Statewide Summary

Every day there are 5,000 children in Texas waiting to be adopted from the foster care system. Of these, approximately 1,500 need advocacy efforts beyond traditional adoption recruitment – they are typically grade school and older youth, sibling groups and children with higher medical needs.

The Heart Gallery brings their stories to life through powerful portrait exhibits that showcase each child's individuality and spirit. These exhibits spark awareness and inspire communities to take action, building connections that lead to permanency for children. Through collaboration, the Heart Gallery also extends its impact beyond adoption day—supporting families formed through adoption, kinship, and guardianship to prevent disruptions and strengthen family well-being.

Texas has invested $24 million to expand Heart Galleries across all 11 regions, strengthening post-adoption support and training statewide. This collaborative effort—led by the University of Texas Steve Hicks School of Social Work, the Texas Center for Child and Family Studies, the Office of the First Lady, the Governor's Commission for Women, and DFPS—is helping more children find permanent homes.

Heart Galleries are telling child stories across the state, featuring over 1,000 children this year, both in online galleries and over 1800 exhibits and 844 outreach events with close to 100,000 attendees to raise awareness for children and youth in their very own communities. In honor of National Adoption Month, last November we hosted Snapshots of Hop, sharing our impact with more than 400 Texas leaders and partners. This November, we're launching Journey to Adoption: A Permanent Place to Call Home, at the Bullock Texas State History Museum. This exhibit highlights successful stories of foster care adoption from all corners of Texas and will travel across the state in 2026.

Heart Galleries continue to stand beside families long after adoption day. This year, we awarded $5.9 million to more than 50 organizations statewide to deliver vital post-adoption services—including emergency assistance, mental health care, respite, family connection activities, and training for caregivers and professionals. The impact has been remarkable. When adoptive families are surrounded by community and support, they're empowered to nurture stability, healing, and belonging for a lifetime.

Making A Difference

From Families:

"My sweet boy has ongoing behavioral health needs. As a single working mom, my meager savings drains very quickly. I spent over $8000 for therapies and residential treatment in 2024. This support for his PHP (partial hospitalization program) allows me to have a little more in the pot for his ongoing therapies and possibly another residential stay.

"We were so thankful to have funding for my sons' psychiatrist appointments. Unfortunately, we have been unable to find reputable psychiatrists that take their insurance AND are accepting new patients. My children have our private insurance as primary insurance and their Medicaid policies as secondary……it is next to impossible to find doctors that accept both private and Medicaid. This funding allows us to seek medication management from better doctors that take time with my children. '

"Every (support group) meeting is a chance to breathe, slow down, and even stop my mind from working overtime. I almost feel like I'm on a mini-vacation, and then I get to see my world from a different angle, with new insights."

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"(At foster/adopt mom gatherings:) "I just… felt really seen. And I felt relaxed...Even just hearing other moms talk about what specialists they've worked with, or why their kids do certain things, helped me realize—'Oh! That's what's going on with my kid too.'

"I don't like feeling like I'm floating alone in a cold ocean. (The support groups are) like finding a lifeline and crawling into the boat that has other survivors. I have taken things home that I learned here and it has helped my home life, my child, and my relationship with my husband. I am so grateful."

"We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to access services that have made a real difference in Natalie's life and in our family as a whole. This made it possible for Natalie to participate in an Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) specifically designed for teens with challenges similar to hers. This program has been a lifeline—not only because of its specialized approach, but because it allowed Natalie to find a true sense of community among peers she can relate to."

From Professionals:

"Anthony was adopted last year after being featured in the Heart Gallery, and since then, his dads have been incredibly grateful for the guidance and support they've received through our post-adoption services. We've stayed in touch with the family and are thrilled to share that they are now pursuing the adoption of Anthony's biological sister."

" We were able to assist a family who has 5 adopted children who are very young. The adoptive mother was recently diagnosed with cancer and required ongoing treatments. Her husband had to take off work to take her to treatments, and as a result of missing work, they were behind on car payments. We were able to help them catch up just as she was finishing treatments and he was able to maintain his transportation and return to work, as he is the primary financial supporter of the family."

"A foster parent recently shared how their child, who previously experienced nightly panic attacks, now sleeps through the night after learning calming techniques in therapy. Parent reported "We went from surviving each day to finally feeling like we're thriving."

Impact in FY2025

1,094	**Children featured on a Heart Gallery website**	941	**Families received basic and emergency assistance**
1,810	**Exhibits**	1,683	**Clients received mental health services**
324	**Children removed from Heart Gallery due to adoptive placement**	181	**Families received 1,310 days of respite**
1.2M	**Heart Gallery website clicks**	1,905	**Coaching and mentoring sessions provided to families**

To learn more about our 2024 Heart Gallery Post-Adopt community needs assessment, go to: Needs Assessment of Post-permanency Services in Texas Dashboard. You can locate all the data specific to your region

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