LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS OF RECRUITMENT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN AGES 0-5 IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of this landscape analysis is to identify public and private efforts supporting the recruitment of resource families for the 0-5 population in Los Angeles County. Beginning with Phase I, we focus on the 0-5 population, which is both disproportionately represented in Los Angeles County's child welfare system and whose critical needs and permanent brain development are directly linked to stability. This in-depth look at recruitment methods and the identification of appropriate resource families could provide this stability. The county specifically needs to identify families willing and able to facilitate reunification and, when that is not possible, to provide permanency. The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has families waiting to adopt this population, so the focus is to identify care options in this age range to support large sibling sets and children with special needs.

Key questions guiding the landscape analysis include:

1. What are some preconceived notions of this group and around recruitment, and what is the intended use of the data?

2. How can we explore and implement an array of initiatives that attract a variety of resource parents?

3. Can a collaborative model address the needs of 0-5 foster children?

4. What are some of the untapped resources that can be key to any new or revisited initiatives?

METHODOLOGY

This landscape analysis is informed by existing research and over 26 literature and model reviews completed between the years of 2012-2016 regarding resource family recruitment, the California child welfare system, and caregiver and parent training and outcomes. Interviews with subject matter experts from the child welfare sector and community-based organizations active in recruiting resource families in Los Angeles County were conducted.

Working in partnership with the Department of Children and Family Services leadership, focus groups were organized with foster parents, legal advocates, Foster Family Agencies (FFAs) and DCFS Accelerated Placement Team Staff, and Outreach and Recruitment staff. Feedback from the following participants include: The Alliance for Children's Rights, the Children's Institute Inc., the Children's Law Center, FosterMore, PBS SoCal, the voice of new and experienced Foster/Resource Parents, Foster Family Agency staff, and DCFS staff in Los Angeles County[1]. Information from the Children's Data Network database as of January 1, 2017, is also included.

The goal of this landscape analysis is to identify public and private efforts supporting the recruitment of resource families for the 0-5 population in Los Angeles County.

[1]This work includes culling information from the Department of Children and Family Services and the Children's Data Network. Community-based organizations and Foster Family Agencies include both ACHSA affiliated and non-affiliated.

Sections	Key Contents and Guiding Questions
I. Research	• Overview of Los Angeles County • Overview of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) • Top 10 key funders of foster care in philanthropy in Los Angeles County • Regional analysis of the critical needs for 0-5 population • Literature reviews regarding resource family recruitment • Data from the Children's Data Network (CDN)
II. Interviews Focus Groups	• Overview of community-based organizations (CBOs) • Focus group feedback • Interview feedback from subject matter experts • Local model overview: approach, trends, and highlights
III. National Models	• Overview of five national models in five states: Washington, Louisiana, Illinois, Oregon, and Georgia
IV. Pilot Models	• Final report • Overview of three recommendations for pilot models for collaboration

I. RESEARCH

OVERVIEW OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Los Angeles County is a large urban area spread across an expansive landscape of approximately 4,000 square miles. It is made up of 88 incorporated cities and 140 unincorporated communities[2], and it covers a larger land mass than the states of Delaware and Rhode Island combined. Living across this large landscape are approximately 10 million ethnically and culturally diverse groups of residents. Approximately 2.3 million of these residents are children between the ages of 0 and 18.

L.A. County is governed by dozens of adjacent and sometimes overlapping municipal governments, in addition to city services and supports. The County landscape and residents are also governed by a five-member Board of Supervisors (BOS), who provide leadership and oversight for 37 county departments and approximately 200 committees and commissions. Within this structure, the BOS oversees the largest child protective service agency in the nation through the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

Figure 1.0 Service Planning Areas (SPAs) within L.A. County

[2]County of Los Angeles. lacounty.gov. https://www.lacounty.gov/government/about-la-county/incorporated-cities

OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

The initial point of entry for children 0-18 years of age into the child welfare system is an in-person response or visit from a DCFS social worker tasked with following up on a report of danger or risk to the child's safety. If the social worker identifies a potential risk that cannot be mitigated immediately, the worker must remove the child from the home and connect the child with, first, a relative caregiver (if possible), or, second, a temporary foster placement through either a resource family or congregate care, until an investigation is complete. In addition to determining risk, identifying placements, and providing the proper investigation, DCFS social workers must ensure that children in their care have access to any additional necessary services, including education and educational supports, transportation, and physical, dental, and mental health services. The services must be regionally accessible to the child's placement.

To expedite permanency for children, DCFS targets recruitment of resource families based on the individualized needs of children and has enhanced coordination of community placement activities with 50 Foster Family Agencies (FFAs) across L.A. County. Resource families (formerly known as foster parents; throughout this report, we will be using both terms interchangeably) provide home-based family care in a nurturing environment to support children under the County's care. Resource families are recruited and supported by DCFS or a host of other organizations that interact with the system DCFS' work in this area is dynamic and fluid, affected by many factors in the current environment. Currently, the child welfare system is undergoing structural reforms to change how permanency and wellbeing for children are accomplished. With the implementation of state Assembly Bill (AB) 403 – Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) – placement strategies and services within the child-welfare system must now focus on transitioning children out of group homes to a home-based family.

To expedite permanency for children, DCFS targets recruitment of resource families based on the individualized needs of children

Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) is an initiative to drastically change policy and practice in California's foster care system. Continuum of Care Reform proposes a restructuring of placements and services with the idea that children should live in their communities in home-based family care settings. Under the new model of care, however, children who cannot initially be safely placed in home-based family care can still go into congregate care, but with specific time-limited care plans. Once CCR is implemented, the goal is to provide a family environment and meet all the needs of the children while in the system. New Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs) will be used to provide intensive mental health services on a time limited basis and to reunify children and youth with their biological family and resource families.

Figure 2.0 County Rates Versus FFA Rate Components Comparison

Basic Level Rate	Loc 2	Loc 3	Loc 4
$923	$1,027	$1,131	$1,235

FFA Rate Components - Phase II December 1, 2017				
	Basic Level Rate	LOC 2	LOC 3	LOC 4
RF	$923	$1,027	$1,131	$1,235
Social Work	$340	$340	$340	$340
Social Services and Support	$156	$200	$244	$323
RFA	$48	$48	$48	$48
Administration	$672	$672	$672	$672
Total	$2,139	$2,287	$2,435	$2,618

THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES BEFORE AND AFTER CONTINUUM OF CARE REFORM (CCR)

We worked in close partnership with the Department of Children and Family Services leadership to review the current priorities based on their 2015 and 2016 plans, and they include:

- More coordination between DCFS and the FFAs

- Targeted recruitment based on the needs of children, determining the need by looking first at children in short-term shelters

- Involve caregivers in the recruitment process.

Areas for continued work and improvement include, but are not limited to:

- Need for statistics on children, i.e. who they are, and how many came out of which communities, racial/ethnic and regional.

- Improved partnerships with the school districts, to keep them involved when children are removed.

- Improved marketing presence, i.e. Core Practice Model (CPM). DCFS now has a contract with the PR firm Mercury, and current efforts to rebrand are in process.

- DCFS is ready to implement the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) in Los Angeles County, which is a resource-parent-driven initiative still in its preliminary stages. DCFS has been doing research, site visits, and are bringing together a QPI steering committee that will focus on branding. They are reviewing how other counties have been implementing QPI and how caregivers are involved with treatment, education, and retention of resource parents.

Recently, in response to the state requirements to increase the number of resource families, DCFS implemented customer service driven Outreach and Recruitment Teams that streamline processes and facilitate better connections with potential families. DCFS also contracted with BINTI, a San Francisco-based technology company committed to supporting better outcomes for children and families through software. With BINTI, DCFS was able to launch a dynamic public facing website for recruitment-FosterLAKids.org-that allows for families to complete an orientation and submit their application online. DCFS received over 300 additional resource family applications compared to last year. In addition, initiatives launched by media organizations such as PBS SoCal and FosterMore have increased awareness of the need to foster. DCFS in collaboration with the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships housed within the L.A. County Office of Child Protection, hosted a one-day event focused on streamlining the onboarding process for potential resource parents. This event targeted faith-based communities, and both enhanced recruitment efforts and resulted in new partnerships.

Figure 3.0 DCFS and FFA home data and bed capacity

DCFS OVERVIEW

CWS Jusisdiction: 35,288

Children Placed in LA County: 14, 583

Licensed DCFS Foster Homes: 904 w/ bed capacity of 2,438

FFA's: 50

LA County FFA Homes: 2,102

Total Bed Capacity: 4,594

Out of County: 1,093

*Total Bed Capacity: 2,772

*bed capacity is fluid. Some homes may reflect vacancies, but may not be taking in children for a variety of reasons

Working collaboratively with other County departments, DCFS is focused on having children thrive in safe families and supportive communities. DCFS's primary responsibilities are to ensure child safety, placement permanency, and access to needed supports for children within its care. DCFS's services include but are not limited to emergency response services, in-home family maintenance, out-of-home support services, and foster care services. To carry out this work, DCFS has a $2.2-billion annual budget.

DCFS employs approximately 8,800 staffers and serves approximately 35,000 children and their families monthly.

Approximately 14,000 of these children are in out-of-home foster care placement. Of the 14,000, 43% (6,020) are children age 0-5.

Black and Latino children (26% and 61%, respectively) make up the greatest number of children receiving DCFS services. Data demonstrates the shortage of resource homes and parents. Although over 50% of these children are placed in relative/non-relative extended care, there are still not enough beds and homes to adequately meet populations with special needs. While it may appear to be enough homes, they are not the appropriate kind of placements for specialized populations, and one third of Foster Family Agency homes are located outside of L.A. County boundaries.

To this end, this landscape analysis examines ways to improve the potential outcome for this vulnerable population amid change at varying levels by identifying public and private efforts that support the recruitment of resource families for DCFS involved children residing in L.A. County.

Figure 4.0 Ethnicity of Children 0-5 in out-of-home

- Black (2,060)
- White (911)
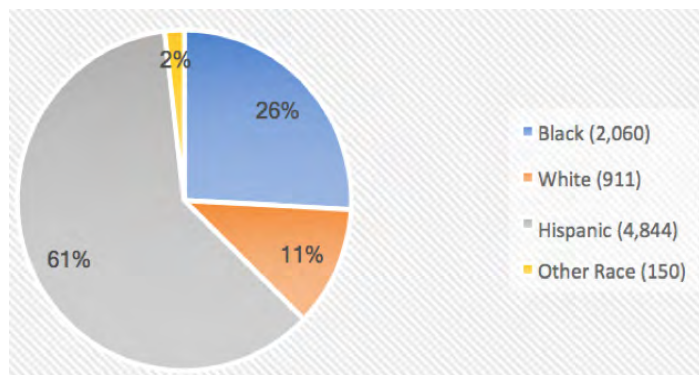- Hispanic (4,844)
- Other Race (150)

TOP 10 PHILANTHROPIC FUNDERS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The following list identifies the top 10 philanthropic funders in Los Angeles County in support of foster care.

Figure 5.0 Southern California Grantmakers Foundation Lists, September 2017

	FUNDER
1	Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
2	Annenberg Foundation
3	The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
4	The Angell Foundation
5	Stuart Foundation
6	Weingart Foundation
7	The Eisner Foundation, Inc.
8	California Community Foundation
9	College Futures Foundation
10	The Anthony & Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation

[3]Children Now, California Children's Report Card 2014: How Kids Are Doing In Our State and What Needs to Be Done About It, 2014. Accessible at: www.childrennow.org
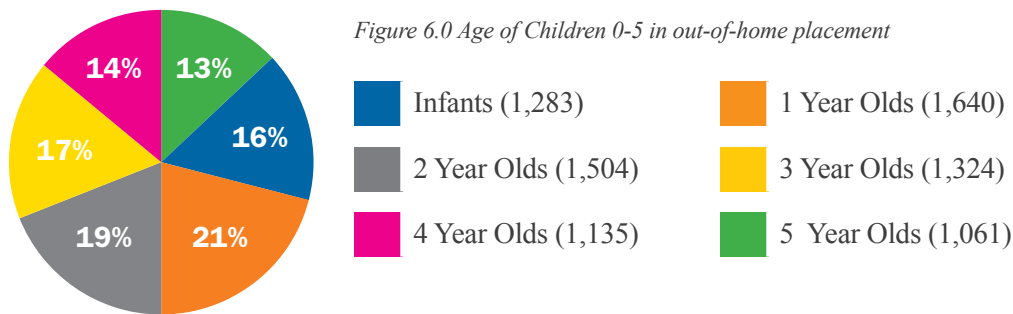
Figure 6.0 Age of Children 0-5 in out-of-home placement

■	Infants (1,283)	■	1 Year Olds (1,640)
■	2 Year Olds (1,504)	■	3 Year Olds (1,324)
■	4 Year Olds (1,135)	■	5 Year Olds (1,061)

FUNDING COLLABORATIVES

Although there are initiatives and philanthropic organizations in partnership with the Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection focused on improving the welfare and safety of children under the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles County, we were not able to identify any specific collaborative focused on recruitment for the 0-5 population.

REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE CRITICAL NEED FOR 0-5

Before examining key trends, priorities, and models being used around recruitment in greater detail, it is useful to understand, at least in brief, the overall and comparative levels of need among the 0-5 population in Los Angeles County. In a recent national ranking of children's wellbeing, California ranked 41st of 50 states.[3] According to the Children's Data Network, as of January 1, 2017, critically 42.9% of children in care are 0 to 5, and there is a disproportionality of communities in the system. Over 90% are removed from their homes due to neglect.

The critical needs of the 0 to 5 population include: a stable, nurturing environment and an attachment to a secure relationship with at least one caregiver-both of which have been found to be imperative for healthy growth and adaptive coping skills. A delay in these attachments leads to long-term mental health concerns. Specialized care and a solid foundation by caretakers are needed for healthy cognitive functions, as well as social, emotional, and physical skills.

According to the California Child Welfare Council report, "Building a System of Support for Young Children in Foster Care," in 2012, in the state of California, 45% of infant placement in foster care occurred within 30 days of birth. That year, 14,671 children, ages 0 to 5 entered, and 11,468 exited the system.

The long-term trajectory of the children exiting is unknown, and currently there is no tracking system that can identify efforts for each child, a subject for further review. State data demonstrates that children between 0-5 are in care longer, are less likely to be properly diagnosed, and, in 32% to 42% of the population, there is prevalence of behavioral health problems[4]. This population has the highest rate of victimization of maltreatment compared to other age groups due to vulnerability and dependency.

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[4]Statewide data, not countywide from the California Child Welfare Council. "Building a System of Support for Young Children in Foster Care. 2012.

II. INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED IN L.A. COUNTYWIDE

SUMMARY OF OVERALL DATA COLLECTION APPROACH

In partnership with DCFS and the Landscape Analysis subcommittee, we generated a list to determine the universe of organizations focusing on recruitment.

DEFINITIONS AND CRITERIA

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS FOCUSED ON RECRUITMENT

For this analysis, we define community-based organizations as those that explicitly recruit for Foster/Resource Families for children/youth and young adults in the foster care system as part of their mission. Community-based organizations such as Angels in Waiting, FosterAll (formerly known as Child S.H.A.R.E.), Wayfinder Family Services (formerly known as Junior Blind) , KFAM, Kidsave, and RaiseAChild, provided quantitative and qualitative information for this analysis. In addition, we spoke to organizations that serve and provide specialized services to specific populations of children, youth, and young adults with an innovative approach to care.

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION (CBO) LANDSCAPE RECRUITING FOSTER/RESOURCE FAMILIES

INTERVIEW FEEDBACK

Below, we examine the community-based organization arena in greater detail. Several community-based organizations were interviewed, all focused on recruitment, but five organizations focused specifically on recruitment of foster/resource parents for all ages.

Five main questions were asked regarding recruitment: to define recruitment and retention, to explain funding sources, to describe challenges and barriers, to describe strategies and approach, and to provide one recommendation for change in the recruitment space. Interviewees provided some important feedback about the challenges, gaps, and successes they face in the recruitment space. Based on their feedback, a couple of trends emerge:

RECRUITMENT

Is defined differently from retention; but when applied in strategy, they overlap. Recruitment is defined as raising public awareness of the issue of fostering and adoption. The recruitment process begins before the child is placed, and retention continues after placement. As Richard Valenza, Founder and CEO of RaiseAChild notes "recruitment is a social movement to start supporting people"-not just the child in need, but the potential foster/resource families, biological families, and all involved in a child's case. Educating the community about the issues to help them gain perspective and providing them with tools to become potential families are vital.

When placing a child 0-5, the risk of losing a foster parent is due to the lack of support the parent receives. There was a consensus on the need of support for foster/resource parents before, during, and after the journey of becoming a foster/resource parent. According to many organizations, part of the successes they share is when a lot of hand-holding occurs throughout the many processes resource parents go through to become approved. When they reach out, not only do they seek technical support, but also emotional and psychological support.

> *When placing a child 0-5, the risk of losing a foster parent is due to the lack of support the parent receives.*

An understanding of cultural components in a community is necessary for recruitment. The concept of fostering is important to review when addressing barriers to recruitment and retention. Depending on the culture and community, some concepts known in the United States may not share the same meaning in other parts of the world and countries. The concept of "fostering," "adoption," and "family" differs throughout many societies.

A translator of language or perhaps a translator of concepts is necessary when addressing issues related to specific communities. A strength of many organizations was community outreach and the engagement process with the local population. Educating, hosting information sessions, training, and expectation-setting are vital to the recruitment process.

Language may also be a barrier within certain communities, not just for Spanish-speaking individuals, but Cantonese, Mandarin, Filipino, and Chinese. Connie Chung Joe, executive director of KFAM, an organization that specializes in providing linguistically and culturally appropriate services through its bilingual and bicultural staff, notes, "a lot of our families are not fluent in English; therefore, our documents, posters, videos, and staff are bilingual. We need to help navigate concepts, counseling, doctor visits, referrals, and resources and help families find whatever type of support needed in the language needed."

An understanding of cultural components in a community is necessary for recruitment.

FUNDING

Funding comes from a variety of sources, but none of the organizations we spoke with have recruitment-specific contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services. DCFS provides Title IV E funding to FFAs for placement of children, which includes funding for recruitment activities. However, FFAs are not paid until the child is placed. Based on our conversations with over 20 FFAs, they feel funding is not sufficient to support recruitment and retention and are requesting a recruitment-specific budget. Two main challenges noted that could benefit from immediate funding are monitors during visitation and transportation.

According to Lou Moore, executive director of FosterAll (formerly Child S.H.A.R.E.), an organization whose mission is to find homes for abused and at-risk children through foster care programs in faith-based communities, notes that they are invested in using data to inform their recruitment model. FosterAll is currently in collaboration with the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles to secure families to foster from their more than 200 parishes. FosterAll recruited 252 interested parents from Catholic masses as a part of their Respect Life campaign. They describe their strategy as a cultivation process and have now hired a staff person to focus only on data collection and analysis.

CHALLENGES/BARRIERS

The biggest challenges to finding appropriate placements occurs when siblings are involved. Keeping siblings together is difficult because the children cannot be placed together due to the restrictions of potential foster parents, licensing regulations, and placement requirements. The new Resource Family Approval (RFA) process was designed to address some of these barriers and challenges, however, communication is slowly in progress in informing the FFA case and field workers.

Another challenge is providing adequate services for children with special needs. According to Miki Jordan, president & CEO of Wayfinder Family Services (formerly known as Junior Blind) , an organization that provides services for children and their families who are blind, visually impaired, or disabled (ranging from moderate to severe), Wayfinder Family Services recently opened The Cottage, a transitional shelter-care program, in collaboration with DCFS. The Cottage provides short-term emergency placement to children, ages 0-17, who need safe and temporary shelter due to removal or disruption within their families because of abuse, neglect or abandonment. In their emergency shelter, 57% of the population is 0-5. Because some children have special needs, including developmental needs, there are not enough foster parents or birth parents trained to handle the child's specific requirements. Wayfinder Family Services has recently acquired a partnership with a Foster Family Agency and plans to train parents with the essentials to foster special-needs children. Due to their emergency shelter structure, timing does not allow for an appropriate assessment of a child; therefore, it can be difficult to find an appropriate placement. As a result, children cycle through, and children with autism return more often.

Regarding the 0-5 population and the medically fragile, there are currently only a few organizations serving this population.

Regarding the 0-5 population and the medically fragile, there are currently only a few organizations serving this population. They currently have the largest concentration of medically fragile children serving more than 1,000 babies across the state with visual impairments alone. DCFS has an office on their site with a medical facility, and 24-hour nursing. However, when a child is placed with this organization, they are prohibited from doing any medical exams unless their needs are "obvious" for first-time arrivals. Authorization from parents is needed for immediate care, so this, too, can be a challenge. Fifty-seven percent of the population served in the organization are 0-5, 75% go to foster homes and only 6% go to relative care.

Another of the few organizations working with medically fragile foster children is Angels in Waiting (AIW). AIW focuses on recruitment specifically to certify and license nurses. Its mission is to help the rising population of America's most vulnerable infants and children by ensuring they grow up in the loving homes, hearts and hands of nurses. Its focus is to recruit and license nurses in 58 counties.

STRATEGIES and APPROACH

Each of the community-based organizations explored resulted in exemplifying individual organizational strengths. All CBOs had one thing in common: a targeted recruitment approach.

These ranged from an extensive analysis tactic embedded in the faith community (previously mentioned), a customer-service model to recruit and retain potential families, the idea and design of a future digital communication program to help with resources, and easily accessible information for on-the-spot training, to focusing on specific targeted recruitment of skilled and certified nurses to foster medically fragile foster children and youth. Involving the child and allowing the children to have a voice in the decision-making process of recruitment are crucial. The shift of strategy to focus on connection first, then fostering with the possibility to adopt, is needed in the foster parent recruitment narrative.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

Recommendations include shifting recruitment from the Department of Children and Family Services and contracting with churches and other agencies to allow for a more community-based model. According to DCFS Outreach and Recruitment staff, there is a backlog of community cases that can be alleviated by the addition of more staff. DCFS continues to receive interested families ready to commit, but RFA workers cannot continue with them because the current infrastructure cannot absorb the amount of families that are responding. The average caseload of an RFA worker is currently estimated at 50-55 cases.

According to Karen Richardson, deputy director of Juvenile Court & Adoption Bureau, the department is in the process of identifying data to use for new recruitment targets and outcomes, and there is a lot of support around recruitment and the backing continues to grow. The department requires additional staffing and the reliance on community partnership and the infrastructure to address the need.

The suggestions are to hire companies that specialize in marketing and recruitment and to produce a collaborative marketing strategy with a different narrative about foster youth and what it means to be a foster/resource parent. In response to this, DCFS is now working with Mercury to focus on a new narrative. Another recommendation is the enhancement of the foster-care search system that will allow appropriate placement assignment and matching based on family and child strengths of possible foster/resource parent and specialized placements.

ASSESSING THE CAPACITY BUILDING LANDSCAPE FOR LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS FOCUSED ON RECRUITMENT

There is a consensus that there is major capacity building, linguistic capacity and recruitment-specific budget needs among recruitment-focused community-based organizations. Research demonstrates that foster/resource parents are great recruiters and ambassadors. Organizations are working on smaller scales, but need to scale up for sustainability to meet the need of a complex system.

Organizations are working on smaller scales, but need to scale up for sustainability to meet the need of a complex system.

- Recruitment-Specific Budget - This was the most frequently mentioned area of organizational development. The challenge is the lack of funding for specific recruitment and retention strategies, which include staffing, hiring and training, and team development to further the organization's vision and mission.

- Targeted Recruitment Planning - With the collection of and use of data, targeted recruitment in specific communities for specific populations may be developed and the creation of a support network critical to retention may be accomplished. Targeting precise demographics and audiences, learning and understanding cultural and psychological components of the need of communities, and including the child's voice in the decision-making process will result in leads to potential foster/resource families.

- Collaborative Media Campaign - An innovative approach to public engagement is necessary for a long-term culture shift, to chip away at pre-existing stigmas about the foster care system. A reintroduction of foster children and youth and foster/resource parents and families to the public has the capability of changing the narrative of both who the children and youth are and what it means to foster and be a foster/resource parent/family.

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS IN CHILD WELFARE

For purposes of this landscape, Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) are defined as a person who is an authority in the child-welfare sector and foster-care space, but are not limited to the following: The Department of Children and Family Services Leadership, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Children Deputies, Foundation Executives, Senators, UCLA Ties, Foster America, the Commission for Children and Families, Legal Advocates, Alliance for Children's Rights, and the Children's Institute Inc.

The transition to the current Resource Family Approval process has been a challenge for all entities, from DCFS to CBOs to FFAs, but, most importantly, to the potential foster families going through the process. Strategies at DCFS are attempting to address the needs and trends, but the capacity remains the same. The response time is difficult to maintain, and the backlog continues due to a lack of staffing and structural limitations.

SMEs agree that the scale of L.A. County is too grand to continue operating as it is regarding recruitment. There is consensus that parents do not know about all the resources available, that paperwork and the process are overwhelming, and a lot of hand-holding is necessary. The lack of communication within the system affects outcomes. Birth and foster families feel intimidated by the legal system; and concurrent planning, while beneficial to children, can create challenges for both birth and foster parents.

FOSTERMORE

FosterMore is a coalition of entertainment, media, business, and philanthropic organizations working to deliver a better future for youth in foster care. Its goal is to become the internet's "go-to resource" for anyone looking to support foster youth, while serving as a conduit to local organizations across the country. Mark Daley and a team of communications and marketing experts conducted research and focus groups to develop powerful messaging for a digital advertising campaign to recruit foster parents and mentors.

According to Jennifer Perry and Mark Daley of FosterMore, based on their qualitative research and the quantitative research of Tennessee-based Youth Villages, the average decision-making process takes 24 months, from first thinking about becoming a foster parent to making the commitment to do so. According to FosterMore, single mothers and same-gender couples are rapidly growing demographics for recruitment. Families with children and empty nesters (Baby Boomers) hold great potential for recruitment purposes as well. Public media has the potential to be the megaphone for this discussion, which is why FosterMore hosted a panel with the Television Academy for close to 100 writers, producers and show runners to discuss storyline integrations and accurate portrayals of foster youth and families.

Figure 7.0 FosterMore's Approach to Public Engagement
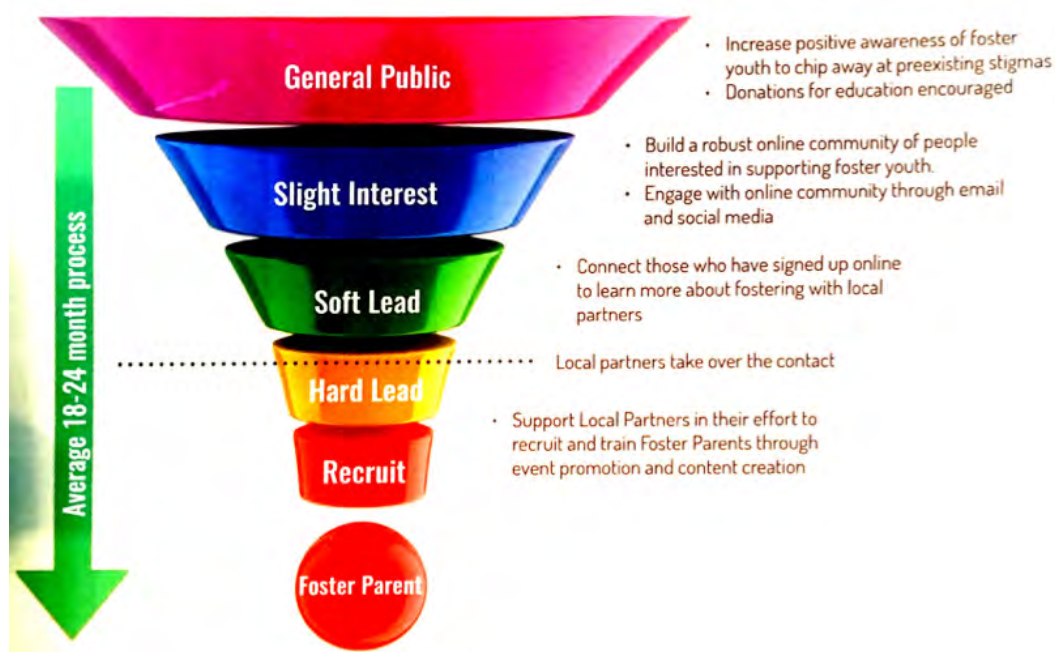
TO FOSTER CHANGE: A Social Impact Initiative
PBS SoCal has joined the efforts to improve the lives of foster youth in Southern California. Contributing its expertise in mass media, trusted storytelling and community engagement, PBS SoCal is raising awareness and bringing an understanding of the trials and tribulations foster youth experience with the goal to inspire hope, action, and, ultimately, change.

Figure 8.0 To Foster Change Logic Model
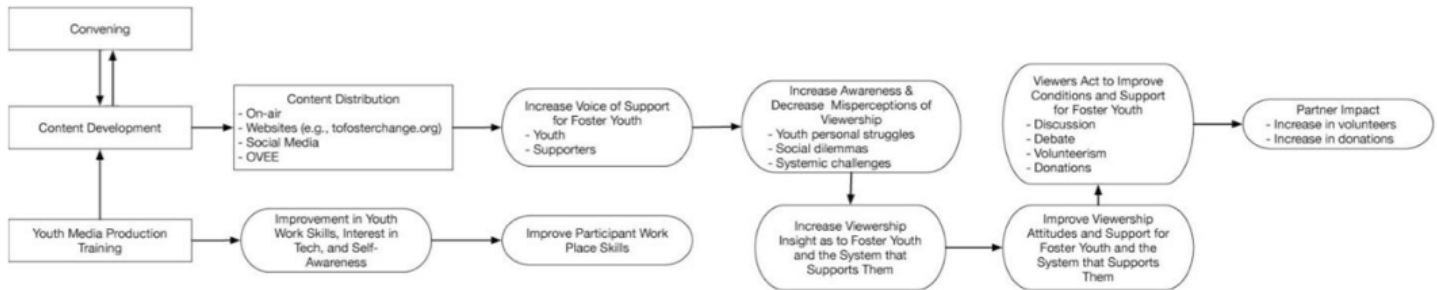
Through community discourse, the network is raising awareness of the personal struggles, social dilemmas and systemic challenges that affect the ability of foster youth to fully thrive. The *To Foster Change* initiative is a multi-faceted, multi-year campaign comprising three main sections, each with important outcomes:

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

To Foster Change content is designed through a collaborative community process. PBS SoCal collects authentic stories shared by the foster youth community by bringing together service providers, policymakers, civic leaders, families, and youth. At annual To Foster Change community conversations, stakeholders convene to discuss solutions, make new connections, identify content themes, and provide feedback on PBS SoCal interstitials and documentaries.

CONTENT

These conversations will help identify community partners and inform original documentary content -- PSAs, web series, social content and documentaries -- to raise awareness of the issues and needs of this vulnerable population of children. Content will also reveal and reinforce the valuable contributions and accomplishments of those working with foster youth to show that every little success counts.

ENGAGE FOSTER YOUTH

Engagement experiences will include job shadowing, field learning, opportunities, multi-day media trainings with industry professionals and student video diaries. According to a survey PBS SoCal conducted with viewers, over 80% of the participants had not considered and would not consider becoming a foster parent or a weekend parent to a displaced child, but they would consider volunteering and mentoring short-term. About 70% of participants were White women age 60 or older, and over 40% had a graduate or professional degree. Initial preconceptions about foster youth and the foster-care system include: foster youth are troubled, they have a harder time engaging in school, and foster-care workers need to work more collaboratively. Over 40% of participants believe the foster-care system does not properly vet foster parents, but believe that the system is not too complicated to change and would consider volunteering with an organization that helps foster youth through their journey. This demonstrates the need to change the narrative and to educate communities about foster youth, the foster-care system, and the opportunities available to become engaged with this population.

HARRIS POLL

According to a Harris Poll conducted in February 2017 about foster-care attitudes , over half of adults say they are not at all familiar with what foster parents do to care for children who have been abused or neglected. Over 4 in 10 Americans say they feel extremely/very favorable towards foster-care parents. White adults are more likely favorable of foster parents, compared to Blacks and Latinos. The exploration of potential foster parents is important to investigate because these demographic groups could be the first to be targeted with a media campaign and potential recruitment strategies. Nearly 3 in 10 Americans have considered becoming foster parents. While over 70% have not, the demographic groups most likely to consider becoming a foster parent:

- Younger: 18-34 (44%); 35-44 (40%)
- Latinos: 38%
- Have kids: 49%
- Considering adoption: 62%
- Considered foster-care adoption: 73%

When asked the question to rank the reasons individuals would consider becoming a foster parent, over 7 in 10 say they would consider becoming a foster parent mainly to help a child in need. About 50% of respondents are aware of the need for foster parents, and about 20% would consider becoming a foster parent because of their own personal experience in the foster-care system. This demographic group may also be a potential initial target group.

Figure 9.0 Harris Poll Survey Responses Regarding Involvement

Q: Please list some places you would go to or contact if you wanted to support solutions to these issues.

#	RESPONSES
1	My church
2	Organizations that contribute time
3	Their own Foster Care Offices
4	Child Services
5	County mental health services, TAY program, county government
6	I don't know
7	CASA already started process
8	Internet
9	Cal State Fullerton's Guardian Scholar Program
10	School District

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups included over 45 participants from over 20 Foster Family Agencies, new and current foster/resource parents ranging from one to 14 years of experience (some with knowledge of both the Foster Family Agency approval process and the County's process), legal advocates, and a discussion group with Accelerated Placement Workers and the Outreach and Recruitment team from the Department of Children and Family Services.

FOSTER FAMILY AGENCIES

We define Foster Family Agencies as any organization engaged in the recruiting, certifying, and training of, and providing professional support to, foster parents; or in finding homes for placement of children for temporary or permanent care who require that level of care as an alternative to a group home.

A survey was first distributed to 50 Foster Family Agencies. Based on the responses to the initial questions asked, a dialogue was continued to further explore challenges, gaps, and trends throughout. Two discussion groups were then conducted with questions developed from the initial answers. For the purposes of this analysis, only the 24 responses received are included in this section.

Questions included: funding sources, percentage of families recruited interested in 0-5, successful tactics to recruit, top three reasons resource families do not follow through, and what support could the agency receive to enhance recruitment services.

Figure 10.0

COLLABORATIVE VERSUS COMPETITIVE FFA

In your opinion, or based on agency data, what are the top three reasons Resource Families do not follow through with the Resource Family Approval (RFA) process? Select all that apply:
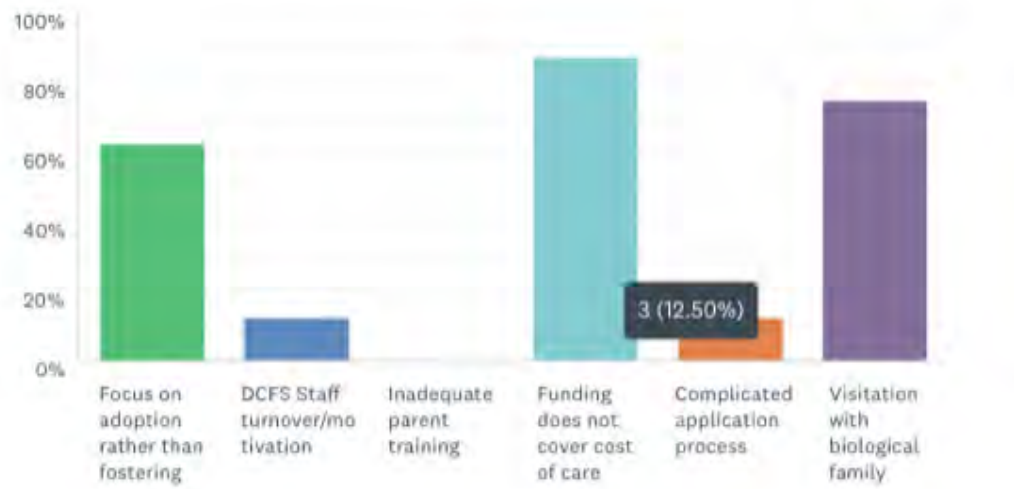
Answered: 24   Skipped: 0

Foster Family agencies identified that within the foster care recruitment efforts, there exists a competitive rather than a collaborative system. FFAs receive some of their funding once a child is placed; therefore, there is a competitive aspect of who can place more children than others. Feedback included: a review and restructuring of what and how services should be provided to potential and existing resource families. Child-care, accessible mental healthcare services, and a budget sufficient enough to hire visitation monitors and provide transportation are some of the top services needed and requested by both agencies and families.

Figure 11.0

In your opinion, what are the barriers for birth to 5 Resource Family recruitment? Select all that apply:

STANDARDIZATION

While Resource Family Approval standardizes the process in counties, FFAs are adding requirements for best practices, and there is no standardization among FFAs. The need for policy and a standardization of processes across all entities involved in child placement is highlighted. Once a family begins a process in the County or with a specific FFA, they must follow through until the end and complete it, or else they must begin the process all over again if they decide or have no other option to begin in another location. Since there is no standardization of processes among FFAs, different agencies and locations require different hours of training, different paperwork, and have different requirements. FFAs also highlighted the challenges they face with accreditation and best practices. As one staff member stated:

> *"We as an agency must meet best practices to meet accreditation, yet standards were lowered at the county level. But we aren't going to stay accredited if we don't meet best practices and do the minimum to meet County standards. Although changes are happening, it is too early to see them, and the new process is still confusing. We are required to provide more hours of training, but what we are worried that when we tell potential resource parents that 40 hours of training is required, they may then go to another agency and be told that they only require 20."*

Because L.A. County is so large, there are too many contracts and agencies involved in cases that, at times leads to chaos for all. The Association of Community Human Services (ACHSA) requires FFAs to check fingerprints, how many clear, and how many can go forward based on all their requirements, however the implementation of RFA is causing some confusion. A lot of potential resource families are expressing frustrations with other agencies and the county. Although RFA standardizes minimum requirements, some FFAs are going over the minimum threshold, and as a result the process is not user friendly. It should be mandatory to exclusively use the minimum standards implemented and required by the state to move forward and complete the application process regardless of organization or county. A workgroup could be formed to reconcile minimum standards with best practices to create one clear process.

FOSTER PARENTS

Fifteen parents, ranging from one to 14 years of experience participated in a focus group assembled by FosterAll. Questions were asked about their knowledge about CCR, training experience, positive and negative experiences with case workers, and one recommendation for change in the system.

SYSTEM TRANSITION AND INFORMATION

All parents knew about a system change, but were not fully aware of specific modifications to the process. The main factor mentioned was the language change, from "foster parent" to "resource family." Many parents have participated in other focus groups for the Children's Bureau and Forever Families. Many see themselves as not only temporary caregivers, but advocates for change. All agreed that the training for foster/resource parents is extensive, ranging from 12- to 40-hour trainings, but the experience also varies from thorough and effective to quick and insufficient. One recommendation that all parents agreed with is that resource families be provided with top 10 medical and psychological diagnoses for children in the system. Many felt that once a child is placed, parents are unaware of the extent of the child's experience and need for trauma healing.

ONGOING CONSISTENT SUPPORT

There is a need for preparation and support with how to navigate experiences elicited by an emotional, physical, and psychological trigger; not only for the foster/resource parent, but also for the child to prevent further trauma. Experiences with social workers varied from positive and pleasant to confusing and frustrating because of the lack of communication and follow-through. Overall, there is an agreement that social workers seem overloaded with cases and lack emotional support themselves. Further training about the changes in the system and assistance with the transition is also needed for the workforce. A more thorough evaluation and assessment of each child can be improved upon, and accountability of everyone involved in a child's case, including the birth parents is a concern.

Foster/resource parents were also unaware of certain paperwork/forms that allow them to have a voice in court and advocate for themselves and the child placed with them. Many agreed that the courts sometimes lacked current and correct information about a child and case. Many foster/resource parents mentioned that it seemed to them that judges, lawyers, and workers made decisions about a case with the interest and benefit to the birth parents instead of the child. Because of HIPPA laws and confidentiality issues, certain aspects of a child's case are not shared, particularly with regards to mental and physical health. Foster/resource parents felt that imperative information about the child was kept from them, ultimately affecting the child's well-being, long-term plan, healing, and trajectory.

There is a need for preparation and support with how to navigate experiences elicited by an emotional, physical, and psychological trigger; not only for the foster/resource parent, but also for the child to prevent further trauma.

DCFS

Focus groups with both the Accelerated Placement Team (APT) (workers who search for placements for high-risk children) and the Outreach and Recruitment Team were conducted. *Accelerated Placement Team* workers ranged from six to 27 years of experience. We asked the following questions:

1. What is one change you would like to see in terms of recruitment of foster parents for the 0-5 group?

2. What support do you think foster/resource parents could use based on your work experience with this population?

3. Based on your experience, what are the top three reasons families do not accept children birth to 5?

4. What type of specialized homes would you like to see developed for children?

The many challenges parents face included, but are not limited to court ordered visitation, prioritizing placements for special populations, and the lack of a respite care system.

VISITATION ORDERS

According to DCFS staff, visitation court orders are a barrier. Based on feedback from participants in a focus group we conducted with placement workers, sometimes court ordered visitation can be too much for some parents to balance. Some challenges include work schedules, distance, and accessibility to forms of transportation. The need for transportation and monitoring has been a recurring theme throughout from all participants in various focus groups. Based on this feedback, perhaps the county could create a partnership to provide transportation services for visitation. The county currently has a workgroup exploring rideshare services.

SPECIALIZED POPULATIONS

For the purposes of this landscape analysis report, specialized populations can include, but not be limited to: birth to 5, members of sibling groups, children of underrepresented ethnic and racial heritage, including LGBTQ, who are overrepresented in the child-welfare system, children who exhibit difficult behaviors such as sexually acting out, physical aggression, mental health issues, moderate to severe developmental disabilities, and children who are medically fragile. Workers believe a lot is expected from resource parents and that there is not enough of an incentive to take specialized populations.

Several of L.A. County's FFA placements are located in Victorville, Lancaster, and San Bernardino; the social worker and parent sometimes have to visit up to three times a week. While it appears that there are homes, there aren't appropriate matches for the kinds of children in the system. It is both a racial and specialty issue-ultimately a match issue.

*Figure 12.0 Map of Placements*
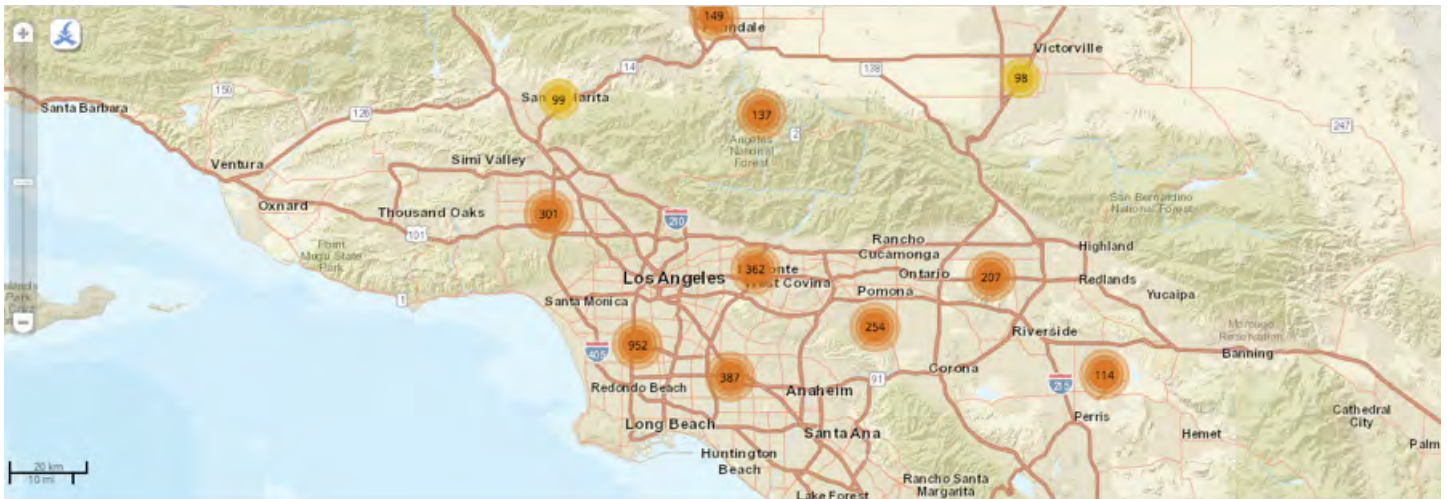
OUTREACH & RECRUITMENT TEAM

There has been an increase of 300 more potential families this year compared with last year. Workers report to be more customer-service driven, creating and developing greater connections and relationships with families as the department continues to streamline processes. Although there has been an increase in the amount of staff dedicated to recruitment, the average RFA caseload is between 50 to 55 cases for the workers completing the assessments. The challenge remains that there is insufficient staff to address the backlog of cases and new potential families. As a result, we offer the following recommendations:

- 2 chief deputies at DCFS: One would handle programming, the other administration to assist with the size and complexity of LA county, ultimately increasing outcomes in all departments.

- Address communication challenges within the department

- Include staff input on programmatic planning

- Policy development

Figure 13.0 DCFS Caseload by Facility Type as of December 2016
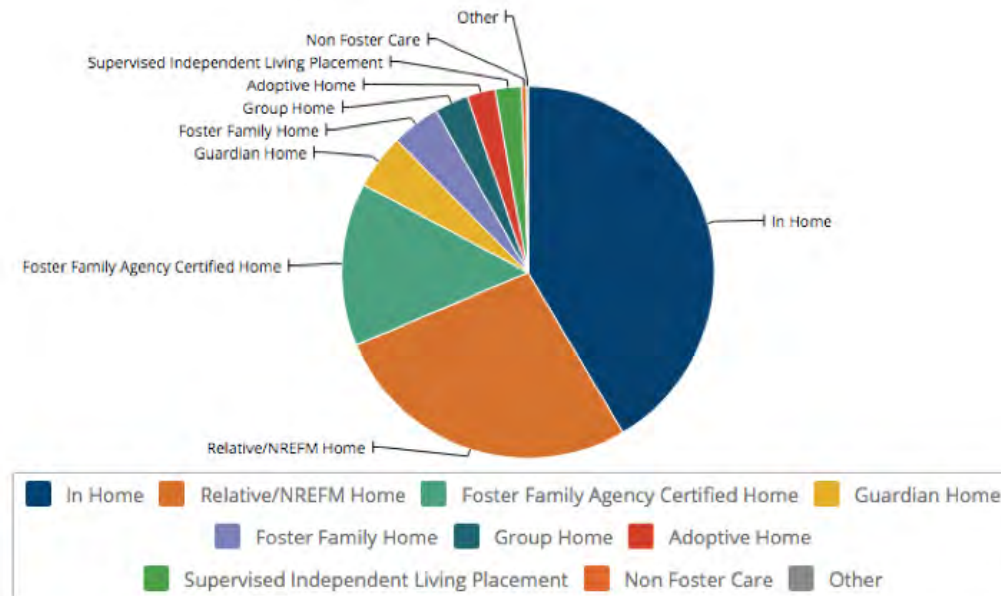
LOCAL MODELS

For the local models, we reviewed community-based organizations from our original interviews and explore their strategies and approach. The main outcome is that they all result with having targeted recruitment strategies-they modify their models/approach based on data to better serve their communities and populations.

ANGELS IN WAITING (AIW)

Due to LA County's increase in illicit drug use, including LA's opioid crisis, LA DCFS is faced with a growing number of medically fragile foster care infants and children who need adequate safe placements. According to Linda West RN, Founder and President of Angels in Waiting, Los Angeles is financially plagued by a growing population of medically fragile infants and children in the foster care system. A 2014 California State law, Chapter # 490, Created by Angels in Waiting, gives licensed nurses Priority Placement for medically fragile foster care infants and children.

AIW's practical and cost-effective nursing program has been successfully implemented through the hearts and hands of California nurses for over 15 years. Angels in Waiting is helping Los Angeles, Riverside, Kern County and numerous Foster Family Agencies to implement Chapter # 490 as per DSS's "All County Letter," as well as recruit the nurses needed to care for this growing number of medically fragile foster care infants and children. In-turn AIW nurses, who become Nurse-Foster (Resource) Providers for this costly population, are directly saving the State of California and federal reserves millions of dollars through a federally funded EPSDT in-home/private duty nursing program. Angels in Waiting has created a different alternative revenue source to serve 0-5 children. Furthermore, with the marked reduction in hospital readmission rates, and ER visits, AIW's nurse provider program reports saving Medi-Cal millions of dollars due the fact that highly skilled nurses are mitigating long term hospitalization costs.

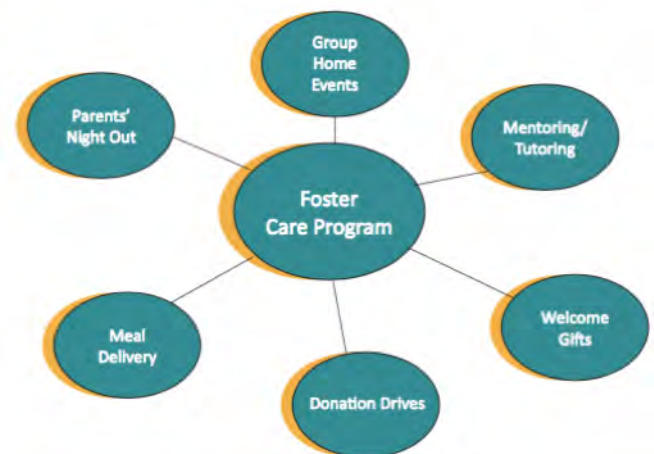*AIW's organizational strategy comprises 4 major objectives:*

1. Recruit Nurse-Foster Providers statewide

2. Hire and train Nursing Coordinators to help streamline and support

3. Further develop a statewide Continual Education Program for Early Intervention Therapies for AIW's Nurse-Foster Providers.

4. Develop and manage a data platform to tally the medical cost-saving factors and tally the program's high adoption rate among the dedicated nurses.

FOSTERALL

Specializes in the recruitment and retention of quality families for children in foster care. Operating more than 120 Foster Care Programs in faith communities across Los Angeles County, FosterAll recruits and cultivates interested parents, supports existing foster families, and involves volunteers in a Foster Care Program. The Foster Care Program is administered by FosterAll and is comprised of activities for hundreds of volunteers. Activities range from giving welcome gifts to new child placements, serving as a host for Parents' Night Out events, providing meals, mentoring children, or hosting special events. When FosterAll conducts a recruitment event, families sign up to become involved in the cause either to foster or become a volunteer. Of the number of people who express an interest in fostering, on average 24% fill out a FosterAll application. Over the last five-year period, 40% of families who completed a FosterAll application to foster were approved by a foster family agency. This year, FosterAll's recruitment exceeded previous years, yielding 663 families expressing interest in foster care.

Figure 14.0 FosterAll Foster Care Program

FosterAll ensures that families know exactly what to expect and that they are educated and prepared to foster, expertly guiding them at every step of their foster journey. FosterAll does this by conducting extensive education and pre-screening, followed by an in-home assessment. Once a family completes the vetting process they are matched with the foster family agency that best suits their communication style and family dynamic. With more than 70 foster family agencies in LA County, finding the right agency is daunting and difficult.

However, that match of a family to the foster family agency that is right for them is critically important to ensure retention and child placement stability. FosterAll has found homes for more than 3,600 children in foster care. FosterAll stays in communication to support the family throughout the foster approval process and after they welcome a child into their home, offering support groups, behavioral specialist services, educational workshops and more.

WAYFINDER FAMILY SERVICES (FORMERLY KNOWN AS JUNIOR BLIND OF AMERICA)

Wayfinder Family Services is the place for children facing the greatest challenges. Their mission is to ensure that children, youth and adults facing challenges always have a place to turn. Founded in 1953 as the Foundation for the Junior Blind, their programs initially provided blind and visually impaired children with opportunities to lead fuller and more independent lives. Today, they serve a broad array of children and families through two service divisions: children with visual impairment and/developmental disabilities and the other assists children in the child welfare system, with a particular specialty in service to medically fragile children and those with physical, cognitive, mental health and other special needs.

Figure 15.0 Wayfinder Family Services Data for Ages 0-5 Transitional Shelter Care (TSC)
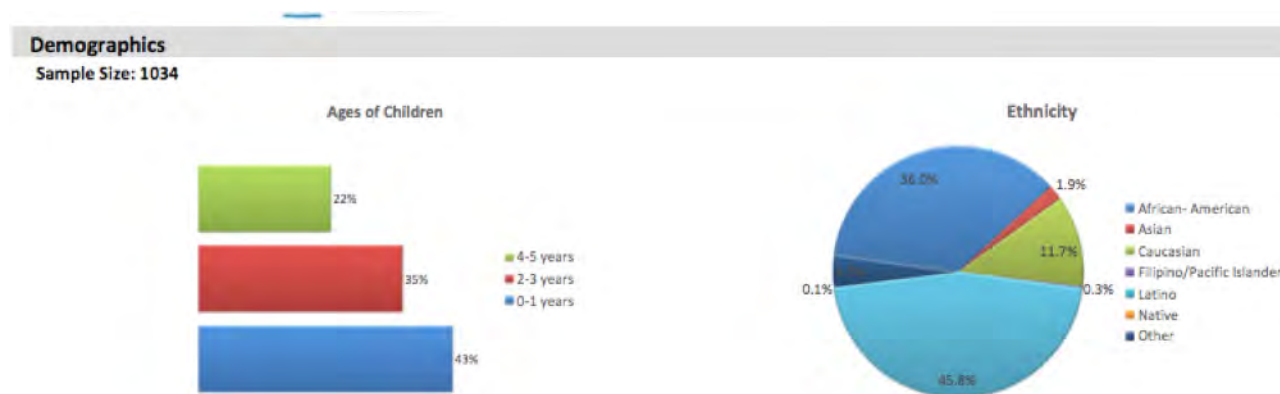
According to Miki Jordan, President and CEO of Wayfinder Family Services with a budget of $34.6 million and almost 500 employees, they provide services free of charge at 14 locations throughout California. For many clients, Wayfinder Family Services is the only place in California that provides the help they need to reach their greatest potential. Nearly 20 years ago, they began providing residential services to children and youth age 5 to 21 with severe disabilities and often multiple disabilities (with or without visual impairment).

In 2012, they partnered with L.A. County DCFS to create a RCL12 residential program for foster children and youth. This program serves children with significant mental health issues, often as a result of trauma. Wayfinder Family Services has special expertise in serving medically fragile children and those with special needs. In early 2016, further deepening their work with foster youth, they opened a transitional shelter care program on their campus. The Cottage provides temporary placement for children age 0 to 17 who have been removed from their families. Wayfinder Family Services was selected by DCFS as one of only four agencies to offer this critical program. In 2017, they further expanded their services for children and families in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties through a merger with Concept 7, a foster family and adoption agency, and the absorption of the foster family program of longtime collaborator Masada Homes. By the end of the 2017-18 fiscal year, they will become licensed as a resource family agency and adoption agency.

Figure 16.0 Wayfinder Family Services 0-5 Monthly Census

Monthly Census

KFAM

KFAM's vision is to support and strengthen Korean American families and individuals in the Greater Los Angeles area through counseling, education, and other social services. According to KFAM, there are currently 600 to 800 Asian Pacific Islander (API) foster children in Los Angeles County who are in need of loving and forever homes. Their dedicated, skilled team of bilingual staff and volunteers serve over 5,000 adults and children each year with quality, culturally-relevant services and compassionate care that speak directly to the challenges among Korean American families undergoing trauma or adaptation stresses. The Asian Foster Family Initiative (AFFI) trains and provides full support to foster/resource parents.

KIDSAVE

Los Angeles Weekend Miracles Program is Kidsave's weekend family visit program developed specifically for older foster youth (age 9 to 17) who are languishing in Los Angeles County foster care and have no prospects for adoption. Foster youth meet prospective weekend hosts and adoptive families through Kidsave's monthly advocacy events. These events are interactive, engaging, and youth-focused, allowing youth and interested families to get to know each other slowly and establish a connection naturally. Kidsave recruits, trains and screens the prospective families, and works with DCFS to match the children with host families that the they have established connections with at the monthly events. Host families are volunteers who commit to hosting the children in their homes twice each month for a minimum of one year. The host families introduce the youth to their circle of friends and community members to increase opportunities for these youth to meet prospective adoptive families. Host families often adopt the youth they host, or remain involved in their lives after the youth is adopted by another family.

Figure 17.0 Kidsave At-A-Glance

Cultural Demographics	Gender Overview	Permanency Outcomes (as of 11/30/2017)
44% Latino	58% Boys	80% of youth have a connection to an adult
39% African American		51% legal permanency in process
16% Caucasian	42% Girls	37% moved to a lower Level of Care
1% Other		

RAISEACHILD

Their vision is to be the nationwide leader in the recruitment and support of LGBT and all prospective parents interested in building families through fostering and adopting to meet the needs of children in the foster-care system. Their approach is through advertising and marketing, and they recruit potential families using a customer-service model. They also explore technological applications and are currently working on designing a digital communication program to possibly implement throughout L.A. County. According to Rich Valenza, Founder and CEO of RaiseAChild, adoptive resource parents are adopting an average of 1.5 children per family. In 2017, they are seeing a new trend of many of their resource parents going back to foster and adopt a second and third time.

Figure 18.0 RaiseAChild At-A-Glance

% who make it from…	December 2014	December 2015	December 2016
Referral to Orientation	32%	32%	29%
Orientation to Class Sign Up	78%	78%	72%
Sign Up to Attending Class	93%	91%	93%
Attending Class to Finishing Class	95%	95%	96%
Finishing Class to Children Placed	37%	34%	41%
Children Placed to Adoption Finalization	17%	46%	52%

Overall Community-Based Organization recommendations include:

- Subject matter experts and community-based organizations agree that DCFS should consider shifting recruitment to faith-based communities or to other agencies/organizations.

- Hiring companies that specialize in marketing and recruitment

- Shift recruitment from DCFS and possibly outsource to churches and agencies

- Funding for seasoned foster parents to be ambassadors/champions to new foster parents

- Collaborative marketing strategy

- A database of the children and the recruitment efforts for each

III. NATIONAL MODELS

ILLINOIS: SAFE FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN: A PREVENTION MODEL

While Safe Families for Children is not a recruitment strategy, it is a prevention model that still recruits for host families to assist with hosting of children before entering the child welfare system. Launched in 2002, Safe Families for Children has served over 35,000 children in 36 different states. Over 90% of the children hosted through the program have been successfully reunited with their biological families. Safe Families costs around $10 a day per child served (private money that is evenly drawn from individual donors and foundations). The program's volunteer host families-who undergo an extensive training program, home inspections, and background checks-are typically recruited through churches or other religious institutions. Unlike foster parents, these families are not given a stipend. Additional resources are also provided by donors to support the children. Churches, for instance, frequently provide clothing, diapers, and other necessities that host families can use. Church and community donors defray the costs of summer camps or extracurricular activities, and provide volunteer help with carpooling or babysitting.

According to Danny Sells, national director of Safe Families for Children at Olive Crest, Safe Families for Children, hosted 834 kids in volunteer host homes in Southern California during fiscal years 2016 and 2017. At the end of the hosting, 94% of kids hosted were reunified with their families, and the families demonstrated increased capacity to access healthy support system in future crisis. Over 49% of kids hosted were 0-5 years old. Currently, there are nearly 100 volunteer teams organized through local churches throughout Southern California, comprising over 400 host homes and over 1,600 support volunteers.

In Illinois, Safe Families for Children, in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS), is currently being evaluated by a randomized control evaluation at the University of North Carolina. Safe Families for Children in the United Kingdom is also being evaluated by the Social Research Unit at Dartington. Results will be made available once the research is completed.

COST ANALYSIS:

Sites around the country vary greatly in their operational budgets. Chapters that are more staff driven have higher operational costs than those that are more volunteer driven. Within Olive Crest, they aim to strike a balance, and land on the low-cost side of the average. In the first couple of years of operations, they aim to carry a budget that allows them to serve at a $2,500/child. So, for instance, to serve 50 children in year one, they would have a budget of $125,000. As they mature and build the volunteer base, they will able to reduce costs. By the end of year three, they aim to operate at a $1,000/child hosting ratio. Very conservatively, they estimate their cost at about 1/10th the cost of the child welfare system.

Team Structure: There are three necessary roles to be filled when beginning a SF chapter:

1. Catalyst/Champion(s)/Ambassador(s): This person/role is the community mobilizer. Often, they are well-connected and a visible leader who can inspire people to action. They know who/where to go and how to get them to move. This can be a person/team or group/organization/etc.

2. Leadership: This person/role is the source of strategy and resources. They lead the effort for the development of the movement of SFFC in the region and build to support growth sustainably. This is often a volunteer group from the community who resonate with the vision and values of SFFC.

3. Safety Lead: This person/role is the qualified assessor of risk/safety. They lead the volunteer clearance/approval process and provide leadership to the referral and matching screening process.

OREGON: BRIDGE MEADOWS: AN INTERGENERATIONAL LIVING COMMUNITY

An intergenerational community is a community of care across generations. Seniors partner with parents, staff, and neighbors to support a child, and children participate in a variety of activities that support their growth and well-being. The Bridge Meadows community was established in 2011 with 36 units of affordable housing. Thirty elders live at Bridge Meadows and provide over 10,000 hours of service to the community each year. Service may look like tutoring, serving as surrogate grandparents, babysitting, preparing meals, teaching a class, driving a neighbor to the doctor, and supporting other needs. It is estimated that elders provide about 333 hours per year, 28 hours per month, 6 ½ hours per week.
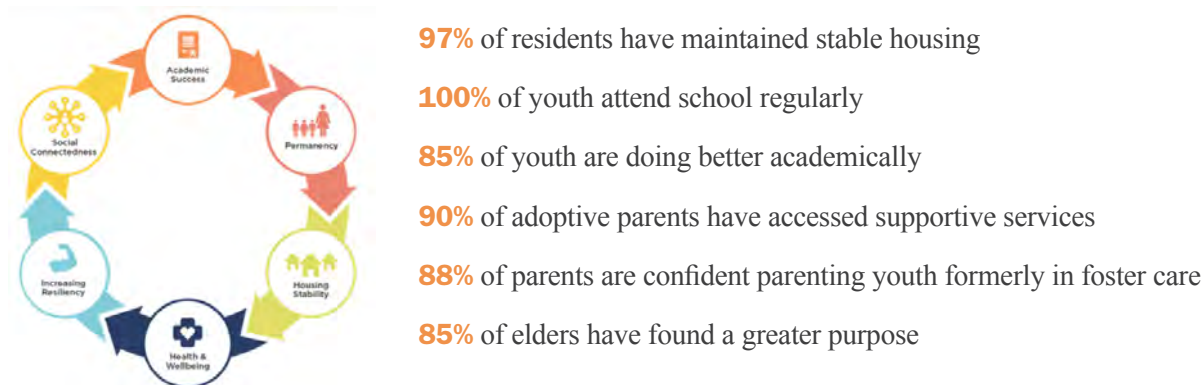
According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, nine units are reserved for adoptive families in two-story duplexes and single-family homes. The family units are more than 1,700 square feet and have four bedrooms. Each family must adopt or become the legal guardians of at least three children from the foster-care system within five years of moving into the development. Although the family units have no income restrictions, the rent is capped at 26.5% of the household's gross income to allow families to pay for supportive services and other expenses that arise in caring for their adopted children.

The remaining 27 units are set aside for elders. These range in size from 618 to 822 square feet and include both one- and two-bedroom apartments arranged in one- to two-story triplexes. Units meet the accessibility standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and an additional unit is designed for the hearing impaired. The elders' units are affordable to households with a range of incomes from 30% of the area median income (AMI), 30% of the area median income (AMI) up to 60% of AMI. The head of household for all of the elders' units must be age 55 or older. Elders must be capable of independent living and when elders can no longer live independently, Bridge Meadows helps them transition to an assisted living facility.

Elders must sign a lease addendum agreeing to volunteer with children living in the development for at least 100 hours per quarter. Elders may devote their volunteer time to many activities such as arts and crafts, outdoor recreation, cooking, babysitting, or other activities. Before volunteering, elders must undergo specialized training through the Oregon Department of Human Services, and Bridge Meadows staff ensure that elders understand and meet the needs of adoptive children and families.

Development costs for both the elder and family housing were separately financed with both public and private funds. A portion of the elder's development was financed with equity from the sale of low-income housing tax credits provided by the National Equity Fund's Portland office, as well as funding from the federal Tax Credit Assistance Program, Oregon's Low Income Weatherization Assistance program and Housing Development Grant Program. More than 24 foundations provided financing for the family portion of the development, which cost roughly $2.4 million. Given the high cost of housing in Los Angeles County, funding for this portion of the program would be significantly higher.

Figure 19.0 Bridge Meadows

97% of residents have maintained stable housing

100% of youth attend school regularly

85% of youth are doing better academically

90% of adoptive parents have accessed supportive services

88% of parents are confident parenting youth formerly in foster care

85% of elders have found a greater purpose

GEORGIA: FAITHBRIDGE FOSTER CARE

FaithBridge Foster Care consists of a ministry team that mobilizes, organizes, and equips a Community of Care©. For every five resource families, there are two respite families and 15 volunteers. According to Bob Bruder-Mattson, executive director of FaithBridge, the volunteer structure consists of some pastoral staff and people not engaged in full-time ministry. The Community of Care consists of at least one couple -- a husband and wife -- and if there are enough couples interested, may consist of two couples. The husband and wife perform exclusively administrative work and do not act as foster parents. They recruit families and identify matches for potential care teams. Taking into account the diversity of L.A. County, this model would need to be modified to be more inclusive of diverse family structures (i.e. LGBTQ families).

Figure 20.0 FaithBridge Foster Care Model
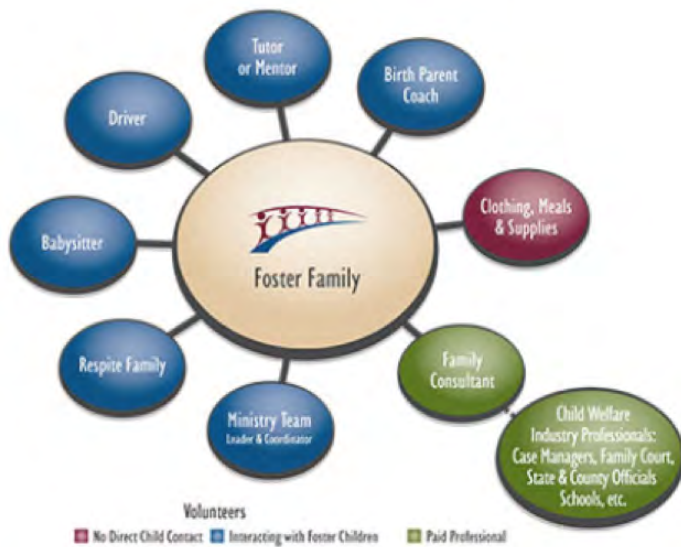
PAID STAFF

Paid staff include a family consultant, which the church surrounds with people who do not have direct interaction with the kids or families.

RESPITE

Interested families that volunteer are trained only for respite and will then be paired with a foster family as their respite family. Ministry team leaders and family consultants follow up with the foster families. At a higher level, the ministry team's efforts are all about how to support families collectively; activities include events such as date nights, social time, and peer-led support groups. It is the role of the church staff to drive awareness of the need and issues faced by foster youth and biological families. The commitment asked from interested families is at least six months, based on the expected placement length of stay of the child.

TRANSPORTATION

Is a critical need for families. Sixty percent of the children they work with are placed outside the county from which they are removed. A roster of volunteers is gathered to help with transportation, mainly with medical visits, and other visitation needs.

WASHINGTON: THE MOCKINGBIRD CONSTELLATION

In each Mockingbird Family Model (MFM) Constellation, six to 10 families (foster, kinship, foster-to-adopt, and birth families) live in close proximity to a central, licensed foster or respite care family (Hub Home) whose role is to provide support. The support provided through the Hub Home includes assistance in navigating systems, peer support for children and parents, impromptu and regularly scheduled social activities, planned respite nearly 24/7, and crisis respite as needed. According to Degale Cooper, The Mockingbird Family Model (MFM) is an intuitive way to structure foster care based on the extended-family concept. The model is underpinned by the following core principles:

- Community-based care-in the least restrictive and most appropriate living environment.

- Unconditional care-ensuring environments where children and youth thrive.

- Normalization of care-providing the same types of opportunities, supports and challenges as peers from intact families.

- Continuity of care-same community, same school, same sports team.

- Cultural relevancy-embedded into the caregiving environment.

- Biological family viewed as future support-children and youth taught the skills and boundaries necessary to establish and maintain family relationships.

- Caregiver support-taking good care of the folks who take good care of children and youth.

Figure 21.0 The Mockingbird Constellation Model

According to the Mockingbird Family Model evaluation completed by Loughborough University and published on October 2016, the hub caregivers were identified as being key to the success of MFM. Therefore, it is important to recruit highly experienced foster caregivers into the hub role.

All stakeholders must be familiar with the goals and process of delivery of the model. Implementation leaders must ensure that mechanisms are in place to support the constellation activities, without undermining the peer support element. Additionally, they must ensure there are protocols in place to address inconsistencies in care for children in the constellations, with appropriate attention paid to the specifics of the situation.

FOSTER AMERICA

Foster America is a unique nonprofit dedicated to improving and transforming the lives of children who are orphaned, abused, or neglected. Founder Sherry Lachman and fellows are laying the groundwork to scale nationally over the next five years, recruiting more than 100 new leaders for the child-welfare sector. An interesting factor about Foster America's recruitment process is that they enlist potential candidates from outside the child-welfare sector to bring a fresh perspective. Fellows' expertise ranges from finance, advertising, design, management, engineering, data, consumer research, and more. Bringing this model to L.A. County could help bring individuals from varied disciplines to focus on developing new recruitment strategies for resource families.

Figure 22.0 Foster America Model

Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 5
8 new fellows 3 jurisdictions	12 new fellows 7 jurisdictions	18 new fellows 9 jurisdictions	24 new fellows 12 jurisdictions	40 new fellows 20 jurisdictions

IV. PROPOSED PILOT MODELS

The goals for these model options are to develop capacity in both Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and in the faith sector to assess the cost effectiveness and outcomes improvement when recruitment is handled by organizations outside of DCFS. The problem we are seeking to address, is the disproportionality of communities in the system. An important question is, how do we address the many issues faced by the communities most impacted by detention rates. We must consider the strengths of the models suggested above, in relation to the factors and needs impacting each community. Given the size, complexity and diversity of L.A. County, we cannot take a "one-size-fits-all" approach. It may be necessary to establish "boutique" models within a larger framework depending on geographic locations.

TARGET OUTCOMES

Our model options aim to ensure that children and young people who have been in foster care experience:

- improved placement stability

- stronger birth family and sibling relationships

- more successful, early reunifications with birth family, where appropriate

- increased successful transition to other permanence options, when necessary

- more opportunities for the development of strong and lasting relationships with adults and within communities

- improved educational outcomes

The models aim to ensure that foster caregivers experience:

- improved peer support

- improved uptake of respite with consistent caregivers

- reduction in stress

- improved retention rates

1. FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE

One way to address the overrepresented Latino children, which are nearly 61% of population in care, may be by partnering with the Catholic Diocese and with FosterAll as potential lead agencies to assist with the recruitment of seasoned foster parents to be ambassadors for interested new resource parents. Likewise, in order to provide services for African American children, nearly 26% of population in care, partnering with five local African American churches, which have a significant presence in that community would allow for the selection of foster parent ambassadors within the ministry community. Based on the interest from the Fostering Home event, we have a community that is ripe and ready for partnering with the county to bring on a faith-based movement. One collaborative model, All Saints Church in Pasadena, CA, has cost $34,000 annually and provides services to more than 200 children each year[5]. However, the relatively low cost of the program has been due partly to its affluent congregation and a roster of 800 volunteers, including a former L.A. County program manager, which makes this an enviable though difficult model to replicate.

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[5]Jemmot Rollins Group Inc. "A Landscape Analysis of Faith-Based Support of Foster Care Families in Los Angeles County". February 10, 2016.

L.A. County

The first step in creating a faith based initiative, would be to find a collaborative leadership team and build awareness with pastors from interested congregations, as well as to identify leaders within specific communities with a passion and commitment to a ministry focused on foster children and families. The team must start with a strong ministry leadership team willing to pledge at least six months of their time and service. The second step may be to identify the different profiles for potential families. Socio-economic status could be a target factor, however, the message to all potential volunteers, families, and leaders, should be from a psycho-demographic and spiritual perspective. Meaning, we must help participants become aware of the significant roots of the issues facing their specific community and motivate each ministry by applying values and belief systems held by their congregation to address these issues. The third step may be education and training. Immersion training regarding issues faced by children and families involved in the child-welfare system and how their specific community is impacted will be useful. An additional period of hands-on activities will provide a more realistic experience of the challenges which need to be overcome in order to more successfully support the effort or recruitment and retention of resource families. This will improve their ability to create and lead the implementation process.

Misconceptions about Faith Community Engagement/Recruitment

As FosterAll Executive Director Lou Moore explains, "Upon joining FosterAll, I assumed that all faith-based congregations would embrace foster care and a multitude of people would step forward in churches to help a child. What I found was surprising and a bit sad. There are not volumes of people who will open their home to a child and not every congregation will join the cause." Moore explains that "faith communities are inundated with every cause in the county, in the nation and the world, let alone the many knocks on the door from nonprofits focused on fostering." She adds, "there are so many agencies working in foster care in LA County that it's confusing to faith leaders. Even more surprising was encountering pastors who had personally fostered but wouldn't speak about it to their congregation, while fewer faith leaders will actually speak about foster care from their pulpit. FosterAll's focus, now more than ever, has been to unpack the confusing landscape of the foster care system, the county, agencies, and other nonprofit foster-focused organizations and to be more creative, tenacious, and strategic in securing relationships with both faith and lay leaders. I still believe that great families and enormous support will come from our faith communities."

Another misconception is that faith communities who support foster care become directly involved with the cause. Moore explains, in some cases FosterAll has seen "faith communities participate in foster care by making donations to the county and county workers. However, this is done simply by a church staff member who goes online to Amazon and has it shipped out. The faith leaders are not necessarily engaging the congregation to participate, which is why a full-fledged Foster Care Program can activate congregants and really engage the cause, effectively setting the stage for recruitment efforts." Things to consider in L.A. County is that there must be a specific contact or congregation consultant that can be reached by the ministry team and families at any point in time to ensure follow-up, follow-through, and to ensure an open line of communication is maintained.

> *"faith communities are inundated with every cause in the county, in the nation and the world, let alone the many knocks on the door from nonprofits focused on fostering."*

Cost Analysis for L.A. County

Considering the scale of L.A. County SPAs and regions, assuming that at least three paid positions are needed to maintain an operation year-round per area, the coordinating agency would require an annual budget between $250,000 and $300,000 designated for the pilot program. It is safe to assume that a $100,000 grant from the county, and smaller annual project support grants (between $15,000 and $30,000) from 10 or more funders would fund a pilot per year for up to three years. Additional funding for an independent evaluation, which would inform practical adjustments to the programs, would round out the costs.

2. NON-RELATED/SPECIALIZED POPULATIONS

Another recommendation is to shift recruitment out of DCFS to organizations that specialize in recruitment of families for children in need of temporary homes. This effort could focus on non-related resource parents and those providing foster care for specialized populations of children. DCFS could create sub-contracts with community-based providers/different agencies to address specific needs of a population and community in each area. A new path of approval may be created, led by the private sector where interested foster/resource parents complete the process through a different path organized by a connecting lead agency or organization. An evaluation could be developed to measure permanency, placement stability, and caregiver retention among other outcomes. Goals and incentives could be created for each special-needs group of children. A community-based partner would be the leader and a data analyst would be identified to assist with the collection and analysis of data, management, and evaluation. These would likely need to be paid staff positions, and additional support staff would need to be identified. This could address the workload and backlogs that DCFS workers, Social, APT, and Outreach and Recruitment teams are facing. Special attention to the following populations should be addressed:

- Birth to 5

- Members of sibling groups

- Children of underrepresented ethnic and racial heritage, including LGBTQ, who are overrepresented in the child-welfare system

- Children who exhibit difficult behaviors such as sexually acting out, physical aggression, mental health issues, moderate to severe developmental disabilities, and who are medically fragile

3. THE MOCKINGBIRD CONSTELLATION

Not only does the Mockingbird Family Model assist in sibling sets, but it may be viewed as a long-term initiative with specific objectives and long-term outcomes. A pilot could be created with one or several Foster Family Agencies and target 0-5 children and teens (possible siblings).

According to Degale Cooper, director of Family Programs for The Mockingbird Society, the purpose of the Mockingbird Family Model (MFM) Replicating Agency Organizational Self-Assessment is to evaluate an agency's capability to implement the Mockingbird Family Model as a practice framework supporting the delivery of foster care and improving caregiver retention. The self-assessment is organized by competencies (three sections) and subsections (roles and responsibilities) considered essential for agencies replicating the MFM.

Section 1: MFM Replicating Agency

- Relationship to the child welfare system

- Marketing capability

- Funding advocacy

Section 2: Thought Leader

To ensure an alignment exists between the candidate Replicating Agency's mission, values and overarching philosophies with the Mockingbird Family Model's Core Principles for grounding and reshaping frontline practice in a thoughtful, integrated model of practice - a Practice Leader is essential. The following qualifications are recommended:

- Agency strategically aligned with the Mockingbird Family Model Core Principles

- Practice Leadership

Section 3: MFM Replication Oversight

To create a dedicated and trained staff, certified by The Mockingbird Society, to provide technical assistance, training, consulting and fidelity monitoring to partnering agencies *(Host Agencies)* who will reshape foster-care support utilizing the Model-MFM Expertise Role[6].

To provide overarching communication, coordination, and fidelity oversight to Host Agencies supporting the development and maintenance of a cohesive MFM network-Replication Management Role.

- Program and change management expertise

- Staffing capability

- Collaborative problem solving

- Process capability

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Organizations should discuss the adoption of a framework/model for practice by asking the most basic of questions. The following should be defined:

Practice: the values, principles, relationships, approaches and techniques used at the system and casework practitioner level to enable children and families to achieve goals of safety, stability, permanency, and well-being.

Framework: a structure to hold together or support something; an underlying set of ideas, principles, agreements or rules that provides the basis and outline for something intended to be more fully developed at a later stage.

Some of the potential models we are suggesting do not fall under current policy/legislation. This suggests that the experience of policy experts/advocates will be needed in order to facilitate the implementation of any changes. Finally, as pointed out earlier, it is important to acknowledge the scale and size, as well as the complex nature of L.A. County as compared to other localities. Factors such as density, poverty, socioeconomic status, housing availability, low-income housing availability, gentrification, and other issues specific to L.A. County need to be addressed when choosing/modifying any existing models.

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[6]The Mockingbird Model Replicating Agency Packet *Confidential, obtained with permission.

I know firsthand the traumas of growing up in the system. As a child who experienced physical and sexual abuse in the hands of the individuals that created me, I entered the system at a young age and was emancipated when I was 19. I was in nine placements throughout and was never adopted, but was raised and given guidance along the way by individuals who took the time to see the goodness in me. Having a solid foundation from the very beginning of existence is important. There are so many things I did not know that I attempted to figure out on my own, but paid the consequences for not knowing. Although I faced many hardships, including homelessness, I am here today not only because of my resilience and idea of something better, but also because of the patience, understanding, and love from strangers I met throughout my life who allowed me to see that greatness in me in every phase of my life up to now.

Now, as an adult who continues to evolve and grow, my aim is to heal children in the system, and the system itself. Once a child enters the system, simply by that introduction, there is trauma. But that doesn't have to continue and the experience doesn't have to negatively color the rest of their lives.

After working on this landscape analysis, I have found that there are so many people – individuals and entities – who truly care and want to change the system. It is clear to me that, as a team, we have the potential to impact the trajectories of every child in the system and that is a critical responsibility. To do that, it will require strong collaboration and accountability.

Just as we former foster children have the opportunity to change and rewrite our personal narratives, we as providers and creators of culture must rewrite the story as well. We must motivate and inspire not only the children and families we are serving, but one another – all of those dedicated individuals who also experience sleepless nights, the daunting challenge of human logistics and passion at times so intense it seems it could drain our souls.

This is an opportunity to acknowledge all of the people committed and ready to act and to be mindful of the souls who need our care, inspiration, and motivation. We are not and must not be only service providers, but healing providers. We must remember that we can and may always be someone else's reason to be better.

-- Jaemmie Cañas

1. RAISEACHILD

Contact	Interview Date	Address	Focus	Foster Care Services Offered
Richard Valenza Sonja Lee	July 17, 2017	695 S. Vermont Suite S-1201 Los Angeles, CA 90005	Recruitment of Foster Parents	Outreach Campaigns, Parent Advocate, Education Programs, Agency Coaching
Mission				
Recruits, educates, and nurtures supportive relationships equally with all prospective foster and adoptive parents while partnering with agencies to improve the process of advancing foster children to safe, loving, and permanent homes.				

2. KFAM

Contact	Interview Date	Address	Focus	Foster Care Services Offered
Connie Chung Joe	July 17, 2017	3727 W. 6th St #320 Los Angeles, CA 90020	Asian Foster Family Initiative	Clinical Counseling, Outreach & Education, Family Violence, Child Wellness, Community Programs
Mission				
Provides individual, couple, family and group counseling to Korean American adults and children, adolescents, and families in Los Angeles County.				

3. FOSTERALL *(Formerly Known As Child S.H.A.R.E.)*

Contact	Interview Date	Address	Focus	Foster Care Services Offered
Lou Moore Amanda Bell	July 20, 2017	1544 W. Glenoaks Blvd. Glendale, CA 91201	Faith-Based Recruitment Program Family Support Services	Support, Advocacy, and Resources for churches, community, and families
Mission				
To recruit families for abused and abandoned (at-risk) children who enter the foster care system and to provide critically needed support and education to these heroic resource/foster families				

4. WAYFINDER FAMILY SERVICES *(FORMERLY KNOWN AS JUNIOR BLIND OF AMERICA)*

Contact	Interview Date	Address	Focus	Foster Care Services Offered
Carina Casco Miki Jordan, Jay Allen	August 3, 2017	5300 Angeles Vista Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90043	Children, Youth, and Adult Services	Blind Babies Foundation, Children's Group Homes, Concept 7 Foster Family Agency and Adoption Services, Transitional Shelter Care Program
Mission				
Children, youth, and adults facing the greatest challenges always have a place to turn.				

5. KIDSAVE

Contact	Interview Date	Address	Focus	Foster Care Services Offered
Lauren Gordon	August 4, 2017	100 Corporate Pointe, Culver City, CA 90230	Hosting	A partnership with LADCFS
Mission				
Create change so children grow up in families and connected to caring adults.				

6. FOSTER MORE

Contact	Interview Date	Address	Focus	Foster Care Services Offered
Mark Daley Jennifer Perry	August 16, 2017	Los Angeles, CA	Coalition of entertainment, media, business, and philanthropic organizations working to deliver a better future for youth in foster care	"go-to resource" for anyone looking to support foster youth, while serving as a conduit to local organizations across the country
Mission				
Coalition of not for profit organizations and foundations raising awareness about youth in the foster care system.				

7. ANGELS IN WAITING

Contact	Interview Date	Address	Focus	Foster Care Services Offered
Linda West	August 24, 2017	27689 Mattrhrn Dr, Lake Arrowhead, CA 92352	Medically Fragile Foster Youth	Foster Nurses
Mission				
To help the rising population of America's most vulnerable infants and children by ensuring they grow up in the loving homes, hearts and hands of nurses.				

8. OLIVECREST

Contact	Interview Date	Address	Focus	Foster Care Services Offered
Danny Sells Sharon Dean	August 31, 2017	3 locations in LA County	At-Risk Children	Loving Homes. Tools for Success
Mission				
Dedicated to Preventing child abuse, to Treating and Educating at-risk children and to Preserving the family one life at a time.				

9. ALLIANCE FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Contact	Interview Date	Address	Focus	Foster Care Services Offered
Barbara Facher Lisa Winebarger Lara Holtzman	September 12, 2017	3333 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90010	Children and Families	By providing free legal services, advocacy, and programs that create pathways to jobs and education, the Alliance levels the playing field and ensures that children who have experienced foster care are able to fulfill their potential
Mission				
Protects the rights of impoverished, abused and neglected children and youth.				

10. CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE INC.

Contact	Interview Date	Address	Focus	Foster Care Services Offered
Angela Barbie	September 12, 2017	2121 W Temple St, Los Angeles, CA 90026	Provides healing so traumatized children can recover and lead healthy lives, while working to shape the field of children's services through innovative research, demonstration projects, and professionally accredited training programs	Mental Health Services, Early Care and Education Programs, Child Welfare Services, Family Support Services, Youth Development Services
Mission				
CII helps children in Los Angeles's most challenged communities heal from the trauma of family and community violence, build the confidence and skills to break through the barriers of poverty, and grow up to lead healthy, productive lives.				

11. FAITHBRIDGE FOSTER CARE

Contact	Interview Date	Address	Focus	Foster Care Services Offered
Bob Bruder-Mattson	September 28, 2017	Georgia	Foster Care and the Local Christian Church	Ministry Team to facilitate a FaithBridge Community of Care (CoC)
Mission				
To mobilize, organize, and equip local churches to solve their community's foster care crisis.				

12. CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER OF CALIFORNIA

Contact	Interview Date	Address	Focus	Foster Care Services Offered
Susan Abrams	October 10, 2017	201 Centre Plaza Drive Monterey Park, CA 91754	Children, Youth, and Families	Training, education, legal representation
Mission				
A non profit, public interest law firm that provides legal representation for tens of thousands of children impacted by abuse and neglect				

Appendix B. List of Interviews with Subject Matter Experts

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION/DEPARTMENT
Susan Abrams	Policy Director	Children's Law Center of Los Angeles
Jay Allen, M.A.	Executive Vice President and COO	Wayfinder Family Services (formerly known as Junior Blind of America)
Amanda Bell	Development Officer	FosterAll
Bob Bruder-Mattson	CEO	FaithBridge Foster Care
Nicole Cadena	Assistant Director	Children's Action Network
Corina Casco, LCSW	Chief Program Officer	Wayfinder Family Services (formerly known as Junior Blind of America)
Connie Chung Joe, J.D.	Executive Director	KFAM
Degale Cooper	Director of Family Programs	The Mockingbird Society
Mark Daley	Executive Director	FosterMore
Sharon Dean	Chief Administrative Officer	Olivecrest
Kelvin Driscoll	Children and Human Services Deputy	Office of Supervisor Janice Hahn Fourth District, Los Angeles County
Taylor Dudley	Children's Deputy	LA County Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Hilda Solis
Barbara Facher, MSW	Social Worker	Alliance for Children's Rights
Dorothy Fleisher, Ph.D.	Program Director	W. M. Keck Foundation
Seyron Foo	Director, Public Policy & Government Relation	Southern California Grantmakers
Wendy Garen	President and CEO	The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
Sari Grant, LCSW	Children's Services Administrator III	DCFS, Adoption, Kinship & Support LA County DCFS RFSP Division
Daniel Heimpel	President	Fostering Media Connections
Lara Holtzman, Esq.	Managing Attorney	Alliance for Children's Rights
Emily Putnam-Hornstein	Director	Children's Data Network
Tamara N. Hunter, MSW	Executive Director	Commission for Children & Families Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors
Miki Jordan, M.S.	President/CEO	Wayfinder Family Services (formerly known as Junior Blind of America)
Kathy Jura	Director of Foster Youth Initiative	PBS SoCal
Angela Karimyan	Children Services Administrator	DCFS
Elizabeth Kurila	Vice President of Development	PBS SoCal
Sherry Lachman	Founder & Executive Director	Foster America

Appendix B. List of Interviews with Subject Matter Experts *(continued)*

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION/DEPARTMENT
Mary Landrieu	Senator	Louisiana
Audra Langley, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry	UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior
Zahirah Mann	Program Officer	The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
Lou Moore	Executive Director	FosterAll
Jennifer Perry	Executive Director	Children's Action Network
Lisa Pinto	Child Welfare Deputy	Office of Supervisor Kuehl, LA County District 3
Nina Powell M.S.W	Division Chief	DCFS Resource Family Recruitment & Approval & Parents in Partnership
Lauren Reicher-Gordon	VP and Director of Family Visit Programs	Kidsave
Karen D. Richardson, LCSW	Deputy Director	DCFS Juvenile Court Services and Adoptions Bureau
Michael K Ross	Assistant Regional Administrator	DCFS Accelerated Placement Team/Transitional Shelter Care
Naftali Sampson	Division Chief	Dept. of Children & Family Services Out-of-Home Care Management Division
Angie Schwartz	Policy Director	Alliance for Children's Rights
Danny L. Sells	National Director	Safe Families for Children at Olivecrest
Anneli Stone, MPA	Senior Program Officer	W. M. Keck Foundation
Jillian Tempesta	Development Manager	PBS SoCal
Maricruz Trevino	Division Chief	DCFS Transitional Shelter Care Program
Rich Valenza	Founder & CEO	RaiseAChild
Michelle Vega	Family and Children's Deputy	Supervisor Kathryn Barger, 5th District
John Wagner	Executive Vice President	First 5 LA
Winnie Wechsler	Executive Director	Anthony & Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation
Elise N. Weinberg	Policy Director	Alliance for Children's Rights
Linda West-Conforti RN	Founder	Angels in Waiting
Lisa Winebarger	Staff Attorney	Alliance for Children's Rights

Appendix C. Works Consulted

The Anne E. Casey Foundation. *A Movement to Transform Foster Parenting.* August, 2016

Association of Community Human Service Agencies. *Foster Family Recruitment: Reasons Families Do Not Complete the Certification Process Survey Results.* December, 2014

Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection. *The Road to Safety for Our Children.* 2015

Bureau of Clinical Resources and Services. *Young Children in Care: Facts About Outcomes in Young Children in Open DCFS Cases and What We Need to Do to Improve Their Lives.* April, 2016

California Child Welfare Council. *Building a System of Support for Young Children in Foster Care.* September, 2013

California Department of Social Services. *California's Child Welfare Continuum of Care Reform.* January, 2015

Casey Family Programs. *Effective Practices in Foster Parent Recruitment, Infrastructure, and Retention.* December, 2015

Children's Bureau. *Kinship Caregiver and the Child Welfare System.* May, 2016

Department of Children and Family Services. Resource Family Recruitment Recommendations. February, 2016

Fostering Media Connections. *The Chronicles of Social Change: Where Do We Go From Here.* 2016

The Fostering Network. *Why Foster Carers Care: How Understanding Values Can Transform Relationships and Improve Services.* 2013

Harris Poll: Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. *U.S. Foster Care Attitudes Survey.* February, 2017

Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. *Foster Parent and Relative Caregiver Recruitment, Retention and Support Plan Los Angeles County.* 2015

San Diego State University School of Social Work. *Public Child Welfare Training Academy: Research Summary: Supporting, Retaining & Recruiting Resource Families.* October, 2015

San Diego State University, Department of Psychology. *KEEP Foster Parent Training Intervention: Model Description and Effectiveness.* January, 2009

The Mockingbird Society. *The Mockingbird Model: An Innovative Approach for Child Welfare Reform.* July, 2015

UCLA, DCFS & Pritzker Family Foundation. *Resource Family Recruitment in Los Angeles County.* October, 2015

Youth Law Center/County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency. 2016 QPI Accomplishments. January, 2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PROJECT UPDATE

Landscape Analysis of Recruitment of Resource Families for Children from 0-5 Population in Los Angeles County

Conducted by Gita Cugley & Associates
December 15, 2017

INTRODUCTION

This landscape analysis identifies public and private efforts supporting the recruitment of resource families for the 0-5 population in Los Angeles County. The 0-5 population is disproportionately represented in L.A. County's child-welfare system, and its critical needs and permanent brain development are directly linked to stability. The in-depth examination of recruitment methods and the identification of appropriate resource families in this landscape analysis could provide this stability.

OVERVIEW

Background

Los Angeles County is a large urban area approximately 4,000 square miles, comprising 88 cities and numerous unincorporated communities covering an area larger than the states of Delaware and Rhode Island, combined. Living across this large landscape are approximately 10 million ethnically and culturally diverse groups of residents. Approximately 2.3 million of these residents are children between the ages of 0 and 18. L.A. County is governed by dozens of adjacent and sometimes overlapping city municipal governments, and a five-member Board of Supervisors (BOS) who provide leadership and oversight for 37 County departments and approximately 200 committees and commissions. Within this structure, the BOS oversees the largest child protective service agency in the nation through the L.A. Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

Working with other County departments, DCFS is focused on having children thrive in safe families and supportive communities.

Working with other County departments, DCFS is focused on having children thrive in safe families and supportive communities. DCFS' primary responsibilities are to ensure child safety, placement permanency, and access to needed supports for children within its care. DCFS' range of services includes but is not limited to emergency response, in-home family maintenance (preventative), out-of-home support, and foster-care services. With its $2.2-billion annual budget, the department employs approximately 8,800 staff and serves approximately 35,000 children and their families monthly. Nearly 14,000 of these children are in out-of-home foster-care placements. Of that 14,000, 43% (6,020) are children age birth to 5, 90% of whom are removed from their homes due to neglect; Black and Latino children (26% and 61%, respectively) make up the greatest number receiving DCFS services.

System Involvement and Placements

The initial point of entry for children ages 0-18 into the child-welfare system is an in-person response or visit from a DCFS social worker tasked with following up on a report of danger or risk to the child's safety. If the social worker identifies a potential risk that cannot be mitigated immediately, they must remove the child from their home and connect them with a relative caregiver, if possible, first or, second, a temporary foster placement through either a resource family or congregate care until an investigation is complete. In addition to determining risk, identifying placements, and providing the proper investigation, DCFS social workers must ensure that children in their care have access to any additional necessary services, including education and educational supports, transportation, and physical, dental, and mental health services. The services must be regionally accessible to the child's placement.

To expedite permanency for children, DCFS targets recruitment of resource families based on the individualized needs of children and has enhanced coordination of community placement activities with 50 Foster Family Agencies (FFAs) across LA County. Resource families (formerly known as foster parents; throughout this report we will be using these terms interchangeably) provide home-based family care in a nurturing environment to support children under the County's care. The resource families could be recruited and supported by DCFS or a host of other organizations that interact with the system. DCFS' work in this area is dynamic and fluid, affected by many factors in the current environment. Currently, the child-welfare system is undergoing structural reforms to the way permanency and wellbeing for children is accomplished. With the implementation of state Assembly Bill (AB) 403 – Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) –placement strategies and services within the child-welfare system must now focus on transitioning children out of group homes to home-based families.

To expedite permanency for children, DCFS targets recruitment of resource families based on the individualized needs of children...

Landscape Analysis Methodology

This landscape analysis was conducted in phases. The first phase focused on children ages 0-5, who are most likely to come from ethnic communities and whose development is most directly linked to stability. An in-depth look at existing recruitment methods for this target population identifies areas where improvement is needed to achieve the best possible permanency options. In addition, the analysis explores current trends in the recruitment space, which can inform the design and implementation of any new or revamped recruitment strategies. These strategies could be applied by engaging a range of stakeholders, e.g. through a collaborative or collective impact model.

Various methods and resources were used to collect information for this analysis, including:

- Data and statistics for DCFS detained children of all ages and for those 0-5, specifically;

- Existing literature regarding service models on resource family and similar recruitment, the child-welfare system, and caregiver and parent training, and outcomes;

- Interviews with subject matter experts from the child-welfare sector and community based organizations active in recruiting resource families; and

- Surveys and focus groups with foster parents, legal advocates, FFAs, and DCFS staff.

Findings

There are a wealth of promising strategies and models that DCFS and its partners could implement to increase the number of permanent placements and resource families available to children ages 0-5. Findings from the literature, structured interviews, surveys, and focus groups are highlighted below:

- There currently is no data system tracking resource family recruitment efforts countywide. The lack of a singular data system creates a missed opportunity for building upon existing recruitment efforts in order to increase the number of resource families.

- Based on the disproportionate number of Black and Latino children in the child-welfare system, recruitment efforts focused on specific communities and cultural competencies are needed.

- There is an existing two-tiered resource family onboarding system for FFAs and the County. This two-tiered system results in inconsistent standards and protocols for bringing on resource families, which can be confusing.

- While initial efforts to recruit additional resource families through customer-service focused Outreach Teams have demonstrated success, additional staff resources are needed to provide onboarding and support services to resource families currently in the system and additional families to be identified through reform efforts.

- The faith-based sector is an untapped resource for community-based recruitment efforts of resource families. Communities are nimble, able to respond to crisis and provide on the ground support, which makes churches an ideal ground for recruitment efforts.

- Focus groups identified one of the largest barriers in placing 0-5 children was the need to keep sibling sets together. While there were homes willing to take on a single child, they were not willing to commit to taking on additional children. There are long-standing benefits to keeping siblings in care together.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, this analysis sets forth recommendations for further development and implementation. Recruitment strategies and models identified through this analysis demonstrate the greatest potential for exponentially increasing the number of resource parents countywide.

Recommended Policy Strategies

1. Create a matching system for placement of children in resource families that:

- Compiles data on current and potential resource families, which could aid in selecting appropriate homes for children based on matching between resource family strengths and the unique needs of each foster child; and

- Employs an appropriate system of matching children to homes that enhances placement options and prevents unnecessary placement disruptions, caused by pairing resource families with the individualized needs of the child. Successfully matched resource families may ease the disproportional representation of specific communities in the child-welfare system.

> *There are a wealth of promising strategies and models that DCFS and its partners could implement to increase the number of permanent placements and resource families available to children ages 0-5.*

2. Launch a media campaign highlighting information on three key factors related to becoming a resource family, including:

- The value of a resource family;

- The experience of a foster youth; and

- The resources and processes involved in becoming a resource family, on both a temporary and permanent basis.

3. Create a more collaborative versus competitive system among FFAs by:

- Standardizing the process for licensing resource families, while providing specialized outreach and recruitment efforts based on the uniqueness of each community; and

- Encouraging specialized outreach and recruitment that provides tailored community strategies while standardizing onboarding, including family orientation, training, and paperwork across agencies (i.e., DCFS, FFAs, and CBOs), resulting in licensing as a resource family. This would improve communication across systems and diminish confusion caused by inconsistent onboarding processes.

4. Dedicate additional County resources to create an earmarked budget to support the effective execution of resource family recruitment efforts by FFAs, including data collection requirements for performance outcomes.

5. Develop a triaging model for onboarding and processing efforts that ensures child-family match cases are prioritized first, particularly in cases where siblings are not placed in the same home.

6. Demonstrate ongoing care, support, and reinforcements for resource families by implementing a customer service culture for recruitment and retention.

Recommended Recruitment and Retention Models

This analysis identified models that are currently being implemented in L.A. or other jurisdictions and demonstrate effectiveness in bolstering resource family recruitment and retention efforts. An important consideration given the size and complex nature of L.A. County is the scalability of model programs. Programs need to be implemented across a vast physical area, while at the same time meet the needs of very diverse communities. In this regard, the issue of disproportionality is a salient one. Certain ethnic and racial communities are overrepresented within the child-welfare system. Therefore, surveying and addressing communities that are most impacted could be the initial way to fund, organize, and prioritize implementation efforts across the county. Recommendations include:

1. Targeted Recruitment:

- Develop data and predictive analytics for targeted recruitment efforts, particularly for communities with precise demographics and audiences.

- Employing the faith-based community to conduct resource family recruitment efforts that are culturally relevant.

2. Secure specialized recruitment contracts:

- Implement specialized recruitment contracts that focus on matching children ages 0-5 with resource families based on the individualized needs of the child, and the capacity and strengths of the resource families, particularly for cases in which placement of siblings in the same home is optimal.

3. Marketing and Communications:

- Employ specialized marketing and recruitment agencies to produce a collaborative marketing strategy to outreach to potential resource parents.

- Use collaborative media campaigns to improve the narrative of DCFS involved children and youth and what it means to be a foster or resource parent.

- Design a digital communication program to chronicle resources for families, and accessible information for on the spot training.

- Develop a database for tracking and communication of services and case efforts provided to children awaiting permanency to be used by service providers and recruitment partners.

4. Intergenerational or Hub Based Supports and Services:

- Implement resource family support models such as the Mockingbird Family Model (MFM), to create community supports in helping resource families keep sibling sets together and deliver better outcomes for youth. Not only does the MFM model assist in sibling sets, according to the University of Washington, School of Social Work, findings demonstrate that of the MFM youth that exited foster care, 90% were discharged to a permanent home and 83% of children experienced zero placement changes.

- Create intentional communities that have structures for reducing social isolation in diverse communities, providing long-term supports for families that benefit children, youth, adults, and the elderly.

NEXT STEPS

The full landscape analysis will be available by January 2018. That document includes the guiding questions for this analysis, a detailed discussion on the methods used for collecting data, and a complete literature review. It also includes a list of the essential, local nongovernmental partners who are shaping the work around recruitment of resource parents as well as promising strategies and models for increasing the recruitment of resource families for children ages 0-5 in Los Angeles County.