

Survey Examines Postadoption Services Among Private Agencies

—By Kelly Mack

In April 2006, CWLA conducted an Internet-based survey of its private agency members to gauge how many use postadoption services to support families and children who have recently completed the adoption process. Agencies that acknowledged providing postadoption services were also queried about the types of programs they offer—such as counseling, respite care, or emergency assistance—and how they fund these services.

CWLA collected 95 responses, from agencies in 39 states, to seven questions. Ninety-four percent reported providing postadoption services; the most common included support groups, crisis intervention, child and family advocacy, adoption searches, case management, family therapy, mental health treatment, respite care, and targeted case management. Some agencies also provide chemical abuse treatment, day treatment, and intensive in-home supervision, indicating a strong commitment to making adoption placements work.

Although some services are more common than others, agency creativity has also responded to professional experience and family requests. Agencies tend to create programs to meet the specific needs of the children and families they serve, whether the adoptions are domestic or international.

Examples of postadoption services noted by the survey respondents include

- adoption mediation and reunions,
- adoption registry,
- parent retreats,
- child support groups,
- parenting and adoption education,
- crisis counseling,
- information and services referral,
- emergency assistance,
- newsletters,
- lending libraries,
- birth land tours,
- international intermediary services, and
- marriage education.

The survey also notes unique services, such as social skills training, intensive in-home supervision, recreation therapy, and chemical abuse treatment.

Some agencies acknowledged funding postadoption services through state or county contracts. Thirty-five respondents

reported using contract money through the state or county child welfare agency to support these services. For the rest of the agencies, funding appears to be challenging. Thirty-six reported using funding sources other than public agency contracts to pay for their postadoption services. A few agencies have small grants from foundations to provide postadoption programs. Others use government

Postadoption Services Offered by Survey Respondents

Support groups	63	Adoption Resource Centers	28
Crisis Intervention.	58	Flexible Funding for Families.	23
Individual Therapy	54	Social Skills Training.	20
Child and Family Advocacy	53	Special Camps	20
Adoption Search	48	Intensive In Home Supervision	18
Family Therapy	48	Supplies and Equipment	13
Case management	45	Recreation Therapy.	10
Mental Health treatment	35	Day Treatment	9
Respite Care	35	Medical/Physical	
Targeted Case Management	33	Health Services.	9
Group Therapy	30	Chemical Abuse Treatment	7

funding, such as TANF, adoption incentive grants, adoption opportunities grants, Medicaid, state mental health funding, postadoption special service subsidies, and other public agency grants.

Some agencies charge families for postadoption services, using a sliding scale based on family income. Sixty-four agencies support postadoption services independently because they either don't have outside funding, or the funding doesn't cover the total cost of services.

"Albeit informally, this survey hints at the importance of postadoption services to agencies conducting adoptions in the United States," says CWLA Director of Adoption Services Ada White. "The survey results also indicate that funding opportunities are not as readily available as agencies need them to be in order to provide the services. But the agencies show great flexibility and tenacity in finding financial support in multiple arenas."

White adds, "Clearly, agencies value these programs in supporting families enough that they invest their own budgets in such services. Finding and increasing forms of financial support for quality postadoption services is something CWLA believes would be a value to all adoptive families and children."

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