



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Office of the Commissioner

Margaret Ross Schultze
COMMISSIONER

April 14, 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".

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 January – March, 2016

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 third 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.

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. Through the second quarter of SFY 2016, which ended December 31, 2015, there were 274 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

Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.) – On February 11, 2016 in the Piedmont Region, a SAFE @School event was held at Bedford Elementary with 31 participants (teachers, guidance staff and principal). The therapist in Piedmont area served 12 children under the grant (July 2015-December 2015) and the therapist in the Eastern region served nine children under the grant.

DePaul Community Resources- The agency provides intervention services for families through Parent Engagement Team (PET)’s parent coach and parent/child aide model. Families reported an increase in positive and effective communication within their homes due to utilizing this model.

Frontier Health – Ten families attended the monthly adoption forums where families openly discuss topics related to adoption with others who understand the process and are facing similar milestones in their adoption journey. For this quarter, training was provided to the families on Stress and Happiness (three parts). The forums include a separate meeting for the youth. The last meeting had twenty-five participants. In addition, an assessment and referral process was implemented to allow enhanced collaboration with local departments of social services. This quarter two new families were referred and are receiving services. Both families contacted their local department of social services after having issues years after their adoptions were finalized. Mentoring services have become a part of services offered. One of the adoptive families receiving services stated, “I had nowhere to turn. I was at my wit’s end. I am forever indebted to Post Adoption Services for their love, support, and the services they have offered my family. They saved my adoption and my family.”

Extreme Recruitment® - FAM-15-0093

Since the September start date, 25 youth have been provided services. Of this number, 14 youth are in Foster Family Home settings. Collectively 10 youth are in Group Homes or Residential settings and one is classified as “other”. The youth being served constitute referrals from 12 local departments of social services.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been fully executed with the Radford Department of Social Services and the City of Radford for Child Specific Recruitment using Extreme Recruitment®. Radford Department of Social Services is collaborating with the following local departments of social services: Montgomery County, Floyd County and Giles County. On April 13, 2016, the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition from St. Louis, Missouri, the proprietors of the Extreme Recruitment® Model will provide individualized training to the staff at the local agency.

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

Using market segmentation data, the Division of Family Services contracted with the M Network to develop region-specific messages and strategies to help target specific segments of families that are more likely to foster and/or adopt. Unfortunately, the contractor was unable to complete their deliverables as spelled out in the contract and a Notice of Cancellation and Termination was sent to the M Network on March 21, 2016. The deliverables have been brought “in-house” and the Division in conjunction with the Division of Public Affairs have developed three potential region-specific recruitment campaigns which are set to launch May 1, 2016.

In addition, the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment continues to provide technical assistance to VDSS to use market segmentation data to inform recruitment activities, materials and messaging. They are also providing assistance to the Adoption Unit related to use of a national tracking system, the Family Intake Tracking Tool, through AdoptUSKids.