one at a fire station), one social worker completed the form for the mother who provided verbal information, one father attempted to complete the form at the hospital, and a form was given to a man who surrendered the child, but the form was not completed and returned. Finally, two mothers fled the surrender site before they could be given a form to complete.

In **2006**, three mothers completed the medical questionnaire while at the hospital. Another mother provided medical history in another format. One surrendered infant's uncle completed and returned the form. Finally, three mothers reportedly completed the form, but no other details were provided. Unfortunately, for five surrendered infants, no medical information was received.

In **2007**, five of the surrendering mothers completed the medical questionnaire while at the hospital. One surrendered infant's maternal grandmother completed and returned the

form. Two mothers were offered the form but refused to complete one. Three mothers took the questionnaire but did not complete and return the form. Finally, one mother left the hospital before receiving a form, and it is unknown if the surrendering parties were offered or completed questionnaires in three cases.

In **2008**, three of the surrendering mothers completed the medical questionnaire while at the hospital. Two mothers were given the form, but it is unknown if they completed and returned it. One mother, who gave birth at a hospital, was not given a form. Another mother brought the infant to the hospital but left before she was given a form. Lastly, one mother surrendered her infant through a Good Samaritan and it is doubtful the Good Samaritan was able to find the mother to give her the form.

In **2009**, one of the surrendering mothers completed the medical questionnaire while at the hospital. Two mothers were offered the form but refused to complete one. Another two mothers were given the form, but it is unknown if they completed and returned it. Lastly, one mother was given the form at the hospital, but fled before completing it.

In **2010**, two of the surrendering mothers completed the medical questionnaire while at the hospital. One mother left the hospital before completing the form. Another mother completed the form at the fire station. Lastly, one mother partially completed a Spanish version of the format at a fire station.

In **2011**, one mother completed the form and faxed it to the Department of Children and Family Services and one mother completed part of the form while at the hospital. Two of the mothers were given the form but it is unknown if they completed and returned it. Lastly, one mother was offered the form but refused to complete it.

In **2012**, ten of the surrendering mothers completed the medical questionnaire while at the hospital. Two of the mothers declined to complete the form. One surrendering mother partially completed the form while at the fire station.

In **2013**, five of the surrendering mothers completed the medical questionnaire while at the hospital. For the other four infants, no medical questionnaire was obtained.

In **2014**, four of the surrendering mothers completed the medical questionnaire while at the hospital. Two of the mothers were given the questionnaire, but it is unknown if it was completed and returned. For the other five infants, no medical questionnaire was obtained.

In **2015**, five of the surrendering mothers completed the medical questionnaire. Five mothers refused to complete the form. For the other eight infants, it is unknown if the medical questionnaire was obtained.

In **2016**, four of the surrendering mothers were given the medical questionnaire to complete, but it is unknown if they followed through. Two mothers completed the form. For the other two infants, no medical questionnaire was obtained.

In **2017**, four of the nine surrendering mothers completed the medical questionnaire. Two others were given the questionnaire but did not complete it or left the facility before returning it completed. There's no questionnaire information on two mothers and the one

who surrendered at a Fire station was not given a questionnaire as the Fire station did not have an SSBL Kit at hand when the infant was surrendered.

In **2018**, at least five mothers left the hospital against medical advice before completing the medical questionnaire. Only three mother's reportedly filled out at least part of their medical questionnaire.

In **2019**, we have reports that at least four mothers completed their medical questionnaire.

In **2020**, we have reports of at least five mothers completing the medical questionnaire upon surrendering their infant. The medical questionnaire information was not always entered or available for review in the CWS/CMS system.

In **2021**, we have documentation indicating that at least seven mothers filled out their infant's medical questionnaire upon surrendering. However, the medical questionnaire was not always available for review in the CWS/CMS system.

## Motivation to Surrender

### 2002

One mother and father indicated that they were overwhelmed caring for four other children, financially strapped and incapable of providing for another child. They were not interested in placing the child with relatives.

In a second case, the father who surrendered the infant reported that he and the mother had three other children, were homeless and could not provide for another child.

In a third case, the mother reportedly stated that she could not care for a sixth child. One mother indicated that she had hidden her pregnancy and wanted to safely surrender, as she did not want her mother, with whom she lived, to know of her pregnancy.

Finally, one mother who gave birth in the hospital indicated that she became aware of her pregnancy late in the pregnancy and could not care for an infant.

### 2003

One mother indicated that she had a job offer in another state and did not want a child "tying her down."

In a second case, the mother reportedly lived with parents from whom she had concealed her pregnancy and the child's birth. It is unknown what motivated her to conceal this information.

In a third case, the mother reported that she was afraid to keep her infant, as she believed it would jeopardize her military career. Upon learning that being a mother would not have a negative impact on her military service, she reclaimed her infant within the 14-day period permitted in the law.

**2004**

One mother told the hospital social worker to whom she surrendered her child, that she already had two young children and could not afford another child.

In a second case, a mother told hospital personnel that she and her husband were both unemployed and having difficulty supporting their three older children. She said they could not afford another child.

**2005**

One mother indicated that she was single and living with her three-year old child and her mother. She had hidden her pregnancy because she was afraid what her mother would say and do if she found out she was pregnant again.

**2006**

One mother was raped and wanted nothing to do with the baby.

In a second case, the mother had an unplanned pregnancy and explored placing her baby for adoption.

In a third case, the mother indicated that she was young, had three boys and did not want to keep the baby.

In a fourth case, the mother indicated that she was leaving to return to Mexico and did not believe that the baby could survive the long ride.

In another case, the mother admitted to hiding her pregnancy from her family and hospital personnel suspected that it was because of religious reasons.

**2007**

One mother indicated that her pregnancy was a result of an affair; she hid the pregnancy from her husband and planned to surrender her baby.

In a second case, the mother reportedly lived with parents from whom she had concealed her pregnancy and the child's birth. It is unknown what motivated her to conceal this information.

In a third case, the mother reportedly was in denial about her pregnancy and, for reasons unknown, she did not want to keep her baby. This mother talked about placing the baby for adoption.

Finally, in two additional cases, the mothers stated they were unable to care for their baby. One of these two mothers stated that she was homeless while no other details were obtained from the other mother.

**2008**

One mother told the hospital staff that she suffered from a history of domestic violence and could not care for an infant in that environment.

In a second case, the mother reportedly stated her pregnancy was unplanned; she explored getting an abortion but changed her mind.

In a third case, one mother considered voluntary relinquishment, but chose to surrender instead.

### **2009**

One mother concealed the pregnancy from her mother and, for reasons unknown, she did not want to keep her baby.

### **2010**

One mother told hospital staff she did not want to keep her baby because of financial restraints.

In a second case, the mother told fire department personnel that her pregnancy was unplanned, had four other children and could not afford another child.

In a third case, the mother stated that she already had four other children and could not take care of another.

Finally, in a fourth case, the mother told the hospital social worker she was living with her parents and did not want them to know about her baby out of fear they would “kick her out.”

### **2011**

In three cases, for reasons unknown, the mother stated she wanted to conceal the pregnancy.

In an additional case, the mother was raped.

### **2012**

One mother had concealed her pregnancy and considered placing her baby for adoption.

In two of the cases, the mothers had previously surrendered their infants. It is unknown what motivated them to surrender again.

In a third case, the mother and father had other children at home and implied they could not take on another child.

In a fourth case, the mother had concealed her pregnancy from her family. However, once she learned they would accept the baby, the mother reclaimed the infant. Finally,

in another case, the mother told hospital staff that she was married and her husband did

not know about her pregnancy.

### **2013**

One mother was caring for her other three children and could not afford to take on any additional responsibility.

In a second case, the mother expressed concern that if she kept the newborn, the Department of Children and Family Services would get involved and she wanted to avoid that.

### **2014**

One mother, who was an exchange student, stated being concerned that her family would not accept a baby born out of wedlock due to her country of origin's strict cultural norms.

In a second case, the mother intended to abandon the infant in a dumpster until a friend told her about safe surrender.

In a third case, the mother was homeless.

### **2015**

One mother was raped and did not want to keep the infant.

In a second case, the mother concealed her pregnancy from her family.

In a third case, the pregnancy was planned, but when the mother and father learned that the infant had numerous medical complications, they chose to surrender.

In a fourth case, the mother, who was single, already had a young child at home.

In a fifth case, the pregnancy was unplanned. In two other cases the mothers were homeless.

In two other cases the mothers were homeless.

### **2016**

One mother was homeless and raped.

In a second case, the mother wanted the infant to have a better life.

In a third case, the mother was married, had two young children at home, and could not afford another child.

In a fourth case, the pregnancy was unplanned.

### **2017**

One mother went into the hospital requesting to surrender her infant after delivery, stating she already had children and could not afford another child and that the infant's biological father was uninvolved.

One mother declared the infant's biological father was completely uninvolved and that was at least part of the reason she needed to surrender.

One mother declared she was homeless

One mother stated her pregnancy was the result of a consensual relationship but the father was unemployed and had been uninvolved

One mother stated that her pregnancy was the result of a rape, she was counseled on adoption but chose to surrender after having researched the SSBL on her own.

There were no specific motivating circumstances known in the other four cases

## **2018**

At least five mothers declared a lack of financial means and unstable housing situations as the primary reasons for giving up their newborn. There were also various instances where the mothers left the hospital against medical advise, refusing to provide information. In most of these instances the mothers were found to have evidence of drug use.

## **2019**

A couple in their early 20s initially safely surrendered their baby because they felt they did not have the financial means to care for a baby. They reclaimed their baby the next day. Another young mother initially safely surrendered her baby because as a 2nd year college student, she wanted to focus on her education and felt that she did not have the financial means to appropriately care for her child. She, too, reclaimed her baby by the next day. There was a mother in her late 20s of Asian descent who specified being in a relationship with a Caucasian man (unknown if he's the baby's father). She reported that he supports her financially but does not want to assume the care of the baby. Another couple surrendered their baby claiming they did not know about the pregnancy until about a month prior to giving birth and therefore were not equipped to take care of their baby. There was also a young mother, approximately eighteen years of age. She and her grandmother insisted that they didn't realize she was pregnant until she was in labor at the hospital. She lived at home with her family. After finding out she was in early labor, she left the hospital but returned the next day to deliver and surrender. A mother who had moved here from Texas was living with extended family and reported having older children in their teens. Another mother also reported having older children, becoming involved with her newborn's father who left her after finding out about her pregnancy. She had little income and was struggling to provide care for her older children. She too felt surrendering her newborn was her best option. Another mother was addicted to heroin and living with extended family, but could not provide for her newborn due to her addiction and limited financial means. She also reported struggling for years with depression and anxiety.

## **2020**

In 2020, at least four mothers reported being in unstable relationships where the infant's father's lack of involvement or absence played a significant role on their decision to surrender their infant.

One mother reported being pressured by the baby's father to have an abortion but she wanted to give her infant a better chance at life.

At least two infants were surrendered by both their mother and father, who seemed to have made a joint decision to surrender their infant. One mother disclosed substance abuse and not wanting her baby to go through the DCFS system. Both couples cited their ongoing substance abuse as the main reason for surrendering their infant.

Most mothers cited being separated or being in unstable situations where their infant's father was uninvolved. Including one mother who reported that she's homeless, living in a van and that the baby's father left her three months prior to the infant's birth.

One mother reported having left the infant's father along with her 8 year old son and having moved to a different city. At least three mothers indicated hiding their pregnancies for fear of what their families might think, including one mother who reported hiding her pregnancy from both her family and from the baby's father.

One Hispanic mother stated that this was an unplanned pregnancy, this is her first child and she was not prepared to take care of it as she is completing college and not yet in a position to care for a child.

## **2021**

In 2021, One mother wanted to safely surrender her infant due to being in a "toxic" and abusive relationship with the infant's father for the past three years. She has a history of mental health issues that arose to a crisis soon after delivering her infant.

Another mother who surrendered her infant stated she is homeless and unable to care for her infant. She disclosed being unable to reunify with her older child through DCFS and admitted to drug use and no family support system.

A mother was determined to surrender her infant stating she could not take the baby home with her because she does not want her father to know she was pregnant and had a baby. She declined to fill out any documentation or declare her ethnicity.

A mother who was from Bangladesh reported that the baby's father and her own family is not in her life. The hospital reported there were no family members or baby's father at the hospital when she delivered.

One Hispanic mother stated her pregnancy was a surprise to her and that she has other children currently in their father's care. She is currently separated from the baby's father. This mother later reclaimed her child and an assessment of the paternal family was initiated.

A Caucasian mother reported not having a job and caring for her own mother and an older child. She stated she is financially unable to take on the care of another child and her newborn's father is not involved.

A Hispanic mother reported her current family living situation is not ideal and reported being afraid of admitting her pregnancy to her family. She reported not being able to take her infant home. She also reported being undocumented and a victim of rape but does not believe the infant's conception is from the rape incident.

A young African American mother safely surrendered her infant due to not having the means to care for her infant, but reclaimed once she found her parents supportive and anxious to have her and her baby live with them at their home.

### Reclaiming

SB 1368 provides the parent or other surrendering party with a 14-day period in which he or she can seek to reclaim the surrendered infant.

In **2002**, one mother made an initial attempt to reclaim her child. In this case, the mother reportedly returned to the hospital where she had surrendered her child and asked about having the child returned to her care. As the child was already in the custody of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the mother was referred to DCFS to seek reclamation. Mother reportedly did not follow up and contact the Department.

In **2003**, one mother successfully reclaimed her infant. As DCFS had already taken temporary custody of the child and filed a petition with Juvenile Court, the DCFS Social Worker assessed the potential safety of the child and supported the mother's request to have the child returned to her care. At the detention hearing, the Juvenile Court returned the child to the mother. In a second case in 2003, a mother attempted to reclaim her child but the Juvenile Court declined her request due to safety concerns related to mother's long-standing and ongoing substance abuse problems. Although family reunification services were offered by the Court and DCFS, the mother did not avail herself of these services and her child was eventually adopted.

In **2004**, one mother successfully reclaimed her infant. As the Juvenile Court had not yet heard the petition, and the social worker recommended the infant be returned to the mother, the Court terminated the petition and returned the child to the mother two days after initial surrender.

In **2005**, although one mother and father returned to the hospital to see their infant, none of the surrendering parties made efforts to reclaim their infants.

In **2006**, one mother returned to the hospital to see her infant and expressed a desire to reclaim but never followed through. Another mother successfully reclaimed her infant. DCFS had already been contacted, but the social worker supported the mother's request to have her infant returned to her care.

In **2007**, two mothers had their infants returned after DCFS and the Juvenile Court were involved. For one of the cases, the Juvenile Court dismissed the petition and returned

the infant to the mother one month after initial surrender. The other mother had her infant returned and agreed to participate in the Voluntary Family Maintenance (VFM) Program through DCFS.

In **2008**, none of the surrendering mothers attempted to reclaim their infants. However, in one case, a man came forward after his girlfriend told him she had given birth and surrendered the infant. This man was not certain if he was the father so the Juvenile Court ordered a paternity test. However, no paternal link was revealed by the test results.

In **2009**, none of the surrendering mothers attempted to reclaim their infants. However, in one case, the mother identified herself and the man she believed to be the father. This man went to Juvenile Court and a paternity test was ordered. However, no paternal link was revealed by the test results.

In **2010**, one of the surrendering mothers attempted to reclaim her infant. However, it was learned that she had four other children under DCFS supervision and the Juvenile Court ordered Family Reunification services. Another case was also brought to the attention of the Juvenile Court after DCFS learned the infant tested positive for drugs. In this case, the court ordered Family Reunification but the mother did not take advantage of the services.

In **2011**, none of the surrendering mothers attempted to reclaim their infants.

In **2012**, one of the surrendering mothers successfully reclaimed her infant.

In **2013**, none of the surrendering mothers attempted to reclaim their infants.

In **2014**, three of the surrendering mothers reclaimed their infants.

In **2015**, two of the surrendering mothers asked to reclaim their infants. One of these mothers was receiving Family Reunification services through the Department of Children and Family Services at the time this report went to print. In the other case, the infant was returned.

In **2016**, one father of a surrendered infant came forward and the infant was placed in his care.

In **2017**, there were no surrendered infants reclaimed. All nine infants surrendered are on a pathway to adoption. As of the writing of this report, two of these infants' adoptions had been finalized.

In **2018**, of the fifteen newborns that were safely surrendered. Two were reclaimed. In both instances, the young mothers had a casual encounter with fathers with whom they who were no longer involved. The mothers disclosed feeling unprepared and unable to care for their newborns, they did not have stable housing and did not feel their family could support them. However, in both instances the babies were reclaimed once the mother's disclosed to their families and once their families offered support for their newborns.

In **2019**, a couple in their early 20s initially safely surrendered their baby because they felt they did not have the financial means to care for a baby. They reclaimed their baby the next day. Another young mother initially safely surrendered her baby because as a

2<sup>nd</sup> year college student, she wanted to focus on her education and felt that she did not have the financial means to appropriately care for her child. She too, reclaimed her baby by the next day.

In **2020**, there was no reclaiming information on the sixteen safely surrendered children being reclaimed. Except for one mother who left the hospital against medical advice, possibly due to drug use, then later returned asking for her baby, with her own mother and was advised to call DCFS.

In **2021**, a Caucasian mother was very clear on surrendering her baby due to being in a abusive relationship, she has a history of depression and PTSD. She suffered a mental crisis, and later reclaimed her infant, DCFS was notified.

A Hispanic mother who was separated from her infant's father and other children at the time of delivery, later reclaimed her child after receiving the support of her partner and paternal extended family.

A Hispanic mother who initially surrendered her infant in Whittier later reclaimed her baby girl and DCFS was notified for further assessment.

A twenty three year old African American mother who initially surrendered her infant later reclaimed him upon receiving the support of her own parents.

Of the four reclamations listed above, two may have been filed and detained by DCFS.

## Abandoned Infants

Unfortunately, despite the passage of SB 1368 allowing parents to safely surrender their newborns as of January 1, 2001, 67 infants were abandoned in an unsafe manner in the years 2001 – 2017. Eighteen of these infants survived while 49 were killed or left to die.

Data regarding the mothers and infants in these cases is limited by the nature of the act; mothers who illegally abandon and harm their children are likely to conceal their actions and identities. If law enforcement is unable to identify these mothers through their investigations, we have very little information about them. When mothers who have abandoned their infants are identified, the information we receive is often limited by what information they are willing to provide, especially in light of efforts made on their behalf to defend them in criminal actions.

Data are collected for infants that survive abandonment – “Abandoned Surviving Infants” and those infants who do not survive abandonment – “Abandoned Deceased Infants.”

These terms are defined, as follows:

### Abandoned Surviving Infants

For data collection purposes and consistency across County Departments involved with safely surrendered children, the following criteria were established to define an abandoned surviving infant. In Los Angeles County, an abandoned surviving baby is defined as:

- under 72 hours of age AND
- abandoned in a public location (e.g., dumpsters, alleys, rail yards, residence steps, stairwells, etc.) OR
- abandoned in a private location (e.g., hidden and/or abandoned in private residence closets, bathtubs, wastebaskets, etc.) AND survives.

Excluded from data collection as abandoned surviving infants are:

- infants “abandoned” in the care of persons, even those who are strangers to the parent
- infants left in hospitals after birth by mothers who fail to make plans for their care (i.e., “boarder babies”)

### Abandoned Deceased Infants

For purposes of data collection, an abandoned deceased infant in Los Angeles County is defined as:

- under 72 hours of age AND
- killed (e.g., asphyxiated, stabbed, etc.) in a public (e.g., dumpster, alley, rail yard, residence steps, stairwell, ocean, etc.) or private (e.g., private residence closet, bathtub, wastebasket, etc.) location OR
- died from abandonment (e.g., dehydration, hyper/hypothermia, etc.) in a public or private location

### Abandoned Infants 2002-2021 Gender

Between 2002 and 2021, 70 infants were abandoned in Los Angeles County, as follows:

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Female	6	4	7	2	4	2	1	2	2	1	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	38
Male	7	4	1	2	4	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	3	0	1	0	0	1	32

### Abandoned Infants 2002-2021 Ethnicity

Between 2002 and 2021, 70 infants were abandoned in Los Angeles County, as follows:

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Hispanic	7	2	4	2	5	2	2	1			1	1	1	1	1		1			1	32
African American	4	1		1	1			1	1		1		0	3							13
Caucasian	1	1	2	1	1			1	2	1			1	1							12
Asian/Pac Islander		2	1*			1									1						5
Unknown	1	2	1		1						1				1				1		8

\*Filipina mother and Hispanic father

**Abandonment Sites** - (These were sites where infants were found and abandoned, both surviving and deceased.)

**2002 (n=13)**

2 infants were located in private residences (one hidden under a bathroom sink and one left in a toilet).

3 infants were found in dumpsters (one child survived).

2 infants were discovered at recycling centers. (It should be noted that one of these infants was known to have been born in a K-Mart bathroom and left in a trash can at the store).

1 infant was found in a paper bag in a hospital parking lot (this child survived).

1 infant was found hidden in bushes (this child survived).

1 infant was found in a diaper box on a residential doorstep (this child survived).

1 infant was buried in a vacant field.

1 infant washed ashore in a plastic bag.

**2003 (n=8)**

4 infants were located in private residences (one in a suitcase, one hidden in a closet, one on front porch steps, and one found in the back yard) (child found on front porch steps was well wrapped and survived).

2 infants were found in dumpsters.

1 infant was found in the ocean.

1 infant was found at the entrance of a church.

**2004 (n=8)**

4 infants were located in private residences (one under a bed, one in an apartment crawl space, on in a front yard, and one on back steps) (child found in front yard was wrapped in towels and survived).

4 infants were found in dumpsters.

**2005 (n=4)**

1 infant was found in the street in front of a church.

1 infant was found in a dumpster.

1 infant was found on the ground in front of a dumpster.

1 infant died at home, and was taken to a fire station.

**2006 (n=8)**

3 infants were found in a private residence (one in a closet in a shoebox, one in a bath tub and one in an undisclosed location).

2 infants were found in a parking structure.

1 infant was found next to railroad tracks.

1 infant was found in a dumpster.

1 infant was found in a trashcan outside a private residence.

**2007 (n=3)**

All 3 infants were found in a private residence (one hidden on a bathroom shelf, one in a laundry basket, and one found partially delivered in the mother's pants).

**2008 (n=2)**

Both infants were found in a private residence (one in the garage, the other in a bathroom).

**2009 (n=3)**

2 infants were found in a bathroom toilet in a private residence.  
1 infant was taken to a fire station and left in a cardboard box.

**2010 (n=3)**

2 infants were found in a private residence (one in a waste basket inside the home, the other in a trash barrel set out at the curb).  
1 infant was found in a dumpster.

**2011 (n=1)**

1 infant was found in a bathroom toilet in a private residence.

**2012 (n=3)**

2 infants were located in private residences (one in the bathroom trash bag, the other on a bed).  
1 infant was found in a waste collection center.

**2013 (n=1)**

1 infant was found in a trash barrel set out on the street nearby mother's private residence.

**2014 (n=2)**

1 infant was found by paramedics and taken to the hospital.  
1 infant was found in an alley wrapped in a garbage bag.

**2015 (n=5)**

1 infant was found laying on a table cloth in a bank parking lot.  
1 infant was found left in a stroller at a street intersection.  
1 infant was left in a wash.  
1 infant was found in a hole hidden under some boulders.  
1 decapitated infant was found buried in the backyard of a private residence.

**2016 (n=3)**

1 infant was left at the front door of a private residence.  
1 infant was found face up in a bathroom toilet at a fast food restaurant.  
1 infant was found in an alleyway in Long Beach with evidence of trauma from a possible collision.

**2017 (n=0)**

**2018 (n=1)**

1 infant was located crying on the ground of a parking lot.

**2019 (n=0)**

There were no reports of abandoned infants in 2019.

**2020 (n=1)**

On March 5, 2020, one female deceased abandoned infant was found on the floor of a bathroom at Holly Street Park in Pasadena. It was not be determined if this was a stillborn or a baby that did not survive abandonment.

**2021 (n=1)**

One male infant was found alive in the women's bathroom at Yvonne Burke Park in Lynwood

**Locations of Abandonments –  
Geographic Area**

**2002 (n=13)**

\*1 infant was abandoned in Canoga Park (91307)  
 1 infant was found in Carson (90248)  
 1 infant was found in City of Industry (91733 – although the infant was found in recycled trash that originated in Azusa)  
 1 infant was found in Long Beach (zip code not provided)  
 1 infant was abandoned in Los Angeles (90011)  
 \*1 infant was abandoned in Los Angeles (90011)  
 1 infant was abandoned in Los Angeles (90021)  
 1 infant was abandoned in Los Angeles (90002 – although mother gave birth in Los Angeles, 90043)  
 \*1 infant was abandoned in Los Angeles (“Florence area”)  
 \*1 infant was abandoned in Monrovia (91016)  
 1 infant was found in Palmdale (93551).  
 \*1 infant was abandoned in Panorama City (zip code not provided)  
 1 infant was found in Moreno Valley (although mother lived in Inglewood, 90303).

**2003 (n=8)**

1 infant was found in Carson (90745)  
 \*1 infant was found in Los Angeles (90037)  
 1 infant was found in Los Angeles (90023)  
 1 infant was found in Los Angeles (90043)  
 1 infant was found in Marina del Rey (90252)  
 1 infant was found in Northridge (91343)  
 1 infant was found in Santa Clarita (91321)  
 1 infant was found in Westchester (90045)

**2004 (n=8)**

1 infant was found in Long Beach (90808)  
 1 infant was found in Los Angeles (90007)  
 1 infant was found in Los Angeles (90023)  
 \*1 infant was found in Los Angeles (90038)  
 1 infant was found in Pacoima (91331)  
 1 infant was found in San Dimas (91773)  
 1 infant was found in Sylmar (91342)  
 1 infant was found in Whittier (90606)

**2005 (n=4)**

1 infant was found in Carson (90745)  
 1 infant was found in Lancaster (93534)  
 1 infant was found in Los Angeles (90007)  
 1 infant was found in Los Angeles (90018)

**2006 (n=8)**

1 infant was found in Alhambra (91803)  
 1 infant was found in Hollywood (90068)  
 1 infant was found in Lancaster (93535)  
 1 infant was found in Los Angeles (90002)  
 1 infant was found in Montebello (90640)  
 1 infant was found in Newhall (91321)  
 \*1 infant was found in Pico Rivera (90660)  
 \*1 infant was found in Van Nuys (91405)

**2007 (n=3)**

1 infant was found in Lakewood (90713)  
 2 infants were found in Los Angeles (90001 & 90005)

**2007 (n=3)**

1 infant was found in Lakewood (90713)  
 2 infants were found in Los Angeles (90001 & 90005)

**2008 (n=2)**

1 infant was found in Lancaster (93535)  
 1 infant was found in Van Nuys (91405)

**2009 (n=3)**

1 infant was found in Claremont (91711)  
\*1 infant was found in Paramount (90723)  
1 infant was found in Pomona (91766)

**2010 (n=3)**

1 infant was found in Lake View Terrace (91342)  
1 infant was found in Redondo Beach (90277)  
1 infant was found in Studio City (91607)

**2011 (n=1)**

1 infant was found in Littlerock (93534)

**2012 (n=3)**

1 infant was found in the City of Industry (91746)  
1 infant was found in Long Beach (90813)  
1 infant was found in Los Angeles (90044)

**2013 (n=1)**

1 infant was found in South El Monte (91733)

**2014 (n=2)**

\*1 infant was found in Long Beach (90801)  
\*1 infant was found in San Pedro (90731)

**2015 (n=5)**

\*1 infant was found in Compton (90222)  
\*1 infant was found in Lakewood (90712)  
\*1 infant was found in Los Angeles (90007)  
1 infant was found in Los Angeles (90047)  
\*1 infant was found in Santa Clarita (91321)

**2016 (n=3)**

\*1 infant was found in Inglewood (90304)  
\*1 infant was found in West Covina (91792)  
1 infant was found in Long Beach

**2017 (n=0)**

**2018 (n=1)**

1 infant was found in Whittier (90602)

**2019 (n=0)**

There were no reports of abandoned infants in 2019

**2020 (n=1)**

1 infant found in Pasadena, (91103)

**2021 (n=1)**

1 infant found in Lynwood, (90262)

## Dates of Abandonments

### **2002 (n=13)**

- 2 infants were found in January (1/5 & \*1/20/02)
- 2 infants were found in February (\*2/4 & 2/9/02)
- 3 infants were found in June (6/10, \*6/13 and \*6/30/02)
- 2 infants were found in July (7/2 and 7/9/02)
- 1 infant was found in November (11/16/02)
- 3 infants were found in December (12/10, 12/10 & \*12/16/02)

### **2003 (n=8)**

- 1 infant was found in January (1/28/03)
- 2 infants were found in February (2/4 and 2/12/03)
- 1 infant was found in May (5/3/03)
- 1 infant was found in June (\*6/27/03)
- 1 infant was found in August (8/11/03)
- 1 infant was found in October (10/26/03)
- 1 infant was found in December (12/31/03)

### **2004 (n=8)**

- 2 infants were found in January (\*1/13 and 1/25/04)
- 1 infant was found in April (4/22/04)
- 1 infant was found in May (5/31/04)
- 2 infants were found in September (9/22 and 9/30/04)
- 1 infant was found in November (11/10/04)
- 1 infant was found in December (12/22/04)

### **2005 (n=4)**

- 1 infant was found in January (1/9/05)
- 1 infant was found in September (9/24/05)
- 1 infant was found in October (10/10/05)
- 1 infant was found in November (11/26/05)

### **2006 (n=8)**

- 1 infant was found in January (1/30/06)
- 1 infant was found in March (3/12/06)
- 1 infant was found in May (5/2/06)
- 2 infants were found in June (6/11 and \*6/13/06)
- 1 infant was found in September (\*9/15/06)
- 1 infant was found in October (10/13/06)

**2014 (n=2)**

1 infant was found in February (\*2/23/14)  
1 infant was found in March (\*3/7/14)

**2015 (n=5)**

1 infant was found in February (\*2/8/15)  
1 infant was found in April (4/25/15)  
2 infants were found in August (\*8/4 & \*8/11/15)  
1 infant was found in December (\*12/8/15)

**2016 (n=2)**

1 infant was found in January (\*1/27/16)  
1 infant was found in February (\*2/15/16)

**2017 (n=0)**

N/A

**2018 (n=1)**

not applicable, the abandoned infant survived

**2019 (n=0)**

N/A

**2020 (n=1)**

1 infant found in March (3/5/2020)

**2021 (n=1)**

1 infant found in June (6/11/2021)

**Abandoned Deceased Infants - Cause of Death per Coroner**

**2002 (n=8)**

2 - pneumonia, chorioamnionitis and other undetermined factors  
2 - asphyxia & other undetermined causes  
1 - multiple blunt injuries  
1 - multiple traumatic injuries  
1 - exsanguination & possible suffocation  
1 - cause not established

**2003 (n= 7)**

- 3 - asphyxia
- 1 - head trauma and other undetermined factors
- 1 - peripartum fetal demise
- 1 - perinatal demise – caretaker neglect
- 1 - lack of peripartum care

**2004 (n=7)**

- 2 - asphyxia
- 1 - perinatal demise and congenital pneumonia and other undetermined factors
- 1 - peripartum demise, meconium/amniotic fluid aspiration and other undetermined factors
- 1 - traumatic head injuries
- 1 - on security hold, unable to obtain information
- 1 - body never found

**2005 (n=4)**

- 1 - asphyxia, amniotic material aspiration, and other undetermined factors
- 1 - peripartum demise, prematurity and other factors
- 1 - peripartum demise, probable asphyxia and other unestablished factors
- 1 - body never found

**2006 (n=6)**

- 1 - asphyxiation, neck compression and possible hypothermia
- 1 - inflicted antemortem blunt head trauma
- 1 - blunt force trauma to the head and other undetermined factors
- 1 - peripartum demise, asphyxia and other unestablished factors
- 1 - asphyxia and blunt force trauma
- 1 - cause not established

**2007 (n=3)**

- 1 - postpartum demise, probable asphyxia, and other unestablished factors
- 1 - peripartum demise, head trauma, and asphyxia
- 1 - asphyxia and strangulation

**2008 (n=2)**

- 1 - peripartum demise, asphyxia, and other unestablished factors
- 1 - peripartum demise, placenta abruption, and other undetermined factors.

**2009 (n=2)**

- 1 - postpartum demise from asphyxia
- 1 – pneumonia associated with amniotic fluid aspiration, near drowning, chorioamnionitis, funisitis, and other factors

**2010 (n=3)**

- 1 – asphyxia by ligature strangulation
- 1 – prematurity trauma and other unestablished factors
- 1 – perinatal demise, probable asphyxia, and other undetermined factors

**2011 (n=1)**

- 1 – perinatal demise, probable asphyxia, and other undetermined factors

**2012 (n=3)**

- 2 – perinatal demise, placenta abruption and other undetermined factors
- 1 – blunt head trauma

**2013 (n=1)**

- 1 – perinatal asphyxia, and blunt force head trauma

**2014 (=0)**

**2015 (n=1)**

- 1 unattended newborn

**2016 (n=1)**

- 1 Undetermined

**2017 (n=0)**

**2018 (n=0)**

**2019 (n=0)**

**2020: 1 undetermined**

**2021: the abandoned infant survived**

**Final modes of Death, per Coroner**

**2002:** 7 Homicide and 1 Undetermined

**2003:** 7 Homicide

**2004:** 4 Homicide, 2 Undetermined, 1 body never found, 1 on security hold

**2005:** 2 Homicide, 1 Undetermined, 1 body never found

**2005:** 6 Homicide

- 2006:** 6 Homicide
- 2007:** 3 Homicide
- 2008:** 1 Homicide and 1 Undetermined
- 2009:** 2 Homicide
- 2010:** 3 Homicide
- 2011:** 1 Undetermined
- 2012:** 1 Homicide and 2 Undetermined
- 2013:** 1 Homicide
- 2014:** Both infants survived
- 2015:** 1 Undetermined
- 2016:** 1 Undetermined
- 2017:** None
- 2018:** the abandoned infant survived
- 2019:** None
- 2020:** 1 undetermined
- 2021:** not applicable, the abandoned infant survived

## Mothers Who Abandoned Their Infants

It should be noted that it is inherently difficult to obtain data about mothers who abandon their infants. It is likely that because a crime has been committed, they do not wish to be identified. Complicated by the likelihood that when they are located and identified by law enforcement and subsequently charged with a crime, they are often advised by their counsel not to disclose information about their pregnancies and the circumstances surrounding the abandonment of their infants. What information we do have about the mothers who abandoned their infants has been collected from interviews with law enforcement, who may have had contact with them as well as from Coroner records.

Abandoned Infants 2002-2021 Mother's Age																					
	2002 (n=13)	2003 (n=8)	2004 (n=8)	2005 (n=4)	2006 (n=8)	2007 (n=3)	2008 (n=2)	2009 (n=3)	2010 (n=3)	2011 (n=1)	2012 (n=3)	2013 (n=1)	2014 (n=2)	2015 (n=5)	2016 (n=2)	2017 (n=0)	2018 (n=)	2019 (n=)	2020 (n=0)	2021 (n=0)	
	1 16- year old	1 16- year old	1 15- year old	1 17- year old	1 17- year old	1 20- year old	1 29- year old	1 17- year old	1 18- year old	1 35- year old	1 18- year old	1 18- year old	1 "32- year old"	1 20- year old	1 35- year old	None	1 47- year old	None			
	1 17- year old	1 22- year old	1 18- year old	1 21- year old	1 18- year old	1 23- year old	1 18- year old	1 32- year old	1 21- year old		1 22- year old		1 18- year old	1 30- year old	1 1 Unk						
	1 21- year old	6 Unk	1 19- year old	1 32- year old	1 23- year old	1 25- year old		1 1 Unk	1 24- year old		1 1 Unk			3 Unk							
	1 28- year old		1 23- year old	1 1 Unk	1 28- year old																
	1 34- year old		1 26- year old		1 30- year old																
	8 Unk		3 Unk		1 39- year old																
					1 41- year old																
					1 Unk																

Abandoned Infants 2002-2021																			
Mother's Ethnicity																			
2002 (n=13)	2003 (n=8)	2004 (n=8)	2005 (n=4)	2006 (n=8)	2007 (n=3)	2008 (n=2)	2009 (n=3)	2010 (n=3)	2011 (n=1)	2012 (n=3)	2013 (n=1)	2014 (n=2)	2015 (n=5)	2016 (n=2)	2017 (n=0)	2018 (n=1)	2019 (n=0)	2020 (n=1)	2021 (n=1)
4 African Am.	2 Asian/ Pac Isl.	2 Hisp.	1 Hisp.	4 Hisp	2 Hisp	2 Hisp	1 Hisp.	2 Cauc.	1 Cauc.	1 African Am.	1 Hisp.	1 Cauc.	2 African Am.	1 Asian/ Pac Isl.	None	Hisp	None	1 Hisp.	
3 Hisp.	6 Unk	2 Cauc.	1 Cauc.	1 Cauc.	1 Asian/ Pac Isl.		1 African Am.	1 African Am.		1 Hisp.		1 Hisp.	1 Hisp.	2 Unk					
1 Cauc.		1 Asian/ Pac Isl.	1 African Am.	1 African Am.			1 Unk.			1 Unk.			1 Cauc.						
5 Unk.		3 Unk	1 Unk	2 Unk									1 Unk						1 Unk

## Marital Status

In **2002**, marital status was unknown for 8 of the 13 cases of infant abandonment. Of those with known status, 4 mothers were single and one was married at the time of abandonment.

In **2003**, marital status was unknown for 6 of the 8 cases of infant abandonment. Two mothers were single at the time of abandonment.

In **2004**, marital status was unknown for 3 of the 8 cases of infant abandonment. Those five **with** known status were reportedly single, with one mother indicating she was in a common-law marriage.

In **2005**, marital status was unknown for 1 of the 4 cases of infant abandonment; three mothers were reportedly single at the time of abandonment.

In **2006**, marital status was unknown for 4 of the 8 cases of infant abandonment. The other four mothers were reportedly single at the time of abandonment.

In **2007**, marital status was unknown for all 3 cases of infant abandonment. In 2008, marital status was unknown for both cases of infant abandonment.

In **2009**, marital status was unknown for 2 of the 3 cases of infant abandonment. The other mother was reportedly single.

In **2010**, marital status was unknown for all 3 cases of infant abandonment.

In **2011**, the one known mother was married and living with her husband at the time of abandonment.

In **2012**, marital status was unknown for all 3 cases of infant abandonment. In 2013, marital status was unknown for the 1 case of infant abandonment.

In **2014**, marital status was unknown for the both cases of infant abandonment.

In **2015**, marital status was unknown for 4 cases of infant abandonment. The other mother was reportedly single.

In **2016**, marital status was unknown for the 3 cases of infant abandonment.

In **2017**, not applicable, as there were no known infant abandonments.

In **2018**, the marital status was unknown for the infant abandonment case. Mother denied having other children but officials confirmed a prior instance of a similar abandonment in 2016. It was also confirmed that mother has had two other children, one who is a young adult, both reside with their father with whom she had a prior relationship.

In **2019**, not applicable as there were no known infant abandonments this year.

In **2020**, the marital status of the woman who abandoned her infant is unknown.

In **2021**, the marital status of the woman who abandoned her infant is unmarried.

## Involvement of Fathers

As with safe surrenders, we know very little about the involvement of fathers in these cases of infant abandonment. In **2002**, four fathers were identified as mother's boyfriend; one of these fathers was aware of the pregnancy and abandonment and three were not. In **2003**, one father was identified as mother's ex-boyfriend. In **2004**, two fathers were identified as boyfriends, one father was identified as a common-law husband, and in one case mother indicated that the father could be one of two males. In **2005**, one father was identified as a boyfriend. This boyfriend was supportive of his girlfriend's full-term pregnancy. He became alarmed and contacted law enforcement when she was no longer pregnant and provided conflicting statements as to what happened to the baby. In **2006**, one father was identified as the mother's boyfriend. In **2007**, and in **2008**, none of the fathers were identified. In **2009**, one father lived with the mother but it is unclear if he knew about the pregnancy. In **2010**, one father was with the mother when she gave birth and was identified as the mother's boyfriend. In **2011**, one known father was identified as the mother's husband. In **2012**, none of the fathers were identified. In **2013**, the father was identified as the mother's boyfriend. In **2014**, neither father was identified. In **2015**, two of the four fathers were identified. One of the fathers was identified as the mother's boyfriend. Another father was identified but was unclear as to his relationship with the mother. In **2016** and **2017**, and **2018** there were no identified fathers. In **2020** and in **2021**, there is no information pertaining to the fathers of infants that were found abandoned.

## Other Children

In **2002**, three mothers had no other children, one mother had one other child, and one mother had five older children.

In **2003**, two mothers had no other children; there is no information on the remaining 6 mothers.

In **2004**, four mothers had no other children; there is no information on the status of the remaining 6 mothers.

In **2005**, two mothers had no other children, and one mother had three other children. Nothing is known about the other two mothers who abandoned their infants.

In **2006**, one mother had no other children, one mother had five older children, one mother had four older children, one mother had two older children, and one mother had six older children. Nothing is known about the other three mothers who abandoned their infants.

In **2007**, two mothers had no other children, and one mother had three older children living in another country.

In **2008**, one mother had three other children, and nothing is known about the other mother.

In **2009**, nothing is known about the three mothers.

In **2010**, two mothers had no other children, and nothing is known about the other mother.

In **2011**, the one mother had an older daughter.

In **2012**, one mother had an older child, and there is no information on the remaining two mothers.

In **2013**, the one mother had a two-year old daughter.

In **2014**, one mother had a twelve-year old daughter, and nothing is known about the other mother.

In **2015**, one mother had two older children living in another country. Another mother had five older children all of whom were known to child protective services, and nothing is known about the other three mothers.

In **2016**, nothing is known about any of the mothers.

In **2017**, this is not applicable, as there were no reported abandonments.

In **2018**, the mother who abandoned her infant has a history of one prior abandonment in 2016. This infant was also left in similar circumstances but also survived and is in the process of adoption. It was also confirmed that she had two other children from a prior relationship. Her oldest is now an adult, and the other a teen, both of her prior children are in the care of their father.

In **2019**, this is not applicable as there were no known abandoned infants this year.

In both **2020** and **2021**, there is no information on siblings or other children of the infants that were abandoned.

## Family Circumstances

### 2002

For 8 of the 13 cases of abandonment, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 5, the following was reported:

One single 16-year old had no other children and lived with her aunt.

One single 17-year old lived with her parents and three younger siblings. She had no other children.

One single 21-year old resided with her aunt and uncle who had raised her since birth when she was placed with them by the Department of Children and Family Services due to her mother's substance abuse problems. She had no other children.

One single 28-year old lived with her mother, father and six-year old daughter.

One divorced 34-year old lived alone with her five children.

## **2003**

For 6 of the 8 cases of abandonment, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 2, the following was reported:

One single 16-year old lived with her adoptive parents; she had no other children.

One single 23-year old lived by herself in a rented house; she had no other children.

## **2004**

For 3 of the 8 cases of abandonment, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 5, the following was reported:

One single 15-year old lived with her mother, her mother's boyfriend and her younger half-sibling; she had no other children.

One single 18-year old lived with her adult brother. They were immigrants from the Phillipines and their parents remained back in their home country. She had no other children.

One single 19-year old college student lived in an apartment near campus with a roommate. She had no other children.

One single 23-year old college student had no other children and resided with her parents.

One 26-year old lived with her common-law husband and her 5-year old daughter.

## **2005**

For one of the 4 cases of abandonment, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 3, the following was reported:

One single 17-year old lived with her mother and sisters. She had no other children.

One single 21-year old college student lived in an apartment near campus with a roommate. Although she is reported to have no other children, law enforcement suspects that she previously abandoned a live infant in 2004.

One single 32-year old lived with her father and her own three children.

## **2006**

For 4 of the 8 cases of abandonment, we know nothing of the mother's family situation. For the remaining 4, the following was reported:

One single 17-year old had no other children and lived with her mother.

One single 41-year old had six older children to whom she had lost her parental

rights.

One single 23-year old resided with her boyfriend and her two children.

One single 39-year old lived with her five children.

### **2007**

For the 3 cases of abandonment, the following was reported:

One 20-year old lived with her parents.

One 23-year old college student lived with her parents

One 25-year old lived in a very small studio apartment with four adult family members.

### **2008**

For 1 of the 2 cases of abandonment, we know nothing of the mother's family circumstances. For the other 1, the following was reported:

One 29-year old lived with her mother and her own three children.

For 1 of the 3 cases of abandonment, we know nothing of the mother's family circumstances. For the other 2, the following was reported:

One 32-year old lived with the baby's father.

One 17-year old lived at home with her mother and grandfather.

### **2010**

For 1 of the 3 cases of abandonment, we know nothing of the mother's family circumstances. For the other 2, the following was reported:

One 24-year old lived with her family.

One 18-year old college student lived with her parents.

### **2011**

For the 1 case of abandonment, the following was reported:

One 35-year old, who suffered from a disability, lived with her husband and older daughter.

### **2012**

For 1 of the 3 cases of abandonment, we know nothing of the mother's family circumstances. For the other 2, the following was reported:

One 22-year old lived with her mother. One 18-year old lived with her mother.

**2013**

For the 1 case of abandonment, the following was reported:

One 21-year old lived with her two-year old daughter, four brothers, her mother and her mother's boyfriend.

**2014**

For 1 of the 2 cases of abandonment, the following was reported:

One 32-year old was homeless.

**2015**

For 3 of the 5 cases of abandonment, the following was reported:

One mother was mentally ill and had two other children living in another country.

One 30-year old was homeless.

One single mother, of an unknown age, was homeless.

**2016**

For all 3 cases of abandonment, nothing was reported.

**2017**

Not applicable

**2018**

Not applicable

**2019**

Not applicable

In **2020**, there is no information pertaining to the infant that was found at Holly St. Park in Pasadena

In **2021**, the mother who abandoned her infant is sharing an apartment with a family. It is unknown if they are related. It is believed she is a recent immigrant from another country, there was no clear information pertaining to her family situation.

## Awareness of the Safely Surrendered Law (SSBL)

In **2002**, two mothers who abandoned their infants claimed they did not know about SSBL; one of these mothers indicated that she would have “done things differently” had she been aware of the Law. In **2003**, one mother stated she had no knowledge of the Law. In **2004**, one mother denied knowledge of the Law to the District Attorney. One mother was reportedly aware of the Law and had told a friend she intended to surrender her baby. It is unknown why she did not follow through with this plan and, instead, abandoned her infant. One mother stated that she had read about the Law in her local paper, but she denied she had been pregnant and given birth. In **2005**, it is known that one mother who abandoned her infant had been previously informed of the Law. This mother is suspected of abandoning another infant in **2004**; at that time, she was advised of the existence of the Law. It is unknown why she did not take advantage of the Law and, instead, abandoned her infant. In **2006 to 2016**, it is unknown whether any of the mothers who abandoned their infants had awareness of the Law. There were no reported abandonments in **2017**. In **2018**, there was one mother who abandoned her male newborn in Whittier, she has a prior history of abandoning her newborn. She was detained and remains in custody. In **2020**, there is no information pertaining to the mother or father of the infant found at Holly St. Park in Pasadena. In **2021**, the mother who abandoned her infant is sharing an apartment with a family. It is unknown if they are related. There was no clear information pertaining to the woman’s family situation. It appeared she is from another country and is not familiar or aware of the laws of this country. She was not aware of the SSBL and according to the Detective investigating the case, given her attempts to cover up her infant with trash, clothes and trash bin cover, she would be detained and prosecuted.

## Employment

In **2002**, mother’s employment status was unknown in 9 of the 13 cases of infant abandonment. One mother was a high school student, one was a college student, one was an elementary school aid, and one worked at a day care center.

In **2003**, mother’s employment status was unknown in 6 of the 8 cases of infant abandonment. One mother was identified as a high school student, and one mother worked in a retail clothing store.

In **2004**, mother’s employment status was unknown in 3 of the 8 cases of infant abandonment. Two mothers were high school students, two were college students, and one worked in a dress shop.

In **2005**, mother’s employment status was unknown in 2 of the 4 cases of infant abandonment. One mother was a high school student, and the other was a college student.

In **2006**, mother’s employment status was unknown for 6 of the 8 cases of infant abandonment. One mother worked at a supermarket and the other was employed but specific details unknown.

In **2007**, mother’s employment status was unknown for all 3 cases of infant abandonment.

In **2008** through **2016**, mother's employment status was unknown for all cases of infant abandonment. The mother who abandoned her infant in December of **2018** was homeless, with a chronic history of homelessness, illicit drug use, and criminal activity, it was likely that she was not employed. In **2020**, there is no information pertaining to the mother or father of the infant found at Holly St. Park in Pasadena. In **2021**, the mother who abandoned her infant is sharing an apartment with a family. It is unknown if they are related. There was no clear information pertaining her family situation, employment status, religious affiliation or domestic violence. It appeared she is from another country and is not familiar or aware of the laws of this country. She was not aware of the SSBL and according to the Detective investigating the case, given her attempts to cover up her infant with trash, clothes and trash bin cover, she would be detained and prosecuted

### Religious Affiliation

In both **2002** and **2003**, two of the mothers who abandoned their infants were identified as practicing the Catholic faith. In **2004**, one mother who abandoned her infant was identified as Catholic. No information is known about the religious affiliation of the mothers who abandoned their infants in **2005** to **2016**. There were no reported abandonments in **2017**. The religious affiliation of the mother who abandoned her infant in **2018**, is unknown. There were no reported abandonments in **2019**. In **2020**, there is no information pertaining to the mother or father of the infant found at Holly St. Park in Pasadena. In **2021**, the mother who abandoned her infant is sharing an apartment with a family. It is unknown if they are related. There was no clear information pertaining her family situation, employment status, religious affiliation or domestic violence. It appeared she is from another country and is not familiar or aware of the laws of this country. She was not aware of the SSBL and according to the Detective investigating the case, given her attempts to cover up her infant with trash, clothes and trash bin cover, she would be detained and prosecuted

### History of Domestic Violence

There is no reported history of domestic violence for the mothers in these cases of infant abandonment between **2002 – 2016**, but obtaining this information is difficult at best. This does not apply to **2017** as there were no reported abandonments. A history of domestic violence in the case of the **2018** abandoned baby was not reported. This field does not apply in **2019**, as there were no known abandoned infants this year. In **2020**, there is no information pertaining to the mother or father of the infant found at Holly St. Park in Pasadena. In **2021**, the mother who abandoned her infant is sharing an apartment with a family. It is unknown if they are related. There was no clear information pertaining her family situation, employment status, religious affiliation or domestic violence. It appeared she is from another country and is not familiar or aware of the laws of this country. She was not aware of the SSBL and according to the Detective investigating the case, given her attempts to cover up her infant with trash, clothes and trash bin cover, she would be detained and prosecuted

## History of Substance Abuse

In **2002**, one mother admitted to using marijuana during her pregnancy and one deceased infant tested positive for the “products of cocaine.” There is no information on substance abuse for mothers who abandoned their infants in **2003** and **2004**. In **2005**, one mother who abandoned her infant had a long-standing history of methamphetamine abuse. In **2006**, one mother who abandoned her infant is reported to have had a history of methamphetamine and amphetamine abuse. There is no information on substance abuse for mothers who abandoned their infants in **2007** to **2013**. In **2014**, one mother had a history of amphetamine use. In **2015**, one mother who abandoned her infant is reported to have had a history of drug abuse. In **2016**, one mother who abandoned her infant is reported to have had a history of drug abuse. In **2018**, the mother who abandoned her infant has a chronic history of substance abuse. This was confirmed by hospital staff who reported having seen her come into the hospital under the influence. Her prior history indicates she has tested positive for marijuana and methamphetamines. While at the hospital mother confirmed a history of marijuana, amphetamines, nicotine, and cocaine. In **2020**, there is no information pertaining to the mother or father of the infant found at Holly St. Park in Pasadena. In **2021**, the mother who abandoned her infant is sharing an apartment with a family. It is unknown if they are related. There was no clear information pertaining her family situation, employment status, religious affiliation or domestic violence. It appeared she is from another country and is not familiar or aware of the laws of this country. She was not aware of the SSBL and according to the Detective investigating the case, given her attempts to cover up her infant with trash, clothes and trash bin cover, she would be detained and prosecuted

## Reason to Abandon

### **2002**

Four of the mothers who abandoned their infants in 2002 indicated that they had hidden their pregnancies from family and friends. One such mother indicated that she didn’t want to “burden” her other children by having a sixth child. Another expressed fear that her aunt and uncle with whom she lived would “kick her out” if they learned she was pregnant, and one woman stated that her family would be “mad” at her. Finally, one young mother stated, “after his birth, I wasn’t thinking at all. I didn’t know how to think. I couldn’t get myself to think. . . I didn’t want to tell him (her father). All he asked was that I finished school. I’m thinking it was my fault.”

### **2003**

The motivation to abandon her infant is known for only one mother in 2003. This mother stated that she hid her pregnancy and abandoned her infant as she did not want to “disgrace” her family.

### **2004**

One mother who abandoned her infant in 2004 stated that she hid her pregnancy as she was afraid her brother would become angry and make her leave their home if he discovered that she had been sexually active. A second mother indicated that she did not want to disappoint her mother.

### **2005**

One mother admitted that she had concealed her pregnancy from family and friends but did not provide an explanation as to why she did this or why she abandoned her infant. A second mother concealed her pregnancy from her father with whom she lived, but did not hide her pregnancy from her boyfriend (the infant's father) or her friends. She provided no explanation for her actions in concealing her pregnancy from her father or abandoning her newborn shortly after birth.

### **2006**

One mother admitted that she had concealed her pregnancy from co-workers but did not provide an explanation as to why she did this or why she abandoned her infant. A second mother concealed her pregnancy from everyone but the baby's biological father but abandoned the infant because she was afraid that the father would not support her if she kept the baby.

### **2007**

One mother disclosed that she had concealed her pregnancy from her family members with whom she lived. A second mother denied that she was pregnant and stated that she was unaware of what was occurring when she gave birth.

### **2008**

The motivation to abandon her infant is known for only one of the two mothers in 2008. This mother stated she wanted to keep her pregnancy a secret because after her third child was born, her mother, told her not to have any more children.

### **2009**

One mother stated she was unaware she was pregnant. Nothing is known about the other two mothers' motivation to abandon their infants.

### **2010**

One mother stated she was unaware she was pregnant. Another mother admitted to concealing her pregnancy. Nothing is known about the other mothers' motivation to abandon her infant.

**2011**

The one mother stated she was in denial about her pregnancy.

**2012**

Two of the mothers denied being pregnant when asked by their family. Nothing is known about the other mother's motivation to abandon her infant.

**2013**

The one mother reported that the infant was born with the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck. After efforts to resuscitate were unsuccessful, the mother disposed of the infant's body.

**2014**

One mother stated that she was homeless and has had other children removed by protective services. Nothing is known about the other mother's motivation to abandon her infant.

**2015**

One mother was mentally ill and stated that she did not realize that she had given birth. A second mother was homeless and abandoned her infant right after giving birth.

**2016**

Nothing is known about either mothers' motivation to abandonment their infant.

**2017**

There were no reported abandonments in 2017.

**2018**

Nothing is known about mothers' motivation to abandon her infant, but she has a chronic history of excessive drug use.

**2019**

This is not applicable this year, as there were no known abandonments in 2019.

**2020**

There is no information pertaining to the mother or father of the infant found at Holly St. Park in Pasadena

**2021**

The mother is a recent immigrant and is unfamiliar with U.S Laws. She was unable to provide care for her infant and didn't know what to do when she gave birth to him.

## Explanation of SSBL Data Elements

- **ID No.** – Assigned by ICAN for data base tracking purposes
- **ID Year** – year of surrender/abandonment
- **Entry Date** – date ICAN enters data into the data base
- **Type** – Safely Surrendered, Abandoned Alive or Abandoned Deceased
- **Child Name** – Child’s name and AKAs
- **Event Date** – Date of surrender or abandonment
- **Address** – address of surrender or abandonment (Note: if mother’s address is known, please include this address and identify it as mother’s home address)
- **Location** – place where the child was surrendered or abandoned (e.g., hospital ER, Fire Department, dumpster, residential steps, etc.)
- **DOD** – date of child’s death, if applicable
- **DOB** – date of child’s birth
- **Age Calculation** – assigned by the computer
- **Age** – child’s age on date of abandonment or surrender
- **Gender** – Male or female
- **Ethnicity** – African American, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander or Other (Note: if other, please explain in the Comments section at the end of the form)
- **Ab/Neg (Abuse/Neglect)** – List and elaborate on any evidence that the child was abused or neglected. (Note: if child was abandoned, the child has been neglected and this should be elaborated.)
- **Subs Exp (Substance Exposure)** – List and elaborate on any evidence that the child was exposed to substances in utero.
- **Cong Anom (Congenital Anomaly)** – List and elaborate on any evidence that the child has/had a congenital anomaly (i.e., birth defect).
- **Mode** – For abandoned deceased infants: Coroner’s mode of death
- **Cause** – For abandoned deceased infants: Coroner’s cause of death
- **Dispo (Disposition)** – Returned to Parent/Legal Guardian, Adopted, Legal Guardianship, Deceased, or Other (Note: if other, please explain in the Comments Section)

- **Med Ques (Medical Questionnaire)** – For safely surrendered infants: did party surrendering the infant complete a medical questionnaire? Please elaborate.
- **Reclaim** – For safely surrendered infants: did someone attempt to reclaim the child within the 14 days permitted by law? Yes or No.
- **Reclaim Party** - For safely surrendered infants: who attempted to reclaim the child (e. g., mother)?
- **Reclaim Outcome** - For safely surrendered infants: what was the outcome of any reclaiming attempt (e.g., child returned to mother, DCFS detained child) – Please elaborate
- **Parent Located** – Were parents located? Please elaborate.

