

Child Welfare
Foster Care Program

July-September 2026

Quarterly Report

Resource Family Recruitment and Retention

Statewide Summary

Oregon's recruitment and retention work this quarter reflects a deepening alignment with the Administration for Children and Families 'A Home for Every Child' initiative — a national call to ensure every child has access to a safe, appropriate, and stable home supported by well-prepared caregivers and strong community networks. Across the state, staff and partners advanced this vision by strengthening caregiver support systems, expanding culturally responsive outreach, investing in training that equips both staff and families, and building meaningful community partnerships that widen the circle of support for children and youth.

These collective efforts move Oregon closer to a child welfare system where every child's needs are met through a diverse, resilient, and well-supported resource parent community. By emphasizing belonging, stability, and readiness at every point of engagement, Oregon continues building the infrastructure necessary to fulfill the shared mission of securing a home for every child.

Community-Building and Caregiver Appreciation

Across Oregon, districts invested in relationship-centered events that build trust, appreciation, and belonging among resource parents.

- District 1 (Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook) held multiple county-wide appreciation events, including barbecues, lake gatherings, donated clothing drives, and catered meals funded by partners like the Kiwanis Club. These efforts gave families opportunities to connect with one another and with staff in informal, positive environments.
- District 3 (Marion, Polk, Yamhill) provided free tickets to sporting events, aquarium passes, flowers, and access to Salem's Art Fair, demonstrating appreciation while reducing costs for families.
- District 4 (Linn, Benton, Lincoln) facilitated well-attended back-to-school events, distributing hundreds of pairs of shoes, socks, hygiene kits, meals, and clothing bundles — showing responsiveness to practical needs and strengthening families' confidence in agency partnership.
- District 5 (Lane) deepened community connection through respite meet-and-greets, Coffee & Connect sessions, Emeralds baseball outings, and a lake day event that brought families together in a supportive setting.
- District 7 (Coos & Curry) co-hosted a large Tri-County Summer Camp with Douglas County, offering bonding experiences that built cross-district caregiver relationships.

- District 12 (Morrow & Umatilla) hosted its annual pool party with 100 attendees, one of the district's most anticipated events, fostering a strong sense of community belonging.
- District 16 (Washington) delivered multiple high-impact appreciation events including a privately rented movie screening for 179 attendees, bilingual support groups, and a Teen Support Group event with Every Child and Chase Bank.

These events help families feel valued, reduce burnout, and foster peer connection — all essential to retaining homes. Families who feel supported are more likely to maintain certification, accept new placements, and speak positively about fostering in their communities. Supported and satisfied resource parents serve as our most trusted and impactful recruitment partners.

Expanding Culturally Responsive and Community-Specific Outreach

Districts worked intentionally to increase access for families from diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, and LGBTQIA2S+ backgrounds, directly advancing statewide recruitment goals focused on culturally matched homes and equity.

- District 2 (Multnomah) demonstrated a strong focus on culturally specific initiatives, with partnerships spanning Mi Gente, African American Management Council, Slavic ERG, Parenting with Intent, and Black-led organizations. Their presence at Pride Parade and Waterfront Pride extended visibility to LGBTQIA2S+ communities.
- District 4 (Linn, Benton, Lincoln) continued targeted efforts to recruit culturally diverse families and participated in events like Festival Latino and Newport Pride.
- District 12 (Morrow & Umatilla) strengthened relationships with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and explored culturally responsive retention opportunities through Pendleton Faith Center and local libraries.
- District 15 (Clackamas) recruited Spanish-speaking families through "Saturdays in the Park," where almost all interested families were monolingual or bilingual Spanish speakers.
- District 16 (Washington) expanded bilingual caregiver support groups, and participated in Hillsboro's Latino Cultural Festival.
- District 8 (Jackson & Josephine) built visibility among rural and culturally diverse communities through radio interviews, school-based outreach, and faith-based partnerships.

Strengthening Caregiver Preparedness, Training Access, and Staff Capacity

A strong statewide thread is the intentional development of both staff and caregiver skills — a direct investment in long-term stability and recruitment readiness.

- District 10 (Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson) led statewide progress on staff-facing customer service training, with 72–86 staff completing each module — a significant contribution to statewide retention practices.
- District 6 (Douglas) advanced placement stability by developing a formal structure for multidisciplinary team meetings and pursued a large grant for trauma-informed training (ARC Reflections) and Foster Parent College access.
- District 5 (Lane) expanded both structured and informal learning spaces through Dinner & Discuss events and Coffee & Connect groups.
- District 1 (Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook) strengthened internal alignment through their updated placement change form, encouraging earlier identification of when Icebreakers are needed.

Deepening Partnerships with Schools, Faith Communities, and Local Organizations

Districts increasingly embedded themselves into community systems — a strategic approach that not only drives recruitment but improves ODHS' connections and relationships within local networks.

- Schools as recruitment partners:
  - District 1 (Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook) collaborated with Head Start across multiple counties.
  - District 7 (Coos & Curry) presented to Brookings Harbor School District and Coos Bay/North Bend administrators.
  - District 8 (Jackson & Josephine) increased visibility in middle and high schools through PeachJar and rural school partnerships.
  - District 12 (Morrow & Umatilla) collaborated with schools to expand community awareness through events and presentations.
- Faith communities as support hubs:
  - District 8 (Jackson & Josephine) and District 12 (Morrow & Umatilla) deepened partnerships with churches interested in supporting resource families.

    - District 6 (Douglas) leveraged a local therapist with deep ties to the community to support trauma-informed training.
- Nonprofit & ERG partnerships:
    - Every Child and community-based organizations supplied gift cards, clothing closets, freezer meals, and ongoing tangible supports.
    - A partnership with the D2 Equity and Inclusion Committee led to new funding to support culturally diverse resource parent recruitment events and to support culturally specific food pantries.
- These partnerships provide:
    - Broader recruitment pipelines.
    - Increased caregiver belonging and support.
    - Expanded community networks and increased home retention.

Retention and Recruitment: One Essential Part of a Systemwide Commitment

The retention and recruitment efforts highlighted this quarter reflect Oregon's ongoing commitment to the goals of ACF's 'A Home for Every Child' initiative, while also recognizing that this work represents just one essential piece of a much larger movement. Ensuring that every child has an appropriate, safe, and supported home depends not only on strengthening and sustaining resource families, but also on the vital work taking place across the broader ODHS system — from expanding relative placements, to enhancing prevention services, to building strong community partnerships that support children and families long before foster care is needed.

Retention and recruitment remain crucial levers in improving the statewide ratio of available homes to children needing placement, but they operate alongside many interconnected efforts led by staff, caregivers, and community partners across Oregon. Progress in one area reinforces progress in others, and together these complementary strategies help create a more stable, responsive, and child-centered system.

As Oregon continues advancing toward the vision of A Home for Every Child, the state remains committed to strengthening the resource parent experience while also honoring the diverse, collaborative work happening across the agency and within local communities. This collective commitment is what moves the system forward — and what ultimately ensures that every child can access the safe, nurturing home they deserve.

Inquiries and Certifications

- General Resource Parent Inquiries: 186

- Respite Inquiries: 166
- New General Applicant Certifications: 43
- New Respite Certifications: 38