



# EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN FOSTER HOMES FOR TEENS

## A Readiness Toolkit

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# Introduction & Background

Foster parents are a critical element in Florida's privatized child welfare system. They provide a safe place for children and youth to live after experiencing abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Recruiting homes for youth (11-17) is becoming increasingly important as the number of homes needed continues to outpace the number of willing foster families recruited and retained. The current shortage of foster families has led to sibling groups being separated and placed in multiple locations. There is a need to transform recruitment efforts for foster homes to care for teens because community-based care lead agencies (CBCs) lack willing families to care for some of the most behaviorally challenged and trauma-exposed populations in the child welfare system — teens.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF or Department) has had to find a way to balance the need for autonomy while at the same time contractually regulating foster home recruitment because recruitment has historically been the responsibility of CBC agencies. By identifying, evaluating, and utilizing evidence-based recruitment methods, DCF may be better able to assist CBCs in strategically recruiting and retaining foster parents.

In Florida, there are no universal policies, standards, or recommended best practices in place regarding teen foster home recruitment methods. Recruitment and retention efforts are primarily undertaken by CBCs in each judicial circuit. The number of homes needed for teens continues to outpace the organizations' ability to recruit and retain parents. Each CBC faces its own set of challenges due to the unique nature and composition of the communities they serve. The lack of foster home recruitment uniformity makes it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts. As Florida and the nation face resource reductions, it is imperative that DCF and CBCs demonstrate the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of foster home recruitment efforts.

Without standardized recruitment strategies and appropriate data collection, the Department is unable to determine the cause of foster home disparities and/or determine which methods are most cost-effective and beneficial. Ultimately, every child needs a family, and family-based foster home placements are more likely to give children the best chance for success.<sup>1</sup>

This manual presents strategies for increasing the number of teen foster homes and offers solutions for sustainability. Collaboration and partnership with

community leadership and local organizations is the overarching component to the recommended strategies in this manual but will not be discussed because the focus of this manual is on recruitment and retention strategies.

## Manual Format

This manual will assist with developing a plan for targeted foster home recruitment for teens as well as developing strategies for retaining quality foster families on your roster. It can also be utilized as a quality assurance tool for performance contracts by the Department and CBCs.

The manual offers seven key components to effectively plan for teen foster home recruitment and retention. Following each section, questions are presented for your consideration to determine your agency's strengths and needs regarding each component. At the end of the manual, readiness tools and reproducible worksheets can be found that may be used on an individual or agency level. The seven key components outlined in this manual are:

1. Active Engagement
2. Ongoing Support
3. Assessing the Need
4. Recruitment
5. Training
6. Appropriate Placement
7. Continuous Quality Improvement

This is designed to be a self-paced tool to assist you in determining the effectiveness of your current recruitment strategies. It is suggested that you complete one section at a time and based on your answers, implement the strategies provided for that section.



# Active Engagement

Finding an appropriate number of suitable foster homes for teens can be a challenge. There is a perception that this age group presents with a unique subset of issues that are difficult to address and overcome (e.g. behavioral/mental health issues and juvenile delinquency). Foster home recruiters have the responsibility for ensuring that all children, including teens, are placed in the most family-like environment possible. This means that recruiters must possess a high level of comfort with actively engaging potential foster parents and youth at the individual level as well as the community level.

## What is Active Engagement?

Simply stated, active engagement is a process that involves building relationships based on mutual respect, trust and understanding. This process is an *active* process where the recruiter has to take the lead as the initiator and the sustainer of relationships.

Foster home recruiters must possess a broad spectrum of engagement approaches ranging from information

sharing with community groups to encouraging youth to participate in the placement process. Engaged youth, foster parents, and communities are more likely to endorse your agency's recruitment process, as well as have higher levels of satisfaction with the process.

Fundamentally, active engagement means that the recruiter has to *motivate* people to want to become foster parents. Generally speaking, motivation is derived either intrinsically or extrinsically. *Intrinsic motivation* comes from the interest, satisfaction, and enjoyment that drives one to take action on his or her own decision, whereas *extrinsic motivation* comes from the value and usefulness a person places on an external goal – e.g. the reward one would get for doing something.<sup>2</sup> The recruiter's job is to motivate on both levels, *intrinsic* and *extrinsic*, through active engagement skills.

There are five key components to the active engagement process:

1. Knowledge
2. Input
3. Acknowledgement
4. Communication
5. Problem solving

## KNOWLEDGE

Finding foster homes for teens may be more difficult than recruitment for other age groups due to misconceptions that potential foster parents have about teens and teens have about foster parents. Potential foster parents can have the perception that teens in foster care are difficult to manage behaviorally or are beyond help because of their histories with the child welfare system. They may also fear that bringing an older foster child into their home will negatively influence their own younger biological children or that they are not prepared to adequately parent a child who *may* need significant parental structure, discipline, and guidance. The anxiety produced from these perceptions often results in foster parents requesting younger children or not fostering at all.

Most changes require new skills and attitudes that people need to learn.

Even when recruiters have a potential foster home, they may still face issues with placement because of the misconceptions that teens have about foster care. Teens requiring placement often fear that



they will not be accepted into families with biological children in the home.<sup>3</sup> They fear that they will not be respected, loved, or listened to and that their foster parents won't understand that this is a difficult developmental period — not only because they are in foster care, but because they are teenagers. Lastly, they fear that they will lose privileges (i.e. cell phones, driving) most teens enjoy and they will not have a sense of normalcy.

The recruiter's role is to change these perceptions through information sharing. By providing information needed to be knowledgeable about fostering teens or about being a teen in a foster home, the recruiter can assist in reducing anxiety, increase the sense of competency and comfort in exploring the possibilities of placement.

### SEEKING INPUT

The process of active engagement requires seeking input from the foster parents, teens, colleagues, and community stakeholders. Creating a team-like environment gives every team member the opportunity to openly and honestly express their thoughts and ideas on recruiting and retention efforts. This approach shows that the recruiter is genuinely interested in others' opinions and they are wanted as part of the team.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Timely acknowledgement of willingness, participation, and effort by potential and existing foster parents, teens, colleagues, and stakeholders is essential for success and should be an integral part of daily practice.<sup>4</sup> Appreciation is a fundamental human need. Recognizing the value of praise and encouragement is necessary to be effective in recruitment and retention efforts.

### COMMUNICATION

Communication involves two or more people in an exchange where people take turns speaking *and* listening. Communicating the need for foster homes for teens requires recruiters to package their message in an individualized, succinct and clear manner for each audience. Effective communicators recognize that one

size does *not* fit all and that their repertoire of messaging has to be broad enough to reach multiple levels of audiences, including both individuals and groups. A strategized communication plan will help the message recipients obtain the information necessary to make informed decisions, decrease their anxiety, and increase their motivation for wanting to be foster parents for teens.

### PROBLEM SOLVING

The final component to active engagement is problem solving. Effective problem solving involves seven key steps:

**Step 1: Identifying the Problem** requires that you answer the “who, what, when, where, why and how” of the problem.

**Step 2: Setting the Goal** requires that you are specific about what the outcome you desire is and articulate it in clear, realistic and measurable terms.

**Step 3: Brainstorming Options** requires that you accurately assess the issue and are able to identify multiple (5-10) potential options for a solution.<sup>5,6</sup>

**Step 4: Weighing the Pros and Cons** requires that you consider the short and long term effects on you (time invested), others (foster family, teen, community), and agency (funding issues).

**Step 5: Selecting the Best Option(s)** requires that you select the most feasible option(s) at this point that will help you resolve your problem and reach your goal while at the same time keeping the remaining options “on the table” for future use.

**Step 6: Creating an Action Plan** requires that you actively engage all parties to delineate the specific action steps that are needed to achieve your stated goal.

**Step 7: Evaluating the Outcome** requires that you continuously evaluate the progress on the action steps to ensure that the goal is met. Once the goal is met, periodic reviews are needed to ensure that goal attainment has been sustained.

In short, the teen foster home recruitment and retention problem-solving process is on-going and requires a strategic problem-solving plan, such as the one presented in this manual, to assist with addressing and resolving problems as they arise.

The primary purpose of communication in change is to create clarity — ensuring that everyone understands what is to be achieved.

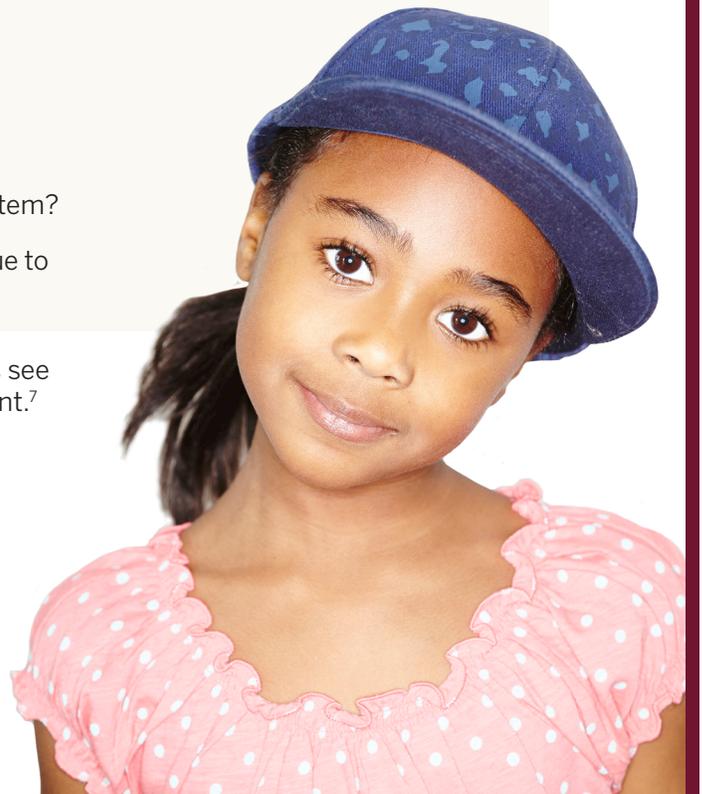
## Engagement Self-Assessment and Readiness Questions

- » What strategies do you use to build rapport with prospective foster parents?
- » What strategies do you use to build rapport with prospective teens in need of a placement?
- » What strategies do you use to empower foster family members and teens?
- » How do you seek information from families and teens about their strengths, needs and desires?
- » What process do you use for resolving problems?

**On a scale of 1–5** (1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Most of the time; 5 = Always)  
**how often do you?**

- » Provide recruitment information and specific child information to potential foster parents?
- » Provide case information and recruitment information to existing foster parents?
- » Provide recruitment and case information to teens?
- » Provide recruitment and case information to colleagues?
- » Seek input from potential foster parents regarding recruitment strategies and effectiveness?
- » Seek input from teens regarding recruitment strategies and effectiveness?
- » Seek input from colleagues regarding recruitment strategies and effectiveness?
- » Acknowledge efforts provided by potential foster parents?
- » Acknowledge efforts provided by existing foster parents?
- » Acknowledge efforts provided by teens?
- » Acknowledge efforts provided by colleagues?
- » Assess your communication skills?
- » Ask for feedback from potential foster parents?
- » Ask for feedback from colleagues?
- » Complete exit surveys with foster parents leaving the system?
- » Complete exit surveys with teens leaving a foster home due to disruption or permanency?

For resources on surveying current and former foster parents see the Family to Family Tools for Rebuilding Foster Care document.<sup>7</sup>



# Ongoing Support

Providing ongoing support to potential and existing foster parents and teens is key to successful teen foster home recruitment and retention. The recruiter's role is to 1) assist with administrative concerns; 2) provide support to resolve disputes or misunderstandings between the foster parents and your agency or the foster parents and the teen placed in their home; 3) provide feedback on parenting approaches; and 4) identify training needs. This can be done in multiple ways and requires an ongoing support plan for the foster parents and the teen.

## Support Plan Assessment and Readiness Questions

### Do you:

- » have a support plan?
- » give foster parents and the teen have access to a 24-hour emergency telephone line?
- » follow-up when there is an emergency within 48 hours?
- » connect each foster parent with a mentor?
- » connect each teen with a foster teen mentor?
- » ensure that every foster parent has information about their local and statewide foster parent association?
- » ensure teens have access to their statewide foster teen association?
- » give foster parents have access to

monthly support group meetings supported by your unit and a quality foster parent?

- » give teens access to monthly support group meetings supported by your unit and teen participant?
- » have a foster home support team to address potential disruptions?
- » offer regular (i.e. monthly) trainings to foster parents to enhance knowledge and develop parenting skills?
- » provide allowances for costs not covered by the daily rate?
- » ask foster parents on a monthly basis if there is anything they need?
- » ask foster teens on a monthly basis if there is anything they need?
- » include foster parents in case staffings or case planning?
- » assist foster parents in developing a self-care plan?
- » adequately inform the foster parent about the teen's background and needs?
- » adequately inform the foster parent about the teen's legal status, treatment plans, and concurrent placement goals?

- » What are the barriers to having a successful ongoing support plan?
- » What are some solutions or modifications you could make to your existing plan to improve access to auxiliary services?

» Is there a mechanism in place where solutions or modifications could be implemented?

» Is there a current evaluation or feedback process?



# Recruitment and Retention Process and Strategies

**Active engagement** and **ongoing support** are two components of the foster home recruitment and retention process model. These components are consistent regardless of the geographic area served. Four components will utilize the same framework; however, the application of the framework may vary depending on geographic area:

1. Assessing the need
2. Recruiting foster homes
3. Training
4. Appropriate placement

## ASSESSING THE NEED

There are three components to assessing the need for teen foster homes: 1) collecting accurate *data*; 2) knowing the *demographics* of the teens in need of a foster home; and 3) making *deliberate* recruitment plans to meet the individual needs of each teen.<sup>8</sup> After reading the manual, complete the Needs Assessment on page 35.

## DATA COLLECTION

To have an effective teen foster home recruitment and retention plan, recruiters need to know data trends regarding the number of homes needed, the complexity of the issues that the teens in the community present with, and the agency's historical capacity to meet recruitment thresholds and retain quality foster homes.

**Trend data** is critical to successful teen foster home recruitment and retention because it provides insight into patterns of change over time. The goal of a trend analysis is to determine if there has been an increase or decrease in a specific indicator (i.e. increase in special populations such as victims of commercial exploitation or those with medically complex needs), as well as how quickly or slowly the change has occurred. Comparing one-time period to the next will allow for adjusting of recruitment strategies and making policy shifts if needed. Trend analysis also allows for comparing one geographic area to another so that you can "target" specific geographic areas that may be more difficult in placing teens. For example, you may want to compare why one geographic area is more successful than another in recruiting foster homes for Hispanic male teens or medically complex teens. Lastly, projecting foster home recruitment and retention rates into the future allows you to monitor progress, or lack thereof, toward meeting your objectives. Projecting or

forecasting the potential number of future homes can aid in the planning of recruitment events and services needed to retain existing foster parents.

## Data Collection Readiness Questions

### Do you currently:

- » collect data on foster parents?
- » collect data on teens you have placed?
- » collect data on the effectiveness of your recruitment strategies (i.e. number of homes recruited by faith-based organizations)?
- » collect data on hard to place populations (i.e. pregnant and parenting teens)?
- » collect data on attrition rates and the reasons for leaving the program?
- » collect data on disruptions and the reasons for the disruption?
- » analyze the data on a monthly basis for trends?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, list the types of data you currently collect and the reason why you collect it.

If you answered no to any of the above questions, what are the barriers to collecting or analyzing the data for each of the questions above?

What are some solutions or modifications you could make to your existing plan to improve data collection efficiency and effectiveness?

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Teen foster home recruiters need to know the demographics of the 1) community/neighborhood they are targeting; 2) potential foster parents; and 3) teens coming into the system.<sup>9</sup> Key demographic data that will assist you with your recruitment plan includes the following:

Community/Neighborhood	Foster Parents	Teens in Need of Placement
Gender Dispersion	Age	Age
Age Dispersion	Racial Identity	Racial Identity
Racial Composition	Ethnic Identity	Ethnic Identity
Ethnic Composition	Household Income	Biological Family Household Income
Median Household Income	Educational Attainment Level	Education Attainment Level (Child and Parent)
Religious Affiliations	Religious Affiliation	Religious Affiliation
Mobility Rate	Family Composition	Family Composition
Child Maltreatment Rate	Mobility History	Mobility History
Crime Rates	Placement Parameters	Sibling Status
School Districts	Vocation	Special Needs

## Demographic Data Collection Readiness Questions

- » What demographic information do you currently collect on your community?
- » What demographic information do you currently collect on your foster parents?
- » What demographic information do you currently collect on your teens?
- » How do you use this information?
- » What additional data should be collected?
- » What are the barriers to collecting demographic data in for each of the subsets?
- » What are some solutions or modifications you could make to your existing plan for collecting demographic data to improve efficiency and effectiveness?

# Recruiting Foster Homes for Teens

Recruiting prospective foster parents for teens and retaining them can be challenging, especially if you do not have a process that is engaging, supportive, and data driven. A successful teen foster home recruitment plan requires a deliberate approach that engages specific community groups and targets potential foster parents who are the best fit for teens.

## DELIBERATE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

By utilizing the information from your data collection plan and demographic matching, you will enhance the probability of appropriately targeting your recruitment and retention efforts for teens.<sup>10</sup>

## Deliberate Recruitment and Retention Implementation Readiness Questions

- » Do you have a recruitment and retention plan specifically for recruiting foster homes for teens?
  - If you answered yes, is the plan effective?
  - If you responded no, list barriers to not having a recruitment and retention plan for teen foster homes.
- » What are the benefits to having a recruitment and retention plan specific to recruiting foster homes for teens?
- » What are the strengths of the plan?
- » What improvements/modifications could be made to the plan?
- » What are the barriers to making improvements to the plan?



## RECRUITMENT APPROACHES

There are three main types of foster home recruitment approaches: general, targeted and child-specific.

**General recruitment** approaches typically do not differentiate foster children by population or need. Messaging and outreach is meant to reach a broad audience and does not take into consideration the special needs of the agency (i.e. foster homes for teens). **Targeted or deliberate recruitment** approaches are focused on direct messaging and outreach to potential foster parents who reside in certain communities and/or have desirable backgrounds that match those of the children that need placement. **Child-specific recruitment** approaches are designed to target a specific child or sibling group in need of a foster home. This approach usually involves the teen's input as to potential placements through the use of genograms or ecomaps.

While targeted child specific recruitment approaches are the most effective in recruiting foster families for teens, they are frequently not utilized due to budget constraints and staffing patterns.

## Targeted and Teen-Specific Recruitment Approach Readiness Questions

### What type of approach do you typically use to recruit foster homes for teens?

- » Why is this the preferred method?
- » Do your current outreach, marketing and media materials target potential foster parents for teens?
- » What are the barriers to having teen specific outreach, marketing and media materials for potential foster parents for teens?
- » What are some solutions or modifications you could make to your outreach, marketing and media materials to improve teen foster home recruitment?

Though targeted and teen-specific recruitment approaches are the more effective recruitment strategies, they are the least used.

Targeted and teen-specific recruitment plans rely heavily on outreach and marketing to groups that are more likely to foster teens. These groups include current foster parents, parents with teens, teachers, coaches, mentors, and guardians ad litem. Recruiters must know their community and actively target groups of potential foster parents in a strategic manner. One way to assist with ensuring strategic engagement with these key groups is to build a tracking form that allows you to schedule and track the groups and individuals that you have made contact with so that you can frequently follow-up with them.

## Targeted Group(s) Readiness Questions

**On a scale of 1–5** (1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Most of the time; 5 = Always) **how often do you?**

- » Outreach/market to high school staff and parents?
- » Outreach/market to Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTOs)?
- » Outreach/market to faith-based organizations?
- » Outreach/market to organizations that work with teens (i.e. sports clubs/recreation facilities)?
- » Outreach/market to empty-nesters?
- » Outreach/market to LGBTQ community groups?
- » Utilize local media outlets?
- » Seek input from teens?
- » Outreach to existing foster parents?
- » Outreach/market to civic organizations?
- » Use a tracking form for organizations?
- » Follow-up with organizations?
- » Use a tracking form for potential foster parents?
- » Follow-up with potential foster parents?
- » Update your print material specific to teens?

- » Update your website for foster parents?

What are the barriers to increasing teen specific outreach and marketing for potential foster parents?

What are some solutions or modifications you could make to your outreach and marketing plan to improve effectiveness?

## WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

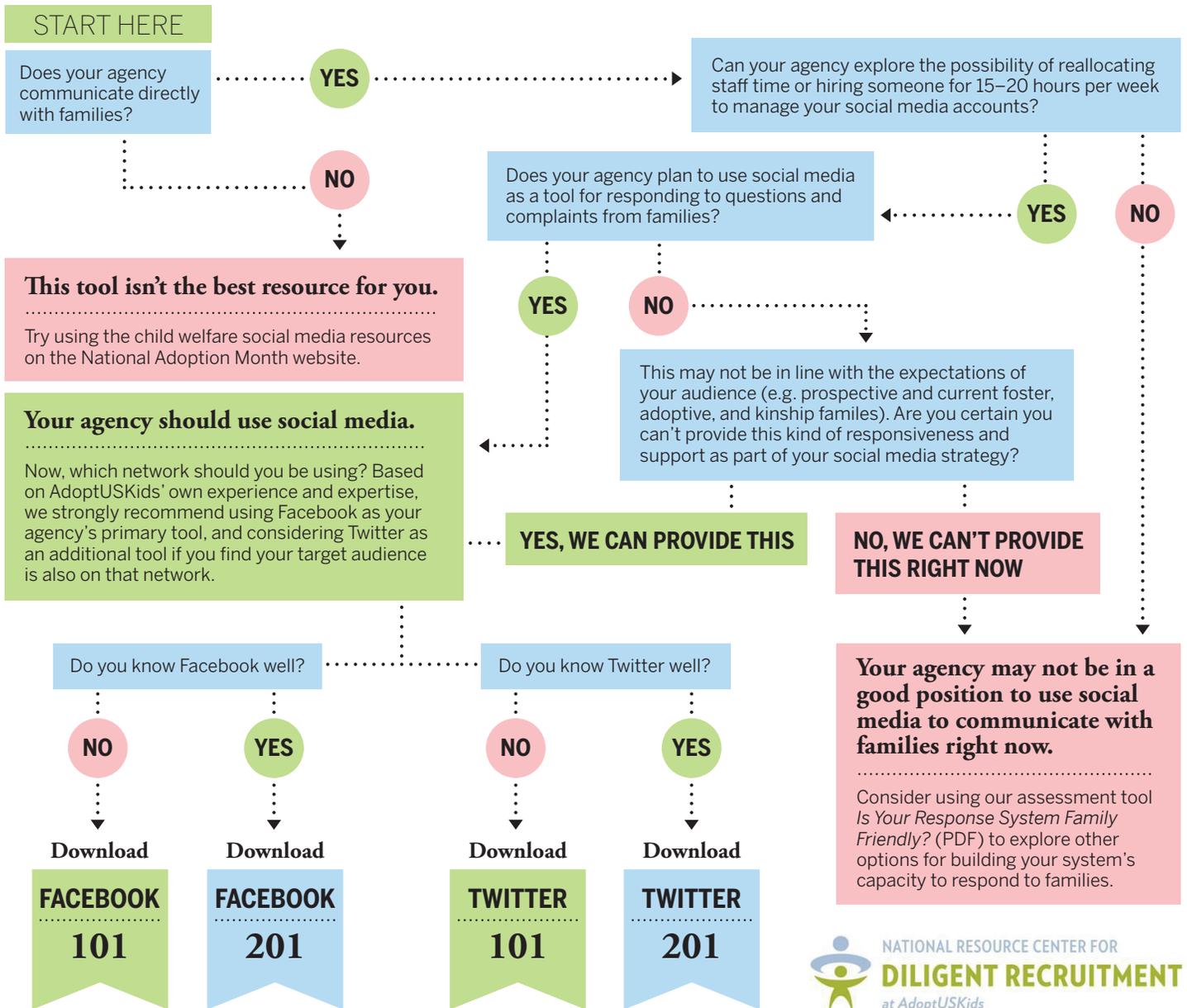
The term “media” refers to outlets or tools that can be utilized to communicate information across an array of audiences. To successfully recruit foster homes for teens, recruiters need to know what their media outlets are and how to best utilize them. In general, the types of media used for recruitment will fall into two categories — mass media and social media.

**Mass media** is typically designed to reach a large audience (e.g. television, radio, newspapers, etc.).

**Social media** is designed to connect people through online networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.). These networks are readily accessible and free. The National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment has a social media flowchart (located on the next page) to assist you with your agency’s capacity to utilize social media.



# WHICH SOCIAL NETWORKS SHOULD YOUR AGENCY USE TO REACH FAMILIES?



You can find the PDF resources located here:  
[nrldr.org/placement-stability-and-permanency/tools-and-resources/using-social-media-in-recruitment](http://nrldr.org/placement-stability-and-permanency/tools-and-resources/using-social-media-in-recruitment)

## Media Readiness Questions

- » List all the print media available in your community.
- » Identify the print media outlets that you use on a regular basis. (e.g. newspapers, community magazines). Why do you use them? What has been the result in terms of recruitment? How many foster families have been recruited through this recruitment strategy?
- » If you do not use print media for outreach, what is the barrier?
- » List all of the local television stations available in your community.
- » Identify the stations that you use on a regular basis. Why do you use them? What has been the result in terms of recruitment? How many foster families have been recruited through this recruitment strategy?
- » If you do not use television stations for outreach, what is the barrier?
- » List all of the local radio stations available in your community.
- » Identify the stations that you use on a regular basis. Why do you use them? What has been the result in terms of recruitment? How many foster families have been recruited through this recruitment strategy?
- » If you do not use radio stations for outreach, what is the barrier?
- » Do you use social media as a recruitment tool?
- » Identify the social media outlets that you use on a regular basis. Why do you use them? What has been the result in terms of recruitment? How many foster families have been recruited through this recruitment strategy?
- » If you do not use social media what is the barrier?

# Training

Florida requires all foster parents to complete a minimum 21-hour preservice training course for licensure that is designed to promote a partnership for decision-making in terms of the best fit for the child, foster parent, and agency. The training is designed to assist the licensing agency and prospective foster parents to mutually decide on the best foster parenting path for each family. Topics addressed in the training include attachment, behavior management, maintaining birth family connections, and the impact fostering has on the foster family. For married couples, both parents within a family must attend the training. Potential foster parents must also complete a one-hour Universal Safety Precautions training and Adult/Infant/Child CPR and First Aid courses.

Although DCF mandates a minimum 21-hour foster parent preservice training, an agency may:

1. Add a module that is specific to teens.
2. Designate foster parents as “specialists” in fostering teens by offering additional training and priority placements.
3. Invite teens to attend the foster parent training so they hear the same message that the foster parents are receiving.

The foster parent training is also a great time to evaluate potential foster parents' strengths and needs related to their capacity to adequately foster teens. It is during this time that recruiters can evaluate whether or not they want to *retain*, *refrain from using*, or *remove* a foster parent from their roster of foster parents equipped to care for teens. Potential foster parents who display the

to the agency. Foster parents who articulate a willingness to foster teens, yet do not meet the capacity threshold, should have placement refrained until they have demonstrated a capacity to appropriately foster teens. Teens should not be placed with these families until they have met designated capacities that are predetermined, objective, and consistently applied. Lastly, when there are undeniable issues of suitability about a foster parent's capacity to foster a teen, he or she should be removed from the teen foster home roster. These decisions can be difficult to make given the shortage of resources and foster homes for teens; however, building a cadre of quality foster homes for teens requires that there is a vetting and matching process that starts in the training stage.

## Training Readiness Questions

- » What teen specific training modules do you offer in preservice?
- » How do you identify the training needs specific to fostering teens?
- » How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your preservice training specific to fostering teens?
- » What is your vetting process for foster parents for teens who complete the preservice?
- » Do you allow teens to participate in the preservice training? If no, why not?
- » What is the matching process that you currently utilize for teens?
  - If none, what steps can you take to begin one?
- » If you do utilize the matching process, what are the indicators that it is effective?
- » What barriers exist that impact your ability to maximize the preservice training curriculum for foster parents for teens?
- » What are some solutions for overcoming the barriers you identified?



# Appropriate Placement

When recruiting foster parents for teens, you will need to make an assessment of the potential foster parents' capacity to promote and sustain placement stability. Capacity is measured by thoroughly assessing:

- The foster parents' strengths and parenting capacity.
- The teen's educational and behavioral health needs.
- The available supports and services that are offered in your community.

A deficit in any of these areas sets the stage for potential placement disruption. The key components of teen foster homes that have a higher likelihood of placement stability are:

- A high quality assessment of the needs and strengths of the teen, the foster parent(s) and available support services.
- A plan to meet the needs of the teen and the foster parent(s).
- The teen feels engaged in the decision-making process.
- The teen receives appropriate supports and services.
- The foster parent(s) has experience with teens.
- The foster parent(s) feels adequately trained on behavioral interventions for teens.
- The foster parent(s) is engaged in the educational and behavioral health support services.
- The foster parent(s) supports the teen's desire and/or case plan goal for reunification.
- The foster parent(s) feels as though they have adequate information about the teen's history.

- » How are teens engaged in the placement decision-making process?
- » What preplacement activities or action steps does your agency utilize?
- » How do you monitor the timeliness of access to supports and services to the teen?
- » How do you monitor the quality of supports and services to the teen?
- » How do you monitor the effectiveness of supports and services to the teen?
- » How do you monitor the timeliness of access to supports and services to the foster parent?
- » How do you monitor the quality of supports and services to the foster parent?
- » How do you monitor the effectiveness of supports and services to the foster parent?
- » What case information do you share with foster parents?
- » How do you assess if a foster parent is "adequately trained"?
- » What ongoing training specific to supporting teens do you offer foster families?

## Placement Readiness Questions

- » How do you define a successful foster parent?
- » Do you have an assessment process that is teen specific?
- » What are the strengths in your assessment process?
- » What are the deficits in your assessment process?



# Continuous Quality Improvement Process and Strategies

In order to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of teen foster parent recruitment and retention initiatives, a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) plan is needed. CQI is defined as:

...the complete process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions. It relies on an organizational culture that is proactive and supports continuous learning. CQI is firmly grounded in the overall mission, vision, and values of the agency. Perhaps most importantly, it is dependent upon the active inclusion and participation of staff at all levels of the agency, children, youth, families, and stakeholders throughout the process.<sup>11</sup>

There are six goals of a CQI system:

1. Creating a continuous learning environment.
2. Using data consistently to guide fiscal and programmatic decision-making.
3. Utilizing a management information system that can track data across agencies, if possible, and can provide data to inform decisions.
4. Developing a process for monitoring cross-agency data, if a common interagency management information system is not an option.
5. Developing evaluations that incorporate systems of care principles.
6. Developing processes for using data and outcomes to improve agency processes, procedures, and functions.

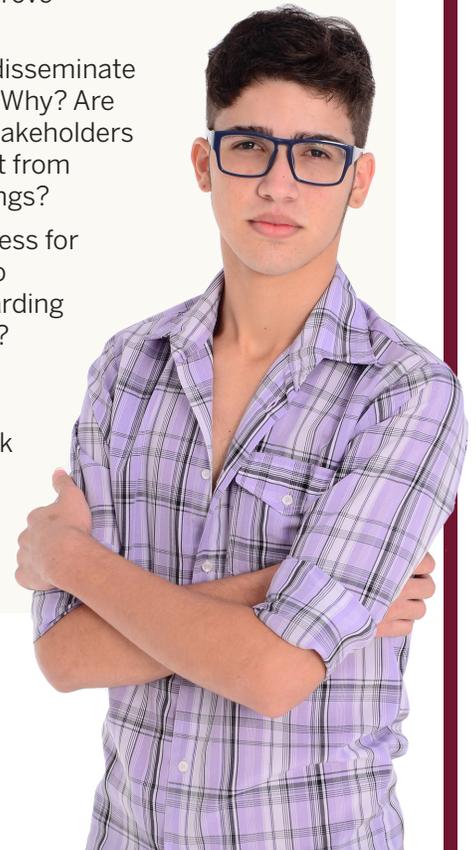
CQI principles should be applied to teen foster home recruitment and retention plans to ensure that the components and activities of the plan are universally utilized and are effective. Most importantly, CQI ensures that agencies are consistently updating the demographic and biopsychosocial characteristic databases of teens in need of placement. CQI also allows for an ongoing analysis of the prospective pool of foster parents for teens, as well as current foster parents. Lastly and most importantly, CQI strengthens the ability to conduct comprehensive and diligent recruitment efforts.<sup>12</sup>

## Continuous Quality Improvement Readiness Questions

- » Do you currently have a CQI system in place?
  - If no, what are the barriers to having a CQI system?
  - If you answered yes, how effective is the system? How often is it deployed?

*The following questions can be answered even if you responded no to the previous question.*

- » Who provides or should provide administrative oversight to your CQI system?
- » What deficits are there in your data collection system at the present time?
- » What are some solutions to remedy the deficits?
- » What method of case review do you currently use or could use? Be specific.
- » If currently utilizing a case review system, is the methodology effective? If no, what could you do to improve effectiveness?
- » What changes should be made to improve effectiveness and efficiency?
- » What process do you currently use or could use to analyze performance measure data?
- » Is the process effective? If no, what could you implement to improve effectiveness?
- » To whom do you disseminate the CQI findings? Why? Are there any other stakeholders who would benefit from knowing the findings?
- » What is your process for giving feedback to stakeholders regarding your CQI findings?
- » What is your process for receiving feedback from your stakeholders regarding your CQI findings?





## Sustainability Solution: Advisory Boards

Difficulty in sustaining effective recruitment and retention efforts may be compounded by low levels of funding or insufficient staff. Establishing a recruitment and retention advisory board is a viable and valuable option that agencies should consider. Advisory boards are a cost effective strategy for developing a recruitment plan, setting measurable and achievable recruitment goals, defining outcome measures, and increasing accountability and performance. Additionally, an advisory board of key stakeholders can assist with providing solutions to recruitment and retentions problems, as well as making improvements to the child welfare system. Lastly, an advisory board gives a voice to community members who may be underrepresented and allows teens and foster parents to directly participate in the recruitment process.



# READINESS TOOLS

## ENGAGEMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT AND READINESS TOOL

What strategies do you use to build rapport with prospective foster parents?

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What strategies do you use to build rapport with prospective teens in need of a placement?

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What strategies do you use to empower foster family members and teens?

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How do you seek information from families and teens about their strengths, needs and desires?

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What process do you use for resolving problems?

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**On a scale of 1–5** (1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Most of the time; 5 = Always) **how often do you?**

	Rating 1-5	If score is "1" or "2"- List the barrier(s)	List solutions to barrier(s)
Provide recruitment information and specific child information to potential foster parents?			
Provide case information and recruitment information to existing foster parents?			
Provide recruitment and case information to teens?			
Provide recruitment and case information to colleagues?			
Seek input from potential foster parents regarding recruitment strategies and effectiveness?			
Seek input from existing foster parents regarding recruitment strategies and effectiveness?			
Seek input from teens regarding recruitment strategies and effectiveness?			
Seek input from colleagues regarding recruitment strategies and effectiveness?			
Acknowledge efforts provided by potential foster parents?			
Acknowledge efforts provided by existing foster parents?			
Acknowledge efforts provided by teens?			
Acknowledge efforts provided by colleagues?			
Assess your communication skills?			
Ask for feedback from potential foster parents?			
Ask for feedback from existing foster parents?			
Ask for feedback from colleagues?			
Complete exit surveys with foster parents leaving the system?			
Complete exit surveys with teens leaving a foster home due to disruption or permanency?			

# SUPPORT PLAN ASSESSMENT AND READINESS TOOL

	Yes	No
Do you have a support plan?		
Do foster parents and the teen have access to a 24-hour emergency telephone line?		
Do you follow-up when there is an emergency within 48 hours?		
Do you connect each foster parent with a mentor?		
Do you connect each teen with a foster teen mentor?		
Do you ensure that every foster parent has information about their local and statewide foster parent association?		
Do you ensure teens have access to their statewide foster teen association?		
Do foster parents have access to monthly support group meetings supported by your unit and a quality foster parent?		
Do teens have access to monthly support group meetings supported by your unit and teen participant?		
Do you have a foster home support team to address potential disruptions?		
Do you offer regular (i.e. monthly) trainings to foster parents to enhance knowledge and develop parenting skills?		
Do you provide allowances for costs not covered by the daily rate?		
Do you ask foster parents on a monthly basis if there is anything they need?		
Do you ask foster teens on a monthly basis if there is anything they need?		
Do you include foster parents in case staffings or case planning?		
Do you assist foster parents in developing a self-care plan?		
Do you adequately inform the foster parent about the teen's background and needs?		
Do you adequately inform the foster parent about the teen's legal status, treatment plans, and concurrent placement goals?		

What are the barriers to having a successful ongoing support plan?

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What are some solutions or modifications you could make to your existing plan to improve access to auxiliary services?

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Is there a mechanism in place where solutions or modifications could be implemented?

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Is there a current evaluation or feedback process?

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# DATA COLLECTION READINESS TOOL

	Yes	No
Do you currently collect data on foster parents?		
Do you currently collect data on teens you have placed?		
Do you currently collect data on the effectiveness of your recruitment strategies (i.e. number of homes recruited by faith-based organizations)?		
Do you currently collect data on hard to place populations (i.e. pregnant and parenting teens)?		
Do you currently collect data on attrition rates and the reasons for leaving the program?		
Do you currently collect data on disruptions and the reasons for the disruption?		
Do you analyze the data on a monthly basis for trends?		

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, list the types of data you currently collect and the reason why you collect it.

Type of Data Collected	Reason

If you answered no to any of the above questions, what are the barriers to collecting or analyzing the data for each of the questions above?

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What are some solutions or modifications you could make to your existing plan to improve data collection efficiency and effectiveness?

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# DEMOGRAPHIC DATA COLLECTION READINESS TOOL

1. What demographic information do you currently collect on your community?

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2. What demographic information do you currently collect on your foster parents?

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3. What demographic information do you currently collect on your teens?

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4. How do you use this information?

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5. What additional data should be collected?

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6. What are the barriers to collecting demographic data in for each of the subsets?

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7. What are some solutions or modifications you could make to your existing plan for collecting demographic data to improve efficiency and effectiveness?

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# DELIBERATE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IMPLEMENTATION READINESS TOOL

1. Do you have a recruitment and retention plan specifically for recruiting foster homes for teens?

Yes  No  Unknown

If you answered yes, is the plan effective?  Yes  No

If you responded no, list barriers to not having a recruitment and retention plan for teen foster homes.

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2. What are the benefits to having a recruitment and retention plan specific to recruiting foster homes for teens?

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3. What are the strengths of the plan?

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4. What improvements/modifications could be made to the plan?

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5. What are the barriers to making improvements to the plan?

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# TARGETED AND TEEN-SPECIFIC RECRUITMENT APPROACH READINESS TOOL

1. What type of approach do you typically use to recruit foster homes for teens?

General Recruitment  Targeted Recruitment  Teen-specific Recruitment

2. Why is this the preferred method?

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Do your current outreach, marketing and media materials target potential foster parents for teens?

Yes  No  Unknown

If no, how could you modify?

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If yes, how?

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3. What are the barriers to having teen specific outreach, marketing and media materials for potential foster parents for teens?

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4. What are some solutions or modifications you could make to your outreach, marketing and media materials to improve teen foster home recruitment?

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# TARGETED GROUP(S) READINESS TOOL

**On a scale of 1–5** (1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Most of the time; 5 = Always) **how often do you?**

	Rating 1-5	If score is "1" or "2"- List the barrier(s)	List solutions to barrier(s)
Outreach/market to high school staff and parents?			
Outreach/market to Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTOs)?			
Outreach/market to faith-based organizations?			
Outreach/market to organizations that work with teens (i.e. sports clubs/recreation facilities)?			
Outreach/market to empty-nesters?			
Outreach/market to LGBTQ community groups?			
Utilize local media outlets?			
Seek input from teens?			
Outreach to existing foster parents?			
Outreach/market to civic organizations?			
Use a tracking form for organizations?			
Follow-up with organizations?			
Use a tracking form for potential foster parents?			
Follow-up with potential foster parents?			
Update your print material specific to teens?			
Update your website for foster parents?			

1. What are the barriers to increasing teen specific outreach and marketing for potential foster parents?

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2. What are some solutions or modifications you could make to your outreach and marketing plan to improve effectiveness?

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# MEDIA READINESS TOOL

1. List all the print media available in your community.

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2. Identify the print media outlets that you use on a regular basis. (e.g. newspapers, community magazines). Why do you use them? What has been the result in terms of recruitment? How many foster families have been recruited through this recruitment strategy?

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3. If you do not use print media, what is the barrier?

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4. List all of the local television stations available in your community.

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5. Identify the stations that you use on a regular basis. Why do you use them? What has been the result in terms of recruitment? How many foster families have been recruited through this recruitment strategy?

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6. If you do not use television stations for outreach, what is the barrier?

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7. List all the local radio stations available in your community.

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8. Identify the stations that you use on a regular basis. Why do you use them? What has been the result in terms of recruitment? How many foster families have been recruited through this recruitment strategy?

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9. If you do not use radio stations for outreach, what is the barrier?

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10. Do you use social media as a recruitment tool?  Yes  No

If you do not use social media what is the barrier?

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11. Identify the social media outlets that you use on a regular basis. Why do you use them? What has been the result in terms of recruitment? How many foster families have been recruited through this recruitment strategy?

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# TRAINING READINESS TOOL

1. What teen specific training modules do you offer in preservice?  None

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2. How do you identify the training needs specific to fostering teens?

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3. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your preservice training specific to fostering teens?

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4. What is your vetting process for teen foster parents who complete the preservice?

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5. Do you allow teens to participate in the preservice training? If no, why not?

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6. What is the matching process that you currently utilize for teens?  None

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If you marked none, what steps can you take to begin one?

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7. If you do utilize the matching process, what are the indicators that it is effective?

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8. What barriers exist that impact your ability to maximize the preservice training curriculum for foster parents for teens?

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9. What are some solutions for overcoming the barriers you identified?

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# PLACEMENT READINESS TOOL

1. How do you define a successful foster parent?

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2. Do you have an assessment process that is teen specific?

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3. What are the strengths in your assessment process?

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4. What are the deficits in your assessment process?

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5. How are teens engaged in the placement decision-making process?

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6. What preplacement activities or action steps does your agency utilize?

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7. How do you monitor the timeliness of access to supports and services to the teen?

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8. How do you monitor the quality of supports and services to the teen?

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9. How do you monitor the effectiveness of supports and services to the teen?

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10. How do you monitor the timeliness of access to supports and services to the foster parent?

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11. How do you monitor the quality of supports and services to the foster parent?

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12. How do you monitor the effectiveness of supports and services to the foster parent?

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13. What case information do you share with foster parents?

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14. How do you assess if a foster parent is "adequately trained"?

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15. What ongoing training specific to supporting teens do you offer foster families?

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# CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT READINESS TOOL<sup>13</sup>

1. Do you currently have a CQI system in place?  Yes  No

If no, what are the barriers to having a CQI system?

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2. If you answered yes to question #1, how effective is the system? How often is it deployed?

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*The following questions can be answered even if you responded no to question #1.*

3. Who provides or should provide administrative oversight to your CQI system?

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4. What deficits are there in your data collection system at the present time?

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5. What are some solutions to remedy the deficits?

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6. What method of case review do you currently use or could use? Be specific.

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7. If currently utilizing a case review system, is the methodology effective? If no, what could you do to improve effectiveness?

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8. What changes should be made to improve effectiveness and efficiency?

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9. What process do you currently use or could use to analyze performance measure data?

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10. Is the process effective? If not, what could you implement to improve effectiveness?

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11. To whom do you disseminate the CQI findings? Why? Are there any other stakeholders who would benefit from knowing the findings?

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12. What is your process for giving feedback to stakeholders regarding your CQI findings?

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13. What is your process for receiving feedback from your stakeholders regarding your CQI findings?

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# NEEDS ASSESSMENT<sup>14</sup>

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Completing Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How many teens (11-17) currently reside with foster families in your community? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. How many of those teens:
    - i. have special emotional or behavioral needs?
    - ii. have medically complex needs?
    - iii. are pregnant or have a child(ren)?
    - iv. are victims of commercial exploitation?
    - v. are also involved in the juvenile justice system (crossover)?
    - vi. have siblings?
    - vii. are LGBTQ?
2. Based on your agency's experience in the past two years, how many teens do you expect will need family foster care during the next year? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many foster parents are licensed in your community to foster teens? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. How many are willing and able to foster teens:
    - i. with special emotional or behavioral needs?
    - ii. with medically complex needs?
    - iii. who are pregnant or have children?
    - iv. who are victims of commercial exploitation?
    - v. who are also involved in the juvenile justice system (crossover)?
    - vi. with siblings?
    - vii. who are LGBTQ?
4. Is the number of licensed foster parents in your community sufficient to meet the needs of teens in foster care?  Yes  No
  - a. If the answer is no, what is the estimated number of foster parents needed to meet the existing needs of your community? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Are some teens placed in residential (group care) settings because no foster parents are available to care for them?  Yes  No
  - a. If the answer is yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. If the answer is yes, what has your agency done to try to remedy this issue?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Are sufficient numbers of licensed foster parents living in the same neighborhoods as teens who need foster care?  Yes  No

a. If the answer is no, what recruitment strategies has your agency used to recruit foster parents in the highest need neighborhoods?

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7. To what degree have the following risk factors contributed to placement of children in foster care in your community? (Check one)

- |  |                               |                                   |                              |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Poverty                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Substance abuse of parent(s)             | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Substance abuse of teen                  | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Mental illness of parent(s)              | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Mental illness of teen                   | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Domestic Violence                        | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| HIV/AIDS status of parent(s)             | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| HIV/AIDS status of teen                  | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Death of parent(s)                       | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Poor parenting skills                    | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Teen's emotional-behavioral health needs | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Teen's medically complex needs           | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Inadequate housing                       | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Incarceration of parents                 | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Pregnant or parenting teens              | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Human trafficking - parent(s)            | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Human trafficking - teen                 | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Other (specify): _____                   | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |

8. To what degree are the following services and resources available for birth parents whose children are in foster care? (Check one)

- |                             |                               |                                   |                              |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Housing programs/assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Employment programs         | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Job training                | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Quality childcare           | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| After-school programs       | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Financial assistance        | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |

Family support services (in-home)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Access to health care	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Access to dental care	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Treatment for substance abuse (outpatient)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Treatment for substance abuse (inpatient)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Mental health counseling (outpatient)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Mental health counseling (inpatient)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Domestic violence counseling (perpetrator)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Domestic violence counseling (victim)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Trauma-focused therapy	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Parent education classes	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Other (specify): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low

9. Which of the above services or resources are most critically needed by birth families in your community? Why?

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10. To what degree are the following services and resources available to teens in foster care in your community? (Check one)

Employment programs	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Job training	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
After-school programs	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Free/Affordable recreation programs	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
College financial aid assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Access to health care	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Access to dental care	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Pregnancy prevention counseling	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Treatment for substance abuse (outpatient)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Treatment for substance abuse (inpatient)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Mental health counseling (outpatient)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Mental health counseling (inpatient)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Domestic violence counseling (perpetrator)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low

- |                                       |                               |                                   |                              |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Domestic violence counseling (victim) | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Group therapy and support             | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Trauma-focused therapy                | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Other (specify): _____                | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |

11. Which of the above services or resources are most critically needed for teens in foster care in your community? Why?

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12. Are there sufficient numbers of foster parents in your community available to care for:

- |  |                              |                             |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Teens  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Sibling groups                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Teen mothers and their children                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Teens infected with HIV/AIDS                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Teens with special needs (behavioral, emotional) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Teens with medically complex needs               | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Teens with special needs (educational)           | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Teen victims of commercial trafficking           | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Teens involved in juvenile justice               | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Teens who are LGBTQ?                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

13. What percentage of teens who entered foster care in your community were reunited with their birth parents in the:

- Past year? \_\_\_\_\_
- Past 2 years? \_\_\_\_\_
- Past 3 years? \_\_\_\_\_

14. On average, how long did it take for most of these teens to be reunited with their birth parents? \_\_\_\_\_

15. What percentage of teens in your community who are not reunified with their birth parents:

Are or have been adopted? \_\_\_\_ Age out? \_\_\_\_ Enter extended foster care? \_\_\_\_

16. Are children frequently (e.g. more than two disruptions) moved from one foster family to another because the families with whom they are placed lack the knowledge and skills necessary to care for their needs?  Yes  No

a. If the answer is yes, what has your agency done to increase knowledge and skillsets for caring for teens with special needs?

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17. What is the racial composition (%) of the teens currently placed by your agency?

- White \_\_\_\_
- African American \_\_\_\_
- Asian American \_\_\_\_
- Hispanic/Latino \_\_\_\_
- Native American \_\_\_\_
- Middle Eastern \_\_\_\_
- Polynesian/Pacific Islander \_\_\_\_
- Biracial \_\_\_\_
- Multiracial \_\_\_\_

18. What is the racial composition (%) of the foster parents currently on your agency's roster?

- White \_\_\_\_
- African American \_\_\_\_
- Asian American \_\_\_\_
- Hispanic/Latino \_\_\_\_
- Native American \_\_\_\_
- Middle Eastern \_\_\_\_
- Polynesian/Pacific Islander \_\_\_\_
- Biracial \_\_\_\_
- Multiracial \_\_\_\_

19. To what degree are the following supports and services available in your community for youth in foster care who are preparing for independent living? (Check one)

- |  |                               |                                   |                              |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Financial aid for post-secondary education | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Financial assistance                       | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Transportation                             | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
| Parent education                           | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |

Vocational counseling	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Vocational school	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Job training	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Assisted or supervised transitional living	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Treatment for substance abuse (outpatient)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Treatment for substance abuse (inpatient)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Mental health counseling (outpatient)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Mental health counseling (inpatient)	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Health insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Dental Insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Other (specify): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low

20. Which of the above two or three supports or services are most critically needed by youth in foster care in your community? Why?

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21. To what degree are the following supports adequate in your community to help foster parents?  
(Check all that apply)

Adequate financial reimbursement	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Respite care	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Buddies or mentors	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Preservice training	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
In-service training	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Liability insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Health insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
After-school programs	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Summer programs	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Counseling	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Behavioral issue support	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Transportation assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Timely access to case managers	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Support groups	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Other (specify): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low

22. Which of the above two or three supports do foster parents in your community most critically need? Why?

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23. What administrative or system problems do you think are interfering with your agency's ability to provide effective services to teens in foster care in your community?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Administrator turnover   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Supervisory turnover   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Worker turnover  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Communication issues between staff/agencies/foster parents/teens     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Outdated policies  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Lack of policy guidelines  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Too much oversight   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Lack of oversight  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Negative media attention   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Lack of community support  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| High caseload  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Lack of focus on key outcomes for permanency, safety, and well-being | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Court delays   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Too much court involvement   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Too little court involvement   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Lack of preventive services  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Insufficient funding   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Funding the wrong services   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Lack of worker training  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Poor retention of foster parents                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Not matching foster parents with teens                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Scarce resources and supports for foster parents                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Lack of community support/interest                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Other (specify): _____   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

24. Identify at least two solutions for every item in question #23 marked as a yes.

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### **PRIORITIZING YOUR NEEDS**

After the needs assessment is completed, staff and stakeholders should meet to review the results to ensure there is a consensus as to the identification of specific needs and strengths. Once there has been agreement about the identification of needs, they will need to be prioritized by identifying realistic timeframes for addressing each need. Agencies may need to utilize the problem-solving model offered in this manual to identify solutions and timelines.

# Sample Yearly Scheduling and Tracking Form for General Recruitment

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete the chart using:

S = Scheduled

C = Completed

# = Number of times completed task for month

		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Outreach/ Market to high school staff and parents?	S												
	C												
	#												
Outreach/ Market to Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTOs)?	S												
	C												
	#												
Outreach/ Market to faith-based organizations (specify)	S												
	C												
	#												
Outreach/ Market to organizations that work with teens (i.e. sports clubs/recreation facilities)? (specify)	S												
	C												
	#												
Outreach/ Market to empty-nesters? (specify)	S												
	C												
	#												
Outreach/ Market to LGBTQ community groups? (specify)	S												
	C												
	#												

		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Utilize local media outlets? (specify)	S												
	C												
	#												
Utilize social media outlets? (specify)	S												
	C												
	#												
Seek input from the teens in foster care? (specify)	S												
	C												
	#												
Outreach to existing foster parents? (specify)	S												
	C												
	#												
Outreach/ Market to civic organizations? (specify)	S												
	C												
	#												
Follow-up with organizations that initially denied a presentation?	S												
	C												
	#												
Follow-up with potential foster parents?	S												
	C												
	#												
Update print material specific to teens?	S												
	C												
	#												
Update website for foster parents specific to fostering teens?	S												
	C												
	#												

# SAMPLE TRACKING FORM FOR TEEN SPECIFIC PLACEMENT

Name of Teen: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Removed: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Placement: \_\_\_\_\_

## Matching Demographics:

What county does teen reside in? \_\_\_\_\_ Teen's age? \_\_\_\_\_

Race:  White  African American  Asian American  
 Hispanic/Latino  Native American  Middle Eastern  
 Biracial  Multiracial  Polynesian/Pacific Islander

What school does the teen attend? \_\_\_\_\_ What grade? \_\_\_\_\_

How many foster care placements has the teen had? \_\_\_\_\_ How many disruptions? \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for disruption(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the teen have prospective relative or non-relative caregivers to whom he/she would like to be placed with?  Yes  No

If yes, have they been contacted?  Yes  No

If yes, what was the outcome? \_\_\_\_\_

If no, what are the barriers? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the teen have a foster home to which he/she would like to return?  Yes  No

If yes, have they been contacted?  Yes  No

If yes, what was the outcome? \_\_\_\_\_

If no, what are the barriers? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the teen have any special needs?  Yes  No

If yes, what are the needs? \_\_\_\_\_

# RECRUITING STRATEGIES

Did you contact former foster parents of the teen?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Did you outreach/market to the teen's high school staff and parents?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Did you outreach/market to Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTOs) in the teen's school district?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Did you outreach/market to faith-based organizations in the teen's school district (specify which ones)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Did you outreach/market to organizations that work with teens in the teen's school district (i.e. sports clubs/recreation facilities)? (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Did you outreach/market to empty-nesters in the teen's school district? (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Did you outreach/market to LGBTQ community groups in the teen's school district? (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Did you utilize local media outlets? (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Did you utilize social media outlets? (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Did you contact existing foster parents in the teen's school district about fostering this teen? (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Did you outreach/market to civic organizations in the teen's school district? (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Did you update your website to include the teen?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

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- <sup>14</sup> Barbell, K. & Sheikh, L. (2000). A community outreach handbook for recruiting foster parents and volunteers. Washington D.C.: CWLA Press.