
Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids

Three-year Final
Report 2004-2006

Adoption Network Cleveland

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Community cost savings | 3 |
| Three year project results summary | 5 |
| Description of project structure, collaborations and partnerships | 8 |
| Description of program implementation and partnerships | |
| Issue 1: Backlog of children waiting for adoptive homes and youth 15-17 who are “aging out” | 14 |
| Issue 2: Difficulty navigating the public sector adoption system | 16 |
| Issue 3: Preparation of children | 22 |
| Issue 4: Post adoptive family supports | 25 |
| Issue 5: Public policy | 27 |
| Issue 6: The need for business and community education outreach | 28 |
| Issue 7: Operations | 29 |
| Program Outcomes to date | 31 |
| Continuance plans | 34 |
| Closing questions | 34 |
| Three year media report | 42 |
| Three year budget report | 45 |
| Budget narrative variance report | 48 |

Suppose...

The 332 children adopted from 2004-2006 through the Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids Initiative each remained in foster care for five more years, the cost of care didn't rise beyond the 2003 levels, and they emancipated without a permanent family, and then succumbed to what too often happens to similar youths...

Costs of Case Management for 332 Youth for Five Years

| Yearly Cost per Youth Affected | Total Cost for Five Years for 332 Youth | Public Expenditures for 332 Youth for Five Years Federal-State-Local 42%-9%-49% |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| \$17,743 | \$29,453,380 | Federal - \$12,370,419 State - \$2,650,804 County - \$14,432,156 |

If these 332 children had not been adopted, foster care for them would have cost conservatively : \$29,453,375

Social Costs for 332 Youth for Five Years Past Emancipation

| | Percent of Youth Affected | Estimated Number of Youth Affected of the 332 Youth | Cost Per Youth Per Year | Total Social Costs for <u>Affected</u> Youth for Five Years |
|--|---------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|
| <u>Education</u> : Lack of GED or high school diploma | 45% | 150 | \$7,000 | \$5,229,000 |
| <u>Employment</u> : prevalent unemployment | 50% | 166 | \$25,900 | \$21,497,000 |
| <u>Incarceration</u> : Average length of stay is 2.7 years | 30% | 100 | \$28,500 | \$14,250,000 |
| <u>Early parenthood</u> : Women and cost of public assistance | 40% | 66 | \$1,400 | \$463,000 |
| Men and loss of wages | 40% | 66 | \$3,400 | \$1,122,000 |

If these 332 children had aged out without a permanent family and followed the pattern of other youth that had, their poor outcomes would cost society: \$22,205,900

These are monetary costs but there are incalculable human costs for these children had they not been adopted and would have lacked permanent connections. The losses are staggering for the youth and for the adults whose lives could be enriched and extended by involvement with these youth. Our community as a whole is poorer in terms of its moral, spiritual and human capital.

NOTE: Please see next page for assumptions, calculations, and references.

Assumptions, Calculations, and References for Costs Aging Out Tables

According to Tracey Feild, a researcher with the Institute for Human Services Management (Baltimore, MD) in her Report to the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (August, 2003), the major cost associated with failure to secure an adoptive placement is that of managing a child's case in the public system. Basing calculations on the casework budget of the CCDCFS, Ms. Feild estimated that the annual cost per child who is not adopted (at 2003 rates) is \$17,743 per child per year in permanent custody. The public expenditure breakdown is based on PCSAO 2005 estimates of 42% from federal funds, 9% from state funds, and 49% from local funds for Cuyahoga County. For the 332 children adopted via AKC, the cost of their not being adopted would be \$29,453,375 for foster care and \$22,205,900 for negative outcomes during the first five years after aging out, assuming 2003 rates remain constant and there was no inflation.

To develop the projection of costs associated with negative consequences of not being adopted, we reviewed the literature widely, and used conservative estimates from a wide range of outcome results reported, as suggested by the CWLA (CWLA, 1999).

Education: There are estimates that some 45% of emancipating youths won't receive a high school diploma or GED (45% Courtney & Piliavin 1998; 46% Cook 1991; 46% Westat 1991; 38% Barth 1990) Should 149 out of the 332 in the group not get a diploma or GED, and had an annual reduction in wages of \$7,000 per year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002) this could mean potential earnings loss of \$5.2 million should they not be able to maintain a higher level of employment during the five years post emancipation.

Employment: The estimates range from 25-51% that these youths will be unemployed at some point (39% unemployed and 19% had not held a job at all during 12-18 months post discharge from care Courtney & Piliavin 1998; 62% Cook 1991; 51% and 62% had not maintained a job for a year Westat 1991; 25% Barth 1990). If 166 of the 332 youths are unemployed for one year and would have earned at least \$25,900 annually as high school graduates, that could mean the loss of \$21.5 million dollars (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002) during the five years post emancipation.

Incarceration: A range of 18-33% experienced incarceration. (18% Courtney & Piliavin 1998; 33% Barth 1990) If 30% of our 332 youths are incarcerated (100 youth) for an average of 2.7 years, the average length of stay in Ohio prisons (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, June 2004 Facts) at a cost to the State of \$28,500 per year per prisoner, that is a total of \$14.3 million during the first five years post emancipation.

Early parenthood and cost of public assistance and lost wages: The Annie E. Casey Foundation (1998) estimated \$7 billion dollars in financial burden to society from teen pregnancies. Barth reported 40% of women stated they had a pregnancy, most unplanned, in the years following emancipation. AECF reports that the average teenage mother collects \$1400 per year in support from ACDC and federal food stamp program. If 40% of our 154 teenage women in our group become teenage mothers, they are likely to receive \$434,000 in that alone not to mention the other negative outcomes associated with teen pregnancies for those 77 women. The AECF also reports fathers of children born to teenage mothers earn \$3,400 less per year. If 40% of our 178 teenage men become fathers, their loss of income could mean \$1.1 million.

References used in developing this projection include:

- National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2000, www.naeh.org/pub/tenyear/cost
- National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, May 8, 2000
- Office of Policy Development and Research, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Evaluation of the Emergency Shelter Grants Program, Volume 1: Findings September 1994. p 91.
- U.S. Census Bureau, The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates for Work-Life Earnings, Special Studies, July 2002, Jennifer Cheeseman Day and Eric C. Newberger
- Public Children Services Association of Ohio, PCSAO, profile of Cuyahoga County and Ohio.

*Source: T. Garafolo, October 6, 2008
tgarafolo@earthlink.net*

**Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids
Adoption Network Cleveland
2004-2006 Three Year Project Results Summary**



Overall Project Goal: Address the large backlog of foster children in permanent custody with no prospects of ever being adopted.

| <u>Program Component</u> | <u>Barrier Addressed</u> | <u>Three-year Result</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Child Centered Recruitment | To address the immediate problem of over 650 youth in CCDCFS foster care awaiting adoption with no families identified to adopt them. | 332 of the 780 identified youth placed in adoptive homes |
| Mentoring Programs | To provide youth who are aging out foster care without a permanent family with a supportive adult relationship in an effort to increase their safety net. | Program designed and implemented with 22 youth-mentor matches so far |
| Adoption Navigators | To increase “customer service” to prospective adoptive parents to help them successfully adopt from CCDCFS. | 200 families working with Navigators adopted 340 youth |
| Targeted Recruitment | To avert a future backlog by creating a flow of prospective adoptive parents wanting to adopt a waiting child. | Over 500 prospective families responded to marketing campaign, over 200 people requested more information about adopting after viewing the Heart Gallery |

(over)

**Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids
Adoption Network Cleveland
2004-2006 Three Year Project Results Summary
(Continued)**

| <u>Program Component</u> | <u>Barrier Addressed</u> | <u>Three-year Result</u> |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Child Preparation | To help resistant youth warm up to the idea of adoption, to participate in finding a family, and to prepare youth for living in a permanent family. | Monthly groups and a summer camp designed and implemented, all area adoption workers are being trained to enhance their adoption preparation work with waiting youth |
| Legislative Change | To decrease legal barriers to adoption from foster care both for families and for agencies while always maintaining a child focus. | Legislation successfully passed, more legislative opportunities follow |
| Probate Court Involvement | To decrease case continuance and make the court adoption finalization a more celebratory experience. | Case continuances decreased, photos taken at all finalization hearings and given to the new families. |
| Support for Adoptive Families | To increase community resources for adoptive families to help families cope and to take some of the fear out of adopting an older child. | Adoption navigators continue to work with families if requested even after adoption, designed and implemented training program for area mental health professionals increasing area therapists specializing in adoption from about four to about twenty, designed and implemented pre-adoption education and post adoption family programs |

COMMUNITY VISION COUNCIL

FINAL REPORT

Vision Council Name: Strong Families = Successful Children

Priority Name: Adoption

Name of Project: Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids

Lead Agency: Adoption Network Cleveland

Contact Person: Betsie Norris

Contact Person's Telephone #: (216) 325-1000 x102

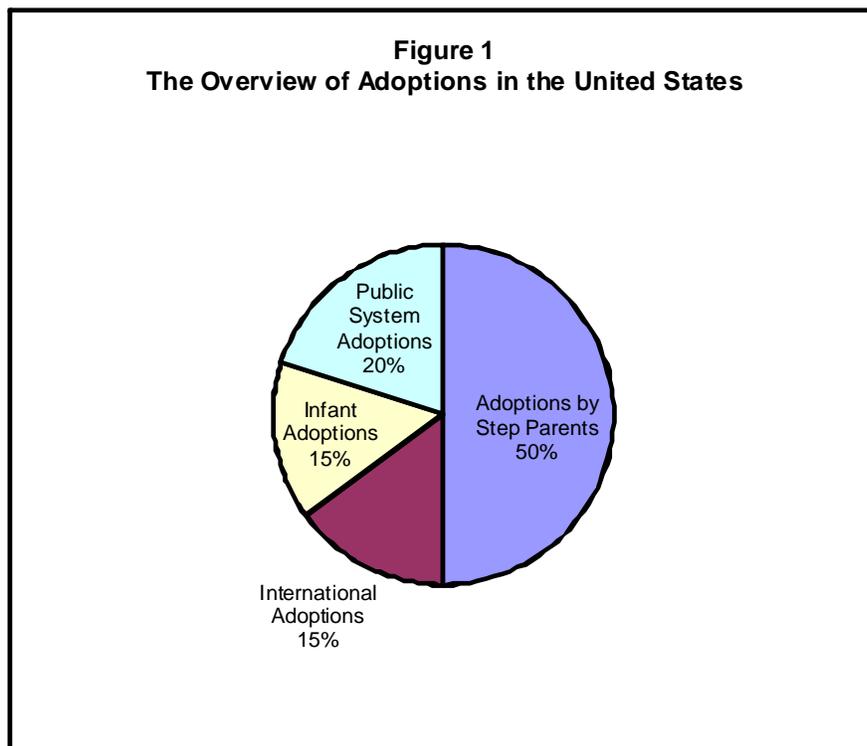
Contact Person's E-Mail Address: betsie.norris@adoptionnetwork.org

Date Report Submitted: September 7, 2008

Description of Project Rationale and Objectives

From Strategy and Resource Plan (2003):

Fifty percent of adoptions in the United States are by step parents, 15 percent are infant



adoptions, and another 15 percent are international adoptions.ⁱ See Figure 1. While only 20 percent of adoptions are of children who are in custody of public child welfare agencies, these represent the greatest challenge in finding adoptive homes. Approximately 59 percent of all adoptions of children in child welfare systems are foster-adopt arrangements; 17 percent non-relatives; and 24 percent relatives.ⁱⁱ It is estimated that there are 120,000 children in foster care waiting for adoptive

homes at any given time.

Beginning in 1997 there has been a dramatic increase in the number of children entering permanent custody each year in Cuyahoga County. Between 1997 and 2002, an average of 697 children entered permanent custody each year compared to 270 between 1990 and 1996.ⁱⁱⁱ Approximately half of these children have identified families for adoption; the other half are waiting for adoptive homes to be found. See Figure 2.

The Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (CFS) and the 15 private adoption agencies have been very successful in recent years in recruiting adoptive homes for children in permanent custody with close to 800 children adopted in 2002 compared to only 109 in 1994. However, in spite of this success, today 650 children are in permanent custody of CFS without an identified adoptive family. Teens (68 percent), African American children (83 percent), and sibling groups are those for whom it is most difficult to find adoptive homes. The ideal is that children should only need one placement.

The core issue is that there is an unacceptable number of children in permanent custody waiting for adoptive homes. Two underlying assumptions are: 1) Adoptive homes must be found for the backlog of waiting children so that in the future CFS and the private adoption agencies can focus on finding adoptive homes for children entering the system in timely fashion. 2) There must be system change if CFS and the private adoption agencies are to be more successful in placing children in adoptive homes in the future.

The Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids Initiative envisions a community in which every child lives in a permanent wholesome, nurturing family environment, which is physically and emotionally safe. Its goals are: to reduce the backlog of children waiting for adoptive homes and to ensure that youth 15-17 years who are "aging out" have a relationship with an adult to help them through the transition; to improve the adoptive system and process; to support post adoptive families and children; to advocate for public policies that will support adoption of children in permanent custody; and to encourage local businesses and other community organizations to become partners in recruiting and supporting adoptive families.

Description of Project Structure, Collaborations and Partnerships

Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) requested the help of the Community Vision Council (CVC) to examine the issue of the mushrooming number of youth in permanent county custody for whom there were no adoptive families on the horizon. The CVC studied the issue for over a year and in examining the barriers to the adoption of these youth, created a multifaceted plan to address both the immediate problem and the myriad of issues that had led to the backlog of youth, with a focus on addressing system change to prevent such a backlog from forming again in the future. During the final part of the planning, the CVC chose a lead agency to administer the implementation of the project. Priority considerations in the selection of the lead agency were to choose an existing organization that had established relationships with area adoption agencies and with CCDCFS, but yet was a neutral entity that did not provide adoption services that were competitive with the agencies with whom the initiative

sought to bring into a collaborative. Adoption Network Cleveland was chosen to function as the lead organization under the following structure:

Responsibilities of the Lead Organization:

- Provide coordination and oversight to carry out the goals of the Initiative.
- Hire the staff and/or contract with consultants/other organizational partners who will implement the Initiative in collaboration with stakeholder committees.
- Report to the Strong families = successful children Vision Council on implementation, progress toward intended outcomes, supporting forces/challenges, and proposals for change.
- Participate in fund raising activities and report to all funders involved.
- Ensure that the Vision Council philosophy and brand remains intact, including use of letterhead and attribution.
- Develop a request for proposal for evaluation of progress and oversee the evaluation of the Initiative.

Collaborations and Partnerships: The lead organization cannot carry out this Initiative alone. The private adoption agencies, CFS, local businesses, and local, state, and national advocacy groups are all collaborators.

Oversight: The lead agency is accountable to the Strong families=successful children Vision Council, which will delegate oversight responsibility to the Adoption Task Force.

Supporting Forces

- Adoption Network, a bridge organization, as the lead agency.
- Backing of Vision Council.
- Issue of adoption is appealing to private funders.
- Notion of intermediary agency is appealing to private funders.
- Long term cost effectiveness – less expensive than custody and prevents homelessness, perpetuation of dependency cycle, characteristics of children of an adult who grew up in the system; anger management.
- Improved likelihood of becoming producing, contributing members of society and a family.
- Passage of the Human Service Levy (Issue 15) represents community support for social service issues like adoption.
- History of public-private collaboration.
- New beginning as AdoptOHIO ends.
- Issue of adoption is compelling to the community.

Challenges

- Budget issues & external funding environment.
 - Generation of revenues.
 - State cuts to CFS and AdoptOHIO.
- Buy-in of private adoption agencies.
- Sustainability.
- Potential increase of kids in permanent custody

Project Implementation

Due to the collaborative nature of the Initiative, step one was for Adoption Network Cleveland to create processes to involve CCDCFS, all area private adoption agencies, the funding community and the business community. The Cuyahoga County Commissioners had designated funds to pass-through for adoption agencies conducting Child Centered Recruitment under contract with Adoption Network Cleveland, and the CVC and United Way had allocated funds for operating. Adoption Network Cleveland laid and implemented plans to raise the additional needed funds (over half of the annual \$4 million budget). Program components of the Initiative were phased in as funding allowed.

As the initiative began, establishing communication vehicles between ANC and CCDCFS was also critical. An Operations Meeting took place monthly throughout the project. This group consisted, from the ANC side, of the executive, associate and program directors, and from the CCDCFS side of the deputy director, foster care administrator, adoption chiefs and leadership from the recruitment department.

A cohort of 780 youth were assigned to ANC for the intensive services in the Initiative. Originally, the cohort contained 656 children. The additional 124 children were added to the cohort in 2005. By that time, there were an additional 124 children who had been in the county's permanent custody for at least one year, without a plan or resources for adoptive or other permanent placement. Ages of the children in the cohort ranged from under a year to almost 20 (part of a sibling group) at the time the project began. On December 31, 2006, when the first three years ended, 221 children (28% of the cohort of 780) had aged out of the cohort; they had reached the age of 18 without a permanent family connection and were officially no longer in the county's custody (some actually remained in custody to complete school or to assure other care). Table 1 below shows age ranges, gender, race/ethnicity and length of time in county custody for all the children in the cohort. Seventy percent of the children (N=541) were aged 10 or older when they entered the cohort. Most were boys (57%, N=448) and African-American (N=609, 78%). Most children had been in custody less than two years (N=464, 59%), although more than 40% (N=316) had been in custody three years or more.

Demographic Characteristics of the ACK child cohort (N=781)^a

| Demographic Item | Number | Percentage |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| <hr/> | | |
| Age of Child in Years | | |
| Birth – 4 years | 93 | 12% |
| 5 – 9 years | 146 | 19% |
| 10 – 12 years | 158 | 20% |
| 13 and over | 383 | 49% |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 448 | 57% |
| Female | 333 | 43% |

| Demographic Item | Number | Percentage |
|---|--------|------------|
| Race/ethnicity | | |
| African-American | 609 | 78% |
| White | 165 | 21% |
| Native American | 3 | 0.4% |
| Bi-racial | 1 | 0.1% |
| Other | 2 | 0.3% |
| Length of Time in Permanent Custody of the County | | |
| 1 month – two years | 464 | 59% |
| Three – five years | 217 | 28% |
| Six – eight years | 73 | 9% |
| Nine years of more | 26 | 4% |

^aOne child appearing in the database was initially assigned to Options for Youth, which left the initiative shortly after it began in 2004. The case was not re-assigned but demographic data are shown here.

Source: ANC and Cuyahoga County data; analysis Garafolo & Pearlmutter

Child Centered Recruitment

The first and most collaborative component of the plan to be initiated was Child Centered Recruitment. After much discussion, it was decided that ANC would issue an RFP to all area private adoption agencies, and to CCDCFS, to entertain proposals from all eligible entities. In an effort to help determine the most effective way to contract the work, to payment models were devised and agencies could chose which model they wanted to work under. Model I entailed ANC paying a set amount up front meant to equal the salary of a full-time worker and the associated overhead to the agency employing the worker, and Model II consisted of no up front financing, but payments at three points through each case: upon satisfactory completion of the child’s profile, upon placement of the child in the adoptive family, and upon legal finalization of the adoption. The sum of the three amounts equaled what some of the area private adoption agencies claimed they should be paid for this intensive CCR approach. In all, 15 agencies contracted to perform CCR work in the first year: three under payment Model I, and 12 under payment Model II. CCDCFS had the most assigned workers under Model I – 6 – and Model II agencies adjusted their volume of cases by stating how many youth referrals they wanted to work on. The contracts required that each worker involved in CCR attend a monthly Learning Community conducted by ANC. This Learning Community provided both a training opportunity as well as created a community to support and enhance the work of the project.

A total of 332 youth in the cohort of 780 had been placed for adoption by the end of the third year. One hundred and thirty two of those placements were a direct result of CCR and the others occurred as a combined effort of CCDCFS, ANC staff, and all of the attention given to adoption during the three years. CCR placements began slowly in the first year, picked up in the second, and by the end of the three years were out numbering placements via traditional methods for

youth in the cohort. In addition, CCR methods were shown to be more successful than traditional methods in placing the hardest to place youth.

| | Placed via CCR | Placed via Traditional Methods | Percent Overall in Designated Cohort |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Age: 13 and over | 58% | 19.5% | 48% |
| Age: 18 and over | 6 youth | none | |
| Race: African American | 84% | 64% | 78% |
| Gender: Male | 57% | 51.5% | 57% |

Adoption Navigators

Much of the energy during the first six months of the project was spent on hiring staff and drafting procedures. We worked hard at developing a partnership with CCDCFS Recruitment staff and attended the Preservice Training classes. Very little was done with the Navigators and the private agencies during this time as the private agencies were all getting involved with the CCR Program.

In year two, the marketing campaign increased the incoming calls for the Adoption Navigators. Most of the recruitment efforts were for children in the custody of CCDCFS. As CCDCFS offered Preservice multiple times per year and charged no fees, it was more expeditious to refer people to them. We did refer people to private agencies depending on individual criteria.

In year three, the Navigators stopped attending Preservice at CCDCFS as it did not seem to be a good source of referrals. We did implement contacting every family that became approved for adoption and indicated they were waiting to adopt a child in the foster care system. We were able to access these names as in 2005 we finally had access to the CCDCFS computer system FACTS.

Getting Access to FACTS was a critical piece of being able to become aware of families who wanted to adopt. When we lose access either temporarily or in the future possibly permanently (as the new statewide data information system SACWIS is implemented), it greatly reduces our ability to work with families effectively.

In looking back the key piece of many parts of the role of Adoption Navigator is the building of relationships with the social workers who work with the families and the children. It took us

time to develop the trust needed to work in partnership. It also helped that in the first 2 years of the project the Navigators had a desk and computer access at CCDCFS. Another important factor was that the supervisor of the Adoption Navigators had previously worked at CCDCFS and held the respect of many people.

During the three years, Adoption Navigators assisted over 1,400 families in the adoption process. Of those families, 198 successfully adopted 340 youth by the end of year three.

Project Connect

In the first year of implementation, ANC had the opportunity to apply for a four-year federal Adoption Opportunities Grant through the Children's Bureau of Health and Human Services. The proposal was structured to provide services to the oldest youth most at risk of aging out of the child welfare system, and to provide services within the plan of the Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids Initiative. The extensive application process gave the opportunity for planning some of these services in greater depth. A mentoring program, child prep activities and a summer camp were the cornerstones of the project proposed, with support for ANC oversight of Child Centered Recruitment also included.

Mentors, termed Permanency Champions, were the largest component of Project Connect. Mentors were called Permanency Champions because in the original plan these mentors were to be recruited from within the CCR process with the goal being that the mentor, or permanency champion, be someone known to the child. After failed attempts at partnership first with One Church One Child, and later Big Brothers Big Sisters, ANC finally implemented the program on its own – which required increased staff learning effort and practical matters such as risk insurance? This component was implemented with some challenges, and overall goals for the project needed to be scaled back, and the program shifted focus to recruit and match mentors who were previously unknown to the youth.

Description of Program Implementation and Accomplishments

From Strategy and Resource Plan (2003) with Final Report on Each Issue:

| |
|--|
| <i>Issue 1: Backlog of Children Waiting for Adoptive Homes and Youth 15-17 Years who Are “Aging Out.”</i> |
|--|

Currently, there are 650 children in permanent custody who have been waiting for adoptive homes for over a year (henceforth known as the backlog). These children are the oldest and represent the most challenging for finding homes. Only 5 percent are under 5 years; 9 percent are between 5 and 9 years; 42 percent are between 10 and 14 years; and 44 percent are between 15 and 17 years; this latter cohort will age out within two years. All routine approaches for recruiting homes for these children have not been effective. It is believed that very intensive, child specific identification of homes must take place over the next three years if these children will ever find a permanent adoptive home. This includes a time-consuming in-depth search into each child’s history to identify persons who have been significant in their lives (e.g. a teacher, an athletic coach, or a neighbor). It can take thirty or more meetings with prospective adoptive parents to find the appropriate match. There is limited funding in the system to support this child specific research and matching process. Research has shown a moderate degree of success using child specific recruitment to find homes for the oldest children and those with special needs. While there are no guarantees, failure to engage in this intensive recruitment process is virtually a 100% GUARANTEE THAT A FAMILY WILL NOT BE FOUND.

Forty-four percent of children waiting for adoptive homes are between 15 and 17 years. It is likely that they will “age out” of the system while the search for an appropriate adoptive home is happening. However, a positive relationship with an adult can help them move into the next life transition. “Although youth in foster care are bombarded by an abundance of risk factors and a lack of protective factors, many are able to transcend adversity and succeed in the face of great odds. A consistent, caring relationship with a responsible adult is a major factor in helping at risk youth overcome the obstacles they face....Studies have demonstrated that attachment to a supportive adult, related or unrelated, can be one of the key variables correlated with resilience. Research has also shown that even when young people grow up in high-risk environments, they are likely to have positive outcomes if their lives are characterized by the presence and some measure of continuity of caring relationships with adults, high expectations and engaging activities, and opportunities to make decisions and contributions.” (Charles, Kristi and Jennifer Nelson, April 2000)^{iv}

Building on this research, is the proposed Mentoring/Child Advocate component of this plan to both support the child specific recruitment process and to help the youth who are aging out make a transition into adulthood. The program would consist of finding an adult willing to function as a mentor or child advocate by establishing a permanent relationship with a youth to help them through their transition into independent living and perhaps longer. The intention is that the child specific recruitment process continues for older children and that the mentor be part of the team to find an adoptive home and to provide respite for the adoptive family if one is found. There are many other potential benefits from a mentoring program. A study of 1,000 urban adolescents who participated in a national study of Big Brothers-Big Sisters found that

foster children who had mentors showed improvement in their peer relationships, a building block that helped them develop trust in other people.^v Those youth who had mentors for 18 months showed decreases in drug and alcohol use and in antisocial behavior. Mentoring USA, a national organization that provides mentors for foster children K-12 found that as a result of the mentoring relationship, grades went up, school absenteeism went down, and children gained new confidence and greater hope for the future.^{vi}

Strategy: Engage in an intensive child specific recruitment process to find adoptive homes for the backlog of waiting children.

Client: The backlog of children waiting for an adoptive home

Projected Cost over 3 Years: \$6.9 million

Actual Cost over 3 Years: \$1,650,255 (plus an unspecified amount of CCDCFS dollars spent directly)

Action Steps:

- Initiate an intensive collaborative child specific recruitment process to find adoptive homes or another secure permanency outcome for the backlog of waiting children.
 - Done
- Provide specialized training and ongoing technical assistance to all CFS and private adoption agency staff and supervisors on using child specific methods to find homes for hard-to-place children.
 - Done - Learning Community and individual instruction
- Explore establishment of an incentive system for placement of children in adoptive homes.
 - Done – Model I and Model II
- Shift funding from CFS to Adoption Network if the number of waiting children is reduced.
 - Plan to continue initiative and use funding on other support activities as well as CCR

Strategy: Provide continuity and stability for youth 15-17 years who are waiting for an adoptive home - the "aging-out" group - through an on-going supportive mentoring relationship.

Client: "Aging out" youth in foster care, ages 15-17 years.

Projected Cost Over Three Years: \$60,000

Actual Cost over 3 Years: \$792,714

Action Steps:

- Initiate a Mentor/Child Advocate Program to recruit appropriate adult volunteers to function as mentors/child advocates and to work closely with child specific recruitment efforts.
 - Program began in Year 2 of Adopt Cuyahoga’s Kids. Funded through Federal Adoption Opportunities Grant.
- Recruit adults, 40 to 65 years, who are willing to function as Mentor/Child Advocates such as members of faith-based organizations, high school PTA groups, or service clubs, recently retired educators and others, empty nesters, community and corporate liaisons of recently retired people.
 - Our recruitment ended up being more broadly based, although the majority of mentors did fall in this age range.
- Develop a Power Point presentation showing youth waiting for a mentor and make presentations to targeted groups.
 - We did not implement this step as planned, although we do now (in year 4 & 5) have Power Point presentations of youth developed that we use to recruit adoptive parents. These presentations could also be used to recruit mentors.
- Perform a background check, including a criminal record check, on potential mentors.
 - Done
- Develop and implement a curriculum for training mentors.
 - Done
- Develop and implement a process for matching youth with mentors.
 - Done
- Provide support services to mentors.
 - Done – Monthly support meetings. Monthly group activities.

Issue 2: Difficulty Navigating the Public Sector Adoption System

Families have reported a range of experiences in navigating the public sector adoption system. Many have felt a general lack of responsiveness from a customer unfriendly system where delays are accepted as the norm. In addition, there is little collaboration across the 15 private adoption agencies and CFS with each having different protocols and information systems. Essentially the adoption process consists of nine major steps and there could be a bottleneck at any one of them. See Figure 3. Families can also drop out at all stages of the adoptive process and need to be cultivated at each phase. Currently, there is neither a good information tracking system within and across CFS and private adoption agencies for knowing who dropped out nor a follow-up system for learning why families dropped out. Because the public welfare system considers only the child the client for a variety of reasons, the potential adoptive parents often feel like secondary actors in the adoptive process. In reality, the child is the client and the potential adoptive family the partner. Staff turnover has not been a major issue; however, with funding cuts, many private agencies are currently downsizing their adoption

services staff. CFS typically has a 4 to 5 percent staff turnover rate with the exception of during the buy-out during which it was 11 percent. Adoptive parents who were interviewed as part of this planning process and those who serve on the Task Force expressed more concerns about staff attitudes, the Jane Edna Hunter building, and the complexity of the process than about changes in the staff. See Attachment A for a detailed description of issues at each step of the process.

Strategy: Initiate changes in Cuyahoga County’s public sector adoption system to make it easier for families to navigate and to adopt children.

Client: Potential Adoptive Parents

NAVIGATION BARRIER: AWARENESS

Projected Cost Over 3 Years: \$1.4 million

Actual Cost over 3 Years: \$132,021

Action Steps:

- Based on geo-demographic research, develop and implement a targeted marketing and public relations plan that is customized for the three primary markets of adoptive families: foster-adopt; relative; and straight out.^{vii} The plan will include community outreach to faith-based organizations, current successful families, and other potential collaborators. It will also allow for participation in Cuyahoga County events such as the Black Family Expo. Print, billboards, bus exterior advertising, point-of-purchase brochures, direct mail and radio will be used, but aimed at the targeted groups. In addition to paid media, earned media will be aggressively pursued in print, radio and TV. Research has found that while a general marketing campaign to identify families with no prior experience with the child has had some success in identifying new families, the strongest success came about from targeted recruitment campaigns like the one proposed in this plan. Building community capacity and ownership is expected to encourage sustainability.
 - We conducted an extensive Targeted Recruitment Campaign in year two which was based on geo-demographic research. We did not continue it due to mixed reviews from our evaluators and CCDCFS staff, and because of the fact that CCDCFS began conducting their own campaign in the venues that we had used, and their materials were similar to ours. We are conducting a second campaign this year.
- Gain consensus on common messages to be advertised by CFS, private adoption agencies, and the Adopt Cuyahoga’s Kids Initiative.
 - We did seek consensus on messages and gained valuable insights. However the combined campaign we initially envisioned was much more difficult than imagined as all players wanted direct recognition instead of to function under one umbrella. CCDCFS wanted their

recruitment line phone number to be the advertised central phone number and the private agencies did not want to lose their identity.

- Conduct a survey of foster families and relatives to identify barriers to becoming adoptive families; make changes in the system to overcome barriers.
 - We completed this goal directly and indirectly. The most valuable information came through the Adoption Navigators whose role it is to guide families through the process. As such, they were able to readily identify common barriers and through our regular operations meetings with CCDCFS staff we were able to talk through many of these issues to help resolve them.
- Develop, manage, and advertise an Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids Web Page.
 - This was done.
- Publicize a common point for all inquiries to call; ensure that Adoption Navigators disseminate inquiries to appropriate agencies.
 - The original plan centered on having the Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids phone number be the central point. Early in setting up the project we worked hard to get an easy phone number (216) 325-1000 and to establish a presence in the Yellow Pages and other venues. However, as stated above, CCDCFS wanted their recruitment line phone number to be used on all publicity that was collaborative in nature. Adoption Navigators distributed calls to agencies to the extent that calls were received on ANC's phone number. Adoption Navigators did not receive lists of calls received by CCDCFS recruitment line or other agencies.
- Ensure that the Adoption Navigators handle all calls professionally and return calls within 24 hours. Build an expectation of prompt response with participating agencies and require measurement of success.
 - Our Adoption Navigators have maintained this standard. We were not able however to build in this expectation with participating agencies or require any measurement of success. The only agencies we had any ability to hold accountable to any standards were the agencies we subcontracted to for CCR, and then our leverage was limited only to the implementation of CCR, not how the agencies would handle inquiry calls.

NAVIGATION BARRIER: TIME

Projected Cost Over 3 Years: \$1.1 million

Actual Cost over 3 Years: \$1,298,957

Action Steps:

- Design or adapt a computerized tracking system that crosses public and private adoption agencies for identifying where potential adoptive families are in the system. Establish a new position, Client Tracking Data Analyst, to track data, train and provide technical assistance to staff, and handle all technological elements.
 - We found that this was an unrealistic goal and one that was not shared by CCDCFS and the private agencies due to a myriad of reasons including confidentiality. Instead we tried to get CCDCFS and the privates to share with us list of the people seeking adoption services so that Navigators could connect to them and provide support and service. The private agencies were resistant due to competition issues and CCDCFS refused due to confidentiality issues. We were allowed access to the CCDCFS computer system, FACTS, which was critical for tracking youth, pre-approved and approved foster and adoptive parents. We did not find a way to access CCDCFS' prospective adoptive parent tracking system, DAWN.
- Establish a new position, Adoption Navigator (6 FTE) under the administration of the lead agency, but closely connected to CFS and private adoption agencies. Their function is to work with prospective and post adoptive parents as referral sources to assist them in navigating the public and private adoptions systems and to reach out to those potential adoptive families who drop out at any phase of the process. This includes relative and foster parents. They need not be social workers, but could be experienced relatives or foster parents, former County staff, or other paraprofessionals who are comfortable with potential adoptive families.
 - We hired and developed a team of Adoption Navigators and this was largely successful, although we did adjust their role as we went along. We did not have access to the information about who was starting the adoption process with CCDCFS. The one or two times we got a list of people who had dropped out of the process, the lists were so out-dated that our calls were largely ineffective. Adoption Navigators developed positive relationships with CCDCFS Resource Managers and with CCDCFS Adoption Workers and worked to build a sturdy bridge between the two (Resource Managers work with waiting prospective parents and Adoption Workers work with waiting youth). In addition to working with prospective parents who contacted ANC directly, Navigators worked, at the request of CCDCFS staff, with prospective

parents when there was a problem to be resolved (such as a foster-adoption placement stalled and not moving toward adoption) in which CCDCFS staff deemed a Navigator could be helpful.

- Establish a new Position, Social Worker Supervisor, to oversee Navigators and Mentors, and assume other clinical responsibilities and oversight.
 - We found that we needed two supervisory positions to accomplish our goals. Dottie Klemm, former administrator of adoptions at CCDCFS, has been a true asset throughout the project in hiring, training and developing the Adoption Navigators. A separate supervisor (first Chris Esmurdoc, then Nancy Calos) was needed to head up the CCR, child prep, pre and post adoption and mentoring programs.
- Design a communication system among CFS, private adoption agencies, and the lead agency for following up with adoption contacts and assigning Adoption Navigators.
 - As described above we failed at making the assignment of a Navigator part of the routine adoption process. Navigators ended up working with people who found us and made contact or responded to our Targeted Recruitment Campaign. CCDCFS has referred some people to Navigators, largely because a problem has been encountered.
- Develop a training program for Adoption Navigators and an orientation for CFS and private adoption agencies related to procedures for accessing a Navigator.
 - Adoption Navigators have received extensive formal and informal training. Agency orientation to Navigators has been extensive and continuous as well. At first there was a lot of resistance to the idea of Navigators: largely fear that Navigators would either replace CCDCFS recruitment staff, breach confidentiality or encourage adopting parents to advocate for higher adoption subsidy. These fears subsided over the first 1-2 years of the project. Throughout the whole project there have been many presentations at many levels of CCDCFS department and unit meetings. Although Navigators refer prospective parents to private agencies for service, it is more infrequent that those agencies will refer clients to a Navigator.

NAVIGATION BARRIER: PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

Projected Cost Over 3 Years: \$282,000

Actual Cost over 3 Years: Associated costs included in above, plus unspecified cost paid directly through CCDCFS to increase number of pre-service training groups.

Action Steps:

- Reduce training group size to 25 persons per.
 - Done directly by CCDCFS at the beginning of the project.

- Ensure that training sessions are conducted in locations throughout the Greater Cleveland area.
 - This was not implemented, however Adoption Navigators did offer callers trainings offered by private agencies at alternate locations.
- Widely advertise time and location of potential adoptive family training so that families can make a choice.
 - Adoption Navigators worked closely with CCDCFS and all private adoption agencies to maintain and distribute a list of all area pre-service opportunities.
- Conduct Pre-Training Orientation sessions to help potential adoptive parents decide if they want to engage in the training program.
 - Developed *Adoption 201: Adopting Through the Public System* and offered workshop quarterly. We have not had success in getting the majority of prospective pre-service attendees to participate as a method to incorporate CCDCFS to promote the program to this population was never successfully institutionalized.

NAVIGATION BARRIER: HOME STUDY

Cost Over 3 Years: \$0

Actual Cost over 3 Years: Incorporated into above cost

Action Steps:

- Widely advertise location and contact information for agencies that conduct home studies so that families can make a choice.
 - Done via our web site and through individual work of our Adoption Navigators.
- Decrease the length of time it takes to complete a home study.
 - Our evaluators did not answer this question although it was in the original evaluation plan. They did not have access to information from the DAWN system, and believe that CCDCFS did not want this evaluated at this point in time.

NAVIGATION BARRIER: LEGALIZATION by PROBATE COURT

Projected Cost Over 3 Years: \$128,000

Actual Cost over 3 Years: Incorporated into above cost

Action Steps:

- Initiate a position, Adoption Para-legal, housed at, but not a staff of, Probate Court to review adoption documents prior to the Court hearing.
 - Refused by Probate Court after discussion.

- Initiate quarterly training for social workers on preparing for Probate Court.
 - Initiated and conducted in year 1 of the project.
- Ensure that the legalization of the adoption is a celebratory experience that includes photos of child and family.
 - A digital camera, printer and accessories was purchased and given to the Probate Court for this purpose. Probate Court continues to use it. Camera was replaced because it broke.
 - Case continuations decreased each year of the project, with 122 the year before the Initiative began (2003), 61 in 2004, 50 in 2005 and 43 in 2006.

Issue 3: Preparation of Children

All children face an adjustment when joining a new family. However, this can be more intense for older adoptive children who face the tasks of developing new competencies, adjusting to new schools, making new friends, and often, living in new communities. These tasks can affect how they develop their relationships with members of their adoptive families. In addition many are dealing with losses of their biologic family and have attachment issues with people in general and their adoptive families in particular. Several studies have shown that older children are at greater risk of disruptions and dissolution. (Pinderhughes 1998)^{viii} Preparation of children to meet these challenges can help greatly in the adjustment process once a youth is adopted and can improve their chances for having a stable home.

Currently in CFS, all children are being prepared by Case Workers on a one-on-one basis and some of this is spotty. Most workers do not have the clinical expertise and specialized mental health training to adequately prepare reluctant children and to work with them in group and individual settings, which could be very helpful. The Adoption Assessor training does not include this skill component in its curriculum. Furthermore, mental health professionals in the community are not specialized in the unique needs of children being adopted. There are also geographical constraints in preparing children who reside in foster homes in other counties in a group setting. Reimbursement is a primary issue. Since there is no diagnosis, this is not viewed as a mental health service. The degree to which Medicaid funds can be used for this purpose is limited. Private agencies have tremendous pressures to perform functions that are billable. This is a huge system issue.

Client: Older children waiting for adoptive homes

Projected Cost Over 3 Years: \$61,000

Actual Cost over 3 Years: Costs incorporated into costs for Project Connect and CCR

Strategy: *Ensure that all older children are prepared for the adoptive process.*

Action Steps:

- Conduct groups for children waiting to be adopted to prepare them to join a new family system and deal with their grief and loss of biological family.

- *Get Real* and *Link Up* groups were developed and conducted monthly throughout the project. A week-long overnight summer camp was held in years 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the project.
 - *Get Real* is a monthly group offered to youth in permanent custody 13 years old and older. It is co-led by ANC staff and volunteers who are adult former foster youth. This group was developed early in the project implementation and was actually initiated by a volunteer who had aged out of CCDCFS foster care. The group has been well attended and has gotten positive feedback from attending youth. The group is discussion based with a structured subject and exercise each month. Themes examine the realities of being in care, dealing with grief and loss, the long-term impact of choices the youth make and talking about permanency. Barriers have included transportation for the youth – typically the social workers drive them, yet because the group meets in the afternoon after school, that sometimes necessitates the social workers working late and flexing their time.
 - *Link Up* is a five-week series offered to teens and their prospective adoptive or foster families. The series, conducted in a “parallel” fashion with parents in one group and youth in another, focuses on attachment and helping participants explore what it means to become a permanent family. Attendance was low for the first 2 years that the groups were offered, and have improved more recently. The five-week series is held 3 times a year.
 - *Camp Connect* was a week-long overnight camp offered to 24 youth, ages 13- 17, who are in permanent custody of the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services for four summers. The initial three years, the camp was held at Cedar Hills Conference Center; however, last year ANC decided to host the camp with Camp Asbury in Hiram, Ohio to take advantage of the additional camp activities, like a high ropes course. The main goal of Camp CONNECT is to increase adoption rates by providing a carefully planned series of structured experiences that help the teens prepare for adoption. The camp includes a balance of recreational experiences and therapeutic activities. Some of the recreational activities include canoeing, hiking, gymnastics, yoga,

swimming and martial arts. Therapeutic activities encourage the youth to address important topics about grief and loss and what it means to live in a family. One of the key ways in which the youth prepare for adoption is by creating a self-recruitment tool to be shared with prospective adoptive families. The self-recruitment tool, coined “Digital Me,” includes a five to ten-minute DVD about themselves including a video and power point slides. The teens insert their favorite music, childhood photos and artwork into the power point. The execution of Digital Me is successful in large part due to the committed volunteer base at ANC. Volunteers come to camp for two sessions to assist the youth in creating their “Digital Me’s”. Overall the greatest goal is for teens to consider adoption as an option, however the other goals also include:

- Teens will better understand their feelings and the feelings of others
- Teens will develop a sense of trust
- Teens will acquire and practice skills needed for life in a family, or in a greater community
- Prepare recruitment materials to be used for potential adoptive families.

A significant number of youth agreed to have their “Digital Me’s” exhibited at a recent virtual mixer. An adoption mixer is an event where approved adoptive parents meet children of all ages who are available for adoption. Many youth have expressed discomfort at being at such an event and often feel they are on display. A virtual mixer is an event where the children are not physically present, but either a video or power point representing the youth is presented, encouraging individuals interested in adoption to know the youth virtually instead of in person. ANC hosted this virtual mixer, which was the first of its kind in the geographic area and allowed youth a voice in expressing themselves without the pain that can often accompany them when they participate in a typical mixer.

Issue 4: Post Adoptive Family Supports

Adoption is a lifelong process that goes on long after the legalization phase. Children who are being adopted plus the families who adopt them come to their new relationship with historic issues that must be addressed as each becomes part of a new family system. During this process of adjustment, it is important for children to have help in overcoming attachment difficulties and gaining positive attachments in adoptive families. Families must also learn different methods of intervening in attachment difficulties.(Groza, 1999)^{ix} Barth, Gibbs, and Siebenaler (2001) suggest that adoptive families need services in four major categories: educational and informational services, clinical services, material services, and support networks.^x

The kinds of services needed are a function of the issues that a child brings to the new adoptive family relationship and thus different services are needed for different situations. Although communities have treatment, support, and adoption services available to families, these services often are not coordinated with each other and few practitioners are experienced in or knowledgeable about the combination of special-needs adoption and the array of child welfare, mental health, educational, medical, and therapeutic services. In Cuyahoga County, there are not enough staff to provide the necessary post-adoptive services because of time and insufficient training of social workers to provide mental health-related services. Likewise, mental health professionals are not trained in adoptions. Even if there were enough trained staff, funding of these services remains a major issue. Private insurance typically does not pay for this and Medicaid is limited. And when services do exist, families often do not know where to go to get the services that their family and/or child(ren) need.

Strategy: Plan and provide post-adoptive family supportive services.

Client: Post Adoptive Family

Cost Over 3 Years: \$184,000

Actual Cost over 3 Years:

Action Steps:

- Develop and implement a plan for providing post adoptive family supportive services. The planning process should include an inventory of existing services, gaps and potential funding sources plus a plan for accessing available services and developing new services.
 - This area received the least attention of any in the plan because of the huge focus on changing the pre-adoption processes. Adoption Network Cleveland continues to provide post adoption services. We did attempt to conduct the above assessment but had a very low response rate. Adoptive parents were educated about existing resources and available funding sources (primarily Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy).

- Develop a certification process for mental health professionals who want to be competent in adoption.
 - During years one and two we conducted discussions with CWRU and CSU about developing a collaborative post-graduate program based on one at Rutgers University. There were many barriers to creating such a program, and it would have required many more resources than were available. We did conduct several one day trainings on mental health and adoption that were well attended, and in year 4 conducted a post-graduate certificate program in adoption counseling in conjunction with MSASS with 16 area therapists completing the program in February 2008.
- Conduct specialized training for mental health professionals to educate them about the special needs of children waiting to be adopted.
 - Contained in answer to above question – pre adoption needs were also addressed.
- Maintain a database of mental health professionals competent in adoption; publish the list on the Web Page.
 - We have updated our list of therapists skilled in this area with the therapists who completed our training, the list grew from 5 to 20. The list will not be available on our web site, referrals will be given on the phone or in person. The list has been made available to the Post Adoption Unit at CCDCFS. One difficulty in this area is that most of the available therapists are social workers in private practice and therefore are not eligible to accept Medicaid. There were many barriers to training therapists from the larger organizations that can accept Medicaid, including that it is difficult for them to take off time for training due to productivity quotas, and that for a variety of internal reasons, those larger organizations may not assign the adoptive families seeking services to the therapists trained in this area.
- Work with First Call for Help to develop and disseminate a directory of family support services for post adoptive families that is updated periodically and is published in both hard and electronic form, including on the web site.
 - As in the response to the first action step in this area, this proved to be a challenge. We got a very low response rate from adoptive parents. While we had staff working on this we realized that CCDCFS had also assigned staff to create a directory for post adoptive families. We combined efforts so as not to duplicate resources and CCDCFS published a directory.

- Establish a position, Program and Volunteer Coordinator, to plan social events for post adoptive families and provide other resources to support them.
 - While we do have a Volunteer Coordinator, the Adoption Navigators have largely taken over the above described function.
- Coordinate opportunities for Post-Adoptive Family Training, some of which are on the Internet.
 - Upon assessment, the post-adoptive family training that we offered already covered this need.

| |
|---|
| <i>Issue 5: Public Policy Advocacy</i> |
|---|

In Cuyahoga County, there is no advocacy group that specializes in the issue of children in permanent custody waiting to be adopted and the needs of post-adoptive families. At the same time, there are major issues on a federal, state, and local level that impact their lives and the adoption process. The policy agenda changes over time. However, a potential starting point of areas to be addressed are policies related to compliance regulations that must be monitored, including a possible waiver for system regulations. To do this effectively, there must be a vehicle for keeping current with the policies and organizing stakeholders to education policymakers about important issues.

Strategy: Create a structure for advocating for public policy initiatives relative to adoption.

Stakeholders: Child; Potential and Post Adoptive Family; Adoption Agencies

Projected Cost Over 3 Years: \$142,000

Actual Cost over 3 Years: \$246,283

Action Steps:

- Establish a combination position, Public Policy/Community Liaison/Fund Developer.
 - It quickly became evident that with the fundraising needs we had to implement this project, that it was unrealistic to have the above position split three ways. We hired a Director of Fund Development and External Relations, and contracted for assistance with public policy augmented by the Executive and Project Directors.
- Identify a public policy agenda, beginning with funding and regulations.
 - See detailed answers to these action steps in following section.
- Develop a vehicle for informing stakeholders about important public policy issues.
- Create and staff a coalition of public/private adoption agencies and post adoptive parents to identify issues and educate policy makers about adoption issues.

- Collaborate with organizations across Cuyahoga County, the State of Ohio & U.S. to promote policy agendas as appropriate.
 - See the answer to narrative question #3 under closing questions for details of Public Policy work.

Issue 6: The Need for Business and Community Education and Outreach

In the 1990s, Congress adopted the Hope for Children Act and the Family Medical Leave Act. The Hope Act increased federal corporate tax credits to employers who reimbursed employees for non-special needs and special needs adoptions and increased the family income cap eligibility for full benefits. The Medical Leave Act requires corporations with 50 or more employees to provide 12 weeks of unpaid leave and continuous benefits without jeopardizing employment. As a result of this legislation, many corporations now offer extended benefits to employees who are planning to adopt or are adoptive parents. These include extended financial reimbursements, resource and referral aide, and extended paid and unpaid leave with uninterrupted benefits. However, corporate adoption benefits most often are limited to employees, infants, or international adoptions and are not extended to employees adopting children who are in permanent custody (CFS). There are multiple reasons for this: 1) Families are subsidized for adopting a child through the public sector even though many services for special needs children are not supported financially. 2) There is lack of available information to employees of Greater Cleveland's businesses about the children and their needs. 3) Some have encountered a "system" that has not been customer friendly; and 4) There is lack of awareness of the variety of private agencies across the County in addition to CFS that are the "front doors" for all children in permanent custody waiting for adoptive homes.

In addition, there is no structured vehicle for outreach to corporations and other community organizations to facilitate a range of interventions businesses and community organizations could take to support children in permanent custody waiting to be adopted. These include in kind services such as sponsoring parties, use of rooms, support of post-adoptive family support services, and donation of resources.

Strategy: Partner with local businesses and other community organizations to recruit adoptive homes and provide other needed supports.

Stakeholders: Child; Potential and Post Adoptive Family; Adoption Agencies

Projected Cost Over 3 Years: \$146,000

Actual Cost over 3 Years: Costs not calculated separately. They are contained in Marketing and PR costs, and in Adoption Navigator costs.

Action Steps:

- Establish a combination position, Public Policy/Community Liaison/Fund Developer.
 - As above. An Outreach Coordinator was hired in 2005.

- Provide information and educational forums about adoption, needs of children in permanent custody of CFS, and a range of other possible business and community supports.
 - These were more difficult to arrange than anticipated. We did do a few of educational forums, including one at University Hospitals. In addition, through meetings we successfully influenced the Cleveland Clinic to offer adoption benefits to their staff (financial reimbursement for up to \$3,000 of adoption-related expenses. Our Heart Gallery in tower city also functioned in a way to help meet this function.
- Facilitate logistics of businesses and community organizations that provide in-kind services to support adoption of children in permanent custody of CFS.
 - For two years we received large donations of household items from stores through Gifts in Kind and passed them through to the families of our partner agencies.
- Collaborate with faith-based initiatives.
 - This was also more difficult than anticipated. We did do several presentations at religious institutions, however were not able to build the level of partnership with any that we had hoped to. We found that the religious institutions have many requests for collaboration from entities wanting access to their members, and needs within their own congregation, and that unless we had a personal contact (and even in some cases where we did), it was hard to get in the door. We collaborated with One Church, One Child to create our mentoring program, but never launched the program developed with them because of disorganization on their end.

| |
|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Issue 7: Operations</i> |
|-----------------------------------|

Currently, Cuyahoga County has a highly experienced pool of 15 private adoption agencies and CFS who provide services to find adoptive homes for children in permanent custody waiting to be adopted. See Attachment B for a list and map of locations of the private agencies. Because of the funding structure which pays for placing, not finding adoptive homes, these agencies operate in a highly competitive environment. Each agency does its own marketing, recruitment, and home studies. It is believed that creating a more collaborative environment by sharing some of these functions and resources is in the best interest of children waiting to be adopted.

Strategy: Administer the Initiative.

Projected Cost over 3 Years: \$1.3 million; Adoption Summit/Launch: \$18,000

Actual Cost over 3 Years: \$566,632 (12%)

Action Steps:

- Function as Greater Cleveland’s intermediary organization for adoptions and other permanency planning outcomes.
- Administer and oversee the Adopt Cuyahoga’s Kids Initiative.
 - Done
- Select and work with external evaluator.
 - Done
- Convene CFS and private providers to implement the Initiative.
 - Done
- Explore the possibility of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among CFS, private adoption agencies, and Adoption Network that articulates agreements around roles and relationships specific to various components of the Initiative, as appropriate.
 - Explored but not implemented
- Coordinate all staff training activities included in this plan: training in child specific recruitment, training in use of the computerized adoptive family tracking system, training of Adoption Navigators, training of Case Workers on preparing for Probate Court, specialized training for Case Workers on how to prepare children for adoption, specialized training for mental health professionals to educate them about the special needs of children waiting to be adopted.
 - Done as reported in above portions of report
- Conduct a launch event to inform funders and stakeholders in Greater Cleveland about the Initiative.
 - Done, however official launch was attended primarily with adoption agencies.
- Conduct an Adoption Summit to increase knowledge of relevant best practices locally and from other communities.
 - Scheduled for April 22-26, 2009. This conference will be co-hosted by the American Adoption Congress in order to draw a more broad national audience.
- Work toward sustainability of the Adopt Cuyahoga’s Kids Initiative by applying for membership as a United Way agency, by requesting permanent funding from the Board of County Commissioners, and by seeking foundation funds for specific projects.
 - Done

Strategy: Enhance the technological capacity of CFS and the private adoption agencies to support the adoption process.

Cost over 3 Years: \$672,700 (Note that this amount is duplicative of expenses related to technology included in other strategies.)

Actual Cost over 3 Years: \$0

Action Steps:

- Expand CFS’s new computer system for matching children and families so it is available to the private adoption agencies.
 - We found we could not create an online tool for this, but did provide onsite training at CCDCFS for the private adoption agencies to access the CCDCFS computerized matching system. Our Adoption Navigators use the CCDCFS Matching System routinely on behalf of the families they are working with.

Develop capacity on the Initiative Web page for tracking families at various stages of the adoptive process, matching children and families, conducting home studies, preparing children for adoption, recruiting and training of mentors, and providing post adoptiv

- e family supports.
 - As above, this proved to be an unrealistic goal for many reasons including government regulations and confidentiality.

Program Outcomes to Date

- Intended outputs and/or outcomes (As described in resource plan)
- Actual outputs and/or outcomes
- Outcome indicators
- Measurement methods

| Outcomes | | |
|--|--|---|
| Consumer Outcomes | Outcome Indicators | Actual Outcomes |
| 1. <i>Children in Permanent Custody</i> have adoptive homes and <i>Youth ages 15 to 17 years in permanent custody who are aging out</i> have mentors to assist in their transition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backlog of children in permanent custody who are waiting for adoption reduced by 25% through legal adoption or another secure permanency outcome, including mentors. • Increased knowledge and skill in doing child specific adoptive family recruitment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cohort of 780 children constituting the backlog was reduced by 43%; child-centered recruitment specifically was responsible for 17% of the reduction. A small cadre of mentors (22 individuals) had worked with youth over age 13 for more than one year. • Adoption staff in partner agencies used child-centered recruitment strategies including submission of profiles, sustaining relationships with children, and seeking known adults to support adoption; 51 child-centered adoptions (41.4%) were to new families |

| Consumer Outcomes | Outcome Indicators | Actual Outcomes |
|---|--|---|
| <p>2. Prospective Adoptive Parent(s) are aware of the needs of older and African American children waiting to be adopted.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of potential adoptive families for whom home studies have been approved is doubled. • Increased knowledge of barriers for foster families and relatives to adopt. • All calls for adoption information are followed-up within 24 hours. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in implementation kept these outcomes in the province of DCFS; navigators supported strategies for smoothing the home study process. More than half (56%) of surveyed families using navigators reported they had sought help for completing the home study process. • Navigators assisted kin and foster families in pursuing adoption; they helped people find resources and connected them with DCFS staff. • 63% of respondents to navigator survey reported receiving return calls within 2 days |
| <p>3. Prospective Adoptive Parent(s) are able to navigate the public and/or private systems.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased number of months to complete adoption process. • Pre-Training orientation is available to all prospective adoptive parents. • Prospective adoptive parents are aware of locations of training sites throughout the County. • Decreased number of months to complete home study. • Decreased number of adoption cases continued at Probate Court. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCFS maintained this outcome, but 98% of families using navigators reported that they knew who to contact if they were struggling to complete the process and would not hesitate to contact a navigator for assistance. • DCFS changed its system of offering pre-training orientation to include more offerings in smaller groups, spread throughout the community; this increased access. • Navigators, agency partners, and DCFS maintained the calendar of sites and dates; made this information available. • DCFS maintained this outcome; navigator survey indicates that prospective adoptive families see navigators as a resource in resolving delays in home study completion. • Number of continuances decreased in all but one year from 2002 to 2006, from high of 122 to 43 in 2006. |
| <p>4. Older Children to Be Adopted are prepared for the adoptive process so that their chances of adjusting to a stable home are improved.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older Children report that they have greater understanding of what permanency means in their lives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who attend Camp CONNECT and Get Real report that, although these are difficult for them, activities involving discussions of permanency are helpful to their understanding of family and “forever” for their lives |

| Consumer Outcomes | Outcome Indicators | Actual Outcomes |
|---|--|---|
| 5. <i>Post Adoptive Families</i> are able to access needed family resources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post Adoptive Families are knowledgeable of educational, health, and social services for their families. • Post Adoptive Families report that they had assistance with accessing services if needed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our survey of post-adoptive families showed strong levels of awareness; parents know what they need, many know where to find the services, and they easily identify gaps in services. • Families in our initial survey reported that they had help from friends, adoption professionals, and other advocates in accessing services. Others reported a need for counselors and therapists to be trained in adoption, post-adoption issues and services. |
| 6. <i>Public policymakers</i> are aware of issues facing children in permanent custody of child welfare agencies waiting to be adopted and their prospective adoptive families and will initiate appropriate public policy interventions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders are actively engaged in advocating for public policies that support adoption in Cuyahoga County. • There is evidence of public policy changes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policymakers are aware of the issues raised by Adopt Cuyahoga’s Kids stakeholders. More than half of 27 legislators we contacted were able to discuss at least three of the issues that had been presented to them. • Specific gains were made in coalition with other state-wide groups and as a result of ACK staff work, as SB238 was passed in 2006, “strengthening the infrastructure of child welfare” (PCSAO, 2006). |
| 7. <i>Businesses and Other Community Organizations in Greater Cleveland</i> actively engage in recruiting and supporting adoptive families and providing in kind services to adoption agencies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption agencies have received financial and/or in kind services or products from Greater Cleveland businesses. • Employees of Greater Cleveland businesses have initiated the process of adopting a child in permanent custody through CFS or a private agency. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area businesses made product contributions to Adoption Network which were distributed to agencies; some promotional opportunities, such as tickets to events were offered. Overall, this was not successfully measured. • Although these adoptions have occurred, there was little change in supports given by Cleveland businesses |

Final Budget

- Listing of income from all sources
- Column A: Anticipated expenditures, by line item
- Column B: Actual expenditures, by line item
- Budget narrative providing explanation for discrepancies (over/under)

See all of the above items attached.

Continuance Plans

(Please include any funding committed for continuance as of the date of submission of this report in your narrative)

The initial three years of Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids was widely successful, and ANC had been transformed by the growth that the implementation necessitated. The programs and collaborations contained in the Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids Initiative are now part of the core offerings and operations of ANC. Funding for continuance as of the date of this report include:

- United Way \$225,000 annually for three years to support post-adoption services to families who have adopted children with special needs from the public child welfare system.
- State of Ohio Faith and Community Based Initiative office of the Governor \$246,000 over one year to support the mentoring program.
- Cuyahoga County Commissioners -- \$1 million requested annually
- State of Ohio, Governor's Office of Community and Faith-Based Initiatives -- \$246,315 Mentoring Program
- George Gund Foundation -- \$200,000 over two years (through June 2010) – Operating Support
- Saint Luke's Foundation--\$20,000 (Carryover from FY 2008 grant of \$100,000); We will request an additional \$100,000 in April 2009
- Swett Foundation--\$50,000 -- Adoption Navigators
- United Black Fund--\$8,000 – Adoption Navigators; We will request another grant of \$8,000 beginning July 2009
- Skirball Foundation -- We have received \$266,667 toward a challenge grant of \$400,000 to establish the William N. Skirball Memorial Endowment Fund to sustain Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids and other innovative programming related to adoption. We have raised \$179,925 toward this challenge grant and expect to raise an additional \$220,075 by April 2009 in order to receive the final installment of the challenge grant (\$133,333) from the Skirball Foundation. With the successful completion of the challenge grant, the endowment will provide approximately \$32,000 income annually.
- Lazarus vs. Ohio Casualty Class Action Reverter by Dworken and Bernstein Co., LPA-- \$123,759.64 (carryover) -- General Support for Programs Within the Kids Initiative
- Charter One Bank – Champions in Action Award - \$25,000

Closing Questions (Please address each in narrative form)

1. What do you wish you knew when the project began that you learned during the process of conducting this project?

As noted, this project transformed Adoption Network Cleveland from a small organization with a \$230,000 annual budget and no public funding to a much larger organization with a multi-million dollar annual budget. As such, the organization grew and changed quickly throughout implementation of the project. Many new staff were

hired throughout the project and some consultants were also used. The following are things that would have been helpful:

- Change management – Rapid change, even if it is good change, is difficult. Having the majority of staff being newly hired and the organizational cultural change that occurred as a result was also hard. Having resources to deal effectively with managing change would have been beneficial.
- Use of resources/funds – As noted, the project began with less than half of the needed annual funds committed. Programs were implemented as funds became available. ANC's initial understanding was that all County funds were only to be used for pass-through for CCR, and were not available to ANC to use for any of the other program aspects. This slowed down implementation greatly. Near the end of year one we did renegotiate the use of the County funds, which worked out well as not all were needed for the pass-through portion after all. In addition, because of ANC's previous small size, raising needed outside funds came slowly. More assistance raising these funds would have allowed more full implementation of project components in years one and two.
- Program Evaluators – It proved to be very difficult to supervise the program evaluators and hold them accountable, while also being the entity they were evaluating. To maximize the effectiveness of the evaluation, in our opinion, in a similar situation the program evaluators should be under contract with the CVC instead of the lead organization. In addition, contracting with the evaluators was ANC's first contractual relationship with a consultant. In retrospect we realize that greater technical assistance would have been helpful.
- Technology – In the initial budget there was not funding designated to building the capacity of technology internal to ANC. ANC started the project with 3 staff who worked on Mac computers in an informal network. We first tried to work with minimal cost, adding donated PC computers to our existing network. After the first year it became evident that a more formal server (Small Business Server) and more current computers were needed to allow for the size and capacity needed to serve the organization. A technology survey early on could have made this process much easier.

2. What do you feel most contributed to the project's successes and/or was responsible for its difficulties?

The success of the Kids Initiative is due to several factors. First, Initiative staff focused on building strong partnerships between CCDCFS administration and staff, the private agencies who performed child centered recruitment activities, and other community partners including funders. When things didn't go as planned, it always involved an aspect of breakdown in communication or a lack of focus on making the partnerships a priority. Success factors included:

- Strength of support from CCDCFS
- Collaborative nature

- Clear communication
- Partnerships
- Community attention
- Results – success breeds success, so when things started going well we gained momentum

At the same time, some of the same factors as above were responsible for difficulties. CCDCFS is a large multi-layered bureaucracy, and although several upper level staff were deeply involved in planning the Initiative, as we got started in implementation of the Initiative we found that there were departments within CCDCFS that did not know much about the initiative or the plans made. This impeded buy-in. Relationships were sometimes also difficult with the private adoption agencies, some of whom felt that they should be named the lead agency instead of ANC. For the first three years there was a feel that some people felt that that the Initiative might be over after three years, which decreased their perception of needing to buy-in.

3. All Community Vision Council projects had a public policy component. How did your project approach the public policy process and how successful were your efforts?

Adoption Network Cleveland has always focused on public policy and advocacy issues as they relate to adoption, primarily in the access to records area. For that reason, we already had a functioning public policy committee made up of board members and community volunteers. With their input, we decided to hire a public policy consultant -- Madeline Cain -- to help us identify our key agenda items and to help us form a strategy for achieving our objectives.

Once on board, Madeline, and selected staff began speaking with key community partners individually and in small groups to identify what some of the key issues might be. From that information, the public policy committee discussed the Network's official stance on each item and prioritized the key issues that we wanted to address.

Once the public policy agenda was finalized, Madeline coordinated a legislative breakfast for our local delegation of state legislators. We invited key partners to speak, including Commissioner Peter Lawson Jones, CCDCFS Director Jim McCafferty, a former foster youth Alfonzo Russell, and a partner agency representative Kathy Franz.

As this agenda setting occurred, we also decided that we wanted to raise general awareness among state legislators about what was happening to teens in foster care who "aged-out" of the system without a permanent family. To achieve this, we developed "The Doll Project." We purchased Groovy Girl Dolls at a discount from Playmatters because they were the only dolls we found that were ethnically and racially diverse and looked like older children and teens. We developed a "tag" for each doll to wear that contained their first name, month and year of birth, how long they had been waiting for an adoptive family, what their current living situation was (foster home, group home, residential treatment, etc) and whether they had siblings or not. Each doll was tagged with a different, but real, foster child's identity. A volunteer also created

sleeping bags for each doll to be inserted into as they were being delivered to state legislators and other key officials.

A group of 15 volunteers and staff met in Columbus to distribute the first round of 135 dolls to each legislator or their staff members. With permission, we traveled in small groups to different offices to tell the story of foster children aging out and to let them know about the Adopt Cuyahoga' Kids Initiative. We were able to meet with the Speaker of the House, who then informed us that he was adopted. This relationship has developed since then, resulting in several face to face meetings with Speaker Husted and his assistance in sheparding some of our key agenda items into proposed legislation.

In addition to our proactive efforts, a couple of highly visible tragic incidents occurred that improved our ability to influence public policy. In September 2005, an adoptive family in Huron County was accused of keeping some of their 11 adopted children in "cage-like" beds. The national and international media attention was high, and Governor Taft asked the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services to investigate the process by which 11 children were placed into this family and whether rules were broken by agencies who were involved in the placement and monitoring of these children. Out of that report came a series of recommendations for improving the adoption system in Ohio.

In January 2006, Adoption Network was invited to participate in a series of stakeholder meetings with Senator Niehaus and Representative Wagner, who were chosen to lead the legislative reform. At the beginning of the process, the legislators made it clear that they did not intend to add anything to the legislation that had not been addressed in the Governor's recommendations. After we met with them separately, however, they agreed to include items which had consensus from the rest of the stakeholders. With the help of our new public policy consultants (Madeline had taken a full-time position with the county), we held a series of meetings with other stakeholders to identify which of our issues fit with the proposed legislation. In the end, we were able to include more permissive language about adoption of adults over age 18 who were former foster youth, and to retroactively make non-identifying information accessible to all Ohio adoptees.

Unfortunately, another tragedy occurred in 2006 where a four-year old foster child died after being bound and left in a closet for a weekend while his foster parents attended a family reunion out of state. His death led to another investigation and the same group of stakeholders and legislators working on foster care reform legislation. We were invited to the table for those discussions, as well as several other smaller adoption-related bills. In addition, Speaker Husted asked Representative Brinkman to include Adoption Network Cleveland in the discussions as he drafted House Bill 7 which includes creation of a state task force to create a state best practices model for child centered recruitment methods to improve outcomes for the oldest foster children at highest risk of aging out without a permanent family.

Finally, the key goals of raising awareness of the needs of children waiting for adoptive parents, and improving the perception of Cuyahoga County as a strong resource for adoption knowledge were achieved, but needs continued attention to be maintained. In addition, other legislation has improved the availability of resources for adoptive parents. With the pending legislation, our

hope is that the adoption system in Ohio can continue to improve and become streamlined to benefit everyone touched by adoption.

4. Community Vision Council projects were expected to have and implement a communications plan. How did you communicate about this project? What coverage did you receive in various media outlets and/or targeted communications to constituency groups?

One of the components of the Initiative was to conduct Targeted Recruitment activities to identify and recruit prospective adoptive families who are most like those who have previously adopted from the public child welfare system. We decided early on that we would coordinate these activities with other public relations efforts to maximize the use of funding and coordinate messaging. We contracted with Lief and Karson, a local media relations company who had strong ties to the goals of the Initiative. They developed a communication plan and we worked on finding funding to pay for it in addition to the recruitment activities. Many newspaper articles, radio and television interviews with Initiative staff and partners resulted from their efforts.

After that contract ended, we contracted with Singleton and Partners, a local media relations company with strong expertise working with the African American community in greater Cleveland. They also developed a 12-month plan to conduct more targeted communications efforts with media outlets that had primarily African American and female audiences. In addition, we created a full-time communications coordinator position to coordinate our consultant's efforts and to complete our own communication projects internally, including annual reports, newsletter editing, and fundraising efforts.

Finally, as part of our targeted recruitment, and eventually for all other print, radio, and television communication, we contracted with StudioThink for graphic design services. They coordinated messaging and look while our other consultants identified appropriate outlets and helped obtain other media attention. By the end of the Initiative, we only contracted with StudioThink, as they are a full-service agency with key partnerships in website and video production, both of which were key issues for us in 2006.

In addition ANC collaborated with CCDCFS to create a Heart Gallery which was open in a storefront in Tower City May-November 2005 and February-May 2006. The Heart Gallery is a photographic exhibit of candid shots of youth in the child welfare system in need of adoption. More than 50 youth were featured in the gallery, and the photographs were taken by local professional photographers who volunteered their time to the project. Forest City Enterprises donated the space in Tower City and ANC paid only for utilities. The Cleveland Browns helped to sponsor the gallery, donating furniture, a TV and DVD player and made a video of many of the youth in the gallery to add a multimedia component. Plans are currently underway for CCDCFS and ANC to have a mobile traveling Heart Gallery display.

Please see attached for a full list of media and communications accomplishments.

5. Based on your experience with this project, what do you feel are the essential elements for nurturing collaborations and partnerships?

- Shared vision/goals
- Communication, communication, communication
- Trust
- Connections made throughout organizational levels
- Planning

6. What do you think the biggest challenges will be for sustaining this project in the future (if applicable)?

- Sustained funding
- Diverse funding to meet all needs
- Time/resources to continue to plan to meet emerging community needs
- Marketing
- Continued sense of competition

7. Is there anything the Community Vision Council or its staff might have done differently that you feel would have expedited this project?

In retrospect, a greater clarity of roles would have been helpful. There are three areas in which this was an issue:

- Fund-raising – in our agreement with the Vision Council we asked that rather than taking on the full burden of fund raising, we assist the Vision Council in raising the additional funds needed to implement the Initiative. It ended up that we took the lead in the fund raising efforts.
- Evaluators – as noted earlier, it would have been helpful if the Vision Council had a greater role with the program evaluators. In the beginning it was not clear who the evaluators reported directly to.
- Communications – we were asked to use Vision Council logos and refer to the Vision Council in specific ways in our communications, however we were not given the logo or clarity on how to refer to the Vision Council, or the role that United Way played in the Vision Council.

Our official agreement with the Vision Council was signed about a month before the Initiative was to begin, and programming was to begin at the same point as the funding began. It would have been helpful to have some time in the beginning allocated to planning, building needed infrastructure and hiring staff.

At the end of the three years when we presented our results, and some of our challenges, to the Strong Families Vision Council, it became evident that there were Vision Council members (a technology firm, for instance) who could have been helpful to us. In the future, publicizing the needs the initiatives to the other Vision Council members might give rise to opportunities for assistance and involvement.

8. If you were to advise the “second generation” of Community Vision Council lead agencies, what would you tell them to pay attention to as a result of your experience?

The answers to this question are already discussed in the answers to questions #1 and #7 above regarding:

- Planning, implementation time
- Fund-raising
- Infrastructure
- Change management
- Budget, staff
- Technology

Submitted by:

Betsie Norris

Signature of Executive Director

September 22, 2008

Date of Submission

References

ⁱ Groza, V. (1999). Adoption. In D.E. Biegel & A. Blum (Eds.). Innovations in Practice and Service Delivery, (pp. 79-101). New York: Oxford Press.

ⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Children’s Bureau, FY 2001.

ⁱⁱⁱ Data supplied by Cuyahoga County Department of Family and Children Services.

^{iv} Charles, Kristi and Jennifer Nelson. “Permanency Planning: Creating Life Long Connections – What Does It Mean for Adolescents?” The University of Oklahoma, National Resource Center for Youth Development.

^v “Mentoring Foster Children”, News from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, July 1999. <http://fostercross.org/mentor.htm>

^{vi} Mentoring USA <http://www.mentoringusa.org/main.htm>

^{vii} Much of the recruitment strategy and implementation is based on principles of social marketing, which adapts commercial marketing technologies to programs designed to influence the voluntary behavior of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of their society.

One of the key principles of social marketing is that marketing research is essential and that markets should be carefully segmented. The plan calls for geo-demographic research, which is based on a national data base that categorizes every U.S. household into one of sixty-two unique segments that share lifestyle and purchase characteristics. A list of current successful adoptive and foster families in Cuyahoga County will be compared to this database. The resulting profile identifies the location of these key segments and also provides valuable information about their lifestyle and purchase habits. Thus, we will know not only where most families like current families live and where we should direct our efforts, but we will also have information about what motivates these people.

In addition to recruiting others like current families, this project will look for breakthroughs to reach new groups that have not adopted in large numbers in the past. Analysis of the geo-demographic profiling may indicate some segments that adopt but not in large numbers. In addition, focus groups and other research will be used to help find ways to remove barriers and encourage new groups to adopt.

^{viii} Pinderhughes. 1998. In *Post-Permanency Services*, Chapter 2.

^{ix} Groza, V. 1999. Adoption. In D.E. Biegel & A. Blum (Eds.) *Innovations in Practice and Service Delivery*, pp.79-101. New York: Oxford University Press.

^x Barth, Gibbs, and Siebenaler. 2001. In *Post-Permanency Services*, Chapter 2.

Three-Year Media Report

Interviews/Articles 2004

March 11, 2004 - "Reparenting for 1,400 kids in county care" Cleveland Plain Dealer, METRO.

May/June 2004 - Tami Lorkovich and Chris Esmurdoc interviewed Alfonso Russell, a young man who aged out of foster care. The story and other highlights about adoption and mentoring were published in Cleveland/Akron Family magazine in the May/June issue.

Summer 2004 - Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids Initiative selected as a model program for public-private partnerships to be featured in a book by the Casey Family Foundation. Book is in press

June 9, 2004 - An editorial appeared in the Plain Dealer highlighting the Initiative and talking about connecting "disconnected kids." In response, two letters to the editor were published on Sunday, June 13th

July 17, 2004 - Jim McCafferty was interviewed by Channel 3 about the Kids Initiative

July 28, 2004 - Kim Wheeler of Channel 3 interviewed one of our adoptive families and showed one of our door hangers.

Summer 2004 - Program Director, Tami Lorkovich, interviewed by Akron Beacon Journal about adoption supports...

Summer 2004 - Social Service Director, Chris Esmurdoc, interviewed by Lorain Paper.

Fall 2004 - Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids Initiative featured by the North American Council on Adoptable Children as one of five programs effective at finding homes for teens

October 2004 - Dottie Klemm, System Liaison, appeared on Channel 23, a public cable access channel to talk about how to adopt and the children currently available from Cuyahoga County Department of Child & Family Services.

October 7, 2004 - "Adoption group wins U.S. grant". The Sun Messenger

November 2004 - Betsie Norris, Executive Director, and Tami Lorkovich, Program Director, were interviewed on a live call in shows on 90.3FM by Paul Cox to promote Project *CONNECT*.

November 2004 - Tami Lorkovich and Senator Mike DeWine were interviewed on the Lanigan and Malone morning shows (WMJI 105.7) about Project *CONNECT*

November 2004 - Betsie Norris, Executive Director, and Tami Lorkovich, Program Director, appeared on "Around the Block" featured on Channels 19/43.

November 2004 - Tami Lorkovich interviewed for other NPR story on adoption of older teens that aired in Cleveland and Columbus (perhaps others too).

November 6, 2004 - "Another adoption option". Cleveland Plain Dealer, Editorial.

December 2004 - Acted as state coordinator for calls received from the TV special *Home for the Holidays* which is sponsored by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption...

Interviews/Articles 2005

February 12, 2005 - Interview with Betsie Norris and Michael Lehan. Channel 3

February 13, 2005 - "Too Old for Foster Care, too young to be alone." By Sharon Broussard, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Forum

February 16, 2005 - Story on Michael Lehan's work with Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids. Channel 3

March 2, 2005 - Story on the doll project heading to Columbus. Channel 3

March 3, 2005 - "Dolls remind us of youth's plight." By Sam Fulwood, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Column

March 9, 2005 - "Kowalski travels to Columbus to promote adoption of older foster children." By Lori Switaj, The Press

April 14, 2005 - "Standing Up, not standing by." By Margaret Bernstein, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Arts & Life

August 14, 2005 - "For foster kids, a turning point." By Regina Brett, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Column

August 29, 2005 - Interview with Betsie Norris. Radio Disney

Fall 2005 Issue - "Foster teens connect during camp experience." By David Levey, *Impact*, Community Vision Council Newsletter

September 22, 2005 - Interview with Tami Lorkovich. By Traci Reed, The News Herald

September 23, 2005 - Interview with Tami Lorkovich and Betsie Norris, WMJI, Lanigan & Malone

October 31, 2005 - November 6, 2005 issue. Interview with Betsie Norris. "Women of Note Award." By Jay Miller, Crains Cleveland Business

November 2, 2005 - "Network puts teens first in making families happen." By Amanda Garrett, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Arts & Life

November 8, 2005 - Letter by Betsie Norris regarding Cleveland Plain Dealer article, "Showcasing loving families that choose to adopt." Cleveland Plain Dealer, Opinion

November/December 2005 Issue - "Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids: One county's program helps unite kids with families." By Fostering Families Today

November 13, 2005 - Interview with Tami Lorkovich by Kim Johnson, WZAK, Urban Spotlight

November 14, 2005 - Interview with Tami Lorkovich by Ronnie Knight, WJMO

November 14, 2005 - Interview with Chris Esmurdoc. Channel 5, Kaleidoscope

November 21, 2005 - Interview with Betsie Norris by Kim Johnson, WZAK, Woman to Woman

November 24, 2005 - "A tangible way to share blessings." By Jimmy Dimora, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Forum

December 2005 - "Adoptive dad, 66, adjusting to life with three teen daughters." By Rhona Crowder, The Call & Post

December 20, 2005 - "Toys, cash, support kids in need." Cleveland Plain Dealer, Communities

Interviews/Articles 2006

February 19, 2006 – Regina Brett "It's about kids – nothing else" article in Metro section of the Plain Dealer, highlighting Speaker Jon Husted and Adoption Network Cleveland

May 19, 2006 - Plain Dealer Heart Gallery article, by Barb Galbincea

May 22, 2006 - Heart Gallery ad in Section A of Plain Dealer

June 1, 2006 - Leon Bibb does story on Heart Gallery. Interviews Judge Sikora as well for 5pm news

June 14, 2006 - Ohio News Network visits Heart Gallery and interviews Holly and a woman visiting Gallery aired that day

June 21, 2006 - ½ hour special on Heart Gallery on Village TV Channel 20

June 21, 2006 - Navigator Lucille Hudson on Ronnie Duncan show on WERE

June 21, 2006 - Tami on FOX 8 News

June 22, 2006 - PD Article by Barb Galbincea: Taft OK's changes in Adoption Process (featuring Tami)

June 24, 2006 - Live cut-ins from Heart Gallery on Channel 3 in morning Ohio News Network

July 17, 2006 - Kim Wheeler piece on Heart Gallery on Channel 3 morning news- featuring a child in heart gallery and also an adoptive parent of an older child in foster care.

August 20, 2006 - Barb Galbincea “Young Adults must find way after foster care” The Plain Dealer

August 29, 2006 Plain Dealer ad for Michael Artis- Heart Gallery, CCDCFS

September 3, 2006-Robin Williams and Holly Spencer-Trueman on Radio Disney AM 1260 on morning show

October 30, 2006 - Executive Director Betsie Norris and Associate Director Tami Lorkovich wrote an editorial published in The Plain Dealer’s Metro section on the Opinion page, highlighting relevant facts and figures of the successes of the Adopt Cuyahoga’s Kids Initiative, in addition to faces on adoption.

October 30, 2006 - Editorial published in The Plain Dealer’s Metro Section in the Opinion page highlighting relevant facts and figures of the successes of the Adopt Cuyahoga’s Kids Initiative, in addition to facts on adoption.

November 27, 2006 – Associate Director Tami Lorkovich and Adoption Navigator Julius Jackson appeared on the Ronnie Duncan show on WERE 1300AM to promote our December Open House

Conference Presentations

- North American Council on Adoptable Children
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Child Welfare League of America
- Community Solutions
- Ohio Judge’s Association

Three-year Budget Report

| STRONG FAMILIES=SUCCESSFUL CHILDREN | | | | |
|---|--|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids Initiative | | | | |
| Completed Project Budget vs. Actual | | | | |
| 2004-2006 | | | | |
| | | Budget | Actual | Variance |
| REVENUE | | | | |
| Vision Council Seed Money | | \$900,000 | \$900,000 | \$0 |
| Local Foundations (Gund & Cleveland) | | \$700,000 | \$300,000 | (\$400,000) |
| Revenue to be Raised | | \$2,237,444 | \$1,397,125 | (\$840,319) |
| UWS Harambee Funds | | \$300,000 | \$300,000 | \$0 |
| <i>Regional Training Center</i> | | <i>\$198,000</i> | | <i>(\$198,000)</i> |
| <i>Cuyahoga County Private Agency Contracts</i> | | <i>\$3,900,000</i> | | <i>(\$3,900,000)</i> |
| <i>Cuyahoga County</i> | | <i>\$3,700,000</i> | <i>\$4,152,618</i> | <i>\$452,618</i> |
| Total Revenue | | \$11,935,444 | \$7,049,743 | (\$4,885,701) |
| <u>EXPENSES</u> | | | | |
| <i>Personnel</i> | | | | |
| Executive Director | | \$110,338 | | |
| Program Manager | | \$173,388 | | |
| Administrative Assistant | | \$88,270 | | |
| Client Tracking Data Analyst | | \$126,100 | | |
| Adoption Navigators (6) | | \$567,450 | | |
| Public Policy/Community Liaison/Fund Developer | | \$236,438 | | |
| Program and Volunteer Coordinator | | \$71,750 | | |
| Social Worker Supervisor | | \$126,100 | | |
| <i>Sub-total</i> | | <i>\$1,499,833</i> | <i>\$1,173,219</i> | |
| Benefits (25%) | | \$374,958 | \$208,350 | |
| Total Personnel | | \$1,874,791 | \$1,381,569 | (\$493,222) |
| <i>Other Operating Expenses</i> | | | | |
| Cuyahoga County Private Agency Contracts | | \$3,900,000 | | |
| Total Cuyahoga County Private Agency Contracts | | \$3,900,000 | \$0 | (\$3,900,000) |
| Child Specific Recruitment Consultant Expenses | | \$5,000 | | |
| Web Page Design Consultant | | \$600,000 | \$80,887 | |
| Marketing and Public Relations | | \$692,455 | \$190,457 | |
| Marketing Strategy Consultant | | \$120,545 | \$142,746 | |
| Technical Consultation on Software Application | | \$2,000 | | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Evaluation Consultant | | \$225,000 | \$282,278 | |
| Potential Foster/Adoptive Family Trainers | | \$198,000 | | |
| Financial Services | | \$45,000 | | |
| Audit | | \$23,182 | \$46,353 | |
| Adoption TA Consultants | | \$19,110 | | |
| Computer Technical Services | | \$1,200 | | |
| Child Specific Recruitment TA | | \$24,000 | | |
| Staff Training in Preparation of Children | | \$7,500 | | |
| Adoption Network Organizational Consultation | | \$10,500 | \$54,031 | |
| Consultants - Professional | | | \$60,342 | |
| Total Professional Fees | | \$1,968,492 | \$857,094 | (\$1,111,398) |
| Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids Initiative Launch | | \$2,000 | | |
| Adoption Summit | | \$10,000 | | |
| Total Adopt Cuy. Kids Initiative Launch | | \$12,000 | \$0 | (\$12,000) |
| Child Specific Recruitment | | \$3,000,000 | \$2,027,316 | |
| Foster Parent Survey & Response | | \$500 | | |
| Total Child Specific Recruitment costs | | \$5,034,992 | \$2,027,316 | (\$3,007,676) |
| Computer Equipment for Recruitment of Mentors | | \$9,000 | \$13,785 | |
| Computer Equipment | | \$9,000 | \$23,977 | |
| Computer Software for Family Tracking | | \$50,000 | \$23,323 | |
| Copier | | \$15,455 | \$10,000 | |
| Office Equipment | | \$24,000 | \$24,183 | |
| Total Computer Software and Equipment | | \$107,455 | \$95,268 | (\$12,187) |
| Refreshments for Mentor Recruitment Events | | \$540 | | |
| Refreshments for Child Preparation | | \$360 | | |
| Refreshments for Mentor Training Sessions | | \$1,125 | | |
| Staff Training on Preparing for Probate Court | | \$1,500 | | |
| Refreshments for Potential Adoptive Family Training | | \$14,850 | | |
| Total Meetings and Meals | | \$18,375 | \$19,731 | \$1,356 |
| Directory of Family Support Services | | \$5,830 | \$2,375 | |
| Total Directory of Family Support Services | | \$5,830 | \$2,375 | (\$3,455) |
| Adoption Para-legal (including 25% benefits) | | \$115,313 | | |
| Public Policy Advocacy Expenses | | \$6,000 | \$95,765 | |
| Total Public Policy Advocacy Expenses | | \$121,313 | \$95,765 | (\$25,548) |
| Office Supplies | | \$30,909 | | |
| Mentor Recruitment Brochures | | \$18,750 | | |
| Mentor Training Materials | | \$1,500 | | |
| Cameras and Film | | \$5,400 | | |
| Family Social Activities, Training, Support Groups | | \$4,000 | | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Training Navigators and Orientation of Private Agencies | | \$1,500 | | |
| Orientation Sessions for Potential Adoptive Families | | \$44,004 | | |
| Training Materials for Child Prep Groups | | \$2,400 | | |
| Child Specific Recruitment Training | | \$30,000 | | |
| Child Prep Groups | | \$24,000 | | |
| Child Specific Recruitment Training Materials | | \$2,400 | | |
| Business & Community Adoption Outreach Expenses | | \$6,000 | | |
| Total Supplies | | \$170,863 | \$216,685 | \$45,822 |
| Space | | \$61,200 | \$70,589 | |
| Telephone | | \$15,207 | \$10,799 | |
| Telephone Hardware | | \$7,580 | \$7,680 | |
| Postage | | \$15,455 | \$13,987 | |
| Utilities | | \$9,273 | \$13,636 | |
| Total Occupancy and Utilities | | \$108,715 | \$116,691 | \$7,976 |
| Miscellaneous | | \$1,500 | \$64,110 | |
| Mileage | | \$35,607 | | |
| Development of Mental Health Certification | | \$20,000 | | |
| Criminal Record Checks for Mentors | | \$1,650 | | |
| Training of Mental Health Professionals | | \$15,000 | | |
| Total Expenses - Other | | \$73,757 | \$64,110 | (\$9,647) |
| Total Other Operating Expenses | | \$11,521,792 | \$3,495,035 | (\$8,026,757) |
| Total Expenses Excluding Indirect | | \$11,367,089 | \$4,876,604 | (\$6,490,485) |
| Indirect (5%) | | \$568,354 | \$566,632 | (\$1,722) |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | | \$11,935,444 | \$5,443,236 | (\$6,492,208) |
| VARIANCE (+/-) | | \$0 | \$1,606,507 | |
| | | | | |

Budget Narrative – Variance Report

Adoption Network Cleveland's accounting system does not categorize expenses as were reflected in the original budgeted categories. In turn, we have combined several line items into categories that ANC normally uses to report expenses and have explained any variances there may be in those categories.

The amounts stated in this report for computers, office equipment, software and web page design are represented at cost. They were capitalized over their useful life in ANC's financial statements.

REVENUES

Vision Council Seed Money: No variance

Local Foundations (Gund & Cleveland, to be approached): We received \$300,000 from the Gund Foundation and the Cleveland Foundation declined to fund a Vision Council project.

Revenue to be Raised: This total consists of foundations, corporate and individual donations. The following are some of the foundations that contributed to the project. The United Black Fund, and the St. Ann's, St. Luke's, Thomas White, Wuligier, Swett, Hunt, and O'Neil Foundations.

UWS Harambee Funds: No variance

Regional Training Centers: This activity was completed but the costs were not paid by ANC nor communicated to ANC, costs were covered by CCDCFS and the Regional Training Center.

Cuyahoga County Private Agency Contracts: These funds were received by the County and distributed by the County. We have no figures for this amount.

Cuyahoga County: This amount includes pass thru funds to CCR contract agencies and funding for Kids programs internal to ANC. The variance is MEPA funds received from CCDCFS to retroactively cover Targeted Recruitment costs.

EXPENSES

Total Personnel – In addition to the staff listed, the following positions were filled to help with the project: Director of Finance & Human Resources, Associate Director, Communications Coordinator, Program Associate, Coordinator of Project Connect, Executive Assistant and IT Director.

We were under budget due to ramp up time to get employees hired.

Fringe benefits were 17% of total salaries instead of the estimated 25%. The variance is also due to the fact we didn't spend as much in salaries as estimated.

Total Cuyahoga County Private Agency: Although included by the CVC to show in our budget in an effort to reflect the full cost of public agency adoption work in our county, these funds were received by and administered through CCDCFS as planned. The amount of this funding is unknown as it was not reported to ANC.

Total Professional Fees – The line items that have no amount entered are lumped into the line Consultants – Professional for a total expense of \$60,342. The budgeted amount for this category was \$1,968,492. We actually spent \$857,094.

The notable variances include: Web page design consultants (\$534,113) which was not spent when it became evident that ANC could not build a database to be the central repository for information in the county (see report). The remaining amount was for Marketing and Public Relations (\$502,000) which was not spent because money was allocated to projects as it was raised. Marketing and PR was done without ever raising the full amount budgeted.

Adopt Cuyahoga's Kids Initiative Launch/Adoption Summit: The launch costs are captured under meetings and meals, and printing. The Adoption Summit is to be conducted in April 2009 using carried over funds from Project Connect.

Total Child Specific Recruitment costs: Includes all pass thru agency payments made by ANC and by CCDCFS to partnering agencies. Foster Parent Survey & Response was done via phone.

Total Computer Software and Equipment: ANC had to purchase new computers, desks, chairs, and computer software for new employees. The difference is because the collaborative database was not implemented, therefore, the cost weren't as high for the software purchases.

***Reminder – these numbers are at cost and were capitalized according to GAAP guidelines.**

Total Directory of Family Support Services: The costs incurred here were in staff time. The directory was printed by CCDCFS.

Total Public Policy Advocacy Expenses: This amount is over budget because after examination, we decided to hire a consultant instead of an employee to do this work. This number is counted twice, once as total public policy expenses, which consists of food, supplies, consultants, etc. and then throughout the report under the other various categories. The court refused the Adoption Para-legal.

