

The Recruiting Families Using Data Act

Senators Chuck Grassley and Maggie Hassan

Background:

Nearly every state faces a shortage of qualified foster parents. The limited data available suggests that retention drives this problem—most foster parents stop fostering after only a year and many stop fostering after only one or two placements.

Currently, under Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, states are required to include in their state plan a description of how they will diligently recruit foster families that reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of kids in care, known as a diligent recruitment plan. An HHS review in 2020 showed that many states do not submit all required information and documentation, suggesting that states could benefit from more guidance on diligent recruitment efforts.

Improving data collection on the foster system capacity can help states understand the scope of their recruitment challenges, and the reasons why families stop fostering. Data collection would also enhance the ability of states to conduct targeted recruitment and find families that meet specific areas of need.

The Recruiting Families Using Data Act:

- Specifies that states should fulfill the current diligent recruitment requirement by developing and implementing a family partnership plan that describes how the state will be identifying, recruiting, screening, supporting, and retaining foster and adoptive families, including
 - How states will use data to establish goals, assess needs and measure progress.
 - How states will stand up and support ongoing foster and adoptive family advisory boards to improve retention of foster and adoptive families, and
 - How states will consult with foster parents, as well as youth and service providers
- Requires states to collect and report data on foster family capacity and congregate care utilization, as well as the demographics and characteristics of foster families. This data collection would also include a summary of feedback from foster parents on licensing, support, training, and reasons why they have stopped taking placements if applicable.
- Requires HHS to produce an annual report of the data reported by states in order to identify national trends and best practices.

Last Congress, this bill was [supported](#) by the National Foster Parent Association, North American Council on Adoptable Children, Voice for Adoption, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Children's Home Society of America and The Family Focused Treatment Association, as well as 20 state-level foster parent organizations.

To cosponsor, or with any questions, please contact Liesel Crocker (Liesel_Crocker@grassley.senate.gov) or Megan Blanco (Megan_Blanco@hassan.senate.gov)