# Administrative Policies and Procedures: 16.7

## Subject:
Foster Family Recruitment and Retention

## Authority:

## Standards:
DCS 2-106 B, 2-303, 3-101, 3-103, 3-201, 3-202, 3-203

## Application:
Foster Parent Support Staff, Supervisory Staff and Foster Parents

## Policy Statement:
DCS develops and maintains regional recruitment plans for the recruitment and retention of foster families. These plans are developed in collaboration with local community partners, faith-based communities, and contract providers and are updated annually.

## Purpose:
To recruit and maintain a diverse pool of approved foster and kinship families that ensure quality home placements for children in DCS custody.

## Procedures:

**A. Regional Targeted Recruitment Plan**

1. Each region develops and submits a regional recruitment plan to Central Office Foster Care Division, by December of each year.

2. Each regional recruitment plan addresses the identified areas of need and consists of, at minimum, the following components:
   a) A demographic summary of the children and families served by the region,
   b) A demographic summary of the foster homes served by the region,
   c) A summary of the region’s general, targeted, and child-specific recruitment efforts.
   d) A summary of the region’s gained foster home numbers and loss of foster home numbers,
   e) A summary of the current regional needs and priorities,
   f) A summary of planned general and targeted community awareness activities to meet current needs and priorities,
   g) An estimated timeframe to meet the need in each category,
   h) A plan for engaging more community partners,
   i) Through established base lines, measurable goals to determine recruitment of new homes within the region,
   j) The type of technical assistance and resources needed from Central Office.
### B. Child-Specific Recruitment

1. A child specific recruitment plan is developed and implemented by the child and family team for any child in custody for twelve (12) months, with a dual goal or sole goal of adoption and has no identified adoptive family resource.

2. The Permanency Specialist and/or a regional recruiter joins the child’s team to assist in developing and implementing the child-specific recruitment plan to ensure specific strategies, time frames, roles, and responsibilities are included in the plan.

3. The Child/Youth-Specific Recruitment Plan (see [Child and Family Team Meeting Protocol](#)) is written by the Permanency Specialist and is developed in the context of the Child and Family Team Meeting. The plan is updated in TFACTS no less than every three (3) months until a permanent family is found for the child.

4. Within thirty (30) calendar days of a child or youth entering full guardianship without a permanent family, a referral is made to the Focus Team.

### C. Retention of Foster Families

Retaining foster parents is a critical part of providing service to children and families. In an effort to retain them as partners each plan should include, at a minimum:

1. Opportunities for foster parents to partner with DCS staff at recruiting events for families who are open to parent teens, sibling groups and minority children.

2. A procedure for foster parents to formally file a grievance if they believe the Foster Parent Bill of Rights has been violated (see [Protocol for Resolution of Disagreements and/or Conflicts Between Foster Parents and DCS](#)).

3. Open door access for foster parents to the Regional Administrators to address foster parent questions.

4. Partnership with the TN Foster Parent Advocacy & Mentorship Programs by offering training and support to traditional and kinship families.

5. Monthly calendars of phone in dates to help ensure accurate board payments.

6. In-service training opportunities for all foster parents through state and regional conferences.

7. Annual recognition and appreciation events for foster parents.

8. Utilization of Exit Survey outcomes to improve areas of need and to build strong relationships.

### D. Annual Evaluation of Plan Outcomes

1. Prior to annual submission to Central Office Foster Care Division, each region reviews and assesses the outcomes of the current Recruitment and Retention Plan to determine which strategies and practices worked well or may need modified or eliminated.

2. A summary of this assessment is provided to the region’s Regional Administrator and the Central Office Foster Care Division at minimum one month prior to the due date of the new plan.
### E. Foster Parent Inquiry Process

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<tr>
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<th>The foster parent inquiry process is used to note the effectiveness of recruitment events and to monitor the progress of foster parent applicants. Steps in the inquiry process are outlined below.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>An individual may inquire about becoming a foster parent through the web, hotline, or the Adopt Us Kids (AUK) website. These inquiries are first sent to a Central Office Foster Care Designee who assists in contacting inquiries as needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Each region has an inquiry tracking log that is monitored by the Central Office Foster Care Unit and regional point persons. Web and hotline inquiries are entered on the tracking log by the Central Office Foster Care Designee within two business days. AUK inquiries are entered on the tracking log every Monday or the day they are received from the AUK representative.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Regional point persons have 3-5 business days to contact each inquiry in the form of a phone call, e-mail and/or regular mail. Follow up contact is made at 30, 60, and 90 day intervals. Documentation of the contact is made in the appropriate section of the regional tracking log. The Central Office Foster Care Designee monitors the tracking log for timely documentation.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>If documentation on the tracking log is not timely or is lacking, the Central Office Foster Care Designee notifies the regional point person that an update to the tracking log is needed.</td>
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### Forms:
- CS-0768 Child/Youth Specific Recruitment Plan
- CS-0769 Child Specific Case File Review Tool
- CS-0774 Genogram Contact Sheets

### Collateral documents:
- Child and Family Team Meeting Protocol
- Protocol for Resolution of Disagreements and/or Conflicts Between Foster Parents and DCS