

Engaging Philanthropic Partners to Achieve Timely Permanency for Children and Youth Waiting to Be Adopted



Introduction

Philanthropic organizations often are strongly connected to, and invested in, the communities where they provide funding. As such, these organizations can be important partners when seeking to improve outcomes for specific populations. Foundations and other philanthropic entities often have resources and expertise as well as extensive relationships that they can direct to areas that they prioritize. As states attempt to make significant improvements in achieving timely permanency for children and youth waiting to be adopted, engaging philanthropic partners is one key approach for leveraging valuable community resources and increasing awareness of the importance of achieving permanency for children and youth.

Opportunities to Engage Philanthropic Partners

- ▶ Explore options for foundations to serve as conveners of agencies, organizations, and individuals in the community who are committed to achieving positive outcomes for children and youth, to help facilitate creative collaborations, and develop new ideas and approaches for achieving timely adoption for more children and youth who are waiting to be adopted.
- ▶ Share information with philanthropic organizations about the children and youth waiting to be adopted, the importance of permanency in promoting positive outcomes for children and youth, and other insights to help these organizations deepen their understanding of the needs, strengths, and challenges child welfare agencies experience in trying to achieve permanency for children and youth. Engage them in discussions about creative ways to partner together.
- ▶ Partner with foundations for funding of intensive, targeted, and child-specific recruitment efforts for children and youth waiting to be adopted. An example from the field is the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's long-standing investment in its child-focused recruitment model, Wendy's Wonderful Kids, which funds both the program services and undertakes rigorous program evaluation to develop the evidence base. In this example, the foundation funds specialized recruiters who implement the evidence-based program aimed at finding adoptive families for children and youth.
- ▶ Seek foundation funding for rigorous evaluation of adoption recruitment, preparation, and support programs and strategies to help child welfare agencies strengthen their evidence base and increase their ability to prioritize devoting resources to the most effective practices.
- ▶ Engage with foundations to support intensive system change efforts to improve overall child welfare system approaches to achieving timely permanency for children and youth in foster care (e.g., providing experts consultants to the child welfare agency, conducting process mapping, and providing recommendations for improving the processes, etc.).
- ▶ Reach out to philanthropic organizations that have specific priority areas related to children and families to encourage them to focus on encouraging and supporting adoption from foster care.
- ▶ Invite philanthropic leaders to shadow staff who are working to recruit, prepare, and support families for children and youth waiting to be adopted so they can learn more about the importance of achieving permanency, the need for adoptive families, and the issues involved in finding and supporting families for children and youth in foster care.
- ▶ Share information with philanthropic organizations about specific programs that other foundations around the country operate or fund in service of achieving positive outcomes for children and youth waiting to be adopted, and explore whether these organizations are interested in learning more about how to provide similar support in their communities.

