



# North Carolina Child Welfare 2020-2024 Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan Revised June 2020



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Social Services

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## Section I: Overview

### Introduction

North Carolina is a state supervised, county administered child welfare system with partially privatized foster home licensing and adoption services. Prospective foster and adoptive families can be licensed as foster families and/or approved as adoptive families by either a county child welfare agency, a licensed child placing agency, or licensed adoption agency. This variation in service provision across the state provides a wide variety of localized licensure and approval options for families. North Carolina does not have a dual foster care/adoption licensure process. For the purposes of this Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan, the term “County Child Welfare Agency” includes County Departments of Social Services and consolidated human services agencies.

Because North Carolina is a very diverse state, county child welfare agencies may have very specific needs around Diligent Recruitment and Retention. To that end, North Carolina has developed a statewide diligent recruitment and retention plan that provides concrete targets for statewide achievement, consistency, and structure, while also allowing for localized planning for diligent recruitment and retention efforts within each individual county child welfare agency, in partnership with their private child placing agency partners. Localized plans are data-driven and designed to meet the unique needs of the community within each county.

In partnership with representatives from county child welfare agencies, private child placing agencies, foster and adoptive families, youth, Guardian Ad Litem staff, and other key stakeholders, North Carolina began development of a new statewide Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan in 2016. Each representative provided input into the development of the North Carolina Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan. The approach was collaborative and structured and was facilitated by the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment at Adopt US Kids. Information gained through the stakeholder meetings was used by a working group made up of the Division of Social Services, local County Departments of Social Services, private child placing agencies, foster and adoptive families, and youth both currently and formerly in foster care to write and update NC’s Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan. The statewide Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan was first implemented in July 2017. The targeted Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan for 2020-2024 has been updated to align with North Carolina’s commitments to improving child welfare services across the state. The Division of Social Services will continue to collaborate with the community partners and stakeholders listed above to update and improve diligent recruitment and retention efforts on an ongoing basis.

Through the statewide Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan, North Carolina intends to provide increased consistency in both messaging and service provision to prospective and current foster and adoptive families, as well as develop increased capacity to meet the needs of children and youth in care. North Carolina’s Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan is anchored in the Safety, Permanency and Well-Being Commitments outlined in the 2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan:

*All children live in a safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments.*

*Children and youth in the foster care program will experience stability in foster care and achieve permanency in a timely manner. If permanence is not achieved, the youth in the foster care program will transition successfully into adulthood.*

*Families will have the enhanced ability to meet their child/youth's well-being, including physical, emotional, behavioral, and educational needs.*

### Values and Vision for Diligent Recruitment and Retention in North Carolina

The North Carolina child welfare system has the following core values regarding diligent recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families:

- We value all prospective, current, and former foster and adoptive families.
- We value the belief that retention of foster and adoptive families is a customer service-based activity that begins at the first contact with a prospective family and continues through post permanence support.
- We value all caregivers, including kinship caregivers, and encourage the licensure of kinship homes whenever possible, including the use of licensure waivers when appropriate.
- We value opportunities for support, engagement, and training of foster, adoptive, and kinship families.
- We value opportunities to increase North Carolina's capacity to track and interpret data.
- We value the use of data to inform diligent recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families.

The North Carolina child welfare system has the following long-term vision regarding diligent recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families:

- Structured statewide approach to the diligent recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families.
- Efficient and easily understood process for prospective families when navigating their initial interest in being foster/adoptive families.
- Placement stability for children served by the foster care system.
- Placement of children in their home communities and school districts.
- Placement of sibling groups together.
- Diverse population of foster and adoptive families, including but not limited to ethnicity, race, language and geographic location.
- Familiarity with the North Carolina's Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan among public and private child welfare staff.
- Consistent engagement in technical assistance, information sharing, and collaboration around Diligent Recruitment and Retention by the NC Division of Social Services, County Departments of Social Services, and private child placing agencies.
- Statewide use of a customer service approach to diligent recruitment and retention with positive feedback from foster and adoptive families.
- Representation of foster and adoptive families and youth served by the foster care program in the recruitment and retention process.
- Statewide capacity to collect, assess, and interpret data to inform diligent recruitment and retention activities.

## Section II: Roles and Responsibilities

### Roles and Responsibilities of State Division of Social Services

The Division of Social Services provides state level diligent recruitment and retention activities for county child welfare agencies and private child placing agencies, including but not limited to, an annual Child Welfare Summit focusing on recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families, regional meetings, statewide calls, and webinars. Ongoing technical assistance, resources and support to county and private agencies regarding their specific diligent recruitment and retention efforts are also provided by the North Carolina Division of Social Services.

#### *Outreach and Child-Specific Recruitment*

The Division of Social Services' NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network is North Carolina's Statewide Diligent Recruitment Entity and Adoption Exchange Program available to all North Carolina residents as well as residents of other states. The Adoption Exchange can be accessed at <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/child-welfare-services/adoption-and-foster-care>.

NC Kids manages the following elements of diligent recruitment and retention:

- State level first point of contact for individuals interested in becoming foster or adoptive families via a general email address and telephone hotline as direct points of intake, talking families through the general process of becoming a foster and/or adoptive family in North Carolina.
- Manage and facilitate North Carolina's adoption exchange program, providing targeted child specific recruitment of adoptive homes through online photo listings.
- Conduct preliminary review of approved adoptive family's Preplacement Assessment for initial matching before final matching determination is made by the County Child Welfare Agency.
- Provide diligent recruitment tools for use at the state level or by County and private agencies such as the NC Kids website, general brochures, fliers, pens, key chains, magnets, and posters.
- Provide technical assistance and support to county child welfare agencies and private child placing agencies regarding general, targeted, and child specific diligent recruitment and retention efforts.
- Provide monitoring and technical assistance support for each county's Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan on an annual basis.
- Publish North Carolina's Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan data on an annual basis.

#### *Cultural Sensitivity, Working with Diverse Communities, and Addressing Linguistic Barriers*

North Carolina Division of Social Services provides trainings, available to county child welfare agency staff, on working with diverse communities including cultural, racial, and socio-economic variations. The trainings include *Child Welfare in North Carolina: Pre-Service* and *Building Cultural Safety*. These trainings include information on cultural sensitivity and working with diverse communities. Information on the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) is covered in the following trainings offered by NC DSS: *Permanency Planning in Child Welfare Services*, *Foster Home Licensing in Child Welfare Services* and *Trauma Informed Partnering for Safety and Performance: Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (TIPS-MAPP)*. The Division of Social Services and county child welfare agencies take reasonable steps to ensure that people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access to the licensure process and foster care and adoption programs. One of the provisions of the Voluntary Compliance Agreement signed with US Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights is that each county child welfare agency

develop a Title VI/Limited English Proficiency (LEP) compliance plan to address the needs of this ever-growing population of individuals whose primary language is not English. The Division of Social Services provides additional trainings at <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/county-staff-information/training#program-compliance> to include *Civil Rights Training for County Departments of Social Services*, *Mexican Consulate Webinar*, *Rights of Families with Limited English Proficiency*, *Civil Rights Agency Training*, *NC Division of Social Services Presentation on Interpreter Training*, and *Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994* (Parts I and II). Additional resources including the Mexican Consulate webinar and brochure and interpreter training resources are also located on this website.

### *Fee Structure*

Because the North Carolina child welfare system operates as a state supervised and county administered state, each of the 100 counties is charged with developing a non-discriminatory fee structure for prospective foster and adoptive families.

### Roles and Responsibilities of County Child Welfare Agencies

Because North Carolina is a state supervised, county administered child welfare system, and to best meet the needs of children in the custody of each county child welfare agency and foster and adoptive families, North Carolina's Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan must consider the needs, resources, and structure of each individual county. For that reason, each county is tasked with writing an annual localized Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan with the technical assistance and resources provided by the North Carolina Division of Social Services. County-specific plans are submitted by the county on an annual basis, due on September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The county-specific plan is comprehensive, data-driven, and includes Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) requirements. In addition to localized plans, county child welfare agencies are required to report data to the NC Division of Social Services on an annual basis, due on September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, using the attached Diligent Recruitment and Retention Data Profile (Appendix B).

A template for a county-level Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan (Appendix A) is provided, as well as supplemental guides and attachments that are used to track data, provide best practice outcomes, and provide ongoing support to localized efforts. County child welfare agencies receive training through webinars and regional meetings on the statewide plan, county-level localized template, and MEPA requirements. Counties then submit their annual Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan to the state for review, feedback, and technical assistance as needed. Each County's Plan will be reviewed by the NC Division of Social Services to ensure all required elements are included; a plan for technical assistance is created, and written correspondence approving the localized Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan is provided.

Each County's annual Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan will also serve as their annual MEPA Plan. County-specific plans include, but are not limited to: (a) a description of the characteristics of children and youth for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed in the county; (b) specific strategies to reach all parts of the community; (c) diverse methods of disseminating information about becoming a foster/adoptive parent as well as child specific information; (d) strategies for assuring that all prospective foster/adoptive parents have access to the licensure process, including location and hours of operation; (e) strategies for training staff to work with diverse communities including cultural, racial, and socio-economic variations; (f) strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers; (g) non-discriminatory fee structure; and (h) procedures for a timely search for prospective parents for all children needing an adoptive placement. Please reference the County Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan Template and the

attached resources for additional guidance and information regarding the overlap between diligent recruitment and retention and the requirements of the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act.

#### Roles and Responsibilities of Private Child Placing Agencies

Private child placing agencies are a vital aspect of NC's child welfare system. Each county child welfare agency is highly encouraged to collaborate with the private child placing agencies that serve children and families in their counties in the writing of their Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan. Many private child placing agencies engage in the development of their own Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan on a regular basis. Private child placing agencies are encouraged to share these detailed plans with the NC Division of Social Services and the counties they serve to promote collaboration and consistency in practice. Private child placing agencies may utilize the templates provided to inform their own Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan. At a minimum, private child placing agencies who place children in the custody of a County Child Welfare Agency in their licensed foster homes are required to report data to the NC Division of Social Services at the end of each fiscal year using the attached Diligent Recruitment and Retention Data Profile (Appendix B).

### Section III: State Level Data

#### Data Regarding North Carolina’s Children in Foster Care and Foster and Adoptive Families

In addition to county child welfare agencies and private child placing agencies submitting a completed data profile (Appendix B) annually, the North Carolina Division of Social Services provides the following data summary of the statewide characteristics of children in foster care, children legally free for adoption, as well as comparable data regarding licensed foster homes. The table below provides that information in this initial report and will be updated annually at the time of submission of the statewide Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan through the Annual Progress and Services Report.

<b>For YTD SFY 2017-2018 CHILDREN CURRENTLY IN FOSTER CARE</b>	<b>N=11,380</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Data Source/As of</b>
Female	5,591	49%	*CSDW June 2018 data month Run 5/30/19
Male	5,789	51%	
Caucasian	5,959	52%	
African American	3,629	31%	
Hispanic	968	8%	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	248	2.2%	
Asian	50	0.4%	
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	--	
Bi-racial	637	5%	
Other	1	.01%	
Unable to Determine	189	1%	
Ages 0-5	4,424	39%	
Ages 6-10	2,610	23%	
Ages 11-14	1,905	17%	
Ages 15-17	1,718	15%	
Ages 18-21	723	6%	

<b>For YTD FY 2017-2018 CHILDREN WHO EXITED FOSTER CARE</b>	<b>N= 5,822</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Data Source/As of</b>
Female	2,842	49%	*CSDW June 2018 data month Run 5/30/19
Male	2,980	51%	
Caucasian	2,975	51%	
African American	1,648	28%	
Hispanic	448	8%	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	180	3%	
Asian	29	0.5%	
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	38	0.7%	
Bi-racial	376	6.5%	
Other	59	1.1%	
Unable to Determine	69	1.2%	
Ages 0-5	2,263	39%	
Ages 6-10	1,377	24%	
Ages 11-14	710	12%	
Ages 15-17	723	12%	
Ages 18-21	749	13%	
ICWA-Eligible	6	0.1%	
<b>Reasons for Exit</b>	<b>N = 5,822</b>		
Reunification with Parents or Primary Caretakers	1,593	27%	
Guardianship with a Relative	1,092	19%	
Adoption	1,423	24%	
Guardianship with Court-Approved Caretaker	195	3%	
Custody with Non-Removal Parent or Relative	657	11%	
Custody with Other Court-Approved Caretaker	0	--	
Emancipation	593	10%	
Transfer to Another Agency	94	2%	
Runaway	0	--	
Death of Child	10	0.2%	
ICPC	0	--	
Authority Revoked for Reasons Other than Above	165	2.8%	
Missing Field (blank)	0	--	

	N	%	Data Source/As of
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION</b>	<b>N= 959</b>		*CSDW June 2018 data month Run 5/30/19
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	
Female	416	43.4%	
Male	543	56.6%	
<b>Race</b>			
Caucasian	526	54.9%	
African American	270	28.2%	
Hispanic	58	6.1%	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	18	1.9%	
Asian	0	0.0%	
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	0.1%	
Bi-racial	71	7.4%	
Other	8	0.9%	
Unable to Determine	6	0.6%	
<b>Age</b>			
Ages 0-5	315	32.9%	
Ages 6-10	252	26.3%	
Ages 11-14	251	26.2%	
Ages 15-17	140	14.6%	
<b>ICWA Eligible</b>			
ICWA Eligible	6	0.6%	*AIMS and *NC FAST 6/1/2019
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN BEING ACTIVELY RECRUITED FOR BY NC (NC's Adoption Exchange and Photolisting)</b>	<b>Legally Free: 233</b> <b>Legal Risk: 25</b> <b>Hold: 98</b>		

TOTAL NUMBER OF LICENSED BEDS	N	%	% w/o Special Programs	Data Source/As of
Foster Care (privately licensed)	2,889	20.7%	23.0%	*XPTR 5/30/19
Special Program	1,367	9.8%		
Therapeutic Homes (privately licensed)	4,051	29.1%	32.3%	
Foster Care (county licensed)	5,207	37.4%	41.5%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,923</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		

<b>RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LICENSED FOSTER FAMILIES (Private Agency Supervised Households)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	Exported from *SESSIONS 5/30/19
Caucasian	3,739	78.2%	
African American	939	19.6%	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	52	1.1%	
Asian	14	0.3%	
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	5	0.1%	
Multi-racial	28	0.6%	
Unable to Determine	6	0.1%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,783</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
Hispanic or Latino	193	4.0%	
Not Hispanic or Latino	4,590	96.0%	

<b>RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LICENSED FOSTER FAMILIES (DSS Supervised Households)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	Exported from *SESSIONS 5/30/2019
Caucasian	3,344	49.8%	
African American	3,234	48.1%	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	72	1.1%	
Asian	17	0.3%	
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	6	0.1%	
Multi-racial	28	0.4%	
Unable to Determine	16	0.2%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,717</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
Hispanic or Latino	253	3.8%	
Not Hispanic or Latino	6,464	96.2%	
Unknown	3,344	49.8%	

*\*Data Sources*

*Child Services Data Warehouse (CSDW):* A data repository that captures information about children and families served through the child welfare system. To access data from the CSDW, the state uses Business Objects, a business intelligence software that provides the business user with more flexibility in defining specifics of a given report.

*Adoption Information Management System (AIMS):* A database that maintains indexed adoption information on all adoptions in the state of North Carolina. The database also houses information on children in foster care who are legally free for adoption and awaiting an adoptive home.

*North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST):* A case management program that uses business processes that enable child welfare staff to spend more time assisting families. The program captures specific data points to assist in evaluating performance.

*X/PTR:* A report distribution system maintained by NC DHHS's Information Technology Division (ITD). Business users of DSS data provide specifications for reporting needs to ITD, which will then generate a report accessible through Sessions' X/PTR page or through other, more user-friendly "shells", or alternative user interfaces.

*SESSIONS*: Sessions is the Legacy user interface in which county and state users can enter data about services across DSS. These data are stored on the NC DHHS's mainframe computer system.

#### Description of the Characteristics of Children for whom Foster and Adoptive Homes are Needed

There are over 11,500 children in foster care, of which 52% are Caucasian, 32% are African American, 8% are Hispanic, and 8% are American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Bi-racial, or other. The majority of children in foster care (39%) are between the ages of 0-5, followed by children ages 6-10 (23%), children ages 11-14 (17%) and 15-17 (15%). There are also 723 young adults, ages 18-20, who are participating in North Carolina's extended foster care program, Foster Care 18-21, which makes up 6% of children/youth being served in foster care. In SFY 2017-2018, 5,822 children and youth exited foster care. The majority were between the ages of 0-5 (39%), followed by children ages 6-10 (24%), children and youth ages 11-14 (12%) and youth ages 15-17 (12%). Of these children and youth, 27% were reunified with their family, 24% were adopted, 22% exited to guardianship with a relative or other court approved caretaker, 11% exited to custody with the non-removal parent or relative, and 10% aged out of foster care at age 18.

As of the end of June 2018, there were 959 children and youth in foster care who were available for adoption. Of those, 55% were Caucasian, 28% were African American, 6% were Hispanic and 11% were American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Bi-racial, or other. Of the children and youth available for adoption, the majority (33%) were ages 0-5, followed by children ages 6-10 (26%), children and youth ages 11-14 (26%) and youth ages 15-17 (15%).

## Section IV: 2020-2024 Statewide Commitments and Targets for Diligent Recruitment and Retention

North Carolina has identified four areas of focus for the 2020-2024 Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan, with a commitment of recruiting and maintaining a sufficient pool of ethnically and racially diverse families who can provide ongoing safety for and meet the needs of children served by the foster care program. All statewide and localized diligent recruitment and retention activities in North Carolina support the following four targets, which are anchored in one or more of the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) Commitments:

**Commitment:** *Recruit and Maintain a Sufficient Pool of Diverse Families to Meet the Needs of Children and Youth in Foster Care*

**Target 1:** *Develop and implement localized Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plans*

All 100 counties in North Carolina will develop and implement an annual localized Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan that is data-driven and specific to the needs of their own community.

**Target 2:** *Quality Customer Service to Families and Stakeholders*

State, counties and private child placing agencies will provide excellent customer service to prospective, current, and former foster, adoptive, and kinship families as well as internal and external community partners/stakeholders.

**Target 3:** *Develop and Support Families*

State, counties, and private child placing agencies will provide ongoing development and support of foster, adoptive and kinship families to help meet families' needs and build on their skills.

**Target 4:** *Increase the number of licensed kinship placements*

State, counties and private child placing agencies will work in partnership to remove barriers to kinship training and licensure and increase the number of children and youth who are placed in licensed kinship placements and who exit care to guardianship and receive Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP) benefits.

The four statewide diligent recruitment and retention targets are grounded in North Carolina's commitment to safety, permanency and well-being for children, as outlined in the 2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan. Through diligent recruitment and retention efforts, North Carolina aims to increase stability of foster care placements, achieve permanence for children in a timely manner, provide safe and nurturing environments for children who cannot remain in their own homes, and ensure foster, adoptive and kinship families have what they need to meet the well-being needs of children and youth for whom they are caring.

The following chart outlines the four statewide targets, followed by specific strategies DSS, county child welfare agencies, and private child placing agencies will complete in order to achieve each target.

Because diligent recruitment and retention efforts are made on a statewide level and are specific to local communities, the agency responsible for the strategy is also noted in the chart below.

<b>Diligent Recruitment and Retention Commitment Overview:</b>	
North Carolina will recruit and maintain a sufficient pool of ethnically and racially diverse families that reflect the diversity of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed, and who can provide ongoing safety for and meet the needs of children served by the foster care program.	
Rationale	2015 NC CFSR findings identified the state’s efforts to recruit a sufficient pool of potential foster and adoptive families reflective of the ethnic and racial diversity of children in North Carolina (Item 35) as an area in need of improvement. In addition, the state’s efforts to increase placement stability for children in foster care (Item 4) and efforts to ensure siblings in foster care are placed together (Item 7) were identified as an area in need of improvement.
Targets	<p>1. By 2024, North Carolina will have implemented robust, effective, and data-driven localized diligent recruitment and retention plans in all 100 counties.</p> <p>2. By 2024, to improve customer service to families and stakeholders, North Carolina will develop a family response system that offers consistent messaging across the state and focuses on quality services to children, families, and stakeholders.</p> <p>3. By 2024, North Carolina will ensure foster, adoptive, and kinship families are provided with ample opportunity for development, support, and growth in order to build their skills and meet the unique needs of children and youth served by the foster care system.</p> <p>4. By 2024, to increase the number of licensed kinship caregivers, North Carolina will implement a training and licensure process specific to the needs of kinship caregivers and the children for whom they care for.</p>

<b>Target 1: Develop and Implement County-Specific Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plans</b>		
Description	All 100 counties in North Carolina will develop and implement an annual localized Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan that is data-driven and specific to the needs of their own community.	
Rationale	<p>Having a data-driven, county-specific diligent recruitment and retention plan will ensure all counties in North Carolina have a sufficient, well-trained and diverse pool of foster, adoptive and kinship families who are available and capable of meeting the changing needs of children and youth served in foster care in the local community. It will also ensure appropriate matches are made between children/youth and families. This will help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide placement stability by having appropriate placement options for a child’s first placement in foster care (CFSR Item 4);</li> <li>• Keep sibling groups together (CFSR Item 7);</li> <li>• Place children and youth near their own schools and communities (CFSR Item 9); and</li> <li>• Provide timely permanency by having prospective adoptive and kinship families who can meet the needs of children and youth who are unable to return home (CFSR Item 6).</li> </ul>	
	Strategies	Who is Responsible
Strategies	<p><b>1a.</b> Provide a template for each county to write their own localized Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan and provide a Data Profile (Appendix B) for annual reporting of key state identified diligent recruitment and retention measures, with an option for additional county specific measures.</p> <p><b>1b.</b> Development and implementation of localized Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan and updates of data profile measures quarterly and submitted to NC Division of Social Services annually.</p>	<p>NC Division of Social Services</p> <p>County Child Welfare Agencies Private Child Placing Agencies (optional)</p>

<b>Target 1: Develop and Implement County-Specific Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plans</b>		
	<b>1c.</b> Review, approve and monitor each County’s Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan and publish an annual statewide cumulative data profile.	NC Division of Social Services
	<b>1d.</b> Provide technical assistance, education, and resources specific to diligent recruitment and retention including access, tracking, and interpretation of data, and MEPA compliance.	NC Division of Social Services
	<b>1e.</b> Build capacity to track and report demographic characteristics of licensed foster homes at all levels of service provision	NC Division of Social Services County Child Welfare Agencies Private Child Placing Agencies (optional)
Benchmarks	<b>2020:</b> Provide training to county child welfare agencies and private child-placing agencies on the development of localized diligent recruitment and retention plans using the modified template.	
	<b>2020-2024:</b> Provide ongoing training and technical assistance to county child welfare agencies regarding the statewide diligent recruitment and retention plan and the development and implementation of localized diligent recruitment and retention plans.	
Metrics	A variety of sources will be used to measure success of Strategy 1 including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each County Child Welfare Agency will implement a localized Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan that is updated annually</li> <li>• Annual publication of diligent recruitment and retention data</li> <li>• An increase in the capacity of county child welfare agencies to determine realistic targets for diligent recruitment and retention based on data</li> <li>• Creation of state level reports regarding licensed foster families’ race and ethnicity</li> <li>• Data regarding race/ethnicity of children in foster care and the pool of licensed foster families are aligned</li> <li>• Increase in the number of new applications submitted to licensing authority who reflect the ethnicity and race of the children served by the foster care program</li> </ul>	
Staff Training, Technical Assistance, and Evaluation/Research	Staff Training: Information is provided through quarterly diligent recruitment and retention calls, webinars, and the annual Child Welfare Summit.	
	Technical Assistance: Counties and private agencies are supported through the NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Exchange and the DSS Regulatory and Licensing team.	
Implementation Supports	This target will be driven by NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Exchange in partnership with DSS Regulatory and Licensing staff. It will also be supported by Adopt US Kids.	
	Implementation supports needed include the development of trainings and technical assistance to educate county child welfare agencies and private child placing agencies on the updated statewide Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan and the Localized DRR template.	

<b>Target 2: Quality Customer Service to Families and Stakeholders</b>	
Description	State, counties and private child placing agencies will provide quality customer service to prospective, current, and former foster, adoptive, and kinship families as well as internal and external community partners/stakeholders.
Rationale	Findings from the 2015 NC CFSR findings identified the state’s efforts to recruit a sufficient pool of potential foster and adoptive families reflective of the ethnic and racial diversity of children in North Carolina (Item 35) as an area in need of improvement. It is important for prospective, current, and former foster, adoptive and kinship families to experience consistency in the quality of services received. North Carolina believes that the way families perceive and experience the services provided are central to recruitment and retention. Foster, adoptive and kinship families should always feel respected, valued, heard, cared for,

<b>Target 2: Quality Customer Service to Families and Stakeholders</b>		
	and supported. Just the same, collaboration and communication with community partners and stakeholders are essential to recruitment and retention as well. Providing quality customer service to external and internal partners leads to effective and transparent partnerships. Community partners, including but not limited to, private child placing agencies, faith-based organizations, civic groups and family advisory groups, are resources that support recruitment and retention efforts across the state, and they share an interest in promoting strong families and communities.	
	Strategies	Who is Responsible
Strategies	<b>2a.</b> Create a decision tree accessible on the adoptnckids.org website for prospective foster and adoptive families to use to navigate making an informed decision in selecting prospective child placing agencies that meet their needs.	NC Division of Social Services
	<b>2b.</b> Assess each agency’s customer service culture and identify any needed changes in the approach to customer service in county-specific Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plans.	NC Division of Social Services County Child Welfare Agencies
	<b>2c.</b> Provide a diligent recruitment and retention resource list, sample documents, tools, and technical assistance to county child welfare agencies and private child placing agencies specific to evaluating and improving customer service approaches provided to prospective, current, and former foster and adoptive families.	NC Division of Social Services County Child Welfare Agencies
	<b>2d.</b> Provide quarterly diligent recruitment and retention calls, webinars and state publications to provide topic specific resources, training, and information sharing regarding diligent recruitment and retention to increase communication, information sharing, and collaboration between the North Carolina Division of Social Services, local county child welfare agencies, private child placing agencies, and community stakeholders.	NC Division of Social Services
Benchmarks	<b>2020:</b> Implementation of a decision tree on the adoptnckids.org website.	
	<b>2021:</b> Evaluate the statewide family response system and align practice with statewide practice model, Safety Organized Practice.	
	<b>2022:</b> Train and educate county child welfare agencies and private child placing agencies on statewide family response system.	
	<b>2023:</b> Develop resources regarding quality customer service and response system and disseminate to county child welfare agencies and private child placing agencies.	
	<b>2024:</b> Facilitate peer connections and information-sharing across the state.	
Metrics	A variety of sources will be used to measure success of Strategy 2 including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The completed decision tree available on <a href="http://www.adoptnckids.org">www.adoptnckids.org</a>.</li> <li>• Decrease in calls to the NC Kids statewide hotline about problems with the inquiry, response, and licensing process.</li> <li>• Decrease the time from initial inquiry to licensure for foster families on a statewide level.</li> <li>• The number of agencies and individuals participating in diligent recruitment events.</li> <li>• The number of requests for and topics of technical assistance made to the Division of Social Services around Diligent Recruitment and Retention.</li> </ul>	
Staff Training, Technical Assistance, and Evaluation/Research	Staff Training: Information is provided through quarterly diligent recruitment and retention calls, webinars, and the annual Child Welfare Summit.  Technical Assistance: Counties and private agencies are supported through the NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Exchange and the DSS Regulatory and Licensing team.	

<b>Target 2: Quality Customer Service to Families and Stakeholders</b>	
	Evaluation: DSS in partnership with Adopt US Kids will evaluate North Carolina’s family response system and implement a system that is consistent, customer service focused, and grounded in North Carolina’s practice model, Safety Organized Practice.
Implementation Supports	<p>This target will be driven by NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Exchange in partnership with DSS Regulatory and Licensing staff. It will also be supported by Adopt US Kids.</p> <p>Implementation supports needed include the evaluation of North Carolina’s current family response system and implementation of a consistent and customer service focused system. Technical assistance to educate county child welfare agencies and private child placing agencies on a consistent family response system will also be needed.</p>

<b>Target 3: Develop and Support Families</b>		
Description	State, counties, and private child placing agencies are able to provide ongoing development and support of foster, adoptive, and kinship families to help meet families’ needs and build on their skills.	
Rationale	Findings from the 2015 NC CFSR identified the state’s efforts to address the needs and services to children, parents, and foster parents (Item 12) as an area in need of improvement. The development and support of foster, adoptive and kinship families involves building and nurturing a relationship with families so that they continue to feel equipped to meet the needs of children and youth served in foster care. By actively and continually developing the foster, adoptive, and kinship families, families are able to meet the needs of the children and youth they are parenting. Truly effective support is integrated into efforts to develop families from their first point of contact with the child welfare agency. Ensuring a robust recruitment and retention program with development and support tailored to families’ needs will result in positive relationships and will achieve the best outcomes for children, youth and families.	
	Strategies	Who is Responsible
Strategies	<b>3a.</b> Provide resources regarding development and support of families to county child welfare agencies and private child placing agencies.	NC Division of Social Services
	<b>3b.</b> Ongoing use of webinars, in-person events and state publications to provide topic specific resources, training, and information sharing regarding the development and support of families.	NC Division of Social Services
	<b>3c.</b> Provide learning and developmental opportunities for foster, adoptive and kinship families that supports families and builds their skills, so they are equipped to meet the needs of children and youth served in foster care.	County Child Welfare Agencies Private Child Placing Agencies
Benchmarks	<b>2020:</b> Develop resources regarding the development and support of families and disseminate to county child welfare agencies and private child placing agencies.	
	<b>2021:</b> Develop training and technical assistance plan to provide county child welfare agencies and private child placing agencies resources and build capacity in agencies to develop and support foster, adoptive and kinship families.	
	<b>2022:</b> Develop a specific in-service training plan for foster, adoptive, and kinship families to provide ongoing training, skill-building, and support.	
	<b>2023:</b> All foster and adoptive families in North Carolina are trained in Resource Parent Curriculum (RPC).	
	<b>2024:</b> Sustainable implementation of a dual licensure process for foster families and adoptive families who are interested in adopting children and youth from foster care.	
Metrics	<p>A variety of sources will be used to measure success of Strategy 3 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of agencies, individuals, and families participating in diligent recruitment and retention events</li> </ul>	

<b>Target 3: Develop and Support Families</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of learning and developmental events held by county child welfare agencies and private agencies</li> <li>Decrease in the number of placement moves (not towards permanency) among children and youth in foster care</li> </ul>
Staff Training, Technical Assistance, and Evaluation/Research	<p>Staff Training: Information is provided through quarterly diligent recruitment and retention calls, webinars, and the annual Child Welfare Summit.</p> <p>Technical Assistance: Counties and private agencies are supported through the NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Exchange and the DSS Regulatory and Licensing team.</p>
Implementation Supports	<p>This target will be driven by NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Exchange in partnership with DSS Regulatory and Licensing staff. It will also be supported by Adopt US Kids.</p> <p>Implementation supports needed include the development of a specific in-service training plan for foster, adoptive, and kinship families to provide ongoing training, skill-building, and support as well as the development of a dual licensure process for foster families and adoptive families who are interested in adopting children and youth from foster care.</p>

<b>Target 4: Increase the number of licensed kinship caregivers</b>		
Description	State, counties and private child placing agencies will work in partnership to remove barriers to kinship training and licensure and increase the number of children and youth who are placed in licensed kinship placements and who exit care to guardianship and receive Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP) benefits.	
Rationale	Finding from the 2015 NC CFSR findings identified the state's efforts to place children and youth with relatives (Item 10) is an area in need of improvement. Kinship placements are more likely to be stable when kinship providers have received kinship-specific training and feel better equipped to meet the needs of the children for whom they are caring. Providing training, family-centered principles, and cultural sensitivity to kinship providers will lead to improved outcomes for children and families served by the foster care system including placement stability, siblings remaining together, ongoing connections with birth and extended families and the community, and preservation of cultural identity. Licensed kinship providers are able to receive foster care payments to offset the cost of caring for children in their home. Kinship providers are also more likely to provide a permanent placement for children whom they are caring for when the child is unable to return home.	
	Strategies	
Strategies	<p><b>4a.</b> Develop a statewide training and licensure process that is kinship-specific and meets the unique needs of relatives caring for children and youth in foster care.</p>	<p>NC Division of Social Services County Child Welfare Agencies Private Child Placing Agencies</p>
	<p><b>4b.</b> Provide educational materials, tools, training, and technical assistance to county child welfare agencies and private child placing agencies regarding kinship licensure, the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP) and the benefits of kinship care.</p>	<p>NC Division of Social Services</p>
	<p><b>4c.</b> Educate kinship caregivers about the licensing process and the related financial support and benefits offered, and educate kinship caregivers, children and youth about the KinGAP.</p>	<p>County Child Welfare Agencies Private Child Placing Agencies</p>
Benchmarks	<p><b>2020:</b> Begin a formal evaluation process on the effectiveness of guardianship and kinship educational materials disseminated in SFY 2019-2020.</p>	
	<p><b>2021:</b> Completion of formal evaluation regarding guardianship and kinship educational materials and the evaluation of Children's Home Society of New Jersey's Kinship Navigator Model for feasibility in North Carolina.</p>	

<b>Target 4: Increase the number of licensed kinship caregivers</b>	
	<p><b>2022:</b> Policy and practice changes based on evaluation of guardianship and kinship educational materials and Kinship Navigator.</p> <p><b>2023:</b> North Carolina state statute and child welfare policy changes to improve kinship training and licensure.</p> <p><b>2024:</b> Sustainable implementation of a training and licensure program specific to kinship caregivers.</p>
Metrics	<p>A variety of sources will be used to measure success of Strategy 3 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of a statewide kinship training and licensure process</li> <li>• The number kinship caregivers completing the training and licensure process</li> <li>• The number of children and youth exiting foster care to guardianship and receiving KinGAP benefits</li> <li>• An increase in kinship placement stability</li> </ul>
Staff Training, Technical Assistance, and Evaluation/Research	<p>Staff Training: Information is provided through quarterly diligent recruitment and retention calls, webinars, and the annual Child Welfare Summit. Information is also provided through educational materials for child welfare professionals, kinship families, and youth in foster care. Additional training will be needed on the specific licensure process for kinship families once developed.</p> <p>Technical Assistance: Counties and private agencies are supported through the NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Exchange and the DSS Regulatory and Licensing team.</p> <p>Evaluation/Research: DSS, in partnership with UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work and Children’s Home Society of North Carolina, is currently piloting a kinship caregiver training, “Caring for Our Own”, in four counties. The evaluation of this pilot will inform statewide implementation of a kinship specific training and licensure process.</p>
Implementation Supports	<p>This target will be driven by DSS in partnership with UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work and Children’s Home Society of North Carolina.</p> <p>Implementation supports needed include changes to North Carolina state statute, administrative rule, and policy as well as the development of a kinship specific training and licensure process for relatives and other kin caring for children who are served by the foster care system.</p>

The North Carolina Adoption Call to Action was finalized in January 2020 and incorporates additional benchmarks highlighted in the 2020-2024 Diligent Retention and Recruitment Plan. As NCDSS moves into year 2 of the implementation of the CFSP additional emphasis will be placed on marrying the work of recruiting and retaining foster and adoptive families and the Adoption Call to Action.

<b>Adoption Call to Action Overview:</b>	
North Carolina is committed to reducing the number of children waiting for adoption in the foster care system; developing improved strategies to achieve timely permanency for children and youth; and examining data to determine streamlined methods that will assure no youth lingers in the system. Provide a feedback loop on the effectiveness of the methods and develop a process for adjusting continuously improve the process.	
Data Overview	<p>KinGAP Candidates as of 12-2019: <b>290</b> youth ages 14-17 in relative placements and there are 112 younger siblings of those 14-17 (unknown if in same placement).</p> <p>Children/Youth in care 3+ years awaiting adoption: TBD</p> <p>PII quarterly report: TBD</p>

Implementation Supports	Children’s Services Committee; Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) Permanency Design Team; KinGAP Workgroup; DRR Workgroup; Child Welfare Family Advisory Council; SAYSO; North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan workgroup focusing on Permanent Families for Children in Foster Care.
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<b>Target 1: Increase the number of licensed Kinship Providers and increase permanency for older youth in foster care through reunification, guardianship and adoption by enhancing partnerships with key stakeholders</b>		
Description	North Carolina recognizes that partnerships are vital to achieving permanency for children and youth in foster care. Stakeholders can serve as powerful partners – in supporting permanency for children and youth in foster care. Engaging stakeholders creates opportunities to develop new and innovative strategies to promote safe and timely permanence.	
	Strategies	Who is Responsible
	<b>1a.</b> NC Kids Foster Care and Adoption Exchange will manage guardianship data and flag youth who are eligible for KinGAP. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a target population of youth 14-17 (and their younger siblings) who are placed with relatives</li> <li>Review data and identify counties to target</li> <li>Provide data to judges in those jurisdictions (through CIP Rep)</li> <li>Identify judges in target counties to advocate for this effort</li> </ul>	DSS AOC
	<b>1b.</b> Provide learning opportunities for county child welfare agencies to gain knowledge of the KinGAP program, Caring for Our Own training, and provide educational materials on KinGAP for the child welfare workforce, kinship providers, and youth to increase communication, information sharing, and collaboration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate and partner with county agencies and CHS to engage kinship providers (of target population) and provide training and licensure services</li> <li>Present on permanency planning strategies, including KinGAP at the regional supervisor’s meetings in January and February</li> <li>Present information on the call to action plan and Caring for Our Own training at the Children’s Services Committee meeting in February</li> </ul>	DSS AOC KinGAP Workgroup UNC-CH SAYSO CW FAC
	<b>1c.</b> Review targeted cases and attend Permanency Planning Reviews (PPR) of targeted cases. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide one-on-one technical assistance and coaching to improve permanency planning strategies.</li> </ul>	DSS (Regional CW Consultants) County Child Welfare Agencies

<b>Target 1: Increase the number of licensed Kinship Providers and increase permanency for older youth in foster care through reunification, guardianship and adoption by enhancing partnerships with key stakeholders</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work closely with county agencies to promote safe and permanent outcomes for targeted population (through reunification, guardianship or adoption)</li> </ul>	
	1d. NC Kids will make automatic referrals to the Permanency Innovation Initiative Program for children and youth available for adoption with no identified adoptive home, and children and youth with a permanent plan of guardianship with no identified guardian.	DSS CHS County Child Welfare Agencies
Benchmarks	<b>By January 2020:</b> Identify a target population of youth 14-17 (and their younger siblings) who are placed with relatives and Review data and identify counties to target -- <b>NC DSS identified 343 youth in 20 counties as a part of our Caring For Our Own RFP.</b>	
	<b>By February 2020:</b> Provide data to judges in those jurisdictions (through CIP Rep) and identify judges in target areas who will advocate for this initiative -- <b>This goal was deferred -- District Permanency Collaboratives were deemed the best avenue for this goal.</b>	
	<b>By February 2020:</b> Provide presentations on permanency planning and KinGAP at the regional supervisor’s meetings and present Action Plan and Caring for Our Own training at February’s Children’s Services Committee meeting – <b>Completed this activity presenting at eight regional Child Welfare supervisors’ meetings across the state and during the February Children’s Services Committee meeting.</b>	
	<b>By May 2020:</b> Collaborate and partner with county agencies and CHS to engage kinship providers (of target population) and provide training and licensure services - <b>A RFP was disseminated for the Caring For Our Own (CFOO) training and licensure. Children’s Home Society was awarded a \$120,000 grant to provide training and licensure to our target group. Contract begins July 1, 2020.</b>	
	<b>July 2020:</b> Begin making automatic referrals to PII for children in need of a permanent home	
	<b>Ongoing:</b> Partner with county agencies to promote safe and permanent outcomes for targeted population (through reunification, guardianship or adoption) <b>This work continues through CFOO initiative and work with Regional Child Welfare Consultants.</b>	

<b>Target 2: Increase collaboration between Child Welfare and AOC in order to increase timely permanency for children and youth in foster care.</b>		
Description	North Carolina firmly believes the collaboration between DSS and AOC contributes to the achievement of better outcomes for children, youth, and families served by the foster care system. Together, DSS and AOC can examine permanency data and practices to decrease a child’s time in custody and make the child welfare system a stronger support for children and families.	
	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Who is Responsible</b>
	<b>2a.</b> NC DSS in partnership with AOC will host a Permanency Summit for judges, attorneys, GAL and AOC staff, county DSS Directors, and other child welfare stakeholders.	DSS AOC
	<b>2b.</b> Build on the District Permanency Collaboratives, initiated during NC’s PIP implementation, that focus on	DSS AOC

<b>Target 2: Increase collaboration between Child Welfare and AOC in order to increase timely permanency for children and youth in foster care.</b>		
	data analysis and action planning directly related to the timely achievement of permanence for children served by the foster care system and continue across the state.	County Child Welfare Agencies
	<b>2c.</b> Engage with Governor Roy Cooper’s office for support regarding timely permanency for children in the foster care system in NC.	DSS AOC
	<b>2d.</b> Leverage the Interagency Collaborative to promote local collaboration among county child welfare agencies, courts, and other child welfare stakeholders.	DSS AOC
	<b>2e.</b> Partner with local county child welfare agency who champions the District Permanency Collaborative Model in order to strengthen engagement with other local districts across the state.	DSS AOC County Child Welfare Agencies
Benchmarks	<b>By December 2020:</b> NCDSS will hold second annual Permanency Summit for judges, attorneys, GAL and AOC staff, county DSS Directors, and other child welfare stakeholders	
	<b>By December 2020:</b> Explore engaging Governor’s Office for support regarding timely permanency for children in the foster care system in NC through NCDSS legislative liaisons.	
	<b>By December 2021:</b> All 41 judicial districts will have an active district Permanency Collaborative	
	<b>Ongoing:</b> Leverage the Interagency Collaborative to promote local collaboration among county child welfare agencies, courts, and other child welfare stakeholders.	

<b>Target 3: Increase timely permanency through concurrent planning</b>		
Description	Effective implementation of concurrent planning eliminates delays in achieving permanence for children and youth in foster care by identifying and working toward a primary permanency goal while simultaneously working on a secondary goal. North Carolina is committed to enhancing the use of concurrent planning through early, comprehensive assessment.	
	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Who is Responsible</b>
	<b>3a.</b> Develop additional and more detailed child welfare policies and practice guidance around concurrent planning.	DSS AOC
	<b>3b.</b> Advocate for additional legislation around concurrent planning and relative engagement	DSS AOC
	<b>3c.</b> Revise policy regarding child specific recruitment through NC Kids and develop a streamlined process for statewide/national child-specific recruitment.	DSS AOC
	<b>3d.</b> Identify county child welfare agencies and private child placing agencies who are champions of shared parenting and assist them in developing guidelines/strategies for successful shared parenting to model with other counties.	DSS AOC County Child Welfare Agencies Private Child Placing Agencies
	<b>3e.</b> Utilize SAYSO to empower youth and educate county child welfare agencies and judicial partners on the importance of using youth in their own recruitment for permanency.	DSS AOC CHS/SAYSO

<b>Target 3: Increase timely permanency through concurrent planning</b>	
Benchmarks	<b>By December 2020:</b> Partner with UNC in development of marketing tools and educational resources to promote permanency outcomes for children in foster care.
	<b>By December 2020:</b> Modify policy manuals to comply with legislative updates around concurrent planning and disseminate information to county partners -- <b>We have updated policy to reflect 2019 legislative changes and communicated in May 8, 2020 webinar- ongoing communication will occur as additional changes occur.</b>
	<b>By December 2020:</b> Continue partnership with AdoptUSKids, public and private partners to develop streamlined process for statewide/national child-specific recruitment -- <b>NCDSS receives weekly and monthly reports from AdoptUSKids regarding children in need of families. NC Kids works to support adoption activities on an on-going basis with public and private partners.</b>
	<b>By December 2020:</b> Develop and evaluate materials for youth and young adults surrounding permanency outcomes through partnership with SAYSO – <b>This work is on-going.</b>

APPENDIX A:  
**County/Agency Diligent  
Recruitment and Retention Plan  
Template**

County/Agency Name:

Effective October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021

The North Carolina child welfare system has the following core beliefs regarding diligent recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive parents:

- We value all prospective, current, and former foster and adoptive families.
- We value the belief that retention of foster and adoptive families is a customer service-based activity that begins at the first contact with a prospective family and continues through post permanence support.
- We value all caregivers, including kinship caregivers, and encourage the licensure of kinship homes whenever possible, including the use of licensure waivers when appropriate.
- We value opportunities for support, engagement, and training of foster, adoptive, and kinship families.
- We value opportunities to increase North Carolina's capacity to track and interpret data.
- We value the use of data to inform diligent recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families.

As set out by the statewide Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan, the state of North Carolina identifies the following goals for diligent recruitment and retention within the child welfare system:

- 1) Recruit and maintain a sufficient pool of ethnically and racially diverse families who can provide ongoing safety for and meet the needs of children served by the foster care program.
- 2) State, counties, and private child placing agencies have the capacity and ability to use data to inform and monitor diligent recruitment and retention efforts throughout North Carolina.
- 3) Excellent customer service provided to prospective, current, and former foster, adoptive, and kinship families.
- 4) Excellent customer service provided to internal and external community partners/stakeholders.

North Carolina is a beautifully diverse state, with 100 counties that each have unique populations, strengths, needs, resources, and cultures. In recognizing and valuing the need for localization of diligent recruitment and retention efforts, each county child welfare agency will submit its

own plan for the diligent recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families to meet the needs of the children in their care. By design, each plan will be different, and will be based on the expertise of the communities it aims to serve. Private child-placing agencies are welcome and encouraged to use this template, in partnership with the counties they serve, to develop their own Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan.

The diligent recruitment and retention plan for all county child welfare agencies must be submitted to the county's NC Kids Program Consultant by **Sept. 1** for the upcoming year.

All plans will be effective from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30. The NC Kids Consultant will review the completed plan and is available for technical assistance to assist the county in the plan's development and implementation. Counties must also complete the Diligent Recruitment and Retention Data Profile (Appendix B). Counties are expected to capture this data at the beginning of each quarter and submit the completed Data Profile to their NC Kids Consultant by **Sept. 1** of each year.

NC Kids Program County Assignments (current as of May 30, 2019):

**Alamance through McDowell (excluding Dare, Franklin, and Guilford)**

Shirley Williams

919-527-6404

[shirley.williams@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:shirley.williams@dhhs.nc.gov)

**Mecklenburg through Yancey (plus Dare, Franklin, and Guilford)**

Mary Mackins

919-527-6287

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## Part 1: Information Gathering

Agencies are encouraged to utilize the Developing Recruitment Plans Toolkit developed by the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment, available at <http://www.nrcdr.org/assets/files/NRCDR-org/developing-recruitment-plans-toolkit.pdf>

### 1) **The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) has the following requirements:**

Codes/References: Title IV-E of the Social Security Act Section 471(a)(18)(A) & (B); 45 CFF Part 1355.38(a)(2); and Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994 as amended by the Inter-Ethnic Adoption Provisions of 1996 (MEPA-IEPA)

- Prohibits State agencies and other entities that receive Federal funding and were involved in foster care or adoption placements from delaying, denying, or otherwise discriminating when making a foster care or adoption placement decision on the basis of the parent or child's race, color, or national origin
- Prohibits State agencies and other entities that receive Federal funds and were involved in foster care or adoption placements from categorically denying any person the opportunity to become a foster or adoptive parent solely on the basis of race, color, or national origin of the parent or the child
- Requires States to develop plans for the recruitment of foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom families are needed
- Allows an agency or entity to consider the cultural, ethnic, or racial background of a child and the capacity of an adoptive or foster parent to meet the needs of a child with that background when making a placement
- Does not affect the provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978
- Makes failure to comply with MEPA a violation of title VI of the Civil Rights Act

**Explain how your agency meets these requirements:**

- a. Discuss how your agency safeguards against discrimination.**
  - b. Explain the procedures that are in place when a staff person may believe discrimination has been a factor in the decision-making process.**
  - c. Specifically address your agency's grievance policy and how clients are able to access this information.**
- 2) **Describe your county's child welfare system and structure. Note: In this section you must provide information on how to access services through your agency, including location and hours of service.** (Is your agency a consolidated human service agency or an independent social service agency? How many employees work in child welfare services at your agency? Are the child welfare teams blended (responsible for more than one service area) or do you have dedicated staff per service area (assessments, in-home, foster care, adoption, etc.)? Which staff, team or external agency has primary responsibility for the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive parents?)
- 3) **Describe strategies for training agency staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities.** (How are trainings offered? What on-going training is provided?)
- 4) **Describe the training model(s) that your agency provides to prospective foster, adoptive, and kinship families (i.e. TIPS-MAPP, MAPP-GPS, PRIDE, Deciding Together, etc.) and its structure.**

(How often are orientation sessions and trainings offered? How do you structure your curriculum? How many staff are certified trainers? What ongoing training is available to foster, adoptive, and kinships families through your agency or community partners?)

- 5) **Describe the licensure/approval process at your agency. Note: In this section you must address your agency's non-discriminatory fee structure.** (How quickly do families typically move from initial inquiry to licensure? Does your agency gather data on when and how often families drop out of the licensure process? How frequently and under what circumstances do you refer to other agencies for licensure/approval rather than work with them directly?)
- 6) **Describe your agency's current process for data collection.** (Note: In this section you must provide actual data reflecting characteristics of children in care) How does your agency gather and maintain data on the characteristics of children in care? How does your agency gather and maintain data on the characteristics of available families/beds? Do you feel like your data gathering techniques are effective? How does your agency use the data collected to inform diligent recruitment and retention?
- 7) **Describe any community partnerships that exist in your county and how they impact your recruitment and retention efforts.** (How effective do you feel like these relationships are? What aspects of these partnerships are strongest, and what aspects do partners find challenging? Is data shared between agencies?)
- 8) **Describe standards, practices, or conditions in your agency related to the recruitment, retention, or approval of families that may be unique or nuanced.** (For example, does your agency require that all kinship care providers be licensed? Do you require all adoptive families to provide foster care before adopting?)
- 9) **Describe specific strategies that your agency is currently using to recruit and/or retain foster, adoptive, and kinship families. Note: In this section you must discuss specific strategies that are being utilized to reach all segments of the community and your agency's method to disseminate information for both general and child-specific information. For example – media campaigns, mailers, community events, etc.**  
**Which of these strategies do you feel are the most effective, and how do you know?**
- 10) **What are barriers to effective diligent recruitment in your community and what strategies are in place to overcome them?** (For example – financial, staff shortages, geographic, etc.) **Note: In this section you must address strategies for overcoming linguistic barriers.**
- 11) **Describe the characteristics of waiting children. What population(s) of children have the highest need for resource families?** (For example – age, race, sibling groups, disabilities, ethnicities, etc.) **Can you provide data to demonstrate this need?**
- 12) **Describe your agency's procedures for ensuring a timely search for prospective foster and adoptive parents.** (For example – the use of NC Foster Care and Adoption Exchange, interagency efforts, etc.) **Such procedures must ensure that the placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for the same race or ethnic placement.**



**Part 3: Plan and Measurement**

**Goal: Recruit and maintain a sufficient pool of ethnically and racially diverse families who reflect the diversity of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed, and who can provide ongoing safety for and meet the needs of children served by the foster care program.**

<b>Target 1</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Current, Expanded, or New Activity +</b>	<b>Type of Recruitment*</b>	<b>Potential Outcomes/Measures</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
<b>Use of data to inform and monitor local diligent recruitment and retention efforts.</b>							
<b>Target 2</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Current, Expanded, or New Activity</b>	<b>Type of Recruitment*</b>	<b>Potential Outcomes/Measures</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
<b>Provide quality customer service to prospective, current, and former foster, adoptive, and kinship families as well as internal and external community partners/stakeholders.</b>							

Target 3	Strategies	Activities	Current, Expanded, or New Activity	Type of Recruitment*	Potential Outcomes/Measures	Timeline	Responsible Parties
Provide ongoing development and support of foster, adoptive, and kinship families to help meet families' needs and build on their skills.							
Target 4	Strategies	Activities	Current, Expanded, or New Activity	Type of Recruitment*	Potential Outcomes/Measures	Timeline	Responsible Parties
Remove barriers to kinship licensure and increase the number of children and youth who are placed in licensed kinship placements							

+Identify if this activity is already taking place at your agency (Current), is an expansion of an existing activity (Expanded), or is a new activity not already in place (New)

\* Type of Recruitment: General, Targeted, Child-Specific, Retention

Target 5 (optional)	Strategies	Activities	Current, Expanded, or New Activity	Type of Recruitment*	Potential Outcomes/Measures	Timeline	Responsible Parties

<b>Target 6 (optional )</b>	<b>Strategie s</b>	<b>Activitie s</b>	<b>Current, Expande d, or New Activity</b>	<b>Type of Recruitment *</b>	<b>Potential Outcomes/Measur es</b>	<b>Timelin e</b>	<b>Responsibl e Parties</b>

**+Identify if this activity is already taking place at your agency (Current), is an expansion of an existing activity (Expanded), or is a new activity not already in place (New)**

**\* Type of Recruitment: General, Targeted, Child-Specific, Retention**

APPENDIX B:  
Diligent Recruitment and Retention Data Profile

2020-2024 PROGRAM PLANNING TOOL (Updated 5/31/2019)

COUNTY / AGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_ SFY: \_\_\_\_\_

REQUIRED DATA POINTS	# Ju ly 3 1	# Au g. 31	# Se pt. 30	# O ct. 31	# N ov . 30	# D ec . 31	# Ja n. 3 1	# Fe b. 28	# M ar. 31	# Ap ril 30	# M ay 31	# Ju ne 30		Narra tive	To tal for fis cal ye ar	Dat a Sou rce
<b>Total number of children in care</b>																
<b>Races of children in care</b>																
Caucasian																
African American																
American Indian or Alaskan Native																
Asian																
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander																
More Than One Racial Heritage																
Undetermined																
<b>Ethnicity of children in care</b>																
Number of Hispanic/Latino children																
Number of children where ICWA applies																
<b>Sibling groups in care</b>																
Total number of																

<b>REQUIRED DATA POINTS</b>	<b># July 31</b>	<b># Aug. 31</b>	<b># Sept. 30</b>	<b># Oct. 31</b>	<b># Nov. 30</b>	<b># Dec. 31</b>	<b># Jan. 31</b>	<b># Feb. 28</b>	<b># Mar. 31</b>	<b># April 30</b>	<b># May 31</b>	<b># June 30</b>		<b>Narrative</b>	<b>Total for fiscal year</b>	<b>Data Source</b>
sibling groups in care																
Sibling groups of 2 placed together																
Sibling groups of 3 or more placed together																
<b>Ages of children in care</b>																
Ages 0-5																
Ages 6-12																
Ages 13-17																
Ages 18 and over																
<b>Therapeutic Needs</b>																
Total number of children leveled as therapeutic in DSS custody																
Total number of children leveled as therapeutic NOT in DSS custody																
<b>Races of licensed families</b>																
Caucasian																
African American																

<b>REQUIRED DATA POINTS</b>	<b># July 31</b>	<b># Aug. 31</b>	<b># Sept. 30</b>	<b># Oct. 31</b>	<b># Nov. 30</b>	<b># Dec. 31</b>	<b># Jan. 31</b>	<b># Feb. 28</b>	<b># Mar. 31</b>	<b># April 30</b>	<b># May 31</b>	<b># June 30</b>	<b>Narrative</b>	<b>Total for fiscal year</b>	<b>Data Source</b>
American Indian or Alaskan Native															
Asian															
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander															
More Than One Racial Heritage															
<b>Ethnicity of licensed families</b>															
Number of Hispanic/Latino families															
Number of ICWA preferential families															
<b>Occupancy and Capacity</b>															
Total number of traditional licensed beds															
Total number of available traditional beds															
Total number of therapeutic licensed beds															
Total number of available															

<b>REQUIRED DATA POINTS</b>	<b># July 31</b>	<b># Aug. 31</b>	<b># Sept. 30</b>	<b># Oct. 31</b>	<b># Nov. 30</b>	<b># Dec. 31</b>	<b># Jan. 31</b>	<b># Feb. 28</b>	<b># Mar. 31</b>	<b># April 30</b>	<b># May 31</b>	<b># June 30</b>	<b>Narrative</b>	<b>Total for fiscal year</b>	<b>Data Source</b>
therapeutic beds															
Number of therapeutic beds occupied by children NOT in DSS custody															
Total number of licensed beds not utilized within the month															
<b>Number of children within the month placed out of county due to lack of available families.</b>														0	
<b>Number of placement disruptions or placement changes within the month.</b>														0	
<b>Average length of time in months from initial inquiry to licensure.</b>															

	# Ju ly 3 1	# Au g. 31	# Se pt. 30	# O ct. 31	# N ov . 30	# D ec . 31	# Ja n. 3 1	# Fe b. 28	# M ar. 31	# Ap ril 30	# M ay 31	# Ju ne 30		Narra tive	To tal for fis cal ye ar	Dat a Sou rce
<b>REQUIRED DATA POINTS</b>																
<b>ADDITIONAL AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA POINTS TO TRACK (SEE EXAMPLES)</b>																

**Examples of Additional Data Points:**

Recruitment events/activities and number of referrals/inquiries directly tied to event/activity

Number of families who were previously licensed with another agency, and why?

Number of MAPP Trainings completed each quarter

Length of time between initial inquiry and first day of MAPP Training

Prospective family opt outs and when those occur in the training/licensing process

Families licensed more than "x" number of years.

Number of In-Service trainings provided to foster/adoptive parents per quarter.

Number LGBTQ friendly foster homes available.

Number and characteristics of placement referrals private agency was unable to serve

**Data Sources for Drop Down:**

Management Assistance website <http://ssw.unc.edu/ma/>

Data Warehouse

Internal Agency data

Other

APPENDIX C:  
**Diligent Recruitment and Retention Resource Guide**

**Foreword**

Three statewide, all day, stakeholder meetings were held in October 2016 and January 2017 with over 200 participants, to seek input for NC's Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan. These stakeholders included County DSS's, private child placing agencies, foster and adoptive families, youth, Guardian Ad Litem staff, and other key stakeholders. Each attendee provided input into the development of the North Carolina Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan. The approach was collaborative and structured and was facilitated by the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment at Adopt US Kids.

A consistent need identified at these stakeholder meetings was a centralized resource guide to support agencies in their recruitment and retention efforts. This appendix is such a guide. The NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network, at the NC Division of Social Services, maintains this resource guide as one portion of the technical assistance the team provides to counties and partner agencies. These resources are not all-inclusive, and their appearance in this resource guide does not constitute an endorsement by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

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## External Resource Links

### General Resources

- “What Can I and My Agency Do to Improve Recruitment” – NC Practice Notes:  
<https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/youth-development/blueprint-series/>
- Recruiting and Retaining Resource Families – Child Welfare Information Gateway:  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/permanency/recruiting/>
- National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment (NRC-DR):  
<http://www.nrcdr.org/>
- A Community Outreach Handbook for Recruiting Foster Parents – Child Welfare League of America  
<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/recruiting-foster-parents.pdf>
- Recruitment, Training, and Support: The Essential Tools of Foster Care – The Annie E. Casey Foundation  
<http://www.aecf.org/resources/recruitment-training-and-support-the-essential-tools-of-foster-care-1/>
- Getting More Parents for Children from Your Recruitment Efforts – Adopt US Kids  
[http://www.adoptuskids.org/\\_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/practitioners-guide-getting-more-parents-from-your-recruitment-efforts.pdf](http://www.adoptuskids.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/practitioners-guide-getting-more-parents-from-your-recruitment-efforts.pdf)

### Customer Service

- *Treat Them Like Gold* – NC DHHS Publication:  
[https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dss/publications/docs/Partnering\\_with\\_Resource\\_Families.pdf](https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dss/publications/docs/Partnering_with_Resource_Families.pdf)
- Using Customer Service Concepts to Enhance Recruitment and Retention Practices – NRC-DR:  
[http://www.nrcdr.org/\\_assets/files/using-customer-service-concepts-to-enhance-recruitment-and-retention-practices.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/using-customer-service-concepts-to-enhance-recruitment-and-retention-practices.pdf)
- Phone Interactions with Families – NRC-DR:
- [http://www.nrcdr.org/\\_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/five-things-you-can-do-customer-service-phone-interaction.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/five-things-you-can-do-customer-service-phone-interaction.pdf)

### Data-Driven Recruitment

- Data-Driven Recruitment – NRC-DR:  
[http://www.nrcdr.org/\\_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/data-driven-recruitment-110514.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/data-driven-recruitment-110514.pdf)
- Overview of Market Segmentation – NRC-DR:  
[http://www.nrcdr.org/\\_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/overview-of-market-segmentation.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/overview-of-market-segmentation.pdf)
- Speaking the Same Language – NRC-DR:  
[http://www.nrcdr.org/\\_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/speaking-the-same-language-110614.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/speaking-the-same-language-110614.pdf)
- NC Child Welfare Program Data – Published by the Jordan Institute (UNC-CH School of Social Work)  
<http://ssw.unc.edu/ma/>
- Developing Recruitment Plans Toolkit – NRC-DR:  
[http://www.nrcdr.org/\\_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/developing-recruitment-plans-toolkit.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/developing-recruitment-plans-toolkit.pdf)

### **Interjurisdictional Placements**

- “Tips and Strategies for Successful Out of State Adoptive Placements” – NC DHHS and the Jordan Institute for Families (NC Kids and ICPC):  
Webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWWdOnFail&feature=youtu.be>  
Handouts: <http://fcrp.unc.edu/pdfs/interstate.pdf>
- Key Elements and Strategies for Effective Interjurisdictional Work – NRC-DR\_  
[http://www.nrcdr.org/\\_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/key-elements-and-strategies-for-effective-interjurisdictional-work.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/key-elements-and-strategies-for-effective-interjurisdictional-work.pdf)

### **Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA)**

- “Guide to the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act” – NC DHHS\_  
<https://www2.ncdhs.gov/info/olm/manuals/dss/csm-50/man/appendixp.pdf>
- Understanding and Complying with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994” – US DHHS, Administration for Children and Families\_  
[https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/mepa\\_powerpoint.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/mepa_powerpoint.pdf)

### **Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)**

- NC Indian Child Welfare Program – NC DHHS (Contains contact info for tribal enrollment representatives for all NC tribes and bands of American Indians)\_  
<https://ncadmin.nc.gov/citizens/american-indians/american-indian-initiatives/indian-child%20welfare-program>
- Full text of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) – Tribal Law and Policy Institute  
[http://www.tribal-institute.org/lists/chapter21\\_icwa.htm](http://www.tribal-institute.org/lists/chapter21_icwa.htm)
- Commission of Indian Affairs  
<https://ncadmin.nc.gov/about-doa/divisions/commission-of-indian-affairs>
- Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians  
<https://ebci.com/>
- “A Guide to Compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act” – National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA)\_  
[http://www.nicwa.org/Indian\\_Child\\_Welfare\\_Act/documents/Guide%20to%20ICWA%20Compliance.pdf](http://www.nicwa.org/Indian_Child_Welfare_Act/documents/Guide%20to%20ICWA%20Compliance.pdf)
- For assistance with meeting the needs of Native American resource families, you may contact the Commission of Indian Affairs  
Lori McClain – 919-807-4440

### **Recruiting Specific Populations**

- Moving Toward Cultural Competence – NRC-DR:\_  
[http://www.nrcdr.org/\\_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/moving-toward-cultural-competence.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/moving-toward-cultural-competence.pdf)
- Working With African American Adoptive, Foster, and Kinship Families – NRC-DR:\_  
[http://www.nrcdr.org/\\_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/working-with-african-american-families.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/working-with-african-american-families.pdf)
- Recruiting Families for Native American Children – NRC-DR:\_  
[http://www.nrcdr.org/\\_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/recruiting-families-for-native-american-children.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/recruiting-families-for-native-american-children.pdf)
- Nuestra Familia, Nuestra Cultura: Promoting and Supporting Latino Families – NRC-DR  
[http://www.nrcdr.org/\\_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/nuestra-familia-nuestra-cultura.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/nuestra-familia-nuestra-cultura.pdf)
- Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Preferred-Placement Foster Homes for American Indian Children – Casey Foundation  
<https://www.casey.org/icwa-recruitment-retention/>

- Recruiting and Supporting Military Families Who Are Adopting: <http://www.nrcdr.org/assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/wherever-my-family-is-thats-home.pdf>
- Strategies for Recruiting LGBT Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Families: <http://www.nrcdr.org/assets/files/strategies-for-recruiting-LGBT-foster-adoptive-kinship-families.pdf>
- Finding Common Ground: A Guide for Child Welfare Agencies Working with Communities of Faith – NRC-DR: <http://www.nrcdr.org/assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/finding-common-ground.pdf>
- Recruiting, Developing, and Supporting Resource Families in Rural Communities (Webinar) – NRC-DR <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kh-auFN-l4s&feature=youtu.be&list=PLghM7YFZ4EP9f1wm5hPsLTV39hXb6JtYk>
- Recruitment and Retention of Kinship, Foster, and Adoptive Families for Siblings – NRC-DR <http://www.nrcdr.org/assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/practice-principles-and-seven-step-process-for-sibling-recruitment.pdf>

#### **Training for Resource Parents**

- Fostering NC – Resource Parent Education Portal <http://fosteringnc.org/>
- Fostering Perspectives <http://fosteringperspectives.org/>
- Foster Parent College <http://fosterparentcollege.com>
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network: <http://www.nctsn.com/>

#### **Youth Engagement**

- Youth Engagement Blueprint Series – DHHS Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative: <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/youth-development/blueprint-series/>
- Talking with Older Youth About Adoption – DHHS, Adopt US Kids, Child Welfare Information Gateway: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/talking.pdf>
- Going Beyond Recruitment for Older Youth – NRC-DR <http://www.nrcdr.org/assets/files/NRCRRFAP/resources/going-beyond-recruitment-for-older-youth.pdf>

## Types of Recruitment: Definitions and Suggestions

### General Recruitment

General recruitment strategies help build public interest and awareness of the need for foster and adoptive parents for children and youth in foster care by broadcasting the need to a general audience. These strategies focus on drawing in a wide variety of families while setting the stage for more targeted recruitment.

Examples of General Recruitment:

- Setting up a booth/table at an event designed for a wide population of people, such as a fair or street festival
- “Swag” that is given out to the public at events or as they encounter the agency (such as pens, keychains, bags, t-shirts, etc.)
- Facebook/Twitter posts from your agency
- Media releases, TV spots on local news, ads in the local newspaper
- Events that promote Adoption Awareness Month, Foster Care Awareness Month, etc.
- Pamphlets and publications that are available on your website or on the state’s website (such as “You Don’t Have to Be Perfect to Be a Perfect Parent”)
- Heart Gallery

### Targeted Recruitment

Targeted recruitment considers the unique needs of children and youth in need of foster and adoptive families by developing recruitment strategies and messages based on their needs. Effective targeted recruitment uses demographic data to inform your recruiting efforts by identifying characteristics of current foster and adoptive parents and children and youth in care.

Examples of Targeted Recruitment:

- Building your data capacity is a critical component of targeted recruitment. What are the characteristics of children that you have in care? (Race, age, gender, sibling groups status, therapeutic need, etc.) Do you have families available to meet these needs? Your areas of largest need are the communities you should target.
- Partner with a school or school system located in community where many children from your county enter care; arrange to send flyers home with every child’s report card or have a booth/table during open house night.
- Request permission to post information and/or speak at an event about the need for foster parents at a faith house or community center that is frequented by leaders from within the population you are seeking to recruit. Come prepared with data that informs the need for foster parents from their community (for example, “there are currently X number of Native American children in foster care in our county. X percentage of those children are placed in non-Native homes.”) Cultural competency is incredibly important as you seek to establish or maintain trust.
- Your materials should reflect the needs of your agency. For example, if you have a need for foster parents for teenagers, photos of a teen or group of teens should be on your pamphlets and websites.
- Target people that are already in helping professions, such as the medical field, teaching, social work, mental health, etc. You could arrange to leave flyers or speak at the next staff meeting at the elementary school or at a local hospital or clinic.
- Poll your current pool of foster parents to find out where people like them spend time in your community. Ask them where they typically go out to eat, what stores they frequent, how do they spend their free time, where do they work, etc. This can help you decide how to put your

limited time, money, and energy to the best use, by focusing your recruitment on places where foster parents already congregate.

### **Child-Specific Recruitment**

Child-specific recruitment strategies help recruit foster, adoptive, and kinship families for specific children and youth in foster care. These strategies begin with a comprehensive child assessment and preparation process. Every effort should be made to involve the child as developmentally appropriate. Comprehensive strengths-based child pre-adoptive summaries are a critical component of child-specific recruitment.

Examples of Child-Specific Recruitment:

- Photo listings and/or video listings of available children (such as on Adopt US Kids)
- Participating in matching events with the child, where approved families meet children who are available for adoption
- NC Kids Program (DHHS)
- Family Finding services (CHS)

### **Retention**

Retaining resource parents is an incredibly important recruitment strategy that cannot be overlooked. Excellent recruitment strategies mean nothing if resource parents are not supported and developed to meet the complex needs of the children in care. Retention efforts should start from the first point of inquiry and are intrinsically linked to quality customer service.

- Cross-train all staff so that they understand what to say (and how to say it) when they interact with a prospective or current resource family. The administrative assistant or the assessments social worker don't have to know absolutely everything about how to become a foster parent, but they should know some general talking point and who interested families can talk to within the agency.
- Call folks back! It's simple, but it's so incredibly important. Everyone is very busy but taking just a moment to promptly return someone's call could mean the difference between a family feeling supported and a family feeling ignored.
- Partner with local businesses to offer discounts or special deals to resource parents in your community. Perhaps a local salon could provide foster children with free haircuts, or a local restaurant could offer one night a month where foster families eat for free. You could provide the businesses with a placard or certificate to display that indicates that they are supporting local foster children, which is both good for their business, and an additional general recruitment tool for your agency. This could be especially effective in rural communities.
- Organize foster parent appreciation events (dinners, picnics, movie nights, trips to the ball park, etc.). Not only do these events support current foster parents, they also are visible in the community and act as another general recruitment tool.
- Organize foster parent support groups and have agency staff provide childcare
- Send handwritten and personalized notes and cards on birthdays or other special days.
- Poll your foster parents to understand what makes them feel supported. Tailor your support to the specific needs of your families as best you can.

**Sample Recruitment Letter**  
[Agency Letterhead]

April 20, 2017

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a foster or adoptive parent in North Carolina! At NC Kids we are here to help you with getting started and to assist you on your fostering or adoption journey. Valuable information about how to become a foster or adoptive parent, frequently asked questions about the process and the child welfare system, as well as, information about the types of children who are in need of foster and adoptive homes can be obtained by viewing the “You Don’t Have to be Perfect to be a Perfect Parent” brochure at: <http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/forms/dss/dss-5133.pdf> .

If you are interested in becoming a foster parent only, you may contact your local county Department of Social Services or one of the private foster home licensing agencies. To locate contact information for your county’s DSS, please visit the North Carolina Division of Social Services website at <https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dss/local/index.htm> . A list of private foster home licensing agencies can be found at: <http://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dss/licensing/docs/cpalistfostercare.pdf>. These agencies can provide you with information regarding upcoming informational meetings, training sessions and answer any questions you may have about the licensing process.

The first step to becoming an adoptive parent in NC is to obtain a Pre-Placement Assessment (PPA), also known as an adoptive home study, from a licensed adoption agency. All local county Departments of Social Services (DSS) are licensed. There are also several private agencies in North Carolina available to assist you. A list of these agencies can be found at: <http://www.adoptuskids.org/adoption-and-foster-care/how-to-adopt-and-foster/state-information/north-carolina#agency>. Please note that there are differences between a county agency and a private agency in terms of services offered and potential fees for those services. Selecting an agency to represent you during this process is an important decision. We suggest that you contact several agencies to discuss your adoption goals so as to make an informed choice.

Once you have obtained an approved Pre-Placement Assessment (PPA), you may register with the NC Kids office. You will then be added to a database of approved families and waiting children that is used to find potential matches. To register with NC Kids, please complete the Family Registration Form (<http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/forms/dss/dss-1821-ia.pdf> ) and return it along with a copy of your approved PPA. Please note that registration with NC Kids is optional and does not guarantee that you will be matched. It is simply one option available to you in your adoption journey. We encourage you to search for children on your own through AdoptUSKids or NC Kids’ websites.

Please visit [www.AdoptUsKids.org](http://www.AdoptUsKids.org) and click on North Carolina to see children in our state that are waiting to be adopted. We recommend that you check the website frequently, as new profiles of children who have recently become available for adoption are added regularly. For confidentiality reasons, we are not able to make referrals or provide information on specific children without a current PPA.

Once you have had an opportunity to review the websites provided and to speak with your local agencies, please feel free to contact us with any additional questions. You may reach me at 1-919-527-6358 or by email at [britt.cloudsdale@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:britt.cloudsdale@dhhs.nc.gov). Again, we appreciate your interest in North Carolina’s waiting children.

Sincerely,  
NC Kids Program Consultant

**New Caller Intake Form (Sample) – Source: “Treat Them Like Gold”**

Contact Information for Prospective Resource Families

1. Name of Caller: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date of Initial Call: \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Date Call Returned: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Primary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Email: \_\_\_\_\_
7. DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Employment: \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Work hours: \_\_\_\_\_
11. How did you hear about the need for resource parents/our agency?
12. Are you primarily interested in fostering? Adopting? Both? Volunteering?
13. What can I do for you?  
 Send Information                       Arrange an Interview  Accept a donation of goods/services  
 Accept a donation of money         Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Information on Others in the Home (if applicable)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Caller: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
School or employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Caller: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
School or employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Caller: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
School or employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes from Call

Tracking Information

Informed of Orientation Meeting to be held: \_\_\_\_\_ Attended?     Yes  No  
Date Information Packet Sent: \_\_\_\_\_ Sent by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Follow-up Letter or Visit: \_\_\_\_\_ Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member Completing Form: \_\_\_\_\_



### Sample Exit Interview

#### Resource Parent Exit Questionnaire

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Email (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Exit: \_\_\_\_\_

How many years were you a resource parent?

\_\_\_\_\_

What was your main motivation to begin fostering? (check as many as apply.)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wanted to give back/make a difference | <input type="checkbox"/> Infertility issues      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Former fostering/adoption experience  | <input type="checkbox"/> Own children were grown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual or religious calling        | <input type="checkbox"/> Interested in adoption  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other : _____                         |  |

What was your main reason for deciding not to continue fostering?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Health                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moved out of county           | <input type="checkbox"/> End of relative placement     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burn out                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Involuntary closure           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transferred to another agency | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in family circumstance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At capacity                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other : _____                 |

Tell us about your experience as a Resource Parent:

Did you feel confident in your ability to meet the needs of the child(ren) placed in your care?

- Yes       No

Do you feel that you were offered support services to you meet the needs of the child(ren) placed in your home?

- Yes     No

Do you feel you were offered training which could help you meet the needs of the child(ren) placed in your home?

- Yes       No

Did you feel consistently supported by your social worker and the child's team?

- Yes       No

What support services do you feel you needed, that were not offered?

\_\_\_\_\_

What did we do well in supporting you as a resource parent?

\_\_\_\_\_

What, if anything, could have been done to change your mind about closing your foster home license?

\_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you have further thoughts you would like to share, please contact XXXX at XXXXX.

**Sample Renewal Interview**

Resource Parent Renewal Questionnaire

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Renewal: \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been a resource parent?

\_\_\_\_\_

What was your main motivation to begin fostering? (check as many as apply.)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wanted to give back/make a difference | <input type="checkbox"/> Infertility issues      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Former fostering/adoption experience  | <input type="checkbox"/> Own children were grown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual or religious calling        | <input type="checkbox"/> Interested in adoption  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other : _____                         |  |

What was your main reason for deciding to continue fostering with our agency? (check as many as apply.)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plan to adopt                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Fostering a relative               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Level of support from my worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Level of support from child's team |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Services provided               | <input type="checkbox"/> Feel a calling                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other : _____                   |   |

Tell us about your experience as a Resource Parent:

Do you feel confident in your ability to meet the needs of the child(ren) placed in your care?

- Yes  No

Do you feel that you are offered support services to meet the needs of the child(ren) placed in your home?

- Yes  No

Do you feel you are provided training which enables you to meet the needs of the child(ren) placed in your home?

- Yes  No

Did you feel consistently supported by your social worker and the child's team?

- Yes  No

What support services do you feel you need, that are not offered?

\_\_\_\_\_

What do we do well in supporting you as a resource parent?

\_\_\_\_\_

What, if anything, could we do better to support you in your role as a resource parent?

\_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you have further thoughts you would like to share, please contact XXXX at XXXXX.

### Sample Satisfaction Survey

[Company Name]

[Company Address]

[City, ST ZIP Code]

[Company Name] requests your help. We take our role of supporting, training, and licensing foster, adoptive, and kinship families very seriously and are always looking to improve our services. Please take a few minutes to complete the following Resource Parent Satisfaction Survey. We plan to complete this survey annually in order to continually improve services and meet the needs of our families. Thank you in advance for your time.

***This survey is anonymous.*** Social Worker XXX will be entering the data from the survey and there will be no link from the survey data to the person who completed it.

Directions: Please complete the following survey. If responding to an email, please save your completed survey and mail back directly to XXX. If your worker gave the survey to you during a home visit, please complete and return in the envelope included that has postage pre-paid.

## 1. Demographics

### 1a. Who is your support social worker?

- XXX                       XXX                       XXX                       Other

### 1b. Resource parent category

- Foster Parent                       Respite/Emergency Placement                       Adoptive Parent                       Other

**1c. What is your education level?**

- 
- High School       Some College       College/University Degree       Graduate School or Higher

**1d. How long have you been a resource parent?**

- 
- Less than 1 year       1-2 years       3-5 years       More than 5 years

**1e. How many different children in foster care have you cared for in your home during the last year? (Not including respite)**

- 
- None       1-3 children       4-7 children       More than 7 children

**1f. How many different children in foster care have you cared for through respite?**

- 
- None       1-3 children       4-7 children       More than 7 children

**2. Overall, how satisfied are you as a licensed resource parent with Catawba County Social Services?**

- 
- Very Satisfied       Satisfied       Unsatisfied       Very Unsatisfied

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**2a. In the past year, did you receive adequate support for your roles and responsibilities as a resource parent?**

- 
- More than adequate       Somewhat adequate       Somewhat inadequate       Very inadequate

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**2b. I feel that I am kept informed of events, trainings, and support services available to me.**

- 
- Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

**2c. My support social worker (Marcie, Sharon, or Leigh Ann) responds to my requests, needs, and suggestions in a timely manner.**

---

Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

**2d. I feel my role as a Resource Parent is viewed as important and valued by staff.**

---

Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

**2e. I am made aware of whom I can call if my support worker is on vacation or if there is a crisis.**

---

Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

**2f. My licensing social worker gives me the support and information I need for licensure.**

---

Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

**3. Do you currently have any children in foster care in your home?**

---

Yes       No (skip to question 4 on next page)

**3a. I believe I am given all information available about the children placed in my home.**

---

Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

**3b. My support social worker involves me in the planning process for each child in my home.**

---

Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

**3c. I feel the educational, medical, and psychological needs of the children in my home are being met.**

---

Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

**3d. I am invited to attend Permanency Planning meetings and/or Child and Family Team Meetings for each child living in my home.**

---

Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

**3e. I am involved and kept informed of court hearings and outcomes that affect me and the child in my home.**

---

Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

**3f. When in crisis, efforts are made to support the placement and help us through the crisis.**

---

Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

**3g. What does [Agency] and your social workers *do well* to support you?**

---

**3h. What could [Agency] and your social workers *do better* to support you?**

---

**3i. What makes you feel appreciated as a person? Is there something we could do to better show our appreciation of you as a resource family?**

---

---

**4. I feel the training offered to me is helpful and allows me to be an effective resource parent.**

---

Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

**4a. How effective was MAPP training in preparing you to become a foster parent?**

---

Very Effective       Effective       Ineffective       Very Ineffective

**4b. How well prepared were you to be a foster parent prior to your first placement?**

- Very prepared       Somewhat prepared       Not prepared at all       N/A, I have not had a placement yet

**4c. In your opinion, what has been the most helpful training that you have attended? Why?**

---

**4d. Are there any trainings that you would like to see offered that are not?**

---

**4e. Do you have any suggestions as to how resource parent training could be improved?**

---

5. The following supplemental questions are to help us improve our recruitment process and gauge interest in support services.

**5a. Do you have any suggestions for recruiting new resource families?**

---

**5b. Do you have any connections that could assist us in recruitment (i.e. arranging for us to speak at your church, getting us a booth at a community event)?**

---

---

**5c. Based on your experience with [Agency], would you recommend [Agency] to others?**

- Yes       Maybe       No

**5d. Have you attended the Support Group?**

- Yes       No

**5e. If you HAVE attended a meeting, was it helpful to you?**

---

- Yes                       Somewhat                       No                       N/A, I have not attended

**5f. Would you be willing to join a [Agency] public Facebook page to help publicize recruitment efforts?**

---

- Yes                       Maybe                       No

## Questions to Engage Youth in Child-Specific Recruitment

(Please be mindful: Tailor these questions for the specific child you're talking to. Some of these may trigger trauma in different children.)

- Who do you call for advice, or just to talk?
- When something great happens, who do you feeling like calling to tell them about it?
- Do you have a best friend?
- Is there an adult that seems to understand you better than others do?
- Who do you, or would you, call if you were in serious trouble? (in the emergency room, at the police station, etc.)
- Is there someone who worries about where you are and what you're doing?
- Do you have an adult in your life whose advice you respect?
- Can you tell me who you trust the most? (Who have you trusted before, even if you feel like you can't trust them now?)
- Is there anyone with whom you'd like to build a better relationship? Someone you hope to trust one day?
- Where were you living at the point in your life that you felt safest and most comfortable? Where do you feel the most at home?
- With what person or people do you feel the most comfortable?
- Who praises you and makes you feel good about yourself?
- Who believes in you?
- If you could choose where you are going to live, where would that be?
- Where have you visited in the past that you'd like to go again?
- What are your favorite things to do (hobbies, interests, etc.)? – [When they answer, ask who taught them how to do those things.]
- What would you like someone to know about you if they were meeting you for the first time?
- What things would you like to do when you are older? When you are an adult?
- Who/What makes you feel useful or accomplished?
- Who really listens to you and knows what you want?
- Who do you want to have around to help you plan for your future?
- What is your favorite part of your day?

APPENDIX D:  
**State Level Diligent Recruitment and Retention Activities**

**Values and Vision for Diligent Recruitment and Retention in North Carolina**

The North Carolina child welfare system has the following core values regarding diligent recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families:

- We value all prospective, current, and former foster and adoptive families.
- We value the belief that retention of foster and adoptive families is a customer service-based activity that begins at the first contact with a prospective family and continues through post permanence support.
- We value all caregivers, including kinship caregivers, and encourage the licensure of kinship homes whenever possible, including the use of licensure waivers when appropriate.
- We value opportunities for support, engagement, and training of foster, adoptive, and kinship families.
- We value opportunities to increase North Carolina's capacity to track and interpret data.
- We value the use of data to inform diligent recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families.

The North Carolina child welfare system has the following long-term vision regarding diligent recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families:

- Structured statewide approach to the diligent recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families.
- Efficient and easily understood process for prospective families when navigating their initial interest in being foster/adoptive families.
- Placement stability for children served by the foster care system.
- Placement of children in their home communities and school districts.
- Placement of sibling groups together.
- Diverse population of foster and adoptive families, including but not limited to ethnicity, race, language and geographic location.
- Familiarity with the North Carolina's Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan among public and private child welfare staff.
- Consistent engagement in technical assistance, information sharing, and collaboration around Diligent Recruitment and Retention by the NC Division of Social Services, County Departments of Social Services, and private child placing agencies.
- Statewide use of a customer service approach to diligent recruitment and retention with positive feedback from foster and adoptive families.
- Representation of foster and adoptive families and youth served by the foster care program in the recruitment and retention process.
- Statewide capacity to collect, assess, and interpret data to inform diligent recruitment and retention activities.

**NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network**

The Division of Social Services' NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network is North Carolina's Statewide Diligent Recruitment Entity and Adoption Exchange Program. NC Kids manages the following elements of diligent recruitment and retention:

- State level first point of contact for individuals interested in becoming foster or adoptive families via a general email address and telephone hotline as direct points of intake, talking families through the general process of becoming a foster and/or adoptive family in North Carolina.
- Manage and facilitate North Carolina's adoption exchange program, providing targeted child specific recruitment of adoptive homes through online photo listing.
- Conduct preliminary review of approved adoptive family's Preplacement Assessment for initial matching before final matching determination is made by the County Child Welfare Agency.
- Manage and facilitate the North Carolina Heart Gallery, a traveling photography exhibit of children legally free for adoption and in need of adoptive families.
- Provide diligent recruitment tools for use at the state level or by County and private agencies such as the NC Kids website, general brochures, fliers, pens, key chains, magnets, and posters.
- Provide technical assistance and support to county child welfare agencies and private child placing agencies regarding general, targeted, and child specific diligent recruitment and retention efforts.
- Provide monitoring and technical assistance support for each county's Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan on an annual basis.
- Publish North Carolina's Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan data on an annual basis.

### Foster Home Licensing

The Division of Social Services serves as North Carolina's licensing authority for the licensure of all North Carolina's foster homes. Public and private child placing agencies recommend foster homes for licensure. All foster home license actions are put through a rigorous quality assurance review before being approved or denied by the Division of Social Services. The Regulatory and Licensing Team also provides technical assistance and training to county child welfare agencies and private child placing agencies regarding the training and licensure process for foster families.

### Treat Them Like Gold and Latino Recruitment and Retention Guide

The North Carolina Division of Social Services' recruitment guide [Treat Them Like Gold](#) is a diligent recruitment guide that provides suggested practices, resources, and general guidance on how to effectively recruit and retain foster and adoptive families in NC. A companion [guide](#) that specifically focuses on recruitment and partnering with Spanish speaking foster and adoptive families is available.

### Statewide Diligent Recruitment Calls and Trainings

Through the development process for the Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan, it was recognized that there is a significant need for regular, ongoing communication and collaboration between agencies on the topic of diligent recruitment and retention. The NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network will provide ongoing learning opportunities that support communication and collaboration among state, county, and private child placing agencies. This will be done through North Carolina's annual Child Welfare Summit, webinars, and statewide calls. These events will include a variety of diligent recruitment and retention topics. These topics will be determined through assessment of patterns in technical assistance needs, topics that arise during live webinars and calls, and requests by both County DSS's and private child placing agencies.

### Fostering Perspectives

Fostering Perspectives ([www.fosteringperspectives.org](http://www.fosteringperspectives.org)), is a free newsletter produced by the NC Division of Social Services in partnership the UNC Chapel Hill School of Social Work. It is published twice a year and the intended audience is foster, adoptive, kinship, and therapeutic families as well as child welfare professionals in North Carolina. Each issue furthers diligent recruitment efforts by regularly

featuring waiting children and offering information that supports the educational needs of existing foster families.

#### Fostering NC

Fosteringnc.org is a learning site for North Carolina's foster and adoptive families and kinship caregivers. This site features on-demand courses, webinars, videos, resources, and answers to foster, adoptive, and kinship caregiver's frequently asked questions. The Division of Social Services, in partnership with the University of NC Chapel Hill and NC State University will maintain and update the learning site with additional resources and trainings on a regular basis.

#### Online Orientation for Prospective Foster Families

North Carolina's online, on-demand, self-paced [orientation for NC foster parents](#) provides an overview of foster care in North Carolina. Public and private child-placing agencies are required to make completion of this online orientation mandatory for all foster families.

#### NC's Permanency Innovation Initiative (PII)

PII is an effort launched in 2013 by NC's General Assembly. Under this state-sponsored initiative a private child-placing agency, Children's Home Society of North Carolina (CHS), provides services to improve permanency outcomes for children living in foster care, to improve engagement with biological relatives, and to reduce costs associated with maintaining children in foster care. Since July 1, 2015 CHS has achieved positive outcomes for children and families through Family Finding, child specific adoption recruitment, and permanency related training.

#### Adoption Promotion Program Fund

The Adoption Promotion Program Fund is utilized to enhance and expand adoption programs, to secure permanent homes for hard to place children, and to encourage partnerships between public and private agencies to achieve permanency for children in a timely manner by providing financial incentives for the adoption of special needs children. Allowable expenditures of the funds received include direct provision or purchase by contract of general and child specific adoption recruitment, retention, and promotion services.

#### Post Adoption Support Services (PASS)

Post Adoption Support Services (PASS) are intended to ensure the permanency and well-being of adoptees and their families. PASS are voluntary services available to all adoptees in NC, regardless of age of the adoptee or the type of adoption. PASS also provides education, outreach, and support to families at risk of or experiencing an illegal custody transfer.

#### State-Funded Supplement for Children Exposed to the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

North Carolina provides supplemental board payments for children served by the foster care program and supplemental adoption assistance payments for children who have been adopted that were diagnosed as having been prenatally exposed to HIV or who have developed symptoms of HIV/AIDS in foster care. Supplemental payments for HIV positive children may be made to foster/adoptive families, group homes, or child caring institutions licensed by NC Division of Social Services.

#### Special Children Adoption Incentive Fund (SCAIF)

The NC Appropriations Act annually authorizes Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funding for a Special Children Adoption Incentive Fund. The SSBG funding is then combined with local and state matching

funds to make adoption a possibility for children with special health care needs who would otherwise remain in the foster care system because of the financial loss to adoptive families.

#### Foster Care 18 to 21

NC Session Law 2015-241 (2015 Appropriations Act) was passed to include “Fostering Success/Extend Foster Care to 21 Years of Age.” The North Carolina Division of Social Services worked with collaborative partners and the General Assembly to afford the opportunity for youth to continue foster care services from 18 to 21 years of age if the individual meets the requirements for the program. This law also provides the availability of adoption assistance payments to continue until the youth reaches the age of 21 if the youth was adopted at 16 or 17 years of age. Implementation of this initiative began on January 1, 2017. These developments around Foster Care 18 to 21 will enhance North Carolina’s capacity to recruit, retain, and support families for children and youth, specifically youth ages 16 and 17 in need of foster and adoptive homes.

#### Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program

NC Session Law 2015-241 (2015 Appropriations Act) was passed to include a Guardianship Assistance Program. North Carolina implemented the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP) on January 1, 2017. The purpose of KinGAP is to make funds available for the financial support of youth ages 14 to 18 who are determined to be in a permanent family setting, eligible for legal guardianship, and otherwise unlikely to obtain permanency. KinGAP reimburses room and board at the same rate as North Carolina’s foster care board rates. A child eligible for KinGAP must be living in a licensed foster home for six months. The KinGAP provides an additional mechanism to support permanency through guardianship for specific youth and their licensed caregivers.

#### Foster Parent Liability Insurance

Foster parent liability insurance became available to North Carolina foster families on May 1, 2016. Foster families can use this optional insurance, if they choose to purchase it, to protect their assets against litigation in the event a child in their care is hurt.