

NORTH DAKOTA

FOSTER OR ADOPT

Foster & Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment & Retention



History & Background

North Dakota is committed to recruiting foster and adoptive parents that reflect the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of the children in out-of-home care. The North Dakota Foster and Adopt Recruitment and Retention State Plan has been operationalized for many years with updates made periodically. In August 2012, North Dakota enhanced the statewide recruitment and retention focus from solely addressing primarily 'general' recruitment efforts to equally addressing both general and targeted recruitment activities. During this time, regional R&R Coalitions were established statewide and required to submit a "Request for Funding" proposal which identified general and targeted recruitment activities. The coalitions were directed to analyze their regional data in order to identify gaps and needs in their region and submit their proposal based upon this determination. The amount of recruitment and retention funding made available to each region was determined based on the approximate population of children by region and budget expenditures from previous biennium.

In January 2018, the request for funding changed based on the North Dakota legislative bill SB 2206, County Social Service Redesign. This law change wrapped recruitment and retention funding into the legislative bill and funds were distributed to the counties in a similar way as done prior to 2018, but most costs were embedded into the county fiscal formula and not offered as monthly reimbursement within an isolated budget.

In January 2020, the Department engaged in a formal contract with the University of North Dakota Children and Family Services Training Center (CFSTC) to hire a Recruitment Retention Specialist (R&R Specialist) to lead statewide recruitment and retention efforts. The R&R Specialist was hired and began working in April 2020. The duties of the contract include:

- Engage with the department Children and Family Services (CFS) to develop and maintain the R&R plan.
- Engage with community stakeholders to provide information and referral for all incoming foster care providers via website, telephone or inquiries forwarded from other partners.
- Support and inform inquiring individuals of foster care licensing and adoption options.
- Co-facilitate Recruitment and Retention Coalition meetings.
- Provide technical assistance and training as needed.
- Assist in efficient statewide planning to maximize funding.
- Administer statewide recruitment and retention funds.
- Oversee a statewide branding effort to establish cohesive messaging to increase "brand" awareness.
- Research and engage in best practice marketing and advertising, to develop statewide marketing efforts.
- Collect and document quarterly and annual recruitment and retention data
- Provide education and awareness related to recruitment and retention, through social media, marketing efforts, bimonthly newsletter articles, developing community partners, and promotional opportunities.
- Survey foster care providers to enhance retention efforts and overcome barriers.
- Other duties as determined necessary to carry out the goals of the plan and contract.

In April 2022, the CFS Licensing Unit was implemented. This included the transfer of ND Human Service Zone foster care licensing duties to the ND Department of Health and Human Services - Children and Families Services section. Legislative redesign efforts (SB 2086 (section 26) shifted all duties and local supervision of up to 16 staff to become licensing specialists and coordinators. The CFS Licensing Unit will provide statewide coverage, licensing foster homes, engaging in recruitment and retention efforts, identifying shelter and respite care providers, while offering the PRIDE pre-service training to prospective foster care providers. The CFS Licensing Unit will also oversee the licensing of Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTP), Supervised Independent Living (SIL), Licensed Child Placing Agencies (LCPA), maternity homes and certified shelter care programs.

In September 2022, the North Dakota Department of Human Services merged with the ND Department of Health and Human Services; known as ND Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This in fact required upgrades to all recruitment and retention branded materials, etc. All rebranding was required by July 2023. In April 2023, the CFS Licensing Unit remained stable with one year of redesign underway!

In January 2023, ND state legislature allowed for the CFS Licensing Unit to develop parameters and gain approval through administrative rules to proceed with a licensing level of care specific to short-term placements (respite and emergency shelter for less than 30 days), as well as work with the federal government to gain approval for PI-23 relative licensing. North Dakota has historically licensed foster care providers under one set of standards and these three levels of licensure will help meet the varied needs of children in need of out-of-home placement. Effective April 1, 2024, HHS Children and Family Services received approval under the federal Title IV-E State

Plan amendment to have separate standards for relatives licensed to provide foster care to related children. North Dakota family licensing includes:

1. Licensed – Full

- Care to children in need of an out-of-home placement including long term, short term, respite, and shelter.
- Providers are licensed by the State, Nexus PATH (treatment) or Tribal Nation.

2. Licensed – Relative

- Care to relative children only.
- Providers are licensed by the State or Tribal Nation.

3. Certified - Short term care

- Care for children for 30 days or less inclusive of emergency shelter care (14 days or less), or planned respite care (4 days or less).
- Providers are licensed by the State

CFS Licensing Unit Contact Information:

cfslicensing@nd.gov

Office: 701-328-2322

Toll Free: 1-888-334-1330

Fax: 701-328-0962

CFS Licensing Unit			
Kelsey Bless, Licensing Unit Administrator			
Licensing/LOC Administrator Brittany Fode	Coordinators/Nexus PATH, Tribal, URM Licensing Sup Monica Miller	Licensing Specialist Sup Bob Schock	Licensing Specialist Sup Michelle Jacob
Dana Lindemann, License/LOC Specialist	Brooke Kosiak, Coordinator	Natalie Straub, Licensing Specialist	Sadie Olson, Licensing Specialist
Megan Colbenson, License/LOC Specialist	Renee Grussing, Coordinator	Becka Koll, Licensing Specialist	Barb Reed, Licensing Specialist
	Jenn Puppe, Coordinator	Rachel Suda, Licensing Specialist	Teresa Wieseler-Kubal, Licensing Specialist
Unit Contact Information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cfslicensing@nd.gov • 701-328-2322 • 1-888-334-1330 (toll-free) <p>Inquiries go to UND CFSTC at 1-833-FST-HOME</p>		Jennifer Thoreson, Licensing Specialist	Samantha Everson, Licensing Specialist
		Jenny Smyth, Licensing Specialist	Amber Nix, Licensing Specialist
		Shantel Froelich, Licensing Specialist	Kathy Molland, Licensing Specialist

Inquiry Contact Information:

Information related to foster care and adoption recruitment and retention efforts can be found by accessing the Department of Health and Human Services' website at: <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/foster-care-provider-inquiry> or by calling the North Dakota Toll Free Recruitment and Retention line at **1-833-FST-HOME** or 1-833-378-4663.

Individuals interested in learning more about becoming a foster or adoptive parent can enter their name, address and telephone number, press 'send', and the inquiry is sent directly to the R&R Specialist at The UND Children and Family Services Training Center (CFSTC). The R&R Specialist makes telephone and email contact with interested individuals immediately. The R&R Specialist gathers information about the inquiring family, shares information regarding different levels of care, agencies related to the level of care, and licensing and training requirements and process. The R&R Specialist and the interested individuals plan which licensing agency(s) to forward their information or to be followed up by the R&R Specialist. At the time the interested individuals are ready to move forward, their information gathered by the R&R Specialist is forwarded to the identified agency(s).

ND Provider Task Force

The ND Foster Care Provider Task Force was created in February 2022. This format offered a platform for HHS Children and Family Services to solicit feedback, gain perspective, request assistance on small projects, while engaging subject-matter experts in system change and growth opportunities. The ND Provider Task Force is made up of twelve licensed foster care providers and facility representatives, as well as policy administration with an equal mission to identify challenges and seek change in a meaningful respectful, solution focused manner. The Task force meets every other month and is facilitated by the CFS Licensing Unit.

ND Recruitment & Retention Work Group

The ND Statewide Foster and Adopt Recruitment and Retention Work Group was an enhanced effort formally created in April 2020. This format offered a more consistent statewide representation of agency staff and partners and took the place of the historical annual R&R Task Force meeting. Work Group members represent all areas of the state and include individuals from Human Service Zones, Division of Juvenile Services, Tribal Nations, Licensed Child Placing Agencies (Nexus PATH, Youthworks, AASK, etc), UND Children and Family Services Training Center, Children & Family Services, foster and adoptive parent/s. The goal of the work group is to review the R&R state plan, analyze data, address systemic issues for recruitment and retention, while meeting any additional requests of the Department.

Recruitment & Retention Coalitions

The purpose of the Foster and Adopt Recruitment and Retention Coalition is to gather local parties to engage in conversation and support the recruitment and retention of foster care providers as well as adoptive families. Prior to 2020, Coalitions were structured by regional human service center boundaries and made up of various parties. Mostly led by the county licensor. In October 2020, the R&R Coalition structure was revised and repurposed to ensure consistency, efficiency and productivity statewide when carrying out the mission of recruitment and retention. Today, North Dakota has four functioning R&R Coalitions representing partners and providers from across the state. For more information about the ND R&R Coalitions, see ATTACHMENT A.

State Policy Limitations

ND does not have limitations about who can become a licensed foster care provider. The US Supreme Court decision regarding same sex marriage has not and will not have program implications on licensing foster homes. Currently, ND does have same-sex couples licensed to provide foster care to children and our state has had same sex couples licensed in the past. Same sex couples may also adopt children from ND foster care.

Fee Structures

There are no fees associated with licensing of family foster homes. The Department of Health and Human Services assumes costs related to fingerprint-based criminal records checks as well as costs related to private well water testing. In addition, any costs related to a physical or psychological exam required by the licensing agency is the responsibility of the individual insurance first, then the licensing agency or the Department of Health and Human Services. (NDAC 75-03-14) Fees charged to prospective adoptive families by the Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) program are minimal consisting of an application fee and psychological testing, if determined necessary. These costs along with a variety of other allowable expenditures (legal and court fees, etc.) can be reimbursed to the family if the child they adopt qualifies for an adoption subsidy.

Statewide Agencies and Service Areas

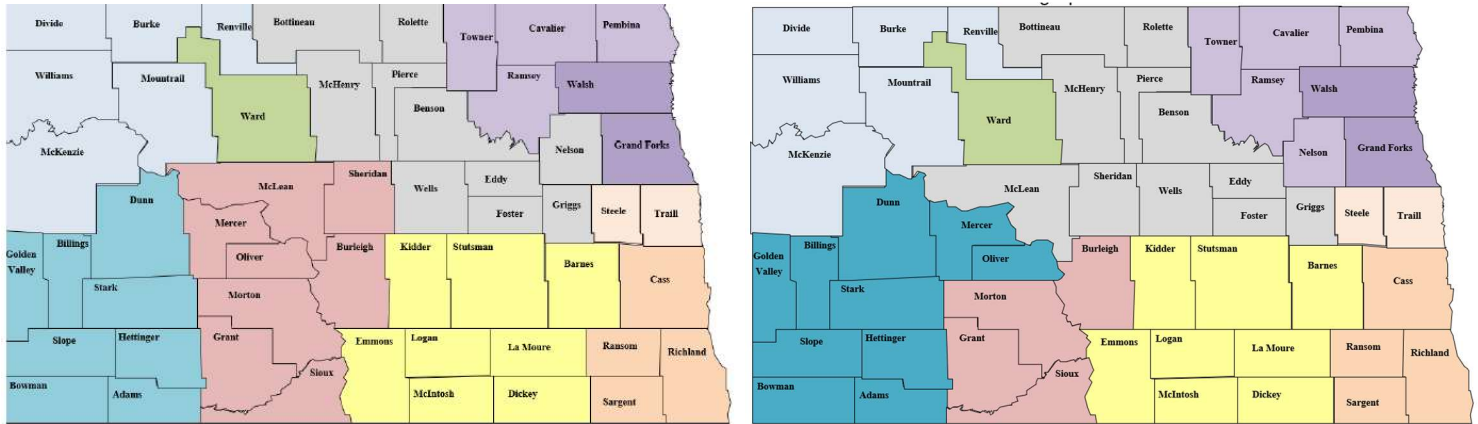
HHS, Children and Family Services Licensing Unit hires licensing specialists to administer the licensing of foster care provider homes across the state. At this time, twelve licensing specialists oversee licensure requests statewide, while various authorized licensing agent/s complete the home study process, interview prospective families, complete licensure recommendations, etc. Foster care licensing packets are received to the Department from authorized agents including:

- Nexus – PATH
- Tribal Nations
- Unaccompanied Refugee Minor program

Home Study packets for adoption are received by the AASK adoption program. More details are located on the Department's web site at: <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/adoption-program>

CFS Licensing Specialist Coverage Areas

Licensing specialists are assigned to a service area where they will meet regularly (weekly or every other week) with custodial agencies to discuss new homes, changes to homes, recruitment needs, etc. The service areas offer a primary point of contact, but do not officially require the assigned specialist/s to complete tasks or home studies. The CFS licensing Unit works collaboratively to share areas, cover for one another, etc. as needed. In spring of 2025, Licensing Specialist capacity shifts impacted the ability to serve one area of the state known as “Dakota Central” located north of Bismarck. This offloaded nearly 20 homes from the Bismarck/Mandan specialists case load and transferred the homes to two specialists.



KEY: The color on the map is associated with one or more Licensing Specialists as the main POINT of CONTACT for the service area. However, the CFS Licensing Unit does share homes and duties across jurisdictional lines, and dependent on the location or needs, another specialist may be called in to cover!

Light Blue = Kathy Green = Amber Grey = Teresa Light Purple = Barb Dark Purple = Barb and Sadie
Dark Blue = Natalie Pink = Rachel and Becka Yellow = Samantha Light Orange = Jennifer T Dark Orange = Jenny, Jennifer, Shantel

Data Systems and Reporting (Foster and Adopt)

North Dakota has a reporting tool in our data management system, FRAME, to provide a quick glance at foster care demographics. The “Foster Care Demographics Report” is available to all FRAME users and allows access of up-to-date data related to foster youth, i.e., # foster children in each county/Zone, region, age, race, etc. Coalitions can view demographics as specific to their local county or as regional view to determine their needs. Recruitment & Retention Coalitions can view the foster care demographics reports “moment in time” data or in larger timeframes to determine increases, decreases, recruitment strategy updated needed, etc.

ND Children in Foster Care Data

The report can be run as a statewide data report or specific to an area. Data below shows the demographic breakdown for children in foster care by age and location on a specific date.

2024 ND Data:

- 1230 children are in foster care on May 30, 2024, under the custody of one of these three public agencies: ND Human Service Zone, ND Tribal Nation with a Title IV-E Agreement, or the Division of Juvenile Services.
- 43% (533) of the children are age 5 and under
- 47% (620) of the children identify as sole/dual race of Native American. Tribal IV-E cases are included in our statewide data. Of the 47% of children who identify as Native American; 28% of the children are under the public custody of a Human Service Zone or DJS, while 19% are under the custody of a Tribal Nation.
- ND does not provide foster care services after age 21.

Unique Child Totals by Age

Region	Ages																						
	Total	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
I - Northwest	86	6	6	9	8	7	7	7	4	6	4	3	3	1	3	3	3	2	1	2		1	
II - North Central	156	8	10	14	15	11	10	5	9	8	5	12	5	4	2	9	5	11	5	5	1	2	
III - Lake Region	235	12	12	18	24	23	18	14	11	14	12	15	13	10	7	11	6	9	4	1	1		
IV - Northeast	165	8	16	14	9	13	10	5	9	9	8	10	8	7	8	5	5	3	5	9	3	1	
V - Southeast	217	15	23	12	18	15	12	9	13	9	7	12	4	11	5	10	11	8	8	9	2	4	
VI - South Central	39	1	2	2	3	1	3	3	3	2	3		2	1	1	4	1	3	2			2	
VII - West Central	294	19	19	25	15	25	19	18	12	14	5	18	9	14	14	16	11	9	16	9	5	2	
VIII - Badlands	38	3	1	5	2	4	1	2	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	1		
Age Totals	1230	72	89	99	94	99	80	63	63	63	45	73	45	49	41	59	45	46	44	36	13	12	

Unique Child Totals by Race

Race	Total
American Indian or Alaskan Native	620
Asian	5
African American	103
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	9
White	530
Unable to Determine	52
Refusal by Client	0
Total	1319

Children by Gender

Gender	Total
Male	601
Female	629
Total	1230

2025 ND Data:

- 1,110 children are in foster care on May 30, 2025, under the custody of one of these three public agencies: ND Human Service Zone, ND Tribal Nation with a Title IV-E Agreement, or the Division of Juvenile Services.
- 42% (464) of the children are age 5 and under
- 47% (518) of the children identify as sole/dual race of Native American. Tribal IV-E cases are included in our statewide data. Of the 47% of children who identify as Native American; 85% of the children are under the public custody of a Human Service Zone (926) or DJS (16), while 15% are under the custody of a Tribal Nation (168).
- ND does not provide foster care services after age 21.

Unique Child Totals by Age

Region	Total	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
I - Northwest	93	6	10	7	10	9	4	6	4	2	4	3	3	2	2	3	6	6	5		1		
II - North Central	140	9	16	11	11	13	6	7	6	7	5	6	7	5	6	3	5	7	5	3	1	1	
III - Lake Region	167	8	16	11	16	15	11	5	9	10	9	9	11	6	3	9	4	5	1				
IV - Northeast	133	7	9	13	10	7	3	6	4	5	6	7	9	9	6	10	5	6	4	2	3	2	
V - Southeast	199	13	20	16	9	11	9	12	9	17	9	7	10	6	6	9	6	12	8	4	5	1	
VI - South Central	34	2	2	4	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	5	3	2	1			
VII - West Central	308	17	25	17	20	15	23	13	22	21	12	6	17	10	14	18	11	17	11	9	6	4	
VIII - Badlands	36	2	5	3	1	2	5	1	3	2	1		2		4	2	1		1			1	
Age Totals	1110	64		103	82	78	75	62	51	58	65	47	39	58	44	45	50	48	55	41	20	16	9

Unique Child Totals by Race

Race	Total
American Indian or Alaskan Native	518
Asian	5
African American	105
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	15
White	506
Unable to Determine	58
Refusal by Client	0
Total	1207

Children by Gender

Gender	Total
Male	569
Female	541
Total	1110

Adoption Specific Details

The AASK program continues to serve children in the foster care system who have a concurrent or primary goal of adoption. From July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, AASK served a total of 872 children in varying stages of the adoption process. In addition, a total of 166 adoption home assessments were completed on families. In fiscal year 2024, AASK facilitated 245 adoptions. Of this number:

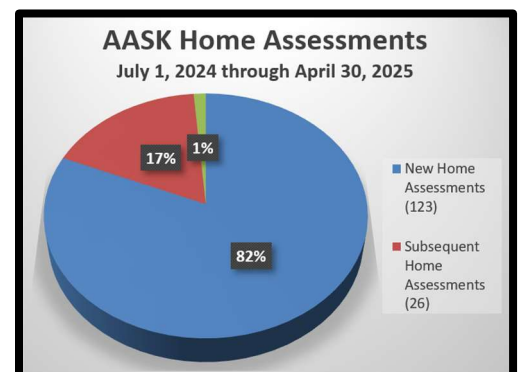
- 69% were North Dakota State Custody Children
- 25% were Tribal Custody Children
- 6% were Incoming ICPC Children

The average age of a child at the time of finalization during fiscal year 2024 was 7.07 years old. Children finalized ranged from 9.36 months to 17.71 years old.

In the current fiscal year (July 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025), AASK has completed 149 home assessments for adoptive families in North Dakota. Of this number, 123 are new adoptive families and 26 are families who have adopted through the AASK program in the past (see chart below).

In the Fall of 2023, The North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services, Children and Family Services Division began a formal adoption re-design effort to focus on identifying areas that could be enhanced on a child's journey to adoption. Through this process four areas of focus were identified, and workgroups were created to dig deeper into the following areas:

- Relative Search and Active Efforts (actively seeking out connections to a child prior to an adoption goal)
- Termination of Parental Rights (working with court systems to create consistency and timeliness in hearings and petitions)
- AASK Referral (creating workflows that allow a seamless transition of information from a child's custodian to meet adoption requirements)
- AASK and Foster Care Home Assessments (building a process to create efficiencies and utilizing foster care assessments within the adoption process)



Several implementations were made as a result, including many changes to the adoption home assessment. All implementations began February 1, 2024. Some high-level changes include:

- A new home assessment format, including a supplemental assessment option with the use of a foster care study

- A decrease in reference requirements
- The elimination of background check processing fees
- A decrease in home assessment visit requirements
- A decrease in application requirements

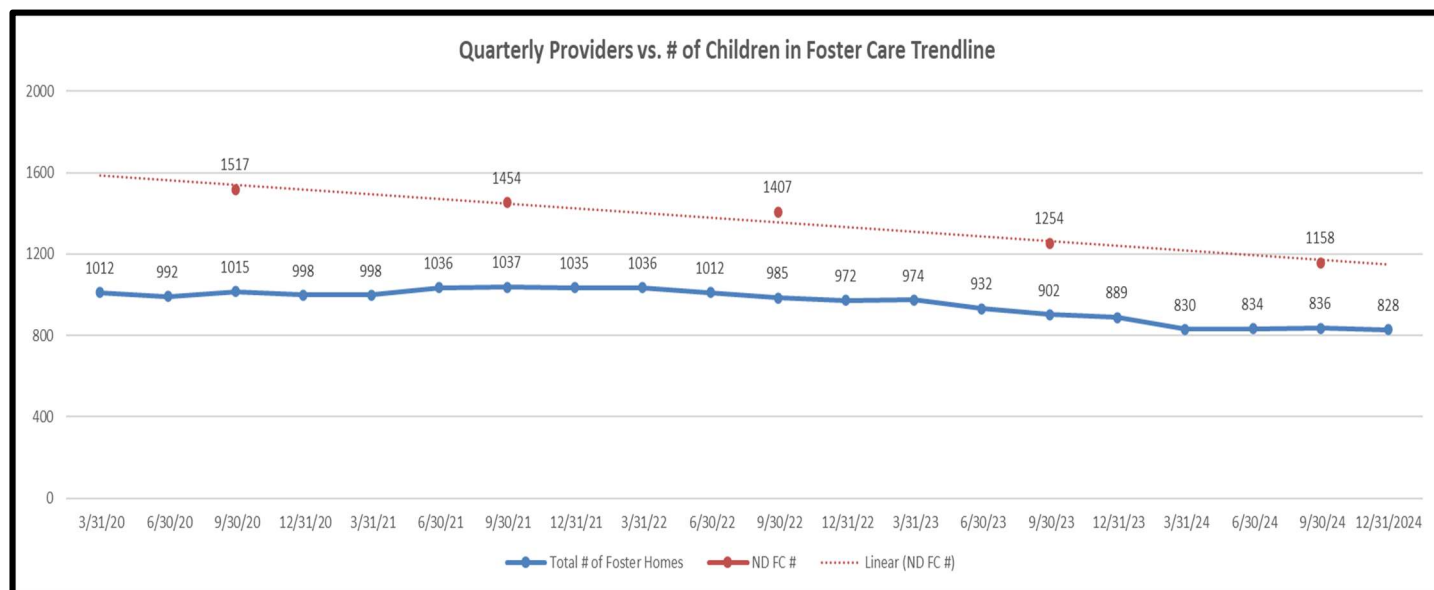
An overall goal of ND Adoption Redesign is to finalize child cases 60 days from the date of termination of parental rights. As a result of adoption redesign efforts, in the current fiscal year (compared to the prior fiscal year), we have seen a 23% decrease in the number of days it takes to complete an adoption study. We have also seen a 13% decrease in the time from TPR to finalization for children whose adoptions were completed in this fiscal year.

Children in Foster Care vs. Licensed Provider Data

Historically, recruitment and retention coalitions tracked numbers of homes, inquiries, asked what data is most relative to our work and to create a baseline of data to analyze and compare. In July 2020, Children and Family Services began extracting foster care data from CCWIPS, provider and payment data management system. This change in data analysis altered the view of the data collected and showed ND disparity in data. The chart below represents the volume of homes licensed for one day in the preceding quarter of the biennium.

ND recognized a decline in the total number of licensed family foster care providers. In reviewing the data, North Dakota has a reduction in the number of children in ND foster care as well, so the decline in placement options is in alignment with the volume of children in care on any given day. In analyzing data, North Dakota highlights the decline in homes, but also wants to highlight two important timeframes that may have impacted the trajectory. ND Safety Framework Practice Model went into effect in December 2020, a time when the assessment of present danger versus impending dangers shifted and workers managed cases and assessed safety with a more definition, which has contributed to some reduction of children in care. In addition, April 2022 the CFS Licensing Unit went live which increased oversight/consistency in monitoring provider licenses.

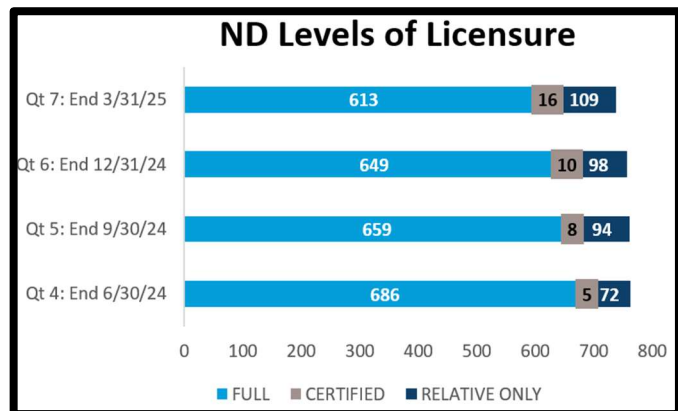
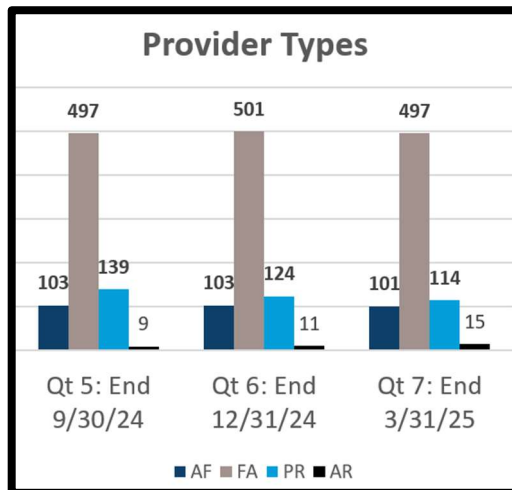
The chart below represents the volume children in North Dakota foster care compared to the volume of licensed providers. This downward trend between children in need of placement and providers is relatively consistent, but the reduction in volume of children is higher with a 31% decrease in volume of children in foster care compared to the 18% decline in homes from 2020 to 2025.



There is a constant effort made to ensure provider homes are available and willing to meet the needs of the children in care based on age, gender and complexity of needs.

Provider Types

The Department issues a formal license or approval to State, Nexus PATH, and Tribal Nation homes. This chart shows a consistent trend for all provider types.



State Provider Availability

In May 2024, the ND Provider List shows 438 active state homes. **42% of state homes** have at least one opening if you include the short-term homes:

- 158 (36%) are full
- 134 (30%) are open, with at least 1 bed available
- 27 (6%) Specific Child Only
- 56 (13%) Not Taking Placements
- 53 (12%) Short Term only
- 10 (2%) CFS Hold/Do Not Call
- 284 (65%) are willing to offer respite care
- 221 (50%) are willing to take emergency shelter care placements
- 40 (9%) have committed to join the on-call shelter care rotation in select parts of the state.

In May 2025, the ND Provider List shows 421 active state homes. There is a notable reduction in the number of homes as CFS Licensing no longer allows statewide access to the relative providers as they are specific to “related” children. **52% of state homes** have at least one opening if you include the short-term homes:

- 137 (33%) are full
- 151 (36%) are open, with at least 1 bed available
- 44 (10%) Not Taking Placements
- 78 (19%) Short Term only
- 11 (3%) CFS Hold/Do Not Call
- 318 (75%) are willing to offer respite care
- 279 (66%) are willing to take emergency shelter care placements
- 31 (7%) have committed to join the on-call shelter care rotation in select parts of the state.

Respite and Shelter Care Services

ND tracks additional services and supports offered by licensed providers. 75% of the state homes have an interest in providing respite, while 66% are willing to offer shelter care services in their home. ND has a very small population of family homes “on-call”, but 31 homes have taken a week to be available to help in emergency on-call situations. Since July 1, 2024, North Dakota expended over \$56,360 on respite and \$65,368 on shelter care services. 68% of the shelter funds have been used for prevention in efforts to maintain children in the parental home (mom, dad, relative, close family friend, etc.)

Long Stayers – Children in Care Greater than 2 years

Children and Family Services has been viewing specific the emergency/short term need for foster care to offer a safety service as well as the enhance structures and support to foster care providers who offer care to children in care longer than two years.

In March 2024, a collective data pull of foster care cases under the custody of the Human Service Zone, DJS and Tribal IV-E cases indicate length of stay:

- 39% (480) in care less one year,
- 158 (13%) in care less than 90 days
- 303 (25%) children are in care over 1 year, less than 2 years
- 213 (17%) children have been in care over 2 years, less than 3 years
- 230 (19%) children have been in care greater than 3 years, with longest length of time for a child is 4517 days (12.3 years).

In May 2025, a collective data pull of foster care cases under the custody of the Human Service Zone, DJS and Tribal IV-E cases indicate length of stay:

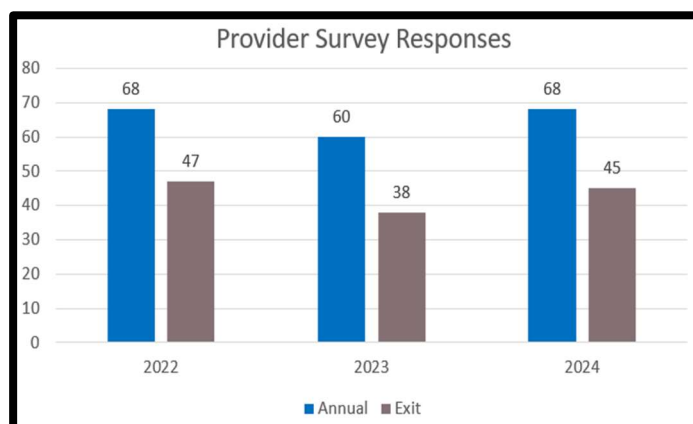
- 47% in care less than one year, with 28% of those cases in care 90 days or less
- 24% in care over 1 year, less than 2 years
- 15% in care over 2 years, less than 3 years
- 14% in care greater than 3 years; longest time for a child is 4192 days (11.5 years).

Cases in care greater than two years present with a variety of complex needs, which inadvertently leads to placement instability impacting the willingness of providers to accept placements into the home. North Dakota is fortunate to have majority (96%) of the children placed in a family least restrictive setting; 16% of children are with unlicensed caregivers, 77% with a licensed provider (relative or unrelated), and 27 children in 18+ are placed in supervised independent living apartments. Since 2019, HHS has seen a reduction in the number of children placed in long term residential settings and an increase in the number of relatives or known caregivers caring for children in the community!



Provider Surveys

ND licensed foster care providers are surveyed each year during the annual onsite visit, renewal licensure and upon exit/discontinuation from providing foster care. A virtual survey is available to gain perspective and feedback from providers to generate awareness as well as improve the experiences of foster care providers and the children they provide care to. Participation is voluntary and anonymous.



Strengths Noted from Providers

- The team has absolutely always gone above and beyond to support us and the child in care in any way possible. I brag about the ND foster system all the time.
- Having the appropriate support has helped us provide for the children in our home and remain licensed.
- Huge shout out to those case workers who are doing their jobs and making leaving this program difficult!!
- I felt numerous trainings were offered and I could contact licensing at any time with questions
- COVID really changed the delivery method for trainings, finally getting online options was and is a great opportunity for foster parents. Thank you!
- Our case workers were responsive and helpful in securing respite or support for us.
- We couldn't have fostered if not provided support with transportation and help from case managers/parent aides to get the children to appointments and visits,
- We've been very lucky to work with individuals who genuinely care and give so much of themselves to children they meet through this process.
- Licensing Specialists are there every time we need to ask questions. Our specialist walks us through stuff if we don't understand and is friendly and easy to talk to.

Challenges Noted from Providers

- We are grateful to be a foster care provider but wish we could offer more input as to what we think would be best for the child in our care and also would desire to see better communication with the caseworker.
- We had to disrupt a long-term placement after a year. It was unfortunate. We needed respite and more services for the child and ourselves. The child transitioned to a more experienced foster home.
- Lack of communication from case management
- Lack of transparency in decision making and accountability of case managers by supervisors.
- Providing a service is not "our job", it is a calling for many. We volunteer to step up and open our homes, we are a member of the team and should be treated as such.
- The younger children required more financial support, between all of the trips to town for medical appointments, diapers, wipes, clothing and extras that babies need as they grow. The lowest rate is not equivalent.
- As an adoptive parent, there's a diversity of support groups, but I am not aware of any for foster families. I say "families" because I think there could be opportunities to include support for biological parents or other children living in the home.

ND tracks those families who discontinue with reasons for closure in two parts. CFS Licensing Unit monitors applicants who complete the process and obtain a license as well as those who start the process and never make it through the licensing process. In the last twelve months 282 licensed providers discontinued for a variety of reasons. Majority of the providers had family needs to attend to (36%), adopted a child and was using the time to bond as a family (27%), or was no longer interested (15%). Relative licenses discontinue when the child achieves permanency, 7% of the providers closed in lieu of transferring to a full license. There will always be moments of disagreement, but only 3% (n=8) of providers discontinued because of lack of support from the custodial agency. This is an improvement overtime as the CFS Licensing Unit works closely with the custodial agencies to ensure communication, engage with providers, show appreciation and support the provider-worker relationship in efforts to positively impact the placements in the home.

Reason for Closure	#	%
Family needs/circumstances	101	36%
Adoption	75	27%
No longer interested	43	15%
Relative/Specific child	21	7%
Moving	19	7%
Retiring	9	3%
Lack of support - custodial agency	8	3%
Health concerns	4	1%
Revocation	2	1%
Total Discontinued Licensure	282	

Never Licensed	#	%
Discontinued	119	88%
Denied CBCU	10	7%
Counseled out initial	5	4%
Denied	1	1%
Total	135	

As for prospective providers who apply to become licensed, 135 applicants did not complete the process. Data shows a limited number of applicants who are discontinued due to a denied criminal background check (7%), while less are counseled out on the front end by the Coordinator Lane. Counseling an applicant out happens through inquiry calls and discussions with the individual; some will openly explain they have a child with mental health concerns, and they are working through those times, they may share they are going through a divorce or have an employment barrier where they do not have flexibility in their schedule. These conversations often lead to a mutual agreement to discontinue the licensing process until their life circumstance stabilizes. Lastly, the majority of applicants (88%) discontinued the process on their own either they lost interest, no longer were in contact with CFS Licensing, had a specific child they were licensing for who returned home, they may have refused to complete training or had their own family circumstances change (pregnancy, divorce, marriage, health), which prompted their application closure.

CFS Licensing Unit and the R&R Work Group will continue to analyze rationale as to why a foster care provider discontinues their license. ND is always seeking ways to improve support and retention of licensed and trained providers to care for children in need of placement.

Statewide R&R Accomplishments 2024-2025

The department has a contract with the University of North Dakota-Children and Family Services Training Center (CFSTC) to oversee statewide recruitment and retention of foster care providers and adoptive families. The role of CFSTC's Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Specialist is to lead and support statewide recruitment and retention efforts. A large focus is placed on consistent and cohesive messaging for statewide recruitment, working closely with the four recruitment and retention coalitions across the state to support their local recruitment and retention efforts, developing efficient plans to maximize the funds available, and administering recruitment and retention funds statewide. During the 2024-2025 timeframe, the contract also offered supportive services to assist with retention, including:

- Grief and loss counseling
- Monthly virtual training opportunities
- Foster care provider mentor program
- Post-adopt mentor program
- ICWA Cultural Liaison Program- Managed by Native American Training Institute (NATI) and supported by CFSTC

Tasks completed by R&R Specialist 2024-2025:

- Management of statewide foster or adopt inquiries including ongoing communication with new and past inquiries through email and phone calls and referring to the appropriate agency for licensing. Invites to virtual foster care panels are sent to pending inquiries, or individuals who are unresponsive after making initial contact with the R&R Specialist.
- Continued creation of branded recruitment materials (as noted below) to include specialized recruitment of homes for teenagers, Native American homes, and youth who identify as LGBTQAI+.
- Ongoing use of 13 full videos (2 have been archived) and five 30 second video PSAs produced by Chezy in 2022 for statewide recruitment. Examples of use: Video links are included in the initial inquiry email that is sent to interested families on a daily basis, videos are shared during virtual foster care panels, video links are included within the Fostering Communications newsletter, on-screen movie theater advertising, at foster or adopt presentations in the community, through social media, etc.
- Coordinated movie theater ads to run in the following theaters:
 - 30 second ad for 5 months (2/2025-6/2025) in Devils Lake Theater
 - 30 second ad for 3 months (3/15/2025-6/15/2025) in Williston and Dickinson Theaters
 - 30 second ad for 3 months (4/2025-6/2025) in Jamestown and Valley City Theaters
- Coordinated recruitment ads for:
 - Electronic screen- Lakota, ND (new ads created and provided every quarter)
 - Badlands Activity Center
 - Tidbits- Grand Forks, ND
 - High school sports programs (football, volleyball, basketball)- Divide County area
 - District tournament booklets- Divide County area
 - Sports program ads-Cavalier Chronicle
 - Electronic Screen- Bismarck Legacy High School Gymnasium
 - Thrill Hills Ski Area- Fort Ransom, ND
 - Volleyball tournament booklet- Grafton, ND area
 - Friday Flyer- Bismarck Public Schools
 - Wahpeton Daily News
 - ✓ Domestic violence special edition
 - ✓ Veterans Day special edition
 - ✓ Thanksgiving activity page for kids
 - ✓ Christmas Countdown edition
 - ✓ Athlete of the Year special edition
 - ✓ Lake Elsie Fishing Derby special edition
 - ✓ FFA special edition
 - ✓ Sports congrats page

- ✓ Spring sports edition
 - ✓ Say No to Drugs coloring book
- Daily News Monitor
 - ✓ Athlete of the year special edition
- Walsh County Record
 - ✓ Sports Tabs (fall, winter, spring)
 - ✓ Sports booster ads (October, November, January, February)
 - ✓ Front page weekly source
 - ✓ Christmas Greetings edition
 - ✓ 2025 Calendar
- The Morning Edition- Devils Lake, ND
- District 5 boys and girls basketball tournament booklets
- Fargo Mom- sponsored article and large sidebar ad
- ADventures- Fargo Public Schools
- Region 2 boys and girls basketball tournament booklets
- Southern Valley Living Magazine
- The targeted recruitment schedule was fulfilled in 2024 and updated for 2025. This tool acts as a recruitment guide throughout the year and offers consistency with recruitment throughout the state. The schedule denotes targeted locations, materials available to help recruit for targeted populations (Native homes, teens, LGBTQIA+ homes, etc.), and a list of recruitment ideas for each designated location. This schedule is reviewed at each Coalition meeting, and with the CFS Licensing Unit. It is important to note that it does not replace the day-to-day general recruitment that continues to take place in North Dakota.
- Ongoing coordination, advertising, and facilitation of the virtual foster care panels that are offered 4x per year. The panels give community members an opportunity to learn more about fostering or adoption through foster care in North Dakota.
- Supported coalition members with the planning and execution of community recruitment events, including:
 - Developing a payment plan, overseeing the paperwork process, and managing invoices for booth fees, parade fees, etc.
 - Ordering and distributing necessary items to supply resource booths.
 - Creating event specific recruitment materials, as needed.
- Supported licensing unit workers with the planning and execution of 7 training/appreciation events across the state, including:
 - Budget planning
 - Ordering of door prizes
 - Overseeing the paperwork process and payment of trainers, space rental, catering, and completing necessary reimbursements for on-site childcare.
- Assisted coalition members in the purchasing of foster provider appreciation gifts. Gifts were selected by workers, gift ideas varied across the state, and included:
 - Large canvas totes with “Licensed to Love” screen printed on them
 - May Day baskets
 - Keychains
 - Handmade magnets
 - Utensil Sets (Nexus-PATH)
 - Planter gift set (Nexus-PATH)
- Coordinated with AASK on the purchasing of gifts for families who finalized their adoption on National Adoption Day. Gifts included:
 - Personalized wood plaques
 - Gift baskets
 - Wall art with family quote
- Ongoing management of the Foster Care Provider Mentor program, Post Adopt Mentor Program, and ICWA Cultural Liaison program.
 - Accept referrals on providers needing a mentor, make contact with the family to review the mentor program, then match the family with a mentor.
 - Complete 6-month check-ins with families matched with a foster care provider mentor.
 - Facilitate meetings as needed with all foster care provider mentors to check-in, review program information, provide updates, seek feedback, and answer questions.

- Facilitate individual meetings or schedule phone calls with foster care provider mentors as needed to answer questions and/or talk through various scenarios.
- Follow-up with Licensing Specialists with the CFS Licensing Unit, ND Post Adopt Network workers, and NATI contacts as needed.
- Oversee and track invoices and payment for all three programs.
- Ongoing management of Grief and Loss Counseling. Solace Counseling is set-up as the vendor for this service. Counseling is available to foster care providers who are experiencing grief and loss and are in need of additional support. Each provider is offered:
 - (3) 1-hour individual sessions
 - Plus (3) family sessions to include provider/s and provider's own children.

Branded materials created & distributed in 2024-2025

See Attachment C for examples of publications and materials. Branded items include, but not limited to:

- Pens- 3350
- Magnetic chip clips-1800
- Microfiber screen cleaners- 1800
- Custom post it pads- 500
- Hot/cold gel packs- 5100
- Band aid dispensers- 2500
- Mints- 1800
- Re-usable mini tote bags- 1400
- Bookmarks- 4000
- Recruitment stickers- 45,000
- Tear away flyers- 1300
- 3'x6' vinyl banners- 9
- Coffee sleeves- 8000
- Custom luncheon napkins- 25,000
- Provider holiday greeting cards- 875
- Provider appreciation cards- 80
- Thank you cards- 205
- Community thank you cards- 875
- Greenhouse recruitment cards- 2100
- Marathon recruitment cards- 1100
- Summer recruitment cards- 1440
- 'Tis the Season recruitment cards- 4150
- 'Tis the Season recruitment card (1-side)- 60
- Foster care brochures- 700
- Mentor brochures- 40
- General recruitment post cards- 2850
- General recruitment business cards- 5100
- Licensing unit business cards- 675
- A-frame posters- 2
- Color Sheets- full page
 - Fall- 5300
 - Winter- 1100
 - Spring/Summer-3450
 - Dreamcatcher-1300
 - Valentines- 1095
- Color Sheets- 1/4 page
 - Fall- 500
- Kids activity placemats
 - Winter- 500
- Full page flyers:
 - Teen Mythbusters- 250
 - Teen-Top 10 Reasons- 50
 - Grief & Loss- 40
 - One page handout- 400
- Half page flyers:
 - General- 750
 - Teen focus- 550
 - Native family recruitment focus- 1350
 - Virtual panel- 3000
- ¼ Page flyers
 - State Fair- 250
 - Bismarck marathon- 2100
 - Wish Tree- 80
- Provider Survey Handout- 1325

Inquiries Received:

In addition to supportive services, the R&R Specialist manages the statewide inquiry clearinghouse phoneline, inquiries received online through the HHS website, and direct inquiries to CFSTC. This process has improved the response time and consistency in messaging across the state. The R&R Specialist makes telephone and email contact with interested individuals within 24 hours of their inquiry. The R&R Specialist gathers information about the inquiring family, shares information regarding different levels of care, licensing agency options, levels of licensure, licensing requirements, training requirements, and process. If an inquiry would like to have a more detailed conversation, or start the licensing process, a referral is made to the authorized licensing agency of their choice.

An online inquiry intake process is in place for authorized licensing agencies to assist in the data tracking of statewide inquiries. The online inquiry intake form can be found [here](#). This form is completed by licensors with

authorized licensing agencies for all inquiries they receive directly through their agency. All inquiries are to be submitted to CFSTC at quarter's end, and no later than January 5, April 5, July 5, and October 5 to assure accurate statewide data tracking and reporting. The R&R Specialist utilizes a printed copy of this form, that also includes a second page. The second page acts as a guide to get to know and to assess families that inquire directly through the inquiry Clearinghouse (reason for inquiry, experience, family dynamics, preferences, etc.). When a family is ready to move ahead with licensing, the completed form is shared in the referral process to the authorized licensing agency.

CFSTC R&R Clearing House Inquiry Data by State Fiscal Year

Qts	# of Inquiries	# Referred to Agency	Screened Out	# of Inquiries	# Referred to Agency	Screened Out	# of Inquiries	# Referred to Agency	Screened Out
	July 2022 - June 2023			July 2023 - June 2024			July 2024 - June 2025		
Qt 1	178	95	32	172	89	28	131	79	12
Qt 2	118	72	20	142	76	32	121	59	25
Qt 3	144	72	14	160	80	22	170	88	18
Qt 4	150	74	32	151	76	28	pending	pending	pending
Total	590	313	98	625	321	110	422	226	55

**Tracking of total statewide inquiries began as follows in January 2022:

CFSTC R&R Clearing House & Partner Agency Inquiry Data by Calendar Year

	UND Inquiry	Partner Inquiry	Total		UND Inquiry	Partner Inquiry	Total		UND Inquiry	Partner Inquiry	Total
Calendar Year 2023				Calendar Year 2024				Calendar Year 2025			
Jan	56	28	84	Jan	58	17	75	Jan	67	19	86
Feb	42	18	60	Feb	48	14	62	Feb	46	19	65
March	46	16	62	March	54	16	70	March	57	18	75
April	50	25	75	April	63	21	84	April	42	18	60
May	49	14	63	May	46	30	76	May	39	15	54
June	51	21	72	June	42	50	92	June	pending		
July	53	18	71	July	40	20	60	July			
Aug	67	32	99	Aug	48	13	61	Aug			
Sept	52	20	72	Sept	43	31	74	Sept			
Oct	39	18	57	Oct	33	26	59	Oct			
Nov	54	18	72	Nov	46	19	65	Nov			
Dec	49	14	63	Dec	42	25	67	Dec			
Totals	608	242	850	Totals	563	282	845	Totals	251	89	340

Publications 2024-2025:

- The CFSTC R&R Specialist contributed information and resources in the following editions of the *Fostering Communications* newsletter, which can be found online [HERE](#):
 - ✓ August 2024 edition focused on the “fear of getting too attached” and navigating grief and loss that providers experience.
 - ✓ December 2024 edition highlighted National Adoption Month (recognized in November) and provided more detail on the AASK programs collaboration with The Reel Hope Project and how this project’s goal is to find a forever family for every child waiting in foster care.
 - ✓ March 2025 edition focused on “surviving the winter blues” including tips for families and access to a weekly mood booster activity sheet.
 - ✓ May 2025 edition focused on National Foster Care Month and this year’s theme: “Centered on Family. Strengthened by Connections.”

- CFS Licensing Unit also creates a quarterly newsletter that is sent to providers, custodial agencies and partners. Strategically the newsletter is issued in opposite months of the CFSTC Newsletter. The CFS Licensing Unit issued the newsletter in July 2024, October 2024, January 2025, April 2025.

In addition, the *Fostering Communications* newsletter provides information on how to learn more about fostering in North Dakota by highlighting the toll-free inquiry line (1.888.FST.HOME). Information is also provided on upcoming virtual training opportunities through the Recruitment & Retention contract. The final portion of each edition showcases the upcoming virtual foster care panels, which provide another opportunity for community members to learn more about fostering in North Dakota.

Social media is a useful tool used for recruitment efforts. Posts through the CFSTC Facebook book page continue to reach a large audience. Between July 1, 2024 and May 31, 2025, the R&R Specialist made 56 posts specific to foster or adopt recruitment and retention resulting in:

- Total Impressions (7/1/24 - 9/17/24) - 16,609
- Total Views (9/17/24 - 5/31/25) - 49,559
- Total Reach (7/1/24 - 5/31/25) - 41,066
- Total Interactions (7/1/24 - 5/31/25) - 810

**Please note: Facebook stopped collecting data on "Impressions" and began collecting data on "Views" mid-September 2024.*

Virtual Events 2024-2025:

➤ **Virtual Foster Care Panels**

- Panels were held four times between July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025. The panels continue to be facilitated on Zoom and advertised through the CFSTC Facebook page encouraging those interested in learning more about foster care in North Dakota to attend. The R&R Specialist sends email invites to past inquiries that are still pending or who have not responded to initial contacts. In addition, to assist with promoting the panel, the virtual panel flyer is sent to all families who have completed PRIDE training, the CFS Licensing Unit, Field Service Specialists, Human Service Zone staff, Nexus-PATH, URM Program, AASK, NATI, and tribal licensors. Panelists include licensed foster care providers, foster care licensors with the CFS Licensing Unit and Nexus-PATH, an AASK adoption worker, and when possible, a ND Youth Leadership Board Member (former youth in care). A DJS representative also joined as a panelist on the two most recent panels in 2025. The R&R Specialist coordinates the panel, facilitates the panel dialogue, and manages the zoom securities.
 - Registration and attendance details:
 - September 2024- 34 registered / 11 in attendance
 - November 2024- 20 registered / 9 in attendance
 - February 2025- 25 registered/ 6 in attendance
 - May 2025- 27 registered / 10 in attendance

➤ **Foster Care Provider Educational Sessions:**

- A one-hour virtual educational session is offered on a monthly basis to foster care providers and kinship homes.
- Monthly flyers are created to promote the training opportunity, emailed out to all providers in North Dakota, and advertised on the CFSTC Facebook page.
- The following topics were presented on this last year during the monthly educational sessions:
 - Brain Injury Awareness
 - Student Led IEP
 - IEP vs. 504 Plan
 - Use of Sign Language to Enhance Learning
 - Grief and Loss in Foster Care: Working through the Goodbyes
 - Stand to Protect
 - ND Child Protection Process
 - Safety Planning for Youth at Risk of Suicide
 - Drug Trends
 - Beyond the Bed: Strategies for Pediatric Bed Wetting and Incontinence

- Organizational Tips for Providers

*Due to unforeseen circumstances, the presenter in October had to cancel on short notice. Therefore, no training was held in October 2024. This topic was re-scheduled to January 2025.

Specific Adoption Recruitment

The AASK Program completes adoption assessments for all families seeking to adopt a child from foster care in North Dakota, including families identified for specific children being adopted from foster care and for general recruitment adoptive families. In the current fiscal year July 1, 2024 through April 30, 2025 the AASK Program has completed 123 new assessments, 2 updated and 26 subsequent adoption assessments.

North Dakota has two full time Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) recruiters. One WWK recruiter is located in eastern ND and the other in western ND. Both have a primary focus on child specific recruitment and have caseloads with a mixture of state custody children and tribal custody children who do not have an identified adoptive option at the point of referral. The AASK program also has appointed a "general recruitment" worker to ensure all children on WWK caseloads have an opportunity to receive child-specific recruitment services as well as broader statewide and national recruitment efforts. To support adoption re-design efforts, the AASK program converted the "general recruitment" worker into a full-time AASK recruiter to serve children across the state who do not have an identified adoptive home.

North Dakota has the ND Heart Gallery, which facilitates a website and photo gallery of waiting children. The photo gallery is transported across the state showcasing professional photographs of each child. ND hosts an annual "gala" where new portraits are unveiled; however, children can be added to the gallery throughout the year. The operations of the ND Heart Gallery have been on hold, but as of Spring 2025, a Heart Gallery Director has been hired, and active efforts are being made to ensure utilization of the organization is available to all children needing recruitment services.

On July 1, 2023, the AASK formalized a partnership with The Reel Hope Project (TRHP). This organization provides children needing adoption recruitment with a personal video to be used for child specific recruitment activities. Since the start of the partnership, TRHP has created 34 reels/videos for 40 children. Of those children, 11 have been matched and 3 have been adopted. As of today, 2 additional reels/videos are in progress with 3 additional children.

North Dakota provides adoption services to Tribal custody children at the request of each Tribe, through the AASK program. After adoption re-design efforts were implemented, the Tribes makes requests directly to the AASK program to provide these services on a case-by-case basis. In the current fiscal year July 1, 2024 through April 30, 2025, AASK has placed 79 children for adoption at the request of the Tribes and has also assisted in the finalization of adoption for 75 children.

R&R Plan Outcomes Reporting

The R&R Work Group elected to create new outcomes for the 2024-2029 state plan.

Outcome 1

Analyze and monitor the successes and challenges of the expanded levels of family foster care licensing (certified and relative)

- *Effective August 1, 2023, CFS Licensing Unit was approved to proceed with "certified licensing" to offer short term placement options for children in care (30 days or less).*
- *Effective April 1, 2024, CFS Licensing Unit was approved to proceed with the "relative licensing" standards effective April 1, 2024. This new process was to support known relatives for the children in foster care.*
- *CFS Licensing unit reviews data monthly to assess volume and trends, jurisdictions and geography. There has been an increase in the volume of both levels since inception.*
- *Licensing Levels of Care offers support to providers caring for specialized medical and high behavioral need children through respite. Respite is utilized when a child has special medical, mental or behavioral health needs.*
- *Respite is used to support placement stability, enhance provider capacity and ensure children are able to remain in a least restrictive family setting with services and supports.*
- *Strengths of the Outcome*
 - *Relative license allows children to be placed with family/fictive kin they know! Less trauma.*
 - *Streamline licensing process for relatives with less barriers.*

- Increased willingness of the relatives who may feel more equipped to support getting licensed under the new standards. The relative standards seem to be more appealing for the relatives inquiring to foster.
- Case managers are finding the new process for relative licensing more tolerable, so ND has experienced workers encouraging “family to care for family” at a higher rate.
- Providers are appreciative of the abbreviated training opportunities.
- On occasion, relative providers are willing to remain open and transfer to a fully licensed provider to help others in the community. In addition, relative providers are willing to remain licensed for a period of time to ensure respite services could be offered to the child upon reunification.
- Certification as a level of care gives new providers the ability to ease into fostering, which allows for more time to understand the system and identify their strengths with varied child needs.
- **Challenges of the Outcome**
 - Education and awareness of the change. Always reinforcing that new standards do exist.
 - Understanding the intent of the levels of licensure by referrals and prospective providers.
 - Ensuring our licensing team is not “lowering” our minimum standards to meet the needs of a relative. Assessment is important and required.
 - Limited licensing period for relative providers as they are not as long term committed, as they come to licensing only to serve their relative child.
 - Inquiries asking to get licensed because “maybe” their relative child will enter care, we educate on how this is not the process in ND and we would encourage them to wait unless they are willing to care for unrelated children in the interim.
 - Education and awareness of other options that do exist for relatives. The relative licensing is for foster care cases, while the Kinship ND allowance program is supportive of families where the child can be opened in a preventative “in home” case with a relative for six months at the same daily rate. There are cases where the level of intrusion may be too high and ND continues to evaluate.

Outcome 2

Monitor and review the process for those who “foster to adopt” to ensure adequate efficiencies with the AASK program.

- CFS engaged in adoption redesign in February 2024, this process allowed for a more streamlined approach to assessing providers who are already licensed to provide foster care, but are interested in or have been identified as the family to adopt the child. The redesign supports a more efficient and coordinated approach within the AASK program.
- **Strengths of the Outcome**
 - Providers have reported that the process more efficient
 - Licensing Specialists and AASK Specialists relationships have improved with great collaboration in addressing the needs of the family, summarizing their license, etc.
 - Positive Data Trends (between FY 2024 through April 30, 2025):
 - ✓ The average time to complete an adoption home assessment has decreased by 23%.
 - ✓ The time between termination of parental rights (TPR) and adoption finalization has decreased by 13, indicating improved permanency outcomes.
- **Challenges of the Outcome**
 - Education and awareness with all stakeholders of the process; change takes time.
 - Education and awareness of when the licensing process should be initiated versus when a family should pursue adoption study only.

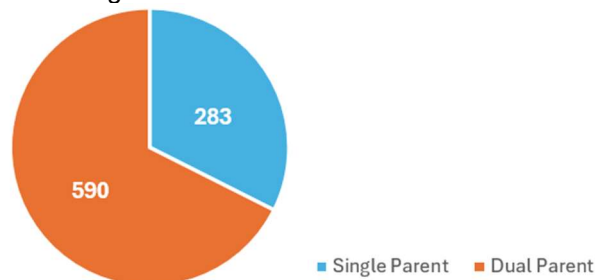
Outcome 3

Engage in targeted recruitment to ensure children are properly matched regarding their diversity, culture and complexity of the case.

- CFS Licensing Unit works closely with the four Tribal Nations to accommodate recruitment and retention ideas specifically related to Native American populations. Tribal Nations have expanded their recruitment effort to include communities near the reservation.
- The Division of Juvenile Services (DJS) has requested an increased partnership to identify and secure homes willing to serve children adjudicated delinquent. Specialized recruitment efforts began in the fall of 2024 with increased marketing and presentations from DJS partners.
- Coalitions and CFS Licensing specialists report providers tend to be more willing to meet the needs and accept placement for high medical needs (drug exposed newborns, cancer, developmental delays, feeding tubes, etc.) more than behavioral health challenges. ND is experiencing a high need for providers to accept children with more behavioral or aggressive characteristics.
- Champion for Child is a campaign using targeted recruitment to identify a provider willing to accept a placement. Champion for a Child is intended to locate a foster care placement for a child in great need. Typically, the child's longevity in the system is a contributing factor to placement disruption, complex needs and a delay in permanency achievement. The flier describes the strengths of the child, a photo, age and permanency plan for the child. We

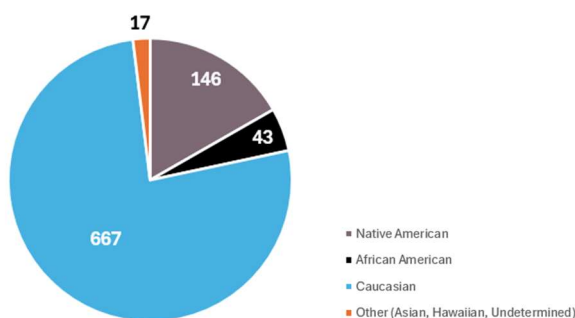
email all providers in the state of ND and this effort has allowed providers to consider the case and call the case manager if interested in learning more about the child.

- **Comprehensive Case Coordination (CCC)** is a new strategy (October 2024) offered by CFS Field Service Specialists to provide direct supervision and support to agency case manager, facilitate meetings with the child's care team to monitor ongoing progress and follow through of treatment team members and complete a comprehensive overview of the case as it relates to placement history, family engagement, relative searches, and referrals to services. This process has assisted in securing placement for difficult to place children with complex behavioral health needs.
- **Children's Treatment Services Level of Care (July 2024)** is the universal assessment process determining the most appropriate treatment placement for North Dakota children and youth. CTS-LOC is structured to ensure needs are met in the least restrictive setting by using a single evidence-based assessment tool. Maximus serves as the third-party assessor, offering consistency and efficiency in reviewing treatment needs. CTS-LOC will ensure children receive the right services, at the right time, for the right duration. Ensure community services have been used and or considered before seeking out-of-home or residential treatment for children, while also ensuring families or case workers have a clear process when seeking out-of-home or residential treatment for a child.
- **Transition Plan Agreements** are state general funds used to bridge relationships between a child in a facility placement needing to step down into a family setting. The TPA allows for partial payment to the licensed provider who agrees to visit, send cards, call, attend therapy, learn more about skills integration techniques, etc. prior to the discharge from a facility into their home.
- When a provider is identified, licensing and custodial agencies do seek additional services and training to support the provider including behavioral analysts, clinical experts, or other professional staff offering hands on learning and techniques to use in the home.
- When a provider is identified, custodial agencies do request excess maintenance payments to assist in the general costs to supervise, provide service and meet the needs of the child during placement. The excess maintenance is not an incentive, but rather support for service.
- Children who meet criteria as "difficult to place" are reviewed with CFS Licensing Specialists and referred to the CFS Licensing Coordinator, as needed, to properly match the child's needs to a provider who is equipped to manage the needs. Specialists and Coordinators know the families and are able to engage in ways that case management may not, this process has been available to custodial agents.
 - Jan – Dec 2024 = 134 unique children in need of placement
 - Jan – May 2025 = 74 unique children in need of placement
- Seeking partnership and additional cultural events to recruit and show support to our Tribal Nations who are recruiting homes, but also attending Native American powwows, gathering, school functions, etc.
- **Demographics of the providers to care for children**
 - Recent quarterly data shows 873 provider homes, North Dakota had 590 (68%) dual parent households and 283 (32%) single parent households. Provider homes were inclusive of 1180 (dual) + 283 (single)= 1463 actual adult individuals. Dual vs. Single Parent Provider Households

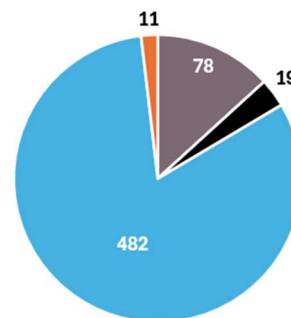


- ND does accept applications with no discrimination based on gender identity, age, or race. CFS Licensing staff have put forth additional recruitment efforts to recruitment at Pride parades, events and distribute materials to the LGBTQIA+ clinic in Fargo.
- Quarterly race data shows variety in providers licensed to care for children in ND foster care includes:

Provider 1 Race Identified



Provider 2 Race Identified



- **Strengths of the Outcome**
 - Encouraging current providers to accept the more complex behaviors...
 - 2025 Speaker Challenge for all CFS Licensing Unit staff. The goal is ambitious; the CFS licensing Unit Administrator asked Licensing Specialists to do 8 speaking engagements, Coordinators to do 4 and Unit leadership to do as many as they can in efforts to be present in the communities across ND. Face-to-face visual presentations or attending meetings in small groups is a new opportunity!
 - New advertising options to secure space to find new audiences
- **Challenges of the Outcome**
 - Identify new providers for these specific needs
 - Willingness to try new things and reach new populations of individuals and families
 - Nexus PATH Family Healing is the treatment foster care agency in ND providing specialized treatment services to children in the least restrictive setting. In May 2024, the agency began detailing enhancements to the treatment foster care program, which went into effect July 1, 2024. The model has been well received by some licensed provider homes and not tolerated by other foster care providers who have transferred their licenses and left the TFC program with capacity issues. This past year has offered growing pains for the agency and placement needs for the state.
 - CFS Licensing Unit has a desire to explore additional recruitment techniques to develop “specialized foster care providers” to identify a select number of specialized family foster care providers to accept placements of children with complex needs. This has been challenging. The specialized providers will use trauma-informed care to stabilize children, engage the child in community services, while transitioning the child to their permanent home. Children in foster care in need of this specialized family setting are known to have multiple, concurrent medical and behavioral health needs, have experienced multiple placement settings and their need for supervision, services and support is high. If we can expand this option in ND, Specialized Family Foster Care Providers will receive:
 - ✓ Training in managing behaviors that require enhanced supports.
 - ✓ Comprehensive and individualized services for children to meet their unique needs.
 - ✓ Assessments of the child, foster care provider and bio family to create appropriate treatment plan.
 - ✓ Enhanced case management and clinical support while the child is in their home.
 - ✓ Increased reimbursement for providing care in the least restrictive family setting.

Outcome 4

Retain an appropriate volume of providers compared to the volume of children in foster care, by offering respite, support, and ongoing education.

- Retention is a priority and CFS Licensing Unit along with authorized licensing agents work collectively to show recognition and appreciation for providers efforts.
- CFSTC R&R contract offers monthly training opportunities to support the provider and allow for additional training to best meet the needs of a child placement (sexualized behavior, autism spectrum situational awareness, de-escalation techniques, ...)
- CFS Licensing Unit has the ND Provider Task Force to hear concerns and help brainstorm solutions or provide feedback to the CFS office regarding areas that may require attention or change.
- **Strengths of the Outcome**
 - ND has capacity in ND; many homes – just see a lack of willingness to accept placements.
 - Grief and loss counseling is offered to providers in need of additional support after an incident occurs or a placement transfers out of their home.
 - Mentoring is offered to providers in need of additional support after obtaining a license, an incident occurs, or a placement transfers out of their home.
 - Quarterly check ins have been a huge incentive and sounding board for foster care providers. This is an opportunity to feel heard and cared about even when they are not reaching out for help.
- **Challenges of the Outcome**
 - Provider willingness, tolerance and flexibility to manage the needs in our communities.
 - Underutilized supports and services (respite, therapeutic interventions, crisis supports, etc.)
 - Buy in from providers to ask for help before it gets too challenging or a crisis erupts.
 - Attendance at trainings both in-person and virtual.
 - Attendance at Specialized TFC program – treatment providers to meet the needs of children with complex behavioral health needs.

Statewide R&R Challenges

ND continues to have discussions about the best way to retain families once they have become a licensed provider. Families have provided various reasons why they choose to discontinue the licensing process or no longer retain their license after a duration of time. Foster care providers indicate they cease the licensing process after further reflection of how additional children in their home may disrupt their own children's schedule, they disclose they have had a change of heart, unexpected marital/family issues have arisen, or the expression that getting too attached to the children would be difficult for their own family when the foster child has to go, etc. Once licensed, providers who choose to let their license expire or discontinue providing foster care to children state the reasons they no longer remain a foster parent are; adoption of a specific child/ren, family issues, moving, no longer interested, specific license for a child who has exited care, etc.

ND Recruitment and Retention Coalitions have worked with local licensing workers to help educate prospective providers early on regarding the pros and cons of fostering, not intending to sway decision making, rather to assist in making an educated choice and commitment. In addition, great effort has been made to offer additional support early on for the new families to assist in answering questions and guiding them through the process of a first placement, expectations, navigating the system, understanding the payment schedule, and knowing it is ok to ask for additional support if it is needed, etc.

During the spring of 2024, CFS engaged in a systemic factor review of item 35, Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes. The committee identified challenges related to this item:

1. Data shows that the number of licensed foster homes in North Dakota has declined in the past three fiscal years. Although retention efforts have strengthened during this timeframe, families continue to close their license for a variety of reasons.
2. As ND increases their licensing of relative providers, there is projected to be an increase in the large number of providers who are interested in only providing foster care to a relative child or a specific child, who discontinue once the child achieves permanency. The exit reasons have been helpful in monitoring retention and reasons why a family may discontinue service. Since March 2020, the impact of COVID pandemic had on families was significant and it has led to mental health, financial and willingness to accept new challenges, resulting in less interest and more families vocalizing they need to tend to their own family needs. Since April 2022, CFS has been better tracking and collecting reasons why families discontinue their license.
3. Need for Native American foster homes continues as the number of children identifying as Native American remain stable.
4. North Dakota does solicit preference (age, gender, race, etc.) from foster care providers, the CFS Licensing Unit and other authorized licensing agents want to be respectful of preference, however there are times that preferences of the provider cannot always be guaranteed or followed by the custodial agency placing children. This challenge is historical, as providers have become more prescriptive in the parameters they will serve, which challenges the system and restricts placement options for children in need of placement.

Onsite Case Review – CFSR PIP

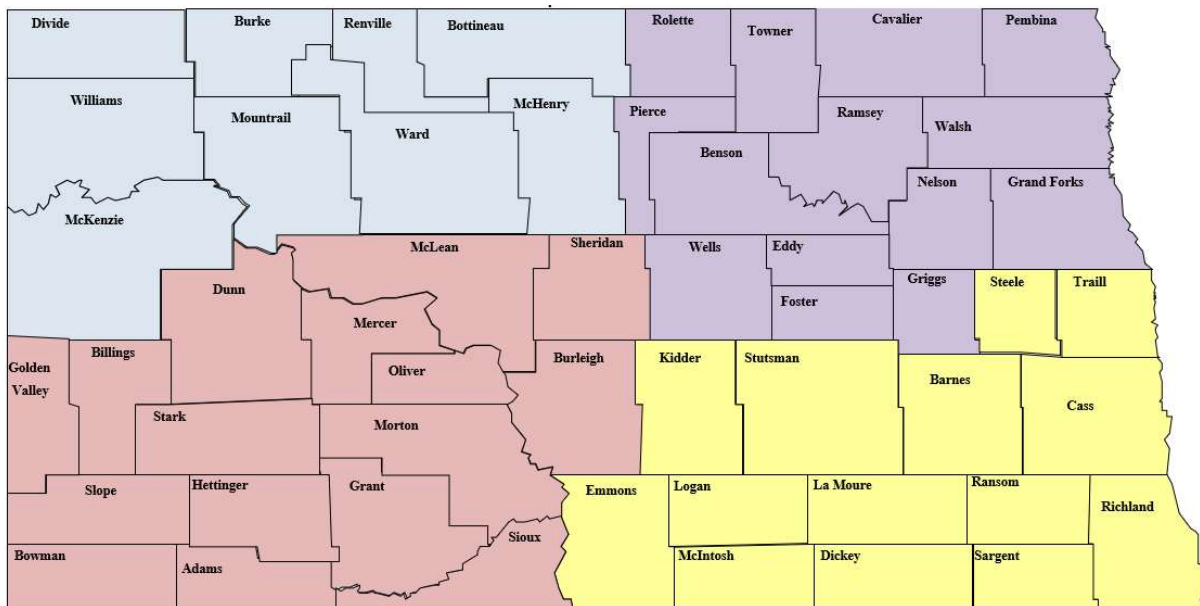
Historically, North Dakota has had a goal noted in the CFSR Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) related to strengthening and reframing the statewide foster and adoptive parent diligent recruitment plan to support the recruitment of families who meet the needs of the children they serve and who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children served by the foster care program (CFSR Items 35 and 36). HHS made continual efforts throughout the PIP to improve the collaboration with foster and adoption providers, and relative caregivers to increase awareness of available resources or training and to better recruit prospective providers to meet the ongoing needs of North Dakota children in foster care, particularly those with specific behaviors. This has included making a more effective use of social media, newsletters and surveys to obtain feedback and input from foster care providers, relative, and adoptive families as to what is working well and where things could be enhanced in order to improve overall satisfaction and retention. The Department, CFSTC, custodial case managers and provider agencies continued to collaborate throughout the PIP to further align training to increase the ability of relative caregivers and providers to manage child behaviors and best meet the needs of children in placement. This goal is always a foundation of the innovative and creative planning to be flexible in our recruitment strategy dependent on the demographics of children in ND foster care.

ND Recruitment/Inquiry Toll Free Line 1-833-FST-HOME or 1-833-378-4663

CFSTC Role: The North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Children and Family Services has a fiscal contract with UND Children and Family Services Training Center (CFSTC) to oversee statewide Recruitment and Retention efforts. CFSTC is responsible to accept and communicate with initial inquiries, collect data, participate/co-facilitate coalition meetings to assess and address local needs, manage the statewide R&R budget for fiscal purchases, etc.

Coalition Purpose: The purpose of the Foster and Adopt Recruitment and Retention Coalition is to gather local parties to engage in conversation and support the recruitment and retention of foster care providers as well as adoptive families. The statewide goal is to continue to offer education and awareness surrounding the need for families to open their hearts and homes to children in need of safe placement.

Coalitions: North Dakota has four functioning coalitions located statewide; service area varies based on Human Service Zones.



Coalition Schedules: Monthly or Every Other Month?

	Coalition 1	Coalition 2	Coalition 3	Coalition 4
Meeting Dates	Third Wed 10:00	Fourth Monday 2:00pm	First Wed 1:00pm (x2)	Third Monday 12:00pm
Co-Facilitator	<i>Kathy Molland</i>	<i>Jennifer Puppe</i>	<i>Shantel Froelich</i>	<i>Becka Koll</i>
Co-Facilitator	<i>Amber Nix</i>	<i>Barb Reed</i>	<i>Brooke Kosiak</i>	<i>Rachel Suda</i>
Minutes	<i>Megan Colbenson</i>		<i>Jennifer Thoreson</i>	<i>Natalie Straub</i>

Coalition Attendance: Each coalition is inclusive of various agency representatives; CFSTC R&R Specialist, CFS Licensing Unit staff, Human Service Zone, Tribal Social Service office, Nexus PATH, Youthworks, URM, AASK, Division of Juvenile Services (DJS) and Native American Training Institute. These agencies should have at least two participants at each meeting including the agency licensing worker and a supervisor/case manager. In addition, coalitions should secure local business leaders with an interest in advertising, faith-based and volunteer organizations (Churches, Lions Club, Kiwanis, etc.)

driven to engage as supports, as well as foster care providers and adoptive families who have a passion for child welfare who are willing to participate in coalition meetings.

Coalition Participation Limits: There is no limit to the number of members each coalition should have. Some coalitions are larger and function with various perspectives, which spreads the work around more evenly. Other coalitions are smaller in size but have great connections to recruiting agency staff or local volunteers to assist when needed.

Coalition Participant Roles: Each coalition will function with appointed members or volunteers to serve:

1. **Co-Facilitator/s** – CFSTC R&R Specialist along with one CFS Licensing Unit Specialist, Coordinator or LOC. The CFS Licensing Unit representative will send all of the TEAMS meeting invites, generate emails to the coalition members, etc.
2. **Minutes Lead** – CFS Licensing Unit staff member will capture the discussion and take meeting minutes to share with coalition members and CFS Licensing Administration for federal reporting. Distribution of the meeting notes should occur within one week of the meeting.
3. **Expectation of all Coalition Participants:**
 - a. **Events** – Coalition members will research and review local events to advertise for families to attend (free, low cost, etc.). All members will also identify local opportunities for licensing specialists and volunteers to attend as a meet and greet, booth, parade engagement, etc. Local events will require a point of contact to lead and organize. The lead can solicit help from other coalition members in the area to attend/participate.
 - b. **Training** – Coalition members will research local training opportunities, notify licensed providers of any CFSTC and NATI trainings, and identify local speakers for event/training as needed.
4. **Other** – Retention activities, National “Months of Interest” or local advertising.

Meeting Agenda: Each coalition will function differently; however common themes are to be discussed at each meeting. Attached is an example of coalition meeting structure.

Questions/Contact Information: If you have questions regarding your role or expectations with a local Foster and Adopt Recruitment and Retention Coalition, please contact the CFS Licensing Unit representative or email the unit at cfslicensing@nd.gov or 701-328-2322.

Meeting Date:

Attendees:

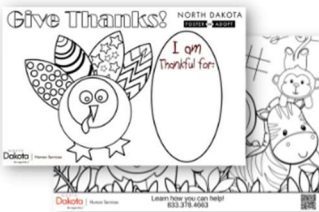
1. **Licensing Agent Updates:** *This agenda item allows each agency time to share highlights and successes. In addition, agencies will share # of inquiries, # of licensed provider homes and # of families who have discontinued.*
 - a. Zone
 - b. Tribe
 - c. Nexus-PATH
 - d. AASK
 - e. DJS
2. **Training** *This agenda item allows the coalition members to reflect on training topics that would benefit providers. This also is a time to review what was offered locally and share specific details regarding future trainings (who can attend, when, how to register, etc.).*
 - a. Training requests from providers
 - b. Training offered since last coalition meeting
 - c. Training planned for future
3. **Recruitment and Retention Activities**
 - a. Activities completed since last meeting
 - b. Activities planned for future
4. **Provider Appreciation**
 - a. Activities completed since last meeting
 - b. Activities planned for future
5. **National Months of Interest**
 - a. November is Adoption Month *(Begin planning in August of each year)*
 - b. May is Foster Care Month *(Begin planning in February of each year)*
6. **Other Agenda Items:**
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
7. **Next Meeting**



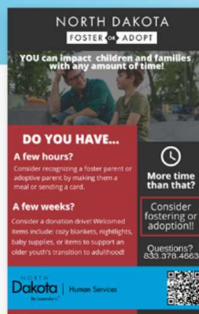
Virtual panel flyer



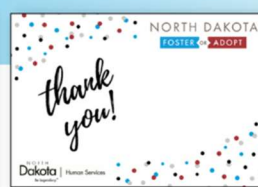
Support/Training flyer



Kids activity placemats



Church flyer



Thank you card



Appreciation card



Pizza flyer



Movie night flyer



Sticker



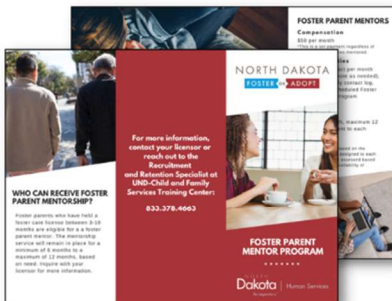
Poster/Ad



Recruitment business cards



Vinyl banner



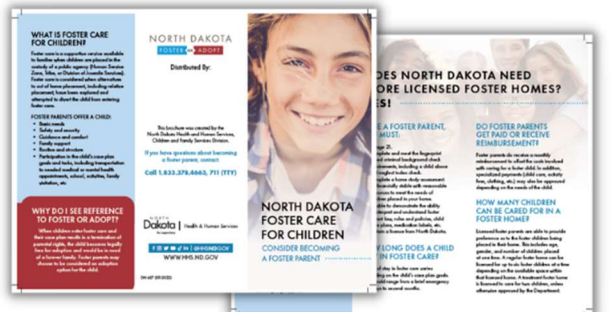
Mentor brochure



Recruitment post cards



Branded table display



Foster care brochure



Training flyer



Open chat flyer



Coffee sleeves



Posters (A-frames)



Shirts



Promo Items

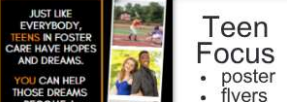
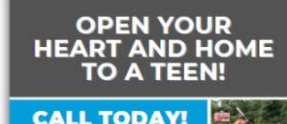
- bandaids
- dispensers
- koozies
- pens





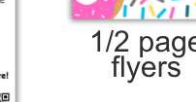
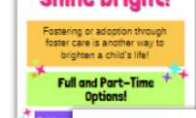
Native family recruitment focus

- posters
- flyers

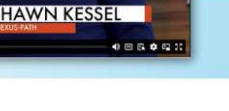
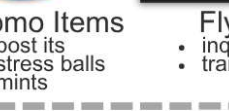


Teen Focus

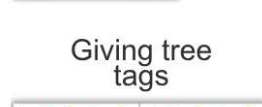
- poster
- flyers
- table tents



Provider greeting cards



Holiday recruitment cards



Bookmarks



Summer recruitment cards



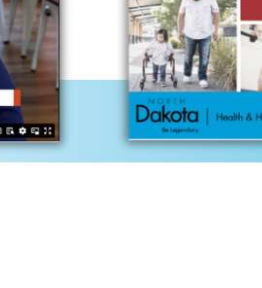
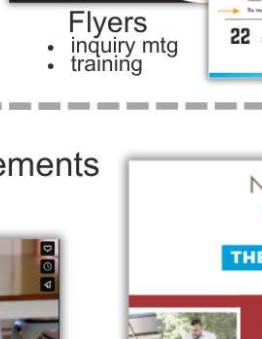
Promo Items

- post its
- stress balls
- mints

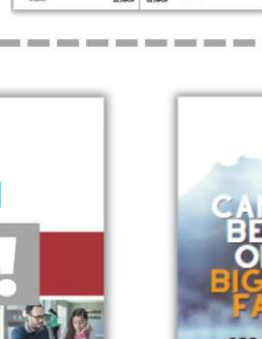
Flyers

- inquiry mtg
- training

Anniversary cards



Giving tree tags



Advertisements





Post Cards
revised 11/2024



Business Cards
revised 11/2024



New Sticker Images
2.5"x2.5"



Flyers

- inquiry meeting
- be the village
- tear away
- state fair



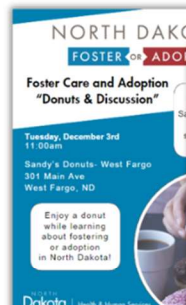
Color Sheets



Napkins



Coffee sleeves
revised 11/2024



Provider Greeting cards



Community thank you card

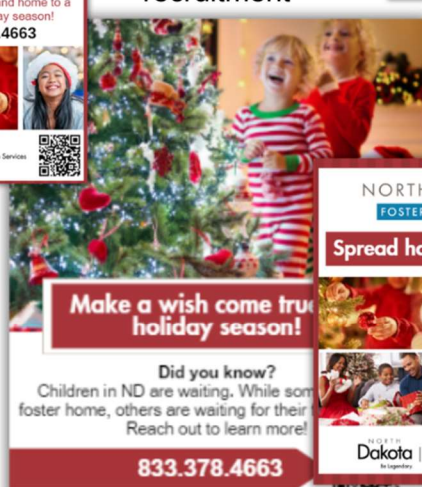


Holiday recruitment



Promo items

- screen cleaners
- chip clips
- gel packs
- pens
- tote bags



NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

10 Reasons to Foster a Teen!

- Be their last stop in foster care.
- Build their confidence.
- Provide a sense of belonging.
- Offer guidance through difficult decisions.
- Make a challenging time feel easier.
- Help prepare them for adulthood.
- Be a trusting adult.
- Share a lifelong connection.
- Be there for important milestones.
- Make a difference!

Call or Scan Today!
833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

Teen flyers/handouts
revised 4/2025

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

Teens in Foster Care
On any given day, ND supports 1,150 children in foster care. Roughly 25% are teenagers. Children between the ages of 13-18 years old wait the longest for a temporary foster home. The negative stigma attached to caring for teens is a big factor in why teenagers are waiting. **Let's break those myths!**

Myth #1
Teens enter foster care because they did something "bad".
Not often, teens enter foster care due to caregiver's struggle with addiction or mental health, incarceration, parental abandonment, or other circumstances that led to an unsafe home.

Myth #2
Teens are harder to care for than younger children.
Foster parents are physically larger and not more, providers do not need to manage diaper bags and car seats. Teens may challenge the norms at times, but keep in mind they are self-sufficient, exploratory, inquisitive, creative and fun to be around when you establish a relationship!

Myth #3
Teens are too old to positively impact.
Not true! Teens are at a pivotal time in life when additional guidance can help change trajectory and provide a sense of belonging. Most often, teens connect with those who are genuinely interested in them, their life, and their hobbies. When connections are made, trust is formed, and stability is provided, teens in foster care will thrive!

Myth #4
I can't care for teens because I do not have experience.
Not true! These teens will learn, can make a difference! ND offers support, training, and resources to better equip and prepare foster care providers to meet the needs of teenagers in their home!

Call or Scan Today!
833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

Children are waiting.
Will you go the distance?

NORTH Dakota | Be Legendary.
Health & Human Services 833.378.4663

Marathon flyer

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

Share your heart!
833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

Native family
recruitment flyer
revised 4/2025

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

Share your heart!
833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

Fostering can be a part of your story!

- Seeking those who are caring, patient, and flexible.
- Full and part-time opportunities!
- You must be at least 21 years old.
- Renting or owning a home is acceptable.
- You can be single or married.
- New or experienced parents are welcomed!
- Training and support are available!

833.378.4663

Bookmarks
revised 4/2025

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

Like Children?

Scan to learn more about fostering or adoption in ND!

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

CFSLU business cards

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

Children are waiting. They need you!

- Seeking individuals who are caring, committed, patient, and flexible.
- Full and part-time opportunities!
- New or experienced parents welcome!
- Training and support are available!

833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

Summer recruitment cards
revised 4/2025

Share your sunshine!

from tiny seeds...

grow magnificent things!

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

'Tis the season... Share your heart!
833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

CHILDREN ARE WAITING. OPEN YOUR HEART AND HOME TODAY!
833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

Open your heart & home today!
833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

Open your heart and home today!

833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

'Tis the season... Share your heart!
833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

Open your heart and home today!

Questions? 833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

Share your heart!

Facts about fostering or adoption through foster care:

- Children are waiting. They need you!
- Seeking those who are caring, committed, patient, and flexible.
- You must be at least 21 years old.
- Can be single, married, or even have a roommate!
- Criminal background checks are completed.
- Renting or owning a home is acceptable.
- New or experienced parents are welcome.
- Training and support are available!

Questions? 833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

Ads

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

CAN YOU BE ONE OF MY BIGGEST FANS?
833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

Share your heart!
833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

Share your heart!
833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

You can be an important chapter in a child's story!

833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

NORTH DAKOTA
FOSTER OR ADOPT

Share your heart!
833.378.4663

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.