



NATIONAL CENTER FOR ENHANCED
Post-Adoption Support

THE ARIZONA IMPACT STORY

How targeted technical assistance with the National Center for Enhanced Post-Adoption Support helped Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) redesign its post-permanency system to better support adoptive and guardianship families.

AT-A-GLANCE



Designed Arizona's statewide

No Wrong Door model to create a coordinated post-permanency system.



Developed statewide Program

Guidance, Memorandum of Understanding, and Universal Intake process to support coordinated services across agencies.



Expanded adoption competency

by enrolling DCS staff, supervisors, and more than 130 behavioral health providers in adoption competency training.



Strengthened collaboration

between child welfare, behavioral health, Medicaid, crisis response, and community providers to better support families before they reach crisis.



Established a permanent Lived Experience Advisory Group

to ensure caregiver and youth voice continues to guide Arizona's post-permanency system.



The Impact

Technical assistance helped the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) move from a collection of individual post-permanency services to a more coordinated, statewide approach for supporting adoptive and guardianship families.

Rather than build entirely new services, Arizona focused on strengthening how existing ones work together. Through technical assistance, DCS finalized a statewide hub-and-spoke model grounded in a “No Wrong Door” philosophy, giving families multiple points of entry into the system along with coordinated navigation, referrals, and family-centered support.

On-site technical assistance strengthened Arizona’s capacity to implement and sustain these improvements by developing implementation tools, building adoption competency across child welfare and behavioral health systems, and establishing structures for long-term success beyond the formal technical assistance period.

As a Result of Technical Assistance

- **Designed Arizona’s first coordinated statewide post-permanency model.** The hub-and-spoke framework positions Arizona DCS as the central coordinating entity and strengthens partnerships with behavioral health providers, crisis services, and community organizations under a “No Wrong Door” approach.
- **Created the infrastructure needed for implementation.** New statewide Program Guidance, a Memorandum of Understanding, a Universal Intake and Referral process, and supporting tools and communication materials now anchor consistent practice across the state.
- **Strengthened adoption competency across Arizona.** Enrolled 24 DCS professionals, 5 supervisors, and 132 behavioral health providers in National Training Initiative (NTI) courses and expanded participation in the Training for Adoption Competency (TAC) program, building a more adoption-competent workforce statewide.

“The Arizona Post-Permanency Supports program found the technical assistance from the Post-Adoption Center crucial to moving intended improvements forward. The professionals assigned to work with Arizona were accommodating and insightful. They brought their experience, expertise, and perspectives to this work without judgement of how much improvement was needed and with openness to a collaborative innovative approach.

Arizona is appreciative of not just the time during the assessment and technical assistance, but also from a sustainability perspective, allowing for continued learning from other states working with the Center in later cohorts. The information sharing between states has been so helpful and seems to be a direct result of the collaborative tone and guidance provided by the Center throughout the process.”

Ken Hoffman, Program Manager – Post-Permanency Supports

- **Improved family engagement before and after permanency.** Redesigned trauma-informed Post-Permanency Services Orientation materials, updated family communication and outreach tools, and developed an Adoption Handbook to better prepare families throughout their permanency journey.
- **Strengthened crisis response and family navigation.** Partnered with Solari Crisis Services and community providers to improve warm handoffs, clarify referral pathways, and reconnect families with DCS for ongoing support beyond an immediate crisis.
- **Built stronger cross-system partnerships.** Engaged behavioral health organizations, Mercy Care, AHCCCS, crisis providers, universities, and community agencies in shaping a shared vision for post-permanency support, building new, sustainable partnerships along the way.
- **Embedded lived experience into system design.** Established a Lived Experience Advisory Group that directly shapes communication materials, family navigation strategies, crisis response planning, and the broader system design — and that Arizona DCS will sustain for ongoing family engagement and improvement.

Why This Work Mattered

Post-permanency services existed across Arizona, but they often operated independently, leaving families to navigate multiple systems with little coordination. Families in crisis frequently struggled to find where to turn, and behavioral health, crisis response, child welfare, and community providers were not consistently connected.



The technical assistance partnership focused on helping Arizona build a coordinated statewide system that makes the most of existing resources, improves family navigation, strengthens cross-system collaboration, and keeps families connected to support before situations escalate.

Arizona's goals included:

1. Design a coordinated statewide post-permanency model.
2. Improve access to adoption-competent services.
3. Strengthen collaboration among child welfare, behavioral health, Medicaid, crisis providers, and community partners.
4. Improve family engagement before and after permanency.
5. Develop sustainable infrastructure to support long-term implementation.

Looking Ahead

Arizona's technical assistance officially concluded in May 2026, but the work to strengthen the state's post-permanency system continues. DCS will build on this foundation by rolling out the statewide "No Wrong Door" hub-and-spoke model, launching the centralized intake and referral process, and putting the new program guidance and implementation tools into practice.

Arizona also plans to expand adoption competency across the child welfare and behavioral health systems. DCS will broaden staff participation in the National Training Initiative (NTI) curriculum, increase access to training, and strengthen the workforce's capacity to support children, youth, and families impacted by adoption and permanency. At the same time, Mercy Care will expand participation in NTI among behavioral health providers to strengthen clinicians' understanding of the unique needs of adoptive, guardianship, and kinship families while increasing the organization's capacity to deliver adoption-competent, trauma-informed services.

The state will continue engaging its Lived Experience Advisory Group to keep caregiver and youth perspectives central to system improvement and will keep expanding partnerships with behavioral health and community providers to support the new post-permanency model. Mercy Care also plans to launch a digital badging system in its statewide provider directory, flagging clinicians who have completed NTI or TAC training so families can more easily find providers with specialized adoption, guardianship, and kinship expertise.

Together, these efforts position Arizona to deliver a more coordinated, responsive, and sustainable post-permanency system — helping adoptive and guardianship families access the right support at the right time and promoting long-term family stability and well-being.

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