



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
*Office of the Commissioner*

Margaret Ross Schultze  
COMMISSIONER

February 26, 2016

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Honorable Terry McAuliffe  
Governor of Virginia

Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr.  
Co-Chairman, Senate Finance

Honorable Emmett W. Hanger, Jr.  
Co-Chairman, Senate Finance

Honorable S. Chris Jones  
Chairman, House Appropriations

Daniel Timberlake  
Director Department of Planning and Budget

**FROM:** Margaret Ross Schultze

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margaret Ross Schultze", written over the printed name.

**SUBJECT:** Report on Item 339 of the 2015 Appropriation Act – Adoption of Children in Foster Care

I am pleased to submit the Department of Social Services' quarterly report pursuant to Item 339 F (1) and (2) of the 2015 Appropriation Act. Item 339 F (1) provides \$1,500,000 the first year and \$1,500,000 the second year to implement pilot programs that increase the number of foster care children adopted. Item 339 F (2) requires the Department of Social Services to report quarterly on the use and effectiveness of this funding, including the number of additional children adopted from foster care and the types of ongoing supportive services provided as a result of the expenditure of these funds. If you have any questions or need additional information concerning this report, please contact me.

MRS: kc

Attachment

## Quarterly Report on Adoption of Children in Foster Care July - September 2015

### Report Mandate and Background

Items 339 (F1) and (F2) of the 2015 Appropriation Act provides:

(1) *“Out of this appropriation, \$1,500,000 the first year from federal funds and \$1,500,000 the second year from the general fund shall be provided to implement pilot programs that increase the number of foster care children adopted.”*

(2) *“Beginning October 1, 2013, the department shall provide a quarterly report, within 30 days of quarter end, on the use and effectiveness of this funding including, but not limited to, the additional number of special needs children adopted from foster care as a result of this effort and the types of ongoing supportive services provided, to the Governor, Chairmen of House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees, and the Director, Department of Planning and Budget.”*

This is the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2016 first quarter report, provided by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). The pilot programs to be reported on are Post Adoption Services, Child Specific Recruitment using the Extreme Recruitment® model, and Foster/Adoptive Parent Recruitment using Market Segmentation. These pilot programs are those contracted with in 2013. The 2013 contracts were in place for a short time (October 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015) with no renewals factored beyond that time due to the pilot nature of the funded programs and the lack of a guarantee of funds. New Request for Proposals (RFP) were issued in SFY 2016. These contracts show promise for increasing and supporting adoptions from foster care. In addition to being a benefit to children and families, the adoption contracts can benefit the local departments of social services by filling staffing gaps and sustaining knowledge of the adoption processes that lead to finalization of adoptions.

There were 727 finalized adoptions in SFY 2013 (ending June 30, 2013) and 647 finalized adoptions in SFY 2014 (ending June 30, 2014). In SFY 2015 (ending June 30, 2015), there were 620 finalized adoptions. In SFY 2014, 37.4% of adopted children exited from foster care within 24 months of their most recent removal from home – higher than in SFY 2013 (31.5%). In SFY 2015, 38.6% of adoptions occurred within 24 months of the most recent removal. The national standard is 36.6%. Refer to the appendix for statistical details. While there has been a decrease in adoptions from foster care, the contractors noted in this report assisted with placement and finalizing over 50% of the adoptions of youth with special needs.

**Adoption contracts**

**Post Adoption Services – FAM-15-083**

On April 10, 2015, an RFP for Post Adoption Services was issued. The award ceiling was up to \$500,000 in sub-grants. Eligible entities who could apply for these funds included for-profit and non-profits organizations to include private licensed child-placing agencies, local departments of social services, Community Services Boards and Children’s Services Act Community Policy and Management Teams. The proposal stated that underserved areas in Virginia and unmet post adoption services would be given priority. The RFP identified underserved areas as remote counties and cities located in VDSS’ Eastern, Piedmont and Western Regions. Seven proposals were received by the May 28, 2015 due date. Based on the recommendation of the review panel, contracts were awarded to the Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.), DePaul Community Resources and Frontier Health. Collectively the three contractors service the Eastern and Piedmont Regions and seven localities in the Western Region. Services under this grant began July 1, 2015. A combined meeting with all post adoption services contractors took place October 1, 2015 in the Charlottesville. The meeting covered contractual expectations, reporting requirements and identified methods in which services can result in successful outcomes.

Lesson Learned from Previous Contract	In the Piedmont Region, referrals for services were minimal. One possibility for the limited number of referrals was the fact that most youth that have been adopted from foster care may already have a therapist to address their needs and are unlikely to transition to a new therapist after finalization.
Correction in new Contract	In the new post adoption contracts, the contract was modified to allow for pre-finalization services for a period of 6-8 months leading to a finalized adoption. This expansion of services provides an opportunity for the contractors to be a resource to agencies as they proceed to placement of a child with a family.

**Extreme Recruitment® - FAM-15-0093**

On May 21, 2015, an RFP for child-specific adoption recruitment using the Extreme Recruitment model was issued. The award ceiling was \$625,000. The eligible entities who could apply for these funds included Virginia private child placing agencies, local departments of social services, private firms, and non-profit entities. The purpose of the contract(s) is to conduct Extreme Recruitment for youth with termination of parental rights and have been waiting the longest for an adoptive family. The contract was expanded to issue an award in one or more geographical regions of the Commonwealth. Proposals from three private child-placing agencies were received on July 8, 2015. One proposal was for the Central Region, two proposals were for the Eastern Region, and one proposal was for Northern Region. A review panel evaluated and approved three contracts. The contracts were awarded to c2Adopt (formerly Coordinators2, Inc.) and United Methodist Family Services (UMFS) Northern Virginia office and UMFS Tidewater office. UMFS Tidewater office serves Eastern Region and UMFS Northern Virginia office serves the Northern Region. C2Adopt serves the Central Region. These contracts began September 1, 2015.

Although no proposals were submitted for the Western Region, there was a vested interest by state and local staff to identify a mechanism in order to provide Extreme Recruitment services in that region. The Department is considering entering into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with some LDSS in the Western Region to train and provide this service. More information will be provided in a subsequent report once a detailed plan has been created.

Lessons Learned from Previous Contract	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Extreme Recruitment model has its own stated outcome measures which are youth reconnected with family, kin or placed for adoption, but it does not include the finalization of an adoption. It is the responsibility of the custodial agency to complete the finalization.</li> <li>2. The model is intense and only a few cases can be served with the weekly team meetings for the 12-20 weeks of service, which is not enough time to place the youth and achieve finalized adoptions.</li> </ol> <p><i>Example:</i> James, an older youth under the custody of Henrico County DSS was one of the first youth identified and approved for services under Extreme Recruitment, led by C2 Adopt (formerly Coordinators2, Inc.), one of two contractors. James was referred for services September, 2013 and his adoption was finalized March, 2015.</p>
Correction in New Contract	The new RFP issued June 8, 2015 has an optional renewal clause. This gives a longer potential window to monitor the Extreme Recruitment cases.

Foster Care/Adoption Recruitment using Market Segmentation – FAM-16-003

On July 30, 2015 a RFP was issued to solicit proposals to award one contract to develop a statewide marketing and public awareness plan to include media campaign strategies to increase recruitment of foster and adoptive families.

The Foster Care/Adoption Recruitment RFP included requirements from entities to provide innovative, region-specific marketing strategies and implementation toolkits using market segmentation data. Attached to the RFP was the July 1, 2015 VDSS Office of Research and Planning document, “Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Families in Virginia: Market Segmentation Analysis.” This document was a result of the collaborative work with the National Resource Center (NRC) for Adoption and Diligent Recruitment, who provided technical assistance on market segmentation. The NRC, in partnership with VDSS, used the Esri Business Analyst software to organize and analyze geographic information to identify segments of the population that are likely to foster and adopt and the marketing characteristics associated with these groups. This profile helps to determine where to recruit and how to develop marketing materials.

VDSS is considering using five LDSS per region (there are five regions), in conjunction with the selection of a contractor, as pilot agencies. The pilot agencies will serve as a focus/advisory group for materials developed by the contractor and to test customer appeal. The proposals were submitted September 3, 2015. Six proposals were received that met the requirements. The review panel met September 16, 2015 to evaluate the proposals. The contract is expected to begin October 1, 2015.

Lesson Learned from Previous Contract	LDSS do not have the resources to create the tools required to market to the 30 distinct market segments in Virginia to which our successful foster care/adoptive families belong.
Correction in New Contract	VDSS issued the RFP with a marketing approach requesting region-specific marketing materials and toolkits that can be used by Virginia recruiters specific to the Virginia target groups of families that are most likely to foster and adopt.

## Appendix

### Cohort Data on Finalized Adoptions (as of June 30, 2015)

- Of the 774 children who were in foster care as of December 31, 2012 and had a goal of adoption (referred to as the “2012 Cohort”), 473 (61%) children and youth discharged to adoption, 74 (10%) emancipated out of foster care, and 66 (9%) left foster care for other reasons (e.g., reunification with biological parents, entry into juvenile detention).<sup>1</sup> This leaves 161 (21%) children waiting for adoption, including 19 (3%) youth who are in pre-adoptive homes waiting for finalization of their adoptions and 142 (18%) youth who are waiting for pre-adoptive placements.
- Of the children who were in foster care on December 31, 2013 and had a goal of adoption (“2013 Cohort”; N=466)<sup>2</sup>, 285 (61.2%) children and youth exited to adoption, 15 (3%) emancipated out of foster care, and two (< 0.5%) left foster care for other reasons. This leaves 154 (33%) children waiting for adoption, including 34 (7%) youth who are in pre-adoptive homes waiting for finalization of their adoptions and 120 (26%) youth who are waiting for pre-adoptive placements.
- The newest cohort to be tracked is comprised of children who were in care on December 31, 2014 (“2014 Cohort”).<sup>3</sup> As of end of June 2015, of the 534 children in care, 74 (14%) have been adopted, 11 (2%) emancipated out of foster care, and three discharged for other reasons. This leaves 446 (84%) children waiting for adoption, including 374 (70%) youth who are in pre-adoptive homes waiting for finalization of their adoptions and 72 (14%) youth who are waiting for pre-adoptive placements.
- The charts below track the progress of these three cohorts based on the number of months elapsed since the start of the clock for each cohort. By 18 months, the 2013 Cohort had a higher percentage of children who discharged to adoption than the 2012 Cohort (61% vs. 51%). The gap between the 2012 and 2013 cohorts is continuing to widen. It is too soon to say how the 2014 Cohort will perform relative to the previous cohorts.
- At the 18-month mark, the 2012 Cohort had a higher percentage of youth still left in care and not in a pre-adoptive placement than the 2013 Cohort (31% versus 26%). The gap started at month 8 and continued to grow, but has recently become smaller. It is too soon to say how the 2014 Cohort will compare to the previous two cohorts.

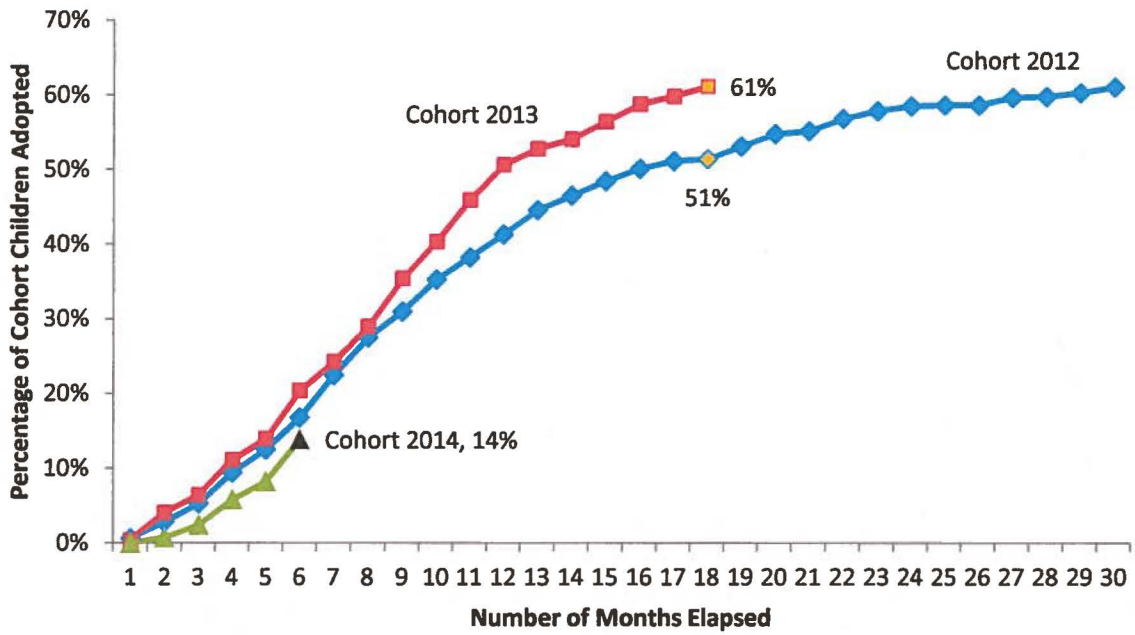
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<sup>1</sup> An error was noted with the previous quarterly report: 462 children discharged to adoption. This represents 60% (not 61%) of the 2012 child cohort.

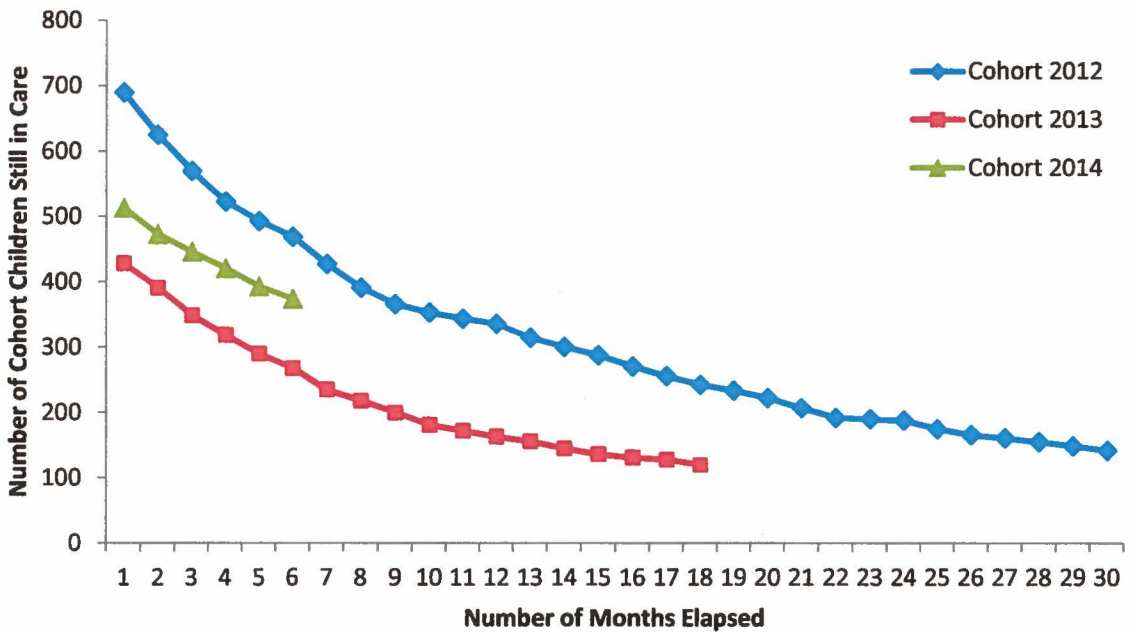
<sup>2</sup> These children came into foster care between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2013 and are not included in the 2012 cohort.

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### Percentage of Children and Youth Who Exited to Adoption



### Number of Cohort Youth Still in Care NOT in Pre-Adoptive Placement



**Percentage of Cohort Youth Still in Care NOT in Pre-Adoptive Placement**

