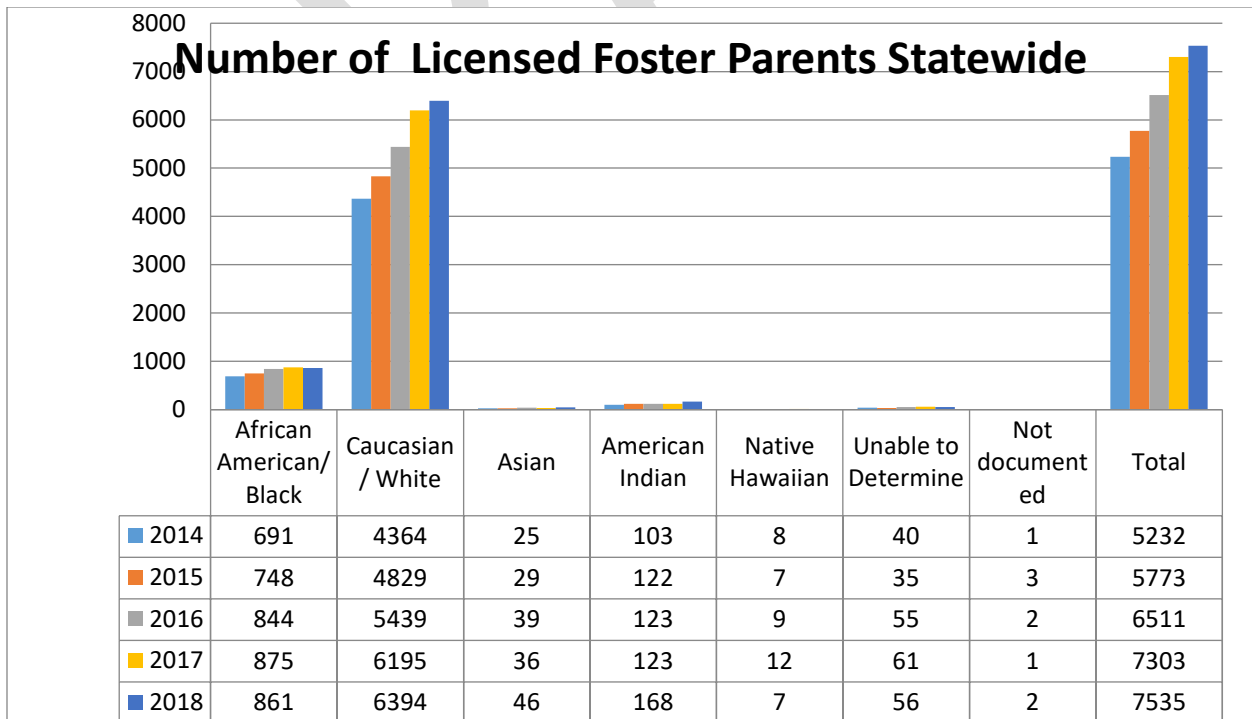


Diligent Recruitment Plan - Strategies to Reach all Parts of the Community

Wisconsin has a process for and is committed to recruiting foster and adoptive parents that reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the children in OHC. Local child welfare agencies, including the state’s Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services and the public adoption programs, counties, and private child placing agencies are responsible for recruiting families for the children living in OHC. The Division continues to increase resources to all licensing and placing agencies to support their efforts to recruit foster and adoptive parents who reflect the children in our care. Data below shows that Wisconsin continues to be successful in recruiting diverse families that match the race and ethnicity of children in care.

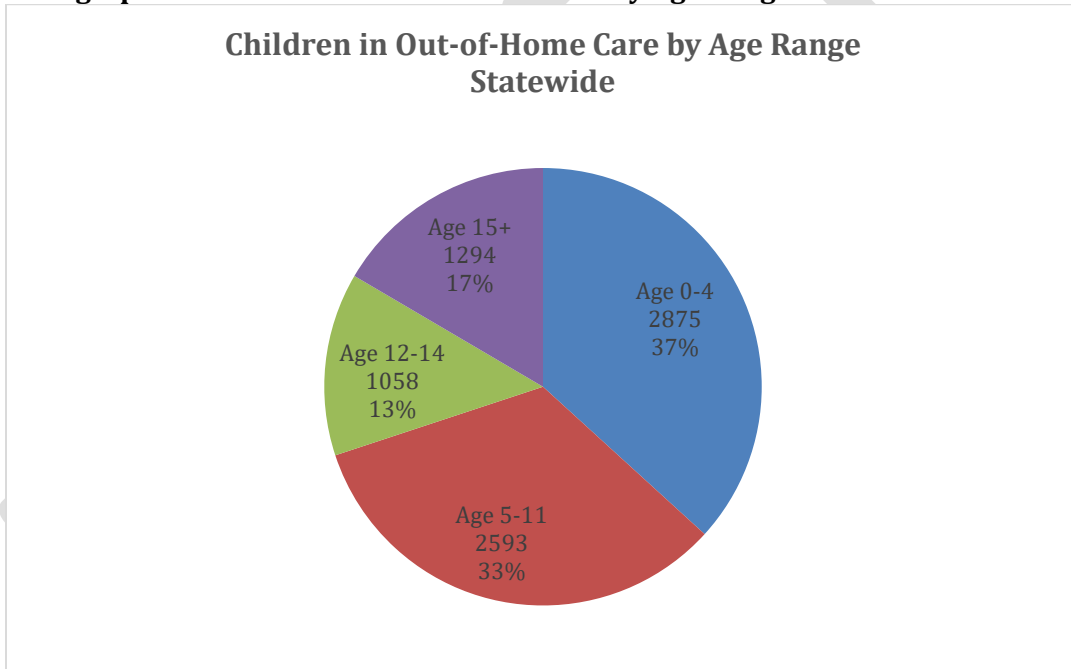
Data for Wisconsin on recruitment and diversity follow on the next three pages.

	African American/ Black	Caucasian/ White	Asian	American Indian	Native Hawaiian	Unable to Determine	Not documented	Total
2014	691	4364	25	103	8	40	1	5232
2015	748	4829	29	122	7	35	3	5773
2016	844	5439	39	123	9	55	2	6511
2017	875	6195	36	123	12	61	1	7303
2018	861	6394	46	168	7	56	2	7535

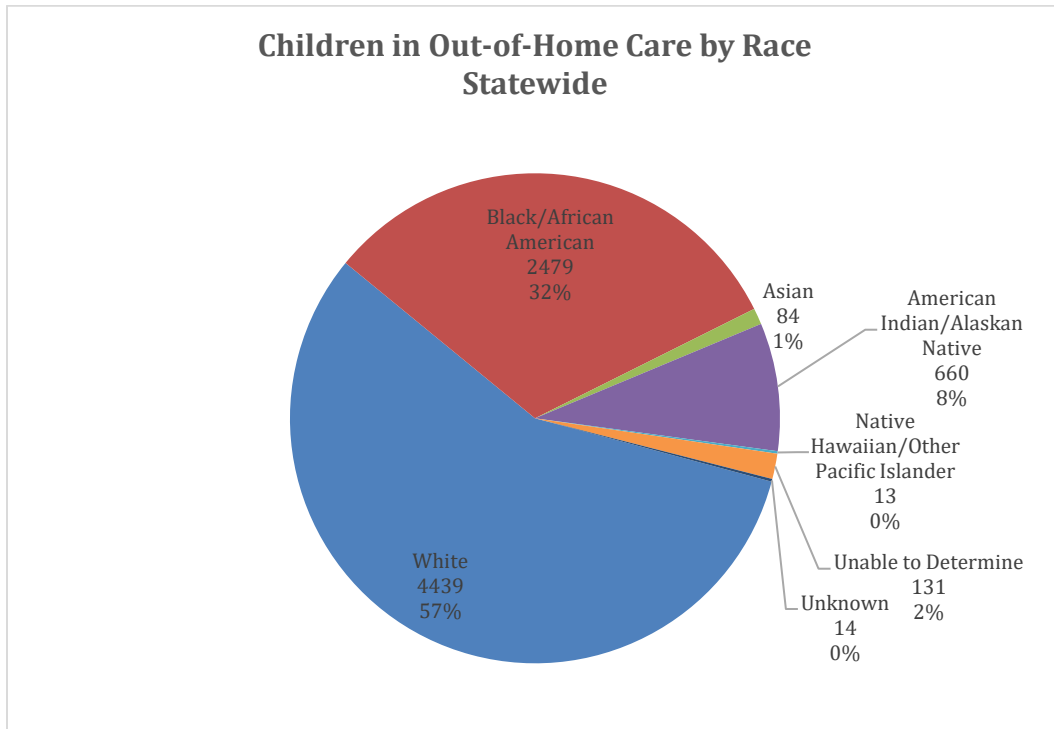


- Statewide: Total Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care on December 31, 2018: **7,820**

Child Demographics: Children in Out-of-Home Care by Age Range

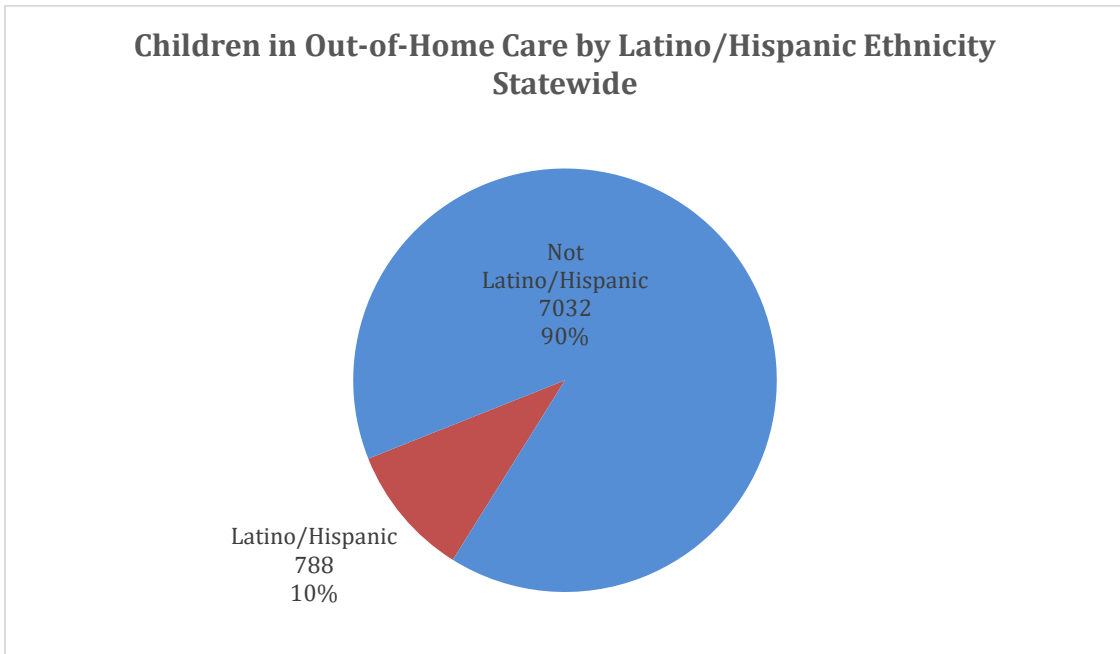


Child Demographics: Children in Out-of-Home Care by Race

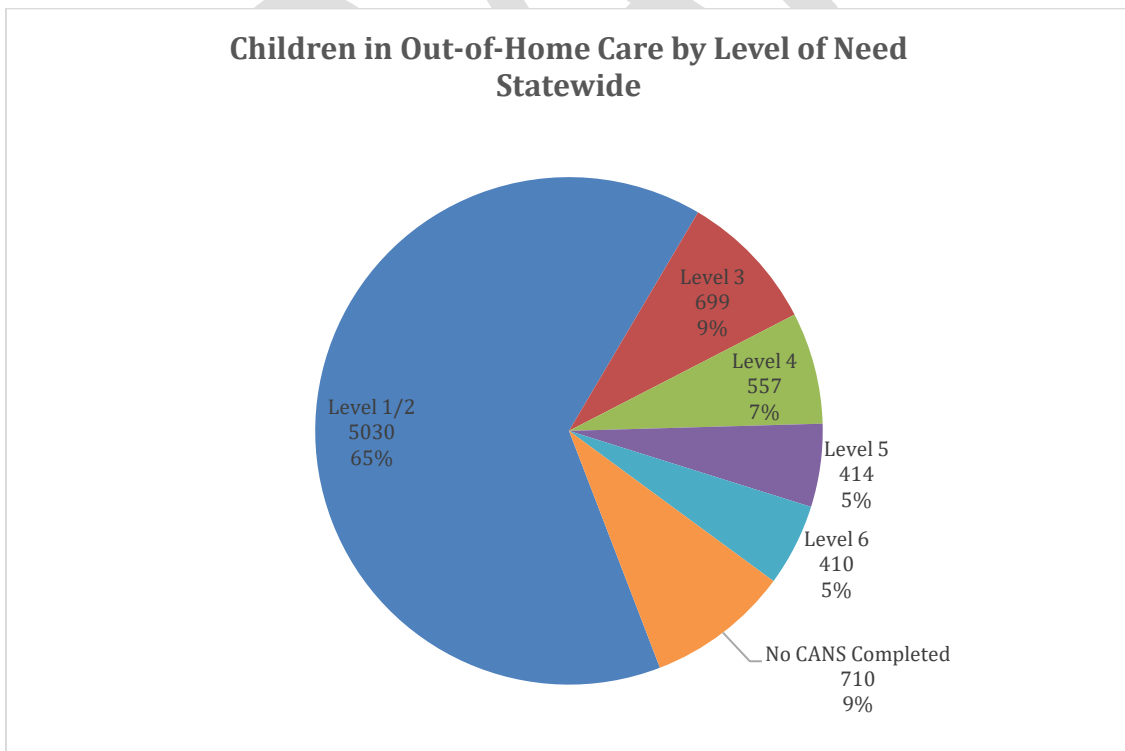


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Child Demographics: Children in Out-of-Home Care by Latino/Hispanic Ethnicity

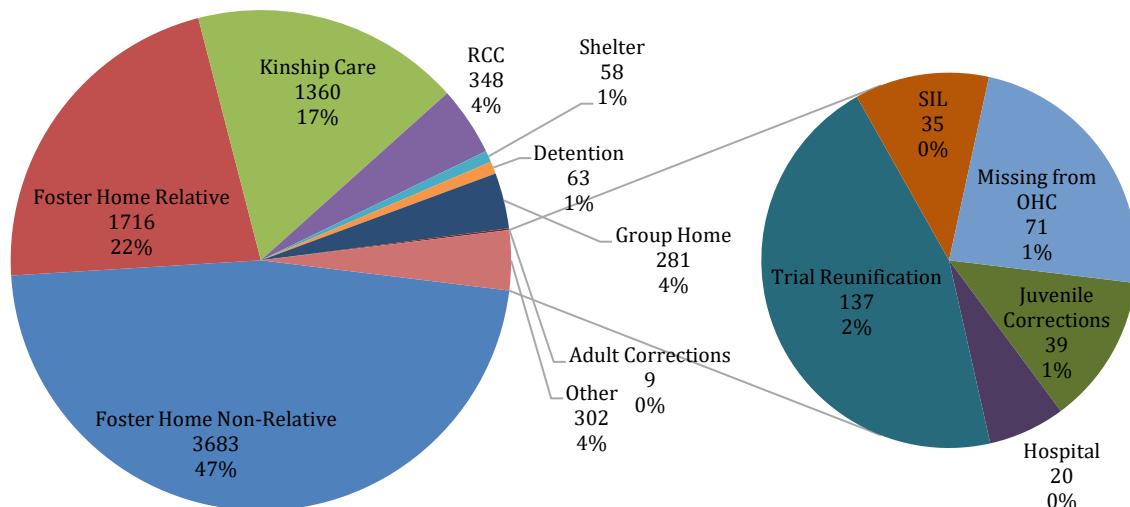


Child Demographics: Children in Out-of-Home Care by Level of Need



Placement Settings of Children in Out-of-Home Care

Placement Settings of Children in Out-of-Home Care Statewide



Wisconsin will continue efforts to increase the number of foster parents statewide that will be detailed in

Wisconsin's 2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan.

State staff called Permanency Consultants work with counties to identify children needing child-specific recruitment efforts so that these children can move to permanence in a more timely fashion. To help facilitate the timely movement of children to permanence, the Division required all adoption agencies working with the public child welfare system and counties, tribes, and private agencies to use the Structure Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) foster and adoption family assessment format so that the completion of an adoptive home study is not a barrier to a timely adoption. DSP supports SAFE trainings each year for new licensors and their supervisors.

Recruitment and Retention

Wisconsin Statewide Recruitment Goals

In collaboration with counties and tribes, DSP works with public, private, and tribal agencies to develop a pool of families to meet the diverse needs of children in OHC (OHC). Specific strategies that are used include the following:

- Sustain a consistent, statewide recruitment campaign with materials that can be used by local agencies to build on the recognition gained from the statewide activities. During 2012, billboards were released to support the recruitment of foster homes for Indian children through collaboration with Wisconsin tribes. In collaboration with the tribes in 2017-18, DCF developed a new and more expansive tribal campaign, which was launched in May 2018 at the same time a refreshed general foster parent recruitment campaign began.
- Continue to improve use of recruitment and retention data to enable agencies to make program improvement decisions based upon current and accurate data concerning family recruitment and retention. DCF is implementing a Geographic Placement Resource System (GPRS) to target recruitment and better identify areas in need and where foster children are removed. Being able to visualize on a map where foster children come from and where they are placed will improve the identification of areas in need of recruitment efforts by local agencies. The GPRS will display the race, ethnicity, relationship status, level of care certification, and provider characteristics. There were delays in the implementation of the targeted recruitment in GPRS due to state level changes to the geographic information system used by GPRS at DCF. GPRS became available to agencies in 2013. In 2015, licensing agencies were required to enter more specific provider characteristics into eWISACWIS to improve the information available to improve the match between the child and potential foster homes.

- Promote State Permanency Consultant (SPC) work with counties, tribes, and private agencies to facilitate timely, quality permanence for children. The SPC are available to provide child specific recruitment efforts which include Family Finding and Engagement, Permanency Roundtables, photolisting, creating recruitment videos, etc. Since 2015 the SPCs have been available to public child welfare agencies to request Family Finding and Engagement for children needing a permanent resource and they provide consultation and coaching to workers and supervisors trained in Family Finding and Engagement.
- Collaborate with counties, tribes, and private agencies to develop policies and procedures to increase the identification of relatives as placement resources. In 2016 DCF released a desk guide to assist caseworkers in Family Finding and Engagement efforts which includes having the legal authority to contact relatives in Wisconsin and tips to involve relatives in case planning.
- Provide support and training to counties, tribes, and private agencies to improve community and cultural responsiveness to recruitment and retention activities, including access to services.
- Implement a dual licensing process (SAFE) to help facilitate quality and timely permanence by having studied and approved foster/adopt families as resources for children in need of permanence. Legislation was passed in 2016 Act 378 that requires a standardized home study for all foster and adoptive parents in Wisconsin.

The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center (FCARC) produces a variety of recruitment resources for agencies to use at the local level. Resource Center brochures and information are also being used by local agencies to connect with families. In addition, the Resource Center has supported the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families through the annual foster care coordinators' conference. In 2016, the focus of the conference was Emotional Regulation for Secondary Trauma and targeted recruitment of foster homes. The Division is committed to assisting local agencies with targeted and child-specific recruitment. Beginning in 2010 and continuing through the present, the FCARC created new resources for relative caregivers, especially those who become licensed families. FCARC created a resource guide to assist workers working with relative caregivers and DCF approved the guide for issuance in 2013. In 2014, a training was conducted on the relative caregiver guide and in 2018 the guide was incorporated into the caseworker on-line Placement training.

In 2017, to assist foster home licensing agencies in recruiting qualified foster parents, the DCF implemented a recruitment plan that went into effect on July 1, 2017 and will continue until June 30th, 2018. DCF, in partnership with FCARC, hosted a series of recruitment activities, which sought to increase the capacity within child welfare agencies to recruit. These activities were open to all foster home licensing agencies throughout the state, including county agencies, private child placing agencies, and tribal agencies. A total of 43 agencies voluntarily participated in the activities with the Coalition.

Agencies that chose to participate were expected to:

- Conduct an assessment of needs specific to their agency.
- Create a recruitment plan with assistance from FCARC.
- Learn how to use their current licensed foster homes as a recruitment resource.

For all participating agencies, the DCF produced a data summary specific to each agency. For example, county child welfare agencies were provided a breakdown of the demographics for the children currently in care within their county, as well as demographics on the agency's current licensed foster parents. The data was provided as a tool to allow agencies to see how well their foster families were currently meeting the needs of the children in their care and whether there were gaps that needed to be targeted in recruitment efforts.

In addition to the recruitment activities, FCARC trained and coached licensed foster parents to recruit foster homes within the participating communities. Each participating agency identified at least one Foster Parent Champion to be an active member of their recruitment efforts. Foster Parent Champions were gathered for a day-long conference to learn about recruitment strategies and how they could be an asset to their agency's recruitment goals. To acknowledge foster parents for their efforts, the DCF provided licensing agencies reimbursement funds for costs incurred by their licensed foster parents who participate in recruitment activities for their time, travel, child care, and mileage. The DCF will continue to

reimburse these costs until at least the end of FY 2020. Agencies submit requests for the reimbursement and the DCF provides the funds to the agency. Once awarded, the agency provides a stipend to reimburse their licensed foster parents.

The DCF is continuing to support child welfare agencies in their recruitment of new licensed foster homes by providing licensed foster parents with an acknowledgement gift card with a value of \$100 for successfully recruiting new licensed foster parents. This is open to any foster parent licensed by a public, private, or tribal licensing agency. Foster parents are the greatest recruiter of new foster parents. Foster parents who successfully recruit new foster parents throughout the state will receive a gift card with a \$100 value from the Department until at least the end of FY 2020.

The Recruitment Activities are explained in [Memo Series 2017-09i](#).

In addition to the recruitment activities being offered to all counties and private child placing agencies, the DCF has provided additional targeted recruitment assistance to tribal agencies. The tribal recruitment work group provides technical assistance to the tribes and helps to identify barriers and gaps in the licensing process. Tribes were provided in-depth assistance in the identification of child needs within the population they serve and support in developing strategies for reaching families that will best meet those needs. The group has also worked closely with the DCF and FCARC to develop materials for recruitment purposes, such as lawn signs, brochures, and billboards, and continued work is being done to develop trainings and tribal resources for families. Furthermore, the DCF and FCARC are worked alongside tribal stakeholders to create a video detailing the need for licensed foster parents and preserving culture within the tribal communities of Wisconsin. The launch of the recruitment campaign took place in the spring of 2018. Additionally 5 tribes created specific recruitment plans and increased their foster home licensed or certified capacity by 100% in 2018.

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	Number of Homes (Prior to Initiative)	Number of New Inquiries (Since Initiative Began)	Likely Newly Licensed*	Total of Current Likely Licensed*	Conversion Success (Inquiry to Likely Licensed)	Total Percent Increase
Oneida	11	14	11	22	79%	100%
Sokaogon	1	9	2	3	22%	200%
Red Cliff	22	19	11	33	58%	50%
Lac Courte Oreilles	1	2	7	8	NA**	700%
Menominee (County Licensed)	6	17	10	16	59%	167%
Overall	41	53	41	82	77%	100%

Staff at the Resource Center continue to operate a 1-800 toll-free recruitment line and have enhanced their web site to accept electronic inquiries regarding foster care and adoption. FCARC will continue to meet with local county and tribal agencies to gather information and ideas about how to expand services to meet the needs of local agencies throughout 2017 and beyond.

The Department continues to maintain and refresh a recruitment campaign to garner interest, counter negative images of foster care, and redefine what it means to be a foster parent in Wisconsin. This public awareness campaign was refreshed in 2018 in celebration of National Foster Care Month and continues throughout the year. Interest in foster care has risen as a result of the media campaign.

DCF also supports the Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parent Association through funding and technical support for a statewide newsletter created by foster parents, the Foster and Adoptive Support and Preservation Program, and the biannual conferences. The support includes foster parents who are trained to respond to concerns by other foster parents specifically around circumstances of allegations of abuse and neglect. DSP meets quarterly with foster parents from across Wisconsin in the Foster Parent Advisory Committee to gather input on pending policies and legislation and to allow foster parents to bring forward concerns they are hearing from other foster families.

Quality Parenting Initiative

Wisconsin has also been working on the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) led by the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services in concert with the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, training partnership.

This initiative seeks to rebrand the image of foster parenting with the goal of recruiting an expanded pool of foster parents. Agencies contracting with the DCF have executed numerous recruitment and retention strategies over a number of years. Some of these strategies have been successful in attracting new families in the short run.

Sending and reinforcing clear and consistent messages to families about the purpose of fostering and what is expected of foster parents has also proven challenging. While this could be expected in most instances of mass communication, the challenge is greater when agency leadership, staff, community partners, and existing foster families have not necessarily clarified their understandings or committed to how these understandings will be translated into action.

The QPI, developed by the Youth Law Center in San Francisco, offers a way to respond deeply and systemically to these challenges. This approach has been used successfully in a number of states and jurisdictions and promises to have a similar effect in Milwaukee. The QPI seeks to change what foster parenting, including kinship care means to a community. Only the community itself can decide exactly what that is. Similarly, each community must identify local barriers to making the “brand” a reality and opportunities for improvement. Most importantly, bringing the community together to discuss parenting and expectations of caregivers is the first step in increasing mutual respect and team building.

A broad group of community stakeholders has crafted a brand statement for foster care in Milwaukee and has identified four key areas of action needed to align system practices with the values articulated in the brand statement. These areas include clarifying legal constraints and requirements around confidentiality, increasing foster parent participation in court, improving the quality of visitation (family interaction) and establishing structures early in a case that encourage birth parent-foster parent relationships. Workgroups have been formed to address each of these areas and have made preliminary recommendations to a steering committee. The steering committee has asked for some revisions and the plans are expected to be finalized in mid-July. The final recommendations will then be presented to the community stakeholder group once again and further actions identified.

A communication team has also been formed to create a comprehensive plan for ongoing communication of the purpose, values, and actions associated with QPI to all key constituencies.

Adoption Training Program

Recent legislation passed in 2016 increased the training requirements for adoptive parents from 16 hours to 25 hours. The DCF worked with the UW-Milwaukee Training Partnership to develop new curriculum for families adopting through public adoption. The new training was implemented in September 2018, with ongoing evaluation to ensure families are understanding the competencies.

The DCF brought together public, international and domestic adoption agency staff to discuss issues related to adoption at a statewide conference in September of 2018. The focus of the conference was on transracial adoptions, the impact of trauma on children and treatment services available within WI.

Post Adoption Resource Centers

Ending June 30th, 2019, the DCF contracted with six service providers to operate PARC services in Green Bay, Stevens Point, Milwaukee, Madison, Eau Claire, and La Crosse. Beginning July 1st, 2019, the DCF will be contracting with one service provider to implement a new types of service for post-adoption, guardianship and kinship families. The new center will be renamed, Wisconsin Adoption and Permanency Supports (WiAPS). The services are funded by federal IV-B, Subpart 2 funds and state funding.. The names of all families who adopt in Wisconsin are shared with WiAPS, unless the family opts not to have their contact information shared. The DCF will work with the new contract agency to develop outreach plans for families with guardianships or providing kinship care.

The DCF also participates in the Quality Improvement Center for Adoption and Guardianship (QIC-AG) with the Adoption and Guardianship Enhanced Support (AGES) program. This initiative is testing a promising practice designed to help adoptive and guardianship families manage stress and prevent post-permanence discontinuity in 17 identified Wisconsin Counties and three Tribes in the Northeastern Region. It will also determine whether the enhanced response to emerging needs of adoptive and guardianship families is effective in increasing the capacity of adoptive parents and guardians to address the needs of their children and equipping parents and guardians to better manage family stress. Identified outcomes that will be measured for the AGES project, in collaboration with QIC, include:

- Decreased familial stress
- Increased family satisfaction with services
- Increased caregiver confidence.

In our usability testing for the program, the DCF is serving 8 families. Of the current families receiving services 56% are public adoptions, 36% are international/private adoptions, and 9% are private guardianships. Families provided the following types of child-related concerns: mental health conditions, school-related issues, and parent-child relationship issues.

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