

# COG FOSTER CARE PROGRAM AND 2025 RECOGNITION

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# Committee Overview

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- Representatives from local government child welfare agencies: resource parent recruiters, trainers, supervisors and managers participate in this committee to coordinate foster and adoptive parent recruitment and retention efforts.
- The committee seeks new cutting-edge approaches that will increase the number of foster or adoptive parents available to care for our region's foster children.

# Committee Highlights

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## 1. Mass deportation policies impact children separated from families and entering foster care

- Federal funding for children in foster care and undocumented immigrants
- Placements for undocumented immigrants
- Number of children entering foster care

## 2. Kinship meeting with Child Welfare directors

- National average is 35%
- DC has percentage of 30% as of December 2024, increased from previous years
- Maryland is 28% as of April 2025
- Virginia is 17% as of December 2024

## 3. Lived Experiences

- Youth who aged out of care sharing their lived experiences in the child welfare system through media such as newsletters, social media, magazines, and podcasts
- Fostering Youth Independence (FYI) program provides youth aged out of foster care rental assistance and housing vouchers

# Data Collection Project: Preliminary Findings

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## Background

- This data collection effort was launched to better understand demographic trends across the region's foster care system.
- By analyzing the makeup of both foster youth and resource parents, we aim to identify gaps and inform more targeted, inclusive strategies to strengthen recruitment and retention efforts across the 10 participating jurisdictions.

## Key Findings and Next Steps

- Most consistent reporting in categories like age and race/ethnicity and number of kids in care and resource parents. While areas like religion and sexual orientation still have significant gaps.
- One insight is the large portion of foster youth in 16-21 age group and 35-44 age group for resource parents.
- Initial submissions indicate that most of the foster youth reported so far are male.
- A significant portion of data collected show reported foster youth identify as African or African American.

# Call to Action – Be an Ambassador

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Help the Foster Care Advisory Committee recruit and retain resource parents and become committee partners for foster care organizations in DC, MD, and VA.

- **Using Your Voice** to create more opportunities to help the foster care community tell their story.
- **Champion policy incentives:** Advocate for legislation offering foster families tax breaks, stipends, and support services.
- **Promote awareness in your district:** Use your platform - newsletters, town halls, and social media - to highlight the urgent need for foster care parents.
- **Highlight Monthly Recruitment Sessions**
- **Add Tagline** - “Interested in becoming a foster parent?”
- **Know Your Numbers** - Learn how many kids are in care locally and how to help recruitment.

# Foster Parent of the Year Project

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## Description

10 families are nominated by their jurisdictions for their outstanding actions as resource parents:

- Washington, DC
- Charles County
- Frederick County
- Montgomery County
- Prince George's County
- City of Alexandria
- Arlington County
- Fairfax County
- Loudoun County
- Prince William County

## Next Steps and Changes

- Foster Parent of the Year Reception Family Day Event, in person. (committee members, directors, resource workers)
- Update the project name from Foster Parent of the Year to Resource Parent of the Year.
- Include kinship placement families in the next Foster Parent of the Year Project.
- Updated the language - we ask the resource families to use in the videos “Not placed but joined,” avoid language such as “separated from family,” include language about working with their birth family and the importance to keep the connection and emphasis on older foster youth.

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