

2016 Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan

Section 422(b)(7) of the Social Security Act requires the state provide for the diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are sought.

To plan for years 2015-2019, Missouri took a collaborative approach of engaging private and public partners in considering the questions posed in the Diligent Recruitment Navigator provided by the Children's Bureau as developed by the NRC for Diligent Recruitment at AdoptUSKids. During 2015, meetings continued with the following groups to illicit input on the most effective collaboration for recruitment planning:

- Adoption Resource Centers in Kansas City, St. Louis, Central Missouri and Springfield
- Resource Team of Southwest Missouri
- Cornerstones of Care Recruitment and Retention Privatization Contractor in Kansas City and the Northwest Region
- Global Orphan Project in Kansas City and the Northern region
- Adoption Exchange of Missouri
- Recruitment and Retention Workgroup
- CFSR Advisory Committee
- Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board

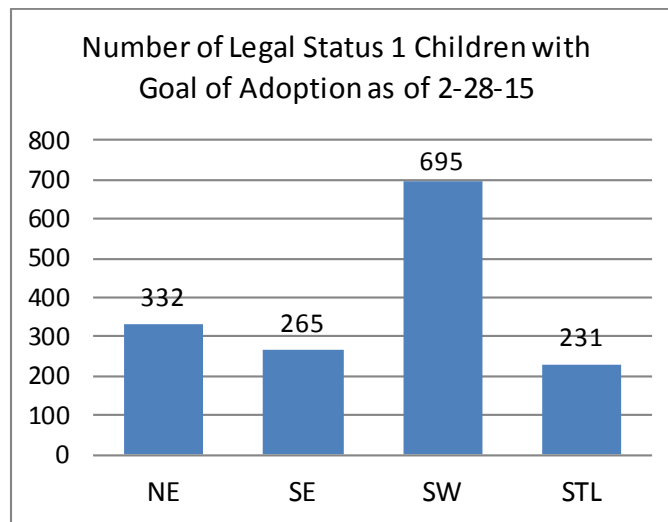
During these meetings many of these groups were asked to identify a representative to attend the statewide recruitment committee in 2015-2019. Not all groups were asked to provide a representative as they were interested in providing feedback within their ongoing meetings and requested updates as the plan develops. In addition to the representatives identified, the team will be comprised of standing members including:

- Representatives of the Missouri Indian Centers
- Staff from the Adoption Exchange of Missouri
- Communications Director from the Department of Social Services
- Foster Care/Adoption Manager
- Quality Assurance Unit Manager and a QA/QI Field Staff Representative
- Quality Improvement/COA Unit Manager
- Privatization contract representative
- Private case management contract representative

Data Gathering:

In response to the questions posed to each of these groups using the Diligent Recruitment Navigator, the following data is being compiled to enhance recruitment efforts. In addition to these data points Quality Assurance staff members provide local reports upon request such as zip code information or school district codes and specific point in time demographic information to tailor information to specific recruitment activities and the groups in attendance.

Child/Youth Data for Southwest, Southeast, Northeast, and St. Louis Regions:



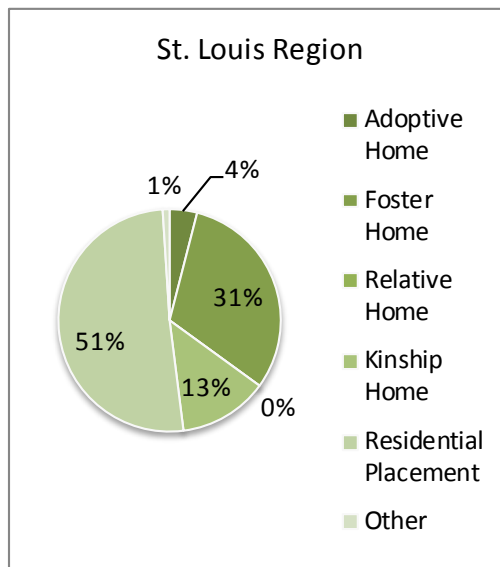
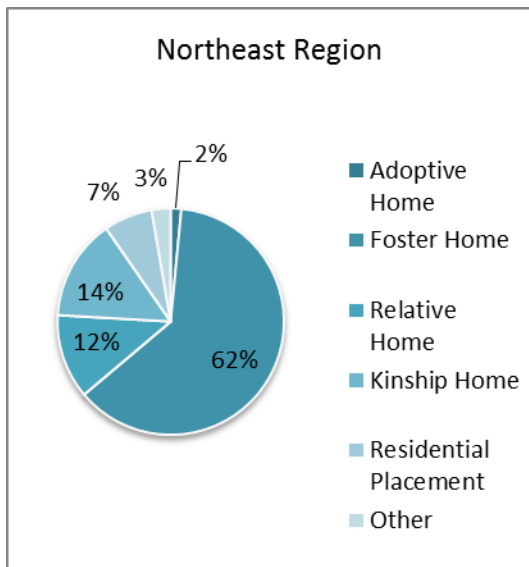
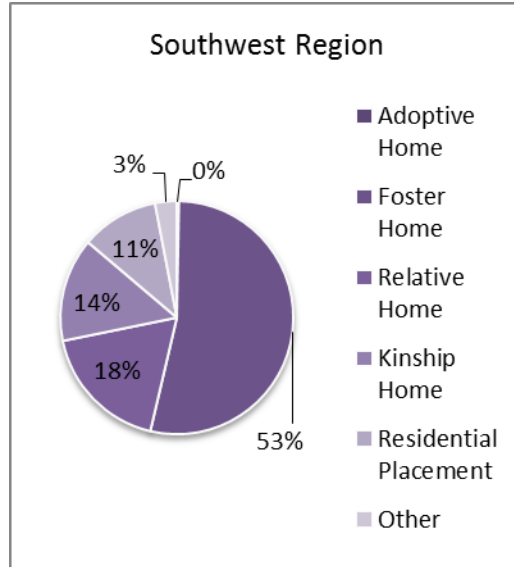
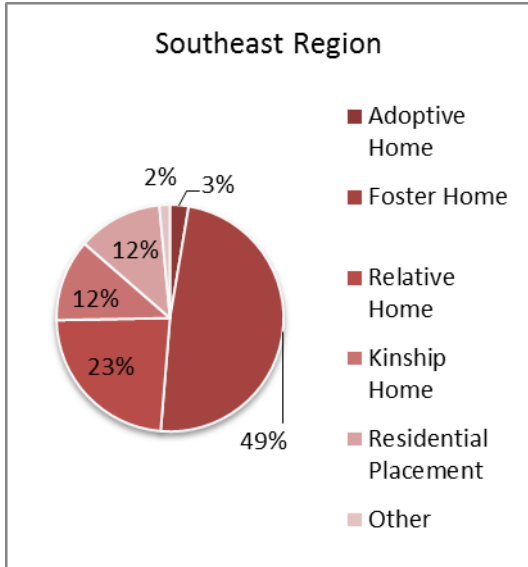
Race of Children with Goal of Adoption as of 2-28-15

	NE	SE	SW	STL
White	257	226	615	48
African-American	41	28	57	171
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0	2	0
Asian	0	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0	1	0
Multiracial	20	3	10	0
Unable to determine	14	8	10	0

Ages of Children with Goal of Adoption as of 2-28-15

	NE	SE	SW	STL
Ages 0-2	20%	20%	19%	29%
Ages 3-5	22%	22%	22%	18%
Ages 6-9	28%	24%	24%	23%
Ages 10-12	15%	16%	16%	11%
Ages 13-16	14%	17%	17%	15%
Ages 17 +	2%	2%	3%	4%

Current Placement for Children Awaiting Adoption



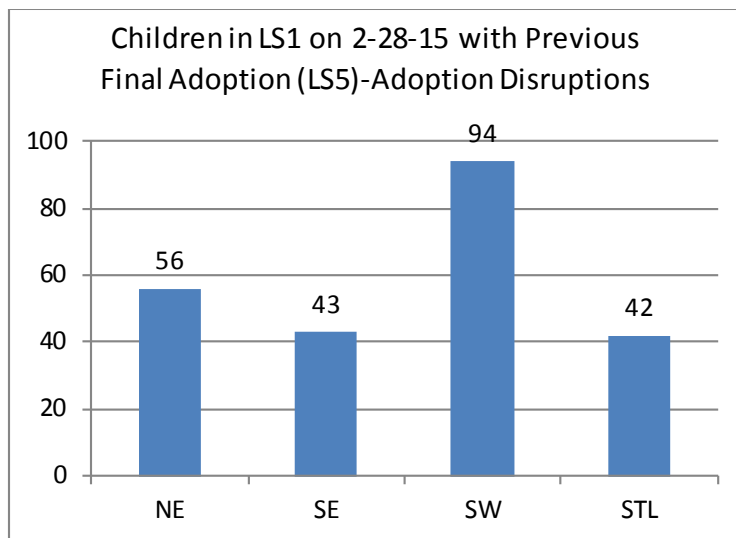
Number of Moves for Children with Goal of Adoption

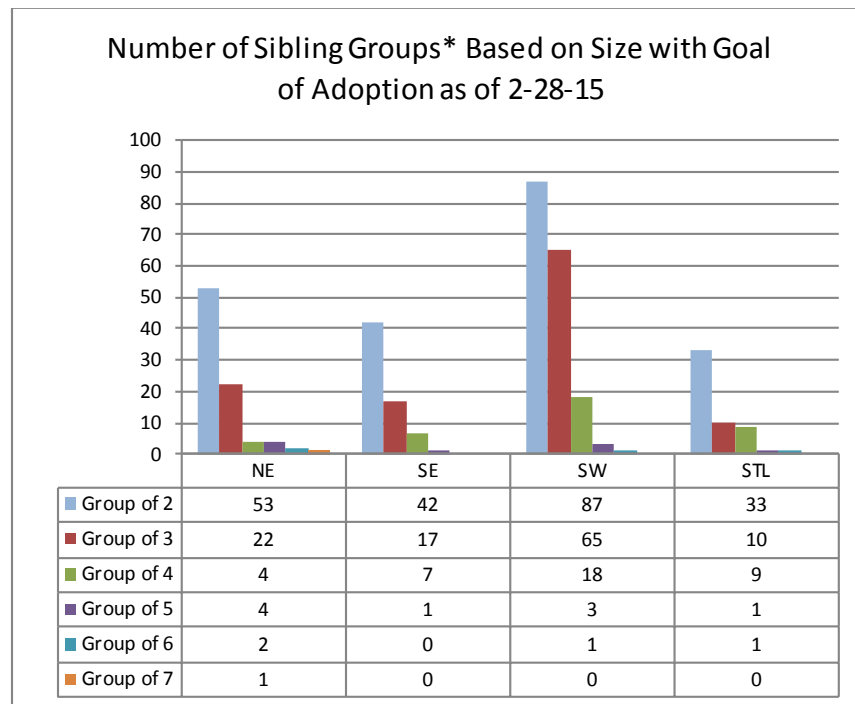
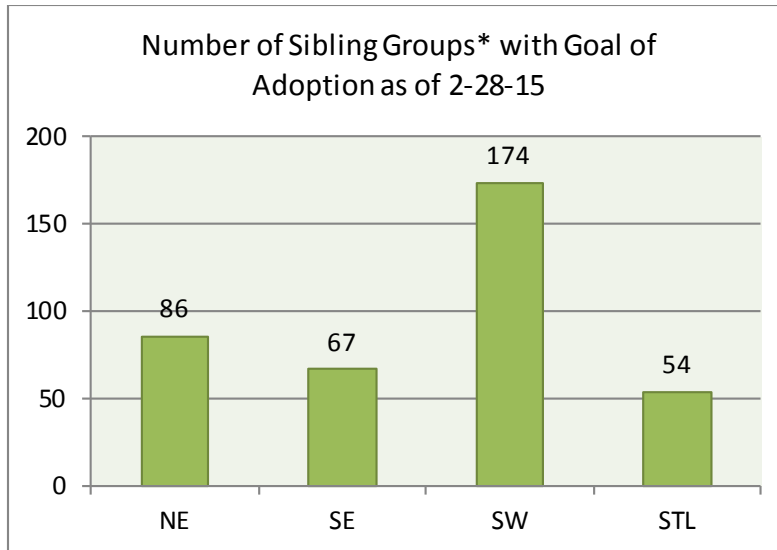
As of 2-28-15

	NE	SE	SW	STL
None	75	58	127	44
1-2	137	107	271	105
3-5	73	58	148	41
6-10	28	27	91	22
11-15	13	10	31	11
16-20	2	5	16	3
21 +	4	0	11	5

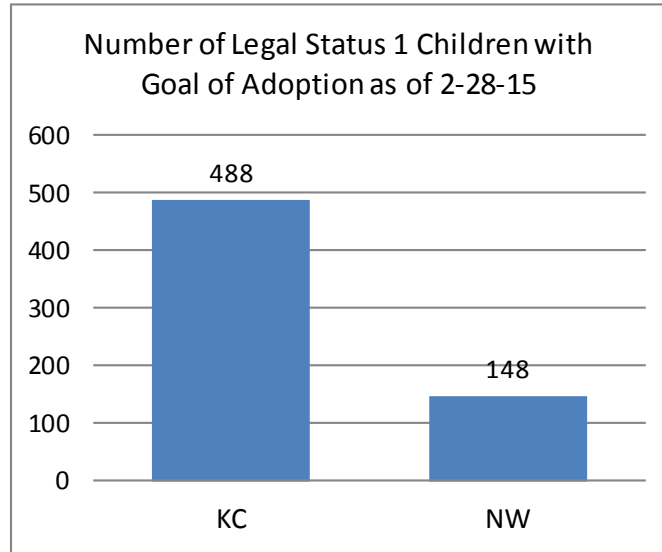
**Length of Time in Legal Status 1 (all episodes)
for Children with Goal of Adoption - as of 2-28-15**

	NE	SE	SW	STL
0-6 mos.	3	4	15	3
7-12 mos.	23	29	40	24
13-18 mos.	63	45	118	32
19-24 mos.	56	37	142	39
2 yrs.	90	68	157	43
3 yrs.	38	40	82	26
4-5 yrs.	38	27	100	30
6+ yrs.	21	15	41	34





Pilot Region Data:

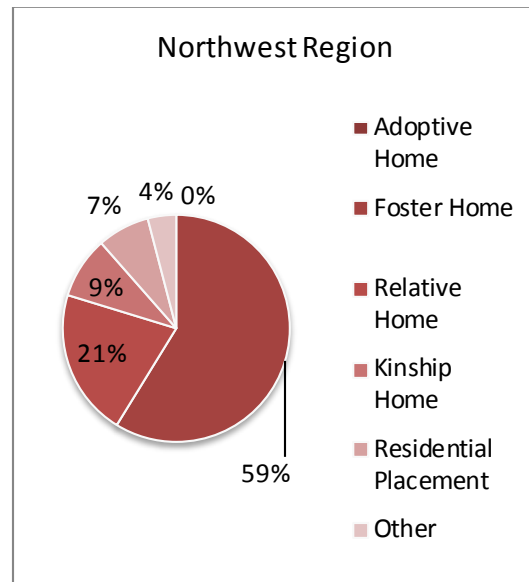
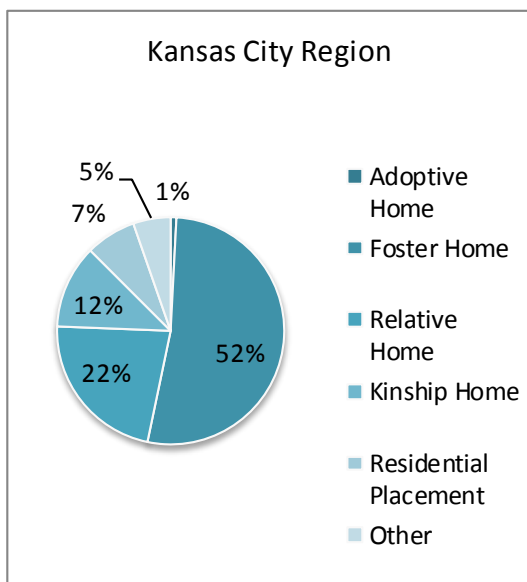
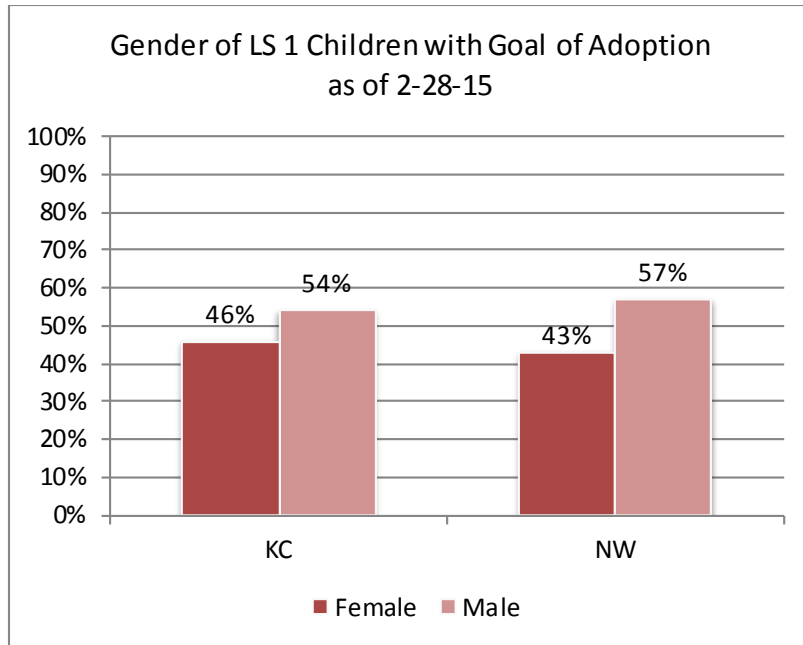


Race of Children with Goal of Adoption as of 2-28-15

	KC	NW
White	214	135
African-American	241	6
American Indian/Alaska Native	3	0
Asian	3	0
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0
Multiracial	12	1
Unable to determine	15	6

Ages of Children with Goal of Adoption as of 2-28-15

	KC	NW
Ages 0-2	74	30
Ages 3-5	94	28
Ages 6-9	129	35
Ages 10-12	70	18
Ages 13-16	96	30
Ages 17 +	25	7

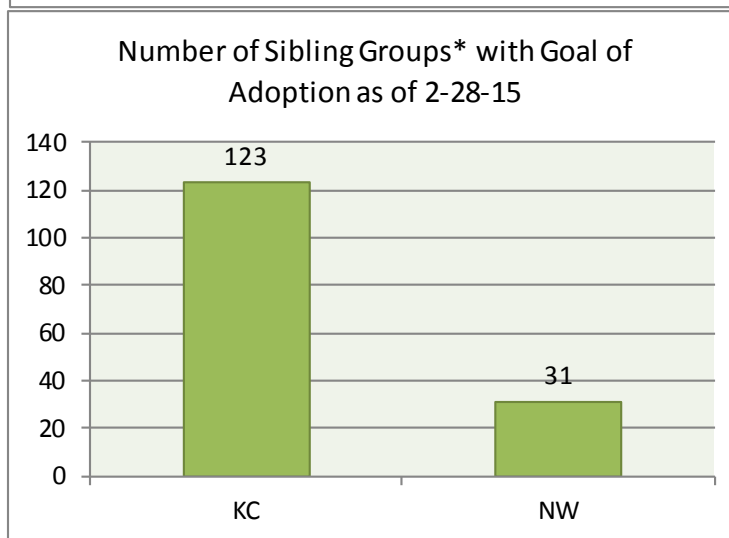
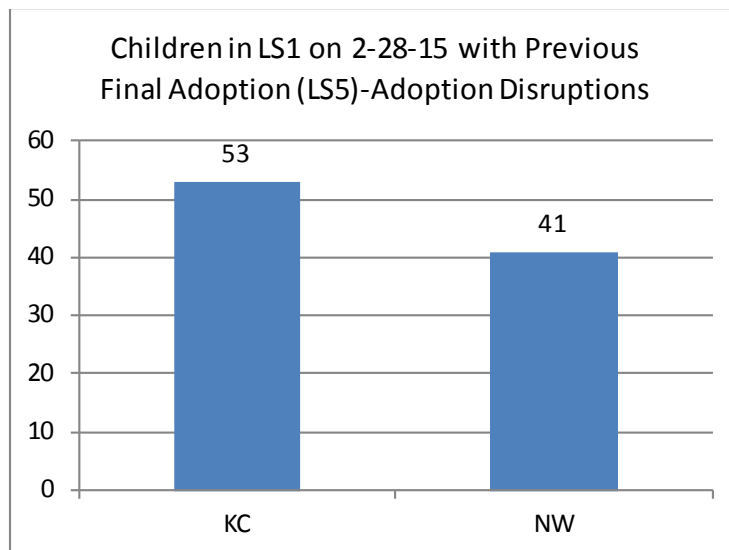


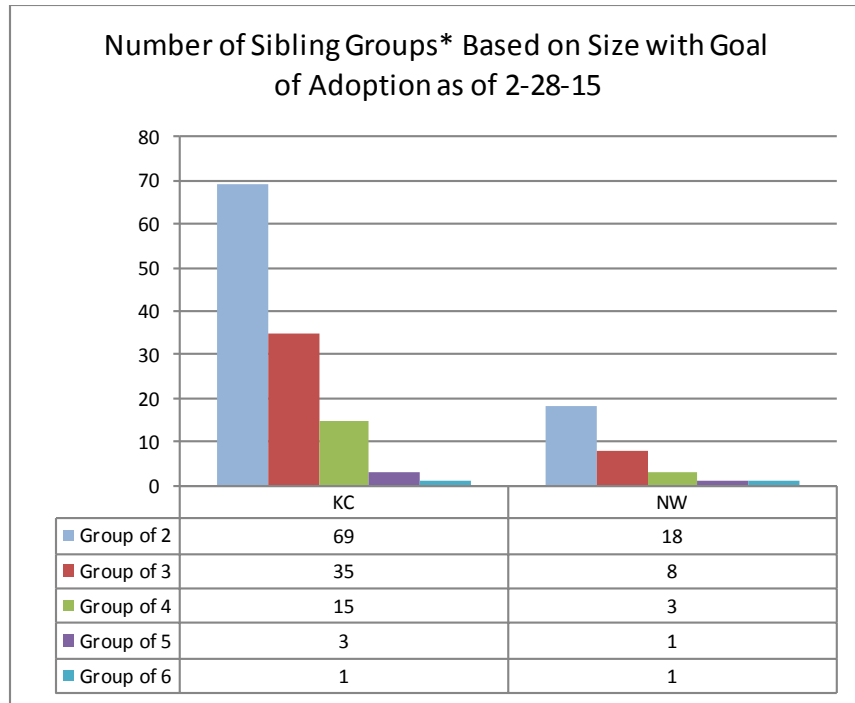
Number of Moves for Children with Goal of Adoption As of 2-28-15

	KC	NW
None	95	36
1-2	186	51
3-5	122	38
6-10	66	13
11-15	17	4
16-20	2	2
21 +	0	4

**Length of Time in Legal Status 1 (all episodes)
for Children with Goal of Adoption - as of 2-28-15**

	KC	NW
0-6 mos.	4	0
7-12 mos.	23	8
13-18 mos.	67	14
19-24 mos.	65	17
2 yrs.	151	45
3 yrs.	89	27
4-5 yrs.	63	28
6+ yrs.	26	9





Statewide Resource Family Data:

Available Capacity by Region

	Foster Homes	Adoptive Homes
Kansas City	303	250
Northeast	576	577
Northwest	235	198
Southeast	381	484
Southwest	745	1,001
St Louis	493	615

Foster Homes with Availability - Parent Race by Region

	White	Black/African American	American Indian	Asian	Native Hawaiian	Multi-Racial	Unknown
Kansas City	174	63	0	0	1	0	26
Northeast	436	46	0	1	0	2	49
Northwest	219	10	1	0	0	1	26
Southeast	290	24	1	0	0	0	59
Southwest	1,158	11	0	3	1	4	67
St Louis	167	212	1	3	0	2	20

Adoptive Homes with Availability - Parent Race by Region

	White	Black/African American	American Indian	Asian	Native Hawaiian	Multi-Racial	Unknown
Kansas City	171	61	0	0	1	0	27
Northeast	586	23	1	1	0	2	45
Northwest	198	9	0	1	0	1	20
Southeast	454	36	1	0	0	0	32
Southwest	1,110	19	3	1	0	5	70
St Louis	254	281	1	0	0	3	20

Statewide Alternative Care Population Data:

Total Alternative Care Population as of 3/31/15 13,030

Gender

Males 6,702 51%
 Females 6,328 48%

Race

White 9,551 73%
 African American 2,656 20%
 Amer. Indian/AK Native 61 <1.0%
 Asian
 Native HI/Pac. Islander
 Multiracial 242 1.80%
 Unable to Determine 520 3.90%

Age

0-2 2,558 19.60%
 3-5 2,173 16.60%
 6-9 2,550 19.50%
 10-12 1,599 12.20%
 13-16 2,686 20.60%
 17+ 1,464 11.20%

New Efforts or Initiatives in Recruitment initiated 2014-2015:

New recruitment materials were developed around the *Life is Better with Kids Around* campaign. The materials include posters, brochures and business size cards in full color which can be custom tailored to include Heart Gallery photos of youth representing the population being recruited for in a particular venue or at a specific event. These materials were made available in November 2014. In addition to the full color promotional materials a plea document was developed which can be transmitted electronically

to civic organization e-mail list serves or list serves within corporations or professional associations to recruit resource parents. Staff from the ARTS team are being asked to elicit responses from staff on the efficacy of the materials and report back on staff feedback at the summer ARTS meeting. At that time adjustments will be made as warranted.

On Saturday, November 1, 2014, over 550 people attended *Wait No More* at Colonial Presbyterian Church in Kansas City, MO to hear about the needs of children who await a permanent home through adoption and the need for foster families in the Kansas City bi-state area. As a result of the event, 89 families initiated the process of adoption from foster care.

During 2014 and 2015, the Division took a closer look at the Heart Gallery process and partnered with the Adoption Exchange and the ARTS team to revise and update the registration form, process and book. The Gallery will feature children with the greatest recruitment need, picking the top 50 to be displayed on the website first. With each new quarter, there will be 50 children added to the website and children who have found a permanent home will be removed. The children to be featured are chosen based on length of time in foster care and appropriateness of Heart Gallery for recruitment. The Missouri Heart Gallery website will launch photos of the first 50 children in May 2015.

The most significant change to the Heart Gallery process will be ongoing registration throughout the year, allowing photographs to be taken and posted on the website on an ongoing basis. Also new for 2015, photographs will only be printed twice a year, in May and November, for the traveling Gallery. Each region will receive 8x10 images of children from their region who are featured in the Heart Gallery for display at regional events. This approach will allow for flexibility to feature the Heart Gallery at a moment's notice in smaller venues, i.e. churches, school functions, and community events. Prospective adoptive families should be directed to the online Heart Gallery for a complete list of children featured. Regions will also receive extra images of children from other regions and will have the flexibility to exchange with other regions. The Children's Division is continuing to hold focused grassroots efforts at events such as PTA functions, fairs, and church events.

In 2015, a *SAFE* Assessment Pilot has been initiated in the St. Louis Region. In January, over 45 participants from Children's Division and the private case management agency staff, as well as Foster Care Training and Assessment contractors, under the leadership of the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition were trained in the *SAFE* approach to assessing families and completing the accompanying home assessment. *SAFE* is a structured evaluation process that assists practitioners in identifying and addressing both strengths and areas of concern that may impede current functioning as well as safe and effective parenting. *SAFE* provides home study practitioners with a structured methodology that supports the social work interview as well as provides a uniform methodology of interpreting and assessing the information gathered during the home study process. The participants in the pilot will be meeting ongoing to determine if *SAFE* has advantages and should be pursued statewide and, if that determination is made, strategize to obtain funding for a statewide rollout. The global intent of piloting the *SAFE* approach is to add well equipped resources to our existing pool of resource parents as well as add consistency to the home assessments completed in Missouri and sent to other states.

Jackson County Children's Division, in coordination with the Global Orphan Project, hosted a Fall Funfest at Synergy Children's Center. This event provided an opportunity for prospect adoptive parents to engage in planned activities with available youth who have yet to have an adoptive resource identified for them. Data is currently being evaluated to determine the efficacy of this event and adjustments needed for future events.

A recruitment video production in partnership with Cornerstones of Care

- Expressing the inspiring voices of successful foster and adoptive parents who have experienced both the rewards and challenges of providing a home for children from foster care temporarily or permanently;
- Voices of children who lived in foster homes and went on to be adopted, reunified or exited foster care without a permanency outcome.

A partnership was developed with Central Missouri Adoption Resource Center, Children's Division and Jefferson City Public Schools to promote the need for foster and adoptive parents in central Missouri through features in the district newsletter.

Ongoing Recruitment Efforts:

The Division continues to utilize an internet link titled Submit an Adoption Foster Care Event/Activity at <http://dss.mo.gov/cd/adopt/activity/submit.htm> for circuits to post specific recruitment activities and events in their areas and to inform local offices of efforts to increase the number of resource homes. The multifaceted approach includes:

- Person to person contacts by current foster/adoptive parents with potential foster/adoptive parents which has proven to be the single best method for recruitment,
- Utilization of bus and grocery store checkout ads in locations consistent with the ethnic and racial make-up of children in foster care for a specific area,
- Use of a billboard in a tourist area of the Mark Twain district in Hannibal, MO,
- Recruitment of distinct individuals based on profession or prior involvement with a child as mandated by a child's special need,
- Community informational meetings and events to educate about foster care and adoption (shopping malls, fairs, libraries, bookstores),
- The news media (newspapers, radio station, television station, cable network station, special interest bulletins),
- Displaying flyers, pamphlets, posters, handouts and electronic web notices,
- Coordination with faith-based partners in communities throughout the state to:

- Feature photos and profiles of children currently waiting for adoption and informing churches of the need within their community by providing zip code specific information to the faith-based partners for recruitment.
- Distribution of informational packets,
- Completing family assessments timely, within 90 days,
- Regular use of the media for recruitment,
- Utilizing AdoptUSKids site and the Adoption Exchange websites where Missouri's waiting children are featured,
- Celebrating National Foster Care month (May) and National Adoption month (November) and including media campaigns and print materials for recruitment,
- Linking Hearts Event in Rolla MO which is a collaborative effort between the Phelps County Community Partnership and the Panhellenic Society at Missouri S and T University. This is an effort to have families interact with available children and receive information about foster care and adoption; and
- National Recruitment Saturday Celebration in St. Louis County and Jackson County.

Follow up work from the Recruitment and Retention of Foster and Adoptive Parents Task Force has continued in 2014-2015. Policy and practice changes regarding recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive resources that resulted from the task force workgroup recommendation during FY14 are:

- Introduction of training for inquiring applicants and respite providers, CD14-17 which requires all applicants provide respite care prior to becoming foster or adoptive parents to obtain parenting experience with children and youth in the foster system before fully committing to licensure/approval.
- Revision of respite policy, CD14-17 which requires respite training and allows for half units of respite care to accommodate foster/adoptive parent needs.

Policy and practice changes that are in progress with plans to introduce by the end of FY16, June 2016, include:

- Approval process for Large Family Resource Homes which is a revision of Missouri's prior Group home policy. The new approval process includes a training specific to Large Family Resource Homes. In addition to the new training component the maximum number of children to be housed in Large Family Resource Homes is reduced from 12 to 10.
- Process for licensed relative and kinship providers to become licensed foster homes for foster youth with whom they are not related nor have a relationship.

Planned Efforts for 2015-2019:

Quarterly meetings with the Diligent Recruitment Team beginning summer 2015 to continue to plan additional recruitment strategies and share information amongst team members of successful recruitment activities.

Continued coordination with the Adoption Exchange of Missouri to:

- further expand their role in recruitment of foster and adoptive parents for youth.
- increase connections for youth in foster care and awaiting adoption through targeted recruitment meet and greets with waiting youth and waiting families with similar interests
- increase Heart Gallery recruitment efforts by developing digital stories of youth waiting for permanent families through adoption as well as short video presentations which can be featured on the Heart Gallery website to bring the kids to life for prospective families

Make available to current foster and adoptive resource parents the RPC (Resource Parent Curriculum) from National Child Traumatic Stress Network and infuse these principles into pre-service and in-service trainings.

Continued refinement and expansion of the new recruitment materials developed and released in 2015.

Ongoing assessment of the efficacy of the privatization pilot in Jackson County and the Northwest region to determine promising practices being used in that contract to recruit, license and retain resource families.

Expand outreach of current foster and adoptive parents in recruitment of new resources.

Expand recruitment materials to include giveaway items for recruitment events such as book marks and make adjustments to materials as a result of the input of field staff.

Exploration of use of Learfield Communications to produce commercials using the Life is Better with Kids around campaign for radio and web in 2016.

Expand partnerships with other school districts and professional organizations for recruitment materials to be featured in newsletters.

Evaluate the use of *SAFE* approach for assessing resource parents to determine if expansion is warranted.

Expand Wendy's Wonderful Kids in Jackson Co. under the direction of Cornerstones of Care.

Continue refinement of data available to resource development staff for use in recruitment outreach including capturing sibling information and trauma history information.

Continued partnership with Faith and Community Partners to:

- ensure outreach to all communities representative of the youth population in care; and
- accomplish outreach to neighborhoods for development of resource homes where children are removed to ensure children can remain in close proximity to family, school and social connections.