

# **North Carolina Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan**

Last Updated June 15, 2017

## **Introduction and Overview**

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 Department of Social Services, a licensed child placing agency, or licensed adoption agency. 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 Department of Social Services” includes consolidated human services agencies.

Each county in North Carolina has a different need around Diligent Recruitment and Retention. For example, some counties have very few children in foster care and even fewer who become available for adoption. They may opt to place all their children in privately licensed foster and adoptive homes and meet their diligent recruitment and retention needs through their partnership with the private agencies that serve their area. Some counties have robust diligent recruitment and retention programs for foster care, but may rely on private agency resources to meet their needs for adoptive homes. Finally, some counties have robust diligent recruitment and retention programs for foster and adoptive families. This variation in service provision across the state provides a wide variety of localized licensure and approval options for families but also creates a complex system that can be confusing and frustrating to prospective families and stakeholders.

Through this updated Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan, NC intends to provide increased consistency in both messaging and service provision to prospective and current foster and adoptive families, as well as developing increased capacity to meet the needs of children and youth in care.

## **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.

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

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.

Information gained through the stakeholder meetings was used by a work 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 NC’s Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan.

Through this work, it was ultimately determined that the most appropriate plan for diligent recruitment and retention in NC was to have a statewide plan that provided concrete goals for

statewide achievement, consistency, and structure, while also allowing for localized planning for diligent recruitment and retention efforts within each individual County Department of Social Services, in partnership with their private child placing agency partners.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of County Departments of Social Services**

To best meet the needs of children in the custody of each county Department of Social Services and NC's 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. The first county-specific Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan will be written during state fiscal year 2017/2018 and then implemented in state fiscal year 2018/2019. Following the first year of implementation, an updated plan will be submitted by the county on an annual basis, due on September 1 each year. The county-specific plan will be comprehensive and include the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) requirements.

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 agencies in their specific diligent recruitment and retention efforts.

A template for a county-level Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan is provided, as well as supplemental guides and attachments that will be used to track data, provide best practice outcomes, and provide ongoing support to localized efforts. Counties will 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 their assigned NC Kids Consultant; a plan for technical assistance created if needed, and then written correspondence that the Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan has been received and reviewed.

Each County's annual Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan will also serve as their annual MEPA Plan. 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.

The County Diligent Recruitment Plans will be initiated during two phases throughout fiscal year 2017/2018, for implementation during fiscal year 2018/2019 with the expectation that the County Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan will be updated and resubmitted to the Division of Social Services by September 1st of each year going forward.

### **Phase 1 Counties:**

Alamance, Alexander, Alleghany, Avery, Bladen, Brunswick, Burke, Caldwell, Carteret, Catawba, Chowan, Cleveland, Columbus, Currituck, Davidson, Davie, Duplin, Edgecombe, Gaston, Gates, Granville, Halifax, Haywood, Hertford, Iredell, Johnston, Lee, Macon, Madison, Martin, McDowell, Mitchell, Montgomery, Moore, Nash, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimmons, Person, Polk, Randolph, Robeson, Rutherford, Stanly, Stokes, Surry, Swain, Warren, Wayne, Transylvania, Tyrell, Union, Vance, Yancey, and Yadkin

County DRR Plan due to NC Kids Consultant on February 1, 2018, effective July 1, 2018

**Phase 2 Counties:**

Anson, Ashe, Beaufort, Bertie, Buncombe, Cabarrus, Camden, Caswell, Chatham, Cherokee, Clay, Craven, Cumberland, Dare, Durham, Forsyth, Franklin, Graham, Greene, Guilford, Harnett, Henderson, Hoke, Hyde, Jackson, Jones, Lenoir, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Mitchell, New Hanover, Onslow, Orange, Pamlico, Pender, Pitt, Richmond, Rockingham, Rowan, Sampson, Scotland, Wake, Washington, Watauga, Wilkes, and Wilson

County DRR Plan due to NC Kids Consultant on May 1, 2018, effective July 1, 2018

**NC Kids Consultant and County Assignments**

Alamance through Cumberland Counties  
Shirley Williams, Program Consultant  
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Johnston through Polk Counties  
Kerri Shiflett, Program Consultant  
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(919)527-6366

Randolph through Yancey Counties  
Mary Mackins, Program Consultant  
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(919)527-6287

**Roles and Responsibilities of Private Agencies**

Private child placing agencies are a vital aspect of NC’s child welfare system. Each Department of Social Services 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 Department of Social Services 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).

**State Level Data Regarding North Carolina’s Children in Foster Care  
and Foster and Adoptive Families**

In addition to county Departments of Social Services 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 2016-2017 CHILDREN CURRENTLY IN FOSTER CARE</b>	<b>N=10935</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Data Source/As of</b>
Female	5291	48.39	CSDW April 2017 data month Run 5/24/17
Male	5644	51.61	
Caucasian	5556	50.81	
African American	3370	30.82	
Hispanic	886	8.10	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	229	2.09	
Asian	22	0.20	
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	19	0.17	
Bi-racial	660	6.04	
Other	74	0.68	
Unable to Determine	119	1.09	
Ages 0-5	4330	39.62	
Ages 6-10	2710	24.80	
Ages 11-14	1773	16.22	
Ages 15-17	1761	16.11	
Ages 18-21	355	3.25	
ICWA-Eligible	41	0.37	

<b>For YTD FY 2016-2017 CHILDREN WHO EXITED FOSTER CARE</b>	<b>N= 4785</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Data Source/As of</b>
Female	2321	48.51	CSDW April 2017 data month Run 5/24/17
Male	2464	51.49	
Caucasian	2404	50.24	
African American	1415	29.57	
Hispanic	388	8.11	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	163	3.41	
Asian	21	0.44	
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	10	0.21	
Bi-racial	287	6.00	
Other	51	1.07	
Unable to Determine	44	0.92	
Ages 0-5	1883	39.35	
Ages 6-10	1207	25.22	
Ages 11-14	636	13.29	
Ages 15-17	488	10.20	
Ages 18-21	571	11.93	
ICWA-Eligible	19	0.40	
<b>Reasons for Exit</b>	<b>N=4785</b>	<b>%</b>	
Reunification with Parents or Primary Caretakers	1405	29.36	
Guardianship with a Relative	708	14.80	
Adoption	1153	24.10	
Guardianship with Court- Approved Caretaker	153	3.20	
Custody with Non- Removal Parent or Relative	549	11.47	
Custody with Other Court- Approved Caretaker	123	2.57	
Emancipation	461	9.63	
Transfer to Another Agency	69	1.44	
Runaway	7	0.15	
Death of Child	7	0.15	
ICPC	4	0.08	
Authority Revoked for Reasons Other than Above	108	2.26	
Missing Field (blank)	38	0.79	

	N	%	Data Source/As of
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION</b>	<b>1227</b> (735 also coded as Free for Adoption as of 5/24/17)		CSDW April 2017 data month Run 5/24/17
<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION *AND IN NEED OF AN ADOPTIVE HOME</b>			
	N	%	
Female	431	43.06	
Male	570	56.94	
Caucasian	521	52.05	
African American	295	29.47	
Hispanic	76	7.59	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	20	2.00	
Asian	n/a	n/a	
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	0.10	
Bi-racial	76	7.59	
Other	7	0.70	
Unable to Determine	5	0.50	
Ages 0-5	285	28.47	
Ages 6-10	321	32.07	
Ages 11-14	235	23.48	
Ages 15-17	160	15.98	
ICWA Eligible	9	0.90	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1001</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN BEING ACTIVELY RECRUITED FOR BY NC (NC's Adoption Exchange and Photolisting)</b>	<b>Legally Free: 237</b> <b>Legal Risk: 53</b> <b>Hold: 101</b>		AIMS 6/2/2017

<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF LICENSED BEDS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Data Source/As of</b>
Foster Care (privately licensed)	1297	12.57	XPTR 2/28/17
Special Program (privately licensed)	142	1.38	
Therapeutic Homes (privately licensed)	2646	25.64	
Foster Care (county licensed)	6235	60.42	XPTR 5/17/17
<b>Total</b>	<b>10320</b>	<b>100%</b>	

<b>RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LICENSED FOSTER FAMILIES (Private Agency Supervised Households)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	Exported from SESSIONS 5/30/17
Caucasian	1587	40.11	
African American	2295	58.00	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	38	0.96	
Asian	9	0.23	
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	0.05	
Multi-racial	17	0.43	
Unable to Determine	9	0.23	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3957</b>	<b>100%</b>	
Hispanic or Latino	129	3.26	
Not Hispanic or Latino	3828	96.74	

<b>RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LICENSED FOSTER FAMILIES (DSS Supervised Households)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	Exported from SESSIONS 6/1/2017
Caucasian	1921	72.71	
African American	668	25.28	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	27	1.02	
Asian	8	0.30	
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3	0.11	
Multi-racial	11	0.42	
Unable to Determine	4	0.15	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2642</b>	<b>100%</b>	
Hispanic or Latino	100	3.79	
Not Hispanic or Latino	2541	96.18	
Unknown	1	0.04	



## **Statewide Goals and Strategies for Diligent Recruitment and Retention**

All statewide and localized diligent recruitment and retention activities in NC should support the following goals and strategies. The primary owner of each strategy is listed in parentheses after each strategy.

***Goal 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.***

- Strategy 1 – Provide a template for each county to write their own Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan (NC Division of Social Services)
- Strategy 2 – Development and implementation of localized Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan (County Departments of Social Services and Private Agencies)
- Strategy 3 – Review and approve each County’s Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan (NC Division of Social Services)
- Strategy 4 – Provide technical assistance, education, and resources specific to diligent recruitment and retention and MEPA compliance to County and private agency partners on an individual, regional, and statewide basis as needed (NC Division of Social Services)
- Measures of success:
  - Each County Department of Social Services will write and implement an annual Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan
  - Data regarding race/ethnicity of children in foster care and the pool of licensed foster families are aligned
  - 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

***Goal 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***

- Strategy 1 – Provide a data profile (Appendix B) for quarterly and annual reporting of key state identified diligent recruitment and retention measures, with an option for additional county specific measures. to be reported based on individual county Diligent Recruitment and Retention plan (NC Division of Social Services)
- Strategy 2 – County Departments of Social Services and licensed private foster care agencies update data profile measures quarterly, and submit to NC Division of Social Services annually (County Departments of Social Services and private agencies)
- Strategy 3 – Publish annual statewide cumulative data profile (NC Division of Social Services)
- Strategy 4 – Provide technical assistance to County Departments of Social Services and private child placing agencies regarding access, tracking, and interpretation of data to inform their diligent recruitment and retention efforts (NC Division of Social Services)

- Strategy 5 – Build capacity to track and report demographic characteristics of licensed foster homes at all levels of service provision (NC Division of Social Services, county Departments of Social Services, private agencies)
- Measures of success:
  - Annual publication of diligent recruitment and retention data
  - An increase in the capacity of County Departments of Social Services to determine realistic targets for diligent recruitment and retention based on data
  - Creation of state level reports regarding licensed foster families’ race and ethnicity

***Goal 3: Excellent customer service provided to prospective, current, and former foster, adoptive, and kinship families***

- Strategy 1 – Update NC’s Diligent Recruitment and Retention Website – adoptnckids.org (NC Division of Social Services)
- Strategy 2 – 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)
- Strategy 3 – Develop and disseminate a communication plan to County Departments of Social Services and private agencies regarding the updated website and decision tree features with suggestions for increased collaboration among agencies (NC Division of Social Services)
- Strategy 4 – Assess each agency’s customer service culture and identify any needed changes in the approach to customer service in each county’s Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plans (County Departments of Social Services)
- Strategy 5 – Provide resources, tools, and technical assistance to County Departments of Social Services and private child placing agencies specific to evaluating and improving customer service provided to prospective, current, and former foster and adoptive families (NC Division of Social Services)
- Measures of success:
  - The completed update of the adoptnckids.org website
  - The completed decision tree available on adoptnckids.org website
  - Decrease in calls to the NC Kids statewide hotline about problems with the inquiry, response, and licensing process. A baseline for comparison will be established beginning in June 2017
  - Develop the capacity to track the time from initial inquiry to licensure for foster families on a statewide level, and work to decrease the time from initial inquiry to licensure for foster families

***Goal 4: Excellent customer service provided to internal and external community partners/stakeholders***

- Strategy 1 – Provide diligent recruitment and retention resource list, sample documents, and appendices to County Departments of Social Services and private child placing agencies (NC Division of Social Services)
- Strategy 2 – Implement quarterly diligent recruitment and retention calls to increase communication, information sharing, and collaboration between the North Carolina Division of Social Services, local county Departments of Social Services, private child placing agencies, and community stakeholders (NC Division of Social Services)
- Strategy 3 – Ongoing use of webinars and state publications to provide topic specific resources, training, and information sharing regarding diligent recruitment and retention (NC Division of Social Services)
- Measures of success:
  - The number of events, agencies, and individuals participating in quarterly diligent recruitment calls
  - The number of requests for and topics of technical assistance made to the Division of Social Services around Diligent Recruitment and Retention

## **Use of Data and Data Systems to Build Statewide Capacity**

Throughout the development process for this Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan, it was recognized that County Departments of Social Services and private child placing agencies have a wide variation in capacity to track, maintain, and interpret diligent recruitment and retention data. Each agency is encouraged to begin building their data capacity through their first Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan. Acknowledging a lack of use of data around recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families, and taking the first steps to begin to build that capacity is acceptable and encouraged. Technical assistance regarding the building of data capacity is available through the North Carolina Division of Social Services.

To make data driven decisions regarding diligent recruitment and retention, each County Department of Social Services and private child placing agency that licenses foster families will complete a quarterly update to the Diligent Recruitment and Retention Data Profile (Appendix B). The completed profile will be provided to the NC Division of Social Services by August 1<sup>st</sup> of the next fiscal year. Comprehensive statewide data will then be issued on an annual basis to assist in informing ongoing localized and statewide diligent recruitment and retention efforts.

Private Child Placing Agencies are required to complete the foster family specific section of the Diligent Recruitment and Retention Data Profile (Appendix B) on a quarterly basis and submit it to the Division of Social Services by August 1<sup>st</sup> for the previous fiscal year.

## **State Level 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 Department of Social Services.
- 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 the County Departments of Social Services 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 Departments of Social Services 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 initiate standing quarterly calls regarding diligent recruitment and retention beginning in fiscal year 2017/2018.

The Division of Social Services will also facilitate recorded webinars as needed on 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 quarterly calls, and requests by both County DSS's and private child placing agencies.

#### 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 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.

#### FosteringNC.org

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, NC State University, and Independent Living Resources, 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 over view 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 provide 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 DSS.

### 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 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.

### Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP)

NC Session Law 2015-241 (2015 Appropriations Act) was passed to include a Guardianship Assistance Program. The purpose of GAP 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. GAP reimburses room and board at the same rate as North Carolina’s foster care board rates. A child eligible for GAP must be living in a licensed foster home for six months. The GAP 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.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A  
County Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan Template

Appendix B  
Diligent Recruitment and Retention Data Profile

Appendix C  
Diligent Recruitment and Retention Resource List

# North Carolina Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan

## Appendix A: County/Agency Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan Template

County/Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Effective July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019

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 the following dates:

**Phase 1 Counties: Due February 1, 2018**

**Phase 2 Counties: Due June 1, 2018**

All plans will be effective from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. 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 August 1, 2018.

NC Kids Program County Assignments (current as of June 15, 2017)

**Alamance through Cumberland**

Shirley Williams

[Shirley's phone #]

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

**Currituck through Jackson**

Britt Cloudsdale

919-527-6358

[britt.cloudsdale@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:britt.cloudsdale@dhhs.nc.gov)

**Johnston through Polk**

Kerri Shiflett

919-527-6366

[Kerri.shiflett@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Kerri.shiflett@dhhs.nc.gov)

**Randolph through Yancey**

Mary Mackins

919-527-6287

[mary.mackins@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:mary.mackins@dhhs.nc.gov)

**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](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCDR-org/developing-recruitment-plans-toolkit.pdf)

- 1) **Describe your county's child welfare system and structure.** 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 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?
  
- 3) **Describe the licensure/approval process at your agency.** 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?





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

- 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 received 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 effect 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. Explain how your agency safeguards against such discrimination, what procedures are in place when a staff person may believe discrimination may be a factor in decisions, and how your agency meets these requirements.**



4) **How will capacity be built to measure outcomes and success?**

5) **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**

**Goal 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.**

Strategies	Activities	Current, Expanded, or New Activity+	Type of Recruitment*	Potential Outcomes/Measures	Timeline	Responsible Parties

+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 (Select all that apply)



**Goal 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.**

Strategies	Activities	Current, Expanded, or New Activity	Type of Recruitment*	Potential Outcomes/Measures	Timeline	Responsible Parties

+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

**Goal 3: Excellent customer service provided to prospective, current, and former foster, adoptive, and kinship families.**

Strategies	Activities	Current, Expanded, or New Activity	Type of Recruitment*	Potential Outcomes/Measures	Timeline	Responsible Parties

+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

**Goal 4: Excellent customer service provided to internal and external community partners/stakeholders.**

Strategies	Activities	Current, Expanded, or New Activity	Type of Recruitment*	Potential Outcomes/Measures	Timeline	Responsible Parties

+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

Goal 5 (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Strategies	Activities	Current, Expanded, or New Activity	Type of Recruitment*	Potential Outcomes/Measures	Timeline	Responsible Parties

+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



<b>OPTIONAL DATA POINTS TO TRACK (SEE EXAMPLES )</b>							

**Example Optional Data Points to Track:**

Track varying level of needs of children in care related to types of homes needed.

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

Number of MAPP Trainings completed each quarter

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 of sibling groups placed together.

Number of sibling groups placed separately due to lack of homes available to accommodate sibling groups.

# **North Carolina Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan**

## **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/NRCDR-org/data-driven-recruitment-110514.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCDR-org/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/NRCDR-org/speaking-the-same-language-110614.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCDR-org/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/NRCDR-org/developing-recruitment-plans-toolkit.pdf](http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCDR-org/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=MWWdOnFailI&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.ncdhhs.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/)  
<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,

Britt Cloudsdale, MSW

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 Tracking Table – Source: “Treat Them Like Gold”**

Inquiry Type	Name and Address	Phone #	F/A	How did they hear?	Date Packet Sent	Date Follow-up Call	Date of Orientation	MAPP	Approval Date

### 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]

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[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.

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### 1. Demographics

1a. Who is your support social worker?

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XXX                       XXX                       XXX                       Other

1b. Resource parent category

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Foster Parent                       Respite/Emergency Placement                       Adoptive Parent                       Other

1c. What is your education level?

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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.

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Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

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

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Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

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

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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.

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Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

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

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Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

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

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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.

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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.

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Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

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

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Strongly Agree       Agree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

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

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

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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?

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***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?

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

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

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***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?

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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)?

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

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- Yes                       Maybe                       No

5d. Have you attended the Support Group?

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- Yes                       No

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

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- 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?

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- 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?