



FOSTER & ADOPTIVE CARE COALITION
FOR EVERY CHILD... A PLACE TO CALL HOME

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Press Release

Governor Parson Signs Historic Investment for Foster Care Support Services

ST. LOUIS, MO – July 29, 2021 – The State of Missouri made a historic investment on behalf of children in foster care when Governor Mike Parson signed the social services portion of the FY 2022 budget on July 1, 2021.

\$90 million in new social services funding included \$5 million for the St. Louis-based Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition to expand innovative programs. This new investment from the state, combined with sustained philanthropic support, will provide a solid foundation to fully address the length of time children languish in foster care.

This effort to help kids would not have happened without a bi-partisan effort from all 197 lawmakers in Missouri. Specifically, the leadership of House Speaker Rob Vescovo, House Budget Chair Cody Smith, Representative Kimberly-Ann Collins, Senate Appropriations Chairman Dan Hegeman, Senator Karla May, Senator Brian Williams, and countless other staff members who worked tirelessly to make this possible.

New and expanded services provided by the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition will include:

- Targeted recruitment of African American foster parents to address racial disparities in St. Louis City and County
- Recruitment and training of specialized homes for children with profound trauma
- Geographic expansion in Franklin, Warren, and Lincoln counties
- Transform metro St. Louis foster care into one of the most supportive foster/adoptive communities in the nation

A key expansion includes the Coalition re-establishing RESPOND, a model developed in the 1990s by Howard and Vickie Denson to recruit African American foster parents for African American children.

In St. Louis City and County, 70% of children in local foster care are African American, yet only 13% of foster parents are African American.

RESPOND was highly regarded thanks to other exemplary leaders, including fellow child advocates Rose Walls (who became a major child advocate in the Republic of Ghana), Curtis Mullins, LaRhonda Wilson, Sandy Clay, and Lester Kyles.

Unfortunately, RESPOND's doors were closed due to lack of funding.

Missouri Representative Kimberly–Ann Collins (District 077) spearheaded the effort to include funding for RESPOND in the annual state budget. Rep. Collins was herself adopted by a RESPOND family when she was a child.

The Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition is recognized nationally as a driver of innovative programming to address the needs of children in foster care. They are best known for creating Extreme Recruitment® and 30 Days to Family®, programs so effective that they are replicated by other non–profits across the country.

Philanthropic support from individuals, corporations and foundations allows the Coalition to currently serve 1,248 children annually. At any given moment, there are 4,500 children in foster care in the metro region. The average age of a child in foster care is 8 ½ years old.

With continued donations from the community along with this transformative state investment, the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition will come closer to achieving their vision of “For Every Child. . .A Place to Call Home.”

About the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition

The Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition (Coalition) exists to ensure every child has a place to call home. To achieve that goal, we focus on finding homes for our community’s hardest–to–place kids (older youth, sibling groups, and kids with special needs), and supporting foster and adoptive families so our kids can heal.

Visit www.foster-adopt.org to learn more about the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition.

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