



State of Rhode Island  
*Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families*



**2021 STATEWIDE PLAN FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF FOSTER FAMILIES**

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## Introduction

The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) is committed to the goal that all children and youth should be cared for in a safe, supportive family setting. To support this goal, DCYF is focused on partnering with the community and its leaders and organizations who can [Be An Anchor](#) for children and families involved in Rhode Island's child welfare system.

Be An Anchor is Rhode Island's comprehensive community engagement campaign to support foster care recruitment and retention. Our [kinship](#) caregivers,<sup>1</sup> [traditional](#) and [therapeutic foster families](#), pre-adoptive, and other [resource families](#) are "Anchors" for children and families served by DCYF. The Rhode Island 2021 Statewide Plan for the Recruitment and Retention of Foster Families reflects the philosophy and strategic initiatives to ensure that DCYF and its partners are able to recruit a diverse pool of individuals who can Be An Anchor, and that our Anchors are well prepared and supported to care for children.



Further, these initiatives also signify the vast societal changes that have occurred in 2020. This partner-based plan focuses on the key values of our children, our families, our communities, and our commitment.

Across the country, the child welfare system faces universal challenges, and these must be acknowledged in order to take be successful in our efforts related to the recruitment and retention of foster families. These include:

1. The child welfare system is complicated and has many stakeholders, however, some foster families express that their opinions and contributions to a child's team are not consistently valued. The system is imperfect, but **efforts must be made to continually educate system staff and other stakeholders about best practices in foster care, and further, family and youth voice must be central to inform larger system change and improve retention efforts.**
2. Foster families are sometimes frustrated due to communication challenges among the members of a child's team. It is **vital for our system to build in the time and value related to keeping foster families informed. The relationships with foster families are crucial.**
3. Families of color are overrepresented in the child welfare system, and while efforts must be made to address this disproportionality, a simultaneous effort must be made to ensure that the diversity of our resource families must represent the races, ethnicities, spoken languages, cultures, identities, geographies, and experiences of the children, youth and families we serve. **Diversity, equity, and inclusion must be valued in our system practice and perspective.**

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<sup>1</sup> A kinship caregiver is someone known to a child, most likely a relative. In some cases, family friends, teachers, and coaches can be identified as "fictive kinship caregivers". Traditional Foster Families are supported directly through DCYF, and care for children of all ages. The Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families also contracts with ten private foster care agencies to provide foster care services for children in the child welfare system in therapeutic foster homes. Private agency partners specialize in providing services for foster families who care for foster children who have higher levels of need. All foster families are collectively referred to as "Resource Families". *This plan will refer to the recruitment of all non-kinship foster families.*

4. There are times where a child is placed with a foster family that may not be well-prepared to care for that child's specific needs. As a result, foster families are often disengaged after an ineffective matching process. **Open dialogue must occur with families from the onset of the recruitment process to ensure a full understanding of a family's expectations, needs, and abilities, in order to set them up for success in their match and care of children.**
5. The child welfare system focuses heavily on the needs of children, youth and families served by the Department, it is **important to ensure that our supports for foster families are also responsive to their individual needs.**
6. There are often negative public connotations about the child welfare system. **Desired outcomes, success stories, prevention and support programming must be proactively shared to highlight the positive impact of the system to the community.**

## Systemic Impacts & Foster Care Timeline

*Prior* to 2020-2021 there have been a series of [systemic factors](#) that have previously limited recruitment success:

1. Repeated change in Department leadership, impacting strategic direction from 2017-2019:
  - a. 2017 – DCYF holds contracts with ten private foster care agencies from a large system-wide procurement in 2015. Agencies and DCYF independently recruit foster families. Agencies express challenges with this approach and request additional DCYF support to collaborate on recruitment efforts. DCYF also hires two staff members designated to support “Family Search and Engagement” to increase utilization of kinship caregivers.
  - b. 2018 – In an effort to help agencies increase recruitment, and address the available resources, DCYF shifts its strategy and directs changes to the foster care system so that all non-kinship foster families will be associated with one of the private agencies.
  - c. 2018-2019 – Two procurement opportunities are issued (Requests for Proposals) to formalize changes to the foster care system. After extensive stakeholder feedback and discussions about the vision of foster care, both procurements are rescinded.
  - d. 2019 – DCYF engages with the ten existing private foster care agencies to renegotiate existing contracts as well as advocates for additional investments to DCYF resources to support recruitment and retention efforts. Additionally, DCYF successfully engages in an effort to resolve an extensive backlog of unlicensed kinship providers.
2. Lack of understanding of the capacity/intent of the existing pool of resource families with regards to matching criteria and family’s permanency goals.
3. Limited personnel capacity and resources to invest in concrete recruitment activities.
4. Missed opportunities for early-matching criteria discussions with families to engage in child-specific recruitment.
5. Different groups seeking stakeholder feedback, but not always connecting the dots on the outcome or next steps.
6. Non-family-centered approach did not focus on the family’s entire experience as a member of the system.
7. Incomplete data sets. Specifically, the DCYF data system, RICHIST (RI Children’s Information System):
  - a. does not collect ethnicity of foster families;
  - b. only captures the race of one foster parent per family;
  - c. only captures one language per family (often resulting in English being identified for families who are bilingual); and
  - d. is not intuitive when a foster family’s matching criteria changes.

8. Inefficiencies in the licensing process, including but not limited to:
  - a. having too many people contact the family for different elements of licensing requirements;
  - b. mailing paper packets to providers versus electronic methods; and
  - c. staff that are not available at family friendly hours

In 2020, to address these systemic factors, the Department engaged in a strategic plan called “Right Sizing Foster Care”. Right Sizing Foster Care is a strategic effort to ensure that children are cared for in the most appropriate setting based on their needs (at home, by a relative or fictive kinship (non-relative) caregiver, a non-kinship foster family, or in rare cases, a congregate care or hospital setting). This included a series of activities to build a stronger foundation for the recruitment and retention system:

1. Contract amendments go into effect to ensure that agency clinical and case management service delivery standards are consistent and targeted towards children with higher levels of need;
2. A new rate structure is established and implemented to ensure that all foster families were provided equitable financial resources to support the needs of the foster child(ren) in their care;
3. DCYF hires 14 FTEs to invest to support the recruitment and retention (eight caseworkers, two supervisors, two junior recruiters, one communications specialist, and one foster parent trainer); and
4. Utilizing federal grant funds, DCYF develops an array of programming to support Kinship Caregivers including, but not limited to: a Peer to Peer Mentoring Program and Support Groups (contracted through two community organizations).

These system changes and investments, as well as the [strategies](#) outlined later in this plan address the systemic challenges directly. Data related to homes initially licensed in the past four state fiscal years clearly demonstrates that the system shift has contributed to an increase in the number of licensed foster families available for placement:

| <b>State Fiscal Year<br/>(July 1 – June 30)</b> | <b>Private Agencies<br/>(10)</b> | <b>DCYF</b> |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------|
| SFY 2021 (so far)                               | 50                               | 103         |
| SFY 2020  | 114                              | N/A         |
| SFY 2019  | 109                              | N/A         |
| SFY 2018  | 123                              | N/A         |

Source: RICHST 724, 5/1/2021

## System Leadership

The Department of Children, Youth and Families has combined responsibility for child welfare, juvenile justice, children's services, and behavioral health for the State of Rhode Island. DCYF was



Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families

established in 1980 and is statutorily designated as the "principal agency of the state to mobilize the human, physical, and financial resources available to plan, develop, and evaluate a comprehensive and integrated statewide program of services designed to ensure the opportunity for children to reach their full potential." ([RI General Law §42-72-5](#))

DCYF's mission is to partner with families and communities to raise safe and healthy children and youth in a caring environment. In this mission, it is the Department's responsibility to be a leader in the statewide efforts to recruit and retain foster families.

The Department's Division of Resource Families was developed in 2017 to effectuate a coordinated system of programs and resources for all of Rhode Island's foster families. The Division includes units to support the recruitment, training and development, licensing, matching, placement, support, and retention of foster families.

The Rhode Island foster care system is built on a public-private partnership. In this model, DCYF holds contracts with ten Private Foster Care Agencies<sup>2</sup>. The eleven (11) entities work together to support all foster homes in the state. In the event that a child requires out-of-home care, and DCYF is not able to identify a suitable kinship caregiver, there are two types of non-kinship foster families:

1. *Traditional Foster Families* who are supported directly through DCYF, and generally care for foster children with typical needs.
2. *Private Agency Foster Families* who are supported by their chosen agency, and generally care for foster children who have higher levels of need with the support of specialty services and clinical supports from the agency.

This mixed-delivery partnership seeks to ensure a diverse pool of foster families who are able to care for all children who require out of home care, while ensuring that foster families receive the supports to help them to be successful in their foster care journey. However, in ongoing collaboration, private foster care agencies have expressed three key operational challenges regarding recruitment:

1. Rhode Islanders outside of the child welfare system do not understand the relationship between DCYF and a private foster care agency.
2. DCYF, as the system leader, needs to ensure clear communication on the recruitment strategies that are being used to ensure that duplication can be avoided.
3. The pandemic has impacted face-to-face recruitment activities for partners.

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<sup>2</sup> Each agency provides an overview of their specific array of services starting on page 12.

As a result, the Department has identified the following strategies and activities to support the efforts of our private foster care agency partners:

1. Provide system-wide leadership and technical assistance for recruitment plans, ensuring that private agencies do not oversaturate any specific recruitment source.
2. Coordinate system-wide opportunities to plan for recruitment, training, licensing, and matching.
3. Make available a Be An Anchor branding and social media toolkit, which can be personalized by agency.
4. Create a letter providing a summarization of the relationship between DCYF and private agencies that agencies may customize and include in initial communications with a new organization or recruitment source.
5. Distribute a quarterly recruitment and retention summary to private agency partners and internal staff highlighting system updates on the recruitment pipeline, newly licensed families, notable matches, as well as successes and challenges.
6. Identify clear and efficient processes for prospective or current non-kinship foster families to transfer to or from the Department or a private agency, to meet their family's needs most effectively.
7. Provide, at no cost to private foster care agencies, access to Binti, the web-based portal for foster care recruitment and licensing.
8. Offer each agency the opportunity to receive quarterly consultation from the Department's communications staff.

## Recruitment Partners

The Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (<http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/>) partners with a number of entities to support the child welfare system and the recruitment and retention of foster families. The importance of engaging and empowering the voice of children, youth and families served by our system, and who serve our system, is paramount. They are experts, and their knowledge, experiences, views and ideas must be central to our goals. Government entities contracted private agencies, and other community partners also collaborate closely on this effort.

### Government Entities:

1. **Office of the Child Advocate**  
<http://www.child-advocate.ri.gov/>



The Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) serves as the oversight agency to the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). In this role, the OCA is responsible for monitoring the operation of each unit within the Department to ensure compliance with internal policies and protocols, state law, and federal law. In addition, the OCA monitors data and trends to ensure DCYF operates within the best practices of child welfare and identifies systemic change needs when necessary.

The OCA monitors each child open to DCYF to protect the legal rights of children in State care and to promote policies and practices which ensure that children are safe, that children have permanent and stable families, and that children in out-of-home placements have their physical, mental, medical, educational, emotional, and behavioral needs met.

2. **Rhode Island Children's Cabinet**  
<http://www.kids.ri.gov/>



The Children's Cabinet is a committee consisting of state agencies that serve children and families. Together, state agencies collaborate to put families at the center of government services, supports, and programs to ensure that children ages birth to twenty-four can thrive. Governor Gina Raimondo has charged the Children's Cabinet with increasing third grade reading proficiency in Rhode Island -- a key focus of this effort has been connecting children in DCYF care with the highest quality services and supports, including evidence-based Family Home Visiting and high-quality child care and Pre-K. More information is available at <http://www.kids.ri.gov/>. Key Partners include: Executive Office of Health and Human Services <http://www.eohhs.ri.gov/>; Department of Human Services <http://www.dhs.ri.gov/>; Department of Health <https://health.ri.gov/>; Department of Education <https://www.ride.ri.gov/>.



## Contracted Private Foster Care Agencies:

### 1. Alliance Human Services, Inc.

<https://www.alliancehhs.org/Foster-Care-Adoption-Rhode-Island>



Alliance Human Services provides foster care services to children and youth with emotional or behavioral disorders, developmental disabilities, are medically fragile, or are in the juvenile justice system. Often, the children we serve have been placed unsuccessfully in homes from other agencies or come from more restrictive settings. Children placed with Alliance experience success through placement stability, and through achieving permanency by returning to their family or other permanent placement that best suits their needs. In order to support these children, we provide ongoing counseling and case coordination. We recruit and train a diverse population of experienced and compassionate adults who, as foster parents, provide homes that are safe, nurturing and supportive.

### 2. Boys Town New England

<https://www.boystown.org/locations/new-england/Pages/Foster-Family-Service.aspx>



Boys Town Foster Care program includes individualize support to families and children to encourage stability, connection, and healing. All Boys Town foster parents are trained to utilize an evidence-based behavioral program which assists to change behavior and teach emotional regulation. Foster parents are provided with 24-hour on-call support, regular in-home consultation, clinical supports, access to on-going training, licensing support, and opportunities for children and families to connect with one another.

### 3. Child & Family

<https://childandfamilyri.com/our-services/treatment-foster-care/>



Child & Family's Foster Care Program utilizes a trauma-informed approach with two comprehensive levels of support to provide care to our youth. Our program provides therapeutic support to individuals who require additional resources to achieve success in the home, school, and community.

We believe that providing these youth with a consistent and supportive family setting while helping them learn to regulate, feel connected, and build strengths is crucial to their success.

### 4. Children's Friend

<https://www.cfsri.org/programs-and-services/foster-care/>



When crisis hits a family, it may not be safe for children and their parents to live together. The reasons vary – medical catastrophe, mental illness, substance abuse, and children's behavior problems are just a few. To help the family through the crisis, temporary separation is sometimes necessary. Our foster parents provide a safe, temporary place for children to live while their birth parents confront their problems. Children's Friend takes great care to meet the needs of everyone involved in the experience of fostering children.

5. **Communities for People**

<https://www.communities-for-people.org/fostercare/>



Communities for People

The Communities for People Families for Children Program (FFC) is a community-based, intensive service using evidence-based and trauma informed practices to support children in or transitioning into foster or pre-adoptive homes referred through DCYF for enhanced support. We serve youth birth to age twenty throughout the State of Rhode Island.

6. **Community Care Alliance**

<https://www.communitycareri.org/ProgramsServices/ChildFamily/ChildWelfare/TherapeuticFosterCare.aspx>



Our licensed foster families provide a structured and therapeutic family environment for children and youth who can safely be placed in the community but who cannot live with their biological families. The program utilizes a team-based approach to help foster parents meet the emotional & behavioral needs of the children placed in their homes.

7. **Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health**

[www.devereuxri.org](http://www.devereuxri.org)



Devereux Therapeutic Foster Care offers year-round training and 24/7 wrap around, trauma informed support to our foster families as they meet the needs of the youth placed in their home. Our families care for youth from birth to 21 years old. Devereux helps to coordinate treatment services to meet the individual needs of the youth and family. We are invested in supporting every child's permanency plan and collaborate with all treatment team members to advocate for the best interest of the child, while supporting our families on every step of the foster care journey.

8. **Family Service of Rhode Island**

<https://www.familyserviceri.org/child-and-family-wellbeing>



FSRI provides comprehensive case management and clinical services to foster families as they navigate the foster care and adoption system. We have been serving the RI community for over 125 years! Through the Trauma Systems Therapy (TST) model, we provide weekly in home clinical and case management support to all of our foster families and children. TST is a model used for children and adolescents who have been exposed to trauma. We provide additional TST training to our foster parents to support the youth placed in their home.

## 9. The Groden Network

<https://grodennetwork.org/fostercare/>

### Groden Center Treatment Foster Care



Established in 1993, Groden Center Treatment Foster Care Program (GCTFC) provides treatment level foster care for a diverse population of children and youth with special needs (0-21 years old) and matches them with licensed treatment foster homes across Rhode Island. Our team of Licensed Behavior Analysts, LICSW, and Master level case managers, provide an individualized treatment plan for every child to successfully develop and grow while maintaining connections to their community. GCTFC foster parents are provided with on-going 365/24/7 support and services, specialized training and supervision, to help meet the child's treatment goals and ensure a successful foster care experience. When you join the GCTFC family, we are with you every step of your foster care journey.

## 10. NAFI Rhode Island

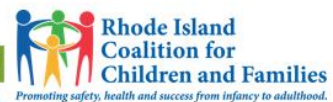
<https://www.nafiri.org/services/foster-care/>



NAFI's Professional Parent Program provides foster care for children and youth birth to age 21 across RI. NAFI foster care is made up of a proud and diverse community of foster parents who enjoy the collaborative approach that NAFI provides. Each parent is supported by an experienced team of case managers, clinicians and licensing workers to provide on-going support and supervision; while each child is given opportunities to make memories through year-round activities and events aimed at strengthening our community.

### Community Organizations:

1. The Village for Rhode Island Foster and Adoptive Families <https://www.rivillage.org/>
2. Adoption Rhode Island <http://adoptionri.org/>
3. Foster Forward <https://www.fosterforward.net/>
4. Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families <https://www.riccf.org/>



## Measures of Success

There are many factors that contribute to our goal where all children and youth are cared for in a safe, supportive family setting. These factors include specialized engagement with kinship caregivers, recruitment of new foster families, improved education and development of foster families, careful matching processes, opportunities to share family voice, and exceptional support through communication and services. Strategies in all these practice areas contribute to the following:

### **Performance Measures**

To support positive outcomes for the health, safety, well-being and permanency of children and youth in foster care, DCYF seeks to accomplish the following by June 30, 2022:

1. License 200 new traditional foster families (with an aim of approximately 25 new families per quarter), to ensure that there are ample opportunities to match children with a well-prepared family.
2. Increase the racial and ethnic diversity of foster families by five percentage points, to support the cultural needs of children more effectively in foster care.
  - a. Currently, only [18.6%](#) of licensed foster families identify as a race or ethnicity other than white/non-Hispanic.
3. Sustain or improve the percentage of children in foster homes who are placed with kinship caregivers, with particular focus on expanding efforts to engage fictive kinship caregivers.
  - a. Currently, [68%](#) of children in foster homes are placed with a relative or fictive kinship caregiver.
4. Reduce the percentage of children and youth who are in a non-family setting and have a [Level of Need \(LON\) Tier Score](#) of 1, 2 or 3 by five percentage points.
  - a. Currently, [35.5%](#) of children and youth in non-family settings have a Level of Need Tier Score of 1, 2, or 3.
5. Develop baseline data for future analysis and measures:
  - a. Increase the number of foster families who can support sibling placements;
  - b. Increase the diversity of foster families who identified as part of the LGBTQQIAAP+ community;
  - c. Enhance the overall stability of children placed with foster families and reduce negative disruptions from foster homes;
  - d. Increase the satisfaction of foster families before, during, and after placement on targeted areas (including but not limited to communication, case management, resources/supports, in role of team member); and
  - e. Improve the retention of foster families over time, with specific focus on newly licensed families.

## Process Indicators

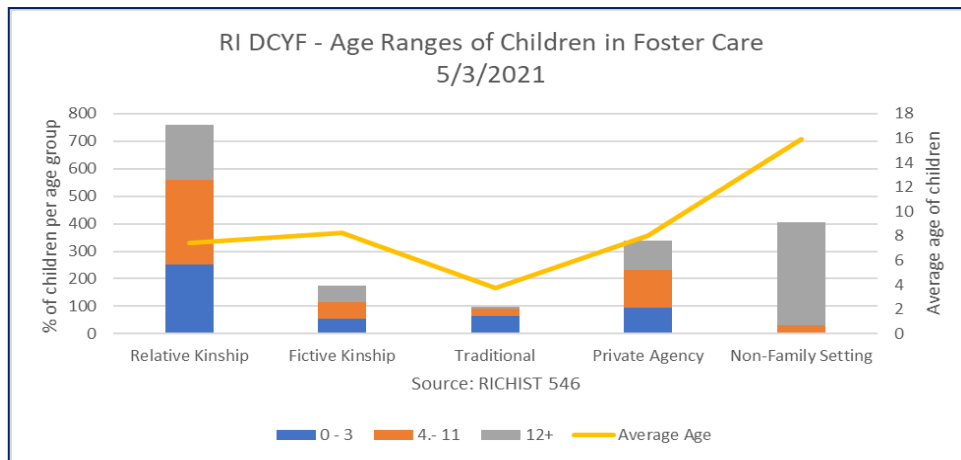
The data points below will be continuously reviewed to provide insight on progress on the implementation of this plan. It should be noted that items marked with an \* indicate that data development is still in process:

1. Number of licensed families by [type](#) (kinship, traditional, private agency).
2. Number of licensed families [with placement](#), by type.
3. Number of licensed families identified as “adoption only” and/or are registered through the State’s Adoption Exchange\*.
4. Number of licensed foster parents by [race/ethnicity](#), [languages spoken](#), [geographic location](#), LGBTQQIAAP+ identity\*, openness to/capacity for child needs\*, and tier score\*, age\*, and size of sibling group\*.
5. Number of families who continue fostering post initial placement\*
6. Number of families in the pipeline who:
  - a. have inquired to be a foster parent;
  - b. have submitted a signed application;
  - c. are awaiting preservice training;
  - d. are engaged in preservice training;
  - e. have completed preservice training; and
  - f. are completing licensing requirements post training.
7. Timeliness of completion of licensure.
8. Percentage of foster families who engage in different recruitment or engagement efforts\*.
9. Satisfaction rates of foster families in core areas (communication with team, case management, resources and supports, education and information provided, feeling of value and inclusion)\*.
10. Number of children in out-of-home care, by placement type and other demographics:
  - a. [race](#) and [ethnicity](#);
  - b. [average age](#); and
  - c. [home city/town](#).
11. Number of disruptions from foster homes where the next placement is a similar or more restrictive environment\*.
12. [Level of Need](#) distribution of children in out-of-home care by placement type.
13. [Maltreatment](#) in foster care by type and placement type.
14. Timeliness to [permanency](#) by type and placement type\*.

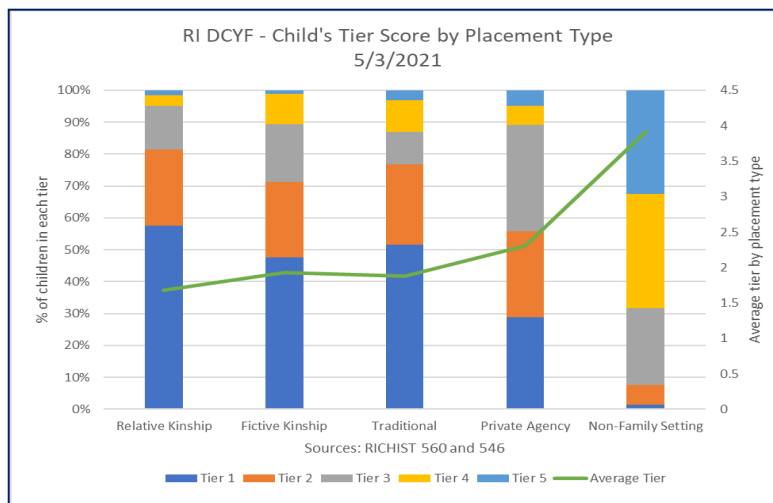
## Baseline Data for Consideration

Nearly 80% of children in Rhode Island, who need to be in out-of-home care, are placed with a foster family, and nearly 70% of those are with a relative or fictive (non-relative) kinship provider. This success was born from and is sustained by an organizational culture at DCYF that believes children and youth belong with families and whenever possible, with people who are known to them. However, there are opportunities for improvement within the populations of children in need of foster care, and the foster families available:

1. The average age of children in foster homes is 7.43, compared to an average age of 15.94 in non-family settings<sup>3</sup>.



2. There are 151 children placed in a non-family setting with a Level of Need Tier Score<sup>4</sup> of one, two or three.



<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of recruitment planning, please note that "non-family setting" includes congregate care settings (such as group homes, assessment and stabilization centers, semi-independent living sits, and residential treatment facilitates), insurance and hospital-based settings, and Independent Living.

<sup>4</sup> The Department assesses all children through a standard assessment called a Level of Need, which has been built from the reliable and validated [Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths assessment](#). The Level of Need assessment results in a Tier Score of 1-5, where a tier score of one is indicative of a child with the lowest level of need in our system. It is critical to ensure success for our caregivers, that we understand the needs of children to know how we can best support them. All types of resource families can care for children of all Levels of Need. However, the Department intends that private foster care agencies seek to support children with tier scores of three, four, and five, and that congregate care settings are only used when clinically necessary for children and youth with the highest level of need.

3. [Recent data](#) of children and youth in out-of-home care by home city/town, compared to the number of licensed non-kinship foster families available, highlights the need to focus efforts on five key cities: Providence, Woonsocket, Pawtucket, Central Falls, and West Warwick, (the first four of which are widely identified as Rhode Island’s urban core). However, it is important to note that within cities such as Pawtucket and Providence there is significant difference in the need among different communities (outlined by zip code), further illustrating the need for a targeted approach to geographic recruitment.
  
4. The Department is also committed to the advancement of race equity and is addressing the disparities in the Rhode Island child welfare system. However, children of color are overrepresented in the child welfare system. For example, 9% of the RI youth population is black<sup>5</sup> but black youth make up 17% of the youth population in out-of-home care. It is critical to ensure recruitment practices that engage diverse populations, to allow the system to better support the cultural needs of children.
  
5. While there is not data on the sexual orientation and gender identities of youth in Rhode Island state care, “a [2019 study](#) found 30.4 percent of youth in foster care identify as LGBTQ and 5 percent as transgender, compared to 11.2 percent and 1.17 percent of youth not in foster care”<sup>6</sup>.

Additional data related to geography, and the demographics of children in out-of-home care and foster families can be found in [Appendix 1](#). This data informs which youth populations should be the direct target of recruitment efforts.



<sup>5</sup> <https://www.rikidscount.org/Data-Publications/RI-Kids-Count-Factbook#821228-family-and-community>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.childrensrights.org/lgbtq-2/> Study from 2019, based on a survey of 895,218 students in California across 2,641 middle and high schools.

## Targeted Populations

The Rhode Island system seeks to recruit and retain a pool of foster families who:

1. ...are diverse, within a range of cultures, races, ethnicities, and spoken languages;
2. ...are from cities and towns across all cities, towns, and villages statewide with targeted focus in Rhode Island's urban core;
3. ...identify as LGBTQQIAAP+;
4. ...represent a breadth of personal characteristics;
5. ...have a range of life experiences; and
6. ...are well prepared to engage with, support, and care for all children who require out-of-home care.

The Department prioritizes kinship (both relative and fictive/non-relative) caregivers, but needs to ensure that there is an abundant number of non-kinship foster families who have the capacity, experience, skills, and willingness to meet the needs of children and youth who:

1. ...are of all ages, with targeted focus on older youth;
2. ...are diverse, within a range of cultures, races, ethnicities, and spoken languages;
3. ...are from cities, towns, and villages statewide, with targeted focus in Rhode Island's urban core;
4. ...are neurodiverse;
5. ...have behavioral or emotional needs;
6. ...are disabled and/or medically fragile;
7. ...identify as LGBTQQIAAP+;
8. ...have siblings in the foster care system with whom placement is preferred; and
9. ...are pregnant or parenting their own child(ren).



## Strategies

### **Our Children; Our Families, Our Communities; Our Commitment**

To achieve desired outcomes, our system must stay centered in the needs and perspectives of the people we serve and develop strategies by engaging and empowering family and youth and incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion as a core value. Our strategies must be developed by asking questions such as:

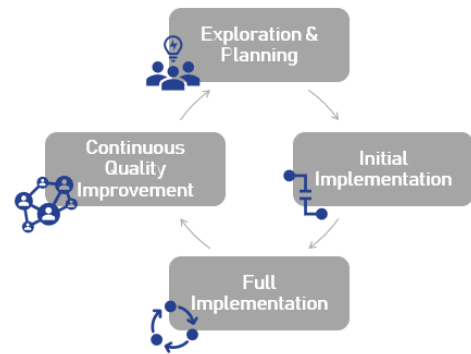
1. How do our stakeholders describe the child welfare system?
2. How do families and youth define their needs?
3. How do foster families describe their inspiration for being an Anchor?
4. Are we effectively recruiting in communities and within populations who are best suited to care for our children?
5. Is the system investing resources in recruitment, or investing differently in retaining families?
6. Are delays in licensure as a result of systemic barriers and/or workflow, or by choice of the family?
7. What are the matching criteria of these families (re: age, need, permanency)?
8. Are these families caring for, or prepared to be matched with a child in need of a foster home?
9. Are we building and sustaining a diverse pool of families who actively take placement of all children in DCYF care?
10. Are experienced foster families taking new placements?



## Project Management

While the Department engages in a variety of strategies to recruit and retain foster families, thoughtful strategic planning is needed to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, and ensure continuity in efforts, initiatives need to be implemented following an intentional path for project management.

For system-level efforts, the Department seeks to actively engage key stakeholders through the cycle of the development phase, program design, process planning, execution, assessment, and modifications.



DCYF as well as each of the ten private foster care agencies, engage in individualized internal strategies to support the full continuum of work related to foster families, along with the following public strategies:

## Planning & Operations

1. Collaborate with community stakeholders on Statewide Recruitment and Retention Plan Revision, and its implementation.
2. Refine a portfolio of branded resources for coordinated and efficient communication and recruitment efforts.
3. Continue implementation of Binti, the web-based portal for foster care recruitment and licensing, as well as matching.
4. Engage in Active Contract Management to ensure accountability for private agency operations and develop solutions to challenges served in these family settings.
5. Convey all resources available to meet the linguistic needs of foster families (e.g. multi-lingual staff members, contracted and community translation services).
6. Complete intensive data reviews into the populations served by the Department to complete a gap analysis related to the diversity of our resource families.
7. Engage in licensing sprint cycles (set periods of time for a set of families to complete the licensing process) for prospective families in varied phases of the recruitment/licensing process.
8. Finalize regulatory revisions and associated support documents to enhance the public's understanding of foster care.
9. Complete and distribute quarterly reviews to ensure that all licensed foster families are viable for future placements.
10. Partner with Children's Alliance of Kansas and State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families to host [TIPS-MAPP](#) Leader Trainings (Trauma Informed Partnering for Safety and Permanence – Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting) to expand the pool of preservice trainers and ensure that trainers are as diverse as the families we serve and seek to recruit.
11. Coordination with New England Child Welfare Commissioner's Group of Foster Care Managers to discuss regional challenges and strategies.

## Recruitment & Awareness

1. Expand messaging scope, by championing staff and agency partners to engage in being part of recruitment efforts by updating their signature to include the Be An Anchor branding and engaging in Departmental social media efforts.
2. Support goal awareness through promotion of "[Rhode to 100](#)" progress.
3. Expand the Department's digital outreach and social media footprint using planned content, different platforms, with the exploration of paid targeted ads, and a non-.gov Be An Anchor website.
4. Plan timetable of virtual information events to occur every two weeks at family friendly hours, and flexibility for personal meetings.
5. Partner with organizations that support and represent youth in foster care to highlight youth voice.
6. Expand proactive print and digital media outreach, highlighting initiatives and families.
7. Schedule preservice TIPS-MAPP trainings to ensure an average of two TIPS-MAPP sessions to start every other month.
8. Maintain strong workflow for application processes and personal applicant connection/entry conversation.
9. Execute month-long awareness campaigns for targeted appreciation, awareness, communications, and virtual programming.
  - a. January – National Mentoring Month
  - b. March – National Social Work Month
  - c. April – National Child Abuse Prevention Month
  - d. May – National Foster Care Month; National Mental Health Awareness Month
  - e. June – National Reunification Month
  - f. September – National Kinship Care Month
  - g. November – National Adoption Month
10. Accumulate branded giveaway materials to incentivize engagement and spread brand awareness.
11. Produce "I am an Anchor" videos featuring foster families and former foster youth.

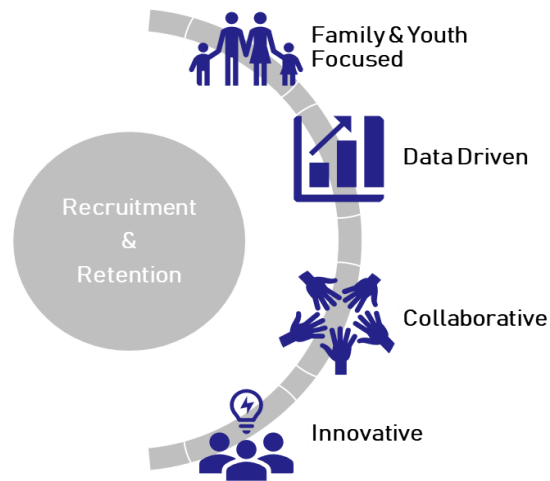
## Matching & Placement

1. Update system reporting structure for placement referrals to have continuous review of children who require placement.
2. Continue concrete and clinical supports for Emergency Response Program.
3. Engage in virtual social events to informally connect youth and families.
4. Complete targeted matching reviews for DCYF and Agency families.
5. Strengthen the familial understanding of placement goals and help them to define personal narrative/goals (foster vs. adoption only vs. blended).
6. Launch Binti Placement module.

## Support & Retention

1. Provide education on the philosophical best practices of foster care for new and existing Division of Resource Families' staff, other DCYF staff, agency and community partners.
2. Commence the Foster Family Advisory Council with a primary goal of bringing DCYF, foster families, and community stakeholders together to drive system improvement. The format will be developed in partnership with foster families and will aim to be solution focused.
3. Develop an internal multi-disciplinary Retention Core Team focused on ensuring a Department wide approach to the support of foster families.
4. Expand Kinship Peer Mentor and Support Group programs to traditional foster families.
5. Engage foster families and biological families in the "Icebreaker" model to enrich shared parenting, build relationships, and provide support to the biological family related to visitation, mentoring, etc.
6. Use enrichment activities and statewide foster care appreciation events to highlight families, create opportunities for family engagement, and increase a natural support network for foster families.
7. Develop a resource family satisfaction survey to be distributed two times per year to gather data and inform Department practice.
8. Expand the online resource library for easy access to information and strategies to address challenging situations (articles, resources, videos, etc.).
9. Provide engagement compensation for families and youth to participate in stakeholder voice activities.
10. Coordinate a comprehensive catalog of in-service training opportunities for foster families with private agencies and community partners, with mixed delivery system (on demand, live webinar, etc.)
11. Develop Trauma Informed Training for childcare professionals to support stability and quality care for children in foster care.
12. Partner with families open to DCYF and youth to discuss shared experiences and needs, and inform system communication and education (with a targeted focus on improving relationships between biological families and foster families).

## Conclusion



This plan provides a range of ongoing and new strategies to ensure that the work of foster care recruitment and retention is viewed as a continuum, focusing on the full experience of our “Anchors”, and ultimately, the outcomes for our most vulnerable children.

To be successful, these strategies must be implemented thoughtfully, and with the collaborative work of stakeholders at all levels of the system, and with an accountability focus on key benchmarks for success throughout the year:

- Summer 2021: Plan for development of data baselines; continue to grow public engagement.
- Fall 2021: Strengthen the support philosophy through the child welfare system; expand support group and peer mentor opportunities.
- Winter 2021/2022: Implementation of the Resource Family Satisfaction Survey; expansion of family leaders for the Foster Family Advisory Council.
- Spring 2022: Promulgation of new regulations; in-person appreciations events; launch pilot to support relationships between foster and natural families.

This work must be done using a data-driven approach, with a targeted focus on engaging and empowering the voices of children and families, in the ongoing pursuit to ensure that **all children and youth are cared for in a safe and supportive family setting.**

## Appendix 1: Data

### Geographical Comparison

#### Data Notes:

- *For the purposes of recruitment planning, geographic data reflects the need for focus, but does not represent the exact number of families needed to meet recruitment targets.*

Table A: Comparison of children needing out-of-home placement by their mother's home zip code (when a valid RI zip code), versus the number of non-kinship licensed families available in the same community.

| Zip Code | City/Town/Village             | # of children in out-of-home placement, who are not placed with a kinship foster family | # of Licensed Non-Kinship Foster Families | Difference |
|----------|-------------------------------|---|---|------------|
| 02895    | Woonsocket                    | 86  | 29  | -57        |
| 02860    | Pawtucket                     | 67  | 29  | -38        |
| 02908    | Providence                    | 50  | 28  | -22        |
| 02903    | Providence                    | 23  | 3   | -20        |
| 02909    | Providence                    | 44  | 30  | -14        |
| 02863    | Central Falls                 | 19  | 7   | -12        |
| 02893    | West Warwick                  | 24  | 15  | -9         |
| 02878    | Tiverton                      | 11  | 5   | -6         |
| 02907    | Providence                    | 31  | 26  | -5         |
| 02882    | Narragansett/Point Judith     | 4   | 0   | -4         |
| 02840    | Newport                       | 18  | 14  | -4         |
| 02891    | Westerly                      | 11  | 7   | -4         |
| 02901    | Providence                    | 4   | 1   | -3         |
| 02887    | Warwick                       | 4   | 1   | -3         |
| 02816    | Coventry                      | 21  | 19  | -2         |
| 02914    | East Providence               | 16  | 14  | -2         |
| 02875    | Richmond/Shannock             | 2   | 0   | -2         |
| 02826    | Burrillville/Glendale         | 1   | 0   | -1         |
| 02804    | Hopkinton/Ashaway             | 1   | 0   | -1         |
| 02835    | Jamestown                     | 2   | 1   | -1         |
| 02838    | Lincoln/Manville              | 4   | 3   | -1         |
| 02876    | North Smithfield/Slatersville | 1   | 0   | -1         |
| 02902    | Providence                    | 1   | 0   | -1         |
| 02894    | Richmond/Wood River Junction  | 1   | 0   | -1         |
| 02885    | Warren                        | 7   | 6   | -1         |
| 02809    | Bristol                       | 4   | 4   | 0          |
| 02830    | Burrillville/Harrisville      | 0   | 0   | 0          |
| 02858    | Burrillville/Oakland          | 0   | 0   | 0          |
| 02823    | Cranston/Fiskeville           | 0   | 0   | 0          |
| 02831    | Cranston/Hope                 | 0   | 0   | 0          |
| 02915    | East Providence/Riverside     | 0   | 0   | 0          |
| 02829    | Glocester/Harmony             | 0   | 0   | 0          |
| 02833    | Hopkinton                     | 0   | 0   | 0          |
| 02873    | Hopkinton/Rockville           | 0   | 0   | 0          |
| 02837    | Little Compton                | 0   | 0   | 0          |
| 02801    | Little Compton/Adamsville     | 0   | 0   | 0          |
| 02842    | Middletown                    | 9   | 9   | 0          |
| 02807    | New Shoreham/Block Island     | 0   | 0   | 0          |
| 02841    | Newport                       | 0   | 0   | 0          |
| 02854    | North Kingstown               | 0   | 0   | 0          |
| 02877    | North Kingstown/Slocum        | 0   | 0   | 0          |
| 02911    | North Providence              | 8   | 8   | 0          |

|       |                               |    |    |    |
|-------|-------------------------------|----|----|----|
| 02824 | North Smithfield/Forestdale   | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 02862 | Pawtucket                     | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 02872 | Portsmouth/Prudence Island    | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 02912 | Providence                    | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 02918 | Providence                    | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 02940 | Providence                    | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 02836 | Richmond/Kenyon               | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 02828 | Smithfield/Greenville         | 1  | 1  | 0  |
| 02881 | South Kingstown/Kingston      | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 02883 | South Kingstown/Peace Dale    | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 02880 | South Kingstown/Wakefield     | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| 02839 | Burrillville/Mapleville       | 1  | 2  | 1  |
| 02815 | Foster/Clayville              | 0  | 1  | 1  |
| 02814 | Glocester/Chepachet           | 2  | 3  | 1  |
| 02802 | Lincoln/Albion                | 0  | 1  | 1  |
| 02892 | South Kingstown/West Kingston | 1  | 2  | 1  |
| 02808 | Westerly/Bradford             | 1  | 2  | 1  |
| 02812 | Charlestown/Carolina          | 1  | 3  | 2  |
| 02818 | East Greenwich                | 7  | 9  | 2  |
| 02916 | East Providence/Rumford       | 4  | 6  | 2  |
| 02825 | Foster                        | 2  | 4  | 2  |
| 02874 | North Kingstown/Saunderstown  | 0  | 2  | 2  |
| 02896 | North Smithfield              | 5  | 7  | 2  |
| 02898 | Richmond/Wyoming              | 0  | 2  | 2  |
| 02817 | West Greenwich                | 2  | 4  | 2  |
| 02859 | Burrillville/Pascoag          | 4  | 7  | 3  |
| 02813 | Charlestown                   | 1  | 4  | 3  |
| 02827 | Coventry/Greene               | 0  | 3  | 3  |
| 02879 | Narragansett/Peace Dale       | 8  | 11 | 3  |
| 02832 | Richmond/Hope Valley          | 0  | 3  | 3  |
| 02921 | Cranston                      | 1  | 5  | 4  |
| 02865 | Lincoln                       | 7  | 11 | 4  |
| 02905 | Providence                    | 18 | 22 | 4  |
| 02857 | Scituate/North Scituate       | 1  | 5  | 4  |
| 02822 | Exeter/Escoheag               | 1  | 6  | 5  |
| 02852 | North Kingstown               | 12 | 17 | 5  |
| 02917 | Smithfield                    | 3  | 8  | 5  |
| 02904 | Providence                    | 20 | 26 | 6  |
| 02910 | Cranston                      | 12 | 19 | 7  |
| 02871 | Portsmouth                    | 3  | 10 | 7  |
| 02886 | Warwick                       | 11 | 18 | 7  |
| 02906 | Providence                    | 7  | 15 | 8  |
| 02889 | Warwick                       | 15 | 24 | 9  |
| 02806 | Barrington                    | 2  | 12 | 10 |
| 02864 | Cumberland/Valley Falls       | 8  | 18 | 10 |
| 02861 | Pawtucket                     | 6  | 17 | 11 |
| 02919 | Johnston                      | 5  | 17 | 12 |
| 02888 | Warwick                       | 4  | 16 | 12 |
| 02920 | Cranston                      | 9  | 23 | 14 |

(Sources: RICHIST 546 & 430; Point in Time: 5/1/2021)

## Children in Out-of-Home Care, by Placement Type

### Data Notes:

- For the purposes of recruitment planning, please note that “non-family setting” includes congregate care, insurance and hospital-based settings, and Independent Living. Private Agency placements include 45 kinship placements that are not duplicated in the kinship data.

Table B: Number of children in out-of-home care, by placement type and average age of child, by placement type

| Children in Out-of-Home Care | Relative Kinship | Fictive Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency | Non-Family Setting | TOTAL |
|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|-------|
| Total                        | 759              | 174             | 99          | 340            | 407                | 1779  |
| Average Age                  | 7.42             | 8.26            | 3.72        | 8.06           | 15.94              | 9.37  |

(Source: RICHIST 546; Point in Time: 5/3/2021)

Table C: Number of children in out-of-home care, by gender identity and placement type

| Gender (#) | Relative Kinship | Fictive Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency | Non-Family Setting | TOTAL |
|------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|-------|
| Male       | 371              | 79              | 57          | 175            | 230                | 912   |
| Female     | 388              | 95              | 42          | 165            | 177                | 867   |

(Source: RICHIST 546; Point in Time: 5/3/2021)

Table D: Percent of children in out-of-home care, by gender identity and placement type

| Gender (%) | Relative Kinship | Fictive Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency | Non-Family Setting |
|------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Male       | 48.88%           | 45.40%          | 57.58%      | 51.47%         | 56.51%             |
| Female     | 51.12%           | 54.60%          | 42.42%      | 48.53%         | 43.49%             |

(Source: RICHIST 546; Point in Time: 5/3/2021)

Table E: Number of children in out-of-home care, by race and placement type

| Race (#)                        | Relative Kinship | Fictive Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency | Non-Family Setting |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| American Indian                 | 1                | 0               | 0           | 2              | 2                  |
| Asian/Pacific Islander          | 4                | 0               | 0           | 8              | 4                  |
| Black or African American       | 131              | 24              | 17          | 54             | 83                 |
| Multiracial (two or more races) | 117              | 35              | 16          | 37             | 43                 |
| White                           | 502              | 113             | 65          | 238            | 271                |
| Unknown                         | 4                | 2               | 1           | 1              | 4                  |

(Source: RICHIST 546; Point in Time: 5/3/2021)

Table F: Percent of children in out-of-home care, by race and placement type

| Race (%)                        | Relative Kinship | Fictive Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency | Non-Family Setting |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| American Indian                 | 0.13%            | 0.00%           | 0.00%       | 0.59%          | 0.49%              |
| Asian/Pacific Islander          | 0.53%            | 0.00%           | 0.00%       | 2.35%          | 0.98%              |
| Black or African American       | 17.26%           | 13.79%          | 17.17%      | 15.88%         | 20.39%             |
| Multiracial (two or more races) | 15.42%           | 20.11%          | 16.16%      | 10.88%         | 10.57%             |
| White                           | 66.14%           | 64.94%          | 65.66%      | 70.00%         | 66.58%             |
| Unknown                         | 0.53%            | 1.15%           | 1.01%       | 0.29%          | 0.98%              |

(Source: RICHIST 546; Point in Time: 5/3/2021)



Table G: Number of children in out-of-home care, by ethnicity and placement type

| Hispanic (any race) (#) | Relative Kinship | Fictive Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency | Non-Family Setting |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Hispanic (any race)     | 179              | 56              | 22          | 103            | 103                |
| Non-Hispanic (any race) | 559              | 116             | 73          | 232            | 301                |
| Unknown                 | 21               | 2               | 4           | 5              | 3                  |

(Source: RICHIST 546; Point in Time: 5/3/2021)

Table H: Percent of children in out-of-home care, by ethnicity and placement type

| Hispanic (any race) (%) | Relative Kinship | Fictive Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency | Non-Family Setting |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Hispanic (any race)     | 23.58%           | 32.18%          | 22.22%      | 30.29%         | 25.31%             |
| Non-Hispanic (any race) | 73.65%           | 66.67%          | 73.74%      | 68.24%         | 73.96%             |
| Unknown                 | 2.77%            | 1.15%           | 4.04%       | 1.47%          | 0.74%              |

(Source: RICHIST 546; Point in Time: 5/3/2021)

Table I: Number of children in out-of-home care, by age range and placement type

| Age Ranges (#) | Relative Kinship | Fictive Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency | Non-Family Setting |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 0-3            | 251              | 56              | 64          | 94             | 3                  |
| 4-11           | 309              | 60              | 26          | 137            | 28                 |
| 12+            | 199              | 58              | 9           | 109            | 376                |

(Source: RICHIST 546; Point in Time: 5/3/2021)

Table J: Percent of children in out-of-home care, by age range and placement type

| Age Ranges (%) | Relative Kinship | Fictive Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency | Non-Family Setting |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 0-3            | 33.07%           | 32.18%          | 64.65%      | 27.65%         | 0.74%              |
| 4-11           | 40.71%           | 34.48%          | 26.26%      | 40.29%         | 6.88%              |
| 12+            | 26.22%           | 33.33%          | 9.09%       | 32.06%         | 92.38%             |

(Source: RICHIST 546; Point in Time: 5/3/2021)

Table K: Number of children in out-of-home care, by LON tier score and placement type and average tier score, by placement type

| Level of Need Tier Score (#) | Relative Kinship | Fictive Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency | Non-Family Setting | TOTAL |
|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|-------|
| Pending Tier                 | 17               | 6               | 0           | 0              | 9                  | 68    |
| Tier 1                       | 473              | 101             | 50          | 119            | 8                  | 661   |
| Tier 2                       | 171              | 37              | 25          | 112            | 21                 | 356   |
| Tier 3                       | 108              | 30              | 7           | 123            | 92                 | 343   |
| Tier 4                       | 29               | 9               | 9           | 35             | 94                 | 201   |
| Tier 5                       | 14               | 5               | 2           | 29             | 117                | 150   |
| Average Tier                 | 1.67             | 1.79            | 1.8         | 2.39           | 3.88               | 2.31  |

(Source: RICHIST 560 & 546; Point in Time: 5/3/2021)

Table L: Percent of children in out-of-home care, by LON tier score and placement type

| Level of Need Tier Score (%) | Relative Kinship | Fictive Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency | Non-Family Setting |
|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Pending Tier                 | 1.84%            | 2.30%           | 0.00%       | 1.76%          | 10.81%             |
| Tier 1                       | 56.39%           | 46.55%          | 51.52%      | 28.24%         | 1.23%              |
| Tier 2                       | 23.45%           | 22.99%          | 25.25%      | 26.47%         | 5.65%              |
| Tier 3                       | 13.57%           | 17.82%          | 10.10%      | 32.94%         | 21.38%             |
| Tier 4                       | 3.29%            | 9.20%           | 10.10%      | 5.88%          | 31.94%             |
| Tier 5                       | 1.45%            | 1.15%           | 3.03%       | 4.71%          | 28.99%             |

(Source: RICHIST 560 & 546; Point in Time: 5/3/2021)

## Licensed Foster Families, by Type

Data Notes:

- *Licensed foster families do not include out of state providers where placement is facilitated through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), or any applicants who have not yet been licensed.*

Table M: Number of licensed foster families, by provider type and number and percent of licensed foster families with placement

| Status                            | Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-------------|----------------|
| Licensed Homes (#)                | 582     | 215         | 422            |
| Licensed Homes with Placement (#) | 432     | 87          | 215            |
| Licensed Homes with Placement (%) | 74.23%  | 40.47%      | 50.95%         |

(Source: RICHIST 430; Point in Time: 5/1/2021)

Table N: Number of licensed foster families, by provider type and race

- *Race categories are limited and are only data is available for one foster parent per family*
- *Ethnicity is not an available data source for foster families*

| Race (#)                        | Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency |
|---------------------------------|---------|-------------|----------------|
| American Indian                 | 10      | 0           | 0              |
| Asian/Pacific Islander          | 4       | 1           | 2              |
| Black or African American       | 99      | 22          | 58             |
| Multiracial (two or more races) | 19      | 8           | 4              |
| White                           | 439     | 158         | 257            |
| Unknown                         | 11      | 26          | 101            |

(Source: RICHIST 430; Point in Time: 5/1/2021)

Table O: Percent of licensed foster families, by provider type and race

- *Race categories are limited and are only data is available for one foster parent per family*
- *Ethnicity is not an available data source for foster families.*

| Race (%)                        | Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency |
|---------------------------------|---------|-------------|----------------|
| American Indian                 | 1.72%   | 0.00%       | 0.00%          |
| Asian/Pacific Islander          | 0.69%   | 0.47%       | 0.47%          |
| Black or African American       | 17.01%  | 10.23%      | 13.74%         |
| Multiracial (two or more races) | 3.26%   | 3.72%       | 0.95%          |
| White                           | 75.43%  | 73.49%      | 60.90%         |
| Unknown                         | 1.89%   | 12.09%      | 23.93%         |

(Source: RICHIST 430; Point in Time: 5/1/2021)

Table P: Number of licensed foster families, by provider type and primary language

- *Data Note: Language categories are limited and only allow one language per foster family*

| Language (#) | Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency |
|--------------|---------|-------------|----------------|
| English      | 559     | 200         | 393            |
| Spanish      | 22      | 15          | 25             |
| Other        | 1       | 0           | 4              |

(Source: RICHIST 430; Point in Time: 5/1/2021)

Table Q: Percent of licensed foster families, by provider type and primary language

- *Data Note: Language categories are limited and only allow one language per foster family*

| Language (%) | Kinship | Traditional | Private Agency |
|--------------|---------|-------------|----------------|
| English      | 96.05%  | 93.02%      | 93.13%         |
| Spanish      | 3.78%   | 6.98%       | 5.92%          |
| Other        | 0.17%   | 0.00%       | 0.95%          |

(Source: RICHIST 430; Point in Time: 5/1/2021)

## Appendix 2: Glossary

1. Kinship Caregiver – A kinship caregiver is someone who is known to the child and has been identified as someone who can provide foster care. There are two types of kinship caregivers:
  - a. Relative Kinship – a family member to the child (often a grandparent, aunt, uncle, or adult sibling)
  - b. Fictive Kinship – someone who has a relationship with the child but not as family (often a teacher, coach, neighbor, or family friend)
2. Traditional Foster Families – Foster families who are supported directly through DCYF, and generally care for foster children with typical needs.
3. Private Agency Foster Families – Foster families who are supported by their chosen agency, and generally care for foster children who have higher levels of need with the support of specialty services and clinical supports from the agency.
4. Resource Family – This term is inclusive and often used when referring to all types of foster families. Kinship caregivers, traditional foster families, and Private Foster Care Agency foster families are all critical partners for the child welfare system because they provide care for children who cannot live safely at home.
5. Be An Anchor – Rhode Island’s community engagement strategy to support foster care recruitment and retention. Our Resource Families are “anchors” for children in DCYF care. It is critical that our “anchors” can care for children/youth in a safe and reliable family setting that is well supported and able to care for the child’s individual needs.
6. Rhode to 100 – DCYF’s current foster care recruitment campaign. DCYF must have the right plan in place to recruit a diverse pool of individuals who can Be An Anchor for all children and youth in DCYF care.
7. Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) – A CANS assessment is a multi-purpose tool developed for children’s services. Versions of the CANS are currently used in all 50 states in not only child welfare, but also, mental health, juvenile justice, and early intervention applications. The tool is used to support decision making. It helps to identify the level of care and service planning a child or youth might need.
8. Level of Need (LON) – An assessment tool DCYF uses for all children and youth requiring out-of-home care. The goal of the LON assessment is to clearly identify what each child’s needs are, what type of homes would be a best fit for their needs, and what services might be needed for that child. The LON assessment tool is the cornerstone of the foster care system.
9. Level of Need Tier Score (Tier Score)– The Tier Score is determined by the LON assessment tool. The LON identifies the intensity of services needed and determines the rate that will be reimbursed to a private foster care agency and the agency’s or Department’s foster home on behalf of a child initially placed with them in out-of-home care. There is a five-tiered foster care structure, with the LON assessment indicating a Tier 1 through Tier 5 score, commensurate with the child’s needs through this assessment. A Tier 1 score is meant to identify children and youth with lower needs, a Tier 5 is meant to identify children and youth with higher needs.

### Appendix 3: Rhode Island 2020-2024 Diligent Recruitment Plan

In accordance with the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994, as amended, the delay or denial of any adoption or placement in foster care due to the race, color, or national origin of the child or the foster or adoptive parents is prohibited. It also requires States to provide for diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom homes are needed. To meet MEPA's diligent efforts requirements, States must have a comprehensive plan that includes:

1. A description of the characteristics of waiting children;
2. Specific strategies to reach all parts of the community;
3. Diverse methods of disseminating both general and child-specific information;
4. Strategies for assuring that all prospective parents have access to the home study process, including location and hours of services that facilitate access by all members of the community;
5. Strategies for training staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities;
6. Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers;
7. Procedures for a timely search for prospective parents for a child needing an adoptive placement, including the use of exchanges and other interagency efforts, provided that such procedures ensure that placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for a same race or ethnic placement; and
8. Non-discriminatory fee structures.

State agencies are required to submit a five-year, comprehensive Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) that outlines initiatives and activities the State, tribe, or Territory will carry out in administering programs and services to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families.

While the elements above are reflected through the 2021 Statewide Plan for the Recruitment and Retention of Foster Families, the specifics of the required Rhode Island 2020 – 2024 Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan can be found at:

<https://fosteringchamps.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/RI-Foster-and-Adoptive-Parent-Recruitment-Plan-2020-2024.pdf>

## **Appendix 4: Additional Resources**

1. FY2019 Rhode Island DCYF Resource Family Recruitment Plan Reflection Summary: <http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/documents/news/fy19recruitmentplan.pdf>
2. A Family For Every Child! Resource Family Evaluation Survey – 2014 from the Diligent Recruitment project funded by the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:
  - a. Resource Parent Experiences with the Child Welfare Licensing Process: <http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/documents/data-evaluation/resource-parent-experiences.pdf>
  - b. Satisfaction with Resource Parenting, Services and Supports and Interest in Continuing: <http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/documents/data-evaluation/satisfaction-with-resource-parenting.pdf>
  - c. Resource Parent Willingness to Provide Care to Specific Populations: <http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/documents/data-evaluation/willingness-to-care-for-specific-populations.pdf>
3. Rhode Island Foster Care Redesign Frequently Asked Questions:
  - a. Overview: <http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/documents/news/English%20-%20Overview%201020.pdf>
  - b. Glossary of Terms: <http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/documents/news/English%20-%20Glossary%20of%20Terms%201020.pdf>
  - c. Level of Need: [http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/documents/news/English%20-%20LON%20FAQ\\_1020.pdf](http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/documents/news/English%20-%20LON%20FAQ_1020.pdf)
  - d. Services and Supports: <http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/documents/news/English%20-%20Services%20and%20Supports%20FAQ%201020.pdf>
  - e. Rates: <http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/documents/news/English%20-%20Rates%20FAQ%201020.pdf>
  - f. Payroll: [http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/documents/news/English%20-%20Payroll%20FAQ\\_1020.pdf](http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/documents/news/English%20-%20Payroll%20FAQ_1020.pdf)
  - g. Placement: <http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/documents/news/English%20-%20Placement%20FAQ%201020.pdf>
  - h. Also available in Spanish: <http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/news/>
4. Annie E. Casey Foundation's: Recruitment, Training, and Support; The Essential Tools of Foster Care; Family to Family Tools for Rebuilding Foster Care: <https://www.aecf.org/resources/recruitment-training-and-support-the-essential-tools-of-foster-care-1/>
5. CHAMPS: Children Need Amazing Parents: Analysis of State 2024-2024 Foster & Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plans: <https://fosteringchamps.org/>
6. Annie E. Casey Foundation's: Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide: <https://www.aecf.org/resources/race-equity-and-inclusion-action-guide/>
7. Annie E. Casey Foundation's: Foster Home Estimator <https://www.aecf.org/m/blogdoc/aecf-FosterHomeEstimatorInstructions-2016.pdf>
8. National Foster Parent Association: <https://nfpaonline.org/>
9. Grandfamilies: <https://grandfamilies.org/>
10. Casey Family Programs: <https://www.casey.org/tag/foster-parent-recruitment-and-training/>
11. Child Welfare Information Gateway: Recruitment Strategies and Tools" <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/permanency/recruiting/recruitment-tools/>
12. Multi-Ethnic Placement Act Overview: [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/mepa\\_powerpoint.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/mepa_powerpoint.pdf)

## **Appendix 5: Children's Rights, Inc. Settlement Agreement**

The Department is responsible for adhere to the following recruitments related to a recruitment and retention plan:

### *Section 12. Foster Home Array*

- 12.1** *DCYF will develop an annual recruitment and retention plan for foster homes in consultation with the Monitoring Team. The plan shall include:*
- a** *Targets for number of foster homes, including targets for special populations, for example adolescents, sibling groups, children with disabilities and medically fragile children, relevant during the period of the plan; and*
  - b** *Foster home retention strategies, such as respite homes, enhanced foster parent training opportunities, and increased visitation with foster parents.*
- 12.2** *DCYF shall implement the annual recruitment and retention plan and make diligent efforts to meet the targets set forth therein, including requests for any additional resources required to meet them.*
- 12.3** *DCYF shall conduct an annual assessment of implementation of the plan over the preceding twelve months to identify any systemic factors that may have contributed to any shortfall in recruitment. DCYF shall publish and make publicly available an annual report setting forth the findings of the assessment including: (a) the numbers of homes recruited and retained by category, (b) the actual number of homes recruited in each of these categories during the twelve month implementation period, and (c) the total number of homes available for child placement in each of the categories at the beginning and end of the twelve month implementation period, and making recommendations for corrective actions to assure sufficient recruitment and retention of homes under the plan.*
- 12.4** *Once all of the Commitments in Sections 1-10 of this Agreement have been deemed to be satisfied and the Court no longer has jurisdiction over those other Commitments then the Commitment contained in Section 12 shall also be deemed to be satisfied and the Court will not have jurisdiction over DCYF with respect to Section 12, or the Commitments contained in Sections 12.1 through 12.3.*