



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Social Services

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Courier # 56-20-25

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Pheon E. Beal, Director
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August 26, 2003

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**ATTENTION: ADOPTION SUPERVISORS
 ADOPTION SOCIAL WORKERS**

SUBJECT: Statewide Contracts with Private Adoption Agencies

The Division of Social Services is again very pleased to announce the renewal of the statewide contracts with four private agencies that are willing to work collaboratively with county departments of social services to find safe, permanent homes for children in the foster care system. The participating adoption agencies are **Another Choice for Black Children, Inc.**, located in Charlotte (704-394-1124); **Adoption Plus with Appalachian Family Innovations**, (formerly Bringing It All Back Home) in Asheville (828-236-2877) and Winston-Salem (336-768-4136); **The Children's Home Society of North Carolina, Inc.**, located in Greensboro (1-800-632-1400); and the **Methodist Home for Children** located in Raleigh (1-888-305-4321). Each of these agencies continues to offer their services to all 100 counties in expanding and enhancing placement resources for children in the foster care system.

The performance-based contracts with these agencies have been very successful in finding families for hard to place children. Reimbursements for services are paid *only* when specific outcomes are achieved. The outcomes are (1) placement for the purpose of adoption; (2) issuance of Decree of Adoption; and (3) the first anniversary of the Decree of Adoption. The provision of post-adoption services beyond the first year of placement is also included in the contracts. You may contact one of these agencies if you have situations where post-adoption services are needed and you need additional support or you are unable to provide the needed services.



The contracts presume that the Contract Agencies will assume primary responsibility for the full adoption process following a referral by a county department of social services agency. Consequently, the statewide contracts include the full range of adoption services, including: accepting and processing referrals from county departments of social services; recruiting, training and assessing prospective adoptive families; making informed and well-documented recommendations about the “match” between specific children and prospective families; arranging visits with families; facilitating necessary court proceedings; and supporting families throughout the adoption process and as needed for post-adoption services. County department of social services staff should make direct contact with these agencies when a foster child has become legally free and an adoptive placement has not been identified. All such referrals will be accepted and the agencies have made a strong commitment to maintain frequent contact with the county department of social services agency following a referral. At their discretion, these agencies will accept referrals of children for whom termination of parental rights is imminent, but not yet completed.

The statewide contracts with these agencies are to complement and enhance your adoption program. The contracts **do not** replace the mandated adoption services, including post adoption services, of county departments of social services. Consequently, the county **must** actively recruit prospective adoptive families and conduct preplacement assessments of families that are interested in adopting children in the foster care system, regardless of whether or not they are interested in becoming foster parents first. The contracts are intended to provide additional assistance to you when finding an adoptive home or providing post-adoption services.

Each of the agencies is licensed by the Division of Social Services and must adhere to the same rules of confidentiality regarding the children and families that we serve. Therefore, all records relating to the children should be made available to these agencies. The confidentiality of records must not be used as a barrier to their full access to pertinent information. All county departments of social services are expected to provide necessary documents of the legalization of an adoption to the Contract Agencies in a timely manner. The Contract Agencies understand that they must adhere to the Division’s practice standards in the provision of adoption services. They are expected to provide the county department of social services with the required documentation of provided services in a timely manner. We encourage you to emphasize this expectation in your work with these agencies.

The statewide contracts with these private agencies do not cover their full, annual operating costs and are typically exhausted before the end of the fiscal year. If the fund becomes depleted, it may be necessary for a private agency to charge fees for their services. These agencies do receive payments from the Special Children Adoption Fund when their contract is exhausted or when they provide services that are not included in the contracts.

Each of these private agencies may also be available to provide discrete services as a part of a department of social services initiated adoption process (i.e., preplacement assessments for relative or foster parent adoption) or to dedicate staff time exclusively to a county department of social services on a regularly scheduled basis. Although such partnerships are encouraged, these types of arrangements are not reimbursable under the statewide contracts and the county department of social services should expect to enter into a separate contract with the private agency for this level of service.

We believe our adoption program has been strengthened because of our partnership with these private agencies, and we appreciate all that you do to ensure permanency for children in the foster care system. It is our firm belief that every child deserves a permanent family and through all our efforts this goal will become a reality for children in foster care.

If you have any questions regarding the statewide contract with private adoption agencies, please contact Amelia.Lance, Program Consultant with the Foster Care and Adoption Policy Team at Amelia.Lance@ncmail.net or 919-733-2580, or Esther High, Team Leader, at Esther.High@ncmail.net or (919) 733-9464.

Sincerely,



Jo Ann Lamm, Program Administrator
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Section

CC: Pheon Beal
Sherry Bradsher
Sarah Barham
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Team Leaders
Children's Programs Representatives
Local Business Representatives
Another Choice for Black Children, Inc.
Appalachian Family Innovations
Children's Home Society of NC, Inc.
Methodist Home for Children

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