

Foster Care/Adoption RECRUITMENT PLAN

Plan Name
2023 Adoption Recruitment Plan

Effective Period
07/01/2023 -

Goals

- > Number of Projected Inquiries -
- > Number of Children to be Placed -
- > Number of Planned Recruitment Events - 4
- > Number of Families to be Approved/Certified - 8

Methods to Disseminate Recruitment Information

General information regarding available children and their characteristics is disseminated during TCJFS recruitment efforts. Our best recruitment method is "word of mouth" from our past and current foster/adoptive families. Radio and TV announcements, newspaper articles, information booths at our regional mall and other local shopping areas as well as for special events/fairs, public speaking at community groups/churches, and participating in public events are used as staff time permits as part of the ongoing recruitment process throughout the year.

TCJFS also collaborates with private foster care/adoption agencies recruiting treatment foster homes in Tuscarawas County. In October 2011, TCJFS added Foster Care/Adoption Information to the agency's Website: www.tcjfs.org. Most inquiries are now received through the agency's Website. TCJFS is also listed in the "It Takes Heart Ohio" website: FosterAndAdopt.jfs.ohio.gov that launched in 2019. In 2019 we also had a media contract with Newsy Mom who published 2 videos and several articles for recruitment on social media. In 2020 we are used billboards and yard signs throughout the community to advertise our need for foster families. We also distributed rack cards to appropriate venues to advertise the need. In August 2022 we launched the Binti system and will receive inquiries through that system also. This system will follow the inquirer through the application and homestudy process. This system will follow up with the applicant on any needed information which they will be able to use to easily turn in all needed material for licensure/approval. We have also partnered with COAD who are recruiting for foster parents in our community. They are able to speak with inquirers and direct them to our agency for further information.

Since all children have cultural needs, those needs will be shared with prospective families.

Child-specific information (for adoptive purposes) is disseminated by sharing personal profile adoption recruitment flyers and videos with other public and private adoption agencies. Children are also listed on the ODJFS Photo Listing Website on the Internet. Referrals for our teens and higher needs children have also been made to the NOAS Wendy's Wonderful Kids adoption recruitment project.

Access to the Home Study Process

Our office is centrally located in the county at 389 16th Street, SW, New Philadelphia, Ohio 44663. Our office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Staff are always accessible after hours, as well as during regular work hours, to facilitate the home study process. We frequently arrange appointments around the work schedules of foster/adoptive applicants. Staff will make arrangements to accommodate any applicant that has a transportation problem.

In August 2022 the Binti system was incorporated for applicants to turn in all information easily. The system directs applicants as to what information is needed and will follow up as needed.

Additional Comments

No additional comments.

Agency Fee Structure

No fees are charged for foster care or adoption services.

RECRUITMENT PLAN

Community Outreach

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In 2019 we began a partnership with Fostering Love, a group that offers community and support to foster families. Their mission is: "We Foster Love to Foster Care-Every Child seen, Every Family known, Every Agency loved." They offer social events for families to connect and have fun as well as a social media site to get support, guidance and in some cases concrete items such as baby clothes, baby furniture, etc.

General information regarding available children and their characteristics is disseminated during the recruitment efforts listed above. Since all children have cultural issues, those issues will be shared with prospective families. Child-specific information (for adoptive purposes) is disseminated by sharing personal profile flyers and DVDs with other public and private adoption agencies. Children are also listed on the ODJFS Photo Listing Website on the Internet. Referrals for our preteens and teens have also been made to the NOAS Wendy's Wonderful Kids adoption recruitment project.

RECRUITMENT PLAN

Description of Recruitment Community and of Children in the Recruitment Community

Tuscarawas County children currently in substitute care could be children of all ages who are Biracial (White/African-American), Hispanic, African-American, and White. They may be part of a sibling group and may have Attention Deficit Disorder, Adjustment Disorder, Anxiety Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Reactive Attachment Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, developmental delays, or may have a mental or physical handicap such as a genetic disorder, mental illness, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, deafness, or seizure disorders. Many children have experienced chronic neglect, been sexually abused, and some have suffered serious physical abuse. Some children have experienced problems because of their parents' substance abuse and domestic violence. Other children are teens with adjustment and behavioral problems who need to learn independent living skills. Generally TCJFS has approximately 123 children in substitute care. These children may be placed in foster homes, kinship homes, adoptive homes, group homes or residential treatment homes.

TCJFS General Characteristics of Children Waiting to be Adopted:

Ages 0-2 TCJFS generally has 2-4 children, both genders, who are Caucasian or Biracial (Caucasian/African American). They are generally Non-Hispanic, and have no special needs, mild physical/developmental needs or mild emotional needs. Generally they are single children, but occasionally are part of a sibling group of 2 to 4 children (with the siblings in a different age group).

Ages 2-5 TCJFS usually has 5-7 children, both genders, who are Caucasian or Biracial (Caucasian/African American). They are generally Non-Hispanic, and have no special needs, mild physical/developmental needs or mild/moderate emotional needs. Generally they are single children, but occasionally are part of a sibling group of 2 to 4 children.

Ages 6-9 TCJFS usually has 10-12 children, both genders, who are Caucasian or Biracial (Caucasian/African American). They are generally Non-Hispanic, but occasionally are Hispanic. They usually have mild developmental needs or mild/moderate emotional needs. Occasionally a child has severe emotional needs. Generally they are single children, but occasionally are part of a sibling group of 2 to 4 children.

Ages 10-13 TCJFS usually has 6-8 children, both genders, who are Caucasian, Biracial (Caucasian/African American), or African American. They are generally Non-Hispanic. They usually have mild developmental needs, or mild/moderate emotional needs. Occasionally a child has severe emotional needs. Occasionally, they require residential treatment to manage their behaviors before they can be placed in a family setting. Generally they are single children, but occasionally are part of a sibling group of 2 to 4 children (with siblings in a different age group).

Ages 14-17 TCJFS usually has approximately 7-9 children in this age range, both genders, who are Caucasian, Biracial (Caucasian/African American), or African American. They are generally Non-Hispanic. They usually have moderate emotional needs. Occasionally a child has severe emotional needs. Generally they are single children, but occasionally are part of a sibling group of 2 to 4 children. Occasionally, they require residential treatment to manage their behaviors before they can be placed in a family setting.

TOTAL: TCJFS usually has 30-40 children waiting to be adopted. Since 86% of TCJFS adoptions are foster parent adoptions, most waiting children are placed for adoption within 12 months following permanent custody. It is only the children with severe emotional needs that it takes longer than 12 months to be placed for adoption.

In the past 6 years, TCJFS has finalized 161 adoptions (73 were ages 0-4, 42 were ages 5-7, 19 were ages 8-10, 10 were ages 11-13, and 17 were ages 14-18). With those 161 finalizations over 4 years, it included 1 sibling group of 5 children, 1 sibling group of 4 children, 8 sibling groups of 3 children, and 31 sibling groups of 2 children, as well as a sibling group of 7 who had been separated into a group of 4 and 3 that were re-united and adopted by the same family. Multiple single adoptions were within the same home as a previously adopted sibling or sibling group.

Adoptive applicants approved by TCJFS who are waiting to adopt are mostly Caucasian, but occasionally we have adoptive applicants with 1 parent Caucasian & 1 parent Hispanic, or Biracial. This is not identical to the usual characteristics of TCJFS' children in agency custody who are available for adoption {88% White, 7% Multi-Racial/ 3% African American}, and 87% Non-Hispanic.

Generally TCJFS approved adoptive families will take children of all races and ethnicities. For children not yet matched, TCJFS conducts child-specific recruitment efforts, which includes contracting with private Ohio adoption agencies to locate permanent families for TCJFS children waiting to be adopted.

RECRUITMENT PLAN

Currently, TCJFS has a need for families willing to foster/adopt sibling groups and teenage children with moderate to severe emotional needs. TCJFS will diligently recruit families that reflect the racial and ethnic diversity represented in Tuscarawas County willing to meet these needs. TCJFS jointly licenses all families for foster care and adoption, and 86 percent of agency adoptions are foster parent adoptions.

Home Study & Pre-Service Training Strategies (Out of County)

TCJF jointly licenses applicants to provide both foster care and adoption services. Our agency completes home studies on prospective families who live in Tuscarawas County and adjacent counties to Tuscarawas County.

Families in other counties are permitted to attend our pre-service training, and we accept families attendance at other county pre-service training.

TCJFS will also accept home studies completed by other assessors in adjacent counties.

Families wishing only to adopt children under age 10 and/or children from other countries will be referred to private adoption agencies specializing in those adoptions.

On a case-by-case basis, TCJFS may provide adoption services to foster families of other agencies (who are not approved as adoptive parents) and who live outside the designated geographic area, when they express the desire to adopt a child in the permanent custody of TCJFS.

Linguistic Barriers

Hearing impaired persons call into TCJFS on their own TTY, or they can contact us through Ohio Relay Services at 1-800-750-0750. Triad Deaf Interpretation Services can also be used and Mr. John Sedewall is certified by the Ohio Supreme Court to provide Sign Language Interpretation. TCJFS also contracts with Greenleaf Family Center in Akron, Ohio. For clients with limited English proficiency, TCJFS has a contract with Language Line Services which offers translators for numerous languages over the telephone, and also contracts with local language translators, one of which is certified by the Ohio Supreme Court to interpret for Spanish speaking clients. Other resources in our community are Kent State Tuscarawas and Latino Cultural Connections, & Hispanic ministries. Our current hiring practices also include interviewing applicants who have bi-lingual skills. Currently 3 TCJFS staff members are bi-lingual. These bi-lingual staff people are available to assist with translation and interpretation services. Besides speaking English, they speak Spanish which is the language of the dominant non-English culture in our community.

Responding to Inquiries

At the time of inquiry (whether by phone or agency website), all persons interested in becoming foster/adoptive parents are directed to our website for further information. All inquirers are immediately sent a letter acknowledging their inquiry, which states that the foster care/adoption information can be obtained on the agency website, or the information can be sent hard copy upon request. If the inquirer requests a hard copy, a copy of our Foster Care/Adoption Services Policy and an information packet will be mailed to the prospective adoptive parent within seven (7) days.

In October 2011, TCJFS added Foster Care/Adoption Information to the agency's Website: www.tcjfs.org. Most inquiries are now received through the agency's Website.

We have contracted with Binti and utilize their program to direct inquiries and follow the inquirer through the application and approval process.

Staff Training

All foster care and adoption staff have and will continue to be required to attend cultural competence trainings offered by our regional training center to increase their competence in working with diverse, cultural, racial, ethnic, and economic communities. MEPA training is required of all foster care and adoption staff on an annual basis. New workers are trained on MEPA as part of their Orientation with the agency.

All foster care and adoption staff are also required to complete all training requirements to be an Adoption Assessor. Staff who are licensed social workers, additionally must obtain 30 hours of continued training every two years to maintain their state license.

RECRUITMENT PLAN

Statement of Assurance

All recruitment activities and materials shall be 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.

Timely Search/Match Procedures

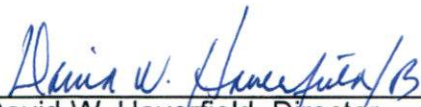
Our agency first searches for a child's relative/kin as a prospective placement, providing they meets all relevant state child protection standards. We currently have a Kinnect worker that is able to take on cases to complete diligent searches for kin. This kinship provider is given the option to become licensed as a foster/adoptive parent. In some cases the kinship provider may be licensed as foster only since the KLIP and KGAP programs are utilized when the kinship provider takes legal custody of a child. The foster parent is given priority consideration if placement with a relative is not determined to be in the child's best interest or if no relative is available. If a child must be placed in foster care, our agency attempts to place a child in a foster home who can meet the best interest and special needs of that particular child. The placement of a child into a foster home will not be delayed by a search for a same race or ethnic placement.

When it appears that receiving permanent custody of a child is inevitable, our agency attempts to identify a foster-to-adopt family who can meet the best interest and special needs of a child. Many times the family identified is the same family who has been fostering the child. Such efforts significantly reduce the number of waiting children. When we receive permanent custody of a child, the placement of the child into a permanent home is not delayed by the search for a same race or ethnic placement. The placement will not be delayed to look for an adoptive family in a specific geographical area. A child will only be placed into an adoptive home which meets a child's best interest and special needs. A search for a family will be considered complete when we believe this has occurred. The decision about whether or not a specific interested, waiting family can parent a specific waiting child will not be delayed or denied on the basis of race, color, national origin, handicap, or geographic location of the potential adoptive parent, or the child involved.

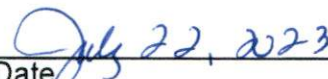
To identify an appropriate home in the pool of adoptive parents, we contact other public and private agencies, list the child on the ODJFS Photo Listing Website, referral to Wendy's Wonderful Kids Adoption Recruitment Project at Northeast Ohio Adoption Services, and attempt to search the State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) when there are no families to be presented at any matching conference scheduled for a child.

Placements will not be denied or delayed due to the geographic location of the parties and families from outside our jurisdiction will not be discriminated against. We will review all solicited as well as unsolicited home studies from other agencies for a possible match with children in our agency's custody. All home studies will be reviewed by the adoption worker and adoption supervisor. Our agency has a policy that we will not certify/approve any agency employee to become a foster or adoptive home. Our policy prohibits any children in our agency custody to be placed for foster care or adoption with any agency employee. Any exception to this policy requires written consent of the director.

Our agency's adoption policy will not conflict with the Indian Child Welfare Act which gives greater control to indigenous tribes over the disposition of tribal children.



David W. Haverfield, Director



Date