

**Permanency for Ohio's Children: Recruitment of Relatives and for Sibling Initiative
A Public-Private-University Initiative and Neighborhood-Based Approach**

**Funded by Adoption Opportunities: Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in the
Foster Care System**

Year 1 Evaluation Report of the Planning Year, 2008-2009

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I. Executive Summary

This report is a summary of Year 1 for Permanency for Ohio's Children: Recruitment of Relatives and for Sibling Initiative. The initiative is a Public-Private-University Initiative and Neighborhood-Based Approach and funded by Adoption Opportunities: Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in the Foster Care System. Overall, the planning year was successful in working out the implementation of proposal. We learned what components of the proposal could be successfully implemented as well as the modifications that had to be made from the initial conceptualization.

A major strength of this initiative was that all the partners worked together to develop the proposal, showing great investment in the ideas by the public agency (Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services, private agencies (Adoption Network Cleveland and Beech Brook, Neighborhood Collaborative Agencies) and University (Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University) had in the project and process. This investment continued after funding and everyone worked together in good faith to address issues as they arose.

One of the major accomplishments of Year 1 was to begin the process of "threading" project processes into current CCDCFS committees and initiatives. A second accomplishment was identifying target and control neighborhoods and getting child data during a time with CCDCFS was changing to SACWIS. A third accomplishment was developing the protocol to use with older youth. A fourth accomplishment was delineating roles and responsibilities.

It was a good year for the project. The project is on solid ground for achievement process and outcome benchmarks as specified for the next year.

II. Introduction and Overview

A. Overview of the community, population and problem.

The child welfare system in Cuyahoga County at the time this grant was developed reflected a shrinking population of children in foster care, but the children who remained in care were the most complicated, requiring new methods to promote their need for permanency. When the project was initiated in 2008 and the same is more or less true as of writing this report, over 300 children were in the permanent custody of Cuyahoga County with no identified adoptive family. While approximately 80 children from this group were placed for adoption each year, another 80 joined this group of waiting children. Less than 37% of children in permanent care in Cuyahoga County (CC) were being adopted in less than 12 months. *Objective one was to increase the percent of children who exit for adoption in less than 24 months from 25.1% to match the state's percent of 37.2% or higher.* One way we could accomplish this objective was to do a better job with kinship families because many children are initially placed with kin or subsequently move to kin placements, at least historically.

Kinship resource families have become increasingly important in permanency and kinship care has been a recognized form of substitute care for several decades. When children must be separated from their biological parents through the intervention of the child welfare system, the Indian Child Welfare Act (1978), the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act (1980), PRWORA (1996) and the ASFA (1997) support kin as the preferred placement resource for children. Kinship families offer several benefits to children including providing familiar caregivers to children that can help reduce the trauma of separation, reinforcing children's sense of identity and self esteem, offering more stability in placement, reducing the stigma of foster care, and promoting sibling relationships (Wilson & Chipungu, 1996; Berrick, et al., 1998; Beeman & Boisen, 1999). Consequently, kinship foster care has been the fastest growing form of out-of-home placement (Bonecutter & Gleeson, 1998). As Ainsworth and Maluccio (1998) note, the "trend toward greater use of kinship care...may indicate that child care and protection agencies are becoming more sensitive to family, racial, ethnic, and cultural factors and the importance of family continuity in child development" (p. 4).

At the heart of barriers to kinship care as a permanent resource is an ill-defined philosophy about who to include in the circle of kin and how to assess potential kinship caregivers with a critical eye, yet without the bias that is often inherent in evaluating someone with close ties to a parent who has been abusive or neglectful. The results of this reverberate in practice. In the evaluation of a federal demonstration project focusing on kinship adoption in Cuyahoga County, Lorkovich, Piccola, Groza, Brindo, and Marks (2004) found that 58% of kin caregivers never had the option of adoption discussed with them once permanent custody was obtained on their relations.

Despite an evolving definition of kin that is more inclusive, inconsistency still exists among child welfare practitioners when deciding whom to consider kin (Reed, 2003). Also, accurately assessing the viability of permanence for children in kinship placement is a practice that can be inadvertently influenced by the connection of the kinship caregiver to the biological family. Practitioners have difficulty separating some of their concerns and attitudes about the biological family from kinship caregivers. There is an ideology that the "apple doesn't fall far from the tree" rather than approach that "one bad apple does not spoil the whole barrel." Given that over two million children in the United States live in a kinship arrangement (Reed, 2003), most without child welfare involvement, it is evident that kinship families have experience and success in raising children. Gordon, McKinley, Satterfield, and Curtis (2003) confirmed that caregivers have "a

profound understanding of child safety,” quite contrary to the belief that they are the “source of parents’ abusive or neglectful behaviors” (p. 86). So, it is essential that child welfare policy makers, administrators and practitioners take an objective approach in evaluating kinship resource families—being careful to manage whatever negative feelings they have about the children’s biological parents. The evaluation and engagement of kin has to start when children are entering care and temporary custody is sought; waiting until after permanent custody is filed and the child has been separated from kin for years can be too late. Both paternal as well as maternal kin must be explored. Too often, when a father is absent, little effort is spent considering fathers and the extended families of fathers. Perhaps there is alienation or hostility between the maternal and paternal sides of the family; there is a tendency to explore the extended family of only the parent (usually the mother) coming to the attention of the public system. More effort has to be spent reaching out to paternal relatives.

Assessing the best permanency option for children in kinship care requires workers to be knowledgeable about the options available to kin, the criteria required to be met under each option, and the resources available within the system to provide for each option. There are three primary options to consider when formalizing permanence for children in kinship care. They include legal custody, legal guardianship and adoption. While licensing kinship providers as foster parents may provide caregivers with much needed financial assistance and social service support, foster care is not a permanent option for children, even if the foster parent is kin. This is because custody still belongs to the state

Guiding kin toward legal custody or guardianship has advantages and disadvantages. First, compared to completing a foster care or adoptive home study assessment, the length of time involved in gaining legal custody or guardianship is minimal. Also, some kin families may not meet the criteria required by agencies to become an adoptive parent. For example, some kin families have a history of difficulties including past involvement with child protective services or welfare services. While they may have changed their lifestyle, past issues may preclude them from becoming approved for adoption (Lorkovich, et al., 2004). Also, some kinship caregivers are concerned about the impact of adoption on the birthparents and the role confusion this creates for children (Gordon, et al., 2003). Thus, some kin choose an alternative legal arrangement better suited to their specific situation. They can only do this when they are engaged early in the placement process and all the options are evaluated with them.

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, signed into law by President Bush on October 7, 2008, includes several provisions that can help children connect to grandparents and other relatives. The act offers new support for relatives already caring for children both in and out of foster care and also helps connect children with relatives through new policies. For example, agencies must give notice to relatives within 30 days of a child’s removal from the custody of his parents. This notification could allow the relatives to care for the child and prevent the child from entering foster care, to become the child’s foster parent, and/or to serve as a support person for the child while the child is in foster care. The act also allows states to use Title IV-E funds for kinship guardianship assistance to help eligible children leave foster care to live permanently with relatives. The new law also encourages states to adopt new regulations that allow for case by case adjustments to non-safety licensing standards to enable more children to be cared for by relatives in Title IV-E reimbursable foster care (see Center for Law and Social Policy, 2009).

A disadvantage for kin taking legal custody or guardianship of a child means many kinship families lose the financial support of foster care stipends or potential adoption subsidies if they can be approved as foster and/or adoptive parents. In many cases, kinship providers are only able to

apply for much lower financial assistance for children in their care. In addition, they may lose access to case management services that could help them access other concrete resources as needed.

Overall, it is important for kin families to have complete and accurate information about all of the permanency options for children. Knowing about the advantages and disadvantages of legal custody, guardianship, fostering and adoption as soon as possible in the case helps kin caregivers make better-informed choices earlier so that children can move to permanency sooner. All of these permanency options require an early comprehensive assessment of the kinship family to first determine which permanency alternative is best suited to meet the child and family's needs and situation. The assessment should evaluate the caregiver's ability to provide a safe, stable and nurturing environment, their ability to meet the child's basic and special needs short-term and long-term, and their willingness to access community services to assist them in managing the child's care (Child Welfare League of America, 1994).

To begin, kin providers need thorough and complete information about children entering care. It is easiest to engage kin at the time of temporary care of their relatives; kin become more distrustful and angry with the public agency as the agency proceeds to terminating birth parents rights. Team Decision-Making (TDM) meetings or "staffings" at DCFS provides an opportunity for kin to be in the conversation from the beginning. These meetings are held whenever there is a need for a placement decision involving child removal, change of placement, or reunification/other permanency plans. However, we need to get the kin at these meetings and do a better job right at the beginning of engaging relatives. There is data from Cuyahoga County that shows a correlation between relative attendance at TDM meetings and kinship placements, so if the agency wants to increase kinship placement, they need to get kin to attend TDM meetings (Crampton, 2004).

Not only informal placements or diversion placements to keep children out of public care, but formal placements for fostering or adopting by kin are important to increase in order for more youth to achieve permanency. At the time of the proposal, 75% of kin families in Cuyahoga County did not have a completed home study by the time permanent custody (PC) is granted! This is a combination of insufficient engagement, cumbersome process, major paperwork, intrusiveness and not a customer-centered, welcoming reception. Jennifer Miller of Child Focus, Inc. conducted focus groups with CCDCFS staff that indicated that initial contacts with parents of children coming into care do not result in the identification of extended family members. She also found that ongoing efforts to identify relatives after the initial placement decision is limited at the agency due to unclear policy, limited search technology, and the lack of information at the front end of custody options available to the kinship families who are caring for children in CCDCFS custody. The ongoing or intake worker is also faced with what they perceive as an unwieldy assessment packet for the kinship caregiver and she is not armed with the rules and regulations of what it takes to get licensed and what are barriers and what situations can be waived. *Our second objective is by the time PC is granted, 35% of caregivers who plan to adopt will have a completed home study.*

Second, while kin resource families may be familiar with the children they are willing to care for, they may not be prepared for managing the physical, social or emotional effects that often accompany abuse, neglect, frequent housing moves and chaotic family environments. Families with accurate and complete information about children are more successful in maintaining adoptions (Nelson, 1985; Schmidt, Rosenthal, & Bombeck, 1988; Groze, 1994). Whether the information is withheld, poorly recorded or unavailable, the lack of complete information serves as a stressor and can place a family at risk for crisis or other negative outcomes such as losing custody or connection with their relatives (Groze, 1996).

Next, kinship providers may require social support and professional services that are different from the services typically provided to non-relative foster parents (Gordon, et al., 2003).

Many kin caregivers report difficulty accessing all of the needed services due to cumbersome paperwork, transportation, costs, and/or inflexible office hours (Lorkovich et al, 2004). Further, kinship providers identified the need for ongoing support for themselves and their children. In non-kin adoption, public child welfare agencies offer a range of pre-placement and post-placement services designed to assist families in developing their skills in identifying and coping with children's behavioral and emotional problems. These include helping foster parents become more flexible in dealing with children, helping them develop realistic expectations of children (given the children's history and potential special needs), and assisting them in accessing resources when crises arise. Such interventions at the family system level are designed to reduce disruptions, dissolution, and out-of-home placement in adoption and have application to kin families as well. Providing such services to kin resource families is equally essential to reduce stress on the family system and help preserve placements within the child's kin network. Because the home study process is set up for expedited completion, and most of the relatives are not efficient in completing paperwork, 75% of relatives have difficulty getting through the home study process. *Objective 3 is to provide a model of service that allows 50% of relatives to complete their home study successfully.*

While so far the discussion has focused on when children first enter care, children who are 17 or older for whom a permanent family has not been found can also benefit from a renewed search for kin resource families since these families are the best option for building a permanent family. There are terrible consequences for children who age out of the public system with no permanent family (Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor, & Nesmith, 2001). When children turn 18, the first places they go to after they leave care are relatives (McMillen & Tucker, 1999). Many return to birth parents, even if they have had no direct contact with them for years. The question we ask ourselves is this: if children are going to their birth family once they reach majority age, why are we not working with relative resource families before they leave care? We recognize the values and policies that have operated to discourage and prohibit this work but if we take a pragmatic approach, we should be working with kin resource families to help these children transition out of care and have a permanent connection. We recognize that some, or perhaps many, of these families cannot or will not be an adoptive family or a good permanent resource for the older children, but some will. We need a different way to practice with older children who are at-risk of leaving care without a permanent resource family. We need to go back to kin! We need to help youth evaluate these relationships while we still have an opportunity. Pre-Service training does not address the unique issues of relatives, in part because kin and non-kin are trained together. This is one factor that frustrates kin and contributes to increased lack of completing pre-service training for 50% of relatives. *Objective 4 is to change pre-service training to meet the needs of relatives, working with public policy to allow flexibility for relatives.*

Kin resource families are more likely to take sibling placements and keep siblings together (Groza, Maschmeier, Jamison, & Piccola, 2003). Most children grow up with siblings. The time they spend together in their early years is often greater than the time they spend with their parents. While sibling relations may be very strong at some points, weak at others, peaceful and fun, conflictual and intense, personal identity is interwoven with sibling relationships (Bank & Kahn, 1982; Pfouts, 1976; Sutton-Smith, 1982; LePere, Davis, Couve, & McDonald, 1986). In early childhood, siblings are companions and playmates. Through games, conversations with each other and conflicts, they learn to interact with others, solve problems, and negotiate. During the early school years, the sibling relationship continues to be emotionally intense for many children and an ongoing developmental influence (Amramovitch, Pepler, & Corter, 1982). Older siblings assist younger siblings in the transition to school by both acting as a role model and by giving information about the experience. Older siblings are also attachment figures for younger siblings. Stewart and Marvin (1984) indicate that by the end of preschool years children serve as subsidiary attachment

figures for their younger siblings.

While these aspects of sibling relations exist in well-functioning families, both the positive and negative aspects of relations are intensified in problematic and dysfunctional families. Often children grow more attached to their siblings when they have experienced severe parental losses, neglect or abuse. Their attachment is greater than the attachment shown by siblings who have not experienced such losses (Lamb & Sutton-Smith, 1982). In these families, children learn early to depend upon and cooperate with each other in order to cope and survive (Hochman, Feathers-Acuna & Huston, 1992).

Additionally, because children don't really differentiate between good and bad -- they see life and relations as familiar and unfamiliar -- when children are traumatized by removal from their families, it is their siblings to whom they turn because they represent familiarity. What professionals and those outside the family judge as questionable or unacceptable family functioning, children tend to see as normal and customary. While siblings within the same family may experience the family environment differently, when raised within an abusive or neglectful family, the environment to them feels normal and rational. When removed, siblings do not seek to "de-identify" with each other as is the case with a sibling subgroup in which one sibling is seen by another as "disturbed" or "different" in some way (Schachter & Stone, 1987). Rather, within the context of these problematic families, sibling relations intensify. Without access to that sibling relation, their trauma often increases (Hegar, 1988).

Earlier studies indicate that of the children in foster care, 93% had full, half, or step siblings (Timberlake & Hamlin, 1982) and up to 85% of children entered foster care with a sibling (Wedge & Mantle, 1991). According to the Hochman and colleagues (1992), 30% of the children entering foster care are sibling groups of four or more. In a 2000 study in Ohio (Wells & Guo, 2000), over 66% of the children in foster care were found to have an identifiable sibling also in the system. The sheer number of children in out-of-home care is an obvious challenge to sibling placement. Yet, other barriers to sibling placement can be addressed once they are identified.

Unfortunately, when children enter the child welfare system, sibling relationships are at risk of interruption and, in some cases, termination. While child welfare practitioners recognize the importance of the sibling bond, in practice sustaining the sibling relationship continues to be a challenge.

It takes special families to provide temporary and permanent care to children who have been abused and neglected, and even more skill to manage sibling groups. Licensed foster and adoptive families typically indicate preferences regarding the number and types of children they feel they would be best suited to care for in their home. This limits foster and adoptive home availability. Yet, when given the opportunity, many families accept placements outside their original preferences. Other limitations of foster and adoptive homes include too few foster and adoptive homes available, limited physical space to accommodate large sibling groups, a lack of information about the waiver process -- exceptions that can be made to allow siblings to be placed together -- and, the need for various supports to sustain siblings together in temporary and permanent placements.

Siblings are separated when there are too many siblings compared to the licensed and available foster and adoptive homes (Smith, 1996). The shortage of homes is a constant challenge for the number of siblings in care. There is a lack of approved foster homes willing and able to take placement of sibling groups of 3 or more children. About 25% or 193 children in permanent custody need to be placed together as siblings. Yet, we don't have families available to take them into the home. Given that most adoptions (60%) of children from the public system in Ohio are foster parents, having more foster parents willing and able to take siblings will result in more sibling adoptions.

The size of the posed blended family (adoptive or foster family and sibling group) is cited as a reason for not placing a sibling group together. The amount of physical space required for each child per licensing rules can prohibit the number of children that can be placed in a home (Smith, 1996). In some cases, waivers are available. However, workers are not always knowledgeable about the waivers and how to access them, or there is a lack of flexibility or willingness on the part of an agency to utilize waivers. *Our next objective is to increase adoptive placements of siblings by 22% (from 58% to 80%) and increase our number of resource families willing to care for large sibling groups.*

Because many maltreated children enter into care with complex needs, foster and adoptive families require assistance to cope successfully with those needs. Siblings have different levels of service needs. The support that families need ranges from respite and financial assistance to therapeutic interventions including individual counseling for the children or the family. Often there is a misconception that foster and adoptive families come readily equipped to handle the issues that emerge with fostering or adopting sibling groups. In truth, more so than other families, they require help within their community to care for children. To fail to provide services to assist families with their needs is to increase the stress on the developing family system, placing them at great risk for negative adoption outcomes (Groze, 1996). *Our next objective is to increase services and service access to enable resource families to maintain large sibling groups.* Services in close proximity to the family increase the likelihood that families will have easy access to services.

If children cannot be with relative resource families, decisions, sometimes in an instant, must be made about their placement in foster care. An agency operating on the philosophy of keeping siblings together absent a compelling reason to separate them should have a procedure in place to automatically evaluate first those resources that can accommodate all of the siblings together. If this is not possible, families who live in close proximity to one another and families who are willing to allow frequent contact between the siblings is the next best alternative. Even if initial separation occurs, careful consideration should be given to replace siblings if there is an opportunity early on to place them together in one home.

Creation and revision of procedures to keep siblings together necessitates revision of forms. All forms associated with placement processes should be revised to reflect the careful attention paid to siblings entering care. Such forms might include intake forms and placement questionnaires. Further, the agency management information system should be advanced and updated to link information about siblings who enter care at different points in time making it possible to consider placement together.

Once procedures have been appropriately revised and written and associated forms and processes reflect the necessary information, caseworkers should be trained. Training should include the information about the philosophy, procedures and the rationale for making all efforts possible to place siblings together. The research about outcomes for siblings placed together and separately should be included as part of training. Also, because decision-making can be complex, an assessment tool developed previously (Groza, Maschmeier, Jamison, & Piccola, 2003) should be used to help workers systematically and consistently address the areas associated with sibling placement.

B. Overview of Program Model.

General recruitment

Like all over the US, we experience the same inverted pyramid from calls inquiring about fostering or adoption to an actual placement; that is, we often get hundreds of calls but only about 5% yield for families who make it through the system to receive training, be studied, approved and have placement. DCFS has a specific tracking system (DAWN) that was developed by a private

adoption agency and given to them that tracks from the first phone call through each stage of the process; from recruitment to licensure or approval for adoption or drop out inquiries can and will be tracked. We will work with the recruitment department about how they deal with inquiries, attempting to insure inquiries will receive both general information about adoption as well as information about siblings and older children; we will enroll families in our targeted neighborhoods into a database for follow-up with newsletters about events for at least 2 years, recognizing that many inquiries take time to cultivate. In fact, in a minority adoption project at a local private agency, Groza, Roberson, Brindo, Darden-Kautz, Fujimura, Goode-Cross, & Prusak (2002) found that about half the minority families wanted a relationship with the agency for a long period of time before they were ready to move forward. They wanted to be included in information updates and events but often took a year or more to make the next step in the adoption process. Recognizing that the path to permanency for families is not linear, we will engage interested parties and keep them connected even if they are not ready to move forward with an adoption. They will receive information and be invited to activities located in or near their communities.

Our general recruitment campaign will have as one of its key components the use of paraprofessionals for the purpose of strengthening that part of each community that welcomes and celebrates resource families and supports them in their efforts. Efforts will be made to engage families at the pace they are comfortable in moving. The campaign will demonstrate an investment in relationships for the long-term, to change community impressions and fears about the public system, children in the public system, adoption and foster care. In the previously mentioned Minority Adoption Project (Groza et al., 2002), one successful strategy in the African-American community, building on personal contacts, was to use Beauty Shops and Barber Shops to recruit for adoptive families. These shops are social places in the urban African-American community as well as places to get hair and nails styled. As part of the Implementation Phase (IP), we will evaluate the use of previous successful strategies to see how we can incorporate them in general recruitment campaigns. In order to build relationships, prospective adoptive families will receive support, information, and referral through a Recruitment Coach located in one of 5 neighborhood based agencies.

Once potential families are identified by an Adoption Navigator, the ANC will give families information, emotional support, and logistical support as they move from considering adoption (or fostering) to becoming an adoptive parent, foster parent or relative caregiver. Adoption Navigators are paraprofessionals, many of whom have personal experience with adoption, who provide guidance throughout the adoption process, from initial inquiry through home study, placement, finalization, and beyond.

As part of general recruitment, each year, we will collaborate with the Adoption Coalition, which is a public-private partnership of agencies and individuals promoting adoption and the improvement of adoption services and processes/policies in the region. In this collaboration, we will coordinate with DCFS and Adopt US Kids to provide training; the training will target all professional staff and paraprofessional staff in the community/region for training about working with relatives and resource families for siblings and older children. People not only need knowledge but emotional intelligence about the issues faced by children in the system and the barriers we have to recruiting families for these children; as such, we need training that is more than just technical. For additional training needs identified throughout the project, we will also consult the training list offered by Adopt US Kids as well as evaluate local resources for training.

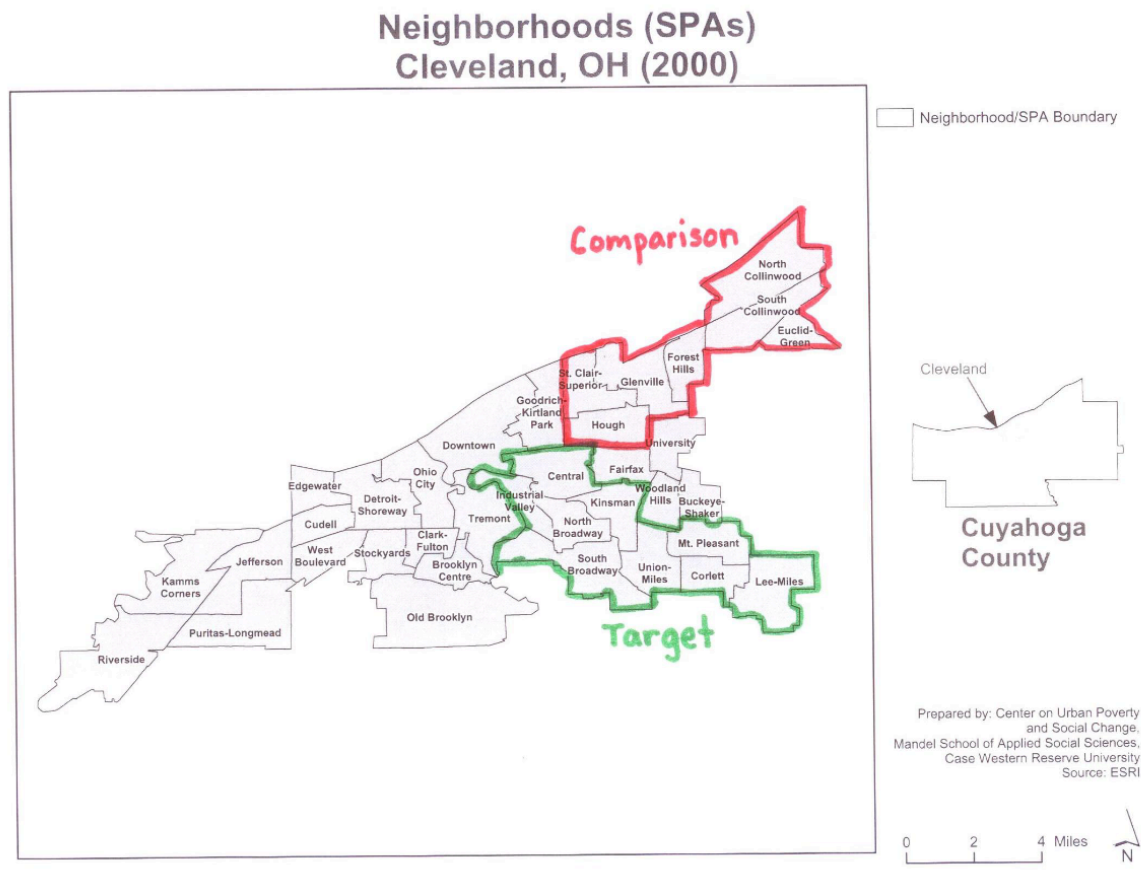
Our public appeal for help through General Recruitment techniques is only as good as an agency's ability to support, train, and develop those resource families that are the "successes" of our general recruitment campaign. A key to increasing the number of families who adopt from the

public system is friendly and responsive customer service, followed up by the predictability about the adoption process, and support during the waiting process from home study to placement.

The goal of general recruitment is to recruit 10 relatives and 15 resource families in each of Years 2, 3, 4 & 5. We will support, approve and stabilize at least 50% of those relatives/kin recruited as resource families and 50% of resource families recruited for sibling groups that result in placement for each project Year 3, 4 and 5. We expect the kin and sibling resource families to be a permanent resource for at least 30 children per year beginning in Year 3 and forward as a result of our general recruitment efforts.

Targeted Recruitment.

In contrast to general or mass marketing, targeted marketing means focusing efforts to find the families that fit the criteria for specific children who need families. We selected 5 SPA's which includes 13 neighborhoods (see map below) for intervention. We identified 5 neighborhoods to target with high concentration of children in public care as well as having high concentrations of kin and foster families. To test for whether our efforts have the effect we want, we also identified neighborhoods not receiving targeted recruitment (our comparison group). These neighborhoods are identified on the following map.



ANC has a role in targeted recruitment as well, though different than their role in general recruitment. We expect them to champion foster-to-adoption in their neighborhoods. They will identify potential kin and foster-to-adopt families in their neighborhoods and they will be involved in both helping kin make a permanent commitment to their relations as well as removing barriers for the foster families to move to adoptive families. We think of the ANC, in part, as barrier busters

in their role of targeted recruiter. Some funds are available for ANC to access if such funds remove barriers to adoption or permanence. They will identify date, location and time of training in their neighborhoods for each potential family.

We will infuse a customer-service orientation into the work of the ANC and their collaborating agencies in each of the 5 communities. This, in essence, promotes customer service not only in the public agency but also with the private agency partners assisting us with this initiative. We anticipate the benefit of such a customer-service model will be better community relationships.

Like in General Recruitment, in targeted recruitment the ANC will give families information, emotional support, and logistical support. The ANC will be able to identify resources for the targeted groups of this grant, relatives, teens, and sibling groups to help families stepping forth to care for the children agency custody. The goal of targeted recruitment is to recruit 5 relative and 8 resource families for siblings or older children in each of Years 2, 3, 4 & 5 in the specific geo-areas receiving the intervention. We will support, approve and stabilize at least 50% of relatives/kin recruited as resource families and 50% of resource families recruited for sibling groups that result in placement for each project Year 3, 4 and 5. We expect the kin and sibling resource families to be a permanent resource for at least 20 children per year beginning in Year 3 and forward as a result of our targeted recruitment efforts. We will compare the number of recruited families and stabilized families in each geographic group and expect to have higher numbers in the target area.

Child-Centered Recruitment: System Readiness

Child-centered recruitment refers to the methodology of finding a permanent resource or permanent resources for a specific child. We think that Child Centered recruitment at CCDFS will be greatly enhanced by alignment of concurrent planning practices and policy. The four areas of system readiness to set the stage for child centered recruitment are the focus of our system work. We cannot limit the child-centered recruitment interventions to only children in the target area so we will not be able to ascertain the independent contribution of a specific child-centered activity/intervention.

- 1) Policy development around concurrent planning and implementation of new policy and practices: We continue to take an approach that will identify and analyze the policy, legal, community, birth family and adoptive family barriers to permanency planning. These same barriers will also be analyzed in relationship to foster parent adoption for older teens. Plans will be developed to overcome these barriers. We will begin to develop procedures and protocols for engaging birth family members, fictive kin, and teens in permanency planning. Training for agency staff, foster parents and community members will be designed and offered to assist in ameliorating these barriers.
- 2) Enhanced Family Finding strategies: parent/kin locator services and practice of routinely searching and engaging families on behalf of youth in care is essential. With search software, we will develop a user group (super searchers) that crosses all departments, who will be supported by the CCDCFS' Administrative Team (A-Team). Findings of procedural barriers and clinical issues (i.e. once we have found family, how we engage them is a skill that will be addressed with training) will be fed back to the A-Team and this will instruct policy and practice guidelines for all staff.
- 3) Case Review modifications: Case Review is the unit at CCDCFS with 15 trained facilitators who practice Team Decision Making (aka staffing) with staff and families. Case review is a pivotal agency structure that will support concurrent planning and in turn, child centered recruitment practices. In this department, we intend to shore up concurrent planning through training with the facilitators regarding the building in evidence of file mining for those children

who have been in care, of family finding for those entering care, and keeping permanency for Cuyahoga's children on the agenda at all reviews through the life of the case. This is also the agency structure that is well suited to push sibling placements, and from the meetings, interested families can be recruited to step forward to become foster/adopt resource families.

- 4) Diversity training: One essential component of effective concurrent planning is staff competence at engaging diverse racial, cultural and economic communities who are reflective of the children and youth in care. CCDCFS, just prior to this grant, partnered with Dr. Williams from Cleveland State University to provide soup to nuts diversity training. As a part of phase 2, we will coordinate with Dr. Williams to include the learning from his work and apply additional strategies if need be, or extend training to community partners. This training has started with the top of the organization and is intended for all supervisors and all line staff at CCDCFS.

Child Centered recruitment: Neighborhood Intervention

Our child centered recruitment will be three- fold. First, we will develop connections within the arts community to enlist their innovations as applied to recruitment. Print and video recruitment materials that are specific to the children and youth will be augmented through partnership with the arts community. A side benefit will be new groups of folks who help champion permanency for our children. A review of Cuyahoga County's recruitment flyers demonstrate a move towards strength based. After this project was funded, OAPL (Ohio Adoption Photo Listing) was defunded. Using the Adopt US Kids website, all photos and descriptions will be placed on their site. We will ensure that CCDCFS maximizes all electronic (child specific) recruitment opportunities. The Beech Brook Adoption Worker will engage the arts community on behalf of specific children to test new ways to creatively recruit for youth in care.

Our second child-centered recruitment approach is to conduct a detailed child study that includes an updated parent-relative locator search, mining existing relationships that the child or children have, developing a DVD with a child that is used for virtual recruiting (called a Digital Me), participating in adoption exchanges, maximizing the use of the Adoption US kids and other websites, and working to eliminate any barriers due to interjurisdictional placement.

The goal of child-centered recruitment is to recruit 5 relative and 5 resource families for siblings in each of Years 2, 3, 4 & 5. We will support, approve and stabilize at least 50% of relatives/kin recruited as resource families and 50% of resource families recruited for sibling groups that result in placement for each project Year 3, 4 and 5. We expect the kin and sibling resource families for be a permanent resource for at least 12 children per year beginning in Year 3 and forward as a result of our child-centered recruitment efforts.

Teens

Our third child-centered recruitment approach targets youth 16 and 17 (and older who) are in the permanent custody of CCDCFS, and for whom no permanency connections have been identified. We will begin working with the family before the child ages out of the system. Kinship will be loosely defined (to include known interested individuals). We will develop an assessment protocol and model of how to work with birth families, whose parental rights were terminated at least 5 years earlier, and who will be providing permanency for older children who leaves the custody of the public agency. In an effort to move beyond continued punishment of birth parents whose rights were terminated years ago, we will demonstrate a method of re-engaging them for children for whom we failed to find a permanent adoptive family before the youth turned 16. It is known that youth who age out of the system return to existing kinship connections. We will develop tools that

assist child welfare workers in helping youth link back to families in advance of the youth aging out of foster care.

As part of the permanency planning process initiated in *IP*, our teen specialist from Beech Brook will work with current supports in the youth's life to form a permanency planning team. Team members may include foster parents; foster care networks and/or group home and residential staff; Neighborhood Agencies, CCDCFS staff, educators, coaches, friends and their families, and other people important in the teen's life, as identified by the teen. The team's role is to support the youth and birth family members in planning for the future as the youth emancipates. This team approach is designed to identify and provide the supports necessary for short-term success in reuniting with birth family members. The team can also work with the youth and birth family or other identified permanency resources to structure wrap around services, as needed, to support longer term success in relationships and living situations.

As part of this component, there are some foster families who will not legally adopt but who are the permanent family for this child. Using the Permanency Pact developed by the National Network for Youth in Foster Care (<http://www.fosterclub.com/pdfs/PermPact.pdf>), we will begin to evaluate in what situations the foster family is the permanent family for older youth. "A Permanency Pact" creates a formalized, facilitated process to connect youth in foster care with a supportive adult. The process of bringing the supportive adult together with youth and developing a pledge or "Permanency Pact" has proven successful in clarifying the relationship and identifying mutual expectations. A committed, caring adult may provide a lifeline for a youth, particularly those who are preparing to transition out of foster care to life on their own." A Permanency Pact provides:

- structure and a safety net for the youth;
- a defined and verbalized commitment by both parties to a long term supportive relationship; and,
- Clarity regarding the expectations of the relationship.

By having 5 years, we will be able to track children over time and develop a predictive model of characteristics of foster families who say they are permanent to determine which are actually permanent. While not definitive, this approach will become part of the national discourse of how to help secure permanency for children who are aging out of the system. Our goal will be to work with 25% of youth who emancipate each year (approximately 38 out of 150) and work with a relative resource family before they leave care for a total of 152 youth from Years 2-5.

The lead agency for the initiative focusing children who are 16 or older for whom a permanent family has not been found will be Beech Brook. Beech Brook will work with the child's team to secure permanency/a permanent connection for the child. Team meetings will occur at least quarterly to monitor implementation of specific components of the permanency plan. The teen permanency specialist and the team will work with personal and community resources to build adequate support networks in order to structure the plan toward success. We expect that as we begin this new way of practice, we will make mistakes but learn from these mistakes and successes in how we work with birth relatives to help older children aging out of care.

As the teen specialist identifies permanency resources, she will refer to the Adoption Navigators those people who are interested in providing permanency through foster/adopt. Recruitment coaches in the neighborhood will additionally assist with identifying barriers to licensure.

Siblings: System Readiness

For siblings, the issues are different. Siblings enter the child welfare system both together and sequentially. Often in temporary care, if they enter together, depending on the size of the group

they might be split up. Unfortunately, once they are split up, the likelihood of reunifying them decreases each day and month they stay separated. In addition, if they are split up, additional time is needed to determine if they should remain separated or be unified. This assessment and decision is compounded by foster families who begin to choose which sibling they want to parent. This lengthens the time children remain in care without permanency.

An additional problem exists when children enter care sequentially—that is some children are already in permanent care or adopted and a new full or half sibling enters care. Not enough diligence is given to finding siblings already in the system and there are policy barriers to finding siblings if they have already been adopted.

A protocol exists for assessing sibling relationships (Groza et al., 2003); of course, each step takes time, lengthening the time children spend in permanent care. Our plan is to utilize the existing sibling assessment developed as a part of another Adoption Opportunity Grant that focused on sibling issues in Cuyahoga County with a private provider (Northeast Ohio Adoption Service) to use with sibling groups will be revived and honed as a component of our sibling initiative. We will evaluate this tool both the process of assessment and outcomes.

In the Planning Phase, we identified that Siblings are a strategic initiative at CCDCFS. Through this work group in IP, we will codify in policy and training on an ongoing basis the value that siblings will be placed together unless compelling reason exist to separate them.

Another strategic work group is effective Teaming, with a charge of disseminating throughout the agency awareness about strategic issues affecting all staff. This work group will be enlisted in IP to keep all of the AOG Diligent Recruitment messages in front of the agency.

CCDCFS will take the lead to develop protocols, policies and procedures to flag siblings as a priority, from temporary care (TC) to permanent care (PC). DCFS has team decision-making/staffings in place, with many different review points in the life of the child custody. The policy/protocols which should be shored up during this phase have logical points of implementation or practice. Also, some municipalities have been able to find foster homes, part of the same cluster of support that will work with large sibling groups. Two, with their legal department, DCFS will develop a mechanism to be able to identify children already adopted who then have siblings enter care to be able to track the families where siblings exist. Also in *IP*, DCFS will pursue state and local authorities for waivers on space requirements and licensing for siblings where applicable. Instead of waiting until children enter PC, while children are in TC and DCFS knows PC is being pursued, at that stage DCFS will begin to conduct the assessment. Our internal AOG staff person will be responsible in Phase II of championing the goal of keeping siblings together and will use existing work groups, or specific work with departments, with the goal of identifying policy and practice issues to senior leadership. Through the efforts of this grant during Phase 2, a model for sibling-centered child welfare policies, procedures and practices will be developed.

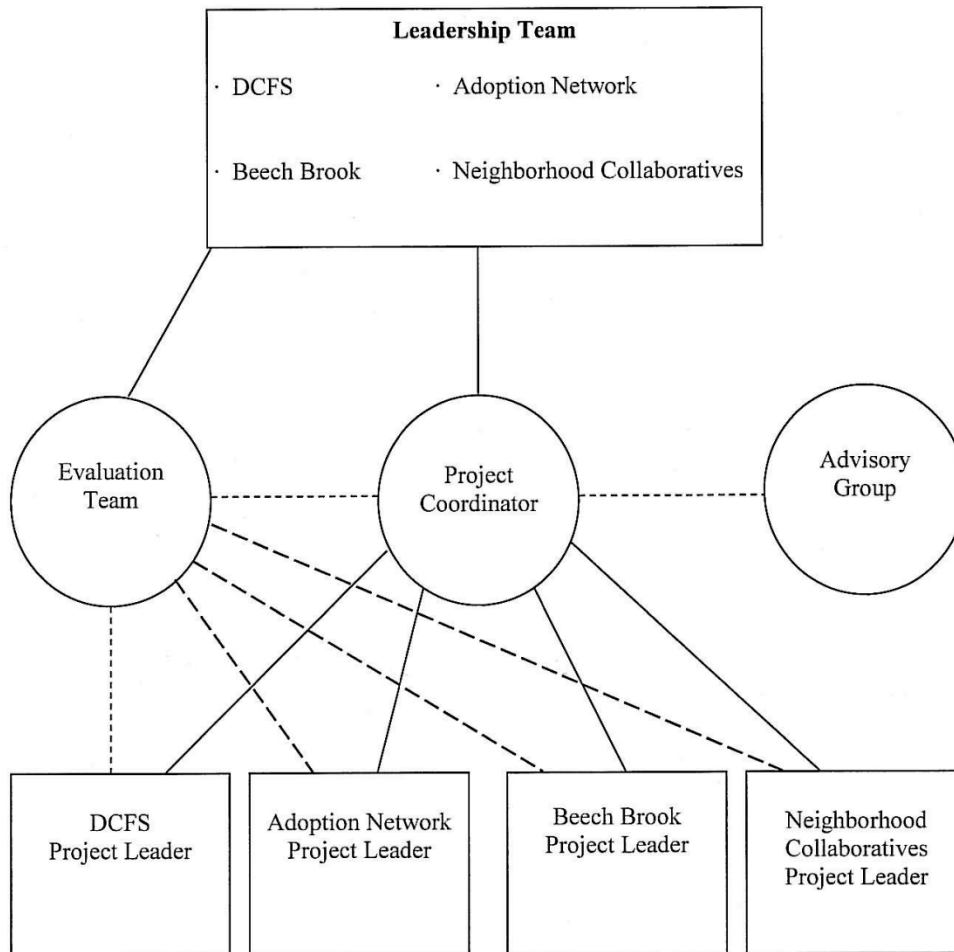
The goal of child-centered recruitment is to recruit 5 relative and 5 resource families for sibling in each of Years 2, 3, 4 & 5. We will support, approve and stabilize at least 50% of relatives/kin recruited as resource families and 50% of resource families recruited for sibling groups that result in placement for each project Year 3, 4 and 5. We expect the kin and sibling resource families to be a permanent resource for at least 25 children per year beginning in Year 3 and forward as a result of our general recruitment efforts.

Lead Agency & Support Agency for Each Component of the Initiative
Focus on Initiative (lead agency in **bold**)

	Relatives for children in temporary custody going to permanent custody	Relatives for children 17 and older who have to permanency resource identified	Sibling Groups
GENERAL RECRUITMENT	DCFS, ANC, BEECH BROOK	DCFS, BEECH BROOK	DCFS
TARGETED RECRUITMENT	ANC, DCFS, BEECH BROOK	ANC, BEECH BROOK	ANC, DCFS
CHILD-CENTERED RECRUITMENT	ANC, BEECH BROOK, DCFS	BEECH BROOK, DCFS	ANC, DCFS

DCFS-Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services
ANC-Adoption Network Cleveland
BEECH BROOK-Beech Brook

Administrative Structure



C. Overview of the Evaluation.

We will use both qualitative and quantitative approaches to address evaluation. Qualitative approaches produce rich and descriptive findings. Quantitative approaches reduce activities and outcomes to numeric form, which allows descriptive statistics and mathematical manipulation of the data. A mix of both approaches produces the strongest information for evaluating the program.

Of particular importance is to describe the children and families who enter the project. It will be important to know from the outset what types of children, families and professionals participated in the Recruitment of Relatives and for Sibling Initiative (**RRSI**).

Participant Characteristics: To evaluate the enrollment process, demographic data on each child, family, and professional participating in the project will be recorded. For children, in addition to such variables as age, gender, and race/ethnicity, we will record the child's history of placement and types of special needs. For families, we will identify family demographics, family structure, and motivation to be a resource family. For professionals, we will document their professional training and background. We will track children and families over time to determine characteristic of children placed, families who obtain placement, as well as characteristics of children and families who dropped out, aged out, had a different outcome than expected or other characteristics that emerge over the course of the project that has implications for policy, practice or research.

Implementation of the model: A major issue of interest to the evaluation will be the extent to which the model developed for this proposal was fully implemented in practice. Each partner, by participating in the grant, agrees to engage in evaluation and, when problems exist in their participation in evaluation, create a work plan within 72 hours of an issue being brought to their attention by any member of the evaluation team. Evaluation of the development and implementation of the model (also known as process evaluation) requires the use of quantitative and qualitative modes of data collection and analysis.

The qualitative component will include at least three data collection methods: observing program functions, focus groups with project staff, and interviews with project partners (including advisory group families and children as well as other professionals). All training will be evaluated and at 6 month intervals we plan to conduct a focus groups to talk about what training remained helpful in the project as well as identify future areas for more training and professional development. The evaluation team will observe meetings of the **RRSI** Project Team at least once per quarter in order to more fully understand the model that emerges and to compare direct observations with written programmatic materials (such as brochures, manuals, project reports, etc.).

Through the development and implementation process, professionals, community members, and families are expected to internalize the concepts and definitions of permanency and the potential factors impacting progress. To address the issues inherent in divergent viewpoints, a focus group will be planned for years 3, 4, and 5. Focus groups are a useful means of obtaining qualitative data from a group of relatively homogeneous subjects, and are frequently used in program evaluations (Krueger, 1988). In preparing for focus groups, the facilitator poses a series of questions that are presented to the group for an interactive discussion. To understand the models that develop and are implemented, focus group questions with professional and paraprofessional staff will address perspectives of the models developed and implemented, their

sense of barriers to implementation, the types of creative solutions that have been tried to address barriers, and staff satisfaction with services. Barriers are expected to come from many sources, including service systems, policies, recruiting foster and adoptive families both general and specifically in neighborhoods, court decisions, cultural differences, and other sources that are best identified by those working directly with the various program components.

Finally, focus group interviews will be conducted with a small number of resource families for siblings and relative resource families in order to understand the process from the perspective of the clients themselves. Like the focus groups with staff, a semi-structured interview guide will be used for family focus group interviews. The information obtained from these interviews will be combined with outcome data and with case studies for a mid-project and final evaluation reports. During each Phase, we will determine when and how to evaluate families. The approval process is pending with CCDCFS for IRB. We anticipate that we are going to be able to evaluate all of our human subjects.

Data Analysis: Analysis of evaluation data will be presented through an interim and final evaluation report that addresses key evaluation issues through a series of key evaluation questions. Table 1 illustrates the relationship between the key evaluation issues, corresponding evaluation questions, and data sources.

Human Subjects Approval: The human subject approval process specified by Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services was used in Year 1. Approval was submitted and granted by Director Forkas. A copy of the request is included in the Appendices (see Appendix 1).

Evaluation Issues, Key Evaluation Questions and Data Sources

ISSUE	QUESTIONS	DATA SOURCES
Participation Characteristics	What are the specific characteristics of targeted children and families who participate in the project?	MIS data on children and families; other data collection instruments to be developed
Implementation of Model	What various models emerge to impact change during Phase 1? To what extent are the models being implemented as planned in Phase 2?	Observation, Family Focus Groups, Team meetings, Staff focus groups, and Key Informant interviews
	What barriers to successful implementation get identified and by whom?	Observation, Family Focus Groups, Team meetings, Staff focus groups, and Key Informant interviews
	What solutions have been tried to address barriers?	Observation, Family Focus Groups, Team meetings, Staff focus groups, and Key Informant interviews
Tracking of benchmarks and outcomes	Are intermediate outcomes being achieved as planned?	Tracking Guide & Data Collection Tools

	What types of formal and informal support services are being provided to families/children to enhance permanency in their community?	Tracking Guide & Data Collection Tools
	To what extent are families attaining desired outcomes (permanency & stability)?	Tracking Guide & Data Collection Tools
	What factors contribute to successful/unsuccessful outcomes? Is there on specific service or combination of services/program components that affect more positive outcomes?	Tracking Guide & Data Collection Tools, Observation, Family Focus Groups, Team meetings, Staff focus groups, and Key Informant interviews

III. Project Implementation/ Process Evaluation from Year 1 of Planning

STAFF

A. Hiring Project Coordinator

The job description was developed quickly and the Adoption Network played the coordinating role with the Leadership team of the collaborative agencies for interviewing. Several issues impeded a quick hire. First, when the grant was submitted there was an Interim Director of DCFS and after it was funded a permanent Director was hired who was not the Interim Director. The only barrier was getting the new Director acquainted with the project and getting her okay to proceed.

A second impediment was the approval process in the Collaborative Agreement. All key project hires had to have approval. While not a significant delay in and of itself, the two events together did result in a delay of over a month.

There were two separate rounds of interviews and approximately 30 people applied. Three were interviewed in the first round and 5 applicants in the second round. Of course, all this takes more time than we had planned.

During the interim, the Diligent Recruitment Project Lead Evaluator filled some duties of the PC and the Director of Programs at the Adoption Network-Cleveland filled in some other duties. Between both people the planning continued to move forward. In January 2009, Kate Lodge was hired as the PC.

B. Hiring Project Staff for Each of the Project Collaborative Agencies

Adoption Network had positions for Adoption Navigators as well as administrative support for grant activities. Since Kate Lodge was the Director of Programs at the Adoption Network, a new Director of Programs had to be hired. This hire was concurrent with Kate leaving the position and taking the PC position. The Adoption Network had ANC working on another funded project and that project was ending, so the staff in those positions could roll into the grant-related positions.

The same situation existed at Beech Brook. The person who previous worked on a grant-funded project (Adopt Cuyahoga Kids) as a Child-Specific Recruiter (Cindy Kaufman) was losing her job and moved into the position for this grant.

The Evaluation Team was in place as soon as the grant was funded. Professor Groza had developed the grant in collaboration with the partner agencies and had been working with the various agencies on assorted evaluation projects. A doctoral candidate has been working with him (Kathleen Alman) and so she was funded from the Diligent Recruitment grant to be part of the evaluation team.

The Neighborhood Collaborative Agencies participated in the development of the proposal and as part of the leadership team but had a difficult time determining the role they should play. They initially suggested that the 5 agencies serving the targeted neighborhoods would hire Recruitment Coaches (RC) who would work at the community level to recruit foster, adoptive and kin families to the project and the agencies working on the project. As negotiations continued to make sure the RC were separate and distinct from the ANC, an agreement was reached about the roles of each position. The next negotiation involved appropriate budgeting for the level of activity. When questions were raised about the items on the budget request related to the work of the RC, the budget was reduced to reflect what the RC would do and the administrative costs related to their work. As the project was ready to move from hiring to implementation, the Neighborhood Collaborative Agencies withdrew from the project. All attempts to re-engage them have not been fruitful. While no have no grant-funded positions, they continue to have a role in the project since 5 of their agencies provide an array of services in the targeted neighborhood.

C. Community Training

DCFS held training with all the agencies that are their partners and part of the Neighborhood Collaborative Agencies (NCA). The training had been scheduled before the Diligent Recruitment Grant was funded but we were able to include project staff on the agenda. The training was held in May 2009 with the 14 neighborhood collaborative agencies and the CCDCFS recruitment staff. The recruitment department did a good job of helping the NCA do a self-assessment prior to the planning meetings. The goals of the training were to give tools to the neighborhood “recruiters” to fulfill the component of their contracts with CCDCFS that applies to “recruitment”. The end result aimed for each of the neighborhood NCA would leave on day two with a recruitment plan specific to their neighborhood.

Some unanticipated issues emerged during the conference. A few agency leaders expressed mistrust of the public agency. The mistrust may be related to organizational development issues; a number of these grass roots agencies did not have the capacity to report more than the number of people they serve in their programs. They have neither the technology nor expertise to conduct more rigorous program evaluations. As contracts become more tied to specific performance outcomes, there is a fear that the agency will lose some or all funding. The fears become stronger as the State of Ohio experiences tremendous budget problems and the requirement of a state balanced budget forces cuts across agencies. These cuts trickle down to the contract state agencies have with private providers.

Copies of both the assessment before the retreat and after the retreat are included in the Appendices (see Appendix II & III). It is important to recognize that much effort has been put into planning the training and follow-up from the training. Neighborhood partners are essential for the work of the grant.

LEADERSHIP TEAM: PUBLIC-PRIVATE-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

The structure of this group includes all of the partners on the original grant application with new members joining as the teams internally expand and require representation from different

representatives from the public child welfare agency (CCDCFS) and the community. Inclusion of key members from the large public agency is vital to buy in at different levels of the work and for system change.

The leadership team meets monthly. Agendas structure each meeting and a member of the evaluation team takes notes. The team meetings are a combination of relationship building and outcome focused; it allows members to talk about their components of the project, their concerns and then to move to talking about the specific work on the team meeting. For much of the year the focus of these meetings was reviewing the logic models to move the project into the implementation phase as well as dealing with the logistical issues of contracts and payments.

The leadership meetings became a forum for discussing contextual issues affecting the grant. First, there was the designation of the new Director of CCDCFS. Second, there were the budget cuts that were first expected and then enacted. All of the agencies, with the exception of the University, experienced significant cuts in programs and staff. The public agency experienced furloughs of staff, staff people were laid off, incentives were given for early retirement, and retired staff or staff who left the agency were not replaced. Yet, in this bleak environment, members of the leadership team remained highly committed. Only once in the 12 months of the planning year was the meeting canceled and that was due to many of the members of the leadership team having to meet about more budget cuts and the implications of the cuts.

GENERAL RECRUITMENT

A. Modify General Recruitment Campaign

The latest materials were reviewed during the first year and are representative of the older teens and the sibling groups.

B. Develop interagency tracking system or access to DCFS system

All agencies involved are aware and committed to data collection as a part of the grant. A connected Web based tracking system is not something we will pursue now given SACWIS issues that are absorbing a good majority of the resources towards IT at CCDCFS.

It is worth mentioning the issues around data here. Up until the grant was funded, CCDCFS used FACSIS to track and report case data to the state. In 2009, the State of Ohio moved to SACWIS. The State issued a policy that in essence stated all data was owned by the State and the county agencies would have to write for permission to use their data. These issues are still being resolved but did not affect our ability to get baseline data.

TARGETED RECRUITMENT

A. Develop strategies for target recruiting relatives and resources families for siblings in the specific neighborhoods

Our first task was to develop baseline data on the children in our targeted neighborhoods compared to the control/non-intervention neighborhoods.

Data analysis will become an important factor in assessing whether the “added plus” interventions made a difference in achieving the grants objectives. We are limited by the data available to us through Cuyahoga County Child and Family Services SAQWIS data (the database

they did not begin to use until January 2009). For some of the issues we want to track, SAQWIS does not have a specific variable to provide that information. In this case, explanation will be given on how the data was derived and any limitations to that analysis. The tables included within this report provide the baseline data that will be used in comparison through the project to see what changes, if any, occur.

There are two sets of data that we have been provided. The first set is data extracted from SAQWIS in August 2009 that shows the open cases. The second data set provides exit information on youth leaving care. Tables 1 to 6 provide the demographic information of the youths in our target and comparison neighborhood areas. Pearson's chi-square was run to evaluate if there were any significant differences between the demographics of the target and comparison neighborhoods. No significant differences were indicated between the two groups. There are a total of 270 youth with open cases: 150 in the target neighborhoods and 120 in the comparison neighborhoods. Table 1 provides the current age distribution of youth within the target and comparison neighborhoods. The age categories were Age categories taken from the *Child Welfare Outcomes Annual Report to Congress*. The number of youth 16 and over illustrates the need to target this group for permanency plans with 39 youth in the target group and 30 in the comparison group. Table 2 provides the age the youth entered care indicating that the majority of the youth enter care when they are ten years old or younger: target neighborhoods with 127 (85%) youth and comparison neighborhoods with 101 (84%) youth entering care under the age of ten. Table 3 indicates a large percentage of youth have been in care for over 24 months: 89% in the target neighborhoods and 63% in the comparison neighborhoods. The mean total months youth have spent in care range from 62 for the target neighborhoods and 56.41 for the comparison neighborhoods. An independent T-Test indicates that there is no significant difference between the total months in care between the target or comparison neighborhoods ($t=1.234$, $p=.218$). There are slightly more males within the target neighborhoods (53%) and within the comparison neighborhoods (63%). In order to identify siblings youth with the same case number were assumed to be siblings, however, there may be additional siblings that were not assigned the same case number based on entering the system during a different time period. The target neighborhoods have 56 (37%) youth who have siblings within care and the comparison neighborhoods have 46 (38%). This does not indicate whether the siblings are placed together or even living within the same neighborhoods. There are mostly African-American youths within both sets of neighborhoods (79% within the target neighborhoods and 89% within the comparison neighborhoods) as indicated in Table 6. No significant difference between the target and comparison neighborhoods is indicated through Pearson's Chi-Square ($\chi^2=7.541$, $p=.110$). In addition, an independent t-test indicated no significant difference between the youth in the target and comparison neighborhoods and their level of care needed ($t=1.059$, $p=.291$). The baseline information collected provides evidence that the target and comparison groups are comparable to each other on all major demographic criteria.

Tables 7-11 indicate baseline demographic information for all children that left care between January and June 2009. Due to the small numbers, Pearson's Chi-Square could not be done as there were less than 5 youth in multiple categories. A total of 40 youth left care during this six month period. Table 7 indicates that the majority of youth entered foster care when they were less than 10 years old (22 of the 23 youth within the target neighborhoods and 15 of 17 youth in the comparison neighborhoods). Table 8 provides the age that the youth exited care. 18 (72%) of the youth in the target neighborhoods were within the range of six to fifteen years old when exiting the system, whereas 13 (76%) of the youth in the comparison neighborhoods were within the range of one to ten years old. There were 48% female in the target neighborhoods and 59% female in the comparison neighborhoods who left care (Table 9). Table 10 indicates the number of youth exiting care who have siblings, as the data set does not provide information on whether siblings were placed together;

it is unknown whether the siblings have been placed together or left siblings still within care. Table 11 indicates the majority of youth exiting the system are African-American (52% within the target neighborhoods and 94% within the comparison neighborhoods).

While there is a variable within the data set that would allow us to track the neighborhoods where youth originated, due to high numbers of missing data within the dataset, we are unable to track this. This means that if there is a significant change in neighborhoods from where a child is taken into custody then placed into care, the data is unable to provide us that information at this point. In order for us to analyze this, the workers would need to enter the information on the neighborhood that each child originates from.

Tables for Annual Reporting of Adoptions Opportunities Grant

The following eleven tables can be used to report on demographic information about the current youth under custody and as they leave custody.

Table 1
Current Age of Youth in Foster Care

	Year 1 – Aug 2009		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
Age	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Under 1	11	9								
1-5	31	24								
6-10	25	25								
11-15	44	32								
16 and over	39	30								
Total:	150	120								
Pearson Chi-Square	(r=.837, p=.933)									

Table 2
Age of Youth When Episode Began

	Year 1 – Aug 2009		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
Age	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Under 1	40	31								
1-5	41	26								
6-10	46	44								
11-15	22	18								
16 and over	1	1								
Total:	150	120								
Pearson Chi-Square	(r=1.630, p=.803)									

Table 3
Months of Youth in Placement

	Year 1 – Aug 2009		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
Months	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
24 or under	16	27								
25 and over	134	93								
Total:	150	120								
Pearson Chi-Square	(r=1.630, p=.803)									

Table 4
Gender of Youth in Foster Care

	Year 1 – Aug 2009		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
Gender	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Female	71	45								
Male	79	75								
Total:	150	120								
Pearson Chi-Square	(r=2.631, p=.105)									

Table 5
Siblings in Foster Care

	Year 1 – Aug 2009		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
Siblings in Foster Care	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Yes	56	46								
No	94	74								
Total:	150	120								
Pearson Chi-Square	(r=.028, p=.866)									

Table 6
Race and Ethnicity of Youth in Foster Care by Target & Comparison Neighborhoods

	Year 1 – Aug 2009		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
Race & Ethnicity	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Black/ African American	119	107								
Multi-racial	9	2								
White	18	11								
None	2	0								
Undetermined	2	0								
Total:	150	120								
Pearson Chi-Square	(r=.7541, p=.110)									

Table 7
Ages of Children when Initially Placed in Foster Care

	Year 1 Jan. – June 2009		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
Age	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Under 1	7	13								
1-5	6	2								
6-10	9	0								
11-15	1	2								
16 and over	0	0								
Total:	23	17								

Table 8
Ages of Children when Placed in Adoptive Home

	Year 1 Jan. – June 2009		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
Age	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Under 1	0	2								
1-5	1	10								
6-10	7	3								
11-15	11	2								
16 and over	1	0								
Total:	23	17								

Table 9
Gender of Youth leaving Foster Care

	Year 1 Jan. – June 2009		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
Gender	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Female	11	10								
Male	12	7								
Total:	23	17								

Table 10
Youth leaving Foster Care who have Siblings within System

	Year 1 – Aug 2009		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
Siblings in Foster Care	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Yes	12	5								
no	11	12								
Total:	23	17								

Table 11
Race and Ethnicity of Youth leaving Foster Care by Target & Comparison Neighborhoods

	Year 1 – Aug 2009		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
Race & Ethnicity	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Black/ African American	12	16								
Multi-racial	1	1								
White	10	0								
None	0	0								
Undetermined	0	0								
Total:	23	17								

CHILD-SPECIFIC RECRUITMENT

A. Engage Arts Community

Once we selected the neighborhoods for the intervention, a graduate student compiled a list of potential arts organizations that could partners in grant activities. With this list, we then determined who on the leadership team had a connection to any of these agencies and might be a source on entre into the organization. At this stage, we only identified the organizations and in the next phase will be determining how they might help us. They are included in the Appendices (see Appendix IV).

B. Implement revised child profiles

These refer to the biographies of the youth in care awaiting permanency. There is a model of improved profiles that has been developed as a side benefit of CCDCFS's Child Centered Recruitment efforts (also an example of a public private partnership). The example exists now for workers on effective profile writing.

Working with the Beech Brook Child Permanency Specialist, we evaluated which components of the profiles would be important to her as well as developed a protocol of additional information we would collect. They are included in the Appendices (see Appendix V). The protocol for the project is as follows:

Introduction to Client and CCDCFS Worker

Sign contract

Review record

Create mini profile

Meet with client

Complete protocol questionnaire

Begin contacting/making permanency connections

Hold permanency planning meeting

Formalize a written permanency plan/contract with client and interested adults (perhaps several)

Implement steps to permanency/continue work with client and significant adults

Keep adding to client permanency base. This may include new foster parents, teachers etc.

Keep records including:

- record of contacts- phone/visits with client, significant adults, professionals
- monthly summaries of progress for each client
- mini child profile
- initial interview forms
- consent forms

Original record to be at Beech Brook with electronic copies to ANC.

C. Determine children 17 and older who will be project participants

Using FACSIS, the MIS person at DCFS identified 39 youth 17 and older in permanent custody who would be candidates for the project. While identified, we have not be able to get the

social workers in Independent Living (IL) to sign the consent form so we can approach youth about participating in the project. After numerous individual and small group meetings, we continue to be stone walled from getting youth into the project. The case workers are very protective of the youth, which is a good thing. However, none of the IL workers see it as their role to promote permanency; they report that the children are either in stable living arrangements or are too unstable to have another person in their life. In either situation, they have refused to participate or allow the youth to participate.

D. Develop teen permanency plans

The hiring of the teen specialist, who was for the last five years a child centered recruitment specialist, has enabled us to identify and work on tools that will be used for the youth interviews and the team permanency meetings. So far, since no youth have been referred to the project or given permission to participate in the project, no teen permanency plans have been developed for teens in the targeted area.

When staff identified a youth who was not in the target area but in great need of service and of “falling through the cracks”, to show good faith we decided to provide services to help this youth. We hope that this approach will soften the resistance.

SIBLINGS

- A. Codify in policy and training on an ongoing basis the value that siblings will be placed together unless compelling reason exist to separate them

Siblings together: this is a strategic planning priority for the agency and they have kicked off a new committee (the Sibling Training and Awareness Subcommittee) that has been working with a widespread group of staff to look at policy and practice. We recently obtained notes of these meetings and will be monitoring the work of this subcommittee as the move forward with the issues of siblings in public care.

- B. With Legal Department, develop a mechanism to identify children already adopted who then have siblings enter care to be able to track the families where siblings exist

Not achieved during the first year.

- C. Pursue state and local authorities for waivers on space requirements and licensing for siblings

The information and specific policy was presented to CCDCFS staff. There was some surprise that the policy existed in the Ohio code and much resistance on using the policy for siblings. At Year 1, more effort was not expended in the area—only the groundwork was laid for more discussion on how waivers could be used and the policy and practice issues in the use of waivers.

CONCURRENT PLANNING REVISITED

A. Assess barriers to concurrent planning and base training on the known obstacles that may have a policy/practice component

CCDCFS is well positioned on this issue. They have had a work group for several years and have a policy for concurrent planning practices that has been through all the layers of the administration but for the final sign off. Additionally, there are many practices at CCDCFS that were devised and supported in the Family-to-Family model funded by Casey which are essential elements of concurrent planning practice. Current work groups have been identified that tie in very well with the goals of the grant. They are widespread and encompass all practice aspects of the agency. They are:

- All about me: these are the icebreaker meetings that introduce the birth family to the foster family in the first week of placement. The policy has been developed and all units have been trained on the policy. Meetings are being tracked and currently are happening 40% of the time.
- Legal Consult Unit: a consultation service was established to be able to work with the evasive families to ensure all avenues are pursued in finding families. No evaluative data are available.
- Team Decision Making (Staffings): permanency has been imbedded in all of the reviews with the facilitators of team decision-making meetings.
- Including Fathers Committee: they had a resource fair at the agency on April 21 with all Fatherhood Cuyahoga County providers being present.
- Parent Locator Services; several search programs are being investigated for purchase for the agency. In the interim, ANC offered the use of locator services by CCDCFS staff. Associated with this is the need to review policy that ensures that the new tools are being used for all families.
- Family Visitation- these services are currently being revamped with efforts on working with the collaborative agencies to make visitation as family friendly as possible and neighborhood based.

These committees are involved in changing practices that influence an agency's ability to engage fully in concurrent planning. Another practice issue that has been identified for training by staff is one of "full disclosure" up front with the families entering the system. CCDCFS is a system that does not have a separate worker for concurrent planning. However, there is a sense that when the policy is implemented and training is identified that the practice components of concurrent planning that already exist will be enhanced.

CCDCFS contracts with Beechbrook for a program entitled "Two Ways Home". Though the program suffered a setback in terms of contracting with CCDCFS (from 6 caseworkers to 3), they have had success in practicing full disclosure and working with families on the dual plans. We are hoping that local expertise can be utilized with the National Resource Center on Foster Care and Permanency Planning to expand practice and skill in concurrent planning.

B. Implement training for every staff person for each year of the grant that covers the philosophy and practice of concurrent planning

Not achieved during the first year.

IV. Project Outcome Evaluation

The first year of the grant was process focused and a planning year. We did not anticipate nor do we have specific outcomes to report. As we move to subsequent years of the grant we anticipate being able to report on project outcomes.

V. Conclusions

The transfer to SACWIS has diverted much of the attention of CCDCFS. It will take some time to work out the data issues.

VI. Implications of Results and Recommendations

The counting of siblings seems problematic based on national trends and previous reports about the percent of siblings in care. The SACWIS data, as currently analyzed, undercounts the percent of siblings. We cannot determine the number/percent of siblings placed together. The implication is that we need to continue working with the MIS system to better identify the siblings in the system.

Since we are concerned about the promotion of kinship care, there is a breakdown of information in knowing the exact percent of children diverted from entering the system into kinship care. From the data we have, it appears that the number of children going into kinship care is decreasing.

We have not gotten data on first placement; we only have data on current placement. We need to determine if and where we can obtain this data. We are concerned that practice has changed about diverting children to kin and the number of kin placements has decreased.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Request for Permission to Conduct Adoption Opportunities Grant Evaluation Submitted to Director Farkas, Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services in June 19, 2009

This is a private/public partnership between Cuyahoga County of Children and Family Services, Adoption Network Cleveland, Beech Brook, the Neighborhood Collaborative Agencies and Case Western Reserve University Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences. It has been funded by the Department of Health & Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau (HHS-2008-ACF-ACYF-CO-0046). Each partner, by participating in the grant, agrees to engage in evaluation and, when problems exist in their participation in evaluation, create a work plan within 72 hours of an issue being brought to their attention by any member of the evaluation team. The evaluation team consists of Professor Victor Groza, Professor David Crampton, Kathleen Alman (doctoral candidate), Kate Lodge and Jackie McCray.

Goals and Objectives

The *objectives* for this project are (1) Increase the percent of children who exit for adoption in less than 24 months from 25.1% to match the state's percent of 37.2% or higher; (2) by the time PC is granted, 35% of caregivers who plan to adopt who have a completed home study; (3) 50% of relatives will complete their home study; (4) changing pre-service training to meet the needs of relatives, including working with public policy to allow flexibility for relatives; (A) to increase sibling adoptive placements by 22% (from 58% to 80%) by (B) increasing the number of resource families willing to care for large sibling groups; and, (C) increasing services and access to services enable resource families to maintain large sibling groups.

To accomplish these objectives, activities of the consortium include collaborating to: (a) recruit, support, approve and stabilize relatives as resource families from the time children enter temporary care; (b) recruit, support, approve and stabilize resource families for sibling groups; (c) develop a protocol to resolve sibling issues early to promote keeping siblings together; and, (d) go back to kin for children who are 17 and older for whom no permanency resource has been found.

These activities require working with various aspects of the public agency (CCDCFS) to enhance or improve general, targeted and child-specific/child centered recruitment strategies and practices. Both process and outcome of the original and modified proposal, designated as the Planning Year (Year 1) and Implementation Years (Years 2-5), must be evaluated as part of the contract.

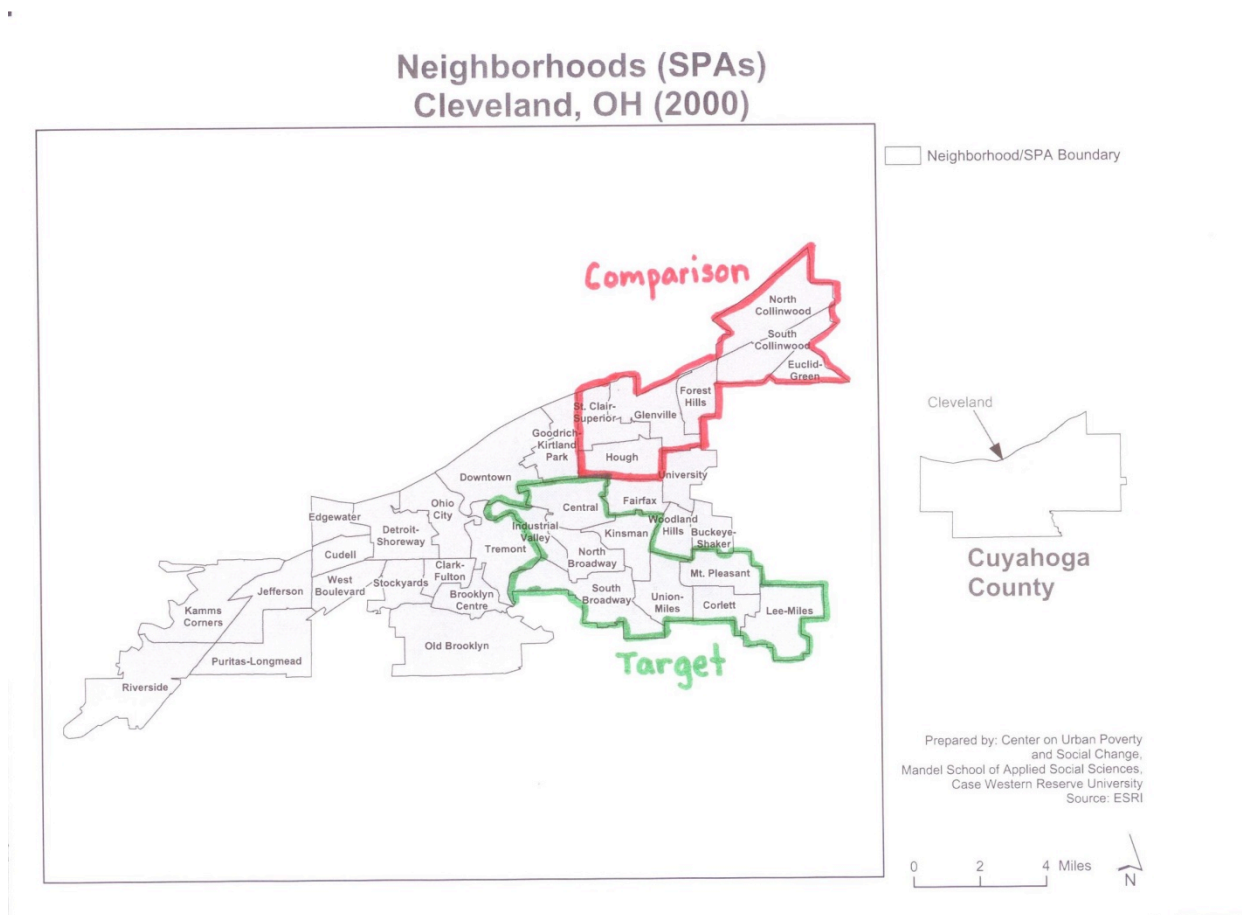
Participants (include demographics)

We will document demographic data on each child, family, and professional participating in the project. For children, in addition to such variables as age, gender, and racial ethnicity, we will record the child's history of placement and types of special needs. For families, we will identify family demographics, family structure, and motivation to be a resource family. For professionals, we will document their professional training and background. We will track children and families over time to determine characteristic of children placed, families who obtain placement, as well as characteristics of children and families who dropped out, aged out, had a different outcome than expected or other characteristics that emerge over the course of the project that has implications for policy, practice or research.

The plan is to make a significant impact on the permanency outcomes for up to 200 children over 5 years through the diligent recruitment of relatives, for siblings and for youth 16-18 years old.

Evaluation Methodology

The specific design we are using is a match group design. We will compare the outcomes for program participants with outcomes for a comparison group selected to closely match participants on key demographic variables. The match group will be specific neighborhoods that received the intervention and compare them to the matched neighborhood that did not receive the intervention. We will be able to identify the demographic similarities and differences in this match groups to control for these differences as we evaluate the outcomes. The targeted and comparison neighborhoods are attached.



The quantitative component includes using SAQUIS data for children and families in both the targeted and comparison neighborhoods, as well as other data generated by CCDCFS. We have worked out a protocol with Gary O'Rourke about the data that we will receive and use on a quarterly basis, once issues around data access are resolved.

The qualitative component includes at least three data collection methods: observing program functions, intermittent focus groups with project staff, and interviews with project recipients. All training will be evaluated and at 6 month intervals we plan to conduct a focus groups to talk about what training remained helpful in the project as well as identify future areas for more training and professional development. The evaluation team will observe meetings of the monthly Project Team

in order to more fully understand the model that emerges and to compare direct observations with written programmatic materials (such as brochures, manuals, project reports, etc.).

Through the development and implementation process, professionals, community members, and families are expected to internalize the concepts and definitions of permanency and the potential factors impacting progress. To address the issues inherent in divergent viewpoints, a focus group will be planned for years 3, 4, and 5. To understand the models that develop and are implemented, focus group questions with professional and paraprofessional staff will address perspectives of the models developed and implemented, their sense of barriers to implementation, the types of creative solutions that have been tried to address barriers, and staff satisfaction with services.

Focus group interviews will be conducted with a small number of resource families for siblings & teens, and relative resource families in order to understand the process from the perspective of the clients themselves. Like the focus groups with staff, a semi-structured interview guide will be used for family focus group interviews. The information obtained from these interviews will be combined with outcome data and with case studies for a mid-project and final evaluation reports. During each Phase, we will determine when and how to evaluate families. Due to Human Subjects concerns about interviewing minor children, we will focus our evaluation on adults.

The participants will not be compensated monetarily for their participation. There are no procedures within the study that would cause physical harm to the participant.

Sample

We will focus our innovations in specific geographical areas of Cuyahoga County and compare our efforts to similar geographical areas of the County not receiving the intervention. Such an approach will help us determine what works, for whom, strengths of the approach, barriers to successful implementation, and identification of concrete outcomes. There will be a target and comparison group based on geographic location. Based on data related to high rates of removal and high rates of foster care, the neighborhoods were chosen. The neighborhoods to be included in the target area include Central, Industrial Valley, North Broadway, South Broadway, Union-Miles, Kinsman, Mt. Pleasant, Corlett and Lee-Miles. The comparison neighborhoods include Hough, St. Clair Superior, Glenville, Forest Hills, North Collingwood, South Collingwood, and Euclid-Green.

Release of Information

There will be some original data to collect and we have develop an informed consent. First, for children within care, an informed consent will be gathered by the direct staff working with them as they are identified as matching the eligibility criteria for the target or comparison group. The consent will have a place for both the guardian and foster youth to sign to give his or her assent to participate.

For those who participate in focus groups, they will be told beforehand what the focus groups are on and that they are part of an evaluation study. They will then be given an informed consent to sign prior to the start of the Focus Group session.

For staff participating in the project at each partner site, they will be asked to sign an informed consent form. Any member of the project and evaluation team will sign a form consenting to keep the participants' identities confidential.

Participants will be given a copy of the informed consent form to take with them.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The privacy and confidentiality of participants is of utmost importance. Original records will be kept by agency, with just the data components for evaluation to be forwarded to evaluation team for analysis. Reports will only include aggregated information thereby protecting individual participants' confidentiality.

If any evaluators taking part within the study is called upon by any individuals or organizations, public or private, to reveal evaluative data in any form which may endanger confidentiality, he/she will refuse to divulge such information.

Participant Participation

No pressure or undue persuasion will be used to elicit the cooperation of any subject. If an individual does not wish to participate in the evaluation, it will affect their ability to receive regular services from all participating partners.

Permission Granted July 2009

INFORMED CONSENT/ASSENT DOCUMENT

Adoption Opportunities: Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in the Foster Care System

A private/public partnership between Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Families Services, Adoption Network Cleveland, Beech Brook, Neighborhood Collaborative Agencies, and the Mandel School, Case Western Reserve University.

Background Information

You are being asked to participate in a federal demonstration project about *recruitment programs for resource families for children in foster care, including kinship, foster, concurrent and adoptive families for children and youth served by public welfare agencies as a way to improve permanency outcomes for siblings groups and teens*. You were selected as a participant because *you live in one of several neighborhoods in which the project is located or a member of a group we are targeting for the project*. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to participate.

Procedures

If you agree to be a participant in this project, we would ask you to assist in the evaluation of our efforts. For much of the evaluation we use information already available from records without any information that would identify you or your family.

Risks and Benefits to Being in the Study

This evaluation has no known risks. The benefits of participation are access to additional resources not typically available. Also, you are contributing to a federal demonstration project with prospects of informing the adoption field about practices that works

Compensation

You will receive no payment/reimbursement for participation in this evaluation.

Confidentiality

The records of this evaluation will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Evaluation records will be kept secure and access will be limited to evaluation team members.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate in the evaluation, it will not affect your current or future relations with Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Families Services, Adoption Network Cleveland, Beech Brook, Case Western Reserve University and Neighborhood Collaborative Agencies. There is no penalty for not participating or for discontinuing your participation.

Contacts and Questions

The evaluator leading this project is Professor Victor Groza in collaboration with Professor David Crampton and Doctoral Candidates. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have any additional questions, concerns or complaints about the evaluation, you may contact Professor Groza at victor.groza@case.edu or the Project Coordinator, Kate Lodge, at 216-325-1000.

You will be given this form for your records.

Statement of Consent/Assent

I have read the informed consent document. I have received answers to the questions I have asked.
I consent to participate in this evaluation.

Print Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

If participant are less than 18 years old:

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

APPENDIX II

Self Assessment Responses/RDS Retreat

Discussion Question	Response Y	N	Rating	Discussion	Suggested Strategies to Improve
Does your community have a plan to recruit resource families? (in writing)	11(1)	3	1 - 100 % 7 - 50% 3 - 25% 3 - 0%	#1 Unwritten plans, table at activities, constant discussion re: foster care and adoption when possible at neighborhood schools, city events. There was a mixed reaction about the effectiveness because there are not many inquiries about foster care and adoption to the individual collaboratives. They also responded that not all their staff is comfortable with giving out the recruitment message.	⇒ More apt to have diligent recruitment efforts more often if written plan in place. It's often on the back burner.
If so, do you feel it has been effective?	1				⇒ Structured outline of a plan
Do you feel that you need one?	13				⇒ Information and material
Do you have a subcommittee?	1			#2 Community festivals and events. Most rely on materials from CFS, and for the most part they have sign up sheets and follow up with prospective families. Some examples are libraries, The Zoo, Giant Eagle, CSEA Block Party, The Galleria and word of mouth. Broadway Callab has a subcommittee for recruitment and retention. The Westside used to but it is currently inactive. Lakewood is looking at the development.	⇒ Support from CFS
How do you recruit your families?				#3 Place ads and articles in neighborhood newspapers, as well as canvassing local restaurants, churches, stores, gas stations and libraries. Have created brochures and posters with general messages. Have had tables at community events and festivals. Through various outlets they continue to not receive many inquiries from the community about foster care and adoption. Cleveland Heights is working on the development of a subcommittee.	⇒ Existing resource families and youth incorporated into recruitment efforts ⇒ Help on "how to" capture emotional appeal in the recruitment message ⇒ Informational meetings needed
Does your community have a recruitment message for resource families?	7	7	3 - 100% 1 - 75% 2 - 50% 3 - 25% 2 - 0% 3 - no response	#1 Recruitment message is basically are you interested in becoming a foster/adoptive parent? Responses were that they will call recruitment at CFS for literature. There was a mixed response regarding the comfort level when speaking about the types of children available for adoption and those children who need placements in their community. They forward people interested to 881-5775. They do not know how to access photos of available children. Some would contact recruitment and we could help them. They feel that words or messaging from the children would grab the emotional appeal needed when expressing interest in foster care and adoption. We discussed the budget for recruitment in their individual collaboratives. Responses were that	⇒ Community partners would find statistics helpful about the number of children removed from their neighborhood, how many children are placed in and outside of the neighborhood ⇒ Creation of materials for their neighborhood. Maybe materials in
If so, do you inform the public about the specific types of children who need families and what they can expect from the experience?					
What is your message? How and where is it placed? Is it a visual message?					

APPENDIX III

Report on Recruitment Retreat Follow up August 31, 2009

Overview: Meetings were held with: Westside, Lakewood, Mt. Pleasant, Glenville, Central, Garfield Heights, Euclid, and Broadway. All meetings were attended by AECF Consultants Diane DeLeonardo and Sheila Spydell. Melanie Zabukovec and Joyce Wadlington attended alternately. The meeting with Westside was attended by Diane solo. Melanie developed an agenda for the meetings which was used throughout. The following grid shows the responses to the question "What do you need from the County to support the implementation of your recruitment plan?" There were 30 different items mentioned. Three of the items were mentioned by 5 or more collabs. 20 of the items were mentioned by only one collab. The following table summarized the items mentioned and the collab that mentioned the item.

Needs Identified	Westside	Lakewood	Mt. Pleasant	Glenville	Central	Garfield Heights	Euclid	Broadway
Would like a neighborhood blitz	x	X *	X	X		x		
Would like a list of all resource families in their community to include name, address, phone, how many children are placed in the home, and type of provider (licensed foster home, relative, etc. And including children placed in safety plans with relatives on 21 day filings)	x	x				X	X	

Would like a monthly report of all community members attending pre-service.	X	x		X		X		X
Need Recruitment materials, new pamphlets and give-a-ways	X	X		X	X*	X	X	
Need to re-connect with DCFS recruitment staff so they can better advocate for care givers	X							
They would like feedback about when inquiries tell the county that their collab referred them.	X			x				

Needs Identified	Westside	Lakewood	Mt. Pleasant	Glenville	Central	Garfield Heights	Euclid	Broadway
Would like to narrow their target area for recruitment from the entire collab area to one or two key neighborhoods and then receive TA on what kinds of recruitment activities in which to engage and what the data tells about the need to recruit.	x							
Needs Identified	Westside	Lakewood	Mt. Pleasant	Glenville	Central	Garfield Heights	Euclid	Broadway
Would like to send their staff to an abbreviated pre-service training rather than to the entire training.	x							
They would like to have a discussion about their proper role as outreach provider because their perception is that their Geo Chief does not want them contacting resource		X						

families directly.								
Would like to know the homes licensed by network providers		x						
Would like information on who are the children in care in their community and there age, where they attend school and where they live; and who are the children who have been placed outside their community but are from their community and where they were placed.		X	X	X			X	
They would like to speak at pre-service trainings		X		x		X*		
They would like a roster of the resource managers assigned foster homes in their community		x	X	x				

Needs Identified	Westside	Lakewood	Mt. Pleasant	Glenville	Central	Garfield Heights	Euclid	Broadway
They would like footballs for their upcoming fall recruitment events.		X						
Would like their community library included in the heart gallery rotation		x						
They would like Department staff to attend more of their recruitment events to answer questions and represent the county perspective.			x					
Would like the Department to support a pre-service training at Pilgrim Church of Christ.				X				
Central would like the Department to put					X			

together a meeting with them and CMHA to discuss making units available for folks who want to foster large sibling groups and even for folks who want to move to a larger unit so they can get a placement.								
They would like notice of when resource families get new placement so they can do support and outreach to those foster parents.					X			X
Learning community: Foster parents are not getting full disclosure at the time of placement and are unprepared when the children in					x			

their home start exhibiting trauma induced behaviors. (How to support foster parents with really difficult placements for which they are unprepared).								
Would like clarity on the staff who are liaison to them from the Dept. from their Chief to the Resource managers.						X		

Needs Identified	Westside	Lakewood	Mt. Pleasant	Glenville	Central	Garfield Heights	Euclid	Broadway
Referrals have tapered off for attending TDMs at case opening; but they are getting referrals for families whose cases have been closed (but they have never heard of those families).						X		
They would like to know how often children from their area are placed into their area and how often children not from their area are placed in their area and how often children are placed outside their area.							X	
They would like staffing and visits to take place in their own community							x	
They would like a list of foster parents							x	

with no placements so they can reach out for support and re-recruitment and also recruitment for volunteerism within their program.								
They would like to get started with the IL/PC work with older children. Who are the kids? Are they from their collab or somewhere else? Who are the TAG members living in their community?							X	
They would like to have a meeting with the placement staff to discuss utilization of the homes from their collab so they can get a better understanding of who the resource families are taking as							X	

placements, who they are refusing and who to better support those families and recruit homes that are needed.								
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Needs Identified	Westside	Lakewood	Mt. Pleasant	Glenville	Central	Garfield Heights	Euclid	Broadway
They would like their list of community events to be shared with resource staff who may want to take some flex time to support community recruitment.								X
They would like the Department to look at the Collab and what they are doing from the entire perspective for the \$\$\$ they are getting and to realize if they cut their budget they will have to cut their services.								x

***Lakewood:** They would like to be on the neighborhood blitz list and include the middle school volunteers

***Central** would like door knob hangers as well

***Garfield Heights** suggests collabs speak at both session 2 and 9

APPENDIX IV

Cleveland Arts Organizations

Community Partnership for Arts and Culture
Tower Press, 1900 Superior Avenue, Suite 130
Cleveland, OH 44114
<http://www.cpacbiz.org/>
P. 216 575 0331
F. 216 575 0332
E. info@cpacbiz.org

The Cleveland Museum of Art
11150 East Blvd
Cleveland Ohio
44106
<http://www.clemusart.com/>
216-421-7340

East Cleveland Community Theatre & Arts Center
14108 Euclid Ave.
East Cleveland, OH 44112
216-851-8721

Cleveland Public Art
1951 W. 26th Street, #101
Cleveland, Ohio 44113-3440
216/621.5330 phone
<http://www.clevelandpublicart.org/>

Karamu House
2355 E. 89th Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44106
(216) 795-7070
<http://www.karamu.com/>
info@karamu.com

The Lit: Cleveland's Literary Center (formerly
The Poets' and Writers' League of Greater
Cleveland)
ArtCraft Building | 2570 Superior Avenue Suite
203 | Cleveland, Ohio 44114 | Phone:
216.694.0000
info@the-lit.org

The Cleveland Orchestra
Severance Hall
11001 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44106-1796
(216) 231-7300
Email:
info@clevelandorchestra.com<http://www.clevelandorch.com/>

Cleveland Public Theatre
6415 Detroit Avenue | Cleveland, Ohio 44102 |
(216) 631-2727 | info@cptonline.org
<http://www.cptonline.org/>

The Cleveland Play House
8500 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44106
p: 216-795-7000
<http://www.clevelandplayhouse.com/>

PlayhouseSquare
1501 Euclid Avenue
Suite 200
Cleveland, OH 44115
(216) 771-4444
(216) 771-0217 fax
<http://www.playhousesquare.com/>

Cuyahoga Arts and Culture
Bulkley Building Suite 407
1501 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
info@cacgrants.org
(216) 515-8303 – phone
<http://www.cuyahogaartsandculture.org/>

Ohio Arts Council
Columbus, OH
<http://www.oac.state.oh.us/>

APPENDIX V

**ADOPTION OPPORTUNITIES GRANT
DILIGENT RECRUITMENT**

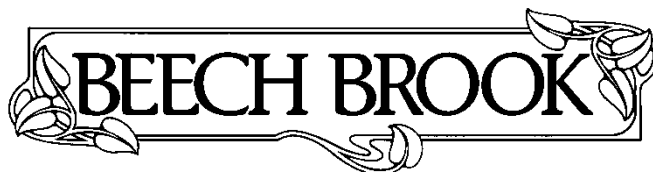
Youth Referral Form

Submit one for each child referred to the program

Date Submitted	
CCDCFS Worker and Supervisor	

Youth

First and Last name	
Date of birth	
SSN	
Cysis Number	
PC Date	
Current Placement, Name, Address, Phone Number	(Relative, Non-relative foster care, Group facility, Specify other)
Siblings name(s) age and custody status	



Protocol

Characteristics of Children Being Screened

The child should meet all of the following criteria:

- 1). Be between the ages of 8 to 17
- 2). Have an IQ of 85 or higher, or be reported to be of average intelligence

The Interview

Start the tape. Give date, time and child's name

Initial Stages of the Interview

- Be clear about the purpose of the interview with the child.
- Be sure to explain who you are, what your role is, and the reason the interview is taking place.
- Give the child an idea of the things you will be talking about and how long the discussion will take place (Wilson & Powell)
- Tell them that the rule is that they can say, "I don't know," "I don't understand," and "I don't want to talk about that topic." It would be best to have these on an index card in front of the child so he or she can refer to them.

Questions for the beginning:

- Tell me your name and age
- Tell me about your exact birthdate and where you were born, if you know it

Tell me about yourself

- Where do you live now?
- How long have you lived where you are now?
- How do you like living there?

****FOR THE INTERVIEWER**REMEMBER.....**

- Be Patient
- Listen
- Be Accepting
- Don't respond to the information shared

If the child becomes agitated, anxious or distressed during any part of the interview, stop the interview and move to ending the interview.

Middle Stage Questions

Repeat the rules. Tell them that they can say

- I don't know
- I don't understand
- I don't want to talk about that topic

Point again to the index cards.

About Family

- Who do you consider to be your family?
- How did you come to consider that they are your family?
- Who do you get along with best in your family?

About the Birth Family

- Do you know what the words birth mother and birth father mean? Can you tell me in your own words? *If the child does not know, explain the words to him or her. Tell him or her that a birth mother is the biological mother; she is the one who gave birth to him or her. Likewise, tell him or her that a birth father is their biological father; the man who got his or her mother pregnant.*
- When was the last time you saw or spoke to your birth mother? When was the last time you saw or spoke to your birth father?
- Do you have siblings (that is, brothers or sisters)? Tell me about your brothers, where are they and if you have contact with them? Tell me about your sisters, where are they and if you have contact with them?

About Services Received

- What agency is your primary agency or the agency who works with you the most often?
- What social worker works with you the most often? How long have you known him or her?
- How many social workers have worked with you over your life?
- What have been the best things that the agency or last social worker you remember has done for you?
- What have been the worst things that the agency or last social worker you remember has done for you?
- What could the agency or your social worker have done better?

About Adoption

- What does adoption mean to you?
- Have you talked to a social worker about adoption? If so, who was it? Can you tell me about that conversation?
- What are the (3) best things about being adopted?
- What are the (3) worst things about being adopted?
- Where are you in deciding about adoption? Can you tell me about your decision?
- What would it mean if you were not adopted?

If a child becomes agitated, anxious or distressed during any part of the interview. Stop the interview and move to ending the interview.

About People in your Life

“In this section, I’m going to ask you some questions about influential adults in your life. We want to focus on what we call “natural mentoring relationships.” A mentor is “An adult who is often older than you, has more experience than you, and is willing to listen and share her or his own experiences, and guide you through some part or area of your life.” Put this definition (underlined) on an index card and hand it to the child.

List the names of (3) adults in your life that are older than you, have had more experience than you, and are willing to:

- Listen
 - Share their own experiences
 - Guide you through some part or area of your life
- **Probe for kin and non-kin, add who they are and how the youth met them***

IF NO ADULT IS MENTIONED, THEN SKIP THIS SECTION

Name of Adult	Kin or Non-Kin	Who are they	How They Met

Name of Adult	Kin or Non-Kin	Who are they	How They Met

IF THE YOUTH SAY ONLY NON-KIN (or vice versa) THEN ASK EXPLICITLY:

You nominated only adults that are not related to you (or that are related to you) – can you tell my up to (3) relatives (or nonrelatives) that are older than you, have more experience than you, and are willing to listen share their own experiences and guide you through some part or area of your life.

Name of Adult	Kin or Non-Kin	Who are they	How They Met

Name of Adult	Kin or Non-Kin	Who are they	How They Met

***Complete questions 3-16 with one kin adult that is nominated; choose the one that the child feels closest to

KIN MENTOR

1) How long have known them (in months)?_____

2) How many times in one month do you spend time one-on-one with this adult?_____

How many hours in one month do you spend time one-on-one with this adult?_____

3) Would you say that your mentor is of the “same culture” as you?

0) NO

1) YES

Would you say that your mentor comes from the same kind of background as you?

2) NO

3) YES

4. I can genuinely be myself with my mentor.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

5. I believe my mentor values me as a person.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

6. My mentor shows commitment to our relationship.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

My mentor make a great deal of effort to participate in my life.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

7. My mentor shares stories about his/her own experiences with me in a way that makes my life better.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

8. I feel as though I know myself better because of my mentor.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

9. My mentor makes me feel better about myself.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

My mentor gives me encouragement.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

10. I want to have the same values as my mentor, such as his/her academic, religious, or physical/athletic values.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

11. I feel strengthened by interactions with my mentor.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

I feel energized by interactions with my mentor.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

12. My mentor tries hard to understand my feelings.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

My mentor tries hard to understand my goals (academic, personal, or whatever is relevant).

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

13. My relationship with my mentor inspires me to seek other relationships like this one.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

14. I feel comfortable expressing my deepest concerns to my mentor.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

NON-KIN MENTOR

*****Complete questions 15-29 with one non-kin adult that the child nominated and they feel closest to.**

15) How long have known them (in months)?_____

16) How many times in one month do you spend time one-on-one with this adult?_____

How many hours in one month do you spend time one-on-one with this adult?_____

18) Would you say that your mentor is of the “same culture” as you?

4) NO

5) YES

19. I can be genuinely myself with my mentor.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

20. I believe my mentor values me as a person.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

21. My mentor shows commitment to our relationship.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

My mentor make a great deal of effort to participate in my life.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

22. My mentor shares stories about his/her own experiences with me in a way that makes my life better.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

23. I feel as though I know myself better because of my mentor.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

24. My mentor gives me emotional support.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

My mentor gives me encouragement.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

25. I try to imitate the values of my mentor such as their social, academic, religious, or physical/athletic values.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

26. I feel strengthened by interactions with my mentor.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

I feel energized by interactions with my mentor.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

27. My mentor tries hard to understand my feelings.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

My mentor tries hard to understand my goals (academic, personal, or whatever is relevant).

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

28. My relationship with my mentor inspires me to seek other relationships like this one.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

29. I feel comfortable expressing my deepest concerns to my mentor.

1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always

**AOG
MINI PROFILE**

Client Name:

Current Address:

Phone Number:

Date of Birth:

Date of Profile:

Social Security Number:

Cysis Number:

Permanent Custody Date:

- I. Sources of Information**
- II. Brief Introduction to Client/Current Situation**
- III. Placement History-dates, names, reason for moves**
- IV. School Placements**
- V. Diagnosis and Current Medication/Medical Issues**
- VI. Birth family Information including siblings and relatives, names, addresses, phone numbers**
- VII. Client's wishes/goals regarding permanency**

Three pages max. Attach CCR profile if available

PLANNING FOR MY FUTURE

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

FOSTER PARENTS NAMES _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____

PLACE OF BIRTH (City) _____

CURRENT SCHOOL GRADE _____

NAME OF SCHOOL _____

Please share the names and phone numbers of 3 adults you most enjoy spending time with right now:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Please share the names and any contact information about 3 other adults that are important to you but you have not had contact with recently:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Please tell me what your favorite activities are that you enjoy doing in your free time:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Who are your heroes or who do you look up to as a role model? (someone you would like to be like as you grow up into adulthood). _____

Please tell me about your current education:

1. What are your favorite subjects in school? _____
2. What subjects do you do well in? _____
3. What subjects are difficult for you? _____
4. Do you plan to graduate from high school and if so, when do you anticipate this happening?

Please tell me about your future education?

1. What type of career/job do you see for yourself in the future?
2. Are you thinking about attending college or a vocational training program? If so, what are your ideas?
3. What are your hopes, dreams, plans, goals for your future?
4. Do you have a beginning plan to move toward reaching your goals?

Page 3

What are your thoughts about future living arrangements?

1. Where do you see yourself living and with whom after you leave the custody of CCDCFS? What would be your first and second choices? Please include birth family members or former foster/adoptive family members if this is an option that you have in mind.
 2. Do you think you have the skills to live on your own? Are there any IL areas that you would like more help with now?
 3. What are your plans to support yourself financially or is there anyone that you hope is planning to help you?
 4. How can I help you make the best possible plan for your immediate future? Think about areas such as housing, income, education/training, jobs, connecting or reconnecting with significant adults in your life that may be able to provide you with a sense of permanency even if you are planning to live on your own.
 5. What do you think of when we talk about “permanency planning” and “independent living” at the same time?
 6. Are you willing to accept help and participate actively in planning for your future?
-