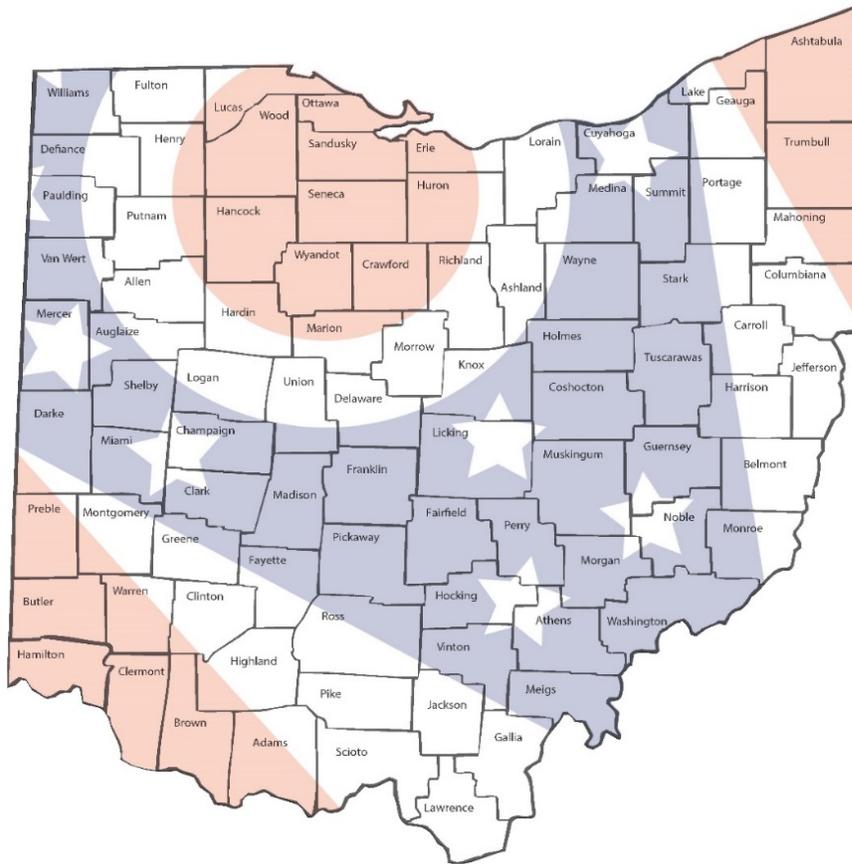**Appendix B**

Ohio 2000-2014
Foster and Adoptive Parent
Diligent Recruitment Plan

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Office of Families and Children

June 30, 2019

State of Ohio Diligent Recruitment Plan
2020-2024

The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994, as amended, requires States to provide for the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom homes are needed. Ohio's Diligent Recruitment Plan is a comprehensive plan that addresses the following areas:

- A description of the characteristics of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed;
- Specific strategies to reach all parts of the community;
- Diverse methods of disseminating both general and child-specific information;
- Strategies for assuring that all prospective parents have access to the home study process, including location and hours of services that facilitate access by all members of the community;
- Strategies for training staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities;
- Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers;
- Non-discriminatory fee structures; and
- Procedures for ensuring a timely search for prospective parents awaiting a child, including the use of exchanges and other interagency efforts, provided that such procedures ensure that the placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for a same race or ethnic placement.

In developing the state's Diligent Recruitment Plan, the ODJFS, Office of Families and Children (OFC) referenced the "CHAMPS Guide to Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention" tool provided by CHAMPS publicly, as well as to those who attended the CHAMPS-Brookings national convening, "Driving better outcomes for children through improved foster parent recruitment and retention" held on January 15-16, 2019 at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. The following components of the plan detail the activities that ODJFS will carry out to ensure diligent recruitment at the state and local level. This is a working plan which encompasses an integrated approach to family recruitment, engagement, development, preparation, and support.

The following stakeholders will be involved in the ongoing Implementation of the Plan:

STAKEHOLDERS		
Agency Directors		Agency Foster Care and Adoption Managers & Staff
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption		Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters
FYLaw		Foster and adoptive parents
Ohio Adoption Planning Group		Kinship caregivers
Ohio Family Care Association		Youth
MEPA Monitors		Other private agency partners involved in recruitment

Key Components of the Plan

- Child-centered policies and procedures that ensure diligent planning for recruitment and retention at the county level;
- Increased focus on being data-driven, completing ongoing evaluation and continuous quality improvement;
- Identification and assessment of systemic and/or organizational factors impacting the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive homes through engagement of diverse stakeholders that includes youth and parent voice;
- Integration of diligent recruitment planning with Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) programming through the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption.

Characteristics of Children Needing Foster and Adoptive Homes

To ascertain how the state should initially focus its recruitment efforts, a point-in-time SACWIS data pull was done to identify: (1) the age range of children in temporary and permanent custody; and (2) the race of children in temporary and permanent custody. The following Tables contain the characteristics of children in the custody of public children services agencies (PCSA) by custody type, age and race.

Children and Youth in Temporary Custody

Age Range of Children in Temporary Custody as of June 1, 2019

Age Range	Count of Children	Percentage
Less than 1 Year	1190	9.88%
1 to 3 Years	2699	22.40%
4 to 6 Years	1963	16.30%
7 to 9 Years	1596	13.25%
10 to 12 Years	1474	12.23%
13 to 15 Years	1763	14.64%
16 to 18 Years	1356	11.26%
19 to 21 Years	5	.04%
Total	12,046	100%

Table 1

Race Value of Children in Temporary Custody as of June 1, 2019

Race Value	Count of Children	Percentage
White	6576	54.59%
Black/African-American	3881	32.22%
Asian	18	.15%
Alaskan Native/ American Indian	7	.06%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	16	.13%
Multiple Races	1421	11.80%
Unable To Determine	127	1.05%
Total	12,046	100%

Table 2

As evidenced in the information presented in the above tables, the largest number of children in temporary custody are ages 1-3 (22.40%) followed by children between the ages of 4-6 (16.30%), and youth between the ages of 13-15 (14.64%). The racial makeup of children and youth in temporary custody are primarily White (54.58%) and Black/African American (32.22%).

Children and Youth in Permanent Custody or Permanent Surrender

Age Range of Children in Permanent Custody or Permanent Surrender as of June 1, 2019

Age Range	Count of Children	Percentage
Less than 1 Year	44	1.08%
1 to 3 Years	592	14.54%
4 to 6 Years	481	11.81%
7 to 9 Years	479	11.76%
10 to 12 Years	530	13.02%
13 to 15 Years	633	15.55%
16 to 18 Years	1124	27.60%
19 to 21 Years	189	4.64%
Total	4,072	100%

Table 3

Race Value of Children in Permanent Custody or Permanent Surrender as of June 1, 2019

Race Value	Count of Children	Percentage
White	2303	56.56%
Black/African-American	1270	31.19%
Asian	5	.12%
Alaskan Native/ American Indian	3	.07%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	1	.02%
Multiple Races	478	11.74
Unable To Determine	12	.30%
Total	4,072	100%

Table 4

As evidenced above, the largest number of children in permanent custody are between the ages of 16-18 (27.60%) followed by youth ages 13-15 (15.55%). The racial makeup of children and youth in permanent custody or permanent surrender is primarily White(56.56%) and Black/African American (31.19%).

Based upon a preliminary analysis of child welfare data and further review of Ohio's census data, recruitment activities will include a special focus on:

- Children under ten with special needs, who may be at-risk of lingering in foster care;
- Older teenagers who are in the custody type "Permanent Custody" and "Planned Permanent Living Arrangement;" and
- Black/African American families.

Data on the characteristics of children and youth in care and the characteristics of licensed/approved foster and adoptive homes will be examined frequently to determine whether

recruitment strategies need to be modified.

Administrative Structure

Within Ohio's state-supervised, county-administered structure, all PCSAs statewide are responsible for the provision of adoption, case management and substitute care services within their local communities. All mandated supportive services are required to be made available to children and families in need of these services without regard to income, race, color, national origin, religion, handicap, sexual orientation or gender.

Foster care and adoption agencies are required to develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment plan that details diligent recruitment for families that reflect the diversity of the children for whom homes are needed. These recruitment plans are submitted and reviewed by ODJFS to ensure compliance with the Multiethnic Placement Act, Oct. 20, 1994, P.L. 103-382, as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, Aug. 20, 1996, P.L. 104-188 (MEPA), and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), as it applies to the foster care and adoption process.

Local recruitment efforts are supported and strengthened by several statewide initiatives described below.

Current Statewide and Local Recruitment Efforts

In a state-supervised, county-administered child welfare system, it is critical to employ a *combination* of effective strategies at the state and local level to recruit families for waiting children in foster care (i.e., general, targeted, child-specific). In 2017 Ohio created the foster care advisory group as a result of the passage of Amended Substitute H.B. 49 of the 132nd General Assembly. The purpose of the group was to advise and assist ODJFS in identifying and implementing best practices to recruit, retain, and support foster caregivers.

The duties assigned to the Advisory Group were to review and provide recommendations on:

- Improving current certification requirements;
- Options to streamline certification requirements and processes while maintaining quality, safety, and accountability;
- Ways to help foster caregivers best respond to children affected by parental drug use and how to deliver and sustain those supports; and
- Best practices for identifying, recruiting, and retaining foster caregivers.

The Advisory Group consisted of 13 voting members, including two co-chairs, and was supported by 10 non-voting ODJFS members serving as policy and licensing subject matter experts.

The recommendations of the group included practice and program changes to help support and retain existing families, as well as recruit new families. The recommendations include many that ODJFS has either recently completed or is planning to complete in the coming years. The following recommendations were made:

Current Certification Requirements

- Streamline Ohio's Revised Code to ensure ODJFS can respond to program needs quickly.
- Decrease the number of preservice training hours and re-focus preservice training on the readiness of prospective foster caregivers.
- Restructure ongoing training for new foster caregivers.
- Restructure ongoing training for foster caregivers who have completed their initial certification period.
- Permit more alternative training formats for foster caregivers.

Options to streamline certification requirements and processes while maintaining quality, safety, and accountability

- Simplify applicant forms and make corresponding changes within the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS).
- Establish a statewide registry of approved foster care and adoption assessors.
- Develop a central resource for rule clarifications.

Additional supports foster caregivers need to best respond to children affected by parental drug use and how to deliver and sustain those supports

- Expand specialized training for foster caregivers caring for drug-impacted children.
- Develop specialized professional coaching for foster caregivers caring for children impacted by parental substance abuse.
- Create specialized paid mentoring opportunities for foster caregivers caring for drug impacted children.
- Develop a range of child care options for foster caregivers.
- Provide behavioral health respite care benefits for foster children.
- Develop trauma competence across the statewide continuum of child and family-serving systems.
- Fund counseling and supportive services for the entire foster family when other resources are not available.
- Develop best practices and guidance for local agencies on foster caregiver retention.
- Formalize foster caregivers' rights and responsibilities in state rule.

Best Practices for Identifying, Recruiting, and Retaining Foster Caregivers

- Develop a statewide foster care and adoption website.
- Develop a statewide, targeted public awareness campaign to educate and attract prospective foster caregivers.
- Acknowledge and support experienced foster caregivers.
- Establish local and state foster caregiver advisory boards and ensure foster caregivers have a voice both within their agency and in the development of statewide policies and programs.

Statewide website, branding, and public awareness campaign

In 2018, ODJFS began work to create a foster care and adoption website and awareness campaign. The logo and messaging were created by a marketing vendor who coordinated with the website vendor to create a statewide user-friendly modern marketing approach to recruitment and retention. The website (FosterAndAdopt.jfs.ohio.gov) went live on January 7, 2019 and currently has information and resources for prospective foster and adoptive parents and current foster and adoptive parents. Marketing materials such as posters, brochures, fliers and PowerPoint presentations were created and are available on the website directly for in-agency printing and by contacting OFC. Work has begun to make the publications available through the ODJFS communications office for professional printing and mailing to agencies. Updates to the website include the addition of: resources for kinship providers; a resource map for all providers (foster, adopt, and kinship); a section to showcase news related to families and children; and an events calendar to notify caregivers of community events, support group meetings, relevant trainings.

Statewide Social Media Presence

To coincide with the website and branding, ODJFS created a social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The Facebook page currently has over 3000 followers with a high level of engagement across the state. The office creates, and shares posts related to child welfare and helps spread the word about the need for foster and adoptive parents statewide. Local recruitment efforts and events posted by public and private agencies are also shared on the statewide page. ODJFS presence on Instagram and Twitter platform has not been as engaging as Facebook; however, it is building.

Partnership with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption

In mid-2012, ODJFS entered into a partnership with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption (DTFA) to significantly expand the foundation's implementation of the Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) child-specific recruitment model in Ohio. Through ODJFS' investment, 55 recruiters are working to assist local agencies in finding permanent homes for children in care. Each recruiter is charged with managing a child-specific caseload, providing child-focused recruitment services, and conducting diligent searches for potential adoptive families.

In addition, recruiters are involved in the coordination of statewide recruitment efforts with PCSAs and PCPAs with an emphasis on Ohio's target populations (children in permanent custody of a PCSA who are over the age of nine, part of a sibling group, and/or in care for two or more years).

A five-year study of the WWK model conducted by Child Trends reflected a significantly higher likelihood of adoption for children served through the program, and Ohio is beginning to see similar results. DTFA continues to provide training across the state on the WWK model to foster increased support among the child welfare community. DTFA provides a WWK Grants Manager to offer support and technical assistance to all Ohio WWK recruiters and supervisors.

Partnership for Permanency Roundtables
Ohio continues working with Casey Family Programs and FYLaw to expand the use of Permanency Roundtables and Youth-Centered Roundtables within the state. Permanency Roundtables (PRTs) are structured case consultations focused specifically on reducing barriers to attaining legal permanency and increasing permanent connections for children and youth. In launching this pilot initiative in 2014, OFC, PCSAO and Casey Family Programs came together with interested Ohio counties to form a Permanency Roundtable Advisory Council. The Advisory Council members work together to troubleshoot and come up with solutions for identified issues. The work of the Advisory Council is informing the implementation and evaluation of Permanency Roundtables and Youth-Centered Roundtables in Ohio – one of the key strategies included in the CFSP. The goal of the PRT approach is to expedite permanency and ensure that all options have been exhausted. PRTs also seek to ensure that each youth has at least one permanent connection in his or her life. The "Gold Standard" for the PRT process remains to achieve legal permanency for each child or youth in one of the following ways: reunification, adoption, legal custody or guardianship.

Partnership with the Family and Youth Law Center
ODJFS continues to partner with Family and Youth Law Center *(FYLaw)* at Capital University Law School to support recruitment efforts. FYLaw is responsible for managing the Ohio Adoption Photolisting website and for being the Ohio contact for the AdoptUSKids photolisting. The listing highlights waiting children who are in the permanent custody of PCSAs and for whom families are being sought. A photo and brief profile are listed for each child as well as agency information. General information concerning adoption can be found on this website, in addition to links to the new FosterandAdopt.jfs.ohio.gov website and links to ODJFS publications such as the *Ohio Adoption Guide* and the *Adoption Subsidies Guide* and information about ongoing events, trainings and meetings.

General Recruitment - Foster Care and Adoption Months

Based upon the number of children coming into foster care and the need for permanent homes for children there is a need to recruit additional foster homes and support existing resource families. Ohio has annually recognized May as National Foster Care Month and November as Adoption Month. The purpose of the recognition is to acknowledge the efforts of child welfare practitioners and caregivers across the state who are responsible for providing care to children that have been abused or neglected.

In May 2019, ODJFS invested funds to complete a month-long social media public awareness campaign to promote foster care and recognize current foster families for all they do to support children and families throughout the state. A similar monthlong media campaign is planned for September for Kinship Month and in November for Adoption Month. PCSAs, PCPAs, and PNAs are encouraged to recognize their resource families. The Governor continues to acknowledge foster families and kinship families for the services they provide to children and families. Across the state, events are held to honor foster and adoptive parents for their dedication to vulnerable children.

Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System*:*

In late 2018 updates were completed to the Ohio SACWIS system in response to implementing rule changes to the pre-adoptive staffing adoption matching conferences. As part of that upgrade project, a child-specific recruitment plan was created in SACWIS. If no families were reviewed as a potential match for a child, then the SACWIS system will require the creation of a child specific recruitment plan and documentation of the activities planned to find a family for the child prior to the next matching conference. As part of the subsequent conference, workers must complete that plan by stating what was completed in relation to each planned activity. If no families are identified to be considered at the next matching, an additional recruitment plan must be created, and activities must be documented to locate a family. This cycle continues until a family is found for the child. By requiring the documentation be completed before and after each matching conference as part of the matching conversation, the intention is to bring more awareness, attention, and discussion to the recruitment efforts given for each child.

Local Recruitment Efforts

When agencies submit foster care and adoption recruitment plans to ODJFS, they are reviewed by OFC to identify recruitment strategies planned by agencies. In all recruitment plans, multiple strategies were identified based upon the agency's mission statement and targeted audiences. The following strategies were identified in order of frequency noted in the recruitment plans reviewed:

Written Information: Pamphlets, flyers, posters, and church bulletin inserts were being used. Several agencies noted that their written information was also in Spanish. Written information was distributed during community events, fairs, and speaking engagements.

Traditional Media: Newspapers, Magazines, Radio, and Television: Local newspapers were used to either advertise the need for foster caregivers or to provide information about the need for families through articles for inclusion in the newspaper. Some agencies also published their own newsletters, and information was included on the need for additional foster caregivers. Ads were also included in professional magazines. The use of radio/cable TV was noted as a method to recruit families (paid or public services announcements) or to discuss the need for foster caregivers during local talk shows. A few county agencies have reported working with local news stations to have professional videos developed of children who are in permanent custody and shown on the local news segments to assist in not only finding a family for the specific children showcased, but also to raise awareness of foster care and adoption among the general public.

Speaking Engagements: Agencies continue to talk about the need for foster caregivers/adoptive parents at such locations as churches, Rotary Clubs, and seminars. Either agency staff and/or foster caregivers presented information.

Community Events: Agencies provide information on adoption/foster care at fairs, special community events and adoption mixers.

Internet: The use of the Internet has increased as more agencies have been developing their websites to disseminate information (one agency noted that they have a video with a foster caregiver talking about her experiences). Additionally, agencies have been using the Internet to post ads about their agencies. Some agencies noted they were now using Facebook. With the

creation of the ODJFS foster care and adoption website and social media presence, agencies have started to share information from the website on their social media, as well as put links to the ODJFS website on their websites and social media pages.

Word of Mouth: During MEPA reviews it was noted that word of mouth (current foster caregivers/adoptive parents recruiting new foster caregivers/adoptive parents) was the most successful recruitment tool. Foster caregivers were also being used in tandem with agency staff to attend speaking engagements. Agencies' Recruitment Plans noted that financial incentives and bonuses were being provided to some currently certified foster caregivers if they recruited new foster caregivers. However, it was noted by one agency that this was not an effective tool for them, and the recruitment information posted on their agency website was more effective.

Advertising: Multiple methods of advertising were being used – from the traditional ad in the Yellow Pages, to displaying banners/posters outside the agency, at sports venues or at other community locations, on buses/billboards, and on yard signs. Some agencies noted that ads were being placed in theatre playbills and other event brochures.

PCSAs continue to work with foster parent associations to identify effective recruitment strategies and ensure retention of existing resource families.

2020-2024 Diligent Recruitment Plan Elements

Ohio will ensure procedures and practices are in place at the state and county level for diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive homes. Recruitment activities implemented under this plan will center on five core goals, as outlined below.

Goal I: Continue and Expand Statewide Collaborative Initiatives to Enhance General, Targeted, and Child-Specific Recruitment for Children and Youth in Care

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- Expand ODJFS' partnership with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption to ensure that all children in the target population have access to a WWK recruiter. In addition, ODJFS will explore expansion of the program's target population by reviewing data annually to determine additional demographics of children at risk of lingering in foster care.
- Release a Request for Proposal (RFP) to secure a vendor to provide program management and oversight to support expansion of the Permanency Roundtable program. The selected vendor will be responsible for:
  - Administering the Ohio Youth Centered Permanency Roundtable Program to improve outcomes for children who are in the custody public children services agencies.
  - Providing ongoing program support to ensure continued success of the program and to ensure model fidelity, accountability, county commitment and increased community involvement.
  - Facilitating expansion of the YCPRT to additional counties.
- Continue ODJFS' partnership with Family and Youth Law to support the ongoing maintenance of the Ohio Adoption Photolisting website and ensure it is kept current with accurate information.

- Collaborate with the National Council for Adoption (NCFA) in a cross-comparative research project to determine differences in recruitment and retention practices. The focus of the research project is to determine why some states' recruitment and retention programs are successful and others are not, as well as identify the characteristics and behaviors of foster parents who are long-term foster parents and what supports they are provided to succeed. The research consists of a 7-part questionnaire/ survey to be given to foster parents at distinct points in the process to become a foster parent, such as at initial recruitment, when training has been completed, a few weeks after a child has been placed, 3 months after placement, after removal, at adoption, and when the family stops fostering. Once data collection is complete and reviewed, NCFA will provide ODJFS with a data driven report with recommendations for policy and practice changes to maximize recruitment efforts and increase retention among foster parents.
- Continue to maintain the foster care and adoption website and social media presence to ensure that accurate and positive information is shared on many platforms to help recruit and support foster parents. ODJFS will utilize data from the website to evaluate the appropriate use of marketing techniques to increase recruitment.

Goal II: Increase Use of Effective Recruitment Tools at the Local Level.

- Monitor agencies' diligent recruitment plans to ensure plans are regularly updated.
- Promote the use of effective recruitment tools at the county level, including mobility mapping and use of adoption exchanges as offered through FYLaw or AdoptUSKkids.org - to aid in identifying and/or meeting the placement needs of children in care.
- Promote the availability of non-safety waivers to aid in increased licensure of relative foster homes.
- Promote the utilization of a "customer service" model in responding to prospective foster and adoptive parents to reduce "dropout" rates.
- Ensure all prospective parents, including relatives and individuals who have important existing relationships with youth in care, have timely access to the homestudy process, including access to foster and adoptive parent training at the local level, and homestudies are initiated and completed in a timely manner.
- Provide technical assistance on diligent recruitment during agency on-site visits.

Goal III: Tailor Local Recruitment Plans to Customize General, Targeted, and Child-Specific Recruitment Efforts Based on Need.

- ODJFS will disseminate reports on local diligent recruitment practices and data on the current characteristics of children in care to assist agencies in adjusting and/or expanding recruitment efforts to match the needs of their children.
- Local agencies will provide the following assurances, pursuant to the Administrative Code:
    o Assure that recruitment of prospective parents is an ongoing activity of the PCSA and/or accomplished through collaboration with private child placing agencies (PCPAs), or private noncustodial agencies (PNAs).
    o Prohibit agency staff from denying any person the opportunity to become a foster and/or adoptive parent based on race, color, or national origin (RCNO) of the person or the child involved.
    o Assure that an agency recruitment plan is in place that identifies how the agency

will work to recruit foster and adoptive caregivers that reflect the diversity of waiting children for whom adoptive homes are needed.

- PCSAs, PCPAs and PNAs, at a minimum, shall incorporate in their agency's Diligent Recruitment Plan:
  - o Specific strategies to reach all parts of the county (or community as defined by private agencies);
  - o Specific methods of disseminating both general and targeted recruitment material;
  - o Strategies for assuring that all prospective applicants receive information regarding foster care and/or adoption procedures within seven days of inquiry;
  - o Strategies for assuring that all applicants have access to the home study process, including location and hours of services that facilitate access to all members of the community;
  - o Strategies for training staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, ethnic and economic communities;
  - o Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers between the PCSA, PCPA, or PNA and the prospective adoptive applicant(s); and
  - o A fee structure that is non-discriminatory to approve adoptive parents and that allows parents of various income levels the opportunity to adopt.
- PCSAs and PCPAs must include in their recruitment plans:
  - o A description of the characteristics of children in the permanent custody or permanent surrender of the agency, including age, gender, race and ethnicity, developmental needs, emotional and mental health, and physical needs.
  - o A comparison of the racial and ethnic diversity of the children in permanent custody with the racial and ethnic diversity of the approved adoptive family resources.
- Agencies must initiate increased recruitment efforts for any racial or ethnic category of family that is under-represented.
- Agencies must identify general criteria used to determine when the agency will conduct child-specific recruitment strategies for a child and the type of specific recruitment techniques the PCSA or PCPA will utilize when child-specific recruitment is warranted.

Goal IV: Include a Focus on Diligent Recruitment in Statewide CQI Efforts.

- Ensure procedures are in place for consistently providing updated data on the characteristics of children in care.
- Utilize multiple sources of data to better understand population and practice trends. Prospective data sources include AFCARS, Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation (CPOE) data, MEPA reviews, NCFA surveys, and data pulled from https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/ofc/
- ODJFS will engage key stakeholders, including tribal representatives, experts and private partners, in the development of data reports and ongoing interpretation of the data. Findings will be disseminated and discussed at stakeholder forums. Data will be used to explore the following questions:
  - o Are plans developed by Ohio counties flexible enough to shift the mix of recruitment strategies based on the current foster care population in the county?
  - o Is ODJFS effectively utilizing county recruitment plans to inform the state's overall recruitment plan?
  - o Are statewide monitoring efforts effective in identifying problem areas and at ensuring plans are fully implemented at the local level?

- o Do counties utilize a "customer service" model in responding to prospective foster and adoptive parents? If so, does the model reduce the dropout rates between inquiry, approval, and placement?
- o Do local agencies have access to needed tools to support effective search practices?
- o Do local agencies have access to specialized expertise in recruiting families for sibling groups?
- o Is ODJFS effectively facilitating the sharing of successful strategies and practices among county staff involved in recruitment efforts around the state?

Goal V: Enhance Training and Information Resources for Prospective Foster and Adoptive Parents and Agency Staff

The 2020-2024 Diligent Recruitment Plan includes the following activities designed to enhance training of prospective foster and adoptive parents as well as agency staff and partners.

Preservice Training Enhancements

Ohio's prospective foster families are mandated to complete a 36-hour preservice training before being licensed to provide placement. In 2018 the foster care advisory group recommended the foster care training requirements be reviewed and revised. ODJFS will convene a stakeholder workgroup of caregivers, trainers, foster care and adoption agency assessors from both private and public agencies, and the organizations that represent them to follow up with the recommendations made by the foster care advisory group. The workgroup will utilize current research regarding adult learning to ensure potential caregivers are prepared for the responsibilities of caring for children in their home.

Additional Training and Resources for Caregivers

The OCWTP has developed a series of standardized trainings for new caregivers called *Fundamentals of Fostering*. This series addresses the same content presented in pre-service training but is taken to a deeper level. The workshops help caregivers apply what they are learning and adapt their parenting style to the needs of children placed in their home.

In addition, the OCWTP maintains the "Caregivers' Corner," on the OCWTP website to ensure caregivers have readily available and regularly updated information and resources. This page connects caregivers to several resources, which includes but is not limited to, online training on human trafficking, strategies to help emancipating youth, and links to national resources. OCWTP will continue to provide this resource for caregivers.

Training Staff to Engage with Diverse Communities

OCWTP defines diversity as all those characteristics that distinguish us from each other. Culture is a powerful driver of diversity but not the only determining factor. Memberships to any number of groups (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic) also influence a person's social identity, as does the influence of individual circumstances, experiences, or traits. The influence of a group membership can shift over one's lifetime, forming complex dimensions of a person's identity that must be explored for their relevance to the present-day experience.

The following is the definition of diversity competence:

Diversity competence is an ongoing developmental process that includes:
- An acquired understanding of the patterns and potential dynamics of specific groups and cultures, including our own;
- The understanding of how culture (the values, beliefs, attitudes, and traditions acquired from affiliate groups), as well as personal circumstances, conditions, nature, and experiences influence our own and other people's thinking and behaviors; and
- The ability to use this knowledge to manage and adapt to the dynamics of diversity and work effectively with all people. *(OCWTP Policy Manual; Section B. Operations of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program; 7. Commitment to Diversity Competence; p.19)*

Diversity competence is used as a guideline for recruitment of trainers, development of curricula, and in public relations and promotion of the OCWTP. Where the OCWTP has historically used the term cultural competence, it now uses the term diversity competence to account for the multi-dimensional aspects of all people that include, but are not limited to, culture.

The OCWTP provides a required Diversity learning activity for all new trainers that focuses on:
- Assessment of the individualized diversity learning needs of each new trainer using the OCWTP diversity section of the *Trainer Competencies*
- Development and completion of an individualized learning plan.
- Participation in a GAP session entitled, *How to Address Diversity Issues in Your Training.*

The OCWTP requires all learning activities (except GAP Sessions) have a plan for how diversity issues related to the specific topic will be addressed. GAP Sessions address diversity issues as they arise during a session. The plan is noted in every workshop outline that is submitted for review and approval from a Workshop Outline Review Committee.

2020-2024 Diligent Recruitment Plan Summation

Listed below are some of the key activities underpinning the five-year plan:

- Expand implementation of the child-focused Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) model in Ohio to ensure all children in the target population have access to a WWK recruiter. Target outcomes are:
  - At least 900 children awaiting adoption will have been enrolled in Ohio's WWK program by the end of 2020 and receive case-mining, case management, and child-focused recruitment services.
  - Of the children enrolled, at least one-half will be matched, placed for adoption and/or finalized by the end of SFY 2020.
- Work with the new vendor to expand implementation of Permanency Roundtables as a strategy to strengthen permanency planning on behalf of long-staying youth in care.
- Continue partnership with the Family and Youth Law *(FYLaw)* Center to support the Ohio Adoption Photolisting website.
- Maintain the foster care and adoption website with current articles, events, news, and resource providers.
- Integrate work on diligent recruitment efforts within Ohio's broader child welfare CQI

plan, including: ongoing data analysis; engagement of stakeholders in data interpretation and identification of solutions; and dissemination of information to support practice improvement.

- Provide technical assistance on diligent recruitment during MEPA on-site visits.
- In partnership with the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program, increase training and awareness of the availability of non-safety waivers for relative caregivers who apply to be licensed foster parents.