

RECRUITMENT PLAN

Plan Name

(Adams) Adoption Recruitment Plan- SFY 2014

Effective Period

05/01/2014 - 05/01/2015

Goals

- > Number of Projected Inquiries - 35
- > Number of Children to be Placed - 5
- > Number of Planned Recruitment Events - 3
- > Number of Families to be Approved/Certified - 3

Additional Comments

(cont.d)....ACCSB is in full compliance with the Multi Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA), a federal law enacted in 1994, and amended in 1996 by the Interethnic Placement Act, which prevents discrimination in the placement of children based on race, color or national origin. It also prohibits agencies from denying persons the ability to become a foster or adoptive caregivers based on race, color or national origin. Agencies are also prohibited from denying applicants the ability to become adoptive parents based upon geographic location.

ACCSB will make every effort to assist an adult, who consents to be adopted, in obtaining verification that the adult was in the custody of ACCSB on the date of their eighteenth birthday. A written request will be made, by the individual seeking the information, to the Executive Director. The letter will include the reason for the request and permission to release the information to the individual or his/her designee (i.e., attorney, court official, etc.) The Executive Director will provide a response to said request within twenty (20) days of receipt of written request for information.

At the present time, ACCSB has numerous homes approved for adoption who are willing to accept children from any cultural, racial or ethnic background. The Foster/Adoption Specialist in conjunction with the Southwest Ohio Regional Training Center, holds training classes three times per year, if there is interest from prospective caregivers, to ensure adequate homes and prevent a delay in placements. The Foster/Adoption Specialist is available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Office hours are extended by request, in order to facilitate access to working families. Adams County Children Services is located at 300 North Wilson Drive, West Union, Ohio 45693. The phone number is (937)544 2511. Adoption Orientation Training is required of all prospective adoptive parents. This training is combined with the Foster Parent Orientation and Training and is a total of 36 hours of training.

ACCSB reserves the right to deny approval of an applicant for foster/adoptive/kinship placement based upon their criminal history. At this time, ACCSB does not approve any applicant for adoption who has been convicted of a prohibited offense listed in 5101:2-7-02, "General Requirements for Foster Caregivers and Applicants," Appendix 1: Offenses Listed In Paragraph (J) (1) of Rule 5101:2-7-02 of the Administrative Code," regardless of the length of time in which the offense was committed.

ACCSB reserves the right to deny approval of an applicant for foster/adoptive/kinship placement based upon their indicated or substantiated history, as alleged perpetrators, with regard to reports of child abuse/neglect, regardless of the length of time in which the offense was committed. At this time, ACCSB does not approve any applicant for adoption who has substantiated reports of child abuse/neglect. Indicated reports of child abuse/neglect may be considered based upon additional information obtained by the agency responsible for investigating the report of abuse/neglect. Pursuant to OAC rule 5101:2-33-23, PCSA's shall permanently keep records of all intakes and all cases opened for services and, as such, this information is considered in making placements for children for foster/adoption/kinship caregivers.

**Pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-23, "Case records for children services," The public children services agency (PCSA) shall prepare, maintain, and permanently keep records for all of the following intake categories which the PCSA has received and/or conducted an assessment/investigation: (1) Child abuse and/or neglect reports; (2) Dependency reports; (3) Family in need of services reports; (4) Information and/or referral intakes.

The PCSA shall prepare, maintain and permanently keep records on all cases for which the PCSA provided services beyond assessment/investigation including: (1) Voluntary supportive services cases; (2) Court ordered protective supervision cases; (3) Substitute care cases; (4) Adoption cases.

All case records prepared, maintained, and permanently kept by the PCSA (pursuant to paragraphs (A) and (B) of this rule) are confidential. Access to PCSA case records and the release of PCSA case record information shall be conducted pursuant to and in accordance with the requirements outlined in rule 5101:2-33-21 of the Administrative Code.

PCSA's shall permanent keep records of all intakes and all cases opened for services. Therefore, as a matter of permanent record,

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these issues will be considered.

Agency Fee Structure

ACCSB does not charge for their services to complete an adoptive homestudy for families adopting special needs children or children through ACCSB or other Ohio PCSA's. Fees to adopt non-special needs children or for private/independent adoption with the assistance of a private attorney and through the court system, will be \$550.00 to \$650.00, for homestudy and completion of birthparent counseling. ACCSB does not complete homestudies for those applicants interested in pursuing International Adoptions. Upon request, ACCSB will refer applicants to agencies who do complete International adoptive homestudies. ACCSB does not charge for their services to complete a foster parent/adoptive homestudy for families fostering/adopting through ACCSB.

Furthermore, ACCSB reserves the right to refuse to complete an adoption homestudy, with regard to private/independent adoptions through the court system, only, if a conflict of interest, significant child/abuse neglect history of prospective adoptive parents, criminal or substance abuse history is presented or discovered, the applicants are determined by the agency to be non-cooperative with requirements, falsify information, or other determining factors are presented in which the agency believes the adoptive parents may not meet the criteria for adoption approval.

All applicants will be responsible for the following costs:

- ** Fingerprint impressions cleared through BCI & I and/or FBI; local background check and Bureau of Motor Vehicle (BMV) checks.
- ** Fire marshal inspection
- ** Co-pays for medical examinations
- ** Any fees associated with additional requirements for substance abuse assessment, psychological evaluation, parenting evaluation, or mental health evaluation, if applicable.
- ** Attorney fees
- ** Court fees
- ** Appellate court fees, if applicable.

ACCSB may reimburse costs for criminal record checks, via non-recurring adoption expenses, when provided with original receipts, for the adoption of a child in the permanent custody of ACCSB or for a private/independent adoption of a child who meets the special needs criteria, as required under OAC Rule 5101:2-49-21, "Reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption expenses for a child with special need": "Nonrecurring adoption expenses" are reasonable and necessary adoption fees, court costs, attorney fees, and in accordance with paragraph (A)(2) of this rule, other expenses directly related to the legal adoption of a child with special needs, as defined in rule 5101:2-49-03 of the Administrative Code for whom a final decree of adoption has been issued. These expenses cannot be incurred in violation of state or federal law and cannot be reimbursed from other sources or funds. "Nonrecurring other expenses directly related to the legal adoption of a child with special needs" as specified in paragraph (A)(1) of this rule refers to the cost of the adoption incurred by or on behalf of the adoptive parent(s) and for which the adoptive parent(s) carries the ultimate liability for payment. These expenses include costs related to: (a) The adoption homestudy; (b) Health and psychological examinations; Supervision of the placement prior to the final decree of adoption; Reasonable cost of transportation, lodging, and food for the child and/or adoptive parent(s) when necessary to complete the placement or adoption process.

ACCSB will assess the adoptive family recruitment program on an annual basis to determine areas that need improvement and/or changes in accordance with OAC rules.

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Community Strategies

Adams County Children Services Board (hereinafter referred to as ACCSB) will serve the families of Adams County who request an application for adoption. Adoption Applicants must be at least 18 years of age. Residents living in other counties are welcome to submit an approved homestudy to be considered for the placement of a child in the custody of ACCSB. Foster Care or foster-to-adopt applicants must be at least (21) years of age or older. Adams County Children Services will conduct adoption homestudy assessments for families who express a desire to adopt Ohio's waiting children and who reside in adjacent counties; however, we do not conduct adoption homestudy assessments for applicants who reside further than 60 miles, one way, from the agency. The Adoption Orientation and Training is open to any prospective adoptive parent, regardless of geographical location, provided space is available.

Recruitment efforts are made on an ongoing basis to assist children in finding permanent homes as quickly as possible. When possible, ACCSB will assist prospective adoptive parents in searching for a child in the permanent custody of an agency, including at a minimum, Ohio Adoption Photo Listing, AdoptUsKids and also a search of the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), as available August 13, 2007 for Adams County, when there are no families to be presented at any matching conference for a child. ACCSB will also use exchanges, families waiting to adopt inquiries, OAPL, AdoptUsKids and contacts with other agencies to locate families for waiting children.

If there are no families available to be considered at a matching conference for a specified child, ACCSB shall conduct child-specific recruitment for the child prior to the next matching conference. Child specific recruitment shall include at a minimum:

- 1.) ACCSB's distribution of written information regarding the child to two or more adoption agencies.
- 2.) ACCSB's review of the case file for relatives or individuals in the child's past who may be able and willing to provide a permanent home for the child.
- 3.) ACCSB's exploration with the child of the ability of individuals with whom the child is familiar who may be able and willing to adopt the child.

If there are more than five families who are potential matches for the child, the agency may narrow the number of families to a minimum of five based on :

- (a) The level of experience the family has in working with child(ren) with the specific behavior, medical or mental health challenges that a specific child presents.
- (b) The preference to keep siblings together if in the child's best interest.

If a family was previously considered for a child in a matching conference and was not interested in the child, the agency does not have to consider the family for the same child in subsequent matching conferences.

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Description of Children in the County and State

Adams County Children Services (ACCSB) diligently recruits throughout the year for children in foster care and those awaiting adoptive placements. Adams County Children Services makes every effort to recruit foster and adoptive caregivers that reflect the cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds of children in placement throughout the county and State. Adams County Children Services seeks adoptive applicants through public service announcements in all county papers and the local radio station. The Speaker's Bureau disseminates information regarding characteristics and the number of children awaiting placement. The agency does disseminate child specific information via the Ohio Adoption Photo Listing Website, AdoptUsKids and via child-specific flyers to agencies within the State of Ohio. ACCSB also hosts a booth at the county fair, in an effort to reach prospective adoptive applicants. ACCSB serves children within Adams County; however, we do not exclude applicants from adjacent counties/states, with approved homestudies. Adoptive applicants must be at least eighteen (18) years of age. Foster Care or foster to adopt applicants must be at least (21) years of age or older. Adams County Children Services will conduct adoption homestudy assessments for families who express a desire to adopt Ohio's waiting children and who reside in adjacent counties; however, we do not conduct adoption homestudy assessments for applicants who reside further than 60 miles, one way, from the agency.

ACCSB serves children from birth to eighteen (or older if still attending school or meet criteria for services up to age 21 (DODD diagnosis), ranging from minimal developmental, emotional and physical disabilities to those needing exceptional services. If the agency cannot meet the needs of the child, the child is placed in a therapeutic home or a congregate facility, out of the county.

As of 4/30/2014, Adams County Children Services had 12 children in permanent custody (including permanent surrender). Ages of the children are: 21 (female), 18 (female), 17 (female), 17 (male), 16 (male), 15 (female), 14 (female), 14 (female), 6 (male), 21 months (male), 17 months (female) and 9 months (female). All children currently in the agency's PC are Caucasian, non-hispanic. (As of 3/31/2014, ACCSB had 70 children in temporary custody (58 total)/permanent custody (12 total) and placed in substitute care: 17 children ages 0-2; 10 children ages 3-5; 11 children ages 6-9; 8 children ages 10-12; 13 children ages 13-15; 11 children 16 and up).

As of 2/17/14, there are 2,649 children in the permanent custody of public children services agencies throughout the State of Ohio. Of those children, 1,435 are male, 1,214 are female. Ethnicity: 129 are Hispanic; 2,452 are Non-Hispanic, 62 have ethnicity that is unable to be determined and 6 children's ethnicity had information missing and were not able to be determined. Race of the children in permanent custody includes: White: 1,509; Black/African-American: 874; Black/African-American/White: 220; American Indian and White: 15 American Indian: 1; Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and White: 6; Asian: 3; Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and White: 4; American Indian, Black/African-American: 2; Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 1; American Indian, Black/African-American, White: 1; Asian/White: 3; Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 1; Asian, Black/African-American, White: 3; Unable to Determine: 2; Information Missing: 4 children. Ages of children in permanent custody in the State of Ohio: 0-3: 569; 4-6: 418; 7-10: 470; 11-14: 561; 15+: 631.

ACCSB will make every effort to recruit foster families that reflect the race, color and national origin of children in placement. Adams County is a rural community with a less than 1% minority population. The majority of children served by ACCSB are mostly Caucasian children; however, ACCSB also serves bi-racial children (Caucasian/African-American; Caucasian/Hispanic). While the minority population within Adams County is small (around 28,550 residents as of 2012), the ethnic backgrounds of other individuals within Adams County include, but are not limited to: African-American, Hispanic, Asian, Amish, Native American, Bi-racial and Multi-racial. ACCSB is in full compliance with the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA), a federal law enacted in 1994, and amended in 1996 by the Interethnic Placement Act (IEPA), which prevents discrimination in the placement of children based on race, color or national origin. It also prohibits agencies from denying persons the ability to become a foster or adoptive parents based on race, color or national origin. ACCSB will comply with the requirements in the JFS 01611, "Non-discrimination Requirements for Foster Care and Adoptive Placements" and a copy of the JFS 01611 will be provided to foster care inquiries along with a copy of the agency's foster care recruitment plan. ACCSB assures full compliance with the standards of conduct regarding MEPA and Title VI in accordance with rule 5101:2-33-11 of the Administrative Code. In addition, a copy of the OAC Rule 5101:2-33-03 "Procedure for complaints of alleged discriminatory acts, policies or practices in the foster care or adoption process that involve race, color or national origin" is attached to the foster care recruitment plan and will be provided in every foster caregiver inquiry packet.

To ensure that placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for a same race or ethnic placement, ACCSB would contact another adjacent or Ohio county, or call a Private Network/Contract agency to assist with the placement, if none of our adoptive families could/would take the child. Placement of children cannot be delayed or denied based on geographic boundaries.

Due to recent budget cuts, statewide, and lack of attendees at foster caregiver preservice training, in 2010, Southwest Ohio Regional

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Training Center has combined preservice training classes for Adams/Brown Counties. Twice annually, classes are scheduled to be held at Adams County Children Services, 300 North Wilson Drive, West Union, Ohio 45693 and once annually, at this time, classes are held at Brown County Department of Job and Family Services, 775 Mt. Orab Pike, Georgetown, Ohio 45122, if there is interest from prospective caregivers, to ensure adequate homes and prevent a delay in placements.

(cont.d in Additional Comments section of report)....

Home Study & Pre-Service Training Strategies (Out of County)

Adoptive applicants must be at least eighteen (18) years of age. Foster Care or foster to adopt applicants must be at least (21) years of age or older. Adams County Children Services will conduct adoption homestudy assessments for families who express a desire to adopt Ohio's waiting children and who reside in adjacent counties; however, we do not conduct adoption homestudy assessments for applicants who reside further than 60 miles, one way, from the agency.

Adoption Orientation Training is required of all prospective adoptive parents. This training is combined with the Foster Parent Orientation and Training and is a total of 36 hours of training. Training is offered up to three times annually (combined classes with Adams/Brown Counties, two sessions held in Adams per year; one session held in Brown per year) as long as enough participants are enrolled for classes to be held and conducted by the Regional Training Center.

The Foster/Adoption Specialist, with the approval of the Executive Director, may waive the training, with the exception of the cultural diversity training (3-hours), if it is believed that the applicant(s) has the skills and previous training to care for a child placed in their home. At this time, ACCSB only waives training for those caregivers who have approved homestudies by the agency for a child placed through ACCSB or another PCSA/PCPA and the agency has monitored the placement/care of the child for a period of time. The Adoption Orientation and Training is open to any prospective adoptive parent, regardless of geographical location, provided space is available. The Foster/Adoption Specialist, Caseworkers and Supervisors are trained at the local Regional Training Center and are required to complete at least 36 hours of training on an annual basis, after their first year of employment, in which 90 hours of core training are required. This includes training on diverse cultural, ethnic, racial and economic communities. This training assists the employees of ACCSB in working with adoptive caregivers, adoptive children and the community.

The Foster/Adoption Specialist is available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Office hours are extended by request, in order to facilitate access to working families. Adams County Children Services is located at 300 North Wilson Drive, West Union, Ohio 45693. The phone number is (937)544-2511.

ACCSB will consider approved adoptive families from other counties and states, with an approved homestudy, submitted by the approving worker/agency. Each homestudy submitted will be carefully reviewed for future placements and kept on file in the order in which they are received and maintained until the homestudies expiration. Families submitting approved homestudies from outside the county or state shall not be discriminated against, nor will they be denied or delayed placement due to their geographic location. ACCSB cannot conduct adoptive homestudies on families residing outside the State of Ohio.

A prospective adoptive family has the right to request information regarding the availability of a state hearing when an adoptive family believes that an adoptive placement was denied or will be denied solely for reasons of geographic location of the family.

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Home Study Assurance Strategies

The Foster/Adoption Specialist is available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Office hours are extended by request, in order to facilitate access to working families. Adams County Children Services is located at 300 North Wilson Drive, West Union, Ohio 45693. The phone number is (937)544-2511.

At the request of prospective applicants, the Foster/Adoption Specialist mails information packets within seven days of the request. All phone inquiries are returned within the next two working days. The packet contains general information about the process and the children served by ACCSB. An application will be provided upon request within seven days of the request. Adoptive Parent Preservice Training is held on weeknights to accommodate prospective foster caregivers who work. Adoptive Applicants will be provided an application, upon request, and/or at the Orientation/Preservice Training.

Adoption Orientation Training is required of all prospective adoptive parents. This training is combined with the Foster Parent Orientation and Training and is a total of 36 hours of training. The Foster/Adoption Specialist, with the approval of the Executive Director, may waive the training, with the exception of the cultural diversity training (3-hours), if it is believed that the applicant(s) has the skills and previous training to care for a child placed in their home. At this time, ACCSB only waives training for those caregivers who have approved homestudies by the agency for a child placed through ACCSB or another PCSA/PCPA and the agency has monitored the placement/care of the child for a period of time. The Adoption Orientation and Training is open to any prospective adoptive parent, regardless of geographical location, provided space is available.

The Foster/Adoption Specialist, Caseworkers and Supervisors are trained at the local Regional Training Center and are required to complete at least 36 hours of training on an annual basis, after their first year of employment, in which 90 hours of core training are required. This includes training on diverse cultural, ethnic, racial and economic communities. This training assists the employees of ACCSB in working with adoptive caregivers, adoptive children and the community.

ACCSB will consider approved adoptive families from other counties and states, with an approved homestudy, which are submitted by the caregiver's homestudy worker/agency. Each homestudy submitted will be carefully reviewed for future placements and kept on file in the order in which they are received and maintained until the homestudies expiration. Families submitting approved homestudies from outside the county or state shall not be discriminated against, nor will they be denied or delayed placement due to their geographic location. ACCSB cannot conduct adoptive homestudies for families residing outside the State of Ohio.

A prospective adoptive family has the right to request information regarding the availability of a state hearing when an adoptive family believes that an adoptive placement was denied or will be denied solely for reasons of geographic location of the family.

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Inquiry Response Procedures

At the request of prospective applicants, the Foster/Adoption Specialist mails information packets within seven days of the request. All phone inquiries are returned within the next two working days. The packet contains general information about the process and the children served by ACCSB. An application will be provided upon request within seven days of the request. Adoptive Parent Preservice Training is held on weeknights to accommodate prospective foster caregivers who work. Adoptive Applicants will be provided an application, upon request, and/or at the Orientation/Preservice Training.

ACCSB will maintain a log if inquiries from persons interested in being adoptive parents. The log will indicate the follow-up that occurred with each inquiry. ACCSB will respond to all inquiries concerning the adoption of a child, within seven working days, by telephone, by mail, or in person. If the inquirer resides in Ohio, ACCSB shall provide the following to the inquirer:

1. A copy of the JFS 01675, "Ohio Adoption Guide" (rev. 07/2013);
2. A description of Title IV-E Adoption Assistance and State Adoption Subsidy programs including eligibility requirements and the application process;
3. The Ohio Adoption Photo Listing Website (OAPL) "<http://jfs.ohio.gov/oapl>
4. How to get an application for adoption;
5. A copy of ACCSB's adoption policy, or a summary of the policy, prepared pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-05 of the Administrative Code;
6. The criminal records check requirements pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code. (A criminal records check is required, as a precondition to being approved for an adoptive placement, for all prospective adoptive parents and all adult residents of an adoptive home);
7. The foster care/adoption homestudy assessment process;
8. Checklist of ACCSB's adoption approval requirements;
9. Copy of preservice training schedule; and
9. Information regarding the state adoption assistance loan program as outlined in section 3107.018 of the Revised Code.

Adoptive packets will be available at all times through the foster/adoption specialist. Applications will be provided at Orientation but will also be made available to applicants within seven working days of receipt of a request for an application.

If the inquirer resides out of state and has an approved homestudy, ACCSB, shall send the inquirer a copy of the JFS 01675. If the family has identified a child they are interested in, the family should be given the telephone number to the custodial agency. If the inquirer resides out of state and does not have an approved homestudy, ACCSB will send the inquirer a copy of the JFS 01675. ACCSB will also inform the inquirer that they will need a completed and approved homestudy from their state of residence in order to adopt an Ohio waiting child.

ACCSB will provide to any Ohio resident not living within the county, at a minimum, the name, address and phone number of the public agency within their county, and/or the telephone number of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Adoption and Placement Services Section. ACCSB will refer any Ohio resident, who does not meet requirements for adoption services as identified in the agency's adoption policy, to another agency for adoption services. ACCSB will provide internet information or a listing of private or public providers that will assist the inquirer with their endeavor.

Linguistic Barriers Strategies

The Foster/Adoption Specialist holds training classes twice annually and is combined with preservice training with Brown County DJFS, once annually (for a total of three times per year), as long as there are enough participants registered, to ensure adequate homes and prevent a delay in placements. The local school districts language teachers and University's from adjacent counties, language teacher's, will assist the agency in dealing with children, who are non speaking or have linguistic barriers. ACCSB will also provide resources through other agencies (United Way of Cincinnati, community Services for the Deaf of Portsmouth, Ohio, Adams County Regional Medical Center, and local school districts/universities language teachers) to assist the agency with applicants with non speaking or linguistic barriers. Ongoing training is offered free of charge to staff and adoptive parents and assists in developing strategies for working with various cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

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Methods of Disseminating Recruitment Information and Activities

Adams County Children Services makes every effort to recruit foster and adoptive caregivers that reflect the cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds of children in placement throughout the county and State. Adams County Children Services seeks adoptive applicants through public service announcements in all county papers and the local radio station. The Speaker's Bureau disseminates information regarding characteristics and the number of children awaiting placement. The agency does disseminate child specific information via the Ohio Adoption Photo Listing Website, AdoptUsKids and via child-specific flyers to agencies within the State of Ohio via email/mail. ACCSB also hosts a booth at the county fair, in an effort to reach prospective adoptive applicants. ACCSB serves children within Adams County; however, we do not exclude applicants from adjacent counties/states, with approved homestudies. Adoptive applicants must be at least eighteen (18) years of age. Foster Care or foster to adopt applicants must be at least (21) years of age or older. Adams County Children Services will conduct adoption homestudy assessments for families who express a desire to adopt Ohio's waiting children and who reside in adjacent counties; however, we do not conduct adoption homestudy assessments for applicants who reside further than 60 miles, one way, from the agency.

Each Public Service Campaign shall address the general information regarding the children served by this agency and throughout the State of Ohio. This information is also disseminated at every Orientation/Preservice Training, the Annual Kids' Community Breakfast, Child Abuse/Neglect Prevention Month in April, Foster Care Recognition and Recruitment Month in May and throughout National Adoption Awareness Month in November via scheduled activities.

Recruitment efforts are made on an ongoing basis to assist children in finding permanent homes as quickly as possible. When possible, ACCSB will assist prospective adoptive parents in searching for a child in the permanent custody of an agency, including at a minimum a search of the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), as available August 13, 2007 for Adams County, when there are no families to be presented at any matching conference for a child. ACCSB will also use exchanges, families waiting to adopt inquiries, and contacts with other agencies to locate families for waiting children.

If there are no families available to be considered at a matching conference for a specified child, ACCSB shall conduct child-specific recruitment for the child prior to the next matching conference. Child specific recruitment shall include at a minimum:

- 1.) ACCSB's distribution of written information regarding the child to two or more adoption agencies.
- 2.) ACCSB's review of the case file for relatives or individuals in the child's past who may be able and willing to provide a permanent home for the child.
- 3.) ACCSB's exploration with the child of the ability of individuals with whom the child is familiar who may be able and willing to adopt the child.

Staff Training Strategies

The Foster/Adoption Specialist, Caseworkers and Supervisors are trained at the local Regional Training Center and are required to complete at least 36 hours of training on an annual basis, after their first year of employment, as 90 hours of core training are required the first year of employment. This includes training on diverse cultural, ethnic, racial and economic communities. This training assists the employees of ACCSB in working with adoptive caregivers, adoptive children and the community. Ongoing training is offered free of charge to staff and adoptive parents and assists in developing strategies for working with various cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

Statement of Assurance

ACCSB assures that all recruitment activities and materials are in compliance with rules 5101:2-42-18.1 and 5101:2-48-13 of the Administrative Code and with the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 622 (b)(9), 671 (a)(18), 674 (d) and 1996 (b) (1/2/06) ("MEPA") and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, (1/2/06), as they apply to the foster care process ("Title VI"), do not supercede the provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C.A. 1901, the "Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978," 25 U.S.C.A. 1901, et seq (hereinafter ICWA), as amended, and 42 U.S.C. 671(a), "The Adoption and SAFE Families Act of 1997," Pub. L. No. 105-89, (hereinafter ASFA). None of these rules supercedes the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978. To ensure that placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for a same race or ethnic placement, ACCSB will contact another adjacent or Ohio county public agency or call a Private Network/Contract agency to assist with the placement. ACCSB will make every effort to recruit adoptive families that reflect the cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds of children available for adoption, county and statewide.

ACCSB is in full compliance with the Multi Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA), a federal law enacted in 1994, and amended in 1996 by the Interethnic Placement Act, which prevents discrimination in the placement of children based on race, color or national origin. It also prohibits agencies from denying persons the ability to become a foster or adoptive caregivers based on race, color or national origin. Agencies are also prohibited from denying applicants the ability to become adoptive parents based upon geographic location.

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Timely Search/Match Procedures

ACCSB is fortunate to have many of the children in permanent custody placed into an adoptive home, immediately or almost immediately following permanent custody. This has been achieved by utilizing the foster to adopt program and retaining a pool of homes agreeing to adopt children placed in their home at the time permanent custody has been granted by Juvenile Court. ACCSB has several approved adoptive homes willing to accept children from any cultural, racial or ethnic background. ACCSB currently has fifteen (15) certified foster homes, and all 15 of those homes are also adoption approved. Of those fifteen adoption approved homes, four are willing to accept all races of children which includes: American Indian/Alaskan Native; Asian; Black/African-American; Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; Caucasian; Bi-Racial or Multi-racial and Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity. Of the remaining eight families: All eight remaining families are accepting of Caucasian children; two families are accepting of American Indian/Alaskan Native children; one family is accepting of American Indian/Alaskan Native; Asian; Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; Bi-Racial or Multi-racial and Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity.

Additionally, in an effort to reduce the time children wait for finalization after permanent custody is granted, ACCSB now requires ongoing caseworkers to begin working on a child study inventory, using an agency required document, within 30 days of filing for permanent custody. Additionally, workers are required to update the CSI at every 90-day case review and/or SAR, to ensure complete information is provided and CSI's are completed timely to avoid delays. Caseworkers also to request medical records for children at the time of filing for permanent custody, if they have not already been requested, to assist with timely adoptions. Recruitment efforts are made on an ongoing basis to assist children in finding permanent homes as quickly as possible. When possible, ACCSB will assist prospective adoptive parents in searching for a child in the permanent custody of an agency, including at a minimum, a search of the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), as available August 13, 2007 for Adams County, when there are no families to be presented at any matching conference for a child. ACCSB will also use exchanges, families waiting to adopt inquiries, and contacts with other agencies to locate families for waiting children.

If there are no families available to be considered at a matching conference for a specified child, ACCSB shall conduct child-specific recruitment for the child prior to the next matching conference. Child specific recruitment shall include at a minimum:

- 1.) ACCSB's distribution of written information regarding the child to two or more adoption agencies.
- 2.) ACCSB's review of the case file for relatives or individuals in the child's past who may be able and willing to provide a permanent home for the child.
- 3.) ACCSB's exploration with the child of the ability of individuals with whom the child is familiar who may be able and willing to adopt the child.

If there are more than five families who are potential matches for the child, the agency may narrow the number of families to a minimum of five based on :

- (a) The level of experience the family has in working with child(ren) with the specific behavior, medical or mental health challenges that a specific child presents.
- (b) The preference to keep siblings together if in the child's best interest.

If a family was previously considered for a child in a matching conference and was not interested in the child, the agency does not have to consider the family for the same child in subsequent matching conferences.

ACCSB will consider approved adoptive families from other counties and states, with an approved homestudy. Each homestudy submitted will be carefully reviewed for future placements and kept on file in the order in which they are received and maintained until the homestudies expiration. Families submitting approved homestudies from outside the county or state shall not be discriminated against, nor will they be denied or delayed placement due to their geographic location. ACCSB cannot conduct adoptive homestudies on families residing outside the State of Ohio.

A prospective adoptive family has the right to request information regarding the availability of a state hearing when an adoptive family believes that an adoptive placement was denied or will be denied solely for reasons of geographic location of the family.

RECRUITMENT PLAN

SIGNATURE

Date Signed

SIGNATURE

Date Signed

SIGNATURE

Date Signed