Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan

CPS has experienced an increase in the number of licensed foster families over the past year. There were 863 licensed foster families on May 31, 2019. There were 881 licensed foster families on May 31, 2020. The recruitment efforts and progress outlined in the plan have contributed to the increase in licensed foster homes.

CPS continues to utilize FACIS (Family and Children Information System) 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 regional managers each month. A standardized needs assessment was conducted in all seven regions in May 2020 to determine recruitment needs for regional recruitment plans for FY 2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021). A set of data elements related to children in care and available foster and adoptive families was gathered and analyzed for each region. 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 regional licensing supervisors who could provide more specifics related to children in care and family availability (ex: LGBTQ youth, teens with own children, child medical needs, etc.). While each region identified specific target needs, the information from the regional assessments informed state-wide recruitment needs, as well.

Key considerations in recruiting families continue to be age and race, with approximately 72% of the children in custody between the ages of 0-11 and with 68.4% of the children and youth in custody being Native American. Native Americans make up 8.4% of the population in South Dakota, therefore creating a significant challenge to recruit an adequate pool of Native American resource families. There are 89 Native American foster homes, which is approximately 13 fewer Native American foster homes than the previous year. In FY 2019, there were 15 new Native American foster homes and 18 closed. In FY 2020, there were 23 new Native American foster homes and 25 closed. This trend is thought to be due to Native American families closing after a kinship adoption and will require further exploration as data related to the reasons for foster home closure by race is not currently available. Recruiting families for teenagers remains a challenge. Youth ages 12-18 are approximately 27.2% of the youth in custody; 42.3% of these youth are placed in family settings. CPS is experiencing an increase in youth placed in CPS custody due to mental health and behavioral needs which their families cannot meet. It remains especially challenging to locate placement resources for youth discharging from group care or residential treatment. Approximately 158 sibling groups of brothers and sisters statewide are currently placed in different homes, an increase from 90 at this time 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. A case review will be conducted by January 1, 2021, to determine the factors contributing to the increase in siblings placed separately. Findings will be analyzed to determine if additional actions are needed. Families are needed with special skills in caring for children with significant developmental delays, genetic disorders, prenatal drug and alcohol effects, drug-addicted newborns, and rare/complex medical diagnoses. In addition to including these needs in recruitment messaging and strategies, CPS has been focusing on identifying existing CPS foster homes who could provide care
for these children with additional support from a child placement agency and other services.

Data from FACIS as of May 31, 2020, utilized to inform recruitment efforts is provided below.

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>37.5%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage in Family Setting*</td>
<td>99.7%</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td>42.3%</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></td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Race of Children in Custody Statewide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hawaiian/Pcf</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>.3%</td>
<td>.1%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tribal Affiliation: Number of Children in Basic Foster Home Placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43</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>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

South Dakota's foster care recruitment program, FosterOne, continues to be the state's recruitment program in the five-year plan. CPS plans to update the video testimonials to reflect targeted recruitment needs and the vision of "Foster care as a family support, not
a replacement for families”. While CPS plans to refresh the FosterOne website, a Request for Proposals (RFP) has not yet been published.

As previously stated, CPS has completed recruitment needs assessments in each of the seven CPS regions, which will be utilized to develop the FY 2021 regional recruitment plans. Regional needs assessments indicate different recruitment needs in each region, reflective of regional demographics and placement needs. Licensing staff in each of the seven CPS regions are updating recruitment plans include strategies to recruit families for their target needs. Drafts of the regional recruitment plans for FY 2021 are due to be completed by June 22, 2020 and expected to be finalized by July 1, 2020. Regional needs assessments, including FACIS data, identified statewide recruitment needs, as well. Statewide recruitment needs include foster and adoptive families for youth 12-18 with mental health and behavioral needs, children with medical needs, and sibling groups.

CPS has made efforts to increase the capacity of foster families to meet the needs of children with special medical and behavioral needs. CPS has collaborated with child placement agencies this year to provide additional support and services to children and their foster families and pre-adoptive families by creating a policy for dual licensure. Behavior challenges are the most common reason foster or pre-adoptive parents request to have a child removed from their home. Medical needs can also be challenging for foster and pre-adoptive parents if they have 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 behavior or medical needs and they are provided additional training and supports, they are more equipped to provide a safe, consistent, and predictable home for the child until permanency is achieved. Child placement agencies provide case management services for children with medical or behavioral needs and provide additional supports to the foster family. These services, otherwise described as treatment foster care, can be utilized to stabilize a new or existing placement for a child with medical or behavioral challenges. A foster family licensed by CPS can be dual licensed with a child placement agency for a specified timeframe to assist with placement stabilization. The policy went into effect May 16, 2020.

CPS continues to collaborate with child placement agencies and private adoption agencies to facilitate recruitment and retention activities. The “Why Not You” recruitment collaboration meets monthly in Rapid City and Sioux Falls, the two largest communities in South Dakota. The collaboration is comprised of CPS, child placement agencies, private adoption agencies. The groups meet monthly to discuss placement trends, as well as recruitment and retention strategies in these communities. The group manages a Facebook page to provide information about recruitment needs in these communities, as well as provide information about upcoming recruitment events. In Rapid City, the focus this past year has primarily been on retention of foster and adoptive families. A support group was brought together to include foster and adoptive families licensed and/or approved from all local agencies. Monthly trainings have been held with focus to increase specialized parenting skills for children with challenging behavioral needs. COVID 19 restrictions have prevented the group from meeting in person since March 202; therefore, the Why Not You group has been facilitating “Trust-Based Relational Intervention” training to families through a digital curriculum. The Why Not You group in Rapid City has hosted two open houses; one at a local family restaurant in November 2019 and another at Ellsworth Air Force Base in March 2020. In Sioux Falls, an Adoption and Foster Care Informational Night was held at the Sioux Falls, SD Public Library on November 12th. The
event consisted of an open house with CPS, child placement agencies, and private adoption agencies hosting the event together. A total of 15 inquiries for more information about fostering or adopting have been received as a result of "Why Not You" recruitment efforts this year and 2 families have started the process to become a licensed foster family.

CPS decorated a Christmas tree for display at "Christmas at the Capitol" from November 25, 2019 – January 3, 2020. The ornaments and decorations on the tree coordinated with the FosterOne campaign. 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 at the Capitol in 2020, as well.

CPS maintains a contract with a private agency for foster and adoptive family inquiry, training, and initial home studies. The contract held by Children’s Home Society expired on May 31, 2020. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was published and two private agencies submitted proposals. A review team of CPS and non-CPS reviewers reviewed and evaluated the proposals. Lutheran Social Services was awarded the contract beginning June 1, 2020 - May 31, 2021 with the option to renew annually for three additional years. A transition team from Children’s Home Society, Lutheran Social Services, and CPS worked together to transition services to Lutheran Social Services on June 1, 2020.

The contract agency employs an Inquiry Coordinator to respond to families interested in learning more about fostering and adopting and complete the inquiry process with families who are ready to start the foster home licensing or adoption approval process. Phone and email contact information for the Inquiry Coordinator is listed on the DSS website and the FosterOne website. Families can also submit a “Commit to Know More” postcard on the FosterOne website or fill out a postcard at a recruitment event. When a “Commit to Know More” postcard is received by CPS, it is forwarded to the Inquiry Coordinator to respond and provide information. Families also contact the local CPS offices and they are connected to the Inquiry Coordinator.

There were 608 Commit to Know More Cards received statewide from May 1, 2019 – May 1, 2020.

<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>100</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An additional 308 families unfamiliar with FosterOne called to ask questions about fostering or adopting from May 1, 2019 – May 1, 2020.

<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>74</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>38</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 419 inquiries were completed in FY 2020. The most common recruitment referral sources reported in FY 2020 are:

- CPS staff 26%
- Kinship Locator staff 21%
- FosterOne website 20%
The list of recruitment referral resources was updated to reflect current recruitment collaborations such as the "Why Not You" collaboration in Regions 1 and 6 and South Dakota Kids Belong, which will provide better data related to the effectiveness of these recruitment efforts. The updated referral sources have been sent to FACIS and will be reflected on the inquiry screen when the next updates in the FACIS system are made. The referral sources on the FosterOne "Commit to Know More" card have also been updated to reflect the same list of updated referral resources.

Reasons for foster family closure are also tracked in FACIS to analyze retention patterns. In FY 2020, 140 foster families closed their foster care license. The most common reasons for foster family closure were:
- Family changes 24.3%
- Retired from fostering 10.7%
- Adopted a child and no longer fostering 8.6%
- Difficulty fostering 8.6%
- No reason provided 7.1%
- Moved out of state 6.4%
- Health issues 5%
- Compliance concerns 4.2%

CPS has experienced an increase in the number of children in custody over the past five years. The rise in methamphetamine addiction is a significant factor impacting the increase. With more children requiring out of home care, there is an increase in the demand to license more foster families (relative and nonrelative) and approve families for adoption. The Department's licensing process has experienced waiting lists to enroll families in foster parent training and delays in the completion of initial home studies. DSS, along with tribal and private agency stakeholders, conducted a review and analysis of the current licensing and adoption approval process beginning in August 2019 and completed in February 2020. While reviewing the process, the workgroup was mindful of the Department's foster care and adoption program goals and the state-wide trends related to foster and adoptive family needs. The review of the licensing process focused on 1) foster and adoptive family recruitment and inquiry process; 2) foster and adoptive parent training; 3) licensing and adoption approval documents, background checks, and references; 4) licensing and adoption home study assessments; 5) kinship families and the licensing/approval process; and 6) findings and recommendations related to each phase of the process. Below are the key areas identified impacting capacity and timeliness of the licensing process.
- Fidelity to a standardized licensing and adoption approval practice model is necessary to guide foster and adoptive parent recruitment, inquiry, training, and home study assessment. The Department will consider realigning the licensing and adoption approval process with a standardized practice model to develop and assess core competencies essential to performing duties of a foster and/or adoptive parent.
- Policy and procedure must be developed or enhanced and implemented for all stages in the licensing and adoption approval process to provide clearer direction related to the process.
Documents need to be revised, eliminated or consolidated to provide added efficiency in the process. Approved documents will be generated solely from FACIS and no other documents may be utilized without CPS approval.

Skill development must be provided to CPS licensing staff and contract staff related to policy, procedures, and practice standards to ensure a consistent and quality process.

Kinship families experience unnecessary delay and duplication when they complete a home study for placement and then later complete another home study when applying to obtain a foster family license or adoption approval.

Since the conclusion of the review process in February 2020, CPS has implemented the following recommendations:

- The guidelines for the inquiry process were enhanced to provide more direction regarding the requirements for engagement and information collection necessary to determine if a family will be invited to continue in the foster family licensing and/or adoption approval process.
- A training agreement was developed to outline an applicant’s training schedule to complete 30 hours of required training, which is intended to provide clearer expectations and structure for families completing the online training program.
- A group of licensing supervisors and CPS Program Specialists updated the documents and correspondence utilized for foster home licensing and adoption approval to ensure only current and applicable documents are being used.
- A workgroup of CPS Program Specialists started a project to make revisions for the FACIS Resource family Module which will improve functioning and capture meaningful resource family data for staff.
- Standardized guidelines for Training, Home Study, and Mutual Assessment have been developed. The guidelines were sent to the contract agency, CPS licensing supervisors, and CPS Regional Managers for review. Once the guidelines are finalized, all CPS licensing staff, and contract staff will be required to follow the guidelines.
- Standardized assessment instruments and questions have been developed to guide staff in the home study assessment process.
- When children are placed in expedited placement with kin or fictive kin, a referral will be made for a kinship home study to be completed right away as it is necessary to have a timely written assessment of the family’s strengths and needs to provide care for the children placed in the home. A kinship home study addendum policy was developed to provide a more streamlined approach for kinship families to be approved for placement, licensed as foster parents, and approved for adoption. When children are placed with a relative or fictive kin through the expedited kinship placement process, policy was changed to require a kinship home study to be completed in 30-60 days of placement. Foster and adoption parent training and a shortened home study addendum will be completed with kinship families applying for a foster family license and/or adoption approval. The home study addendum process is intended to reduce the duplication and timeframe for kinship families to become licensed and/or approved for adoption.

Additional recommendations from the review such as developing a Training of Trainers and faculty to continue skill development with licensing and contract staff will continue to be implemented. The workgroup for the review will continue to be utilized to inform and review practice and outcomes related to foster family licensing and adoption approval.
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, Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe each have IVE agreements and license tribal foster homes. This year, CPS and Crow Creek Sioux Tribe entered a Memorandum of Understanding 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. In 2019, Casey Family Programs shared they would no longer have funding to support in-person meetings of the SDNFC group. It was decided SDNFC agenda items would be included to State Tribal Child Welfare Consultation (STCWC) workgroup meetings. Due to COVID 19 restrictions, in-person meetings have not been feasible. Casey Family Programs has offered to schedule and facilitate a SDNFC meeting via Zoom and scheduling is in process.

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. Six hours of training in cultural consciousness continues to be required as part of the certification training for newly hired Family Services Specialists and Supervisors. The training is facilitated by the ICWA Program Specialist. Foster and adoptive parent training continues to be a requirement for certification, training as well. The training curriculum includes information related to respecting cultural diversity to meet children’s needs and strengthen family connections.

The Department of Social Services continues to provide Cultural Diversity training and conducts a Poverty Simulation at the annual New Employee Day training held for all new department employees. CPS can utilize interpreters and Interpretalk in each office, as needed. Interpretalk is a dial-in interpreter service which provides translation services in real time. Online foster and adoption training offers closed captioning. Lutheran Social Services is the private agency awarded the contract to conduct foster family inquiry, training, and home studies for CPS starting June 1, 2020. Lutheran Social Services. Lutheran Social Services Community Interpreter Service provides trained on-call interpreters in more than 30 languages. Lutheran Social Services also has 43 years of experience working with refugee and immigrant families.

**Adoption Call to Action**

South Dakota participated in the two Adoption Call to Action conferences held in Washington DC in August 2019 and January 2020. The state team participating at the August conference was the state CPS Adoption Program Specialist, the 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 Foster Care Program Specialist, the Adoption Program Specialist and the Chief Operating Officer of SD Children’s Home Society.

South Dakota developed a plan to compliment 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 for waiting children legally cleared for adoption and no identified adoptive resource.

CPS continues to partner with South Dakota Kids Belong, a chapter of America’s Kids Belong, to recruit and retain foster and adoptive families. CPS State Office meets with the directors from South Dakota Kids Belong on a bi-monthly basis to discuss implementation and progress of recruitment and retention plans. The current collaborations with South Dakota Kids Belong include these recruitment and retention strategies.

- **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 in the spring of 2018 in the Northern Black Hills. South Dakota Kids Belong presented recruitment information to a large congregation in Sioux Falls on four campuses with three church services at each campus on November 10, 2019. A follow-up meeting was held on November 17, 2019 and nine couples came forward and expressed an interest in becoming a foster and/or adoptive family. CPS and South Dakota Kids Belong were in the process of setting up a similar recruitment event at Calvary Lutheran Church in Rapid City for spring 2020, which has been postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

- **Wrap-around services.** During the church presentations mentioned above, 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. There are 18 families providing wrap-around services in the Northern Black Hills area. As a result of the November 2019 church presentations in Sioux Falls, 45 families came forward as volunteers to provide wrap-around services. CPS and South Dakota Kids Belong plan to continue recruiting wrap-around services in conjunction with church presentations. South Dakota Kids Belong hired a Wrap-Around Coordinator to assist with the statewide coordination of wrap-around services.

- **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.

- **"I Belong" Project.** The "I Belong" Project gives a face and voice to the 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 individual child and the 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 in December of 2018. The first videos were created in January 2019. To date, there have been four video shoots and 30 children have participated, and 18 children have found an adoptive resource. The video shoot scheduled in April 2020 was postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

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.

South Dakota identified the need to gain a better understanding of the youth available for adoption and what current efforts were under way to recruit for them. South Dakota had a few promising strategies already in place prior to the Adoption Call to Action. Starting in December of 2019, SD started began tracking children with the plan of adoption, who have no identified adoptive resource. This information is reported by the regional managers on a monthly basis. Demographic information is part of the tracking form, so data can be used to develop a recruitment strategy that will match the children that are available for adoption. Findings from the data analysis are as follows.

- The number of children this applies to is around 84 children. A plan to develop a FACIS generated report capturing this information is underway. Further analysis was completed regarding the promising practices already in place.
- The findings indicate that of the 84 children available for adoption, only nine of these youth have a Wendy’s Wonderful Kids recruiter.
- The Wendy’s Wonderful Kids caseload averages about 35 cases. This information would support expansion of this program.
- Region 1 and Region 6 have the most children that utilize this Program, given that the recruiters are in Rapid City and Sioux Falls.
- Seventeen of the 84 children with no identified adoption resource are involved in Permanency Round Tables.
- Permanency Round Tables have not been implemented in Regions One and Six. These are the two largest regions in the state and account for 52% of the children with no identified adoption resource. Both these regions will be fully implemented by July 2021.
- Twelve of the 84 children have had an “I Belong” adoption recruitment video completed with South Dakota Kids Belong for recruitment purposes and 15 of these youth are currently listed on the AdoptUsKids Website.
- The tracking of these children and the recruitment strategies utilized to recruit adoptive families reveals an inconsistency on what is done for children statewide. Recruitment efforts are somewhat different between regions. Future work will need to be completed with CPS Regions on the promising strategies and possible development of individual recruitment plans for each youth.

CPS is exploring potential expansion of the Wendy’s Wonderful Kids adoption recruitment program. Currently South Dakota has two recruiters. One is in Sioux Falls and the other recruiter is in Rapid City. A discussion was held with the Division Director of Child Protection Services about the possible expansion of the program. The Division Director was open to explore this recommendation. A plan was developed to collect data and evaluate outcomes related to FY 2020 Wendy’s Wonderful Kids services. The Chief Operating Officer with Children’s Home agreed to submit a budget of what it would take to add an additional recruiter to the program. This information will be compiled and given to the Division Director of Child Protection Services for review prior to the next budget cycle.
As previously stated, a Kinship Home Study Addendum process was developed 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, parent, foster/adoptive family, and youth participants. On October 23-24, the workgroup came together in a meeting to begin work on a strategic plan to address permanency barriers for older youth, 10 years and older. The group participated in a brainstorming session to identify the key barriers and a list of potential solutions. On January 30-31, the group came back together and broke into subgroups to develop a work plan with objectives, strategies and activities to impact the four specific objectives in the plan. The four objectives are:

- Youth will be prepared and involved in permanency planning
- Family members and potential permanency resources will be identified and engaged who have capacity to meet the needs of children in care.
- Kinship, Foster, and Adoptive families will be prepared and involved in permanency planning.
- 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.

Strategies and activities are in process of being finalized. The workgroup was scheduled to meet again April 14-15; however, this meeting was cancelled due to COVID 19 restrictions. Video-conference meetings are scheduled for July 8-9 with CPS State Office and each of the four subgroups to finalize the initial strategies, activities, and plan next steps.