

Department of Children
and Families



2025-2029

Foster and Adoptive Parent
Diligent Recruitment Plan

June 30, 2024

Table of Contents

Overview	3
Recruitment	7
Strategies to Reach all Parts of the Community	8
Strategies to Ensure Access to Approval / Licensing Agencies.....	9
Strategies for Training Staff to Work with Diverse Communities	9
Strategies for Dealing with Linguistic Barriers.....	10
Non-discriminatory Fee Structures.....	10
Procedures for Timely Search for Prospective Parents	12
Adult Adoption Search - Connecticut Search Law	13
Moving Forward.....	13

Overview

The Department of Children and Families (DCF, Department) emerging vision and strategy is to partner with communities to empower families to raise resilient children who thrive. Strategic goals include:

- Keep children and youth safe, with a focus on the most vulnerable population
- Engage the workforce through an organizational culture of mutual support
- Connect systems and processes to achieve timely permanency
- Contribute to child and family wellbeing by enhancing assessments and interventions
- Eliminate racial and ethnic disparate outcomes within the Department

The Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan embraces the vision and strategies of the Department and focuses on partnering with communities and families to recruit and retain a diverse population of foster and adoptive parents that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children entering and in DCF care. Foster care and adoption is a critical function of the Department, with a primary focus on ensuring children entering care are safe while in care, their well-being needs are met, and that foster and adoptive parents are engaged in timely permanency of their foster or pre-adoptive children. In order to accomplish this, DCF must recruit, train, license, and support family resources to meet the regional and statewide demand of placement requests.

Planned activities targeted at improving performance toward CFSP goal and objectives for well-being are included in *CFSP Chapter 2: Well-Being, beginning on p. 39.*

To identify the children in need of foster care, a point in time report was pulled from the Children in Placement (CIP) dashboard.

1. Number and percent of children in placement by region
2. Number and percent of children in placement by placement type (Congregate Care, Foster Care, Independent Living, Kinship and Special Study)
3. Number and percent of children in placement by age group (<6, 7-12, 13-17, >=18)
4. Number and percent of children in placement by race / ethnicity
5. Number and percent of placements with siblings

CHILDREN IN DCF PLACEMENT ON JAN 1 EACH YEAR FROM 1/1/2019 - 1/1/2024 BY DCF REGION

DCF Region	Date In Care					
	1/1/2019	1/1/2020	1/1/2021	1/1/2022	1/1/2023	1/1/2024
#CIP						
Region 1	425	428	389	287	265	308
Region 2	595	579	563	426	395	447
Region 3	790	710	685	588	551	523
Region 4	742	705	611	501	470	520
Region 5	832	779	740	616	532	461
Region 6	522	495	458	382	377	381
Unknown	41	36	31	30	28	8

%CIP

Region 1	10.8%	11.5%	11.2%	10.1%	10.1%	11.6%
Region 2	15.1%	15.5%	16.2%	15.1%	15.1%	16.9%
Region 3	20.0%	19.0%	19.7%	20.8%	21.0%	19.8%
Region 4	18.8%	18.9%	17.6%	17.7%	18.0%	19.6%
Region 5	21.1%	20.9%	21.3%	21.8%	20.3%	17.4%
Region 6	13.2%	13.3%	13.2%	13.5%	14.4%	14.4%
Unknown	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	1.1%	1.1%	0.3%
Total #CIP	3947	3732	3477	2830	2618	2648
Total %CIP	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

According to the CIP dashboard, there were 2,648 children placed in out of home care as of January 1, 2024. The majority of children placed in out of care are located in regions 3, 4, and 5 (56.8%). Regions 3 and 5 cover the eastern and western areas of the State and a wide geographical area.

**CHILDREN IN DCF PLACEMENT ON JAN 1 EACH YEAR FROM 1/1/2019 - 1/1/2024
BY PLACEMENT TYPE**

Placement Type	Date In Care					
	1/1/2019	1/1/2020	1/1/2021	1/1/2022	1/1/2023	1/1/2024
#CIP						
Foster Care	1920	1780	1726	1402	1280	1246
Kinship Care	1642	1627	1465	1195	1143	1224
Shelter	43	38	38	25	34	33
Group Home	95	74	71	54	44	28
Residential	109	91	68	60	47	47
Hospital	29	32	18	19	21	21
Independent Living	15	13	4	7	3	3
Trial Home Visit	28	24	43	19	19	9
Unknown	66	53	44	49	27	37
%CIP						
Foster Care	48.6%	47.7%	49.6%	49.5%	48.9%	47.1%
Kinship Care	41.6%	43.6%	42.1%	42.2%	43.7%	46.2%
Shelter	1.1%	1.0%	1.1%	0.9%	1.3%	1.2%
Group Home	2.4%	2.0%	2.0%	1.9%	1.7%	1.1%
Residential	2.8%	2.4%	2.0%	2.1%	1.8%	1.8%
Hospital	0.7%	0.9%	0.5%	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%
Independent Living	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Trial Home Visit	0.7%	0.6%	1.2%	0.7%	0.7%	0.3%
Unknown	1.7%	1.4%	1.3%	1.7%	1.0%	1.4%
Total #CIP	3947	3732	3477	2830	2618	2648
Total %CIP	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The Department continues to prioritize kinship placements. Despite the increase in kinship placements over time, there is still a need to ensure a pool of resources for children placed in non-relative foster homes.

**CHILDREN IN DCF PLACEMENT ON JAN 1 EACH YEAR FROM 1/1/2019 - 1/1/2024
BY AGE ON JAN 1ST**

Age on 1/1	Date In Care					
	1/1/2019	1/1/2020	1/1/2021	1/1/2022	1/1/2023	1/1/2024
#CIP						
Ages 0 - 2	1053	975	972	781	714	690
Ages 3 - 5	676	644	614	491	449	428
Ages 6 - 12	1134	1111	1017	784	706	741
Ages 13 - 17	1048	965	835	745	732	780
Ages 18 - 22	31	31	34	25	13	9
Ages >=23	5	6	5	4	4	
%CIP						
Ages 0 - 2	26.7%	26.1%	28.0%	27.6%	27.3%	26.1%
Ages 3 - 5	17.1%	17.3%	17.7%	17.3%	17.2%	16.2%
Ages 6 - 12	28.7%	29.8%	29.2%	27.7%	27.0%	28.0%
Ages 13 - 17	26.6%	25.9%	24.0%	26.3%	28.0%	29.5%
Ages 18 - 22	0.8%	0.8%	1.0%	0.9%	0.5%	0.3%
Ages >=23	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%
Total #CIP	3947	3732	3477	2830	2618	2648
Total %CIP	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The largest number of children in placement are aged 6 years old and under. This represents 42.3% of the total children in placement in the state, followed by youth 13 to 17 years (29.5%). There may be fewer adolescents in placement than children 6 and under, but experience has shown that the adolescent population is the most challenging to place due to several factors, including mental and behavioral health, involvement in the criminal justice system, and lack of interest by families to accept older youth.

**CHILDREN IN DCF PLACEMENT ON JAN 1 EACH YEAR FROM 1/1/2019 - 1/1/2024
BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

Race/Ethnicity	Date In Care					
	1/1/2019	1/1/2020	1/1/2021	1/1/2022	1/1/2023	1/1/2024
#CIP						
Hispanic	1249	1221	1141	986	911	892
Black/AA	916	921	825	631	586	651
Other	404	354	338	299	273	278
AIAN	5	3	3	3	4	5
Asian	9	9	11	3	4	3

Mult-Race	332	313	305	276	240	229
NHPI	2	1	1			
Other	56	28	18	17	25	41
White	1378	1236	1173	914	848	827
%CIP						
Hispanic	31.6%	32.7%	32.8%	34.8%	34.8%	33.7%
Black/AA	23.2%	24.7%	23.7%	22.3%	22.4%	24.6%
Other	10.2%	9.5%	9.7%	10.6%	10.4%	10.5%
AIAN	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Asian	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
Mult-Race	8.4%	8.4%	8.8%	9.8%	9.2%	8.6%
NHPI	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	1.4%	0.8%	0.5%	0.6%	1.0%	1.5%
White	34.9%	33.1%	33.7%	32.3%	32.4%	31.2%
Total #CIP	3947	3732	3477	2830	2618	2648
Total %CIP	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

A statewide look of the race/ethnicity of the children in placement shows that White and Hispanic children make up the largest population of children in placement in the state, with Black/African American children representing 24.6%. Each region must do a deeper review of the data, as geography, economic, and other factors may influence the data in each region. The Department continues to focus its efforts on recruitment that reflects the diverse population and placement needs of each region.

**CHILDREN IN DCF PLACEMENT ON JAN 1 EACH YEAR FROM 1/1/2019 - 1/1/2024
BY SIBLING PLACEMENT STATUS**

Sibling Placement	Date In Care					
	1/1/2019	1/1/2020	1/1/2021	1/1/2022	1/1/2023	1/1/2024
#CIP						
All Together	919	957	858	661	651	691
Some Together	351	299	245	184	193	164
Alone	481	457	462	352	290	302
%CIP						
All Together	52.5%	55.9%	54.8%	55.2%	57.4%	59.7%
Some Together	20.0%	17.5%	15.7%	15.4%	17.0%	14.2%
Alone	27.5%	26.7%	29.5%	29.4%	25.6%	26.1%
Total #CIP	1751	1713	1565	1197	1134	1157
Total %CIP	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**The totals here represent children in placement on 1/1/ each year that had at least one other sibling in placement at the same time.*

The data indicates that out of 1805 siblings in placement as of January 1st, 2024, 26.1% were placed alone. Despite 59.7% sibling placed all together, there continues to be a need to recruit foster families that can take sibling groups.

For additional information on assessment of these systemic factors, please see *FINAL REPORT: State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Annual Progress and Services Report 2020 – 2024, p. 154-173.*

Recruitment

The Department's recruitment of foster and adoptive families consists of a statewide plan and 6 targeted recruitment plans for each region. The regional foster care staff recently received training on recruitment and retention of foster/adoptive families, in addition to one on one consultation specific to the recruitment needs of each region, by national foster care expert. The 6 regions are currently updating their targeted recruitment plans to reflect the specific needs of the local and regional areas.

The DCF statewide recruiter continues to coordinate/collaborate with the regional DCF and private child-placing recruitment representatives to review the recruitment plans, share activities, assess efforts, and collaborate on local or statewide initiatives.

Recruitment activities that DCF will continue to conduct:

1. Contracting with a professional advertising/marketing expert/agency to use data to drive recruiting benchmarks, work on targeted recruitment/media campaigns, work with the regions on recruiting for teens, seeking permanency for teens, analyzing data on demographics in the regions, and identifying strategies to bring in diverse pool of families that reflects needs in the regions.
2. General Recruitment
 - a. Web based and social media resources www.CTFosterAdopt.com, Google keyword search, and social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
 - b. Conduct open houses on weekends/evenings, at family convenience, throughout the State
 - c. Promote and distribute a signature theme song that identifies with foster care and adoption recruitment
 - d. Utilize multiple radio and TV resources to promote the need and community outreach for foster and adoptive families (e.g. iHeart media and radio, WIHS, WTIC, WATR, Spanish speaking radio)
 - e. Utilize movie theater screen, billboards, and other mass media advertising
 - f. Public service announcements and press releases
 - g. Foster/adoptive parent success stories or articles in local paper and online news sources
 - h. Community information sessions at local community meetings
 - i. Fairs and other statewide and local events
3. Targeted Recruitment
 - a. Outreach and engagement with professional organizations such as Connecticut Nursing Association, hospitals, etc.
 - b. Host Heart Gallery displays at various locations in the State

- c. Faith based recruitment efforts and engagement
- d. Partnership with other state agencies, schools, police, and other groups
- e. LGBTQ recruitment and engagement (Chamber of Commerce, Gay Pride Day events, recruitment information and/or pamphlets for LGBTQ Community)
- f. Foster care month appreciation and awareness month, including a statewide press conference, events, and 6 regional appreciation dinners/activities
- g. Positive outcome articles published in local and statewide media resources to highlight and promote foster care and adoption and dispel myths and misconceptions with foster care and adoption

The 6 regions are developing targeted recruitment plans, based on the individual needs of each local area office and regions, to be used as a blue print for local targeted recruitment, to be reviewed, shared, and adjusted quarterly by the foster care recruitment staff and leadership. The plans focus on:

- i. Kinship development and recruitment
 - ii. Adolescents, children under 6 and infants, medically complex, sibling groups, LGBTQ, and families of wide range of race/ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
 - iii. Retention and post-license training efforts, with a customer service mindset
 - iv. Adoptive resources, specifically families that can take children under 6 years
4. Child-Specific Recruitment: The Department continues with child-specific recruitment strategies. In addition to developing the skills and capacity of foster care staff, DCF has also partnered and contracted with community resources to identify families for children and youth needing to achieve permanency. These include:
- a. Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) and their recruiters
 - b. Permanency Planning Services Program (PPSP) that contracts with 17 private providers in the State responsible for offering an array of permanency services, including recruitment, assessment, preplacement services, etc.
 - c. Therapeutic Foster Care providers that conduct child-specific recruitment and case mining activities in their assigned regional catchment area

Additional information on foster and adoptive care services can be found in [CFSP Chapter 3: Services beginning on page 64](#)

Strategies to Reach all Parts of the Community

The Connecticut Alliance of Foster and Adoptive Families (CAFAP) and DCF partner to recruit and support foster and adoptive families. CAFAP operates the statewide foster care inquiry phone number, 888-KID-HERO, in addition to tracking the inquiries and source of inquiry/interest.

Strategies to reach all parts of the community include:

- Use of foster parents as recruiters, having them discuss the need at support groups, in their community, at their church, schools, and other locations that they attend. Foster parent word of mouth is a highly effective resource for recruitment. The Department offers a finder's fee incentive to licensed families called the Parent Encouragement Program (PEP). A licensed family will receive \$500 per family that they recruit and becomes licensed by the Department.

- Use of child placement and demographic data to identify areas to focus on recruitment. Examples include identifying the communities from which children are being removed.
- Foster care community collaboratives, which are community groups composed of foster parents, families, community providers, and youth, focused on recruitment, retention, and outreach. They hold open houses, recruitment events, and other activities in the community in order to raise awareness and perform outreach.
- Website and social media efforts by the Department and partner agencies (CTfosteradopt Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram).
- Statewide and local radio and television advertising and programming.
- Regional and local newspapers and online news advertising.
- Hosting 3 or more open houses or foster care presentations in each region at least once a month. Open houses are located in different locations in the community throughout the State.
- Presentations at faith-based organizations and brochure distribution to parishioners have been a great resource for awareness and outreach.
- Community Foster Parent Month and Adoption Awareness Month kick-off events in May and November.

Strategies to Ensure Access to Approval / Licensing Agencies

The Department's licensing requirements are governed by Foster and Prospective Adoptive Families regulations Sections 17a-145-130 through 17a-145-160, which require foster and adoptive families to be licensed by the Department.

Families recruited go through a very thorough mutual assessment process. Steps to becoming licensed for foster care or adoption are as follows:

- Initial inquiry
- Open House attendance
- Background checks
- Personal interview and site visit to the family home
- Tips-Mapp training (trauma informed pre-service training)
- Mutual assessment and home study process
- Licensing of the foster/adoptive family

Strategies for Training Staff to Work with Diverse Communities

Through the Academy for Workforce Development and additional technical assistance from consultants and other initiatives, the Department continues to prepare staff to work with diverse communities. Strategies include:

- Pre-service Training for Staff

- In-Service Training for Staff
- Professional Staff Development and Staff Training
- Webinars
- Technical assistance, consultation, and training on racial justice
- Training on understanding data on disproportionality and disparity
- Partnership and training by Robin P. McHaelen, Executive Director of True Colors, Inc. – LGBTQ
- Racial justice, fatherhood engagement, and CAFAF statewide conferences
- Collaboration with the Academy for Workforce to development to develop trainings specific to foster care staff

Examples of relevant training offered by the Academy for Workforce Development include:

- Cultural Humility and Implicit Bias in Our Practice
- From Cultural Competence To Cultural Humility: Identifying Key Skills In Addressing Racial Bias In Child Welfare Practice
- When Pink and Blue are Not Enough: Working with Transgender Youth and Families
- Working with Transgender and Gender-Diverse Youth and their Families

Planned activities targeted at improving performance toward CFSP goal and objectives for racial justice are included in *CFSP Chapter 2: Racial Justice, beginning on p. 47.*

Planned activities targeted at improving performance toward CFSP goal and objectives for DCF's workforce are included in *CFSP Chapter 2: Workforce, beginning on p. 51.*

Strategies for Dealing with Linguistic Barriers

Strategies to address linguistic barriers include:

- Office of Multicultural Affairs and Immigration Practice offers support and guidance to staff dealing with linguistic barriers and other challenges
- The DCF website lists Authorized Interpreters and Translators services, including sign language
- Regions offer Spanish speaking open houses and pre-service trainings
- Regions survey foster families and regional staff of the top 5 languages spoken in each region to inform needs assessments and planning
- Foster care forms have been translated into Spanish
- Staff are to use Connecticut demographic data to determine the most prevalent languages spoken by families in the State
- Regions have requested priority/preference to fill foster care staff vacant positions with bilingual staff to meet the needs of the areas

Non-discriminatory Fee Structures

DCF operates with a reimbursement structure that implements standard per diem rates for expenses incurred on behalf of a child, except those children who qualify for the exceptional foster care rate. The

basis for the per diem rates is the age of the child and expenditures on children by families in the middle-income bracket.

The expenditures on behalf of a child included in the basic foster care reimbursement rate are listed in the table below.

Category	Expenditure
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shelter • house furnishings and equipment • utilities
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dining out at restaurants • school meals • food and non-alcoholic beverages purchased at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ grocery stores ○ convenience stores ○ Specialty stores
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the net outlay for the purchase of new and used vehicles • vehicle finance charges • gasoline and motor oil; • maintenance and repairs; • insurance; • reasonable travel to remain in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement (school of origin); • public transportation; and • routine transportation to before and after school activities
Clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children’s apparel items such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ shirts, pants, dresses and suits; ○ footwear; and ○ winter apparel, including overcoat and boots; • clothing services such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ dry cleaning ○ alteration and repair; and ○ storage
Education, Child Care, Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elementary and high school tuition, books and supplies; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ daycare tuition and supplies; ○ babysitting; ○ personal care items; ○ entertainment; and ○ reading material.
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spending allowance;

Category	Expenditure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • music, dance and other lessons, such as karate; • driver education classes; • school uniforms; • summer camp; • vacations; • vocational and trade school supplies; and • recreational equipment.

Procedures for Timely Search for Prospective Parents

The Permanency Resource Exchange is charged with maintaining a registry of all children legally available for adoption in Connecticut per Connecticut General Statute 17a-43. Additional work done by Permanency Resource Exchange staff include:

- Maintaining a registry of families approved for adoption.
- Referring appropriate home studies (matching a family’s request for a child to the children available) to area offices that are requesting adoptive and “legal risk” families for children who are free for adoption or who need a permanent home while the legal work is completed.
- Conducting specialized recruitment efforts on behalf of Connecticut’s children who are waiting to be adopted that include the annual Heart Gallery, listings on the national exchange, participation in ADOPT US KIDS, and aggressive outreach efforts to other states participating in inter-jurisdictional adoption.
- Providing technical assistance to area offices and participating in permanency planning teams.
- Responding on behalf of the DCF Commissioner to correspondence from agencies and individuals interested in Connecticut’s adoption laws and the Department’s adoption program.
- Maintaining all closed adoption records.
- Processing subsidized adoption finalizations for the DCF Commissioner’s signature.
- Providing information to adult adoptees - see “Adult Adoption Search”.
- Maintaining the “Adoption Reunion Registry” and the “Medical Information Registry” for adopted children.
- Answering questions from the general public regarding Connecticut’s adoption laws and processes.
- Managing the College Assistance Program.
- Managing Permanency Placement Services Program contracts.

Planned activities targeted at improving performance toward CFSP goal and objectives for permanency are included in *CFSP Chapter 2: Permanency, beginning on p. 35.*

Adult Adoption Search - Connecticut Search Law

Connecticut Search Law provides birth parents, birth relatives, adult adoptees, adults formerly in foster care, and adoptive parents with access to certain information contained in adoption files. According to Connecticut Search Law (Connecticut General Statutes, §§ 45a-743 through 45a-757) adult adoptees, adults formerly in foster care for whom the State of Connecticut had been appointed the statutory parent, and adoptive parents have access to certain information contained in adoption files, which is most often referred to as non-identifying and medical information.

Birth parents have the ability to update information regarding their medical history that is contained in their child's adoption file. Additionally, adult adoptees, adults formerly in foster care, birth parents, and birth relatives have the ability to conduct a search for their birth family members who are 18 and older through the agency that completed their adoption or the termination of their parental rights.

Moving Forward

The Department's administration will work to finalize the organizational assessment. Staff and providers connected to foster care efforts will support the development of specific recruitment goals with detailed benchmarks and performance targets. DCF plans on leveraging subject matter experts throughout the fiscal year to develop detailed plans that will be implemented over the life of the CFSP 2025-2029. Consultation and technical assistance will focus on recruiting and retaining a diverse pool of families that reflect the diversity of children and youth in the Department's care.