

PARTNERS FOR FOREVER FAMILIES
A Public-Private-University Initiative and Neighborhood-Based Approach¹



PARTNERS
FOR FOREVER FAMILIES

Year 3 Evaluation Report, 2010-2011

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I. Executive Summary

This report is a summary of Year 3 for Partners for Forever Families (the grant and evaluation year runs from October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011). The initiative is a Public-Private-University Initiative and a Neighborhood-Based Approach to recruitment, funded by Adoption Opportunities: Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in the Foster Care System. The lead agency is Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services and the project partners are Adoption Network-Cleveland, Beech Brook, Case Western Reserve University and the Neighborhood Collaborative Agencies of East End Neighborhood House, Harvard Community Services Center, Murtis Taylor Human Services System, and University Settlement. Overall, the third year was successful in continuing the implementation of the project. The project kept focus on process while sharpening the focus on data informed outcomes.

One of the major accomplishments of Year 3 was the passage of two policies that had been pending in Year 2: concurrent planning and siblings. Another accomplishment was the routine sharing of data from various CCDCFS Departments. The Project Director continued to be successful in threading project activities into DDCFS. A new Director of CCDCFS was hired that will result in new leadership for the agency. Finally, the Mandel School Child Welfare Fellows, funded from a different Children's Bureau grant, have provided leadership in the customer service component of the grant.

One of the interventions specified in the original grant application was a place-based community development strategy. Effective community problem-solving requires that government agencies tap local knowledge and collaborate to achieve policy and practice outcomes in child welfare (Daro & Dodge, 2009). The strategy for Partners for Forever Families involved working with local community-based agencies (neighborhood collaborative agencies) in specific neighborhoods to conduct targeted and child-specific recruitment.

Targeted recruitment involved campaigns focusing on families who specifically reflected the majority of children in public care in Cuyahoga County. More specifically, there are a disproportionate number of African-American children currently in the permanent custody of Cuyahoga County. Targeted recruitment focused on increasing the number of African-American families willing to foster and adopt the children in the public child welfare system. In particular, targeted recruitment highlighted older children and siblings groups. It has been difficult to determine the effects of targeted recruitment as data collection management has been a problem at DCFS due to multiple changes at the County politically and administratively.

The child-specific recruitment involved finding permanent options for youth who had some connection to the specific neighborhoods/geo areas served by these agencies. This included youth who were currently living in these neighborhoods or those who, at some point in their life, had some geographic connection in the neighborhoods. For the youth involved in this project, this has worked well and the team is developing a model for working with older youth who are aging out of foster care by creating permanency teams and permanency pacts.

Schorr (2006) identifies four components of successful place-based strategies. These include the following: 1) clarity about the purposes of the work; 2) creating, enhancing, and *sustaining* the partnerships to achieve these purposes; 3) accountability for achieving those purposes; and, 4) embracing systems' change that promotes greater positive outcomes for children and families. Using these components, PFFF had some successes but more difficulties existed in achieving these components.

PFFF was a clear initiative but was instituted during a time of tremendous change in Cuyahoga County. Within a year of funding, many local government challenges took place prompting the arrest and conviction of County officials for corruption/betraying the public trust. Citizens voted in a new County government structure as well as a new Executive. Simultaneously, Cleveland was leading the nation in the subprime mortgage meltdown with home foreclosures. The neighborhoods we initially targeted were disproportionately hit by this economic turmoil. The result is that no matter how clear the PFFF purpose, the ecological context thwarted efforts for place-based strategies. Collaborative agencies were dealing with the economic crisis and trying to operate in a political and policy context that was radically changing. There was little continuity between the context in which the project started and where the project is at Year 3. Thus, the first component for successful community-based strategies was compromised and the project had no responsibility for the compromise but was significantly affected by these challenges.

The collaborative agencies were an integral part of the development and implementation of the first year of planning. However, when only a small number of all the collaborative agencies were to directly benefit from project funds and activities, the Neighborhood Collaborative Agencies as an entity (the Council of Neighborhood Leaders) dropped out of the project. The next year involved negotiating with specific agencies in the neighborhoods for engagement in the grant process. While eventually select collaborative agencies were re-engaged by Year 3, each collaborative agency identified a different staff person to be involved in PFFF. A few involved their System of Care supervisors while others identified staff with little familiarity with child welfare. In an effort to enhance the relationship, several workshops were held by Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) in the various agencies to assist them in developing targeted recruitment plans. This intervention has had several difficulties in the implementation.

The staff issues with the Collaborative Agencies were compounded by problematic communication between the Collaborative Agencies in the targeted neighborhoods and CCDCFS. The difficulties included a lack of communication from CCDCFS to the agencies, problems with the timeliness of communication, difficulty obtaining relevant data about the children connected to specific neighborhoods, and confusion about what is funded and not funded through PFFF. The communication issue was compounded when the Executive Director of CCDCFS was dismissed, served for several months as a “lame duck” administrator, and then the next 6 months was spent hiring of a new Director. Also, during this period, CCDCFS moved towards enforcement of deliverables for the Collaborative Agencies existing contracts. This represented a major change; historically there were few consequences for failing to meet contract deliverables. This change added a complexity to cooperation; to achieve performance benchmarks, the Collaborative Agencies needed to make sure their activity was recorded by CCDCFS. Since the contracting enforcement accountability was new for both entities, many issues emerged around communication, tracking, MIS systems, and data sharing. These issues have yet to be worked out, compromising components 2 and 3 of successful community-based strategies.

Lastly, it is difficult to embrace system change even in the best of circumstances. When an organization suffers from intense negative media scrutiny, as has CCDCFS, a “siege” mentality develops. Information sharing becomes more and more restricted in this atmosphere, any effort to change a system in crisis is thwarted, and a “survivor” mentality develops. The result has been a lack of referrals of children in the targeted neighborhoods to the partner agency conducting child-specific recruitment (Beech Brook), the child specific materials are not consistently shared or updated with Collaborative Agencies, and there is no assumption of “good

will” as efforts are made to change processes.

Given this context, we have decided to expand the project and make some changes in the evaluation methodology in Year 4. In addition to evaluating neighborhood effects on child outcomes (placement of older youth and sibling groups), the project will track outcomes for the youth touched by the project and match them to a group of youth not touched by the project to compare outcomes. We also will eliminate the restriction on Beech Brook to only working with youth in the targeted neighborhoods. For 3 years they have not gotten the referrals and the restriction undermines our ability to develop a good model of child-specific permanency planning for older youth and sibling groups. Such changes will open up opportunities to touch greater numbers of children’s lives as well as enhance our learning.

This report departs from the format used in Years 1 and 2. In this report we use the major headings for each section as employed in our original recruitment proposal: General Recruitment, Targeted Recruitment, and Child Specific Recruitment.

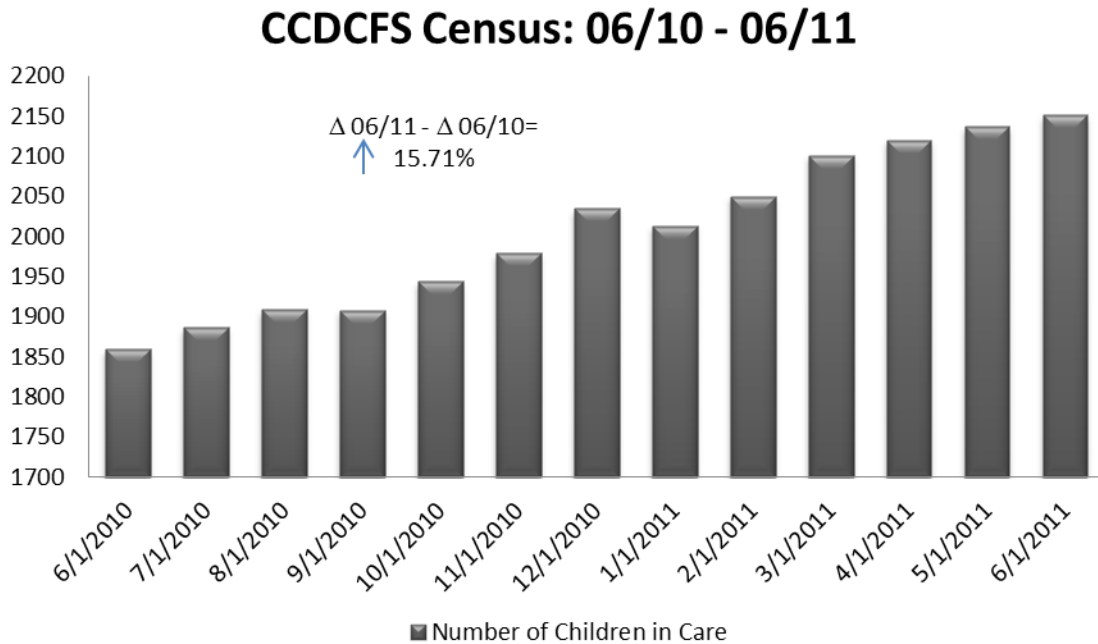
II. Introduction and Overview

Cuyahoga County is located in Northeast Ohio and encompasses the City of Cleveland as well as numerous inner ring and outer ring suburbs. At the time this grant was developed, the overall population of children in foster care had reduced but the children who remained in care were older and had the more complicated histories and difficulties, requiring new methods to promote their need for permanency. The project was initiated in 2008. In 2008, there were 710 children in permanent custody (pc); 272 (38.3%) had no adoption resource identified and there were 223 (31.4%) adoptive placements. In 2009, there were 708 children in pc; 221 (31.2%) had no adoption resource identified and there were 248 (34.9%) adoptive placements. As of July 2010, there were 649 children in pc; 203 (31.3%) had no adoption resource identified but the goal is 270 (41.6%) adoptive placements (108 adoptions had occurred so far). As of August 2011, there were 604 children in pc; 211 (24.9%) had no adoption resource identified and there have been 162 adoptive placements. At the time the grant was written in 2008, about 37% of children in permanent custody statewide were being adopted in less than 12 months. *Objective one was to increase the percent of children who exited for adoption in less than 24 months in Cuyahoga County (CC) from 25% to match the state’s percent of 37% (in 2008) or higher.* As of May 2011 (the last report available to the project), the CSFR data for CC had not changed; it was about 24%, similar to Years 1 and 2. It is not possible to have more detailed CFSR data such as neighborhood data to ascertain if there are any changes in the neighborhoods. In addition to no change in CRSR data, Ohio received no dollars from the Adoption Incentive funds during Year 3, similar to Years 1 and 2 of the grant.

Another important factor to note is the public agency’s fluctuating census of the number of children in care between January 2008 and June 2011, presented in Figure 1 (accessed August 22, 2011 at http://cfs.cuyahogacounty.us/pdf_cfs/en-US/2011_June_Statistical_Report.pdf). Between January 2008 and January 2009, there was a 7.0% decrease in the total number of children in care; then another 14.0% decrease between January 2009 and January 2010; but, a reverse trend where the census increased by 6.90% between January 2010 and January 2011; and, again a 15.71% increase between June 2010 to June 2011 (see *Table 5*). It is suspected that the 14% decrease between 2009 and 2010 may have been linked to dramatic budget cuts that impacted agency operating funds. We hypothesize the 15.7% increase in the number of children in care is linked to the trend of conservative child welfare practices of CCDCFS, the catalysts being a number of youths who died at the hands of their parents in 2009-2010 and much negative

media attention. Regardless of the reason, the trend is that more youth are entering foster care after a period of time when there was a decrease.

Figure1. The Number of Children in Care, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, 06/01/10 – 06/01/11



Accessed on 08/21/11 at <http://cfs.cuyahogacounty.us/pdf/cfs/en-US/2011.pdf>

GENERAL RECRUITMENT

Recruitment is a conversation and not just information.

-Zelma Brown

Adoption Recruitment

One of the general recruitment activities of PFFF is the Heart Gallery, a mobile photo gallery featuring youth and sibling groups waiting for adoption. While it could be considered child centered recruitment, because the children in the Heart Gallery reflect the profile of waiting children, we placed their activities under general adoption recruitment.

The Recruitment Department keeps track of the location of each event and the results of events. Table 1 presents this data. Results are not positive.

Table 1: Heart Gallery January to July 2011

Site/Location	Dates	No. of Calls	No. of Reply Cards	Pre-service
Public Library downtown 325 & Superior Avenue	2-7 to 3-11-2011	None	None	None
Karamu House Theatre E. 89 th street off Quincy	3-10 to 4-10-2011	1	1	None
Cleveland City Hall/downtown	4-28 to June 1-2011	None	None	None
Cleveland Hts Library Lee Rd	6-1 to 7-5-2011	None	None	None
Scheduled events				
Playhouse Square 1519 Euclid Avenue Cleveland Ohio	August 1, 2011 thru August 31, 2011	NA	NA	NA
Cuyahoga County Libraries	July 5, 2011 thru August 2, 2011	NA	NA	NA
Lakewood Library 15425 Detroit Avenue Lakewood, Ohio	November 1, 2011 thru December 6, 2011	NA	NA	NA
City of Cleveland	September	NA	NA	NA

However, results of the Heart Gallery should be viewed with caution. First, people may see the photos and consider adoption for several months to years before making the next step; such potential families would not show up in this data. Second, potential families are often exposed to several general recruitment messages. Families report usually only the last one they remember. Third, there remains a problem accurately tracking all inquiries. Some inquiry calls do not remember where they head about foster care or adoption or the data is not recorded or recorded accurately.

There are also some problems with the displays. Hospitals are reluctant to take the 20 foot wall display because it takes up a lot of space. Usually places are willing to take the 8 foot kiosk. There is a team that is divided up by region that calls and introduce themselves to the targeted organization to display the Heart Gallery; one of their jobs is to get the contact person's name, phone number and email address. The most calls received about the Heart Gallery were in April when the gallery was up at the Karamu House, a local performance center located in the African-American Community that performs plays about or written by African-Americans. The

Karamu House had a huge audience as there were two plays about “Black History Month”. As to people calling into the Recruitment Line, families usually want the younger children which are not all representative in the gallery.

As part of examining general recruitment, the evaluation team examined adoption data. Figures 2 and 3 present adoption placement and finalization data for 2008-2010, Years 1-3 of the PFFF project. The majority of adoptions are foster-to-adopt and the only change is a slight increase in straight-out adoptions from 2008 (13%) to 2010 (17%). Of most concern is the dramatic drop in the number of adoptions from 2008-2010 (Figure 3).

Figure 2: Adoptions by Type of Placement, 2008-2010

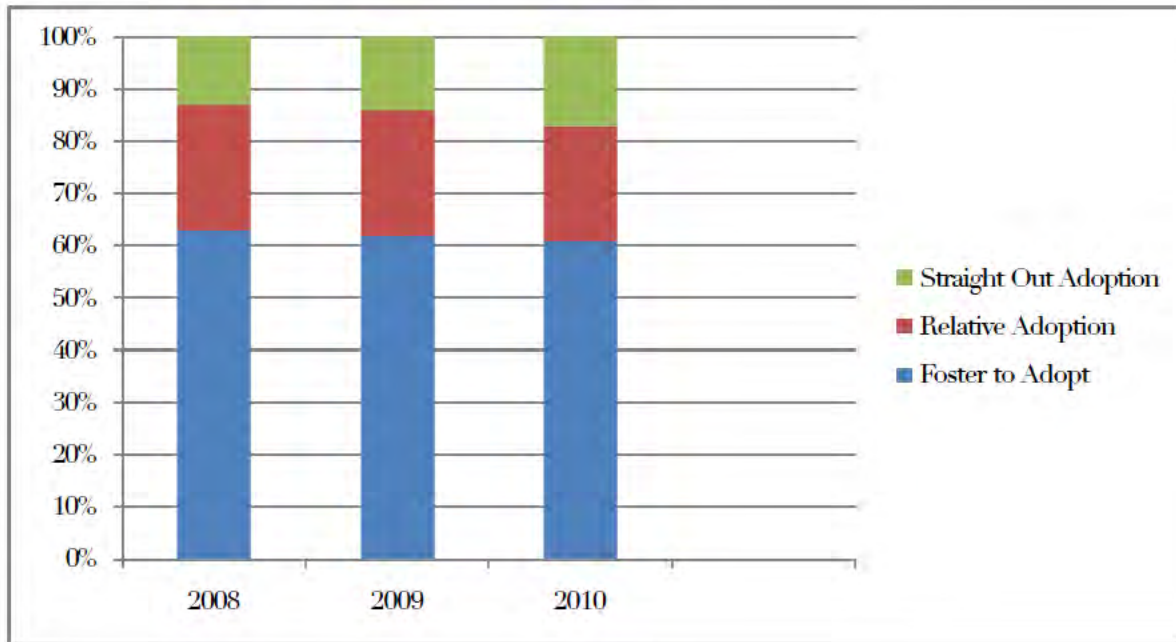
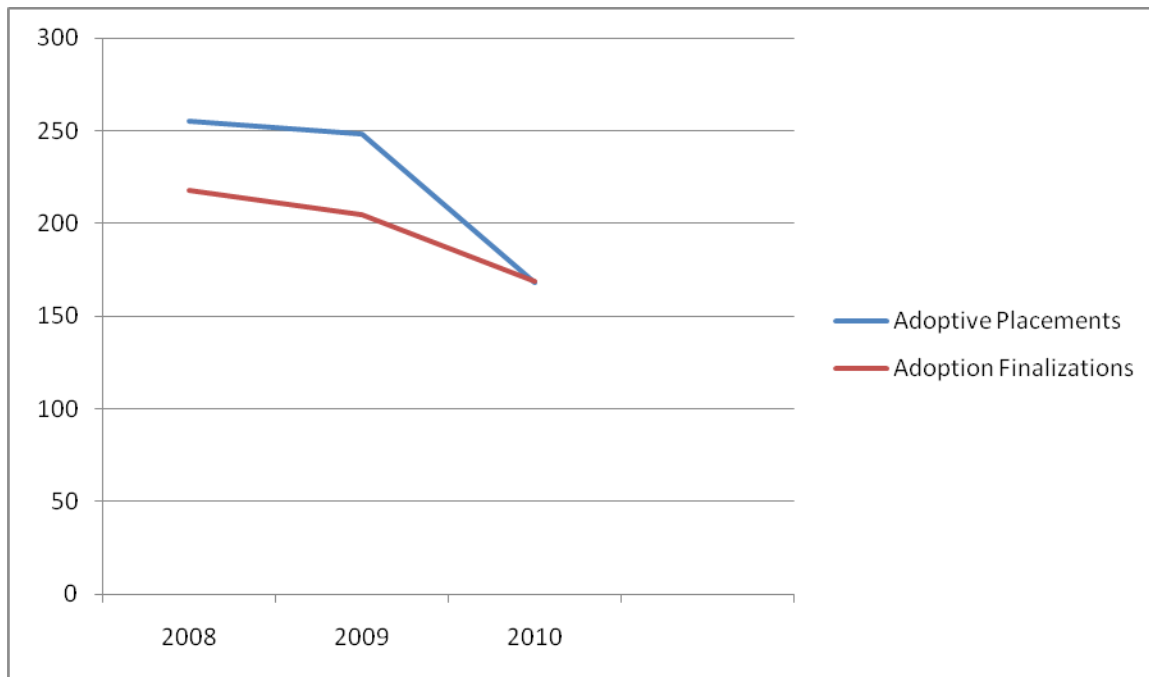


Figure 3: Number of Adoptions and Finalizations, 2008-2010



To determine if the decrease in adoption was related to census, that is as the number of children waiting for adoption decreases you can expect a decrease in the number of adoptions, rates were computed for adoptions. It was not possible to compute rates for finalizations because the data were not part of the MIS systems and each type of adoption has a different length towards finalization. Table 2 present data used in developing rates of adoption for each year.

Table 2: Classification Status of Children in Cuyahoga County Permanent Custody, 2008-2010

	Total number of youth in permanent custody	Total number of youth classified as having no plan	Percent of child considered "available"/with no plan	Total number of children placed for adoption
2007	676	273	40%	293
2008	605	278	46%	223
2009	572	239	42%	248
2010	635	274	33%	168

Using the total number of youth in permanent custody, the rate of adoption is as follows. In 2007, with 676 youth in permanent custody and 293 adoptive placements, the rate is .43. In 2008, with 605 youth in permanent custody and 223 adoptive placements, the rate is .37. In 2009, with 572 youth in permanent custody and 248 adoptive placements, the rate is .43. In 2010, with 635 youth in permanent custody and 168 adoptive placements, the rate is .27. The rate of adoption is uneven between 2007 to 2010 but overall decreased from 2008 to 2010. Data for 2011 as of August shows a further decline in the number of adoptions.

There are several explanations for the decrease in total number of adoptions and rates of adoption. First, contracts to private agencies to assist with adoptions were so delayed that some agencies refused to move forward on an adoption they were facilitating without a contract. This also led to some agencies closing their adoption programs. The State of Ohio cut adoption funding 75%, from about 1.8 million to \$400,000. This funding was used to contract with private agencies. So not only were contracts delayed but they were cut substantially. Second, the state decreased the amount of subsidy they would provide. This resulted in the county and families being unable to successfully negotiate an adoption subsidy. Some families remained as foster parents because the foster care per diem was higher than the adoption subsidy. There was no doubt they were committed to the child but could not afford to adopt given the difference between the adoption subsidy and foster care per diem. This is similar to the experience late in the 20th century and the reasons subsidies were created, to remove financial barriers to adoption. There is now a reverse incentive to adopt. Third, the economy in the county has been very problematic. Not only did families lose their jobs, a number of them feared losing their job. Most of the foster-to-adopt families are working families; job loss or the fear of job loss decreased families' inclination to adopt. Any of these factors alone could result in fewer adoptions; together they create a "perfect storm", to the detriment of permanency through adoption.

Foster Home Recruitment

The majority of youth in the public child welfare system are adopted by the foster parents. Therefore, foster care recruitment plays a pivotal role in permanency. In Ohio, families can be dually licensed as foster and adoptive parents, highlighting the significant role foster care plays in adoption. As the data shows, most families are dually licensed.

Pipeline Foster Home data, that is the net gain or loss of foster homes each month, were not routinely shared by the agency during the first few years of the project; it is not clear whether it was routinely collected. As part of threading project activities into the agency, starting summer 2011, each component of the agency was expected to provide monthly reports. Foster Home data spans two departments, recruitment and home study. Staff had to hand count because they don't trust SACWIS and the former system, FACWIS, double counted resource families so that is an area where using administrative data was not trusted. Each department has been routinely collecting the hand counts, but it doesn't get totaled. Data are available for several months at the time of the PFFF Year 3 Evaluation.

The Recruitment Depart keeps track of calls received inquiring about fostering or adopting. These data are presented in Table 3. Data are organized by calendar year so only data available at the time of the report are included in the table. Newspapers were listed as a source but only one call came into DCFS from the newspaper in July so it is eliminated from the table.

Table 3: Recruitment calls by source of call, January to May 2011

	Radio	Staff	Foster or Adoptive Parents	TV	Friends or Relatives	Church	Recruitment Event	Other Agency	Collab Agencies	Internet	Total
Jan	3	21	12	5	27	0	10	13	5	19	115
Feb	3	16	11	2	20	0	0	5	1	5	63
March	10	15	9	2	51	1	4	10	20	4	126
April	2	13	6	3	16	0	5	4	0	2	51
May	7	14	16	3	30	0	5	2	0	3	80
June	7	10	17	9	33	1	21	2	0	9	109
July	10	15	13	3	88	2	6	4	0	8	100
YTD Total	42	104	84	27	215	4	51	40	26	50	644

Three results stand out. One, the best source for calls are people already connected to the child--friends or relatives of the children. Two, the church is not a good source for soliciting calls for foster care or adoption. These results run counter to the experience of one of our partners who has actively recruited from churches in the targeted geo area; somehow this data is not being recorded. Three, tracking calls to the collaborative agencies is problematic, a point we heard in leadership meetings. One month 20 calls are attributed to the collaborative agencies and other months there are zero calls although the collaborative agencies indicate there are referrals that should have been recorded. The table failed to reflect efforts at community festivals, which are viewed as the biggest source of general recruitment. Since tracking data remains a problem, results must be viewed with caution.

It is important to track every person's contact with the child welfare system. Table 4 tracks the total number of application during this same time period by type of application (foster or adoptive) and the race of the applicant family.

Table 4: Number of applications submitted January through May 2011

	Foster			Adoptive			Total	Dual license (foster & adoptive)
	Black	White	Other	Black	White	Other		
Jan	3	2	0	3	0	0	10	7
Feb	8	2	0	0	0	0	10	10
March	13	3	0	2	1	0	19	13
April	2	1	0	0	0	0	3	3
May	20	10	3	0	4	2	39	30
June	9	2	0	4	0	0	15	7
July	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
YTD total	57	21	3	9	5	2	97	71

To date, 81 foster families and 16 adoptive families have submitted applications. Of these, 17 were child specific applications.

Using data from Table 4, the majority of families (68%) submitting applications are African-American. Most families (73%) want to be dually licensed for foster care & adoption. Yet the drop out from inquiries to the application is significant; out of 644 inquiries, only 97 submitted an application. This is a yield of 15% for applications. Yet this is a crude estimate and likely lower because from inquiry to application may be as long as 6 months. Someone inquiring about fostering or adopting cannot submit an application until they have completed their pre-service training. The trainings are not offered monthly so a family can expect to wait for training. During the waiting period, when there is historically little to no contact from DCFS, families drop out. For those families from our targeted neighborhoods who become known to PFFF, an Adoption Navigator is assigned to help keep them connected through the process.

Recruitment Department staff provided some additional information in a memo dated August 16, 2011 when concerns were raised about the number of withdrawals. There are a number of case reasons for withdrawals. One couple had criminal histories that were not disclosed on the application or when they signed the “Non-conviction statement” for being fingerprinted. Falsification of an application is cause for denial; apparently this couple chose to withdraw. Another applicant changed their minds about being licensed. Because the project is concerned about the high number of withdrawals, in Year 4 a special evaluation project will focus on better understanding family withdrawals.

Table 5: Pipeline on home studies, January through July 2011

	Number of home studies assigned	Number of homes approved as dual	Number certified for foster care only	Number approved for adoption only	Number of withdrawn home studies	Number recommended for denial	Number of transfers	Number of homes closed	Number of homes recertified
Jan	3	6	0	2	7	0	0	7	9
Feb	2	2	0	0	4	0	0	9	9
March	21	4	1	1	5	1	0	20	7
April	14	2	0	0	8	0	1	9	7
May	16	3	1	0	0	1	0	7	8
June	21	4	1	1	6	1	0	15	8
July	19	4	1	0	3	0	0	10	11
Total YTD	96	25	4	4	33	3	1	77	59

A trend, if these numbers continue, does not bode well for foster care and adoption. For the first 7 months of the year, a total of 93 homes were approved, transferred or recertified but 113 were withdrawn, denied or closed. This is a net loss of 20 homes when the number of children entering care is going up.

Legal Symposium

One systemic barrier to permanency has been the lack of cross-system understanding and collaboration. The Guardian Ad Litem may not understand or agree with the caseworker; when cases come to court they may not work together on behalf of children but be in opposition. The purpose of the Legal Symposium

The Partners for Forever Families: Permanency Solutions Conference (aka Legal Symposium) was held September 22-23, 2011. On the learning continuum, the conference should serve as a catalyst for social workers, foster parents, and members of the legal community in their continued pursuit of greater skill development in working to resolve barriers to permanency for children. The training of these partners together benefits each group in working collaboratively and draws from the best of their perspectives.

The goals of the conference were to:

- Train child welfare professionals to improve outcomes for the children and families served by the public agency.
- Engage in meaningful dialogue regarding current trends in child welfare practice and the potential impact of these trends on how we conduct our business and to consider opportunities to reengineer our practice to improve our service.
- Share new knowledge with participants that would pique their interest in our learning programs, and encourage them to use these valued resources for continuous skill development.
- With the implementation of the Adoption and Safe Families Act and Ohio's response to this legislation in House Bill 484, time limits have been imposed which dictate that we expedite our work with the children and families we serve to ensure permanency and greater child well-being. Training is the primary form of intervention in the agency's work to improve performance that impacts outcomes, and social workers and foster parents are the front-line persons working with our families. This conference impacts their knowledge acquisition and increases awareness and this is beneficial.
- Child welfare is an evolving discipline. Some of the trends that impact our work in addition to shorter time lines are multiple problems of the families we serve, limited resources within the community, and the need for on-going support and collaboration with natural helpers. Identifying and using our collective abilities is the ideal thing to do in an environment of diminishing fiscal investment.

The conference vision was to provide child welfare professionals who possess complex knowledge and skills to assure culturally sensitive protection and permanence for Cuyahoga County's abused and neglected children.

Legal symposium survey outcomes. Table 6 presents the outcome results from the conference survey (means; SD) indicating how well attendees felt their learning goals were met. Scores range from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*); the higher the scores, the more participants felt the conference goals were met. Results denoted for all 11 questions, the mean scores ranged between 4.40 to 4.70; this indicated that most participants either agreed (4.0) or strongly agreed (5.0) that their learning goals had been met at the symposium.

Table 6: Permanency Solutions Workshop Evaluation Survey ($N = 102$)

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation
Written materials were informative	4.45	0.68
AV materials clarified subject	4.35	0.80
Trainers understood the subject	4.70	0.61
Trainers encouraged people to participate	4.67	0.60
I felt involved in the workshop	4.52	0.70
I felt enthusiastic about the workshop before attending	4.30	0.84
I am going to put into action what I learned in this session	4.38	0.80
Goal: Identified barriers to permanency	4.50	0.70
Goal: Identifying new skills to achieving permanency	4.47	0.71
Goal: Identify permanency path for youth	4.53	0.67
Goal: Identify permanency solution for youth	4.48	0.75

Note: 1=Extremely disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree or disagree; 4= Agree; 5. Strongly Agree

Commitment letters to self. At the end of the conference, participants were asked to write themselves letters describing how they planned to integrate their learning from the legal symposium into their daily child welfare practices. They were given the following statements to complete:

Dear _____,

In participating in the *Permanency Solutions Workshop*, I gained ideas as to what I could use in my daily practice as a child welfare professional. Something I see myself implementing in my practice is

When leaving a workshop, people often feel enthusiastic about adding what they learned to their daily practices in child welfare. The challenge is how to keep that enthusiasm over time! The advice that I am giving myself about how I can continue implementing what I learned at the workshop is the following:

I am making the following commitment to myself. _____

Participants were asked to place the completed letters into self-addressed envelopes and to seal them. They were collected at the end of the conference; the evaluation team would mail these letters back to attendees in four weeks. The purposes of this exercise were as follows: to re-introduce the materials learned at the conference that they found most important to their practices; to promote “over-learning” which fosters permanent learning pathways; to foster an emotional recommitment of participants’ goals made the day of the conference; and to promote further integration of information learned into attendees’ daily child welfare practices.

Volunteers were also solicited for future phone interviews that would take place in 3 to 6 months post-symposium. Recognizing the wealth of child welfare expertise in those attending the conference (i.e., Judges/magistrates; prosecutors; GAL’s; public defenders; defense attorneys; social workers; case workers; managers and department leaders at CCDCFS; foster/adoptive parents; youth who had aged-out of the system; executive directors of organizations), the evaluation team made it a goal to qualitatively tap into participants’ opinions and experiences (i.e., through examples they share in the interviews) by the following questions: 1. Through your experiences with the child welfare system, what do you feel is working well to ensure positive outcomes for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families in Cuyahoga County?; 2. What do you feel is not working well?; 3. What are ideas that you have as to how to improve child and family outcomes? For each questions, the interviewer will ask for a specific example to further illustrate their donated concepts.

Out of 102 participants who completed the evaluation materials, 69 agreed to participate in the phone interviews six months after the conference; this accounts for almost 7 out of every 10 participants (70%)! Individuals who volunteered varied in roles: about equal numbers of law and social service professionals (approximately 50); various other positions (like ED of organizations which was approximately 10); and approximately 9 foster/adoptive parents/foster children. Interviews will begin in January, 2012.

TARGETED RECRUITMENT

Focus on Kin

The project had an explicit focus on improving services to kin because many children are initially placed with kin or subsequently move to kin placements, at least historically. Also, for children who have been in care and whose parental rights are terminated, kin play an increasingly important role.

DCFS recruitment materials address non-relatives for foster care and adoption as well as relatives (kin). Recruitment materials are placed in all of the staffing rooms so that the staff, when appropriate, can refer the kin to the recruitment department and for pre-service training. DCFS is able to waive some non-safety issues for relatives and sometimes make some creative solutions so that their relative children can remain in the relative homes. The Recruitment Department's end of the month statistics reflect calls from relatives and friends of children inquiring about licensure or approvals. DCFS also capture the number of relative applications received during each month for foster care and or adoption. However, once they are approved or licensed relative foster/adoptions are not separated in the data from non-relative foster adoptions in the end of the month reports. Usually when there is a barrier, it is identified during the application process and DCFS staff does whatever they can to reduce or eliminate that barrier.

We had several objectives related to kin. We planned that by the time PC is granted, 35% of kin caregivers who plan to adopt will have a completed home study. At the time of the proposal, 75% of kin families in Cuyahoga County interested in adopting their kin did not have a completed home study by the time permanent custody (PC) was granted. Another objective was to change pre-service training to meet the needs of relatives, working with public policy to allow flexibility for relatives. We had minimal successes with this objective. Pre-service training was modified to better accommodate the needs of kin families at one site in our geo area but few kin attended. It was not piloted in other areas and discontinued at the one site. Finally, we planned to provide a model of service that allows 50% of relatives to complete their home study. To that end, DCFS created a Kinship Unit.

The Kinship Unit described in Year 2 had several accomplishments this last year. The Kinship Unit attended a two day training offered at Summit County Children's Services providing an overview and strategies for Family Search and Engagement. The training was offered through the National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning and the trainers, Patty Renfro and Donald Koenig, were from Catholic Charities of Western Washington. The two trainers are considered pioneers and experts in this area of practice. This training was a great overview and their level of success set the tone for our work in development a Family Search and Engagement (FSE) Model at CCDCFS.

Additional training that provided a foundation for the unit included the following:

- Placement Genograms, Ecograms, and other family assessment techniques by Professor Victor Groza, January 13, 2011 and January 20, 2011
- Mining for Relatives: Family Search and Engagement by Maureen Heffernan, MSSA, January 21, 2011
- Engaging Relatives in Kinship Care Placements by Anthony President, February 11, 2011
- "Papa was a Rolling Stone" by Raymond Lloyd, February 22, 2011
- Engaging the Non-Resident Father by Tracy Robinson, March 24, 2011

Pilot Cases started with one of the PFFF neighborhoods. Nine initial youth were referred from Darrell Harris' geo area, the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood. The pilot cases use the framework from *Six Steps to Finding a Family* developed by the National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning. The pilot cases allowed the team to develop a

technique for Step 1 from the model, Setting the Stage. The next activity for the model's Step 2, Discovery, involved the use of file mining, data base searches, and interviews with the youth. The FSE pilot set the tone of the work and engaged the workers and supervisors; the team also did a terrific job of finding relatives with the tools we have. The agency is looking to contract with Accurant/LexusNexus for a search engine which will provide an additional wealth of information to locate relatives. The work on these nine cases identified the "bump" at DCFS; the information gained during the "Discovery" stage of the process was wonderful but FSE team members and assigned social workers were not ready to begin engagement activities. There is an identified need to work on these skills for both FSE workers and direct service workers.

The FSE team became a resource for the Permanency Roundtables launched in July 2011. FSE team provided services as scribes for many of the roundtables. FSE was offered as an action step at the roundtables. In order to introduce the pilot to the agency, an internal brochure was developed and printed. A PFFF referral /resource packet was compiled and made available for each master practitioner at the Permanency Roundtable that identified resources available through PFFF such as FSE, barrier "busting" funding, and sibling visitation. The packet included the neighborhood information on the cover for ease of identification. The presence of FSE team members at the Permanency Roundtable and the access to quick referrals has led to 35 referrals to the FSE pilot to date. The team's goal is to provide a status memo at 30 days, 60 days and 90 days to the worker requesting the assistance and their supervisor. The status memo will have pertinent information discovered in the chart as well as a listing of potential relatives, contacts and any know contact information. Additional resources to assist direct services staff in engagement activities is being prepared and will be made available to those who participated in the Permanency Roundtables.

Two DCFS staff (Joyce Wadlington from Recruitment and Lois Roberts from the Kinship Unit) have maintained involvement in a FSE workgroup with the state that is chaired by Summit County Children's Services. The resource sharing and feedback on bi-monthly conference calls has been a great think tank and support for the work at Cuyahoga County (CC). For example, the Institute for Human Services (IHS) is working to provide additional training for FSE work in the state. They have also supported a request to obtain some professional coaching on engagement strategies with the CC FSE team through an IHS trainer which is a major need for the pilot project at this time.

Joyce and Lois have joined an internal agency workgroup to address family engagement and re-engagement of relatives for youth in care. In particular, the efforts focus on those older youth who desire and need connections as they enter young adulthood. The hope is to develop protocols to guide the agency as they begin to focus on engagement strategies for families that are located.

The FSE team is meeting as a group to develop a team approach and operate in a case consultation model to increase creativity and idea sharing as the model develops at the agency.

Siblings

We had several objectives for the work with siblings. We planned to increase adoptive placements of siblings by 22% (from 58% to 80%, increase our number of resource families willing to care for large sibling group,² and increase services and service access to enable resource families to maintain large sibling groups). One problem that was mentioned in previous

² When the grant was developed using FACSIS, data on siblings was easy to access. With SACWIS, the sibling data is no longer accessible. As such, we might not be able to measure this objective as planned. The evaluation team and the project staff are working together to determine how we can capture the data on siblings.

reports involves SAQWIS data. The SAQWIS data is problematic in identifying siblings. The Project Coordinator and Doctoral Student Evaluator met with the State of Ohio SAQWIS officials in July 2011. Through discussion, the evaluators with the State also recognized that this was a problem, yet there was no specific plan in place to fix this at that time.

The specific target of child-centered recruitment was to recruit 5 relative and 5 resource families for siblings starting in Year 3 serving at least 20 children. We could not determine if we met this goal. The data were collected after the grant was funded presented barriers to tracking the information we wanted. The only demonstrated success is the Sibling Policy passed in Spring 2011. While a significant event, there is a lag between policy acceptance and policy implementation.

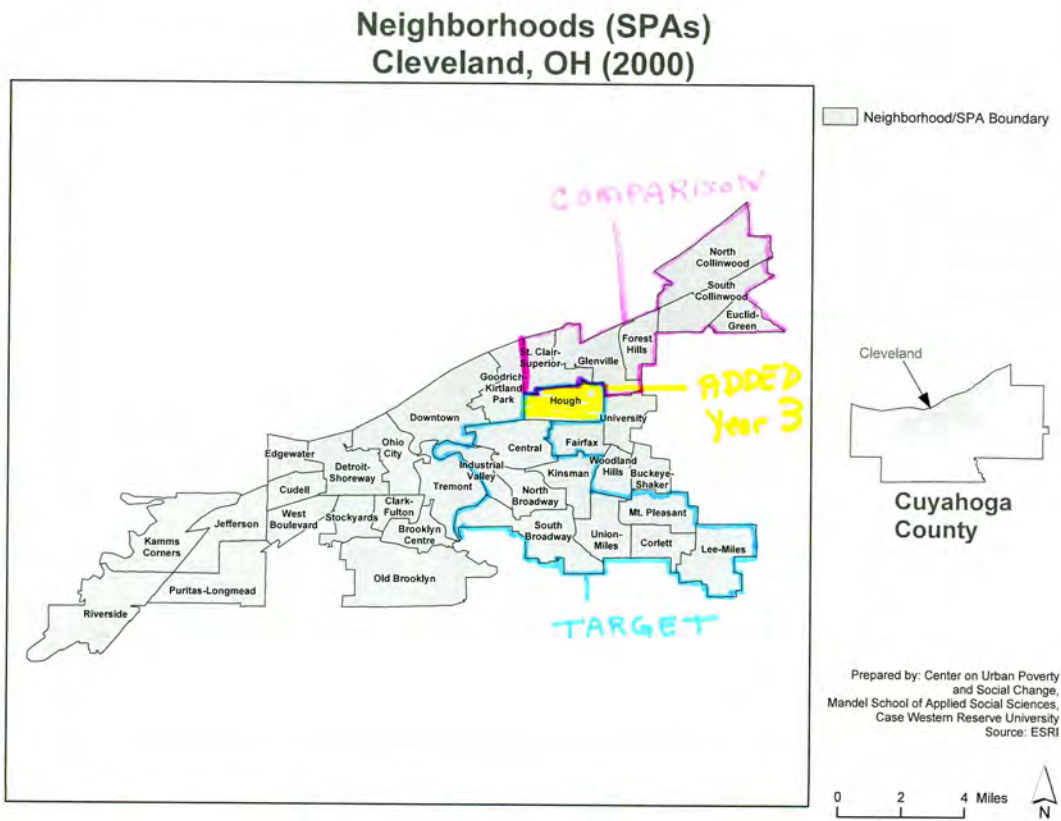
CCDCFS staff were able access Barrier funding to keep a sibling group of 3 together and also to facilitate sibling visitation between 2 separate sibling groups. One youth visited with her brother (who has already been adopted) and her younger sister (who is in the process of being adopted). Due to the visit, the adoptive mother is considering adopting this youth as well. In another case, a teen was able to visit with his younger sibling prior to the younger sibling's adoption, helping to create a relationship between the teen and his brother's adoptive family.

Neighborhood Recruitment

Our plan from the beginning was to work with collaborative agencies in specific neighborhoods to recruit families for older children, sibling groups, and specific children who had some connection in these neighborhoods. Figure 3 is the map of the targeted and comparison neighborhoods. In Year 3, we added a contiguous neighborhood previously in the comparison group as we expanded the project.

Figure 3: Map of Targeted and Comparison Neighborhoods

Child-



Centered Recruitment

System Interventions

Child-centered recruitment refers to the methodology of finding a permanent resource or permanent resources for a specific child. One of the main system interventions used for families in our targeted neighborhood is Adoption Navigation. Adoption Navigators guide families through the adoption process as well as share resources and provide emotional support. The goal of a navigator is to make certain that parents understand the adoption process and feel supported along the way. Navigators provide advocacy for prospective adoptive parents. These services are available to both prospective adoptive and foster parents who are considering adoption. The Adoption Navigator model used in the project was developed by the Adoption Network-Cleveland. Table 6 presents data on the number and characteristics of families using Adoption Network-Cleveland Navigation Services.

Table 6: Families receiving Adoption Navigator Services

	Single Parent	Two-Parent	Age Range	Note
October 2010	23		28-65	All women of color
Number 2010	27		21-65	All women of color
December 2010	27		21-65	All women of color; one family completed training and is starting the home study process
January 2011				
February 2011	26		21-65	All women of color
March 2011	24	1	21-65	1 family received PFFF barrier funding to help with utilities and furniture as these were both barriers to her moving forward in the process
April 2011	16	2	21-65	1 family finalized an adoption & 1 was selected to adopt the foster child in their home
May 2011	11	2	21-65	
June & July 2011	11	3	21-65	

The Adoption Network-Cleveland created several community events in the targeted neighborhoods as part of targeted recruitment of families where children had either lived or currently live in foster homes. There were 14 events hosted through the Adoption Network-Cleveland and cards on interest were collected from 69 individuals. Of those 69, 37 live in the PFFF geographic areas. The Adoption Navigator followed up with all the families in the targeted neighborhoods and CCDCFS received a copy of these cards of interest for their follow up.

Permanency Roundtables

In the fall of 2008, Georgia's Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), and Casey Family Programs (Casey) developed a Permanency Roundtable Project to address permanency for children who had been in foster care for long periods of time (most for 24 months or longer). Drawing from this project (see Rogg, Davis & O'Brien, 2010), Cuyahoga Department of Children and Family Services partnered with Casey Family Programs to Cleveland in July 2011. Permanency roundtables included case presentations and discussion among agency casework staff and a Permanency Consultant provided by Casey Family Programs; each roundtable had the child's worker, their supervisor and a facilitator, who was a Master Practitioner at the agency (typically a Senior Supervisor or above). The project was strength based; it was designed to move the case forward and not discuss past problems or the lack of action on the case. Data were recorded systematically by a designated recorder and each case discussion had a facilitator and consultant trained to promote the process. In this first wave, 168 cases were reviewed in July 2011.

The plan now is to take the data generated at the roundtables, code the qualitative data for quantitative analysis and merge the roundtable data with SACWIS data. Then the children whose cases were part of the roundtables will be monitored for the next year to ascertain what effect, if any, the roundtable may have had on permanency. The PFFF evaluation team is assisting with the coding of data, merging of data and participating in monitoring case permanency outcomes.

Arts Community

One child centered recruitment strategy was to develop connections within the arts community to enlist their cooperation with targeted recruitment. The engagement of the arts community initially was to increase staff skill at writing narratives and summarizing information about youth for recruitment materials such as fliers, digital me's, Heart Gallery. We identified that the work on the narratives was satisfactorily addressed through the AdoptUsKids "Lasting Impressions" training that was implemented and so did not approach the "arts community" for this aspect of practice. In Year 2 of the grant, a recording artist worked with the grant in creating a song "Dreams Come True" that was featured at an adoption month event held in a community church. This collaboration was not further pursued because of proprietary issues related to the recording, the recording artist, and recording company really trying to reach a different market than the targeted neighborhood identified for intervention in the grant.

As an extension of the Ambassador's program developed by the Adoption Network-Cleveland, an artist was engaged in Year 2 to create a poster that would highlight the issues of the diligent recruitment grant. Since then, the poster is displayed by the businesses and churches in the targeted neighborhoods during Years 2 and 3.

In Year 3, Karamu Theater was approached as a potential resource for collaboration. Karamu Theater is a settlement house, with a rich history of multicultural, and more recently culturally specific theater focusing on the African American community. Their executive director, Mr. Gregory Ashe, is also an adoptive parent of a youth from Cuyahoga County. A nice article about Mr. Ashe in the local newspaper, *The Plain Dealer*, opened the possibility that that we would find a natural champion for the cause of finding families for older youth and sibling groups who were in foster care. That was what has happened in Year 3. Mr. Ashe is a natural champion and he was open to finding a way for Children and Family Services to collaborate with the Karamu Theater. He recommended that we attend a performance of one of their reality theater productions entitled "A Course of Action" that was commissioned by a Cleveland school.

The model for their reality theater was for their in-house playwright (writer-in-residence) to write a play that incorporated the data and voices of the constituents that the play was about. The story and the experience of “A Course of Action” became a template for the Partners For Forever Family program. The process that ensued was engaging the playwright (Michael Oatman) with youth from the agency’s Teen Advocate Group so that he could learn firsthand about the experiences of the youth who are in the child welfare system. Additionally agency staff presented to the playwright and director about the circumstances of youth in custody as it pertains to aging out and agency goals to find families for youth in care. The piece of work would have to be shown to audiences who could respond to what we framed as a **call to action**. One of the assumptions is that there are families who will step forward if they are made aware of the need. This play then is conceived as - calling on participants to consider life without a permanent family and to consider how they can help change the trajectory that is laid out for the youth in the play. Its potential to reach a large audience and a different audience than the typical recruitment strategies used. The agency held onto editorial control during this work with the playwright. A team of managers read the script and provided feedback to the Karamu leaders. A team of DCFS staff then went to a staged reading and again provided more feedback. Adjustments were made without compromising the story itself.

The premier of the play at the Permanency Solutions Legal Symposium had an audience of approximately 250 people. In the audience were judges, lawyers, social workers, community advocates, youth in care and families. The Karamu Reality Theater Troupe is accustomed to taking their productions to nontraditional venues. In our case, the hotel ball room was transformed into a theater. The youth who participated in the focus groups were present at the performance and enjoyed having their stories in their words validated by the playwright and the production. The success of the first run of the production has challenged the group to make sure every showing of the play is as impactful with an audience who can respond to this **call to action**. The next performance is November 9th, 2011 (Year 4) and it will be held at the Karamu Theater. The strategy for this will be to bring youth together with community leaders so that a wider audience is asked to consider what action they are able to take on behalf of the youth at risk of aging out.

Neighborhood Intervention

This project has targeted specific neighborhoods for project interventions. Using SAQWIS data (case level administrative data provided by CCDCFS), each year we evaluate if the interventions demonstrate effectiveness in the neighborhoods.

In Year 1, we developed baseline data on the children in our targeted and comparison neighborhoods that did not receive the interventions. Year 2 indicated the first year that interventions were introduced in the target neighborhoods. We were limited in all three years’ analyses by the data available to us through the Cuyahoga County Department of Child and Family Services (CCDCFS) SAQWIS system. Problems exist with several errors in the dataset (i.e., case duplications, input errors, and inconsistencies in data categorization). Evaluators cleaned and merged (July 2010 – July 2011) the datasets to be analyzed for Year 3; the following tables also provide the baseline data from Years’ 1 and 2 data.

There are two sets of data used in these analyses. The first set is data extracted from SAQWIS in June, 2011 that shows the open cases (entry cohort data). The second data set provides information on youth leaving care (exit cohort data). Tables 5 to 10 provide the demographic information of those youth in our target and comparison neighborhood areas for the

entry cohort. Tables 11 to 15 provide exit cohort data on youth leaving care from January 2010 to January 2011.

Demographic characteristics between the target and comparison neighborhoods were examined by utilizing the Pearson's chi-square (χ^2) and the two-tailed, Fisher's exact test. The chi-square was implemented when the expected count in each cell of the crosstabulation was greater than or equal to five. If the expected cell count was less than five, the approximation to the chi-square distribution breaks down creating a greater risk for misleading probabilities; the Fisher's exact test is recommended to avoid making type-II errors (Yates, Moore, & McCabe, 1999, p. 734).

Year 1 captured data from January through August 2009, consisting of only an 8 month time frame. Year 1 was limited to 8 months because of difficulties accessing data from the public agency due to transition from one software system (FACIS) to another (SAQWIS) in February, 2009. Year 2 data ran from January 2010 to January 2011 (further referred to as Year 2) and Year 3 data was collected between July, 2010 through July, 2011 (further referred to as Year 3).

In Year 3, the Hough geographic neighborhood was moved from a PFFF comparison neighborhood group to a PFFF target neighborhood group. This change marked a redistribution of the number of children in each group, accounting mostly for the increased differences between the numbers of children in the target versus comparison neighborhoods when compared to previous years.

Entry Cohort Data

Significant results from Years' 1 and 2 are provided for review. A summary of Year 3 significant results follow.

Year 1. In Year 1, significant differences were found between target and comparison neighborhoods when examining the number of months that youth were in placement ($\chi^2 [1] = 6.59, p = .01$). The targeted neighborhoods had fewer children in care than expected (28.6%) for the under 24 months group in contrast to those in the comparison group (71.4%). To determine the magnitude of the significant relationship, the Cramer's ϕ indicated a weak effect size ($V = 0.163$) for this relationship. The majority of children in care for both the targeted (93.8%) and comparison (83.5%) neighborhoods were in placement for greater than 24 months.

Year 2. In Year 2, there was a total of 470 youth who had open cases; 260 were in the targeted neighborhoods and 210 were in the comparison neighborhoods. Significant results were found between target and comparison neighborhoods with entry cohort data for current age of youth in foster care ($\chi^2 [4] = 9.562, p = .048$) as well as race (Fisher's Exact Test = 17.641, $p < .001$). For current age of youth in foster care, the greatest percentage differences were found among older youth. For example, youth ages 16 and older in the target neighborhood accounted for 23.8% and the comparison neighborhood, 31.0%. Also, percentages of youth ages 11-15 in the target neighborhood (32.7%) was greater than the comparison neighborhood (20.5%) by 12.5%. Although statistically significant, Cramer's ϕ denoted a weak effect size ($V = 0.143$). Percentages of youth in the target and comparison groups were comparable in size for those in the three younger categories.

A significant relationship existed between race/ethnicity and the target and comparison neighborhoods (two-tailed, Fisher's exact test = 17.641, $p < .001$). A greater percent of African American youths lived in the comparison neighborhoods (95.2%) and a greater percent of White youth in the target neighborhoods (11.9%). Although statistically significant, Cramer's ϕ noted that the effect size for race was weak ($V = 0.191$).

Year 3. In Year 3, there was a total of 468 youth who had open cases; 237 were in the targeted neighborhoods and 164 were in the comparison neighborhoods. Significant results were

found between target and comparison neighborhoods with entry cohort data for current age of youth in foster care ($\chi^2 [4] = 11.03, p = .027$) as well as race (Fisher's Exact Test = 20.94, $p < .001$).

Although current age of youth was statistically significant, Cramer's ϕ denoted a weak effect size ($V = 0.153$). Children ages 16 and older noted the greatest percentage difference of 13.4% between target (23.3%) and comparison (36.6%) neighborhood groups. In the 1 through 5 age range, the target neighborhood group (23.5%) accounts for 6.90% more cases than the neighborhood comparison group (16.6%); and percentages of youth ages 11-15 in the target neighborhood (31.1%) was greater than the comparison neighborhood (26.3%) by 4.80%. Percentages of youth in the target and comparison groups were comparable in size for those in the under age 1 and the 6 to 10 year old categories.

Table 5 presents the age distribution of youth within the target and comparison neighborhoods at the time of the project. The number of youth 11 years of age and older are the majority of children in the public child welfare system waiting for permanency. Children over the age of 11 and older make up 54.3% of the target and 62.9% of the comparison group.

Table 5
Current Age of Youth in Foster Care

Age	Year 1 January 2009 – August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 3 July 2010- July 2011		Year 4	
	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Under 1	3.10% (4)	6.60% (8)	3.50% (9)	2.90% (6)	3.10% (9)	4.00% (7)		
1-5	25.0% (32)	21.5% (26)	20.8% (54)	23.8% (50)	23.5% (69)	16.6% (29)		
6-10	14.8% (19)	26.4% (32)	19.3% (50)	21.9% (46)	19.1% (56)	16.6% (29)		
11-15	28.9% (37)	21.5% (26)	32.7% (85)	20.5% (43)	31.1% (91)	26.3% (46)		
16 and over	28.1% (36)	11.6% (29)	23.8% (62)	31.0% (65)	23.2% (68)	36.6% (64)		
Total:	128	121	260	210	293	175		
Pearson Chi-Square	X² (4) = 7.752, p = .101		* X² (4) = 9.562, p = .048		*X² (4) = 11.00 p = .027			

¹ Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

*Significant $p < .05$

Table 6 presents the age that youth in the target and comparison neighborhoods when the child entered public care. The results indicate that in both the target (89.5%, $n = 262$) and the comparison neighborhoods (84.5%, $n=148$), the majority of the youth enter care when they are ten years of age or younger. Comparing target neighborhoods from Year 2 to Year 1, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of children entering care between the ages of 11-15(1.82%).

Table 6
Age of Youth When Episode Began

Age	Year 1 January 2009- August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 3 July 2010- July 2011		Year 4	
	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Under 1	26.6% (34)	26.4% (32)	24.6% (64)	27.1% (57)	26.1% (36)	25.9% (22)		

1-5	27.3% (35)	24.8% (30)	28.5% (74)	23.3% (49)	27.5% (38)	20.0% (17)		
6-10	35.9% (46)	35.5% (43)	38.1% (99)	35.2% (74)	37.7% (52)	40.0% (34)		
11-15	10.2% (13)	12.4% (15)	8.80% (23)	12.9% (27)	8.70% (12)	12.9% (11)		
16 and over	0.00% (0)	0.80% (1)	0.00% (0)	1.40% (3)	0.00% (0)	1.20% (1)		
Total:	128	121	283	210	138	85		
Pearson Chi-Square	(Fisher's Exact Test) (4) = 1.455, p = .924		(Fisher's Exact Test) = 6.752, p = .134		(Fisher's Exact Test) = 3.767, p = .427			

¹ Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

Table 7 indicates that there were no significant differences found between target and comparison neighborhoods for Year 3. During Year 3, the majority of youth were in care for over 24 months (target = 84.0%; comparison = 88.0%). There was a greater percentage increase of children in care under 24 months in the target groups ($\Delta = 9.60\%$) when examining differences between Year 1 and Year 3 data. There was also a decrease in ($\Delta = 9.80\%$) in the percentage of children in care over 24 months in the target neighborhood group from Year 1 to Year 3.

Table 7
Months of Youth in Placement

Months	Year 1 January 2009 - August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 3 July 2010- July 2011		Year 4	
	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
24 or under	6.30% (8)	16.5% (20)	10.4% (27)	43.3% (91)	16.0% (47)	12.0% (21)		
25 and over	93.8% (120)	83.5% (101)	89.6% (233)	56.7% (119)	84.0% (246)	88.0% (154)		
Total:	(128)	(121)	(260)	(210)	(293)	(175)		
Pearson Chi-Square	*X² (1) = 6.59, p = .010		X² (1) = .131, p = .718		X² (1) = 1.44, p = .230			

¹ Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

*Significant $p < .01$

Table 8 presents the gender of youth in foster care. There are 6.10% more females in the and 6.10% less males being served by the project. There were no significant differences found between groups related to gender.

Table 8
Gender of Youth in Foster Care

Gender	Year 1 January 2009- August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 3 July 2010- July 2011		Year 4	
	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Female	45.3% (71)	42.1% (45)	45.0% (117)	43.3% (91)	47.8% (140)	41.7% (73)		
Male	54.7% (79)	57.9% (75)	55.0% (143)	56.7% (119)	52.2% (153)	58.3% (102)		

Total:	150	120	260	210	293	175		
Pearson Chi-Square	$X^2(1) = 0.253, p = .615$		$X^2(1) = 0.131, p = .718$		$X^2(1) = 1.630, p = .202$			

¹ Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

Table 9 presents data on siblings in foster care. 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 because they entered the system during different times and did not have the same last name and/or children with the same last name and birth family address were not consistently reported to be siblings. Thus, the data presented may undercount the actual number of siblings in foster care. Yet, comparing Year 3 to Year 1, there are greater percentages of siblings accounted for in both target (29.2%) and comparison (25.3%) groups. Two possible explanations for this increase may be as follows: Larger numbers of siblings are coming into care; or siblings may be more detectable in the SACWIS data than they were in Year 1. Still, the raw data fails to clarify whether siblings were placed together or even living within the same neighborhoods. There were no significant differences found between the target and comparison groups for Year 3.

Table 9
Siblings in Foster Care

Siblings in Foster Care	Year 1 January 2009– August 2009		Year 2 January 2010–January 2011		Year 3 July 2010– July 2011		Year 4	
	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Yes	36.7% (47)	36.4% (44)	34.6% (90)	32.4% (68)	65.9% (193)	61.7% (100)		
No	63.3% (81)	63.6% (77)	65.4% (170)	67.6% (142)	34.1% (108)	38.3% (67)		
Total:	128	121	260	210	293	175		
Pearson Chi-Square	$X^2(1) = 0.003, p = 0.954$		$X^2(1) = 0.260, p = 0.610$		$X^2(1) = 0.825, p = 0.364$			

¹ Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

Table 10 indicates that there are mostly African-American youths in care in Year 2 (targeted = 83.1%; comparison = 95.2%). Significant differences were found between the target and comparison neighborhoods in Year 2 (two-tailed, Fisher's exact test = 17.641, $p < .001$). There were a greater percentage of African-American youth in the comparison neighborhood (95.2%) than the target neighborhood (83.1%). There was also a higher percentage of multi-racial (target = 4.60%; comparison = 1.00%) and white youth (target = 11.9%; comparison = 3.80%) when comparing the two neighborhood groups. There was a small decrease in the percentage of African American youth between Year 1 and Year 2 data ($\Delta = 2.10\%$).

Table 10
Race and Ethnicity of Youth in Foster Care by Target & Comparison Neighborhoods

Race & Ethnicity	Year 1 January 2009- August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 3 July 2010- July 2011		Year 4	
	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Black/ African American	85.2% (109)	91.7% (111)	83.1% (216)	95.2% (200)	80.9% (237)	93.7% (164)		
Multi- racial	4.70% (6)	1.70% (2)	4.60% (12)	1.00% (2)	4.80% (14)	0.60% (1)		
White	9.40% (12)	6.60% (8)	11.9% (31)	3.80% (8)	13.5% (40)	4.00% (7)		
Undetermi ned	0.80% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.40% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.70% (2)	1.70% (3)		
Total:	150	120	260	210	293	175		
Pearson Chi- Square	(Fisher's Exact Test) = 3.445, p = .153		***(Fisher's Exact Test) = 17.641, p < .001		***(Fisher's Exact Test) = 20.94, p < .001			

¹ Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category
*Significant $p < .05$; ***Significant $p < .001$

Termination Cohort Data.

In Year 3, Table 11 indicates that the majority of youth who exited care had entered foster care when they were less than 10 years old (100.0% in target neighborhoods; 83.3% in comparison neighborhoods). In the target group, 50.0% of children in the Year 3 sample were under the age of one year. The differences were not statistically significant and were similar to the entry cohort data.

Table 11
Ages of Children when Initially Placed in Foster Care

Age	Year 1 January 2009- August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 3 July 2010- July 2011		Year 4	
	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Under 1	40.4% (19)	60.0% (21)	30.0% (3)	75.0% (6)	50.0% (6)	33.3% (2)		
1-5	19.1% (9)	17.1% (6)	30.0% (3)	12.5% (1)	25.0% (3)	33.3% (2)		
6-10	25.5% (12)	11.4% (4)	20.0% (2)	12.5% (1)	25.0% (3)	16.7% (1)		
11-15	14.9% (7)	11.4% (4)	20.0% (2)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	16.7% (1)		
16 and over	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)		
Total:	47	35	10	6	12	6		
Pearson's Chi Square	(Fisher's Exact Test) = 3.771, p = .285		(Fisher's Exact Test) = 3.739, p = .080		(Fisher's Exact Test) = 2.430, p = 0.623			

¹ Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

Table 12 provides the age that youth exited care. In Year 3, 75% of those children exiting the system from the target neighborhood were under the age of 11 years and no children left care in either neighborhood group between the ages of 11 and 15. Differences between children in the target and comparison neighborhoods were not statistically significant.

Table 12

Ages of Children when Exiting Care

Age	Year 1 January 2009– August 2009		Year 2 January 2010– January 2011		Year 3 July 2010– July 2011		Year 4	
	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Under 1	6.40% (3)	17.1% (6)	10.0% (1)	50.0% (4)	16.7% (2)	0.00% (0)		
1-5	25.5% (12)	37.1% (8)	20.0% (2)	25.0% (2)	33.3% (4)	33.3% (2)		
6-10	23.4% (11)	28.6% (10)	20.0% (2)	12.5% (1)	25.0% (3)	33.3% (2)		
11-15	31.9% (15)	11.4% (4)	10.0% (1)	12.5% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)		
16 and over	12.8% (6)	5.70% (2)	40.0% (4)	0.00% (0)	25.0% (3)	33.3% (2)		
Total: T	47	35	10	8	12	6		
Pearson's Chi Square	(Fisher's Exact Test) = 7.747, $p = .097$		(Fisher's Exact Test) = 5.947, $p = .203$		(Fisher's Exact Test) = 1.217, $p = 1.00$			

¹ Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

Table 13 presents the gender of the youth leaving foster care. No statistically significant results were reported between children in the target and comparison neighborhoods for Year 3. Comparing target neighborhood results between Years' 1 and 3, there were 16.7% more males leaving care from the target neighborhoods (50.0%) in contrast to the comparison neighborhoods (33.2%).

**Table 13
Gender of Youth Leaving Foster Care**

Gender	Year 1 January 2009– August 2009		Year 2 January 2010– January 2011		Year 3 July 2010– July 2011		Year 4	
	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Female	40.4% (19)	57.1% (20)	20.0% (2)	40.0% (4)	50.0% (6)	66.7% (4)		
Male	59.6% (28)	42.9% (15)	80.0% (8)	50.0% (4)	50.0% (6)	33.3% (2)		
Total: T	47	35	10	8	12	6		
Pearson's Chi Square	$X^2(1) = 2.248$, $p = .134$		(Fisher's Exact Test), $p = .321$		$(X^2(1) = 0.450$, $p = .502$			

¹ Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

Table 14 indicates the number of youth exiting care who have siblings; it is unknown whether the siblings have been placed together or left siblings still within care. Only 25% of the youth in the target and comparison groups who left foster care had a sibling still within the system. Year 3 results denote that 21.5% less children left care that had a sibling when compared to Year 1. There was no significance difference between the target and comparison neighborhoods for Year 3.

**Table 14
Youth Leaving Foster Care who have Siblings within System**

	Year 1 January 2009– August 2009	Year 2 January 2010– January 2011	Year 3 July 2010– July 2011	Year 4
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Siblings in Foster Care	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Yes	29.8% (14)	28.6% (10)	30.0% (3)	25.0% (2)	8.30% (1)	16.7% (1)		
No	70.2% (33)	71.4% (25)	70.0% (7)	75.0% (6)	91.7% (11)	83.3% (5)		
Total:	47	35	10	8	12	6		
Pearson's Chi Square	$X^2(1) = .014, p = .905$		(Fisher's Exact Test), $p = 1.00$		Fisher's Exact Test), $p = 1.00$			

¹ Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

Table 15 indicates the majority of youth exiting the system are African-American (75.0% in the target and 83.3% in the comparison neighborhoods) or multiracial (25% in target neighborhood). No statistical significance was found between the target and comparison groups in terms of race.

Table 15
Race and Ethnicity of Youth Leaving Foster Care by Target & Comparison Neighborhoods

	Year 1 January 2009- August 2009		Year 2 January 2010- January 2011		Year 3 July 2010- July 2011		Year 4	
Race & Ethnicity	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison	Target	Comparison
Black/ African American	70.2% (33)	85.7% (30)	100% (10)	87.5% (7)	75.0% (9)	83.3% (5)		
Multi-racial	2.10% (1)	2.90% (1)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	25.0% (3)	0.00% (0)		
White	27.7% (13)	11.4% (4)	0.00% (0)	12.5% (1)	0.00% (0)	16.7% (1)		
Undetermined	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)		
Total:	47	35	10	8	12	6		
Pearson's Chi Square	(Fisher's Exact Test) = 3.419, $p = .153$		(Fisher's Exact Test), $p = .444$		(Fisher's Exact Test), = 2.939, $p = 0.191$			

¹ Values in parentheses equal actual number of children in category

Children Specific Recruitment: Teen Cases

As part of the permanency planning process, our teen specialist from Beech Brook works 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. As the teen specialist identifies permanency resources, she refers to the Adoption Navigators those people who are interested in providing permanency through foster/adopt. System of Care Supervisors in the neighborhood will additionally assist with identifying barriers to licensure and getting youth or families needed services in their community.

Our goal was to work with 25% of youth who emancipate each year (approximately 38 out of 150) and work with a relative resource family before the youth leave care for a total of 152

youth from Years 2-5, with an estimated 38 youth in Year 3. Table 4 presents the data on the number of youth served during Year 3. Overall, during the year, the most clients served was at the end of Year 3 and we achieved 66% (n=25) of the targeted number of youth to be served. This was an increase from the previous year.

Table 4: Number of Youth Enrolled in PFFF during Year 3

	Males	Females	Total
October 2010	6	10	16
November 2010	6	10	16
December 2010	6	11	17
January 2011	6	11	17
February 2011	6	11	17
March 2011	7	10	17
April 2011	7	10	17
May 2011	7	10	17
June 2011	7	10	17
July 2011	8	9	17
August 2011	13	12	25

Our goals included reducing the median length of stay from 41.5 months to less than 27.3 months and increasing the number of children who are teens who have permanency and who have been in care for 24 months from the current 21.9% to 29.1% or higher.

Overview of Services

Permanency planning services included meeting with clients, contacting and having conversations with permanency resources such as former foster/adoptive families, bio family, siblings, therapists, teacher's, case managers from private agencies that are supervising the foster care placements, mentors and current foster parents/staff. The Beech Brook Permanency Youth Specialist (PYS) supports sibling and birth parent relationships, strengthening the connection and bond as some kids and families have been separated for years.

Successes and Issues

Two clients continue to manage in college and in their independent living situations. Both are using the permanency resources that we planned for prior to emancipation. One of these two clients had a disruption in his living arrangement in February and moved in with a former foster parent (she is no longer a foster parent). She was part of his permanency plan and she stepped up to the plate to help when the arrangement with bio family member disrupted. Unfortunately, this client is on his third living arrangement since his emancipation. First he lived with bio mom, then bio dad and now with former foster mom. With that being said, it is a good thing this young man made good back up permanency plans!

Another client is very excited about her permanency planning meeting and has taken a very active role in contacting adults that she would like to have in her life in the future. We are going to meet monthly with her CCDCFS worker, network case manager, foster mom and therapist for purpose of communication, clarifying tasks and specifying tasks that need to be done to prepare this young lady for emancipation.

The PYS has been assisting seven clients in making plans for college or technical school for Fall 2011. In September 2011, 3 youth started college and 1 started cosmetology school. These seven clients had permanency planning meetings. It has been more difficult than expected to gather people together in a formal manner due to scheduling issues and some resistance on the part of bio family members to come forth in a structured manner. "Permanency people" selected by the client do not consistently respond to phone calls and letters; 99% of the time, youth identify at least one biological family member to be part of their permanency plan.

Using information from record mining the PSY has helped one client reconnect via telephone with bio family members that he had not had contact with for many years. She is actively working with one client who is trying to re-establish his relationship with bio mom who lives in another state. The CCDCFS worker has already requested that the mom's home be checked by social services in her city so that visits can be approved. This client is also searching for additional bio family members that came up in his record search.

The five clients that are not active are youth referred but not ready to work on permanency planning due to the lack of stability in their placements, mental health problems, or some already had a plan for permanency. Some are living in relative foster placements or have solid permanency connections and a plan to go live with bio family when they emancipate. We keep in touch but are not actively working together at this time. These youth have agreed to revisit my involvement in when they are a year away from emancipation.

Family Re-engagement Committee

A number of legal issues come up when, as part of child-specific planning, the PYS would contact birth parents whose legal rights were terminated. To work through the issues and develop a model for work with older youth reconnecting with their birth family, a committee developed that tried to engage social workers and attorneys in sorting through the legal issues in this process.

In April 2011 it was decided to change the name from Legal Committee to Family Re-Engagement Group. This change came via CCDCFS after some of the committee members shared the work we were doing with their legal department and it was determined that we really were not doing legal work but rather working on making recommendations for best practice in reuniting youth with bio family and significant others from whom they have been estranged.

III. Conclusions

So far our community interventions have not resulted in the outcomes expected for older youth or sibling groups. The most significant findings at Year 3 are that we have a policy framework to move forward with sibling-centered practice and concurrent planning as well as new leadership in the public agency. We are hope that these two developments will improve our results. Gathering and sharing data on a continuous basis has been difficult to achieve but as Year 3 closes, we are optimistic about the changes for Year 4.

IV. Recommendations

The County needs to renew its commitment to Diversity Training. This becomes particularly important in family engagement strategies. There tends to be an assumption that since the majority of families served are African-American and a large percent of the Child Welfare Staff are African-American diversity practices are less problematic. Nothing could be further from reality since, at the very least, class issues play a major role. Diversity training must transcend issues of race to focus on issues of working with the poor and dispossessed in urban areas.

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