

Fostering Foundations

DCFS Quarterly Newsletter for Foster and Relative/Kin Caregivers



Thank YOU for being a foster caregiver!

We appreciate your dedication to and support of the children and teens who need a loving, stable environment. We have heard from you and are working to provide more communication and community support. Below are some ways to connect.

- **Community Support Workshops**

Held virtually every quarter, these meetings bring together foster caregivers, community partners and DCFS team members in each region to talk about how many children in your area need foster homes, how to recruit for more foster families and how to support current foster caregivers.

- **Foster Care Community Collaboratives**

Starting in Shreveport and now in Baton Rouge, Thibodaux, and Monroe, these in-person monthly meetings also bring together community partners, foster caregivers and DCFS team members, but they are community-driven. Our goal is to start a Collaborative in every region and eventually merge the Community Support Workshops into the Collaborative meetings.

- **Navigating the Journey**

This meeting is offered quarterly throughout the year in each region. It provides a detailed discussion about the court process and helpful information about the foster caregiver's role in

LA 211, Louisiana's Statewide Network, connects callers to information about critical health and human services available in their community. Support is available 24/7, and it's FREE and confidential. Visit louisiana211.org or text your Zip Code to 898-211.

working with the agency. All foster caregivers certified on Jan. 1, 2023 or later are required to take this course within the first year of certification. All certified foster caregivers are welcome to attend to connect with new families. Training hours are also available. Contact your region's Home Development Supervisor to learn more.

- **"A Journey Home" Wrap Parties/New Foster Family Gathering**

These events provide a time of celebration and fellowship between caregivers who have recently finished their certification classes. Experienced foster caregivers are welcome to join the group to connect with new families and provide support and guidance. Events have been held in the Alexandria (Fostering Community), Monroe (First West) and Shreveport (Unite Ministries) regions, with plans to launch in every region over the next year as our recruiters come on board.

To learn more or to participate in any of these meetings, contact [your regional](#) Home Development team members.

Thank you to the churches and community organizations who have hosted our recent regional meetings!

Baton Rouge:

Aetna
Bethany Church
The Chapel
Empower 225

Healing Place Church

Shreveport:

Broadmoor Baptist
Church

Thibodaux:

House of Prayer

Monroe: First West Church

Fostering Foundations

DCFS Quarterly Newsletter for Foster and Relative/Kin Caregivers



New recruiters seek to find, support foster caregivers

The Child Welfare Division recently added recruiters in four regions whose focus is to find new foster caregivers and support current ones. Led by Foster Caregiver Recruitment and Support Manager Kerri Byrd, the other five regions will also have a dedicated recruiter in the near future.

The recruiters have been busy connecting with local community partners and attending events in their regions to get the word out about the need for more foster caregivers. Here's a quick introduction of them; feel free to reach out to your regional recruiter with any needs.

Baton Rouge Region

Kellye Worley

Kellye.worley.dcms@la.gov

Covington Region

Evan La Roche

evan.laroche.dcms@la.gov

Lake Charles Region

Jessica Sias

Jessica.sias.dcms@la.gov

Monroe Region

Angela Scriber

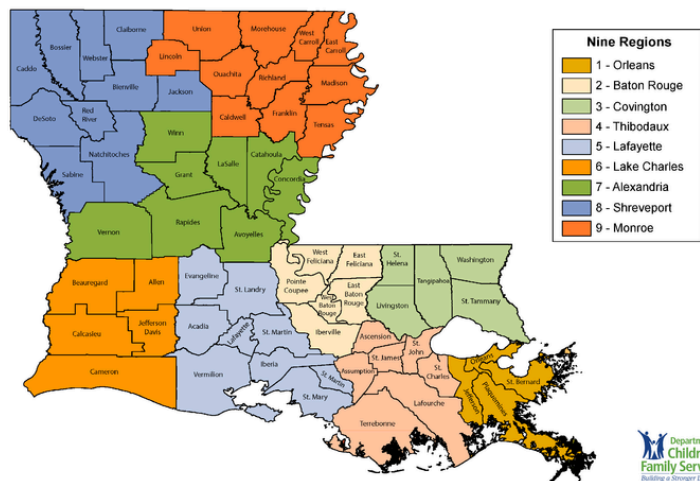
angela.scriber.dcms@la.gov

Common foster care questions answered in new fact sheet

Becoming a foster caregiver is a rewarding journey, but it can come with challenges, such as figuring out the rules and regulations.

DCFS has created a [Fact Sheet](#) to answer some of the most common questions from foster caregivers. It covers questions about topics like supplies and reimbursements, meetings, respite care, and travel.

Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services
Child Welfare Regions



Fostering Foundations

DCFS Quarterly Newsletter for Foster and Relative/Kin Caregivers



Louisiana Foster Care Support Organization offers list of resources, mentors for foster caregivers

DCFS partners with the [Louisiana Foster Care Support Organization](#) (LFCSO) to ensure that foster caregivers have the support and resources they need to care for the children placed in their homes.

Foster Care Mentors

LFCSO provides mentors to foster caregivers who have questions, concerns, or just need to talk to someone. The mentors are experienced foster caregivers who understand what the mentees are going through.

- Find a mentor [here](#).
 - Keep in mind you can call a mentor in any region, not just your own, and you can reach out as often as you need.
- Apply [here](#) to be a mentor for other foster caregivers.

Statewide List of Foster Care Resources

Organized by region, this list provides names of organizations and community partners who provide resources for foster caregivers. You can find it at <https://form.jotform.com/222934712477158>.

For more information about the Louisiana Foster Care Support Organization, contact Margie Nielson at margie@louisianafostercare.com.

Unite Ministries shares resources through app

Unite Ministries recruits businesses to support foster families by providing discounted services, sponsoring children and youth for extracurricular activities or sponsoring special events for children and families. They are working to expand the offerings statewide. You can view the offers by downloading the Foster Friendly LA app on your phone.



barriers while still ensuring the children are in a safe environment and recently unveiled this new process. The amount of training hours has been reduced from 12 to 3.5, and family members now only need to provide two references. Criminal and child abuse/neglect clearances are still required. Once the process begins, the relative/kin caregiver should become certified within 60 days.

If you are a relative/kin caring for a child in foster care, reach out to your Home Development team member to learn more about certification and how you can begin.

New process helps relatives become certified foster caregivers more quickly

Relative and kin who decide to care for children placed in foster care can face financial challenges while waiting to become certified.

DCFS wanted these caregivers to have quicker access to board payments in order to support the children in their care, so we looked at the barriers to certification. We found a way to reduce those

We want to hear from YOU!

- Are there topics you want to see covered in this newsletter? What do you want to know more about?
- Do you have any concerns you'd like addressed, or suggestions for improving the foster caregiver experience? Let us know by filling out [this form](#).

Fostering Foundations

DCFS Quarterly Newsletter for Foster and Relative/Kin Caregivers



Mobile Crisis Response Services available in three regions

The Louisiana Department of Health's 24/7 Mobile Crisis Response (MCR) Services for children and youth are now available in the Orleans, Lafayette and Lake Charles regions. See the list of providers below. Consisting of two key components, Mobile Crisis Response and Community Brief Crisis Support, the Medicaid covered service is easy to access with a simple phone call.

Mobile Crisis Response provides up to 72 hours of intervention. MCR teams are dispatched to provide immediate, on-the-spot assistance to stabilize a crisis. **Community Brief Crisis Support** provides up to 15 days of crisis services. The service offers short-term, intensive care that connects children with essential resources and ongoing support for their well-being and recovery.

Foster caregivers, along with DCFS staff, service providers, school personnel, CASA workers, etc. can use the service. There are no referral forms or prior authorization required to have an MCR team go to the child within one to two hours of the request, depending on the distance. A self-identified crisis is sufficient to have an MCR team deployed to a child.

MCR can be used when a child is entering a foster home for the first time or moving to another placement, as well as stabilization for a child

experiencing agitation or a mental health crisis.

You can access providers directly or via 988. Please note that OBH regions are different from DCFS' regions, so some parishes will be served by a different agency.

Region 1 – Orleans

Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority

Phone: 504-832-5123

Website: <https://www.jpghsa.org/>

Resources for Human Development - Orleans

Phone: 504-821-2222

Region 5 – Lafayette*

The Extra Mile

Phone: 337-362-8899

Website: <https://theextramileregioiv.com/>

**St. Mary Parish will be served through the Thibodaux Region provider when they come online. Please do not call The Extra Mile for services in St. Mary.*

Region 6 – Lake Charles

Imperial Calcasieu Human Services Authority

Toll-free line: 1-833-900-0055

Phone: 337-475-3100

Website: <https://imcalhsa.org/>

New learning platform for trainings launched

The Louisiana Child Welfare Training Academy's new and improved Moodle learning platform launched July 1, 2024. The site makes it easier to find and enroll in classes, as well as see your personal dashboard of class listings.

This [series of short videos](#) walks you through the new system. For questions or assistance logging in, contact the LCWTA support team at 985-248-0888 or support@lcwta.org.

The Training Academy offers a wealth of classes, some mandatory and others voluntary, to help caregivers in their foster journey. These include live, online sessions as well as pre-recorded sessions you can take at your own pace. View the listings in Moodle and begin planning for your training hours now!

