

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FOSTER FAMILIES

1998 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Sponsor: Nathan C. Tanner

AN ACT RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES; AUTHORIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO CONTRACT WITH PRIVATE, NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION TO RECRUIT AND TRAIN FOSTER CARE PARENTS AND CHILD WELFARE VOLUNTEERS; AND EXTENDING IMMUNITY TO PRIVATE ENTITIES THAT REFER PROSPECTIVE FOSTER CARE PARENTS AND CHILD WELFARE VOLUNTEERS TO SUCH ORGANIZATIONS.

This act affects sections of Utah Code Annotated 1953 as follows:

AMENDS:

62A-4a-105, as last amended by Chapters 47, 329 and 365, Laws of Utah 1997

ENACTS:

62A-4a-107.5, Utah Code Annotated 1953

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **62A-4a-105** is amended to read:

62A-4a-105. Division responsibilities.

The division shall:

(1) administer services to children and families, including child welfare services, youth services, domestic violence services, and all other responsibilities that the Legislature or the executive director may assign to the division;

(2) establish standards for all contract providers of out-of-home care for children and families;

(3) cooperate with the federal government in the administration of child welfare, youth services, and domestic violence programs and other human service activities assigned by the department;

(4) provide for the compilation of relevant information, statistics, and reports on child and family service matters in the state;

(5) prepare and submit to the department, the governor, and the Legislature reports of the operation and administration of the division in accordance with the requirements of Sections 62A-4a-117 and 62A-4a-118;

(6) promote and enforce state and federal laws enacted for the protection of abused, neglected, dependent, delinquent, ungovernable, and runaway children, and status offenders, in accordance with the requirements of this chapter, unless administration is expressly vested in another division or department of the state. In carrying out the provisions of this subsection, the division shall cooperate with the juvenile courts, the Division of Youth Corrections, and with all public and private licensed child welfare agencies and institutions to develop and administer a broad range of services and supports. The division shall take the initiative in all matters involving the protection of abused or neglected children if adequate provisions have not been made or are not likely to be made, and shall make expenditures necessary for the care and protection of those children, within the division's budget;

(7) provide substitute care for dependent, abused, neglected, and delinquent children, establish standards for substitute care facilities, and approve those facilities;

(8) provide financial support to persons adopting physically handicapped, mentally handicapped, older, or other hard-to-place children who, immediately prior to adoption, were legal wards of the state. The financial support provided under this subsection may not exceed the amounts the division would provide for the child as a legal ward of the state;

(9) cooperate with the Division of Employment Development in the Department of Workforce Services in meeting social and economic needs of individuals eligible for public assistance;

(10) conduct court-ordered home evaluations for the district and juvenile courts with regard to child custody issues. The court shall order either or both parties to reimburse the division for the cost of that evaluation, in accordance with the community rate for that service or with the department's fee schedule rate;

(11) provide noncustodial and in-home preventive services, designed to prevent family breakup, family preservation services, and reunification services to families whose children are in

substitute care in accordance with the requirements of this chapter and Title 78, Chapter 3a, Juvenile Courts;

(12) provide protective supervision of a family, upon court order, in an effort to eliminate abuse or neglect of a child in that family;

(13) establish programs pursuant to Section 62A-4a-250, and provide services to runaway and ungovernable children and their families;

(14) provide shelter care in accordance with the requirements of this chapter and Title 78, Chapter 3a, Juvenile Courts;

(15) provide social studies and reports for the juvenile court in accordance with Section 78-3a-505;

(16) arrange for and provide training for staff and providers involved in the administration and delivery of services offered by the division in accordance with this chapter;

(17) provide domestic violence services in accordance with the requirements of federal law, and establish standards for all direct or contract providers of domestic violence services. Within appropriations from the Legislature, the division shall provide or contract for a variety of domestic violence services and treatment methods;

(18) ensure regular, periodic publication regarding the number of children in the custody of the division who have a permanency goal of adoption, or for whom a final plan of termination of parental rights has been approved, pursuant to Section 78-3a-312, and promote adoption of those children; [and]

(19) have authority to contract with a private, nonprofit organization to recruit and train foster care families and child welfare volunteers in accordance with Section 62A-4a-107.5; and

~~[(19)]~~ (20) perform such other duties and functions as required by law.

Section 2. Section **62A-4a-107.5** is enacted to read:

62A-4a-107.5. Private recruitment and training of foster care parents and child welfare volunteers--Extension of immunity to referring entities.

(1) The division may contract with one or more private, nonprofit organizations to recruit and train foster care parents and child welfare volunteers on a statewide or regional basis.

(2) An organization that contracts with the division pursuant to Subsection (1) shall agree to:

(a) increase the number of licensed and trained foster care parents in the geographic area covered by:

(i) developing a strategic plan;

(ii) assessing the needs, perceptions, and qualities of potential foster care parents;

(iii) assessing the needs, perceptions, and qualities of children in state custody;

(iv) identifying potential foster care parents through public and private resources;

(v) screening foster care parent applicants;

(vi) providing preservice, ongoing, and customized training to foster care parents;

(vii) developing a competency-based training curriculum with input from public and private resources and approved by the division;

(viii) focusing training exercises on skill development; and

(ix) supporting foster care parents by supplying staff support, identifying common issues, encouraging peer support, and connecting available resources;

(b) increase the number of child welfare volunteers in the geographical area covered by:

(i) developing a strategic plan;

(ii) seeking the participation of established volunteer organizations;

(iii) designing and offering initial orientation sessions to child welfare volunteers;

(iv) informing volunteers of options for service as specified by the division; and

(v) facilitating the placement and certification of child welfare volunteers;

(c) coordinate efforts, where appropriate, with the division;

(d) seek private contributions in furtherance of the organization's activities under this

Subsection (2);

(e) perform other related services and activities as may be required by the division; and

(f) establish a system for evaluating performance and obtaining feedback on the activities performed pursuant to this Subsection (2).

(3) Notwithstanding Subsection (2), the department shall retain ultimate authority over and

responsibility for screening, investigation, licensing, and placement decisions with respect to any person recruited or trained by an organization.

(4) A referring entity or a referring individual that voluntarily and without remuneration assists the organization to identify and recruit foster care parents or child welfare volunteers is not liable in any civil action for any act or omission of:

(a) the referring entity or the referring individual, which is performed in good faith and in furtherance of the entity's assistance to the organization; or

(b) any person directly or indirectly referred to the organization by the entity as a foster care parent or child welfare volunteer, if the referring individual was without actual knowledge of any substantiated fact that would have disqualified the person from such a position at the time the referral was made.

(5) As used in this section:

(a) "referring entity" means:

(i) an incorporated or unincorporated organization or association whether formally incorporated or otherwise established and operating for religious, charitable, or educational purposes which does not distribute any of its income or assets to its members, directors, officers, or other participants;

(ii) any organization which is described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and is exempt from tax under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code; or

(iii) any not-for-profit organization which is formed and conducted for public benefit and operated primarily for charitable, civic, educational, religious, benevolent, welfare, or health purposes; and

(b) "referring individual" means an individual:

(i) with the authority to act on behalf of a referring entity in making a referral; and

(ii) who may or may not be compensated by the referring entity.