

**CLINTON COUNTY JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES
CHILD PROTECTION UNIT
ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE PROGRAM
COMPREHENSIVE RECRUITMENT PLAN**

This Policy is in reference to Rule 5101:2-48-05:

- A. Recruitment of prospective foster and adoptive families shall be an on-going program at Clinton County Job and Family Services. Clinton County Job and Family Services are committed to diligently recruiting and developing an adequate pool of potential foster and adoptive parents willing and able to care for children needing homes. The agency will conduct recruitment in a manner to assure foster and adoptive parents are reflective of the ethnic and racial diversity of children in need of placement and shall prevent discrimination in placements of children in foster care and adoption on the basis of geographic location, race, color, religion, ethnicity, and national origin. The agency will conduct recruitment in a manner that seeks to provide all children with the opportunity for placement and all approved families in the community to foster or adopt.

The recruitment process involves sending adoption and foster care information to all members of the community who have expressed an interest in the foster and adoption program. This will include the characteristics and needs of available children, information on the foster and adoption process, MEPA information and the Post Adoption Services available to adoptive families. Clinton County Job and Family Services will sponsor on-going recruitment through newspaper articles, billboards, information to church and civic groups and distribution of literature and newsletters. The agency will actively recruit families who reflect the diverse needs of children needing placement by presenting adoption and foster care information to churches and community groups. Every year, during Foster Care Month and Adoption Month, the agency will distribute materials throughout the community to promote the placement of foster and adoptive children. In addition, the local public library will promote adoption and foster care by allowing the agency to set up an information table and display literature and books during the month of May and November.

- B. Clinton County Job and Family Services currently has seven children in the permanent custody of the agency. The following information describes the characteristics of the three children in the permanent custody of the agency awaiting adoptive placement. There are currently four children in adoptive placement.

<u>Age</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Race/Culture/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Developmental/Emotional/Physical</u>
16 yrs.	Male	Caucasian	Mild emotional issues.
14 yrs.	Female	Caucasian	Mild emotional issues.
10 yrs.	Male	Bi-Racial	Severe physical and emotional issues

- C. Clinton County Job and Family Services serves children from different geographic locations that are from diversified racial identities, color national origins and ethnic backgrounds as well as various religious orientations. The children are between the ages from birth to 18 years of age and up to age 21 if a child has a mental or physical handicap. These children have varying physical, emotional, cognitive behavioral and psychological needs. Children who come into the care of an agency may have suffered physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional maltreatment or neglect. They may exhibit symptoms and behaviors indicative of mental health concerns such as depression, attention hyperactivity disorder, bi-polar disorder, borderline personality, or oppositional defiant disorder. The children often require attention for medical ailments including drug exposure, i.e. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or crack cocaine. Children who come into care are sometimes diagnosed with developmental delays, learning disabilities or forms of mental retardation. Some children require various levels of care from family foster care through intensive treatment care.

Clinton County Job and Family Services has 23 approved Adoptive Applicants which also include foster families with dual approval for foster and adoption. Of these applicants, one is Native American, one is African American, two are Hispanic and the remaining individuals are Caucasian. African American and Hispanic families are under represented in Clinton County as approved Adoptive Applicants. Clinton County Job and Family Services has included in our recruitment plan various initiatives to reach various parts of the community as well as educating the community about the need for foster and adoptive homes for children waiting in our county and the state of Ohio.

- D. Based on the characteristics of available children which includes age, developmental needs, racial identities, sibling relationships and special needs of child, the following are the types of family adoptive and foster homes needed in Clinton County:
- a. Foster and adoptive parents accepting placement of children with different cultural, ethnic and racial backgrounds.
 - b. Foster and adoptive parents open to caring for sibling groups of two or more children.
 - c. Adoptive and foster parents accepting placements of children with developmental delays, emotional problems and serious health problems.
 - d. Adoptive and foster parents willing to accept placement of children ages ten years and older, especially teenagers.
- E. Clinton County is located in a semi-rural area with the county seat being Wilmington which has a population of around 12, 000. Clinton County Job & Family Services is located at 1025 S. South Street, Suite 300, in Wilmington, Ohio. The county is

predominately Caucasian with an African-American population around three percent and a one percent Hispanic population. Clinton County Job and Family Services primarily recruits for foster families that are in Clinton County and surrounding counties in order to support and facilitate our Family to Family Program. The agency's efforts lie within the philosophy of matching children to homes that meet each child's individualized needs while also supporting reunification efforts and permanency needs.

Clinton County Job and Family Services has developed the following strategies to reach all parts of the community:

- a. Newspapers: Feature articles regarding the adoption and foster care programs; highlight Adoption Month and Foster Care Month/Foster Parents of the year. Run articles/announcements about dates and location of Pre-Service training that is offered.
 - b. Agency Web: Clinton County JFS has a website, www.co.clinton.oh.us that has a specific site on featuring information about children available for adoption as well as information on the application process for becoming an adoptive or foster parent.
 - c. Other: Agency brochures that address procedures on becoming foster/adoptive parents and that describe children in need of placement. This information will be distributed through mailings, informational meetings and other public speaking.
- F. Clinton County Children Services has developed diverse methods of disseminating both general, targeted, and child specific information about foster and adoption services and children available for adoption by identifying the following :
- a. Ministerial Association: An organization of local ministers who gather monthly to discuss pertinent community issues affecting their churches and communities. This will include presenting information on the Faith Based Initiative where the Agency will visit various churches to present information on our programs.
 - b. Neighborhood centers: Counseling centers, YMCA, Schools and colleges, clinics, and community parks.
 - c. Community Events: Clinton County Job and Family Services' staff will attend such events to give information regarding waiting children and the foster care and adoption program. Clinton County Job and Family Services has written and implemented procedures which are included with the Adoption Policy.

- d. We use child specific recruitment when all other recruitment methods have been exhausted and no home has been found.
- G. Pre-Service training will be offered three times a year at Clinton County Job and Family Services. All families who inquire about adoption or foster care will be placed on a mailing list and sent a schedule on Pre-Service that is offered throughout the year. The agency also runs articles and announcements in the local paper to inform community members of the adoption and foster care homestudy process.

If the inquirer resides in Ohio, the following information must be sent within 7 days:

1. Copy of the JFS 1675 "Ohio Adoption Guide"
2. Description of Title IV-E Adoption Assistance and State Adoption Subsidy, including Eligibility Requirements and the Application Process.
3. Address of OAPL Web Page
4. How to acquire an Application for Adoption
5. Summary of Agency Adoption Policy
6. Criminal Record Check Requirements
7. Foster Care and Adoption Homestudy Process
8. MEPA Complaint Procedures
9. JFS 1611

If the inquirer resides outside the State of Ohio and has an approved homestudy, the following information must be sent to the inquirer within 7 days:

1. JFS 1675 "Ohio Adoption Guide."

If the inquirer resides outside the State of Ohio and does not have an approved homestudy, the inquirer must first complete a homestudy in their state of residence in order to adopt an Ohio waiting child. The JFS 1675 will be sent to this inquirer as well.

All inquiries concerning adoption and foster care are recorded in SACWIS and on a log sheet by the Foster Care Coordinator and the Adoption Coordinator. The date of the inquiry and the date information was mailed is listed in SACWIS and on the log sheet. **All prospective parents who inquire about adoption or foster parenting are mailed information within seven days of inquiry. This log sheet and SACWIS information is then reviewed by the Adoption and Foster Care Supervisor at monthly case conferences to ensure that information was sent within the required timeframes. A SACWIS Inquiry Specialist will enter all inquiries when first received and follow-up immediately with a letter to the family.**

The agency is centrally located within the community and is easily accessible to families

within the community. Clinton County JFS is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; however, evening and Saturday appointments can be arranged as necessary to accommodate the different schedules of prospective foster and adoptive families. Pre-Service training is also offered during evenings and Saturdays to accommodate families' work schedules.

- H. Clinton County Job and Family Services will develop strategies training staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, ethnic and economic communities. The Adoption Coordinator and Foster Care Coordinator have completed all Tiers of Assessor Training that has included a curriculum on learning various techniques to work with a diverse pool of foster and adoptive applicants. In addition, the staff at the agency attends on-going training through the regional training center that offers specific training in this area. The Adoption and Foster Care Supervisor meets twice a month with the staff in the unit to assess training needs and to see if it includes on-going training in cultural competency.
- I. Clinton County Job and Family Services will contract with translators through the Language Department of the local college (Wilmington College) for assistance in working with parents whose primary language is other than English. If an applicant has a disability such as a speech or hearing impairment, the agency will contract through an interpreter as well as utilizing TTD/TTY services at no cost to the applicant.
- J. Clinton County Job and Family Services offers Pre-Service training that is open to Clinton, Fayette and Highland County foster and adoptive applicants. If an applicant resides outside any other county area they will be permitted to attend Pre-Service training as long as they receive permission from our agency, their placement agency and the Southwest Ohio Regional Training Center.
- K. Clinton County Job and Family Services does NOT charge any fees for adoption and foster care homestudies or for any Pre-Service or on-going training requirements. The agency will pay for BCI/FBI record checks.

The agency will NOT pay for medical exams that are required for licensure or adoptive homestudy approval. If a family is experiencing any financial difficulty, the agency will consider financial assistance in this area on a case by case basis and upon approval by the agency's Director.

- L. Clinton County Job and Family Services will conduct a timely search for prospective parents for any child in the permanent custody of the agency. When a child is available for adoption, the agency will first make a diligent effort to contact and locate any known relatives for the child. If a relative placement is not possible then the agency will make contact with the child's foster parent to inquire of their desire to adopt said child. Foster parents will be notified when the agency is filing for permanent custody and of the date the agency receives permanent custody. They will also be invited and informed about

Pre-Adoptive transfer conference, as well as Matching Meetings that are conducted for the child.

If a child cannot be adopted by the foster parents or relatives, the agency will register the child on the OAPL website within 90 days of permanent custody as well as distributing flyers to all 88 public agencies and private adoption agencies. If there are no identified families to be presented at a matching conference, the agency will conduct a search for prospective families in the statewide automated child welfare system. The agency will also consider registering the child on other adoption exchanges as well as attending Adoption Picnics and fairs.

When a child is placed in the temporary custody of the agency and a relative placement is not available, a staffing is held with the Protective Unit Supervisor, the Foster/Adoption Supervisor, the Foster Care Coordinator and the Protective Caseworker prior to the child coming into care, or immediately after the unit is notified about the legal status of the child. The agency utilizes an agency staffing form to record the child's needs, and other pertinent information such as psychological, medical, educational and any criminal history of the child that is available at the time of the staffing. This information is then compared with all the licensed foster homes that are available through Clinton County Job and Family Services to determine the most appropriate placement for the child. The appropriate foster home is based on the families' experience and ability to accept and care for a child with the characteristics that are presented. If a Clinton County Licensed Foster Home is not available, then the agency will contact other Public County agencies as well as Private Foster Care Agencies in the state to locate a home for a child needing placement. At no time is a decision delayed by the agency seeking to locate a same race or ethnicity of the child and foster family.

M. The Adoption Policy completed through Clinton County Job and Family Services includes a Statement of Assurance as well as procedures on access to approved adoption homestudies and as well as the structured decision making process for selecting adoptive families. The Adoption Policy, Statement of Assurance and Adoption and Foster Care Recruitment Plan is in compliance with the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994, 42 U.S.C.A. and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and does not supersede the provisions of 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.

Submitted by:

Revised: June 10, 2009

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Approved by:

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