

What's New?

Colorado

Launched with a community forum at the annual "Spotlight on Families" conference in May, the Colorado coalition identified priority areas including access to and appropriate settings of residential treatment, educational advocacy, and consistent and equitable subsidy decisions. On November 13 and 14 CO-PARC and COCAF are co-hosting a two-day training for parents and professionals on advanced advocacy issues and effective partnering. For more information, email cocafcave@yahoo.com or paula@adoptex.org



New Brunswick

During early June, parents, child welfare professionals, governmental officials and community members attended and participated in forums across the province, lending their voices and concerns to a greater understanding of the strengths, needs and opportunities facing New Brunswick's foster and adoptive community. Premier Sean Graham's wife, Roxanne Reeves, a board member of the New Brunswick Adoption Foundation offered opening words of encouragement and support at each of the three meetings, and continues to be involved in the efforts moving forward. On November 3 a parent leadership organizational meeting will take place in conjunction with the Saint John monthly adoptive parents' meeting. The next day advanced training in adolescent permanency planning will be presented by NACAC staff in Fredericton, followed by a November 6 meeting with the Deputy Minister of Children and Family

Services. The New Brunswick Adoption Foundation annual fundraising gala is to be held on November 5. For more information, please contact Suzanne Kingston, Executive Director at nbadopt@nbnet.nb.ca.



Nova Scotia

Close to 100 parents, professionals and community members attended four forums (one in each of the regions) and a two-day training on Parent Leadership and Mentoring during the spring CCN launching in Nova Scotia. In partnership with the recently appointed Post Adoption Liaison, the Mi'kmaq Family Services staff, and parent support group leaders across the province, NACAC staff was able to create priority list plan that addresses school supports and availability of teacher assistants, recognition of autism and FASD/FAE as serviceable issues, increased adoption competency training, improved partnership between child welfare and families, parent-to-parent support networks, better access to mental health services for families outside the greater Halifax area. During the two-day training, 25+ parents created both personal and group action plans in support of expanding their reach across the province.



Sacramento

Two adoptive parents created the Capital Alliance of Adoptive Families in order to facilitate greater partnership between families and child welfare professionals, as well as to assist in the development of new support groups throughout the Sacramento region. CAFA hosted a two-day training in March - day one

was for mental health providers and social workers and was an Adoption Competency Clinical Overview. Day two focused on the needs of the families, providing parents with advocacy tools, information about normative developmental issues in adoptive families and strategies for addressing challenging issues with children, schools, and systems. Moving forward, Sacramento is partnering with the Los Angeles County CCN coalition and other advocates across California in support of AB665, legislation which would ensure that the monies generated by Fostering Connections federal legislation will be used in support of post adoption services.



Virginia

The last of our newly added sites, Virginia is off and running. Dozens of parents and professionals attended a series of 8 community forums held across the Commonwealth in early June. Attendees acknowledged that the post adoption program, overseen by UMFS and delivered by local agencies has been very effective; in fact it is a nationally-recognized model. However, both families and workers also report that there is a need for expanded Adoption Competency training and for a more unified approach to subsidy appropriations, service access and delivery, and interpretation of rules and regulations. Additionally, parents are hopeful that they can create a parent-to-parent support network with technical assistance from NACAC staff. In September, NACAC staff had the opportunity to assist in an Adolescent Permanency Grand Round at the annual FACES conference; an event that also provided for valuable networking with coalition members. Thanks go out to

FACES of Virginia Families for their commitment to and facilitation of the CCN project in Virginia.



Ontario NE Region

The Northeast Adoption Working Group of Ontario hosted their semi-annual meeting in October, providing an opportunity for resource and adoption workers to come together to do strategic planning, assist each other in matching, and participate in training. NACAC staff was invited to facilitate a youth forum; provide training on adolescent brain development, and permanency planning; facilitate a parent discussion group; offer resources for therapeutic life books and permanency work; and assist in strategic planning.

This dynamic and committed group left the two day retreat with an achievable and aspirational work plan that will continue to incorporate the voices of youth and parents as a driving force in their endeavors.



Adoption Competency for

Mental Health Providers

The folks at Tampa's Sylvia Thomas Center have been taking the Adoption Competency training to the community in Hillsborough County, providing community providers with an opportunity to improve their skills and better serve the adoptive families in their region. To date, more than 70 trainers have gone through the program and already STC is re-

porting an improvement in the service delivery to their adoptive families.

Harden House/Southern Christian Services is bringing the Training for Trainers to Mississippi this January and anticipates a full roster of 30 mental health and social work professionals in attendance.

Please contact
Diane Martin-Hushman at
651-644-3036, hushman@nacac.org
or Kim Stevens at 508-254-2200,
kimstevens@nacac.org for more
information on how to bring Adoption
Competency Training for Trainers to
your community.

Through this locally delivered training-for-trainers model, NACAC is able to provide jurisdictions with a base of knowledgeable trainers as well as the materials and technical assistance necessary to take the learning to the field.



Advocacy Alert

As you probably know, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act made two important adopted-related changes that will result in more funding for child welfare services in your state. The law:

- * improved the adoption incentive program, including changing the baseline to 2007, doubling award amounts, and giving states two years to invest the funds
- * gradually de-linked eligibility for federal (Title IV-E adoption assistance) from birth parent income, greatly expanding the number of children who will receive federal support. The law requires

states to reinvest the funds saved in child welfare services, so it will result in a net increase in child welfare funding over time.

Please contact Kim Stevens at kimstevens@nacac.org for copies of the Adoptalk articles and the 2007 HHS baseline numbers that will assist you in making your calculations..

NACAC is interested in working with advocates to ensure that states are aware of these changes and that they invest adoption incentive funds in post-adoption services. In Minnesota, for example, the legislature passed legislation designating adoption incentive funds be spent on post-adoption services. We would like other states to pursue similar efforts. In the next two to three weeks, the feds will release information about how much adoption incentive funding each state will receive (if any). We hope that advocates in each state will:

- * contact the state adoption manager to ask if the state expects to earn adoption incentives this year and, if yes, what are the state's plans to use those funds (which will be available about October 1)
- * if necessary, work with administrators or legislators to designate funds be spent on post-adoption services
- * work with other adoption organizations and advocates to brainstorm gaps in existing post-adoption services and share recommendations with administrators about funding options

NACAC staff are available to help in your advocacy efforts and to connect you with others in your area who might also be engaged in this advocacy effort. If you would like more information about how we can work together, please contact Joe Kroll at joekroll@aol.com or 651-644-3036 x14.



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