



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

Margaret Ross Schultze  
COMMISSIONER

October 30, 2016

**MEMORANDUM**

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

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

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

The 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 346 of the 2016 Appropriation Act – Adoption of Children in Foster Care

I am pleased to submit the Department of Social Services' first quarter report pursuant to Item 346 of the 2016 Appropriation Act. Item 346 (F1) provides funding to implement pilot programs that increase the number of foster care children adopted. Item 346 (F2) requires the Department of Social Services to report quarterly to the Governor, the Chairmen of Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees and the Director of the Department of Planning and Budget 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

Attachment

## **Quarterly Report on Adoption of Children in Foster Care July – September 2016**

### **Report Mandate and Background**

Items 346 (F1) and (F2) of the 2016 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) 2017 first 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. 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%.

Through June 30, 2016, there were 568 finalized adoptions. One-third (33.80, n=192) of these adoptions occurred within 24 months after the most recent home removal. According to the June 2016 data, 5,050 children were in foster care as of the end of the month. This count includes 920 children and youth who are waiting for adoption.

### **Adoption Contracts**

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

There are three contractors providing post adoption services under this funding stream. The contractors are Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E), DePaul Community Resources and Frontier Health. C.A.S.E. trained 15 therapists in Training for Adoption Competency (TAC) this quarter, provided assessments and counseling services to 32 adopted youth. DePaul Community Resources provided post adoption services to 11 youth and 10 families during this quarter. Common services provided were individual counseling and family counseling. Frontier Health conducted “Strengthening Adoptive Families (Trauma & Attachment) training. They provided services to 25 youth and 10 families.

#### **Extreme Recruitment® - FAM-15-093**

Extreme Recruitment has four contractors covering identified areas in Eastern, Central, Northern and Western Regions. The contractors, C2Adopts, United Methodist Family Services (UMFS) Tidewater, UMFS Northern Virginia and Radford Department of Social Services, are currently serving 27 youth. Of the 27, there has been one finalized adoption and 13 connections matched with a permanent resource. There are five pending finalized adoptions.

#### Foster Care/Adoption Recruitment using Market Segmentation

In March 2016, VDSS cancelled its contract with M Network (FAM-16-003), the Miami-based marketing firm that worked on the development of a campaign in the fall of 2015. Rather than work through a contractor, VDSS Division of Family Services has been working collaboratively with the Division of Public Affairs to develop and execute a foster and adoptive parent recruitment campaign.

Public Affairs launched three separate “mini” campaigns: Foster the Odds, Reunification, and Foster Futures VA. Each campaign includes different collateral, including posters, fliers, and social media examples for local departments of social services (LDSS) to use. Some of the campaigns have also included radio PSA, billboards, and testimonial stories from foster and adoptive parents in an effort to reach a larger audience statewide. All campaign materials are available through a Digital Campaign Library on VDSS’ intranet site.

Additionally, a select number of pilot LDSS were given access to AdoptUSKids Family Intake Tracking Tool (FITT), which can be used to track inquiries and basic information from prospective foster and adoptive parents. Outreach was conducted with each of the 24 agencies to solicit feedback on the utility of the tool. Approximately half of the agencies have used FITT since May and were able to highlight some of the tool’s most useful features and biggest limitations; however, several LDSS reported that staff turnover and complex cases have limited their agency’s use of the tool and general recruitment efforts.