



# 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 October - December 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 second quarter report, provided by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). The adoption contracts to be reported on are Post Adoption Services, Child Specific Recruitment using the Extreme Recruitment® model, and Foster/Adoptive Parent Recruitment using Market Segmentation. New Request for Proposals (RFP) were issued in SFY 2016 and contracts were awarded with staggered begin dates.

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. For the first quarter of SFY 2016, which ended September 30, 2015, there were 128 finalized adoptions.

In SFY 2015, 38.6% of adopted children exited from foster care within 24 months of their most recent removal from home – higher than the percentage in 2014 (37.4%) and in 2013 (31.5%). The national standard is 36.6%.

### Adoption Contracts

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

The Post Adoption Services contracts began on July 1, 2015. 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 serve the Eastern and Piedmont Regions and seven localities in the Western Region. The contractors identified fifteen types of services that were provided to the families and children totaling 122 service outputs. Of this number Individual Counseling and Family Counseling were the highest number services, 80, or 66% of the 122 service outputs. Following these two services were Adoptive Support Group and Case Management. The majority of cases 105 (89%) were Agency Adoptions or adoptions from Foster Care. One adoption disruption was reported.

Summary Year-to-Date		
		Jurisdictions
Families Served	97	Amherst County (1)
Children Served	118	Campbell County (2)
		Hampton (1)
<b>Adoption Status</b>		Lee County (20)
Pre-Finalization	32	Lynchburg (3)
Post-Finalization	79	Montgomery (1)
Missing Data	7	Norton City (4)
		Roanoke County (6)
<b>Adoption Type</b>		Scott County (27)
Agency	105	Suffolk (5)
International	3	Wise County (26)
Parental Placement	4	York/Poquoson (1)
Relative	6	

All families are experiencing intensive levels of need and are being maintained at this time with the services provided. Two examples of some of the challenges include: 1) one youth has had two out of home placements since finalization including one residential treatment center; and 2) one youth was charged with forcible sodomy against a six year old relative and is currently in detention.

Extreme Recruitment® - FAM-15-0093

The contract for Child Specific Recruitment using the Extreme Recruitment model began on September 1, 2015. The purpose of the contract is to conduct Extreme Recruitment for youth with termination of parental rights and have been waiting the longest for an adoptive family. The contracts were awarded to C2Adopt (formerly Coordinators2, Inc.) and United Methodist Family Services (UMFS) Tidewater office and UMFS Northern Virginia office. C2Adopt serves the Central Region. UMFS Tidewater office serves Eastern Region and UMFS Northern Virginia office serves the Northern 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 goal is to achieve a minimum of 40 reconnections during a 12 – 20 week period. The model is intense and only a few cases can be served with the weekly team meetings. Since the September start date, twenty (20) youth are being provided services. Of this number, fifty-five (55) percent or eleven youth are in Foster Family Home settings and (collectively) 45% or nine youth are in Group Homes or Residential settings. Two of the youth have been matched with a prospective relative and one youth and his agency have decided not to pursue adoption. The youth being served were referrals from eleven local departments of social services. Below are highlights of the cases.

<b>Extreme Recruitment Highlights</b>				
	C2Adopts	UMFS Tidewater	UMFS Northern*	Total
<b>Cases Serviced</b>	9	6	2	17
<b>Cases Referred &amp; Pending</b>	2	0	1	3
				20
<b>Case Placement Type at beginning of services</b>				
1)Foster Family Home	7	2	1	10
2)Group Home	1	1	1	3
3)Residential	3	3		6
<b>Outcomes</b>				
Matched		1	1	2
<p><u>Case Highlight:</u>  UMFS/Tidewater Office is currently working with a 17 year old female who has been in care for 2 years and has had 2 placements. When services began the youth was resistant to being adopted because she felt no one would be interested in adopting her due to her age. However her foster parent has expressed an interest in adoption in addition to a paternal uncle who lives out of state. Her paternal grandfather who is not an option for placement due to history of abuse has expressed an interest in naming the youth in his Will.</p>				

Using the competitive bidding process, contracts were awarded for Eastern, Central and the Northern VDSS regions. The \*Northern Region was an addition over the previous contract period. A need for the model in the Western Region was expressed, but no proposals were received. Since the contract implementation, the Western Region continues to reconfirm their interest in Extreme Recruitment. In September, the plan for a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Pulaski Department of Social Services was pending, but the agency rescinded. In November, Radford Department of Social Services took measurable steps towards an MOA and progress to finalize is promising. When the anticipated MOA is fully executed, the services cannot begin until approximately February, 2016. The agency will need time to hire a service worker; but they have identified an investigator who has experience working with the agency. All the staff and the partnering local departments of social services will have to be trained on the model by the St. Louis Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition staff.

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

The M Network, a marketing firm from Miami, Florida was awarded a contract to complete the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) initiative to develop a statewide marketing and public awareness plan and the tools needed to advance the successful recruitment of foster and adoptive families. The contract began October 1, 2015 and will end on September 30, 2016.

August, 2014, as part of the VaAdopts campaign, the National Resource Center (NRC) for Diligent Recruitment began to provide technical assistance to VDSS on Market Segmentation. VDSS, in partnership with NRC, used the Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri)

Business Analyst software to identify segments of the population that are likely to be prospective foster and adoptive parents for Virginia and the marketing characteristics associated with these groups.

The campaign development will include innovative, region-specific marketing strategies and implementation tools using Market Segmentation data. The Contractor shall lead this work and shall work closely with VDSS in order to ensure alignment with all aspects of the project. The M Network has held two meetings in Virginia with the VDSS lead staff and partners (One Church One Child, Change Who Waits, FACES of Virginia Families and Connecting Hearts). The initial assessment by the M Network is that “in past campaigns, VDSS has not maintained ownership (or control) of the campaigns created on their behalf and/or the various components of those campaigns. In order to create a successful, sustainable campaign, we (VDSS/M Network) will need to build an internal infrastructure that will be owned by VDSS. This will give VDSS the ability to delegate or assign control over specific aspects of the campaign to both internal and external agencies without losing control over the campaign as a whole.”

Pilot Agencies, approximately five (5) LDSS per region will serve as a focus/advisory group for materials developed by the Contractor to provide input and to test customer appeal. Pilot Agencies will:

- Review their agency’s internal protocol for timely responses to families who inquire about fostering and or adopting;
- Use a tracking tool available through the AdoptUSKids to track recruitment responses and follow-up;
- Provide training to other LDSS.

VDSS’ marketing and public awareness campaign is anticipated to be 3-5 years in duration. VDSS will lead the campaign. VDSS will enter into agreements with LDSSs to pilot recruitment within a region using the VDSS marketing plan and tools developed by the contractor. The next meeting with the M Network will be January 13, 2016.

## Appendix Cohort Data on Finalized Adoptions (as of September 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”), 483 (62%) children and youth had discharged to adoption by end of September 2015 (equates to 33 months elapsed since the start of CY 2013).
- Of the children who were in foster care on December 31, 2013 and had a goal of adoption (“2013 Cohort”; N=466), 309 (66%) children and youth exited to adoption by September 30, 2015 (at the 21-month mark).
- The newest cohort to be tracked is comprised of 534 children who were in care on December 31, 2014 (“2014 Cohort”). As of end of September 2015 (the 9-month mark), 133 (25%) exited to adoption.
- The charts below track the progress of these three cohorts on finalized adoptions based on the number of months elapsed since the start of the clock for each cohort. By 21 months, the 2013 Cohort had a higher percentage of children who discharged to adoption than the 2012 Cohort (66% vs. 55%). The gap between the 2012 and 2013 cohorts continues to widen.
- Compared to the other two cohorts, the 2014 Cohort shows a lower adoption rate at the nine-month mark. After nine months, 25% of children in the 2014 cohort achieved finalized adoptions, whereas 31% and 35% of children, respectively, in the 2012 Cohort and 2013 Cohort were adopted. We will continue to monitor these trends over the next 6 to 9 months.

