**North Carolina**

**Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan**

**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 **September 1st** for the upcoming year.

All plans will be effective from October 1st through September 30th. 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 **September 1st** of each year.

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

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

Shirley Williams

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

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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:**

1. **Discuss how your agency safeguards against discrimination.**
2. **Explain the procedures that are in place when a staff person may believe discrimination has been a factor in the decision-making process.**
3. **Specifically address your agency’s grievance policy and how clients are able to access this information.**

1. **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?)
2. **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?)

1. **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?)
2. **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?)
3. **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?
4. **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?)

1. **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?)
2. **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?**

1. **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.**
2. **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?**
3. **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 2: Plan Development Process**

Diligent Recruitment and Retention is a community activity and each agency is encouraged to develop a county DRR plan with the input of your community’s stakeholders (such as private child placing agencies, youth in care, foster and adoptive parents, kinship providers, faith community leaders, volunteers, GAL staff and volunteers, etc.).

1. **Who was involved in the development of this plan?** Were any current or former resource parents, kinship providers, and/or foster youth involved with the plan’s development?

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| **Name** | **Role** | **Agency** |
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1. **How was this plan developed?** (Describe process, meetings held, input gathered, data collection)
2. **How were activities identified?**
3. **How will capacity be built to measure outcomes and success?**
4. **What Technical Assistance (TA) have you sought from the State in the formulation of this plan? What areas of TA are most needed by your agency related to diligent recruitment and retention of resource parents?**

**Part 3: Plan and Measurement**

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| **Target 1** | **Strategies** | **Activities** | **Current, Expanded, or New Activity+** | **Type of Recruitment\*** | **Potential Outcomes/Measures** | **Timeline** | **Responsible Parties** |
| **Provide quality family experience to prospective, current, and former foster, adoptive, and kinship families from initial inquiry through post-placement services.** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **Target 2** | **Strategies** | **Activities**  | **Current, Expanded, or New Activity** | **Type of Recruitment\*** | **Potential Outcomes/Measures** | **Timeline** | **Responsible Parties** |
| **Provide ongoing capacity development and support of foster, adoptive, and kinship families to help meet families’ needs and build on their skills.** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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**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.**

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| **Target 3** | **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.** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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**+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**

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| **Target 4 (optional)** | **Strategies** | **Activities** | **Current, Expanded, or New Activity** | **Type of Recruitment\*** | **Potential Outcomes/Measures** | **Timeline** | **Responsible Parties** |
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| **Target 5 (optional)** | **Strategies** | **Activities** | **Current, Expanded, or New Activity** | **Type of Recruitment\*** | **Potential Outcomes/Measures** | **Timeline** | **Responsible Parties** |
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**+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**