

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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North Dakota receives incentive award for adoption rate

BISMARCK, N.D. - The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has awarded the North Dakota Department of Human Services \$80,320 for increasing the number of children adopted from foster care.

North Dakota was one of 38 states and Puerto Rico sharing in \$35 million in adoption incentive awards, which can be used to promote, support, and enhance adoption services, especially programs serving abused and neglected children.

Last federal fiscal year, 121 children were adopted from North Dakota's foster care system. This compares to 113 during the previous federal fiscal year.

State Adoption Administrator Julie Hoffman said North Dakota has traditionally excelled in placing children with special needs with adoptive families. However, because many children are adopted by their foster parents, the need for foster and adoptive families is ongoing.

Currently about 700 licensed foster homes provide care to an average of 1,000 children per month in North Dakota.

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 created incentives to reward states that increased the number of children adopted from foster care. The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 provides stronger incentives for states to find adoptive homes for foster children – especially children who are older or who have other special needs. The law also established an adoption rate to measure performance.

North Dakota has received adoption incentives awards before. Since 2003, federal adoption incentive awards to North Dakota have totaled \$202,000.

North Dakota contracts with Catholic Charities' Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) Program to provide adoption services for children in foster care. AASK and other child placement agencies provide services ranging from family recruitment, preparation, and assessment, to child preparation and placement, and post-placement support.

Adoption information is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/adoption/ or by calling the department at 701-328-2316 or 1-800-245-3736, or e-mailing dhsdfs@nd.gov.

See the federal announcement at www.hhs.gov/news/press/2009pres/09/20090914a.html.

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