



Adoption Opportunities Program

ACTION

- Reauthorize the Adoption Opportunities Program and increase funding to \$50 million in FY 2004.

HISTORY

Congress will reauthorize the Adoption Opportunities Program, Title II of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, this year. The program provides discretionary grants for demonstration projects that eliminate barriers to adoption and provide permanent loving homes for children who would benefit from adoption, particularly children with special needs. This program was funded at \$27.4 million in FY 2002.

Several resources and supports exist under the Adoption Opportunities Program to assist in the adoption of children. Among these, the Collaboration to AdoptUSKids recruits homes for children waiting to be adopted through a National Recruitment Campaign and has developed a network of adoptive parent groups. AdoptUSKids also maintains a national Internet photolisting of waiting children. In 2000, 52,000 families received information on how to proceed with adoption. The exchange currently lists 5,500 children waiting to be adopted.

The Adoption Opportunities Program has funded a National Resource Center on Special Needs Adoption, which provides technical assistance and training on current issues in special-needs adoption—such as compliance with federal laws and regulations, permanency planning, and cultural competence—to state, tribal, and other child welfare organizations. Nearly 65,000 people in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands have received special-needs adoption training through the center.

Adoption Opportunities funds also support the National Adoption Assistance Training Resource and Information Network. The network's services include a hotline that provides free information on adoption subsidies to parents interested in adopting children with special needs, and a booklet on adoption assistance programs available in each state.

Adoption Opportunities funding has also helped establish the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (NAIC), a comprehensive information center on adoption. In 1999, NAIC responded to 10,603 requests for information on adoption and disseminated more than 127,000 materials to the public.

Adoption Opportunities funds also provide support services to kinship families who have adopted the children for whom they are caring.

KEY FACTS *

- Of the 542,000 children in foster care on September 30, 2001, approximately 126,000 were free for adoption.
- Of the children waiting to be adopted from foster care as of September 2001, 45% were black non-Hispanic, 34% were white non-Hispanic, and 12% were Hispanic.
- In 2000, the median age of children waiting to be adopted was 8.1. Three percent of the children waiting to be adopted were younger than 1 year old, 33% were ages 1–5, 34% were 6–10, 26% were 11–15, and 4% were 16–18.
- The number of children adopted from foster care has increased in recent years: 28,000 in 1996; 31,000 in 1997; 37,000 in 1998; 46,000 in 1999; 51,000 in 2000; and 50,000 in 2001.
- Of the children adopted from foster care in 2000, 2% were younger than age 1; 45% were ages 1–5; 35% were 6–10; 16% were 11–15; and 2% were 16–18.
- Of the children adopted from foster care in 2001, 59% were adopted by their foster parents, 17% were adopted by a nonrelative, and 24% were adopted by a relative.
- Of the children adopted from foster care in 2000, 49% waited more than one year from the time they became legally free for adoption until they were adopted.

SOURCE

* U.S. Children's Bureau. (August 2002). *The AFCARS report #7*. Available online at www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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