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For immediate release

DHHR announces Adoption Incentive award of \$1.5M

West Virginia received an award of approximately \$1.5 million in adoption incentive funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for completing more adoptions of foster children in fiscal year 2010 than in the baseline year of 2007. The funds will be used for post-adoption services.

West Virginia was one of only 32 states to receive the award. Full awards for all 32 states can be viewed at <http://www.nacac.org/adoptalk/adoptionincentives.html>

In 2010 the state completed 658 adoptions from foster care, an increase of 257 adoptions over the 2007 total of 401 adoptions.

West Virginia has partnered with several different programs to increase the number of adoptions for children awaiting a permanent home.

Two local TV stations air segments of children awaiting adoption: WTAP features *Wednesday's Child* typically on the 2nd Wednesday of every month; and WBOY airs a program called *Finding a Family*.

Another DHHR partner, Mission West Virginia has helped increase the numbers of adoptions through their efforts of a newspaper article highlighting a child in foster care that is printed in numerous newspapers statewide called *Sunday's Child*. Additional partnerships include: Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters who work closely with DHHR staff and the children in foster care trying to find permanent homes for them and the Heart Gallery of West Virginia, a traveling exhibit of children in foster care in the state.

The DHHR highlights children in foster care who need permanent families on their Adoption Resource Network (www.adoptwvchild.org) as well as on the AdoptUSKids website (www.adoptuskids.org).

A new initiative that allows Specialized Foster Care Agencies to manage and finalize WVDHHR foster care adoptions is now in place to allow even more foster care adoptions to be completed in WV.