



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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AND COUNTY OPERATIONS

June 15, 2017

**DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**DEAR EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF LICENSED CHILD PLACING AGENCIES**

**ATTENTION: CHILD WELFARE STAFF INVOLVED IN DILIGENT RECRUITMENT AND  
RETENTION OF FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE FAMILIES**

**SUBJECT: NORTH CAROLINA'S NEW DILIGENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PLAN**

This letter is to inform county child welfare agencies and private child placing agency partners who work with families and children involved in the NC child welfare system of the release of North Carolina's new Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan. One of the strategies within the State of NC's Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan is to "strengthen and reframe the statewide foster and adoptive parent diligent recruitment plan to support the recruitment of families who meet the needs of the children they serve and who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children served by the Foster Care program." Through this updated Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan, all involved entities in NC will 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.

To develop this plan, three statewide stakeholder meetings were held in October 2016 and January 2017 with over 200 participants, to seek input for NC's statewide Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan. Participants included County DSS's, private child placing agencies, foster and adoptive families, youth, Guardian Ad Litem staff, and other key stakeholders. The meetings were facilitated by the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment at Adopt US Kids.

Information collected during these meetings was used by a work group comprised of the Division of Social Services, local County Departments of Social Services, private child placing agencies, foster and adoptive families, and youth currently or formerly in foster care. The work group determined that the most appropriate plan for diligent recruitment and retention in NC is to have a statewide plan that provides concrete goals for statewide achievement, consistency, and structure, while also allowing for county-level planning for diligent recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families. NC's Statewide Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan is attached to this letter (Attachment 1).

[WWW.NCDHHS.GOV](http://WWW.NCDHHS.GOV)

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## **COUNTY DILIGENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PLAN**

### **Each county is required to draft an annual Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan.**

Technical assistance and resources are available through the North Carolina Division of Social Services by contacting the NC Kids Program. This year, the county-specific Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plans will be completed in two phases with the counties in phase 1 due by **February 1, 2018** and the counties in phase 2 due by **May 1, 2018**. The implementation of all county plans begins **July 1, 2018**. County assignments and details can be found in NC's Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan (Attachment 1). Annual updates to County Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plans are then due by September 1<sup>st</sup> in future years. A template is provided for the county plans and is attached (Attachment 2). Private child placing agencies are vital to the success of NC's child welfare system. County Departments of Social Services and private child placing agencies that serve children and families involved in the child welfare system are encouraged to collaborate in the writing of their Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plans.

The county-specific plans will be comprehensive and include the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) requirements. County Departments of Social Services and private child placing agencies that serve the child welfare system are also required to report specific data annually through the Diligent Recruitment and Retention Data Profile (Attachment 3). The completed data profiles are due to the Division of Social Services on August 1<sup>st</sup> each year for the previous fiscal year.

### **WEBINAR**

To strengthen the support to counties in the development of the plans, the Division of Social Services, in partnership with the Jordan Institute at the UNC School of Social Work, is holding a Webinar regarding this new Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan on **Friday, June 23, 2017**. Please reserve a seat through <http://www.ncswLearn.org> as quickly as possible as the registration has been extended to June 19, 2017.

The Division of Social Services will continue to provide state level diligent recruitment and retention activities while also providing technical assistance, resources, and support to the County DSS's and private child placing agencies in their specific diligent recruitment and retention efforts. A Diligent Recruitment and Retention Resource Appendix has been developed for initial and ongoing use (Attachment 4).

The Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan and Appendices can all be accessed at <https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dss/publications/>. If you have questions or need clarification, please contact your County's NC Kids Consultant or Jamie Bazemore at (919)527-6371 or [jamie.bazemore@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:jamie.bazemore@dhhs.nc.gov).

Sincerely,



Wayne E. Black

Attachments (4):

- Attachment 1 – North Carolina's Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan
- Attachment 2 – County Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan Template
- Attachment 3 – Diligent Recruitment and Retention Data Profile
- Attachment 4 – Diligent Recruitment and Retention Resource Appendix