

**TUSCARAWAS COUNTY JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES  
CHILDREN SERVICES POLICY**

**FOSTER/ADOPTIVE HOME RECRUITMENT PLAN**

Recruitment of prospective foster/adoptive families is an ongoing process at our agency. Our goal is to recruit a sufficient number of adoptive homes so there are no waiting children and a sufficient number of foster homes to care for the specific population of children served by our agency.

**1. DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERISTICS OF TUSCARAWAS COUNTY WAITING CHILDREN**

Waiting Tuscarawas County children could be children of all ages who are biracial, Hispanic, African-American, and Caucasian. They may be part of a sibling group and may have Attention Deficit Disorder, Adjustment Disorder, Attachment Disorder, developmental delays, or may have a mental or physical handicap such as mild mental retardation, a genetic disorder, mental illness, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, deafness, or seizure disorders. Many children have been sexually abused and some have suffered serious physical abuse. Some children have experienced problems because of their parents' substance abuse. Other children are teens with adjustment and behavioral problems who are in need to learn independent living skills.

**TCJFS Characteristics of Children Waiting to be Adopted as of March 31, 2013**

AGE	SEX	RACE	ETHNICITY	SPECIAL NEEDS	# of CHILDREN
0-2	3 M	2 Biracial 1 White	3 N-H	They all have mild/moderate health issues or developmental delays.	3
2-5	1 M, 4 F	5 White	5 N-H	3 are all part of a sibling group of 3. 1 female w/moderate developmental delays is part of a sibling group of 2. Another female has mild developmental issues.	5
6-9	4 M, 3 F	7 White	7 N-H	1 male w/moderate emotional needs is part of a sibling group of 2. 1 female and 2 males with moderate emotional needs are a sibling group of 3. 2 females w/moderate emotional needs. The other male has moderate emotional needs.	7
10-13	4 F	4 White	1 Hispanic 3 N-H	3 females w/moderate emotional needs are part of a sibling group of 5. 1 female has moderate emotional needs.	4
14-17	3 M, 3 F	2 Bi-racial 4 White	6 N-H	2 females w/moderate emotional needs are part of a sibling group of 5. 1 female has moderate emotional needs. 3 males each have moderate emotional needs.	6
<b>TOTALS</b>					<b>25</b>

**TCJFS Children Awaiting Adoptive Placement as of March 31, 2013**

	Children Awaiting Adoption for 1 to 12 Months	Children Awaiting Adoption for More Than 12 Months
White	19	2
African American	4	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0
Native American	0	0
Unknown	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>

**SFY 2008**

RACE	NUMBER	PERCENT	AVG. TIME FROM PC TO PLACEMENT IN MONTHS
White	6	55%	7.5 mos.
African American	5	45%	11.5 mos.
Asian/Pacific	0		
American Indian	0		
Unknown	0		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>10.36 mos.</b>

**SFY 2009**

RACE	NUMBER	PERCENT	AVG. TIME FROM PC TO PLACEMENT IN MONTHS
White	17	100%	8.2 mos.
African American	0		
Asian/Pacific	0		
American Indian	0		
Unknown	0		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8.2 mos.</b>

**SFY 2010**

RACE	NUMBER	PERCENT	AVG. TIME FROM PC TO PLACEMENT IN MONTHS
White	14	93%	7.9 mos.
African American	1	7%	5 mos.
Asian/Pacific	0		
American Indian	0		
Unknown	0		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7.7 mos.</b>

**SFY 2011**

<b>RACE</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>	<b>AVG. TIME FROM PC TO PLACEMENT IN MONTHS</b>
White	24	96%	7.3 mos.
African American	1	4%	42 mos. (Autism)
Asian/Pacific	0		
American Indian	0		
Unknown	0		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8.7 mos.</b>

**SFY 2012**

<b>RACE</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>	<b>AVG. TIME FROM PC TO PLACEMENT IN MONTHS</b>
White	19	86%	8 months
African American	3	14%	4 months
Asian/Pacific			
American Indian			
Unknown			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7.5 months</b>

Current adoptive applicants approved by TCJFS who are waiting to adopt are 100% Caucasian and 100% Non-Hispanic, which is not identical to the current characteristics of TCJFS' children in agency custody who are available for adoption (92% Caucasian, 12% Bi-racial, 96% Non-Hispanic, 4% Hispanic). When TCJFS approved adoptive families waiting to adopt are compared to the current characteristics of children in the state of Ohio who are available for adoption, families of all other races and Hispanic families are under-represented.

Several siblings who are waiting have already been matched with a waiting family, but adoptive placement has not occurred. For children not yet matched, TCJFS is doing child-specific recruit efforts.

Currently, TCJFS has a need for families willing to foster/adopt sibling groups and children with moderate to severe emotional needs. TCJFS will diligently recruit families that reflect the racial and ethnic diversity represented in Tuscarawas County willing to meet these needs. TCJFS jointly licenses all families for foster care and adoption, and almost 80 percent of agency adoptions are foster parent adoptions.

**2. SPECIFIC STRATEGIES TO REACH ALL PARTS OF THE COMMUNITY**

Our best recruitment method is 'word of mouth' from our past and current foster/adoptive families. Radio and TV announcements, newspaper articles, information booths at our regional mall and other local shopping areas, public speaking at community groups, and participating in public events are used as staff time permits as part of the ongoing recruitment process throughout the year.

TCJFS also collaborates with private foster care/adoption agencies recruiting treatment foster homes in Tuscarawas County. In October 2011, TCJFS added Foster Care/Adoption Information to the agency's Website: [www.tcjfs.org](http://www.tcjfs.org). Many inquiries are now received through the agency's Website.

Staff has created recruitment brochures. Staff, other community professionals, and volunteers serve as committee members on a Foster Care/Advocates Committee. Our agency also sponsors an annual foster parent appreciation banquet. Informational meetings are regularly held to recruit adoptive/foster parents that reflect the diversities of the children needing placement.

**3. DIVERSE METHODS OF DISSEMINATING BOTH GENERAL, TARGETED, AND CHILD-SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

General information regarding available children and their characteristics is disseminated during the recruitment efforts listed in No. 2. Since all children have cultural issues, those issues will be shared with prospective families. Child-specific information (for adoptive purposes) is disseminated by sharing personal profile flyers and DVDs with other public and private adoption agencies. Children are also listed on the Ohio Adoption Photo Listing Website on the Internet. Referrals have also been made to the NOAS Wendy's Wonderful Kids adoption recruitment project and The Village Network Wendy's Wonderful Kids adoption recruitment project.

**4. PROCEDURES FOR ASSURING THAT ALL PROSPECTIVE PARENTS WILL RECEIVE INFORMATION REGARDING ADOPTION PROCEDURES WITHIN SEVEN DAYS OF INQUIRY**

Within seven (7) days from an adoption inquiry, a copy of our Adoption Services Policy and an information packet will be mailed to the prospective adoptive parents if the inquirer has not chosen to obtain that information via our agency's Website.

**5. STRATEGIES FOR ASSURING THAT ALL PROSPECTIVE PARENTS HAVE ACCESS TO THE HOME STUDY PROCESS**

Our office is centrally located in the county at 389 16<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, New Philadelphia, Ohio. Our office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Staff is always accessible after hours, as well as during regular work hours, to facilitate the home study process. We frequently arrange appointments around the work schedules of foster/adoptive applicants. Staff will make arrangements to accommodate any applicant that has a transportation problem.

**6. STRATEGIES FOR TRAINING STAFF TO WORK WITH DIVERSE CULTURAL, RACIAL, ETHNIC, AND ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES**

All foster care and adoption staff have and will continue to be required to attend cultural competence trainings offered by our regional training center to increase their competence in working with diverse, cultural, racial, ethnic, and economic communities. All foster care and adoption staff are required to complete all training requirements to be an Adoption Assessor.

**7. STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH LINGUISTIC BARRIERS**

The agency has a contract with Trillium Family Solutions to interpret for the hearing impaired. The agency also has a contract with Language Line Services which offers translators for numerous languages over the telephone. The agency also contracts with local language translators. Other resources in our community are Kent State Tuscarawas and Hispanic Ministries. Our current hiring practices also include interviewing applicants who have bi-lingual skills.

**8. PROCEDURES FOR THE PROVISION OF ADOPTION HOME STUDY SERVICES AND PRE-SERVICE TRAINING TO FAMILIES IN OTHER COUNTIES**

Families in other counties are permitted to attend our pre-service training, and we accept families' attendance at other county pre-service training. Our agency will complete home studies on prospective families who live in adjacent counties. We will also accept home studies done on these families by other county assessors.

**9. NON-DISCRIMINATION FEE STRUCTURES**

No fees are charged for services.

**10. PROCEDURES FOR A TIMELY SEARCH FOR A PROSPECTIVE PARENT FOR A WAITING CHILD**

Our agency first searches for a child's relative as a prospective placement providing the relative meets all relevant state child protection standards. The foster parent is given priority consideration if placement with a relative is not determined to be in the child's best interest or if no relative is available. If a child must be placed in foster care, our agency attempts to place a child in a foster home who can meet the best interest and special needs of that particular child. The placement of a child into a foster home will not be delayed by a search for a same race or ethnic placement. When it appears that receiving permanent custody of a child is inevitable, our agency attempts to identify a foster-to-adopt family who can meet the best interest and special needs of a child. Many times the family identified is the same family who has been fostering the child. Such efforts significantly reduce the number of waiting children. When we receive permanent custody of a child, the placement of the child into a permanent home is not delayed by the search for a same race or ethnic placement. The placement will not be delayed to look for an adoptive family in a specific geographical area. A child will only be placed into an adoptive home which meets a child's best interest and special needs. A search for a family will be considered complete when we believe this has occurred. The decision about whether or not a specific interested, waiting family can parent a specific waiting child will not be delayed or denied on the basis of race, color, national origin, handicap, or geographic location of the potential adoptive parent, or the child involved.

To identify an appropriate home in the pool of adoptive parents, we contact other public and private agencies, list the child on the Ohio Adoption Photo Listing Website, and attempt to search the State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) when there are no families to be presented at any matching conference scheduled for a child.

**11. ADOPTION SUBSIDIES**

Our agency participates in processing applications for federal Title IV-E Adoption Assistance, the non-recurring adoption expenses program, the in-state adoption subsidy program, and Post-Adoption Special Services Subsidy.

**12. PROCEDURES FOR A TIMELY SEARCH OF PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE FAMILIES**

Recruitment will be diverse, and ongoing recruitment activities will take place throughout the calendar year using strategies specified in No. 2. Procedures for a timely search of prospective adoptive families have been outlined as part of No. 10.

**13. PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING ALL APPROVED ADOPTIVE FAMILIES FROM OTHER COUNTIES AND STAFF**

Placements will not be denied or delayed due to the geographic location of the parties and families from outside our jurisdiction will not be discriminated against. We will review all solicited as well as unsolicited home studies from other agencies for a possible match with children in our agency's custody. All home studies will be reviewed by the adoption worker and adoption supervisor. Our agency has a policy that we will not certify/approve any agency employee to become a foster or adoptive home. Our policy prohibits any children in our agency custody to be placed for foster care or adoption with any agency employee. Any exception to this policy requires written consent of the director.

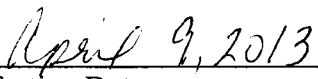
**14. PRIORITY IS GIVEN TO A CHILD'S TRIBE FOR PLACEMENT OF AN AMERICAN INDIAN CHILD OVER PLACEMENT WITH NON-TRIBAL PLACEMENT**

Our agency's adoption policy will not conflict with the Indian Child Welfare Act which gives greater control to indigenous tribes over the disposition of tribal children.

**15. ASSURANCES**

All recruitment activities and materials shall be in compliance with MEPA and Title VI, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C.A. 1901, et seq., as amended, and the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.

  
Michelle Tope, Director

  
Effective Date