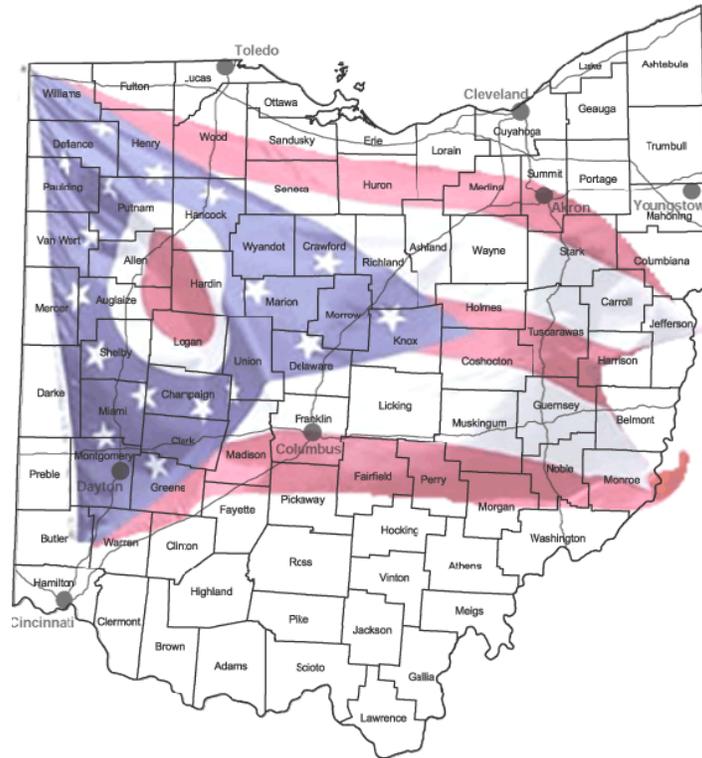# Appendix A
Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Office of Families and Children

2015 - 2019

State of Ohio Diligent Recruitment Plan
2015-2019

The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994, as amended, requires States to provide for the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom homes are needed. Ohio's Diligent Recruitment Plan is a comprehensive plan that addresses the following areas:

- A description of the characteristics of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed;
- Specific strategies to reach all parts of the community;
- Diverse methods of disseminating both general and child-specific information;
- 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;
- Strategies for training staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities;
- Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers;
- Non-discriminatory fee structures; and
- Procedures for ensuring a timely search for prospective parents awaiting a child, including the use of exchanges and other interagency efforts, provided that such procedures ensure that the placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for a same race or ethnic placement.

In developing the state's Diligent Recruitment Plan, the ODJFS Office of Families and Children (OFC) referenced the "Diligent Recruitment Navigator" tool provided by the *National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment at AdoptUSKids.* The following components of the plan detail the activities that ODJFS will carry out to ensure diligent recruitment at state and local levels. This is a working plan which encompasses an integrated approach to family recruitment, engagement, development, preparation, and support.

The following stakeholders will be involved in the ongoing Implementation of the Plan:

STAKEHOLDERS		
Agency Directors		Agency Foster Care and Adoption Managers & Staff
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption		Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters
National Center for Adoption Law & Policy at Capital University		Foster and adoptive parents
Ohio Adoption Planning Group		Kinship caregivers
Ohio Family Care Association		Youth
MEPA Monitors		Other private agency partners involved in recruitment

Key Components of the Plan

- Policies and procedures for ensuring diligent planning and recruitment at the county level;
- Increased focus on data analysis to facilitate ongoing planning and implementation;

- Identification and assessment of systemic and/or organizational factors impacting the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive homes through engagement of diverse stakeholders;
- Integration of diligent recruitment planning with Ohio's Adoption Incentive and Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) initiatives; and
- Integration of diligent recruitment into ongoing evaluation and continuous quality improvement (CQI) efforts.

Characteristics of Children Needing Foster and Adoptive Homes

In order to ascertain how the state should initially focus its recruitment efforts, a point-in-time SACWIS data pull was done to identify: (1) the age range of children in temporary and permanent custody and (2) the race of children in temporary and permanent custody. The following Tables contain the characteristics of children in the custody of Public Children Services Agencies (PCSA) by custody type, age and race.

Children and Youth in Temporary Custody

Table 1
Age Range of Children in Temporary Custody as of 5/31/2014

Age Range	Count of Children	Percentage
Less than 1 Year	932	9.45%
1 to 3 Years	2016	20.43%
4 to 6 Years	1517	15.38%
7 to 9 Years	1117	11.32%
10 to 12 Years	911	9.23%
13 to 15 Years	1468	14.88%
16 to 18 Years	1744	17.68%
19 to 21 Years	161	1.63%
Total	9866	100%

Table 2
Race Value of Children in Temporary Custody as of 5/31/2014

Race Value	Count of Children	Percentage
White	5830	59.09%
Black/African-American	3014	30.55%
Asian	13	.13%
Alaskan Native	0	0
American Indian	14	.14%
Native Hawaiian	0	0
Other Pacific Islander	3	.03%
Multiple Races	865	8.77%
Unable To Determine	127	1.29%
Total	9866	100%

As evidenced above, the largest number of children in temporary custody are less than 6 years of age (45.26%) followed by youth between the ages of 13-18 (32.56%), and children between

the ages of 7-12 (20.56%).   The racial makeup of children and youth in temporary custody are primarily White and Black/African American.

Children and Youth in Permanent Custody or Permanent Surrender

Table 3
Age Range of Children in Permanent Custody or Permanent Surrender as of 5/31/2014

Age Range	Count of Children	Percentage
Less than 1 Year	48	1.73%
1 to 3 Years	508	18.29%
4 to 6 Years	409	14.73%
7 to 9 Years	378	13.61%
10 to 12 Years	362	13.04%
13 to 15 Years	498	17.93%
16 to 18 Years	510	18.37%
19 to 21 Years	64	2.30%
Total	2777	100%

Table 4
Race Value of Children in Permanent Custody or Permanent Surrender as of 5/31/2014

Race Value	Count of Children	Percentage
White	1576	56.75%
Black/African-American	940	33.85%
Asian	3	.11%
Alaskan Native	0	0
American Indian	1	.04%
Native Hawaiian	0	0
Other Pacific Islander	2	.07%
Multiple Races	244	8.79%
Unable To Determine	11	.39%
Total	2777	100%

As evidenced above, the largest number of children in permanent custody are between the ages of 13-18 (36.30%), closely followed by children ages 6 and under (34.75%).   The racial makeup of children and youth in permanent custody or permanent surrender is primarily White and Black/African American.

Examination of ethnicity by custody type indicates that in calendar year 2013, 761 children (4.38%) in the temporary custody of PCSAs were identified as Hispanic, and 216 children (5.16%) in the permanent custody of PCSAs were identified as Hispanic.

Based upon a preliminary analysis of child welfare data and a review of Ohio's census data, recruitment activities will include a special focus on:

- Children under five with special needs, who may be at-risk of lingering in foster care;
- Older children and youth who are in the custody type "Planned Permanent Living Arrangement;" and
- African American and Hispanic families.

Data on the characteristics of children and youth in care and the characteristics of licensed/approved foster and adoptive homes will be examined frequently in order to determine whether recruitment strategies need to be modified.

Administrative Structure

Within Ohio's state-supervised, county-administered structure, all PCSAs statewide are responsible for the provision of adoption, case management and substitute care services within their local communities. All mandated supportive services are required to be made available to children and families in need of these services without regard to income, race, color, national origin, religion, social status, handicap, or sex.

Foster care and adoption agencies are required to develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment plan bi-annually which describes diligent recruitment for families that reflect the diversity of the children for whom homes are needed. These recruitment plans are submitted and reviewed by ODJFS to ensure compliance with the Multiethnic Placement Act, 42 U.S.C.A. 1996 (B), as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 (MEPA), and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI). In addition, ODJFS requires agencies to conduct child-specific recruitment efforts in other counties when prospective adoptive families cannot be identified locally.

Local recruitment efforts are supported and strengthened by several statewide initiatives described below.

Current Statewide and Local Recruitment Efforts

In a state-supervised, county-administered child welfare system, it is critical to employ a *combination* of effective strategies at the state and local levels to recruit families for waiting children in foster care (i.e., general, targeted, and child-specific). In January 2012, ODJFS hosted a statewide forum with adoption advocates and practitioners to discuss permanency planning for Ohio's hardest to place youth. Specifically, ODJFS wanted to know more about best practices and barriers impacting PCSA adoptions. The following topics were addressed during the convening:

- Family-finding – Strategies employed by placement practitioners to successfully locate relatives who might be potential caregivers;
- Homestudy Assessments – Processes most successful in moving foster-to-adopt placements to finalization;
- Post-Finalization Resources – Efforts to minimize disruptions and dissolutions;
- Adoption Subsidy and Incentive-Based Contracts – Flexible funding and efforts to provide financial support to adoptive families; and
- State and Local Policies and Procedures – Rules and regulations, policies and laws that impede or advance permanency planning.

Building on the stakeholder feedback received in this convening, ODJFS has developed several partnerships and statewide initiatives designed to better support local recruitment efforts to achieve permanency for youth in care. These are described below.

State Recruitment Efforts

Partnership with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption: In mid-2012, ODJFS entered into a partnership with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption to significantly expand the foundation's implementation of its Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) child-specific recruitment model in Ohio.   Through ODJFS' investment, 35 new recruiters were hired, trained and deployed statewide to assist local agencies in finding permanent homes for children in care. Each recruiter is charged with managing a child-specific caseload, providing child-focused recruitment services, and conducting diligent searches for potential adoptive families.   In addition, recruiters are involved in the coordination of statewide recruitment efforts with PCSAs and PCPAs with an emphasis on Ohio's target populations (children in permanent custody of a PCSA who are over the age of nine, part of a sibling group, and/or in care for two or more years). A five-year study of the WWK model conducted by Child Trends reflected a significantly higher likelihood of adoption for children served through the program, and Ohio is beginning to see similar results. As of March 31, 2014, 544 children were enrolled in Ohio's WWK program. In less than two years, the program has realized 178 matches of children with prospective adoptive parents, 50 pre-adoptive placements, and 33 successful adoption finalizations.

County Adoption Incentive Payments: The Ohio Adoption Incentive Program was also created in 2012. This program provides financial incentives to PCSAs for finalizing adoptions for the target population of youth ages 9 and over. Each county's adoption finalizations for the target population are averaged for the previous three-year period, and if counties exceed this baseline, they receive a funding allocation that may then be reinvested in future adoption recruitment and finalization efforts.

Partnership with Casey Family Programs: Through ODJFS' partnership with Casey Family Programs, Ohio has begun implementation of the Casey Permanency Roundtable model. Permanency Roundtables (PRTs) are structured case consultations focused specifically on reducing barriers to attaining legal permanency and increasing permanent connections for children and youth. The goal of the PRT approach is to expedite permanency and ensure that all options have been exhausted. PRTs also seek to ensure that each youth has at least one permanent connection in his or her life. The "Gold Standard" for the PRT process is achieving legal permanency for each child or youth in one of the following ways: reunification, adoption, legal custody or guardianship.

Partnership with the National Center for Adoption Law and Policy: ODJFS has also entered into a partnership with the National Center for Adoption Law and Policy at Capital University Law School (NCALP) to support recruitment efforts. NCALP is responsible for managing the Ohio Adoption Photo-listing website in concert with AdoptUSKids. The photo-listing highlights waiting children who are in the permanent custody of PCSAs and for whom families are being sought. A photo and brief profile are listed for each child as well as agency contact information. General information such as who may adopt, the adoption home study process, adoption subsidies, costs associated with adopting, access to adoption records, and information on interstate adoptions can also be found on this website. In addition, the photo-listing website provides links to ODJFS publications such as the *Ohio Adoption Guide* and the *Adoption Subsidies Guide* and lists information about ongoing events, trainings and meetings. In 2013, ODJFS updated the *Ohio Adoption Guide* and the *Adoption Subsidies Guide* and made both available online along with other manuals.

General Recruitment - Foster Care and Adoption Months: Based upon the number of children coming into foster care and the need for permanent homes for children there is a need to recruit additional foster homes and support existing resource families. Ohio has annually recognized May as National Foster Care Month and November as Adoption Month. The purpose of the recognition is to acknowledge the efforts of child welfare practitioners and caregivers across the state who are responsible for providing care to children that have been abused or neglected. Public service announcements are prepared to recognize and celebrate both months. PCSA, PCPA, and PNAs are encouraged to recognize their resource families. The Governor continues to acknowledge foster families and kinship families for the service they provide. Across the state, events are held to honor foster and adoptive parents for their dedication to vulnerable children, including the statewide advocacy day, held in Columbus annually.

Local Recruitment Efforts

A review of foster care and adoption recruitment plans submitted to ODJFS, OFC in 2012 was conducted to identify recruitment strategies planned by agencies. In all recruitment plans, multiple strategies were identified based upon the agency's mission statement and targeted audiences.   The following strategies were identified in order of frequency noted in the recruitment plans reviewed:

Written Information: Pamphlets, flyers, posters, and church bulletin inserts were being used. Several agencies noted that their written information was also in Spanish. Written information was distributed during community events, fairs, and speaking engagements.

Traditional Media: Newspapers, Magazines, Radio, and Television: Local newspapers were used to either advertise the need for foster caregivers or to provide information about the need for families through articles for inclusion in the newspaper. Some agencies also published their own newsletters, and information was included on the need for additional foster caregivers. Ads were also included in professional magazines. The use of radio/cable TV was noted as a method to recruit families (paid or public services announcements) or to discuss the need for foster caregivers during local talk shows.

Speaking Engagements: Agencies continue to talk about the need for foster caregivers/ adoptive parents at such locations as churches, Rotary Clubs, and seminars. Either agency staff and/or foster caregivers presented information.

Community Events: Agencies provide information on adoption/foster care at fairs, special community events and adoption mixers.

Internet: The use of the Internet has intensified as more agencies have been developing their websites to disseminate information (one agency noted that they have a video with a foster caregiver talking about her experiences). Additionally, agencies have been using the Internet to post ads about their agencies. Some agencies noted they were now using Facebook.

Word of Mouth: During MEPA reviews it was noted that word of mouth (current foster caregivers/adoptive parents recruiting new foster caregivers/adoptive parents) was the most successful recruitment tool. Foster caregivers were also being used in tandem with agency staff to attend speaking engagements. Agencies' Recruitment Plans noted that financial incentives and bonuses were being provided to currently certified foster caregivers if they recruited new

foster caregivers. However, it was noted by one agency that this was not an effective tool for them, and the recruitment information posted on their agency website was more effective.

Advertising: Multiple methods of advertising were being used – from the traditional ad in the Yellow Pages, to displaying banners/posters outside the agency, at sports venues or at other community locations, on buses/billboards, and on yard signs. Some agencies noted that ads were being placed in theatre playbills and other event brochures.

PCSAs continue to work with foster parent associations to identify effective recruitment strategies and ensure retention of existing resource families.

MEPA Biennial Comprehensive Self-Assessment Report

PCSAs, private child placing agencies (PCPA) certified to perform the foster/adoption function and private non-custodial agencies (PNA) certified to perform the foster/adoption function are required to submit a *MEPA Biennial Comprehensive Self-Assessment Report* by March first of every even numbered year. One of the components of the self-assessment requires the agency to address the following:

- Whether its foster care and/or adoption recruitment plan includes information on efforts to diligently recruit foster caregivers and/or adoptive parents that reflect the racial and ethnic backgrounds of the population of children in foster care and available for adoption.
- Methods for targeting individuals as foster caregivers/adoptive parents where there is a disparity between the racial and/or ethnic groups of children in care and the racial/ethnic groups of foster or adoptive parents certified/approved currently.

The *MEPA Biennial Comprehensive Self-Assessment Report* is discussed during MEPA reviews of public and private agencies, which occur on a 24-month cycle. The discussion of recruitment efforts with PCSAs includes a presentation of data on children in the temporary and permanent custody of the agency by race and ethnicity as well data on foster parents/adoptive homes by race and ethnicity. OFC staff and agency staff then determine if a disparity exists between the racial and/or ethnic groups of children in care and the racial/ethnic groups of foster or adoptive parents. If a disparity exists, further discussion occurs on what recruitment efforts will be used to reduce the disparity.

MEPA reviews conducted with private agencies (agencies that have contracts with PCSAs to provide foster and/or adoptive services) include a discussion of statewide data on the number of children in the temporary and permanent custody of the PCSAs by race and ethnicity as well data on foster parents/adoptive homes by race and ethnicity licensed/certified by the agency. OFC staff and agency staff then determine if a disparity exists between the racial and/or ethnic groups of children in care and the racial/ethnic groups of foster or adoptive parents. If a disparity exists, further discussion occurs on what recruitment efforts will be used to reduce the disparity.

As noted above, child specific recruitment efforts are required when the custodial agency has yet to identify a family for the child. During MEPA Cycle 4, March 1, 2012- February 28, 2014, 793 child case records were reviewed to determine if there were families presented at the most recent matching conference, and if there were no families presented, determine whether the agency engaged in child specific recruitment efforts prior to the most recent matching conference. Failure to engage in child specific recruitment efforts would require the agency to

develop a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Four PCSAs were required to develop a CAP to address how they would come into compliance with the requirement to engage in child specific recruitment efforts prior to the most recent matching conference.

Child specific recruitment efforts noted during reviews included:

- Registering children with NCALP and the U.S. Health and Human Services' AdoptUSKids Website;
- Placing the child's information on the agency's website;
- Distributing child specific recruitment flyers at adoption events;
- Conducting searches for significant adults noted in the child's case file;
- Sponsoring "Foster and Adoption Parties" designed to provide information to potential families about foster care and adoption programs and the need for resource homes;
- Profiling waiting children in newspapers and in television and radio spots; and
- Publishing agency calendars which feature harder to place youth who are available for adoption.

2015-2019 Diligent Recruitment Plan Elements

Ohio will ensure that procedures and practices are in place at the state and county levels for diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive homes. Recruitment activities implemented under this plan will center on five core goals, as outlined below.

Goal I: Continue and Expand Statewide Collaborative Initiatives to Enhance General, Targeted, and Child-Specific Recruitment for Children and Youth in Care

- Expand ODJFS' partnership with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption to increase the number of WWK recruiters from 35 to 45 statewide. In addition, ODJFS will explore expansion of the program's target population to include youth with a status of "Planned Permanent Living Arrangement" and younger children with special needs who may be at risk of lingering in foster care.
- Work with Casey Family Programs to expand the implementation of Permanency Roundtables in Ohio. Five Permanency Roundtable (PRT) Pilot sites will implement PRTs and a new Youth-Centered Roundtable component designed to support the youth's voice and participation in the PRT process.   Pilot counties will participate in a project evaluation to assess the implementation process and outcomes. ODJFS anticipates that the expansion of PRTs will continue after the pilot and is working with Casey Family Programs to plan for rollout to additional sites.
- Continue ODJFS' partnership with the National Center for Adoption Law & Policy to support the ongoing maintenance of the Ohio Adoption Photo-listing website.
- Continue implementation of the Ohio Adoption Incentive Program, which has received much positive feedback from PCSAs.

Goal II: Increase Use of Effective Recruitment Tools at the Local Level

- Monitor agencies' diligent recruitment plans to ensure plans are regularly updated.
- Promote the use of effective recruitment tools at the county level, including mobility mapping and use of adoption exchanges - as offered through the National Center for

Adoption Law and Policy or AdoptUSKkids.org - to aid in identifying and/or meeting the placement needs of children in care.

- Promote the licensure of relative foster homes and dual licensure of foster-to-adoptive homes.
- Promote the utilization of a "customer service" model in responding to prospective foster and adoptive parents to reduce "dropout" rates.
- Ensure all prospective parents, including relatives and individuals who have important existing relationships with youth in care, have timely access to the home study process, including foster and adoptive parent training at a local or community level, and that the home studies are initiated and completed in a timely manner.
- Provide technical assistance on diligent recruitment during MEPA onsite visits.

Goal III: Tailor Local Recruitment Plans to Customize General, Targeted, and Child-Specific Recruitment Efforts Based on Need.

- ODJFS will disseminate reports on local diligent recruitment practices and data on the current characteristics of children in care to assist agencies in adjusting and/or expanding recruitment efforts to match the needs of their children.
- Local agencies will provide the following assurances, pursuant to the Administrative Code:
  - o Assure that recruitment of prospective parents is an ongoing activity of the PCSA and/or accomplished through collaboration with private child placing agencies (PCPAs), or private noncustodial agencies (PNAs).
  - o Prohibit agency staff from denying any person the opportunity to become a foster and/or adoptive parent on the basis of race, color, or national origin (RCNO) of the person or the child involved.
  - o Assure that an agency recruitment plan is in place that identifies how the agency will work to recruit foster and adoptive caregivers that reflect the diversity of waiting children for whom adoptive homes are needed.
- The PCSA, PCPA and PNA, at a minimum, shall incorporate in their agency's Diligent Recruitment Plan:
  - o Specific strategies to reach all parts of the county (or community as defined by private agencies);
  - o Specific methods of disseminating both general and targeted recruitment material;
  - o Strategies for assuring that all prospective applicants receive information regarding foster care and/or adoption procedures within seven days of inquiry;
  - o Strategies for assuring that all applicants have access to the home study process, including location and hours of services that facilitate access to all members of the community;
  - o Strategies for training staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, ethnic and economic communities;
  - o Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers between the PCSA, PCPA, or PNA and the prospective adoptive applicant(s); and
  - o A fee structure that is non-discriminatory to approve adoptive parents and that allows parents of various income levels the opportunity to adopt.
- In addition, public and private custodial agencies (PCSAs and PCPAs) must include in their recruitment plans:

- A description of the characteristics of children in the permanent custody or permanent surrender of the agency, including age, gender, race and ethnicity, developmental needs, emotional and mental health, and physical needs.
- A comparison of the racial and ethnic diversity of the children in permanent custody with the racial and ethnic diversity of the approved adoptive family resources.
- Agencies must initiate increased recruitment efforts for any racial or ethnic category of family that is under-represented.
- Agencies must identify general criteria used to determine when the agency will conduct child-specific recruitment strategies for a child and the type of specific recruitment techniques the PCSA or PCPA will have available and will utilize when child-specific recruitment is warranted.

Goal IV: Include a Focus on Diligent Recruitment in Statewide CQI Efforts

- Ensure procedures are in place for consistently providing updated data on the characteristics of children in care.
- Utilize multiple sources of data to better understand population and practice trends. Prospective data sources include AFCARS, Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation (CPOE) data, and MEPA reviews.
- Issue state reports relevant to diligent recruitment efforts in Ohio. ODJFS will determine by the end of SFY 2015, the formats and types of analysis of data to be used for diligent recruitment planning purposes (e.g., dashboard-style data profiles, trend data and point-in-time data).
- ODJFS will engage key stakeholders, including tribal representatives, experts and private partners, in the development of data reports and ongoing interpretation of the data. Findings will be disseminated and discussed through stakeholder forums. Data will be used to explore the following questions:
  - Are plans developed by Ohio counties flexible enough to shift the mix of recruitment strategies based on the current foster care population in the county?
  - Is ODJFS effectively utilizing county recruitment plans to inform the state's overall recruitment plan?
  - Are statewide monitoring efforts effective in identifying problem areas and at ensuring plans are fully implemented at the local level?
  - Do counties utilize a "customer service" model in responding to prospective foster and adoptive parents? If so, does the model reduce the dropout rates between inquiry, approval, and placement?
  - Do local agencies have access to needed tools to support effective search practices?
  - Do local agencies have access to specialized expertise in recruiting families for sibling groups?
  - Is ODJFS effectively facilitating the sharing of successful strategies and practices among county staff involved in recruitment efforts around the state?

Goal V: Enhance Training and Information Resources for Prospective Foster and Adoptive Parents and Agency Staff

The 2015-2019 Diligent Recruitment plan includes a number of activities designed to enhance training of prospective foster and adoptive parents as well as agency staff and partners.

Pre-Service Training Enhancements

Ohio's foster caregivers and pre-adoptive families are mandated to complete a 12-Module Pre-Service training before being licensed and/or approved for placement. As a result of continuous quality improvement efforts, including input from an advisory group consisting of adoptive parents, foster caregivers, trainers, foster care alumni and representatives from a statewide trauma consortium, a revision of the mandated pre-service training curriculum is underway. When finalized, this revision will strengthen several content areas including:

- Current information on trauma and trauma-informed caregiving (NOTE: NCTSN's elements of trauma-informed caregiving are used as the framework throughout pre-service).
- Material on the child welfare system, the role of the foster parent on the child welfare team, and the importance of permanent connections.
- Focus on learning objectives, which will be being used to guide summary activities at the end of each module and the development of a Transfer-of-Learning tool for workers responsible for caregiver Training Plans.

The overarching learning objectives for the revised pre-service are as follows:

- Participants can accurately self-assess if foster parenting or adoption is the right choice for their family.
- Participants can describe the importance of the child welfare goals of safety, permanency and well-being and recognize their role in supporting these goals for children in their home.
- Participants can explain the importance of, and can recognize their role in, placement stability.
- Participants can explain the importance of teaming with the worker, birth family, child and others involved in the case, and can recognize their role on the team.
- Participants can recognize the need to parent differently based upon the child's trauma history.
- Participants can explain how a caregiver's response to the diverse identities of children and families impacts placement success and child welfare goals.

Currently, OCWTP collects feedback from pre-service attendees via a paper survey following select training sessions and via trainer feedback. In order to more fully assess the quality of pre-service training and preparation of prospective caregivers, OCWTP has several enhancements planned that will be implemented by July 2015:

- Evaluation data will be collected on each of the 12 pre-service modules.
- Evaluation surveys will be disseminated to participants, providing an opportunity to assess their progress on learning objectives specific to each pre-service module.
- Aggregate results of pre-service evaluation surveys will be reported to curricula developers, Regional Training Centers (RTCs), and ODJFS.
- A sample of county licensing specialists will be surveyed regarding how well pre-service training accomplished the stated learning objectives and how pre-service can be improved.
- Systematic feedback loops will be established (e.g., from RTC staff to training staff and from pre-service trainers to OCWTP staff).

The OCWTP has also developed a series of standardized trainings for new caregivers called *Fundamentals of Fostering*. This series addresses the same content presented in pre-service training, but taken to a deeper level. The workshops help caregivers apply what they are learning and adapt their parenting style to the needs of the children placed in their home.

In addition, the OCWTP maintains the "Caregivers' Corner," on the OCWTP web site to ensure caregivers have readily available and regularly updated information and resources. This page connects caregivers to a number of resources, including an online training on human trafficking, strategies to help emancipating youth, links to national resources, etc. OCWTP will continue to provide this resource for caregivers.

Training Staff to Engage with Diverse Communities

OCWTP defines diversity as all those characteristics that distinguish us from each other. Culture is a powerful driver of diversity but not the only determining factor. Memberships to any number of groups (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic, etc.) also influence a person's social identity, as does the influence of individual circumstances, experiences, or traits. The influence of a group membership can shift over one's lifetime, forming complex dimensions of a person's identity that must be explored for their relevance to the present day experience.

The following is the definition of diversity competence:

Diversity competence is an ongoing developmental process that includes:
- An acquired understanding of the patterns and potential dynamics of specific groups and cultures, including our own;
- The understanding of how culture (the values, beliefs, attitudes, and traditions acquired from affiliate groups)**,** as well as personal circumstances, conditions, nature, and experiences influence our own and other people's thinking and behaviors; and
- The ability to use this knowledge to manage and adapt to the dynamics of diversity and work effectively with all people. *(OCWTP Policy Manual; Section B. Operations of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program; 7. Commitment to Diversity Competence; p.19)*

Diversity competence is used as a guideline for recruitment of trainers, development of curricula, and in public relations and promotion of the OCWTP. Where the OCWTP has historically used the term cultural competence, it now uses the term diversity competence in order to account for the multi-dimensional aspects of all people that include, but are not limited to, culture.

The OCWTP provides a required Diversity learning activity for all new trainers that focuses on:
- Assessment of the individualized diversity learning needs of each new trainer using the OCWTP diversity section of the *Trainer Competencies*
- Development and completion of an individualized learning plan
- Participation in a GAP session titled, How to Address Diversity Issues in Your Training

The OCWTP requires that all learning activities (except GAP Sessions) have a plan for how diversity issues related to the specific topic will be addressed. GAP Sessions address diversity

issues as they arise during a session. The plan is noted in every workshop outline that is submitted for review and approval from a Workshop Outline Review Committee.

2015-2019 Diligent Recruitment Plan Summation

Listed below are some of the key activities underpinning the five-year plan:

- Expand implementation of the child-focused Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) model in Ohio. ODJFS will assume the cost of hiring 45 or more recruiters. In addition, ODJFS will explore a change in the WWK contract to include children under age 5, who are at-risk of lingering in foster care, and children with the status of permanent planned living arrangement (PPLA). Target outcomes are:
    - At least 800 children awaiting adoption will have been enrolled in Ohio's WWK program by the end of 2019 and receive case-mining, case management, and child-specific recruitment services.
    - Of the children enrolled, at least one-half will be matched, placed for adoption and/or finalized by the end of SFY 2019.
- Work with Casey Family Programs to expand implementation of Permanency Roundtables as a strategy to strengthen permanency planning on behalf of long-staying youth in care.
- Continue partnership with the National Center for Adoption Law & Policy to support the Ohio Adoption Photo-listing website.
- Build on the success of the Ohio Adoption Incentive Program.
- Integrate work on diligent recruitment efforts within Ohio's broader child welfare CQI plan, including: ongoing data analysis; engagement of stakeholders in data interpretation and identification of solutions; and dissemination of information to support practice improvement.
- Provide technical assistance on diligent recruitment during MEPA onsite visits.
- In partnership with the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program, offer specialized training to prospective foster and adoptive parents regarding the characteristics and needs of children who have experienced trauma.