

Changes to DCFS prompt changes to Foster Caregiver Recruitment and Support Program

During the 2025 regular legislative session, “One Door” legislation was passed to streamline the way the state delivers services. As of Oct. 1, 2025, DCFS’ Economic Stability program and Disability Determination Services were moved to the Louisiana Department of Health, and all employment and training programs were moved to the Louisiana Workforce Commission.

These changes have given DCFS the opportunity to restructure itself as a child-centered department, dedicated to child welfare and support. A business plan has been created that focuses on improving services that protect and nurture our state’s children. If you are interested in reading the business plan, you can find it at <https://www.dcms.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/LA-DCFS-25-26-Business-Plan-final.pdf>.

Recruiters

Debra Cyprian

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Foster Caregiver Recruitment and Support Program Manager **Joel Hooper** (left) and Recruiter **Courtney Young Sanders** promote foster caregiving at a community resource fair hosted by Volunteers for Youth Justice in Shreveport.

As part of the agency realignment, changes have been made within the Child Welfare division, including to the Foster Caregiver Recruitment and Support Program. The team, still led by Manager Joel Hooper, now has three recruiters: Courtney Sanders, Debra Cyprian, and Kathryn “Katie” Kilpatrick.

The recruiters are available to you, wherever you are in the state, if you need information about resources for foster caregivers or to refer new families who would like to learn more about foster parenting.

We have also moved the Community Collaborative meetings to once a quarter, though partners in some regions continue to meet monthly.

If you have questions about the changes or when your Community Collaborative is meeting, please reach out to one of the recruiters. who are listed to the left.

Great foster caregivers: it takes one to know one!

As foster caregivers, you are our agency's greatest recruitment tool. You are living the experience and can share from your heart why you're giving of your love, time, and resources to support children in the state's custody.

If you know someone who would be another great foster caregiver, or someone who has expressed interest in the fostering journey, send them our way! Share this link to our webpage with information about the ways to get involved in foster care, <https://www.dcfslouisiana.gov/page/be-there-foster>. Once they complete the form, we'll take it from there!

If you want resources to print out and share with larger groups of people – like your church or community organization – you can find those on this webpage, <https://www.dcfslouisiana.gov/page/foster-caregiver-resources>, under "Recruitment Materials for New Foster Caregivers". Thank you for helping us share the gift of being a foster caregiver!



Medical bills for a child in your care? Let us know.

DCFS has the overall responsibility for the physical, medical, dental, and emotional care of children in foster care. As a caregiver, you are in the best position to know when a child in your care needs medical attention, and you are the one bringing the child to appointments and keeping up with paperwork.

However, you should not be receiving bills for

a child's medical treatment. All children in foster care are covered by Medicaid or the biological family's private insurance. If you receive a medical bill for a child in foster care, please let your case worker know and provide the original copy of the bill. Case workers will connect with the DCFS medical team to ensure payments are made.

Renew or Sign Up for a Free State Parks Pass in 2026!

If you've received and used a free pass to visit the State Parks and Louisiana State Museums, you'll want to apply to renew your pass for 2026. If you haven't yet applied for the pass, now's your chance!

Simply fill out the form at <https://www.lastateparks.com/fostercaregiverpass> and attach either your Form 406 Card for certified foster caregivers or your State Parks Pass Card verifying you are a relative/kin caregiver. Once your application is processed

and approved, you'll receive your pass in the mail.

If your 406 card has expired, or you are a relative/kin caregiver and never received your verification card, please reach out to your caseworker or your Foster Caregiver Recruiter to receive your new document.

Thank you again to Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser and the [Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, Office of State Parks](#) for this opportunity!

Get a head start on your required training hours

**NOTE: This is a reminder to all currently certified regular foster/adoptive caregivers but does not apply to our child-specific (relative/kin) foster caregivers.*



Although the training year doesn't end until June 30, 2026, it's never too early to get a start on your required in-service training hours. Here is some information that might be helpful.

Regular foster/adoptive caregivers need at least 15 hours of in-service training per state fiscal year (SFY), which begins on July 1 and ends on June 30.

In a two-parent household, each caregiver needs to obtain at least 5 of the total 15 hours.

New foster/adoptive caregivers who attended pre-service training, Equipped to Care, during this SFY should attend a 3-hour class called Navigating the Journey within six months of certification. This training is offered quarterly in each region.

Beyond certification training, there are a variety of ways to obtain the needed training hours. Caregiver trainings are offered through the Louisiana Child Welfare Training Academy (LCWTA) at <https://moodle.lcwta.org/>.

Further online training courses are available at:

- <https://fosterparents.com>
- <https://www.fosterclub.com>
- <https://www.fosterparentcollege.com>

- <https://www.fosterparenttraining.com>
- <https://www.prosolutiontraining.com/index.cfm>

Caregivers can attend other trainings after getting approval by the DCFS State Office.

Other parts of foster caregiving that count toward training hours include:

- Home visits with the child's case worker
- Training or consultation from a licensed clinical social worker, professional counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist
- Training from a medical provider to meet the physical needs of a child in your home
- Participation in Independent Living training with a youth in your care
- Completion of an educational narrative or book review related to topics about children and youth, trauma, and working with children with special needs or behaviors

Please talk with your case worker if you have questions about your required training hours.

The Foster Caregiver Handbook gets a refresh

The Foster Caregiver Handbook has been updated to reflect new policy changes for foster and adoptive parents and to provide new, relevant information for our caregivers.

The Handbook is thorough, covering everything from how children come into foster care, to all the things considered when living with a child in foster care, to information on expenses and how to request a reimbursement. You can access the updated handbook on the DCFS website at

https://www.dcfslouisiana.gov/assets/CW_AV_Files/Foster_Caregiver_Handbook_2025.pdf.

Louisiana Foster Care Support Organization available for support, foster care mentors

The Louisiana Foster Care Support Organization, led by Foster Care Ambassador Margie Nielsen, is available for all caregivers in the state. The organization keeps an ongoing list of statewide resources for foster families, and they offer the Foster Care Mentor Program. Mentors are seasoned foster caregivers who can share advice, knowledge of resources and general support when you are experiencing a challenging time as a foster parent.

You can find out more about the Foster Care Support Organization on their website, <https://www.louisianafostercare.com/>, or download their app, <https://form.jotform.com/222934712477158>.



Be prepared for tax season

Tax season will be here soon, and some foster caregivers may have questions about what they should and shouldn't claim on their income tax returns. Here is a brief refresher.

Adopted and foster children are treated the same as biological dependents for tax purposes.

If you don't have and are unable to obtain the child's Social Security number (SSN), you should request an adoption taxpayer identification number (ATIN) or individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN).

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program is generally available from late January to April 15. Specific availability varies by site. Managed by the Internal Revenue Service, the VITA program offers free tax help to people who generally make \$67,000 or less annually, persons with disabilities, and limited English-speaking taxpayers.

- Fact Sheet: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p3676bsp.pdf>
- VITA locator tool (available during tax season): <https://freetaxassistance.for.irs.gov/s/sitelocator>

Foster Caregiver Resources

- [DCFS's Foster Caregiver Resources webpage](#)
- [Louisiana Foster Care Support Organization - Statewide list of resources](#)
- [Foster Care Mentors](#)
- [UNITE Ministries' Foster Friendly App](#)
- [Siblings Supporting Siblings](#)
- [Mobile Crisis Response Hub](#)
- [988 and Louisiana988.org](#)
- [Homework Louisiana](#)