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Introduction

Kentucky's Cabinet for Health and Family Services (cabinet), Department for Community Based Services (department), endeavors to recruit and retain foster and adoptive families that are able meet the diverse needs of the children in out of home care (OOHC) and support the permanency goals of children, particularly if that goal is reunification. This is inclusive of foster and adoptive homes approved by private child care agencies and the department. This requires a great deal of support from the department and has required an intentional evaluation of statutes, regulations, and policies, particularly within the past year.

Statewide, diligent, general, targeted, and child specific recruitment efforts are comprehensive and ongoing. The department strives to recruit homes that support our mission of keeping children safe in the least restrictive environment. To increase success, the department has entered into partnerships, not only with private child placing agencies, but with other organizations such as the Dave Thomas Foundation, Children's Alliance, Orphan Care Alliance, Thursday's Child, Wednesday's Child, public school systems, public universities, and the faith based community.

Collaboration with Community Partners

The department has recognized the need for a strong relationship with community partners. In order to ensure success in the department's diligent recruitment activities, various community partners have been engaged. The Foster Adoptive Support Parent Network (The Network) has regional liaisons and team leaders that lead foster parent support, training, and recruitment efforts regionally. Murray State also coordinates the VOC, which is a group of young people that share their foster care experiences to enact change, advocate, and recruit. The department has requested that regions utilize their VOC members to aid in recruitment in 2019.

Kentucky has a large number of private child placing (PCP) agencies. Their engagement in diligent recruitment activities is imperative in the success of meeting the needs of this targeted population. There are quarterly statewide Private Child Caring (PCC)/PCP meetings held. During the first quarter, the agencies were presented with diligent recruitment data and asked to develop strategies to meet the needs of the targeted populations. Regionally, there have been events co-sponsored by the public and private agencies. Many regions hold PCP collaborative meetings, which allows both the public and private agencies to meet in order to discuss services, recruitment efforts, and any barriers.

The department has a partnership with the Children's Alliance which is an advocacy organization that is comprised of PCC and PCP agencies. Approximately 60% of children in Kentucky's OOHC population are served by PCCs or PCPs. Therefore, it is essential that the department has a strong relationship with the Children's Alliance, as well as the private agencies that are not affiliated with the alliance. The department holds quarterly meetings with representatives from the PCC/ PCP agencies to address the needs of children in care and to share data and inform them of the types of foster homes needed. In addition, department leadership meets with the Children's Alliance steering committee on a bi-monthly basis to build rapport, share data, and work in partnership to address any systemic needs.

The University of Kentucky's (UK) Training Resource Center (TRC) is also a partner in the department's efforts. The diligent recruitment workgroup on retention recognized the need for ongoing support and mentorship of current foster families. UK TRC provides both foster and adoptive support groups and a

mentor program, which allows families to feel more supported. In turn, this encourages the department's current families to recruit new families, which is a significant recruitment tool. New standards of practice (SOP) to support the mentor program has been issued. In addition, regional staff have identified their own community partners that will assist in recruitment efforts including schools, churches, local businesses, and medical facilities. As Kentucky is a diverse state with both urban and rural areas, regional focus in necessary to ensure success. More detailed information follows to outline some of these above discussed efforts.

This department's partnership with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption (DTFA) began with the first Wendy's Wonderful Kid's (WWK) recruiter position being funded for the Jefferson Service Region in 2006. Two additional recruiters were funded for the Southern Bluegrass and Two Rivers Service Regions. Kentucky has continued to be a recipient of this grant from the DFTA. Adopting the WWK model in Kentucky and the mindset that "every child is adoptable" has had a great impact on Kentucky's foster care system over the past several years. The program was expanded over the past year and the department uses title IV-B funds to contractually match the funds of the DTFA. Staff who are trained in this child-focused recruitment model are hired as specialists. A child who is assigned child-focused specialist is three times more likely to be adopted. The Permanency Branch within the Division of Service Regions (DSR) overseeing the child-focused specialists includes one branch manager, five supervisors, and 64 child-focused specialists statewide to focus on recruitment for children who do not have an identified adoptive home. If vacancies occur, leadership moves quickly to fill those positions in order to maintain service to the largest number of children possible.

The department is addressing the need for placing children on the autism spectrum by participating in the Governor's Council on Autism Spectrum Disorders. This is a collaborative effort that includes partnering with the Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID); Department of Public Health (DPH); UK; and UofL, parent advocates; and others. Currently, the Autism Council is focusing on the availability of services for these children with the intent of increasing access and quality.

The department contracts with the Children's Review Program (CRP), who assigns levels to children who are 48 months and older and who are placed in foster care or residential program. This is the established payment structure that outlines reimbursement for programs which are designed to match the child's needs. CRP uses this information to guide placements by matching children's needs with the capabilities of private residential and foster care treatment programs. They also track children through the service delivery system and collect and analyze data in order to evaluate child, agency, and system outcomes. The department is working to reduce the number of children in care, specifically in residential care facilities. This is being accomplished by working with managed care organizations (MCOs) to send children with lower levels of care who are in residential care facilities to therapeutic foster homes, public foster homes, or back to their own homes by increasing the services that can be provided to these children in the home setting. The department tracks children's level of care monthly with the assistance of CRP, and as their level decreases communicates with the residential care facility, as well as the local region, to ensure that the child is moving to the appropriate level of care.

The CRP creates a PCC/PCP comparative report that is used to assist the department staff in making best placement decisions between PCC/PCP programs. The PCC/PCP comparative report can be used to aid department staff and regional placement coordinators (RPCs) in making placement choices between

PCC/PCP programs. Individual elements of the comparative report are intended to be used together in making placement decisions. Below are some elements of the report:

General
- County(s) of program or foster homes: Can be used to determine which programs have homes close to or in the child's county of origin.
- On-site school: If an on-site school is needed, this indicates if this service is available.
- Supplemental information: A narrative by the provider which may explain comparative report results, special situations, or special services offered by the program.
- Average level of care (LOC) at intake: This is the average level of care of current residents at intake. It estimates the severity of children accepted by the program.
- Risk indicator percentages at intake: Percentages of current residents that were assigned to the categories by the program within 60 days after intake. This may be used to find the best fit between a program and a child in terms of the program's experience with particular issues.
- Staff information: The number of staff, average length of employment by the agency in months, and the percentage of highest education are presented in table format for the four categories of staff listed. This can be used to estimate staff experience and education.

Safety Outcomes
- Abuse and neglect substantiations in last year: Number of substantiations against program staff and/or foster parents resulting from incidents that were substantiated during the 12 months prior to when this report was updated.
- Percentage of foster families caring for more than 2 children and percentage of these who are caring for a sibling group: This provides information on a program's current performance in caring for sibling groups and how full foster homes may be.
- Physical managements & critical incidents ratio: Physical managements and critical incidents are reported as ratios per 100 resident days. For example, a result of 1.00 would mean there was 1 incident for every 100 resident days over the reporting period of the report. Programs are compared against their peers, e.g. "within average range" if the program's score is within one standard deviation of the peer group average for the reporting period.

Permanency Outcomes
- Planned discharge to home-like placement and less restrictive placement: Indicates the percentage of planned discharges that were to a home-like (or less restrictive setting). Discharges to short term placements (e.g., hospitals) when the program takes the child back are not included. Discharges from one foster home within an agency to another foster home within the agency are not included. Programs are compared against their peers, e.g. "within average range" if the program's score is within one standard deviation of the peer group average for the reporting period.
- Placement source unplanned discharge rate: Indicates the percentage of unplanned discharges that were due to a reason deemed to be the program's responsibility (e.g., behavior problem, needs more restrictive care). Discharges to short-term placements (e.g., hospitals) when the program takes the child back are not included. Discharges from one foster home within an agency to another foster home within an agency are not included. Programs are compared

against their peers, e.g. "within average range" if the program's score is within one standard deviation of the peer group average for the reporting period.

- Runaway rate: This is a subset of the placement source unplanned discharge rate which measures only those discharges where the child ran away and did not return.
- Psychiatric discharge rate: This is a subset of the placement source unplanned discharge rate which measures only those discharges where the child was discharged to the hospital and did not return to the original placement.
- Refer source unplanned discharge rate: Indicates the percentage of unplanned discharges that were due to a reason that is not the program's responsibility and is out of control of the facility (e.g., judge orders child home, child has needs not identified at admission). Discharges to short term placements (e.g., hospitals) when the program takes the child back are not included. Discharges from one foster home within an agency to another foster home within an agency are not included. Programs are compared against their peers, e.g. "within average range" if the program's score is within one standard deviation of the peer group average for the reporting period.

Well-being Outcomes

- Adoptions by the program's foster parents: The number of adoptions of the department's children by the programs foster parents during the 12 months prior to when the report was updated.
- Description of how the program supports family connections: Narrative by the program indicating their efforts to support the process of reunification for children when reunification is the goal, e.g. transportation to family visits.

For the past several years, the Commissioner's Office and the provider community have held discussions about moving from the current state of procuring services for children based upon a level of care to a performance and outcome based model. Performance based measures are being incorporated into the PCC/PCP agreement for fiscal year 2020. The goal of moving to performance based contracting is to improve the outcomes for children in the department's custody through incentivizing reductions in use of residential care, increased use of therapeutic foster care, and to expedite the reunification process for children exiting care.

Diligent Recruitment-Characteristics, Practices, and Efforts

Characteristics

The department gathers demographic data on the characteristics of children placed in OOHC from the comprehensive child welfare information system (CCWIS), The Worker's Information System (TWIST). Data is also collected on foster home characteristics for public resource homes and private foster homes approved within the state. The diligent recruitment report contains data on both child characteristics and foster home characteristics. The diligent recruitment report provides a breakdown of these characteristics by county, region, and statewide. The diligent recruitment report is produced monthly and distributed to department staff in all 120 counties. The diligent recruitment report is an invaluable tool utilized to determine the number of children in care, their age, race, and whether they are part of a sibling group and if there are compatible foster placements available to meet their needs. In addition,

quarterly meetings are held with regional R&C staff. The agenda includes a discussion of use of diligent recruitment data and best practices related to diligent and targeted recruitment activities.

The percentage of need met is a measure used in several demographic categories in the diligent recruitment report. It is based on one sibling group per foster home and two children per home. As of April 1, 2019, 9,739 children were placed in OOHC and there were 2,242 public agency homes and 3,020 private agency homes approved. The percentage of need met statewide as of April 2019 was 108.06 %.

The characteristics of children in care on April 1, 2019 reflect:

- Children age 0-5, 3,214
- Children age 6-11, 2,385
- Children age 12-21, 4,140
- Children age 19+, 275
- Children in a sibling group, 5,024
- Children in a sibling group placed together, 3,174
- African American Children, 1,766
- Caucasian Children, 8,135
- Asian children, 33
- Native American children, 32
- Hispanic children, 481
- Medically complex children, 194

Categories where the percentage of need statewide was met for the children in care include:

- Foster homes accepting children ages 0-5 (156.88%);
- Foster homes accepting children ages 6-11 (169.31%);
- Foster homes with Asian parents (145.45%);
- Foster homes with Caucasian parents (111.25%); and
- Number of DCBS medically fragile foster homes (117.53%).

Categories where the percentage of need statewide was not met included:

- Foster homes accepting children ages 12-21 (93.67%);
- Foster homes accepting children ages 19+ (36.36%);
- Foster homes accepting siblings (41.36%);
- Foster homes with African American parents (73.09%);
- Foster homes with Hispanic parents (30.35%);
- Foster homes with Native American parents (81.25%); and
- Foster homes with Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander parents(s) (66.67%).

Practices

The above data reflects the recruitment challenges in Kentucky. The regional, county, and statewide breakdown of the diligent recruitment report provides a snapshot of the number of children placed in a particular county and the number of homes available. Department staff use this county specific data to help ensure children are placed in close proximity to their homes and the same county whenever possible.

The diligent recruitment report assists in planning for general and targeted recruitment activities where homes are needed. Department staff work to recruit homes within Kentucky to meet the needs of children entering care. To ensure that all parts of the community are targeted, R&C staff in the nine service regions plan recruitment events throughout the communities such as participating in festivals and fairs, setting up booths at conferences, distributing recruitment materials, and engaging foster parents and youth to speak to the faith based community. Regions have developed recruitment advertisements for grocery store bags, billboards, yard signs, newspapers, etc. In addition, the department has a recruitment booth setup at the state fair held in August of each year.

Recruitment and retention is also supported through regional foster and adoptive parent appreciation events and award ceremonies. These are held annually to recognize and showcase the rewards of foster and adoptive caregiving. Additionally, local newspapers interview foster and adoptive parents and publish stories. The events generate interest and community support.

Recognizing that Kentucky has a diverse population of children in OOHC, data is made available to the regions to assist them in identifying the needs of children. As a result, regions have developed recruitment materials for use that reflect the needs of the children in their area. For example, the Two Rivers Service Region created a public service announcement to run locally on their radio station that was recorded by a foster and adoptive family to help disseminate a recruitment message.

Beginning in 2019, the department established a statewide template for diligent recruitment. This template ensured that the regions were identifying and planning recruitment activities for each individual county within their region. The template was developed in such a way to allow regions to examine the data surrounding the current foster home population and the current population of children in OOHC. This data includes the demographics of both the foster and adoptive parents and youth populations. Additional data was embedded in the statewide diligent recruitment data report that allowed regions to track children placed both inside and outside their region of origin. Regions will submit a complete diligent recruitment plan to the Division of Protection and Permanency (division) twice a year, in January and July. This will allow regions to track their progress and make adjustments to their plans. In order to successfully execute the plan twice a year, regions have been asked to monitor and review their plans quarterly. The diligent recruitment template was developed in order to capture successes and barriers for both generalized and targeted recruitment. In order to effectively utilize the template, regions must use the data to guide their recruitment activities. Regional staff also participate in various creative recruitment campaigns that are unique and specific to their regional interest. Regions engage their community in planning and implementing recruitment activities. Attachment 13.1 is an example of one regions specific plan that was developed in collaboration with community partners with the use of data provided by central office.

The service regions included recruitment activities to meet the targeted needs on their individual plans. Some promising examples of these activities include:
- Medicine spoons and hand sanitizers to pharmacies and pediatricians with foster care contact information;
- Holding an informational booth at Martin Luther King Jr. festivals and parades;
- Holding an informational booth at the International Festival in the Lakes Service Region;
- Holding informational booths at events that promote and/or celebrate African American or Hispanic history and culture;

- Partnership with local YMCA's to recruit homes for all targeted areas;
- Newsletters to community churches to identify the need and build connections;
- Informational booth at the Bluegrass Autism Walk;
- Recruitment fliers to nurses & physician's lounges;
- Pride activities to recruit for older youth who may be LGBTQ;
- Recruitment flyer at KY School for the Deaf;
- Radio and newspaper advertisements; and
- Advertisements at movie theaters during previews.

The contract with Murray State University for The Network significantly impacts the department's ability to implement strategies to recruit specific populations that reflect the diverse needs of children in care. The Network is an agency partner that manages and coordinates foster parent support, training, and recruitment. The Network is made up of 15 teams comprised of experienced foster and adoptive parents throughout the state. The Network's primary objective is to offer training and provide confidential peer support. Network members support recruitment based on regional need through public speaking, responding to foster parent inquiries, distributing recruitment materials targeted to specific communities statewide, and are involved in faith-based activities. Many regions collaborate well with their Network team. However, in years past, recruitment completed by The Network was not being appropriately tracked. In 2019, The Network was asked to develop their own diligent recruitment plans utilizing the statewide template. Each region developed their own template in conjunction with regional R&C staff.

Recruitment advertisements created by AdoptUSKids and the Dave Thomas Foundation are viewed across the state for children who do not have an identified adoptive home. The department also utilizes the AdoptUSKids matching program.

In addition, the department, through the Kentucky Adoption Profile Exchange (KAPE) has a statewide photo listing of children available for adoption who do not have an identified family. This website is available at KAPE-Kentucky Adoption Profile Exchange.

A Diligent Recruitment Steering Committee was developed in 2018 in order to address diligent recruitment on a statewide level. This committee was instrumental in developing the new template for the regional diligent recruitment plans. As work within the committee expanded, separate workgroups were identified. These groups include Retention, Targeted Recruitment, Generalized Recruitment, Training, Respite, and Data. Each of these workgroups focused on different areas and reported to the steering committee. Specific strategies for recruitment were identified and the expectation was set forth to staff to duplicate statewide. Strategies identified for implementation on a statewide level include:

- Utilizing the Voices of the Commonwealth (VOC-foster youth advisory group) in both recruitment and training;
- Regional invite to invest events (utilizing our current foster and adoptive parents to identify potential families) and streamlined informational meeting held at this event;
- Utilizing current and former foster parents in recruitment activities;
- Providing information about the medically complex program to all active foster and adoptive parents;

- Educate both Recruitment and Certification (R&C) and frontline staff surrounding care plus foster parent approvals, including policy updates and a tip sheet; and
- The steering committee has identified a need for a statewide brand. This is an ongoing activity utilizing feedback from the regions.

The Targeted Recruitment workgroup identified the need for targeted recruitment for sibling groups; older youth; children of color; medically complex children; and care plus homes.

In September 2018, the department implemented a permanency tracking protocol based on a data analysis following the CFSR and as a part of PIP efforts. The permanency tracking calls are managed by the Adoption Branch and the Out-of-Home Care Branch within central office. The calls are held monthly with each region and have key staff including regional leadership, Office of Legal Services (OLS), and child specific recruiters. Permanency data is reviewed monthly to include movements for children progressing toward permanency including reunification and adoption and what the barriers may be. Discussions include engagement with community partners that may be beneficial. Barriers are shared with department leadership and addressed as necessary. Work is underway to develop statewide communication plans to share permanency data with the Administration Office of the Courts and judges statewide. The numbers of children in OOHC has decreased for the first time in years since the permanency calls have begun. This is likely due to a culmination of efforts, including the use of utilization reviews at removals.

Native American and Tribal Affiliation

Although there are no federally or state recognized tribes in Kentucky, the department communicates with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) if a child is identified as having Native American heritage to help identify the specific tribe, provide tribal notification, and begin communicating about placement preferences.

The department has an established protocol for identifying Native American children and communicating with tribe(s) as outlined in SOP 4.2 Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The department collaborates with each tribe on a case by case basis regarding case planning and permanency planning for Native American children. There is an ICWA specialist in central office who assists field staff in understanding the ICWA requirements and facilitating discussions with the BIA and tribal agents. SOP contains tools, such as the Indian Child Welfare Act Compliance Desk Aid and Tribal notification letter template to assist staff. In addition, the ICWA central office specialist ensures the following federal mandates are being met:
- Adoptions and Safe Families Act (ASFA) – Public Law 105–89
- Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) – 25 U.S.C. Chapter 21
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) – Public Law 88-352
- Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 (MEPA) as amended by the Interethnic Adoption Provisions of 1996 - Public Law 104-188, Title 1, Subtitle H, Section 1808
- Permanency Prioritization of children ages 0-5

The department makes diligent efforts to place a Native American child with an Indian parent, relative, or tribe whenever possible. In cases where a child is not placed with the identified parent, relative, or tribe, the department communicates and consults with the tribal agent regarding the "Active Efforts" requirement. Customary adoption or permanency planning without the option of terminating parental

rights is an area that many staff are unfamiliar with and is a recognized training need in Kentucky. In addition to access to the central office specialist, workers are given the various resources for reference which are located in SOP 4.2 Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

Recruitment and Development Efforts

Concurrent Planning Foster Homes

The department has resources available to help support foster families in the concurrent planning process. From the point of inquiry, prospective applicants receive information about becoming a foster and adoptive parent. All applicants are required to attend an information meeting which provides an overview of the department's requirements, including provisions in the Adoptions and Safe Families Act (ASFA). The Building Foundations pre-service training includes components related to permanency and concurrent planning and the importance of working with caregivers and birth parents.

The department's SOP reflects the importance of concurrent planning throughout the life of the case. Foster parents often provide feedback that they have difficulty managing expectations throughout the life of the case. Therefore, neither concurrent planning practices nor preparing families for permanency, whether that be reunification or adoption, are not necessarily consistent statewide. This is an area that department needs to strengthen practice in. Feedback is often received through the mentor/mentee surveys that support this through the Foster Parent Mentor Program.

Homes That Accept Siblings

There continues to be a need for more homes accepting sibling groups. In some counties the percentage of need is exceeded, while other counties percentage of need met is significantly low in homes that accept placement of sibling groups. Historically, the department has planned recruitment activities, training, and education that prepares foster parents to accept siblings into their homes. A significant portion of the pre-service training is dedicated to educating the prospective parents about the importance of sibling relationships. The department's SOP even permits exceptions to exceed the maximum number of children to accommodate sibling groups. The state amended administrative regulations in April 2019 to allow for room sharing to accommodate the placement of siblings, absent any risks.

Department staff have been trained that when initially placing siblings in OOHC that placement should be sought that accommodates siblings being placed together, unless there is a compelling reason that it would not be in the best interest of one or more of the children. A Placement with Siblings Tip Sheet and Placement Decision Making Matrix was developed in 2004 to help guide decisions about placing siblings together and remains in SOP today. The decision to separate siblings is based on thorough review and documentation of each case. Diligent efforts to reunite siblings separated in foster care are to be made as soon as possible. When this is not feasible, visits are scheduled between siblings at least monthly. In 2019, the public agency adoption regulation, 922 KAR 1:100, was amended to strengthen language around sibling separation and practice to revisit sibling separation once they are separated. SOP was amended to align with the regulation. When sibling separation is considered beyond the initial placement consideration, staff are provided guidance through SOP 13.9 Sibling Relationship Decisions.

Care Plus and Medically Complex Foster Homes

The department offers two specialized foster care programs for foster parents who have successfully completed the pre-service training. One of the programs, care plus, is designed to assist foster parents

in understanding how to approach and address behavior issues of children placed in their home. The care plus model is based on re-education and the premise that all children can learn new behaviors. The focus of care plus is the foster parent's ability to use behavior modification techniques and skills taught in the curriculum.

The care plus curriculum was recently updated to include the effects of trauma on the growth and development of children. The new curriculum includes the current concepts and vocabulary with additional material to explain the impact of trauma on brain development and a child's day to day behavior. Some current elements of the care plus training will be expanded, such as parenting styles, adult anger management styles, and the connection between the needs, feelings, and behaviors of children.

Children who enter OOHC with medical conditions that require a higher level of care are designated as medically complex by the Medical Support Section within the division. A child who is deemed medically complex is placed into specially trained medically complex foster home. In order to become approved as a medically complex home, foster parents are required to receive twelve hours of medically complex training initially and annually thereafter. They are also required to have current certification in CPR and first aid.

Conferences are held twice annually to allow foster parents to meet their annual ongoing training for medically complex requirements. There are also training options available online. The goal of providing a portion of the training online is to promote more medically complex foster homes and to provide information that can be accessible to them after the training as a reference. There has been an increase in the department's online training capacity over the past few years which now includes training about pediatric head trauma and medication administration. In order to maintain a variety of qualified skilled medically complex foster homes, the department responded to feedback from trainings and private providers and increased the number of Joining Hands Together trainings (the medically complex training) from five specialized medically complex trainings to ten per year. As mentioned, there are also two annual (twelve hour) ongoing trainings held to provide ongoing training to approved medically complex homes. Lodging and meals are provided to foster parents who travel more than 40 miles to attend the trainings.

A request has been made to add an online training for families which would provide information about all resources available to them. The department is pursuing a contract with the University of South Florida to provide Just in Time training as a resource for ongoing training, as well as potentially meeting some pre-service training requirements. This is expected to be implemented in the upcoming fiscal year. The diligent recruitment report reflects that there are 66 approved medically complex public foster homes in Kentucky. Data from the diligent recruitment report indicates that there are 66 medically complex children in out of home care as of April 1, 2019.

Ensuring Educational Stability

The diligent recruitment report is the primary tool used to plan for recruitment activities. The DR includes a statewide, regional, and county breakdown of children placed in OOHC and the characteristics of those children within the nine service regions. One of the state's current placement challenges is proximity of placement and maintaining children in their county of origin. R&C and PCP staff recruit enough homes overall for the number of children placed within their region and counties. However,

when an emphasis is placed on best placement to address behavioral issues, placement with siblings, or other issues, it becomes more difficult to maintain children in their schools of origin. This can result in approved homes reaching full capacity by taking placements from out of county and region.

The department is currently improving methods of capturing data regarding proximity of placement specifically to track children placed in and outside of their county of origin. In January 2019, the department added another data field to the diligent recruitment report, based on feedback from the Diligent Recruitment Steering Committee. The additional data provides the region with the number of children placed outside of the region of removal and shows where they were placed. This data allows the region to see where their children are being placed and also can be used as a recruitment tool. Recently, the department presented this information at the statewide PCC/PCP quarterly meeting to promote using the data as a recruitment tool.

Guidelines have been established and implemented to evaluate school placement at the point of entry into care to maintain a child in his or her school of origin whenever possible. SOP 4.17 Preparation for and Completion of the Ten (10) Day Conference outlines the requirements of frontline staff regarding educational stability, to include what constitute a plan for the child's educational stability.

SOP 4.28 Meeting Educational Needs provides additional guidance for department staff in meeting the educational needs of children in care provides. Additionally, the department and the Kentucky Department for Education (KDE) have a data exchange between the CCWIS and the KDE Infinite Campus database that capture's attendance, behaviors, and grades.

Kentucky Adoption Profile Exchange-KAPE
Formerly known as the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP), the Kentucky Adoption Profile Exchange (KAPE) was renamed in 2018 to better reflect the intent of the program and remove the stigma related to "special needs." KAPE was designed to specifically recruit for Kentucky children who are legally free for adoption but have no identified permanent home. Children registered with KAPE have a child-focused recruiter assigned to them and receive a level of targeted recruitment with increased success by focusing efforts on making communities aware of the need for foster families, expediting adoptive placement, and obtaining permanency for waiting children in Kentucky. The department is currently in the process of partnering with AdoptUSKids to redesign the KAPE website to enhance features in order to more effectively recruit adoptive families.

Identifying children who should be referred to the KAPE continues to be a challenge. The practice of allowing children to remain in foster care without placing them in the KAPE prevents the child from receiving the special recruitment often necessary for placement. Children who remain in foster care without having the benefit of steady recruitment for permanency, regardless of their comfort with the family, are at risk of leaving foster care without a family. Considering that the age of a child and the length of time spent in foster care can affect the child's adoption outcomes, finding a permanent placement as early as possible is imperative.

Programs and Supports for Foster and Adoptive Parents
It is the department's goals to be responsive to foster and adoptive parents and offer programs to support and retain foster and adoptive homes. The department offers a wide array of services to support and retain foster and adoptive families. CHFS Listens is one option offered by the cabinet when

an individual has a general concern, question, or suggestion they would like to share. The public has access to an electronic form available on the cabinet's website at https://chfs.ky.gov/Pages/contact.aspx or can send an email to CHFS.Listens@ky.gov. To receive a response to an inquiry an email address must be provided. CHFS Listens is available to both private and public foster homes.

Foster Parent Mentor Program

The Foster Parent Mentor Program specializes in one-on-one, short-term, intensive coaching relationships, which provide newly approved foster parents emotional encouragement, skill reinforcement, and parenting strategies unique to providing OOHC so as to enhance the quality of care provided and stabilize initial placements. The program matches newly approved foster parents (mentees) with experienced foster parents (mentors) for their first six months of service.

The goals of the program are to:
- Retain newly approved foster parents by providing short-term and intensive coaching, training, support, encouragement, and skill reinforcement;
- Equip newly approved foster parents with a wide variety of parenting strategies unique to providing OOHC;
- Prevent, when possible, any unnecessary disruptions and transitions due to stress and discouragement; and
- Assist newly approved foster parents in applying skills that make their experience both satisfying and successful.

The Foster Parent Mentor Program works in partnership with the department, foster/adoptive parents, the University Training Consortium (UTC), and Eastern Kentucky University (EKU). Meetings are held quarterly with the department. There is ongoing communication with the department's R&C team members as the program's most important linkage is with them. They provide mentor recommendations, offer program feedback, provide opportunities for program promotion during pre-service training, and inform the program when trainees are officially approved as foster parents and thus initiate the matching process. Each Program Coordinator regularly attends R&C staff meetings in their assigned regions to facilitate this communication and receives input on issues that mentors need to be addressing with mentees. Additionally, R&C supervisors receive monthly program reports, as well as program updates during their statewide meetings.

The team members of each Foster/Adoptive Support Training (FAST) program (Adoption Support for Kentucky, Medically Complex Training Program, Foster Parent mentor Program, and the Foster Parent Training Program) administered by the UK College of Social Work's TRC regularly review program services, needs, and linkages. The Foster Parent Mentor Program assists the Foster Parent Training Program by sharing feedback from mentors and mentees regarding the effectiveness of initial and ongoing training for foster parents. Further input is received from mentors on reoccurring themes in their work with mentees that might be addressed through new or updated foster parent training or through information and resources included on the FAST help website. The Foster Parent Mentor Program also encourages mentors to attend an Adoption Support for Kentucky (ASK) meeting with new mentees in an effort to familiarize them with the support and training ASK can provide throughout their foster/adoptive journey.

Foster parent mentors typically make 3-4 contacts with their mentee each month. Mentors initiate conversations about any challenges or struggles that the new family may be experiencing. They then seek to address those concerns from their own experience and training to bring some normalcy to the situation and provide strategies that can help alleviate stress from a position of problem solving. Mentors also attempt to anticipate what the new family may be facing in the days ahead based upon their experience and understanding of the typical placement cycle. The goal is to help prepare the new family for potential challenges and decisions that may arise. This is designed to alleviate surprises and stressful decision-making.

The program distributed a final assessment questionnaire at the end of each mentoring match with a 28.28% return rate. Question 8 asked the mentee to rate their response as either strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree to each of the following statements listed below starting with, "Because of my mentoring experience, I am more…" Respondents either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed to all of the following:

Knowledgeable in working with children: 88.67%
Aware of policy and procedures: 92%
Supported at an emotional level: 85.33%
Able to fulfill my new roles/responsibilities: 92%
Confident in the face of stress common to Foster Parents: 89.33%
Likely to assist birth parents in working toward reunification: 77.33%
Aware of local community resources: 89.33%

Question 13 of the questionnaire asks the mentee to rate on the same scale as mentioned above whether their mentoring experience increased the likelihood that, "I will continue to serve as a Foster Parent." Of the respondents, 82.67% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that indeed their mentoring experience increased the likelihood that they will continue to serve as a foster parent. The following represents the topics of conversations discussed between mentor and mentee and the number of their occurrence:

Managing Expectations & Emotions	**475**
Respite, Babysitting, Child Care	**382**
Communication with R&C Staff	**311**
Behavior Mgmt./Addressing Needs & Fears	**296**
Communication with SSW's	**290**
Healthy Boundaries	**285**
Life Books	**285**
Court Proceedings (Types, Protocol, Attendance, etc.)	**281**
Medical Passport	**277**
Attachment Challenges	**276**
Clothing Letter	**272**
Mission of Mentor Program	**271**
Permanency and its Importance to Children	**270**
Routines, Schedules, Rituals	**265**

Impact of Foster Care on Family	**264**
Ongoing Training Requirements	**251**
Ongoing Support Programs	**248**
Visit Supervision	**248**
Regional Billing	**246**

Below is a description of the number of mentees served per region for 2018 calendar year:

Region	Active Regional Mentors	*New Mentors Trained	Mentor Matches Made
Cumberland	79	16	26
Eastern Mountain	41	10	26
Jefferson	26	3	34
Northeastern	32	7	28
Northern Bluegrass	50	10	65
Salt River Trail	49	3	49
Southern Bluegrass	87	7	61
The Lakes	35	3	44
Two Rivers	59	12	46
Grand Totals	458	71	379
*New mentors trained in 2018 are also reflected in the first column that represents the total number of active mentors serving the program.			

Mentor/Mentee Personal Contacts for 2018

Region	**Contacts**
Cumberland	469
Eastern Mountain	391
Jefferson	388
Northeastern	477
Northern Bluegrass	946
Salt River Trail	804
Southern Bluegrass	917
The Lakes	911
Two Rivers	665
Total Contact for 2018	**5968**

2018 Program Coordinator Activity

- Attended regional R&C staff meetings, mentee and mentor orientations, and a variety of meetings to collaborate with both the sponsor and partners.
- Received, analyzed, and processed an average of 133.5 mentor monthly contact summaries each month, or 1602 for the year, with a 65.82% average return rate.
- Provided match management for 379 matches, including the following:
  - 2 week courtesy calls   758
  - 60 match questionnaires   764

- 90 day courtesy calls   794
- Final evaluations   343
- Provided mentor orientation (one-on-one or group) for 71 new mentors.
- Provided mentee orientation during pre-service training to a total of 926 potential public foster families.

Several updates to the program's website occurred in 2018 providing mentors and mentees greater access to relevant and helpful information, as well as user-friendly tools designed to enhance the mentoring experience. The web-based training for mentors that launched enables the program to orient new mentors in an effective, efficient, and consistent manner. Due to this, the program saw an increase in the number of new mentors orientated.

SOP 12.5 Pre-Service Training Requirements for Foster and Adoptive Parent Applicants was revised to include completion of the FAST resources web-based training prior to approval. This web-based training features the Foster Parent Mentor Program, along with other programs and services sponsored by the department to provide support and training to Kentucky's foster/adoptive parents. This change ensures prospective foster/adoptive parents receive information in a consistent manner regarding services available to them.

The program anticipated an increase in 2018 mentor matches due to relative and fictive-kin caregivers becoming approved department foster homes for child-specific placements. However, at the time these families were referred to the Foster Parent Mentor Program, many had been caring for their relative child for an extended period and declined services. This resulted in fewer matches than anticipated. Several of these caregivers remarked that a mentor would have been helpful when the child first came into their care. Given this, program staff and department program liaisons determined that mentor referrals for these families should be submitted following the completion of the Informational Meeting and their decision to move forward with becoming a foster home. The intent of this change is to offer mentoring when it is needed most, which is at or near the time of placement. Approval for these homes can take a while depending on the schedule of pre-service classes, home study completion, and submission of required documents by the family. As the needs of relative caregivers and fictive kin vary from traditional foster parents, the program will continue to work toward identifying what those specific needs are and develop or refine current mentoring practices to meet those needs.

Given the above, the department has drafted new SOP that would require R&C personnel to submit a referral to the Foster Parent Mentor Program for mentoring services for all department foster parents, excluding child-specific homes. For all foster home types, except child-specific, this will occur at the time the home is approved. This is different from current practice as some R&C personnel submit referrals at the time of placement. Further, some refer every family and some do not. This new SOP would also require that R&C personnel refer child-specific foster parents once they attend the informational meeting and decide they want to move forward with becoming a foster home. This will ensure that all DCBS foster parents have an opportunity to receive mentoring.

<h1 style="text-align:center">Adoption Support for Kentucky (ASK)</h1>

Adoption Support for Kentucky (ASK) specializes in the utilization of peer-led support groups to offer pre and post adoptive support and services to foster/adoptive parents throughout the state. Support and information are also provided by phone, e-mail, or through one-on-one meetings with local Adoptive Parent Liaisons (APLs). ASK provides the opportunity to share resources, suggestions, frustrations, and successes with those who share the experience of adoption. Adoption is a unique experience and ASK exists to provide a continuum of proactive advocacy, ongoing support, and specialized training in an effort to prevent pre-adoption disruption and post-adoption dissolution. ASK services are available to families formed through state, private, relative, or international adoption. They are also available to foster/adoptive parents, relative caregivers, and those considering foster care and adoption.

There was an increase 2018 in attendance at ASK meetings statewide. ASK meetings provide support and two hours of ongoing elective training credit. The increase in attendance during 2018 may be due to some participants having completed mandatory foster parent training requirements. It may also be attributed to ASK promotional efforts, such as increased program visibility due to the ASK Facebook page, as well as APLs representing the program at community events at least quarterly.

The ASK Virtual Interaction Pilot (VIP) program launched in 2018 in two service regions. Two ASK APLs were recruited to facilitate each of the groups. ASK-VIP participants met synchronously for approximately one hour per week via a virtual video conferencing platform that allowed participants to see one another. The pilot was 10 weeks and a total of 27 adoptive parents participated. The groups continued to convene regularly after this time. Based on positive feedback from both participants and facilitators, the program plans to offer five ASK-VIP groups in 2019. Further, the program will explore how ASK might provide training for foster/adoptive parents virtually.

In 2019, new strategies will be considered for recruiting and retaining ASK childcare providers (independent contractors). Consistency among these providers helps ensure that the children attending support groups with their caregivers receive the best care possible. It also alleviates the burden of parents arranging for childcare so that they can more readily participate in ASK meetings.

During the adoption awareness campaign in 2018, there were 700 postcards containing white ribbons distributed statewide that included information about children in Kentucky that are awaiting adoption. A profile frame for Facebook users was created to promote adoption awareness and the ASK program.

The following highlights the types of ASK Facebook posts that were made in November using #NAM2018 #adoption:
- Link to new KAPE website;
- Information from White Ribbon postcard regarding Kentucky's waiting children;
- Link to the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's Finding Forever Families: A Step-by-Step Guide to Adoption;
- Link to Adoption is a Lifelong Journey - A book written from the perspective of an adopted child aimed at helping adults understand what kids are going through;
- Link to AdoptUSKids;

- The importance of listening to adoptee voices, and a link to the video series by Angela Tucker (adult adoptee) with adolescent adoptees called, The Adopted Life;
- A news story about a woman who helped an adoptive mother learn to care for her child's hair, and encouragement to support foster & adoptive families in your community;
- The Child Welfare Information Gateway's video gallery featuring adoptees and adoptive families; and
- An article featured in a local newspaper for National Adoption Month on TRSR APLs Antoine & Jeremiah Smith-Rouse regarding their adoption journey.

A professional development event for APLs was held April 13-14, 2018. This provided training and information to enhance their capacity to provide peer support and training to Kentucky's foster/adoptive parents. Further, ASK collaborated with the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) to provide relevant training and professional development to its APLs through live webinars. During 2018, these included the following:
- August 12th, "Challenging Behaviors" with Barb Clark & Kim Stevens, NACAC;
- October 3rd, "Moving from Foster Care to Adoption" with Maris Blechner, M Ed, LCSW; and
- November 14th, "Self-Care for Support Leaders and Caregivers" with Barb Clark & Kim Stevens, NACAC.

The program held a professional development opportunity on June 2, 2018 for its childcare providers and plans to hold another one in 2019. This event included a review of program policies and procedures and training related to child development, the impact of trauma on children, confidentiality, and more.

ASK Face-to-Face Meetings and Training for 2018

ASK Statistics (January 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018)
There are 56 training topics currently available in the ASK Training Library. One training is presented by an APL at each ASK meeting. Foster parent participants receive two hours of ongoing elective foster parent training credit at each meeting. Training is also provided by APLs in a one-on-one setting with foster/adoptive parents as requested by their R&C supervisor.
309 support groups were held across all 9 service regions.
2,460 parents were served through ASK support groups. *This number may reflect adults who attended a support group more than once in 2018.
336 new parents participated in ASK support groups.
1,849 children received childcare services provided by ASK during support group meetings. *This number may reflect children who attended a support group with their caregiver and received childcare services more than once in 2018.
35 parents received one-on-one training.
1,975 phone calls were made to 908 foster/adoptive parents.
505 emails were sent to 1,037 foster/adoptive parents
2,486 support texts were sent to 713 foster/adoptive parents.
1,258 support activities (i.e. FP posts, private messages) were made through social media to 1,532 foster/adoptive parents.
323 foster/adoptive parents received support through 375 face-to-face interactions.

467 ASK promotional flyers were posted in the community.
Promoted ASK among 94 foster/adoptive parents by attending meetings or trainings offered by The Network and local association meetings.
27,203 ASK contacts to promote the program were made by APLs. *Includes contacts made through mass email distribution.
693 contacts were made by APLs at pre-service meetings across the state.
5,984.97 total hours of service were reported by APLs serving families throughout the Commonwealth

The Kentucky Foster & Adoptive Parent Training Support Network

The Kentucky Foster & Adoptive Parent Training Support Network (The Network) consists of 15 regional parent led teams throughout the state. These teams provide peer support in time of crisis and stress including foster/resource parents who are under investigation, recruitment of prospective foster/adoptive parents, and provide training to improve the skills resource parents need to deal with the issues they will encounter in fostering and adopting. Teams include experienced and trained foster parents and department representatives. Network members are required to provide training annually to foster parents. "Super Saturday" trainings are conducted within the regions. As mentioned in the introduction, Network members submitted diligent recruitment plans for the first time during 2019 in an effort to structure their activities. The below data was provided to the department by the Network for the period of January 2019 through March 2019, of recruitment contacts that Network members engaged in.

RECRUITMENT CONTACTS		Jan 2019	Feb 2019	March 2019	Total
	Personal One on One	781	309	428	1518
	Personal Speaking	27	44	2	73
	Recruitment Materials	9222	6359	3016	18597
	Faith Based	783	1648	262	2693
RECRUITMENT TOTALS		10813	8360	3708	22881
TEAM TOTALS		21410	14845	12152	48407

Fostering Futures-The Kentucky Foster & Adoptive Care Association (KFACA)

Fostering Futures-The Kentucky Foster & Adoptive Care Association (KFACA) is sponsored by the department. The Association was formed in 1988 and their mission is to serve as a united voice to effectively advocate and support children in OOHC and the families that serve them with the highest integrity. Members of the KFACA help unite foster and adoptive families, social workers, and interested citizens across Kentucky. The KFACA is current working to rebuild membership after the association experienced some reorganization over the past two years. Current members of the Kentucky Foster/Adoptive Care Association are:

- Able to collectively advocate for the needs of foster and adoptive families at both a state and national level;

- Able to network in a group that offers information on how to work in partnership with a child's worker;
- Able to attend scheduled membership meetings to learn from other foster and adoptive parents; and
- Able to meet with DCBS to discuss issues pertinent to DCBS foster homes.

The Kentucky Foster Adoptive Caregiver Exchange System (KY FACES)

The Kentucky Foster Adoptive Caregiver Exchange System (KY FACES) website launched on August 25, 2018. KY FACES is a valuable means for Kentucky foster and adoptive parents to find resources and information to assist them in navigating their journey in fostering and adopting. KY FACES rolled out in several phases and will be developed further. Citizens are provided with an overview of foster care and adoption, requirements to move forward with becoming a foster parent, benefits that are offered, and links to available statewide resources. Points of contacts have been established in the local regions in order to keep the website up to date for the public and current foster and adoptive families. Resources can be added to the site that may be region specific as feedback is received about the site. Some statewide resources include information about the MCOs and finger print scan sites. Citizens can submit questions online which go directly to central office staff for response. The site also features videos, testimonials, and frequently asked questions. In October 2018, citizens interested in becoming a department foster and adoptive parent were able to begin submitting foster parent inquiries and applications online. Additionally, they are able to create an account and track their inquiry, home study approval progress, and other case specific information online. Current foster and adoptive parents are able to view case specific information such as training, placement screens, payments, and the case manager information for children in their home. To support the new work flow, new SOP was formulated related to inquiry response. This requires the department to respond to a foster parent inquiry within consistent timeframes and by various methods. The idea is that good customer service starts with the first phone call.

In February 2019, the new Kinship Navigator Section on KY FACES was launched. It provides information and quick links to supportive services for relative and fictive kin caregivers raising kin children, including assistance providing for a child's medical or mental health care needs, child care assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-food benefits), Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program (KTAP-cash assistance), Kentucky Children's Health Insurance Program (KCHIP), information about becoming an approved foster home, and other helpful services. The Kinship Support Hotline is 877-565-5608 and is staffed 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Foster Parent Engagement

Western Kentucky University (WKU)

One method the department uses to assess needs, barriers, etc. is through foster parent surveys. Over the past several years, surveys have been used in different ways from region to region. WKU conducted a survey of 255 foster parents. Below are the reported overview and highlights from the survey results.

Overview and Highlights of Data
- Data collected through statewide electronic Qualtrics survey in the summer of 2018.
- 6-point Likert style items were used for responses considered for subscales, leaving 3.5 as the midpoint or "neutral".

- Subscales were developed through a principal components analysis, achieving appropriate loadings.
- Three key items were created as 10-point scales, designed for the use as dependent variables (overall satisfaction, intention to remain a foster parent, intention to remain a foster parent with agency).
- Bivariate t-tests produced several significant differences, primarily associated with public vs. private. Of those foster parents surveyed, the respondents were primarily more satisfied with private agencies than the public agency.
- One-way ANOVAs had limited value in determining any meaningful differences.
- Multiple linear regression models identified key factors predicting overall satisfaction and likelihood of remaining a FP in next 12 months.
- Future research should seek a larger sample, increasing quantitative value and affording avenues for more sophisticated analyses.

University of Kentucky (UK)

UK invited the department and private foster parents to take part in a research study to help understand their experiences of stress, burnout, and satisfaction related to their role as a foster parent. The survey was designed to be convenient and confidential, and foster parents were not required to provide their name and all information collected in the survey will be presented as group averages. The purpose of this study is to better understand the experiences of foster parents caring for trauma-exposed children. This will help identify additional ways to support caregivers and foster families. The survey was issued in April 2019 and will be concluded in May 2019. As of May 1, 2019, there were approximately 800 respondents.

GovDelivery

A significant deficit noted was the low response rate in the WKU survey. A barrier was the limited means of communication with the foster and adoptive parents in Kentucky. Since the time the survey was issued, the department established a partnership with GovDelivery. GovDelivery is a web-based e-mail subscription management system that allows a member of the public to subscribe to news and information related to the department. Regional points of contacts were established to manage regional communication with foster and adoptive parents, and statewide leads were also established for statewide communication. TWIST staff adds and removes foster and adoptive parents into GovDelivery to maintain and active directory.

Training

The department utilizes the Training Record Information System (TRIS) to track and analyze training records for foster and adoptive families. In December 2017, TRIS and Kentucky's CCWIS system known as TWIST, developed an interface to allow R&C staff to view foster and adoptive parents training records easily through TWIST. TRIS is managed by EKU. The partnership with EKU has continued and division staff have worked with EKU to enhance TRIS to be more user friendly for families and staff. An enhanced Foster/Adoptive TRIS system is expected to roll-out in July 2019. The department also partners with EKU to coordinate several mandatory trainings, include the Building Foundations pre-service training. EKU has been involved in the development of the Kinship Navigator training that will roll-out in May 2019.

The Foster Parent Training Program is a program managed by the UK TRC that collaborates with the department, other public universities in Kentucky, community partners from across the state, and foster families to identify foster parent training and informational needs. Services include training and curricula development and dissemination, as well access to relevant resources and information. The program is guided by the needs of foster families, recognizes the critical link between knowledge management and performance enhancement, and strives to promote and enhance the safety, permanency, and well-being of Kentucky's children and families.

The department is very flexible in scheduling pre-service trainings. Trainings are scheduled to meet the needs of the participants, including weekends and evenings. In addition, the department offers one-on-one training if participants cannot attend the group trainings. Trainings are held across the region to ensure accessibility and reduce travel for participants. Foster and adoptive parent training requirements for private and public agencies are outlined in 922 KAR 1:350 and 922 KAR 1:310. In addition, SOP 12.5 Pre-Service Training Requirements for Foster and Adoptive Parent Applicants provides guidelines for the training requirements for all foster/adoptive parent applicants including standards once homes are approved. The training requirements are similar for both public and private agencies. Regulations were aligned in 2015 and were further aligned in 2019 with the federal model foster home standards.

All prospective foster and adoptive parents are required to attend an information/orientation meeting which provides an overview of the program. Characteristics of children in care, and needs and issues children have experienced with trauma are discussed during this meeting. Building Foundations is the pre-service training curriculum used by the department, however a private agency can utilize a separate curriculum if approved by the department. Applicants learn more about the types of children as they progress through the pre-service training to help them make an informed decision. The department provides the Building Foundations training of trainers to private agency staff and specialized training for medically complex foster parents. Ongoing annual training is provided twice a year in a conference format to medically complex providers for both private and public foster parents. The department partners with the UK to provide trauma informed care training specifically designed for foster parents. This is a required ongoing training along with psychotropic medications provided or approved by the department, sexual abuse curriculum provided or approved by the cabinet; and behavior management and skill development. Required online trainings include Pediatric Abusive Head Trauma; First Aid and Universal Precautions; Medication Administration; Medical Passports; and Reasonable and Prudent Parenting.

The department contracts with the Consortium for Children to provide training twice per year related to the Structured Family Analysis Evaluation (SAFE) home study tool that Kentucky utilizes for home studies. Private agencies may attend this training if there are openings. The department plans to contract with SAFY, a PCP, for the 2019-2020 fiscal year, for assistance with home study completion due to an increase in volume. This will act as a support for R&C staff.

Historically, department staff have collaborated with the UTC to strategize and plan for annual training. Annual meetings are scheduled with the UTC to discuss and plan for an annual training calendar for foster parents, budget for planned events, brainstorming about new training, etc.

The department also works with the UTC to development curricula for the academy. The department meets quarterly with UK to discuss activities, barriers, etc. related to ASK, the Foster Parent Training program, the Foster Parent Mentor Program, and the Medically Complex Program. The department also

meets with Murray State University quarterly to discuss the Foster Parent Network program's recruitment efforts, activities, barriers, etc.

The department currently has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Orphan Care Alliance (OCA) to provide pre-service training statewide. OCA has been a long-standing supporter of the department. OCA participated in the Building Foundations training of trainers and collaborates currently with the Office of the First Lady's Uniting Kentucky recruitment initiative to offer pre-service training. OCA also assists with gathering the home study documentation that accompanies the homes study approval process.

Exploring Cultural Diversity and Prejudice is a required training and prepares staff for working with the diverse population of clients in the human services system to avoid discriminatory practices. The training creates a safe learning environment for examining individual biases and how those biases can relate to culturally competent service delivery and for exploring the misinformation often present about other groups. Through small group work, discussion, facilitated storytelling and role play, participants learn to undo stereotypes about race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, class, disabilities, and other differences which will assist in the development of case plans. R&C staff use information gleaned from this training to develop techniques for localized recruitment.

Peer-to-peer sharing is a strategy currently being used in Kentucky to share effective strategies for recruitment within regions. Recruitment is a standing agenda item for the quarterly statewide R&C meeting and a portion of this time is used to allow regions that are using best practices in recruitment to share their successes with their peers. Additionally, this time is used to allow community partners and stakeholders the opportunity to speak with R&C staff and receive feedback.

Strategies for Linguistic Barriers

The department has several resources in place to address linguistic barriers. Resources include:

- A language access section located in central office in Frankfort (502-564-7770). This number can be used to access an interpreter.
- An internal website that contains a list of qualified staff interpreters. Interpreting is not the main focus of their job, so availability may be limited. This resource is recommended if the staff person is located in an office close to where the interpreter is needed.
- Approved community based partner interpreters can be found at the same internal website. These are independent contracts. When staff know in advance that they will need an interpreter, they may contact an interpreter from the list and check for availability.
- When requesting an interpreter for a language other than Spanish, staff look for those approved as organizations and check with them to see if they offer the language needed.
- Staff may call Language Services Associates, Inc., at 1-800-305-9673.
- The Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) is charged with oversight in the provision of interpreter/captioning services for deaf and hard of hearing consumers statewide. Statue pertaining to the duties of the commission can be found at KRS 163.510. AC coordination services are provided at no cost to individual state agencies.
- Many department forms are available in the two most predominate languages which are Spanish and English.

Non-Discriminatory Fee Structures

From the onset of potential placement, families are provided an array of services to support the opportunity for placement. This includes reimbursement for travel expenses to visit the child, therapeutic family counseling, and pre and post placement support. Foster parents receive a per diem based on the needs of the children and the skill level of the parents. Adoptive parents negotiate a subsidy based on the needs of the child. Reimbursement for fees is provided in a timely fashion, typically within 30 days when all documentation has been adequately submitted.

Kentucky provides reimbursement for all post adoption services (POS) or purchase of service involving adoptions from foster care, both in-state and out of state. For out of state cases, where placements are made through private agencies, an adoption services contract is made between the department and the agency facilitating the adoption for the family prior to placement. The contract outlines expectations including reporting schedules which are to take place at specified times during the adoption adjustment. Also included in the contract is the amount to be paid to the agency for services and the expected time frame from placement to finalization. Fee amounts vary but stay within policy limitations. The amount is agreed upon after collaboration between the department and the agency and can vary depending on the services rendered. The reports consist of family preparation, child and family adjustment, effort to resolve issues resulting from the placement, placement dates, progress reports, and the adoption finalization date. The PCP agreement includes a provision that allows reimbursement for facilitation of an adoption and services for post-adoption support. Approximately 60% of Kentucky's children in foster care are placed with a private child placing agency. If a child in a private child placing agency home becomes available for adoption the home transfers to the department for adoption only. However, the agency may provide additional services. The department is leveraging the federal title IV-E funds at 50% of the adoption penetration rate. DCBS paid $54,726.67 of these payments in QE 12/31/18 to PCP agencies. The department claimed the adoption only penetration rate (79.17% for the last quarter) for a total of $43,329.65. The federal portion was 50% so the department received $21,664.83 for the federal grant. The department will continue to work with private child placing agencies to engage children and families in preparation for adoption. To help offset the cost of adopting from foster care, the department provides a onetime fee reimbursement of $1,000 to be applied to legal fees associated with the adoption.

The state regulates several aspects of the independent and private agency adoption process as it pertains to fees. Those regulations can be found through the following links:

- **199.493 Prohibition against payment of attorney's fees of biological parent without court approval -- Penalty.** (1) No adoptive parent, proposed adoptive parent, agency, or intermediary shall pay the attorney's fees of a biological parent for any purpose related to an adoption action except as approved by the court. (2) Any person who violates subsection (1) of this section shall be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.
- **199.590 Prohibited acts and practices in adoption of children -- Expenses paid by prospective adoptive parents to be submitted to court.** (1) A person, corporation, or association shall not advertise in any manner that it will receive children for the purpose of adoption. A newspaper published in the Commonwealth of Kentucky or any other publication which is prepared, sold, or distributed in the Commonwealth of Kentucky shall not contain an advertisement which solicits children for adoption or solicits the custody of children. (2) A person, agency, institution, or

intermediary shall not sell or purchase or procure for sale or purchase any child for the purpose of adoption or any other purpose, including termination of parental rights. This section shall not prohibit a child-placing agency from charging a fee for adoption services. This section shall not be construed to prohibit in vitro fertilization. For purposes of this section, "in vitro fertilization" means the process by which an egg is removed from a woman, and fertilized in a receptacle by the sperm of the husband of the woman in whose womb the fertilized egg will thereafter be implanted. (3) No person, association, or organization, other than the cabinet or a child-placing institution or agency shall place a child or act as intermediary in the placement of a child for adoption or otherwise, except in the home of a stepparent, grandparent, sister, brother, aunt, or uncle, or upon written approval of the secretary. This subsection shall not be construed to limit the Cabinet for Health and Family Services in carrying out its public assistance under Title IV-A of the Federal Social Security Act program in accordance with KRS Chapter 205. This section shall not be construed to prohibit private independent adoption or the right to seek legal services relating to a private independent adoption. (4) A person, agency, institution, or intermediary shall not be a party to a contract or agreement which would compensate a woman for her artificial insemination and subsequent termination of parental rights to a child born as a result of that artificial insemination. A person, agency, institution, or intermediary shall not receive compensation for the facilitation of contracts or agreements as proscribed by this subsection. Contracts or agreements entered into in violation of this subsection shall be void. (5) A person, organization, group, agency, or any legal entity, except a child-placing agency, shall not accept any fee for bringing the adoptive parents together with the child to be adopted or the biological parents of the child to be adopted. This section shall not interfere with the legitimate practice of law by an attorney. (6) (a) In every adoption proceeding, the expenses paid, including but not limited to any fees for legal services, placement services, and expenses of the biological parent or parents, by the prospective adoptive parents for any purpose related to the adoption shall be submitted to the court, supported by an affidavit, setting forth in detail a listing of expenses for the court's approval or modification. (b) In the event the court modifies the expense request as it relates to legal fees and legal expenses only, the attorney for the adoptive parents shall not have any claim against the adoptive parents for the amount not approved.

- **199.473 Placement of children by private person -- Home study required -- Temporary custody -- Background check -- Removal.** (1) All persons other than a child-placing agency or institution, the department, or persons excepted by KRS 199.470(4) who wish to place or receive a child shall make written application to the secretary for permission to place or receive a child. (2) Prior to the approval of an application to place or receive a child, the fee required pursuant to subsection (13) of this section shall be paid and a home study shall be completed. The purpose of the home study shall be to review the background of the applicant and determine the suitability of the applicant to receive a child, taking into account at all times the best interest of the child for whom application to receive has been made.

Conclusion

The Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan provides an overview of the comprehensive diligent recruitment plan currently implemented in Kentucky, as well as future plans for the next five years. Kentucky's plan has continued to adapt to meet the diverse needs of the children in care and

enhance the agency's ability to respond to the unique qualities present in Kentucky's communities. The plan is ever changing to accommodate factors such as caseloads, budgetary constraints, legislative changes, complexity of cases, and the relationships with community partners such as the court system. The department recognizes the many strengths incorporated in current practices, but also acknowledges challenges that need to be addressed.

The CCWIS and TRIS systems provide data collection that informs and guides agency efforts to recruit foster and adoptive homes that meet the needs of the children. From this data, the department recognized the need to recruit for children that are a part of a sibling group, older youth, and minority children. Using this data, regional teams and the Network plan recruitment activities that target the specific populations that reflect the needs of their region. This includes methods such as developing brochures, videos, child specific recruitment models, public service announcements, foster parent engagement events, readily available pre-service training, and ongoing calendars of recruitment and training activities. One area of recognized need is the ability to find homes equipped with the skills necessary to parent children with significant behavioral and psychological needs.

In 2019, the department focus will continue to empower R&C staff with the knowledge and skills to engage foster parents in training and skill building to overcome the identified barriers while focusing on the programs best practices that have proven successful. The department has intentionally engaged foster parents in workgroups and surveys and will continue to gain feedback. The department has intentionally reviewed and amended SOP to reflect the agencies emphasis and value of partnership between parents and foster parents.

The department has applied for a Kinship Navigator grant. The department hopes to partner with the UK TRC to implement the Kentucky Kinship Information, Navigation, and Support (KY-KINS) program. KINS is a programmatic endeavor designed by researchers, trainers, and staff at the UK TRC, and is designed to be a complementary programmatic component to the continuum of kinship navigator services already in existence. The purpose will include fostering and developing effective, enduring peer-to-peer relationships between kinship caregivers and paraprofessional peer supporters, as well as virtual peer support groups in pilot regions, with the hope to expand statewide.

The department is exploring the optional Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) available to states under title IV-E of the Social Security Act. The GAP program would allow relatives to pursue approval as a foster parent and then accept legal guardianship or permanent custody after six months. Often, relatives are deterred from pursuing approval as a foster parent due to the possibility of their family's members' rights having to be terminated in order for the child in their home to achieve permanency. The GAP program will allow the child to achieve permanency without termination of parental rights and also allows the relative to continue to receive some financial assistance. These factors coupled with the implementation of the new relative service array and permanency calls will reduce the length of time children are in OOHC and improve permanency outcomes. It is through the vision of dedicated department staff that progress will be advanced. The department will continue to enhance technology, such as KY FACES, to further improve recruitment and retention of quality foster and adoptive parents with the ultimate goal of supporting children and their families.

The department is focusing on improving practices around post-adoption and post-permanency services for caregivers. This will require a continued shift in the permanency culture within the department. One approach for shifting the current culture is the implementation of the culture of permanency

training statewide. Additionally, the department is considering implementation of The National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI) in 2020 to have an increased focus in the area of post-permanency well-being for families.