

It Takes Heart[™] Ohio

Strategies and Materials for Resource and Adoptive Family Recruitment

an initiative of:



presented by: **Ohio Children's Alliance** Leading change for child and family service providers The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, in partnership with the Ohio Children's Alliance (the Alliance), Ohio's Resource and Referral Hubs, and Adopt America Network, are working to increase the number of qualified resource (foster and kinship) and adoptive families in the state. Each partner is committed to working with all public and



private agencies statewide. The campaign builds on the current **It Takes Heart Ohio™** campaign, launched in 2019, to increase awareness and address the statewide shortage of available resource families.

To ensure strategies for recruitment and awareness are regionally appropriate, the state has been divided into 12 service delivery areas (SDAs) (see the map on page 3). This strategy packet was created using the specific data and resources available to **SDA 9, including Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union counties.** Bear in mind that while the information is specific to the SDA, there will be nuance among the counties.

All of the strategies organized by the Alliance for the **It Takes Heart™** campaign have been thoroughly developed using data provided by ODJFS, public and private stakeholder input, and feedback from current and former foster youth and resource families. Collectively, this information provided insight into the specific needs of each SDA, and allowed the campaign to be intentionally targeted to meet those needs.

Your agency can use the materials in this strategy packet to not only be involved with the **It Takes Heart™** campaign, but also meaningfully engage with qualified resource and adoptive families. Whether your agency has a dedicated recruitment department or would simply like to increase your social media presence, you will find resources and tips to support your initiatives.

To continuously support local efforts, ODJFS and the Alliance are launching a statewide marketing campaign including localized recruitment and activities. Be on the lookout for **It Takes Heart™** advertising in your area.

We are looking forward to working with you. Your dedication to Ohio's children and families is our inspiration, and we hope these resources will help us all achieve our mutual mission and create a better support system for our community.

Bridget Graber Program Manager Ohio Children's Alliance bridget.graber@ohiochildrensalliance.org

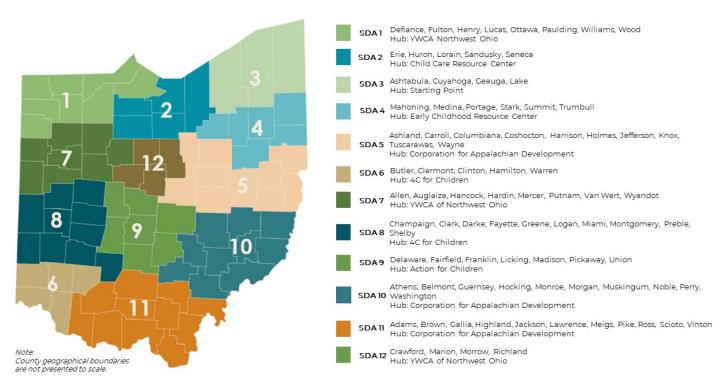
Gabrielle Judy Program Coordinator Ohio Children's Alliance gabrielle.judy@ohiochildrensalliance.org

Table of Contents

SDA Overview and Directories	4
Campaign Usage Standards and Co-Branding	4
Youth and Placements in SDA 9	5
Engaging with Potential Families	6
Recruitment Best Practices	9
Best Practices for Social Media	10
Maximize Your Outreach	11
From Inquiry to Resource Readiness Training	12
Monitoring Your Recruitment Investment	13
How to Access and Customize It Takes Heart™ Materials	
Adoption and Resource Home Assessor Program (AAN)	15
Hub Specialist Contact Information	16

Service Delivery Area (SDA) Overview

As outlined by ODJFS, the It Takes Heart[™] campaign will utilize 12 service delivery areas. To identify which SDA(s) you provide services in, locate your county(ies) below:



Service Delivery Areas (SDA's) and Hub Assignments

Public and Private Agency Directories

Each SDA has a directory including all of the public and private agencies that provide foster care, kinship care, adoption, and home study services in the SDA. The directory can be shared virtually or printed and distributed to interested families to assist them in researching and selecting an agency.

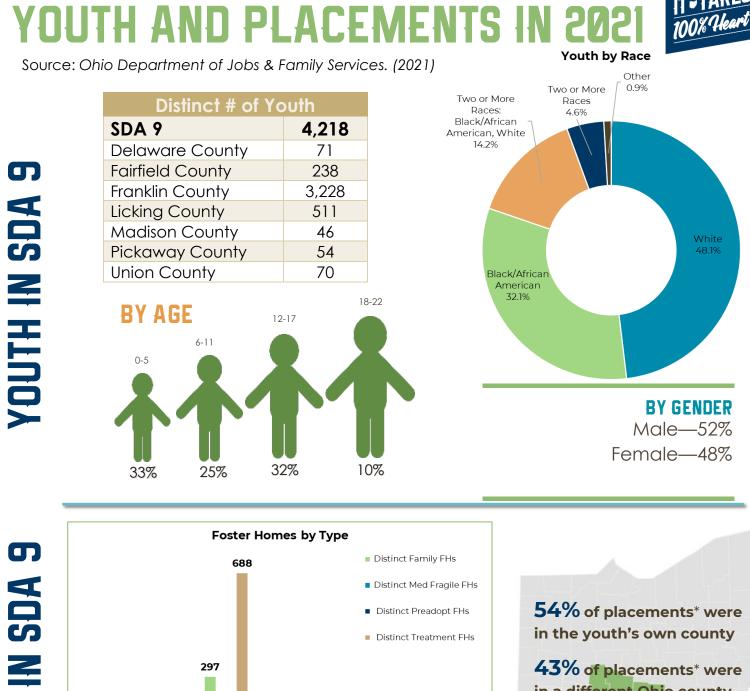
CLICK HERE to find the directory for your area(s).

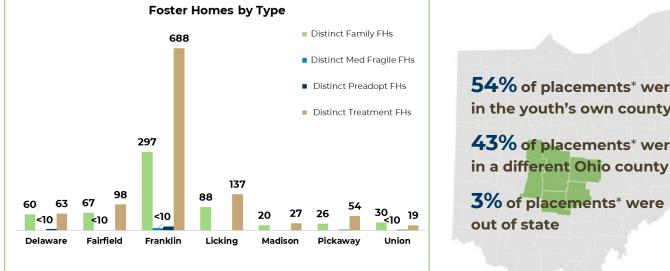
Campaign Usage Standards and Co-Branding

A clear and concise definition of how the campaign's visual elements are to be used and implemented is important to establishing brand awareness and maintaining the consistency and quality of all communication pieces that represent the It Takes Heart[™] campaign.

In addition to providing comprehensive guidelines on campaign visuals and tone, the Usage Standards outline co-branding opportunities for public and private agencies to add their own logos to It Takes Heart[™] materials. Co-branding supports the efforts of both individual agencies and statewide efforts.

It Takes Heart™ Usage Standards





Teen Placements

Homes Accepting Youth Age 13+.....1,055 Youth Age 13+.....1,612

SIBLING GROUP PLACEMENTS* 72% Placed Together

12% Some Siblings Together 15% No Siblings Together 1% no data available

*Child can have more than one placement, and each placement is counted.

Engaging with Potential Families

Reaching Families who Likely Represent the Diversity of Youth in Care

Common Professions:

- Service Industry
- Construction
- Maintenance
- Transportation
- Sales
- Office
- Logistics



Retailers to Partner With: *

• Walmart & Sam's Club



- Sports Apparel Shops (Finish Line; Foot Locker)
- Department Stores (Burlington; Dillards; DSW; Rack Room Shoes; Bed Bath and Beyond; BJs Wholesale; and Big Lots)
- Fashion Specific Stores (Sephora; Forever 21; Ross Dress for Less)
- General Merchandising Stores (Dollar General; Dollar Tree; Family Dollar)
- Video Game Retailers (Game Stop; Best Buy) *Consider similar retailers

Media Opportunities:

- Print Media: Direct mail, coupon books, catalogs, billboards, magazines, etc.
- Advertising on Yahoo, Google, Facebook, Instagram, & Youtube
- TV Advertising (during NBA, NFL, and college football)
- iHeart Radio, Tuneln, Pandora
 - Contemporary
 Inspirational and Gospel
 - Contemporary Hits
 - Urban Contemporary
- Local sports radio
- Advertising at the local mall

The characteristics of this group were determined by analyzing the market research on families that demographically and culturally reflect the birth families and youth involved in the foster care system. Demographics information was found in Ohio SACWIS, 2021.

Characteristics:

- These groups are more likely to engage with a mission when:
 - A family member or friend makes a recommendation
 - $\circ~$ A celebrity (local or national) relays the message
 - o There's a social component
- They're less likely to have access to home internet, and more likely to use their mobile phone for internet
- Active on Facebook (app), Secondarily Instagram and LinkedIn
- This group enjoys participating and watching basketball, boxing, and professional bull riding.

This group emphasizes the importance of cultural traditions and prayer within their activities and media.

Community Opportunities Based on Audience's Motivation:

- Host a movie night: Setup a table and/or hand out flyers at a movie theater
- Display ads in food courts, the mall, bus stops, grocery stores, convenience stores, and the like
- Speak/set up a table where continuing education is offered
- Attend, sponsor, and support local basketball tournaments
- Host a community dinner (at an individual's house, street party, party at the park, community center, or apartment common space)
 - Partner with local businesses to donate supplies and food.

Key Topics to Pair Your Advertising With:

- > Automotive Services (tires, oil change, etc.)
- > Cosmetics, perfumes, or skin care
- Fast food

Reaching Families who are Historically Likely to Foster and/or Adopt

Common Professions:

- Computer Science
- Education
- Social Services
- Management/Admin
- Work from Home Professionals
- Food Services
- Self-Employed
- Retired

Retailers to Partner With:*

- Costco/Costco Connection
- Bass Pro Shops, Cabela's
- Wine shops
- Fitness and sports clubs; group fitness
- Grocery (Whole Foods; Kroger; Trader Joe's)
- Family fun retailers (bowling; swimming; movie theaters; golf; skating rinks; etc.)
- Gardening retailers
- Outdoor activity and sports retailers (running; camping; and backpacking)
- Retailers who specialize in: Video games, cosmetics, office supply, and flower shops

*Consider similar retailers

Media Opportunities:

- Social media (Facebook and Instagram)
- Community specific apps such as Reddit, Next Door
- Digital ads/forms/QR codes
- Advertising on Google, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube



- Streaming services with advertising – Hulu, Amazon Prime Video, Peacock, Paramount+, YouTube TV
- Radio streaming services that allow advertising (Pandora, Spotify, iHeart Radio)

The characteristics of these groups were created by analyzing the market research on current and former resource and adoptive families in the past 5 years, from data in Ohio SACWIS.

Characteristics:

- > These groups are more likely to engage with a mission when:
 - There is a community/family friendly component
 - They have had time to research the mission, spoken to neighbors, family and friends about it, and/or engaged with the mission before
 - The involvement opportunities (events, training, volunteering, etc.) are convenient and well planned.
- Enjoys spending time in their community—in the parks, at neighborhood events, shopping locally, etc.
- > Above average use of digital platforms and social media.
- > Enjoys learning and having conversations through posting/chats
- > Enjoys community arts (art museums, live theater)
- Invests time in reading the financial and sports sections of digital newspapers.

This group loves researching, all things digital, researching before making a decision, and engaging with their local community.

Community Opportunities Based on Audience's Motivation:

- Host or attend family friendly events (recreation centers, zoos, summer activity days, activity centers)
- > Give presentations at local businesses
 - Focus on women-lead businesses and organizations (Rotary Clubs, Junior League, American Legion)
- Attend a technology or health industry conference that allows for speaking opportunities with intentional networking and outreach
- Partner with school boards, education focused committees/groups, and local child-focused organizations to add content to their social media, bulletins, newsletters, etc.
 - Arrange a social media takeover: Identify a partner who agrees to temporarily post content on their social media
- > Host lived experience listening and engagement sessions
- Gather and present to small groups at locally owned businesses (coffee shops, bakeries, restaurants)
- Organize or partner with vendors at local farmer's markets or retail markets
- > Utilize the local libraries to host an event that follows library events
- Hold an eSports activity
- > Organize foster parent-led in-home info sessions
- Host interactive engagements
 - o 55+ social hours
 - o Wine and Paint
 - Board game meet-up



Reaching Families in Urban Areas who are Historically Likely to Foster and/or Adopt

The characteristics of these groups were created by analyzing the market research on current and former resource and adoptive families in the past 5 years., from data in Ohio SACWIS.

- > This group accesses entertainment and information utilizing the internet
- > This group has minimal interest in participating or watching professional sports
- > Enjoys focusing on being healthy and active
- > Enjoys theme parks
- > This group is more likely to trust a mission when a celebrity of the same ethnic background communicates the mission.
- > Enjoys learning and having conversations through posting/chats
- > This group is more likely to be a caregiver to a parent or relative
- > When they're not on the internet or streaming, this group is likely:
 - Outdoors running
 - Shopping for cosmetics, video games, automotive enhancements, and/or clothing
 - o Sewing
 - Volunteering
 - At a local health/fitness club or gym
 - Engaged in eSports



Streaming Services and Apps	E-Retailers & Retailers	Radio Streaming Channels
 Top Three TV Streaming: YouTube TV, Netflix, Amazon Prime Video ABC, CBS, Fox Apps Most likely watching: Daytime dramas 	 Book stores Cosmetics Shoes Vitamins Grocery Pet stores Sporting goods and 	 Univision Mexican Regional Spanish Contemporary All AIRE Urban AC/Contemporary Reach Media Weekdays

apparel

> Office supplies

Beasley Media Group

- Feature filmsDocumentaries
- o News
- Sports (NFL & WWE)
- Pinterest
- Reddit
- ➢ RetailMeNot

Need support finding the best ways to utilize these target markets?

The Alliance will be holding in-person and virtual sessions to assist agencies with navigating the target markets.

Sessions Begin May 2023!

Recruitment Best Practices

Create a Long-Term Plan

It can take 3-6 months to see results from a recruitment campaign. When planning your recruitment efforts, expect to display your message continuously over an extended period to ensure you reach your desired audience.

Consistency is Key

Plan to maintain consistency from the start. Post on social media on the same days and times as often as possible, send regular emails around the same day/time, and convey a reliable message. This also applies to visual elements. Use consistent fonts, colors, and phrases. Make sure people can count on you and your communications.

Maintain Anonymity

Avoid posting pictures or identifiable details of children currently in foster care. While we want to draw attention to the need, we also want to protect the privacy of these children and their families.

Take Your Audience on a Journey

People need multiple connections with you before taking the first step, especially one as big as becoming a resource parent. Prospective resource families won't act after one event or social media post. Think about how you can guide these families through the decision-making process with your recruitment.

Put Yourself in their shoes

When creating content, imagine what it's like to be at the beginning, and build informative social posts, emails, and fliers that you wish you would have had. In addition to answering common questions, infuse your recruitment with quotes and stories from current and former resource families and youth with lived experience. Motivate families through storytelling.

Use Your Resources

Get creative and look for all the resources around you. Are there people in your community who will advocate for you? Businesses who will hold special events for you or feature your story? Are there opportunities for your organization to speak or hold listening sessions? Consider using the materials and strategies created for the It Takes Heart[™] Campaign to augment your current efforts.

7

Concentrate Your Efforts

Use the data from your target markets as well as your experience to focus your recruitment where it will have the most impact. Utilize the resources in this packet to maximize your efforts.

Track and Measure Your Efforts

Use data to help you determine what is working and what isn't and check in regularly. Use this information to evaluate and make changes to your recruitment strategy.

Best Practices for Social Media

Social Media Should Be Social

Take time during each week to like, comment, and share content from other related organizations or creators that align with your message. This will encourage other accounts to interact with you. Social platforms will also reward you for your activity by showing your posts to more people.

Be Consistent

Create a schedule you know is possible to maintain and stick to it, whether it's once per week or once per day.

Plan Ahead

Brainstorm a list of themes or types of posts to create and develop them ahead of time. Some examples include foster tip Friday, success stories, lessons from pre-service, sharing the data, etc. Create a content calendar including important events, days, and holidays, then fill in your own ideas and content.

Batch Your Content

Schedule blocks of time to create social media posts all at once. This is an efficient way to make sure you always have content ready.

Use a Social Media Scheduler

While most platforms have a scheduling feature, you can also use other free or low-cost software that will schedule and post your social media content. Some options include: Later, Hootsuite, Buffer, and more.

Track Your Results

Use the reporting available in your platforms or your scheduler to track your posts. If you're just starting out, choose one or two metrics to watch. Note which type of posts get the most interaction and create more of that content.

Master One Platform

It's easy to feel pressured to be on all platforms at all times, but social media takes a lot of work to do successfully. Use your resources to excel at one or two platforms rather than spreading your resources thin. Start by understanding the target markets on pages 5-7 of this packet to determine which platform(s) to use.

Use Free or Low-Cost Tools to Create Interesting Visuals

Tools like Canva have thousands of templates to help you create professional looking graphics or make static pictures into videos quickly.

KEY METRICS TO TRACK:

- Engagement (Likes and/or Comments)
- Follower Growth
- Number of Posts
- Page Growth
- Reach (How many people see your content)

The It Takes Heart™ campaign has posts and pictures available for your agency to utilize. See page 13 for details. All of the photos and captions have been curated to help you maintain a consistent presence and reach more families, while your staff can focus their efforts on other important work.

Maximize your Outreach

Connect

Think about outreach opportunities as places for you to connect, build awareness, and motivate potential resource families. Open the lines of communication for them to contact you, but also gather contact information to reach out in the future.

Plan Conversation Starters

Before the event, come up with one or two phrases you can use to initiate conversation. Consider direct questions like, "Have you ever thought about being a foster parent?" or "What motivated you to come today?" Having some of these phrases in your pocket can help you feel more confident talking to others.

Invite People to Get More Involved

Are you going to hold a webinar for curious parents? Are you sponsoring a talk in the next month? Having an invitation ready for the people you meet helps them know exactly what next step to take. This may also be as simple as following you on social media or visiting your website.

Follow-Up

In the week or so following your event, schedule time to follow-up with contacts you made. Most likely families won't be ready to start the process right away, but you can send them additional information and answer their questions. It is also best to personalize your follow-up. A mass email may be overlooked, so whenever possible tailor your outreach to the individual family.

Track Your Success

There are a number of ways you can track your influence at events. Keep track of how many people you talk to, how they heard about the event, what peaked their interest, etc. These details will help you personalize your follow-up and improve promotion of future events.

PROMOTING EVENTS

Use all your resources to announce your events, as well as those you are attending, including social media, newsletters, posters, flyers, and word of mouth.

Allow for plenty of time to promote/advertise events or events you're attending:

- Three-four weeks (minimum): Events with a limited number of attendees, hosted virtually, or an event hosted by someone else.
- Three months or more: If you're expecting a large crowd, the event is in-person, or it is held during a busy time of the week/year.

Keep Showing Up

Event marketing is a powerful way to reach out to new potential resource parents. The more often you show up, the more people will recognize and trust you and your organization. When you show up in your community consistently (with the same visual presentation) you will begin to make inroads that will last a lifetime.

Consider Your Target Market

When deciding which events to organize and attend, consider the target market information provided in this packet to learn where the people you're looking for will be. Consider their interests and look for events that align.

KEY METRICS TO TRACK:

- Contacts made at an event
- > Number of people who contact you after outreach event
- > Increase in website traffic or QR scans following material distribution
- Number of business cards handed out

From Inquiry to Resource Readiness Training

The main goal of the It Takes Heart™ Campaign is to increase the number of qualified resource and adoptive families submitting inquiries to public and private agencies statewide.

We anticipate that your agency will see an influx of inquiries submitted through the <u>It Takes Heart™ website</u> and your agency's website. Therefore, we want to equip you with best practices for responding to inquiries and encouraging families to move on to the next steps in applying and beginning resource readiness training.

Inquiries Through the It Takes Heart[™] Website

- Families will receive an email thanking them for their submission. This email promises that they will hear back from their selected agency within 5-7 business days. Reach out to interested families as soon as possible within that 5-7 day window.
- > We encourage you to test your agency on the Inquiry Page. Submit an inquiry with your agency selected and assess the response. Consider:
 - Is your agency accurately listed on the Inquiry Page?
 - Who at your agency receives the inquiry? How long does it take to appear in their inbox?
 - If you see something regarding your agency that you would like to change please contact:

Gabrielle Judy, Program Coordinator Ohio Children's Alliance Gabrielle.Judy@ohiochildrensalliance.org

Inquiries Through Your Agency Website

- Include your agency website and/or QR code in your own recruitment materials including social media posts, flyers, etc. to drive traffic to your inquiry page
- Create an auto-response email for inquiries and include the window in which they can expect to hear back from you (we recommend no more than 7 business days).

Always Follow-Up with families after the first contact. Establish regular touchpoints with all of your interested families. We recommend reaching out approximately 2 weeks after the first contact, and 1 month after the second contact.

While some families submit an inquiry fully ready to begin the process, we know that for other families it may take longer. Maintain contact to keep the idea fresh and the door open.

Monitoring your Recruitment Investment

Before You Begin: Set Your Goals

What are you hoping to accomplish by increasing your recruitment efforts? Here are some potential goals to consider:

- Increase the number of pre-service entries
- Increase social media traffic
- Increase website traffic
- Increase awareness in your community

What metrics align with the goals you've selected?

- > Number of pre-service entries or completions
- Social media engagement (likes and comments)
- Website visitors or QR scans
- > Number of forms submitted on the website
- Number of children awaiting homes

Once you have your desired list of metrics, follow these best practices:

Measure Regularly

Decide how often you'd like to assess your efforts. Depending on the frequency of your recruitment, you may need to check in more often (monthly) or less often (bimonthly or quarterly). You can use a simple spreadsheet to track all your efforts for each month. Compare your progress to see if new tactics are working.

Start Small

It's easy to get excited and track every metric you can, but that can get overwhelming and create a lot of work. Start with one or two metrics from eachrecruitment effort to create a habit and add on as you go.

Treat Recruitment Like a Science Experiment

Create a hypothesis of what will work, test it for a set amount of time (usually 3-6 months), evaluate your selected metrics, and change it as necessary.

Change Things Up

If you aren't seeing an increase in engagement or growth over your desired period of time, change up your messaging or methods.

It Takes Heart[™] Campaign Materials

Ohio Children's Alliance has developed a library of co-branded materials that is available to public and private agencies, and Hub Specialists to utilize for recruitment efforts. Available materials include:

- Banners and Signs
- Communication Templates
- > Customizable Event Flyers
- > General Informational Flyers
- Social Media Posts

Assets and materials are continuously being developed. Plan to check back regularly to see what's new!

Prior to accessing the materials, all users must download and read the campaign Usage Standards. You will find the Brand Guidelines on page 3 of this packet.

<u>CLICK HERE</u> to verify you have reviewed the guidelines to receive the link to materials. Be sure to bookmark the link to return to it later.

Marketing Materials Request Instructions:

The Alliance continues to work diligently to create digital and print materials for the campaign that utilize data-backed strategies, support brand standards, and are SDA specific.

If you have reviewed the current library of assets (above) and do not find what you are looking for, please utilize this form to make a request:

It Takes Heart[™] Campaign Materials Request

We're happy to create any printed or digital materials you need and/or work directly with your vendor. Some examples of previous requests include:

- > Flyers for specific events
- Banners/Signage
- Co-Branded Packets

Please note, the Alliance will provide the file (art) only. Agencies/Organizations are responsible for printing and distribution.

Questions contact: Gabrielle Judy gabrielle.judy@ohiochildrensalliance.org

Adoption and Resource Home Assessor Program Adopt America Network (AAN)

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), in conjunction with Adopt America Network (AAN), launched the Adoption and Resource Home Assessor Program (ARHAP) on July 11, 2022. ARHAP maintains a pool of certified assessors in every region of the state. These assessors augment the current home assessor workforce, and can, upon request, by Public Children Services Agencies (PCSA), Private Noncustodial Agencies (PNA), Private Child Placing Agencies (PCPA), and Title IV-E courts perform home studies of adoption, foster, foster and adoption homes, and kinship assessments. These home studies and assessments include those required through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) process.

During State Fiscal Year 23, ODJFS will cover the cost of an assessor for up to 800 home studies and 700 kinship assessments through ARHAP. After accepting a request, ARHAP's staff assigns and monitors the progress of the assessor and will report the home study's/assessment's progress to the requesting agency every two weeks.

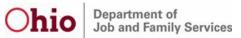
The following documents in the links below further explain ARHAP:

- "InformationSheet-ARHAP.pdf" explains the program in more detail.
- <u>"ARHAP-ProcessFlow.pdf"</u> explains how the program functions.
- <u>ARHAP.org</u> is where you can submit to request an assessment.

If you have questions about ARHAP, would like to submit a request for services, or would like to schedule an introductory meeting for your agency, please contact the Assessor Program Manager, Olubunmi Adekanbi at 419-705-5982 or <u>oadekanbi@adoptamericanetwork.org.</u>

You may also visit <u>ARHAP.org</u> to learn more.

an initiative of:



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Hub Specialist Contact Information

SDA	Hub Specialist (R&R)	Counties	Contact
1	YWCA Northwest Ohio	Defiance, Fulton, Henry, Lucas, Ottawa, Paulding, Williams, and Wood	Heather Dunzweiler <u>hdunzweiler@ywca.org</u>
2	Child Care Resource Center	Erie, Huron, Sandusky, Seneca and Lorain	Delisa Nelson <u>dnelson@ccrcinc.com</u>
3	Starting Point	Ashtabula, Geauga, Lake and Cuyahoga	info@starting-point.org
4	Early Childhood Resource Center	Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, and Trumbull	infoecrc@erescourcecenter.org
5	Corporation for Appalachian Development (COAD)	Ashland, Columbiana, Holmes, Wayne, Carroll, Coshocton, Harrison, Jefferson, Tuscarawas and Knox	foster5@coadinc.org
6	4C for Children	Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Hamilton, and Warren	hub@4cforchildren.org
7	YWCA of Northwest Ohio	Allen, Auglaize, Hardin, Mercer Hancock, Putnam, Van Wert, and Wyandot	Heather Dunzweiler <u>hdunzweiler@ywca.org</u>
8	4C for Children	Champaign, Clark, Darke, Greene, Logan, Miami, Montgomery, Preble, Shelby and Fayette	hub@4cforchildren.org
9	Action for Children	Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union	fostercareinfo@actionforchildren.org
10	Corporation for Appalachian Development (COAD)	Belmont, Guernsey, Monroe, Muskingum, Noble Athens, Hocking, Morgan, Perry, and Washington	foster10@coadinc.org
11	Corporation for Appalachian Development (COAD)	Adams, Brown, Highland, Gallia, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Pike, Ross, Scioto, and Vinton	foster11@coadinc.org
12	YWCA of Northwest Ohio	Crawford, Marion, Morrow, and Richland	Heather Dunzweiler <u>hdunzweiler@ywca.org</u>