



HUMAN
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all children
all families

The State of LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Child Welfare

2023 CHANGE-MAKERS REPORT



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Letter from the HRC President

Dear Friends and Allies,

It is with great pride and a sense of purpose that I present to you the findings of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2023 All Children - All Families (ACAF) report. Since 2007, ACAF has been the go-to resource for agencies looking to welcome and affirm LGBTQ+ prospective parents and transform their service delivery for LGBTQ+ youth in out-of-home care.

At a time when anti-LGBTQ+ legislation continues to sweep across our nation, the Human Rights Campaign has declared a State of Emergency for the LGBTQ+ community. More than 500 anti-LGBTQ+ bills have been introduced in state legislatures, with more than 80 already signed into law. In this moment of crisis, LGBTQ+ children and their families need our unwavering support.

This year's report represents a comprehensive assessment of our progress in the fight to bring justice and equity to LGBTQ+ youth and families within the child welfare and social service systems. Discrimination, bias, and disparities continue to impact the lives of vulnerable LGBTQ+ individuals, but together, we are taking meaningful steps toward change.

In this year's report, you will find a wealth of information highlighting the achievements and challenges we have faced in the past year. It is a testament to the dedication of the 172 participating organizations across 43 states that have embraced the principles of inclusivity and equality. Through their collective efforts, we have made substantial progress in improving the lives of LGBTQ+ youth and families.

With gratitude and determination,

Kelley Robinson, (She/Her)

HRC President

Our Agency Self-Assessment has played a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of LGBTQ+ inclusion within child welfare agencies. More than 9,500 policies and practices have been examined, refined, and implemented to ensure that LGBTQ+ individuals and families are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

In addition, this year marks a significant expansion of the program to include social service organizations. This expansion is a recognition of the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ young people in various social service settings. By broadening our reach, we are better equipped to address the needs of those who have been overlooked and locked out of opportunity.

The report will tell stories of resilience, courage, and hope. These stories are a testament to the real-world impact of our mission. They remind us that, despite our challenges, we are making a tangible difference in the lives of LGBTQ+ youth and families.

As we navigate the journey toward liberation without exception, this report will serve as a source of inspiration and a reminder that together, we can build a world where every child, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, has the opportunity to thrive in a loving and supportive family.

Please take the time to explore the report's findings and join us in the commitment to furthering LGBTQ+ equality in child welfare and social services.

“

With HRC’s recent declaration of a state of emergency for LGBTQ+ people in the United States, it is more important than ever for allies to take a clear and vocal stand...During interviews with new staff, we always make sure to tell them that we are not passive allies, that we are “proudly loud” in our advocacy for LGBTQ+ youth and families.”

Hands Across the Water -
Ann Arbor, Michigan, 2023 Innovator



Why is this work important?

“ People who work in foster care need to learn about gender identity, sexuality – all of that. It’s life or death.”

When LGBTQ+ youth are placed in **homes that are not affirming**, “**you put this queer kid in this situation where they have to choose between safety and validation, which are both safety issues.**”

- An LGBTQ+ young person on the importance of affirming homes for youth in foster care

Approximately **1 of every 3** youth in foster care is LGBTQ+.

44% of LGBTQ+ youth in state custody were removed or ran away from home or thrown out for reasons directly related to their identity.

Once in care, LGBTQ+ youth report **higher rates of mistreatment, more frequent placement disruptions, and higher likelihood of being placed in group homes/residential care settings.**

“ [I] got rejected twice from two different agencies and I didn’t see how going to another agency was going to make any difference. One day I was just browsing online and I found a foster care licensing agency and they [had] the LGBT flag so I called them and I found that, yeah, they’re inclusive to everybody. It’s kind of like it was meant to be.”

- Once denied, an LGBTQ+ couple finds joy in foster parenting with an agency participating in All Children - All Families

84% of LGBTQ+ adults surveyed would consider adoption or foster care in the future.

55% feared being turned away because of their LGBTQ+ identity.

Only 14% of LGBTQ+ adults surveyed knew of an LGBTQ-inclusive agency near them.

About the All Children - All Families Program

For more than fifteen years, HRC Foundation's All Children - All Families (ACAF) program has been the go-to resource for child welfare systems working to improve services for LGBTQ+ youth and families. Utilizing ACAF's organizational framework, agencies assess and ultimately implement a set of best practices – ACAF's "Benchmarks of LGBTQ+ Inclusion". Agencies that lead the field with implementing these Benchmarks are formally recognized in ACAF's Change-Makers Report. As part of this certification process, agency staff receive annual role-specific LGBTQ+ inclusion training at no cost by means of online learning offerings from All Children - All Families.

All Children - All Families also offers a [National Training Program](#) with expert training, capacity building, and coaching on a diverse range of LGBTQ+ topics for child welfare professionals and caregivers, as well as professionals in social and human services more broadly at a sliding scale fee-for-service both in-person and virtually. This includes a Training of Facilitators program to build the capacity of organizations to deliver LGBTQ+ content to their own staff and caregivers utilizing ACAF's materials.

Executive Summary

Since 2007, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's All Children - All Families (ACAF) Program has been the leading resource for child welfare agencies seeking training, technical assistance, and model policies for improving practice with LGBTQ+ youth and families in adoption and foster care. In 2019, 71 agencies across 23 states were featured in ACAF's first edition of this report. Just five years later, **a record-breaking 172 child welfare agencies employing over 30,500 professionals and serving more than 1.4 million children, youth, and families annually in 43 states implemented LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and affirming practices.**

The agencies that are included in this report come from various ends of the field including state and county child welfare agencies, private adoption or foster care providers, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), and Adoption Exchanges. Each agency has completed ACAF's Agency Self-Assessment (ASA), a comprehensive online tool that provides an organizational framework to review existing policies and practices and identify areas for improvement. Utilizing ACAF's individual and group technical assistance, model policy language, and staff train-

ing, agencies implement a set of best practices to guide this systems change initiative. In total, **over 9,500 policies and practices were assessed by the 172 participating agencies.**

There are three different certification levels or "Tiers of Recognition" – Building Foundation for Inclusion, Solid Foundation for Inclusion, or Innovative Inclusion – depending on the number of LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and affirming practices an agency implements. This recognition enhances an agency's efforts to establish a track record of LGBTQ+ inclusion and build meaningful relationships with LGBTQ+ communities in their area. Since the last report, 50 agencies earned the Innovative Tier of Recognition; the highest certification level awarded to agencies that are boldly leading the field with LGBTQ+ inclusive practices. Agencies providing adoption or foster care services that have earned the Solid or Innovative Tiers of Recognition since the last report, are designated as one of the **"Top LGBTQ+ Inclusive Adoption and Foster Care Agencies"**.

All agencies that earned a Tier of Recognition in this report have established written policies protecting LGBTQ+ youth, families, and even employees

from discrimination. Additionally, all Tiered agencies revised language on client-facing forms to be explicitly welcoming and added visual cues to areas clients are served that clearly communicate support and inclusion. **All Children - All Families and the child welfare leaders participating in the program are driving the field forward to reshape the delivery of services to LGBTQ+ youth and families.**

ACAF offers one of the nation’s only comprehensive role-specific LGBTQ+ inclusion training programs grounded in evidence-based strategies. In order for inclusive policies and practices to be truly impactful, it is critical that caregivers, child welfare and youth-serving professionals are trained. Each year participating agencies are charged with training all staff members; from those working in the finance and operations departments to those directly serving youth and families – everyone has a role in agency-wide change. ACAF also trains cohorts of facilitators at agencies and provides ongoing coaching and support to empower agencies to utilize internal resources for LGBTQ+ inclusion training.

This report can offer insight for child welfare leaders, advocates, and stakeholders into the state of LGBTQ+ inclusion in the field. Utilize the map on the following page to determine which

agencies are leading in inclusion in your area, identify opportunities to pioneer this work in your vicinity, or simply to be inspired by the growing movement of agencies committed to equality. Members of the LGBTQ+ community can use this report to identify affirming adoption and foster care agencies, or to connect with a local Court Appointed Special Advocate affiliate to support youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice system.

All Children - All Families continues to see consistent growth in the number of child welfare agencies committed to providing inclusive and affirming services. 36 agencies participated in All Children - All Families for the first time in 2023. This year, to keep up with the continued momentum, ACAF expanded the scope of eligibility for recognition to include a small cohort of organizations providing social services. Certain social service organizations, such as those providing services to unhoused youth or clinical services to system-involved youth, often serve a disproportionate amount of LGBTQ+ young people. In the coming years, ACAF will develop additional resources to meet this need, and ACAF will engage larger cohorts of social service organizations in LGBTQ+ inclusion efforts.

Impact By The Numbers

There are two key pillars to ACAF's systems change work – implementing inclusive policies and training child welfare staff on providing affirming services.

Policy & Practice Engagement



Participating Organizations by 3 Tiers of Recognition

All Children - All Families (ACAF) participating agencies are recognized in one of three Tiers of Recognition, depending on the extent to which they have implemented the ACAF Benchmarks of LGBTQ+ Inclusion.

Building Foundation for Inclusion

At this level, agencies are often at the early stages of inclusive policy and practice implementation. Benchmarks focus on establishing non-discrimination protections, providing staff with online learning related to LGBTQ+ topics and improving LGBTQ+ inclusion in forms, paperwork and messaging. This tier's requirements are meaningful and achievable for agencies beginning their work on LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Solid Foundation for Inclusion

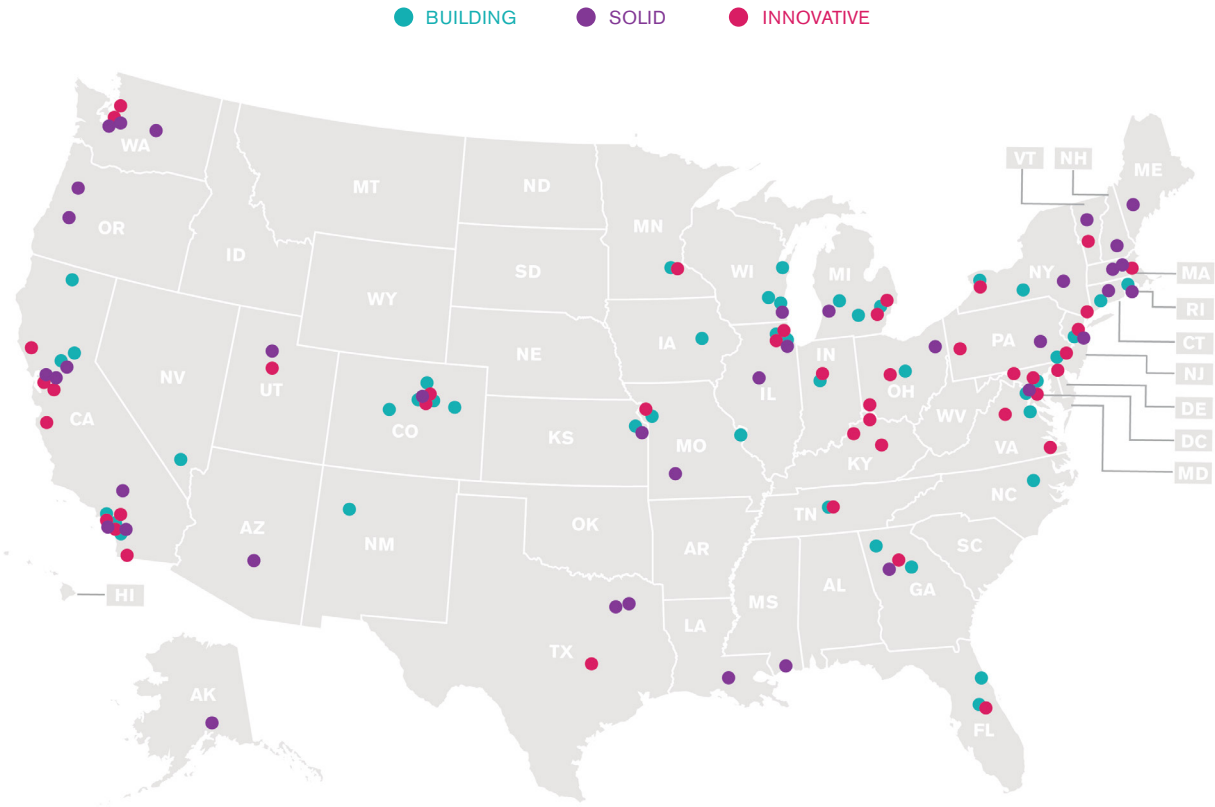
At this level, agencies have implemented the essential elements of LGBTQ+ inclusion in policies and affirming practices. Benchmarks go beyond basic non-discrimination protections to the policies and practices necessary to actively “roll out the welcome mat” to the LGBTQ community. These agencies have also assessed their practices specific to youth and parents to ensure LGBTQ inclusion and acted to make these efforts sustainable for the long-term. Organizations that achieve the Solid Foundation for Inclusion Tier receive the “You Are Welcome Here” Seal of Recognition.

Innovative Inclusion

At this level, agencies are pushing themselves beyond the solid foundation they have built and implementing innovative approaches to LGBTQ+ inclusion in each of the seven key policy and practice areas. Benchmarks at this level also require agencies to demonstrate leadership in areas like policy advocacy or organizational partnerships. Organizations that achieve the Innovative Inclusion Tier receive the “Innovator” Seal of Recognition.



Participating Organizations by 3 Tiers of Recognition

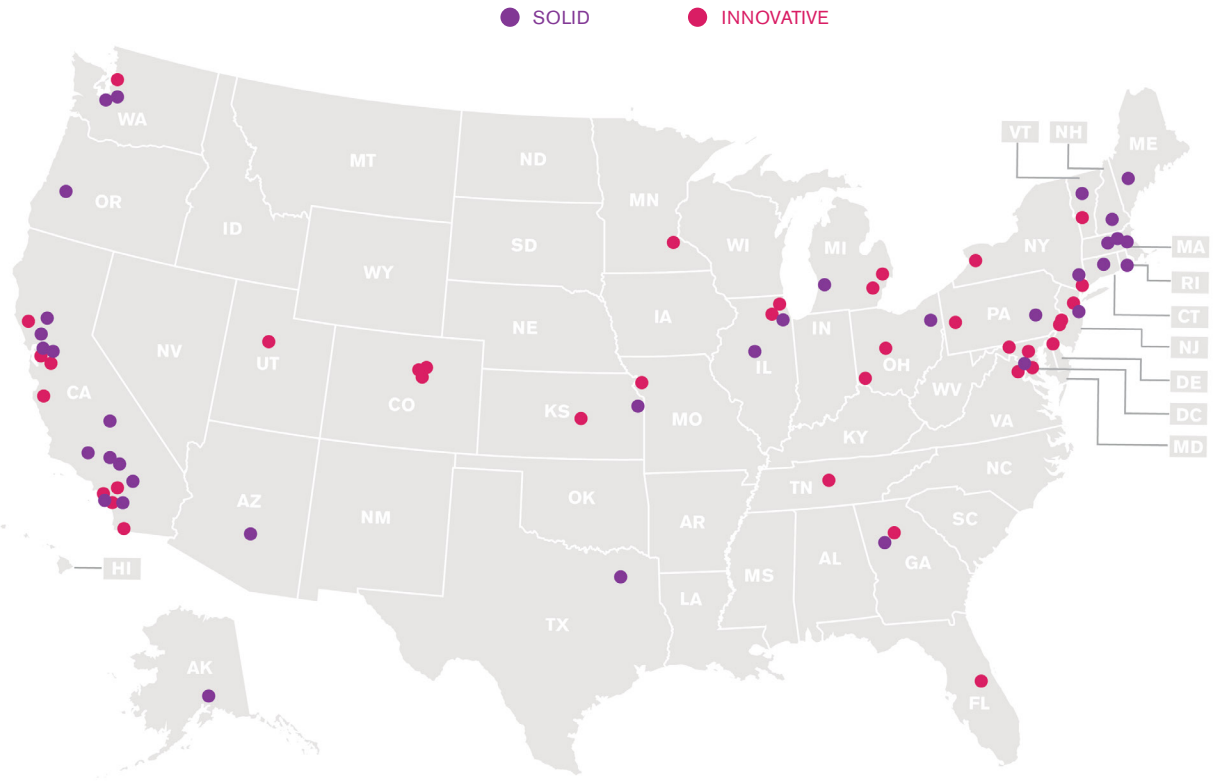


[Click here to see the full list of agencies](#)

Not seeing an agency in your region? Email acaf@hrc.org for an outreach toolkit that you can share with local agencies to encourage them to join the movement of inclusive child welfare agencies committed to affirming practice with LGBTQ+ youth and families.

Top LGBTQ+ Inclusive Adoption & Foster Care Agencies

The agencies listed below provide matching and placement services for adoption and foster care. They have implemented substantial policies and practices to best serve the LGBTQ+ community and earned the two highest Tiers of Recognition from All Children - All Families.



[Click here to see the full list of agencies](#)

“She’s made a difference in my life, and she’s only one person. She made me who I am.”

- An LGBTQ+ Young Person On Affirming Foster Parent’s Impact

Research shows if an LGBTQ+ young person is connected to at least one supportive adult, it can save their life.

“How do you know you won’t make a difference until you try? You...have to try.”

- Parent Fostering an LGBTQ+ Young Person



Staff Training - 2023

In 2023 alone, All Children - All Families provided over 25,000 hours of professional development to staff at child welfare agencies in each state of this country and beyond! All webinars are recorded and made available in [ACAF's Webinar Archive](#) for on-demand viewing at no cost.

“The presenter shared the information in a thoughtful and supportive manner and they did so in a way that made it feel like a comfortable space to ask questions, share information, gain knowledge and increase understanding.”



15 Live Webinars & 40+ Recorded Online Learning Offerings

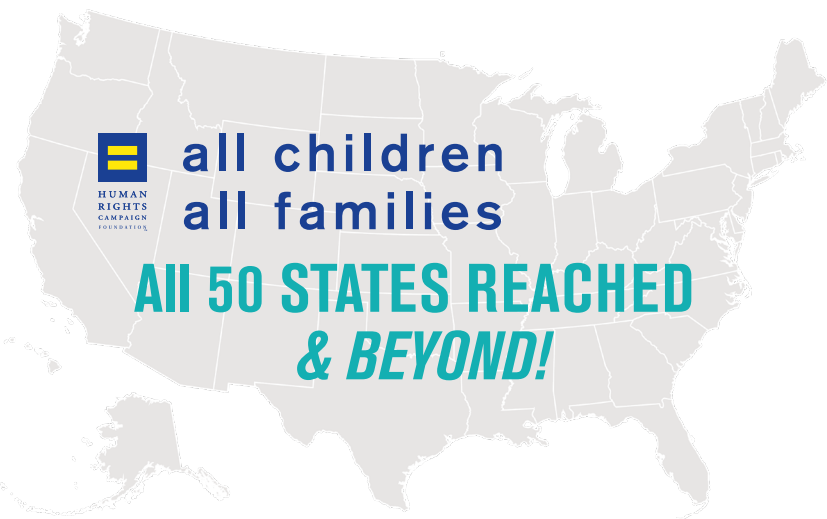


10,650+ Professionals Trained



750+ Organizations Represented Among Attendees

“I really appreciate how well the information was presented, webinars are often tough to learn from but the presenter did a great job sharing material!”



The Trevor Project. (2023). Acceptance from adults is associated with lower rates of suicide attempts among LGBTQ young people.

Putting Intersectionality Into Practice

Systemic racism and LGBTQ+ bias increase the risk of system-involvement for LGBTQ+ youth from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. 57% of LGBTQ+ youth in out-of-home care are BIPOC, and Native/Indigenous LGBTQ+ youth have the greatest odds of experiencing foster care. Additionally, LGBTQ+ youth from BIPOC communities experience longer wait times to be adopted, remain in the system longer, and face greater risk of discrimination and violence compared to their peers. LGBTQ+ folks living with other marginalized identities, such as LGBTQ+ folks who are neurodivergent, also have unique experiences that inform their needs.

In 2023, All Children - All Families offered the following webinars that emphasized the importance of utilizing an intersectional approach in assessing risk and developing support plans with communities who are multiply marginalized.



Allyship and Accessibility - Understanding the Intersection of Autism and LGBTQ+ Identity



Native & Indigenous LGBTQIA2S+ Youth in Child Welfare



Putting Intersectionality into Practice



Using a Racial Equity Lens 2.0 - Best Practices for Black & Brown LGBTQIA2S+ Youth in Care

Recordings of each webinar listed above – and many more – are available on-demand, at no cost in the [All Children - All Families Webinar Archive](#).

Martin, M., Down, L., & Erney, R. 2016, Conron & Wilson, 2019, Grooms, J., 2020

At a Glance: First ACAF Report to Now

| | 2019 | 2023 |
|---------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Youth and Families Served | 352,750 | 1.4 Million+ |
| Number of Agencies | 71 | 172 |
| States Reached | 23 | 43 |
| People Employed | 10,670 | 30,650+ |
| Professionals Trained | 1,527 | 10,650+ |
| Policies Assessed | 3,500+ | 9,500+ |



CHANGE-MAKER STORIES



INNOVATOR PROFILE: TLC CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

Change-Makers Leading Inclusion Work for Decades

Romeo* entered the foster system at 6 years old—moving from home to home until he was almost 10. Although he eventually landed in a stable foster home, his own reactions to the traumatic incidents in his life led to the need for residential care and a therapeutic school.

When he came to TLC Child and Family Services, he was navigating his trauma, as well as questions about his gender identity. He felt lost, unsure of who he was, and that “everything I felt inside felt wrong.” He experienced rejection from his family and even supportive individuals misunderstood him. This led to periods of significant depression, low self-esteem, and feelings of hopelessness.

TLC introduced him to an accepting community that helped him heal and find himself. His therapist honored his identity and validated his journey. LGBTQ+ peer groups inspired him. Meeting individuals confident in their gender identity showed him what was possible. He connected with trans mentors, began taking testosterone, and eventually changed his state ID card. He felt pride in himself and a level of self-acceptance he hadn’t felt before.

“I really stepped into my own here.”

Now fully living as a trans male, he is aware of the political landscape and widespread lack of acceptance, including targeted hate. He’s chosen not to disclose his gender identity publicly. “When people know, that’s when things start to change. If I did announce that (being trans), I would feel really unsafe.”

Romeo emphasized the need for more places like TLC, which offers acceptance and safety to so many. He feels honored to know that because of TLC’s early work with him and others, he was part of a larger history, which culminates in TLC’s collaboration with HRC’s ACAF initiative. Partnering with ACAF raised the bar and helped the organization do even better work. This includes a SOGIE-specific version of the agency’s Sexual Harassment training, reviewing and altering documents to ensure LGBTQ+ inclusive language, and having the acumen to secure an LGBTQ+ grant that gave birth to Project Flare, TLC’s LGBTQ+ initiative that seeks to undo aloneness and reduce or eradicate suicide within the LGBTQ+ community.

“Our initiatives support those we serve to work through unresolved trauma, all while gaining confidence in themselves and their identity. This has a beautiful ripple effect into the broader community—creating greater understanding and acceptance overall.” Says Susan Fette, MFT CEO

As an adult, Romeo is thriving. He’s engaged to be married and excited to share the family-oriented experiences he had at TLC, such as camping and river rafting, with his family. He works in mental health supporting others with their own mental health challenges.

He no longer feels lost. He’s confident, has grown into his own person, and has a clear sense of identity.

“TLC introduced him to an accepting community that helped him heal and find himself...He felt pride in himself and a level of self-acceptance he hadn’t felt before.”

- Romeo*, former youth in care at TLC Child and Family Services

He shares hope for youth who may be feeling as he once did: “Don’t question yourself. Don’t allow others to bring you down with their beliefs. Be you and be proud of it. As long as you’re happy that’s all that matters.”

*Name changed for privacy reasons.



INNOVATOR PROFILE: LIGHTHOUSE YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES BEACON OF INCLUSION FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH

Lighthouse Youth & Family Services began working with the ACAF Program more than ten years ago with its sights set on building and implementing LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and affirming practices internally and across its programs. Today, the agency is the local leader in services for LGBTQ+ youth and beyond.

Venus traveled from Phoenix, AZ, to Lighthouse's young adult shelter in Cincinnati, OH, seeking acceptance. The 19-year-old transgender woman said, "The first night I cried myself to sleep because I was finally accepted for who I was."

In 2015, Lighthouse's foster care & adoption program was the first in Ohio to be designated a "Leader in Supporting and Serving LGBT Families and Youth" by HRC, and has now achieved the Innovative Inclusion Tier of Recognition for several consecutive years. Lighthouse's vision is a community where every young person can thrive. LGBTQ+ youth-specific care and strong support for its staff and allies are essential in helping every young person feel safe and supported.

Lighthouse staff understand that discrimination, rejection, and abuse result in the overrepresentation of LGBTQ+ youth in the homeless youth population and foster care. They're dedicated to elevating and meeting the needs of LGBTQ+ young people and their families every day.

When a Lighthouse foster family faced pushback with an adoption, the Lighthouse team faced the challenge head-on. They provided the information and education needed to move forward.

The foster family included a same-sex couple in a polyamorous relationship with a third adult living in the home. The child placed with them identified as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. The child found happiness with them after previously being in a home where the foster family consistently

acted disrespectfully, ignoring the child's chosen pronouns and identity.

The foster parents were matched as potential adoptive parents for the child in their care. As they prepared to appear in court, the local Job and Family Services contacted Lighthouse for details about the background and relationships in the home. During the following meeting, Lighthouse staff provided information and shared knowledge that paved the way for the adoption. The judge put them on retainer in case there were additional questions about adult relationships in the home.

Through its participation in the All Children-All Families program, Lighthouse has enhanced its affirming practices with LGBTQ+ children and families and created an inclusive environment for foster care, adoption, and children's services.

“ When you come to Lighthouse as a young person that's LGBTQ+ looking for help, you see a sign on every door: 'You're welcome here.' When you've faced unique obstacles and staying safe can be a challenge, finding a place where you're accepted is invaluable,” said Bonita Campbell, Chief Operating Officer at Lighthouse Youth & Family Services.”

- Bonita Campbell, Chief Operating Officer at Lighthouse Youth & Family Services





INNOVATOR PROFILE: PATHS FOR FAMILIES
LONGTIME CHANGE-MAKER CONTINUES TO INNOVATIVE LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

Paths for Families (formerly Adoptions Together) placed its first child with parents identifying as LGBTQ+ in 1993. Since then, they’ve worked to operate at the forefront of inclusivity in adoption and family well-being and have worked with hundreds - maybe thousands - of youth and families in this community.

One of those couples is Mark Williams and Edwin Greer, who adopted a son in 2017, followed by a set of twins in 2020:

“Looking for an adoption agency, we knew we’d have to have a partner through the process. That was the most important thing. We’re a gay family, and we had to have someone who has dealt with our type of family. That brought us to [Paths for Families]...[They] walked us through the process, asked questions, and allowed us to express when we were uncomfortable or when something didn’t feel right; it made the whole process a lot easier for us.”

Actively involved with the Human Rights Campaign’s All Children – All Families (ACAF) since its inception in 2007, Paths for Families has remained engaged and at the forefront of advocating for inclusivity within the adoption community. This includes meeting ACAF’s ‘2023 Inclusive Innovation’ highest tier of recognition. The organization collaborated with IDEAS (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access, Social Justice) Generation to complete a one-year organizational assessment, training, and coaching engagement. This effort included 4 hours of training specifically focused on supporting LGBTQ+ families and youth. In addition to increasing team knowledge and skills, these interactive sessions also sparked discussions and prompted policy and practice changes to further optimize the organization’s services.

With more than 30 percent of youth in the U.S. foster care system identifying as LGBTQ+, and 20-30 percent of the adoptive parents at Paths for Families also identifying as LGBTQ+, Paths for Families sees these efforts as critically important to remain a trusted resource for all children and families.

“We are proud to say we’ve helped hundreds, if not thousands of LGBTQ+ youth and families in our organization since that very first placement in 1993, and will continue to do so,” said Janice Goldwater, Founder and Executive Director for Paths for Families.

“It is our honor to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment so that everyone can find a safe place to call home: every child, every family, every step of the way.”

- **Janice Goldwater,**
Founder and Executive Director for Paths for Families





INNOVATOR PROFILE: HANDS ACROSS THE WATER CHANGE-MAKERS IN MICHIGAN UNITE FOR CHANGE

“Not too long ago, when I needed to find child welfare agencies publicly committed to inclusion for advocacy projects in the State of Michigan, I knew of only a few agencies out of more than 100 in the state who were willing to help publicly,” remarks Katie Page Sander, Executive Director at Hands Across The Water (HATW) in Ann Arbor, Michigan, an All Children - All Families participant since 2011. Now, despite a surge of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation around the country, with the help of a grant through the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan’s HOPE Fund, Hands Across The Water, alongside another agency in Michigan that has earned the Innovative tier, Fostering Futures, has gathered 20 private child welfare agencies and several representatives from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services who have declared their commitment to improving services to LGBTQ+ youth and families. The newly-formed Michigan Consortium on LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Child Welfare is a grassroots group seeking to provide like-minded agencies and leaders the opportunity to share resources, ideas, encouragement, and advocacy around improved practice and policy in the state and is gaining momentum.

With HRC’s recent declaration of a State of Emergency for LGBTQ+ people in the United States, it is more important than ever for allies to take a clear and vocal stand and HATW is so excited to be a part of encouraging other providers to proudly declare their support and allyship. During interviews with new staff, we always make sure to tell them that we are not passive allies, that we are “proudly loud” in our advocacy for LGBTQ+ youth and families. This philosophy goes beyond advocating for our clients alone, but is carried further in advocacy at the local, state and federal levels. HATW’s willingness to speak up when doing so may have led to significant backlash has empowered other agencies to follow, moving from silent allies, to proudly declaring their stances on inclusion.

HATW staff member, Manny J., has been employed at HATW for the past three years with our child welfare team, beginning as a foster care specialist, then as a dual adoption and foster care specialist, and now will lead a team as a foster care supervisor. He shared this about his experience working at HATW: “With my diverse background as a gay Indian I have always felt supported with my identity at my agency. Being a part of a workplace that makes me feel safe being who I am, has in turn allowed me to become a safe person for the youth and families that we work with. It is very important for me to be able to use my role to connect with youth and families within the LGBTQ+ community and advocate for them with the full support of the agency.”

“

During interviews with new staff, we always make sure to tell them that we are not passive allies, that we are “proudly loud” in our advocacy for LGBTQ+ youth and families.”

- Katie Page Sander,
Executive Director



INNOVATOR PROFILE: CASA of the River Region

AN ADVOCATE BECOMES A TRANS YOUNG PERSON'S BIGGEST CHEERLEADER

When George* took a case with Nick*, he did not have any prior experience supporting a young person who identified as transgender. George was uncertain about Nick's needs, was unsure if he could adequately help him, and did not know if Nick would want his help. However, as they got to know each other, George realized that Nick only wanted to be supported, cared about, and encouraged. George became Nick's biggest cheerleader and provided him daily support to grow and flourish. They look forward to their visits each month and the time they spend together.

CASA of the River Region was founded in 1984 and serves Jefferson, Bullitt, Henry, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, and Trimble Counties in Kentucky. Over 15,000 children have had an advocate because of CASA of the River Region. We always strive to support the children we serve with the best tools available. Because of this, we applied to All Children - All Families and completed certification in the Innovative Tier in 2022. We were proud of this partnership and renewed our certification for 2023. We are participants because we believe every child deserves someone who will advocate for them. The children we serve have sometimes experienced unimaginable trauma, and we know that understanding and support is a necessary step to healing. Through our involvement with All Children - All Families, our volunteers, staff, and board receive access to vital training to ensure they are sensitive to the needs of LGBTQ+ youth and all children in need. We are grateful for the opportunity and the resources!

*Names changed for privacy reasons.

“

The children we serve have sometimes experienced unimaginable trauma, and we know that understanding and support is a necessary step to healing”

- William Myers, President/CEO





Findings

This list below includes the 172 agencies that have engaged in LGBTQ+ inclusive policy and practice change with All Children - All Families since the last report in 2021.

The three agency lists in this section reflect the different Tiers of Recognition an agency can earn with ACAF based on the number of policy and practices implemented. The lists are also separated by the three main types of participating organizations below:

Private & Public - Child Welfare

The child welfare agencies featured in this report provide a diverse scope of services centered on ensuring the safety, permanency, and well-being for children and youth, and providing families with the necessary support to expand their families or care for their children successfully. The scope of services can range from foster care matching and placement, to infant adoption.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs)

A substantial number of the organizations supporting Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) are featured in this report. CASAs are volunteers that advocate for the best-interests of children and youth who have experienced abuse or neglect. If you're interestd in becoming a CASA volunteer, contact your local CASA organization.

Adoption Exchanges

An organization that disemminates information on the children and youth available for adoption and in need of an adoptive or foster home.

Building Foundation for Inclusion

At this level, agencies are often at the early stages of inclusive policy and practice implementation. Benchmarks focus on establishing non-discrimination protections, providing staff with online learning related to LGBTQ+ topics and improving LGBTQ+ inclusion in forms, paperwork and messaging. This tier's requirements are meaningful and achievable for agencies beginning their work on LGBTQ+ inclusion.

▸ Indicates 2022 Submission

| Organization Name | Location |
|---|--------------------|
| CASA | |
| CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties | Westminster, CO |
| CASA of East Central Wisconsin | Manitowoc, WI |
| CASA of Jackson County | Kansas City, MO |
| CASA of Jefferson & Gilpin Counties | Golden, CO |
| ▸ CASA of Los Angeles | Monterey Park, CA |
| CASA of Orange County | Orange, CA |
| CASA of the Continental Divide | Dillon, CO |
| CASA Youth Advocates of Delaware and Chester Counties | Media, PA |
| Illinois CASA | Chicago, IL |
| Murray/Whitfield CASA | Dalton, GA |
| Ohio CASA | Columbus, OH |
| Rappahannock CASA | Fredericksburg, VA |
| Stop Child Abuse Now of Northern Virginia | Alexandria, VA |
| Youth Empowerment Siskiyou | Yreka, CA |
| Private - Child Welfare | |
| Adoption Choice Inc. | Glendale, WI |

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Adoption Rhode Island | Providence, RI |
| ▸ Advocates for Children & Families | North Miami Beach, FL |
| All Faiths Children's Advocacy Center - Adoption Services | Albuquerque, NM |
| Boys & Girls Village - Permanency Planning & Residential Programs | Milford, CT |
| Child Advocates Inc - Direct Representation Program | Indianapolis, IN |
| Child and Family Charities | Lansing, MI |
| Connecting Hearts Adoption Services | Orlando, FL |
| D.A. Blodgett - St. John's | Grand Rapids, MI |
| Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition | St. Louis, MO |
| Foster Kinship | North Las Vegas, NV |
| ▸ Four Oaks Foster & Adoptive Family Connections | Cedar Rapids, IA |
| Glove House Inc. - Foster Care Services | Elmira, NY |
| Guiding Harbor | Belleville, MI |
| Hillside | Atlanta, GA |
| Jewish Family Service of Nashville & Middle Tennessee Inc. - Adoption Journeys | Nashville, TN |
| Journey to Josiah Inc. | Baltimore, MD |
| Kaleidoscope Inc. | Chicago, IL |
| Kids Above All - Adoption & Foster Care | Chicago, IL |
| Kidsave International - Weekend Miracles Program | Culver City, CA |
| ▸ Koinonia Family Services - Foster Care Services | Loomis, CA |
| KVC Behavioral Healthcare Kansas Inc. | Olathe, KS |
| ▸ Let It Be Us | Barrington, IL |
| MyPath | Oconomowoc, WI |

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|--|------------------|
| National Youth Advocate Program, Inc. | Columbus, OH |
| New Directions Youth & Family Services - Foster Care Department | Amherst, NY |
| Trillium Health Resources | Greenville, NC |
| UCAN - Child Welfare Services | Chicago, IL |
| Public - Child Welfare | |
| Arapahoe County Department of Human Services - Child and Adult Protection Services | Aurora, CO |
| Baltimore County Department of Social Services - Children's Services Division | Baltimore, MD |
| California Department of Social Services - Adoptions Services Bureau | Sacramento, CA |
| Jefferson County Human Services, Division of Children, Youth, Families, and Adult Protection | Golden, CO |
| Larimer County - Children, Youth, and Family - Foster and Kinship Programs | Fort Collins, CO |
| Minnesota Department of Human Services - Child Safety & Permanency Division | Saint Paul, MN |
| New Jersey Department of Children and Families - Child Protection & Permanency Division | Trenton, NJ |



Solid Foundation for Inclusion

At this level, agencies have implemented the essential elements of LGBTQ+ inclusion in policies and affirming practices. Benchmarks go beyond basic non-discrimination protections to the policies and practices necessary to actively “roll out the welcome mat” to the LGBTQ community. These agencies have also assessed their practices specific to youth and parents to ensure LGBTQ inclusion and acted to make these efforts sustainable for the long-term. Organizations that achieve the Solid Foundation for Inclusion Tier receive the “You Are Welcome Here” Seal of Recognition.

► Indicates 2022 Submission



| Organization Name | Location |
|--|-------------------|
| Adoption Exchange | |
| Coalition for Children, Youth & Families | Milwaukee, WI |
| Raise the Future | Denver, CO |
| CASA | |
| CASA - Voices for Children | Corvallis, OR |
| ► CASA for Children of DC | Washington, DC |
| ► CASA of Hancock County | Bay St. Louis, MS |
| CASA of San Mateo County | Redwood City, CA |
| CASA of Southwest Missouri | Springfield, MO |
| CASA Sacramento | Sacramento, CA |
| Chelan-Douglas CASA Program | Wenatchee, WA |
| Dallas CASA | Dallas, TX |
| Kids Matter Inc. | Milwaukee, WI |
| Private - Child Welfare | |
| A Baby Step Adoption | Reading, PA |
| A Greater Hope - Adoption & Foster Care Services | Victorville, CA |

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|--|-------------------|
| A Loving Choice Adoption Associates | Shrewsbury, NJ |
| Acadia Adoption Center | Bridgton, ME |
| Adoption & Beyond, Inc. | Overland Park, KS |
| Adoption Resource Associates | Cambridge, MA |
| Alliance for Children Inc. | Needham, MA |
| Arbor Circle - Adoption & Foster Care Services | Holland, MI |
| Ascentria Care Alliance - Children and Family Services | Worcester, MA |
| Brightpoint - Child Welfare Programs | Chicago, IL |
| Center for Adoption Support & Education | Burtonsville, MD |
| Child Crisis Arizona - Adoption & Foster Care Services | Mesa, AZ |
| Community Youth Services - Foster Care & Independent Living Services | Olympia, WA |
| Crittenton Services for Children & Families | Fullerton, CA |
| Five Acres Foster/Adoptive Family Agency - Foster Care & Adoption Services | El Monte, CA |
| Jonathan's Place - Foster Care & Adoption Services | Garland, TX |
| Little City Foundation - Foster Care & Adoption Program | Chicago, IL |
| Lund Family Center - Adoption Department | Burlington, VT |
| Lutheran Social Services of Illinois - Children's Community Services | Des Plaines, IL |
| Multi-Agency Alliance for Children Inc. | Atlanta, GA |
| NAFI Connecticut Inc. - Foster Care Services | Hartford, CT |
| NOAS | Warren, OH |
| Northwest Resource Associates | Seattle, WA |
| Optimist Youth Homes & Family Services | Los Angeles, CA |

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|--|--------------------|
| Pact, An Adoption Alliance - Placement Team & Adoption Agency Services | Emeryville, CA |
| Seneca Family of Agencies - Bay Area | Oakland, CA |
| Seneca Family of Agencies - Central Coast (Kinship Center) | Salinas, CA |
| Seneca Family of Agencies - Southern California | Anaheim Hills, CA |
| St. Andrew's Residential Programs for Youth Inc. - S.T.A.R. Programs | San Jose, CA |
| Sycamores | Los Angeles, CA |
| The Center for Youth & Family Solutions | Peoria, IL |
| Utah Foster Care | Murray, UT |
| Wayfinder Family Services | Citrus Heights, CA |
| Your Adoptive Family | Seattle, WA |
| Youth Advocate Services | Columbus, OH |
| Youth Oasis | Baton Rouge, LA |



Innovative Inclusion

At this level, agencies are pushing themselves beyond the solid foundation they have built and implementing innovative approaches to LGBTQ+ inclusion in each of the seven key policy and practice areas. Benchmarks at this level also require agencies to demonstrate leadership in areas like policy advocacy or organizational partnerships. Organizations that achieve the Innovative Inclusion Tier receive the “Innovator” Seal of Recognition.

► Indicates 2022 Submission



| Organization Name | Location |
|--|------------------|
| Adoption Exchange | |
| ► Adoption Center | Philadelphia, PA |
| Foster Adopt Minnesota | St. Paul, MN |
| Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange | Boston, MA |
| CASA | |
| CASA of Lexington | Lexington, KY |
| CASA of the River Region | Louisville, KY |
| Child Advocates of Silicon Valley | Milpitas, CA |
| Norfolk CASA Inc. | Norfolk, VA |
| Snohomish County Office of the CASA | Everett, WA |
| Texas CASA | Austin, TX |
| Tippecanoe County CASA | Lafayette, IN |
| Voices for Children | San Diego, CA |
| Private - Child Welfare | |
| 360 Youth Services - Youth in Care Program | Naperville, IL |
| Adoption Options | Denver, CO |

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|--|--------------------|
| Adoption STAR | Amherst, NY |
| Adoptions From The Heart | Wynnewood, PA |
| Amara | Seattle, WA |
| Aviva Family and Children's Services - Foster Family & Adoption Services | Los Angeles, CA |
| Bayfront Youth & Family Services | Long Beach, CA |
| Children's Home of Northern Kentucky/CHNK Behavioral Health | Covington, KY |
| Children's Home Society and Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota - Adoption & Foster Care Services | St. Paul, MN |
| Children's Home Society of Florida - Adoption & Foster Care Services | Orlando, FL |
| Children's Service Society of Utah - Grandfamilies/Kinship Care & Adoption Services | Salt Lake City, UT |
| Creative Community Services Inc. | Norcross, GA |
| Every Child Inc. - Family Support | Pittsburgh, PA |
| Extraordinary Families | Los Angeles, CA |
| Forever Families | Livonia, MI |
| Forever Families Through Adoption Inc. | Rye Brook, NY |
| FosterAdopt Connect | Independence, MO |
| Fostering Futures | Ann Arbor, MI |
| Friends in Adoption | Castleton, VT |
| Hands Across The Water Inc. | Ann Arbor, MI |
| Jewish Family and Children's Service of Greater Philadelphia - Open Arms Adoption Services | Philadelphia, PA |
| JustChoice | Worthington, OH |
| Lawrence Hall | Chicago, IL |
| Lighthouse Youth & Family Services - Out of Home Care Services | Cincinnati, OH |

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|--|----------------------|
| Lutheran Child & Family Services of Illinois | Oakbrook Terrace, IL |
| McKinley Children's Center | San Dimas, CA |
| Miriam's Promise | Nashville, TN |
| Pacific Clinics - Foster Care & Adoption Services | Campbell, CA |
| Paths for Families | Calverton, MD |
| Spence-Chapin Services to Families & Children | New York, NY |
| TLC Child & Family Services | Sebastopol, CA |
| Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services - Adoption & Foster Care Services | Los Angeles, CA |
| Walden Family Services | San Diego, CA |
| Public - Child Welfare | |
| Adams County Department of Human Services - Children & Family Services Division | Westminster, CO |
| Colorado Office of Children, Youth & Families - Child Welfare Division | Denver, CO |
| Monterey County Department of Social Services - Family & Children's Services Division | Salinas, CA |
| Prince George's County Department of Social Services - Child, Adult & Family Services Division | Landover, MD |
| Ramsey County Department of Social Services - Adoption & Foster Care Services Division | St. Paul, MN |
| Washington County Department of Social Services - Child Welfare Division | Hagerstown, MD |

Agencies that are still in progress towards earning a Tier of Recognition are celebrated in this report for beginning its LGBTQ+ inclusion journey.

- 5th Judicial District Voice for Children (Dillon, MT)
- A Family for Every Child (Eugene, OR)
- ACH Child & Family Services (Fort Worth, TX)
- Adoption Connection PA (Beaver, PA)
- Alabama Department of Human Resources (Montgomery, AL)
- Association House of Chicago - Child Welfare Division (Chicago, IL)
- Aunt Martha’s Health & Wellness - Child Welfare Services (Olympia Fields, IL)
- Bellefaire JCB (Shaker Heights, OH)
- CASA of Johnson and Wyandotte Counties (Mission, KS)
- CASA of the Eastern Panhandle (Martinsburg, WV)
- CASA of the Fox Cities (Appleton, WI)
- CASA of the Tri-Peaks (Booneville, AR)
- CASA: The Voice of Clark County’s Children (Jeffersonville, IN)
- Child Advocacy (Alma, MI)
- Children’s Voice: CASA, Inc. (Douglasville, GA)
- Colorado Sexual Health Initiative (Denver, CO)
- Kansas Children Services League/Adopt KS Kids (Wichita, KS)
- Kids’ Voice of Indiana (Indianapolis, IN)
- LifeStream Behavioral Center (Leesburg, FL)
- Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area - Children, Youth, and Family Services (Washington, DC)
- Penny Lane Centers - Foster Family Agencies (North Hills, CA)
- Project Oz - CCBYS and BCP programs (Bloomington, IL)
- Sankofa Safe Child Initiative (Chicago, IL)
- STARS (Charlottesville, VA)
- Therapeutic Interventions Inc. (Nashville, TN)
- Youth Guidance - School-Based Counseling (Chicago, IL)

Top LGBTQ+ Inclusive Adoption and Foster Care Agencies

The agencies listed below provide matching and placement services for adoption and foster care. They have implemented substantial policies and practices to best serve the LGBTQ+ community and earned the two highest Tiers of Recognition from All Children - All Families.

| Organization Name | Location |
|--|------------------|
| Adoption and Foster Care Matching & Placement | |
| A Greater Hope - Adoption & Foster Care Services | Victorville, CA |
| Adams County Department of Human Services - Children & Family Services Division | Westminster, CO |
| Adoption Options | Denver, CO |
| Amara | Seattle, WA |
| Arbor Circle - Adoption & Foster Care Services | Holland, MI |
| Ascentria Care Alliance - Children and Family Services | Worcester, MA |
| Aviva Family and Children's Services - Foster Family & Adoption Services | Los Angeles, CA |
| Child Crisis Arizona - Adoption & Foster Care Services | Mesa, AZ |
| Children's Home Society and Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota - Adoption & Foster Care Services | St. Paul, MN |
| Children's Home Society of Florida - Adoption & Foster Care Services | Orlando, FL |
| Colorado Office of Children, Youth & Families - Child Welfare Division | Denver, CO |
| Crittenton Services for Children & Families | Fullerton, CA |
| Every Child Inc. - Family Support | Pittsburgh, PA |
| Extraordinary Families | Los Angeles, CA |
| Five Acres Foster/Adoptive Family Agency - Foster Care & Adoption Services | El Monte, CA |
| Forever Families | Livonia, MI |
| FosterAdopt Connect | Independence, MO |



| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Fostering Futures | Ann Arbor, MI |
| Hands Across The Water Inc. | Ann Arbor, MI |
| Jonathan's Place - Foster Care & Adoption Services | Garland, TX |
| Lawrence Hall | Chicago, IL |
| Lighthouse Youth & Family Services - Out of Home Care Services | Cincinnati, OH |
| Little City Foundation - Foster Care & Adoption Program | Chicago, IL |
| Lutheran Child & Family Services of Illinois | Oakbrook Terrace, IL |
| Lutheran Social Services of Illinois - Children's Community Services | Des Plaines, IL |
| McKinley Children's Center | San Dimas, CA |
| Monterey County Department of Social Services - Family & Children's Services Division | Salinas, CA |
| NOAS | Warren, OH |
| Optimist Youth Homes & Family Services | Los Angeles, CA |
| Pacific Clinics - Foster Care & Adoption Services | Campbell, CA |
| Paths for Families | Calverton, MD |
| Prince George's County Department of Social Services - Child, Adult & Family Services Division | Landover, MD |
| Ramsey County Department of Social Services - Adoption & Foster Care Services Division | St. Paul, MN |
| Seneca Family of Agencies - Bay Area | Oakland, CA |
| Seneca Family of Agencies - Central Coast (Kinship Center) | Salinas, CA |
| Seneca Family of Agencies - Southern California | Anaheim Hills, CA |
| St. Andrew's Residential Programs for Youth Inc. - S.T.A.R. Programs | San Jose, CA |
| Sycamores | Los Angeles, CA |
| The Center for Youth & Family Solutions | Peoria, IL |
| TLC Child & Family Services | Sebastopol, CA |

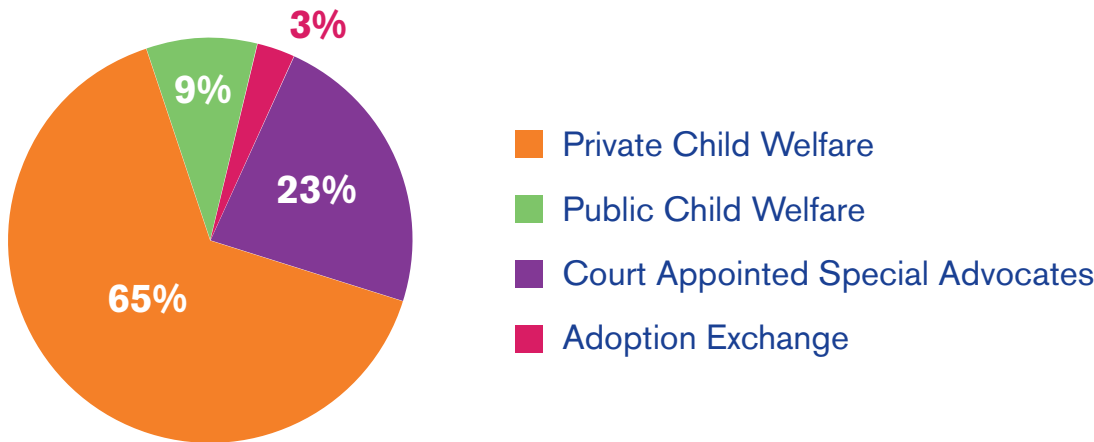
| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services - Adoption & Foster Care Services | Los Angeles, CA |
| Walden Family Services | San Diego, CA |
| Washington County Department of Social Services - Child Welfare Division | Hagerstown, MD |
| Wayfinder Family Services | Citrus Heights, CA |
| Adoption Matching & Placement | |
| A Baby Step Adoption | Reading, PA |
| A Loving Choice Adoption Associates | Shrewsbury, NJ |
| Acadia Adoption Center | Bridgton, ME |
| Adoption & Beyond, Inc. | Overland Park, KS |
| Adoption Resource Associates | Cambridge, MA |
| Adoption STAR | Amherst, NY |
| Adoptions From The Heart | Wynnewood, PA |
| Alliance for Children Inc. | Needham, MA |
| Children's Service Society of Utah - Grandfamilies/Kinship Care & Adoption Services | Salt Lake City, UT |
| Forever Families Through Adoption Inc. | Rye Brook, NY |
| Friends in Adoption | Castleton, VT |
| Jewish Family and Children's Service of Greater Philadelphia - Open Arms Adoption Services | Philadelphia, PA |
| JustChoice | Worthington, OH |
| Lund Family Center - Adoption Department | Burlington, VT |
| Miriam's Promise | Nashville, TN |
| Pact, An Adoption Alliance - Placement Team & Adoption Agency Services | Emeryville, CA |
| Spence-Chapin Services to Families & Children | New York, NY |

| Foster Care Matching & Placement | |
|--|--------------|
| Brightpoint - Child Welfare Programs | Chicago, IL |
| Community Youth Services - Foster Care & Independent Living Services | Olympia, WA |
| Creative Community Services Inc. | Norcross, GA |
| Multi-Agency Alliance for Children Inc. | Atlanta, GA |
| NAFI Connecticut Inc. - Foster Care Services | Hartford, CT |
| Northwest Resource Associates | Portland, OR |

More on the agencies included in this report:



36 First-Time Participants



The 2023 All Children - All Families Agency Self Assessment guides child welfare agencies across the country through a comprehensive review of policies and practices related to LGBTQ+ inclusion. In this section, we’ve reported select responses in aggregate from Tiered agencies to depict the state of LGBTQ+ inclusion in child welfare. The assessment is organized into sections focused on each policy and practice area below:

Non-Discrimination

- Client Non-Discrimination
- Employment Non-Discrimination
- Organizational Partners Non-Discrimination

Staff Training

- Webinar Participation
- Ongoing LGBTQ+ Inclusion Training

Rolling Out the Welcome Mat

- Inclusive Language on Agency Forms
- LGBTQ+ Inclusive External Communications

Role-Specific Best Practices

- Serving LGBTQ+ Parents
- Serving LGBTQ+ Youth
- Court Appointed Special Advocates(CASA) Serving LGBTQ+ Youth
- LGBTQ+ Inclusion for Adoption Exchanges

Sustainability & Capacity Building

- Leadership Buy-In for LGBTQ+ Inclusion
- Team-Based Approach to LGBTQ+ Inclusive Practice
- Innovative Practices for Sustaining LGBTQ+ Inclusion

Leadership & Innovation

- Lead Inclusive Practice Among Partner Agencies
- LGBTQ+ Related Public Education
- Pro-LGBTQ+ Public Policy Advocacy

Non-Discrimination

Establishing written policies to protect LGBTQ+ clients and employees from discrimination is an important first step in building an organization's foundation for LGBTQ+ inclusion.

- 100% of ACAF participants documented that they include “sexual orientation,” “gender identity” and “gender expression” in their client non-discrimination policy, and communicate this policy to staff and clients.
- 100% of ACAF participants documented that they include “sexual orientation,” and “gender identity” in their employment non-discrimination policy.
- 81% of ACAF participants documented contract language that includes explicit LGBTQ+ non-discrimination standards.*

*Policy or practice only required for agencies working towards the Solid or Innovative Tiers of Recognition.

Staff Training

LGBTQ+ staff training is a core component of an organization's efforts to create a culture that is inclusive and affirming of everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (SOGIE). Staff training alone is not sufficient to achieve long-standing cultural change; however, when connected to policy changes, it can help give staff the skills and knowledge needed to translate policy into practice.

- 100% of ACAF participants documented plans to integrate LGBTQ+ topics into ongoing staff training efforts. This plan is required for agencies working towards the Solid or Innovative Tiers of Recognition.



Rolling Out the Welcome Mat

“Rolling out the welcome mat” for LGBTQ+ children, youth, and families means moving an organization beyond non-discrimination and taking concrete action to send an explicitly welcoming message. These benchmarks focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion in agency forms and other paperwork, visual cues within the agency and external messaging (such as on websites, brochures and social media).

- 100% of ACAF agencies documented client forms featuring gender-neutral language, such as “Parent 1” and “Parent 2” rather than “Mother” and “Father”.
- 98% of ACAF agencies documented client forms providing the opportunity to indicate a gender other than “Male” or “Female”, a chosen name, and a client’s pronouns.**
- 100% of ACAF agencies display visual cues throughout common areas to communicate support and inclusion of LGBTQ+ clients and their families.
- 98% of ACAF agencies explicitly reflect its commitment on its websites to working with and welcoming LGBTQ+ clients and their families.*
- 94% of ACAF agencies documented brochures that explicitly reflect its commitment to working with and welcoming LGBTQ+ clients and their families.*
- 94% of ACAF agencies documented social media posts that communicate its commitment to working with and welcoming LGBTQ+ clients and their families.**

*Policy or practice only required for agencies working towards the Solid or Innovative Tiers of Recognition.

**Policy or practice only required for agencies working towards the Innovative Tier of Recognition.



Role Specific Best Practices

Parent Best Practices

Organizations that serve foster parents, adoptive parents, kinship caregivers, and other caring adults should review key practices to ensure that LGBTQ+ adults are welcomed and included. These benchmarks focus on practice areas such as LGBTQ+ parent recruitment efforts, LGBTQ+ inclusion in parent trainings and conducting affirming homestudies with LGBTQ+ applicants.

- 80% of ACAF agencies target LGBTQ+ resource parents in recruitment efforts (e.g., using ads featuring same-sex couples or trans parents, attending LGBTQ+ events, partnering with LGBTQ+ community groups and engaging current LGBTQ+ resource families as ambassadors)*
- 77% of ACAF agencies ensure LGBTQ+ parents feel included in parent training (e.g., trainers are prepared to deliver LGBTQ+ related content and skilled in creating an inclusive space for LGBTQ+ parents)*
- 76% of ACAF agencies hold training sessions for parents that provide information on creating a safe and affirming environment for LGBTQ+ youth (e.g., agency LGBTQ+ youth policy, research on LGBTQ+ youth in care, affirming caregiver behaviors)*
- 95% of ACAF agencies provide LGBTQ+ inclusive ongoing support and education to existing resource parents and other caregivers.*
- 89% of ACAF agencies provide staff with guidance on conducting LGBTQ+ affirming homestudies and assessments.*

- 91% of ACAF agencies track data on the number of LGBTQ+ resource parents served (e.g., information on number of LGBTQ+ parents licensed and number of placements in LGBTQ+ headed homes)*
- 100% of ACAF agencies utilize a list of LGBTQ+ competent referrals for outside services for LGBTQ+ families, parents and caregivers.*
- 64% of ACAF agencies documented a strategic plan for its LGBTQ+ parent recruitment efforts focused on maximizing results and continual improvement.**

*Policy or practice only required for agencies working towards the Solid or Innovative Tiers of Recognition.

**Optional policy or practice for agencies working towards the Innovative Tier of Recognition.



Youth Best Practices

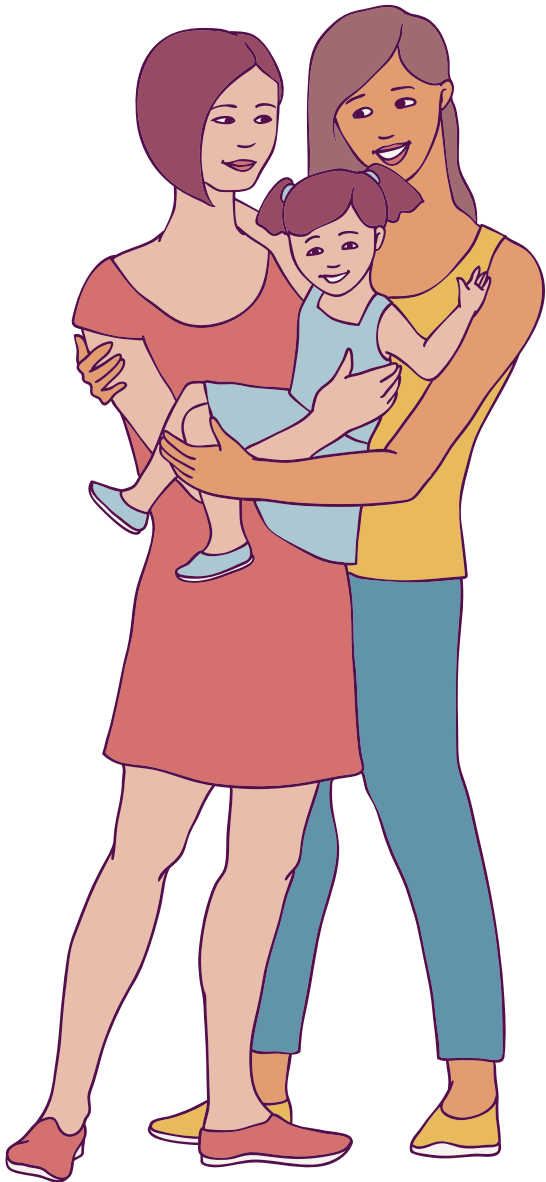
Organizations working to improve and create affirming practices with LGBTQ+ youth need to translate this commitment into a thorough scan of the agency environment and all areas of service provision. Too often LGBTQ+ youth face barriers due to institutional structures and policies rooted in anti-LGBTQ+ bias and/or assumptions that fail to recognize youth with diverse SOGIE. The policy and practice areas specific to youth services focus on removing the most common barriers faced by LGBTQ+ youth to ensure they are safe, affirmed and supported to achieve permanency.

- 88% of ACAF agencies provide youth in care with an LGBTQ+ inclusive “Bill of Rights” or similar information on their rights while in out-of-home care.
- 76% of ACAF agencies provide staff with guidance on assessing resource parents’ capacity to provide safe and affirming homes for LGBTQ+ youth.
- 79% of ACAF agencies provide staff with guidance on creating LGBTQ+ inclusive safety plans for youth, including considerations of the unique risk factors for youth with diverse SOGIE at all points in the placement process.
- 100% of ACAF agencies has policy in place to enforce trans-affirming placements in sex-separated facilities to ensure placement decisions affirm the child’s gender identity, are made based on the safety and well-being of the young person and are not based on the child’s sex assigned at birth.
- 93% of ACAF agencies identify and utilize a list of LGBTQ+ competent referrals for outside services for LGBTQ+ youth.

- 54% of ACAF agencies provide staff with guidance on discussing SOGIE with young people.**
- 62% of ACAF agencies have a written policy in place that prohibits conversion therapy for youth in care.**

*Policy or practice only required for agencies working towards the Solid or Innovative Tiers of Recognition.

**Optional policy or practice for agencies working towards the Innovative Tier of Recognition.



Court Appointed-Special Advocates (CASA) Best Practices

CASA/GAL affiliates should implement the following key practices to ensure that LGBTQ+ adults are welcomed and included as CASA/GAL volunteers. Where applicable, volunteer training and support materials should include considerations for caring for LGBTQ+ youth. Each practice below is required for the Solid Tier.

- 100% of CASA/GAL affiliates participating in ACAF target LGBTQ+ volunteers in recruitment efforts (e.g., using ads featuring LGBTQ+ volunteers, attending LGBTQ+ events, partnering with LGBTQ+ community groups, and engaging current LGBTQ+ volunteers as ambassadors).
- 100% of CASA/GAL affiliates participating in ACAF ensure LGBTQ+ volunteers feel included in volunteer training (e.g., trainers are prepared to deliver LGBTQ+ related content and skilled in creating an inclusive space for LGBTQ parents).
- 100% of CASA/GAL affiliates participating in ACAF training provide information on creating a safe and affirming environment for LGBTQ+ youth (e.g., agency LGBTQ +youth policy, research on LGBTQ+ youth in care, affirming caregiver behaviors, etc.).
- 76% of CASA/GAL affiliates participating in ACAF provides LGBTQ+ inclusive ongoing support and education to existing volunteers.
- 100% of CASA/GAL affiliates participating in ACAF provide staff with guidance on conducting LGBTQ+ affirming volunteer interviews/assessments.
- 100% of CASA/GAL affiliates participating in ACAF track data on the number of LGBTQ+ volunteers served (e.g., information on number of LGBTQ+ volunteers approved and number of placements, etc.).
- 88% of CASA/GAL affiliates participating in ACAF identifies and utilizes a list of LGBTQ+ competent referrals for outside services for volunteers.



Adoption Exchange Best Practices

Adoption Exchanges should implement the following key practices to ensure that their services are LGBTQ+ inclusive and affirming. Each practice below is required for the Solid Tier.

- **80% of Adoption Exchanges participating in ACAF provide staff guidance on handling SOGIE-related disclosures in child-centered recruitment.**
- **80% of Adoption Exchanges participating in ACAF advocate for LGBTQ+ inclusive and affirming practices in child welfare systems (both generally and case-specific).**
- **100% of Adoption Exchanges participating in ACAF provides LGBTQ+ inclusive post-permanency/ongoing support and education to families.**
- **100% of Adoption Exchanges participating in ACAF documented LGBTQ+ inclusive public education or information sharing resources.**



Sustainability & Capacity Building

Transforming an organization's culture to ensure all stakeholders are welcomed and affirmed regardless of their SOGIE is hard work that can take years. Staff turnover, competing priorities and limited resources are among the many challenges that can get in the way of sustainable change. These policy and practice areas focus on the strategies that help support and build internal capacity for long-term and sustainable LGBTQ+ inclusion efforts.

- **68% of ACAF agencies have an LGBTQ+ staff advocate who is identified to all staff and clients and is charged with resource collection and dissemination, advocacy, support and intervention specifically for LGBTQ+ clients.****
- **54% of ACAF agencies have formalized its process for SOGIE data collection from youth and/or adult clients, including the collection, tracking and analysis of the data for quality improvement work.****

**Optional policy or practice for agencies working towards the Innovative Tier of Recognition.

Leadership & Innovation

Organizations that have established a solid foundation for LGBTQ+ inclusion within their own walls can lead the broader child welfare community forward in this area by sharing their lessons learned. This practice area focuses on the ways in which Innovative Tier agencies can serve as leaders on the local, state and national levels.

- **86% of ACAF agencies serve as a leader in LGBTQ+ inclusive practices among its partner agencies (e.g., organizing training or events, leading an LGBTQ+ task force, etc.).**
- **70% of ACAF agencies have participated in LGBTQ+ related public education events (e.g., panel discussion at a university, radio or television appearances, etc.).**

**Optional policy or practice for agencies working towards the Innovative Tier of Recognition.



Take Action for Change

Spread the Word about ACAF

Help child welfare professionals and LGBTQ+ adults interested in adoption or foster care learn about All Children - All Families (ACAF) by sharing this report and [the video](#) today!



View ACAF Webinars

More than [40 free webinars](#) on LGBTQ+ inclusion are available on demand in these topic areas:

- Core Webinars on LGBTQ Inclusion
- Best Practices Serving LGBTQ Youth
- Best Practices Serving LGBTQ Parents
- For Caregivers
- For Agency Leadership

Subscribe to the ACAF Monthly E-Newsletter

ACAF's [monthly newsletter](#) offers best-practice resources based on challenges and inquiries that you and your peers are currently navigating — allowing you to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to supporting and serving LGBTQ+ youth and families.

Bring ACAF Training to Your Agency

The All Children - All Families (ACAF) [national training program](#) offers expert training, capacity building (Training of Facilitators), and coaching on a diverse range of LGBTQ+ topics for child welfare professionals and caregivers as well as professionals in social and human services more broadly at a sliding scale fee-for-service both in-person and virtually.

Participate in the 2024 All Children - All Families Cycle



Become an Official ACAF Participant

Interested agencies can [request to participate](#) online and the ACAF team will be in touch with more information and next steps. The participation process is detailed in the appendices.

Benefits to Participants

Keep up with latest best practices in LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Learn evidence-based strategies for innovation.

Ensure your staff members receive LGBTQ+ training content annually.

Connect with and learn from professionals experienced in updating policies to be inclusive.

Implement policies that will help your agency comply with Federal mandates for child welfare.

Achieve recognition for your inclusion efforts. Leverage HRC's reach into the LGBTQ+ community – 3 million members and supporters!

Federal Mandates for LGBTQ+ Inclusive Practice in Child Welfare

Children’s Bureau Information Memorandum

On March 2, 2022, the Children’s Bureau released, “[Guidance for Title IV-B and IV-E Agencies When Serving LGBTQI+ Children and Youth](#)”. This guidance elaborates **existing requirements for state, county, and tribal child welfare agencies (title IV-B and IV-E agencies) that extend to serving LGBTQI+ children and youth**. The guidance includes provisions stating that:

The needs of children and youth must be considered and addressed as part of case planning.

LGBTQ+ young people have unique experiences and safety risks that must inform case planning in order to accurately assess and address a young person’s needs.

All Children - All Families provides technical assistance and sample language to help child welfare agencies implement best practices in serving LGBTQ+ youth.

Children and youth in foster care should be placed in “safe, permanent placements that support the whole of each child and youth’s well-being.”

LGBTQ+ youth must be placed in affirming and welcoming homes to avoid safety risks and placement disruptions.

All Children - All Families assists child welfare agencies with establishing practices to identify and recruit more affirming foster and adoptive parents.

Funding can be used towards prevention and family preservation services.

Training that informs parents about the importance of affirming their LGBTQ+ child may help prevent the young person being removed or running away from the home.

All Children - All Families offers training for foster and adoptive parents on best practices for affirming LGBTQ+ youth.

Executive Order

On June 15, 2022, the Biden-Harris Administration announced an Executive Order on **Advancing Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Individuals**. Included in this Executive Order are mandates for the Department of Health and Human Services to begin various initiatives aimed at **improving practice with LGBTQI+ youth in foster care and LGBTQI+ foster/adoptive parents. These initiatives include efforts by the federal government to:**

Increase LGBTQI+ inclusion training and technical assistance to update policies to support LGBTQI+ youth and families.

All Children - All Families provides:

- Individual and group technical assistance on implementing policies and practices that affirm and support LGBTQ+ youth in care and LGBTQ+ foster and adoptive parents.
- High-quality, engaging, and evidence-based LGBTQ+ inclusion training for agency leaders, staff, and caregivers.

Implement non-discrimination policies explicitly protecting clients from being discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

This best practice is at the foundation of the LGBTQ+ inclusive policies that All Children - All Families helps agencies implement utilizing model policies and technical assistance.

Collect data on sexual orientation and gender identity that can assist agencies with tracking the performance of agency-led LGBTQ+ inclusion interventions for quality improvement work.

This **best practice guide** from All Children - All Families provides guidance for agencies in collecting data on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SOGIE).

Eligibility

All Children - All Families resources are tailored toward child welfare agencies (e.g., public or private agencies that provide foster care or adoption-related services) and these agencies are eligible to be formally recognized for their participation. In 2023, select social service organizations that directly serve youth in child welfare, participated in ACAF for the first time. Organizations that fall outside of this scope of eligibility are still welcome to take advantage of the project's tools (online self-assessment, resource compilations, technical assistance, training and webinars).

Further, for private contract agencies, the participation process is going to be most helpful and applicable to those that are large enough to have the organizational infrastructure in place for policy and practice assessment and implementation. Smaller agencies (e.g., those with less than 25 or so employees) and/or those just getting started in service delivery may find the formal participation process doesn't fit but they may still take advantage of project resources.

Join the Movement

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About HRC Foundation's All Children - All Families Program

Through its annual certification process, All Children - All Families promotes LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and affirming practices among child welfare agencies and celebrates those agencies leading the field with innovative approaches to inclusion. Participants gain access to a comprehensive, online self-assessment tool, [free webinars](#) on the latest best practices and peer-to-peer learning opportunities. The All Children – All Families [National Training Program](#) offers both foundational material and advanced content tailored for direct service professionals who work with LGBTQ+ children, youth and families, including a Training of Facilitators program to build an agency's internal training capacity to provide LGBTQ+ inclusion training.

This report details the efforts of 172 organizations working to best serve LGBTQ+ children, youth and families. The Tier of Recognition earned is one indicator of the organization's level of LGBTQ+ inclusion. All organizations must continually work to ensure policies are translated into practice and the LGBTQ+ community is safe, welcomed and affirmed while in their care. For organizations in this report that haven't yet met a Tier, and all organizations not included in this report, you can look for signs of inclusion on the organization's website and pay attention to word of mouth among LGBTQ+ community members. For examples of where else to look, see the benchmarks in Appendix B. Above all, your own individual experiences matter. In the event you feel you have been discriminated against, see if the organization has a grievance process through which you can communicate your concerns to the organization's leadership. You can learn more about state laws to understand your legal rights at www.hrc.org/state-maps.

Meet the All Children - All Families Program Team



Phii Regis, MPS (they/them)
 Director,
 All Children - All Families Program



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Lastly, a note of deep gratitude for all of the **agencies participating in All Children - All Families** – both past and present – for their steadfast dedication to serving all children, and all families.

Appendix A: Breaking Down the 3 Tiers of Recognition

All Children - All Families (ACAF) participating agencies are recognized in one of three Tiers of Recognition, depending on the extent to which they have implemented the ACAF Benchmarks of LGBTQ+ Inclusion. The benchmark requirements for each Tier of Recognition are outlined in the table below.

| Building Foundation for Inclusion | Solid Foundation for Inclusion | Innovative Inclusion |
|---|--|--|
| To achieve this level of recognition, core benchmarks must be in place for policy and practice areas 1-3. | To achieve this level of recognition, all benchmarks must be in place for policy and practice areas 1-6. | To achieve this level of recognition, all benchmarks must be in place for policy and practice areas 1-6. In addition, agencies must demonstrate at least one example of innovation in policy and practice areas 2-7. |
| 1. Non-Discrimination | 1. Non-Discrimination | 1. Non-Discrimination |
| 2. Staff Training | 2. Staff Training | 2. Staff Training |
| 3. Rolling Out the Welcome Mat | 3. Rolling Out the Welcome Mat | 3. Rolling Out the Welcome Mat |
| | 4. Parent / CASA / Exchange Best Practices | 4. Parent / CASA / Exchange Best Practices |
| | 5. Youth Best Practices | 5. Youth Best Practices |
| | 6. Sustainability & Capacity Building | 6. Sustainability & Capacity Building |
| | | 7. Leadership & Innovation |

Appendix B: Benchmarks of LGBTQ+ Inclusion

At the core of the All Children - All Families organizational framework for implementing LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and practices are the Benchmarks of LGBTQ+ Inclusion listed below. The benchmarks are organized into seven main areas of inclusive policies and affirming practices that organizations should implement to best serve LGBTQ+ children, youth and families.



Participating agencies that meet specific benchmark requirements will be recognized in one of three tiers: Building Foundation for Inclusion; A Solid Foundation for Inclusion; and Innovative Inclusion.

The requirements for each tier are indicated in the text below in the following way:

- Building Foundation for Inclusion: **Policy and practice areas in bold text.**
- Solid Foundation for Inclusion: All policy and practice areas, except italicized text.
- Innovative Inclusion: *All policy and practice areas including italicized text.*

(Note: While multiple examples of innovations are listed in practice areas 3-7, agencies must demonstrate only one in each area to meet the Innovative Tier)

1. Non-Discrimination

Establishing written policies to protect LGBTQ+ clients and employees from discrimination is an important first step in building an organization's foundation for LGBTQ+ inclusion. The non-discrimination benchmarks focus on three policies:

- a. **Agency's client non-discrimination policy is inclusive of "sexual orientation," "gender identity" and "gender expression" and communicated to staff and clients.**
- b. **Agency's employment non-discrimination policy is inclusive of "sexual orientation" and "gender identity."**
- c. Agency's contract language includes explicit LGBTQ+ non-discrimination standards.

2. Staff Training

LGBTQ+ staff training is a core component of an organization's efforts to create a culture that is inclusive and affirming of everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (SOGIE). Staff training alone is not sufficient to achieve long-standing cultural change; however, when connected to policy changes, it can help give staff the skills and knowledge needed to translate policy into practice. The staff training benchmark has two components and the specific requirements for each depend on which Tier of Recognition an agency is striving to achieve:

- a. **Agency meets minimum participation requirements for All Children - All Families Webinar Series.**
- b. Agency completes an Ongoing Training Plan detailing the ways in which LGBTQ+ topics are integrated into its ongoing staff training efforts. *This plan must meet minimum training length requirements for the Innovative Tier.*



3. Rolling Out the Welcome Mat

"Rolling out the welcome mat" for LGBTQ+ children, youth and families means moving an organization beyond nondiscrimination and taking concrete action to send an explicitly welcoming message. These benchmarks focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion in agency forms and other paperwork, visual cues within the agency and external messaging (such as on websites, brochures and social media).

All agency-controlled forms and internal documents use LGBTQ+ inclusive language, including:

- a. **Agency forms use gender-neutral language (e.g., "Parent 1" and "Parent 2" rather than "Mother" and "Father") where applicable.**
- b. Agency forms provide the opportunity to indicate a gender other than "Male" or "Female."
- c. Agency forms provide the opportunity to indicate a preferred/ chosen name that is different than a person's legal name.
- d. *Agency forms provide the opportunity to indicate the pronouns (e.g., she/her, he/him, they/them) by which a person would like to be addressed.*
- e. *Agency demonstrates other innovation in LGBTQ+ inclusion in forms and paperwork.*

Agency consistently communicates its commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion externally, including:

- f. **Agency displays visual cues throughout common areas to communicate support and inclusion of LGBTQ+ clients and their families.**
- g. Agency's external communications (website, printed materials, etc.) explicitly and consistently reflect its commitment to working with and welcoming LGBTQ+ clients and their families.
- h. *Agency uses social media to communicate its commitment to working with and welcoming LGBTQ+ clients and their families.*
- i. *Agency demonstrates other innovation in its LGBTQ+ inclusive external communications.*

4. Parent Best Practices

Organizations that serve foster parents, adoptive parents, kinship caregivers and other caring adults should review key practices to ensure that LGBTQ+ adults are welcomed and included. These benchmarks focus on practice areas such as LGBTQ+ parent recruitment efforts, LGBTQ+ inclusion in parent trainings and conducting affirming homestudies with LGBTQ+ applicants.

- a. Agency targets LGBTQ+ resource parents in recruitment efforts (e.g., using ads featuring same-sex couples or trans parents, attending LGBTQ+ events, partnering with LGBTQ+ community groups and engaging current LGBTQ +resource families as ambassadors).
- b. Agency ensures LGBTQ+ parents feel included in parent trainings (e.g., trainers are prepared to deliver LGBTQ+ related content and skilled in creating an inclusive space for LGBTQ+ parents).
- c. Agency's parent trainings provide information on creating a safe and affirming environment for LGBTQ+ youth (e.g., agency LGBTQ+ youth policy, research on LGBTQ+ youth in care, affirming caregiver behaviors).
- d. Agency provides LGBTQ+ inclusive ongoing support and education to existing resource parents and other caregivers.
- e. Agency provides staff with guidance on conducting LGBTQ+ affirming homestudies and assessments.
- f. Agency tracks data on the number of LGBTQ+ resource parents served (e.g., information on number of LGBTQ+ parents licensed and number of placements in LGBTQ+ headed homes).
- g. Agency identifies and utilizes a list of LGBTQ+ competent referrals for outside services for LGBTQ+ families, parents and caregivers.

Innovations (at least one):

- a. Agency has developed a strategic plan for its LGBTQ+ parent recruitment efforts focused on maximizing results and continual improvement
- b. Agency has engaged LGBTQ+ parents in innovative ways (e.g., parent mentoring, advocacy efforts, etc.).
- c. Agency demonstrates other innovative practice(s) with LGBTQ+ parents and caregivers.

5. Youth Best Practices

Organizations working to improve and create affirming practices with LGBTQ+ youth need to translate this commitment into a thorough scan of the agency environment and all areas of service provision. Too often LGBTQ+ youth face barriers due to institutional structures and policies rooted in anti-LGBTQ+ bias and/or assumptions that fail to recognize youth with diverse SOGIE. The policy and practice areas specific to youth services focus on removing the most common barriers faced by LGBTQ+ youth to ensure they are safe, affirmed and supported to achieve permanency.

- a. Agency provides youth in care with an LGBTQ+ inclusive “Bill of Rights” or similar information on their rights while in out-of home care.
- b. Agency provides staff with guidance on assessing resource parents’ capacity to provide safe and affirming homes for LGBTQ+ youth.
- c. Agency provides staff with guidance on creating LGBTQ+ inclusive safety plans for youth, including considerations of the unique risk factors for youth with diverse SOGIE at all points in the placement process.
- d. Agency has policy in place to enforce trans-affirming placements in sex-separated facilities to ensure placement decisions affirm the child's gender identity, are made based on the safety and well-being of the young person and are not based on the child's sex assigned at birth.
- e. Agency identifies and utilizes a list of LGBTQ+ competent referrals for outside services for LGBTQ+ youth

Innovations (at least one):

- a. Agency provides staff with guidance on discussing SOGIE with young people.
- b. Agency has a written policy in place that prohibits conversion therapy for youth in care.
- c. Agency has implemented a gender-neutral dress code policy that ensures young people can authentically express their gender through clothing styles.
- d. Agency has conducted a review of services to ensure that LGBTQ+ youth receive equitable services when compared to their non-LGBTQ+ counterparts.
- e. Agency engages LGBTQ+ youth in care in its efforts to change policy and practice (e.g., youth focus groups, taskforces and youth-led initiatives).
- f. Agency provides specialized programs/interventions for LGBTQ+ youth in care.
- g. Agency demonstrates other innovative practice(s) with LGBTQ+ youth.

6. Sustainability & Capacity Building

Transforming an organization’s culture to ensure all stakeholders are welcomed and affirmed regardless of their SOGIE is hard work that can take years. Staff turnover, competing priorities and limited resources are among the many challenges that can get in the way of sustainable change. These policy and practice areas focus on the strategies that help support and build internal capacity for long-term and sustainable LGBTQ+ inclusion efforts.

- a. Agency's leadership supports LGBTQ+ inclusion efforts (e.g., leadership “buy-in” is clear through board/senior leadership communications on the importance of the work and action to hold stakeholders accountable). (Note: Participation in an Executive Briefing by at least one senior leader is required of all ACAF participants.)
- b. Agency takes a team-based approach to its LGBTQ+ inclusion efforts (e.g., forming an LGBTQ+ committee to lead policy and practice review and changes).

Innovations (at least one):

- a. Agency has an LGBTQ+ staff advocate who is identified to all staff and clients and is charged with resource collection and dissemination, advocacy, support and intervention specifically for LGBTQ+ clients.
- b. Agency builds relationships with and engages local LGBTQ+ experts in its LGBTQ+ inclusion efforts.
- c. Agency has formalized its process for SOGIE data collection from youth and/or adult clients, including the collection, tracking and analysis of the data for quality improvement work.
- d. Agency conducts LGBTQ+ specific client feedback surveys to measure the impact of its LGBTQ+ inclusion efforts on the experiences of children, youth and families served.
- e. Agency conducts LGBTQ+ specific staff surveys to measure current agency climate and the knowledge, skills and attitudes related to LGBTQ+ inclusion.
- f. Agency has developed LGBTQ+ expertise among its internal staff trainers through a training of trainers or other effort.
- g. Agency has implemented policies and benefits to recruit and retain LGBTQ+ employees (e.g., inclusive health insurance benefits, gender transition guidelines, and targeted staff hiring and recruitment efforts).
- h. Agency demonstrates other innovative practice(s) to ensure LGBTQ+ inclusion efforts are sustainable.

7. Leadership & Innovation

Organizations that have established a solid foundation for LGBTQ+ inclusion within their own walls can lead the broader child welfare community forward in this area by sharing their lessons learned. This practice area focuses on the ways in which agencies can serve as leaders on the local, state and national levels.

- a. Agency serves as a leader in LGBTQ+ inclusive practices among its partner agencies (e.g., organizing trainings or events, leading an LGBTQ+ task force, etc.).
- b. Agency has participated in LGBTQ+ related public education events (e.g., panel discussion at a university, radio or television appearances, etc.).
- c. Agency has engaged in pro-LGBTQ+ public policy advocacy (e.g., submitting written or oral testimony related to legislation, writing an op-ed, participating in a lobby day, etc.).
- d. Agency demonstrates other innovative forms of leadership.



Appendix C: How to Participate in All Children - Families

1. Determine Eligibility

All Children - All Families resources are tailored toward child welfare agencies (e.g., public or private agencies that provide foster care or adoption-related services) and these agencies are eligible to be formally recognized for their participation. In 2023, select social service organizations that directly serve youth in child welfare, participated in ACAF for the first time. Organizations that fall outside of this scope of eligibility are still welcome to take advantage of the project's tools (online self-assessment, resource compilations, technical assistance, training and webinars).

Further, for private contract agencies, the participation process is going to be most helpful and applicable to those that are large enough to have the organizational infrastructure in place for policy and practice assessment and implementation. Smaller agencies (e.g., those with less than 25 or so employees) and/or those just getting started in service delivery may find the formal participation process doesn't fit but they may still take advantage of project resources.

2. Request to Participate in All Children - All Families

Agencies that meet the eligibility requirements, should complete [this short form](#). The ACAF team recommends ensuring at least one member of agency leadership is informed and prepared to engage prior to submitting the form.

3. Prepare for All Children - All Families Participation

There are two steps that we have identified that can help an agency be successful in beginning engagement with All Children - All Families. These two steps should be completed simultaneously when possible.

a. Team - Building

ACAF encourages agencies to select a team of staff members who will collaborate on leading the organization's participation process. Depending on an agency's size, this can range from a 2-person team to a 15-person steering committee (for larger, public agencies).

b. Leadership Engagement

Ensuring buy-in from leadership is essential to any organizational change effort. To assist in this important step, ACAF provides an "Executive Briefing" webinar tailored to agency leaders. All participating agencies are required to have at least one senior leader attend a briefing.

4. Assess and Implement LGBTQ+ Inclusive Policy & Practice

a. Assessing Policy & Practice

Agencies gain access to the All Children - All Families Agency Self-Assessment, an online tool that provides a comprehensive framework to review internal policies. First-time participants will review the policies required to earn the Building Tier of Recognition (e.g., non-discrimination, staff training, and updating forms and external communications to reflect the agency's commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion)

b. Implementing Policy & Practice

As an agency completes its Agency Self-assessment, necessary policy and practice changes will be clear. Throughout this step of the process, agencies will utilize ACAF resources such as model policies with sample language for updating policies, as well as individual and group technical assistance sessions to assist in implementing the improvements necessary to achieve the Benchmarks of LGBTQ+ Inclusion.

i. Complete Staff Training Requirements

A key component of ACAF participation is the professional development available to agency staff through the program's webinar series. Participating agencies are required to meet specific participation goals for the Building Tier.

5. Achieve National Recognition from the Human Rights Campaign!

Participating agencies that meet specific benchmark requirements will be recognized in one of three tiers: Building Foundation for Inclusion; A Solid Foundation for Inclusion; and Innovative Inclusion. First-time agencies are eligible for the Building Tier of Recognition. In following cycles, the agency works towards achieving the Solid, then Innovative Tier of Recognition; becoming eligible for an HRC-branded Seal of Recognition. All participating agencies are also celebrated in the All Children - All Families annual report.



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Find out more at: HRC.im/ACAFparticipation