

Adoption: Finding families for Minnesota's waiting children

Children of all ages need permanent, stable, loving families. In Minnesota, when county social services agencies place children in foster care and if courts ultimately terminate parents' rights, children are committed to the guardianship of the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families. It is the responsibility of the department to work with counties, Tribes and private adoption agencies to find permanent families for these children. The department is determined to move children quickly into safe, nurturing adoptive families when they cannot be safely reunited with their birth families. In 2024, families adopted 673 Minnesota children from the foster care system.

Hundreds of children waiting

Of the 469 children waiting for adoption, most have experienced trauma during their critical developmental years. Many will need additional educational, medical or psychological help as they grow toward maturity. Approximately:

- 64% have a documented special need, including physical, mental, emotional or a behavioral disability
- 45% are siblings who need to be adopted together
- 35% are white, 31% are two or more races, 25% are Black/African American, 6% are American Indian, 2% are Asian or Pacific Islander, and about 1% declined to provide race information or is unknown
- 51% are 12 to 18 years old
- 23% are 6 to 12 years old
- 26% are under 6 years old, although more than half of these children are part of sibling groups who need to be adopted together.

Many children are in seven-county metropolitan area

Of the 786 children under state guardianship, 343 reside in the Twin Cities seven-county metropolitan area. Of these 343 children:

- 232 are in need of adoptive families immediately, and many of these children (80%) are Black/African American, American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander, or two or more races
- 111 are in pre-adoptive homes, usually with relatives or foster parents who plan to adopt them.

Public, private partners support and seek permanent families for children

The Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families is committed to finding permanent families for all children under state guardianship and supporting these families. Together with counties and private adoption agencies, the department:

- Supports recruitment campaigns to increase communities' awareness of the need for adoptive families
- Targets recruitment efforts to identify prospective adoptive families, including those from the same communities and with similar backgrounds, beliefs and interests as children waiting for adoptive families
- Sponsors child-specific recruitment, which usually involves children and youth in developing the recruitment plan, including identifying, contacting and assessing family members or friends who already care about them
- Contracts with private adoption agencies to recruit and prepare prospective families, and places children with adoptive families
- Contracts with Foster Adopt Minnesota to maintain the State Adoption Exchange at fosteradoptmn.org, an electronic database that helps match children and prospective adoptive parents
- Works to eliminate unnecessary administrative barriers that may make it difficult for families to adopt children
- Works with organizations that help families and adopted children before, during and after adoption, and provides financial assistance after finalization to families who adopt children with special needs who are eligible for these benefits
- [Permanency Services Resource Hub](http://permanencyhubmn.org), this is a centralized tool and site to find a wide range of resources and support services for the kinship, foster and adoption communities across Minnesota and the professionals who serve them. <https://permanencyhubmn.org/>.



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