



North Dakota Post-Permanency Profile

Updated: November 2024

State Population (2023 Census estimate)

under 1 million

Adoption/Guardianship Assistance Caseload (2022)

under 3,000

- Adoption assistance caseload – 1,874
- Guardianship assistance caseload – 89
- Total – 1,963

State Administration Type

County administered

Pre-Service Training

Prospective foster and adoptive parents are trained using the 27-hour Parents Resource for Information Development and Education (PRIDE) pre-service training program. Relative caregivers are not required to attend training before placement, but those who may need financial support to meet the child's needs from the Federal IV-E Guardian Assistance Program (GAP) must be licensed as a foster parent and attend a modified version of the PRIDE pre-service training that consists of three hours of training. Parents who are transitioning to adoption are not required to complete the training again unless the adoption agency has a specific reason to make this request.

Services Offered Through the State's Post-Permanency Support Program

Post-permanency services for adoptive and guardianship families in North Dakota are provided through the North Dakota Post Adoption Network, contracted through the Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) Program and administered by Catholic Charities North Dakota. The North Dakota Post Adoption Network provides family-centered interventions to empower and strengthen families to become self-sufficient in their communities.

Services include:

- **Pre-permanency supports** — The Post Adoption Network can provide families access to support groups and the Trauma Knowledge Masterclass before finalization if families





have a specific need or are facing challenges. Post-adopt and pre-adoption workers also facilitate a “warm handoff” to the post-permanency program where families are offered information about the program and meet post adopt coordinators.

- **Assessment**— Every family referred or self-referred to the North Dakota Post Adoption Network will have an initial screening conducted by a post adopt coordinator to determine appropriate intervention. If needed, a more complete assessment that is adoption-competent, trauma-informed, and family-focused will be conducted. Assessment tools include a Questionnaire for Caregivers that measures commitment, available supports, child development and knowledge of parenting, adaptability, and family functioning plus the Developmental Challenges and Issues and Challenges worksheets from the CORE Teen curriculum to review the child’s developmental history. The initial assessment is completed within 45 days after the family is accepted for case management and guides the support plan.
- **Case management** — The North Dakota Post Adoption Network provides the following through case management:
 - Service navigation and coordination to help families access needed services
 - Strengthening social supports for families
 - Trauma-informed parenting strategies and relationship enhancement to improve family relationships
 - Educational advocacy to navigate school systems and address education-specific challenges a child may encounter

Frequency and type of contact is determined by the family’s needs and can be renegotiated at any time. There are no minimum expectations for contact and no upper limits on the time a post-adopt coordinator can spend with the family.

- **Support groups** — The following support groups are offered to families:
 - Closed support group on Facebook to connect adoptive and guardianship families together for support and resources across the state
 - In-person family support groups are held in multiple regions throughout the state
 - Support groups for youth in adoptive or guardianship families are provided across the state that include curricula from W.I.S.E Up® and Beneath the Mask

Support groups are facilitated by the post adopt coordinators. The structure of each group is determined by the needs and preferences of attendees. Support groups are typically scheduled once a month. Families can participate as frequently as they would like.





- **Educational advocacy** — Educational advocacy is provided as part of case management. The post adopt coordinator will help the family understand the impact of maltreatment and placement changes on school performance; assist with requesting an IEP, accessing support services, and determining how or when to attend school meetings relevant for their child; and attend school conferences, meetings, or events.
- **Respite care** — North Dakota Post Adopt Network offers a limited amount of reimbursement through grants for respite services. Families must find their own respite providers. To qualify, adoptive or guardianship families must have a youth under the age of 18 in their home.
- **Information and referral** — Staff provide information by phone or email on adoption and guardianship subsidies, referrals to local community services, and referrals to adoption-competent therapists and trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapists.
- **Training** — North Dakota Post Adopt Network staff facilitate the following educational events for adoptive and guardianship families:
 - An online book club for adoptive and guardianship parents
 - Regular information sessions on adoption and guardianship-related topics (such as managing expectations, emotional issues for youth, sensory processing, LGBTQ2S+ issues, attachment, and specific intervention strategies)
 - Formal curriculum such as Trauma Knowledge Masterclass by Kristin and Mike Berry, Honestly Adoption Company, and CORE Teen
- **Events** — Once a month, North Dakota Post Adopt Network offers either a family gathering, parents' night out, or kids' night out activity. Monthly activities are held in each region. Two annual weekend family camps are hosted each fiscal year, one in the winter and one in the summer. Camps include family-centered activities. Parent-only camps are also offered annually. Families who participate in family camps must be parenting children in adoption or guardianship who are under 18.
- **Other services** — Post adopt coordinators can help families to enroll a child with a tribe after finalization has occurred and support contact with birth families.

In 2023, the Network served 589 clients, including 97 who received one-on-one supportive services.

For more information, visit <https://ndpostadopt.org/>.





Geographic Area Covered

Post-permanency services are available throughout the state. There are four post permanency workers, one in each quadrant of the state. Similar services are offered throughout the state, however, they may be modified locally based on the needs of the local population.

Eligible Population for the Overall Post-Permanency Program

- All families who adopted from the state's foster care system
- All families who adopted from foster care in other states, territories, or tribes
- All families who adopted through intercountry adoption
- All families who adopted through private adoption
- All families who have guardianship of a child from foster care
- All families who have guardianship of child not through foster care

Variations in Eligibility for the Post-Permanency Program

None

Accessibility

Issues of race, culture, and ethnicity that may affect delivery of services are considered during the assessment process to allow interviews to be conducted in a culturally responsive manner. Another important part of the assessment process is information related to tribal connections and cultural considerations and language considerations. The family assessment also asks questions about concerns related to interracial or transcultural adoption issues the family may be experiencing.

The North Dakota Post Adopt Network can provide support to families to enroll a child with a tribal nation after finalization has occurred. Requests for services in languages other than English will be accommodated upon request. Other specialized services for groups such as children in interracial families, LGBTQ2S+ families or youth, and adoptive/guardianship families who are kin consist of information and referral to educational materials and programs that can meet their needs.

Outreach and Engagement

The state shares information about the post-permanency services through the following outreach:





- Adoption workers introduce post-adoption coordinators to families prior to finalization
- Adoption staff can identify families who could benefit from services prior to finalization and offer them services
- Social media and website outreach
- Outreach at community events
- Outreach to community partners who interface with families such as teachers and mental and behavioral health professionals
- Collaboration with regional recruitment and retention coalitions and infant and intercountry adoption agencies

Upon finalization, families are added to a distribution mailing list and email list. The North Dakota Post Adopt Network will check in with adoptive and guardianship families individually at the following points after finalization:

- within one month of finalization
- six months after finalization
- one year after finalization
- one-on-a-half years after finalization
- two years after finalization

At the two-year follow up, the post-adopt coordinator asks the family if future follow-up calls are welcome and will continue calls if desired. The North Dakota Post Adopt Network also sends newsletters once a month to families to notify recipients of local events, trainings, and support groups throughout the state.

Outreach occurs in all areas of the state and are tracked by management staff. Outreach to families may look different from location to location based on the needs of local families.

How the Post-Permanency Program Is Operated

- Through a contract or grant with one private agency

Notes About Who Provides Which Service(s)

The state contracts with Catholic Charities North Dakota to provide all services statewide.

Adoption/Guardianship Assistance/Subsidy Review and Changes

The adoptive parent must submit the required review information either every year or every two years depending on the type of agreement that has been signed. If a child receives specialized services/circumstances subsidy (excess payment above the traditional foster care rate) the review process is held every year. If the services are not specialized the review process





happens every other year. Guardians must submit required review information annually to Children and Family Services to continue receiving a guardianship subsidy.

Adoptive families can request a change in the adoption assistance agreement any time there is a documented change in the child's needs or the family's circumstances. Parents must make the request for modification in writing to the Children and Family Services Foster Care Sub Adopt Unit (CFSFCSA Unit) that administers the adoption assistance. The request must detail the specific reasons for the requested change, including the rationale for the specific amount requested. The CFSFCSA Unit will negotiate any revision to the agreement and may request additional documentation. The same process is true for guardianship, but the request must be submitted to the CFS Guardianship Unit.

Tracking Adoption/Guardianship Discontinuity

The state's case management system has questions related to whether the child was previously adopted, which supports the tracking of discontinuity. The questions include whether a child was ever adopted, age at adoption, date of last finalized adoption, child adopted from a foreign country, placing agency, prior guardianship before current out-of-home care episode, and prior guardianship date. North Dakota does not regularly review this information, but an ad hoc report can be requested when needed.

Post-Permanency Program Spending (FY 2023)

\$500,000 – \$999,999

Funding Sources for the Post-Permanency Program (FY 2023)

1. Adoption savings (reported on CB 496 Part 4 – Annual Adoption Savings Report)
2. Title IV-B, Part 2 (Promoting Safe and Stable Families/PSSF)
3. State funds

