Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan

During the past year foster care licensing transferred from Child Protection Services (CPS) to the Office of Licensing and Accreditation (OLA). The new office is within the Department of Social Services (DSS). Prior to OLA, CPS employed 18.5 Family Services Specialists to oversee licensing of foster families and approval of adoptive families. Under OLA, the current foster care licensing staff consists of an Administrator, Program Manager, Licensing Supervisor and 10 Licensing Specialists. Licensing Specialists are located throughout the state and cover a larger area and are assigned more licensed foster families than in the past; however, they are no longer required to complete additional CPS duties. CPS and OLA share responsibility for recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families.

The number of licensed foster families in South Dakota has decreased over the past year. There were 881 licensed foster families on May 31, 2020. As of May 31, 2021, there are 854 licensed foster families.

CPS and OLA continue to utilize the Family and Children Information System (FACIS) to inform the development of the division’s recruitment plan for foster and adoptive parents. FACIS provides real time data such as age, gender, race, and tribal affiliation of children and youth in custody. The data is available by office, region, and statewide, allowing staff to have the data at their fingertips to analyze trends. The FACIS data elements have not yet been implemented to track when brothers and sisters are placed together or separately; however, this information continues to be tracked by the seven CPS Regional Managers. A standardized needs assessment was conducted in May 2021 to determine recruitment needs for regional recruitment plans for SFY2022 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022). A set of data elements related to children in care and available foster and adoptive families was gathered and analyzed across the state. Most of the information gathered was available through FACIS, although additional information about specific child needs and families available for placement was gathered by the Licensing Supervisor and CPS staff who could provide more specifics related to children in care and family availability, e.g., LGBTQ youth, teens with own children, child medical needs, or child behavioral needs.

Key considerations in recruiting families continue to be age and race, with approximately 73% of the children in custody between the ages of 0-11 and 67.6% of the children and youth in custody being Native American. Native Americans make up 9% of the population in South Dakota, therefore creating a significant challenge to recruit an adequate pool of Native American resource families. In SFY2021 there are 87 Native American foster homes, which is two fewer than the number of Native American foster homes reported in SFY2020. Recruiting families for teenagers remains a challenge. Youth ages 12-18 are approximately 27% of the youth in custody; 49% of these youth are placed in family settings. CPS and OLA continue to see a trend of youth placed in CPS custody due to mental health and behavioral needs their families cannot meet. It remains especially challenging to locate placement resources for youth discharging from group care or residential treatment. Families are needed with special skills in caring for children with significant developmental delays, significant behavioral needs, genetic disorders, prenatal drug and alcohol effects, drug-addicted newborns, and rare/complex medical diagnoses.

The most recent data reflects 162 sibling groups of brothers and sisters statewide are currently placed in different homes, compared to 158 sibling groups placed in different homes during the same time period last year. Monthly assessments identifying opportunities to place siblings together are required in policy. CPS offers additional supports, including financial support, to assist families willing to keep siblings together. An initiative regarding separated brothers and
sisters started in September 2020 and concluded in April 2021. All staff were required to assist in reviewing split brother and sister cases in each Region. Two or three Consultants from State Office and other Regions were selected to assist. The number of cases reviewed in each Region is selected based on the total number of split sibling cases. Review teams are formed in each Region with approximately five cases per team to review, considering at least 40% of cases reviewed, sometimes more.

The case reviews conducted helped identify the factors contributing to the increase in siblings placed separately. One of the outcomes was the additional oversite by State Office staff during monthly split brother(s) and sister(s) meetings. Each Region will develop a CQI plan to address trends relating to split brother(s) and sister(s) if needed; at this time two Regions have developed CQI plans. Following the case review process, each Region implemented ongoing monthly meetings, with State Office oversight, to review the status of split sibling groups and discuss strategies to overcome barriers.

Data from FACIS as of May 31, 2021, utilized to inform recruitment efforts follows.

**Percentage of Children in Custody Statewide by Age Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>0-4</th>
<th>5-11</th>
<th>12-15</th>
<th>16-18</th>
<th>19-21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage in Custody</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage in Family Setting*</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This number does not include children and youth in trial reunification.

**Gender of Children in Custody Statewide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Race of Children in Custody Statewide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hawaiian/Pacific</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>.5%</td>
<td>.2%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tribal Affiliation: Number of Children in Basic Foster Home Placement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Sisseton Wahpeton</th>
<th>Standing Rock</th>
<th>Crow Creek</th>
<th>Cheyenne River</th>
<th>Lower Brule</th>
<th>Oglala Nation</th>
<th>Rosebud</th>
<th>Flandreau Santee</th>
<th>Yankton</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tribal Affiliation: Number of Children in Basic Foster Home Placement by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Sisseton Wahpeton</th>
<th>Standing Rock</th>
<th>Crow Creek</th>
<th>Cheyenne River</th>
<th>Lower Brule</th>
<th>Oglala Nation</th>
<th>Rosebud</th>
<th>Flandreau Santee</th>
<th>Yankton</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

South Dakota is comprised of a diverse population of families from many races and cultures. Native American children and families constitute the highest percentage by race receiving services from Child Protection Services.

Five of the nine Native American tribes in South Dakota license tribal foster homes in their area. Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Oglala Sioux Tribe, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, and Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe each have IV-E agreements and license tribal foster homes. The Crow Creek Sioux Tribe signed a Memorandum of Understanding with CPS to license foster homes. South Dakota Native Foster Care (SDNFC) is a tribal-state foster care recruitment and retention campaign focused on increasing placement resources for Native American children. The SDNFC Facebook page continues to provide information about fostering and adopting, as well as upcoming recruitment events.

South Dakota’s foster care recruitment program, Foster One, continues to be the State’s recruitment program in the five-year plan. In May 2021, the State launched the **Stronger Families Together** foster and adoptive parent recruitment and support campaign to shift the vision of foster families to be a support for families - not just the child. Foster and adoptive family recruitment promotes this approach to include the following principles:

- All children deserve to grow up in a family where they are loved and protected.
- Foster families are needed to care for children and support their families when they are experiencing challenges that cause the children to be unsafe.
- Encouragement, support, and services are needed for parent, kinship families, foster families, and adoptive families to provide the best care possible for children.
- Families are needed to provide children a safe, stable, and permanent forever family if they cannot return home.

The following entities across South Dakota are working together for **Stronger Families Together**: Governor’s Office, DSS, CPS, OLA, South Dakota Kids Belong (SDKB), Tribal child welfare programs, foster and adoptive parents, foster care alumni, business leaders, faith-based organizations, private adoption agencies, and child placement agencies. Recruitment strategies include the following:

1. Launched the event on May 11, 2021 to communicate the vision and call to action. This event was led by Governor Noem with support from CPS, OLA and SDKB.
2. Continued messaging of the vision and call to action statewide via news stories, testimonials, websites, social media, and e-mails. The FosterOne website has been updated with the Stronger Families Together information and testimonials as of May 1, 2021. Additional testimonials will be added to the website as the initiative continues.

3. Monthly statewide activities are scheduled to highlight fostering and adopting throughout 2021 - 2022.

4. Targeted regional recruitment activities are planned with faith-based and community organizations to provide outreach and up-close opportunities to engage potential foster families. A schedule is being developed to rotate targeted recruitment based on the need. Specific CPS Regions for this targeted recruitment will be 1 (Rapid City), 3 (Eagle Butte, Mobridge, and Pierre) and 4 (Chamberlain, Winner, and Mission).

The goal for the Stronger Families Together campaign is to recruit an additional 300 families from May 1, 2021 through April 30, 2022. The four-year goal for this campaign is to recruit a total of 1,200 families.

The Stronger Families Together initiative incorporates the following efforts:

- **Faith-Based Presentations**
  - South Dakota Kids Belong and CPS have been working together to educate church congregations about the need for more foster and adoptive families since 2018. These efforts began Spring 2018 in the Northern Black Hills.
    - In the last year (May 2020 - May 2021), 25 presentations have been made to different churches across the state.

- **Wrap-Around Services**
  - During church presentations a call is made to congregations to step forward and provide wrap-around services such as respite care, babysitting, meal preparation, yardwork, and other acts of service for foster families.
    - SDKB is working closely with the faith community and businesses in Sturgis, Deadwood, Hot Springs, Custer, Rapid City and Sioux Falls areas to provide wrap around services to existing families. SDKB plans to expand wrap around services to all communities across the state.
    - As of June 2021, there are 103 total wrap-around members supporting foster and adoptive parents. South Dakota Kids Belong hired a Wrap-Around Coordinator to assist with the statewide coordination of wrap-around services.

- **Media**
  - South Dakota Kids Belong Facebook Page
    - South Dakota Kids Belong maintains a Facebook page and maintains daily activity with its followers by posting information about fostering and adopting, foster and adoptive family testimonials, and specific recruitment needs in South Dakota.
  - Foster One Website
    - Features information about the Stronger Families Together campaign with action steps for getting involved along with progress on the yearly recruitment goals.
  - Press Release Plan
    - Was developed for the first year of the campaign to draw attention to monthly themes about the need for more foster and adoptive families in South Dakota and in conjunction with monthly recruitment events.
• **Business**
  - Businesses are provided an opportunity to support children in foster care, foster families, and adoptive families in their community in the following ways:
    - Helping current foster parents who are employees and educate employees to become foster parents.
    - Fulfilling a dream for a child in care or youth transitioning into adulthood.
    - Create an internship for youth who has or is experiencing the foster care system
    - Leveraging products or services to support foster parents.
    - Partnering with the “I Belong Project” and state-wide initiatives to recruit and retain more than enough safe, loving families in SD.
  - A pilot program began in April 2021 in the Northern Black Hills area (Sturgis and Deadwood) to provide opportunity for businesses to join an app to connect with area foster parents who they aim to support. Participating businesses may provide their information on the “Foster Friendly” app. Foster families receive an identification card with their name and the date the foster care license is valid. Foster families may download the Foster Friendly app through Google Play, App Store, or Microsoft Store. Once the app is downloaded, families can easily identify local business that are offering their services with a discount. Foster families will show their identification card to obtain discounts offered. Once the pilot is operational and tested, this program will expand across the state.

• **“I Belong” Project**
  - Gives a face and voice to children eligible for adoption and no adoptive family identified. South Dakota Kids Belong has put together a team to create videos of waiting children. The videos capture the child’s personality, interests, and the child’s input about their adoption plan. The videos can be used in a variety of ways, depending on an individual child and circumstances. The videos can be linked to the child’s profile on adoption exchange websites, featured on the South Dakota Kids Facebook page, shared with specific adoptive families, or other child-specific recruitment strategies.
    - A memorandum of understanding was signed between South Dakota Kids Belong and CPS December 2018.
    - The first videos were created January 2019.
    - As of June 2021, there have been 33 videos involving 56 children completed. Twenty-seven children have been matched with a family. The COVID-19 restrictions slowed the project down in 2020-2021; however, video shoots are scheduled to resume in July 2021.

Representatives from the nine South Dakota Native American tribes were invited to provide input for the **Stronger Families Together** foster and adoptive parent recruitment and support campaign, which launched May 11, 2021. Four tribal representatives from the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, Oglala Sioux Tribe, and the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate volunteered to be members of the Stronger Families Together steering committee to bring the tribal perspective and voice to the initiative as it continues over the next four years.

As previously stated, CPS and OLA have completed recruitment needs assessments by CPS office, which will be utilized to develop the SFY2022 recruitment and retention plans. The needs assessments indicate different recruitment needs in each area, reflective of demographics and placement needs. Each Licensing staff are updating recruitment and retention plans to include strategies to recruit and retain families for their target needs. Drafts of the regional recruitment and retention plans for SFY2021 are due to be completed by June 21, 2021 and expected to be
finalized by July 1, 2021. Statewide recruitment needs were identified using FACIS data as well as family survey results. South Dakota recruitment efforts will target the following:

1. Native American families to care for Native American children.
2. Families to care for siblings
3. Families to care for older youth (10-18)
4. Families who can care for children who require specialized care due to behavioral, mental health or medical needs.

Retaining families is also a priority; therefore, the State’s goals to support current families will be identified. The continued development of wrap-around around support for foster and adoptive families is the primary strategy for retention.

CPS and OLA have made efforts to increase the capacity of foster families to meet the needs of children with special medical and behavioral needs. Behavior challenges are the most common reasons foster or pre-adoptive parents request to have a child removed from their home. The trainings foster families will be offered in the next year include the following: Trust Base Relation Intervention, Beyond Consequences, Conscious Discipline, and Adverse Childhood Experience & Trauma Informed. The training information will be given to families through their Licensing Specialist. Caring for children with medical needs can also be challenging for foster and pre-adoptive parents if they have not had prior experience caring for the child’s specific condition, making it difficult to find and maintain a stable foster family placement. When foster or pre-adoptive parents are caring for children with challenging behavioral or medical needs, the family is provided additional training and supports to equip them in providing a safe, consistent, and predictable home for the child until permanency is achieved. Child placement agencies provide treatment foster care services, including case management and additional in-home support for the foster parents.

CPS and OLA continue to collaborate with child placement agencies and private adoption agencies to facilitate recruitment and retention activities. The Why Not You recruitment collaboration meets in Rapid City and Sioux Falls, the two largest communities in South Dakota. The collaboration is comprised of CPS, child placement agencies, and private adoption agencies. The group discusses placement trends as well as recruitment and retention strategies in these communities. The Why Not You group manages a Facebook page to provide information about recruitment needs in these communities and provides information about upcoming recruitment events. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the group was prevented from any type of in-person recruitment events most of the past year. The Rapid City Why Not You group had a booth with information at the Hope for the Journey training on May 7, 2021. OLA and CPS also provided recruitment materials at booths at the Sioux Falls First Event, October 3, 2020, and the Black Hills Round Up on July 4, 2020. Recruitment materials were given to all current foster families at the time of their annual renewal home visit and their Licensing Specialist discussed the current needs for recruitment at that time.

CPS decorated a Christmas tree for display during the Christmas at the Capitol, Deck the Halls 2020 holiday season. The ornaments and decorations on the tree coordinated with the FosterOne campaign and a FosterOne sign was placed in front of the tree to provide contact information for families interested in learning more about fostering or adopting. The tree was seen by thousands of visitors to the State Capitol during the holiday season. CPS plans to apply to decorate a Christmas tree again during the 2021 Christmas at the Capitol event.
The State contracts with a private agency, Lutheran Social Services, to carry out foster and adoptive family inquiry processes, foster parent trainings, and to conduct initial home studies. The contract was awarded June 1, 2020 and may be renewed annually for three additional years from the date of initial contract.

Through the contract, an Inquiry Coordinator responds to families interested in learning more about fostering and adopting as well as completes the inquiry process with families who are ready to start the foster home licensing or adoption approval process. Phone and e-mail contact information for the Inquiry Coordinator is listed on the DSS and FosterOne websites. Families can also submit a “Commit to Know More” postcard on the FosterOne website or fill out a postcard at a recruitment event to learn more about becoming a foster parent. When a “Commit to Know More” postcard is received, it is forwarded to the Inquiry Coordinator to respond and provide information. Families may also contact the local CPS or OLA offices to be connected to the Inquiry Coordinator.

There were 390 Commit to Know More Cards received statewide from June 1, 2020 – May 1, 2021.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region 1</th>
<th>Region 2</th>
<th>Region 3</th>
<th>Region 4</th>
<th>Region 5</th>
<th>Region 6</th>
<th>Region 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An additional 382 families unfamiliar with FosterOne called to ask questions about fostering or adopting from June 1, 2020 – May 1, 2021.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region 1</th>
<th>Region 2</th>
<th>Region 3</th>
<th>Region 4</th>
<th>Region 5</th>
<th>Region 6</th>
<th>Region 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An additional 127 families were referred as they needed to become licensed to care for relatives as Kinship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region 1</th>
<th>Region 2</th>
<th>Region 3</th>
<th>Region 4</th>
<th>Region 5</th>
<th>Region 6</th>
<th>Region 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The FACIS inquiry screen tracks the referral source when families complete an inquiry to begin the foster family licensing or adoption approval process. A total of 501 inquiries were completed in SFY2021. The most common recruitment referral sources reported in SFY2021 included:

- CPS staff: 31%
- DSS website: 20%
- Foster or Adoptive Parent: 10%
- Kinship Staff: 7%

Reasons for foster family closure are also tracked in FACIS to analyze retention patterns. In SFY2021, 165 foster families closed their foster care license. The most common reasons for foster family closure were:

- Family changes: 40%
- Adopted a child and no longer fostering: 20%
- Difficulty fostering: 10%
- No reason provided: 9%
- Retired from fostering: 7%
- Moved out of state: 6.6%
- Health issues: 3%
- Compliance concerns: 1%

South Dakota is comprised of a diverse population of families from many races and cultures. Native American children and families constitute the highest percentage by race receiving services from Child Protection Services. CPS staff are required to complete the Foster and Adoptive Parent training as part of their CPS Certification Training. The Foster and Adoptive Parent training curriculum includes information about respecting cultural diversity to meet children’s needs and strengthen family connections. Six hours of training in cultural consciousness continues to be required as part of the CPS Certification training for newly hired Family Services Specialists, Licensing Specialists, and Supervisors. The training is facilitated by the Indian Child Welfare Act Program Specialist. The Department of Social Services also continues to provide Cultural Diversity training and conducts a Poverty Simulation at the annual New Employee Day training held for all new Department employees.

Interpreters and Interpretalk may be utilized in each office, as needed. Interpretalk is a dial-in interpreter service that provides translation services in real time. Online foster and adoption training offer closed captioning for the hearing impaired. Lutheran Social Services Community Interpreter Service provides trained on-call interpreters in more than 30 languages and has 43 years of experience working with refugee and immigrant families. CPS and OLA also utilize American Sign Language interpreters as needed.

As reported in the Diligent Recruitment Plan SFY2021, DSS, along with tribal and private agency stakeholders, conducted a review and analysis of the current licensing and adoption approval process completed in February 2020. The recommendations from this review scheduled to be completed in 2021 – 2022 are as follows:

- Review and revise, if needed, the FACIS resource module to improve functioning.
- Revise and enhance the licensing policy and procedure manual to ensure the practice and procedures manual are up to date.
- Conduct a joint meeting between OLA staff and LSS (contracted agency) staff since the teams were not able to meet due to the pandemic.
  - A meeting was held June 7 - 8, 2021.
  - The agenda included several topics to refine processes and ensure LSS staff and Licensing Specialists are giving the same information throughout the licensing process.
- Develop a Training of Trainers to continue skill development of licensing and LSS staff.

Adoption Call to Action

South Dakota participated in two Adoption Call to Action conferences held in Washington, DC in August 2019, and January 2020. The State team participating at the August conference included the State CPS Adoption Program Specialist and Deputy Division Director of Child Protection Services, the Court Improvement Program Coordinator, and the Chief Operating Officer of Children’s Home Society in South Dakota. Children’s Home Society is a key stakeholder and
current contract provider for Post Adoption Services, the Wendy’s Wonderful Kids Program, and Foster and Adoptive Family Training and Home Studies. The State team participating in January included the State’s Foster Care Program Specialist and Adoption Program Specialist, and the Chief Operating Officer of SD Children’s Home Society.

South Dakota developed a plan to complement strategies already taking place with South Dakota’s Permanency Workgroup and South Dakota’s Program Improvement Plan.

South Dakota continues to utilize national adoption matching websites such as AdoptUSKids and Adoption Exchange to identify potential adoptive families who are waiting for children legally cleared for adoption and no identified adoptive resource.

CPS continues to partner with SDKB, a chapter of America’s Kids Belong, to recruit and retain foster and adoptive families. As mentioned previously, CPS has launched a statewide campaign, *Stronger Families Together*, to drive this effort forward. A Steering Committee has been established between CPS and SDKB which meets on a bi-monthly basis to discuss progress and next steps of recruitment and retention plans.

Permanency Roundtables is a strategy CPS began implementing in 2017 to address timely placement with a permanent family for children in out of home care. Progress related to this strategy is included in the Permanency Outcomes section of the APSR report.

Starting in December 2019, SD began tracking children with the plan of adoption, who have no identified adoptive resource. This information is reported by Regional Managers on a monthly basis. Demographic information is part of the tracking form, so data can be used to develop recruitment strategies matching the children who are available for adoption.

There are 75 children without an identified adoptive resource as of May 31, 2021. Thirty-two children have been assigned to the Wendy’s Wonderful Kids recruiters and twenty-five children participated in an “I Belong” video shoot to assist with adoption recruitment since June 1, 2020. Implementation of Permanency Round Tables will be completed in the two largest offices in the state by the end 2021. Those two offices make up 38 of the children with the plan of adoption who have no identified adoptive resource.

CPS continues to explore potential expansion of the Wendy’s Wonderful Kids adoption recruitment program. Currently South Dakota has two recruiters; one recruiter is in Sioux Falls, and the other recruiter is in Rapid City.

In the summer of 2020, a Kinship Home Study Addendum process was implemented to streamline the foster family licensing and adoption approval process for kinship families who have previously completed a kinship home study.

South Dakota’s Permanency Workgroup is a group of stakeholders from CPS, child placement agencies, adoption private agencies, tribes, mental health, United Judicial System, residential treatment, Independent Living Services, South Dakota Kids Belong, parents, foster/adoptive families, and youth participants. They have developed a work plan with objectives, strategies, and activities to impact the four specific objectives in the plan. The four objectives include:

1. Youth will be prepared and involved in permanency planning.
2. Family members and potential permanency resources who have capacity to meet the needs of children in care will be identified and engaged.
3. Kinship, foster, and adoptive families will be prepared and involved in permanency planning.

4. CPS and stakeholders involved with children in care will have knowledge and skills to engage and participate in permanency planning with youth and their families.

Further workgroup meetings were cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. Video-conference meetings occurred on July 8 – 9, 2020 with CPS State Office and each of the four subgroups to finalize the initial strategies, activities, and plan next steps. To move the objectives forward, in person meetings will be scheduled by December 2021.