

Adoption: Finding families for Minnesota's waiting children

Children of all ages need permanent, stable, loving families. In Minnesota, when county social services agencies place children in foster care and if courts ultimately terminate parents' rights, children are committed to the guardianship of the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The department is responsible for working with counties, Tribal Nations and private adoption agencies to find permanent families for these children. The department is determined to move children quickly into safe, nurturing adoptive families when they cannot be safely reunited with their birth families. In 2022, families adopted 1,006 Minnesota children from the foster care system.

Hundreds of children waiting

Most of the 522 children waiting for adoption have experienced trauma during their critical developmental years. Many will need additional educational, medical or psychological help as they mature. Approximately:

- 68% have a documented special need, including a physical, mental, emotional or behavioral disability
- 46% are siblings who need to be adopted together
- 31% are white, 29% are Black/African American, 28% are two or more races, 8% are American Indian, 3% are Asian or Pacific Islander, and about 2% declined to provide race information or it is unknown
- 59% are 12 to 18 years old
- 21% are 6 to 12 years old
- 20% are under 6 years old, although more than half of these children are part of sibling groups who need to be adopted together.

Many children are in seven-county metropolitan area

Of the 981 children under state guardianship, 456 reside in the Twin Cities seven-county metropolitan area. Of these 456 children:

- 278 need adoptive families immediately, and many of these children (81%) are Black/African American, American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander, or two or more races
- 178 are in pre-adoptive homes, usually with relatives or foster parents who plan to adopt them
- Reflective of the ethnic and racial diversity of children in foster care.

Public, private partners seek permanent families for children

The department is committed to finding permanent families for all children under state guardianship.

Together with partners, the department:

- Supports recruitment campaigns to increase communities' awareness of the need for adoptive families
- Targets recruitment efforts to identify prospective adoptive families, including those from the same communities and with similar backgrounds, beliefs and interests as children waiting for adoptive families
- Sponsors child-specific recruitment, which usually involves children and youth in developing the recruitment plan, including identifying, contacting and assessing family members or friends who already care about them
- Contracts with private adoption agencies to recruit and prepare prospective families, and places children with adoptive families
- Contracts with Foster Adopt Minnesota to maintain the State Adoption Exchange at fosteradoptmn.org, an electronic database that helps match children and prospective adoptive parents
- Works to eliminate unnecessary administrative barriers that may make it difficult for families to adopt children
- Works with organizations that help families and adopted children before, during and after adoption, and provides financial assistance after finalization to families who adopt children with special needs who are eligible for these benefits
- Contracts with Foster Adopt Minnesota to maintain a statewide post-adoption support system, which includes an adoption and foster care information clearinghouse, individualized support and consultation, referral to supportive and educational resources, and online and in-person educational opportunities.



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