

Division of Child and Family Services

State of Nevada Foster Parent and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan 2020-2021

Updated SFY 2021

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Characteristics of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed..... | 2 |
| Strategies to reach out to all parts of the community..... | 5 |
| Diverse methods of disseminating both general information about being a foster/adoptive parent and child specific information..... | 6 |
| Strategies for assuring that all prospective foster and adoptive parents have access to agencies that license and approve foster and adoptive parents, including location and hours of services so that the agencies can be accessed by all member of the community..... | 6 |
| Strategies for training staff to work with diverse communities including cultural, racial, and socioeconomic variations | 7 |
| Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers | 7 |
| Non-discriminatory fee structures..... | 8 |
| Procedures for a timely search for prospective parents for a child needing an adoptive placement, including the use of exchanges and other interagency efforts, provided that such procedures ensure that placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for a same race and ethnic placement | 8 |
| Efforts to support and retain foster caregivers | 9 |

Intentionally left blank.

Introduction

The Foster Parent and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan is one component of Nevada’s Child and Family Services Plan for FFY 2020 to FFY 2024. This plan incorporates overarching statewide goals and encompasses the following themes:

- Increased recruitment efforts for sibling groups, teens, and youth who have special health care needs or are considered medically fragile.
- Increased use of marketing strategies through a multitude of media outlets.
- Increased efforts to educate, build relationships and partner with local businesses, organizations and interfaith communities.
- Increased involvement of current foster parents in the recruitment and training process.
- Non-discriminatory fee structure.
- Continued implementation of the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI).

The following Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan reflects activities and goals that will be conducted over the next five years to support recruitment and retention of Nevada’s foster and adoptive homes that meet the needs of the infants, children, youth and young adults served by the State of Nevada Child Welfare Agencies.

The mission of the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) is that together in genuine partnership with families, communities and other governmental agencies, DCFS provides support and services to Nevada’s children and families in reaching their full human potential. DCFS recognizes that Nevada’s families are our future and children, youth and families thrive then they:

- Live in safe, permanent settings.
- Experience a sense of sustainable emotional and physical well-being.
- Receive support to consistently make positive choices for family and the common good.

Characteristics of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed

Data of characteristics of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed is provided both regionally and at the statewide level. The state of Nevada will focus their efforts to recruit foster and adoptive families on activities to meet the needs of sibling groups, children with behavioral health/mental health needs, identifying and serving populations of a specific race or ethnicity, geographical areas with the highest removal rates, and efforts at keeping children who have been placed in foster care living in the same geographical area they were removed from.

| | | |
|------------------|--|---|
| | Foster Youth Population by Jurisdiction as of 5/31/2019 | June 5, 2019 Foster Population Race/Ethnicity PUR: as of 5/31/2019 <i>Source: AFCARS Report (RPT785)</i> Prepared by: Office of Analytics – DCFS Branch |
| Clark County | 3,450 | |
| Washoe County | 770 | |
| Rural Counties | 393 | |
| Statewide | 4,613 | |

| Foster Youth Population Race/Ethnicity by Jurisdiction as of 5/31/2019 | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Jurisdiction | American Indian | Asian | Black | NHPI* | White | Hispanic | Unknown Race/Ethnicity |
| Clark County | 1.1% 38 | 2.1% 72 | 39.2% 1,353 | 1.2% 43 | 31.9% 1,100 | 23.6% 815 | 0.8% 29 |
| Washoe County | 3.2% 25 | 0.3% 2 | 11.9% 92 | 1.6% 12 | 53.6% 413 | 28.8% 222 | 0.5% 4 |
| Rural Counties | 6.4% 25 | 0.8% 3 | 6.4% 25 | 0.3% 1 | 73.8% 290 | 12.5% 49 | 0.0% 0 |
| Statewide | 1.9% 88 | 1.7% 77 | 31.9% 1,470 | 1.2% 56 | 39.1% 1,803 | 23.5% 1,086 | 0.7% 33 |

*NHPI - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

Explanation of race/ethnicity methodology: Although youth may be multiracial/multiethnic, they are only counted once using methodology provided by the DHHS State Biostatistician based on guidance from the National Center for Health Statistics. Additionally, all race/ethnicities in the table above other than Hispanic are Non-Hispanic.

| Foster Youth Population Age Group by Jurisdiction as of 5/31/2019 | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | 0-5 | | 6-10 | | 11-13 | | 14+ | |
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Clark County | 1,655 | 48% | 856 | 25% | 376 | 11% | 563 | 16% |
| Washoe County | 378 | 49% | 192 | 25% | 70 | 9% | 130 | 17% |
| Rural Counties | 190 | 48% | 87 | 22% | 43 | 11% | 73 | 19% |
| Statewide | 2,223 | 48% | 1,135 | 25% | 489 | 11% | 766 | 17% |

Left intentionally blank.

| <p style="text-align: center;">June 7, 2019</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Foster Youth Characteristics</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PUR: as of 5/31/2019</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Source: AFCARS Report (RPT785)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Prepared by: Office of Analytics – DCFS Branch</p> | | Free for Adoption ¹ | | | |
|---|--------------|--|--------------|--|--|
| | | Clark County | 594 | | |
| | | Washoe County | 162 | | |
| | | Rural Counties | 35 | | |
| | | Statewide | 791 | | |
| | | Significant Mental or Physical Health Needs | | | |
| Clark County | 2,224 | Clark County | 934 | | |
| Washoe County | 466 | Washoe County | 250 | | |
| Rural Counties | 241 | Rural Counties | 62 | | |
| Statewide | 2,931 | Statewide | 1,246 | | |
| *Unable to determine specific sibling groups within data | | | | | |
| Free for Adoption <u>and</u> part of a sibling group OR have significant mental/physical health needs. ² | | Free for Adoption <u>and</u> part of a sibling group AND have significant mental/physical health needs. ³ | | | |
| Clark County | 491 | Clark County | 232 | | |
| Washoe County | 130 | Washoe County | 53 | | |
| Rural Counties | 31 | Rural Counties | 5 | | |
| Statewide | 652 | Statewide | 290 | | |
| ¹ <u>Free for Adoption</u> - this count reflects the number of youth in foster care for whom both parents have terminated or relinquished their parental rights (or one or both parents are deceased). ² <u>Free for Adoption and part of a sibling group or have significant mental or physical health needs</u> - this count reflects the number of youth in foster care for whom both parents have terminated or relinquished their parental rights (or one or both parents are deceased). Additionally, these are youth who also have siblings in foster care and/or they have a clinically diagnosed disability that would be counted in one of the following categories: mental retardation, visually or hearing impaired, physically disabled, emotionally disturbed, or other medically diagnosed condition requiring special care, as defined by the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting (AFCARS) system. ³ <u>Free for Adoption and part of a sibling group and have significant mental or physical health needs</u> - this count reflects the number of youth in foster care for whom both parents have terminated or relinquished their parental rights (or one or both parents are deceased). Additionally, these are youth who also have siblings in foster care and they have a clinically diagnosed disability that would be counted in one of the following categories: mental retardation, visually or hearing impaired, | | | | | |

physically disabled, emotionally disturbed, or other medically diagnosed condition requiring special care, as defined by the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting (AFCARS) system.

| June 10, 2019 Foster Youth in Paid Placements of AFC, SFC and Med Fragile PUR: May 2019 <i>Source: CLEO Monthly Expenditures (CFS7K9)</i> Prepared by: Office of Analytics - DCFS Branch | Foster Youth in Paid Placements of AFC, SFC and Med Fragile | | |
|--|--|------------|-------------|
| | AFC | SFC | Med Fragile |
| Clark County | 48 | 334 | 21 |
| Washoe County | 17 | 102 | 0 |
| Rural Counties | 19 | 8 | 7 |
| Statewide | 84 | 444 | 28 |

Strategies to reach out to all parts of the community

Statewide efforts are made to reach out to all parts of the community for recruitment of foster and adoptive families. Each Child Welfare Agency in Nevada utilizes specific strategies to meet the needs of their communities. Strategies include:

- Outreach to churches in targeted communities through programs such as Every Church, Every Child, where printed materials are provided to churches and information is provided about varying levels of participation from the community, including, information sessions, donation collection, providing areas to post materials, hosting trainings, and allowing for support groups for foster and adoptive families.
- Providing information at local events, to public employers, through media and social media outlets, and public service announcements.
- Targeted recruitment strategies in communities with higher removal rates and areas with higher rates of families of certain race/ethnicity that are overrepresented in the child welfare system.
- Coordination and collaboration with various local agencies, including but not limited to the University of Nevada, Reno Wolfpack, the Reno Aces, area schools and preschools, local businesses, Parent Teacher Associations, the Discovery Museum and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).
- Utilize marketing to produce movie theater, billboard, newspaper and radio ads.

2020 Update: 60 community events were attended statewide, including venues for reaching targeted populations, such as the 0-6 population at events such as Easter Egg Hunt, Opening Day at youth sports events, and Discovery Museum. Recruitment at community events has been impacted by statewide COVID closures.

Diverse methods of disseminating both general information about being a foster/adoptive parent and child specific information

Nevada utilizes diverse methods of disseminating general and child specific information about being a foster and adoptive parent through various means. General information is disseminated through:

- Printed materials such as program brochures, application process booklets and educational literature are utilized for recruitment events attended by the Child Welfare Agencies.
- Features on local television, radio, newspaper, billboards and social media outlets on the need for prospective homes, human interest stories, how to get information and upcoming foster parent trainings.
- Websites that are advertised, on informational materials and accessible for prospective foster and adoptive parents.
- Recruitment telephone lines with consistent messaging and an ability to follow up with prospective foster and adoptive parents through email, information dissemination, and training.
- Tracking of prospective foster parents.

Child specific information is disseminated through:

- AdoptUSKids campaign.
- Adoption Exchange website/services.
- Wendy's Wonderful Kids targeted recruitment.
- Adoptex.org.
- Hispanic/Spanish adoption campaign.
- The Forgotten Initiative which presents a photo slideshow of children in recruitment at church services and other indoor events and includes a newsletter with information about specific children who are available for adoption distributed to local churches.
- DCFS' website links to each Child Welfare Agency website, which has biographies and current photos of children who are available for adoption.

2020 Update: Nevada continues to recruit through the use of virtual platforms, with strategies such as new websites, new marketing campaigns, www.CountMeIn.Vegas, and movie theater on-screen ads with 316,224 impressions.

Strategies for assuring that all prospective foster and adoptive parents have access to agencies that license and approve foster and adoptive parents, including location and hours of services so that the agencies can be accessed by all member of the community

Nevada ensures foster and adoptive parents have access to agencies that license or approve foster and adoptive parents through access to the DCFS website, Child Welfare Agency websites, QPI Nevada website and additional targeted approaches used by the Child Welfare Agencies. Specific strategies include:

- QPI Nevada website provides information on trainings, events, information sessions, and Child Welfare Agency information.
- Licensing staff are available Monday through Friday from 8am-5pm to provide information along with dedicated telephone and email to reach licensing workers at.
- Adoption Exchange takes information from prospective foster and adoptive parents and provides it to the Child Welfare Agencies or refers families to the Child Welfare Agencies.
- Flexible work schedules for staff to meet the needs of prospective foster and adoptive families.

2020 Update: In person orientation sessions reached more than 700 attendees prior to COVID closures. Due to COVID, foster parent training has been moved to a virtual platform in most of Nevada with over 300 participants reached statewide. The QPI website continues to host virtual trainings, provide agency contact information, and was most recently updated with the Visitation and Case Worker Contact Policies as part of Nevada's PIP strategy to engage foster parents and caregivers: <http://www.qpinevada.org/familyEngagement.html>.

Strategies for training staff to work with diverse communities including cultural, racial, and socioeconomic variations

Nevada provides ongoing training for staff through the Nevada Partnership for Training (NPT), which includes courses such as LGBTQ, Bridges out of Poverty, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, Trauma Informed Care, and other courses that target working with traumatized adults, cultural humility and working with fathers. The Nevada Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) website provides a survey opportunity to determine what barriers and customer service concerns prospective and actual foster and adoptive parents have. The Nevada QPI website provides online training. These ongoing training opportunities prepare staff to work with diverse communities, including cultural, racial and socio-economic variations.

Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers

Nevada employs multiple strategies to overcome linguistic barriers and allow for people who speak a language other than English or who are hearing impaired to become a foster and or an adoptive parent. Specific strategies used include: employment of Spanish speaking staff within the recruitment team and licensing units; Spanish speaking pre-service and ongoing training classes; Spanish speaking information sessions; use of private and agency interpreters and language line; materials that are translated into Spanish; Spanish language TIPS to meet the needs of relatives becoming licensed for a specific child; and provide accommodations for applicants who have a disability to remove barriers to complete training and home study process. Some barriers for dealing with linguistic barriers include that the QPI Nevada website does not offer online Spanish training or closed captions in Spanish during trainings.

2020 update: In person and virtual Spanish Speaking training sessions are offered. Ten new Spanish speaking foster homes in Washoe County were licensed.

Non-discriminatory fee structures

Nevada participates in a non-discriminatory fee structure. Foster and adoptive parents may be asked to pay the cost of their FBI criminal background check but are not charged any other fees.

Procedures for a timely search for prospective parents for a child needing an adoptive placement, including the use of exchanges and other interagency efforts, provided that such procedures ensure that placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for a same race and ethnic placement

Nevada utilizes various procedures to ensure timely search for prospective parents for a child who needs an adoptive placement. Nevada utilizes diligent search, as outlined by [Statewide Policy 1001 Diligent Search Process and Notice](#), and concurrent planning, as outlined by [Statewide Policy 0204 Case Planning](#), early on and throughout the life of a case to assist with achieving timely permanency for children.

Wendy's Wonderful Kids through the Adoption Exchange is a statewide targeted recruitment and Adoption Call to Action Plan strategy aimed at the following populations: children aged nine (9) and older who may be part of a sibling group, children with special needs and children who do not need a permanency plan of adoption. They have a goal to serve 25% of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) population and are focused on children who have been waiting the longest, who do not have an identified placement, and who will not be reunifying. The Wendy's Wonderful Kids model has the following specific model components:

- Small caseloads (12-15 children to start and can grow up to 20-25 children once children are matched).
- Recruiter builds the relationship with the child to help the child be more open to becoming part of a family, this work is assisted by the smaller caseload and focused work.
- Complete a comprehensive case file review, looking for connections early on in years that may have been overlooked, with people such as teachers, coaches, siblings, etc.
- Develop a recruitment plan based on case review then work with case worker and permanency team to build plan and share recruitment plan with case worker and team.
- Conduct diligent search based on information found and make cold calls in attempts to re-engage connections found.
- Throughout the process, which is not linear, Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters spend time talking with the child, engaging them, helping prepare them for adoption/permanency, and to be a part of a family.
- During the process they provide monthly reporting using a Child Trends system and report on the number of connections found, the number of connections reached, and progress and the outcomes on their cases.

Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters stay involved until a case finalizes or permanency is reached. They do not remove youth from their caseloads because of a failure to reach permanency and they do not believe any child is unadoptable.

Other strategies utilized include: Child Welfare Agency Adoption Recruitment Specialists who focus on matching children with prospective adoptive homes; match parties; profile parties; posting the child's photo in the waiting children books; posting the child's photo to websites (AdoptUSKids, Adoption Exchange, Adoptex, and Agency websites); child participation in Wednesday's child, which presents the child's story on a local news outlet; child assessment and preparation activities; flexible family concept, which begins at pre-service training with the caregiver's acknowledgment and signature on a "flex" letter and then continues throughout the life of the case; and marketing for television spots on local television programs. All families are considered without consideration to their race or ethnicity and placement is not delayed due to race; however, families are asked to respond to how they can best meet the needs of a child, including any cultural needs. The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) regulations are followed.

Efforts to support and retain foster caregivers

Nevada believes that supporting and retaining foster caregivers leads to better outcomes for Nevada children. The state's child welfare agencies employ various strategies aimed at providing support to foster caregivers, one of which is QPI Nevada and all the resources provided within that movement. These resources include: training, information, comfort calls for children and birth families at removal, implementation of the Ice Breaker process between foster families and birth families, and the Caregiver Courier quarterly newsletter which provides information to caregivers on topics such as caregiving, community events, activities and other types of meetings. QPI Nevada strives to provide messaging and create a culture in which the foster parents are an integral part of the child welfare team.

Additional efforts to support and retain foster caregivers include:

- Foster Parent Champion Program where foster caregivers are employed by the child welfare agency to assist other foster caregivers by taking calls Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm and lend experience about situations with infants, teens, large families, medically fragile children, relative caregivers, children with special needs, and Spanish speaking families.
- Foster caregivers are encouraged to participate in workgroups that focus on topics such as communications, community partnerships, training, support and retention, recruitment, child welfare initiatives and to co-lead team meetings.
- Employment of foster parent liaison positions devoted to supporting the foster and adoptive parents and ensuring quality placement and communication between foster parents and the Agency. One such foster parent liaison position specifically focuses on assisting relative placement development.
- Employ foster parents to recruit other foster parents by giving them business cards to hand out whenever anyone inquires with them about foster parenting. The foster parent may choose to include their name and telephone number on the back of the card if they choose to do so.

- Continued work with foster families in minority populations to better access and improve recruitment and the support of foster parents in these minority populations.
- Maintain and utilize an email database to communicate information with foster parents in an effective and efficient manner.
- Foster parent appreciation events where foster parents are recognized and awarded and events that bring foster families and agency staff together such as picnics, Wild Waters events, Halloween parties, etc.
- Provide virtual access for foster parents to attend Family Solution Team meetings and Child and Family Team meetings when they are unable to attend in person.
- Redesigned foster care application process to promote a simpler more streamlined process for potential foster parents.

2020 Overall Update: Nevada has continued to employ strategies outlined in this plan as able within COVID restrictions. Moving to a virtual platform has been successful in Washoe, who licensed 42 new foster homes and cleared and matched 21 new foster parent mentors, and Clark County, who licensed 156 foster homes in 2019-2020. COVID has negatively impacted the DCFS Rural Region as they have been unable to fill vacant positions in their foster care licensing unit.

Nevada has determined both the Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan and Adoption Call to Action Plan may need to be updated to be more data driven. Nevada has engaged with the Capacity Building Center for Technical Assistance to do this work, which will take place over the upcoming year.

Left intentionally blank.