

FY 2022 PERFORMANCE PLAN

Foster Families		CFSD/Child Welfare	Kimberly Bonham x1096 Jillian Thorp x1558		
Program Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure qualified foster families are available in the community to meet the physical, emotional, and behavioral needs of children in foster care. 				
Program Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program recruits, trains and retains families to foster and adopt children. Prospective foster families are recruited from the Arlington community and surrounding Northern Virginia areas. Foster families must be over age 21 and may be single or married. Child-specific and kinship placements are used whenever possible to maintain a child’s connections with their family or other natural supports. A specialized training and certification process is available for kinship foster families. Information sessions provide education to the community and recruit prospective foster families. All prospective foster families participate in an information session, 30 hours of training, background checks and a comprehensive home study before certification to foster and adopt. The program has increased recruitment efforts through social media, targeted outreach, and relationship-building with community institutions. Certified foster families obtain 15 hours of continuing education annually. Children are placed with contracted therapeutic foster care (TFC) agency families when Arlington trained foster families are not available to accept a child in need of a placement. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the team has worked to identify, train and approve foster families who are willing to accept children that have potentially been exposed to COVID. 				
Service Delivery Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services were primarily delivered remotely in FY 2022. Some in-person services such as home studies, home visits and recertifications were conducted in person. Service delivery in FY 2023 will be more of a hybrid model. Some in-person activities will resume including support groups and retention events. In FY 2023, support groups will be held at Community Centers for more space and better child care precautions. 				
PM1: How much did we do?					
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total 5 FTEs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.50 FTE Supervisor 1 FTE Foster Family Coordinator 1 FTE Outreach and Recruitment Specialist 1 FTE Family Development Specialist 1 FTE Kinship Development Specialist Contractor 0.50 FTE Home Study Contractors and Human Services Clinicians <p>*Additional home study support is provided by state contractors as needed</p>				
Customers and Service Data		FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
	Information Sessions / Families Attending	8/97	8/100	8/112	7/79

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	Pre-Service Training Sessions / Families that Have Completed Training	4/67	6/32	5/66	3/41
	New Non-Kin Foster Families Certified	14	9	5	8
	New Kin Foster Families Certified	6	7	10	4
	Total Certified Foster Families (as of last day of fiscal year)	70	69	70	70
	Children Served by Program (monthly avg)	54	52	46	45

PM2: How well did we do it?

2.1	Timeliness of home study completion
2.2	Retention of certified foster families

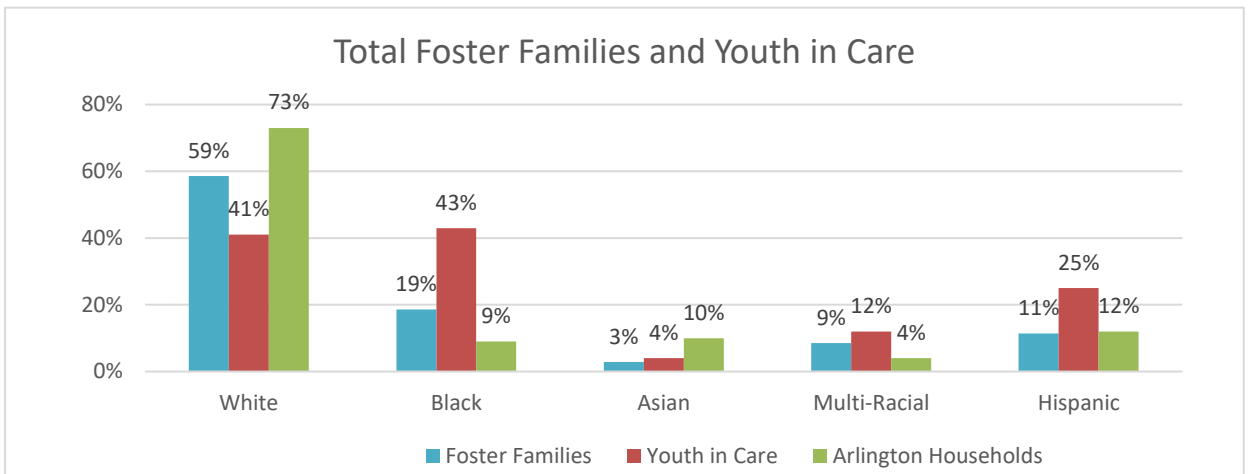
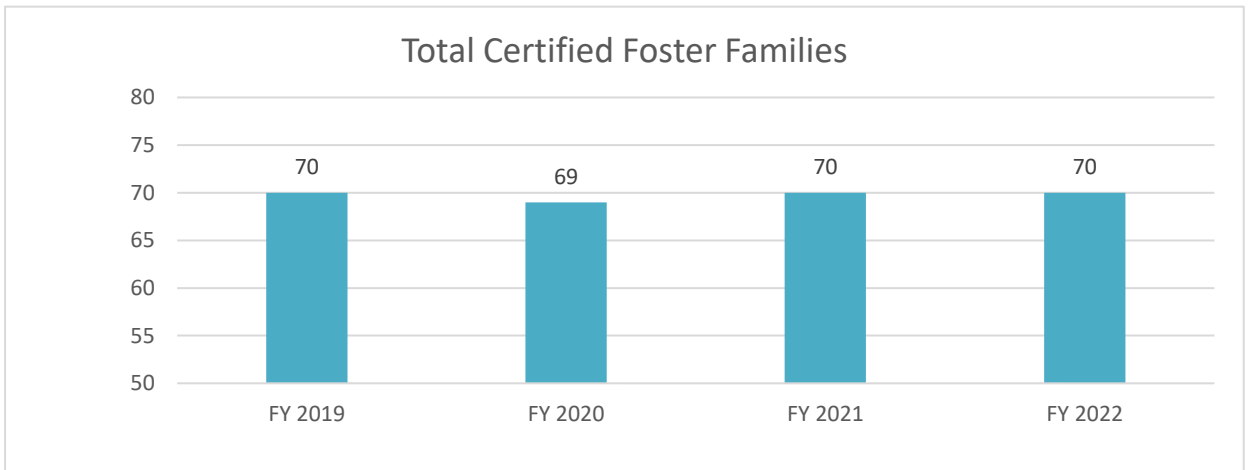
PM3: Is anyone better off?

3.1	Continuity of children’s connections
3.2	Placement stability

Foster Families

Measure 1 Total Certified Foster Families

Data



Data Summary

- In FY 2022, there were 70 certified foster families.
- 59% of the families certified in FY 2022, identified as white, 19% of families identified as black, 9% of families identified as multi-racial, 3% of families identified as Asian and 11% identified as Hispanic.
- For foster families, Hispanic is captured as one of the Race options; for youth in care, Hispanic is captured as an Ethnicity.

What is the story behind the data?

- The COVID pandemic has continued to affect certain aspects of the program. Virtual platforms have continued to be used to create connection within foster parent and kinship caregiver communities. Two foster parent and one kinship caregiver support group are offered each month.
- Surveys continue to be utilized to check in with foster families and kinship caregivers around training needs, level of support, and safety concerns connected to COVID. During this hybrid model of service delivery, families continue to report that their needs are being met and that proper safety measures are taken to protect them and their families from COVID.
- In FY 2022, information sessions and pre-service trainings continued virtually. These virtual platforms increase access for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) families.

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- In FY 2021 and 2022, the percentage of foster families identifying as black and/or Hispanic was lower than the percentage of children in care. However, the percentage of foster families identifying as black was higher than the percentage of the overall population.
- Our goal is to continue to increase the number of BIPOC families so the percentages of BIPOC foster families and kinship caregivers align with the percentage of BIPOC children and youth in care. Barriers in recruitment of BIPOC families include language, legal status, barrier crimes list, and distrust of the child welfare system. The program works to address these barriers by reviewing practices and policies in addition to advocating for changes at the state level.
- The Foster Family Coordinator continued to prioritize a training schedule to include a wide range of topics such as trans-racial parenting, healthy touch, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, family sexual safety plans, and racial equity. In FY 2022, different medias were used to train and engage our community such as the Colin in Black & White series on Netflix.
- The addition of the Kinship Development Specialist position was to address the foster parent approval barriers of our kinship families and ensure they were supported once approved as foster parents.
- The Kinship Navigation and Outreach Coordinator position, although not on the FFAS Team, provides vital initial assessments to determine if kinship families are able and willing to foster their relatives in crisis. This position also serves as training lead for the Traditions of Caring Training offered to the community and potential kinship foster families.
- In FY 2022, families of color, whether traditional foster families or kinship caregivers, who achieved permanency with the children joined with them were more likely to close. In FY 2022, 11 BIPOC children achieved permanency through adoption or kin gap with 8 families who matched their racial and cultural identity. Out of these 8 families, 5 of them closed once the adoption/kin gap agreement was finalized.

Recommendations

Target Dates

- Continue efforts to establish connection in more diverse communities in Arlington.
- Explore developing a Spanish speaking PRIDE training.
- Explore the use of Zoom translation feature for all trainings offered.
- Modify demographic data collection for foster families to capture Hispanic as an ethnicity.
- Continue to review demographic data around permanency outcomes for children/youth.

- Ongoing
- FY 2023, Q3
- FY 2023, Q4
- FY 2023, Q1
- Ongoing

Forecast

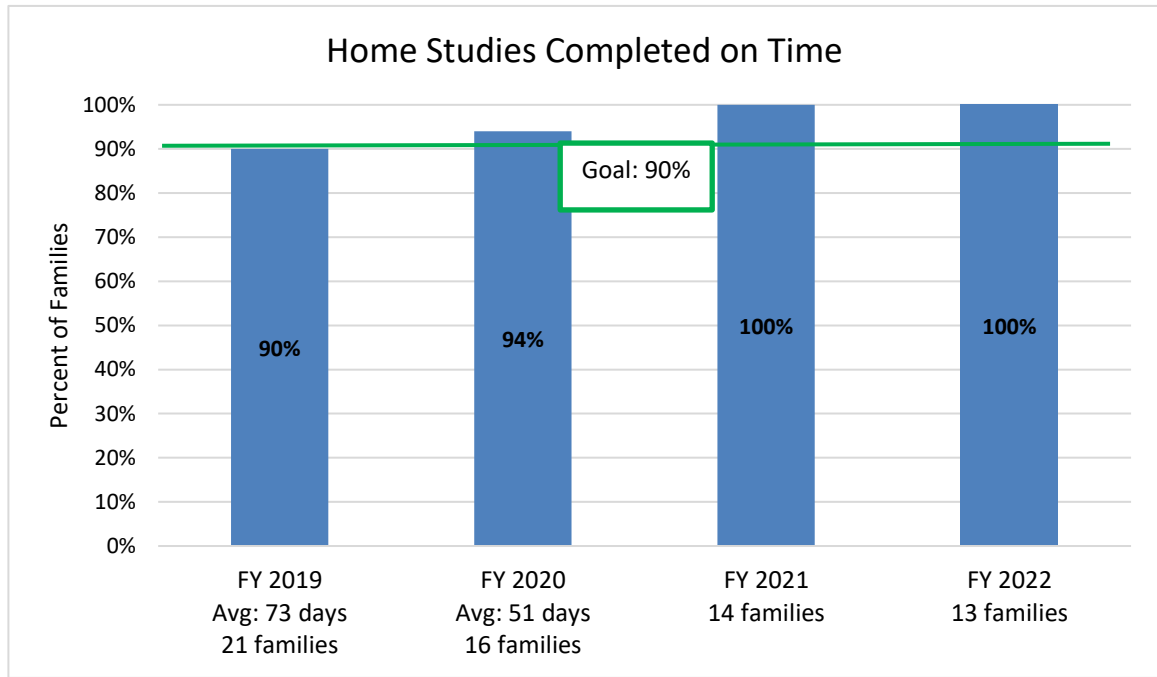
- In FY 2023, it is anticipated that the percentage of Black and Hispanic foster families will increase by 10%. The total number of certified foster families will remain at 70.

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Foster Families

Measure 2.1 Timeliness of home study completion

Data



Data Summary

- In FY 2021, during COVID-19 pandemic, State waivers were created for the approval process allowing home studies to be completed outside of the previous 90-day timeframe. These waivers expired on January 1, 2021 for traditional foster families but became permanently available to kinship care providers going through the approval process.
- In FY 2022, the percentage of home studies completed on time was consistent with FY 2021 at 100%.
- Home study completion dates are tracked in a spreadsheet. Families who have home studies completed in more than 365 days due to personal situations are excluded.

What is the story behind the data?

- Certification requires completion of a home study and background checks. Family availability for home study interviews and unexpected changes in family status can impact completion of this final step.
- In FY 2022, eight traditional foster families completed the approval process, with all 8 home studies completed within the 90-day timeframe.
- Mutual Family Assessors available through Virginia Department of Social Services were utilized to assist with the completion 8 home studies, increasing agency capacity to complete home studies and remain in compliance with timeframes.
- With the implementation of the 6-month kinship waiver, the program was able to use this process to support 4 kinship caregivers to be the first placement option for children/youth who entered care.
- In FY 2022, there was one new foster family approved based on an Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) request. Usually, the foster family will remain child specific for a child in the custody of an out of state agency.

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- Pre-assessments and initial kinship assessments were completed for every family who completed PRIDE and Kinship Tradition of Caring training to determine readiness and prioritize families for home study.
- At the end FY 2022, the vacant Family Development Specialist position was filled with a bilingual clinician with previous home study assessment experience. This team member will be an asset moving into FY 2023 to ensure home studies continue to be completed within the state given timeframes.

Recommendations	Target Dates
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use pre-assessments and initial kinship assessments to determine readiness for fostering. • Continue to use experienced contractors to support the timely completion of home studies. • Continue to use Virginia Department of Social Services Mutual Family Assessors. • Continue to use state approved waivers for kin to extend timeframe for home study completion • Prioritize contracting with bilingual home study vendors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Ongoing • Ongoing • Ongoing • FY 2023, Q2
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Forecast

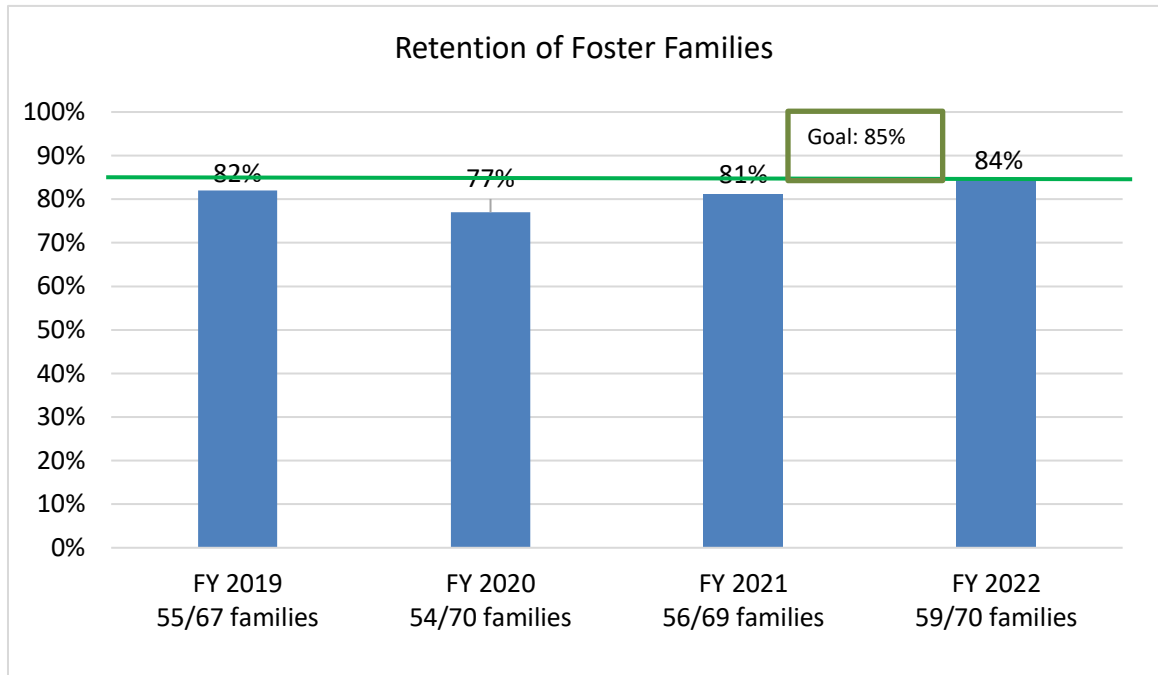
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In FY 2023, it is projected that 100% of families will certify within the applicable timeframe. |
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Foster Families

Measure 2.2 Retention of Foster Families

Data



Data Summary

- Families who were active (certified and available to foster children) at the end of FY 2021 are considered retained if they remain active through the end of FY 2022.
- In FY 2022, 84% of families who were active in FY 2021 were retained in FY 2022.

What is the story behind the data?

- According to national research, 40-50% of foster families are retained for at least one year, and lack of support and stresses related to working within the child welfare system are the most frequently cited reasons for discontinuing fostering. Arlington’s high retention rate enables more children to remain in their community, connected to family and schools.
- Monthly newsletters, support groups, training, and appreciation activities are provided to support retention of foster families.
- During FY 2022, 11 families closed who were active at the end of FY 2021: 5 of the families were kinship families; 2 families closed due to their adoption being finalized; 4 closed due to changes in personal circumstances.
- A Family Development Agreement was implemented in FY 2019 to identify specific training or specialized supports needed to increase a family’s fostering skills and abilities. In FY 2021, there was difficulty implementing the Family Development Agreement due to COVID restrictions on in-person contact. Additionally, in FY 2022 the Family Development Specialist position was vacant for 11 months, which delayed full implementation of the Family Development Agreements.
- In FY 2022 retention events around the holidays and foster parent appreciation month (May 2022) were held in person outdoors. This included the first-ever appreciation event, a joyful event that brought most of our community together in person for the first time in two years.

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- Foster parents continued to take the initiative to meet with each other virtually and in person when safe to do so, to build rapport and offer support to each other during COVID. These get togethers include one for families with teens joined with them, “soul sessions” where a safe place is created for families and youth to discuss difficult topics, and potluck dinners.

Recommendations

Target Dates

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to promote the Kinship family support group monthly to support retention. Collaborate with stakeholders to develop and implement the Kinship Welcome Packet to better support kinship families through the approval process and create a strong connection to the program. Implement a survey to explore unique and safe ways to meet the needs of our growing foster family and kinship caregiver communities. Continue to support foster parent led meetups either face-to-face or virtually to increase connection to the program as well as to welcome in new families. Explore kinship-specific performance measures. Introduce incentives for kinship caregivers for participation in monthly support group to increase level of support. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing FY 2023, Q3 Annually, Q1 Ongoing FY 2023, Q1 FY 2023, Q1 |
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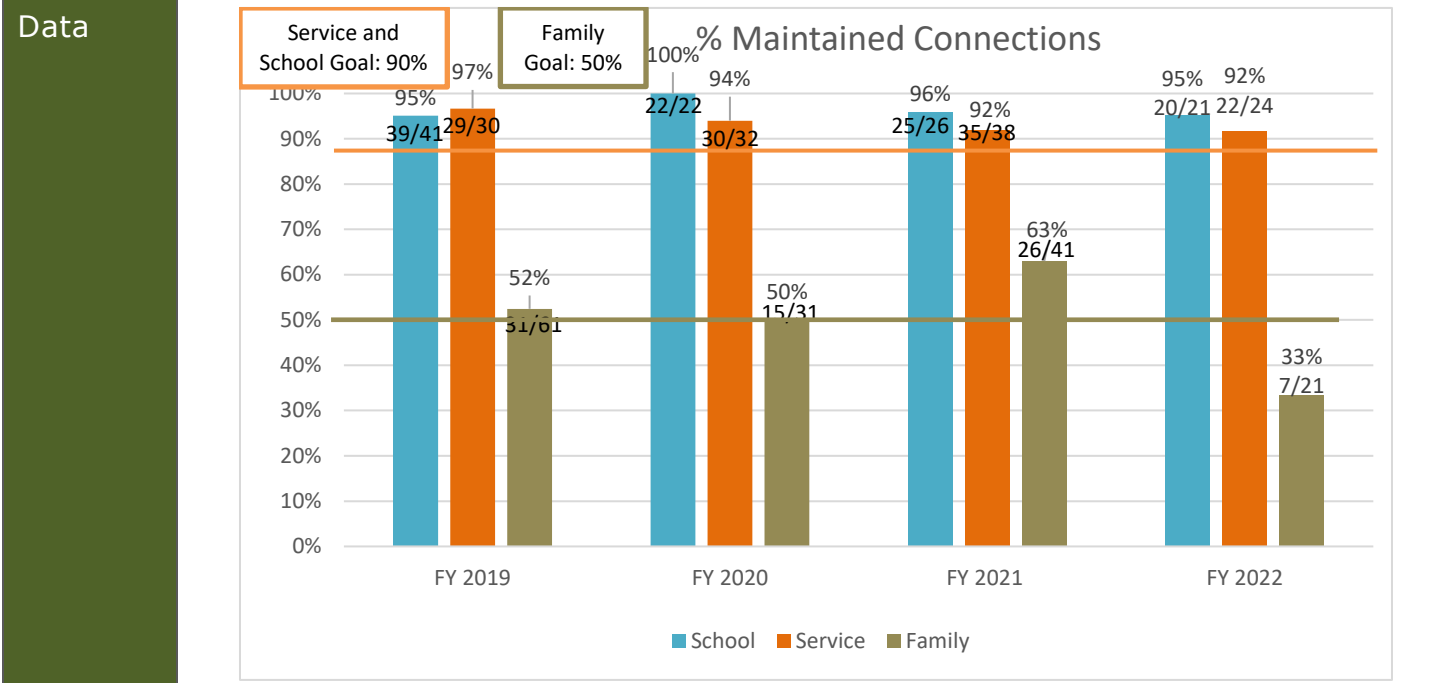
Forecast

- In FY 2023, it is anticipated that 85% of foster families will be retained.

FY 2022 PERFORMANCE PLAN

Foster Families

Measure	3.1	Continuity of children’s connections
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- Data Summary**
- In FY 2022, 95% (20 of 21) of placements enabled children in foster care to remain in their original school districts, 92% (22/24) allowed children to continue services with their own providers, and 33% (7/21) allowed children to live with relatives, siblings, or in a child-specific placement.
 - Continuity is assessed each time a child is placed with a new foster family.
 - Family continuity is defined as placement with kin or placement with full or partial sibling set.
 - Children with no pre-existing connections to schools or service providers are excluded from the data for those categories. For children who lived with multiple foster families, data for each is included.
 - Children without siblings or kin are excluded from the family connections measure.

What is the story behind the data?

- In FY 2022, there was a decrease family continuity, while service and school continuity remained consistent with FY 2021.
- Maintaining family, school and service connections lessens disruptions to the child. Foster families are expected to keep children with their service providers and in their schools of origin whenever possible.
- Maintaining family connections is prioritized when children come into foster care and may compromise school and service connections as family members can live outside of the child’s home community.
- The Foster Family Coordinator and Recruitment and Outreach Specialist continued to emphasize the importance of taking sibling groups and teens at community events which resulted in more foster families recruited with an ability and/or interest in sibling groups.

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- In FY 2022, 1 youth had to change schools due to being discharged from a residential facility outside of Arlington County and returned to the area to rejoin their original foster family.
- In FY 2022, 2 children/youth had to change service providers due to stepping down from a higher level of care and a placement disruption.
- In FY 2022, enhanced prevention efforts resulted in many children with identified kin being diverted from care. Therefore, for children who came into foster care, fewer had potential kinship placements available.
- In FY 2022, there were 14 youth who were unable to be placed with kin or siblings. 3 youth were unable to be placed with kin due to no kin being identified, existence of barrier crimes, and willingness/capacity to complete the approval process. 3 kinship placements disrupted. For 6 youth, kin was identified and placement was attempted but the placement was disrupted due to kin not completing the approval process and/or safety concerns. Two teens verbally expressed not wanting to be placed with family.
- When youth are unable to be placed with family, staff work to maintain connections with family members while in their foster placement. These youth are sometimes able to return home with their family.
- Virginia Department of Social Services is in the beginning stages of mandating foster family sharing throughout the state/region for FY 2023. We anticipate this mandate may have an impact on continuity for children in Arlington.

Recommendations	Target Dates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a new measure to assess continuity of kinship and siblings placements • Continue to emphasize the importance of maintaining continuity with school and service providers during foster family training. • Continue to recruit foster families who can care for sibling groups and teens. • Implement a second teen focused PRIDE Training. • Continue prioritizing kinship family certifications; utilizing the new Kinship Development Specialist position to support their unique needs and expand support possibilities. • Continue with frequent foster family trainings based on feedback directly from families on their training needs. • Continue to implement foster parent led training focused on lessons learned from seasoned families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FY 2023, Q2 • Ongoing • Ongoing • FY 2023, Q3 • Ongoing • Ongoing • Ongoing

Forecast

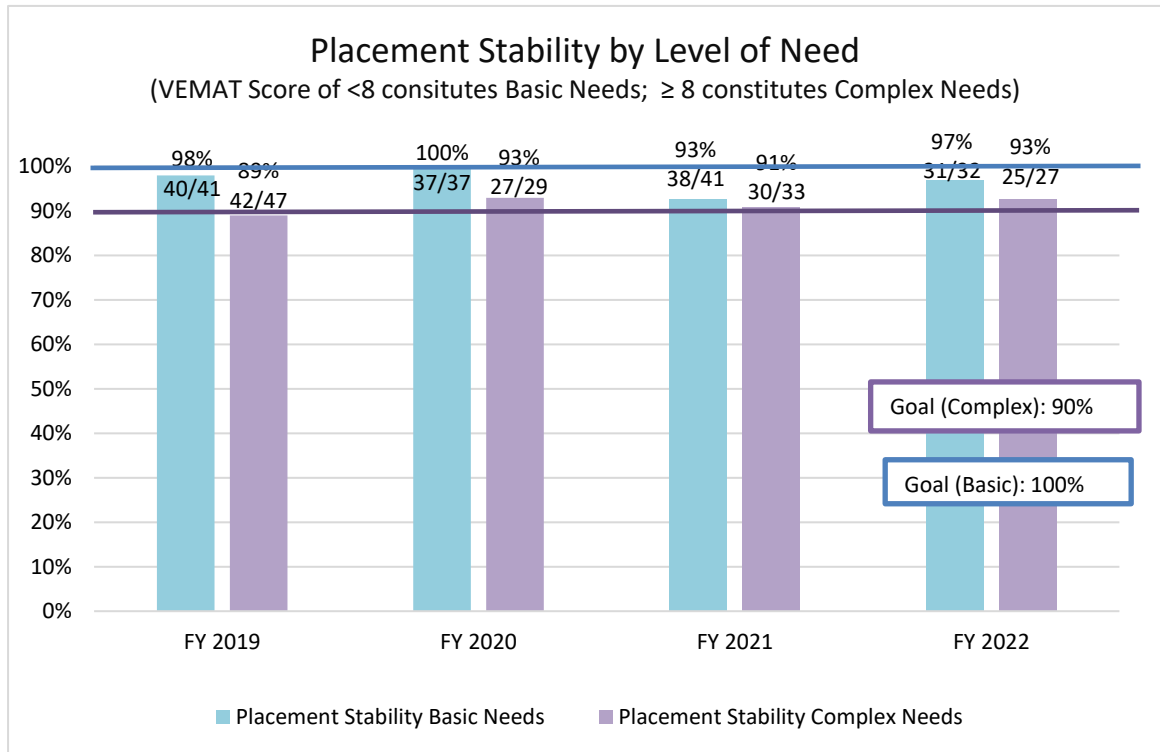
- In FY 2023, it is anticipated the 96% of youth will maintain continuity with school and service providers. A new measure will be developed for continuity with family.

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Foster Families

Measure 3.2 Placement Stability

Data



Data Summary

- The Virginia Enhanced Maintenance Assessment Tool (VEMAT) assessment is completed for every child placed with a foster family. VEMAT assesses a child’s behavioral, emotional, and physical/personal care needs.
- In FY 2022, 97% (31/32) of placements were stable for children with basic needs which is an increase from 93% in FY 2021. During the same time period, children with complex needs had 93% (25/27) placement stability, up from 91% in FY 2021.
- Because the VEMAT is completed once a child has been with a foster family for 45 to 60 days, children in short-term placements are excluded.

What is the story behind the data?

- Placement stability correlates with child’s level of need. Children with complex needs cannot always be safely maintained in a family setting and may require a higher level of care. Placement disruptions also correlate with uncontrollable personal circumstances of the foster families.
- Foster families receive in-home support and phone consultations for children with challenging emotional and behavioral care needs.
- A large foster parent pool has allowed the program to make better matches. In addition, implementation of weekly team meetings has provided a forum to discuss available families and recent placements.
- The use of Arlington certified foster families to care for children with complex needs decreases the need for therapeutic foster care agency placements.

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- In FY 2022, there were three disruptions. One with basic needs that disrupted due to medical concerns in a kinship placement. The other two were youth with complex needs that had disruptions due to the foster families being unable to meet their needs.
- In FY 2022, four families were paired up to support new and/or complex placements. Additionally, foster families held informal gatherings to support each other specifically the families with teens and with the purpose of creating safe spaces around current events such as gun violence and race equity.
- The intensive training program continues to prepare Arlington County foster families and kinship caregivers to meet a variety of the needs of children/youth in care. As a result we are seeing more placement stability even with children/youth with complex needs.

Recommendations	Target Dates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue offering foster families specialized training to meet the specific needs of the children joined with their families. • When possible, continue to reserve specific foster families with demonstrated knowledge and skill to care for children with complex needs. • Continue to implement the “buddy system” for families who need extra support given the new limitations around fostering during the pandemic. • Fully implement the Foster Family Development Agreements at time of certification to detail training needs such as Foster Parent College webinars specific to the family. • Distribute need surveys to ensure the needs of the foster families are being identified and addressed. • Explore the use of Zoom translation feature for all in-service virtual training offerings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Ongoing • Ongoing • FY 2023, Q3 • FY 2023, Q3 • FY 2023, Q4

Forecast

- In FY 2023, it is anticipated that 95% of youth will maintain their placement regardless of need.