

260C.215 WELFARE OF CHILDREN.

Subdivision 1. **Recruitment of foster families.** Each authorized child-placing agency shall make special efforts to recruit a foster family from among the child's relatives, except as authorized in section 260C.193, subdivision 3. In recruiting placements for each child, the agency must focus on that child's particular needs and the capacities of the particular prospective foster parents to meet those needs. Each agency shall provide for diligent recruitment of potential foster families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children in the state for whom foster homes are needed. Special efforts include contacting and working with community organizations and religious organizations and may include contracting with these organizations, utilizing local media and other local resources, conducting outreach activities, and increasing the number of minority recruitment staff employed by the agency. The requirement of special efforts to locate relatives in this section is satisfied on the earlier of the following occasions:

(1) when the child is placed with a relative who is interested in providing a permanent placement for the child; or

(2) when the responsible child-placing agency has made special efforts for six months following the child's placement in a residential facility and the court approves the agency's efforts pursuant to section 260C.201, subdivision 10. The agency may accept any gifts, grants, offers of services, and other contributions to use in making special recruitment efforts.

Subd. 2. **Duties of commissioner.** The commissioner of human services shall:

(1) in cooperation with child-placing agencies, develop a cost-effective campaign using radio and television to recruit adoptive and foster families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom adoptive and foster homes are needed; and

(2) require that agency staff people who work in the area of adoption and foster family recruitment participate in cultural competency training.

Subd. 3. **Recruitment specialist.** The commissioner shall designate a permanent professional staff position for recruitment of foster and adoptive families. The recruitment specialist shall provide services to child-placing agencies seeking to recruit adoptive and foster care families and qualified professional staff. The recruitment specialist shall:

(1) develop materials for use by the agencies in training staff;

(2) conduct in-service workshops for agency personnel;

(3) provide consultation, technical assistance, and other appropriate services to agencies to strengthen and improve service delivery to diverse populations; and

(4) conduct workshops for foster care and adoption recruiters to evaluate the effectiveness of techniques for recruiting foster and adoptive families; and

(5) perform other duties as assigned by the commissioner to implement the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act, sections 260.751 to 260.835.

The commissioner may contract for portions of these services.

Subd. 4. **Consultation with representatives.** The commissioner of human services, after seeking and considering advice from representatives reflecting diverse populations from the councils established under sections 3.922, 3.9223, 3.9225, and 3.9226, and other state, local, and community organizations shall:

(1) review and, where necessary, revise the Department of Human Services Social Service Manual and Practice Guide to reflect federal and state policy direction on placement of children;

(2) develop criteria for determining whether a prospective adoptive or foster family has the ability to understand and validate the child's cultural background;

(3) develop a standardized training curriculum for adoption and foster care workers, family-based providers, and administrators who work with children. Training must address the following objectives:

(a) developing and maintaining sensitivity to all cultures;

(b) assessing values and their cultural implications; and

(c) making individualized decisions that advance the best interests of a particular child under section 260C.212, subdivision 2;

(4) develop a training curriculum for family and extended family members of adoptive and foster children. The curriculum must address issues relating to cross-cultural placements as well as issues that arise after a foster or adoptive placement is made; and

(5) develop and provide to agencies an assessment tool to be used in combination with group interviews and other preplacement activities to evaluate prospective adoptive and foster families. The tool must assess problem-solving skills; identify parenting skills; and evaluate the degree to which the prospective family has the ability to understand and validate the child's cultural background.

Subd. 5. Placement reports. Beginning December 1, 1996, the commissioner shall provide to the Indian Affairs Council, the Council on Affairs of Chicano/Latino People, the Council on Black Minnesotans, and the Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans the annual report required under section 257.0725.

Subd. 6. Duties of child-placing agencies. (a) Each authorized child-placing agency must:

(1) develop and follow procedures for implementing the requirements of section 260C.193, subdivision 3, and the Indian Child Welfare Act, United States Code, title 25, sections 1901 to 1923;

(2) have a written plan for recruiting adoptive and foster families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children who are in need of foster and adoptive homes. The plan must include (i) strategies for using existing resources in diverse communities, (ii) use of diverse outreach staff wherever possible, (iii) use of diverse foster homes for placements after birth and before adoption, and (iv) other techniques as appropriate;

(3) have a written plan for training adoptive and foster families;

(4) have a written plan for employing staff in adoption and foster care who have the capacity to assess the foster and adoptive parents' ability to understand and validate a child's cultural needs, and to advance the best interests of the child. The plan must include staffing goals and objectives;

(5) ensure that adoption and foster care workers attend training offered or approved by the Department of Human Services regarding cultural diversity and the needs of special needs children; and

(6) develop and implement procedures for implementing the requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act and the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act.

(b) In determining the suitability of a proposed placement of an Indian child, the standards to be applied must be the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian child's community, and the agency shall defer to tribal judgment as to suitability of a particular home when the tribe has intervened pursuant to the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Subd. 7. **Reporting requirements.** Each authorized child-placing agency shall provide to the commissioner of human services all data needed by the commissioner for the report required by section 257.0725. The agency shall provide the data within 15 days of the end of the period for which the data is applicable.

Subd. 8. **Rules.** The commissioner of human services shall adopt rules to establish standards for conducting relative searches, recruiting foster and adoptive families, evaluating the role of relative status in the reconsideration of disqualifications under chapter 245C and granting variances of licensing requirements under section 245A.04, subdivision 9, in licensing or approving an individual related to a child.

History: 1999 c 139 art 3 s 28; 2001 c 178 art 1 s 32; 2003 c 15 art 1 s 33