



Adoption

Every child deserves a permanent family — a family where they can be loved, cared for and kept safe. In Ohio, adoption services are provided by public children services agencies, private child placing agencies and private noncustodial agencies, all of which are supervised by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). The mission of ODJFS is to support local agencies in their efforts to decrease the number of children waiting for permanent homes, to prevent discrimination in the placement of children, to identify and recruit permanent families who can meet each child's needs, and to provide support to families to ensure the stability and well-being of the children in their care.

On any given day in Ohio, more than 3,200 children are waiting for adoptive families. If you would like more information about adoption, visit <http://adoptionphotolistingohio.org> or call your county public children services agency. A directory of county agencies is available at http://jfs.ohio.gov/county/County_Directory.pdf.

Preventing Discrimination in Adoptive Placements

The Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994 and the Interethnic Adoption Provisions of 1996 prohibit federally funded child placing agencies from denying or delaying placements on the basis of race, color or national origin. They also prohibit agencies from denying or delaying the opportunity for any person to become an adoptive or foster parent on the basis of race, color or national origin.

Failure to comply with MEPA can result in a loss of substantial federal funding for Ohio. To ensure statewide compliance with MEPA, adoption services staff members work with the ODJFS Office of Legal Services, the ODJFS Bureau of Civil Rights and the federal Office for Civil Rights when developing policies and training programs and providing guidance to foster care and adoption agencies.

Putative Father Registry

The Putative Father Registry is a computerized database, maintained by ODJFS, which allows anyone who thinks he may have fathered a child to be notified if that child is made available for adoption. If the putative father does not register either before the child's birth or within 15 days after the child's birth, the child could be legally adopted without the putative father's knowledge or consent. If a child is placed for adoption and a putative father is listed in the registry, the father will be notified and can seek legal counsel regarding his rights.

Supporting Families through Adoption Subsidies

Several types of financial subsidies are available to help families meet the special needs of their adopted children:

- **Adoption Assistance Program** –The Adoption Assistance Program allows states to provide monthly subsidies to eligible families that adopt children with special needs or circumstances. This subsidy is paid for with a combination of federal, state and, in some instances, local funds. Children receiving this benefit may be entitled to additional assistance, including Medicaid coverage.
- **State Adoption Subsidy Program** –The State Adoption Subsidy Program is a financial assistance program funded entirely by the state of Ohio. It provides monthly subsidies to families that adopt children with special needs who are ineligible for the Adoption Assistance Program. Children who qualify also may be eligible for Medicaid coverage.

- **Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy Program** –The Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy Program offers eligible families financial assistance to help pay for the treatment of physical, developmental, mental or emotional conditions for children they adopt. Usually, this includes mental health, respite care and counseling services. Ohio has been nationally recognized for this innovative program.
- **State Adoption Assistance Loan Fund Program** –The State Adoption Assistance Loan Fund Program provides loans to prospective adoptive parents who live in Ohio. The loan money covers adoption fees, court costs, attorney fees and other expenses directly related to the legal adoption of a child. A prospective adoptive parent may receive up to \$3,000 from the loan program if the child being adopted lives in Ohio and up to \$2,000 if the child is from outside Ohio. For additional information on the State Adoption Assistance Loan Fund, contact your local public children services agency, any private adoption agency or any Fifth Third Bank. Visit <http://www.53.com> or call 1-866-53LOANS to contact a Fifth Third Bank or to find your nearest branch.
- **Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance Program** –The Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance Program is an agreement between member states that ensures continued medical assistance and subsidies for adopted children with special needs who move across state lines. Nearly all states, including Ohio, participate in this program.