Adoption Incentive Payments

In the Federal fiscal year ending in 2011, the Department used adoption incentive funds for the following programs and services.

- **Contract with Boys and Girls Aid Society of Oregon for Enhanced recruitment for foster an adoptive families which includes the following services:**
  - Foster and adoption telephone inquiry service.
  - Distribution of information materials.
  - Personal contact with all inquiry callers.
  - General recruitment of foster and adoptive families that reach mass audiences through media, public outreach programs, public service announcements, newspaper ads, billboards, fairs, booths, sporting events.
  - Targeted recruitment for identified targeted areas, including sibling groups, older youth, specific ethnic or racial groups, geographic considerations, children with disabilities, complex medical needs and other areas of priority identified by the Department.
  - Child specific recruitment focused on the unique placement needs and challenges of the specific referred child or sibling group.
  - Adoption orientation classes.
  - Foundations training (foster and adoptive family training).
  - Home Study preparation and presentation of out of state families at adoption selection committee.

- **Targeted Native American recruitment**
  A specialized Native American recruitment tool was in the planning process for much of this review period. The goal was to develop a recruitment video to be presented to Native communities that included interviews of Native survivors who grew up in the foster care system with Native families and interviews of Native survivors who grew up in the foster care system with non-Native families. Discussion about the two experiences and implications of culturally important resources was to be the primary subject. The video was also to include information about the certification process and barriers that Native
families have typically encountered when trying to become a foster or adoptive resource. The field manager who developed this idea and who had been working on the logistics of the project left the agency prior to the final organization of the filming. Therefore, encumbered incentive funds have not yet been used as originally planned. Of note, however, is the hiring in 2009 of a specialized Native American certification recruiter and certifier in the greater Portland area. She has participated in a number of relationship building activities including individual contact with local Tribes, attendance and a recruitment table at various pow wows, and attendance and recruitment at other Native events. As her position is dedicated to the recruitment and certification of Native families, the Adoption Manager has made contact and there is a plan to work together to develop ideas about future projects.

- **Expansion of the contract with Northwest Regional Associates**

  Create the Northwest Adoption Resource Exchange (OARE) to pay for building, initial implementation and first year maintenance of an intra-state web-based adoption exchange. The website became active in December of 2010 and Oregon has eliminated all paper bulletins. The purpose is to facilitate in-state adoption of Oregon children by Oregon families prior to expanding to a nationwide recruitment. Users of the website include Department caseworkers and private adoption agencies for which DHS has a contract, and Oregon families who have an approved adoption home study. All child bulletins are now listed on OARE and paper bulletins are no longer used in Oregon. Advantages of moving to an automated bulletin system include:

  - Child bulletin information is communicated to families more rapidly since they no longer have to travel to a field office to view a notebook of paper bulletins.
  - The status of a child, i.e. active, on hold, placed is posted immediately so families have immediate information as to whether a child is still available.
  - Workers become less overburdened with unnecessary studies for children whose status has changed but the information has not yet reached the multiple field offices by paper.
  - The contractor monitors the site and gives reminders to caseworkers when a bulletin should be updated.
The exchange offers consultation to staff on writing accurate and effective bulletins.

**Training for Adoption Committee Members**

The PSU Child Welfare Partnership was contracted, in conjunction with content experts from DHS, to develop curriculum for adoption committee members who focused on the core values and mission of the Department as applicable to the adoption process. The training included the following content areas:

- Personal biases. Helping committee members recognize and reconcile their own personal biases when making placement recommendations.
- The importance of relative and sibling connections including history, traditions, sibling, familial, cultural and linguistic continuity.
- Attachment including the neurological basis of attachment and success later in life. Assessing attachment and the ability to re-attach.
- Placement matching.

This curriculum was delivered in May, 2011 to 25 participants and is scheduled to be delivered again in June, 2011 to an additional 25 participants. The curriculum is delivered as a Training of Trainers model. In a two day course, identified staff is provided the curriculum, materials and visual aids, and an opportunity to observe, train and receive feedback on delivery of the material.

The Department also developed a computer based training which addresses current adoption rules, procedures and processes of the selection process, including the implications of MEPA and ASFA. This computer based training is available to all DHS staff, community partners, and volunteers who may be involved in the adoption selection process.

**Camp To Belong**

Camp To Belong is an international non-profit organization that has been actively reuniting brothers and sisters placed in separate foster, adoptive or kinship homes through Summer Camp Programs and year around events. Camp To Belong Summer Camp was created to offer siblings the opportunity to create lifetime memories while reunited at
camp for a one week period. In 2010, incentive money was used for scholarships for 17 siblings who had been adopted separately from each other and whom were reunited during the one week camp experience.

In the Federal fiscal year ending in 2012, the Department plans to use the adoption incentive funds for the following programs and services:

- Fund the Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center (ORPARC). General funds for post adoption services funding has been eliminated in the 2011-13 biennial budget. 100% of this budget was used to fund ORPARC. In an effort to keep this essential post adoption support and services program, adoption incentive funds will be used to pay for this program through September of 2012.

- Continue supplementing the contract with Boys and Girls Aid Society of Oregon for enhanced recruitment for foster and adoptive families which includes the services listed above for the federal fiscal year 2011.