



## South Carolina Post-Permanency Profile

Updated: January 2025

### State Population (2023 Census estimate)

4 – 6,999,999 million

### Adoption/Guardianship Assistance Caseload (2022)

3,000 – 5,999

- Adoption assistance caseload — 5,999

### State Administration Type

State administered

### Pre-Service Training

Prospective foster and adoptive parents are required to participate in the 30-hour National Training and Development Curriculum for Foster and Adoptive Parents (NTDC). Adoptive applicants, including foster parents in good standing, are required to take an additional six-hour course called Adoptive Parent Training.

Training requirements for kinship caregivers who are pursuing foster or adoptive licensure may be waived in some circumstances. Kinship caregivers can complete the kin-specific Caring for Our Own training or NTDC.

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

The South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) offers different services to support adoptive families and guardianship families. For adoption, SCDSS contracts with an independent agency to operate the state's adoption preservation program. State staff also manage cases, provide information and referral, and support families in crisis. Families may be referred to community-based prevention services or the contracted adoption preservation services provided below when appropriate.

Guardians have access to the following services:

- **Information and referral** — State staff provide information and referral, including referral to other state services (such as through the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs), community-based services, and services covered by Medicaid. These services may include in-home or community-based therapeutic services. In addition, SCDSS helps families obtain records as allowed by law





and access other supports, they may be eligible for, such as educational support for those placed in guardianship at age 16 or older.

- **Kinship navigation** — Guardians have access to the state’s contracted kinship navigator program, which offers information, referral, navigation, and other services to help guardians access benefits and resources.

For adoptive families, the independent contractor’s post-adoption program is based on the Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®) model and is staffed by adoptive parents. The program is designed to serve the whole family and may include the following services depending on the family’s needs:

- **Pre-permanency supports** — The TBRI® training, support groups, and information and referral services are available to adoptive families before a child comes home. Other services may also be available before finalization, although in crisis, SCDSS will be the primary service provider before finalization.
- **Assessment** — For families seeking more intensive support, the post-adoption service provider completes a pre-service stress assessment to identify needs and the services to be provided. The assessment is also conducted at the end of services to measure progress.
- **Case management** — The post-adoption program provides therapeutic in-home case management services for the entire family when service provision has been approved by SCDSS. Services vary from family to family but often include providing referrals for needed resources (therapists, medical professionals, respite organizations, etc.) and helping families navigate state agencies involved with their child. Staff also serve as a liaison for the family with other service providers.
- **Crisis intervention** — Crisis intervention is available to families in moderate to serious stress. Families in significant crisis (such as those dealing with very difficult behaviors or suicidal ideation) are prioritized and assigned to a family coach who will make contact with the family quickly and begin in-home services. The agency partners with SCDSS to ensure all wraparound services are available and determine how to best move forward. Crisis consultations are offered via phone or text. In addition, families are also assisted with navigating more critical situations such as acute hospitalizations or long-term psychiatric residential stays.
- **Support groups** — Two virtual support groups are held monthly for one hour and cover an adoption-related topic. Families are able to participate as often and for as long as needed. Support groups are facilitated by both family support specialists and family coaches. The support group time is flexible but includes time for parents to get to know





one another, a short video on the selected topic, follow-up discussion, and time for sharing challenges and ideas.

- **Information and referral** — Post-adoption program staff can answer questions and help connect families to resources. Families do not need SCDSS approval for information and referral services.
- **Training** — The program offers families TBRI® orientation and Caregiver Training as well as other adoption-related webinars. They offer a five-hour virtual introduction and overview of TBRI® monthly. This session is open to any family or professional interested in learning more about TBRI®. In addition, the independent contractor offers monthly parent-focused virtual classes to current and past clients as a continued level of support. These classes complement TBRI® but are not TBRI® specific.

The independent contractor also trains professionals in the TBRI® approach. TBRI® training is provided in-person when requested by an organization.

The state offers financial supports to adoptive parents for the following:

- **Counseling and other services related to diagnoses or behaviors listed on the adoption subsidy agreement** — The Supplemental Benefit for Medical Assistance (SBMA) program is designed to provide additional support for families adopting children who have or have a biological family history of physical, mental, and/or emotional disabilities. These funds may cover medical, rehabilitative, and psychological counseling expenses that are not covered by Medicaid, private insurance, or other resources. All other resources should be exhausted before the SBMA request is made. The benefit must be negotiated before the adoption assistance agreement is signed. The benefit requires prior approval from the state office and cannot be used for experimental or non-FDA approved treatments.
- **Respite care** — As part of SBMA, families can receive reimbursement of up to \$500 per authorization year for services that provide a break for adoptive parents to enable them to cope with the stresses of caring for a child with special needs.
- **Childcare** — Adoptive parents are eligible for 52 weeks of Child Care ABC Vouchers following adoption finalization.

For more information, visit:

- Flourishing Families adoption preservation services — <https://www.flourishingfamilies.org/adoption-training-services>
- State-provided financial supports — <https://dss.sc.gov/child-well-being/adoption/adoption-assistance/>





- Kinship navigation services — <https://kinshipsc.org/>

For information regarding adoption preservation services, email [gapublicadoption@dss.sc.gov](mailto:gapublicadoption@dss.sc.gov).

### **Geographic Area Covered**

Services are statewide and the independent contractor has staff statewide. Availability of referrals may vary in different areas of the state.

### **Eligible Population for the Overall Post-Permanency Program**

- Only families receiving adoption assistance
- Other (listed below)
  - All kinship families

### **Variations in Eligibility for the Post-Permanency Program**

As noted above, adoptive and guardianship families have access to different services. For adoptive families, case management services are only available to families who have received prior approval from SCDSS.

Kinship navigator services are available to all kinship caregiving families.

### **Outreach and Engagement**

The state shares information with families when they apply to adopt or take guardianship and upon approval. Services are also mentioned in the adoption and guardianship subsidy agreement. With children who have higher needs, the agency provides a referral for services before finalization. When a family reaches out to the state for support, SCDSS staff provide a warm handoff to the adoption preservation service provider.

Other outreach includes providing information on the SCDSS website and sharing information on social media.

### **How the Post-Permanency Program Is Operated**

- Through contracts or grants with multiple private agencies offering different services
- By other state staff





## Notes About Who Provides Which Service(s)

Adoption preservation services and kinship navigator services are provided under contract with private agencies. SCDSS staff also provide support as noted above.

## Adoption/Guardianship Assistance/Subsidy Review and Changes

South Carolina does not regularly review adoption assistance agreements. Guardianship assistance agreements are reviewed each year to ensure the child is still in the family's custody.

Adoptive parents and guardians who are not receiving the maximum subsidy can request changes in the assistance when there is a change in the family's circumstances or the child's needs. If the child is found to have a preexisting condition after the adoption assistance agreement is finalized, the agreement may be amended to include the condition. A written request detailing the need for change must be submitted to the SCDSS State Office Adoptions. Medical or therapeutic documentation from a therapist or physician supporting the need must accompany the request for modification.

## Tracking Adoption/Guardianship Discontinuity

SCDSS partners with its Division of Technology Services (CAPSS support) to track children who have been adopted in the state's CAPSS system. The data capture all types of adoptions, including those adopted from foster care, private adoption, and intercountry adoption.

SCDSS staff have done internal analysis on where children were adopted from when they re-enter care. They have also used the data to help develop the adoption preservation services.

## Post-Permanency Program Spending (FY 2023)

\$1 – 1,999,999 million

Note: This amount is just for the adoption preservation services described above.

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

Funding sources include (but are not limited to):

1. Adoption savings (reported on CB 496 Part 4 – Annual Adoption Savings Report)

