

**Cuyahoga County
Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Children and Family Services
Policy Statement**

Policy Chapter: Substitute Care
Policy Number: 6.02.01
Policy Name: Foster and Adoptive Recruitment

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PURPOSE: To provide a framework for the recruitment of foster and adoptive families who are capable of meeting the various needs of children in care.

SCOPE: This policy guides the activities and philosophy of the Recruitment Department as well as informs the staff of the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS), and the community of the ongoing diligent efforts to recruit families which reflect the diversity of the children for whom foster and adoptive families are needed.

POLICY

- I. CCDCFS conducts continuous activities designed to recruit, support and retain an adequate pool of foster and adoptive families who can meet the specific needs of the children in the temporary and permanent care of CCDCFS.
- II. CCDCFS does not delay or deny any person the opportunity to become a foster or adoptive parent based on race, color, national origin, handicap, age, religion, creed, ethnicity, gender identity expression or sexual orientation.
- III. All recruitment activities and materials comply with the Multiethnic Placement Act 42 U.S.C.A.1996, as amended (MEPA), The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (5101:2-42-48 to 5101:2-42-58 of the Administrative Code), 25 U.S.C.A. 1091, as amended, and the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.
- IV. CCDCFS develops bi-annual recruitment plans for both foster care and adoption. The annual recruitment plan is due on May first of every other year to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and addresses the upcoming state fiscal year.

PROCEDURES

- I. CCDCFS maintains a full-time Foster Care and Adoption Recruitment Department; the duties of which includes the development and implementation of a comprehensive recruitment plan.

- II. The Recruitment Plan is submitted to ODJFS every two years. It includes a description of the characteristics of foster children served by the agency such as their (age, developmental/emotional/physical needs; race, color, national origin, gender identity and sexual orientation).
 - A. Each year, statistics for the current year are compiled and reported which describes the characteristics of children in custody of the agency and state who were either served in foster care or are available for adoption by age, gender, race, level of care, ethnicity, culture and developmental status.
 - B. The racial and ethnic diversity of children served is compared with the racial and ethnic diversity of approved adoptive families waiting to adopt through CCDCFS.
 - C. **CCDCFS recruits families for different level of care needs.** CCDCFS continuously assesses each child's current and future needs as outlined in the Child Study Inventory, the child's case plan, medical history, education summaries, psychological/therapy reports, case notes and other documentation to appropriately match and select a foster home and or adoptive home that will be able to maintain the child at the level of care that is needed and determined by the Placement Department. The agency partners with a network of agencies that recruit, train, match and select foster homes needed for children in our custody who require a high level of intensive care and supervision.
 - D. **CCDCFS uses diverse methods to disseminate general information regarding the children served by the agency.** CCDCFS develops and implements a bi-yearly campaign to inform communities and recruit for foster/adoptive families for the population of children CCDCFS has in temporary/permanent custody. This plan includes, but is not limited to, participation at community events and activities, the development of brochures, pamphlets, flyers of children in permanent custody including an online photo gallery, responding to inquiries and a provision of Pre-Placement training at the agency and in the community.
 - E. **CCDCFS uses specific strategies to reach all parts of the community, such as, targeted recruitment campaigns and general recruitment campaigns.**
 - 1. **Targeted Recruitment Campaigns** are used to attract families to meet the needs of specific groups such as adolescents, minority children from birth to 18 years of age, medically fragile or emotionally disturbed and sibling groups.
 - 2. **Child Specific Recruitment Campaigns** are conducted for children in permanent custody for whom adoption is the plan and a family has not yet been identified.

3. **General Recruitment Campaigns** embraces all agency staff and currently licensed foster parents who wish to partake in foster/adoptive recruitment efforts. The agency utilizes data driven approaches to strategically target and guide recruitment activities. Established community events are co-joined with CCDCFS at the table sharing and informing. Youth panels are presented to audiences at Pre-Placement training, where potential families learn about all children in care, especially about the older population. Recruitment materials are also disseminated to communities and faith-based organizations to increase awareness and recruit interested persons.
4. Prospective foster parents are recruited primarily from Cuyahoga County. Families from noncontiguous counties, who contact CCDCFS, are referred to their county's Public Children's Service Agency (PCSA). Prospective adoptive applicants are recruited from Cuyahoga County. Approved adoptive families are recruited statewide and nationwide for the purpose of adopting waiting children.

F. CCDCFS uses various strategies to assure prospective foster caregivers have access to the application process.

1. The Recruitment Department is accessible to the community by phone during regular working hours (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday). Voice mail is available to the public at other times. Interested persons may also have face to face contact with the recruitment staff during regular working hours. Recruitment staff are available at other times by appointment. When recruitment staff are stationed at neighborhood sites for training, certain services are available at those sites.
2. No potential foster/adoptive parent applicant is screened out by the recruitment staff prior to Pre-Placement Orientation training and/or the home study process. No screening is practiced based on a family's race, ethnicity, national origin, culture, age, handicap, religion, color, creed, gender identity expression, sexual orientation or geographic location. The recruitment staff provides all inquirers with the same information and requirements to become a foster and adoptive parent(s). There are no fees associated with the foster care certification or adoption approval.
3. The Recruitment Department tracks all inquiries and enters information into a database. Every phone call, inquiry, informational correspondence, training class invitation, training class attendance and completion record, application and follow-up/reminder card is tracked in the database. Information and requirements are sent within seven days of an inquiry including information on the characteristics of waiting children, such as, age, gender, race, and ethnicity, developmental, emotional and physical needs. In addition, the CCDCFS policy statement of non-discrimination is also sent to prospective applicants.

4. Pre-Placement Training is a service that is continuously scheduled throughout the year with a series of rounds offered on specific days and evenings during the week. This training is provided through the North Central Ohio Regional Training Center (NCORTC), in conjunction with the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP). Current dates and times of sessions can be found on the OCWTP website under [NCORTC Training Calendars](#). Applicants may cross over to different rounds to accommodate their schedules. **Pre-Placement training is valid for eleven months from the time the applicant begins their first session of training, in order to give the applicant ample time to submit their application for foster care/adoption. If that time expires, prospective applicants must repeat the training.**
5. There are 12 sessions of training that must be completed. Families are permitted to begin a round of training up until session 3. After session 3, additional prospective applicants must wait and begin at the start of the next scheduled round.
6. NCORTC provides Pre-Service Orientation Training for prospective applicants. If a licensing agency other than CCDCFs sends an individual to the NCORTC for pre-placement training, the licensing agency that sent them is responsible for the payment of the pre-service stipend upon licensure for foster care.

G. CCDCFs uses various strategies to train staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, ethnic and economic communities.

All recruitment staff members are trained to work effectively with diverse cultures, races, and economic situations. Training is constant through attendance at staff meetings, conferences, direct supervision, and interaction with the community at events and training seminars sponsored by the OCWTP.

H. CCDCFs works with other professionals to overcome linguistic barriers (including hearing impairment).

Interpreters are available, if an applicant needs assistance due to language or communication difficulties. Interpreters assist applicants during Pre-Service Orientation Training with the paperwork and the home study. The Ohio Relay number is provided on recruitment materials.

I. All CCDCFs foster caregiver recruitment activities and materials are in compliance with MEPA - and Title VI, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C,A, 1901, et seq., as amended, and the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. The following statement is located in the CCDCFs Foster/Adoption Handbook and is mailed to inquirers of both programs. "CCDCFs does not deny any person the opportunity to become a foster caregiver or an adoptive parent on the basis of race, color or national origin of that person, or of the child involved. CCDCFs does not

delay or deny the placement of a child for adoption or into foster care on the basis of race, color or national origin of the foster or adoptive parent, or the child involved.”

SEE ALSO:

Ohio Administrative Code, <http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/>

Ohio Revised Code, <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/>

Multiethnic Placement Act 42 U.S.C.A.1996, as amended (MEPA)

Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (5101:2-42-48 to 5101:2-42-58 of the Administrative Code), 25 U.S.C.A. 1091, as amended (ICWA)

Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA)