

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. It is the responsibility of the department to work with counties 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 2018, 1,268 Minnesota children were adopted from the foster care system.

Hundreds of children waiting

As of August 2019, 1,683 children are under state guardianship. Many are waiting to be adopted. Of the 1,683 children:

- 905 children are in need of adoptive families immediately.
- 778 are in pre-adoptive families, usually with relatives or foster parents who plan to adopt them.

Many older children, siblings need adoptive families

Of the 905 children waiting for adoption, most have experienced trauma during their critical developmental years. Many will need additional educational, medical or psychological help as they grow toward maturity.

- Approximately 59% are siblings who need to be adopted together.
- 39% are white, 29% are black/African American, 24% are two or more races, 5% are American Indian and 2% are Asian or Pacific Islander.
- 64% have a documented special need, including physical, mental, emotional or a behavioral disability.
- 28% are 6 to 11 years old.
- 29% are under 6 years old, although more than half of these children are part of sibling groups who need to be adopted together.
- 43% are 12 to 18 years old.

Many children are in seven-county metro area

Of the 1,683 children under state guardianship, 923 reside in the Twin Cities seven-county metropolitan area. Of these 923 children:

- 553 are in need of adoptive families immediately, and many of these children (74%) are children of color.
- 370 are in pre-adoptive homes, usually with relatives or foster parents who plan to adopt them.

Public, private partners seek permanent families

The Minnesota Department of Human Services is committed to finding permanent families for all children under state guardianship. Together with counties and private adoption agencies, the department:

- Supports recruitment campaigns to increase communities' awareness of the need for adoptive families
- Targets recruitment efforts to identify prospective adoptive families such as 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 MN ADOPT to maintain the State Adoption Exchange at www.mnadopt.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 MN ADOPT 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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