

FACT SHEET

ADOPTION

Mission

To provide support to local agencies in their efforts to decrease the number of children waiting for permanent homes; to prevent discrimination in the placement of children; to identify and recruit permanent families who can meet each child's needs; and to provide support to families to ensure the stability and well-being of the children in their care.

Adoption Services

Adoption is a lifelong process and often involves challenges to families. To assure permanency is maintained, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services provides a comprehensive scope of services to birth parents, adoptive parents and adoptive children, particularly those children who have been in foster care. These services are largely provided by public children services agencies, private child placing agencies, and private noncustodial agencies in collaboration with ODJFS.

AdoptOHIO: Decreasing the Number of Waiting Children

On any given day, more than 22,000 children are living with foster families or in another out-of-home placement setting. Nearly 2,800 of these children are waiting for adoptive families. Children who wait the longest for adoptive families include: African American children; those over the age of ten; and/or children who are part of a sibling group. Maintaining the needed number of families to assure the appropriate placement for each child is an enormous task to accomplish and no one can do it alone. For more information, go to the AdoptOhio web site at:

<http://jfs.ohio.gov/oapl/index.htm>

Ohio Adoption Photo Listing: Recruiting Families

One of the most important tools in recruiting families for waiting children is the maintenance of the Ohio Adoption Photo Listing web site. This web site allows potential families to view pictures and profiles of children who are available for adoption over the Internet and receives on average, 2,000 visitors per month. This site is updated daily with information about children who are available for adoption. For more information, go to: <http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/oapl.query.asp>

Preventing Discrimination in Placement

The Multi-ethnic Placement Act/Inter-Ethnic Placement Amendments (MEPA) of 1994 prohibit discrimination in placing children for adoption as well as from denying or delaying, or otherwise discriminating in making placements on the basis of race, color, or national origin, of a child or a prospective adoptive family, if the child placing agency receives federal funding.

Similarly, federally funded agencies and sub-recipients may not deny or delay the opportunity for any person to become an adoptive or foster parent on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Failure to comply with MEPA can result in a loss of substantial federal funding for Ohio. To ensure statewide compliance with MEPA, adoption services staff work closely with Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' Office of Legal Services, Bureau of Civil Rights, and the federal Office for Civil Rights, in the development of policy, training and the provision of technical assistance to foster care and adoption agencies.

Adoption Statistics

- Statewide, in FFY 2005, there were 1,895 children entering permanent custody; this was a 12 percent decrease from 2,107 in FFY 2004.
- The number of children waiting for adoption decreased from 3,200 in FFY 2003 to 2,800 in FFY 2005.
- The number of adoptions declined from 2,260 in FFY 2004, to 1,989 in FFY 2005. This was an expected decline since the number of children waiting for adoption decreased 7 percent from FFY 2004 to FFY 2005.
- For additional statistics, see the "Adoption Performance Report at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/publications.stm>

Supporting Families Prior to Adoption

Putative Father Registry

The Putative Father Registry is a computerized database maintained by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services for men to register if they believe they may have fathered a child and want to be notified should the child be made available for adoption. The Putative Father Registry is searched as part of the process to determine whether the child's ability to be adopted is at risk. If a child is placed for adoption, the putative father, if listed in the registry, will be notified and can seek legal counsel regarding his rights.

Supporting Families After Finalization - Adoption Subsidies

Several types of financial subsidies are available to assist the adoptive families in meeting the special needs of their adopted child/children.

Adoption Assistance

The Title IV-E Subsidy Program was created by the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980. It provides federal financial support for adopted children who are described as having special needs. In addition to a monthly monetary payment, children who are Title IV-E eligible are entitled to other state assistance and services under the Federal Title XX Program and Medicaid coverage.

State Adoption Subsidy Program

The State Adoption Subsidy program is a financial assistance program which provides monthly maintenance subsidies to adoptive families who adopt special needs children who are ineligible for Title IV-E. The child or children may also be eligible for Medicaid coverage. Public Children Services Agencies are responsible for determining eligibility and administering the state adoption subsidy program.

Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy Program

The Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy (PASSS) Program is designed to assist eligible adoptive families after finalization. Services include medical, surgical, counseling, psychological, psychiatric and residential treatment. Ohio is nationally recognized for the program due to an ongoing commitment of support for adoptive children and their families.

Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance

The Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance Program was developed to ensure that medical coverage and other adoption services for eligible children continue in their state of residence. The program creates a framework for formalized interstate cooperation on behalf of an adopted child and his/her family if the family moves from one state to another. It removes the systematic barriers associated with forms and specific state requirements in obtaining medical assistance for the adopted child. Each participating state has a compact administrator who helps facilitate the provision of benefits and services for the special needs of the adopted child. The administrator processes the necessary paperwork and serves as an informational resource. Today, nearly all states, including Ohio, are represented in the Interstate Compact on Adoption Program.