



2024 Illinois Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR)

Addendum B

DILIGENT RECRUITMENT OF FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE HOMES

**Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
Submitted June 30, 2023**

DILIGENT RECRUITMENT OF FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE HOMES

Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan In the 2024 APSR:

- Describe the progress and accomplishments in implementing the state’s Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan.
- Indicate in the 2024 APSR if the state has made changes or additions to the plan. If so, provide information on the change or update to the Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan in a separate document.

The DCFS Resource and Recruitment unit attended an array of community events to attract and recruit potential foster families. There is a Resource and Recruitment team in each region of the state; each team conducts recruitment activities that are determined to best meet the recruitment needs of that region. When attending community events, Resource and Recruitment staff bring brochures and other marketing materials and are prepared to speak with people and answer questions about foster care. Depending on the region, these events might include attendance at school functions, library events, community resource events, community fairs, church or religious events, action team events, and foster parent appreciation events. Resource and Recruitment staff are diligent in immediately following up on recruitment inquiries that come in through the DCFS website. The Department recently updated the DCFS website to include detailed information on foster care and foster/adopt information for the community.

The Resource and Recruitment unit has continued to work closely with the Office of Communications on the Department’s social media messaging campaign to increase awareness for the need of supportive and loving foster homes for our targeted youth populations (siblings, teens, African- American youth, Hispanic / Spanish speaking youth, pregnant teens, youth with special needs and LGBTQI+ youth). The Foster My Future post analytics indicated that the campaign reached over 13,000 accounts. The campaign will be ongoing on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Additionally, the Office of Communications continues to develop press opportunities, such as radio interviews and participation in community forums, to discuss the urgent need for fostering families.

As a result of strong recruitment efforts, the Resource and Recruitment unit saw an increase in the number of potential foster parent inquiries. There were 7,637 inquiries collected for FY 2022. This was a 13% increase from FY 2021. The number of inquiry referrals sent to the statewide licensing unit in FY 2022 was 1,527 which represents 20% of all inquiries collected/received.

		Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Total
	Statewide													
	Inquiries FY 2022													
	Website	507	602	513	537	555	545	677	508	581	480	626	612	6743
	Other	52	140	69	82	28	24	19	183	25	52	89	131	894
	Total	559	742	582	619	583	569	696	691	606	532	715	743	7637
	Inquiries Sent to Licensing	123	163	125	132	134	121	141	115	112	109	135	117	1527
	% of Inquiries to Licensing	22.0%	22.0%	21.5%	21.3%	23.0%	21.3%	20.3%	16.6%	18.5%	20.5%	18.9%	15.7%	20.0%

As of the 3rd quarter of FY 2023, 6,776 inquiries were collected from potential foster parents. There was a decrease in inquiries received during the end of January and early February because of the update done to the Website which impacted electronically submitted inquiries. Inquiries

during his time were either not received or were received multiple times which were not counted in the total amount received. The Office of Communications was alerted to the problems and corrected the system glitch, but the number of missed inquiries could not be determined as they could not be retrieved. Complete data for FY 2023 will be made available in future reporting periods.

		Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Total
	Statewide													
Inquiries	FY 2023													
	Website	623	561	470	456	459	432	615	425	398	398	375	0	5212
	Other	254	200	155	136	128	67	113	99	125	149	138	0	1564
	Total	877	761	625	592	587	499	728	524	523	547	513	0	6776
	Inquiries Sent to Licensing	143	127	116	108	101	78	171	93	89	100	90	0	1216
	% of Inquiries to Licensing	16.3%	16.7%	18.6%	18.2%	17.2%	15.6%	23.5%	17.7%	17.0%	18.3%	17.5%	#DIV/0!	17.9%

Per the licensing data report dated 4/30/2023, 2,095 homes were licensed statewide and 264 foster family home license applications are pending. Data for FY 2023 is not fully available but can be made available in future reporting periods.

The Department's Resource and Recruitment Unit has created a tool to collect and track quantitative and qualitative data to assess the effectiveness of the social media campaigns and in-person and virtual recruitment activities. This data is also used to track the progress of potential foster parents from their initial engagement (inquiry) to completion of licensure. The Department also conducts data analysis of prospective foster parents who do not complete the licensing process by identifying barriers that affect license completion. Identified barriers include potential applicants not submitting the licensing application, changing their mind, or not responding to telephone calls and e-mails. In such cases, referrals to the licensing unit are rated as no longer pursuing (NLP) or no response (NR). This information is used to implement foster parent recruitment plans across the state.

The Department has also successfully developed and implemented a training curriculum on foster parent recruitment and retention for DCFS and CWCA staff. This is an ongoing, mandatory training for recruitment staff. The training emphasizes that recruitment is the responsibility of all agency personnel (from answering the phone and discussing foster care at the point of inquiry, to engaging in the process of licensure, to responsiveness of the case management team, clinical and resources, and to aftercare services). This training, as facilitated by Resource and Recruitment subject matter members, has been well received and has brought DCFS and our CWCA partners together to collaborate on how to grow our foster parenting programs across the state.

The Department has created a new protocol for accessing/managing foster parent availability as a method to 'retain' foster parents. In the past, existing foster parents were burned out when they received a multitude of calls from staff seeking placements for children utilizing the agency's Vacancy Report on the D-Net. This report provided basic information (name, ID#, address, phone numbers, licensed capacity, placements, and vacancies). However, this list did not provide real time vacancies and foster parents' desired age range and gender preferences. The new protocol

for managing foster care resources is in the process of being formalized into policy. In the new protocol, the Department's Resource and Recruitment unit is responsible for knowing in "real time" the foster care resources that are available for youth needing step-down from residential treatment, youth that are new to care and youth needing emergency placement due to placement disruption. For example, in Cook County there were 343 foster homes listed; after review of the list, only 46 of those home were truly viable homes. The new protocol is designed to work as follows:

- The shelter box email will be changed to "Placement Request."
- The new CFS 1901 Placement Request form will ask if the request is a step-down, new to care or emergency placement and if a bilingual home is needed.
- There will be one data base for all available foster homes, EFC Homes, and shelter beds.
- The EMERGENCY SERVICES TEAM will send available resources to the requesting team for follow-up.

For example, if a Child Protective Services or follow-up worker is looking for a foster parent willing to work with teens in Cook County, the Emergency Services Team will send a listing of all the foster parents in Cook County who indicated they would take teens. The same protocol will be followed for Burgos home requests. This means calling five or six real families with openings versus 100 or more from the DNET with no openings. Once this process is solidified, this should be a great support to the placement teams and Child Protective Services seeking to place our youth in appropriate homes in a timely manner. The Resource and Recruitment unit, along with our partners in licensing, will be responsible for the fidelity of the data with daily updating of foster homes as they become available or unavailable.

Additionally, the Resource and Recruitment unit is working with Department of Innovation and Technology to gather real time information on foster home activity: adding newly licensed homes to the vacancy list, determining when a home has accepted or discharged a youth from their care, or removing them from the vacancy list when full or closing their license. This information will be gathered from the Illinois License Summary (ILS) submitted to the Central Office of Licensing (COl) and the 906 Placement Authorization form to indicate when youth are placed in a home.

The Resource and Recruitment unit continues to facilitate weekly shelter calls to ensure that youth are moving through these emergency programs within the prescribed timeline of no more than 30 days. The Clinical Placement administration, Resource and Recruitment and Permanency staff work together to strategize placement of youth in a timely manner. The Clinical Placement administrator monitors the matching process to ensure that youth requiring a higher level of care are matched to the appropriate resources to meet their needs and that documentation, interviews, and acceptances dispositions are completed expeditiously. The Resource and Recruitment unit assists in identifying foster homes from the vacancy list for youth in need of traditional placement. Efforts are documented and are evaluated regularly for quality improvement.

The DCFS Burgos Committee is working with Loyola University on the recruitment of Spanish speaking and other foster homes through several avenues:

- The Spanish speaking 'Migrant to Migrant' program is already established in 45 parishes of the Chicago Archdiocese.
- There are two Spanish newspapers/newsletters that are circulated on a regular basis in the Spanish speaking neighborhoods of Chicago and surrounding areas.

- There are two Spanish language radio stations which work with the Archdiocese of Chicago’s “Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants” program.
- There is participation in numerous health and information fairs in Hispanic communities.
- The Association of Latino Consulates could have the consulates play video loops on the need for foster homes on their lobby closed-circuit monitors as people wait for appointments.

The Resource and Recruitment unit continues to partner with our internal collaborators (Office of Latino Services, Office of African American Services, Office of LGBTQ+ Services, Office of Asian American Services, the Youth Advisory Board, and the Foster Parent Advisory Council) to ensure that we are reaching out to our underserved/targeted audiences effectively.

The Resource and Recruitment unit continues to review the Child Protective Service Reports for regional and statewide child placement trends which informs the unit of where resources and staffing are needed. For example, the increased number of indicated family reports with children entering the child welfare system in the Central Region represents a substantial increase in the need for foster homes. To meet this demand, the unit advocated to fill the supervisor and staff vacancies in the Central region to bolster our recruitment efforts. The supervisory role was filled in September 2022 and the unit is in the process of also filling the vacant recruiter positions. Once the team is fully staffed, an aggressive recruitment campaign can be fully realized. In the meantime, community relationships are being developed in the Central Region to educate the community on this great need.

Please also see Chapter 2, Item 35: ‘*Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes*’

Illinois Department of Children & Family Services
Child Abuse and Neglect Data
 Fiscal Year to Date 5/31/2023

Protective Custody Information

Protective Custody Reports

	FYTD 2023		FY 2022		FY 2021		FY 2020		FY 2019		FY 2018	
	Total Number	% by Region	Total Number	% by Region	Total Number	% by Region	Total Number	% by Region	Total Number	% by Region	Total Number	% by Region
Statewide	5,058	100.0%	6,190	100.0%	7,531	100.0%	7,520	100.0%	6,634	100.0%	5,664	100.0%
Cook Region	862	17.0%	1,077	17.4%	1,350	17.9%	1,833	24.4%	1,571	23.7%	1,533	27.1%
Central Region	1,973	39.0%	2,253	36.4%	2,644	35.1%	2,794	37.2%	2,351	35.4%	2,010	35.5%
Northern Region	1,086	21.5%	1,447	23.4%	1,927	25.6%	1,420	18.9%	1,154	17.4%	902	15.9%
Southern Region	1,137	22.5%	1,413	22.8%	1,609	21.4%	1,473	19.6%	1,556	23.5%	1,219	21.5%
Region Unassigned	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.0%	0	0.0%