

# SAFELY SURRENDERED AND ABANDONED INFANTS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY - 2002-2010



Prepared by

**The Inter-Agency Council on  
Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN)**

4024 Durfee Ave  
El Monte, CA 91732

Deanne Tilton, Executive Director



**Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants  
Los Angeles County – 2002 – 2010**



*“Safe Surrender offers mothers in a desperate situation the chance to make the right choice for their babies. In ten years, we have prevented untold tragedy and saved 83 lives. ‘No Shame, No Blame, No Names.’ ”*

**Don Knabe**, Los Angeles County Supervisor, 4th District  
Founder, LA County Safe Surrender Program

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction	2
Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Trend Chart	4
What Have We Learned from the Data?	5
Surrender/Abandonment Locations – 2002 to 2010	14
Safe Surrenders	25
Safely Surrendered Infants	26
Safely Surrendering Mothers	33
Abandoned Infants	48
Abandoned Infants	50
Mothers who Abandoned their Infants	59
SSBL Data Elements	68

## **Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants in Los Angeles County – 2002 - 2010**

Tragically, newborn infants have been abandoned in an unsafe manner throughout Los Angeles County for years. While statistics for abandoned infants fortunate enough to survive are unavailable for 1999 and 2000, the Coroner reported to ICAN's Child Death Review Team that six abandoned newborns died in 1999 and three abandoned newborns died in 2000. It is important to note that these data reflect only those deceased abandoned infants whose bodies were found; we can never truly know the number of abandoned infants in Los Angeles County, as it is highly likely that the bodies of some deceased infants are never discovered.

Concerned with newborn abandonment throughout the State, the California legislature passed SB 1368 (Brulte) in the year 2000. As with similar laws enacted in other states, SB 1368's intent was to encourage parents who would otherwise abandon their infants in unsafe environments (e.g., trash dumpsters) to leave their newborns in as safe a manner as possible. The law decriminalizes 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 site designated by the County Board of Supervisors. Commonly known as the Safely Surrendered Baby (SSB) law, or "Safe Haven" law, SB 1368 became effective January 1, 2001. Unfortunately, during the year 2001, no infants were safely surrendered in Los Angeles County and 14 newborns were abandoned—3 survived and 11 died.

Alarmed by the number of infants that continued to be abandoned despite the passage of SB 1368, Supervisor Don Knabe made a motion unanimously carried by the Board on February 5, 2002. The motion directed several agencies to jointly submit a report to the Board with recommendations on how to best implement SB 1368 in Los Angeles County. Convened by the Children's Planning Council, a multi-disciplinary task force met for several months to meet this Board mandate. On June 4, 2002, the task force presented the Board of Supervisors with twelve recommendations intended to best implement the law. The Board approved these recommendations which included proposals for a public information campaign, Speakers Bureau, training and education, legal review for possible recommendations for legislative changes and designation of additional safe surrender sites. In addition, the Board also requested that:

. . . 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 their mothers and fathers. Data elements were identified based on their usefulness in best implementing the law in Los Angeles County. In other words, the group sought to determine the characteristics of women who took advantage of SSBL and the characteristics of women who continued to abandon their newborns in an unsafe manner. On a broader level, the group wanted to establish data that would aid in analyzing the overall effectiveness of the law. See Attachment 1 for a complete listing of the data elements established by this group.

Throughout the past nine and a half years, ICAN has collected data with the assistance of the Department of Coroner, Department of Children and Family Services, District Attorney's Office and various law enforcement agencies across the County. The body of this report presents a breakdown and analysis of the data collected for safely surrendered and abandoned infants for the years 2002 - 2010. This report also addresses the positive outcomes of the SSBL and Los Angeles County's efforts to implement the law: the adoption of seventy-six safely surrendered infants, the safe reclamation of five infants and the efforts to safely reunify two infants with their birth families.

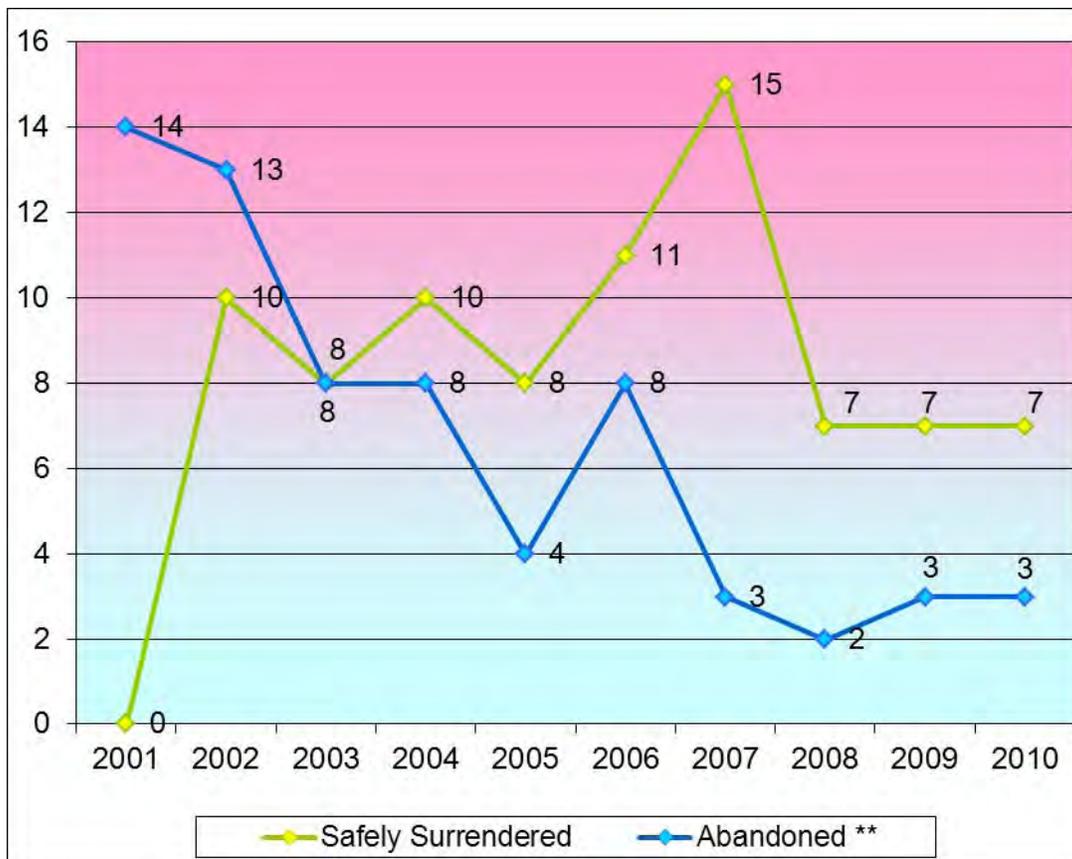
It is hoped that the information contained in this report will be utilized to develop public information strategies that will most effectively reach women who may be at risk of abandoning their newborns in an unsafe manner. In this effort, ICAN, along with the Los Angeles County Fire Department, has worked on public information campaigns and continues to inform both public and private entities about SSBL. ICAN manages an active, successful Speakers Bureau, reaching over a thousand individuals to date, with the intention that these individuals will continue to spread the word about the availability of the safe surrender option to those with whom they have contact.

**Since SSBL went into effect on January 1, 2001, 83 infants have been safely surrendered in Los Angeles County, to date (April 6, 2011).** Tragically, during this same time period, **66** infants have been found abandoned in Los Angeles County; **13** of these infants survived and **53** were found deceased. It is promising to note that the number of abandoned infants has declined from 14 infants in 2001 to 3 infants in 2010 while the number of safe surrenders has increased from zero in 2001 to 10 each in 2002 and 2004 and 8 each in 2003 and 2005, 11 in 2006, and in 2007, there were a record 15 safe surrenders. In 2008, 2009, and 2010 there were 7 safe surrenders each year. During this same time period, the number of abandonments has been fairly consistent with the all time low of only 2 abandoned infants occurring in 2008. This trend of having a low number of abandonments best demonstrates the effectiveness of the Law. **During the three months of 2011, there have been no safe surrenders or abandoned infants.**

## Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Los Angeles County 2001 – 2011\*

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
<b>Safely Surrendered</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>83</b>
Abandoned Surviving	3	5	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	13
Abandoned Deceased	11	8	7	7	4	6	3	2	2	3	53

\*To date (4/8/11) there have been no surrenders or abandonments in 2011.



\*\*These include both abandoned surviving and deceased

## What Have We Learned from the Data?

Data on safely surrendered and abandoned infants are collected by ICAN in an effort to determine how to best implement SSBL in Los Angeles County. Efforts are made to gather information about mothers who safely surrendered their infants and those who abandoned their newborns in an unsafe manner to see if there are differences in these two groups or if either group “fit a profile.” Although the report began by highlighting data up through 2011, the remainder will address incidents of safe surrender and abandonment in Los Angeles County between **2002 and 2010**. During this nine-year period, 83 infants were safely surrendered and 52 infants were abandoned – 10 who survived and 42 who did not.

The data collected for 2002 - 2010 indicate that mothers who surrender or abandon their children do not *typically* fit the stereotypical picture of a young, unmarried teenager with no other children.

### **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 7 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.

## **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.

## **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 seven 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 seven 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.

## **ETHNICITY**

Mothers who surrendered and abandoned their infants did not differ from one another by ethnicity and did not fit a specific type of ethnic or socioeconomic picture. In 2002, safely surrendered and abandoned infants were Hispanic, Caucasian and African American. In 2003, in addition to Hispanic, African American and Caucasian infants, two infants of Filipino ethnicity were abandoned. In 2004 and 2005, safely surrendered and abandoned infants were Hispanic, Caucasian, African American, and Asian/Pacific Islander. In 2006, safely surrendered infants and abandoned infants were Hispanic, Caucasian, and African American. In 2007, safely surrendered and abandoned infants were Hispanic, Caucasian, Asian/Pacific Islander and of mixed descent. In 2008, safely surrendered and abandoned infants were Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander. Finally, in 2009, safely surrendered and abandoned infants were Hispanic and Caucasian.

## **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 nine cases. One safely surrendered infant was of Asian/Pacific Islander ancestry.

## **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 (5 of 10) while Caucasians represented three of the 10 infants, and African-Americans represented two of the 10 infants.

## **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, 7 of the 13 abandoned infants (two who survived and five who died) and 7 of the 10 surrendered infants were found/surrendered in economically depressed neighborhoods in Service Planning Areas (SPAs) 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), two SPAs with the lowest numbers of children living below poverty.

### **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**

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 (6 of the 7 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 SPA 7. No incidents of abandonment or surrender took place in SPA 1, 2, 5, or 8.

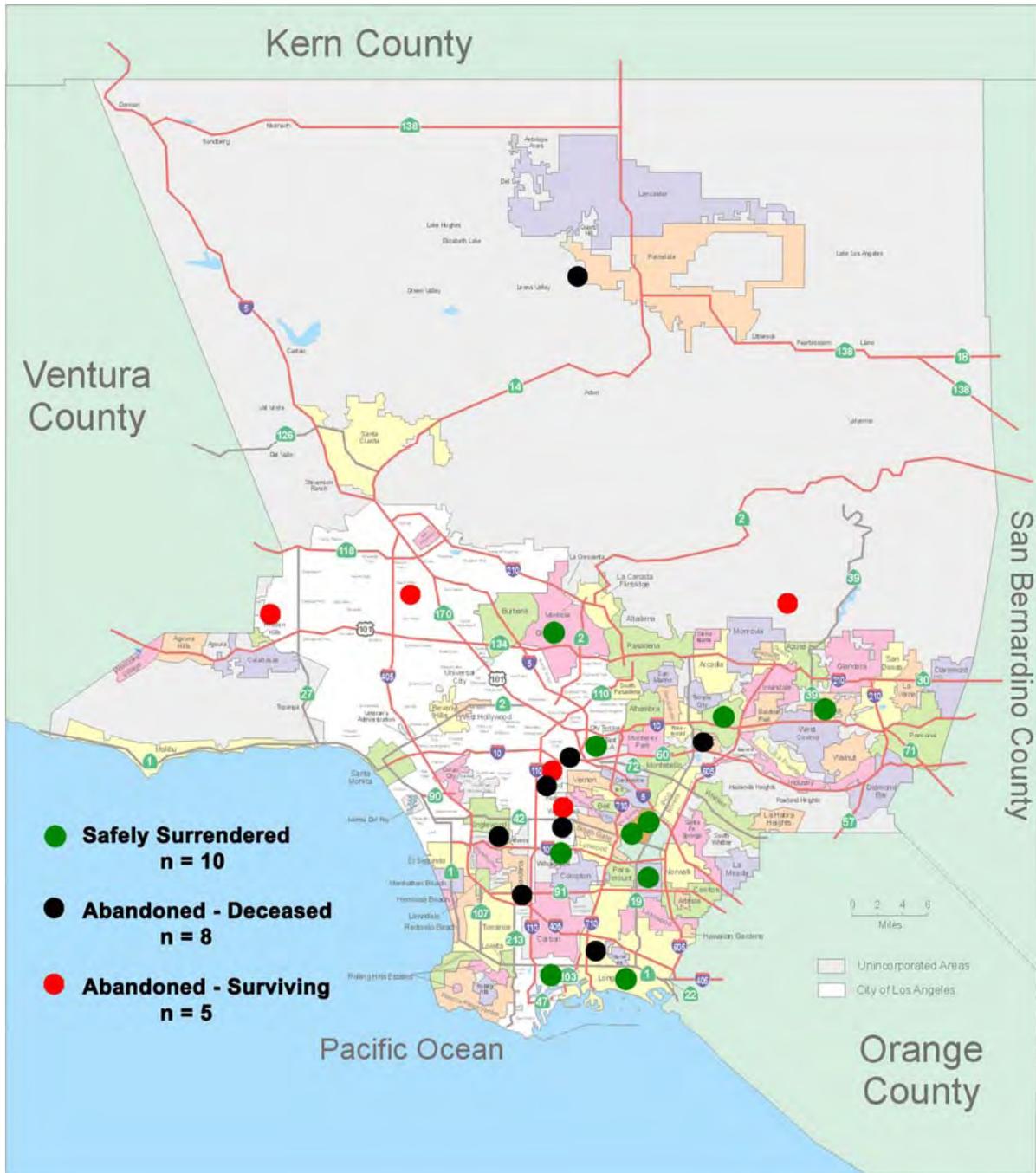
## **2010**

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

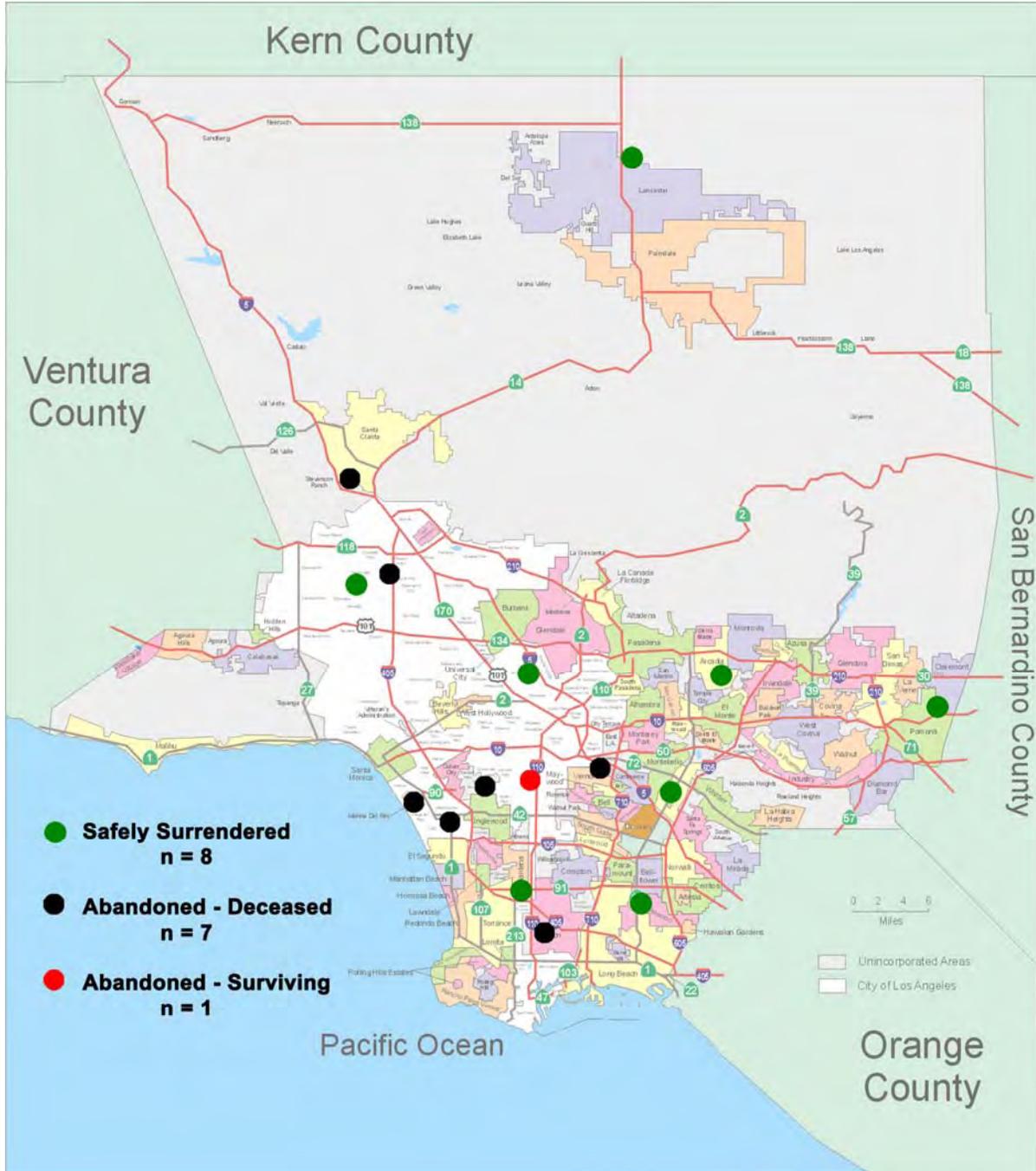
In summary, a review of the most recent cases of infant abandonment and safe surrender, those that occurred in 2009 and 2010, would suggest that public information campaigns target specific communities where abandonment and the possibility of safe surrender are most prevalent. However, data across the nine-year period between 2002 and 2010 reveal that cases were not limited to specific areas

of the County; this speaks to the importance of public information efforts that not only target at-risk communities, but also reach all areas and socioeconomic groups in Los Angeles County. This calls for a broad countywide effort.

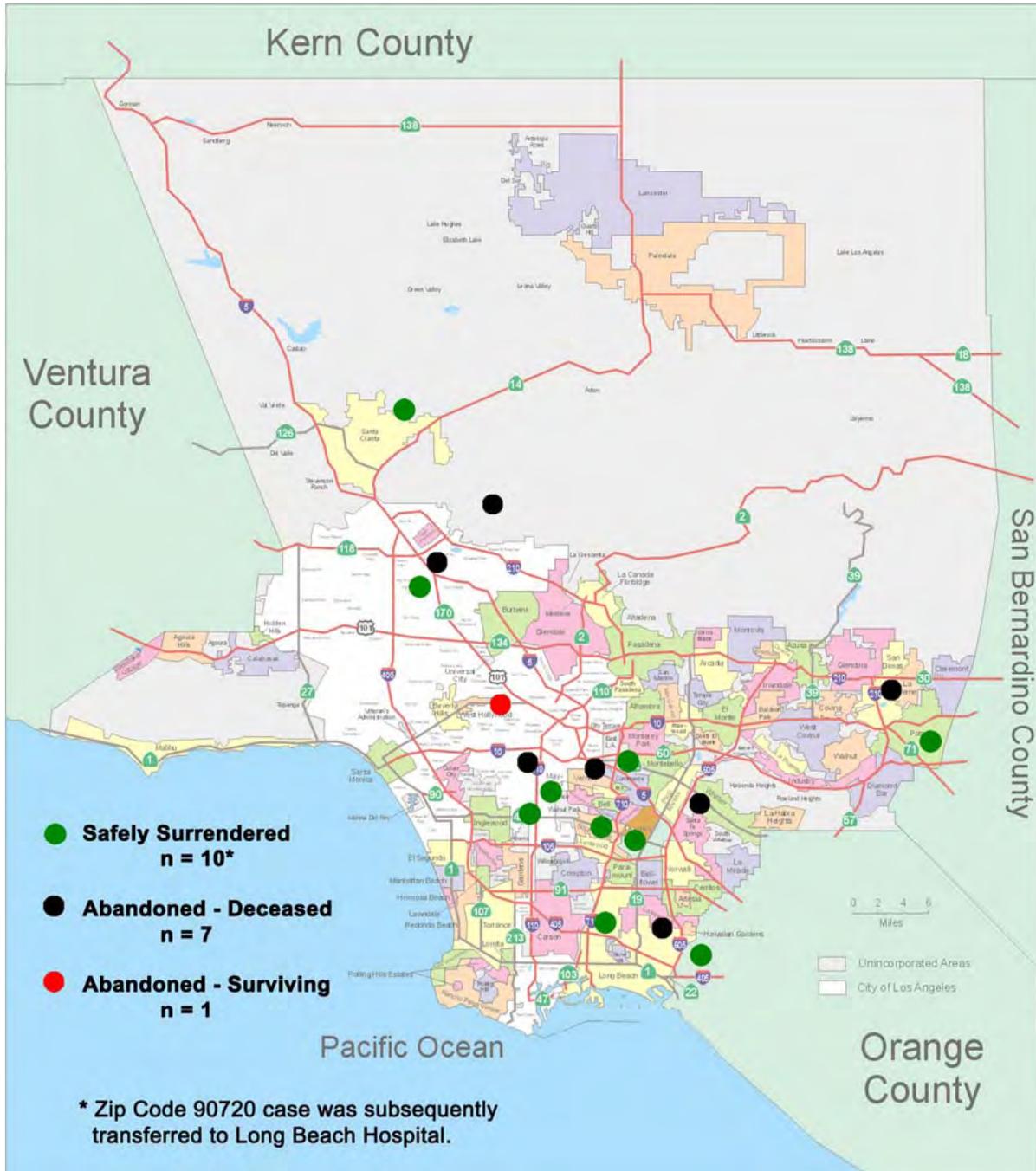
# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Los Angeles County - 2002



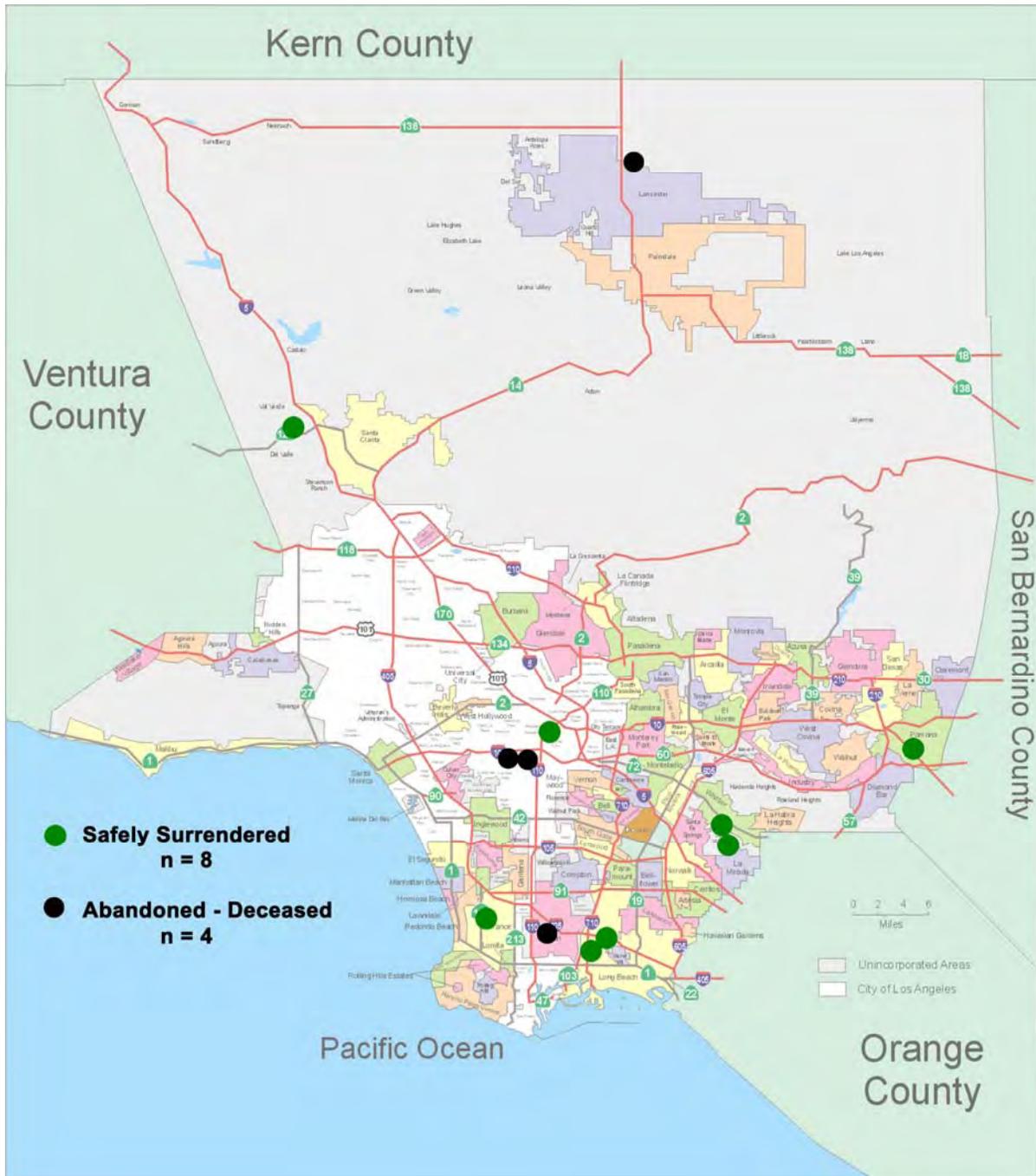
# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Los Angeles County - 2003



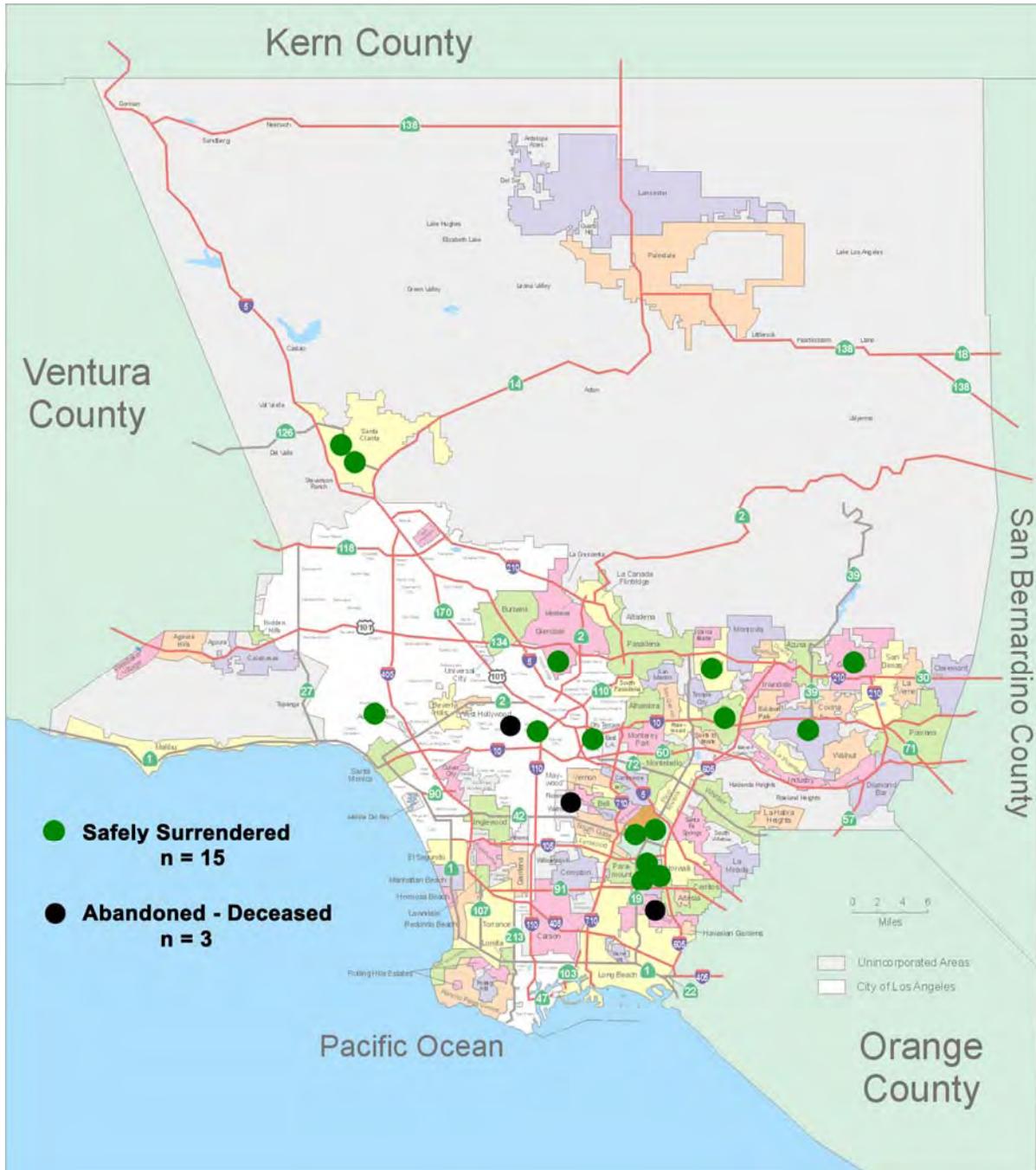
# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Los Angeles County – 2004



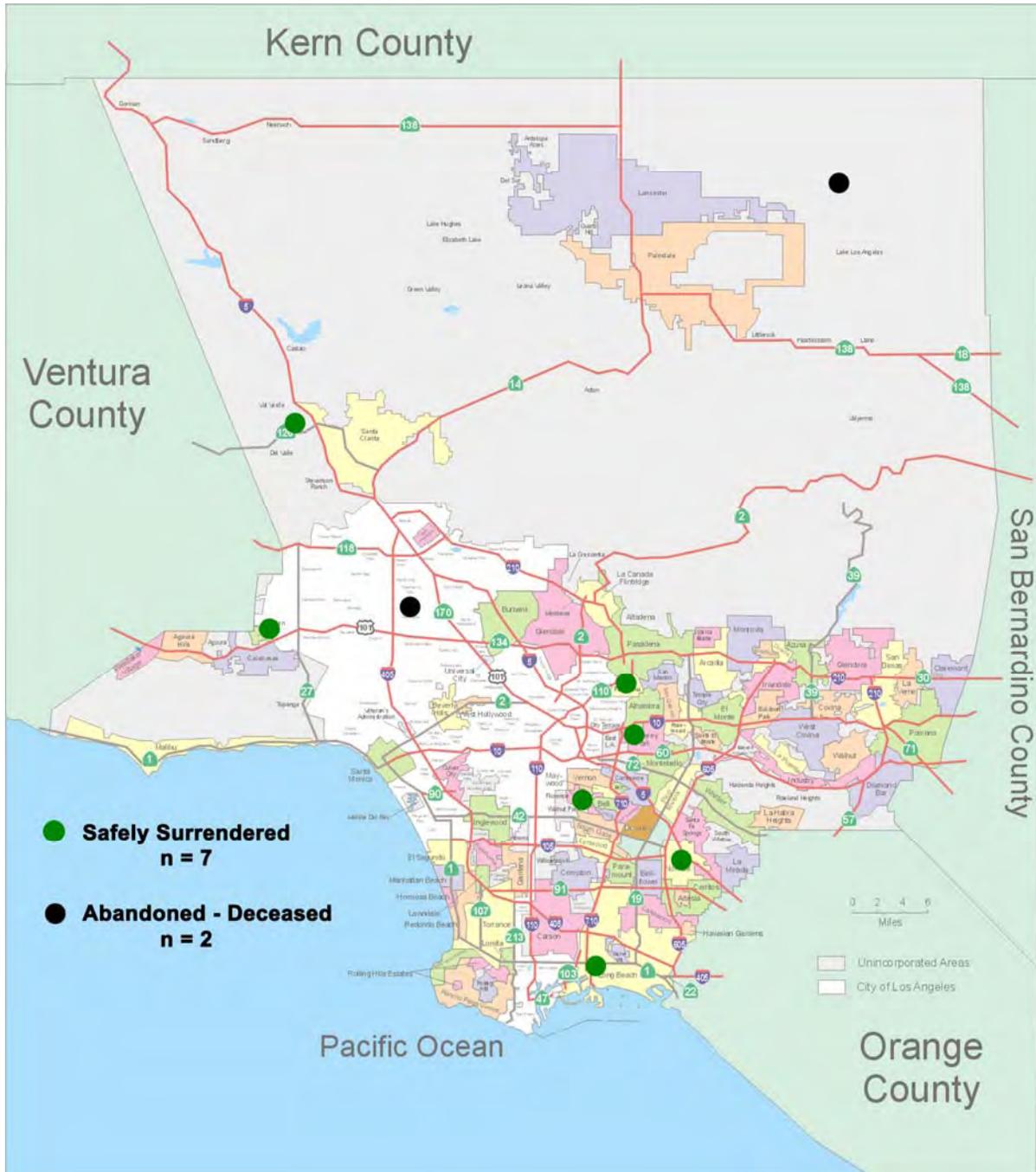
# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Los Angeles County – 2005



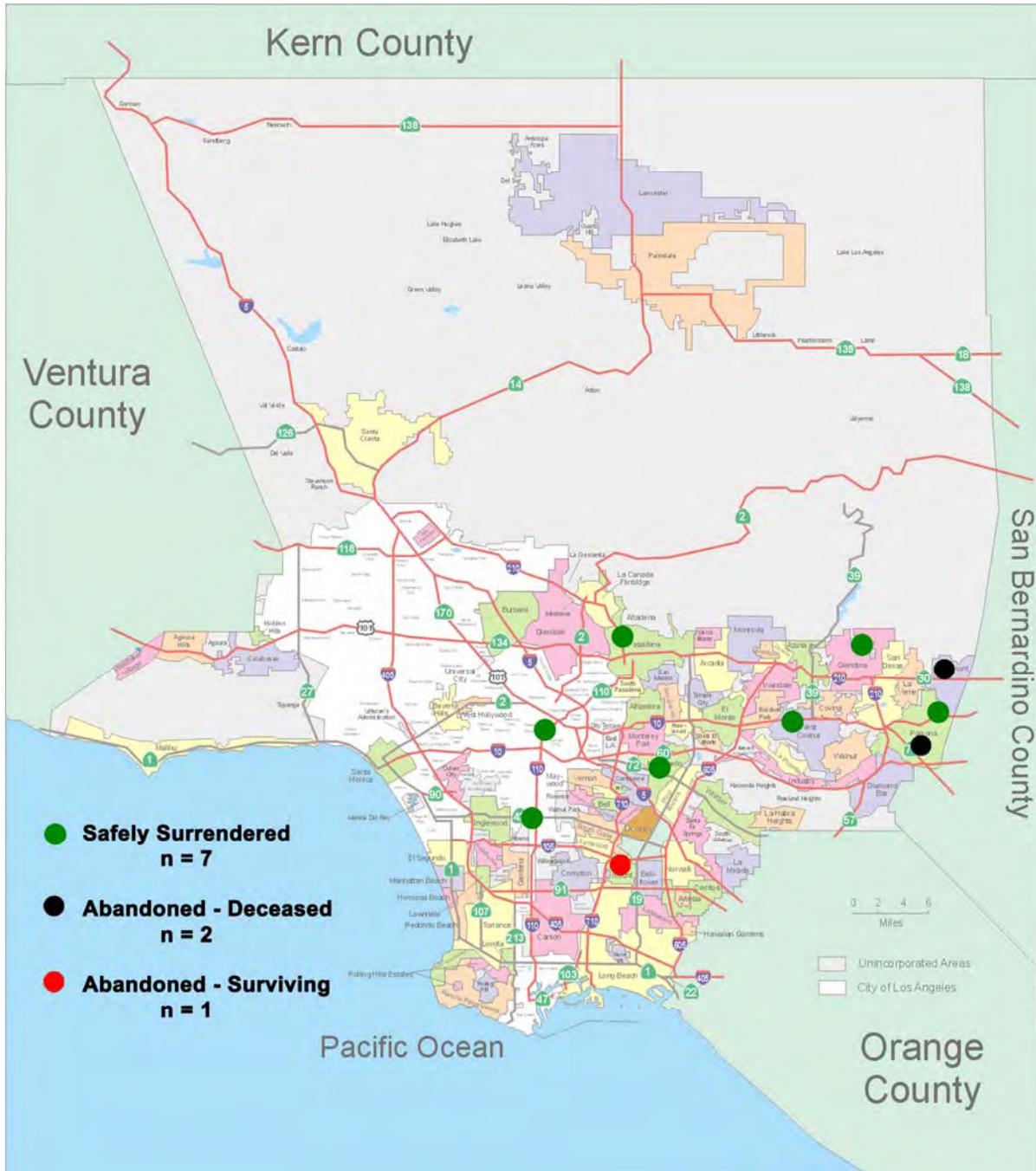
# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Los Angeles County – 2006



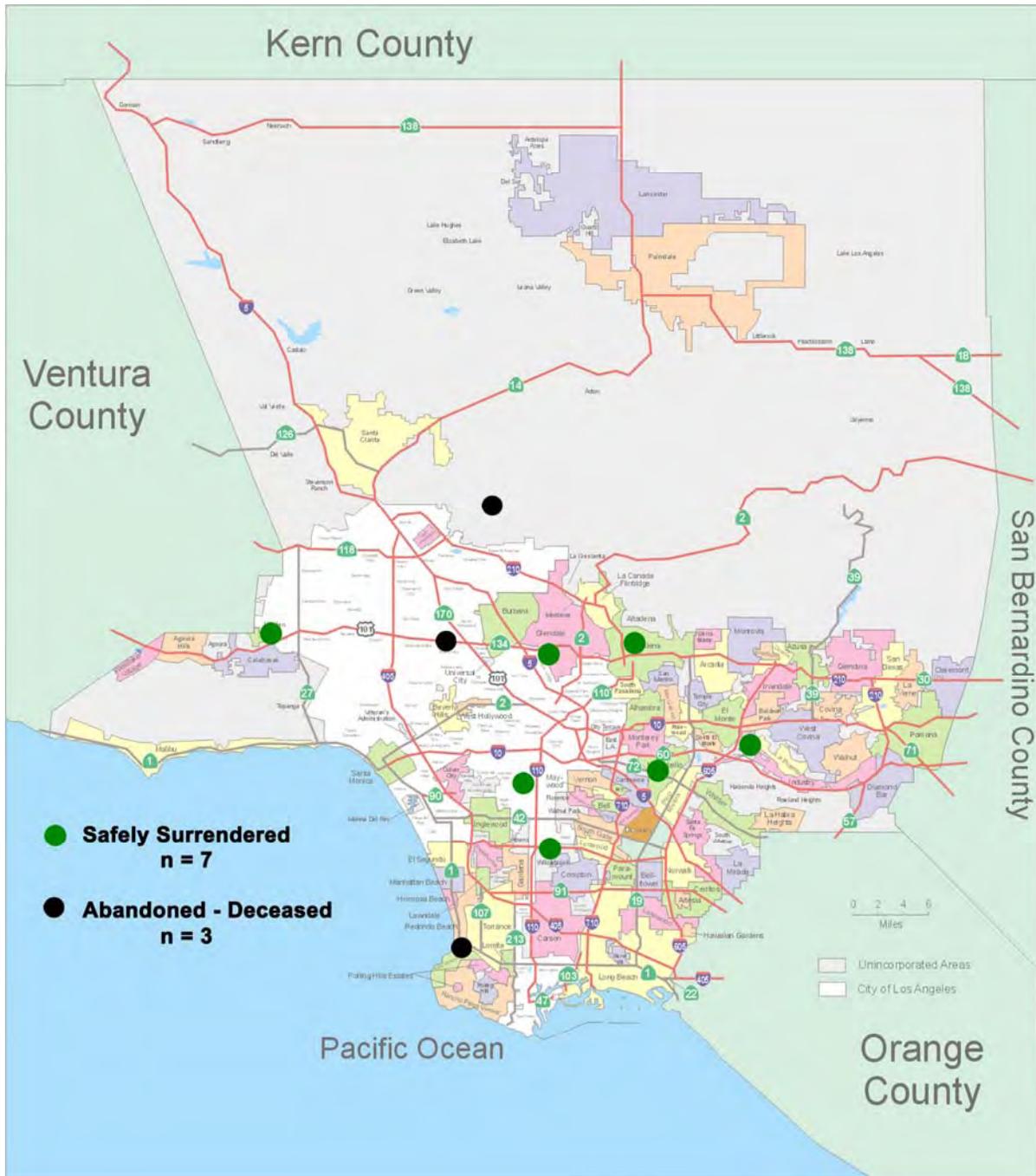
# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Los Angeles County – 2007



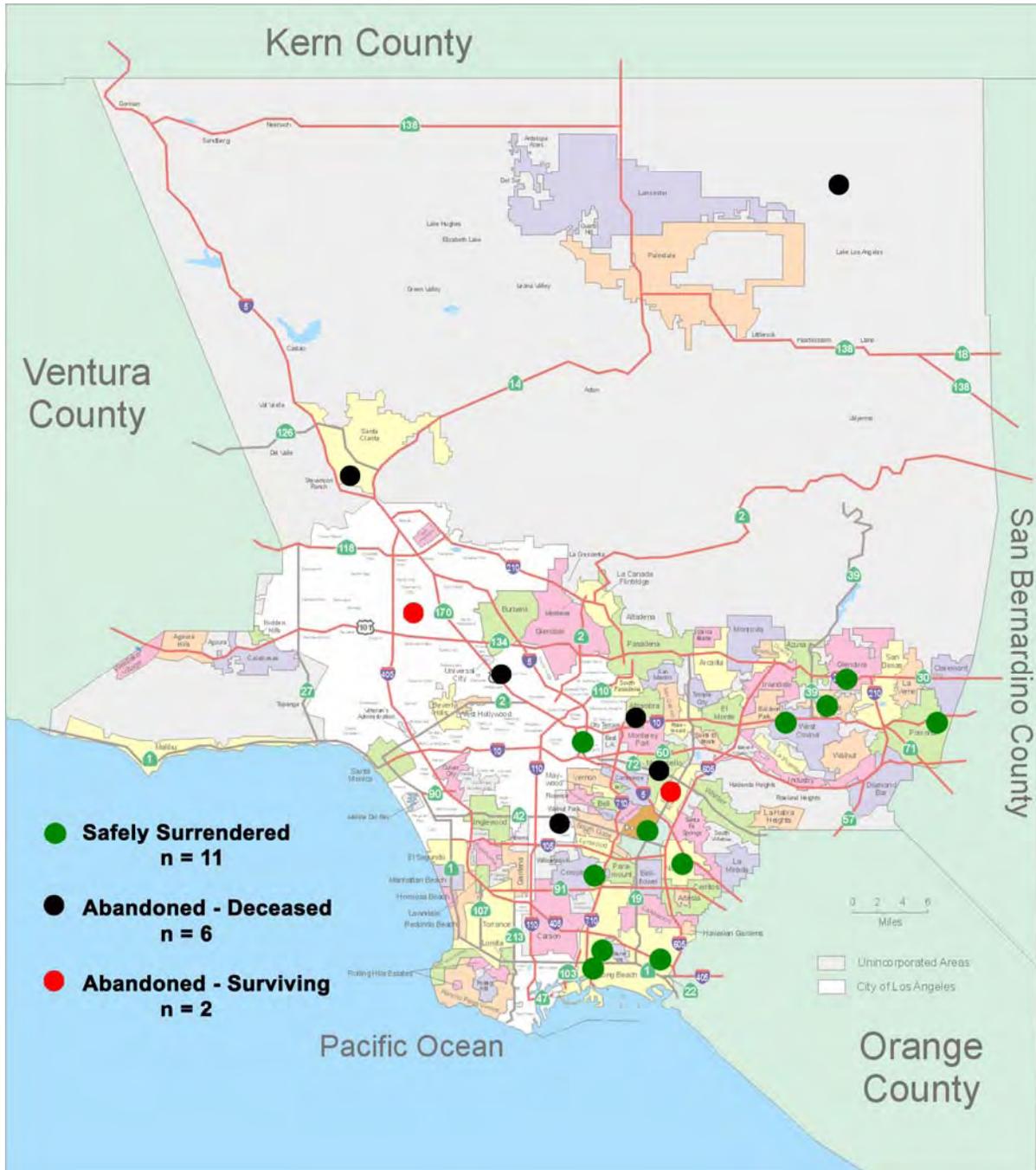
# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Los Angeles County – 2008



# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Los Angeles County – 2009



# Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Los Angeles County – 2010



## **AWARENESS OF THE SAFE SURRENDER BABY LAW**

While it has been somewhat difficult to obtain straightforward demographic information on the mothers who safely surrendered and abandoned their children between 2002 and 2010, it has been nearly impossible to obtain information regarding mothers' awareness of SSBL. How did those who surrendered their infants become aware of the Law? Were mothers who abandoned their infants aware of the Law and, if so, why did they fail to take advantage of the Law? What are the barriers preventing women from safely surrendering their children rather than abandoning them in an unsafe manner? An inability to obtain these types of data is unfortunate; this information would be most helpful in providing direction for best implementing the Law.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION EFFORTS**

However, even with inherent difficulties in gathering data, the data collected do provide 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 support women at risk for abandoning or harming their infants in choosing this option. Those women who abandoned their infants and were available to provide information indicated a great need to deny their pregnancies and took tremendous effort to hide their pregnancies due to fear 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 support or even the right to live with their families if their pregnancies became known. Although it may be uncomfortable to ask a woman if she is pregnant and provide her with support, ignoring suspicions and colluding in a woman's denial of her pregnancy, as apparently occurred in some cases of infant abandonment, must be challenged. The message should highlight that even if a woman's unplanned pregnancy is upsetting or violates an individual's moral or religious values, he or she must move beyond this—failing to do so could mean a child's life.

Efforts to reach the public have included public service announcements, bumper stickers, transit ads, etc. developed by the California Department of Social Services and First 5 LA. Public information efforts continue under the leadership of the Los Angeles County Fire Department and must persevere and expand to reach a broad cross section of the Los Angeles County community. In addition, efforts to reach young women and men should be undertaken in our schools and communities.

## **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, and this will only serve to shed light on better ways to implement the law.

The good news is that eighty-three infants were safely surrendered in Los Angeles County between 2002 and 2010; seventy-six of these infants have been placed with families for adoption through the Department of Children and Family Services Adoptions Division, five children were reclaimed and safely returned to their mothers, and an additional two infants’ mothers were referred for reunification services by the Juvenile Court with the goal of having the infants safely returned home. It is hoped that as the public becomes aware of SSBL, Supervisor Knabe’s goal of “no children thrown away ever” will be realized.

## **SAFE SURRENDERS**

For data collection purposes and consistency across County Departments involved with safely surrendered children, the following criteria were established to define a safely surrendered infant. 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 law and wishes to surrender her child under the law

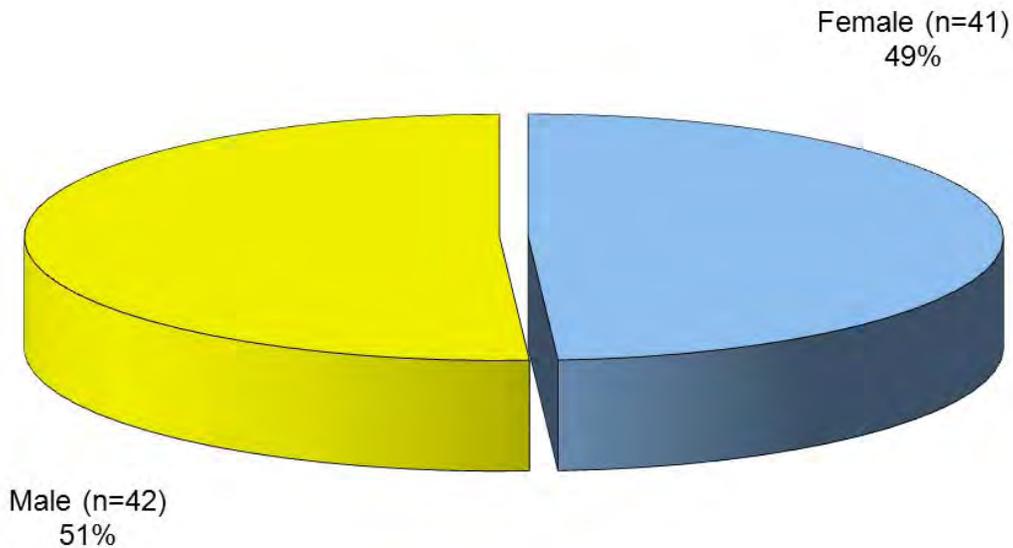
*Excluded* from data collection as safely surrendered are infants with any evidence of abuse or neglect. Also excluded are cases in which hospital staff notify a mother who was previously unaware of the law of the option to safely surrender her infant upon learning that the mother may decide not to keep her baby.

## Safely Surrendered Infants 2002-2010

### Gender

Between 2002 and 2010, 83 infants were safely surrendered in Los Angeles County, as follows:

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	Total
Female	6	2	4	4	5	9	3	4	4	41
Male	4	6	6	4	6	6	4	3	3	42



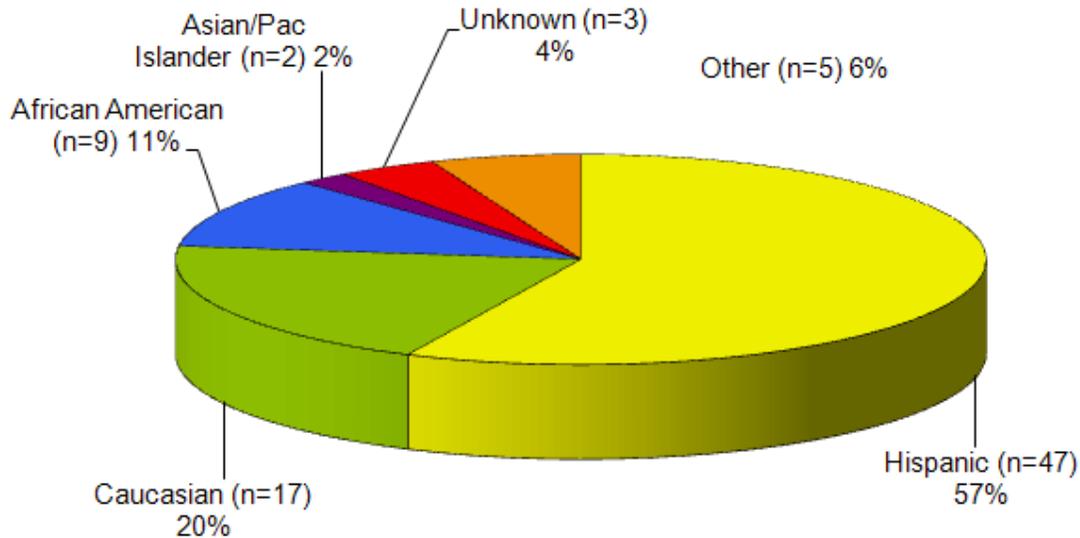
## Safely Surrendered Infants 2002-2010

### Ethnicity

Between 2002 and 2010, 83 infants were safely surrendered in Los Angeles County, as follows:

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<b>Total</b>
Hispanic	6	3	3	4	7	8	6	5	5	<b>47</b>
Caucasian	1	3	3	3	2	3		1	1	<b>17</b>
African American	3	2	3						1	<b>9</b>
Asian/Pac Islander				1*			1			<b>2</b>
Unknown			1			1		1		<b>3</b>
Other					2**	3***				<b>5</b>

\*Filipina mother and Caucasian father \*\*One infant had a Caucasian mother and Hispanic father; the second infant's mother was African American and Hispanic \*\*\*One infant had an African American mother and Hispanic father; the second infant had an Armenian mother and Hispanic father; the third infant appeared to be of Hispanic and Caucasian descent.



## 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 and 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 and 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 and 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 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 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)

**Surrender Sites**

	<b><u>2002</u></b>	<b><u>2003</u></b>	<b><u>2004</u></b>	<b><u>2005</u></b>	<b><u>2006</u></b>	<b><u>2007</u></b>	<b><u>2008</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
Hospital	8	5	5	6	9	12	5	5	4	59
Fire Station	2	3	5	2	2	3	2	2	3	24

**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)  
1 was surrendered in September (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)  
1 was surrendered in August (8/5/10)  
3 were surrendered in December (12/6, 12/24, & 12/31/10)

## **Relationship of Surrendering Party to Infant**

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

### **2002**

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

### **2003**

- 7 - Mother
- 1 - Mother's Neighbor

### **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**

6 – Mother  
1- Good Samaritan

## **2009**

5 – Mother  
1 – Grandmother  
1 – Unknown (infant left in Hospital “Safe Surrender” cabinet)

## **2010**

7 – Mother

## **Case Dispositions**

Seventy-six of the eighty-three infants who were safely surrendered in 2002 – 2010 have been adopted or are in the process of being adopted through the Department of Children and Family Services Adoptions Division. Five infants were reclaimed by their birth mothers and safely returned to their care (four by the Juvenile Dependency Court and one infant was returned prior to Juvenile Dependency Court intervention). Two infants were referred for adoptive planning and, due to the unique circumstances of these cases; the Juvenile Court ordered the Department of Children and Family Services to provide the infants’ birth mothers with reunification services.

## **SAFELY SURRENDERING MOTHERS**

It should be noted that it is inherently difficult to obtain data about mothers who safely surrender their children in California. The Law is intended to assure confidentiality to mothers or other surrendering parties, and this assurance limits access to information. What we know about the mothers who safely surrendered their newborns between 2002 and 2010 is based primarily on what these mothers or other surrendering parties may have disclosed to those to whom they safely surrendered, i.e., hospital personnel or fire department staff.

In addition, 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.

### Mother's Age

<u>2002</u> (n=10)	<u>2003</u> (n=8)	<u>2004</u> (n=10)	<u>2005</u> (n=8)	<u>2006</u> (n=11)	<u>2007</u> (n=15)	<u>2008</u> (n=7)	<u>2009</u> (n=7)	<u>2010</u> (n=7)
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
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 Unknown	1 21- 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 42- year-old	1 26- year old	7 Unknown	1 18-20 year old	1 35- year old	2 25- year olds	1 28- year old		1 "in her mid 30s"
5 Unknown	1 31- year old		1 "early 30s"	1 37- year old	1 38- year old	1 29- year old		3 Unknown
	2 Unknown		3 Unknown	4 Unknown	9 Unknown	2 Unknown		

### Mother's Ethnicity

<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
5 Hispanics	2 Hispanics	3 Hispanics	3 Hispanics	5 Hispanics	7 Hispanics	5 Hispanics	3 Hispanics	2 Hispanics
2 African Ams	2 African Ams	3 African Ams	2 Caucasians	4 Caucasians	4 Caucasians	1 Asian	4 Unknown	2 Caucasians
1 Caucasian	2 Caucasians	2 Caucasians	1 Asian	1 Mixed heritage	1 African Ams	1 Unknown		1 African Ams
2 Unknown	2 Unknown	2 Unknown	2 Unknown	1 Unknown	3 Unknown			2 Unknown

### 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 6 of the 7 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 5 of the 7 surrendering mothers. The remaining two mothers were both reportedly single.

## **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 4 of the 7 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.

### **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 7 surrendering mothers. This mother reported that she was a "non-practicing Catholic."

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

### **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 4 of the 7 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.

## **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

cases as mentioned above. One of these fathers had the mother's four older children placed in his care by the Juvenile Court.

### **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.

### **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, there is no reported history of domestic violence.

### **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=7), 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. For the other surrendering mothers over this eight-year period, it is unknown if there were issues of substance abuse; obtaining accurate information about substance abuse histories is very difficult. In **2010** (n=7), two of the surrendering mothers are reported to have had a history of substance abuse; one mother had a history of cocaine and opiate use. For the other mother with a reported history of substance abuse, the drug of choice was unknown.

### **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.

### **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**, in **2010**, and for all other surrendering mothers over this nine-year period, nothing is known about the surrendering parties’ awareness of the Law.

### **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. 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.

## **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."

**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.

## **ABANDONED INFANTS**

Unfortunately, despite the passage of SB 1368 allowing parents to safely surrender their newborns as of January 1, 2001, 48 infants were abandoned in an unsafe manner in the years 2002 – 2009. Ten of these infants survived while 38 were killed or left to die by their mothers.

Data regarding the mothers and infants in these cases are 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, we have very little information. If mothers who have abandoned their infants are identified, the information we receive is often limited by what information the mothers 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

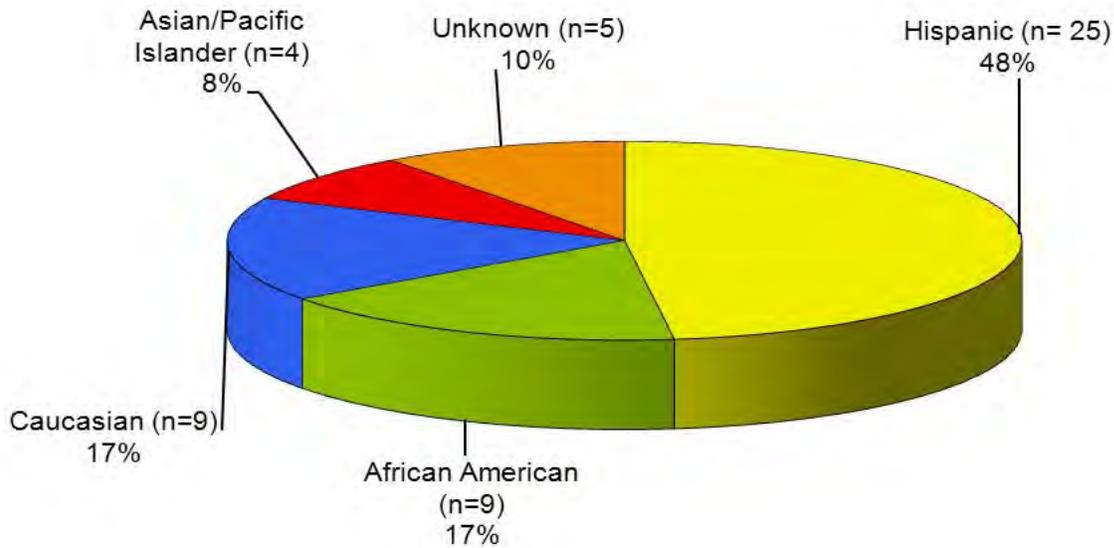
## Abandoned Infants 2002-2010

### Ethnicity

Between 2002 and 2010, 52 infants were abandoned in Los Angeles County, as follows:

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Total</u>
Hispanic	7	2	4	2	5	2	2	1		<b>25</b>
African American	4	1		1	1			1	1	<b>9</b>
Caucasian	1	1	2	1	1			1	2	<b>9</b>
Asian/Pac Islander		2	1*			1				<b>4</b>
Unknown	1	2	1		1					<b>5</b>

\*Filipina mother and Hispanic father

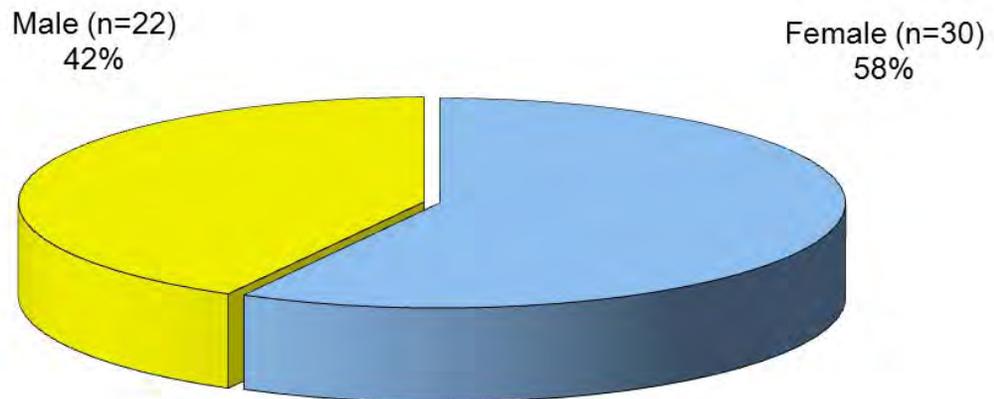


## Abandoned Infants 2002-2010

### Gender

Between 2002 and 2010, 52 infants were abandoned in Los Angeles County, as follows:

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<b>Total</b>
Female	6	4	7	2	4	2	1	2	2	<b>30</b>
Male	7	4	1	2	4	1	1	1	1	<b>22</b>



## Abandonment Sites

### 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, one 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 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

**Locations of Abandonments – Geographic Area**

**2002** (n=13) (\* denotes that child survived)

- \*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) (\* denotes that child survived)

- 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) (\* denotes that child survived)

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) (\* denotes that child survived)

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)

**2008** (n=2)

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

**2009** (n=3) (\* denotes that child survived)

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)

**Dates of Abandonments**

**2002** (n=13) (\* denotes that child survived)

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) (\* denotes that child survived)

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) (\* denotes that child survived)

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) (\* denotes that child survived)

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)  
1 infant was found in December (12/18/06)

**2007** (n=3)

1 infant was found in March (3/13/07)  
1 infant was found in May (5/2/07)  
1 infant was found in July (7/31/07)

**2008** (n=2)

1 infant was found in May (5/11/08)  
1 infant was found in July (7/5/08)

**2009** (n=3) (\* denotes that child survived)

1 infant was found in April (4/2/09)  
2 infants were found in October (\*10/9/09 and 10/24/09))

**2010** (n=3)

1 infant was found in March (3-3-10)  
1 infant was found in April (4-29-10)  
1 infant was found in November (11-8-10)

**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

**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

## MOTHERS WHO ABANDONED THEIR INFANTS

It should be noted that it is also inherently difficult to obtain data about mothers who abandon their infants. Because these women have committed a crime, they do not wish to be identified. If they are located and identified by law enforcement and subsequently charged with a crime, those who defend them in criminal matters most often advise them *not* to disclose information about their pregnancies and circumstances surrounding the abandonment of their children. What information we have about the mothers who abandoned their infants and have been identified has been collected from interviews with law enforcement who may have had contact with the mothers.

### Mother's Age

<u>2002</u> (n=13)	<u>2003</u> (n=8)	<u>2004</u> (n=8)	<u>2005</u> (n=4)	<u>2006</u> (n=8)	<u>2007</u> (n=3)	<u>2008</u> (n=2)	<u>2009</u> (n=3)	<u>2010</u> (n=3)
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 17- year old	1 22- year old	1 18- year old	1 21- year old	1 18- year old	1 23- year old	1 Unknown	1 32-year old	1 21-year old
1 21- year old	6 Unknown	1 19- year old	1 32- year old	1 23- year old	1 25- year old		1 Unknown	1 24-year old
1 28- year old		1 23- year old	1 Unknown	1 28- year old				
1 34- year old		1 26- year old		1 30- year old				
8 Unknown		3 Unknown		1 39- year old				
				1 41- year old				
				1 Unknown				

### Mother's Ethnicity

<u>2002</u> (n=13)	<u>2003</u> (n=8)	<u>2004</u> (n=8)	<u>2005</u> (n=4)	<u>2006</u> (n=8)	<u>2007</u> (n=3)	<u>2008</u> (n=2)	<u>2009</u> (n=3)	<u>2010</u> (n=3)
4 African Ams	2 Asian/Pac Islanders	2 Hispanics	1 Hispanic	4 Hispanics	2 Hispanics	2 Hispanics	1 Hispanic	2 Caucasian
3 Hispanics	6 Unknown	2 Caucasians	1 Caucasian	1 Caucasian	1 Asian/Pac Islander		1 African Am	1 African Am
1 Caucasian		1 Asian/Pac Islander	1 African Am	1 African Am			1 Unknown	
5 Unknown		3 Unknown	1 Unknown	2 Unknown				

## **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.

## **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.

## **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.

## **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.

## **2009**

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.

### **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 **2010**, mother's employment status was unknown for all cases of infant abandonment.

### **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 **2010**.

### **History of Domestic Violence**

There is no *reported* history of domestic violence for the mothers in these cases of infant abandonment between 2002 – 2010, but obtaining this information is difficult at best.

### **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 **2010**.

### **Awareness of the Safely Surrender Baby 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 **2010**, it is unknown whether any of the mothers who abandoned their infants had awareness of the Law.

### **Motivation 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.

## 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.
- **SH Aware** (Safe Haven Awareness) – Was the parent aware of the Safe Haven Law? Yes or No. Please elaborate.
- **SH How** – How was the parent aware of the Safe Haven Law (e.g., radio ad, billboard, from a friend, etc.)?

- **SH When** – When did the parent become aware of the Safe Haven Law?
- **SH Barriers** – For abandoned infants: What prevented the parent from utilizing the Safe Haven Law?
- **Mom Name** – mother’s name, if known
- **Mom DOB** – mother’s date of birth, if known
- **Mom Age** – mother’s age at time of abandonment/surrender, if known
- **Mom Ethnicity** – mother’s ethnicity, if known (African American, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, Other – please elaborate)
- **Mom Marital** – mother’s marital status (Single, Married, Divorced, Separated, Widowed, Unknown)
- **Mom Job** – mother’s employment, if known
- **Mom Religion** – mother’s religious affiliation, if known
- **Mom Family** – mother’s family situation, if known
- **Mom Kids** – number of mother’s other children
- **Sib Loc** (Sibling Location) – location of mother’s other children at time of surrender/abandonment (e.g., with mother and father, living in foster care, etc.)
- **Mom Subs Abuse** – mother’s history of substance abuse. Please elaborate.
- **Mom DV** (Mom Domestic Violence) – mother’s history with DV. Please elaborate.
- **Preg Status** – Planned, Unplanned, Rape, Affair, Unknown. Please elaborate in Preg Details section to follow.
- **Preg Details** – Elaborate on any information known about the pregnancy.
- **Preg Denial** – Was the mother in denial of her pregnancy? Please elaborate.
- **Preg Conceal** – Did mother make efforts to conceal her pregnancy? Please elaborate.
- **Conceal Reason** – If mother concealed her pregnancy, please indicate her motivation for doing so (e.g., fear her parents would kick her out of the home).
- **Dad Involvement** – father’s involvement with the mother and/or child
- **LE Agency** (Law Enforcement Agency) – For abandoned infants: list the law enforcement agency investigating the abandonment.
- **LE Phone** - For abandoned infants: list law enforcement phone number.
- **LE Name** – For abandoned infants: list name of investigating officer(s).
- **Filed** – For abandoned infants: Were criminal charges filed? Yes or No.
- **Charges** – For abandoned infants, list any charges filed.
- **Comments** – Please use this section to elaborate on any above items and to include additional information of interest, including mother’s language. This section can also be used to list the CWS/CMS referral number and other tracking information.