

**Oklahoma Child Welfare Services
Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan
CFSP 2020 - 2024**

Over the past few years, Oklahoma has made a concerted effort to improve the resource approval process and customer service to resource parents. Previously, it took 120-calendar days from time of inquiry to resource home approval. Due to streamlining paperwork, timely receipt of background information, timely completion of the resource family assessment, and the addition of online pre-service training, the majority of resource homes are now approved within 60-90-calendar days after inquiry. Oklahoma also implemented a campaign to engage all Child Welfare Services (CWS) staff in providing excellent customer service to resource parents, regardless of their role within CWS. Monthly customer service surveys were completed in 2016-2017, with a random sample of resource parents and the results continually showed a positive trend regarding foster parent experience. Through exit surveys completed in 2018-2019, with resource parents that request their home be closed, CWS found that the majority of homes that close choose to do so to spend time with their family or children they adopted and not because of a CWS issue. Additionally, over 85 percent of resource homes would recommend fostering to their friends or family. This data indicates that the overall experience of resource parents is positive.

Oklahoma has identified a need for improved pre-service training for all resource parents. Oklahoma was selected as a pilot site to participate in the National Training and Development Curriculum in conjunction with Spaulding for Children, The Center for Adoption Support and Education, the North American Council on Adoptable Children, the National Council for Adoption, and the University of Washington. Oklahoma is one of eight states that will be a part of this five-year grant that pilots new and progressive pre-service training for resource parents.

Oklahoma continues to use a Foster Home Needs Analysis (FHNA) to calculate the number of homes needed to care for children in DHS custody. Oklahoma has fine-tuned the FHNA over the past three years and has used it develop recruitment goals for both internal recruitment staff and external recruitment partners. The FHNA is a simple Excel file. It incorporates the following types of data into its calculations:

- Data on types of placement, such as kinship, therapeutic foster homes, and group care currently used for different groups of children;
- Data on current foster home pool; and
- CWS goals around placement practices.

In Oklahoma, 95 percent of the children who become free for adoption achieve permanency with the foster or relative families with whom they were placed. The goals and strategies identified in this plan are intended to also address the goals and strategies for recruitment of adoptive families. In 2016, Oklahoma integrated their Foster Care and Adoption programs and developed a Resource Family Model. The model created a more streamlined process for families that foster and adopt and

allowed Oklahoma to focus their efforts regarding recruitment of both foster homes and adoptive homes.

One phase of the model was to raise the age of children that Oklahoma would accept as adoptive applicants. In mid-2017, the decision was made to no longer accept adoptive applicants wanting to adopt a child five years old or younger. Families that inquired about adoption for children five and younger were referred to private adoption agencies in their area. In 2018, Oklahoma again looked at the types of homes needed to care for children that were legally-free for adoption. The children in need of adoptive homes are teenagers, siblings groups with a range of varying ages, and children with special needs. Part of implementing the next phase of the Resource Family Model will aim to recruit adoptive-only homes for these specific groups of children and will no longer accept applications from families wishing to adopt children under age 12. Child-specific recruitment efforts will be the key to assisting these groups of children in achieving permanency.

Recruitment for foster homes for DHS custody children includes recruitment by both CWS staff, as well as contracted recruitment agencies. CWS Foster Care and Adoptions (FC&A) Recruitment field administrator leads a total of 10 CWS Recruitment units throughout the state. In September 2018, recruitment plan training was held for all recruitment staff and plans were developed based on KIDS data regarding the demographics of children in custody, current foster parents, as well as children placed outside of their home county and sibling separations. In addition, each unit incorporated retention activities as part of their recruitment plans. Each unit throughout the state was given a specific recruitment goal for their unit and region. Preliminary data indicates as of 5/31/19, CWS Recruitment units opened 367 new foster homes, meeting 89.5 percent of the CWS recruitment goal of 410. FC&A leadership continually evaluates the number of new homes recruited as well as the recruitment events and activities occurring throughout the state.

Contracted resource family partners (RFPs) or private foster care agencies completed recruitment plans for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 19 with an overall recruitment of 497 new foster homes projected. Preliminary data indicates as of 5/31/19 that private agencies have a total of 325 new homes, meeting 65.4 percent of the RFP recruitment goal of 497. RFP agencies provide recruitment plan/activity updates to CWS quarterly. These updates show that recruitment activities are occurring, yet the number of families actually moving forward in the process appears to be low.

The total CWS/RFP SFY 19 recruitment goal is 907 new foster homes. As of 5/31/19, preliminary data indicates that 692 new foster homes were open, meeting 76.3 percent of this goal.

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Preliminary Data for New Foster Homes by Agency														
Agency	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Total	SFY19 Target	% of Target Achieved
ANGELS FOSTER FAMILY	5	7	6	6	5	3	2	2	4	9	7	56	45	124.4%
ANNA'S HOUSE	1	1		3	4	4	1	2	1	3	3	23	26	88.5%
CIRCLE OF CARE	1	3	3	5	3	5	5	4	3	10	5	47	59	79.7%
ECKERD				1	1	1	2		3	1	1	10	12	83.3%
HBSR	2				1	2	1	1	2	3	2	14	12	116.7%
LILYFIELD		4	3	2	2	2	1	2	2	4	4	26	32	81.3%
LIONS MEADOWS OF HOPE				1	1	1				1		4	8	50.0%
OK FAMILIES FIRST	1	2	2	2	2		1	1		1	3	15	12	125.0%
ST. FRANCIS COMMUNITY	1	2	2	1	1		5	4	2	2	3	23	75	30.7%
SUNBEAM FAMILY SERVICES	2		2	1			1		1		1	8	18	44.4%
TALLGRASS FAMILY SERVICES	1	2	1	2	2	6			2	1	3	20	72	27.8%
TFI		5	3	2	4	9	5	4	7	8	6	53	96	55.2%
WESLEYAN		2	4	2		2		2	1	4	1	18	15	120.0%
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICE, INC.		1				2	1		1	3		8	15	53.3%
RFP Total	14	29	26	28	26	37	25	22	29	50	39	325	497	65.4%
REGION 1	3	12	11	4	8	8	4	7	6	6	5	74	94	78.7%
REGION 2	8	6	10	10	7	5	7	3	9	10	10	85	103	82.5%
REGION 3	2	1	3	1	1	4	2	3	3	1	1	22	45	48.9%
REGION 4	5	14	7	11	8	10	6	7	12	9	11	100	78	128.2%
REGION 5	4	9	5	10	4	13	6	10	6	8	11	86	90	95.6%
DHS Total	22	42	36	36	28	40	25	30	36	34	38	367	410	89.5%
Total	36	71	62	64	54	77	50	52	65	84	77	692	907	76.3%

Data Source: Measure 2; Run Date 6/1/19 - These are preliminary numbers and are subject to change

The total number of foster homes served by CWS and RFP SFY 18 to SFY 19 is 4,072, as seen in the following table.

Number of Traditional Foster Homes Served SFY 18 - SFY19	
ANGELS FOSTER FAMILY NETWORK OKC	260
ANNA'S HOUSE	102
CIRCLE OF CARE	202
ECKERD	40
HBSR	57
LILYFIELD	119
LIONS MEADOWS OF HOPE	22
OK FAMILIES FIRST	45
OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH SERVICES	23
SOUTHWEST FOSTER CARE	19
ST. FRANCIS COMMUNITY SERVICES	256
SUNBEAM FAMILY SERVICES	61
TALLGRASS FAMILY SERVICES	266
TFI	390
WESLEYAN	73
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICE, INC.	66
YOUTH CARE FOSTER CARE	10
DHS Foster Homes	2061
TOTAL	4072

Data Source: Measure 2, run date 6/1/19

The number of placement days broken down by age groups for children currently in foster care is in the table below. As indicated, the highest need is foster homes for children 0-2 years with the second highest need for children 6-12 years old.

Placement Days for Foster Care - SFY18					
	Age 0-2	Age 3-5	Age 6-12	Age 13-17	Total
ANGELS	24,452	18,338	13,699	2,400	58,889
ANNA'S HOUSE	12,911	6,169	7,570	1,216	27,866
CIRCLE OF CARE	23,413	12,930	16,329	1,652	54,324
ECKERD	2,978	3,055	2,504	1,653	10,190
HBSR	6,791	4,114	3,950	2,116	16,971
LILYFIELD	12,135	4,822	3,324	440	20,721
LIONS MEADOWS OF HOPE	2,647	2,116	1,586	1,278	7,627
OK FAMILIES FIRST	2,136	2,846	4,510	1,593	11,085
OAYS	370	257	344	62	1,033
ST. FRANCIS	25,057	16,505	17,732	5,156	64,450
SUNBEAM FAMILY SERVICES	4,664	4,890	3,476	1,767	14,797
TALLGRASS FAMILY SERVICES	41,844	21,957	21,453	7,798	93,052
TFI	41,871	26,943	34,949	8,562	112,325
WESLEYAN	6,858	5,483	5,786	959	19,086
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICE, INC.	8,352	4,344	3,079	675	16,450
YOUTH CARE FOSTER CARE		610	216		826
DHS FOSTER FAMILY CARE	216748	136225	182600	57218	592791
TOTAL	433,227	271,604	323,107	94,545	1,122,483

Run Date: Data Collected on August 1, 2018 at 5:02 am

In order to improve performance in these areas and develop and maintain a diverse array of foster and adoptive care resources that are readily available to the children in DHS care, the recruitment plan below was developed and is divided into four sections: General Recruitment, Targeted Recruitment, Child Specific Recruitment, and Retention.

General Recruitment

1. Maintain the Foster Care and Adoption Support Center. This center is the point of contact for all interested individuals related to foster care and adoption. The center tracks CWS and partner agency timeliness of responses to inquiries and assists families, when needed.
2. Maintain the Oklahoma Fosters website at www.okfosters.org. This website provides information to the general community and resource parents, plus it includes a Spanish translation. Included on this website are the links to the partner agency websites where the public can obtain information. such as on location and hours. Neither CWS nor the partner agencies have fees associated with the application or approval of becoming a resource parent.
3. Use social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, to educate the public regarding the need for resource parents for children in DHS custody. The messages will include information related to specific populations where the need is identified,

which include, but are not limited to, foster and adoptive homes for children with therapeutic needs, developmental disabilities, children over 12, and sibling groups.

4. Purchase advertising on radio and TV, when funding is available, to educate the public regarding the need for resource parents for children in DHS custody. In addition, CWS partner agencies will purchase advertising related to the recruitment of traditional and therapeutic foster homes.
5. Provide Spanish translation services to prospective foster families as needed. Offer a pay differential to CWS employees who speak Spanish and can provide translation services.
6. Provide training to CWS staff regarding their roles and responsibilities related to recruitment of a diverse array of resource parents. Cultural competency is taught during entry level staff training and is included in Oklahoma Child Welfare Practice Standards.

Targeted Recruitment

1. Both CWS staff and partner agencies complete a yearly recruitment plan with focused targeted recruitment efforts. These plans are updated quarterly.
2. Continue to provide monthly data to CWS recruiters and partner agency recruiters regarding the number of children in custody, children placed out of county, and children not placed with siblings to aid in targeted recruitment efforts.
3. "Re-recruit" foster families to expand their placement parameters. Kinship caregivers will be offered the opportunity to become a foster parent to non-related children.

Child-Specific Recruitment

1. Focus on the timely identification and approval of relative and non-relative kinship when a child initially enters care to increase placement with siblings, in the same community, stability, and timeliness to permanency, which will result in a larger percentage of children in kinship care.
2. Utilize AdoptUSKIDS, AdoptOKKIDS, Adoption Exchange, Waiting Child, Heart Gallery, Project111, Count Me in 4 KIDS, OK Foster Wishes, OKC Thunder, tribal partners, faith based collaborations, and any interested party who can protect the confidentiality of the child while searching for an adoptive home in presenting child-specific profiles on children who are legally-free for adoption but are currently without an identified family. CWS continues to provide reimbursement for adoption expenses when adopting a child in DHS custody. Reimbursement is not based on income; it is the same amount of reimbursement for all families choosing to adopt through DHS.
3. Annie E. Casey Foundation will provide a class on Child Specific Recruitment techniques and strategies, "The Art of Recruiting Teens," to private partners.
4. Partner with the Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters who will support child specific recruitment efforts for children awaiting adoption and assist in creating connections for youth who may age out without a permanent home. Wendy's Wonderful Kids will have an embedded worker at DHS and they will provide their evidence based training model to all adoption transition staff.

Retention

1. Require all new CWS staff to complete the Customer Service Training in the Learning Management System.
2. Hold yearly focus groups with resource parents in each of the 27 districts. These focus groups will be scheduled and facilitated by the district director.
3. Continue to engage local business to partners with CWS and the foster parent exclusive benefit card that enables resource parents to receive discounts at restaurants, movie theaters, amusement parks, putt putt golf, sports functions, and such.
4. Create and disseminate public thank you messages for resource parents.
5. Send individual thank you cards to resource parents when they are deciding to no longer provide this service for CWS.
6. Hold regional resource parent appreciation events.
7. Supervisors and field managers complete a retention call when a resource parent requests to close their home. This provides an opportunity to thank the resource parent for their service and see if there is anything CWS or the partner agency can do to maintain the resource home.
8. Resource staff completes monthly check-in calls with all resource parents and quarterly in-home visits. The calls focus on relationship building and identifying any needed support in the resource home.
9. Complete exit surveys with resource homes that request to close to assist in identifying resource for closure and potential areas for improvement.
10. Conduct a yearly resource parent survey for feedback on their experience while working with CWS and partner agencies.
11. Continue to enhance the training and supports available for resource parents on the Oklahoma Fosters website.
12. Continue to promote quality customer service to resource parents across the agency through campaigns such as "Support is Everyone's Game."