

# FOSTER CARE INITIATIVES & FOSTER PARENT OF THE YEAR APPRECIATION

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## COG's Foster Care Advisory Committee

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Human Services Policy Committee  
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Metropolitan Washington  
**Council of Governments**

# Committee Overview

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## Description and Mission

Representatives from local government child and family services 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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## Data Driven Recruitment & Retention

- On average, for every 10 children in care, there are only four foster homes
- Customer experience mapping, why are so many agencies losing families before being licensed

## 2. AI use in the Foster Care & Child Welfare System

- AI helps caseworkers maintain more complete, consistent records while reducing documentation burden and operational strain.
- AI tools increase productivity and quality of case notes Fairfax County reported improvements.

## Up coming discussion

- Federal funding policies for children entering foster care systems
- Data driven funding for the region child and family services departments

# Issues Impacting the Foster Care System

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- Recruitment and retention of resource parents remain ongoing challenges.
- Limited placement options, including out-of-county placements, impact stability.
- Community engagement remains limited across jurisdictions.
- Federal funding constraints impact sustainability.
- High caseloads place strain on caseworkers and services.

# Foster Parent of the Year Project

## Description

10 Families are nominated by their jurisdiction's resource worker for their outstanding actions as resource parents from the Washington Metropolitan area.

- City of Alexandria, VA
- Arlington County, VA
- Charles County, MD
- District of Columbia
- Fairfax County, VA
- Frederick County, MD
- Loudoun County, VA
- Montgomery County, MD
- Prince George's County, MD
- Prince William County, VA



Foster Kids pictured at the 2026 Foster Parent of the Year Event.

# 2026 Foster Parent of the Year Winners

- **Arlington County** - Sara Kirwin and Joseph Calizo
- **Charles County** - Kimyada Hooks and Trenease
- **City of Alexandria** - Berlin J. Brun
- **District of Columbia**- Michelle Jones
- **Fairfax County** - Melanie Vracas and Adrienne Randall
- **Frederick County** - Lauren and Paul Kitsoulis
- **Loudoun County** - Johnette Hughes & Darrell Gavin
- **Montgomery County** - Kathy Richardson-Booker and Glenn Booker
- **Prince George's County** - Michael and Chantel McDaniel
- **Prince William County** - James and Bobbie Jo Hanes



# How to Help

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

- **Attend or recognize families at local appreciation events** to personally acknowledge their contributions.
- **Issue a proclamation or formal recognition** honoring foster and resource families within your jurisdiction.
- **Promote foster parent recruitment** by sharing information (e.g., links to become a foster parent) in newsletters, email signatures, or social media during key months like National Foster Care Month.
- **Support and uplift local recruitment events** by attending, speaking, or helping to elevate visibility.
- **Engage regional and local partners** by sharing recruitment efforts with community organizations, agencies, and stakeholders.
- **Strengthen collaboration with Child and Family Services leadership** to stay informed on needs and opportunities

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