

Public Policy Agenda 2021-2022

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

Adoption Network Cleveland (ANC) will mainly focus its efforts during the 134th General Assembly on:



Child Welfare Funding: As human services budgets continue to be strained, ANC remains committed to identifying and supporting creative ways to protect and grow services and support for adoptive and foster families, kinship caregivers and youth. We seek to encourage kinship care as this is often the best way to promote stability and the least disruption for children in need of out of home care.

Sibling Connections: 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 allowed 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.

Foster Care Ombudsman: We support efforts to establish a statewide youth ombudsman to serve alongside an adult-serving children services ombudsman. A state-level ombudsman, as recommended in the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council Recommendations, "would act as an independent entity for the investigation and resolution of complaints made by or on the behalf of children and families involved with children services." (Children Services Transformation Advisory Council Recommendations report 11/2020) We support having a Youth Ombudsman that focuses specifically on complaints by children.

Ethical and Equitable Practices: Adoption Network Cleveland believes that personal growth and adjustment are enhanced where ongoing, cooperative and trusting relationships are developed for all parties in adoption, kinship, assisted reproduction, and child welfare situations where each party's rights and interests are safeguarded throughout the process. Adoption Network Cleveland will continue to seek ways to promote balanced and respectful practices, with a racial equity lens and with attention to policy that balances the rights of birth and adoptive parents with a focus on the best interest of the child involved, into the adulthood of that child.

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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