

Foster Adopt Minnesota, HRC Join Record Number of Partners Working on LGBTQ+ Inclusivity

New Report: 172 agencies partner with the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's All Children - All Families program, including Foster Adopt Minnesota, and together serve more than 1.4 million clients annually.

Foster Adopt Minnesota is proud to be one of the 136 RETURN partners.

St. Paul, Minnesota – Foster Adopt Minnesota is proud to be one of 172 child welfare organizations joining the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation's All Children - All Families (ACAF) program in 2023, as highlighted in a new report. Together, these organizations work to improve the services provided to the LGBTQ+ community, including children in foster care and prospective foster and adoptive parents who are LGBTQ+. This year alone, this multi-organization partnership assessed 9,500+ policies and practices within child welfare organizations to ensure they meet ACAF best practices criteria — approximately 6,000 more than were assessed when this report was first released in 2019. This allowed for over 1.4 million children, youth, and families across 43 states to benefit from these LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and affirming practices.

“Providing children and families with the most inclusive environment in which to grow should always be the number one priority,” said **Phii Regis, Director of HRC's All Children - All Families Program**. “We are grateful for Foster Adopt Minnesota's work as part of this partnership — together, we can win the fight for equality and build safe and loving communities at the same time.”

This report comes at a time when LGBTQ+ people, particularly LGBTQ+ youth, are under threat. Laws and policies protecting LGBTQ youth in foster care from discrimination are a patchwork from state to state. Only 13 states and the District of Columbia have explicit laws or policies in place to protect foster youth from discrimination based on both sexual orientation and gender identity. Seven additional states explicitly protect foster youth from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation but not gender identity. Approximately 1 in 3 youth in foster care are LGBTQ+, and laws that attack them on the basis of sexuality and gender put an already vulnerable community at risk. When they aren't allowed in homes that support them, LGBTQ+ youth face higher rates of abuse and mistreatment than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. Data shows 44% of LGBTQ+ youth in state custody were removed, ran away, or thrown out of their home for reasons directly related to their identity.

At the same time, there are an overwhelming number of LGBTQ+ families who have at least considered adopting or fostering a child in the future, but 55% of them feared being turned away

because of their identity, and only 14% knew of an LGBTQ+-inclusive agency near them. One couple was quoted in the report as having been rejected from two child welfare agencies on the basis of their identity before finally being accepted to foster with an ACAF partner agency: “[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.”

With the work of ACAF, A record-breaking 10,650+ professionals were trained in how to make their agencies as inclusive of LGBTQ+ families and youth as possible. Additionally, all partner organizations that earned a Tier of Recognition with the program, such as Foster Adopt Minnesota, now include “sexual orientation,” “gender identity” and “gender expression” in their client non-discrimination policy, and communicate this policy to staff and clients. They also documented client forms featuring gender-neutral language, such as “Parent 1” and “Parent 2” rather than “Mother” and “Father,” and they display visual cues throughout common areas to communicate support and inclusion of LGBTQ+ clients and their families.

To learn more about Foster Adopt Minnesota please visit fosteradoptmn.org. To learn more about the All Children-All Families program, please visit <https://www.thehrcfoundation.org/about/all-children-all-families>.

Foster Adopt Minnesota supports Minnesota’s adoptive, foster, and kinship families and the professionals who work in these communities. Since 1980, our mission has been to find and strengthen Minnesota adoptive, foster & kinship families.

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation is the educational arm of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), America’s largest civil rights organization working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) people. Through its programs, the HRC Foundation seeks to make transformational change in the everyday lives of LGBTQ+ people, shedding light on inequity and deepening the public’s understanding of LGBTQ+ issues, with a clear focus on advancing transgender and racial justice. Its work has transformed the landscape for more than 15 million workers, 11 million students, 1 million clients in the adoption and foster care system and so much more. The HRC Foundation provides direct consultation and technical assistance to institutions and communities, driving the advancement of inclusive policies and practices; it builds the capacity of future leaders and allies through fellowship and training programs; and, with the firm belief that we are stronger working together, it forges partnerships with advocates in the U.S. and around the globe to increase our impact and shape the future of our work.