

Foster Care Advisory Committee

COG Human Services Policy Committee 5/9/2025

Committee Overview

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.



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Human Services Policy Committee
May 9, 2025

Committee Highlights

1. Mass deportation policies impact children separated from families and entering foster care systems.
 - 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 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, magazine, and podcast
 - Fostering Youth Independence(FYI), program that provides youth aged out of foster care rental assistance and housing vouchers.

Current Project: Data Collection December 2024-2025

Category

- In Care/ Resource parents
- Total #
- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Language
- Age <1

Sub- Demographic

- Female
- Male
- Nonbinary
- White
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- Hispanic or Latin
- Asian
- African or African American
- 2 or more races
- Heterosexual
- Identifies as LGBTQ+
- Christianity
- Judaism
- Islam

- Hinduism
- English
- Spanish
- Mandarin
- French
- Other

Children in Care

- <1
- 1--5
- 6--10
- 11--15
- 16-21

Resource Parents

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-60+



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Preliminary Data Findings

Background

This data collection effort was launched to better understand demographic trends across the regions 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

As we continue gathering data from all jurisdictions, these observations represent early trends based on full and partial submissions. We are treating this as a living dataset that will become more complete and informative over time.

- So far, we've seen the 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 submission 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



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Current Challenges

- Ongoing difficulty recruiting and retaining resource parents
- Limited placement options such as out-of-county placements
- Insufficient recruitment strategies, including creative outreach efforts.
- Community outreach and involvement efforts face ongoing hurdles.
- Additional support is needed for both current and prospective foster families.



Call to Action

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.

- **Using Your Voice** to create more opportunities to help serve 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 with recruitment

Foster Parent of the Year Project

Description

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

- Prince George's County
- Washington DC
- Prince William County
- Frederick County
- City of Alexandria
- City of Arlington
- Loudon County
- Charles County
- Fairfax County
- Montgomery 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 Parents 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 emphasize on older foster youth

Questions? and Contact Information

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