

**FY2019 Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families
Resource Family Recruitment Plan Reflection Summary
July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019**



Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families

Division of Resource Families

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About This Reflection Summary

The Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) is committed to maintaining a robust array of family-based placements (kinship, foster and adoptive homes – collectively known as “Resource Families”) for children who are in state care.

The state 2019 Resource Family Recruitment & Retention Plan was developed and reviewed in consultation with the Rhode Island Office of the Child Advocate and many local and national foster care partner organizations.

This document assesses the implementation of this plan including:

- the numbers of homes recruited and retained by category;
- the actual number of homes recruited in each of these categories during the 12-month implementation period; and
- the total number of homes available for child placement in each of the categories at the beginning and end of the 12-month implementation period.

Recruitment Goals and Outcomes

GOAL 1: NON-KINSHIP RESOURCE FAMILY TARGETS

To calculate recruitment targets for non-kinship Resource Families, DCYF collaborated with Recruitment, Development and Support (RDS) consultants at the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF). The Department, with the support of AECF, built a Foster Home Estimator anticipating recruitment needs for FY2019. The team further engaged in conversations providing adjustments that aligned recruitment targets with common challenges when identifying placements in Rhode Island.

Table 1. Goals for Non-Kinship Resource Family Targets for FY2019

Goal 1	License 200 new foster families in FY2019
Goal 1.1	License at least 24 African American families
Goal 1.2	License at least 49 Hispanic/Latino families
Goal 1.3	License 85 families who are able to care for children 13+
Goal 1.4	License 25 families who are able to care for large sibling groups
Goal 1.5	License 20 families who are able to care for children with significant developmental or medical needs
Goal 1.6	License 30 families who have no other children in their homes

New Licensed Resource Families: Over the course of this reporting period, DCYF worked diligently with our Child Placing Agencies (CPAs) to increase targeted recruitment efforts. This fiscal year, DCYF licensed 136 new non-kinship Resource Families.

Minority Families: DCYF’s commitment to diversity drives our goal of having foster families who reside in the communities where our children are removed and match the race and ethnic distribution of the families we serve. When possible, the Department places children with families who reflect the race and ethnicity of the child. During this reporting period, approximately 20 minority (including Black and Hispanic/Latino) Resource Families have completed the application process.

Teens: DCYF continues to work collaboratively with our community including CPAs and congregate care providers on increasing opportunities for the placement of teens in family settings. This reporting period, DCYF hosted a series of information sessions targeting teen recruitment. The Department also held a teen-focused pre-service training, increasing capacity for teens. During this reporting period, approximately 43 Resource Families have been recruited who are open to caring for youth 13 and older.

Sibling Groups: DCYF holds the connection to family as a top priority. Targeted recruitment strategies have been identified to support large family placements with experienced and well-trained Resource Families. The Department continues to work collaboratively with our CPAs on

the recruitment of homes able to provide care for siblings, while supporting placement through critical training and ongoing assessment. During this reporting period, 83 families have been recruited to support sibling groups. Approximately 10 of these Resource Families are open to supporting sibling groups of 4 or more.

Special Medical and Developmental Needs: Historically the Department has found difficulty identifying non-kinship placements that can support children who have significant medical or development challenges. These challenges may include children on the autism spectrum, children who need injectable medication (most commonly insulin), or children who require a ventilator or a feeding tube for survival. This reporting period, DCYF held a series of Feedback Forums with current Resource Families to discuss and brainstorm opportunities to recruit Resource Families for children with special medical and developmental needs. DCYF continues to work with community partners on identifying opportunities to align targeted recruitment efforts by providing tailored training and supports to Resources Families. As a result, 4 Resource Families have been recruited this reporting period.

Sexualized Behavior: In addition, some of the most challenging children to find homes for can be children who present with sexualized behaviors or sexual abuse reactive behaviors. Resource Families are often hesitant to care for these children, either due to feeling unprepared or because they have other children in the home and are concerned for their safety. DCYF has addressed these concerns by providing an increase in trauma informed and focused training to families. Recruitment efforts have also been made to identify families who have no other children in the home. This reporting period approximately 20 Resource Families have been recruited with 0 household members younger than 18.

Table 2. Non-Kinship Recruitment Outcomes for FY2019

# Resource Families who identify as Black	24
# Resource Families who identify as Hispanic/Latino	43
# Resource Families willing to take children 13+	43
# Resource Families capable of taking sibling groups of 4+ children	10
# Resource Families trained to take children with significant developmental or medical needs	4
# Resource Families who have no other children in their home	20

Table 3. The total number of homes available for child(ren) placement in each of the categories at the beginning and end of the twelve-month reporting period

# Total Resource Families available for placement	July 01, 2018	617	June 21, 2019	660
# African American Resource Families	July 01, 2018	83	June 21, 2019	100
# Hispanic/Latino Resource Families (bilingual homes)	July 01, 2018	8	June 21, 2019	20
# Resource Families with children 13+	July 01, 2018	88	June 21, 2019	104
# Resource Families with sibling groups 4+	July 01, 2018	53	June 21, 2019	37
# Resource Families caring for children with significant developmental or medical needs	July 01, 2018	124	June 21, 2019	122
# Resource Families who have no other children in their home	July 01, 2018	<i>Data not available</i>	June 21, 2019	67

GOAL 2: INFRASTRUCTURE

Critical to achieving the goals laid out above is the Department’s infrastructure and capacity to plan, track and assess our recruitment efforts.

Goal 2.1. Implement an application and tracking system for prospective Resource Families

DCYF has increased efforts to obtain a web-based family portal, which will allow for mutual tracking and recruitment efficiency. This system will be the epicenter for educational and training materials, policies changes, and notifications regarding service changes. For prospective Resource Families, the online application and access to an individualized portal will create transparency and streamline the licensing process. For workers and DCYF partners, a customer relationship management (CRM) tool will allow staff to safely track and share information as needed about the progress of prospective Resource Families in the pipeline. Additionally, this system allows us to better monitor retention and attrition.

Goal 2.2. Increase the statewide web access to information around foster care and adoption

Providing up-to-date resources continues to be a high priority of the Department. In April 2019, the Department’s website was redesigned to provide a more user-friendly experience. Included in the design is a Resource Family Portal to include general recruitment information, frequently

asked questions, recruitment events, information sessions, support opportunities, video and community trainings.

GOAL 3: SUPPORT AND RETENTION

The 2019 Family Recruitment and Retention plan identifies improvements to training and supports for families. Including:

Goal 3.1 Develop a mechanism to track retention rates of Resource Families and reasons for attrition

As reflected above, DCYF has increased efforts to obtain a web-based family portal allowing for mutual tracking and recruitment efficiency. This system will be the epicenter for educational and training materials, policies changes, and notifications regarding service changes. Support of the above portal will allow for multiple levels of tracking aiding in Resource Family satisfaction. In addition, DCYF works collaboratively with CPAs assuring that all Resource Families have access to agencies that recruit/train/license and support Resource Families increasing retention and attrition.

Goal 3.2 Increase availability of in-service training, respite and development opportunities for all Resource Families

As stated above, providing up-to-date resources is a high priority of the Department. The Department's website provides a user-friendly experience. The Resource Family Portal allows families to receive up to date materials this includes general recruitment information, updates to frequently asked questions, recruitment events, information sessions, support opportunities, video and community trainings.

In addition, we believe that well-supported Resource Families are the best recruitment tool of new resource parents. Working with our private partner agencies, DCYF continues to identify opportunities for Resource Families to Mentor and become recruitment ambassadors. This year 5 families were trained as TIPS MAPP facilitators increasing mutual support and Resource Family development.

In-service curriculum has been increased to enhance the knowledge of Resource Families building skills and increasing natural supports. DCYF believes creating training opportunities that build upon skills and abilities lead to successfully increasing placement stability for youth. Trainings have been offered to all families in DCYF's foster home array through partnership with our CPA agencies and community resources.

Summary

This reporting period, the Department, in collaboration with our CPAs, have increased the state's capacity by 136 Resource Family homes. There are currently 146 pending/new homes in the pipeline. Permanency tracking data reflects a total of 779 children placed in non-relative foster care homes.

The Department recognizes data reflects that we have not met all goals put forth in the 2019 Recruitment and Retention Plan. Recruitment efforts will continue with a focus on increasing tracking accuracy and data collection. Accuracy of data is reliant on human data entry subject to error. DCYF has adjusted current systems to align with concurrent data analysis.

DCYF, as evidence by targeted recruitment data and outcomes, recognizes the ongoing critical need to identify homes to support teens, sibling groups and children/youth with complex medical and behavior needs. DCYF has made ongoing recruitment and high quality tracking a priority and highlighted item in the FY2020 Recruitment and Retention Plan.

Our FY2020 Recruitment and Retention plan aims to strengthen collaboration efforts with CPAs while increasing resources and capacity for the children and families in DCYF care. Included in this plan is a focus on high quality customer service and data collection through the use of a web-based interactive family portal.

**FY2020 Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families
Resource Family Recruitment Plan Reflection Plan
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About This Recruitment & Retention Plan

The mission of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) is “to partner with families and communities to raise safe and healthy children and youth in a caring environment.” A critical component of our Department’s mission is our commitment to supporting a robust array of family-based placements (kinship, foster and adoptive homes) collectively known as Resource Families for children in our state care. The Department has several important goals pertaining to Resource Families for children and youth in its care.

Our goals are as follows:

- Increase availability of Resource Families for children/youth needing out-of-home care;
- Increase the number of skilled Resource Families to care for teens;
- Increase the number of competent Resource Families for sibling groups, children with emotional and behavioral needs or disabilities, LGBTQ youth, and/or children/youth of color and/or ethnically/linguistically diverse populations, including the number of Spanish speaking families, and medically fragile children;
- Increase the proportion of children and youth in family-based settings with a particular focus on ensuring proportionality across race and ethnicity;
- Increase timely licensure of Resource Families;
- Improve Resource Family retention and satisfaction both pre-and post-placement;
- Enhance matches between children/youth and Resource Families;
- Reduce placement disruptions and increase placement stability by providing supportive services and in-service training for all families;
- Increase permanency for children/youth in DCYF care; and
- Promote safety and well-being, and support permanency.

DCYF is committed to implementing this plan to our fullest ability and striving to achieve the goals set forth for FY2020. The state agency will assess the implementation of this plan and then publish and make publicly available a report setting forth the findings of the assessment, including:

- the numbers of Resource Families recruited and retained by category;
- the actual number of Resource Families recruited in each of these categories during the 12-month implementation period; and
- the total number of Resource Families available for child placement in each of the categories at the beginning and end of the 12-month implementation period.

Recruitment Goals and Outcomes

GOAL 1: NON-KINSHIP RESOURCE FAMILY TARGETS

To calculate recruitment targets for non-kinship Resource Families, DCYF collaborated with Recruitment, Development and Support (RDS) consultants at the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF). The Department updated components of the Foster Home Estimator anticipating recruitment needs for FY2020. The team further engaged in conversations providing adjustments that aligned recruitment targets with ongoing challenges when identifying placements in Rhode Island.

There are currently approximately 1,600 children in family based foster care, and of these, approximately 500 children are in non-kinship placements. As of May 17, 2019, the Department had 846 licensed Resource Families (243 DCYF Resource Family Homes; 199 DCYF relative; and 404 private agency specialized); 93 homes pending licensing renewal; and 819 pending first time licenses (427 relatives; 392 DCYF and CPA homes.) (Data Source: Licensing Checklist)

Targeted proposed goals are as follows:

Table 4. Goals for Non-Kinship Resource Family Targets FY2020

Goal 1	License 200 new foster families in FY2020
Goal 1.1	License 100 families who are able to care for children 13+
Goal 1.2	License 30 families who are able to care for sibling groups
Goal 1.3	License 30 families who are able to care for children with significant developmental or medical needs
Goal 1.4	License 40 families who have no other children in their home
Goal 1.5	License 50 families who are willing to support LGBTQ youth

General Recruitment Strategies: In April 2019, the Department released a Request for Proposals seeking innovative strategies for community outreach and demonstration of strong partnerships with local community agencies. The Department will work closely with community partners to identify best recruitment messaging and practices. This includes a focused outreach to a broad group of community organizations to educate them about the need for Resource Families and the role of foster care and adoption in child welfare. The Department will coordinate and facilitate statewide information sessions for prospective Resource Families; distribute informational materials in various forms such as social media, traditional media, or in-person; attend ongoing

recruitment efforts and events; and facilitate community-wide agency provider fairs for prospective and current Resource Families.

Targeted Recruitment

The Department will engage in general and targeted recruitment planning that facilitates placement of children/youth with Resource Families able to take placement of older youth, sibling groups, children/youth with disabilities, complex medical or behavioral needs and LGBTQ youth.

Teens: DCYF continues to work collaboratively with our community including CPAs and congregate care providers on increasing opportunities for the placement of teens in family settings. Through the use of Family Search and Engagement and Building Bridges Initiatives, the Department aims to increase capacity for youth 13+ while promoting normalcy and well-being.

Sibling Groups: DCYF believes placement of siblings in the same family setting supports the overall well-being of the family system. Targeted recruitment strategies have been identified to support large family placements with experienced and well-trained Resource Families. The Department will collaborate with our CPA agencies on the recruitment of homes able to provide care for siblings while supporting placement through critical training and ongoing assessment.

Special Medical and Developmental Needs: Identifying non-kinship placements that can support children who have significant medical or development challenges have increased. These challenges may include children on the autism spectrum, children who need injectable medication (most commonly insulin), or children who require a ventilator or a feeding tube for survival. DCYF aims to recruit Resource Families through the use of targeted information sessions, feedback forums and community events with a focus on educating the community and stakeholders on opportunities to support children/youth with special medical and developmental needs.

Sexually Reactive Behaviors and Children 6-12 with Behavioral Needs: Some of the most challenging children to find homes for can be children who present with sexual abuse reactive behaviors or children ages 6-12 with challenging behavioral needs and mental health diagnoses. Resource Families are often hesitant to care for these children, either due to feeling unprepared or because they have other children in the home and are concerned for their safety. DCYF has addressed these concerns by providing an increase in trauma informed and focused training to families. In collaboration with our CPAs, the Department will coordinate targeted recruitment efforts to identify families who have no other children in the home or who are comfortable supporting children/youth with complex mental health or behavioral needs.

LGBTQ Youth: Creating an environment of safety and inclusion is a recruitment priority for DCYF. Identifying Resource Families who are able to support LGBTQ youth is critical to the fabric of our mission and vision. Through the use of targeted recruitment efforts the Department will work collaboratively with our CPAs to increase family-based settings for our LGBTQ youth.

GOAL 2: INFRASTRUCTURE

Critical to achieving the goals laid out above is the department’s infrastructure and capacity to plan, track, and assess our recruitment efforts.

The proposed infrastructure and support goals are as follows:

Table 5. Infrastructure Goals for FY2020

Goal 2.1.	Implement a web-based application and tracking system for prospective Resource Families
Goal 2.2.	Implement Active Contract Management for Child Placing Agencies

Implementing a web-based system to track prospective Resource Families as they progress toward licensure will reduce the over use of Microsoft Excel-based systems. These systems are both disconnected to desired outcomes and difficult to maintain. The Department looks forward to increased opportunities that identify innovative strategies providing high quality customer service to both Resource Families and providers.

The FY2020 Recruitment and Retention plan includes the redesign of Foster Care in the state of RI. DCYF envisions a strong pool of Resource Families, collectively capable of and willing to care for children with a wide variety of needs. Stability of placements of children with these families is critical and disruptions of placements with these families will be minimized.

CPAs will recruit new Resource Families with the goal of having sufficient number of Resource Families so that unrelated children will not be placed in the same Resource Family together; provide Resource Families with pre-service and ongoing training; help them to become licensed; place children with Resource Families per the needs of the child/youth and provide the Resource Family with the care coordination and supports necessary to make the placement a success.

Active contract management will be utilized to monitor both Recruitment and placement stability service delivery. DCYF will monitor recruitment strategies that ensure placement opportunities for children and youth described in the above Non-Kinship Resource Family Goals. This includes children/youth who have traditionally been challenging to place teenagers, sibling groups, LGBTQ youth and children with complex behavioral and medical needs.

GOAL 3: SUPPORT AND RETENTION

Critical to achieving the goals laid out above is the department's strategies to increase Resource Family support and retention.

The proposed goals are as follows:

Table 6. Support and Retention Goals for FY2020

Goal 3.1	Maintain a mechanism to track retention rates of Resource Families and reasons for attrition
Goal 3.2	Increase availability of in-service training, respite and development opportunities for all Resource Families

Increasing a caregiver's capacity to manage the needs of children in their care is one way to improve placement stability. New contracting in FY2020 will increase our level of support such that all Resource Families are connected to a support organization, respite, and other wraparound services needed. Ongoing opportunities to receive feedback on services and supports will be assessed through the use of satisfaction surveys, feedback forums and active contract management.

In addition to pre-service training, Resource Families will have access to on-going training and enrichment opportunities both general in nature or specific to a particular placement needs. CPAs will provide on-going training, in coordination with DCYF, that will be available to all Resource Families in Rhode Island. In-service curriculum will continue to be coordinated and facilitated with the goal to enhance the knowledge of Resource Families and build confidence of placement stability. Efforts in collaboration with CPAs will be made to create an online Resource Family Training calendar that includes support groups and all in-service opportunities.

The Department will monitor, through active contract management, trauma-informed supports for Resource Families and children/youth placed in their care. CPAs will offer a coordinated and comprehensive system of services and supports. These supports will include, but are not limited to, clinical supports, specialized programming designed to serve Resource Families caring for children/youth with significant emotional and behavioral needs; medically fragile youth; and/or developmental disabilities. Support services will ultimately facilitate placement stability and/or preparation for permanency (reunification and adoption) and Resource Family attrition.