

 <p>Michigan Department of Human Services</p> <p>CSA</p> <p>Children's Services Administration Communication Issuance</p>	Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Informational Memorandum (IM) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Program Instruction (PI) <input type="checkbox"/> Policy Guide (PG)	
	Issuance Date: 01/22/13	Obsolete Date: 9/30/13
	Response Due: None	
	Log No.: 13-009	
	Contact: Nicole Leitch - LeitchN@michigan.gov or 517-241-6679	
	Originating Office: Bureau of Child Welfare	
	Subject/Title: Monthly Foster Home Licensing and Adoption Performance	
	Distribution: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DHS Child Welfare Staff	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Agency Child Welfare Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BCAL
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSA Central Office Managers/Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> CWTI
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Native American Tribes	<input type="checkbox"/> SACWIS	
<input type="checkbox"/> Data Management		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DHS County Directors		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:		

The Modified Settlement Agreement (MSA) requires that 1,450 new, non-relative foster homes be licensed by June 30, 2013 and 2,200 adoptions be finalized by September 30, 2013. To assist in tracking progress towards meeting these goals, attached are county scorecards detailing monthly licensing and adoption performance benchmarks. These scorecards will be disseminated to both DHS and Placement Agency Foster Care (PAFC) directors by the middle of each month.

Foster Home Licensing

Based on the monthly licensing data provided by the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing (BCAL), 72 new, non-relative foster homes were licensed in December 2012, 180 homes short of the monthly goals. To achieve the MSA mandate of 1,450 homes by June 30, 2013, DHS county directors, PAFCs, tribes, etc. are asked to increase all licensing efforts to meet their monthly non-relative licensing goals.

The final county goals are reflected in the attached score cards. **To ensure that the MSA non-relative foster home licensing goal is achieved, each county must meet their monthly non-relative foster home licensing goals.**

Congratulations to Alger/Marquette/Schoolcraft, Allegan, Baraga/Houghton/Keweenaw, Barry, Bay, Branch, Cass, Charlevoix/Emmet, Delta, Eaton, Livingston, Mason/Oceana, Midland, Ottawa counties, which are achieving or exceeding their monthly non-relative foster home goals. Please continue the great efforts in recruiting and licensing foster and adoptive homes.

Adoptions

In FY2013, 77% of the number of children who are legally free for adoption and with the goal of adoption as of September 30, 2012 must have adoptions finalized by September 30, 2013. Based on an initial data pull, an estimated 2,200 adoptions must be completed by September 30, 2013 to meet the 77% goal. This interim target will be used to ensure that the excellent work continues until a formal target is determined in January 2013 in order to take into account data lags. The final target will be provided after the January 2013 data pull.

Based upon adoption data provided by the Department of Human Services Data Management Unit, the State of Michigan is currently 114 adoptions below monthly goals. To focus efforts on achieving the MSA mandate of finalizing 2,200 adoptions by September 30, 2013, DHS county directors and contracted adoption agency directors should meet to identify adoption barriers and develop strategies to overcome the barriers on all assigned adoption cases and to ensure timely entry of adoption finalization data on SWSS.

Relative Licensing Goals

The placement of children with appropriate relatives as out of home caregivers continues to be a priority of the Department. However, all unlicensed relative placements must have at least one of the following, depending on the length of time since a child's placement:

1. A completed and approved home study within 30 days of placement for initial placements; and prior to placement for replacements. Completion and approval dates both must be entered into SWSS.
2. If a relative is pursuing licensure but is not yet enrolled, the case file should contain a record of the referral date to the licensing worker and an up-to-date status of the licensing process. This information can be input into the licensing database and the referral date can be entered in SWSS.
3. If pursuing a waiver, a completed DHS-875 signed by the DHS county director. Completion and approval dates both must be entered into SWSS.

Data reporting on the number of placements with unlicensed relatives continues to be a challenge because many SWSS case records do not reflect an approved home study or waiver, and relatives are not enrolled to be licensed with BCAL. Local office management must use the regularly updated "relative placement" reports on the Child Welfare Field Operations SharePoint site to identify and monitor those cases that require additional data entry or action.

Recruitment - Best Practices

Constant efforts – Ongoing recruitment efforts spread over a period of at least twelve months are the most effective ways to recruit foster families. Ongoing recruitment efforts create a climate of awareness over time. Families take time to think about becoming a foster family before contacting an agency. Constant exposure to the idea of becoming a foster parent over time will stimulate the thought process. Ongoing recruitment efforts nurture the thought process into the action step – completing an inquiry call to an agency.

Referrals from current foster/adoptive/kinship families – Data and research show that the most effective recruitment resource are current foster/adoptive/kinship families. For current foster/adoptive/kinship families to help recruit, they must be happy with the services and actions of their agency and workers (CPS, Foster Care, and Licensing workers). It is crucial that foster/adoptive/kinship parents feel respected, have phone calls returned, and are provided with adequate child/case information, etc. Ask your foster parents what it would take for them to refer one quality family that is interested in getting licensed.

Recruitment Coalition/Recruitment Task Force – Recruitment is most effective when it actively involves members of the community in which the agency/agencies operate. Several areas have coalitions, which include public and private agencies. A recruitment coalition/task force should include public and private agencies, faith communities, federally recognized tribes, key foster/adoptive parents, and other service organizations interested in recruiting foster/adoptive parents. When representatives of several agencies and organizations work together, recruitment efforts can be maximized and duplicating efforts can be avoided.

Based on data collected in Michigan, the following activities are effective in recruiting families:

- Recruiting at local fairs, expos, and community events.
- Recruiting at faith communities.
- Recruiting at local places where families frequent, such as parks, zoos, movie theaters, sporting events.
- Expanding retention activities to include recruitment – asking foster/adoptive/kinship parents to bring interested families to retention activities.
- Radio ads.

Based on data collected in Michigan, current and prospective foster and adoptive parents indicate they heard about becoming a foster/adoptive parent:

- Through a family member/friend.
- Through a website/internet.
- Through a faith community.

- Through a recruitment event.
- Through a media source – TV, radio, newspaper, billboard.

Research indicates that prospective families need to hear about the need for foster and adoptive parents several times, through several different venues, before taking action to inquire about becoming a foster or adoptive parent or taking further action, such as attending an orientation or submitting an application. That is why constant recruitment efforts throughout the year are crucial.

AFPRR Allocations

The purpose of AFPRR funds is to provide financial resources to counties to support and retain current foster and adoptive parents and to recruit new foster and adoptive parents. These funds need to be **used throughout the year** to meet the needs of current foster and adoptive parents, and to recruit foster/adoptive homes to meet the needs of children coming into care. Recruitment activities should focus on recruiting homes for teens, sibling groups, children with disabilities, and specific children waiting for adoption who do not have an identified family as well as to meet additional targeted needs as identified by the county.

Examples of how AFPRR funds can be used to support counties in meeting their non-relative licensing goals:

- A recruitment contract with a current or closed foster/adoptive/kinship parent to plan and implement recruitment activities; respond to inquiries and follow-up with prospective foster/adoptive/kinship families; train PRIDE; plan and implement retention activities; organize and implement a support group and/or foster/adoptive/kinship parent mentoring program.
- Advertise in local newspapers, on billboards, with local radio and TV stations, movie theaters, etc. The Office of Communications is in the process of completing standardized brochures, posters, PSAs, advertisements, etc. for counties to use. Counties will be notified as soon as these items are available.
- For new and prospective foster and kinship parents, DHS has contracted with Judson Center for the Foster Care Navigator program. Foster Care Navigators provide support and assistance for foster and kinship parents from the initial inquiry until the home is licensed. Counties can access the Foster Care Navigator program by calling 1-888-335-3882.
- Engaging faith communities to help support our children in care as well as our foster, adoptive, and kinship parents by encouraging congregations to collaborate with agencies in projects or programs to benefit foster children, foster/adoptive/kinship families, or aging-out youth. As faith communities and faith community coalitions spread throughout Michigan, they continue to provide goods and services to support and wrap around our families caring for vulnerable children in the foster care system. If you are interested in collaborating with faith communities in your area, please contact Trina Richardson at RichardsonT12@michigan.gov for further information.

A centrally administered contingency fund was created for counties to access once a county has used a majority or 80% of their allocated AFPRR funds. If a county needs additional AFPRR funds for recruitment activities to meet their non-relative licensing goal, please contact Nicole Leitch at LeitchN@michigan.gov. **All requests to use the contingency funds must come from a DHS County Office and be submitted no later than June 1st, 2013.**

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