

To: DCF/DMCPS Administrator
DCF Area Administrators
Child Placing Agency Directors
Child Welfare Agency Directors
County Departments of Community Programs Directors
County Departments of Human Services Directors
County Departments of Social Services Directors
Group Home Providers
Tribal Social Service/Indian Child Welfare Directors
Private Child Placing Agencies
Residential Care Center Providers
Shelter Care Providers
Tribal Chairpersons

From: Fredi-Ellen Bove 
Administrator

Re: Foster Home Recruitment Activities

PURPOSE

Currently, Wisconsin is experiencing an increase in the number of children in out-of-home care due to a number of factors, including the rise in opioid abuse which disproportionately impacts younger children. As a result, child welfare agencies are struggling to identify and recruit enough foster homes to meet the increasing need. In addition, Foster Care Coordinators are experiencing an increase in their workload related to relative placements and licensure due to the increase in children in out-of-home care living with relatives. In many counties, Foster Care Coordinators have other responsibilities, such as serving as ongoing caseworkers and Kinship Care workers. As a result, child welfare agencies are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit a sufficient number of new foster homes on their own.

BACKGROUND

There are approximately 4,500 foster homes and 1,800 Kinship Care homes serving approximately 6,300 foster care and Kinship Care placements statewide. There are 127 agencies that license foster homes throughout Wisconsin. Of these 127 agencies, there are 72 counties, 44 private child placing agencies, and 11 tribes, that license foster homes.

The current Wisconsin administrative rule for foster parent licensing, Ch. DCF 56, requires licensing agencies to recruit a pool of foster parents: who are interested in and capable of working with the types of children who are commonly placed by that agency; assess and screen families who are interested in becoming foster parents; and develop foster homes to meet the needs of a specifically identified child in need of placement.

There are three different types of foster home recruitment: general, targeted, and child specific. Child welfare agencies often struggle the most with recruiting targeted and general foster homes. There are current resources and supports throughout the state to assist agencies with general, targeted, and child specific recruitment, such as assistance from the State Permanency Consultants, the Geographic Placement Resource System, and the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center (FCARC) managed by the Coalition for Children, Youth, and Families.

The most effective resource for recruitment is individuals who themselves have had a positive experience

fostering. When licensed foster parents speak positively about foster care in their communities to other interested families, friends, neighbors, and community members, others are encouraged to become licensed foster parents as well.

The information and plan below will assist agencies in recruiting new foster homes.

INFORMATION SUMMARY

To assist foster home licensing agencies in recruiting qualified foster parents, the Department is implementing a series of recruitment activities which will be implemented during fiscal year 2018. The recruitment series has two components.

Part One – Increase capacity within child welfare agencies to recruit:

The Department will partner with the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center to host a series of recruitment activities, which will increase capacity within child welfare agencies to recruit. These activities are open to all foster home licensing agencies throughout the state, including public, private, and tribal licensing agencies. Participation is voluntary. If an agency chooses to participate, it is expected that all agency staff with a role in foster home recruitment will attend the recruitment sessions.

As part of the recruitment activities, the agency will:

- Conduct an assessment of need specific to their agency.
- Create a recruitment plan with assistance from the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center.
- Learn how to use their current licensed foster parents as a recruitment resource.

In addition, as part of these activities, the FCARC will train and coach licensed foster parents to assist in recruiting foster homes within the participating communities. The Department will provide licensing agencies reimbursement funds for costs incurred by their licensed foster parents who participate in recruitment activities for their time, travel, child care, and mileage. Agencies will submit requests for the reimbursement and the Department will provide the funds to the agency. Once awarded, the agency will provide a stipend to reimburse their licensed foster parents. Agencies will determine the amount of the stipend to provide to their licensed foster parents who participate, up to \$50 per hour for their time. Reimbursement for the costs of travel, child care, and mileage shall be for the actual costs incurred and shall not exceed the state rate for these expenses.

The state rate may be found on the State of Wisconsin Pocket Travel Guide, <https://dpm.wi.gov/Documents/BCER/Compensation/PocketTravelGuide.pdf>

The request for these funds shall be submitted to the Department on form DCF-F-5210-E: Foster Parent Recruitment Request for One-Time Expense Reimbursement. Requests for reimbursement will be processed quarterly in January, April, July, and October. Agencies will be reimbursed through their SPARC contract with the Department.

Licensing agencies should register for these events through the Coalition at the web addresses located on the attachment. Once registered, it is expected that licensing agencies complete the full recruitment activities. Attached to this memo is a detailed summary of each recruitment activity, the date of the activity, the location, the intended audience, and the activity format.

Part Two – Reward foster parents who successfully recruit new licensed foster homes:

The Department will continue to support child welfare agencies in their recruitment of new licensed foster homes by providing licensed foster parents with a gift card with a value of \$100 for successfully recruiting new licensed foster parents. This is open to any foster parent licensed by a public, private, or tribal licensing agency. Foster parents are the greatest recruiter of new foster parents. Foster parents who successfully recruit new foster parents throughout the state will receive a gift card with a \$100 value from the Department.

Newly licensed foster parents recruited through a licensed foster home will complete and submit postcards to the Department, which will identify the foster parent(s) who recruited them. The postcards can be submitted to the Department through the mail on pre-addressed and postage pre-paid postcards. The Department will monitor the submission of the cards on a monthly basis. Once a new foster parent is successfully licensed and the postcard is submitted, upon verification by the Department of foster home licensure, the Department will provide a monetary reward to the licensed foster parent who recruited the licensed foster home. In addition, the Department will provide notification to the licensing agency of the foster parent recruiter's reward. It is important to note that the newly licensed foster parent does not need to become licensed by the same agency as the foster parent recruiter; but can become licensed by any agency in the state to care for children in the public child welfare system.

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT: Out-of-Home Care Specialist
 Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care
 (608) 422-6937

MEMO WEB SITE: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>

Links: DCF-F-5210-E: Foster Parent Recruitment Request for One-Time Expense Reimbursement, <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms>
 State of Wisconsin Pocket Travel Guide, <https://dpm.wi.gov/Documents/BCER/Compensation/PocketTravelGuide.pdf>

Attachment Recruitment Activity Descriptions

**Part One: Increase Capacity within Child Welfare Agencies to Recruit
Recruitment Activity Descriptions**

Title	Description	Date and Location	Intended Audience	Format
<p>Series Overview and Introduction</p> <p>There is no agency commitment required to participate in this session.</p>	<p>This initial session is an overview and introduction to key concepts related to targeted recruitment as well as an introduction to this consultation series. Content includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Recruitment vs. Targeted Recruitment • Recruitment plans • Understanding your resources • Recruitment teams • Setting realistic goals • Using Foster Parent Champions • GPRS and recruitment • Gathering and understanding data • Commitments and next steps • Stipends for foster parents 	<p>August 22, 2017 10:00am – 2:00pm UW-Extension Bldg. 3365 W. Brewster St., Appleton, WI Registration: https://appletonrecruitmentlaunch.eventbrite.com</p> <p>August 28, 2017 10:00am – 2:00pm GEF-1, Room D203 201 E. Washington Ave Madison, WI 53704 Registration: https://madisonrecruitmentlaunch.eventbrite.com</p>	<p>Directors and managers from counties, private Child Placing Agencies, and tribes.</p> <p>Foster Care Coordinators may also attend, but agency leadership is <i>required</i> to attend.</p>	<p>In-Person and Conference Line:</p> <p>Dial-in number: 1-866-843-8301 Conference Code: 2981453896</p>
<p>The following 5 sessions are focused on specific skills related to targeted recruitment. Agency commitment is required to participate in these activities.</p>				
Title	Description	Date and Location	Intended Audience	Format
<p>Webinar #1</p>	<p>This webinar will focus on the topics of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different Types of Recruitment • Using Data 	<p>9/20/17 10:30am – 12:00pm Local Agencies Registration: https://recruitment5partseries.eventbrite.com</p>	<p>Any team member responsible for recruitment in the agency.</p>	<p>Webinar</p>
<p>Webinar #2</p>	<p>This webinar will focus on the topics of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and Development • Customer Service • Response System 	<p>10/4/17 10:30am – 12:00pm Local Agencies Registration: https://recruitment5partseries.eventbrite.com</p>	<p>Any team member responsible for recruitment in the agency.</p>	<p>Webinar</p>

**Part One: Increase Capacity within Child Welfare Agencies to Recruit
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Title	Description	Date and Location	Intended Audience	Format
Webinar #3	This webinar will focus on the topics of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messaging, Marketing & Materials 	10/18/17 10:30am – 12:00pm Local Agencies Registration: https://recruitment5partseries.eventbrite.com	Any team member responsible for recruitment in the agency.	Webinar
Webinar #4	This webinar will focus on the topics of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment Teams—Foster Parent Champions, Community Partners • Relationship Building 	11/1/17 10:30am – 12:00pm Local Agencies Registration: https://recruitment5partseries.eventbrite.com	Any team member responsible for recruitment in the agency.	Webinar
Webinar #5	This webinar will focus on the topics of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Agency Recruitment Plans • Implementing Agency Recruitment Plans 	11/15/17 10:30am – 12:00pm Local Agencies Registration: https://recruitment5partseries.eventbrite.com	Any team member responsible for recruitment in the agency.	Webinar
Foster Parent Champion Training	This session is designed for foster parents serving as agency Foster Parent Champions who are actively involved in recruiting new foster parents. During this session Foster Parent Champions will learn specific recruitment skills and strategies that they can utilize.	11/18/17 10:00am – 3:00pm Wisconsin Dells Registration: https://recruitment5partseries.eventbrite.com	Any foster parent acting as a foster parent champion for a county, Private Child Placing Agency, or tribe.	In-Person

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Title	Description	Date and Location	Intended Audience	Format
<p>Status check, consultation, and agency support</p>	<p>The purpose of the monthly status checks is to ensure plans are moving forward. Coalition staff will help participants think about what's getting in the way, challenges, and barriers to recruitment.</p> <p>Each participating entity would be assigned a Coalition staff to offer consultation, as needed, and to facilitate status checks.</p> <p>Status checks may be individual or in group settings depending on the participants. This will be decided once the committed participants are identified.</p>	<p>Status check, consultation, and agency support</p>	<p>Any team member responsible for recruitment in the agency.</p>	<p>Status check, consultation, and agency support</p>
<p>Lessons Learned: Assessing and adjusting your agency recruitment plan</p>	<p>The purpose of this session is to learn from each other about: how the agency recruitment plans went, what was learned, and how the plans need to be adjusted. Participants will have the opportunity to present their data, their agency recruitment plans, the outcomes, and lessons learned. The group will be able to collectively brainstorm strategies and solutions.</p>	<p>To Be Determined Spring 2018</p>	<p>Primary recruitment agent and/or recruitment team members, agency directors, managers, and supervisors.</p>	<p>In-Person</p>