



Adoption Network Cleveland's

# Public Policy Agenda 2013-2014

The Public Policy Committee of Adoption Network Cleveland utilizes direct lobbying and grassroots advocacy to seek improvements in the process by which adoptions are facilitated and develop best practices for all parties involved in the process.

The main areas where Adoption Network Cleveland will focus its efforts during the 130th General Assembly are:

**Access to Records:** Adoption Network Cleveland is pursuing stand-alone legislation in the 130th General Assembly to allow adult adoptees adopted between 1964-1996 access to their original birth certificates. Ohio would join a growing list of states that have retroactively opened these records to their rightful owners. Adoption Network Cleveland plans to use a wide array of grassroots and direct lobbying strategies to achieve this goal.

**Funding:** As human services budgets continue to be strained, Adoption Network Cleveland remains committed to identifying creative ways to protect and grow adoption and foster care services, particularly in the areas of system funding, subsidies, kinship, guardianships and college assistance. Even during stressful economic times, policymakers must remember that one dollar invested in adoption from foster care yields three dollars in cost savings for the state.

**Siblings:** Adoption Network Cleveland understands the unique opportunities and challenges of placing siblings together in foster care and adoption. In 2012, the Ohio General Assembly passed HB 279, creating broad language to promote the placement of siblings together. Adoption Network Cleveland will seek to work with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to construct meaningful rules to implement HB 279 in order to promote sibling placements and provide clear guidance to local departments of Job and Family Services.

## About Adoption Network Cleveland

Adoption Network Cleveland 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 parents, siblings and adoption professionals.

In addition to our outreach and service work, Adoption Network Cleveland focuses on addressing policy questions and issues surrounding the adoption and foster care systems. Recognizing that a unified voice is a strong voice, Adoption Network Cleveland promotes community awareness and social change by advocating for improvements to adoption policy, practice and law.

**Betsie Norris, Executive Director**

**Recipient: 2011 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Adoption Excellence Award**

