



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

# RFP Response Form

## PROPOSER INFORMATION

Proposer Name: Adoption Connection, PA

Authorized Representative Name & Title: Robin L Thompson, Executive Director

Address: 700 Turnpike Street, Beaver, PA 15009

Telephone: 724-371-0671

Email: [REDACTED]

Website: www.adoptionconnectionpa.org

Legal Status:  For-Profit Corp.  Nonprofit Corp.  Sole Proprietor  Partnership

Date Incorporated: 2-20-2008

Partners and/or Subcontractors included in this Proposal: Family Links, Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation, Persad and The Children’s Institute

How did you hear about this RFP? *Please be specific.* Rebecca Palatino sent an email notifying us of this RFP. It was also discussed at all of our Providers meetings.

## REQUIRED CONTACTS

	Name	Phone	Email
Chief Executive Officer	Robin Thompson	724-371-0671	[REDACTED]
Contract Processing Contact	Terry Kordecki	724-371-0671	[REDACTED]
Chief Information Officer	N/A	Enter number.	Click here to enter text.
Chief Financial Officer	Terry Kordecki	724-371-0671	[REDACTED]
MPER Contact*	Robin Thompson	724-371-0671	[REDACTED]

\* [MPER](#) is DHS’s provider and contract management system. Please list an administrative contact to update and manage this system for your agency.

## **RFP for Foster Care Agencies**

### **BOARD INFORMATION**

Provide a list of your board members as an attachment or in the space below.

*See attachment*

Board Chairperson Name & Title: Click here to enter text.

Board Chairperson Address: Click here to enter text.

Board Chairperson Telephone: Click here to enter text.

Board Chairperson Email: Click here to enter text.

### **REFERENCES**

Provide the name, affiliation and contact information [include email address and telephone number] for three references who are able to address relevant experience with your organization.

*Please do not use employees of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services as references.*

*See attachment*

### **PROPOSAL INFORMATION**

Date Submitted 2/10/2021

Amount Requested: Traditional Foster Care \$73.83  
Therapeutic Foster Care \$83.47  
Aftercare \$718 for a 3 month unit of service per family

### **CERTIFICATION**

Please check the following before submitting your Proposal, as applicable:

I have read the standard County terms and conditions for County contracts and the requirements for DHS Cyber Security, EEOC/Non-Discrimination, HIPAA and Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law.

By submitting this Proposal, I certify and represent to the County that all submitted materials are true and accurate, and that I have not offered, conferred or agreed to confer any pecuniary benefit or other thing of value for the receipt of special treatment, advantaged information, recipient's decision, opinion, recommendation, vote or any other exercise of discretion concerning this RFP.

## **RFP for Foster Care Agencies**

Choose one:

My Proposal contains information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information and I have included a written statement signed by an authorized representative identifying those portions or parts of my Proposal and providing contact information.

OR

My Proposal does not contain information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Please submit the following attachments with your Response Form. These can be found at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations>.

- MWDBE documents
- Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
- 3 years of audited financial reports
- W-9
- Organizational Chart
- Implementation Timeline
- Line-item Budget, if desired

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### REQUIREMENTS

Please respond to the following. The maximum score a Proposal can receive is **250** points. Your response to this section should not exceed 30 pages.

#### **Organizational Experience and Capacity (30 points)**

1. Describe your organization's demonstrated experience working with the following populations: children from birth up to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday who are at-risk or involved with the child welfare system; prospective and current Foster Care parents; birth parents; and all other stakeholders in Foster Care (e.g., court system, DHS caseworkers, other provider agencies), or an equivalent. Include how the input of children, Foster Care parents and birth parents have been incorporated into this Proposal.

Adoption Connection, PA (ACPA) is a 501-C3 non-profit organization that has provided stability and hope for over 25 years supporting over thousands of families and children ages 0-21 from culturally diverse backgrounds. The agency's full array of services includes foster care, domestic adoption, SWAN services, custody visitations, and Community Family Closet. Our mission is fostering hope and a future for children and families.

Almost 40 percent of ACPA's leadership, staff and board members, contribute real life experiences because they were a foster parent, adoptive parent, a former foster child or an adoptee. Together we make ethical decisions that strengthen our services to make us fiscally sound. Our resource families provide a safe, caring and nurturing environment for foster children as they work towards reunification. Our resource families are in alignment with reunification and are committed to first placement, right placement. Almost 99% of our resource families are open to providing permanency. Our staff and resource families facilitate reunification with the birth family by assisting with family visitations, preparing the children for reunification and working with the children to maintain positive relationships with family members. Over 90% of ACPA's resource families make every effort to be supportive of the birth family. Permanency caseworkers are available to provide guidance and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to the resource and birth families in order to provide the children in care with what they need to heal, to feel safe and secure and to be successful in their resource home.

ACPA has built a multitude of relationships and collaborations within the child welfare system. Recognizing the need to provide expedited and creative training to our families, ACPA united with a few agencies to forge the REACH training collaborative. ACPA has additional alliances with the Western Regional Collaborative, a resource family support group, Junk King, and various colleges.

ACPA takes great pride in supporting the children and our families by attending matching events, Option Meetings, preplacement visits, court hearings, and Teaming meetings. Our Permanency Caseworkers provide additional support to ACCYF caseworkers and the GALs by compiling a detailed court report that is distributed prior to the permanency review hearings.

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The voices of the children, resource parents and birth parents have been incorporated into this proposal. Formally and informally, we completed in-person interviews, surveys and encouraged on-going dialogue to receive the valuable input to meet the ever changing needs of those within the child welfare system.

2. Describe your organization's demonstrated experience working with communities and populations that are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, culture and SOGIE and reflective of the target population.

Currently, ACPA contracts with eleven counties with diverse populations. Our resource families are of varied races and cultures. The populations represented are LGBTQIA+, Wiccan, Christianity, Judaism, African American, Caucasian, Bi-racial and Hispanic. Our families reside in rural, suburban, and urban communities. We have experience working with limited English speaking clients where we were able to provide services in their first language.

ACPA has a team that meets on a monthly basis to strategize ways on which our organization can better meet the diverse needs of the children and families we serve. We seek to better understand the systemic inequalities that impact our communities of color, people who identify as LGBTQIA+ and other underrepresented populations. Our team has developed short-term and long-term goals in an effort to provide more resource homes that will be willing to parent children represented in these populations.

Recently, we opened a location in Duquesne to strengthen our relationships and build partnerships with people, organizations and businesses who reflect the diverse identities of the children and families we serve. We believe by bringing more voices to the table, our policies and practices will be influenced. It will also help us provide better advocacy and arrive at better outcomes for our children and families.

Over the past year, ACPA has built relationships with Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation and Persad which has resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding highlighting collaborative efforts to assist the LGBTQIA+ community. Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation is providing ACPA staff with competence training and will assist in addressing organizational operating procedures to incorporate best practices into our policies and supervision models. Persad is assisting ACPA with recruiting resource families, training for staff and families and providing mental health services.

3. Provide clear reasoning why your organization feels it is a strong candidate for this opportunity and how Foster Care fits well within your organization's mission.

We are completely confident that ACPA is a strong candidate for this opportunity because we deliver personalized service tailored to the client; our passionate staff is dedicated to growing individually and professionally; and we believe that no job is too big or any detail is too small. Additionally, ACPA has a strong foundation of resources that equips us to grow in the areas needed and still be small enough to be nimble and react creatively and quickly. The final element that sets us apart is that we are not afraid of challenges set before us because we believe, and our history tells us, that we can overcome the unexpected.

In 2014, ACPA changed its mission statement to "Fostering hope and a future for children and families" because we challenged ourselves to do better so that we could do more. Historically, ACPA was founded

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with the hopes of providing birth mothers in an unplanned pregnancy, the gift of making a loving plan of adoption. Since that time, ACPA has made two crucial decisions that made us who we are today. The first was when ACPA incorporated foster to adopt into its program. The next pivotal decision came in 2014 when ACPA added foster care to its services. Thereby, ACPA is able to foster hope and a future for ALL children and families.

In 2014, ACPA had approximately 20 resource homes managed by a staff of 8 total people. Today, ACPA has grown to a total of 20 employees and 57 certified resource homes and we are not done growing! It is in our strategic plan to add additional Foster Care Manager, Permanency Caseworkers, Case Aides and a full-time Foster Family Recruiter to accomplish our mission and vision.

ACCYF and ACPA's missions align. ACCYF website, states "CYF protects children, 18 years of age and younger, from abuse and neglect and works with families to provide a safe and loving permanent home for children". ACPA strives to protect children of all ages from abuse and neglect. ACPA works in conjunction with ACCYF to provide loving, permanent homes for children, prioritizes the safety of children and advocates for and empowers children and families. ACPA strategic plan is built upon the foundational belief of providing ALL children with a hope and a future by keeping them safe in a family that meets their needs temporarily or permanently.

4. Provide the number of homes and total bed capacity you anticipate being able to maintain at any given time. Be specific about the number of homes you anticipate being best equipped to care for different child demographics and other characteristics (e.g., infants, teenagers, Therapeutic Foster Care, LGBTQIA+ individuals).

We currently have 57 certified foster families and a bed capacity of 102. We anticipate increasing our certified families to 81 and an open bed capacity to 150 over the upcoming fiscal year. With that goal in mind, and allowing for crossover, the projected allotment will be 45 (30%) beds for TFC, 50 (33%) beds for teens 50 (33%) beds for LGBTQIA+, and 90 (60%) beds for younger children including infants.

ACPA excels in keeping siblings together. Eighty-percent (80%) of our families have specified they would welcome a sibling group. Additionally, 75% of our certified families are open to children of non-white races and various cultural backgrounds. While the majority of our current families are open to mild behavioral issues and psychiatric diagnoses, there is a greater need within the system for families who are equipped to meet the needs of children with more challenging behaviors. To meet that need, we are implementing therapeutic foster care training as part of the resource families' certification process. Four of ACPA's current staff are undergoing Therapeutic Foster Care Trainer certification through Pressley Ridge. Within the upcoming fiscal year, the expectation is that 100% of our certified families will participate in the therapeutic foster care training. The projected result is that 50% of our families will open their homes to children needing a higher level of care than originally stated, but will enable 100% of our families a greater level of confidence to address any behavioral issue.

One of the unique qualities of this agency is our ability to work collaboratively with other counties and agencies. Over the past several months, this agency has intentionally built upon that strength and consulted with other organizations, so that ACPA would be better equipped to maintain the anticipated growth. Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation and Persad are two organizations ACPA has sought guidance from to meet the needs of the LGBTQIA+ population. It is through these efforts that the projected goal of

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33% of the certified families would be open to a LGBTQIA+ placement. Additionally, Family Links will assist ACPA in recruiting resource families to meet the needs of older youth, youth with drug and alcohol issues, mental health diagnosis and JPO involvement.

With the anticipated changes to our foster care program, ACPA intends to hire more staff to maintain our projected growth. The staff increase will comprise of the following added positions: one Foster Care Manager, Foster Care Recruiter, 3-5 Permanency Caseworkers, a Foster Care Supervisor, and 2-3 Case Aides.

### Promoting Placement Stability (60 points)

5. Describe your plan for *recruitment* of diverse, culturally humble Foster Care families who will provide high-quality and trauma-informed care and safety for children. Please include:
  - a. Specifics about which populations you will target.

ACPA's recruitment plan focuses on families who will provide homes for teenagers, LGBTQIA+, and minorities.

- b. The strategies you will use to ensure your Foster Care families are diverse and culturally humble.

ACPA's strategic recruiting plan for diverse and culturally humble families is titled "Take an Adventure" (TAA) and built upon 3 pillars. ACPA's strength of community outreach is the first pillar. ACPA has been highly successful in our efforts through attending community events, placing yard signs in targeted areas, canvassing neighborhoods to build relationships, recruiting supports through churches and PTAs and a strong presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. ACPA has had a monetary incentive program for years rewarding our families for being our greatest recruiting advocates.

The second pillar of "TAA" is our recruitment board for their community region. Ideally each board will capture the unique identity of the community by consisting of a business owner(s), school employee(s), religious leader(s), resource parent(s), foster youth or a community youth(s), community leader(s) and an ACPA recruiter. The purpose of the regional boards is to identify and make connections within their community for successful recruiting efforts, such as: community events to attend, high profile businesses to display advertising literature and family friendly neighborhoods to recruit within.

The final pillar of ACPA's strategic plan is the collaboration formed with Family Links and Persad. ACPA recognized the need to expand our recruitment efforts in the older teens and LGBTQIA+ populations. Persad has agreed to provide training to our staff and will assist in recruiting efforts. Family Links will provide assistance in recruiting resource families that will provide step down homes for their youths. It is through these efforts that ACPA will seek to provide homes that are supportive to the youth in diverse and culturally humble ways.

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- c. The recruitment staffing strategy, specific roles and number of staff involved in the recruitment of Foster Care families.

The community outreach pillar primarily involves ACPA's two Foster Care Recruiters. They will be responsible for building a strong presence in the communities by displaying yard signs, distributing advertising materials, and posting on social media. Additionally, they will create relationships with business owners to gather support and to educate. The recruiters will plan and attend recruiting events both virtually and in targeted communities. ACPA staff and volunteers will provide support for recruiting and community events.

The second pillar is the Recruitment Board Members. Our two Foster Care Recruiters are responsible for identifying the Recruitment Board Members within the communities that have higher removal statistics. ACPA Foster Care Recruiters along with the Recruitment Board Members will create a strategic plan unique to their community in efforts to recruit resource parents. Furthermore, Recruitment Board Members will be expected to be strong advocates within their communities. They will utilize their networks to introduce ACPA as the local resource for fostering children in care.

Family Links and Persad is the third pillar in ACPA's strategic efforts in recruiting resource parents primarily for LGBTQIA+ and teenagers. Those efforts will entail attending community events together, referring prospective resource parents to ACPA and providing education to staff and community about the need for resource parents. By joining forces with these two prominent organizations, ACPA is confident that we can better serve the unique needs of LGBTQIA+ and teenagers.

- d. The specific recruitment strategies you will use for Emergency Placement Homes, Respite Homes and Emergency Respite Homes.

ACPA will utilize two avenues to recruit for Emergency Placement Homes, Respite Homes and Emergency Respite Homes. The first avenue is that each resource family will identify up to three natural helpers that will provide emergency respite. These natural supports can be family members, friends, neighbors or another resource family who lives in close proximity. They will be required to pass background clearances, participate in an orientation meeting and pass home and safety inspection. These natural supports will minimally provide assistance with transportation, occasional meals and/or social/emotional support.

The second avenue is more formal. In addition to the TAA community approach described in section 5b, that will identify emergency placement families, ACPA will also utilize the Boomerang Recruitment Method. This method will target former adoptive/resource/kinship families who still have a vested interest in the well-being of children and youth. Although these families are not in a position to foster full-time, they can fulfill the needs of youth and families by being an emergency respite home. ACPA will connect with former foster/adoptive parents through phone calls, emails, social media, our outreach and foster care appreciation events.



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e. How you will incorporate a “customer service” approach.

ACPA prides itself on our customer centered approach. Our customers are the county children and youth agencies, the birth families, the children and our resource families. We are dedicated to genuine, honest and transparent interactions.

Children are ACPA’s number one priority. We advocate for their safety and well-being, we give them a voice by meeting with them individually at every home visit, we coordinate relationships between the birth families and resource parents and we provide them with concrete goods from our Community Family Closet. Our case aides provide empathetic transitions between visits, they act as a liaison between birth parents and resource parents regarding visitation and they tailor the transportation to meet the child’s needs.

ACPA focuses on a teamwork approach when serving the counties. We are on call 24 hours a day, we have open lines of communication, we complete required documentation within the counties’ timeframe, we participate in every meeting and court hearing and respect the roles of the parties involved in the case. When the county comes to us with a need, we make it a personal priority to fulfil it.

ACPA serves the birth parents with compassion and empathy. Each birth family is provided with the caseworker’s cell phone number which allows around the clock access. Our Permanency Caseworkers advocate for the birth parents when unable to advocate for themselves, we provide flexibility in visitation scheduling and we ensure the birth parents are updated on all aspects of their child’s life.

ACPA recognizes the value of each resource parent. We provide a customized training schedule, both in-person and virtual. We work alongside each family from orientation through placement. Upon placement, the family is supplied with concrete goods and 24 hour access to their Permanency Caseworker. Due to minimal staff turnover, the resource family is assigned one Permanency Caseworker for the duration of the placement. Our Permanency Caseworkers excel at helping our resource families navigate and understand the child welfare system.

f. How you include matching events and preplacement visits in your approach.

Matching events and preplacement visits are a tool to assist us in making the first placement the right placement. Our Matching Specialist meets with each resource family during the certification process to discuss the families’ openness to legal risk and gain an understanding of the type of placement they are open to. The Matching Specialist works closely with our certified families contacting them on a regular basis regarding emergency placements and children listed on PAE and other waiting child sites. A data base of resource families is used by our Matching Specialist and shared with each on call staff member detailing their placement parameters and bed capacity.

When a potential placement occurs, the Matching Specialist works closely with the county, ACPA Foster Care Supervisor and the resource family to ensure a smooth transition. Detailed information is gathered from all parties and preplacement visits are scheduled. The Matching Specialist assists the family through this initial stage of placement by sharing pertinent information about the child, attending the preplacement visits and guiding them through the preplacement process. The Matching Specialist will present a Family Picture Book to the child that each resource family will create. During this presentation to the child, the

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Matching Specialist will be able to answer any questions the child may have about the resource family. Virtual preplacement visits can be used as needed. Some teenagers may prefer these virtual meetings, as they are often comfortable in virtual spaces and may experience less anxious anticipation than of in-person visits. As preplacement visits progress, the Matching Specialist follows up with the resource family, discussing progress, issues, mental /physical needs of the child and any special services that the child may require. How the resource family anticipates meeting the child's needs and assimilating the child into their home is reviewed.

Our Matching Specialist attends and hosts matching events to showcase our families and attract the interest of potential resource families. Our Matching Specialist will continue to participate in Option meetings to present information on our available resource homes. Additionally, we will share information regarding families who are in the process of certification. ACPA Foster Care Supervisor updates SharePoint on a daily basis allowing the county view available families and their most current information.

6. Describe specific efforts you will take and approaches you will use to *retain* foster parents, including Foster Care parents who have Emergency Placement Homes, Respite Homes and/or Emergency Respite Homes. Include how support will be available to Foster Care parents 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

ACPA has always provided 24-hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year support to all our resource families. Our goal is to ensure when a resource family reaches out to ACPA that they are able to communicate directly to an ACPA staff member and not an answering service or a voice mail. This is accomplished by ensuring that all resource families have the office phone number, the agency on call cell phone number and their assigned caseworker's cell phone number. Furthermore, during non-work hours all calls made to the office phone number are forwarded to the Executive Directors' cell phone.

ACPA's standard protocol for emergency placements, respite placements and emergency respite placements is to have a staff member visit the child in the resource home within 24 hours of placement. Knowing that these emergency placements are fragile situations, it is our policy to visit the child every 5 days for the first 30 days of placement. After 30 days, a Permanency Caseworker visits the child every 15 days with the exception of a child under the age of one, who receives a visit every 7 days. In addition to visits, the Permanency Caseworker maintains regular phone contact with the resource families.

Access to our Community Family Closet ensures that emergency and respite homes will immediately have age-appropriate concrete goods to meet the needs of children placed in their care. This reduces out of pocket expenses by providing the resource parents unlimited access to clothes sizes infant to adult, toys for all ages, diapers, wipes, furniture, back packs, toiletries, suit cases, school supplies, coats, and shoes. ACPA has teamed up with Pittsburgh Junk King and Home Sweet Home. When people move and do not want to take all their belongings, they donate them to these companies who then donate them to us. ACPA is generously given donations on a regular basis thus allowing us to stay fully stocked at all times.

Lastly, as will be describe below in section seven (7), ACPA will be implementing a "Resource Family Partners" model for implementing peer support.

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7. Please describe a plan for facilitating peer supports for Foster Care parents. This may include strategies, a specific model (such as the Mockingbird Model) or informal mechanisms, and be based on common challenges, geography or something else.

ACPA's peer support model is called "Resource Family Partners". It is designed to facilitate peer supports for resource parents. It will assist them in navigating resources and support, respite care, advice and social support.

Resource Family Partners is pairing new resource parents with more experienced resource parents. Parents may be matched based on geographical location, interests, family structure, or parenting experience. As ACPA connects parents with each other, a staff member will help them break the ice by facilitating the first conversation.

ACPA plans to collaborate with The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh to connect our families. Together we aim to facilitate a resource parent support group. This support group may happen virtually or in person. If the group is in person, best efforts will be made to provide child care with the utilization of staff or approved volunteers. Knowing that food brings people together, we will have the families share a meal together. The support system will be staff led and topics will be adjusted to meet the needs of the participants. On occasion, a trainer will be provided which can assist families in getting the required yearly training hours. An additional benefit of this partnership with The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh hopefully results in respite connections since participants will all be foster or adoptive parents that have passed background checks and successfully completed the licensing and home study process. By making these connections, if a placement would disrupt in either agency, we could join forces to transfer the placement.

- a. Where you see fit, include innovative solutions that have arisen as a result of COVID-19 (e.g., videoconferencing, virtual visits).

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, ACPA utilized technology to ensure continuity of care for the clients and conducting daily business. The Permanency Caseworkers utilized Facetime during the stay-at-home order to conduct home visits, home safety evaluations, and interviews with resource parents and children. They scheduled and orchestrated virtual visits between the birth parents and their children via Zoom or Facetime. Although these methods were primarily used during the stay-at-home order, they are reintroduced when there is a COVID exposure or positive case.

ACPA established systems to conduct daily business. The main office phone was forwarded to the Executive Director's cell phone. Orientations were conducted via Zoom since they could not be done in person. Certification trainings were offered via Zoom. Staff meetings, Department Head meetings, and Recruitment meetings were held via Microsoft Teams. Department supervisors kept in regular contact with their direct staff, via Teams, Zoom, or Google Duo. ACPA also set up a rotating schedule so staff could have access to the office, but only with limited staff at a time.

One of the positive outcomes is the shortened certification period for resource parents. It is much easier to expedite trainings when they are completed virtually, because you are able to customize the training to accommodate their schedule. The families also appreciate the individualized attention. The COVID-19 pandemic has had its challenges, but through it all we have found that we are stronger when we work

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together and support one another. Our clients have certainly appreciated the support and the lengths that we have gone to provide that support.

Just prior to the stay-at-home order, ACPA had received a rather sizable donation of cleaning products, paper goods, laundry items, and snacks. After the order was issued, the Executive Director and Foster Care Supervisor traveled to all of the homes with placements and dropped off a large box of supplies to each family. It was an exciting day and a great way to serve our families and maintain connections.

8. Describe your process and timeline for Foster Care Home approval. If your anticipated timeline will routinely take more than three months for approval from receipt of application, please explain.

Each potential resource parents meets for an orientation with our Executive Director, which can be done in person or virtually for the family's convenience. The Executive Director is flexible with orientation scheduling, allowing the family to choose daytime, evening or weekend meetings. At the conclusion of the meeting, the resource family leaves with an application, directions to obtain clearances and a certification timeline. The family will attend training virtually with ACPA or in a group setting with our REACH collaborative. With these two options, ACPA meets the scheduling needs of our resource parents. ACPA utilizes these concurrent steps to streamline and expedite the training process.

### Process of Foster Care Certification

- The family schedules either an in person or virtual orientation with ACPA's Executive Director.
- The family receives an ACPA application and instructions to obtain all 3 clearances. If the family confirms they wish to move forward at this time, they are connected with ACPA's Foster Parent Trainer.  
The family is asked to return the application within 14 days and obtain clearances. If we don't receive the family's application within 14 days, an ACPA employee will contact the family by phone and email to offer assistance
- When ACPA receives the family's application (can be emailed or mailed) the remainder of the foster family paperwork packet is sent to the family. They are requested to return the paperwork within 14 days.
- An ACPA caseworker is assigned to the family once we have received the majority of the paperwork. The caseworker contacts the family within 3 days of receiving the assignment and schedules the first home visit. The first home visit can be completed while the family is being trained. The second visit will occur after the family completes their training.
- ACPA caseworker will write the approval document and the Foster Care Supervisor will schedule with the family to review the document and complete the foster care certification paperwork within 60 days. If the family has difficulty completing the paperwork, an ACPA caseworker or employee can assist them. All documents can be emailed or mailed.

### Promoting Well-Being (65 points)

9. Provide a detailed pre-service and ongoing training plan for Foster Care parents that emphasizes cultural humility and includes all required and relevant topic areas.

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As part of the certification process, ACPA's resource families are required to attend 24 hours of education that meet all SWAN requirements, state regulations, as well as county required diversity trainings. These trainings are as follows: Who are the Children, Who are the Parents, Child Development, Grief and Loss, Attachment, Healing the Hurts, Parenting, Resources, Cultural Humility, CPR, Mandated Report Training, Sex Trafficking and Exploitation of Children and Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards. In addition to the initial certification trainings, ACPA resource families are required to complete 3 hours of trauma informed care with an ACPA recommended program.

After certification, resource families complete 12 hours (6 hours must be in-person) of annual training including 3 hours of trauma informed care. Upon certification and every subsequent year after, each resource family is given a resource family development plan that highlights targeted areas: Trauma and Loss, Birth Family Relationships/Triad/Co-parenting Relationships, Placement Preservation, Cultural Humility, Attachment Based Parenting Skills/Discipline, and Fostering Older Youth. Our resource families are able to fulfill their training requirements through, but not limited to, the ACCYF Training Co-op, ACPA provided trainings, resource parent support group and approved independent educational resources.

ACPA is implementing a therapeutic foster care program. Each resource family is required to participate in 36 hours of intensive training to become certified as a Therapeutic Resource Family. In addition, Therapeutic Resource Families will be required to complete 18 hours of annual training to maintain their status. In order to fully invest in the success of our program, ACPA has dedicated four (4) of its full-time staff members to train the resource families and staff. ACPA staff is scheduled to complete Therapeutic Foster Care certification by February 25, 2021 through Pressley Ridge.

We have partnered with Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation and Persad to train our resource families and reduce the bias and discrimination LGBTGIA+ individuals experience and create a more inclusive space. Equipping our resource families with the necessary education, including education on the need for fostering older youth, youth with medical and behavioral problems, LGBTQIA+ youth, and sibling groups, they are able to better advocate for this need and therefore become a great resource for children coming into care.

10. Describe your plan to facilitate co-parenting between birth parents and Foster Care parents, including how you will connect these people as early on as possible after a new placement is established.

ACPA will provide a consistent message that encourages co-parenting through our family recruitment, orientation, certification process, training and staff interactions. This process will break down pre-conceived biases before a child is placed in their home. ACPA currently conducts ice breaker meetings to assist both the resource parents and birth family in establishing a working rapport and helps both parties become intentional about co-parenting in the child's best interest. Currently, our ice breaker meeting takes place within 72 hours of a child's placement to serve as a starting point for establishing communication and building a relationship. This meeting occurs virtually or in person. The ice breaker meeting gives the birth parent(s) a forum to share information regarding their child's likes and dislikes, daily routines, a picture of them with their children, a favorite toy, bedtime rituals and any other relevant information.

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If behavioral issues surface with the child, the birth parents will be consulted about what techniques have been successful in the past. If supportive services are needed, such as family based therapy, the birth parents and resource parents will be equally included in the treatment plan. Together, the resource parents and birth parents will not only make a decision in the best interest of the child but support one another through a co-parenting approach.

Our co-parenting plan builds a positive, child focused relationship between the resource family and birth parent. To help bridge the gap, we expect that the resource parents will invite the birth parents to a child's sporting/school events, transport and supervise visits between child(ren) and their birth parents and assist transporting birth parents to the children's medical and therapy appointments. Through this growing relationship we support ongoing phone contact between resource parents and birth parents and encourage resource parents to plan outings with birth parents, such as to the zoo or a restaurant.

The Permanency Caseworker will actively support the efforts of co-parenting and encourage the birth parents' efforts to complete the goals and objectives of their Family Service Plan. A more involved approach will permit the Permanency Caseworker to offer encouragement and promote reunification.

In an effort to further promote stability for the child, ACPA would like to propose an additional service offering of aftercare for reunified families. ACPA feels that this is a natural extension of our foster care program. We believe that best practice will be the same Permanency Caseworker will also be the aftercare worker for the child and birth family. This will allow continuity of care from placement to reunification. The Permanency Caseworker will create an aftercare plan with goals and objectives to help sustain safety and reunification. This aftercare plan is based on 5 protective factors: parental resilience, social connections, concrete supports, parenting skills and social/ emotional competence of children. An ACPA Permanency Caseworker will remain involved in the case for the first 3-6 months after the child is reunified with their birth family. The Permanency Caseworker will have weekly contact with the birth family, additional contact will occur as deemed necessary. Home visits will occur at least every other week. The final key element of the aftercare program is the encouragement of the resource parents to remain a source of support for the birth parents.

11. Provide a detailed plan for establishing and sustaining Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) homes. Please include:

- a. The standards of the specific model you intend to use and why you chose it.

ACPA chose Trauma-Integrative Treatment Foster Care (TI-TFC) as our therapeutic foster care model. This model embodies the family and community-based settings within its core design. A key aspect is the child's ability to transfer individual improvements in the future. ACPA will utilize community psychiatric and therapy interventions within the TFC home. All treatment team members will implement services necessary to ensure safety while offering concentrated interventions and supervision of child.

TI-TFC program framework is based on many factors, the **first factor is specialized training** for the TFC parent and permanency caseworker who are caring for youth with complex trauma. All TFC parents and Permanency Caseworkers will be trained in "Treatment Parent Training Curriculum, an evidence-based pre-service training" designed by Pressley Ridge. This curriculum has a variety of teaching methods such as trainer presentations, experiential activities, group discussion, multimedia resources and skill practice exercises. Furthermore each TFC parent will receive a parent training manual (English/Spanish)

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which is organized in 12 units of training topics which include, introduction to TFC, professional parenting I &II, understanding childhood development I & II, developing healthy relationships, therapeutic communication, understanding behavior, changing behavior, skill teaching, conflict resolution, and understanding & managing crisis. In order to implement the trainings, four ACPA staff members will successfully complete the trainer certification program.

**TI-TFC's second factor is the focus on change.** Change is the relationship between the TFC parent, the child, and the child's birth family. The key focus is on TFC parent's capacity to develop a safe and secure home environment and their ability to develop therapeutic relationships with the child and their family. These therapeutic relationships will support the child in addressing the trauma responses and enhance their meaningful involvement of the birth family. The birth parent or family is involved from the beginning and is integrated to the maximum extent possible.

The **third factor is the integrated roles** of the Permanency Caseworker and the TFC resource parent. The Permanency Caseworker will play the following roles: case manager, the TFC resource parent supervisor and trainer and the therapeutic team leader. The TFC resource parent is the family partner for the youth and birth parent and is a member of the treatment team. The permanency caseworker, TFC resource parent, birth parent and youth are expected to participate (in person or virtual) in the integrated services which are defined in the service plan. The integration of collateral evaluations and treatment may consist of outpatient mental health and/or substance abuse therapy, specialty medical treatment, psychiatric or psychological evaluation and treatment.

The **fourth factor is assessment** of each child placed in TFC. ACPA chose to use the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Questionnaire. We chose CANS because it is a multi-purpose tool developed for children's services to support decision making and service planning and to allow the monitoring of outcomes of services. We selected ACE Questionnaire because it assess three types of trauma; abuse, neglect and household dysfunction. Five of the measurements are personal and five are related to other family members.

- b. How you will implement the model, including specifics about the development and use of treatment plans at the client level.

All treatment team members will participate in developing the Individualized Service Plan for children in care.

**Placement:** Each placement referral received will be assessed through sharing of resource family's picture, pre-placement visits and other matching interviews with child and his family to determine the ability to ensure the safety of the child placed as well as other youth in the home.

**Consult/Support services:** The Permanency Caseworker will be available to the child's birth family, the TFC parents and youth directly through their cell phone and/or another agency staff through our 24-hour agency on call phone. This availability will provide consult and support by phone and / or in person. The TFC parent and the youth's birth family will initiate contact at least two times a week.

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**Post -placement home visits:** The Permanency Caseworker will complete a face-to-face home visit with child and TFC parent twice per month. These home visits are minimally 90 minutes to 3 hours. If deemed essential, may virtually involve the birth family. The home visit may address progress of the Individualized Service Plan (ISP) goals, in-home training for TFC parent, review of daily intervention chart and contracts (described below), birth family visitation and overall well-being of the child.

**TI-TFC Service Plans:** Within the first 7 days of the placement the CANS and ACE Questionnaire will be completed. By the 14<sup>th</sup> day of placement, a strength/needs-based service plan (the ISP) will be developed for each youth. Areas of function evaluated will be current stressors, sexual behaviors, personality characteristics, chemical dependency and an emergency plan. The plan considers the developmental stage of the youth as well as his/her ethnic and cultural background. The ISP will be re-evaluated in 90 days (earlier if necessary) and revisions are formulated to include progress, goals accomplished and the child's changing needs. The ISP will be formulated by multi-agency input. The team may include the child and his birth family, TFC parent, appropriate MH representative, CYF worker, school staff and ACPA Permanency Caseworker.

**Therapeutic Interactions:** The role of the Permanency Caseworker will be to connect the activities of the treatment team so all recommendations can be consistently implemented. The Foster Care Manager will provide coaching supervision of all Permanency Caseworkers. The Permanency Caseworker will monitor the child's activities and intervene as needed using the treatment plan interventions.

### **Behavior Interventions:**

1. Daily Interventions- The TFC family and child's birth family (during family visitation) will evaluate daily progress of the child according to his/her behaviors as it relates to the treatment plan. Rewards and privileges will be given for progress.
2. Contracts- This is a written agreement between the child and child's treatment team to target a specific disruptive/destructive behavior and method of intervention.
3. Discipline Policy- The discipline policy will follow the children and youth 3700.63 regulations.
4. Development- Posting and review of "house rules, expectation and identification of privileges" for each TFC home.

**Community Activities Intervention:** Each child will be given the opportunity to engage in community activities. The activities will be practical and safe and will consider the physical, mental, and emotional capabilities of each child. This can be adapted to each child's interest and provide a wide variety of experiences within the community. Moreover, this will give the child a chance to experience constructive activities and to interact with positive role models in a community setting. If age appropriate, the child can opt to gain employment or participate in job skill training.

- c. How your organizational capacity and infrastructure will be able meet all model standards and train and support Foster Care parents.

Our minimum 90 minute home visits allow for informal meeting, detail review of the child's progress, modeling child specific interventions, addressing expectations and celebrating the child's accomplishments. Each TFC placement will equate to 1.5 cases towards the Permanency Caseworker's total caseload limit of 12 children. Children served in a TFC program require a high degree of therapeutic



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intensity. Therefore, there will be a limit of three (3) TFC children per TFC family. Due to the additional TFC placements, ACPA recognizes the need for an additional Foster Care Supervisor, Permanency Caseworkers and Case Aides.

TFC parents will be required to complete the initial 36 hours of training within the first 3 months of certification. ACPA will offer our families the trainings either virtually or in-person depending upon their schedule or the CDC guidelines. Each TFC parent will complete 18 hours of training yearly following their certification.

To support our TFC families, the Permanency Caseworker and ACPA emergency on-call phone is available 24/7. During the extended post-placement visits, the Permanency Caseworker will address the needs and goals with the resource parents and any immediate needs at that time. For their convenience, the TFC families can receive in-home training through a certified ACPA TFC trainer. They also have full access to our Community Family closet for concrete goods.

- d. Your proposed process and timeline to establish between 30% and 50% of your Foster Care homes as TFC settings.

Upon approval of the RFP, ACPA will begin the hiring process for additional staff. Within the first 30 days of approval, ACPA will hire a Foster Care Manager and a Foster Care Supervisor in the Beaver location. The hiring of the Foster Care Supervisor will free time for the Foster Care Manager to focus on staffing and training the new Permanency Caseworkers in our Allegheny County location. It is our intentions to hire 1-3 Permanency Caseworkers as placement referrals increase.

By the end of February of 2021, four ACPA staff will have completed certification to become a TFC trainer. In April of 2021, these TFC trainers will educate all ACPA staff on TFC training. In May of 2021, we will begin the 12 week training process for our current certified resource parents. We anticipate having 30-50% of resource parents trained by September 1, 2021.

12. Describe your plan to ensure timely completion of assessments for children in Foster Care through staff training, supervision and quality assurance.

ACPA will continue completing all assessments and reports for children in foster care. Quality assurance of this documentation is accomplished through staff training and ongoing supervision. Permanency Caseworkers training is extensive and is completed over the course of three months from hire date to ensure that not only are they fully trained, but that they have had the appropriate amount of time to apply it to their caseload. They receive training in the KIDS system, SOGIE training, CANS, Prudent Parenting, CSEC, Cultural Humility, Trauma Informed Care, Therapeutic Foster Care, and Mandated Reporter Training. The Permanency Caseworker is also required to participate in the training that the resource parents receive to become a certified resource parent. Each full-time Permanency Caseworker is expected to receive 40 hours of training annually that supports their professional development.

Each Permanency Caseworker submits their monthly progress reports to the Foster Care Supervisor by the 5<sup>th</sup> of every month to allow the supervisor adequate time to review and approve the reports by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. ISP's and CANS are put on a strict time schedule which is reviewed monthly by the

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supervisor to ensure that compliance issues may be identified immediately. The Foster Care Supervisor and Executive Director receive and review all compliance reports from the county and state.

To ensure quality control, the Foster Care Supervisor has a monthly audit meeting, a monthly foster care meeting, and evaluates monthly home visits. At the monthly audit meeting, the Foster Care Supervisor meets with each of the Permanency Caseworkers to review their files on an individual basis. This not only helps to identify any issues that the Permanency Caseworkers may be struggling with, but it also enables the supervisor to build and encourage the Permanency Caseworkers to help with staff retention. The monthly foster care meeting allows each of the team members to be heard and brain storm ideas to address any changing needs. The third prong in ACPA's approach to quality control is the home visit evaluation. Twice a year, the Foster Care Supervisor attends a home visit to evaluate each Permanency Caseworker and ensure that the needs of the resource parents and the child in their home are being addressed properly.

Each Case Aide that transports or supervises a visit is required to submit the reports to their supervisor within 5 days for review. The Foster Care Supervisor schedules and keeps an account of each visit with the birth parents. Not only does the Case Aide have access to the Permanency Caseworker, but also to the Foster Care Supervisor. The Case Aides are required to complete Mandated Reporter, CSEC, Cultural Humility, Car Seat Safety, and SOGIE trainings prior to or within a month of hiring. In addition, they receive on the job training by another Case Aide with significant experience that is able to then act as a peer mentor.

### **Building a High-Quality and Consistent System (15 points)**

13. Describe your organization's plan to regularly collect feedback from Foster Care children, parents and families and how you will incorporate it into your Foster Care program and ensure continuous quality improvements. Please include:
- a. How you will collect feedback from children in Foster Care and use it to inform your practice.

Presently, ACPA's Permanency Caseworkers do face to face interviews with the children in care at each home visit. When the information shared has pertained to our services, we have adjusted to meet the needs of the children. Our Foster Care Supervisor evaluates the Permanency Caseworker at an in home visit twice a year. During the visit, the Foster Care Supervisor also meets and interviews the child regarding the resource family. Any information gathered is then discussed at our Department Head meetings to determine if adjustments need to be made within our programming.

To intentionally gather information, ACPA will design a focus group to ensure our service approach aligns with the children's voices. We will ask children in our care from various demographics to participate. The focus group will concentrate on topics that are important to a child, for example: supporting their identity; adjusting to living with a resource family; and reinforcing birth family relationships. This information will be gathered through Zoom meetings, face to face interviews, and phone calls.

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- b. How you will get Foster Care family input to evaluate what supports are needed, and how this feedback will inform changes to practices.

ACPA begins collecting feedback from our resource families during the certification process and continues to do so until they no longer are resource parents. During the certification process, the caseworkers and trainers assist the resource family in identifying who their supports are. If the resource families share any specific issues during this time, it is brought to the attention of the Foster Care Supervisor and discussed during the monthly department meeting. At that point, it is decided upon on how best this agency needs to address the situation. In most situations, the issues require further education for either the staff or the resource family. For example, when it became apparent that many of our families did not know how to relate to the birth parents, this agency made system wide changes. The Executive Director changed some of the language during orientation, the family profile writers changed their language during interviews, and our ACPA trainer made changes during her trainings. It has been noted that making these system wide changes has had a tremendous effect on placements. Resource families are more comfortable with birth parents' relationships by the time a child is placed in their home and the Icebreaker meeting occurs.

Additionally, the Permanency Caseworkers are in constant contact with the resource families when they have a child placed in their home. When a need arises, it is addressed immediately to determine the resources to utilize. Furthermore, the Foster Care Supervisor evaluates the Permanency Caseworker at an in-home visit twice a year. During the visit, the Foster Care Supervisor also meets and interviews the resource family regarding information about the agency and the Permanency Caseworker. Any information gathered is then discussed at our Department Head meetings to determine if adjustments need to be made within our programming. The final piece to gathering feedback from our resource families occurs after they have closed their file with our agency. Our Matching Specialist emails them a survey which they are then able to submit anonymously. The survey results are then shared with the Executive Director who then shares the information at the Department Head meetings, where it is evaluated and applied to our programming.

14. Describe your process and plan for tracking, entering and reporting data in a timely and accurate manner. Be specific about which staff will be required to perform the data entry, how they will be supervised, monitored and supported and where data entry fits into the overall business process.

ACPA's outcome measurements will follow the following hierarchy of accountability which falls in line with our business process. The Permanency Caseworkers will report to the Foster Care Supervisor. The Foster Care Supervisor will report to the Foster Care Manager. The Foster Care Manager will report to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will report to the Board of Directors.

Permanency Caseworker will submit to the Foster Care Supervisor for approval regarding the following monthly reports: CANS assessments, ISP, monthly progress reports, Educational Assessments, family visitation reports, and court reports. The Foster Care Supervisor will have bi-monthly audit meetings with each Permanency Caseworker to ensure the KIDS data entry is complete. The Foster Care Manager will review the accountability status report monthly with the Foster Care Supervisors. The Foster Care Manager will share any pertinent information with the Executive Director.

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The Foster Care Manager will complete quarterly data reports which gather information pertaining to each foster child's outcomes. The data collected closely mirrors Child and Family Services Review Instrument January 2016 by US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children & Families. Outcome reports will be submitted to county agencies on a yearly basis, unless otherwise stated in the contract agreement. Additionally, The Foster Care Manager will compile a monthly data report that records the demographics and bed capacity of our resource families and child placements. This data report is submitted to the Executive Director.

### Staffing and Staff Training (40 points)

15. Attach an organizational chart that reflects the positions, including responsibilities and current or desired qualifications, of all staff members involved with all components of operating Foster Care. The attachment is not included in the page count.

ACPA's strategy for hiring staff is based on building dedicated professionals where individuals feel empowered and have opportunities to develop. We have an interview team that gives input about each candidate to ensure the most qualified person is hired.

Listed below are the staff members that will we believe will be needed to successfully operate the foster care department:

- Executive Director: Master's Degree and experience supervising and working in the human service field. Responsible for overseeing the entire organization,
- Foster Care Manager: Bachelor's Degree in human service field, experience working and supervising in the human service field. (The potential Foster Care Manager has a Master's Degree). Responsible for managing daily operations of the foster care department and supervising the Foster Care Supervisors.
- 2 Foster Care Supervisors: Bachelor's Degree and working experience in human service field. Responsible for supervising a team of Permanency Caseworkers
- 8 Permanency Caseworkers: Bachelor's Degree. Professional experience preferred. Responsible for overseeing foster care placements in their resource homes.
- 5-8 Case Aides: High School Diploma. Experience working with children. Responsible for transporting to and supervising birth parent visits.

Organizational chart is attached to this RFP.

16. Describe your plan and strategy for recruiting any additional staff needed for Foster Care, or how current staff meets all needs, including the staff who will support TFC homes. Describe past successes using this strategy.

ACPA has had great success building a foster care program. Recognizing the needs within the system, ACPA Executive Director began to make changes in 2015 to grow our foster care program. Between 2015-2017, we grew from one full-time Permanency Caseworker and one full-time Matching Specialist to a Foster Care Supervisor, 5 Permanency Caseworkers, a Matching Specialist, one full-time Case Aide and

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3 contracted Case Aides. It is the intention of ACPA to emulate the same growth in our Allegheny County location utilizing the same metrics.

With great enthusiasm and commitment, ACPA is determined to meet the needs in Allegheny County by adding a new branch to our foster care program. In order to meet those expectant needs, the staff increase will ideally comprise of an additional one Foster Care Recruiter, 3-5 Permanency Caseworkers, a Foster Care Supervisor, and 2-3 Case Aides. Implementation of this program will begin when the contract is approved and the staff will be added as the program grows.

Our strategic plan to hiring staff will focus on Allegheny County. We will advertise on all social media forms: LinkedIn, ZipRecruiter, Diversity Black Career Network, Work Place Diversity, EveryJobForMe.com and Indeed. Initially, the positions we will be hiring for is 2 Permanency Caseworkers, Foster Care Recruiter and 2-3 Case Aides.

Effective February, 2021, four of our ACPA staff will begin the certification process to become a Therapeutic Foster Parent Trainer. These facilitators will train the entire foster care team and all certified families. By having each staff trained, this will allow our TFC families to receive multi-layers of support within the organization. The crisis services will be provided through Family Links and potentially Glade Run Lutheran Services.

17. Provide a detailed staff training plan that emphasizes cultural humility and ensures that staff are trained in relevant topic areas, including the changes you will make to the existing training program to meet requirements.

A culturally humble and educated staff is imperative to ACPA's successful foster care program. In order to embody a customer centered approach to the families and children we work with, all staff will receive yearly training in three primary cultural areas: LBGTQIA+, racial diversity and issues, and older youth in the foster care system. ACPA recognizes in order to better recruit, support and retain resource families that are able to meet the needs of foster children, we as the staff, need to have solid foundational input from the cultures we serve.

One of the new key elements that ACPA is implementing is the addition of therapeutic foster care (TFC). Each foster care staff member will be required to undergo TFC training. All resource parents to be certified in TFC will complete 36 hours of TCF training, taught by the certified ACPA instructors. Although, this does not target one specific cultural identity, it does provide better parenting skills across all cultural barriers to better serve the children. It is through the TFC training that ACPA believes resource parents will feel more capable of parenting older youth with more challenging behaviors.

It became apparent through staff planning meetings, that ACPA had to grow beyond its borders and it has made an intentional effort to do so. One of the critical changes that ACPA has made in its foster care program is the new Allegheny County location in Duquesne, PA. Duquesne is a community that lacks in natural resources and has very few community supports. ACPA's goal is to build community relations and determine ways to support the community. This two prong approach will not only increase ACPA's

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appreciation and understanding for the areas culture, but will increase the community's natural resources. .

ACPA's staff is required to complete 2-4 training hours focused on experiences and cultural identities of others and self-humility in relation to different cultures. This training will aid staff in recognizing the power dynamics and imbalances in various communities and bring about an awareness of how our own culture affects the way we view and interact with others. An additional 2-4 hours will be in the area of racial diversity and current issues to increase awareness. The minimum training requirement in cultural diversity/humility is 4-8 hours annually.

To grow in the area of cultural humility for the LBGQTQIA+ population, ACPA has met extensively with Persad and Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation. Each organization has offered staff training, resource parent training, and supportive services for any child placed with one of ACPA's families. Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation Wellness Foundation is going to partner with ACPA in recruiting LBGQTQIA+ resource families, reducing the bias and discrimination individuals' experience, and teaching us to create more inclusive spaces. To further support the LBGQTQIA+ population, ACPA will utilize the services and supports offered through AFFIRM. Not only will each staff member be required to complete SOGIE training upon hire, but any training designed for ACPA by Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation or Persad will be a full staff mandatory training. Including the support staff or administrative staff in the training will enforce a more inclusive culture. The minimum yearly training requirement is 4-8 hours.

Another critical area that ACPA is addressing is the older youth population. It is required upon certification that the resource parents must complete 3 hours of training for older youth. It is the intent of ACPA to increase awareness and understanding in our families, thus making a system wide positive impact. It will be expected that ACPA staff will complete 2-4 hours yearly, addressing the specific needs of older youth in the system. ACPA will recruit families who are willing to engage with older youth, serve as mentors within their community and support their birth parents. ACPA hopes to build community relations through older youth, by recruiting volunteers, offering community service hours, assistance with senior projects, and training peer mentors. Older youth associated with ACPA will be connected to the Youth Advisory Board, so they can make a positive impact within the system, thereby allowing their voice to be heard. The minimum yearly training requirement is 2-4 hours.

### 18. Describe your plan for hiring racially and culturally diverse staff.

ACPA will grow its team, by hiring from the cultures which we serve. Employees who mirror the clients served will benefit our organization by establishing a common ground. Employees with different perspectives provide ACPA with a holistic view of unmet needs and identify new opportunities. If a company is only as good as its employees, then it stands to reason that a great deal of energy should be devoted to hiring the most talented and culturally diverse individuals. It will be an intentional change to the face of ACPA, but will also naturally provide cultural humility and understanding.

ACPA will hire staff to accommodate our Allegheny County location. It is our intention to expand our staff with employees who reside in the areas we serve. We will advertise on web-based mediums, such as, Ziprecruiter.com, Diversity.com, Black Career Network and Workplacediversity.com, using specific, inclusive language to attract more diverse applicants. Additional hiring efforts will include holding a hiring event and utilizing our community resources.

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### Organizational Capacity and Implementation Challenges (30 points)

19. Complete the following chart of services your organization currently provides in contract with DHS and/or other PA counties. You may add additional lines to the chart, as needed.

Adoption Connection, PA	Service Description	Contracting Entity	Contract Amount	Start Date of Contract
Adoption Connection, PA	Foster care Services	Allegheny Co DHS	\$68.90 per diem	7-1-20
Adoption Connection, PA	Foster care services	Beaver Co. CYS	\$71.05 per diem	7-1-20
Adoption Connection, PA	Foster care services	Butler Co. CYS	\$71.05 per diem	7-1-20
Adoption Connection, PA	Foster care services	Erie Co. CYS	\$71.05 per diem	7-1-20
Adoption Connection, PA	Foster care services	Washington Co. CYS	\$71.05 per diem	7-1-20
Adoption Connection, PA	Foster care services	Greene Co. CYS	\$71.05 per diem	7-1-20
Adoption Connection, PA	Foster care services	Indiana Co. CYS	\$71.05 per diem	7-1-20
Adoption Connection, PA	Foster care services	Lackawanna Co CYS	\$71.05 per diem	7-1-20
Adoption Connection, PA	Foster care services	Lancaster Co CYS	\$71.05 per diem	7-1-20
Adoption Connection, PA	Foster care Services	Crawford Co CYS	\$71.05 per diem	7-1-20
Adoption Connection, PA	Foster care services	Mercer Co. CYS	\$71.05 per diem	7-1-20

20. Describe the challenges that your organization has experienced in the past and/or that you anticipate with fulfilling the Foster Care Scope of Services, as described in the RFP, and how you will mitigate those challenges.

The challenges that ACPA has experienced in the past are identity as an adoption agency, maintenance of adequate staff in relation to our growth as well as diversity of staff and resource parents. In order to mitigate these challenges, ACPA has named our foster care program Family Connections to break down the barriers the word adoption creates and aligns with variety of permanency outcomes for children. To increase our diversity in staff, we are hiring through diverse employment sites using inclusive language and focusing on adding staff from the areas we serve. Our resource family recruitment efforts are targeting multi-cultural areas with families that will foster teenagers, LGBTQIA+ and minority populations. We are being proactive in our hiring strategies to ensure we can meet the needs of the increase in placement referrals and resource families. Additionally, we have partnered with Family Links, Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation and Persad to assist with recruiting resource families.

21. Provide a plan for implementation that clearly identifies your organization's strengths and challenges to implementing the Scope of Services, including the changes your organization will need to make (in terms of staffing, training, structure, Board of Directors, etc.) to deliver the services described. Attach a timeline for implementation that includes benchmarks and anticipated completion dates, clearly showing what can be in place by July 2021 and what will require more time to implement. The attachment is not included in the page count.

To implement the scope of services, the strengths that ACPA embodies are our customer service approach, passion for the children we serve, dedication to all families, collaborations with other social

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service agencies, staff retention, personal experience in our leadership team and staff and connection with our community. We will carry these strengths over to expanding our services into Allegheny County.

While an office in Allegheny County will provide numerous advantages, it will also present several challenges. One of the primary challenges is becoming a known foster care provider in Allegheny County. Due to the fact that we have just begun to establish ourselves in Allegheny County, recruiting resource families and staff from that area will be a priority. The next significant task would be the licensing of our Allegheny office that currently houses two visitation rooms. This will be a time intensive task; however, we have already contacted our representative at OCYF to educate ourselves on the process. Finally, we will have to educate ourselves on the employee/employer tax structure in Allegheny County. We realize that these are not our only challenges. We have addressed other challenges related to our services in question number 20.

ACPA believes that our strengths are our biggest asset in overcoming future challenges. Our exemplary reputation for customer service was recognized by the residents of Beaver County through awarding ACPA the Best of the Valley in the following categories: Best Non-profit, Best Company to Work for under 25 employees, Best Company Culture, Best Overall Company to Work for and Person of the Year. ACPA has always put its clients first, whether it is the resource families, the children in care or the birth families. Our dedication to our families will not be lost as we enter into Allegheny County. As part of the core foundation of our organization, we will implement the same principles in Allegheny County and value the clients we serve with the same high regard. Our 24/7 availability provides them a constant partner in their foster care journey. Another strength that we will implement into our scope of services is our ability to collaborate with other social service agencies. We have formed new partnerships with Family Links, Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation, Persad and The Children's Institute. These connections will provide ACPA's staff and resource families with training and peer support group and will assist us in recruiting resource families.

### **Financial Management and Budget (10 points, not included in page count)**

22. Provide a detailed line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing and sustaining Foster Care, including the suggested Maintenance Rate for TFC homes for the selected model and whether that amount varies based on the age of the child in care. You may provide the line-item budget as an attachment (e.g., Excel file) or in the space below.

*See attachment*

23. Provide a budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in the proposed budget

In developing the projected foster care program budget, ACPA utilized the OCYF Placement Services Budget to ensure a seamless approval process for FY 21/22. The first method for data and calculations used to support the salary/benefits split of several staff across multiple job categories, were the time studies results which were conducted within the previous fiscal year. Two non-consecutive two-week time studies were conducted. Seven staff members that work in multiple programs or have multiple duties within the foster care program were studied. The positions that work in multiple programs include



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Executive Director, Permanency Supervisor, Office Coordinator, and Birth Mother and Development Specialist. The current Foster Care Administrative Assistant, Foster Care Recruiter and Foster Care Supervisor also completed time studies even though they are allocated 100% to foster care program, however; they do multiple tasks within the program. Their time studies are completed to ensure how much of their time is allocated to each of the foster care program activities. Each of these staff members were required to record their tasks each day. A time study summary and analysis were created to summarize each staff percentage of salary to the foster care program. The calculations based on the time study are as follows: total time for foster care program divided by total hours worked, then times that number by 100 and it equals percentage of time allocated to foster care program. Moreover, the methodology used to support the salary split for the Finance Manager is based on the percentage of foster care revenue and the total revenue of the agency, which support a percentage of her salary and benefits to the program.

During this upcoming fiscal year, the agency plans to restructure various positions and increase number of staff. The new employee positions consist of a Foster Care Manager, a second Foster Care Supervisor, a second Foster Care Family Recruiter, three to five additional Permanency Caseworkers and five to eight Case Aides.

Adoption Connection, PA determines and apportions costs for programs and services fairly and impartially. Adoption Connection, PA has three distinct programs that provide our revenue, the SWAN Program, the Foster Care Program and the Domestic Private Adoption Program. Any revenue generated by the SWAN Program and the Domestic Private Adoption Program are non-applicable for Title IV-E and/or Act 148 participation. Our second methodology for determining how to apply costs specifically to the Foster Care Program is by determining the total revenue for all programs and dividing it into the total revenue for the Foster Care Program, then using that percentage for foster care work to allocate the following budget items: facility, maintenance, building utilities, communication, office supplies, postage & shipping, printing/publications, insurance, furniture/equipment, association dues /license fees, advertising, and administrative.

A third methodology used for staff on the staff roster was used for the direct care staff that worked solely in just one program. The direct care staff that worked only for the foster care program had their total salaries allocated at 100%. The third methodology was also used for staff & foster parent transportation/travel, foster parent training, recruitment of foster parents, staff education and contracted case aides' costs that are allocated based on actual tracked usage due to those costs having been set up in our Quick Books program as program specific. These costs were identified on each of the staff's expense reports and contracts as to the program that they are applied to.

Our method of determining projected assumptions for days of care was determined by adding actual days of care for July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. We then multiplied the actual days of care per month by 60% (our projected increase) to get the projected total days for the FY 2021/22. The following budget items were increased by our projection of 60% in foster child placement days: transportation, supplies and postage & shipping.

All costs are consistent with policies and procedures and determined by generally accepted accounting principles. Costs assessed are reasonable and clearly documented and are not used to meet

## **RFP for Foster Care Agencies**

cost sharing or matching requirements. Staff and operating costs are reviewed annually as a part of the annual audit as well as in preparation for the coming year's projected budget; costs may be adjusted throughout the year on an as-needed basis. There is no indirect administrative expense rate charged. All costs attributable to the Foster Care program are 100% Title IV-E and Act 148 allowable.

## Adoption Connection PA

Object of Expense	Projected Budget 21-22
<b>Personnel Expenses</b>	
Salaries	
	\$ 593,610.00
Contracted Case Aides	\$ 15,000.00
Employee Benefits	\$ 778,683.00
Staff Education	
	\$ 2,283.00
<b>Facility/Operational Expenses</b>	
Facility	\$ 18,325.00
Maintenance	\$ 10,695.00
Building Utilities	\$ 5,418.00
Communication	\$ 6,884.00
Office Supplies	\$ 3,788.00
Staff Transportation/Travel	\$ 102,952.00
Foster parent Transportation/Travel	\$ 4,847.00
Postage and Shipping	\$ 1,416.00
Printing and Publications	\$ 344.00
Insurance	\$ 23,655.00
Equipment and Furniture	\$ 1,640.00
Association Dues and License Fees	\$ 304.00
Foster Parent per diem cost	\$ 624,276.00
Foster Parent Training	\$ 3,952.00
Recruitment of Foster Parents	\$ 17,052.00
Advertising	\$ 12,258.00
Admin	\$ 7,803.00

Total	\$	2,235,185.00
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After care option per family	Projected Budget 21-22	
Permanency caseworker salary	\$	502.00
Foster Care supervisor salary	\$	48.00
Transporation	\$	168.00
Total cost for unit of service per family	\$	718.00

Foster care program budget is based of  
24,291 foster placement days of service

	70% of our projected daily per diem	
Foster Care		
Foster family mainatence per diem		\$23.00
Calculated Admin cost		\$50.83
Total calculated per diem		\$73.83

	30% of our projected daily per diem	
Theraputic Foster Care		
Foster family mainatence per diem		\$32.00
Calculated Admin cost		\$51.47
Total calculated per diem		\$83.47

## \ RFP Projected Budget 2021-2022

Explantion of Cost
20.29 FTE
8-Permanency Caseworkers, 2- Foster Care Supervisor, 1- Foster Care Manager, 2 Foster Care Recruiters, 2 Case Aides, 1- Foster Care Administrative Assistant, 1- Matching Specilist , and 4.26 FTE which concist of various Admin/ support staff who are prorated to program based upon yearly time studies
utilized for family visistation and other transportation needs of youth in care (3-6 contracted Case Aides).
health/ dental/ FSA/ simple IRS, tax libility for 20.29 FTE
training for staff to ensure licensing compliance, cost of the TFC training curriculum was made in Jan. 2021 thus the cost was not included in the projected budget (\$8,100)
mortgage,Interest,depreciation & rent
building cleaning, ground maintence and repairs
water/sewage, electic, refuge
internet/phone/TV/ computer maintence, office equipment rental and maintence, on call cellphone, telephone system, computer and software purchases
paper, binders, writing utentials, tablets, cleaning products, etc.
staff and contracted Case Aides transport/ travel cost associated with post placment visits and family visiation, judical hearings,options/team meetings, and pre-placement or mathching
foster parents transport/travel for implementation of family visition for foster child
rack cards, banners, business cards and flyers
package Insurance building & liability, umbrella insurance, crime /D&O insurance, cyber insurance & MVR
desks, filing cabnets
association dues
foster care daily per diem \$23 X 17004 days of care & TFC daily per diem \$32X 7287 days of care
transportation cost, virtural training fees, contracted trainers fees
vendor cost for events, community events, resource parent appreciation events, SWAG, recruitment boad meetings and travel cost associated with recruitment
website design & maintence, community manangement relations softwares, local newspaer ads
payroll and tax prep services, financial audit and 990 tax services

**Explanation of cost**

average hourly rate \$14.54 X 34.5 hours

average hourly rate \$15.86 X 3 hours

average miles per HV 50 X .56 cents per mile

unit of service is for 3 months which includes: weekly contact, homevisit every other week, transportation and case management

## Adoption Connection PA Foster Care Organizational Chart (Proposed)

**Executive Director**  
Master's Degree in a related Human Service field  
Experience in Human Services  
Responsible for overseeing operations of all aspects of

**Foster Care Manager**  
Bachelor's degree in a Human Service related field  
Experience in the Human Service field  
Supervision experience necessary  
Responsible for overseeing Foster Care Dept. in both locations..

**Two (2) Foster Parent Recruiters**  
Bachelor's degree in a Human Service related field  
Responsible for recruiting and training families

**Matching Specialist**  
Bachelor's degree or experience in Human Service related field  
Responsible for matching placements for foster care, shelter and fost/adopt

**Foster Care Supervisor in Beaver location**  
Bachelor's degree and experience in a Human Service related field  
Responsible for supervising Permanency Caseworkers

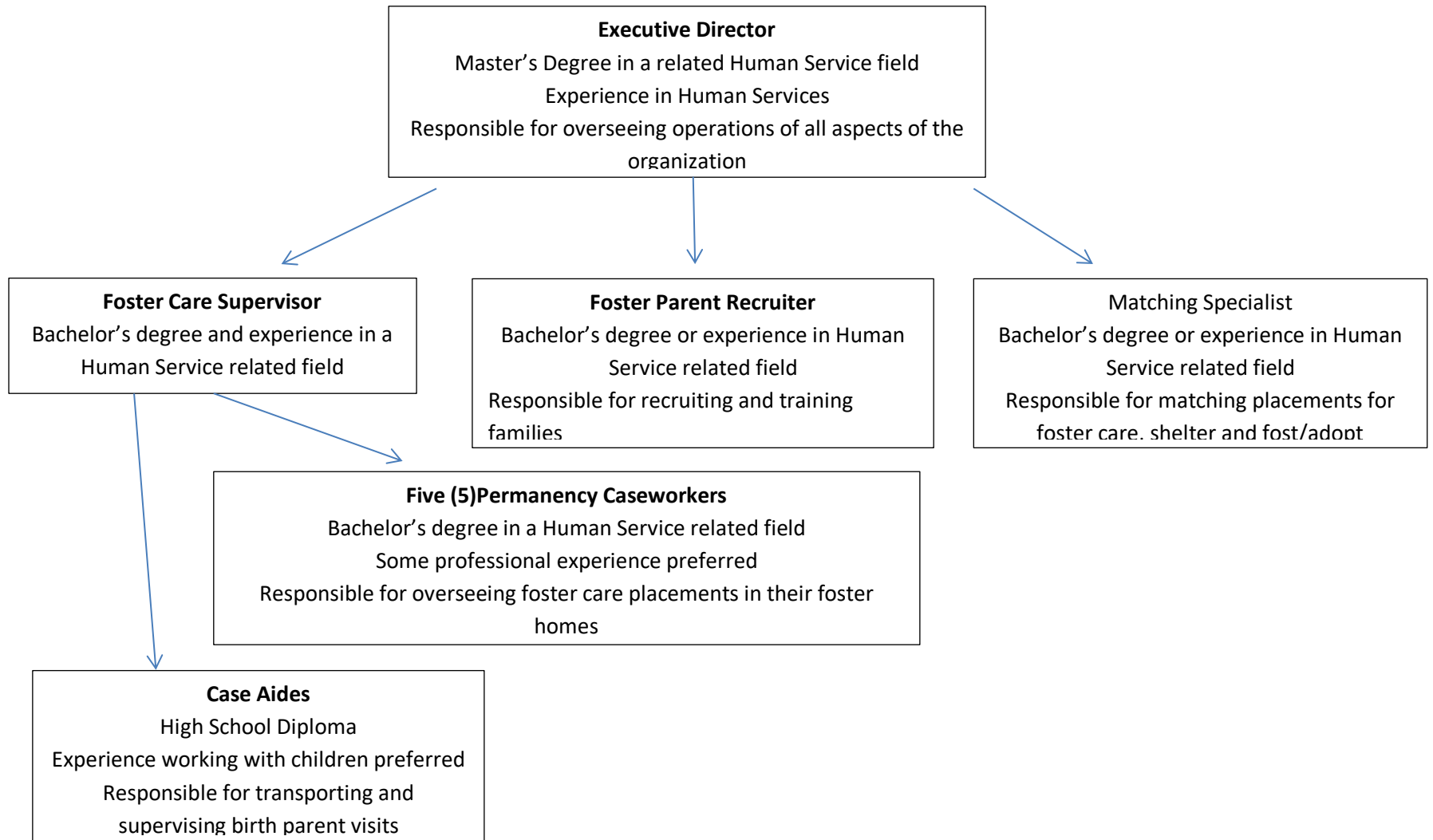
**Foster Care Supervisor in Allegheny County location**  
Bachelor's degree and experience in a Human Service related field  
Responsible for supervising Permanency Caseworkers

**Five (5) Permanency Caseworkers**  
Bachelor's degree in a Human Service related field  
Professional experience preferred  
Responsible for overseeing foster care placements in their foster homes

**Three (3) to Five (5) Permanency Caseworkers**  
Bachelor's degree in a Human Service related field  
Professional experience preferred  
Responsible for overseeing foster care placements in their foster homes

**Five (5) to Eight (8) Case Aides**  
High School Diploma  
Experience working with children preferred  
Responsible for transporting and supervising birth family visits

## Adoption Connection PA Foster Care Organizational Chart (Current)





## Timeline for Implementation of Scope of Services

July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received Concept Paper from ACCYF</li> </ul>
August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drafted response to Concept paper.</li> <li>Held agency wide staff meeting to strategize changes needed within ACPA.</li> </ul>
September – October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outlined strategic plan to present to the Board.</li> </ul>
November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified location within Allegheny County to open a 2<sup>nd</sup> office.</li> <li>Received approval from the Board to move forward on strategic plan to open another location in Allegheny County and grow foster care program.</li> </ul>
December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opened our Allegheny County location in Duquesne, PA</li> <li>Began conducting visits for birth parents in our visitation rooms.</li> </ul>
January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ACPA staff was fully trained in Trauma Informed Care from Lakeside Global Institute.</li> </ul>
February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit RFP to ACCYF</li> <li>Four Adoption Connection, PA staff receive therapeutic foster care certification training to train resource parents and staff on therapeutic foster care.</li> </ul>
March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acceptance of contract from Allegheny County</li> </ul>
April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make staff changes such as the Foster Care Manager; Foster Care Supervisor.</li> <li>Hire 2 Permanency Caseworkers, and 1-2 Case Aides.</li> <li>Hire resource family recruiter.</li> <li>Train ACPA staff on therapeutic foster care.</li> <li>Begin licensing process of our Duquesne Office.</li> </ul>
May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin training Permanency Caseworkers</li> <li>Complete training of newly hired case aides.</li> <li>Determine remodel of Duquesne Offices.</li> <li>Begin training currently certified families on TFC (class 1)</li> <li>Establish recruitment plan regarding territories and responsibilities for recruiters.</li> <li>Recruitment event for foster care awareness month.</li> </ul>
June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruiters will follow through on goals and objectives and plan recruitment event for July</li> <li>Complete training for Permanency Caseworkers</li> <li>Continue Class 1 - TFC training</li> </ul>
July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine if more staff is needed at Duquesne office.</li> <li>Have a grand opening celebration for our Duquesne office and resource family recruitment event.</li> <li>Complete training on first class of therapeutic foster care.</li> </ul>

July 2021, cont...	<p>Begin training for therapeutic foster care 2<sup>nd</sup> class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource family appreciation event.</li> </ul>
August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue training for 2<sup>nd</sup> class of therapeutic foster care.</li> <li>• Recruiters will follow through on goals and objectives and plan recruitment event for September.</li> </ul>
September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete training for 2<sup>nd</sup> class of therapeutic foster care.</li> <li>• Begin training for 3<sup>rd</sup> class therapeutic foster care. Recruitment event.</li> <li>• Foster Care Quarterly meeting to evaluate strategic plan.</li> </ul>
October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruiters will follow through on goals and objectives and plan recruitment event for November.</li> <li>• Continue training for TFC 3<sup>rd</sup> class.</li> <li>• Evaluate changes to foster care program and determine goals and objectives for following year.</li> </ul>
November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment event and establish recruiting plan for 2022. Complete training for TFC 3<sup>rd</sup> class.</li> <li>• Present foster care report for 2022 to ACPA's Board.</li> </ul>
December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruiters will follow through on goals and objectives and plan recruitment event for January.</li> </ul>
January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment event.</li> <li>• Begin training 2022 1<sup>st</sup> Class TFC training.</li> </ul>
February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruiters will follow through on goals and objectives and plan recruitment event for March.</li> <li>• Continue training TFC – 2022 1<sup>st</sup> class.</li> </ul>
March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment event.</li> <li>• Complete training 2022 1<sup>st</sup> class.</li> <li>• Begin 2022 2<sup>nd</sup> TFC training.</li> <li>• Foster Care quarterly meeting to evaluate strategic plan.</li> </ul>
April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruiters will follow through on goals and objectives and plan recruitment event for May.</li> <li>• Continue 2022 2<sup>nd</sup> TFC training.</li> </ul>
May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment event.</li> <li>• Complete 2022 2<sup>nd</sup> TFC training.</li> </ul>
June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruiters will follow through on goals and objectives and plan recruitment event for July.</li> <li>• Foster Care Quarterly meeting to evaluate strategic plan.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>