

TFCO-A

Treatment Foster Care Oregon for Adolescents

Foster Parent Recruitment Manual

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Introduction

As with other foster care programs, recruitment of effective foster parents into the TFCO program is essential to the success of the program and to realizing positive outcomes for the youth involved. Considerable attention is required to enlist suitable foster parents. There are a number of challenges to recruiting foster parents, not the least of which is a supply and demand problem. As the number of youth with behavioral or emotional problems residing in foster care grows, the number of families willing to foster such youth remains limited. Additionally, a lack of research about recruiting foster parents hinders the process. Little research has been conducted about the characteristics of foster parents who would be willing and suitable to foster youth with behavioral or emotional problems. The void of information has recently prompted an initial research effort to study recruitment of foster families. In time, the studies should provide an evidence-based approach to selecting foster parents and predicting successful matches between parents and youth. But for now, agencies and organizations will need to rely on the wisdom of experienced practitioners to supplement the limited research available to guide them through the complex recruitment process. Much of the strategy used by TFCO to recruit and match foster parents is based on years of experience making and evaluating “clinical hunches.” In this guide, we present concepts and strategies that have been the most successful for this program and some early data from the initial studies on recruitment.

Recruitment of foster parents is typically done at either a general or targeted level. General recruitment strategies are those designed to generate interest in the *program or in foster parenting in general*. Targeted strategies are those intended to engage people in the program through their interest in a *specific youth*. In our work to date with the TFCO program, we have found recruiting foster parents for a specific youth to be the most successful, and we will describe those strategies in detail later in this manual. There is also a place for a more program-oriented approach to recruiting. It may be beneficial to use both approaches, especially when the program is new to a community.

Program-oriented Recruitment

Depending on specific community characteristics, it may be helpful to increase awareness of the need for foster families in general. Agencies and organizations can disseminate general recruitment information through mass media using public service announcements, talk shows, and news programs to illuminate the need for foster families. Local newspapers can increase a community's awareness through ongoing columns concerning the needs of youth in foster care. Posters, flyers, and brochures about the program can be developed for distribution throughout the community. Suggested distribution sites include churches, clubs and other organizations, doctors' offices, hospital and clinic waiting rooms, libraries, community centers, etc. It is interesting to note that in a 1993 study involving 771 foster families, 36% of the families indicated that they heard about the need for foster families through other foster parents, 28% through mass media, 9% through civic organizations, 4% through religious organizations, and 24% through a variety of other sources (Cox, Buehler, & Orme, 2002). The study also revealed that while many more inquiries were generated from mass media, more families who became interested in foster parenting through other foster parents actually completed the process and became licensed. At the TFCO development site, we support this kind of recruitment by offering foster parents a finder's fee of \$200 for recruiting a new family that completes the pre-service training and accepts a youth in their home. A survey of 142 foster parent applicants from 1996 to 1999 indicated that there was a tendency for foster parents who were willing to accept youth with emotional or behavioral problems to be employed in helping professions. Given that tendency, it might be beneficial to disseminate recruitment materials in places targeted to attract people in helping professions, such as hospital workers, teachers, paramedics, firefighters, day care workers, etc. (Cox, Orme, & Rhodes, 2002).

In some situations, it may be necessary for an agency to consider its reputation in the community prior to developing a general strategy for recruitment. If the agency has a negative reputation, people may not respond to recruitment efforts. It is common for media to highlight failures in the system rather than successes, which could easily work against recruitment efforts. To be effective with a general recruitment campaign, some agencies may need to engage in efforts that enhance public perception and strive to build better community relations.

As noted earlier, developers of the TFCO program use and recommend a targeted approach to recruitment. We do, however, recognize the contribution positive media and community involvement make to the recruitment effort. The TFCO program has been featured positively in community newspapers, and TFCO staff participate in community- and state-level efforts to address the needs of delinquent youth. While these things are not considered specific recruitment strategies, building this kind of positive community relationship certainly facilitates an interest in the program and ultimately impacts foster parent recruitment. It would be good for agencies and organizations to consider their involvement with the community as they go about the business of recruiting foster parents into the program.

Targeted Recruitment

The most reliable method for recruiting foster parents has been to place youth-specific ads in local newspapers. People considering becoming foster parents tend to respond more and follow through on an ad about a specific youth. It is easy to put off making the call when it is not about a specific youth—"I'll do it tomorrow, or the next day." But, if people have been considering becoming foster parents and see an ad about a specific youth in need, it becomes more personal and, consequently, more compelling.

Couple or single parent with older or no children wanted for a 13-year-old twin boy who needs a

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

He's very likeable but from a troubled background. Comes with parakeet companion. \$xxx month. Call Kathy, Oregon Social Learning Center, 485-2711

HUCK FINN

12-year-old boy with troubled background needs stable foster home with older or no children. Mental health background or like experience preferred. Training, support and \$xxx per month. Call Kathy, Oregon Social Learning Center, 485-2711

We have used advertisements for years and over time have developed some strategies that seem to maximize the effectiveness of the ads. More examples of the types of ads we've used are in Appendix A.

- Give some specific information about a particular youth (gender, age, color of eyes or hair, attractive personality feature, etc.). If several youth are waiting to be placed, write the ad for the one who may be perceived the most favorably. It is rare that a person interested in foster parenting would ONLY be interested in the youth in the ad. It is very acceptable to potential parents to hear that the specific youth in the ad is no longer available, but that another youth is.
- Make sure the ad includes the monthly reimbursement and the fact that the program provides training and support.
- Make the ads lighthearted, eye-catching, and appealing. Incorporating a current event or local attraction into the ad can capture the reader's attention. Try to establish a relationship with a specific ad salesperson at the newspaper. That person will then know your needs and be able to help you accordingly.
- Use as big an ad as you can afford. Eighteen-point for the header is good. Display ads get the most attention. If possible, try to avoid placing the ad in the corners, the middle of the page is more often noticed. Advertising experts informed us that the average reader spends only 3 seconds skimming a printed page. To catch a reader's attention in those 3 seconds is the challenge.
- When using a display ad, ask the ad salesperson for advice on where to place the ad in the paper. It is our experience that ads placed in the section containing "Dear Abby" often generate more responses than those placed in

- other sections. This may vary by newspaper and community, so be sure to use the expertise of the newspaper staff.
- When using classified ads, place them in the Help Wanted section. People who are interested in income read these ads as well as people with an interest in what is going on in their community. It can be challenging to determine in what subsection of Help Wanted to put your ad. Some newspapers list ads alphabetically, some by type of job. Check the newspaper you will use to see how they organize ads and look for where your ad might fit.

Screening Process

TFCO uses the following four-step screening process.

Step 1. Initial Phone Call

Beginning with this very first contact, an organization's policies, procedures, and philosophical approach to the program will have a powerful impact on recruitment. Welcoming families into the process and encouraging and supporting them through the process will immediately convey that foster parents are a valuable resource. This will have a much different result than a process that begins by screening families at the initial contact and takes a more investigatory approach to the intake process. Staff should be focused on bringing families into the program rather than screening them out.

It is common for people calling in response to an ad to be apprehensive. They may be wary and unsure about their ability to be foster parents, or they may have had negative experiences with agencies in the past. A friendly, inviting first contact can put potential foster parents at ease and encourage them to pursue their initial interest. During this first contact, the recruiter should have a very informal conversation with the caller about her interests and provide information about the program.

- Ask the caller what her experience is with foster parenting or what she knows about foster parenting. This allows the recruiter to "tailor" the conversation to the caller's level of awareness or experience. For example, if the caller has been a foster parent with the state child welfare agency, the recruiter can highlight the aspects of TFCO that are different from the caller's previous experience. Ask about why they want to be foster parents and what their expectations are and then emphasize the aspects of the TFCO program that relate to their expectations. For example, a caller might want to help a youth in trouble have a chance to turn his life around. The recruiter can point out that the TFCO program is designed to help youth break out of bad cycles and make better choices, and that studies show that kids are more successful after they leave this program than other programs. Generally, the recruiter should try to respond to the caller's specific interests or questions rather than overwhelm her with all of the information at once.
- Provide information about the specific youth in the ad (how old, what they like, kinds of problems, etc.) without violating confidentiality rules. Openly acknowledge that the youth in this program are difficult to manage, and at the same time be enthusiastic about the program's ability to help them. Give examples of the kinds of problems youth in this program have (anxiety, truancy, drugs/alcohol, etc.) and explain that they all have had emotional and behavioral problems, but be reassuring about the possibilities for improvement and the dangers. Explain that the program is designed to provide youth with a very closely monitored and supervised environment that sharply diminishes the opportunity for misbehavior.
- Give a general and brief overview of the main mechanisms for managing youths' behavior, including:

- Foster parents are trained to use a system that gives consequences for negative behavior and rewards for positive behavior. The system is designed to take some of the stress associated with discipline off of the foster parents.
 - School personnel participate in the system by communicating with foster parents daily about how youth are doing.
 - Youth and their biological families attend regular therapy sessions.
- Emphasize the level of support foster parents receive in the TFCO program, including training before the youth is placed, weekly support meetings, daily telephone contact, and the availability of program staff 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Give examples of how that level of support can be used. For example, if the youth refuses to do a chore, the foster parent could call the Team Leader for advice. Or, if the school called a foster parent and reported that the youth wasn't in class, the foster parent would immediately alert the Team Leader.
 - Ask the caller to talk about her situation. It is essential to know things such as family composition (including ages and genders of youth in the home), home location, working hours, etc. Potential foster parents are often curious about how having a foster youth will impact their lives. Assure the caller, that the goal is to "fit" the youth into their family and minimize the changes to their lifestyle and household routines.

Encourage the caller to ask questions and answer them as completely as possible. Frequently asked questions (during either the initial call or the home visit) include:

- What is the pay? What does that cover? How are medical needs covered?
- Will the biological family come to my home? How much contact is there with the biological family?
- We attend church regularly. Will the youth attend with us?
- What school will the youth attend?
- Can we take the youth on vacation with us?
- Does the youth need to have his or her own bedroom?

These are common questions so the recruiter should be prepared for them. The amount of information a caller wants during this initial call will vary. The recruiter will need to use discretion about how much detail to go into on the logistical issues. Some callers will be very detail oriented, others will find that amount of information overwhelming and may prefer to learn about the program in smaller "doses."

Express appreciation for the caller's interest in the program (even if the caller decides not to continue any further). Explain that the remaining steps are to complete an application, schedule a home visit, begin the certification process, and complete the pre-service training. Potential foster parents often come up with many questions *after* they end this conversation as they think more about the program. Encourage them to keep a list of their questions so you can be sure to answer them later.

Step 2. Application

After the phone call, the recruiter sends an application to the interested family. On the application, the parents are asked to provide demographic information, income level, references, and a written response to the following:

- Why are you interested in the program?
- Do you feel qualified to handle moody and/or rebellious adolescents?
- What sort of events or behaviors would cause you to give up on a youth?
- What forms of recreation do you enjoy? Especially mention ones you could include the youth in. How often?
- How would you typically correct misbehavior? Provide your views on discipline and punishment.
- What role would you expect the youth to assume while staying with you?
- Are you able to provide routine and crisis transportation for the youth?
- Have you or your spouse ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor? If yes, please note date(s) and charge(s). The state child welfare department requires this information.
- Have you and your spouse ever separated because of marital problems? If yes, please give the date and length of separation.
- Have you or your spouse ever applied for a foster care position with any other agency?

A written overview of the program should be included with the application. This overview should include the goals and rationale of the program, the type of youth the program serves, and the roles/duties of foster parents in the program. Examples of an application and overview are included in Appendix B. The application itself is a powerful screening device. We have found that, on the average, only 50% of the applications are returned.

Upon return of the application, references are called and asked a series of questions, including the following:

- In your opinion, are they competent to be foster parents for our program?
- How long have you known them and in what capacity?
- Have you seen them work with children or teenagers?
- How would you say they work together as a couple?
- How do they handle stress?
- How do they get along with co-workers?
- Is there anything in their personal life that you think we should know about that might be relevant to their being foster parents?
- What do you think would be the most difficult aspect of foster parenting for this family?
- What do you see as their particular strengths and weaknesses?
- Describe the activities, hobbies, or interests of family members.
- Do you feel they would sustain their commitment to a youth with emotional and behavioral problems, or would they give up when the going got rough?

Step 3. Home Visit

Providing that the family's application and references are satisfactory, the next step is a home visit by the recruiter. The main purpose of this 1-hour visit is to:

1. determine whether the home atmosphere is conducive to caring for a youth with challenging problems, and
2. give more information about the program and answer questions.

There is no prototype of a perfect TFCO foster parent that helps to evaluate the suitability of an individual family to the program. It is our experience that foster parents from all walks of life can be successful with this program. Single parents and married couples, with and without children, age 25 or 65, working or middle class all have been successful TFCO parents. Although we have conducted no formal research on selection factors, the individual characteristics that seem related to success in working with difficult youth include an ability to take another's perspective, a good knowledge of child and adolescent development, and a healthy sense of humor. Staff at the TFCO development site were asked to generate a list of adjectives describing their most successful foster parents and a list describing their least successful foster parents. Outstanding foster parents were described as nurturing, amicable, flexible, having a good sense of humor, consistent, caring, concerned, cooperative, happy, worried, active, committed, and practical. Unsuccessful foster parents were described as severe, opinionated, quiet, private, harried, naïve, stubborn, punitive, demanding, inflexible, uncooperative, strict, and stressed.

In addition to understanding the characteristics staff consider important to successful foster parenting, it may be useful to recruiters to understand what foster parents perceive to be the rewards of fostering and what factors they consider to facilitate successful foster parenting. The 1996-99 survey noted earlier included a survey of experienced and successful foster parents about the rewards, stressors, and factors that facilitate and inhibit successful fostering. The most frequently cited factor that facilitated successful foster parenting was having a deep, heartfelt concern for youths' welfare. These foster parents reported that seeing a youth grow and develop and being able to make a difference in a youth's life were the most rewarding aspects of being a foster parent. Having a strong support system from family and friends or belonging to a group that offered support was also seen as an important factor. Also frequently reported by foster parents as facilitating factors were open-mindedness and tolerance. Foster parents participating in this survey describe themselves as organized and consistent, but note the need not to be too rigid and to be flexible and easy-going when necessary (Buehler, Cox, & Cuddeback, 2003).

Foster parents provide youth with an atmosphere of consistency and fairness. They have a clear sense of what can be realistically expected of the youth, and are quick to give the youth credit for progress. At the same time, they are willing to correct the youth and provide consequences for rule infractions or other problems. They avoid the tendency to personalize misbehavior (e.g., "How could he do this to me?") even if it

causes them inconvenience or is directed toward them. Successful foster parents are flexible and responsive to the youth's treatment needs.

A special consideration when evaluating a family's suitability specifically for the TFCO program is whether or not the parents would be able to function as part of the treatment team. The ability to function as a member of a team is a critical characteristic of an TFCO foster parent. Unlike many other foster parent programs, in this program, foster parents work closely with program staff and take an active treatment role. They must work cooperatively with program staff to implement the daily structured behavioral program. Many parents who would very competently provide the acceptance, affection, and security that is the focus for youth in regular foster care would not make suitable TFCO parents.

Although there is no fool-proof way to evaluate the suitability of potential foster parents for the TFCO program, it appears there is a core set of characteristics that are indicative of success. The challenge is to create opportunities throughout the recruitment phase to evaluate those characteristics. One opportunity is when the recruiter is engaged in casual conversation with the family. If the family feels at ease and comfortable talking about their motivation and household, the recruiter is usually able to form an impression about how well the family will "fit" into the program. However, if the recruiter is unable to build a friendly rapport and approaches the visit in a more "business-like" manner, it may inhibit the family and affect the recruiter's ability to form an impression about these important characteristics. It is important that the recruiter be well informed and experienced with the program and with foster parenting in general. Not only will this provide a basis to competently answer questions, it will help form valid impressions. In some situations, experienced foster parents make excellent recruiters. Their impressions about the potential of interested families are often very reliable.

The second objective of the home visit is to determine whether the home atmosphere is conducive to caring for a youth with emotional and behavioral problems. This is less about the physical home environment than it is about family composition, roles, and routines. In the physical environment, the family needs to provide adequate space for the youth. The "rules" about space vary from state to state, so it is important to be familiar with your state's requirements. Likewise, rules about other aspects of the physical environment, such as the presence of smoke detectors, smoking in the house, etc., will also vary by state. During the home visit, the recruiter can usually easily form an impression about the family's basic hygiene and safety issues.

To further assess the family's composition, roles, and routines, the recruiter should include in conversation topics like:

- ages of family members in the home
- adults' work schedules
- family's interests and hobbies
- how "chores" are dealt with
- what are the household routines (e.g., does everyone eat dinner together, etc.)
- how parents keep track of the activities of other youth
- how discipline issues are settled

A casual conversation about these kinds of things can be very revealing. However, it is important not to conduct this like an inquisition. The family should not feel that they are being “judged.”

To meet the third objective, a significant portion of the home visit should be spent going over key aspects of the program. Even though the recruiter may have given a fairly extensive overview of the TFCO program on the phone, it should be repeated as there may now be other family members involved, and during a face-to-face conversation the recruiter will be better able to pick up on any questions or concerns and address them. Important areas to cover include:

- An honest description of the kinds of behaviors youth in the TFCO program exhibit. It might be helpful to list common behaviors as well as give an anonymous description of a “typical” youth in the program. This is a good opportunity to use some of the most humorous stories, it will help alleviate apprehension and convey the supportive nature of the program.
- An overview of treatment team member roles and how foster parents are considered critical members of the team.
- An explanation of the level of support that the TFCO program provides, including weekly support meetings and the 24/7 availability of the Team Leader (and, through the Team Leader, the other staff).
- An overview of the point and level system. Explain that the point and level system has been thoroughly tested and is very effective at managing behavior. Illustrate how the system is designed to take some of the stress off of the foster parent by inserting program staff as “the final word,” especially when it comes to negative consequences. Discuss the level of supervision required to administer the program effectively.
- A description of the initial training that takes place before a youth is placed in the home to help the foster parents prepare.

During a typical home visit, before addressing the details of the program, the recruiter should engage parents in a casual conversation about something other than foster parenting to set them at ease and make everyone more comfortable. Potential foster parents often feel anxious about the home visit, anticipating that they will be scrutinized and judged. Approaching them in a warm and friendly manner, and engaging in casual, “neighborly” conversation will help take the pressure off. It will also be much easier to form an impression about the parents’ suitability if they are relaxed and feel at ease to be themselves. Starting a conversation about their pets, an interesting household item, hobbies, etc., is a good way to get things going. The recruiter should always approach the visit as an opportunity to draw potential foster parents into the program by addressing their concerns so they can make an informed decision

During and after the home visit, it is likely that the parents will have questions. The recruiter should encourage parents to ask questions and bring up their concerns. If it is not possible to address all of them at that time, the recruiter should be diligent in

getting back to the family as soon as possible. Finally, the recruiter should discuss the remaining steps to becoming a foster parent with TFCO.

- Foster parents will need to be certified with their state, or in some cases, with their agency. The recruiter should summarize what that process entails and provide the forms or contacts necessary to start the process.
- Foster parents will need to attend the training sessions.

Step 4. Pre-service Training Sessions

The training sessions will provide foster parents with a working knowledge of the program's policies and procedures. Additionally, the training provides an opportunity for both the foster parents and program staff to further assess whether they will be able to work together as a team. Foster parents and staff can address and resolve concerns about participation in the program. The goal of the training sessions is to fully inform and prepare foster parents so that the likelihood of a "failed" placement, and consequently another disruption for the youth, is reduced. The recruiter should acknowledge that during the training phase foster parents are encouraged to express their doubts and apprehensions and should point out that some foster parents decide after training that TFCO is not for them. It is also the case that sometimes TFCO staff decide that the foster parents are not well suited for this program and refer them to the local child welfare office to look into providing "regular" foster care.

At the end of the visit, the recruiter should encourage the foster parents to think about their involvement and call if they think of other questions. If the recruiter doesn't hear from the family in a few days, it would be a good idea to call and see if they have any questions. If the family decides to continue with the process, the recruiter should remain in contact with them while they are awaiting the training sessions or during the certification process and assist in any way that is feasible.

Final Note

The success of the TFCO program, like any foster parent program, relies heavily on the quality of the foster parenting youth receive. Given the apprehension many people have about fostering youth with emotional and behavioral problems, just having a willing and interested family may seem like enough of a qualification. It is easy to get excited and want to quickly place a youth with them. It is important not to rush through the process so that families and staff have every opportunity to assess the “fit” of the family to the program and maximize the likelihood of positive outcomes for the youth.

References

- Buehler, C., Cox, M. E., & Cuddeback, G. (2003). Foster parent's perceptions of factors that promote or inhibit successful fostering. *Qualitative Social Work: Research and Practice, 2*(1), 61-83.
- Cox, M. E., Buehler, C., & Orme, J. G. (2002). Recruitment and foster family service. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 29*, 151-177.
- Cox, M. E., & Orme, J. G., & Rhodes, K. W. (2002). Willingness to foster special needs children and foster family utilization. *Children and Youth Services Review, 24*, 293-317.

Appendix A: Advertisement Examples

CALMER WATERS

Loveable 12-year-old boy from troubled background needs stable home with older children and skilled parents. Oregon Social Learning Center provides training, lots of support, and \$xxxx per month. Call Kathy 485-2711.

CHALLENGE

16-year-old boy with emotional problems needs experienced family for 2-year placement. Training, support, and \$xxxx month provided. Call Kathy, Oregon Social Learning Center 485-2711

ANGEL WINGS

Could grow on any young girl with the right family. Oregon Social Learning Center is looking for skilled parents who can provide a stable home for a 17-year-old girl. She will be going to a permanent home in about 9 mos. OSLC provides training, lots of support, and \$xxxx per month. Call Kathy 485-2711

85%	teenager
7%	toddler
5%	adult
3%	*

These percentages fit many teenagers and maybe this 15-year-old girl. She needs a home for about 1 year with skilled parents who enjoy this age, have no other teens, and are 100% adult. Oregon Social Learning Center provides training, lots of support and \$xxxx per month. Call Kathy at 485-2711

Superman Was a Foster Child?

You bet and he did pretty well and with the right home so will this 14-year-old boy. He comes from a troubled background so will need skilled parents who can provide care for about 9 mos. OSLC provides training, lots of support and \$xxxx per month. Call Kathy 485 2711

3 common lies in Eugene

1. No one minds the rain.
2. It's easy to get a building permit.
3. There are plenty of good parents for needy kids.

In spite of these myths, the Oregon Social Learning Center believes that you want to help one such needy kid. Please call about our foster care program. We provide training, lots of support, and a monthly stipend. Call Kathy R. for information at 485-2711.

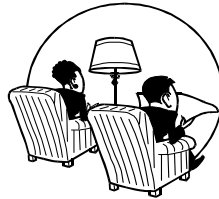
**Gain
130 lbs.**

14 year old boy (about that size), full of teenish humor, needs home for about 9 months with skilled parents who enjoy the challenge of this age group. Oregon Social Learning Center provides lots of support, training, and \$xxxx per month. For details, call Kathy R. 485-2711.

When?

...do we sign you up to become a parent again, to use your well-oiled sense of humor, calm-staying power, and superior logic? Don't waste your skills! We have several young teens who need the caring, stable home you already have. Oregon Social Learning Center is looking for parents to provide care for less than 1 year; the kids are between 13 and 16. We provide plenty of training, support, and **\$xxx** per month. For details, call Kathy R. at 485-2711.

too quiet?



We can fix that! Chatty 14-year-old girl needs stable home (for up to 1 year) with skilled parents who have older children and appreciate the difficulties of the teen years. Oregon Social Learning Center provides qualified parents with lots of friendly training, support, and **\$xxx**. For details, call Kathy R, 485-2711.

Appendix B: Recruitment Materials

Dear Prospective Foster Parent:

Since 1983 the Oregon Social Learning Center and OSLC Community Programs in Eugene, Oregon have provided Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO) for more than 1000 boys and girls in Lane County and surrounding areas. Our organization, [insert agency name] has provided this researched program to our local youth and families since _____. It's an unfortunate fact that most children referred to this service have behavioral and emotional problems. With the help of families like yours, we provide placement and treatment for children in the context of a healthy family home. It's our belief that a stable, home-style placement provides each child with best opportunities to learn and change.

Being a TFCO Foster Parent is a challenging but immensely rewarding job if you have the desire to help a troubled child and enjoy parenting. TFCO Foster Parents work as members of a professional team that includes a team leader, a therapist and skills coach for the child, as well as a therapist for the child's parents or long-term home.

TFCO Foster Parents participate in an initial training course to equip them with specific behavior management skills that are effective in helping troubled kids. Once a child is placed with you, you will receive ongoing training and support, including daily phone contact and a weekly support meeting. Program staff will be available to you on a 24-hour basis for crisis intervention services and other assistance you might need. TFCO Foster Parents receive a monthly stipend, and each child has a medical insurance card which covers the costs of dental and medical health care.

If you wish to pursue becoming an TFCO Foster Parent, please complete the enclosed application and reference sheets and return them to the attention of [insert name of TFCO Recruiter] at [insert name and address of agency]. Please feel free to call me at [insert phone number of TFCO Recruiter] if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

[insert name of TFCO Recruiter]
TFCO Foster Parent Recruiter/Trainer
[insert name of agency]

Sample TFCO Foster Parent Application

Applicant Name: _____ Date: _____

Last Name

First Name

M.I.

DOB: _____ SSN: _____ - _____ - _____ Driver License Number: _____

Single Married Date Married: _____ Divorced Separated

Home Phone Number: _____ Work Phone Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____ Other Phone Number: _____

Physical Address: _____

Applicant Name: _____ Date: _____

Last Name

First Name

M.I.

DOB: _____ SSN: _____ - _____ - _____ Driver License Number: _____

Single Married Date Married: _____ Divorced Separated

Home Phone Number: _____ Work Phone Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____ Other Phone Number: _____

Mailing Address: (please fill in if different than above)

Household Members

Number of residents currently living in household: _____

1. Name:	DOB:	Age:	In Home	Relationship:
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	_____
2. Name:	DOB:	Age:	In Home	Relationship:
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	_____
3. Name:	DOB:	Age:	In Home	Relationship:
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	_____
4. Name:	DOB:	Age:	In Home	Relationship:
_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	_____

Education

High School: _____ Years Attended: _____ Graduate/Degree: _____

College: _____ Years Attended: _____ Graduate/Degree: _____

Other: _____ Years Attended: _____ Graduate/Degree: _____

Work Experience

Current Employer: _____ May we Contact? Yes NO

Supervisor Name: _____ Contact Number: _____

Current Occupation: _____ Net Income: _____

Current Employer's Address:

Street

City State Zip Code

References

Please list four individuals who are not related to you and you have known for at least one year.

1.) Name: _____ Occupation: _____
Last Name First Name

Address: _____ Phone Number: _____
Street

_____ Number of Years Known: _____
City State Zip Code

How do you know this individual? (Friend, neighbor, employer, etc.) _____

2.) Name: _____ Occupation: _____
Last Name First Name

Address: _____ Phone Number: _____
Street

_____ Number of Years Known: _____
City State Zip Code

How do you know this individual? (friend, neighbor, employer, etc.) _____

3.) Name: _____ Occupation: _____
Last Name First Name

Address: _____ Phone Number: _____
Street

_____ Number of Years Known: _____
City State Zip Code

How do you know this individual? (Friend, neighbor, employer, etc.) _____

4.) Name: _____ Occupation: _____
Last Name First Name

Address: _____ Phone Number: _____
Street

_____ Number of Years Known: _____
City State Zip Code

How do you know this individual? (Friend, neighbor, employer, etc.) _____

Additional Questions

If two-parent household, please complete questions together.

- 1.) Why are you interested in this position?

- 2.) Do you feel qualified to handle angry and/or rebellious adolescents? Why?

- 3.) What sort of events or behaviors would cause you to give up on a youth?

- 4.) What forms of recreation do you enjoy? Especially mention ones you could include youth in. How often?

- 5.) How would you typically correct misbehaviors? Provide your views on discipline and punishment.

- 6.) What role would you expect the youth to assume while staying with you?

- 7.) Are you able to provide routine and crisis transportation for this youth?

- 8.) Have you or your spouse ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor? Yes No
If yes, please indicated date(s) and charge(s). This information is required by the child welfare system.

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9.) Has any member of your family been treated (medication or psychotherapy) for any emotional or psychological problem? Yes No

If yes, family member: _____ Dates: _____

10.) Have you and your spouse ever separated because of marital problems? If yes, please give the date and length of separation.

11.) Have you or your spouse ever applied for a foster care position with another agency? Yes No

If yes, which agency? _____ Date Applied: _____

Applicant Name (Print): _____ Date: _____

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sample Note Form for Inquiry Calls

Date _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone: Home # _____ Cell # _____

Previously Certified for Foster Care? No Yes

Family Composition: 2 parent Single Other _____

Children at home: Age Gender Foster or Bio?

Age	Gender	Foster or Bio?
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Home: Own or Rent

Adequate Space? Yes No

At-home parent? Yes No

Occupations: Parent 1: _____ Parent 2: _____

Interested in taking (age & gender) : _____

Any recent significant life changes in the family/home? _____

Comments/ General Impressions:

Referred by: _____

Date application sent by Recruiter: _____

Foster Parent Agreement

Between

(Insert Agency Name
& Address here)

And

(insert foster parent/s name here)

Hereinafter referred to as Treatment Parent(s)

Services

The Treatment Parent(s) agree(s) to provide full-time care and supervision for 1 TFCO youth participating in the program at (insert agency name here) to be placed in the household of the Treatment Parent(s), and to implement and monitor the youth's treatment plan as prescribed by (insert agency name here) program staff.

As the key agent(s) of support and change for the youth in his/her/their care, the Treatment Parent(s) agree(s) to undergo initial intensive training, provided by (insert agency name here) program staff, prior to placement of the TFCO youth. The Treatment Parent(s) further agree(s) to attend weekly meetings with (insert agency name here) program staff to discuss the progress of the youth in his/her/their care, to receive ongoing training, and to receive instructions and directions concerning the treatment of the youth. Furthermore, the Treatment Parent(s) agree(s) to participate in daily telephone reports with (insert agency name here) program staff Monday through Friday.

The Treatment Parent(s) understand(s) that intensive supervision is an important aspect of each treatment plan and agree(s) to exercise such supervision, which includes the commitment to be aware at all times of the whereabouts of the youth.

All overnight absences of the youth from the Treatment Parent(s) shall be approved by (insert agency name here) program staff in advance. All overnight absences from the home of the Treatment Parent(s), shall be approved by (insert agency name here) program staff in advance. All visits by the youth with their parents or other discharge home must be arranged through (insert agency name here)'s TFCO Team Lead.

(insert agency name here) agrees to have support and assistance available to the Treatment Parent(s) at all times. The Treatment Parent(s) will be provided with the appropriate telephone numbers to reach the Team Lead or interim Team Lead at times when he/she is unavailable.

The Treatment Parent(s) agree(s) to maintain a valid driver's license and availability of a car in good working condition or other reliable access to transportation. He/she/they also agree(s) to maintain telephone service to his/her/their residence.

Compensation

(insert agency name here) agrees to compensate the Treatment Parent(s) \$ (insert rate here) on a monthly bases. This monthly amount will be prorated if termination of placement occurs during the month, rather than at the beginning or end of a month. If, during the course of a month, the youth is out of the household of the Treatment Parent(s) for reasons of a family visit, detention of ____ days or less, authorized leave, or runaway of ____ days or less, the compensation will be continued during these absences. Base rate compensations to the Treatment Parent(s) are made for the purpose of covering the expenses incurred for regular upkeep of the youth placed in his/her/their home, such as food, clothes, housing, utilities, transportation, allowance, entertainment, etc. Reimbursements are not intended as compensation for time and effort by the Treatment Parent(s). Because of the nature of the contractual relationship between the Treatment Parent(s) and (insert agency name here), no benefits including unemployment insurance, are provided under this agreement.

Increases in compensation amounts may be awarded by (insert agency name here) based on increases in expenses, budget considerations, and other relevant factors.

Payment of all compensation due the Treatment Parent(s) according to the stipulations above will take place on (insert day of the month) of the service month.

Insurance and Liability

The Treatment Parent(s) understand(s) and agree(s) that (insert agency name here) does not provide insurance against risks associated with placement of the youth in his/her/their household. It is further understood and agreed that (insert agency name here) will not be held responsible or liable for any loss, damage, or injury resulting from placement of the youth in the home of the Treatment Parent(s). The Treatment Parent(s) agree(s) to purchase and/or maintain adequate insurance coverage to protect himself/herself/themselves against reasonable risks to home, care and other

possessions, as well as to his/her/their person(s), created by the presence of the youth in his/her/their household.

Beginning and Termination of this Agreement

This agreement becomes effective on the date the youth is placed in the home or on the date the Treatment Parent(s) begin(s) the training described in the second paragraph under the section entitled "Services" of this document, whichever is later.

This agreement ends when the placement of the youth is terminated.

Signed:

Treatment Parent(s)

Date

Address: _____

Agency Program Director/Manager

Date