



# Public Policy Agenda

2017 - 2018

The Public Policy Committee of Adoption Network Cleveland seeks improvements in the process by which adoptions are facilitated and to develop best practices for all parties involved in the process.

## The main areas where Adoption Network Cleveland will focus its efforts during the 132nd General Assembly are:

**Permanency:** Adoption Network Cleveland advocates for laws that support permanency within a family for all waiting children and youth and for the removal of laws that are a barrier to permanency. This includes post-adoption support services and other ways to prevent disruption, fine tuning recently passed “normalcy” legislation, keeping siblings together, and empowering youth in foster care to be more involved in their own case planning.

**Funding:** As human services budgets continue to be strained, Adoption Network Cleveland remains committed to identifying creative ways to protect and grow services for adoptive and foster families and youth, particularly in the areas of adoption subsidies, supporting families to maintain custody of their children, and financial assistance for college. During this General Assembly, we intend to give specific attention to fully funding the recent expansion of foster care to age 21.

**Ethical Practices in Adoption:** Adoption Network Cleveland believes that personal growth and adjustment are enhanced where ongoing, cooperative and trusting relationships are developed among adoption triad members (adoptive parents, adoptees, and birthparents), and where each party’s rights are safeguarded throughout the adoption process. Adoption Network Cleveland will continue to seek ways to promote and safeguard balanced and respectful adoption practices, including through attention to policy that balances the rights of birth and adoptive parents with a focus on the best interest of the child/adoptee, and promoting ways to maintain contact and legal relationships between siblings who are in foster care.

## About Adoption Network Cleveland

Adoption Network Cleveland recognizes adoption as a complex, lifelong, and intergenerational journey for all those whose lives are touched by it. Founded in 1988, Adoption Network Cleveland provides programs and services to connect and empower all members of the adoption triad (adoptees, birthparents, and adoptive parents), youth in foster care, foster parents, siblings, and adoption professionals.

## Awards

**2015 The Eleanor R. Gerson Leadership in Social Justice Award**  
from Greater Cleveland Community Shares presented to Executive Director Betsie Norris

**2015 Virginia Colson Award for Service to Families and Children**  
from the Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies: OACCA, presented to Executive Director Betsie Norris

**2014 Parent Group of the Year**  
from the North American Council on Adoptable Children, presented to Adoption Network Cleveland

**2014 Advocate of the Year**  
from the Ohio Adoption Planning Group, presented to Executive Director Betsie Norris

**2012 Champion Award**  
from the National Center for Adoption Law and Policy, presented to Executive Director Betsie Norris

**2011 Adoption Excellence Award**  
from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, presented to Executive Director Betsie Norris

**2009 Adoption Excellence Award**  
from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, presented to Adoption Network Cleveland



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