

**2020-2024
Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan
Update
June 30, 2020**

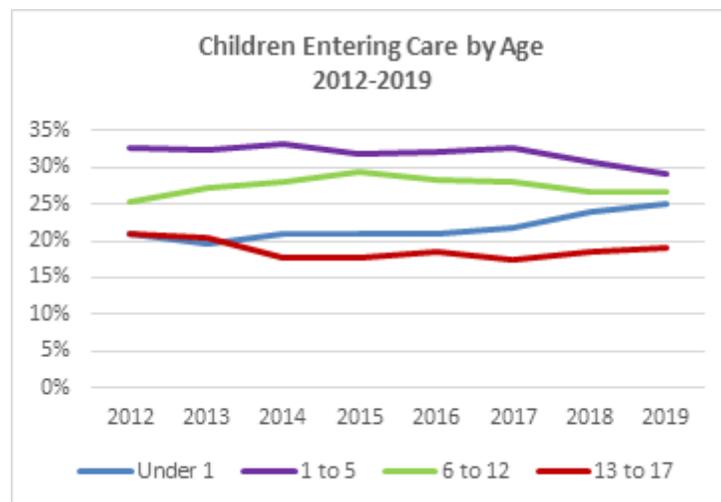
Foster and Adoption Recruitment and Retention Initiatives

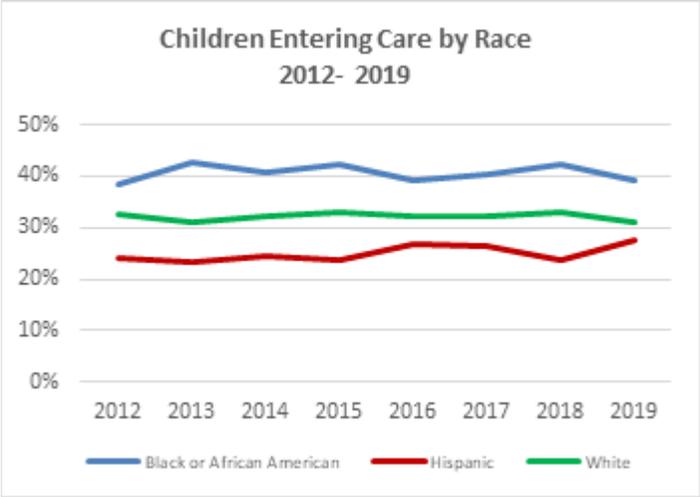
The New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) remains committed to recruiting and retaining potential resource and adoptive families who reflect the cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity of children in out-of-home care. As a result, DCF has developed a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan that supports strategies that are child focused, data driven, customer service centered, collaborative, inclusive of the voice of families and youth, and sustainable. This comprehensive plan also continues to support DCF's substantial conformity with the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) systemic factor: *Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention*.

Characteristics of Children Needing Foster and Adoptive Homes

DCF has experienced great success with increasing and maintaining a robust pool of families who reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of children in care, and strives to remain adaptive and responsive to the needs of families and children. This, along with the continued work of recruiting, licensing, and supporting families who can meet the unique needs of children in out-of-home care, will ensure DCF's success moving forward.

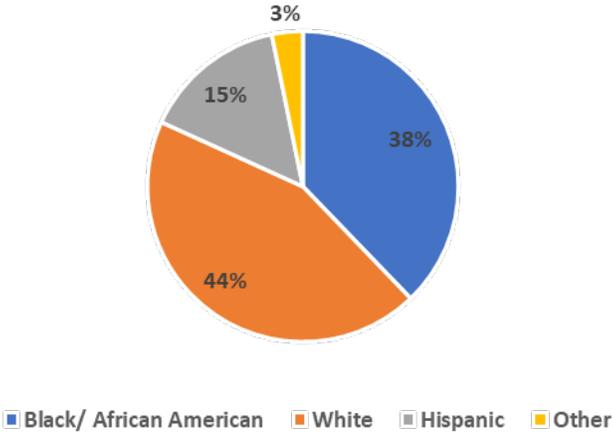
In order to ascertain how DCF should initially focus its recruitment efforts, Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) data is analyzed to identify the age and race of children entering care in NJ. In 2019, 2,625 children entered care. The following graphs depict the age and race breakdown of those children over a prior 8-year period:





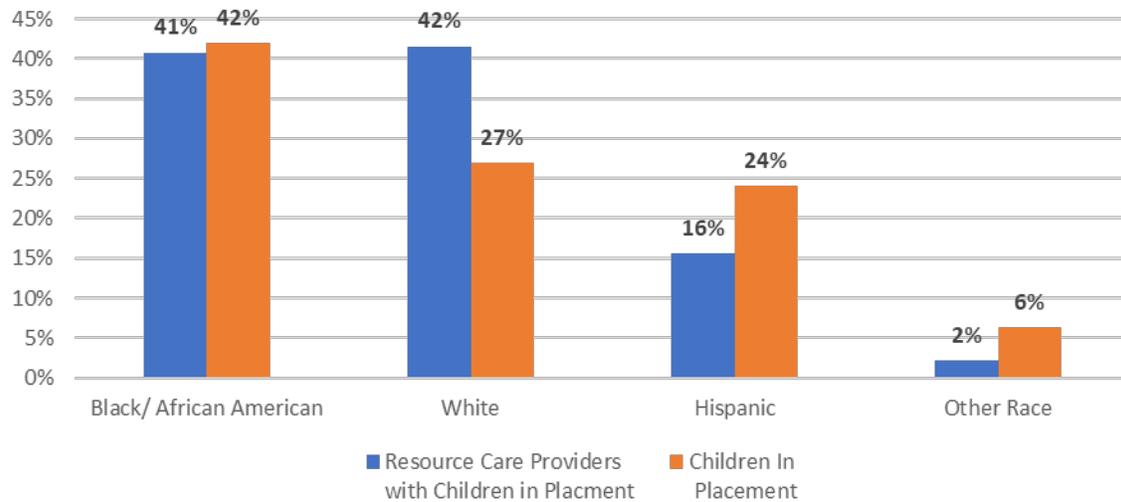
Further review of current point in time data of New Jersey’s pool of resource homes reveals DCF’s performance regarding efforts to maintain a robust cadre of resource homes that reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of children entering care.

All Resource Care Providers by Race/Ethnicity
n= 3,970

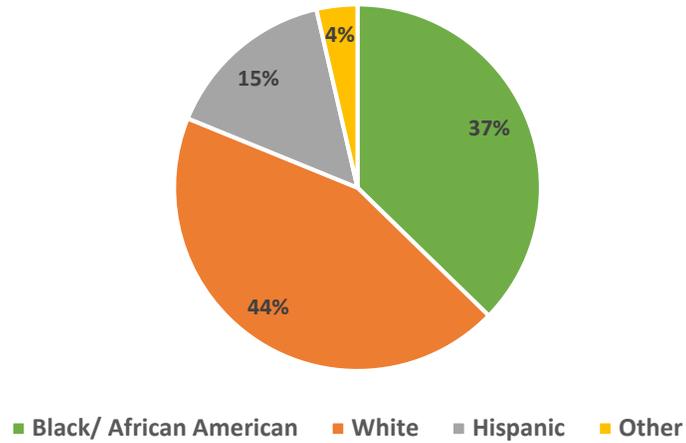


All children in Placement and their Resource Care Providers by Race/Ethnicity		
Race	Resource Care Providers with Children in Placment	Children In Placement
Black/ African American	41%	42%
White	42%	27%
Hispanic	16%	24%
Other Race	2%	6%
n	1,820	4208

All children in Placement and Resource Care Providers by
Race/Ethnicity

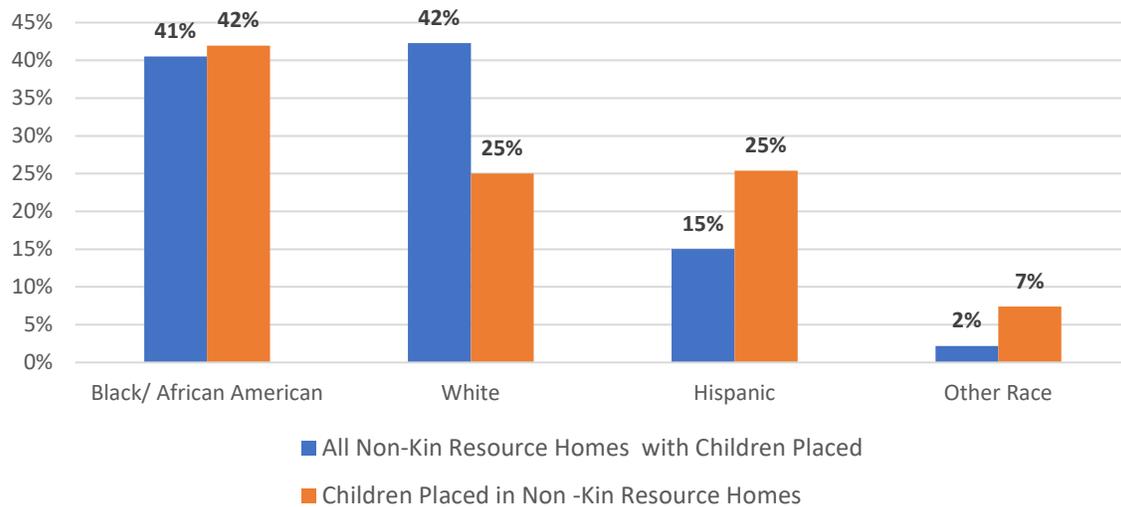


All Non - Kin Resource Homes by Race/Ethnicity
n= 2,804



Non-Kin Resource Homes by Race & Children Placed in Non-Kin Resource Homes by Race/Ethnicity		
Race	All Non-Kin Resource Homes with Children Placed	Children Placed in Non-Kin Resource Homes
Black/ African American	41%	42%
White	42%	25%
Hispanic	15%	25%
Other Race	2%	7%
n	1,145	2,122

Non-Kin Resource Homes by Race & Children Placed in Non-Kin Resource Homes by Race/Ethnicity



DCF acknowledges that there are some data quality issues in particular when capturing and reporting on Hispanic ethnicity. DCF will be exploring these issues to help inform corrective practices around race/ethnicity reporting.

DCF manages the continued need to diligently recruit foster homes for all children served but places a focus on specific populations. These focus populations are identified through data review and include sibling groups, adolescents, and children with special medical, developmental, and behavioral health needs. Updated details regarding these populations and recruitment targets are described below.

Sibling Groups

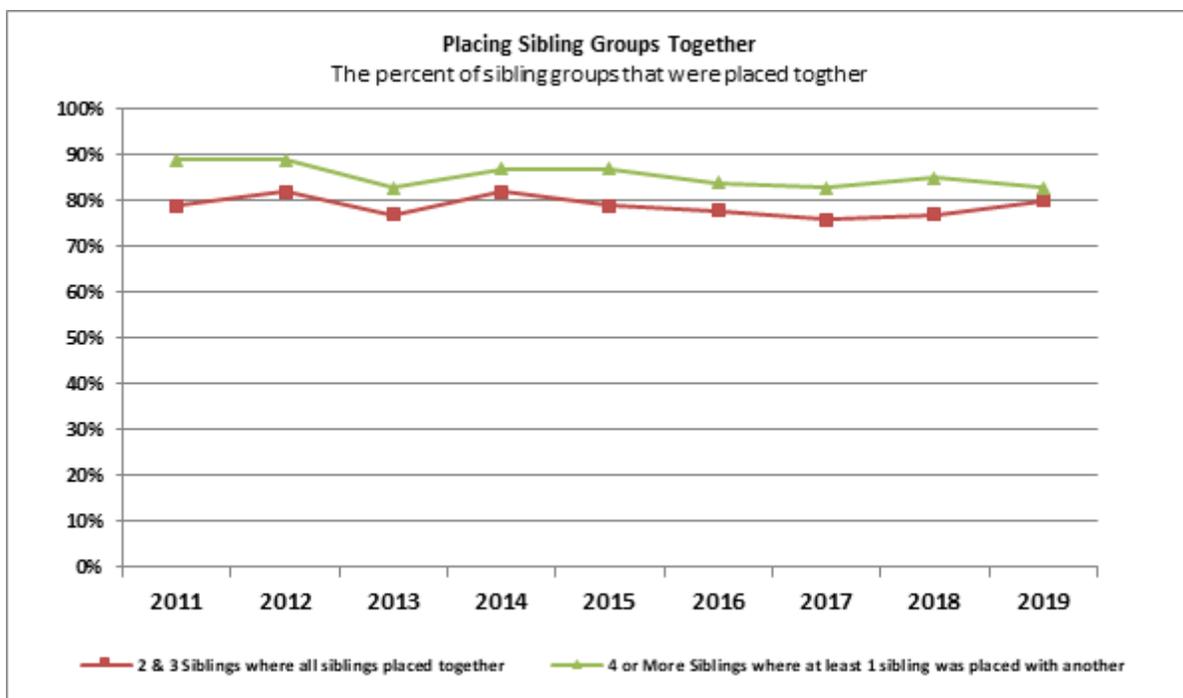
DCF recognizes the importance of sibling connections for all children and in particular those children experiencing an out-of-home placement. DCF works to ensure that sibling groups entering placement remain intact.

To address the need to recruit and retain resource homes willing to accommodate large sibling groups entering placement, DCF continues implementation of the Siblings in Best Settings (SIBS) Resource Family Homes initiative which seeks to recruit homes willing to take large capacity sibling groups of four or more. Strategies include enhanced board rates and retainer fees to maintain homes vacant for the placement of large sibling groups. In 2019, DCF recruited a total of 42 new SIBS homes supplementing an existing pool of 36 for a total capacity of 78. Of these 78 homes, 16 can accommodate five or more children and 62 homes can accommodate up to four children. Compared to 2018, DCF has established a 5% increase in SIBS homes.

DCF continues to use data driven tools to identify sibling placement needs on a local level to ensure targeted recruitment in those areas. DCF promulgates monthly reports that forecast the need for targeted recruitment of resource homes willing to provide care to sibling groups. This data assesses the need at a local level to support children remaining in their community with their siblings when kin placement is not an immediate option.

DCF strives to place at least 80% of sibling groups together. In 2019, 80% of sibling groups of two or three were placed together and 83% of children from a sibling group of four or more were placed with at least one other sibling. While DCF met its goal for both sibling categories, DCF will continue efforts to ensure that siblings remain together when family separation is needed.

In total, there continues to be approximately 300 families including the 78 SIBS homes, identified to provide a home for a sibling group of 3 or more. DCF will continue to strive to increase the number of sibling homes by 20% by 2022. This will be in line with DCF's strategic priority to increase the number of children placed with kin, as well as ensure that new unrelated homes are recruited to maintain capacity.



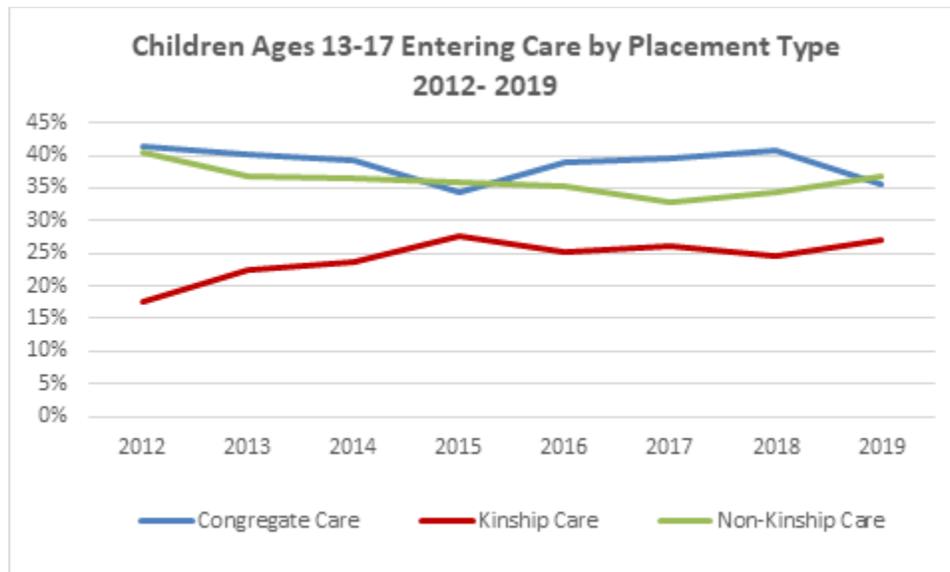
Adolescents

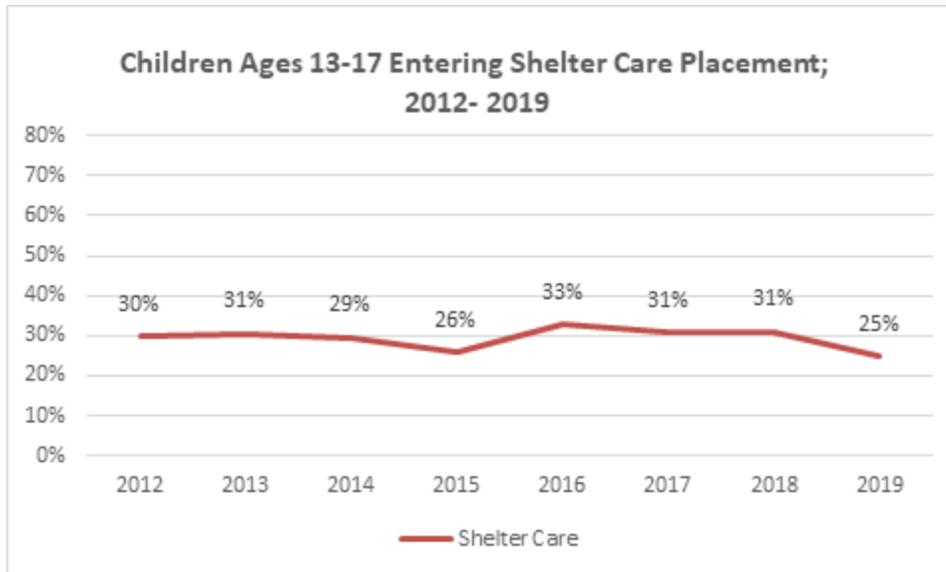
DCF identified an ongoing need to recruit and retain a robust pool of resource homes for the adolescent population. In 2019, 2,625 total children entered out of home placement of which 501 were ages 13 to 17.

In 2019, 27% or 136 of the 501 children placed between the ages of 13-17 were initially placed in kinship care, an increase compared to 25% in 2018. DCF also saw that more children in this age population were placed in an unrelated family setting, or non-kinship care, with 37% or 172 children compared to 34% in 2018.

As placement in family type settings increase, DCF saw a decrease in placement for this population in congregate care settings from 41% in 2018 to 36% in 2019. Further analysis of congregate care placements also shows a decrease in emergent shelter placements from 31% in 2018 to 25% or 124 children out of 501 in 2019.

Children Entering OOH Placement in CY 2019 by Age	
0-5	1,426
6 to 12	698
13-17	501
Total Children	2,625





DCF’s recruitment goal is to increase adolescents in kin care by 30% by 2022¹. DCF also had a recruitment goal to increase the capacity of non-kin families who are able to serve adolescents by 15% during the same time period in an effort to prevent unnecessary shelter placements. Further analysis of the 124 children placed in shelter revealed that 19 were discharged into an unrelated resource home within 30 days, 11 were discharged into a relative resource home within 30 days and four (4) were discharged home. The remainder required a higher level of care, suggesting that the majority of adolescents who enter shelter placements require a setting other than a family type setting and were not unnecessarily placed into a shelter.

In addition, DCF has 351 unrelated resource homes that can accommodate children between the ages of 13-17. Currently, these homes have an open bed capacity of 279 for this age range. This capacity currently exceeds the number of total children placed in a shelter setting. DCF will continue to review relevant data to determine trends and variations across the state to assess the cause for the continued challenges with locating foster home placements for adolescents.

Children with Special Needs

DCF identifies special needs youth entering through a five-level acuity system that supports required care and services in placement. Acuity Level 1 indicates a well child, while progressively Acuity Level 4 identifies a child with an active acute and / or chronic illness that requires physician monitoring. This includes children with developmental delays, all children on psychotropic medications, and all infants as they require frequent monitoring of growth and development. Level 5 indicates a child with acute or chronic illness that is not stable and can lead to a life-threatening condition. As of March 31, 2020, there are 76 children statewide designated as having an Acuity Level 5. While this is a relatively small percent (2%) of the population of children in out of home placement,

¹ More detail on this initiative can be found in the New Jersey CFSR PIP.

these children display the most need and require the most supportive services, thus the resource homes who care for these children will also require intense supportive services.

# of children <18 in OOH as of March 31, 2020	4,141	
# of Children with Acuity Level 5	76	2%

The objective of DCF is to consider the health care needs of all children by matching them with the willingness and capabilities of each family, including relatives. DCF is committed to reassessing the acuity level system as well as developing and maintaining a pool of at least 30 highly skilled resource parents to meet the needs of youth with acute or chronic illnesses that are not stable by 2022. To do this, new families who have a willingness/ability to consider a child who has special health care needs and are willing to be trained in the specific health care needs must be identified and/or recruited.

Specific Recruitment Strategies to Reach Out to All Parts of the Community

DCF continues to emphasize and support recruitment activities in the communities where children reside by using data driven methods to create targeted recruitment plans that assist in determining geographic and subpopulation areas of need. This is accomplished by analyzing the following:

- Characteristics of children who enter placement including race, gender, and age
- Origins of children in placement by municipality
- Locations of current resource families by municipality
- Market Segmentation density maps

Market Segmentation is a tool designed for targeted recruitment that seeks to identify the lifestyle characteristics of households that are perceived to have common needs and interests of our existing licensed resource homes. Upon review of the lifestyle characteristics, strategies are developed to target and successfully recruit these households. Lifestyle characteristics are used to target advertising opportunities within local geographic areas and considered when updating recruitment materials and publications to ensure they are customer centered and reflective of the characteristics identified in our market segmentation tool.

Market Segmentation tools include census data that is updated every 10 years, so information does not frequently change. When the licensed resource family address information is uploaded into the system, an analysis is completed and data is provided on characteristics and strategies to best perform market segments, which informs recruitment strategies. Additionally, county-based density maps are provided to recruiters to compare origins of children in placement by municipality and locations of current resource families by municipality to assess needs geographically. Characteristics of children who enter placement including race, gender, and age are

then used to drive the strategies in the geographical areas that are deemed areas of need.

DCF continues to partner with the Human Rights Campaign All Children-All Families (HRC AC-AF), a nationwide recruitment initiative launched by the Human Rights Campaign's Family Project. This initiative was created to increase the number of qualified foster and adoptive families for children in care by educating the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning/Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI) community about opportunities to be foster/adoptive parents for not only LGBTQI youth, a subpopulation of our adolescent need, but all adolescents in care. This is accomplished by educating and engaging the LGBTQI community about opportunities for foster and adoptive parenting and by improving the cultural competence amongst staff that recruit, develop, train and support resource families.

DCF became the first state child welfare agency to earn the Seal of Recognition by the HRC AC-AF Initiative. DCF maintains the HRC AC-AF Seal of Recognition for reaching all benchmarks of LGBTQI cultural competency and being fully welcoming of LGBTQI youth and families. DCF continues its efforts with LGBTQI families by committing to a seal reassessment that is conducted every three years. In 2020, DCF hopes to achieve the second of three levels of recognition. Resource, adoption, and adolescent staff are participating in web-based training to achieve this end.

Utilizing these recruitment strategies, from January to December of 2019, DCF held over 500 recruitment and retention events. From those events over 947 families submitted applications to become resource parents and a total of 506 became licensed resource homes in 2019.

In review of the characteristics of the 506 newly licensed homes in 2019, it is clear that DCF continues to target and increase homes to match the needs of the children requiring placement.

2019 Newly Licensed Non-Kin Resource Homes by Population Served n= 613 (duplicated)	
Adolescents 13-17	86
Sibling Groups of at least 2 or more	309
Children with at least one special need	144
LGBTQ	74
Total Resource Homes ⁽¹⁾	613

(1) this number is duplicated as some resources can accept more than group

Over the past year, DCF continued to focus on the retention and support of the current pool of resource homes and the children placed with them. Over 150 retention events were held in 14 areas across the state spanning 20 of the 21 counties. One example of a retention event occurred in Bergen County at Humdingers in Paramus, NJ for sibling groups who are in separate resource homes. This was a wonderful opportunity for siblings to come together with their individual resource families and enjoy a fun night of bowling, batting cages, and dinner while supporting networking between resource families to continue sibling connections. Another retention event was hosted by Bergen County at Medieval Times specifically for kinship families. The focus of this event was to bring kinship families together to network and build support while also allowing for some fun and downtime in their otherwise busy schedules.

In another retention event, Camden and Burlington counties came together to host a backyard barbecue and pool party. Licensed resource families from both counties were invited and asked to bring along a friend or family member who may be interested in becoming a resource parent. Holiday retention events occurred across several counties allowing families, including siblings, to come together and enjoy activities such as photos and toys with Santa and family crafts. .

To ensure the supportive needs of resource families are met, Somerset County began hosting monthly resource parent support group meetings. In Union county, in conjunction with Embrella, a foster parent advocacy group which provide services, support and training opportunities for foster, adoptive and kinship families, provided trauma training to licensed resource families.

Since the impact of the COVID-19 Coronavirus crisis, DCF continues to explore virtual options for retention and recruitment activities.

Diverse Methods of Distributing General/Child Specific Recruitment Information

There is a great deal of critical information regarding the recruitment of foster and adoptive parenting which requires dissemination to the public. This, in addition to child specific information for waiting children, is delivered utilizing a variety of methods.

DCF uses its public website and social media sites to provide information on general and child specific resource and adoptive family recruitment, along with changes in policy and new initiatives. The website reflects both Spanish and English resources and adoption support services. Additional material is disseminated through localized resource family and adoption recruitment events held across the state.

DCF maintains a contract with Embrella to assist with recruiting through a hotline inquiry process. DCF also maintains on-going partnerships with religious organizations, non-profits, and local schools to host presentations on resource and adoption recruitment.

Additional efforts to recruit foster and adoptive families occur through current resource parents, who volunteer to share their lived experiences with others through videos that

the DCF Office of Communications and Public Affairs create. This allows families to speak about their experiences fostering and adopting through DCF. Resource parents are offered an honorarium, travel, and childcare reimbursement to participate in recruitment events and trainings.

Finally, DCF supports a Youth Ambassador Initiative, which provides an opportunity for former youth in care to support the recruitment of resource and adoptive parents, specifically for the adolescent population.

The Youth Ambassador Program originated as a result of efforts to enhance recruitment and retention of resource parents. Focus interest revolved around the motivations of individuals who want to become resource parents, as well as the perceptions of youth in care. The expectation was that providing youth opportunities to share their stories will break down some of the existing myths and offer resource parents insight into this population, as well as providing youth with an avenue to advocate for themselves. As a result, the speaking program was born.

Speaking Program Goals

Empowering Youth to Educate the Public By:

1. Raising awareness about specific target populations of youth in care (with an emphasis on teens and sibling groups)
2. Partnering with youth to develop public speaking and leadership skills (strategic sharing training)
3. Addressing misconceptions about youth in foster care (speaking at PRIDE trainings, group engagements, recruitment events, or to DCF staff)
4. Advocating on behalf of current and former foster youth (DCF workgroups)

Primarily, Youth Ambassadors are college students or recent graduates who at one point in time received the New Jersey Foster Care Scholarship that is administered through Embrella. Ambassadors are also referred by CP&P staff. Ambassadors are provided opportunities to potentially speak at PRIDE pre-service trainings, group engagements, recruitment events, or directly to DCF staff. Speakers are compensated up to \$100.00 for participating in an event.

Currently there are 21 trained Youth Ambassadors. Since 2018, Youth Ambassadors have participated in over 70 speaking events across the state, including the resource family symposium and statewide normalcy and prudent parenting workgroups. In 2019, the Youth Ambassadors participated in over 45 speaking events spanning 14 different counties. Some examples include speaking at a LGBTQ Presentation sponsored by the Warinanco Sports Center in Union county, speaking at group engagement and pre-service training events in several counties and several DCF leadership events. In addition, these Youth Ambassadors created recruitment videos focusing on the importance of kinship care that are presented to field staff and leadership statewide.

Resource and Adoptive Parent Accessibility to Licensing Process

DCF operates a state administered child welfare system with 46 local offices dispersed throughout 21 counties allowing for accessibility by prospective resource parents, adoptive parents, and all members of the community. The state administered system also maintains statewide policies and procedures to ensure that standards are applied equally². While the recruitment of resource and adoptive families is centralized in its oversight, each local office maintains select staff that are specific to the study, training, and support of foster and adoptive families. DCF has a single licensing process that studies and licenses families for both resource and adoption, ensuring a more comprehensive and timely process for families. This supports timely permanency for youth who are unable to be reunified and can achieve permanency through their unrelated resource or kin caretakers.

Resource/adoptive parent recruitment is localized and community specific to ensure accessibility for all. DCF holds local bi-weekly small group public information sessions for all initial inquiries related to becoming a resource or adoptive parent. All inquiries obtained from community recruitment events are distributed to recruitment specialists who invite prospective resource and adoptive parents to group engagement events held in their community. These events provide an overview of DCF and the foster and adoptive parent home study and licensing processes. Upon completion of a group engagement event, the home study is initiated by a resource support staff servicing the community where the prospective parents reside. Upon licensure, the resource and adoptive family is supported and serviced by the same office in their community.

Resource and adoptive parent training classes are held in all 21 counties to support accessibility, that include Spanish speaking trainers, and translated recruitment and training materials. The classes are held in the evenings and on weekends in consideration of working families; childcare and transportation are compensated. Each county receives further support through localized resource family peer support from Embrella, New Jersey's contracted resource and adoptive family support agency; KinConnect, New Jersey's Kinship Legal Guardianship Resource Clearinghouse; and NJARCH, New Jersey's Adoption Resource Clearinghouse.

Since the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, DCF continues to explore virtual options for Resource and Adoptive training classes.

Training Staff to Work with Diverse Communities

One of the primary core approaches to the DCF Vision is Race Equity. DCF recognizes that racial bias impacts families' circumstances and the ways in which public

² Statewide policy, statutes and licensing standards can be viewed at: https://www.nj.gov/dcf/policy_manuals/Child%20Protection%20&%20Permanency_113B34A2-A559-4F81-8379-E7070B788D27_IV%20-%20Out%20of%20Home%20Placement.shtml and <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/index.html>

systems, such as those operated by the Department, interact with families. In consultation with a national expert, DCF is launching work to attend to race equity in all areas of the Department, with the ultimate goal of promoting equitable treatment for all NJ constituents, and equitable outcomes for DCF services.

One area of focus is to ensure that staffing is culturally competent, and resource parent training is provided in both English and Spanish as needed. Examples of trainings available to staff specific to this need include the following:

Cultural Competency: Introduces staff to the concepts of cultural competence in the workplace and explores the impact of personal views and values regarding sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity in their role as child welfare advocates. Through activities, videos and group discussions, staff explore the roots of their biases and how these dynamics affect their working relationships.

Aligning Our Values: Designed to give staff the opportunity to use self-reflection to consider how their personal values impact their decision-making process with families. Also, staff will be able to consider the interception of their personal values as they align or differ from social work core values, so they can consider more deeply the ethical decision-making process.

DCF also recognizes while these courses remain available to staff, it is necessary to continue to assess this area of staff competence. DCF is committed to developing a comprehensive learning path for resource staff that will enhance their ability to respond to diverse families in a manner that is effective, respectful and values their worth as partners in the work.

Addressing Linguistic Barriers

DCF employs an ethnically diverse staff who are readily available and able to communicate with families in their own language. However, given the great cultural and linguistic diversity of New Jersey residents, the Department is not always able to serve each family with a staff member who speaks the family's native language. To ensure cultural competence and communication, DCF contracts with interpreting and translation services for in-person or telephonic services. The contracted services are sufficient and are continually assessed to ensure that they meet the needs of staff and families.

Non-Discriminatory Fee Structure

DCF has a non-discriminatory fee structure. No fees are incurred by families to become licensed as a foster or adoptive home. DCF assumes the cost for the home study process including fingerprinting, criminal background checks and training. Other requirements of the licensing process are individually assessed and supported accordingly. DCF also allocates special environmental modification funding for kin and fictive kin placements to support licensure.

Timely Search for Adoptive Parents

Children are referred to the NJ Resource Adoption Exchange when a goal of select home adoption has been identified. The child is assigned to an exchange specialist by geographic area. The specialist reviews all documentation and enters pertinent information in a computerized database. This database assists the specialist in the selection process by matching criteria for the child with criteria for prospective adoptive homes. A list is obtained of prospective matches with CP&P resource families being sought first. If a child is legally free and there are no CP&P resource families, then a non-CP&P family will be sought nationwide. The home studies are reviewed, and families are contacted prior to sending the home studies to the child's Local Office adoption team to review. When a family is not easily identified, a child can be registered on the national exchange. The links to those websites are listed below:

<http://www.adoptuskids.org>

<https://www.adoptamericanetwork.org/>

<https://www.afamilyforeverychild.org/>

<https://www.state.nj.us/njfosteradopt/adoption/>

<http://www.adopt.org>

Children are also featured on the DCF social media platforms of Facebook and Instagram.

Once a prospective adoptive family is selected, the adoption team meets with the family in their home for a Supervisory Interview. This meeting serves as DCF's legal obligation to provide the family with full disclosure while discussing subsidy eligibility and the transitional visitation schedule.

In addition, DCF maintains a partnership and membership with the Adoption Exchange Association which provides adoption recruitment, training, and profiling opportunities for legally free youth. DCF has enhanced abilities to recruit for adoptive families for youth with Select Home adoption goals through the membership with the Adoption Exchange Association. This membership offers the opportunity to profile waiting youth to other adoption agencies within the network of membership across the nation. These agencies have access to families with interest in providing permanency for youth with complex medical, social and emotional needs. Membership also affords professional development and networking opportunities for adoption recruitment staff regarding national recruitment trends and strategies.

DCF also maintains a partnership with the National Adoption Center of Delaware (Adoption Center) for recruitment of legally free children. Over the past number of years, DCF has worked to continually assess formal recruitment efforts. In partnership with the Adoption Center, DCF has developed strategies to evolve recruitment efforts into small, child focused, and family engagement events. A strong Child Specific Recruitment team structure has been formed and gathers bi-monthly to assess each event. The team formulates strategies for continued progress for individual

adoption and permanency readiness for youth. This teaming structure is also utilized to develop formal recruitment that is youth sensitive and effective in securing permanent families.

DCF's Office of Adoption Operations also has recently initiated a family "Connect to Adoption" program that identifies and engages licensed resource families with interest in adoption. This program connects resource families directly with their adoption exchange and child specific recruitment team. This has led to better engagement and preparedness of potential adoptive families.

DCF will continue to contract with a private provider for the recruitment of families for legally free children and will continue the partnership with "Wednesday's Child", a weekly televised feature that assists in locating adoptive homes for legally free children. DCF will also identify staff locally to track the timely response of out of state requests. DCF will implement the use of the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) system and will explore creating a border agreement between NJ and NY to expedite the placement process. DCF will also continue to educate staff on timely completion of initial assessments. Lastly, DCF will continue coordinating with statewide recruitment staff to ensure consistent practice and strategic planning of daily recruitment work as well as the implementation of 30 matching events, youth engagement and adoptive family support events annually.

New Jersey recognizes that while the recruitment of resource and adoptive parents is paramount, retention is necessary to maintain a robust pool of resources. As a result, New Jersey developed a statewide retention plan with the intent of improving and strengthening DCF's delivery of services and supports to resource parents as well as to strengthen partnerships with them.³ The plan consists of the core value of understanding that each resource families' strengths and challenges are essential to meeting their needs and those of the children in their care. In addition, acknowledging that relationships with resource families that are mutually beneficial and lasting must be developed through open communication and inclusion in individualized planning for all children in their care. Resource families must be considered as valuable members of the team.

Adoption Call to Action

Aligned in our recruitment and retention work, DCF continues to make progress on the strategies outlined in the DCF Adoption Call to Action Plan. As part of DCF's strategic transformational goals as well as Goal 2 objectives of the NJ CFSP, DCF strives to preserve family connections by increasing the use of kinship care. Progress on this strategy is outlined in Goal 2, objective 5 and also includes the development of KINConnections presentation to provide research informed discussion on the benefits of kin/fictive kin connection and placement. This presentation discussion began in early 2020 with staff at all levels in DCF to promote organizational buy in. Due to COVID-19,

³ <https://www.state.nj.us/njfofosteradopt/RetentionPlan.pdf>

this presentation was disrupted however DCF will begin to reinstate this presentation virtually.

DCF also began to review licensing standards to support policy and practice changes regarding barriers to completing kin home studies. This included the Criminal history and Child Abuse history waiver policy. This policy was revised based on recommendations made to assist in processing kin homes/fictive kin homes timely in order to support family connections and promote permanency. Other policy standards are currently under review.

Included in the Adoption Call to Action plan are strategies to assist in improving permanency for children who have been in placement for 36 months or longer. Progress includes the utilization of family finding tools to enhance case mining for youth who are legally free with an adoption goal and for those youth where routine case mining has not been successful, a larger child specific recruitment team is assigned to conduct an Intensive case mining effort along with an exit meeting with casework staff to review findings and assign next steps. The adoption child specific recruitment team is also identifying youth earlier in their placement process, 18 months or more to focus the recruitment work, family finding and recruitment profiling. During the initial COVID-19 pandemic, this was done remotely but has since moved to both remote and in person case mining teams. Virtual meetings with the case work staff continue to pursue potential connections.

The final strategy in the NJ Adoption Call to Action plan identifies increasing support to Adoptive and Kinship families post permanency. This includes the evaluation of NJ's Pre-Post Adoption Counseling programs (PACS), the development of guides, such as the Parent Education Guide, tools and strategies around clinical support as well as providing learning opportunities around relational trauma that impact adoption stability. Two half day trainings for PACS clinicians around the Parent Education Guide is scheduled for July and August 2020. Additionally, through a SAMSHA grant, DCF held a PACS conference with Dr. Dan Hughes, renowned expert on relational trauma and connections. Through this same grant, PACS will be providing DCF adoption casework staff with a more case management level training with Dr. Hughes on relational trauma in the fall of 2020.

Continuous Quality Improvement

DCF must ensure that the needs of all resource families are met by continuously evaluating performance quality. The following strategies are used towards this end:

- Maintain an active resource retention taskforce that includes licensed resource and adoptive families, youth formerly in care, and DCF field staff
- Disseminate and analyze an annual customer service survey to resource families to provide DCF with continuous feedback to identify trends and challenges

- Continue to create retention-based activities, such as sending resource families Mother's Day and Father's Day cards, to express gratitude for the critical role they play in the lives of children.
- Continue a quarterly newsletter that highlights key topics, events, and available supports for resource and adoptive families
- Continued evaluation of all aspects of resource and adoptive parent work, including, but not limited to, pre-service training curriculum and delivery, home study licensing tool, and licensing regulations
- Continue to provide Mobile Response Stabilization Services to all families, at the time of placement to allow for increased support
- Restructuring of CP&P Local Office resource units to create more specialized roles in an effort to better support both kin and non-kin providers

In summary, DCF recognizes the need to maintain a diligent recruitment and retention plan that is structured, planful, and fluid. DCF is committed to continued efforts to recruit and retain a robust pool of resource families to provide better outcomes for all children.