

# 2016 CAREGIVER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PLAN

STATE OF GEORGIA  
DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES



**January – December 2016**  
**Statewide Foster and Adoptive Caregiver**  
**Recruitment and Retention Plan**

**Overview**

The Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of children who experience out of home placements due to safety threats in their own home. To fulfill this commitment, DFCS recruits and works closely with relatives and members of the community who are interested in serving as temporary caregivers and adoptive parents for children in foster care and emancipated youth age 18 years and older in Extended Youth Support Services. DFCS also partners with Child Placing Agencies (CPAs) and Child Caring Institutions (CCIs) (group home placements), faith-based and other interested community stakeholders to expand its number of available placement resources. The recruitment of foster and adoptive parents is a collaborative public, private and community-based effort aimed at maximizing the number and types of placement resources available to children and youth in need.

The Recruitment and Retention Plan functions as a part of the state's overall objectives to strengthen families, protect children from further abuse and neglect and ensure permanency for every child in care. The Plan is based on an assessment of the state's resource development system's strengths and challenges. It establishes statewide goals and interventions as well as regional implementation plans.

Please refer to the 2015-2019 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan for the detailed assessment that serves as the basis for this plan as well the complete five-year recruitment and retention goals.

## **2016 Statewide Recruitment and Retention Goals, Objectives and Interventions**

### **2015-2019 CFSP Diligent Goal 1: Ensure that children and youth are placed in the least restrictive and most appropriate placement.**

**Objective:** Expand the number of foster and adoptive resources (in either the county, CPAs or CCIs) to ensure that each child needing foster care placement has at least two potential placements that reflect their need for the least restrictive and most appropriate environment by September 2019. Initial 5 Year Targets: Approve 2,500 Partnership Parents, 1,000 Resource Parents, 700 Adoptive Parents, and 300 Relative Foster Parents.

**2016 Goal # 1:** Each region to increase its total number of approved foster caregiver (foster and relative) resources by 20% and increase by at least twice the number of bed spaces as newly approved resources by 12/31/2016. See Appendix C for baseline goals by region.

**2016 Goal # 2:** Enlist the partnership of CPA providers to increase the number of their caregivers by 20% and at least twice the number of bed spaces as newly approved resources by 12/31/2016. See Appendix C for current CPA totals.

**2016 Goal # 3:** Enlist the partnership of CCI and CPA providers to develop at least 50 “no reject, no eject” acute MWO bed spaces by 12/31/2016.

### **Regional Resource Development Team Interventions:**

1. Publicize awareness of the need for foster, adoptive and relative caregivers (specifically for teens and siblings and any other targeted groups based on regional needs) through local / regional traditional and social media.
  - a. Ensure that at least twice quarterly a verifiable means of publicity has occurred (articles, participation in county/regional events, recruitment events etc..).
2. Complete monthly and quarterly reports on recruitment and retention progress.
3. Participate in conference calls and feedback sessions on recruitment and retention progress.

### **State Office Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit Interventions:**

1. Publicize the need for new foster parents through at least two verifiable means per quarterly.
2. Participate in the P686: Fostering Together faith-based initiative workgroups to ensure that barriers to partnership are removed. Ensure that the P686 MOU is operational by 3/31/2016.
3. Implement a process for approving volunteers including use of the GA SERVES system by 4/30/2016.
4. By 1/15/2016, provide means for monthly reporting on progress; facilitate feedback conference calls as needed but at least once a quarter.

5. Enlist partnerships with CPAs and CCIs in supporting recruitment efforts; and facilitate partnerships between CPAs / CCIs and regional RD-U teams.
6. Utilize RD funding allocations in support of improving recruitment and retention practices. See Appendix A: RD Spending Plan Goals.

**2015-2019 CFSP Diligent Recruitment Goal 2: Improve organizational effectiveness regarding placement resource development, retention and placement matching.**

**Objective:** Improve placement matching process, tools and training for resource development staff by September 2019.

**2016 Goal:** Strengthen the functionality and productiveness of RD-U teams in each region.

**Regional Resource Development Team Interventions:**

1. Maintain assigned staff and a lead worker for the regional resource development-utilization (RD-U) team.
  - i. Develop by 2/15/2016 a regional written charter, including work functions, expectations of the team, how the team works and reporting structure for the RD-U team.
  - ii. Provide by 3/31/2016 a written SOAR analysis on how the region manages placement utilization (U) in the region; include how resource development is/is not involved.
  - iii. Include a quantifiable recruitment and retention goal for each team member in their PMF (provide a 6-month goal in the January mid-point and include in the next PMF).
  - iv. Ensure that state's recruitment and retention plan is implemented via the RD-U team.
    - a) Utilize SOAR analysis developed at the November 2015 RD-U retreat to strengthen operations. Appendix B
  - v. Ensure that monthly and other reporting requirements are met and that the team participates in the quarterly statewide RD-U meeting.
2. Regional Directors support development and maintenance of the RD-U teams; report any personnel or role (including temporary) changes to the RD-U team to the Foster Care Services Director.

### **State Office Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit Interventions:**

1. Facilitate quarterly resource development and resource development lead worker meeting. Conduct at least one resource development retreat during the calendar year.
2. Ensure that regional RD performance is included on cadence calls at least monthly.
3. Provide technical assistance and consultation to regional RD-U teams.
  - a. Review customer service practices at least monthly by “secret shopping” steps in the approval process including inquiry line response, Information Sessions and IMPACT classes.
4. By 2/29/2016, facilitate a meeting for county and regional directors to review the Recruitment Plan.
5. By 4/30/16, begin training the Recruitment Module of the Recruit, Prepare and Retain Curriculum for resource development staff.

### **2015-2019 Diligent Recruitment Goal 3: Increase the retention of prospective caregivers during the approval process and once approved, retain caregivers for at least five years.**

The number of families who terminate their involvement with the agency prior to approval will be decreased by 25%; and 2) 85% of foster parents will serve at least five (5) years and no more than 15% of foster parents will exit within 18 months of approval.

#### **Objective:**

Establish a tracking method that supports understanding of “drop-out” of prospective caregivers in the approval process; and reasons for closure of approved foster parents.

**2016 Goal:** Improve retention rate of foster caregivers.

### **Regional Resource Development Team Interventions:**

1. At re-evaluation provide each foster caregiver the link to the Statewide Caregiver Satisfaction Survey; encourage participation to achieve at least an 80% completion rate in 2016.
2. Quarterly, each RD supervisor will conduct “check-in” phone calls with 10% of foster parent and relative caregivers (capped at no more than 10) and ensure that any needs are met or customer service issues addressed.
3. Ensure that at least 60% of foster parents whose homes close and prospective parents who do not complete the approval process complete an exit survey.
4. Increase support to caregivers by establishing a regular and ongoing communication channel with foster, adoptive and relative caregivers in the county/region by 2/29/2016.

5. Ensure that at least five hours of training opportunities are identified or facilitated and communicated to foster parents at least quarterly.
6. Ensure that during the month of May (Foster Care Month) and November (Adoption Month) that foster/adoptive parent recognition activities occur.

**State Office Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit Interventions:**

1. Update the Foster Parent Exit survey and create the Prospective Caregiver “Drop-Out” and Current Caregiver Satisfaction survey by 1/31/2016.
2. Provide a customer service “check-in call” template by 1/31/2016.
3. Increase support by establishing a regular and ongoing communication channel with foster, adoptive and relative caregivers statewide by 3/31/16.
4. Ensure that during the month of May (Foster Care Month) and November (Adoption Month) that state level foster/ adoptive parent recognition activities occur.

**2016 Goal # 4: Ensure an Exceptional On-Boarding Experience for Caregivers (Foster/Adoptive/Relatives) by implementing faster, friendlier and easier customer service processes.**

**Objective:**

Decrease the length of time to approve new caregivers; maintain more prospective caregivers completing the steps to approval.

**2016 Goal:** Increase the number of foster caregivers approved and reduce the time to approval.

**Regional Resource Development Team Interventions:**

1. Complete at least 90% of foster/adoptive and relative foster parent approvals within 4 months of their inquiry.
  - a. Institute a regional tracking process for monitoring the progress of prospective caregivers (including ICPC) from inquiry through approval; report progress via the monthly report process.
2. Publish quarterly the region’s Information Session and IMPACT training schedules at least 15 days prior to the start of each quarter (Q1- December 15, Q2-March 15, Q3-June 15, Q4-September 15).

**State Office Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit Interventions:**

1. Lead the approval paperwork redesign project; complete project and provide printed forms to RD-U teams by 3/31/2106.

2. Establish state office team and initiate operations to answer and process caregiver inquiries coming in via the 877-210-KIDS line by 3/31/2016.
3. Track regional inquiries, movement of prospective caregivers, approvals and closures including ICPC. Ensure that regional performance is included on cadence calls at least monthly.
4. Establish a centralized recruitment / retention email box for state office communications; establish internet presence for caregiver recruitment and retention activities.
5. By 2/28/16, establish state level contract to support regions in facilitating pre-service training, conducting home evaluation and other approval activities to better leverage existing contracting funds and increase number of caregivers approved through use of contractors.

## Appendix A: RD Spending Plan Report – November 2015

For SFY 16, the legislature allocated \$5.8M for resource development and utilization improvements.

### **Resource Development Goals:**

Resource development is a broad term which addresses the child welfare function that recruits, trains, supports and matches children in care with an appropriate caregiver. Resource development includes each placement resource type including DFCS and Child Placing Agency (CPA) foster and adoptive homes, relative caregivers, and Child Caring Institutions (CCIs).

The spending plan addressed seven key improvements needed in the state's overall placement resource development and utilization practices.

1. To have a sufficient number of placement resources for children & youth from birth to 21 years to ensure they are immediately placed and have placement stability in the least restrictive and most appropriate placement type assessed.
2. To eliminate the use of placements with non-contracted providers.
3. To eliminate the use of hotels as temporary placements.
4. To increase placement stability.
5. To increase the net number of available family foster caregivers (DFCS & CPAs)
6. To increase the number of children placed with relatives.
7. To increase the care capacity of Child Caring Institutions, particularly those who serve children and youth with specialized care needs.

### **Spending Plan:**

The seven outcomes are divided into four spending areas: staffing, recruitment, preparation and retention of caregivers. Increased staffing at the county, regional and state office level represents about 44% of the total spending plan. Twenty percent will be spent in both recruitment and retention functions and 16% will be spent in the preparation of prospective caregivers.

### **Spending Area 1: Staffing**

Spending in this staffing area is to increase resource development staffing at the county and regional level and develop a state office team; provide training and support to DFCS and CPA resource development staff who recruit, train and support foster, adoptive and relative caregivers; and provide training and support to CCI direct workers and Human Service Professionals (HSP).

### **DFCS/CPA/CCI Training and Support**

Develop and implement track training for resource development & utilization staff in DFCS and CPAs. Develop and implement certification training for group home direct care workers and HSP staff. Revise the RBWO program designation categories.

### **Spending Area 2: RECRUITMENT**

Spending in this area supports the marketing aspect of attracting potential caregivers and volunteers interested in supporting needs of children and their foster caregivers. In addition to hiring a state level marketing and PR professional, spending on recruitment will be allocated in the following four areas:

1. Implement statewide advertising campaign to include radio & television ads, billboards, website, brochures, develop other recruitment and approval materials
2. Provide incentives for DFCS and CPA foster parents who recruit new foster parents.
3. Provide recruitment / retention innovation grants to county DFCS , CPAs, faith-based and community partners

### **Spending Area 3: Preparation**

Spending in this area focuses on improvements to the caregiver approval process. The five areas of spending are as follows:

1. Develop caregiver IMPACT pre-service training hubs for prospective caregivers statewide to ensure that classes are continuously available. Provide pre-printed handout packets to trainers.
2. Increase contracting out for completion of home evaluations to support regular and faith-based recruitment initiatives.



3. Reduce the paperwork burden required for approval; redesign approval paperwork to ensure ease of understanding and completion. Provide pre-printed packets trainers to ensure consistent quality and reduction of administrative responsibilities.
4. Cease contracting out the caregiver inquiry line (877-210-KIDS); move operation into state office function to support improved tracking and efficiencies in moving applicants through the process.
5. Partner with a University to assess the pre-service training model (IMPACT) and implement recommendations; and to develop an Individual Assessment Tool to ensure that applicants are not screened out or denied inappropriately.

#### **Spending Area 4 Retention**

Retention spending will be used to increase training and support of relative and foster caregivers. The funding supports six key efforts:

1. Increase communication with relative caregivers and foster parents via surveys, newsletters, email blasts, calling posts, feedback sessions, social media and other means.
2. Increase # of paid scholarships for annual AFPAG conference (include relative caregivers)
3. Increase type, quality and availability of on-going training to relative and foster caregivers
4. Develop warm-*line* to provide phone and website and web-based chat support for foster and relative caregivers.
5. Enhance GA SHINES to support resource development and placement matching functions.
6. Provide for special services reimbursements to relative and foster caregivers for child related as well as caregiver related expenses that enhance caregiver satisfaction and improved care of children. Explore options for implementing therapeutic foster care services.

**Resource Development SOAR Analysis  
November 16, 2015**

Definition	Strengths (We currently have this)	Opportunities (We should have this but don't)	Aspirations (We don't have but want)	Results (Measures that will confirm how well we are doing)
<p><b>Exceptional On-Boarding Experience for Caregivers (F/A/Relatives)—</b></p> <p><i>The ease and meaningfulness of the caregiver approval process. Includes that the process is engaging, well-communicated and simple to navigate.</i></p> <p><b>Principles include</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer Constituent Complaints</li> <li>• Responsive Customer Service</li> <li>• Reduced process lags/waiting time</li> <li>• Consistent messaging across the state</li> <li>• Streamlined paperwork</li> <li>• Faster, Friendly, and Easier Experience for caregivers</li> <li>• Use of Foster Parents to Recruit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry lines are being checked twice a day, screen the potential caregiver, and scan all the documents for the county/region-Social Services Tech (Region 1)</li> <li>• One on one information sessions</li> <li>• Opening up IMPACT sessions across county lines with DFCS and CPAs</li> <li>• Partnership with Faith-Based Community</li> <li>• Providing services (such as information sessions/orientation/IMPACT) on evenings and weekends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly informational call line</li> <li>• Volunteers/Mentors</li> <li>• Have Foster Parents present during recruitment efforts such as information sessions, IMPACT, and marketing events</li> <li>• OPM and CRRU will be trained/certified in IMPACT train-the-trainer to provide IMPACT training for leaders and other stakeholders at nights and weekends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a bar code system (linking the potential caregiver with a resource identification number) that will be able to link with Georgia SHINES</li> <li>• Resource Development scanners and color printers</li> <li>• Portable speakers and projectors</li> <li>• Develop a respite category in Georgia SHINES</li> <li>• Nice recruitment tablecloths</li> <li>• Consistency with recruitment displays</li> <li>• Offering a different setting for IMPACT for relatives who already have children placed in their homes</li> <li>• Online Training for IMPACT classes</li> <li>• Attracting skilled caregivers as foster parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of people completing the foster parent process</li> <li>• Reducing the amount of complaints</li> <li>• Community will be more motivated to partner with DFCS instead of Child Placing Agencies based on their positive experiences</li> <li>• Children will be placed in their own communities (closest to their original homes)</li> <li>• Child's characteristics matches the foster parents preferences</li> </ul>
<p><b>Optimal Caregiver Retention</b></p> <p><i>The length of service that a caregiver could provide where care is safe, nurturing and meets the needs of children and the caregiver's family. Service is not shortened by customer service or partnership issues, involuntary closures or negative closure reasons.</i></p> <p><b>Principles include</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retaining the homes that actually accept foster children</li> <li>• Fewer complaints from foster parents</li> <li>• Increase the foster parents' abilities</li> <li>• Increasing foster parents ability to care for children with special characteristics</li> <li>• Retention is everybody's business (which includes cross training for DFCS staff)</li> <li>• DFCS maintaining consistent staff (decrease staff turnover)</li> <li>• Providing incentive for foster parents base on accomplishments (such as T-shirts for completing trainings)</li> <li>• Permanency and CPS Staff has a stake in retaining foster</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly calls/cadence calls for foster parents to call about strengths and areas of improvements (Note: Some of the calls are not occurring after-hours.)</li> <li>• Providing services (such as training) during the day (flexible scheduling to meet the foster parents' needs)</li> <li>• Each region has an email address</li> <li>• Meet and Greets with the foster parents (at least bi-annual in Region 11)</li> <li>• Online "Where is my check" application</li> <li>• Faith based community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcoming to the Team Orientation/Meeting (new foster parents would be introduced to permanency staff)</li> <li>• Welcome to the Notebooks (contain necessary paperwork such as placement letter, Form 57 for CAPS, direct deposit, and county contact number)-Region 1</li> <li>• Joint visits between permanency and resource development staff</li> <li>• Resource Development staff will advocate for the foster parents to obtain waivers for children</li> <li>• Resource Development would use the RBWO Match Screening Summary to match children with foster homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Region 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13 does not submit foster parent invoices directly to Regional Accounting</li> <li>• Updated Foster Parent Manual</li> <li>• Foster parent desire one case manager coming to their home (Barrier: Not consistent with the message that Resource Development staff should only be doing Resource Development work)</li> <li>• Add a question regarding whether foster parents is receiving specialized per diem for children who have specialized needs during quarterly and annual contacts</li> <li>• A syllabus on trainings (maybe providing abbreviated versions of IMPACT modules) for foster parents</li> <li>• The opportunity to have an increased in respite days based on number of years foster parent has provided service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFCS will lose foster parents only to achieve positive permanency for children</li> <li>• Increase the number of the waivers obtained by the county foster parents for children with specialized needs</li> </ul>

Definition	Strengths (We currently have this)	Opportunities (We should have this but don't)	Aspirations (We don't have but want)	Results (Measures that will confirm how well we are doing)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>parents</li> <li>Providing timely per diems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are sponsoring activities such as movie night</li> <li>AFPAG</li> <li></li> </ul>			
<p><b>Effective Regional Teams</b></p> <p><i>Cohesive members working together to support the region in recruiting and retaining caregivers; the team is adequately staffed and its members work exclusively on the recruitment and retention of caregivers and are led by a regional team leader who has the authority to lead and direct the regional team.</i></p> <p>Principles include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Everyone working well together</li> <li>Communication</li> <li>Consistency across the region/stream-lined process</li> <li>Everyone is passionate/selected RD; not that they failed into the position</li> <li>Team draws on the strength of each individual</li> <li>TEAM—can't be territorial—all homes are "owned" by each member regardless of where they sit (county)</li> <li>All Resource Development staff reporting to the Resource Development Lead for PMF and leave</li> <li>RD members doing RD work (not FC or CPS)</li> <li>Determining a "reasonable" workload because RD is difficult to quantify in time.</li> <li>Decisions on what to contract out vs done in-house</li> <li>Embracing change/thinking out-side the box; open minded to new suggestions/innovative/creative</li> <li>Accountability – determining what their accountability is for % of RD goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have established regional teams with skilled staff</li> <li>State level support</li> <li>Money \$\$\$\$</li> <li>Subject matter expertise leading the teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff</li> <li>Social Services Techs</li> <li>Track training for Resource Development</li> <li>A statewide form for Resource Development Quarterly Contact or a built in report from Georgia SHINES (check box for RD quarterly visits)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educating other staff on Resource Development responsibilities</li> <li>For every home closed, Resource Development will add two additional homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Placement Stability</li> <li>Maltreatment in Care</li> <li>Policy Violations</li> <li>Staff Turnover Rate</li> <li>Customer Satisfaction Survey of the Teams effectiveness</li> <li>One that is infused in the community</li> <li>Consistently meeting state and regional goals</li> </ul>

Regions	Foster				Relative Foster				Total			
	Number of Homes 2015	2016 Regional Goal for Number of Homes	Number of Beds 2015	2016 Regional Goal for Number of Beds	Number of Homes 2015	2016 Regional Goal for Number of Homes	Number of Beds 2015	2016 Regional Goal for Number of Beds	Number of Homes 2015	2016 Regional Goal for Number of Homes	Number of Beds 2015	2016 Regional Goal Number of Beds
1	164	197	410	476	1	2	3	5	165	199	413	481
2	118	142	337	384	1	2	5	7	119	144	342	391
3	99	119	215	255	2	3	9	11	101	122	224	266
4	142	170	405	462	0	1	0	2	142	171	405	464
5	97	116	293	332	0	1	0	2	97	117	293	334
6	117	140	319	366	1	2	3	5	118	142	322	371
7	72	86	219	248	0	1	0	2	72	87	219	250
8	95	114	271	309	0	1	0	2	95	115	271	311
9	71	85	200	228	0	1	0	2	71	86	200	230
10	106	127	352	394	0	1	0	2	106	128	352	396
11	112	134	290	335	2	3	6	8	114	137	296	343
12	105	126	277	319	0	1	0	2	105	127	277	321
13	167	200	480	547	1	2	1	3	168	202	481	550
14	134	161	253	307	7	8	19	22	141	169	272	328
<b>Total</b>	<b>1599</b>	<b>1919</b>	<b>4321</b>	<b>4961</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>1614</b>	<b>1948</b>	<b>4367</b>	<b>5035</b>

Baseline # of Homes By Region December 2015

Regions	Foster	Foster to Adopt	Adoption	ICPC Foster	ICPC Adoption	Relative Foster	Relative Adopt	Total
1	164	40	7	5	1	1	1	219
2	118	17	2	3	3	1	0	144
3	99	29	6	2	3	2	7	148
4	142	31	9	10	2	0	3	197
5	97	39	2	7	4	0	1	150
6	117	45	5	3	2	1	3	176
7	72	4	5	5	0	0	0	86
8	95	17	12	2	4	0	0	130
9	71	12	0	0	1	0	0	84
10	106	21	10	2	0	0	0	139
11	112	14	2	2	2	2	2	136
12	105	11	0	4	2	0	3	125
13	167	55	2	11	13	1	0	249
14	134	15	13	19	11	7	6	205
<b>Total</b>	1599	350	75	75	48	15	26	2188

<b>Total Number of CPA Foster Homes</b>	2264	<b>Goal for 2016</b>	2717
<b>Total Number of CPA Beds</b>	6000	<b>Goal for 2016</b>	7200