



State of Illinois

Illinois State Police

Brendan F. Kelly, Director

# Illinois Missing Children Report 2019



[www.amberillinois.org](http://www.amberillinois.org)

# 2019 Annual Report

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Illinois State Enforcement Agencies to Recover Children (I SEARCH) program was created by the passage of the Intergovernmental Missing Child Recovery Act of 1984 (325 ILCS 40/1, et seq.). The program was designed to educate the public, improve the criminal justice system, affect legislative change, and direct assistance for local programs designed to improve child safety. This report is submitted for Calendar Year 2018, in compliance with the final paragraph of the Act, entitled, “Annual Report.”

On January 1, 2013, Illinois changed from the I SEARCH program to the Illinois Missing Persons Clearinghouse. This move was necessary to bring Illinois in line with all other states’ clearinghouse structures for missing persons. Currently all 50 states have a missing persons clearinghouse. The Missing Persons Clearinghouse is managed by the Illinois State Police.

The Illinois State Police Law Enforcement Agencies Data System (LEADS) is the information system linking Illinois police agencies, other state agencies, and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). The Intergovernmental Missing Child Recovery Act of 1984 and the National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990 mandate immediate entry of all reports of missing children into LEADS, which are automatically entered into the nationwide NCIC database.

## II. ILLINOIS STATE CLEARINGHOUSE FOR MISSING PERSONS

An effective resource in solving cases of missing and exploited children, the Clearinghouse is a focal point for the coordination of efforts by law enforcement, social services, education and prevention programs as well as legislative advocacy and the dissemination of missing children’s photographs. Its responsibilities include:

- Collecting and maintaining computerized data and investigating information on missing persons and unidentified bodies in the state;
- Coordinating with and providing assistance to state and local public and private nonprofit agencies, including those of other states and the federal government, in the location and recovery of missing persons and the identification of unidentified persons and bodies;
- Establishing and operating a statewide, toll-free telephone line for reports of missing persons and reports of sightings of missing persons;
- Providing a uniform missing person reporting and investigation protocol for law enforcement agencies within the state;
- Publishing a directory of missing persons for dissemination to state and local public and private nonprofit agencies and the public;

- Compiling statistics on the missing children cases handled and resolved by the Clearinghouse each year as well as summaries of the circumstances of each case;
- Assisting in the training of law enforcement and other professionals about missing and unidentified persons and bodies;
- Operating a clearinghouse of information about methods of locating and recovering missing persons;
- Operating a resource center of information about the prevention of abduction and sexual exploitation of children; and
- Developing and implementing a coordinated program for a statewide emergency alert system to be used when a child is abducted.

### III. FISCAL

There is no fiscal liability to the state of Illinois. All activities are performed under the structure of the Illinois State Police.

### IV. SPECIAL ACTIVITY

Public Act 93-0310 established the Illinois AMBER Plan Task Force to monitor and review the implementation and operation of the AMBER Alert notification system and the endangered missing person advisory process. The Task Force continues to discuss ways of updating and enhancing the current AMBER Alert system. The Task Force maintains the AMBER Alert website, [www.amberillinois.org](http://www.amberillinois.org), while also providing information to law enforcement, educators, media, parents, and the general public regarding to the Illinois AMBER Alert Plan.

In 2019, the Illinois AMBER Alert Task Force continued to utilize its partnership with the Illinois Lottery and its new provider Camelot Illinois. As a partner, the Illinois Lottery utilizes its digital lottery terminals inside of over 2,000 retail establishments to display all active AMBER Alert messages.



The partnerships do not stop at lottery terminals. The AMBER Alert Notification System continues to utilize digital message boards over Illinois interstates and tollways. This partnership with the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Illinois Tollway Authority has led to increased awareness for drivers of Illinois roadways.



On January 13, 2019, Illinois observed AMBER Alert Awareness Day. A poster contest titled, "Bring Our Missing Children Home," was launched by the Illinois AMBER Alert Task Force. School superintendents, principals, teachers, community leaders, law enforcement, and parents joined in the effort to educate children about safety issues.

The Illinois Clearinghouse continues to chair the Interstate Advisory Council for Missing and Exploited Children (I-SEARCH). This council is made up of various law enforcement and child safety agencies throughout 13 Midwest states. I-SEARCH states have been meeting biannually since 1982 in an effort to enhance missing person communications and investigations that cross state lines. Clearinghouse managers and AMBER Alert coordinators from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin make up the I-SEARCH Council.

In May 2019, Illinois marked the five-year anniversary of its partnership with Alert GPS. This technology provides a more efficient and effective warning system to law enforcement, media, and the public. The Law Enforcement Alerting Portal (L.E.A.P) delivers major efficiencies to the Illinois AMBER Alert notification system. It provides a quicker, more robust alerting technology that enables the issuance of AMBER alerts through a variety of sources including texts, emails, faxes, and website feeds as well as the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and the Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA). These are the same systems used during severe weather emergencies to provide alerts to broadcasters and individuals through their cell phones. The technology has been expanded to include all Endangered Missing Person advisories, including Silver Search.

In May 2019, Illinois observed Missing Children's Month by participating in various activities that brought attention to missing children cases in Illinois. The month-long education and safety initiative culminated in national activities in Washington DC on May 25, Missing Child Awareness Day.

The Fox Valley Technical College hosted a national Missing Person and AMBER Alert conference in Scottsdale, Arizona. The conference took place April 16-18, 2019, and brought Clearinghouse managers and AMBER Alert coordinators from all states together to collaborate efforts to deal with missing and abducted children's issues. These workshops provided the ability for states to discuss cross-border issues as they relate to missing and abducted children. This conference provided great networking opportunities for AMBER Alert coordinators and Clearinghouse managers. Illinois once again facilitated the Midwest breakout sessions.

The Illinois Broadcasters Association hosted the AMBER Alert Task Force at its annual Illinois Broadcasters conference held in Springfield, Illinois. As a supporter of the AMBER Alert program, the Broadcasters Association has annually hosted the members of the AMBER Alert Task Force. The conference was held on June 13, 2019.

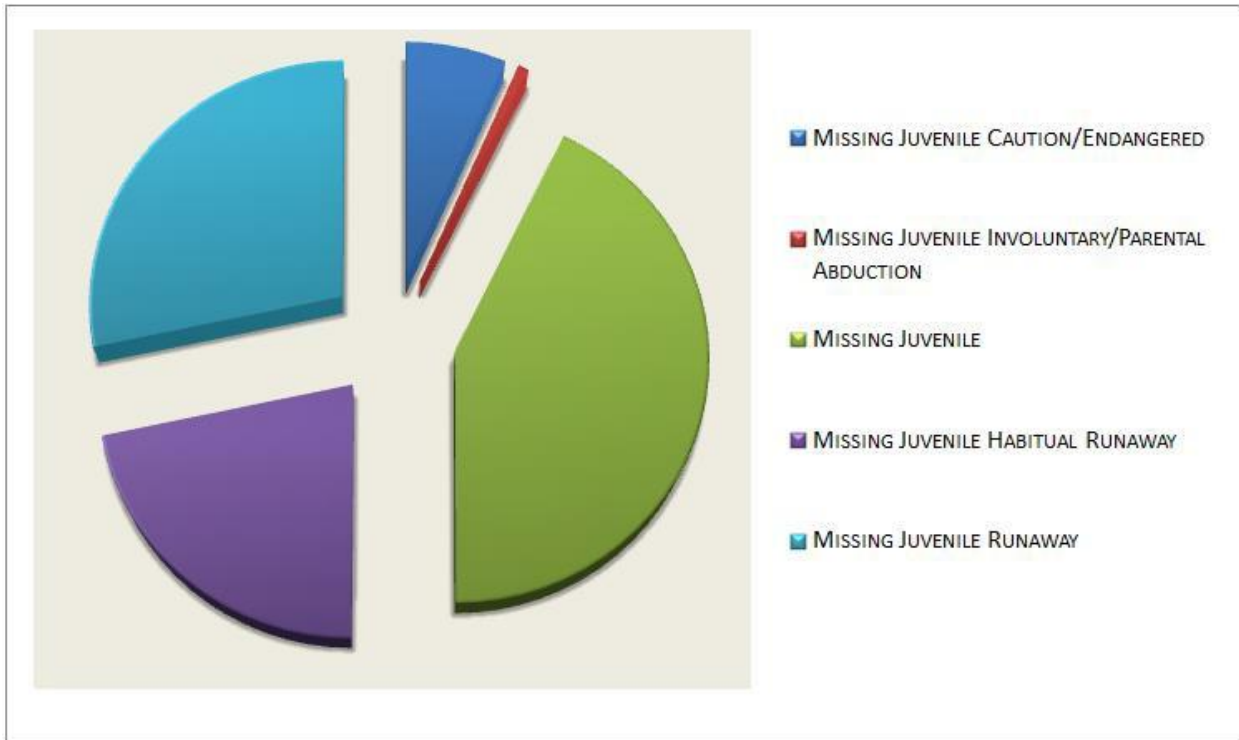
On October 7-9, 2019, the Interstate Advisory Council for Missing and Exploited Children held its fall meeting in St Louis, Missouri. The following agencies were represented: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Fox Valley Technical College, Illinois State Police, Indiana State Police, Kentucky State Police, Michigan State Police, Missouri Highway Patrol, and Wisconsin Attorney General's Office.

In partnership with the Illinois Broadcasters Foundation, the Illinois Clearinghouse has continued to provide training to local law enforcement agencies throughout Illinois on

legislation, administration, and investigative techniques of missing person cases. These training sessions are provided free-of-charge to local, state, and federal law enforcement officials.

The Illinois Clearinghouse continues to electronically disseminate information about missing persons to the Illinois State Board of Education for comparison with student enrollment records to identify disparities. These checks have resulted in the cancellation of numerous missing person records. The Clearinghouse also provided the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and 50 state clearinghouses with bulletins on active missing person cases. The bulletins featured long-term missing children and high-risk missing person cases from Illinois.

## Missing Children 2019: A Statistical Overview



Missing Juvenile Caution/Endangered	970
Missing Juvenile Involuntary/Parental Abduction	103
Missing Juvenile	6,277
Missing Juvenile Habitual Runaway	3,179
Missing Juvenile Runaway	4,157

### MISSING PERSON ENTRY CODES:

AMBER Alert - A child under the age of 16 who has been abducted and meets criteria.

Endangered - A child who is missing and in the company of another person under circumstances indicating that he/she may be in danger.

Habitual Runaway - A child who is missing and has a history of running away.

Involuntary - A child who is missing under circumstances indicating the disappearance was not voluntary, i.e., abduction or kidnaping.

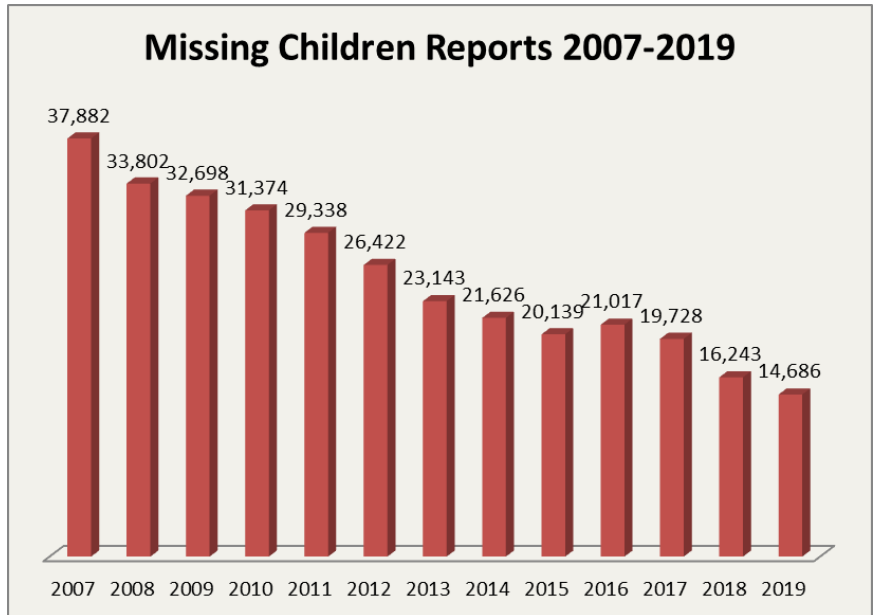
Parental Abduction - A child who is missing and is known to be with a parent (custodial or non-custodial).

Runaway - A child who is missing under circumstances indicating the missing person has run away.

Juvenile - A child who is missing and does not meet any of the criteria set forth in other categories.

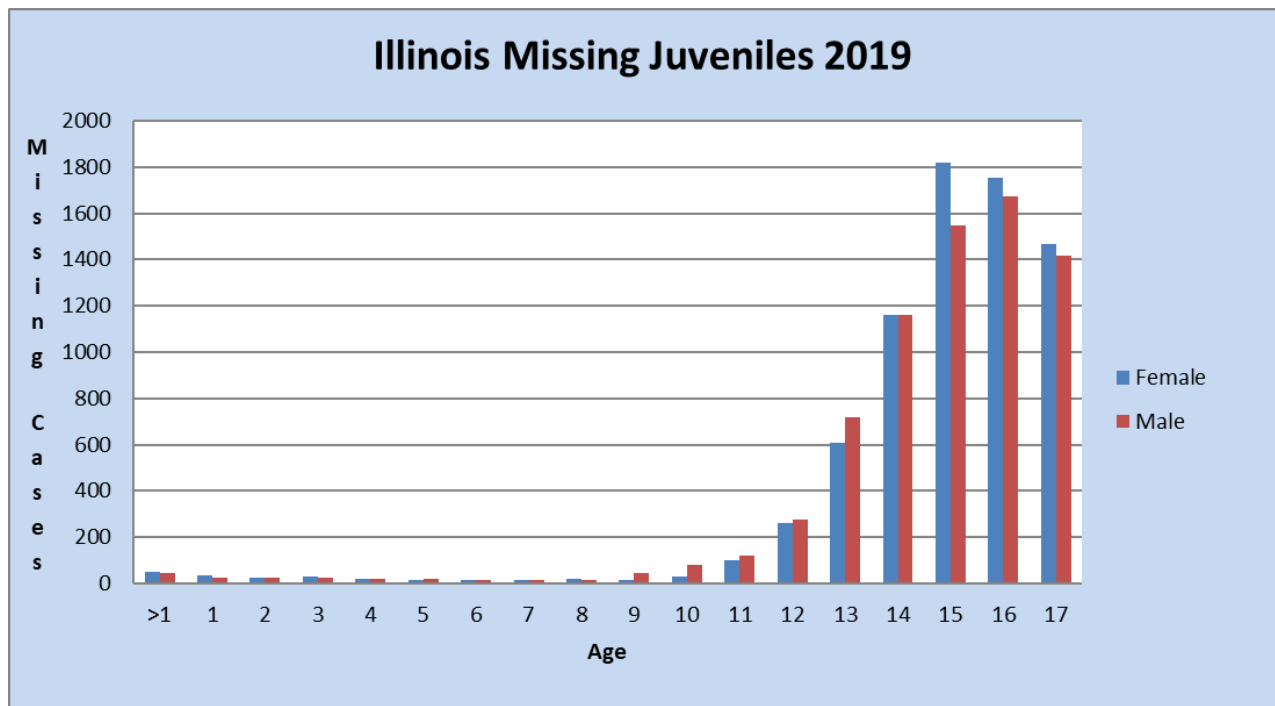
## Missing Child Reports

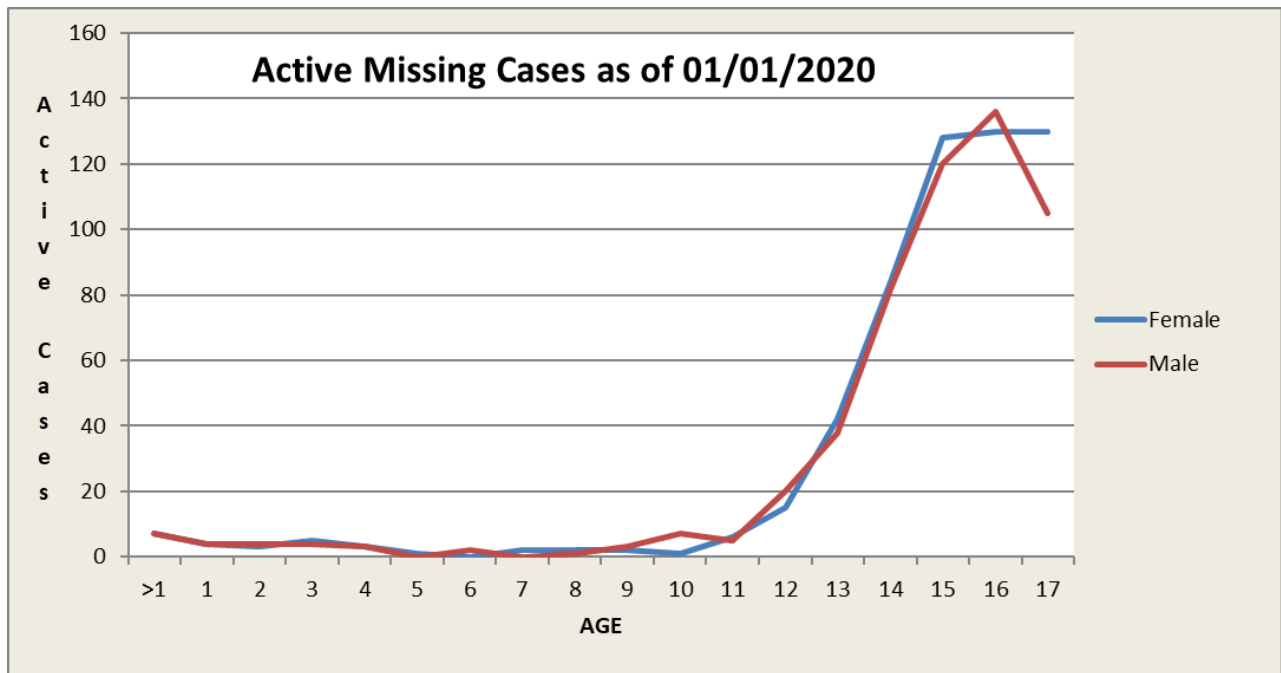
There were 14,686 reports of missing persons under the age of 18 in Illinois during calendar year 2019. This represented a decrease of 1,557 reports (nearly 9.6 percent) from calendar year 2018. Nearly all categories of missing person reports saw a decrease in 2019. Endangered missing juvenile reports increased in 2019. Missing juvenile reports saw the biggest decrease at over 10 percent while runaway and habitual runaway reports decreased slightly in 2019.



## Male vs Female

Female children continued to be reported missing at a slightly higher rate than male children in 2019. In calendar year 2019, there were 7,447 female missing person reports filed compared to 7,239 male missing person reports. This is consistent with 2017 and 2018 data which shows female children were reported missing at a rate of less than 1 percent more than male children. Children age 15-17 were reported missing more frequently than any other group. Children age 12-14 had the second highest frequency. These two age ranges totaled 13,861, or over 96 percent, of all missing children reports for calendar year 2019.





## Active Missing Children Cases

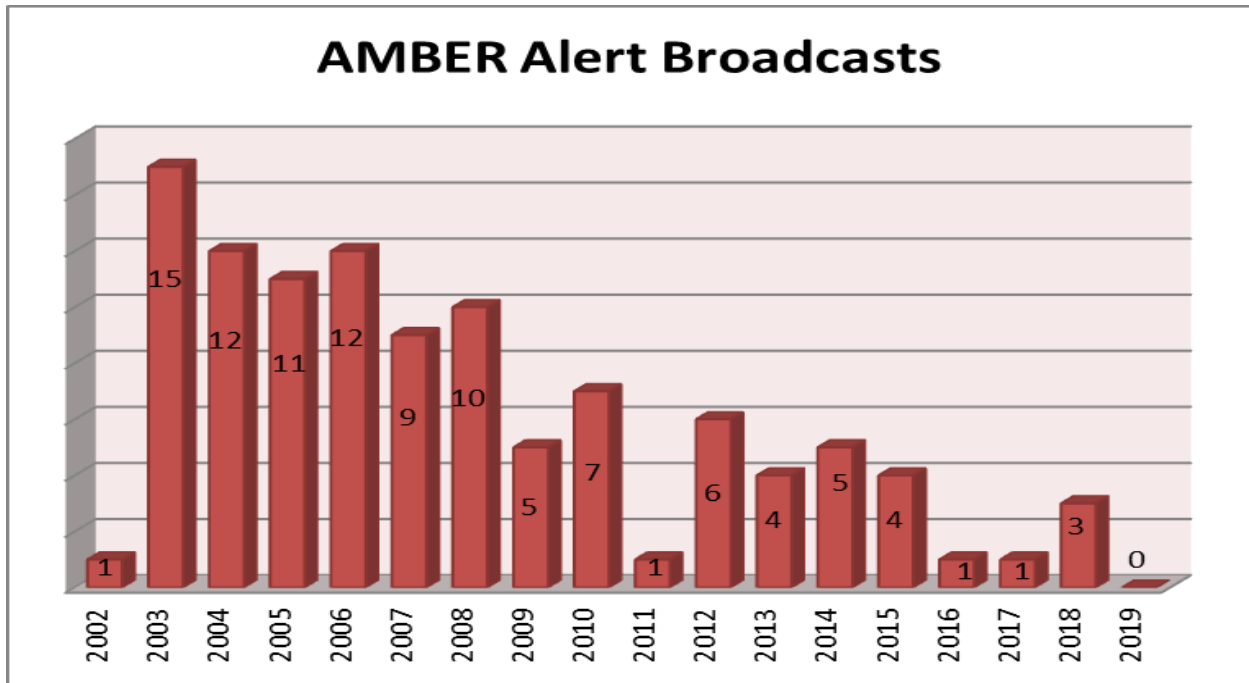
Of the 14,686 reported missing children, 13,580 were cleared through arrest for non-traffic offenses; the child was recovered, located, and returned home; or the child was found deceased. This number reflected a nearly 92 percent clearance rate for calendar year 2019. That is down from the nearly 96 percent clearance rate in 2018. As of January 1, 2020, there were 1106 children still listed as missing. That is double the amount of active missing person cases on the same date in 2019. The majority (83 percent) are between 14-17 years-of-age with 16-year-old males and females making up the largest percentage (24 percent).

Age	Female	Male	Total
>1	7	7	14
1	4	4	8
2	3	4	7
3	5	4	9
4	3	3	6
5	1	0	1
6	0	2	2
7	2	0	2
8	2	1	3
9	2	3	5
10	1	7	8
11	6	5	11
12	15	20	35
13	42	38	80
14	84	82	166
15	128	120	248
16	130	136	266
17	130	105	235
Totals	565	541	1106



## AMBER Alerts

For the first time in the history of the AMBER Alert program, the Illinois AMBER Alert Notification Plan was not activated in calendar year 2019. The AMBER system was requested nearly 40 times, but none of the requests met the AMBER Alert Notification Plan criteria. Since its inception, the AMBER Alert plan has seen a steady decline from its high of 15 broadcasts in 2003. This matches the trend nationally of reduced AMBER Alert broadcasts nationwide.



### Technology Upgrades

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA):

In 2019, the Illinois AMBER Alert system continued to utilize Wireless Emergency Alerts to notify the public, via cell phone towers, when an AMBER Alert has been issued in their area. This technology allows for anyone with an approved cell phone to receive AMBER Alert messages if they are in the same geographical area where an AMBER Alert has been issued.

Integrated Public Alert Warning System (IPAWS):

Illinois became the first state to directly distribute AMBER Alert messages through IPAWS. This method of dissemination provides direct routing to the broadcasters for dissemination through their airwaves in the case of child abduction emergencies.

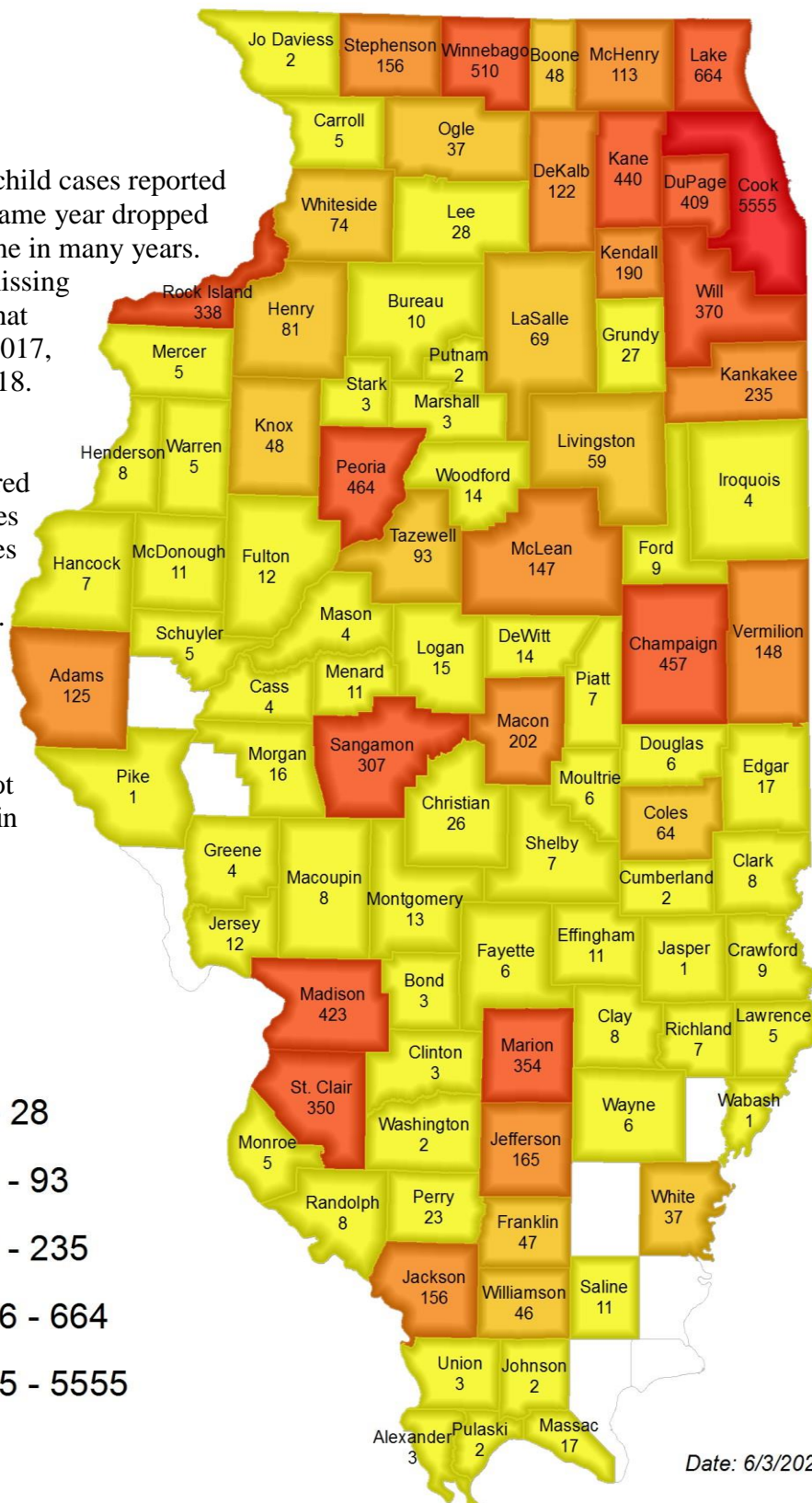
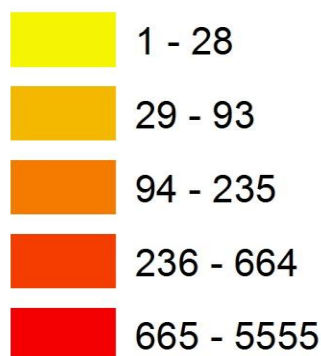


# Missing Children Report Cases Cleared 2019

The percentage of missing child cases reported in 2019 and cleared in the same year dropped significantly for the first time in many years. Ninety-two percent of all missing child cases were cleared. That compares to 97 percent in 2017, and nearly 96 percent in 2018.

Fifty of the 102 counties in Illinois (49 percent) cleared all their missing person cases in 2019. Another 18 counties cleared all but 1 of their missing child cases in 2019.

Eight counties, including Calhoun, Brown, Scott, Pope, Hamilton, Gallatin, Edwards and Hardin, did not report a missing child case in 2019.



Date: 6/3/2020

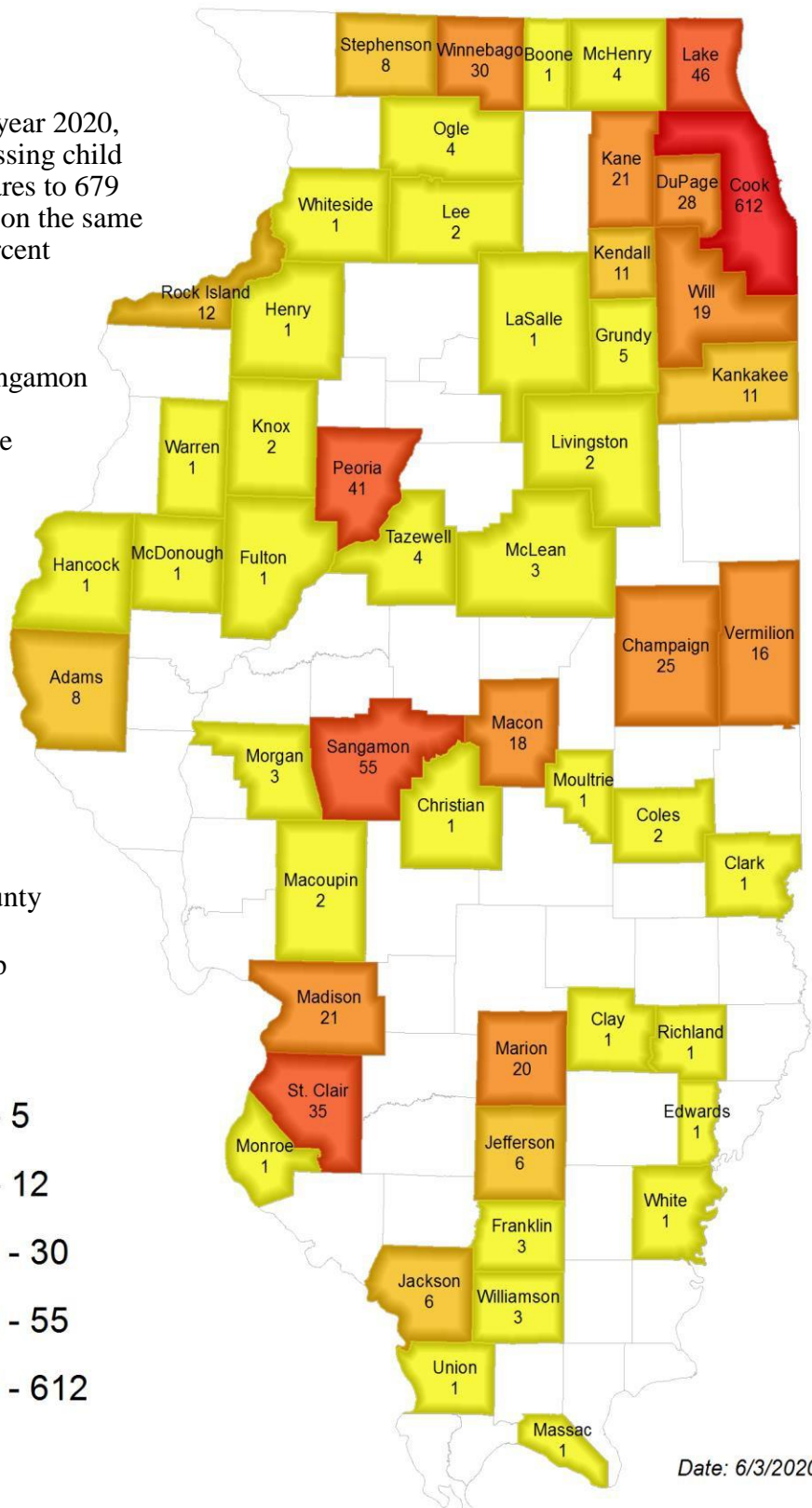
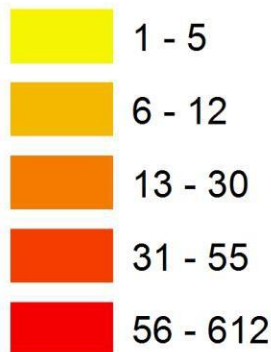
# Missing Children Report Cases Pending 2019

On the first day of calendar year 2020, there were 1106 pending missing child cases in Illinois. That compares to 679 pending missing child cases on the same day in 2019. That is a 38 percent increase.

In comparison to 2018, Champaign (76 percent), Sangamon (65 percent), and Cook (40 percent) Counties had the largest increases in pending missing child cases in 2019.

No counties in Illinois had a significant decline in pending missing person cases in 2019 as compared to the same time period in 2018.

Sixty-six percent of all pending missing child cases from calendar year 2019 are in the five-county area of Cook, Lake, Kane, DuPage, and Will. That is up from 63 percent in 2018.



Date: 6/3/2020

## **DEFINITIONS**

Child - For the purposes of this report, a child is considered to be any person under the age of 18.

Missing Child - Any child whose whereabouts are unknown to the parent or legal custodian and the disappearance is not the result of an accident, catastrophe, or arrest.

Clearance - Children who were reported missing but have been located, returned home, arrested, or found deceased.

Illinois AMBER Alert Notification Plan - A voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies, broadcasters, and the National Weather Service to activate an urgent bulletin in the most serious child abduction cases meeting the below-listed criteria. This is the same concept used during severe weather emergencies. The goal of the AMBER Alert is to instantly galvanize the entire community to assist in the search for and safe return of the child.

### **AMBER Alert Criteria**

- Law enforcement must confirm a child has been abducted;
- The child must be under the age of 16 or have a proven mental or physical disability;
- Police must believe the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death; and
- There is enough descriptive information about the child, abductor, and/or suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help.

ILLINOIS STATE POLICE  
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