



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Office of the Commissioner

Margaret Ross Schultze
COMMISSIONER

February 1, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Terry McAuliffe
Governor of Virginia

The Honorable Charles J. Colgan
Co-Chairman, Senate Finance

The Honorable Walter A. Stosch
Co-Chairman, Senate Finance

The Honorable S. Chris Jones
Chairman, House Appropriations

Mr. 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 2014 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 2014 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 at (804) 726-7011.

MRS: kc

Report on Adoption of Children in Foster Care October-December 2014

Report Mandate and Background

Item 339 (F) (1) and (2) of the 2014 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 funds 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 2015 second quarter report provided by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). There were 747 finalized adoptions in Calendar Year (CY) 2013. As of November 30, 2014, there were 643 adoptions finalized in Calendar Year (CY) 2014. The report appendix includes additional details.

The bulk of the new adoption appropriation was allocated to funding three new initiatives that met the intent of the appropriation. Using the Request for Proposals process, funds were awarded to agencies that developed innovative approaches to encourage more families to adopt Virginia's waiting youth and to support those families who have adopted children from foster care. A fourth initiative, Change Who Waits (CWW), is also included in this report. CWW is a no-cost contract and the funding source is the contractor and a network of community faith-based contributors. Updates on these separate initiatives are below.

Adoption Initiatives

Extreme Recruitment®

VDSS has contracts with two child placing agencies to do Extreme Recruitment®: United Methodist Family Services and Coordinators/2 Inc. Coordinators/2 serves the VDSS Central Region; and both contractors serve the VDSS Eastern Region. The objective of Extreme Recruitment® is to reconnect 90% of youth served with a safe and appropriate adult from their past. Often this reconnection is with a relative. It may also be with a neighbor, baby sitter, step-parent, god parent, foster parent, etc. A "reconnection" is defined as any form of contact (i.e., letter, phone call, visit, etc.) after there has been no contact for a minimum of six months. The plan is to achieve a minimum of 40 reconnections during a 12 – 20 week period.

These two agencies have worked with 43 children to date. Five of the children were placed with families who are proceeding with adoption. Of the remaining children, 10 have been matched with potential adoptive homes and are moving forward with building relationships to determine

mutual suitability. Eleven children have expressed an opinion to the court that they do not wish to be adopted.

The majority of the remaining 17 children are in residential facilities, group homes and other placements. These types of placements are institutional settings and most likely indicate severe emotional and behavioral issues for the youth who have experienced severe trauma. These issues and circumstances make these youth the most difficult population relative to achieving permanency.

Recruitment & Market Segmentation

Bethany Christian Services received the contract award for Family Resource Recruitment. The purpose of the contract is to develop and implement innovative approaches for foster and adoptive recruitment. One of the strategies for innovative recruitment was to use Market Segmentation to identify types of families that are most likely to be interested in and to follow-through in becoming foster or adoptive parents. Through Market Segmentation, recruitment activities and messages can be focused on venues and resources that are used by these family types. At the request of VDSS, the National Resource Center (NRC) for Diligent Recruitment provides technical assistance on Market Segmentation. The NRC, in partnership with VDSS, used the Esri Business Analyst software to identify segments of the population that are likely to be prospective foster and adoptive parents and the marketing characteristics associated with these groups. This profile helps to determine where to recruit and how to develop marketing materials. Bethany Christian Services, along with other recruitment contractors and state staff, were trained to use this data and training continues.

The Bethany contract began October 1, 2013 and was renewed in SFY 2014; it ends June 30, 2015. Through October 30, 2014 (13 months), a total of 944 foster care adoption inquiries have been recorded by the contractor. A snapshot of the quarter shows 202 inquiries. Of this number, 24% responded from a radio announcement, representing the greatest response. The next highest was 14% from Internet; 12% from an event; and 11% from the Heart Gallery. Of the inquiries, 8% signed up for an information meeting or started training with an agency. The contractor records the zip code information for all inquirers and the location of information events. The zip code information will be used to evaluate outcomes compared to the Market Segmentation data for Virginia.

The NRC has extended its service agreement with Virginia to include assistance to improve the Adoption Resource Exchange of Virginia photo listing and workers' use of the AdoptUSKids tools for matching children and families and tracking family matches.

Post-Adoption Services

The Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.) is working in the Piedmont region of the state to develop more post-adoption services for the region. The C.A.S.E. contract outcomes that involve training clinicians and professionals to be adoption competent have met or exceeded goals. The goal was to train 16 mental health clinicians and 24 were trained. The curriculum used was TAC (Training for Adoption Competency). After analyzing utilization of this contract, VDSS approved a modification to the contract that will allow C.A.S.E. to provide pre-adoption services, with continued priority given to post-adoption cases.

For the C.A.S.E second quarter 2014 contract report, two families were listed as being served. One family received three hours of family therapy. The second family, an international adoption from China, received one hour of family therapy. Presenting concerns were unresolved loss and grief, identity issues, depression and anxiety. C.A.S.E. continues to do outreach to Community Service Boards, and public and private child-placing agencies to present available post-adoption services and training. The focus this quarter was on training the clinicians so they can be better prepared to handle the needs of these children. Most of the direct services were done by various private clinicians trained in C.A.S.E. The next report will address steps taken to promote the newly trained providers.

Frontier Health is working in southwestern Virginia (Lee, Scott, Wise counties and the City of Norton) to increase the number of adoption-competent professional and mental health providers and to provide services to families who may not know about post adoption services. The Spaulding Institute completed a two-day training event on adoption competency, with 44 professionals and foster parents completing the training. Of the 44 participants, 13 were mental health workers. Dr. Robert Marvin, Director of Ainsworth Attachment Clinic and Professor Emeritus with UVA School of Medicine, held a two-day Circle of Security Training in September 2014. Fourteen therapists and case managers were trained in the model. They will receive follow up supervision/consultation by Dr. Marvin and his staff for the next year.

Frontier Health reported that the adoption competency trained therapists are working with 82 children who receive clinical services. Over three-fourths of the 82 youth are in adoptive homes.

Newsletters, training materials, and a post adoption brochure were created to offer educational information and benefits of support activities for adoptive families. The brochure was given to local departments of social services in Lee, Wise, Scott and Norton to distribute to families. It was also mailed to families attending support groups.

In October 2014, Frontier Health post-adoption staff visited 16 Wise County schools to speak to guidance counselors and provide them with training materials and information on post- adoption services.

Change Who Waits

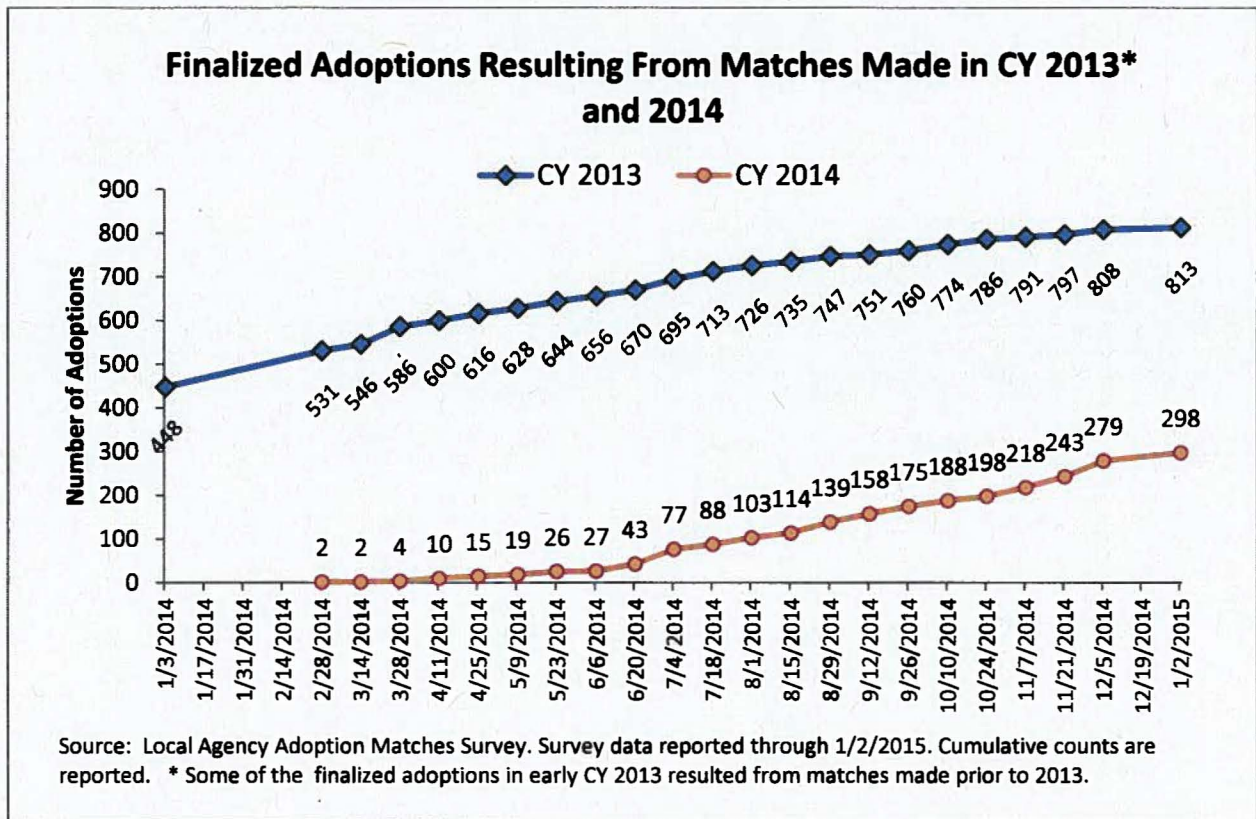
The CWW contract with VDSS is intended to increase the visibility of children waiting to be adopted. CWW created three additional Heart Gallery exhibits that are scheduled at various venues (primarily churches). To date, these venues have been primarily in the central region. CWW has been attending meetings with local adoption and foster care staff in the eastern and central regions to support creation of new photos, narratives and videos that can become a part of the Heart Gallery. CWW created a website that expands their reach and introduces more families to waiting children.

Adoption Program Update

National Adoption Month

National Adoption Month is held celebrated annually in November. VDSS published information on 32 events. Governor and Mrs. McAuliffe hosted a reception to celebrate National Adoption Month. The event, held on November 19, 2014 at the Executive Mansion, included adoptive parents and their children as special guests. Others in attendance included Virginia's Adoption Champion, Debbie Johnston, also an adoptee. Two adopted siblings shared with guests their experience in foster care and how happy they were to be adopted by the same family. Governor McAuliffe issued a proclamation for National Adoption Month in the Commonwealth and spoke about the importance of permanency for all foster care youth. In addition, he praised Virginia's adoptive families for their commitment to permanency for foster youth through adoption.

Appendix Adoption Data on Matches and Finalized Adoptions



- By November 21, 2014, out of 1,041 total matches, 797 adoptions were finalized for children matched in 2013.
- Based on survey responses from 110 local departments of social services, as of January 2, 2015, a total of 813 matches in 2013 achieved finalized adoption by end of CY 2014.
- Of the local departments that responded to the survey, 67 (61%) reported having at least one foster child currently available for adoption.
- By end of December 2014, 721 adoption matches were made; 298 finalized adoptions occurred among these matched children.