

NORTH DAKOTA

FOSTER OR ADOPT

# FOSTER & ADOPTIVE PARENT DILIGENT RECRUITMENT & RETENTION



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**North Dakota — Foster or Adopt**

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**Dakota** | Human Services **1-833-378-4663**

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(Full Revision June 2021)

## **History & Background**

North Dakota is committed to recruiting foster and adoptive parents that reflect the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of the children in out-of-home care. The North Dakota Foster and Adopt Recruitment and Retention State Plan has been operationalized for many years with updates made periodically. In August 2012, North Dakota enhanced the statewide recruitment and retention focus from solely addressing primarily 'general' recruitment efforts to equally addressing both general and targeted recruitment activities. During this time, regional R&R Coalitions were established statewide and required to submit a "Request for Funding" proposal (Attachment 2) which identified general and targeted recruitment activities. The coalitions were directed to analyze their regional data in order to identify gaps and needs in their region and submit their proposal based upon this determination. The amount of recruitment and retention funding made available to each region was determined based on the approximate population of children by region and budget expenditures from previous biennium.

In January 2018, request for funding changed based in the North Dakota legislative bill SB 2206, County Social Service Redesign. This law change wrapped recruitment and retention funding into the legislative bill and funds were distributed to the counties in a similar way as done prior to 2018, but most costs were embedded into the county fiscal formula and not offered as monthly reimbursement within an isolated budget.

In January 2020, the Department engaged in a formal contract with the University of North Dakota Children and Family Services Training Center (CFSTC) to hire a Recruitment Retention Specialist (FRRS) to lead statewide recruitment and retention efforts. The Recruitment and Retention Specialist was hired and began working in April 2020. The duties of the contract include:

- Engage with the department Children and Family Services (CFS) to develop and maintain the North Dakota Recruitment and Retention plan.
- Engage with community stakeholders to provide information and referral for all incoming foster parent inquiries via website, telephone or inquiries forwarded from other partners.
- Support and inform inquiring individuals of foster care licensing and adoption options.
- Co-facilitate Recruitment and Retention Coalition meetings.
- Co-facilitate the statewide Recruitment and Retention Task Force meetings (annually) to bring together all coalitions into one collective team.
- Provide technical assistance and training as needed.
- Assist in efficient statewide planning to maximize funding.
- Administer statewide recruitment and retention funds.
- Oversee a statewide branding effort to establish a single logo and tag line to facilitate common and cohesive message to increase "brand" awareness and reduce advertising/promotional related costs.
- Research and engage in best practice marketing and advertisement, to develop statewide marketing efforts and establish and maintain social media accounts.
- Collect and document quarterly and annual recruitment and retention data
- Provide education and awareness related to recruitment and retention, through social media, marketing efforts, bimonthly newsletter articles, developing community partners, and promotional opportunities.
- Survey foster parents to enhance retention efforts and overcome barriers.
- Other duties as determined necessary to carry out the goals of the plan and contract.

## **Inquiry Contact Information:**

Information related to foster care and adoption recruitment and retention efforts can be found by accessing the Department of Human Services' website at: <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/fostercare/> or by calling the North Dakota Toll Free Recruitment and Retention line at 1-833-FST-HOME or 1-833-378-4663.

Individuals interested in learning more about becoming a foster or adoptive parent can enter their name, address and telephone number, press 'send', and the inquiry is sent directly to the Recruitment and Retention Specialist (RRS) at The UND Children and Family Services Training Center (CFSTC). The RRS makes telephone and email contact with the interested individuals immediately. The RRS gathers information about the inquiring family, shares information regarding different levels of care, agencies related to level of care, and licensing and training requirements and process. The RRS and the interested individuals plan which licensing agency(s) to forward their information or to be followed up by the RRS. At the time the interested individuals are ready to move forward, their information gathered by the RRS is forwarded to the identified agency(s).

## **ND Recruitment & Retention Work Group**

The ND Statewide Foster and Adopt Recruitment and Retention Work Group was created in April 2020. This format offered a more consistent statewide representation of agency staff and partners and took the place of the historical annual Task Force meeting. Work Group members represent all areas of the state and include individuals from Human Service Zones, Division of Juvenile Services, Tribal Social Services, Licensed Child Placing Agencies (Nexus PATH, Youthworks, AASK, etc), UND Training Center, Children & Family Services, foster and adoptive parent/s. The goal of the work group is to review the R&R state plan, analyze data, address systemic issues for recruitment and retention, while meeting any additional requests of the Department.

## **Recruitment & Retention Coalitions**

Prior to 2020, Coalitions were structured by regional human service center boundaries and made up of various parties. In October 2020, the coalition structure was revised and repurposed to ensure consistency, efficiency and productivity statewide when carrying out the mission of recruitment and retention. Today, North Dakota has four functioning coalitions representing all counties/regions of the state; service area varies based on Human Service Zones.

The purpose of the Foster and Adopt Recruitment and Retention Coalition is to gather local parties to engage in conversation and support the recruitment and retention of foster parents as well as adoptive families. The statewide goal is to continue to offer education and awareness surrounding the need for families to open their hearts and homes to children in need of safe placement.

**CFSTC Role:** The North Dakota Department of Human Services (NDDHS) Children and Family Services has a fiscal contract with UND Children and Family Services Training Center (CFSTC) to oversee statewide Recruitment and Retention efforts. CFSTC is responsible to accept and communicate with initial inquiries, collect data, participate in coalition meetings to assess and address local needs, manage the statewide budget for fiscal purchases, etc.

**Coalition Attendance:** Each coalition is inclusive of all agencies identified as a Human Service Zone, Tribal Social Service office, Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA), AASK Program or Division of Juvenile Services (DJS). These agencies should have at least two participants at each meeting including the agency licensing worker and a supervisor/case manager. In addition, coalitions should secure local business leaders with an interest in advertising, faith-based and volunteer organizations (Churches, Lions Club, Kiwanis, etc.) driven to engage as supports, as well as foster parents and adoptive families who have a passion for child welfare.

For more information about the coalition structure, see ATTACHMENT A.

## **Statewide Agencies and Service Areas**

NDDHS, Children and Family Services Field Services Specialist are hired to administer the licensing of foster parent homes across the state. At this time, four FSS staff oversee licensure requests statewide, while various authorized licensing agent/s complete the home study process, interview prospective families, complete licensure recommendations, etc.

Foster Care Licensing packets are received to the Department from:

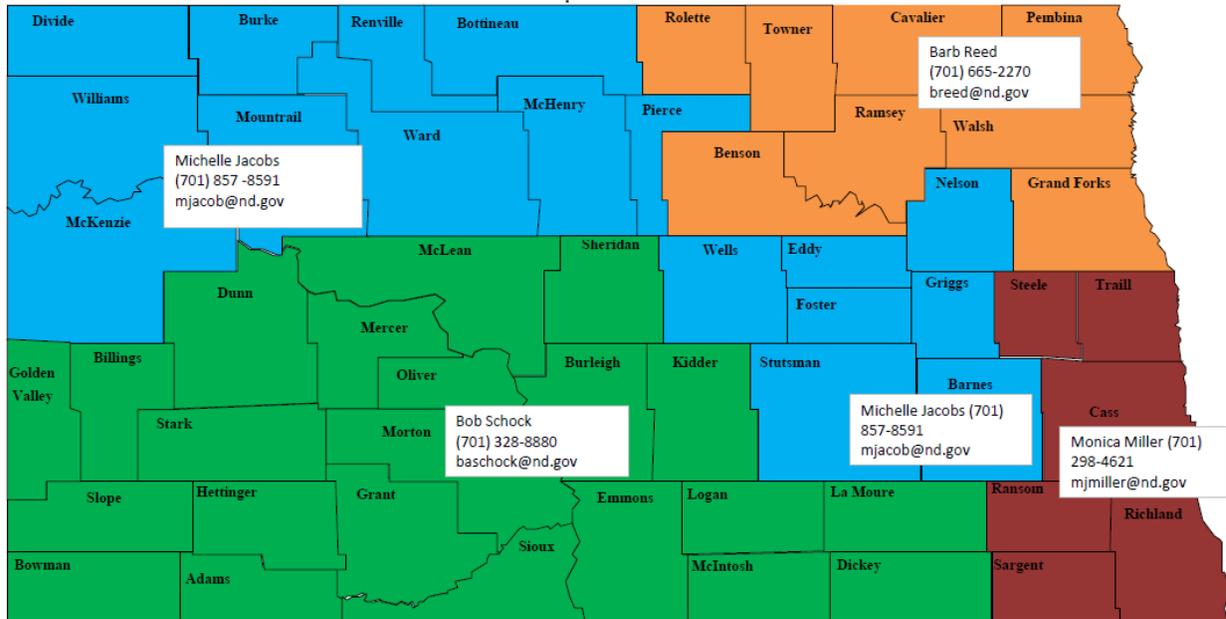
- Human Service Zones
- Nexus – PATH
- Tribes
- Youthworks
- Unaccompanied Refugee Minor program

Home Study packets for adoption are received from AASK adoption program.

Located on the Department's web site at: <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/adoption>.

Links are provided to answer questions regarding the process of adoption as well as agency contact information.

## ND Children and Family Services Field Service Specialist (FSS) Licensing Staff Coverage Areas



### Fee Structures

There are no fees associated with family foster home licensing. The Department of Human Services assumes costs related to fingerprint-based criminal records checks as well as costs related to private well water testing. In addition, any costs related to a physical or psychological exam required by the licensing agency is the responsibility of the licensing agency or the Department of Human Services. (NDAC 75-03-14)

Fees charged to prospective adoptive families by the AASK program are minimal and relate to criminal background checks, an application fee and psychological testing. These costs can be reimbursed to the family if the child they adopt qualifies for an adoption subsidy.

### State Policy Limitations

ND does not have limitations about who can become a foster parent. The US Supreme Court decision regarding same sex marriage has not and will not have program implications on licensing ND foster homes. Currently, ND does have same-sex couples licensed to provide foster care to children and our state has had same sex couples licensed in the past. Same sex couples may also adopt children from ND foster care.

### Onsite Case Review – CFSR PIP (ended March 31, 2021)

North Dakota has one goal of the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) related to strengthening and reframing the statewide foster and adoptive parent diligent recruitment plan to support the recruitment of families who meet the needs of the children they serve and who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children served by the foster care program (CFSR Items 35 and 36). NDDHS made continual efforts throughout the PIP to improve the collaboration with foster and adoption providers, and relative caregivers to increase awareness of available resources or training and to better recruit prospective providers to meet the ongoing needs of North Dakota children in foster care, particularly those with specific behaviors. This has included making a more effective use of social media, newsletters and surveys to obtain feedback and input from foster parents, relative, and adoptive families as to what is working well and where things could be enhanced in order to improve overall satisfaction and retention. NDDHS engaged early in the PIP period with the University of North Dakota CFSTC to offer more online and face-to-face training modules for relative caregivers and providers. The Department, CFSTC, custodial case managers and provider agencies continued to collaborate throughout the PIP to further align training to increase the ability of relative caregivers and providers to manage child behaviors and best meet the needs of children in placement, while creating ICWA resources and training to improve overall ICWA placement preference compliance. Future PIP goals and strategies will be reviewed and managed by the Recruitment and Retention Work Group and acknowledged in the state plan.

## Data Systems and Reporting (Foster and Adopt)

North Dakota has a reporting tool in our data management system, FRAME, to provide a quick glance at foster care demographics. The "Foster Care Demographics Report" is available to all FRAME users and allows access of up-to-date data related to foster youth; i.e. # foster children in each county/Zone, region, age, race, etc. Coalitions can view demographics as specific to their local county or as regional view to determine their needs. Recruitment & Retention Coalitions can view the foster care demographics reports "moment in time" data or in larger timeframes to determine increases, decreases, recruitment strategy updated needed, etc.

### Foster Care Data

The report can be run as a statewide data report or specific to an area. Data below shows the demographic breakdown for children in foster care by age and location.

#### Unique Child Totals by Age

Region	Total	Ages																					
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
I - Northwest	91	2	8	5	5	6	4	5	6	7	7	1	2	3	1	5	4	8	8	3	1		
II - North Central	166	3	8	15	14	6	6	11	8	6	10	10	6	7	8	12	7	11	9	5	1	3	
III - Lake Region	333	3	19	28	30	23	20	21	21	27	25	23	18	18	13	16	8	10	1	6	1	1	1
IV - Northeast	272	2	17	23	22	19	18	18	15	13	14	10	15	12	11	10	18	12	10	5	4	3	1
V - Southeast	291	11	29	27	20	18	11	7	14	8	14	11	15	10	12	10	18	16	16	13	8	3	
VI - South Central	68	2	3	1	3	2	3	5	7	5	5	3	2	2	4	3	3	3	4	5	2	1	
VII - West Central	289		25	17	22	24	7	15	17	17	5	14	13	13	10	20	11	18	10	3		3	
VIII - Badlands	46	1	5	2	3	2	2	2	2	2			1	3	2	2	3	3	8	2			1
<b>Age Totals</b>	<b>1556</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>

#### Unique Child Totals by Race

Race	Total
American Indian or Alaskan Native	740
Asian	8
African American	152
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	6
White	707
Unable to Determine	62
Refusal by Client	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1675</b>

#### Children by Gender

Gender	Total
Male	812
Female	744
<b>Total</b>	<b>1556</b>

\*The age 21 case indicates that child will be 21 this year. ND does not provide foster care services after age 21 (with the exception for the 18+ cases during COVID relief approved timeframes to September 30, 2021).

### Adoption Specific Details

The AASK program began tracking the time it takes for a family to become active on a caseload after having completed either an inquiry or PRIDE training and are waiting to be assigned to case worker. Preliminary results began to demonstrate at least a 10% reduction in wait times in four of the nine AASK regions and wait times to begin an adoption study decreased in four of the nine areas as well. AASK continued tracking data on adoptive home study wait times, and when wait times for January through March 2021 were compared to the previous quarter (reported in September 2019), there was a decrease in wait time six of the nine AASK regions. From January 2020 to March 2021, there was a 11% decrease in overall wait times across the state regarding waiting families. The state is committed to continuing to track and impact this number in the future.

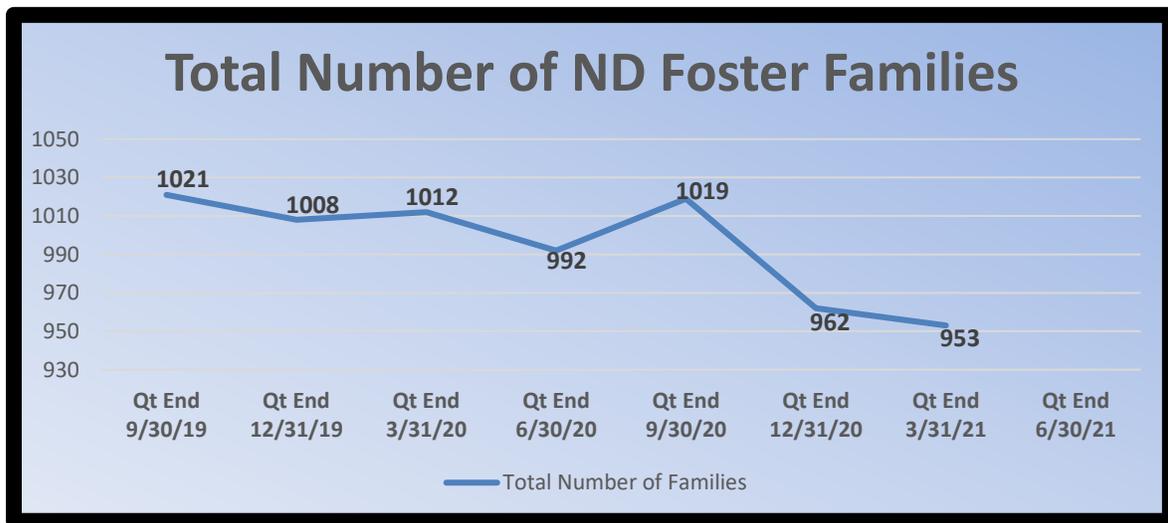
As of May 31, 2021, AASK has completed 119 new approved studies, 38 subsequent approved studies, and nine updated studies. Please refer to the table from March 2020.

ALL DELAY TYPES (Example: Family Paperwork Delays or Referral Source Delays) *This chart INCLUDES AASK delays as well	STARTING NUMBER: Average Monthly Wait (08/2018 to 05/2019)	1st PIP Report Average Monthly Wait (06/2019-09/2019)	2nd PIP Report Average Monthly Wait (10/2019-12/2019)	3rd PIP Report Average Monthly Wait (01/2020-03/2020)	Average of all PIP Reports (06/2019-03/2020)
Fargo	4.79	6.29	5.62	3.28	5.06
Jamestown	14.00	8.34	No Data	4.22	6.28
Grand Forks	5.29	4.24	3.06	3.55	3.62
Devils Lake	6.76	13.73	No Data	No Data	13.73
Bismarck	4.25	7.85	8.68	4.52	7.02
Dickinson	3.29	0.32	4.90	9.82	5.01
Minot	4.68	3.35	5.93	10.24	6.51
Belcourt	10.49	No Data	13.71	15.85	14.78
Williston	3.16	2.30	4.20	3.34	3.28
Statewide Quarterly Average	6.30	5.80	6.59	6.85	7.25

## Baseline Data and Outcomes

Historically, recruitment and retention coalitions have tracked numbers of homes, inquiries, asked what data is most relative to our work and to create a baseline of data to analyze and compare. In July 2020, Children and Family Services began extracting foster care data from CCWIPS, provider and payment data management system. This change in data analysis altered the view of the data collected and showed ND disparity in data. The chart below represents two different ways of doing day analysis and the new way of monitoring the number of foster homes our state has licensed from each quarter. This shift in data collection offered a variance between quarter 4 and 5 that offers question on the increase/decrease. The data is now being pulled from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the quarter (manual extraction) instead of the last day of the quarter (self-reported). This change offers a consistent point in time, plus the most up to date and completely entered/closed provider list. Since quarter six (962), Children and Family Services is confident in the data analysis and will use this method going forward.

Quarter	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Qt End 9/30/19	Qt End 12/31/19	Qt End 3/31/20	Qt End 6/30/20	Qt End 9/30/20	Qt End 12/31/20	Qt End 3/31/21	Qt End 6/30/21
Total # of FC Licenses Self Reported	1021	1008	1012	992	-	-	-	-
Total # of FC Licenses Extracted from the Provider System*CCWIPS					1019	962	953	-



## Provider Types Divided by Quarter

	Zone	PATH	Tribe	Other	Totals
Qt 1	589	301	119	12	1021
Qt 2	587	293	115	13	1008
Qt 3	580	290	122	20	1012
Qt 4					992
Qt 5	594	309	113	3	1019
Qt 6	573	279	108	2	962
Qt 7	566	274	112	1	953
Qt 8					0

**The decline in licensed foster homes is attributed to various factors:**

1. New way of collecting data
2. COVID -19 pandemic
3. Redesign of agencies/consolidating
4. Staff turnover

In May 2021, Children and Family Services requested specific data to include a baseline of data to consider for the remainder of the state plan. This data tells us that for a full twelve months,

- ND had 2,467 children in foster care
- 725 children (29%) had a TPR order on record from the past or received in that timeframe.
- 44% of our North Dakota foster children represent themselves as Native American race, which supports our disproportionality and racial inequities for children in care.
- Sibling placements are a high priority and this data shows us that 69% have at least one sibling in care with majority of those children having three or more siblings.
- Placement stability is a high priority and this reinforced that the average number of placements for the children equal 2, with majority (72%) having one or two placements while 8% of the children in foster care have had more than five placements.
- When accommodating placement levels of care when comparing medical conditions (diagnosed mental illness, ADD, ADHA, Developmental Disabilities, Emotional Disturbances, Hearing, Speech or Visual Impairments, learning disabilities, etc.) documented for the children; 58% have no medical condition documented, while 38% have one or two conditions documented. It is recognized that this portion of the data in our data management system is likely under-reported as the medical conditions are noting that the difficult to place children represent roughly 3% of the foster care population.

Foster Care Data Request	FFY 2020 (Oct 1, 2019 - Sept 30, 2020)		Point in Time (May 1, 2021)	
<b>Unduplicated # of foster children</b>	<b>2,467</b>		<b>1,551</b>	
Caucasian Children	1,266	51.3%	703	45.3%
Native American Children	1,087	44.1%	740	47.7%
Other Races	468	19.0%	293	18.9%
<b>TPR cases</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>29.4%</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>25.5%</b>
<b>Average # of siblings in foster care</b>	<b>1.60</b>		<b>1.64</b>	
0 siblings in foster care	765	31.0%	452	29.1%
1 sibling in foster care	601	24.4%	379	24.4%
2 siblings in foster care	493	20.0%	325	21.0%
3 or more siblings in foster care	608	24.6%	395	25.5%
<b>Average # of placements</b>	<b>2.10</b>		<b>0.95</b>	
0 placements	44	1.78%	77	5.0%
1-2 placements	1,779	72.1%	1,474	95.0%
3-4 placements	454	18.4%	0	0.0%
5 or more placements	190	7.7%	0	0.0%
<b>Average # of clinical conditions</b>	<b>0.57</b>		<b>0.45</b>	
0 clinical conditions	1,441	58.4%	1,017	65.6%
1-2 clinical conditions	946	38.3%	500	32.2%
3-4 clinical conditions	76	3.1%	32	2.1%
5 or more clinical conditions	4	0.2%	2	0.1%

## Outcomes

The ND Foster and Adopt Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Work Group began discussing the need for revision to the State Plan in spring of 2021. The R&R Work Group identified the priorities for the state plan to include five specific outcomes embracing opportunity to identify placement options for Native American children while increasing “customer service” when engaging families.

**Outcome 1 – ND foster children placed out of home, remain in their home community unless placed with family or identified relatives out of the community.**

**Outcome 2 – Sibling groups are placed together.**

**Outcome 3 – Providers are available to care for foster children with specialized medical and high behavioral needs.**

**Outcome 4 – Providers are available to meet the needs of diversity, representing racial, cultural, and ethnic characteristics of the state’s foster care population.**

**Outcome 5 – Providers will not terminate their foster care license due to lack of support, insufficient training or resources to meet the foster child’s needs.**

*North Dakota will be undergoing foster care licensing redesign in this next biennium (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2023). At that time, the creation of ambitious targets and percentages of measurement will be further defined for each outcome. In addition, an exit interview/survey will be developed to thoroughly track this support and retention data through the perspective of the providers.*

### **Annual Reporting**

The ND Foster and Adopt Recruitment and Retention Coalitions will submit an annual report detailing a reflection of the above outcomes and highlights including:

#### **Coalitions report the most successful sources of targeted and general recruitment were:**

- Immediate responsiveness to inquiries from prospective families
- Word of mouth recruitment
- Hosting Special Events: Inquiry meetings, Info booths, parades, presenting to service clubs, etc.
- Community Outreach using publications on pizza boxes, etc.
- Engaging the faith-based community - personal outreach
- Maintaining child-specific recruitment - locating relatives
- Community booth at Home and Garden Show in Grand Forks.
- Participation in community parades Grand Forks, Stanley, Devils Lake, and Bismarck
- Advocacy from foster care case managers
- Educating relatives on benefits of licensure
- Social Media awareness and posts
- Facebook LIVE event
- Advertising through Radio/TV, billboard, community park benches, sporting events
- Provided business cards to foster parents as they are an important connection for recruitment
- Provided reusable tote bags at farmer’s market
- Develop public service announcements
- Participation in “Family Day “at the State Fair
- Including representation from the retail business community, media network and former foster youth to the coalition to expand the recruitment message to more effectively reach targeted areas.
- Train and encourage agency staff to share the recruitment message to external areas of the community with which they are connected such as places of worship, community and civic groups, neighborhood groups and social/recreational area.
- Target recruitment to providers specific to meet the needs of aggressive, sexually acting out, and low functioning foster children.
- Target recruitment for the need of additional Native American families on or near Indian reservations.
- Target recruitment in Native American communities, colleges, or at cultural events such as pow-wows.
- Develop a partnership with the Tribal Colleges to increase awareness of the need for Native American foster homes.

#### **Coalitions report the most successful approach to retain the current licensed providers/families**

- Engage in clear and ongoing communication with licensed providers
- Promote, offer and/or enhance foster and adoptive parent support groups
- Provide information, tools, resources to recharge their perspective
- Provide more frequent training for foster parents to best meet their time schedule
- Offer sharing opportunities during training sessions to receive the support
- Offer stipends to seasoned foster parents to mentor new foster parents
- Give recognition awards to foster parents for years of service, ‘above and beyond’ awards
- Give recognition through the simple act of sending a ‘thank you’ card
- Cross agency referrals and supportive collaboration when foster parents move across county lines or between agencies; i.e. PATH and county foster homes

### **Coalitions report reasons licensed providers/families did not complete their initial licensing process**

- Training access to 27 hours for PRIDE, more online options have been made available
- Spouse not on board
- Individual cannot pass the background check
- Individual acknowledges that foster parenting is harder than they thought it would be
- Family schedule is too busy
- Family situation changed – divorce, death, birth of a baby, etc.

### **Coalitions report reasons licensed providers/families discontinued their foster care license**

- Moved out of state
- Adopted the foster child/ren
- Working parents -- schedule of foster child/ren is too cumbersome
- Need more time to focus on current family needs
- Burn out
- Revocation
- CPS report on their own children in their home
- Systems issues (treatment needs, services for child, or frustrated with workers)

### **Statewide R&R Accomplishments**

ND continues to have ongoing Coalition meetings to discuss recruitment and retention efforts as well as brainstorm solutions for local needs. Children and Family Services Training Center (CFSTC) manages centralized inquiry and developed an inquiry form to manage the intake (Attachment D and Attachment E). CFSTC increased response time and congruency in messaging for overall recruitment. 2020 had 47% of initial inquiries move on to speak to an authorized licensing agent(s) (ALA) or Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA), 2021 thus far has had 48% prospective families moved forward. Many prospective families comment they had no idea of the multiple licensing options or LCPA's available in ND. The ability to maintain ongoing contact with interested parties at times and in timeframes that work for them. CFSTC reports families return to the process after several months by either having a scheduled contact or by reinviting them to the process through invites to information panels or to reconnect through phone or email.

CFSTC began implementation of virtual foster care information panels, which have proven to bring additional interested individuals to the inquiry process and has shown to move many inquiring parties on to connecting with an authorized licensing agent(s). Following each session 3 to 5 families have been moved on to further discussion with ALA or LCPA. In addition, Facebook, has been sited often as a source to locate the tollfree number or DHS access point for requesting additional information. Increased following and response on the CFSTC Facebook page have been noted. Partners and foster/adopt parents are being strongly encouraged to share recruitment and retention materials on organizational and personal pages.

NDDHS supports the collaborative effort of all coalitions. Below is a list of successful accomplishments:

- Billboards about foster parenting
- Foster care month – dispersed yard signs, ribbons on trees, etc.
- Hockey arena team sponsors \$5 ticket night
- Booths, radio ad, online ad,
- Pizza cutters and flyers sent with each delivery pizza on Super Bowl Sunday
- “Find Your Super Power - Become a Foster Parent” for super bowl Sunday or community activities
- Christmas in the Park light festival display
- Stress ball STARS given to the blood drives
- Movie Theater advertising
- School PTO meetings and school fliers
- Activities at county fairs, advertisements on bus, email on school, ad in school
- Table tents at area restaurants
- Pens in at Pharmacies
- Increased interest in respite and emergency care, helpful short term assistance
- Community Fun Nights – donations, games, activities, etc.

- Good Day Dakota TV media segment,
- Educators Staff Development Days – allowed a booth to help recruit
- Fundraiser Event: 31 Bags as a fundraiser to give each child
- Banners at baseball field
- City banner as advertising
- Facebook Live Introductory Sessions
- Foster parent picnic with door prizes.
- Banquet for foster parent recognition event
- Family Engagement: YMCA passes, pool passes, ball game tickets, zoo passes, pumpkin patch, etc.
- Birthday cards and anniversary cards were mailed to the foster parents
- Annual foster parent appreciation/recognition picnic
- Implementation of support groups.
- Appreciation banquets, picnics, and winter parties in multiple regions
- Foster Parent Mentoring program
- Trauma training
- Grief and loss clinical services to foster / adoptive parents.

### **Statewide R&R Challenges**

ND continues to have discussions about the best way to retain families once they have become a licensed provider. Families have provided various reasons why they choose to discontinue the licensing process or no longer retain their license after duration of time. Foster care providers indicate they cease the licensing process after further reflection of how additional children in their home may disrupt their own children's schedule, they disclose they have had a change of heart, unexpected marital/family issues have arisen, or the expression that getting too attached to the children would be difficult for their own family when the foster child has to go, etc. Once licensed, providers who choose to let their license expire or discontinue providing foster care to children state the reasons they no longer remain a foster parent are; adoption of a specific child/ren, family issues, moving, no longer interested, specific license for a child who has exited care, etc.

ND Recruitment and Retention Coalitions have worked with local licensing workers to help educate prospective providers early on regarding the pros and cons of foster parenting, not intending to sway decision making, rather to assist in making an educated choice and commitment. In addition, great effort has been made to offer additional support early on for the new families to assist in answering questions and guiding them through the process of a first placement, expectations, navigating the system, understanding the payment schedule, and knowing it is ok to ask for additional support if it is needed, etc.

### **Specific Adoption Recruitment**

The AASK Program completes adoption assessments for all families seeking to adopt a child from foster care in North Dakota, including families identified for specific children being adopted from foster care and for general recruitment adoptive families. In the current fiscal year July 1, 2020 through May 31, 2021 the AASK Program has completed 119 new assessments, 9 updated and 38 subsequent adoption assessments. In this same time frame, AASK has completed 215 child adoption assessments for children whose case plan goal is adoption.

North Dakota has two full time Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) recruiters. One WWK recruiter is located in eastern ND and the other in western ND. Both have a primary focus on child specific recruitment and have caseloads with a mixture of state custody children and tribal custody children who do not have an identified adoptive option at the point of referral.

North Dakota has an active ND Heart Gallery, which facilitates a web site and photo gallery of waiting children. The photo gallery is transported across the state showcasing professional photographs of each child. ND hosts an annual "gala" where new portraits are unveiled; however children can be added to the gallery throughout the year. Currently, ND is featuring 7 children in the ND Heart Gallery, with 9 additional children featured who have been matched with prospective adoptive parents. An additional 10 children (approximate) will be added before October 2021 to be featured in the November unveiling of the new gallery. Not every child's team is supportive of the child's inclusion in the Heart Gallery, however the option to be featured is provided to all children waiting for a forever family.

North Dakota provides adoption services to Tribal custody children at the request of each Tribe, through the AASK program. The Tribe seeks approval of the State adoption administrator for AASK to provide these services on a case-by-case basis. In the current fiscal year July 1, 2020 through May 31, 2021, AASK has placed 40 children for adoption at the request of the Tribe and has also assisted in the finalization of adoption for 33 children.

### **Adoption Call to Action Update**

An expanded team of individuals attended the Washington DC Call to Action Meeting in January 2020. The team included the states adoption manager, foster care manager, a CIP representative, a private agency contract representative (the AASK program) and a representative from a larger local agency (zone director from Grand Forks County Human Service Zone). This group has begun to meet quarterly to dialog and plan action steps to implement strategies to address barriers to timely adoptions. Some of the strategies include:

- Quarterly zone meetings between zone representative and the AASK program to identify and address case specific barrier to permanency for cases where adoption is a concurrent or primary case plan goal.
- The utilization of a timeline for each case to track specific steps in the adoption process. Additional timelines within the zone are discussed in each quarterly meeting.

### **National Consultation:**

North Dakota received technical assistance in the past from the National Resource Center on the Recruitment and Retention of Foster and Adoptive Parents (NRCRRFAP) and the National Resource Center for Tribes (NRC4Tribes) to gain a foundation and greater knowledge of recruitment and retention strategies focusing on recruiting homes for teens, sibling groups and to increase the pool of Native American families. In 2021, additional national consultation was requested by Adopt US Kids in efforts to support and improve the state's capacity to recruit resource families and keep families engaged, including using the state's new recruitment tagline in effective marketing approaches that support the state's broader recruitment efforts. Adopt US Kids has been provided consultation services, facilitation, and training to build staff capacity and assist the state in developing a strategic recruitment planning that includes approaches for recruiting families, supporting and keeping current families engaged, and leveraging North Dakota's tagline and any other relevant marketing resources. This consultation with Adopt US Kids will continue into the 2021-2023 state biennium.

### **Plans for 2021-2022**

#### ***General recruitment activities:***

- Implement the common statewide logo and tag line with a multiple disciplinary team with representation from all constituents within the foster/adopt community.
- Develop enhanced targeted advertising plan to maximize exposure.
- Utilize statewide branding on promotional items placed strategically in local businesses/events.
- Host foster parent inquiry meetings at public establishments/or in virtual environments.
- Continue to utilize Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts.
- Pursue relationship with community partners who will support recruitment efforts.

#### ***Targeted recruitment activities:***

- Recruit specialized care for specific behavior challenges.
- Advertise to recruit for more Native American foster and adoptive parents.
- Create testimonial commercials specific to teens, Native Americans, and sibling groups
- Partner with the ICWA State Partnership grant managed by UND Social Work Dept.

#### ***Retention activities:***

- Provide more frequent training in more than one location to best meet foster/adopt schedules.
- Increase opportunities of online or virtual training.
- Offer sharing opportunities during training sessions to receive the support.
- Expand foster parent mentoring opportunities to match new parents with seasoned parents.
- Give recognition in various ways on multiple platforms
- Provide grief counseling to foster families struggling with placement transition
- Promote and/or enhance foster and adoptive parent support groups, including online or virtual options
- Grow opportunities to provide access to family activities for foster families at reduced cost or free

**Coalition Purpose:** The purpose of the Foster and Adopt Recruitment and Retention Coalition is to gather local parties to engage in conversation and support the recruitment and retention of foster parents as well as adoptive families. The statewide goal is to continue to offer education and awareness surrounding the need for families to open their hearts and homes to children in need of safe placement.

**Coalitions:** North Dakota has four functioning coalitions located statewide; service area varies based on Human Service Zones.

**CFSTC Role:** The North Dakota Department of Human Services (NDDHS) Children and Family Services has a fiscal contract with UND Children and Family Services Training Center (CFSTC) to oversee statewide Recruitment and Retention efforts. CFSTC is responsible to accept and communicate with initial inquiries, collect data, participate in coalition meetings to assess and address local needs, manage the statewide budget for fiscal purchases, etc.

**Coalition Attendance:** Each coalition is inclusive of all agencies identified as a Human Service Zone, Tribal Social Service office, Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA), AASK Program or Division of Juvenile Services (DJS). These agencies should have at least two participants at each meeting including the agency licensing worker and a supervisor/case manager. In addition, coalitions should secure local business leaders with an interest in advertising, faith-based and volunteer organizations (Churches, Lions Club, Kiwanis, etc.) driven to engage as supports, as well as foster parents and adoptive families who have a passion for child welfare.

**Coalition Participation Limits:** There is no limit to the number of members each coalition should have. Some coalitions are larger and function with various perspectives, which spreads the work around more evenly. Other coalitions are smaller in size but have great connections to recruiting agency staff or local volunteers to assist when needed.

**Coalition Participant Roles:** Each coalition will function with members or volunteers to serve in the role of:

1. Facilitator – NDDHS Field Service Specialist (FSS). In the event the FSS is unavailable for a meeting, he/she will appoint a member to lead discussion.
2. Minutes Lead – This coalition member will capture the discussion and take meeting minutes to share with coalition members. Distribution of the meeting notes should occur within 3 working days of the meeting.
3. Expectation of all Coalition Participants:
  - a. Events – Coalition members will research and review local events to advertise to families to attend (free, low cost, etc.). All member will also identify local opportunities for licensing workers and volunteers to attend as a meet and greet, booth, parade engagement for recruitment efforts, etc.
  - b. Training – Coalition members will research local training opportunities, notify of any CFSTC events of interest and assist in soliciting a speaker for an event/training as needed.
4. Other – Retention activities, National “Months of Interest” or activities locally specific where having a point person from the coalition is necessary.

**Meeting Agenda:** Each coalition will function differently; however common themes are to be discussed at each meeting. Attached is an example of coalition meeting structure.

**Questions/Contact Information:** If you have questions regarding your role or expectations with a local Foster and Adopt Recruitment and Retention Coalition, please contact the Field Service Specialist for licensing in your area or Sheila Muus (CFSTC) for further direction.

1. Sheila Muus (CFSTC) at 777-5913, 200-1825 or [sheila.muus@und.edu](mailto:sheila.muus@und.edu)
2. Bob Schock (CFS FSS) at 328-8880 or [baschock@nd.gov](mailto:baschock@nd.gov)
3. Monica Miller (CFS FSS) at 298-4621 or [mjmillier@nd.gov](mailto:mjmillier@nd.gov)
4. Barb Reed (CFS FSS) at 665-2270 or [breed@nd.gov](mailto:breed@nd.gov)
5. Michelle Jacob (CFS FSS) at 857-8591 or [mjacob@nd.gov](mailto:mjacob@nd.gov)

**ND Recruitment/Inquiry Toll Free Line 1-833-FST-HOME or 1-833-378-4663**

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**Meeting Date:**

**Attendees:**

1. **Licensing Agent Updates:** *This agenda item allows each agency time to share highlights and successes. In addition, agencies will share # of inquiries, # of licensed provider homes and # of families who have discontinued care.*
  - a. Zone
  - b. Tribe
  - c. Nexus-PATH
  - d. Youthworks
  - e. AASK
  - f. DJS
  
2. **Training** *This agenda item allows the coalition members to reflect on training topics that would benefit providers. This also is a time to review what was offered locally and share specific details regarding future trainings (who can attend, when, how to register, etc.).*
  - a. Training requests from providers
  - b. Training offered since last coalition meeting
  - c. Training planned for future
  
3. **Recruitment and Retention Activities**
  - a. Activities completed since last meeting
  - b. Activities planned for future
  
4. **Provider Appreciation**
  - a. Activities completed since last meeting
  - b. Activities planned for future
  
5. **National Months of Interest**
  - a. November is Adoption Month *(Begin planning in August of each year)*
  - b. May is Foster Care Month *(Begin planning in February of each year)*
  
6. **Other Agenda Items:**
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  
7. **Next Meeting**

North Dakota will recruit and retain foster families to meet the placement needs of children in foster care, while recruiting adoptive families to assist in permanency goal achievement for children who are free for adoption. North Dakota Coalitions will engage in general and targeted recruitment.

<b>Recruitment &amp; Retention Plan Outcomes Timeframe</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Year 3: July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022 <input type="checkbox"/> Year 4: July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023 <input type="checkbox"/> Year 5: July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024
<b>Coverage Area</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Coalition 1 (Williston, Minot, Jamestown, Valley City, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Coalition 2 (Devils Lake, Grand Forks, Cavalier, Spirit Lake, Turtle Mt) <input type="checkbox"/> Coalition 3 (Hillsboro, Fargo, Wahpeton, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Coalition 4 (Bismarck, Dickinson, etc.)
<b>Average # of Coalition Participants</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> At least 5 regular members <input type="checkbox"/> 6 to 12 members <input type="checkbox"/> 13 to 20 members <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please describe)</i> Enter text
<b>Who participates in the coalition meetings, events, and planning for recruitment?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> CFSTC Recruitment & Retention Specialist <input type="checkbox"/> CFS Field Specialist <input type="checkbox"/> Zone licensing worker <input type="checkbox"/> Zone case manager/s <input type="checkbox"/> Zone supervisor/s <input type="checkbox"/> Zone director <input type="checkbox"/> Nexus PATH representative/s <input type="checkbox"/> Youthworks representative/s <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal representative/s <input type="checkbox"/> AASK <input type="checkbox"/> Foster parent/s <input type="checkbox"/> Adoptive parent/s <input type="checkbox"/> Community members <i>(please describe)</i> Enter text <input type="checkbox"/> Business representative/s <i>(please describe)</i> Enter text <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please describe)</i> Enter text <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please describe)</i> Enter text
<b>Average # of Licensed Foster Homes served by coverage area</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 25 licensed homes <input type="checkbox"/> 26 to 75 licensed homes <input type="checkbox"/> 76 to 100 licensed homes <input type="checkbox"/> 101 to 149 licensed homes <input type="checkbox"/> More than 150 licensed homes

<b>Outcomes Reflection</b>	<b>Yes Successful</b>	<b>Not in our area</b>
Outcome 1 – ND foster children placed out of home, remain in their home community unless placed with family or identified relatives out of the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:		
Outcome 2 – Sibling groups are placed together.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:		
Outcome 3 – Providers are available to care for foster children with specialized medical and high behavioral needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:		
Outcome 4 – Providers are available to meet the needs of diversity; representing racial, cultural, and ethnic characteristics of the state’s foster care population.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:		
Outcome 5 – ND providers will not terminate their foster care license due to lack of support, insufficient training or resources to meet the foster child’s needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:		

## Recruitment Activities

Coalitions are asked to check all that apply to recruitment efforts from your service area. Detail areas needing more information and comment on overall strengths and challenges of recruitment.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Parades
<input type="checkbox"/>	Service club community speaking engagements
<input type="checkbox"/>	Faith-based community speaking engagements
<input type="checkbox"/>	Facebook LIVE events
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community business engagement (pizza cutters, pizza box fliers, Scheels family days, amateur sports game days, table tents, fliers, etc.) <i>Please describe: Enter text</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
Strengths/successes to recruitment in our service area include:	
Challenges/barriers to recruitment in our service area include:	

<b>Reasons a prospective family <u>did not</u> follow through with foster care licensure:</b> <i>Check all that apply</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Background check requirements
<input type="checkbox"/>	Spouse/partner is not in agreement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Training requirements
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family situation changed; marriage, divorce, death, birth of a baby, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	After further information, self-determined fostering/adoption is not something they are prepared to take on
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family schedule is too busy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
For individuals/families who did get licensed.... Share one success story that sticks out about why they became licensed, adopted, what spoke to the individual/s, how did they take the leap, etc.	

## **Retention Activities**

Coalitions are asked to check all that apply to retention efforts from your service area. Detail areas needing more information and comment on overall strengths and challenges of recruitment.

<b>Targeted retention activities. Check all that apply</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Foster parent support groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adoptive parent support groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Facebook LIVE support groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peer Mentoring
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grief and loss training and support
<input type="checkbox"/>	Training opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Annual recognition/ appreciation banquet or picnic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Incentives for family engagement: pool passes, zoo passes, game tickets, movie tickets, bowling, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community discount cards
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appreciation letter or card
<input type="checkbox"/>	Birthday cards
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anniversary cards
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
Strengths/successes to retention in our service area include:	
Challenges/barriers to retention in our service area include:	

As families terminate their licensure, an exit interview or survey is a desire of NDDHS to gain feedback and knowledge regarding retention of families. Coalitions are asked to check all that apply as it relates to what they hear regarding the termination of licensing.

<b>Reasons that families are no longer licensed for foster care. Check all that apply</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moved out of state
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moved from the community and did not transfer the license
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adopted the foster child/ren
<input type="checkbox"/>	Working parent/s – foster parenting schedule is too cumbersome
<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting personal time to focus on family needs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Burn out

<input type="checkbox"/>	Retiring after many years of service
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provider did not feel supported with training and agency resources to serve the child/ren
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provider was part of a personal or foster care CPS assessment and was discouraged
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provider revocation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
Comments/feedback:	
Is there a way to alleviate any of the above reasons?	

North Dakota R&R Coalitions are asked to complete the required detail to support the budget request and annual needs to carry out the local goals of the coalition. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact CFSTC, Recruitment and Retention Specialist.

<b>Recruitment &amp; Retention Plan Outcomes Timeframe</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Year 3: July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 <input type="checkbox"/> Year 4: July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 <input type="checkbox"/> Year 5: July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024
<b>Coverage Area</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Coalition 1 (Williston, Minot, Jamestown, Valley City, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Coalition 2 (Devils Lake, Grand Forks, Cavalier, Spirit Lake, Turtle Mt.) <input type="checkbox"/> Coalition 3 (Hillsboro, Fargo, Wahpeton, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Coalition 4 (Bismarck, Dickinson, etc.)

**Prepared Budget and Rational**

In this section, describe general recruitment and retention activities that will be utilized to recruit adoptive and foster care families. All details surrounding need and efforts to achieve local goals are encouraged.

Budget Line Item	Total Request	Rational for Need
Advertising/Marketing		
Supplies		
Appreciation Items/Events		
Support Groups		
Peer Mentoring		
Training		
Promotional Items (10%)		
Other:		
Other:		
Other:		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	

**Once complete, please submit to CFSTC by August 15. Funding requests will be reviewed, and allocated budgets will be provided to each coalition by September 1.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Coalition Member Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 CFS Field Service Specialist Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

**FOSTER/ADOPT INQUIRY INTAKE FORM**



**Instructions:** Please complete when a family or individual contacts your agency regarding licensing to provide foster care or to explore adoption options. Complete this form if your agency is the *first* contact (a new form is *not* needed if you are following up on an inquiry referred by another agency). The contact may be considered new if there has been no interaction with your agency in the previous six months. *This form will be submitted quarterly to the CFS Field Service Specialist (licensing) by the worker originating the form – you do not need to submit the form if you have received it from another authorized licensing agency or the UND foster parent recruitment retention specialist.*

Date of Inquiry:	<input type="text"/>	Inquiry Completed By: (worker name)	<input type="text"/>
Inquiry Received By: (worker agency, if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> DHS email	<input type="checkbox"/> UND website	<input type="checkbox"/> Toll Free Number
	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Event: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt US Kids
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="text"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Social Media
How did the family hear about fostering or adoption options? (check all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> DHS email	<input type="checkbox"/> UND website	<input type="checkbox"/> Toll Free Number
	<input type="checkbox"/> Friends/Family: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Event: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt US Kids
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Media
Inquiring About:	<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Parent Licensure		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Adoption		
Parent #1 – Name	<input type="text"/>		
Street Address	<input type="text"/>		
City, State, Zip	<input type="text"/>		
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>		
Email	<input type="text"/>		
Parent #2 – Name	<input type="text"/>		
Phone number	<input type="text"/>		
Email	<input type="text"/>		
Native American or Tribal Status	<input type="text"/>		
Inquiry Tracking: (choose one)	<input type="radio"/> Licensing agent worker will forward this inquiry to CFS Field Service Specialist quarterly		
	<input type="radio"/> UND FPRS will track this inquiry		

**REFERRAL INFORMATION**

**Instructions:** This section is required if you are referring the individual/family making an inquiry to another authorized licensing agency, adoption agency, or UND Foster Parent Recruitment/Retention Specialist. *You will report the inquiry quarterly to the CFS Field Service Specialist (licensing) even if you complete a referral.*

Family Interested in licensing with an agency; referral made to: (check all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Zone		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Nexus-PATH		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Therapeutic		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Youthworks		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Tribe		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program		
	<input type="checkbox"/> AASK		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other adoption agency: <input type="text"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> UND Foster Parent Recruitment Retention Specialist		
Referral Made to Person(s):	<input type="text"/>	Referral Date:	<input type="text"/>

**FOSTER/ADOPT INTAKE – Part B**



*This form can be used by local licensing workers, but the intent was to create the intake form in efforts to have UND CFSTC Foster Parent Recruitment/Retention Specialist complete it and provide you with more detailed information upon referral.*

Personal Information	Notes during inquiry call
Motivation for Inquiring? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Relative to child</i></li> <li>• <i>Child specific inquiry</i></li> <li>• <i>Desire to give back, etc.</i></li> </ul>	
Interest in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Foster care</i></li> <li>• <i>Adoption</i></li> <li>• <i>Both</i></li> </ul>	
Previous experience fostering? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>If yes, when &amp; where?</i></li> </ul>	
Describe the types of foster care. Any preference? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Emergency shelter care</i></li> <li>• <i>Respite care</i></li> <li>• <i>Long-term placements</i></li> <li>• <i>Higher behavioral needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Sibling groups</i></li> </ul>	
Preference to serve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Age/gender/sibling groups</i></li> </ul>	
Other information shared: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Occupation, residence history, pets, Current living arrangement (house, apt), family structure (any children currently in the home, age, gender), review of bedroom space available, etc.</i></li> </ul>	

***ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR REFERRAL***