

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services  
CCDCFS  
Policy Statement**

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

**Original Effective Date:** 01/01/1998  
**Revision Date(s):** 10/01/2017, 10/01//2015, 11/04/2009  
**Current Revision Date:** 05/01/2021  
**Approved By:** Cynthia G. Weiskittel

**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 annual recruitment plans for both foster care and adoption. The annual recruitment plan is due on June 30th every 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 year. 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 and also utilizes its own Therapeutic Foster Home program to service children who require specialized care. 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 higher level of intensive care and supervision.

Adoption assessments and Pre-Service Orientation Training are provided for Cuyahoga County residents who seek to adopt a "special needs" child.

A "special needs" child as defined by OAC 5101:2-1-01 is a child who has, at least, one (1) of the following needs or circumstances that may be a barrier to a child being sustained in a substitute care placement or adoptive home without financial assistance because the child:

- is a member of a sibling group who should be placed together;
- is a member of a minority or ethnic group;
- is six (6) years of age or older;
- has remained in permanent custody for more than one (1) year;
- has a medical condition, physical impairment, or developmental disability;
- has an emotional disturbance or behavioral problem;
- has a social or medical history or the background of the child's biological family has a social or medical history which may place the child at risk of acquiring a medical condition, a physical, mental or development disability or an emotional disorder;

- has been in the home of his/her prospective adoptive parents as a foster child for at least one (1) year and would experience severe separation and loss if placed in another setting due to his/her significant emotional ties with the foster parents, as determined by a qualified mental health professional; or
- has experienced previous adoption disruption or multiple placements.

Interested individuals seeking to adopt a non-special needs child will be referred to other agencies for adoptive services.

- D. CCDCFS uses diverse methods to disseminate general information regarding the children served by the agency. CCDCFS develops and implements an annual 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, development of brochures, pamphlets, flyers of children in permanent custody including an online photo gallery, responding to inquiries and a provision of Pre-Service Orientation 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, sibling groups and youth who identify as LGBTQ2S+.
  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. CCDCFS Recruitment staff attends established community events and provides information tables for our foster and adoptive program. Youth panels are presented to audiences at Pre-Service Orientation Training, where potential families learn about all children in care, especially about the older population. Recruitment materials are also disseminated to communities, faith-based organizations to increase awareness and recruit interested persons and local businesses.
  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.
  2. No potential foster/adoptive parent applicant is screened out by the recruitment staff prior to Pre-Service 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 cards are 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-Service Orientation Training is a service that is continuously scheduled throughout the year with a series of rounds offered on specific weekdays, evenings, and weekends. 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-Service Orientation Training is valid for twelve 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. Upon licensure for foster care, the licensing agency is responsible for the payment of the Pre-Service Orientation stipend, regardless of where the applicants completed their training.
- 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. A foster caregiver or applicant shall have functional literacy to be able to read and write at the level necessary to participate effectively in the community in which they live. A foster caregiver or applicant must be able, or have the means, to communicate with: any child placed in the home, the recommending agency, health care providers and other service providers working with the family or children.
- 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 Section 5101:2-5

Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-7

Ohio Revised Code Section 5103.031

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)