

Diligent Recruitment Plan 2024

As of January 2024, there were more than 12,000 Missouri children in foster care. The Mission of the Children’s Division (CD) is to Empower Missourians to live safe, healthy, and productive lives. CD is responsible for the administration of Missouri’s child welfare services and achieves its mission by partnering with families, communities, the courts and other governmental entities toward ensuring the safety, permanency, and well-being of Missouri children. CD prioritizes children remaining with their families when safely possible. When children are unable to remain safely with their parents, CD and its partners recruit and work closely with relatives and members of the community to provide safe and appropriate temporary care while supporting reunification as quickly as safely possible. CD prioritizes keeping children with relatives and maintaining siblings together. Relative and non-related foster parents are an invaluable part of a team that works together to ensure the health and safety of children in need of a nurturing home. When children are unable to safely return home, CD seeks to identify the most appropriate permanency plan with their current caregiver when possible.

Missouri’s child welfare delivery system is state administered and consists of 114 counties grouped into 46 judicial circuits that make up 6 regions. CD is responsible for establishing and monitoring minimum licensing requirements for all relative and non-related foster homes. CD recruits, trains, and supports resource providers through both public and private resource development programs. Private programs are established through contracts with Foster Care Case Management (FCCM) agencies, Child Placing Agencies (CPA), Family Resource Centers (FRC).

Data Gathering:

The following data is compiled annually to enhance recruitment efforts. In addition to these data points, local reports are provided 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.

Statewide Resource Family Data as of 3/1/24

Foster and Adoptive Homes

	Total Homes		Homes with Availability	
	Foster Homes	Adoptive Homes	Foster Homes	Adoptive Homes
Kansas City	240	950	123	320
Northeast	583	958	368	269
Northwest	235	669	126	228
Southeast	490	1569	246	247
Southwest	759	1683	454	604
St Louis	453	973	272	233
Total	2782	7541	1596	2124

Foster Parent Race by Region – total homes

	White	Black/African American	American Indian	Asian	Native Hawaiian	Multi-Racial	Unknown
Kansas City	230	93	1	7	0	2	51
Northeast	868	59	2	2	1	3	92
Northwest	352	14	2	0	0	2	42
Southeast	715	39	2	0	3	0	82
Southwest	1135	23	7	4	0	6	156
St Louis	341	268	1	6	1	4	46
Total	3641	496	15	19	5	17	469

Foster Parent Race by Region - of homes with availability

	White	Black/African American	American Indian	Asian	Native Hawaiian	Multi-Racial	Unknown
Kansas City	115	50	1	5	0	2	24
Northeast	560	43	1	2	1	2	51
Northwest	196	6	1	0	0	1	18
Southeast	345	26	0	0	2	0	45
Southwest	689	17	3	3	0	4	82
St Louis	196	168	1	7	1	2	26
Total	2101	310	7	17	4	11	246

Adoptive Parent Race by Region – total homes

	White	Black/African American	American Indian	Asian	Native Hawaiian	Multi-Racial	Unknown
Kansas City	915	355	4	9	3	8	186
Northeast	1351	80	1	0	0	4	205
Northwest	979	44	3	0	0	9	123
Southeast	2356	82	3	0	0	5	233
Southwest	2572	30	10	3	5	11	323
St Louis	750	552	1	2	1	6	140
Total	8923	1143	22	14	9	43	1210

Adoptive Parent Race by Region - of homes with availability

	White	Black/African American	American Indian	Asian	Native Hawaiian	Multi-Racial	Unknown
Kansas City	307	122	2	5	1	3	57
Northeast	388	18	0	0	0	3	70
Northwest	327	17	2	0	0	8	42
Southeast	374	13	1	0	0	0	48
Southwest	927	7	1	2	0	4	127
St Louis	196	116	0	1	1	0	27
Total	2519	283	6	8	2	18	371

Note: When homes are dually licensed, counts are provided for each type of resource home unduplicated.

Statewide Alternative Care Population Data

Total Alternative Care Population as of 2/29/24

Gender

Males 6219
Females 5892

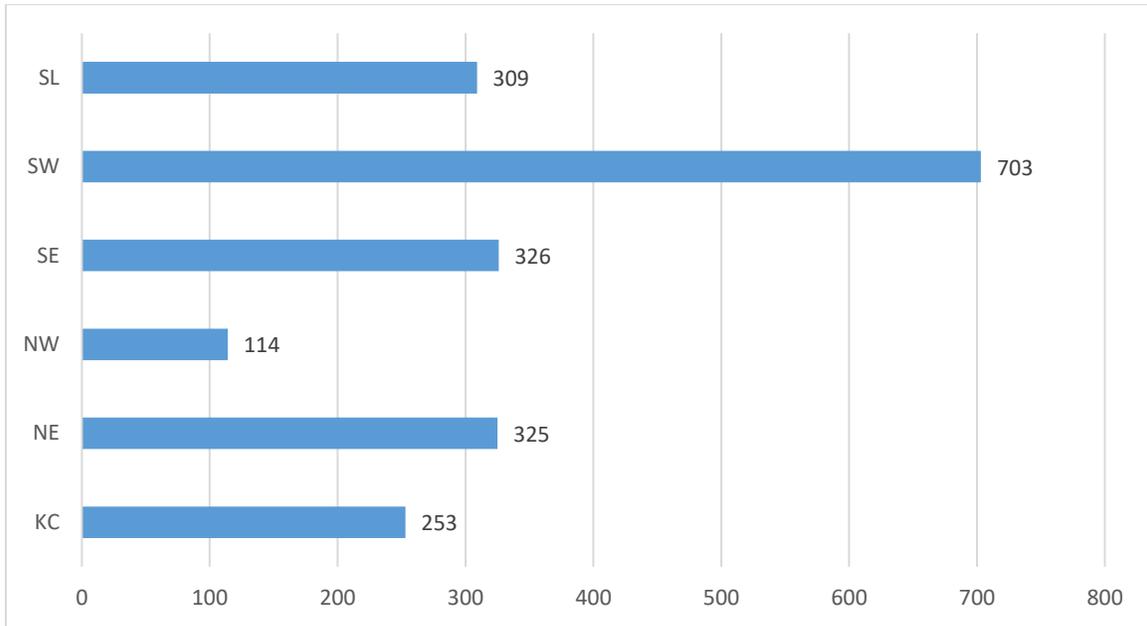
Race

White 8059
African American 2528
Amer. Indian/AK Native 55
Asian 21
Native HI/Pac. Islander 24
Multiracial 292
Unable to Determine 1132

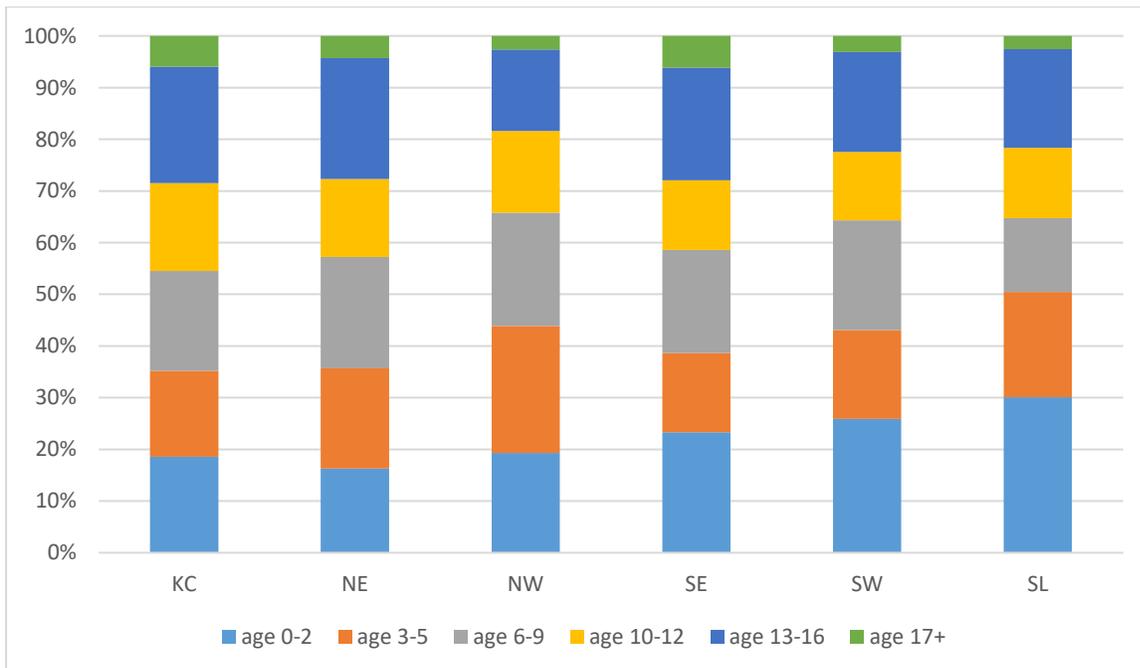
Age

0-2 2537
3-5 1947
6-9 1903
10-12 1362
13-16 2615
17+ 1711

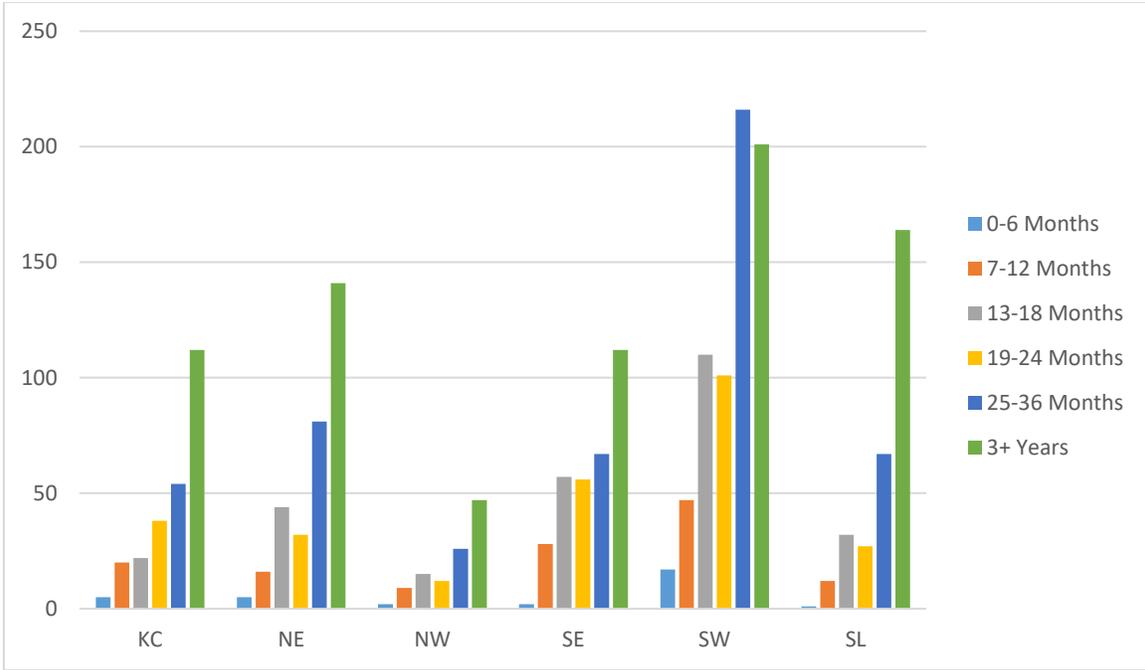
**Number of Children in Children’s Division Custody with Goal of Adoption
As of 2/29/24 (2,030 Statewide)**



Age of Children with Goal of Adoption as of 2/29/24 (2,030 Statewide)



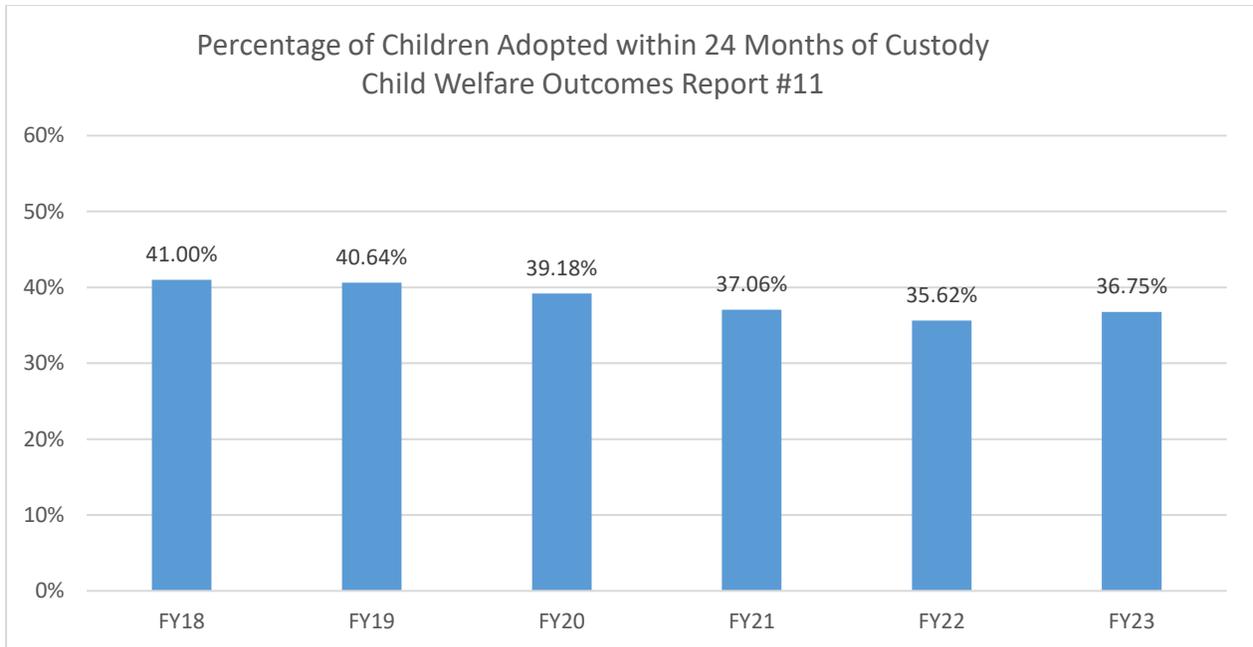
**Length of Stay for Children with Goal of Adoption
As of 2/29/24 (2,030 Statewide)**



Placement Types of Children Awaiting Adoption by Region as of 2/29/24

	Adoptive Home	Foster Home	Relative Home	Residential Facility	Other	Total
KC	2	131	89	14	17	253
NE	1	173	109	25	17	325
NW	0	41	57	6	10	114
SE	0	125	129	40	32	326
SW	3	288	320	63	29	703
SL	1	150	121	23	14	309
TOTAL	7	908	825	171	119	2030

Of the children available for adoption who are not currently in an adoptive home, 39% of the children are considered in a pre-adoptive home with their foster parent, or relative provider, representing an increase of 4% from last year’s report.



The Administration for Children and Families’ Program Instructions, ACYF-CB-PI-24-02, issued February 15, 2024, listed specific items to be included in this Plan. Below are these items and responses:

1. A description of the characteristics of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

CD’s Quality Assurance team provides localized reports annually, and upon request, to include specific point in time demographic information to guide recruitment activities. In addition to the data points below, determining the reasons foster parents stop fostering, other than adoption, is a priority of the recruitment and retention pilot, the state foster care and adoption board, and is monitored through surveys of foster parents who cease fostering to make adjustments to training and retention methods.

The demographic information shared for children in out-of-home care, youth with TPR not completed and permanency goal is adoption, and TPR completed include: gender, race, religion, disability, permanency goal, length of time in foster care, sibling status and placement, number of placements within specific time frames, and types of placements.

The available characteristics of current resource providers and homes retained includes: gender, race, religion, license type, and willingness to accept placement of youth with disabilities.

Demographic information for finalized adoptions includes: gender, disability, race, and religion.

Statewide community demographics for children under 18 includes: gender, race, disability, and religion.

2025-2029 Recruitment and Retention Goals:

- CD will improve recruitment and retention data collection by converting to an electronic survey platform. Electronic surveys and procedures will be reviewed and evaluated for effectiveness for revision as needed. Quarterly survey data will be shared at statewide, regional, and local levels. Central office will review data to identify statewide trends.
- CD will develop infographics that clearly visualize foster youth and family population demographics, and more easily communicate recruitment needs to stakeholders and the public.

2. Specific strategies to reach out to all parts of the community.

Missouri's Diligent Recruitment Plan provides guidance regarding characteristics and needs of children in out-of-home care to direct individual recruitment efforts. CD, along with its partners and stakeholders (FCCMs, CPAs, FRCs, Raise the Future, etc.), have developed individualized and diverse strategies to reach all communities across the state. Localized recruitment plans are developed annually and submitted as part of the Annual Progress and Services Report.

Missouri continues to take a collaborative approach of engaging private and public stakeholders to illicit input on the most effective recruitment strategies:

- Recruitment and Retention Contractor in Kansas City and the Northwest Region
- CD Regional Resource Units of Southwest and Southeast Missouri
- Global Orphan Project in Kansas City and the Northern region
- Raise the Future
- Recruitment and Retention Workgroup
- Placement Issues Workgroup
- CFSR Advisory Committee
- Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board
- Adoption, Resource, Treatment and Support (ARTS) statewide workgroup

2025-2029 Recruitment and Retention Goals:

- CD will partner with the National Center for Diligent Recruitment to assess and implement training and periodic reviews to improve the quality of localized recruitment plans to increase the number of foster homes that better match the foster care child demographics.

3. Diverse methods of disseminating both general information about being a foster/adoptive parent and child-specific information.

CD, FCCMs, CPAs, and FRCs, along with Raise the Future, utilize various methods to disseminate both general and child-specific information throughout Missouri and nationwide. CD prioritizes recruitment strategies that maintain connections for children and youth to their families and communities and that ensure placement opportunities for children and youth who have traditionally been challenging to place (for example—teenagers, sibling groups, youth with high acuity, etc.).

Methods of dissemination may include:

- Hosting and facilitating virtual and in person information sessions for prospective foster/adoptive families
- Distributing information materials in various forms such as social media, traditional media, or in-person
- Attending and/or hosting recruitment events
- Responding to potential applicant inquiries within 3 days
- Preparing, coordinating, collecting, and reviewing family applications
- Targeting recruitment efforts for families willing to take placement of older youth, youth with high medical needs and/or disabilities, and other identified targeted populations
- Assisting new families with acquiring pre-service and ongoing training
- Conducting child-specific recruitment such as family search and engagement

2025-2029 Recruitment and Retention Goals:

- CD will establish separate relative licensing standards through promulgation of relative specific licensing requirements in accordance with the new federal rule for Separate Licensing of Approval Standards for Relative or Kinship Foster Family Homes.
- CD will partner with the National Center for Diligent Recruitment to identify and enhance supports needed by existing foster and relative providers, and by increasing knowledge of available placement stability services.
- Missouri will implement an online Foster Parent Portal that will focus on a customer service approaches for applicants by streamlining the licensing process through:
 - tracking timeliness of foster care licensure statewide
 - providing demographic, school, and location sorting to improve placement searches
 - allowing licensed/approved families to manage their contact preferences
 - documenting family responses to placement requests
 - serving as a seamless repository of provider information

4. Strategies for assuring that all prospective foster/ adoptive parents have access to agencies that license/approve foster/adoptive parents, including location and hours of services so that the agencies can be accessed by all members of the community.

Missouri contracts with Raise the Future to operate a statewide inquiry line and email address that receives and screens inquiries from potential foster/adopt applicants. Raise the Future identifies and connects interested applicants with CD, CPAs and FRCs in their residence county to begin the home assessment process.

CD, FCCMs, CPAs, and FRCs also provide localized recruitment, training, licensing and support services for foster, relative and adoptive families for children in foster care and may receive direct inquiries through these efforts.

2025-2029 Recruitment and Retention Goals:

- CD will partner with the National Center for Diligent Recruitment to develop a tool for assessing county/circuit level recruitment plans and through their plan assessment, monitoring the various agencies to assure they are reaching all types of communities.
- CD will expand resource development resources through contracts for recruitment and retention to increase the total number of licensed foster home from 4,200 to 6,000.

5. Strategies for training staff to work with diverse communities including cultural, racial, and socio-economic variations.

CD offers a comprehensive, competency based pre-service training for resource providers in which working with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities is woven throughout the training curriculum. Missouri's Caregiver and Adoption Resource Education (MO C.A.R.E.) is a culmination of five years of research working with the National Training and Development Curriculum (NTDC). NTDC was funded through a five-year cooperative agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. Spaulding for Children was the lead agency for this initiative and worked in close partnership with four other national partners. NTDC provides potential foster or adoptive parents with the information and tools needed to parent a child who has experienced trauma, separation, or loss. NTDC also gives parents access to information and resources needed to continue building skills once they have a child in their home. Missouri's pilot had three different curriculum areas during the 5-year study. The end result is a pre-service curriculum that meets the needs of our state.

Missouri Children's Division developed a skills-based training program for all new staff. This training is called Child Welfare Practice Training or CWPT. All new staff take this within the first year of hire. It is a comprehensive nine-month program which focuses on engagement, assessment and planning for families. Working with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities is woven throughout the training modules. The training includes how to be aware of bias, trauma informed care, and simulations of casework. This training ensures that

staff have the necessary skills to investigate and provide case management of child abuse and neglect in a variety of communities found throughout the state.

6. Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers.

CD contracts for interpretation services to increase capacity to engage and work with different cultural populations where English may not be the primary language.

2025-2029 Recruitment and Retention Goals:

- CD will review data of the primary languages spoken throughout the state other than English to support an assessment and need for strategic planning to convert forms and trainings as needed.
- CD will continue to partner with the Center for Spaulding's NTDC workgroup in an effort to support translation of the foster parent pre-service curriculum to Spanish.

7. Non-discriminatory fee structures.

There are no agency fees associated with fostering or adopting a child from foster care.

8. Procedures for a timely search for prospective parents for a child needing an adoptive placement, including the use of exchanges and other interagency efforts, provided that such procedures ensure that placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for a same race or ethnic placement.

The Division's goal, in fulfilling its commitment to a child who is available for adoption, is to locate and place the child with a family that can best provide permanency for the child. This goal should be achieved within the shortest possible time from entry into out-of-home care and/or the decision that the child is available for adoption. Missouri gives preference and first consideration for adoptive placements to the child's foster parents (453.070 RSMo) and placement of siblings together.

Missouri contracts with Raise the Future to coordinate photo listing registration with the Heart Gallery, AdoptUSkids, and Raise the Future. Raise the Future works closely with CD and FCCMs to identify waiting children without an adoptive resource and register them on all three websites, keep the information updated, and provide various recruitment strategies.

2025-2029 Recruitment and Retention Goals:

- CD will partner with Raise the Future to develop new strategies for recruitment of adoptive homes without the use of photos due to concerns regarding privacy and safety of online information.

- CD will continue to support the expansion of Wendy's Wonderful Kids, Extreme Recruitment, and 30 days to family programs through individual contracts with CPAs and FRCs.