

Virginia Kin First Diligent Recruitment Plan 2025-2029

Overview

Virginia's social services system is state supervised and locally administered, with the VDSS providing direction, oversight, and support to the 120 LDSS which serve the children and families of Virginia. VDSS partners with the LDSS, private agency service providers, as well as faith-based and non-profit organizations, to support the continuum of placement services and provide resources to temporarily meet the needs of children while parents work to address the issues which have led to family separation through entry into foster care. LDSS and Licensed Child Placing Agencies (LCPA) are responsible for approving resource and adoptive families based on specific Virginia Code requirements and regulatory standards. Virginia's resource families include kinship, resource and adoptive families who are dually approved to foster and when appropriate, adopt. The approval process is a mutual endeavor between the LDSS or LCPA and the family seeking approval.

The Virginia Children's Services Practice Model

The Virginia Children's Services System Practice Model sets forth a vision for the services that are delivered by all child serving agencies across Virginia, especially the Departments of Social Services, Juvenile Justice, Education, Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Office of Children's Services. The practice model is central to all decision-making, present in all meetings, and in every interaction that takes place with a child or family.

- We believe that all children and communities deserve to be safe.
- We believe in family, child, and youth-driven practice.
- We believe that children do best when raised in families.
- We believe that all children and youth need and deserve a permanent family.
- We believe in partnering with others to support child and family success in a system that is family focused, child-centered, and community-based.
- We believe that how we do our work is as important as the work we do.

Plan Development

Virginia has placed priority on a process of CQI that supports the ongoing development of a kin first child welfare system. While CQI efforts have supported the development of kin first practices across the child welfare continuum, regarding children who enter foster care or are currently in foster care, Virginia has established a target of 32% of those children placed with kinship foster parents to be achieved by 2025. VDSS has engaged LDSS in statewide and regional CQI efforts to understand both technical and adaptive challenges that must be overcome to ensure that children are both first placed with relatives upon entry into foster care and that family search and engagement efforts are sustained throughout the life of all foster care cases.

VDSS also recognizes that Virginia's private provider community, particularly LCPA play a critical role in Virginia's Kin First focus. As a result, VDSS has been intentional in its efforts to utilize data to inform and engage LCPA to obtain input and direction related to inclusion in goals and objectives outlined in the plan. However, the most critical element in plan development has been engagement of individuals with lived child welfare experience, through monthly meetings with Virginia's Parent Advisory Council along with engagement of kinship caregivers through Virginia's Regional Convening monthly stakeholder meetings. Virginia's commitment to CQI has allowed VDSS to utilize data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the manner in which Virginia's child welfare system operates and the impacts it has on children and families who enter foster care. By creating a shared understanding of both technical and adaptive challenges, Virginia positioned its lived experiences stakeholders to assume an active role in developing strategies to support kin first practices across the child welfare continuum. Finally, all resource parents (kinship, resource, and adoptive) share information and provide recommendations for system enhancements through VDSS' annual resource parents survey.

Capacity Building

Virginia's child welfare workforce has struggled with staffing challenges made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic. It has been critical that VDSS improve the capacity of the child welfare workforce to balance mandates and prioritize comprehensive family engagement. Over the course of the previous five years, VDSS focused on developing an infrastructure consisting of technological solutions while expanding existing programs and services intended to support diligent recruitment, retention, and development of resource parents.

CRAFFT

The CRAFFT program is facilitated through contractual agreements with Virginia Commonwealth University, Radford University and Norfolk State University. The program provides 5 regional CRAFFT Coordinators to support LDSS is providing pre-service training to prospective resource parents and in-service training to approved resource parents. The focus of CRAFFT remains to ensure that LDSS resource families receive adequate training, centered on core competencies identified in the current resource family approval guidance. CRAFFT coordinators have been partnering with LDSS to respond to training needs and intentional and timely support continues to be a focal point to meet the training demands throughout the state. CRAFFT has maintained the facilitation of scheduled roundtables, bridging communication between CRAFFT, LDSS, and community partners. These meetings highlight positive training experiences and provide an environment to dialogue regarding needs. Additionally, the discussions support sharing information that is pertinent to enhancing training efforts and what is working well within LDSS.

To further support the efforts of LDSS to maintain a pool of resource parents equipped to support, VDSS employees contract staff who support the completion of MFAs of non-relative and kinship foster parents at the request of LDSS. VDSS has maintained ongoing recruitment of additional contract staff to meet the increased demand of MFAs, particularly MFAs necessary to approve kinship foster parents.

Faster Families Highway

Prior to 2022, Virginia did not have capacity to support LDSS to sustain recruitment of resource and adoptive families. Although the development of annual recruitment plans was supported by the CRAFFT program, LDSS were left to recruit and manage inquires without support from VDSS. During SFY 2022, VDSS launched a resource and adoptive parent recruitment portal through a contractual agreement with Adoption-Share, known as Virginia's Faster Families Highway (FFH). The primary objective of the FFH is to support sustained recruitment of non-relative resource and adoptive parents through a web-based platform that organizes prospective resource and adoptive parent inquiries by locality and region as well as by demographic characteristics of prospective parents.

Additional information regarding FFH is included in **CFSP Item 35** and **Diligent Recruitment**.

Kin First Now

In October 2023, VDSS launched Kin First Now as an urgent collaborative intervention between state, regional and local department staff to disrupt child welfare practices that lead to children who enter foster care being placed with non-relative resource parents. VDSS identified 20 LDSS who have custody of 53% of children in Virginia's foster care system and whose data reflect challenges to consistently engage family and place children who enter foster care with relatives. This work will continue and additional information regarding Kin First Now is included in the **CFSP Critical Priorities**.

Kin and Fictive Kin Recruitment

During the summer of 2023, VDSS entered into contractual agreements with three private provider agencies to conduct intensive family finding. Although the providers are based in the Central, Piedmont, and Eastern regions, all have committed to supporting extensive family search and engagement on a case-by-case basis to provide statewide coverage. Providers began accepting referrals in September 2023. The target population includes youth 12-17 residing in congregate care or who have been in foster care for longer than 12 months and are placed with non-relative resource parents. The target population represents children at greatest risk of languishing in foster care as well as aging out of foster care without permanent family connections. Through a delegated model of family search and engagement, private provider agencies focus intensely on discovering relatives and fictive kin for 30 days in order to expand the child's natural support network. An FPM between the child's natural support network and the LDSS is quickly coordinated to restore connections with the child and to identify a kinship foster parent who will welcome the child into their home within 90 days. As of March 1, 2024, 21 children are currently receiving kin and fictive kin recruitment, those children were referred by 16 LDSS.

Characteristics of Children in Foster Care

The tables below provide demographic data and characteristics of the children placed in Virginia’s foster care system. As of December 31, 2023, there were 5,127 children in foster care, 4,333 children age under 18.

Race of children in Foster Care

Year	Black	White	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Asian	Hawaiian Pacific Islander	Multi-race	Hispanic
2019	1642	3273	2	36	6	473	611
2020	1487	3114	3	49	7	491	587
2021	1376	2924	11	42	7	474	547
2022	1390	3000	2	46	10	524	543
2023	1467	2982	3	55	8	528	583

Age of children in Foster Care

Year	Under 1	Age 1 thru 5	Ages 6-9	Age 10-12	Age 13- 15	Ages 16 -18	Age 19 & Over
2019	274	1279	841	634	843	1166	480
2020	241	1239	776	558	791	1108	530
2021	237	1102	684	537	774	1030	565
2022	216	1169	716	554	813	751	841
2023	229	1159	735	535	847	828	794

Average Time in Care (in months)

Year	Average Time in Care (in Months)	Return Home	Placement with Relatives	Adoption	Permanent Foster Care	Independent Living	Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	Continued Foster Care	To Be Determined	Guardian-ship	No Goal Entered
2019	18.73	10.71	16.90	30.58	26.30	18.52	26.73	0.00	6.75	0.00	4.13
2020	20.04	11.74	16.90	31.17	28.48	18.74	23.41	0.00	7.92	0.00	5.98
2021	20.76	11.11	18.76	32.41	29.73	20.80	28.51	0	8.45	0	12.52
2022	20.07	10.20	17.75	32.88	30.87	22.01	18.74	0.00	6.67	0.00	9.20
2023	19.75	10.63	17.60	33.21	28.41	20.92	24.92	0.00	6.11	0.00	5.43

The table below reflects the average length of time children in Virginia spend in foster care in each placement type. It is significant to note that since children who enter foster care and are first placed with kinship foster parents experience shorter stays in foster care, significantly greater placement stability and exit to permanency at a rate of 96%. During CY2023, 10.2% of children entering foster care were first placed with a kinship foster parent.

Average Time in Care by placement type (in months)

Care Type Category	Percentage	Average Length of Stay (Days)	Average Length of Stay (Months)
Kinship	15.21%	508	16.7
Congregate Care	13.69%	700	23.0
Institution	1.85%	748	24.6
Independent living	0.95%	956	31.4
Foster Home Non-Relative	62.71%	581	19.1
Sponsored Residential Facility	0.28%	312	10.3
Trial Home Visit	4.65%	540	17.7
Unapproved	0.07%	992	32.6

AWOL	0.60%	582	19.1
Total	100.00%	591	19.4

Characteristics of Resource Parents

The table below provide demographic data of the 5,842 resource parents (kinship, resource, and adoptive) who were approved as of as of December 31, 2023.

Black	White	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander	Mult-Race	Hispanic	Declined to identify
1,899	3769	10	45	15	48	206	64

Virginia is not experiencing a shortage of resource parents overall; however, due to a historic reliance on non-relative resource parents as well as congregate care, Virginia’s children who enter foster care and are not placed with relatives are at greater risk of languishing in foster care and aging out of foster care without permanent family connections. Virginia’s efforts to ensure that children who enter foster care are placed with caring adults with similar racial and ethnic characteristics has been and will continue to be bolstered by the ongoing focus of placing children who enter foster care with kinship foster parents as quickly as possible.

Goal 1: Increase the likelihood that children who enter foster care are placed with kinship foster parents.

Strategy	Activities	Timeframes	Benchmarks	Measures of Progress	Implementation supports
1. Develop kinship specific standards of foster home approval.	1.1 Conduct review of Virginia Administrative Code to identify need for regulatory action.	2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review completed by April 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a list of necessary regulatory action along with timeline under which action will be taken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource Family, Foster Care and Adoption programs to complete regulatory reviews to ensure alignment.
	1.2 Develop and implement Kinship specific MFA	2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kinship MFA template finalized by April 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain and incorporate input from local department staff, Permanency Advisory Committee and Parent Advisory Council and CRAFFT in the development of the template 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource Family, Foster Care and Adoption programs to complete regulatory reviews to ensure alignment.
	1.3 Develop and implement Kinship specific pre-service training curriculum.	2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation plan to include pilot agencies developed by January 2025 Statewide implementation by January 2026 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum available in Virginia learning management System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State, regional and local staff will be prepared to utilize kinship specific curriculum.
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2. Prioritize first placing children who enter foster care	2.1 Ensure consistent utilization of relative suitability	2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanency Assessment tool included in all Kinship Care and Family Search and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kinship Care and Family Search and Engagement curriculum updated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource family program and regional consultants to provide ongoing training and practice assistance to LDSS.

with relatives	assessment tool		Engagement trainings provided to LDSS staff. Kinship Care and Family Search and Engagement trainings include training on working with kin from a culturally responsive lens.		
	2.2 LDSS will notify prospective kinship foster parents of denial in writing to establish the ability to appeal decision of LDSS.	2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relative notification and denial process included in all kinship and family search and engagement trainings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relative notification and denial process included in updated curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource family program and regional consultants to provide ongoing training and practice assistance to LDSS.
	2.3 LDSS will submit exception reports anytime a child enters foster care and is not immediately placed with a relative.	2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exception Report developed. • LDSS provided training to ensure proper completion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS to collect data related to LDSS efforts to identify and engage relatives, effectively utilize family partnership meetings and the Permanency Assessment tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource family program staff and regional consultants to provide ongoing training and practice assistance to LDSS. • Resource Family Program and regional office staff to monitor and provide practice assistance to support ongoing efforts to identify and engage relatives and natural supports so that children may be placed with kinship foster parents.

3. Develop and support LDSS collaborative placement programs as well as LDSS and LCPA partnerships to support relative search and engagement so that children who enter foster care are placed with kinship foster parents.	3.1. VDSS will support the development of collaborative partnerships between LDSS to support placing children in foster care with relatives.	2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will support the development of MOU/MOAs between LDSS to support collaboration to place children who enter foster care with relative and develop resource family placements equipped to support reunification and ongoing family relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines related to MOA/MOU developed. • Application process developed to support financial support to LDSS collaborative programs to support additional staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS to develop an RFP for LDSS to apply for funding and support to support collaboration. • Resource family program and regional consultants to provide ongoing technical and practice assistance to LDSS collaborative placement programs.
	3.2. VDSS will provide financial incentives to LDSS when children enter foster care and are first placed with Kinship Foster Parents.	2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will develop a business process to provide financial incentives to LDSS within 30 days of children entering foster care and being placed with a Kinship Foster Parent. • VDSS will develop a business process to provide quarterly financial incentives to LDSS who maintain 25% or greater of children and youth in foster care who are placed with relatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statewide implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will distribute incentives timely. Resource family program and regional consultants will provide practice and technical assistance to support LDSS in utilizing incentives to support practice improvement and provide tangible supports to kinship foster parents.

	<p>3.3 VDSS will support ongoing search and engagement of relatives for children placed in non-kinship settings to ensure ongoing child specific recruitment.</p>	<p>2024-2029</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will engage LDSS and LCPA to develop delegated model of family search and engagement to ensure ongoing efforts to urgently identify and engage relatives in case planning for children currently in foster care who are not placed with kinship foster parents. • VDSS will engage LDSS and LCPA working in a delegated model to ensure ongoing efforts to urgently identify and engage relatives in case planning when exception reports are submitted by LDSS following entry into foster care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statewide implementation • Develop workplan to explore public state and regional public/private partnerships to support ongoing family search and engagement efforts when children enter foster care and are not immediately placed with relatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will provide Family Partnership Facilitator Training to LCPA staff. Resource Family Program and regional consultants will provide practice and technical assistance to support collaboration between LDSS and LCPA to ensure that children are placed with relatives when they are identified. • VDSS will engage stakeholders to gather feedback and recommendations related to the development of family search and engagement network of support.
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Goal 2: Maintain a pool of diverse kinship, foster and adoptive parents equipped to support reunification and preserve family relationships as trauma responsive caregivers.

Objective	Activities	Timeframes	Benchmarks	Measures of Progress	Implementation Supports
1. Develop a robust multimedia campaign to increase awareness of the role of foster and adoptive parents in Virginia’s kin first child welfare system.	1.1 VDSS will conduct a thorough assessment and research to recommend and inform immediate strategies and solutions based on market segmentation research.	2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Advisory Team established. March 2024 • Qualitative research conducted. June 2024 • Quantitative research conducted. August 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase I: VDSS core Advisory Team will be established. • Phase II: Qualitative research will be conducted to include interviews with lived experience experts (kinship, resource, adoptive, parents as well as parents who lived experience with Virginia’s child welfare system. • Phase III: Conduct quantitative research through an anonymous survey questionnaire distributed to stakeholders (prospective resource/adoptive parents, approved resource/adoptive parents, reunited parents, foster care youth/alumni). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS core advisory team comprised of state, regional and local department staff will work with market research firm to identify strategies of engaging stakeholders and provide information and data as requested.
	1.2 VDSS will utilize advertising and marketing services through a competitive	2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS core advisory team to review and approve proposed campaign content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign launched statewide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS core advisory team comprised of state, regional and local department staff will work with market research firm to identify strategies of engaging stakeholders and provide information and data as requested.

	RFP process to develop a targeted public awareness campaign to promote a clear understanding of Virginia's Kin first focus, the value and importance of kinship care.				
	1.3 VDSS will utilize advertising and marketing services to create a targeted campaign to promote statewide recruitment of non-relative foster families.	2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS core advisory team will review and approve campaign content. January 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign launched statewide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS core advisory team comprised of state, regional and local department staff will work with market research firm to identify strategies of engaging stakeholders and provide information and data as requested.

<p>2. Virginia will sustain data driven recruitment to replenish the pool of non-relative resource families annually.</p>	<p>2.1 LDSS will utilize technology to manage prospective resource family inquiries and evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment efforts.</p>	<p>May 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of LDSS have used resource parent recruitment portal to recruit, engage, train, and approve a minimum of 3 resource families. • 75% of LDSS have used resource parent recruitment portal to recruit, engage, train, and approve a minimum of 3 foster families. <p>May 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource parent recruitment portal available to all LDSS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and regional staff to support LDSS ongoing efforts to incorporate use of technology into recruitment efforts.
	<p>2.2 Virginia will move from 120 local department specific recruitment plans to 5 annual regional recruitment plans.</p>	<p>May 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All LDSS collaborative placement programs will identify the demographic characteristics of families needed to ensure that children who are not placed with relatives remain in close proximity to their home communities and are placed in families with similar demographic characteristics. <p>May 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional recruitment plan template developed. • 100% of LDSS collaborative placement programs have developed annual non-relative foster parent recruitment plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and regional staff to provide technical and practice support to collaborative placement programs in developing annual non-relative recruitment plans.

	<p>2.3. Develop and implement a plan of continuous quality improvement related to recruitment and retention efforts and timely search and placement of children needing adoptive homes.</p>	<p>2028</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will develop 5 regional recruitment plans annually using demographic data of children in foster care. May 2028 <p>VDSS will ensure that all recruitment materials, training content and approval related forms are available in Spanish and that workers know how to utilize the translation statewide contract to overcome linguistic barriers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will leverage and continually evaluate contracts (including contracted services outlined in the CFSP pages 223–224, 231) to identify adoptive homes and support LDSS in the adoption finalization process in order to achieve timely adoptions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEX committee and stakeholder input gathered and incorporated annually. • Database developed to track non-relative resource parent utilization and outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and regional staff will provide technical and practice assistance to support the development of regional recruitment plans annually.
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3. Virginia will ensure that all resource parents are prepared to meet the physical, emotional and behavioral needs of children exposed to trauma, separation from parents and loss.	3.1. Virginia will utilize the National Training and Development Center Curriculum for Foster and Adoptive Parents to provide pre-service and in-service training to all resource parents.	2025-2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will provide access to the Virginia Learning Management System to LDSS collaborative placement programs. January 2025 • VDSS will provide access to the Virginia Learning Management System to all LDSS. • VDSS will identify annual in-service training requirements for non-relative and kinship foster parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partner accounts will be made available to resource families (kinship, resource, adoptive) and prospective resource parents seeking approval. • LDSS staff will receive cultural competence training and be prepared to facilitate pre-service training to all resource parents using the NTDC curriculum. • Resource parent co-trainers will be identified and prepared to participate in pre-service training offered to prospective resource parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will collaborate with the Division of Local Training and Development to create access to the curriculum. • State, regional and LDSS staff will convene a workgroup to develop and execute a statewide implementation plan.

Goal 3: Virginia will retain kinship, foster, and adoptive families by enhancing their strengths through ongoing skill development and providing supports that meet their unique needs.

Objectives	Activities	Timeframes	Benchmarks	Measures of Progress	Implementation Supports
1. Virginia will ensure ongoing engagement and partnership from stakeholders through the development of lived experience councils.	1.1 VDSS will develop a Resource and Adoptive Parent Advisory Committee and a well a Kinship Foster and Adoptive Parent Advisory Council.	2025-2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will partner with LDSS to identify and recruit resource and adoptive parents and kinship foster and adoptive parents to serve on lived experience councils. September 2025. • Virginia will establish lived experience advisory councils. May 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Permanency PAC will develop a recruitment plan to establish lived experience council membership. • Council members will be oriented to the mission and goals and develop an annual working plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State, regional and LDSS staff will work collaboratively to identify prospective council members and support the development of lived experience councils.
	1.2. VDSS will develop and implement a CQI process to monitor the effectiveness of in-service training provision and foster parent retention efforts.	2025-2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia will define the purpose and scope for the state, local and private agencies of the kinship foster parent support and retention process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will utilize data to monitor annual retention of kinship, foster and adoptive families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State, regional and LDSS staff will work collaboratively to identify prospective council members and support the development of lived experience councils.

<p>2. Virginia will develop an in-service training curriculum to support the ongoing development of kinship, resource and adoptive parents as trauma responsive caregivers.</p>	<p>2.1. VDSS will collaborate with lived experience councils to establish an annual in-service training plan that includes online and in-person trainings.</p>	<p>2025-2029</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will gather input from lived experience councils including Birth Parent Advisory Council and Youth Advisory Council to understand the in-service training needs of kinship, foster and adoptive parents. July 2025 • All kinship, resource, and adoptive parents approved by LDSS will have access to the training and information necessary to maintain a trauma responsive approach necessary to meet the needs of children placed in their care. January 2026 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will identify “right time” trainings to be made available virtually to kinship, resource and adoptive parents. • VDSS will utilize CRAFFT, to develop a statewide annual in-service training plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will utilize resource family guidance to outline annual in-service training requirements for kinship, foster and adoptive parents. • VDSS will develop the infrastructure necessary to ensure that in-service training is consistently available to locally approved kinship, resource and adoptive parents and make in-service trainings available within the statewide Learning Management System.

3. Virginia will ensure that all kinship, resource, and adoptive families have access to financial and tangible supports necessary to provide care and support to children.	3.1 Virginia will expand the use of exceptional circumstances payments to allow kinship and resource parents to care for children with high acuity needs.	2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will utilize data to understand the scope of need and determine financial assets required to expand the use of exceptional circumstances payments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will develop a CQI process to determine how to expand the use of exceptional circumstances payments to ensure that kinship and resource parents caring for children with high acuity needs have access to necessary financial support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State, regional and LDSS staff will work collaboratively to identify situations in which exceptional circumstances payments are necessary.
	3.2. Virginia will explore expediting access of kinship foster parents to maintenance payment following the placement of children.	2026-2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will engage the Center for States for technical support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will identify legislative and financial opportunities to expedite monthly maintenance payments of kinship foster parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will explore processes undertaken in other states to expedite monthly maintenance payments to kinship foster parents.
	3.3. Virginia will create access to peer supports for kinship, foster and adoptive families.	2026-2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will engage lived experience councils to develop access to peer supports for all kinship, foster and adoptive families in Virginia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDSS will create Peer Support Specialists employment opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State, regional and local staff will partner with lived experience councils to ensure that kinship, foster and adoptive parents have access to peer support.