

Public Policy Agenda 2019-2020

The Public Policy Committee of Adoption Network Cleveland: The Ohio Family Connection seeks improvements in Ohio's adoption, foster care and child welfare policies and to develop best practices for all parties involved in the process.



The main areas where Adoption Network Cleveland will focus its efforts during the 133rd General Assembly are:

Child Welfare Funding: As human services budgets continue to be strained, Adoption Network Cleveland remains committed to identifying creative ways to protect and grow services for adoptive and foster families and youth. In The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 the federal government changed a key funding formula that had the result of states saving millions of dollars in services that are now paid for on the federal level. The law specified that states would use their savings to support families in specific ways including prevention services and services for adoptive families. Ohio has not reinvested these funds in the state budget as directed, and should in the 2019-2020 budget.

Promote Existing Recommendations: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services had two significant work groups in 2017-2018. Both groups came up with a series of excellent recommendations that would help the state move forward in serving our families. Adoption Network Cleveland supports the recommendations in both the Foster Care Advisory Group Recommendations of May 2018 and the Post Adoption Work Group Recommendations of September 2017. We also strongly support Governor DeWine's recommendation to create a Foster Care Ombudsman.

Sibling Connections: Currently Ohio law allows the relationship between a parent and a child to determine the relationship between siblings. Adopted children are legally severed from their siblings and it is unclear whether permanent custody ends a sibling relationship. Although federal and state law requires children in foster care be given the opportunity to visit with their siblings, this right does not extend into adoption and can be withheld by caseworkers without direct judicial consideration. We believe siblings should be a source of comfort and stability to children as their relationships to the adults in their lives change. Therefore, Ohio law should allow siblings to petition for visitation and preserve their legal sibling relationships.

About Adoption Network Cleveland: Adoption Network Cleveland: The Ohio Family Connection recognizes adoption as a complex, lifelong and intergenerational journey for all those whose lives are touched by it. Founded in 1988, Adoption Network Cleveland provides programs and services to connect and empower all members of the adoption triad (adoptees, birthparents and adoptive parents), youth in foster care, foster and kinship parents, siblings and adoption professionals.

For more information



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