



# Family Find Step Down Project-Baltimore

*A Project Of Adoptions Together and the Baltimore City Department of Social Services*

“ **Permanency** is a process and a result that includes involvement of the youth as a participant or leader in finding a **permanent connection** with at least one committed adult. This adult provides a safe, stable, and secure parenting relationship, love, unconditional commitment, and **lifelong support**, in the context of reunification, a legal adoption or guardianship, and the opportunity to maintain contacts with important persons (including brothers and sisters).



**The Family Find Step Down Project was created to achieve permanency for children and youth in foster care by removing barriers and creating opportunities utilizing a collection of best practices in recruitment and permanency work from similar programs around the country.**

## Why Choose the Family Find Step Down Project (FFSD)?

- Adoptions Together works in close partnership with Baltimore City DSS
- FFSD services can be tailored to the specific needs of each jurisdiction.
- A team of permanency-focused social workers, called permanency specialists, partner with each child's existing team to select and implement permanency techniques appropriate for each unique situation.
- Professional trainings focused on permanency help all members of the team add a permanency focus to their ongoing work of ensuring the safety and well-being of each child.

Every child in foster care deserves a permanent home and many have waited far too long. When children age out of care without a permanent family, they face an uphill battle. The goal of the Family Step Down Project is to expedite permanency for waiting children. By drawing upon proven best practices in recruitment and permanency work from similar programs in other states, a replicable model has been developed which has made major strides toward permanency for foster children in Baltimore City.

FFSD works directly with three groups to achieve the goal of timely permanency: waiting children, parents, and child welfare professionals. The FFSD team works directly with children in the program, helping them to develop openness to permanency. The FFSD team reaches out to prospective parents through recruitment and training, and collaborates with child welfare professionals to add a permanency focus to their ongoing work.



## *Fact Sheet For Community Partners*

### **Find out more:**

Visit us at [www.adoptionsitogether.org](http://www.adoptionsitogether.org)

Call us at **301-422-5132**

### **In partnership with:**

**The Abell Foundation,**

**The Baltimore City Department of Social Services,**

**And the T. Rowe Price Corporation**

# Tools Used by the FFSD Model

**Case Mining/Family Finding:** Each case record is examined for positive adult relationships and family connections from the child's past. The process includes interviews with the child, caregivers, professionals, teachers, and other interested individuals. Internet searches and searches of other public and private entities are conducted in accordance with HIPPA guidelines and privacy policies.

**Permanency Teaming and Assessment:** The entire team is involved in identifying and removing barriers to permanency.

**Support for Resources:** Services prepare families for permanency in a healthy manner and keep a family strong after a child has been placed.

**Professional Trainings:** FFSD offers several trainings each year for child welfare professionals, focused on permanency for children and youth.

**Consultation to Child Welfare Professionals in Baltimore:** FFSD acts as a consultant all aspects of permanency including: program development, training, and supportive structures.

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Bryan entered the foster care system due to neglect when he was one month old, and has remained in care for 14 years. When he was 12 years old, Bryan was hospitalized due to destructive behaviors, following the death of his birth parents. Fortunately for Bryan, a maternal aunt agreed to care for him upon his release. However, this placement did not last and Bryan was placed in a group home just a few months later.

In June 2011, Bryan was identified as a child who could benefit from the FFSD project, and services began 6/17/11. Through intensive case mining and family finding, the FFSD team reconnected with the Bryan's maternal cousin, and sought out the paternal side of his family by using internet searches. The specialist was able to identify that Bryan had a sister living with an aunt, who wished to reconnect with Bryan.

In October, 2011, the team was able to bring 12 of Bryan's family members together. The team is working with Bryan to re-engage with his family and help him with his transition into a permanent home and a permanent family.



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## Mission:

*Adoptions Together builds healthy lifelong connections for every child and advocates for continuous improvement of systems that promote the well being of children.*

### Find out more:

Visit us at [www.adoptions-together.org](http://www.adoptions-together.org)  
Or call us at 301.439.2900

Silver Spring, Baltimore, Herndon, and DC

Every Child, Every Family,  
Every Step of the Way

**ADOPTIONS  
TOGETHER**