



NOAS ANNUAL REPORT FY2020



Northeast Ohio Adoption Services

Foster Care ♥ Adoption
Mentoring ♥ Training

private, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) agency



“Our agency loves working with NOAS. We have had many successful adoptions with your families.”

- Agency Partner



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

“I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.”

— Brené Brown

I have had this quote on my office door for over a year. At NOAS, connection is at the heart of everything we do.

Fiscal Year 2020 brought tremendous challenges and unique opportunities. Most importantly, we have grown personally, professionally and have learned a great deal.

NOAS started the fiscal year in the summer of 2019 eager for growth through new programs and services. Our foster care and adoption training classes had a waiting list. We doubled the number of staff who assist former foster youth through Bridges, offering support and guidance as the young adults transition out of the system into adulthood. We launched “IGNITE Foster Youth: Mentor One Who Needs Someone,” a volunteer mentoring program to provide connection to our most vulnerable teens and young adults. We began construction on an office expansion. We had our most successful fundraiser in decades in Cleveland. We were in the beginning stages of strategic planning and accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA), and then “it” hit!

Just like all of you, we at NOAS have and continue to do our best to plan and manage this pandemic practically, thoughtfully, and without panic. We recognize that this is a serious issue, and we are following all the protocols to protect our staff and the families, children and young adults we serve. COVID-19 has presented new challenges to our child welfare system, and the kids and families we serve need us now more than ever.

We have made significant progress towards completion of our strategic plan and accreditation. Through a thoughtful process of brainstorming and thinking outside the box, we created a realistic three-year plan that represents who we have been throughout our 42-year rich history but also looks forward to implementing new best practices, resources, and recommendations for achieving permanency for children and youth in a way that prioritizes the youth’s or young adult’s well-being.

We remain firmly committed to walking alongside you through this journey as we all continue to cope with COVID-19 with a renewed urgency that children need connections and permanency —people who deeply care about them and are willing to go the extra mile.

CHERYL TARANTINO
Executive Director, NOAS

FY2020 AT A GLANCE

The NOAS team together had...

27 TOTAL ADOPTIONS

FACILITATED WITH NOAS AND
NON-NOAS LICENSED FAMILIES

NOAS is committed to meeting children, families and young adults where they are and to providing the necessary support for them to thrive.

328 HOURS

IGNITE MENTOR OUTINGS

Since starting the IGNITE program, three mentors have expressed a desire to adopt.

158 CHILDREN

ON REFERRAL

NOAS partners with 29 counties and works with families in a 90-minute radius area from Warren, Ohio.

69 YOUNG ADULTS

RECEIVED CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

NOAS has supported 69 young adults who aged out of foster care.



OUR TEAM'S KEYS TO SUCCESS

Children and families always come first - we are here for you from start to finish.



MISSION

We exist to inspire, develop, and nurture enduring support & connections for current and former foster youth and those at risk of coming into care.

VISION

We envision the day when every child and young adult has a safe and supportive family network.

VALUES

Connections, Customer Service, Diversity, Integrity, Fiscal Responsibility, Teamwork, and Change.

CHERYL TARANTINO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NOAS



NOAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Determines policy and ensures the mission, vision and values of NOAS are upheld.



SHARON DEFRANCES
CHAIRMAN
Farmers National Bank



JOE VEROSTKO
VICE CHAIRMAN
J.M. Verostko, Inc.



STEPHANIE LANDERS
SECRETARY
Boardman Township



DENNIS LEWIS JR.
TREASURER
Lewis Construction Corp.

MEMBERS

Patrick Burgan
Burgan Real Estate

Kathy Cook
St. Joseph Hospital

Kimberly Griffin
Real Living Volpini Group

Cara Lewis Holko
Salon Mingle

Tara Treharn Keating
TC Law Library

William Miner
Merrill Lynch

Stephanie Pullium
S. Jones & Associates

James Ritter
Kent State University

Deryck Toles
Inspiring Minds

Kelly Verostko

Peter Verostko
J.M. Verostko, Inc.

NOAS COMPANY STRUCTURE

Our staff is highly trained and strives for lifelong permanency for current and former foster youth by recruiting, preparing and supporting families and positive connections.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Jamie Hetrick
Wendy's Wonderful Kids
Supervisor

Cary Sanders
PCC-S, LSW
Director of Young
Adult Programs

Kim Stewart
LISW-S
Director of Foster Care
and Licensing

Elizabeth Ward
CPA (Inactive)
Controller

TEAM MEMBERS

Gia Bagnoli-Brown, LMSW
Bridges Liaison and
TBRI® Practitioner

Terri Calautti
Executive Assistant

Meghan Delaney
OhioKAN Navigator

Kathryn DeMart
Permanency Planning
Specialist

Kathy Evans
Director of Marketing
and Recruitment

Olivia Gros
Permanency Planning
Specialist

Laura Holt
Wendy's Wonderful
Kids Recruiter

Alicia Konopinski
Administrative Assistant

Hannah Koran
Bridges Liaison

Karissa Logan
Wendy's Wonderful
Kids Recruiter

Alana MacKenzie
TBRI® Practitioner and
Network for Life Specialist

James Margiotta
Wendy's Wonderful
Kids Recruiter

Tiffany McFall
Accounting Clerk and
Administrative Assistant

Sarah Moreton
OhioKAN Navigator

Kim Morgan
IGNITE Program
Coordinator

Laura Murry
Wendy's Wonderful
Kids Recruiter

Lei Solomon
Bridges Liaison

Katy Sudol
Permanency Planning
Specialist

Jennifer Thompson
Permanency Planning
Specialist

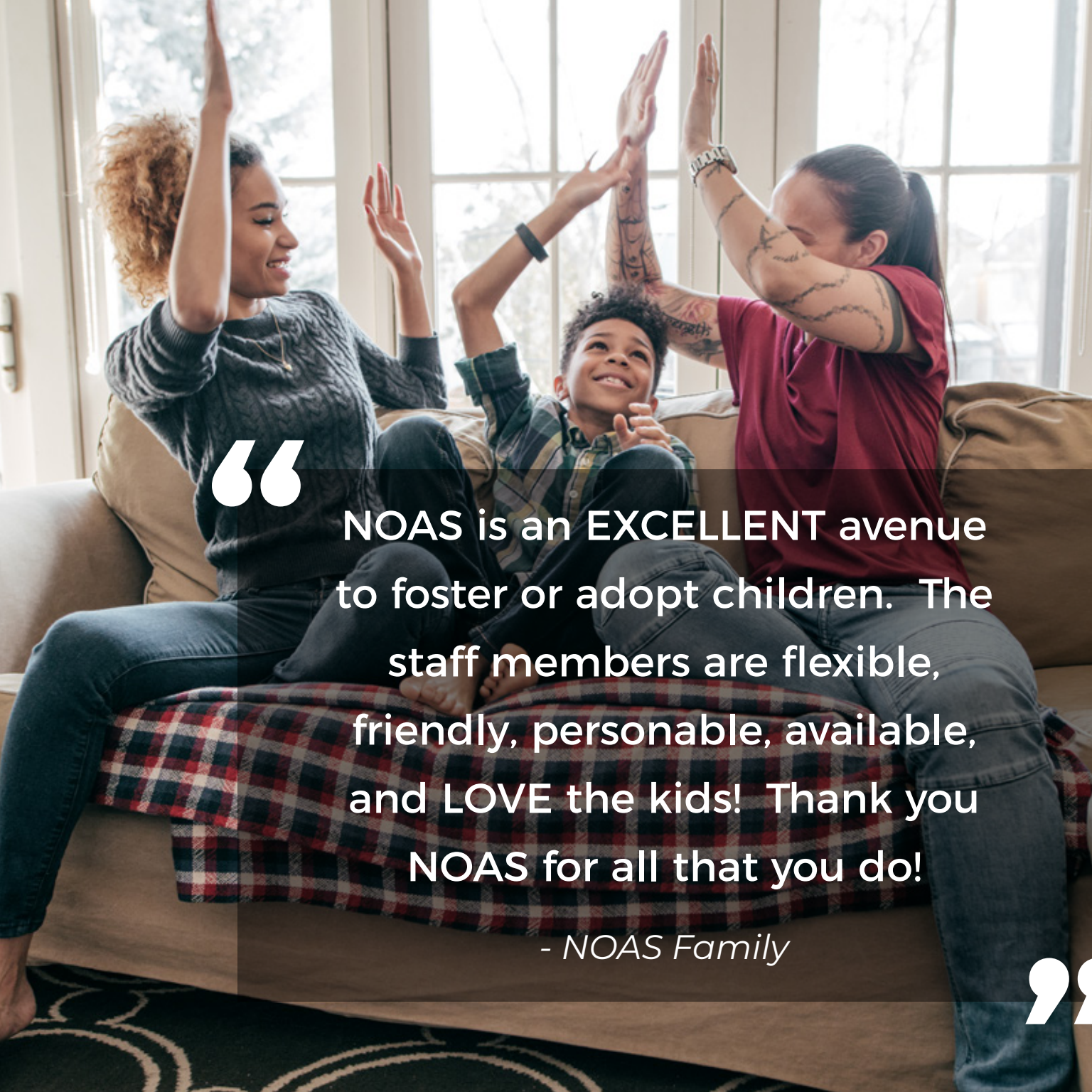
Tom Uss
Wendy's Wonderful
Kids Recruiter

Cindy Wallis, MA, CFLE
Family Recruitment and
Training Coordinator

Chrishyra Whitfield
Bridges Liaison

Michelle Wolcott
Training, CQI and
Accreditation Coordinator

Ashley Zuschlag
Wendy's Wonderful
Kids Recruiter



“

NOAS is an EXCELLENT avenue to foster or adopt children. The staff members are flexible, friendly, personable, available, and LOVE the kids! Thank you NOAS for all that you do!

- NOAS Family

”

ABOUT US WHAT MAKES US TICK

NOAS is a private, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) agency

NOAS was founded in 1978 to serve children and families, with programs built on our mission to promote lifelong permanency for current and former foster youth by recruiting, preparing and supporting families and positive connections.

NOAS has placed over 1,300 children into loving, adoptive homes throughout Northeast Ohio.

While NOAS is perhaps best known for our work related to **Adoption and Foster Care**, we have grown into much more than a placement agency. While we hope every child finds their forever family, this is not always the case. NOAS is committed to serving children, families and young adults no matter the circumstance.

- **Wendy's Wonderful Kids**
- **IGNITE Mentor Program**
- **Bridges Program**
- **TBRI® Coaching**
- **OhioKAN**
- **Monthly Resource Group**

With the goal of supporting our clients every step of the way, NOAS has grown to include the following programs:

NOAS is committed to meeting children, families and young adults where they are and providing the necessary support for them to thrive.

ABOUT OUR SERVICE PROGRAMS

NOAS offers a variety of different mission-driven programs to best support the children, young adults, and families we serve.



STATISTICS

15 ADOPTIONS

CHILDREN, TEENS & SIBLING GROUPS

Who were legalized with NOAS licensed families

22 FAMILY APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

Families made application to NOAS to become foster and adoptive parents

105 FAMILIES

ATTENDED PREPLACEMENT TRAINING

NOAS trained families across the state

133 INTAKES

INDIVIDUALS WHO CONTACTED NOAS

To learn more about the foster care and adoption process

Adoption and Foster Care Program

With a strong belief in the importance of permanent connections, the Adoption Program is the heart of all NOAS services. NOAS is dedicated to developing and supporting lifelong adoptive families for children who cannot be reunited with their families of origin. Each year, there are more than 4,000 Ohio children waiting for a forever family. Our professional team provides preparation, assessment, and ongoing support to families who want to provide a lifelong connection to children and teens in foster care through adoption.

The NOAS Foster Care Program exists to meet the urgent need for temporary foster parents in this region. Our goal is to recruit, train, and support foster parents in Northeast Ohio to address the shortage of loving and safe temporary parents for Ohio's foster children.



GENDER

Boys 62% ● Girls 38%

THERE WERE 118 REFERRALS

from county partners to Wendy's Wonderful Kids



4 legalized with NOAS families
8 legalized with non-NOAS families
17 emancipated / learned of Bridges



AGES

0-4 (1%) ● 5-9 (16%)
10-14 (30%) ● 15-19 (53%)

RACE

African American (23%) ● Biracial (14%)
Hispanic (<1%) ● Pacific Islander (<1%)
Caucasian (62%)



Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption

Wendy's Wonderful Kids Program

In partnership with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption® and multiple county children's services agencies in Ohio, the NOAS Wendy's Wonderful Kids Program is committed to assisting in dramatically increasing the number of adoptions for children in the state's foster care system.

Through its signature Wendy's Wonderful Kids program, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption® provides funding for NOAS recruiters who implement an evidence-based, child-focused recruitment model. Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters work with smaller caseloads of children, ensuring they have the time and resources to give each child as much attention as he or she deserves. Dedicated to finding the best homes for youth, the adoption recruiters start with familiar circles of family, friends and neighbors and then reach out to the communities in which they live.



IGNITE Mentor Program

After seeing the urgent need for supportive role models, NOAS developed the IGNITE Foster Youth Mentoring Program: MENTOR One Who Needs Someone.

The program matches both current foster youth ages 12-17 and former foster youth ages 18-21 with a healthy adult connection in their community.

NOAS serves at-risk youth who are in need of permanent connections due to being in foster care and who have been exposed to trauma that could hinder their adult life, socially and academically.

As a Mentor, you can make a difference and be a hero to a foster youth who needs a helping hand, a connection, and a champion for their well-being. Mentors come from all backgrounds and walks of life.

OUR STATS

15 MENTEES

7 were ages 14-17
8 were ages 18-21



3 identified as male
12 identified as female



10 identified as Caucasian
3 identified as Multi-Racial
1 identified as African American
1 identified as Hispanic

THREE MATCHES DISSOLVED DURING THE YEAR.

One was mentor initiated.
One was mentee initiated.
One was mutual shortly after match was made.

As of 9/30/20, there are 12 active matches.
There are 5 more matches in process.

15 MENTORS



4 identified as male
11 identified as female

100% OF MENTORS IDENTIFIED AS CAUCASIAN



Ages 25-34 = 6
Ages 35-44 = 6
Ages 45-54 = 1
Ages 55-64 = 2



69 YOUNG ADULTS ON REFERRAL



GENDER

Young Men 30% ● Young Women 70%

RACE

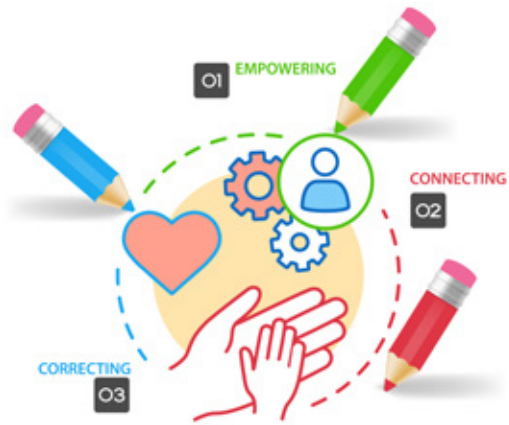
African American 45% ● Biracial 9%
Caucasian 46%



Bridges Program

The Bridges program at NOAS provides direct case management services to young adults who age out of foster care in Ohio. These services are provided by trained Bridges Liaisons and a Supervisor employed by NOAS. In partnership with ODJFS, the Bridges Collaborative (program overseer) and its statewide network of community provider agencies are committed to empowering Bridges participants on their path to independence.

Young adult participation in Bridges is voluntary, and young adults may apply to enroll (or re-enroll) in Bridges at any point before their 21st birthday. The Collaborative strives to ensure that potentially eligible young adults are aware of Bridges and understand how to apply. NOAS and the Collaborative are committed to the success of Bridges. Our commitment is demonstrated by our collective hard work toward achieving improvement in participant outcomes.



TBRI® Program

NOAS is committed to not only recruiting more foster and adoptive families but also to ensuring that the licensed NOAS families we serve are equipped to parent effectively. We provide evidence-based, trauma-informed training called Trust Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®).

TBRI® is a family-based intervention, designed for foster youth who have experienced relationship-based traumas such as institutionalization, multiple foster placements, maltreatment, abuse, and/or neglect.

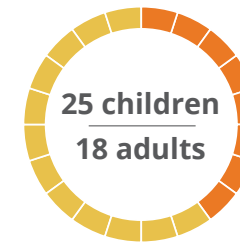
NOAS is requiring TBRI® training for all licensed NOAS families to help families and foster youth work through real-life, problem-solving scenarios. Staff and mentors are also trained on TBRI®.



OhioKan Program

We are proud to announce that we have been selected as a site for OhioKAN. Two OhioKAN Navigators will partner with kinship and adoptive families to assess their needs, identify their goals, and provide individualized case management to provide an appropriate level of support in achieving their goals.

OhioKAN is a new statewide Kinship and Adoption Navigator Program that supports formal and informal kinship and adoptive families by providing information and referral services and assistance accessing support services. OhioKAN was developed in partnership with stakeholders throughout the state and is operated by Kinnect. Building on the premise that families are inherently capable of finding solutions to the circumstances and challenges they face, the OhioKAN program takes an inclusive, engaging, and genuine approach to strengthening families and their networks.



AVERAGE MONTHLY ATTENDANCE



Monthly Parent Resource Group

There is stress involved in parenting a foster child with difficult behaviors, and we know that families who have access to supportive services are at less risk of disrupting their foster or adoptive placement. This resource group provides a place where foster and adoptive parents can meet with one another, discuss and problem-solve the parenting issues they face, share ideas and community resources, and develop a support network for respite. Families tend to bond and feel a sense of camaraderie with one another.

A NOAS team member leads the group and provides on-going education credits necessary for the parents to maintain their foster care license. NOAS provides childcare and dinner so all families can attend if they wish. Families who do not have a child placed in their home are encouraged to attend as well.

ABOUT CQI

Continuous Quality Improvement

Northeast Ohio Adoption Services' Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Program is designed to review practices and outcomes for the programs and administration of the agency with the ultimate goal of providing the highest quality outcomes possible to those we serve. This work involves gathering data, reviewing and summarizing the data, forming and planning improvements as needed, testing and implementing these plans, and reporting back information to our stakeholders.

Program statistics reported throughout the Annual Report are collected as part of the Continuous Quality Improvement Program.

Noteworthy in 2020 and continuing into fiscal year 2021, was the unforeseeable COVID-19 pandemic, which affected all programs, goals, and processes of the agency. NOAS was able to convert to

working remotely very quickly and efficiently. Processes such as moving training and meeting with clients to a virtual platform were necessary and successfully achieved.

A highlight of the CQI program for the year was the progress made toward accreditation by the Council on Accreditation (COA). Achieving this accreditation will show that NOAS performs with the highest standards

and the best practices in our industry. Work toward accreditation has included writing new policies and procedures, training staff, and implementing these new practices throughout our various programs. COA standards dictate a clearly defined, data driven culture of continuous improvement for the agency.



NOAS CQI 2020 SURVEY RESULTS

Here are some results of CQI surveys conducted in 2020, based on a 1 to 5 point rating scale.

+ 4.13

2019 Staff Satisfaction Survey

I love working for NOAS. The management is excellent and I feel respected and supported with the work that I do on a regular basis. Amount of paid time off is wonderful and much appreciated.

+ 4.83

NOAS Pre-Placement Series Evaluation

Cindy was amazing, very knowledgeable, and insightful. Instruction was honest and candid regarding the content and reality the instructors had experienced.

+ 4.69

NOAS Agency Partner Survey

I very much appreciate NOAS as a partner agency. I have always been able to work effectively with NOAS staff.

+ 4.62

NOAS Assessment and Licensing

Kindness, compassion, and support. Information and assistance whenever needed.

+ 4.55

NOAS Placement Services

She always makes us feel supported during all times! She answers all questions and concerns, no matter how minute I may think the concern is. She also has such a love for our children!

FINANCIAL RESULTS SUSTAINING OUR FUTURE

A huge thank-you to donors and community supporters.

Your donation and every hour you spend volunteering goes toward supporting finding permanent connections for children and young adults from foster care. Because of your support we can continue **creating connections**, **preparing specialized families**, and **getting the word out**.



CREATING CONNECTIONS:

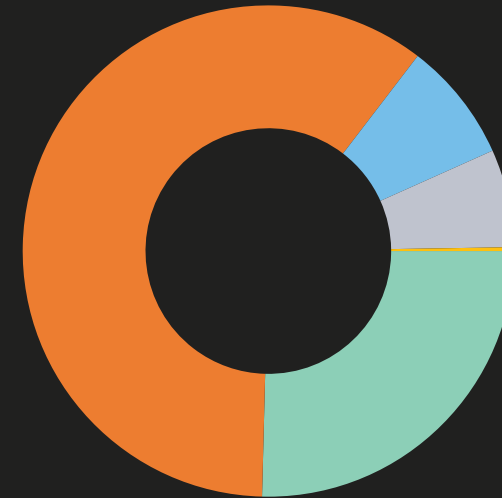
Your donation insures that foster youth have a chance to meet as many prospective families as possible through family finding, child-specific recruitment, matching events and our mentoring program.

PREPARING SPECIALIZED FAMILIES:

NOAS is committed to helping families who want to adopt, foster or mentor every step of the way and will provide life-long support and assistance to families at no charge. Our highly educated team works to help families by offering parenting preparation through pre-placement education classes, home study services, on-going training, post-placement support, our monthly parent resource group and a variety of other services to help create lifelong connections for foster youth.

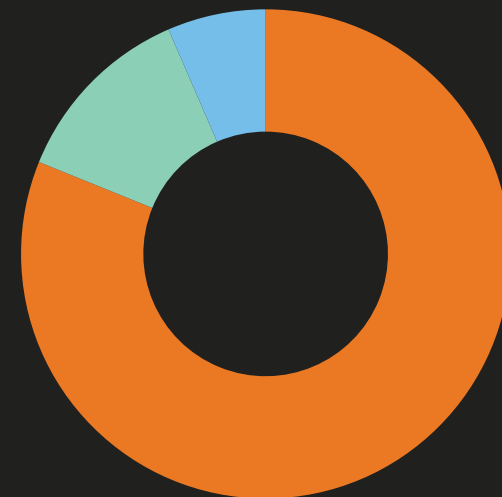
GETTING THE WORD OUT:

Your donation helps us spread the message throughout the community via promotions, events, media, speaking engagements and more.



\$1,874,241
TOTAL REVENUE

- PROGRAM SERVICE FEES & CONTRACTS | \$1,110,209 | 59.24%
- GRANTS | \$470,144 | 25.08%
- SPECIAL EVENTS | \$146,220 | 7.80%
- CONTRIBUTIONS | \$143,106 | 7.64%
- OTHER | \$4,562 | 0.24%



\$1,966,685
TOTAL EXPENSES

- PROGRAM SERVICES | \$1,595,480 | 81.13%
- DEVELOPMENT | \$243,293 | 12.37%
- ADMINISTRATIVE | \$127,912 | 6.50%

**Note: Revenue was affected by loss of spring fundraisers. Expenses exceeded revenue due to retention of staff during pandemic to be covered by PPP loan.*

Fiscal year ending 6/30/20



“

I really enjoy my job here at NOAS. My supervisor is great and I really trust our director and her vision for us. I am excited for the changes coming and glad to see us grow as an agency.

- NOAS Team Member

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THE FUTURE AT A GLANCE

Historic Child Welfare Reforms

Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First): Making Historic Reforms to the Nation's Children's Services System

The federal Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) was adopted on February 9, 2018, and will be implemented nationwide by October 1, 2021. Family First places emphasis on the use of evidence-based prevention services to alleviate the need for placement of children in foster care and ensuring appropriate settings are used for children in foster care.

The name of the law reflects its VISION: *A family first for children and teens through quality prevention services.*

Source: <https://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/Family-First.stm>

Historic Executive Order on Strengthening the Child Welfare System for America's Children

“Our country's child welfare system is responsible for promoting child and family well-being, ensuring child safety, and achieving permanency of a forever family for children. All three outcomes are critical in ensuring children thrive. To achieve these outcomes, our system is charged with strengthening families by supporting community-based prevention efforts that protect children from abuse and neglect; implementing effective family preservation services that keep children

safe with their own families, preventing the need for foster care; and, when children cannot safely remain in their own families, utilizing foster care as a time-limited intervention with oversight by the court to achieve permanency through reunification, adoption or guardianship.” -- President Trump signed an Executive Order (EO) which aims to strengthen America's child welfare system on June 24, 2020.

Source: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/media/press/2020/president-trump-signs-historic-child-welfare-executive-order>

continued >

The Children's Bureau (CB) provided recommendations for implementing primary prevention networks aimed at strengthening families (ACYF-CB-IM-18-05)

"Child welfare systems have a high duty and legal responsibility to achieve and support improved permanency outcomes for children and youth in foster care. The first step toward improvement requires that stakeholders agree that family relationships and connections are key to child wellbeing, family relationships and connections directly influence a child's sense of permanency, and that more meaningful efforts toward reunification should be an urgent priority. Child welfare systems must center all work on preserving and creating such relationships as a critical component of child and family well-being. We strongly encourage all title IV-B/IV-E agencies to commit to the practices that ensure the preservation and continuity of family relationships and connections for all children and youth in foster care. Prioritizing those efforts will ensure that we achieve permanency for children in a way that strengthens their connections, healthy attachments, and sense of belonging to support lifelong thriving. To implement this approach successfully, agency and court leaders must mobilize service providers, attorneys, and resource families in every community to promote this view of permanency. We must make every effort to protect and preserve connections for all children and youth in foster care."
-Elizabeth Darling, Commissioner Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Source: Log No: ACYF-CB-IM-21-01 Issuance Date: January 5, 2021

Ohio will soon extend more financial support to kinship families who care for children in PCSA custody. They will also motivate these families to become licensed as foster caregivers in order to receive in-home supports from agencies like NOAS.

On Tuesday, December 29, 2020, Governor Mike DeWine signed SB 310, which authorizes the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to pay eligible kinship caregivers. On Wednesday, December 30, 2020, the Governor signed Executive Order (EO) 2020-43D requiring ODJFS to develop a system to pay eligible kinship caregivers no later

than June 1, 2021. The EO also requires ODJFS to pay caregivers retroactively from the date the bill was signed. - Jeff Van Deusen, Deputy Director Office of Families and Children at ODJFS.

Source: Families and Children Letter FCL #003 Issued: December 30, 2020



“

I felt we were very supported, like we weren't on the adoption journey alone.

- Licensed NOAS Family

”



Northeast Ohio Adoption Services

Foster Care ♥ Adoption
Mentoring ♥ Training

5000 E. Market Street, Suite 26, Warren, Ohio 44484

www.noas.com