

**MINNESOTA MINORITY
FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE CARE,
1989**

January, 1991

Minnesota Department of Human Services

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STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Human Services Building
444 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-3839

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN 91-68B

March 4, 1991

TO: Chairperson, Board of County Commissioners
Attention: Director

Chairperson, Human Services Board
Attention: Director

SUBJECT: Report on Minnesota Minority Foster and Adoptive Care, 1989

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this bulletin is to distribute to counties the report entitled: Minnesota Minority Foster and Adoptive Care, 1989. This report was submitted to the legislature on February 12, 1991, as required by Session Laws of Minnesota 1989, chapter 282, article 1, section 2, subdivision 4.

One copy of this report is being sent to each county.

II. CONTACT PERSON

Questions related to this report should be addressed to David Koenig (612/296-9858), Community Social Services Division or Rob Sawyer (612/297-2359), Family and Children's Services Programs.

Sincerely,

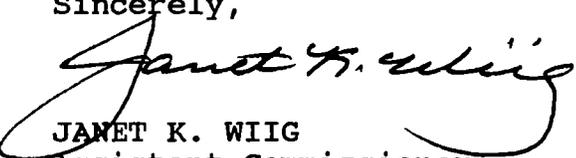

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Executive Summary

MINNESOTA MINORITY FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE CARE, 1989

--National Foster Care Crisis. Both nationally and in Minnesota there is a crisis in foster care. Changing demographic and life style patterns make it more difficult to recruit foster families at the same time that many children who need foster families require more specialized care. This affects all foster care recruitment including recruitment of minority families.

--Minnesota Out-of-Home Placements Rise. From 1987 through 1989 total out-of-home placements grew from just over 12,600 to more than 15,000, or an increase of 19.2%. During these same years foster home placements increased even more dramatically, growing in absolute numbers from 5900 to 7700, or an increase of 30.5%.

--Minority Out-of-Home Placements Rise Sharply. Minority out-of-home placements rose more rapidly compared to whites. Between 1987 and 1988 the rate of increase among white children was 8.4%, but that rate among minority children was 18.0%. These differences also show up in foster home placements. For whites, foster care placements rose 18.3% between 1987 and 1988, but only 7.6% between 1988 and 1989. By contrast, minority foster care placements rose by 23.4% and 26.1%, respectively. National data show that minority children in foster care, when compared to their proportion of the population, are over-represented by a two-to-one ratio. By 1989, minority children in Minnesota are over-represented in foster care placements by a seven-to-one ratio.

--Placement of Minority Children in Same Race/Ethnicity Homes. Although the total number of minority children placed in like race/ethnicity homes grew in absolute numbers from 640 in 1987 to 946 in 1989, the percentage of minority children placed in like race/ethnicity homes remained constant at about 50%. In terms of specific minorities, Black children were most likely to be placed in a family of their heritage (between 62% and 69%), American Indian children next most likely (between 50% and 54%), while Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander children were much less likely to be placed in homes of the same heritage (between 11% and 19%).

--Foster Home Recruitment Lags Need. During 1989, Minnesota's counties reported that they had 4009 licensed foster homes, of which 442 were minority homes. For this same year, Minnesota's counties collectively stated that an additional 324 minority homes would have to be recruited to meet local needs. It would require a quadrupling of the current rate of recruitment of new foster homes to meet this acknowledged unmet need for 1989.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Department can do little about the state and national demographic trends and the unfortunate trend that has more seriously impaired young children requiring foster home placements. There are, however, ways to improve Minnesota's public foster care system. Recommendations include:

1. Increase the availability of culturally appropriate services to strengthen families, avoiding the need to place children out side the family home.
2. Increase the understanding and implementation of the following pieces of legislation to ensure the appropriate placement of minority children: the Minority Child Heritage Protection Act, the Minority Heritage Family Preservation Act, and the Indian Family Preservation Act.
3. Develop and implement targeted recruitment efforts to increase the number of minority foster homes within each minority population.
4. All public and private agencies should develop recruitment efforts to employ and maintain a culturally diverse staff reflective of the families and children they serve.
5. Develop strategies to remove barriers to licensing requirements.
6. Develop a funding base for foster parents which competes with employability opportunities.
7. Develop a foster family recruitment strategy that facilitates access for persons on public assistance.
8. Develop and provide support services which will enhance the retention of foster parents currently in the system. Examples include: increased respite care, increased day care, employee assistance programs, and access to behavior management information.
9. Increase cultural sensitivity training efforts. This training should be aimed at social service staff as well as foster parents.
10. Improve data reporting in such a way that the number of children and foster families whose race is unreported decreases.

MINNESOTA MINORITY FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE CARE, 1989

1. INTRODUCTION

Permanency Planning for children has been a priority in Minnesota during the 1980's. Minnesota formally implemented this framework with the passage of the Permanency Planning Grants to Counties Act in 1986 (Minnesota Statutes, section 256F.01 to 256F.07). Permanency planning means the systematic process of carrying out, within a short time, a set of goal-oriented activities designed to help children live in families that offer continuity of relationships with nurturing parents or caretakers, and the opportunity to establish lifetime relationships. The Act was implemented in 1986 to provide the counties with funds to develop or expand placement prevention and family reunification services. Local social services agencies have expanded their placement prevention and family reunification activities in areas such as: pre-placement review of cases where a child is at risk of placement; and the implementation and expansion of services such as in home family-based services to prevent placement.

In spite of Minnesota efforts to prevent out of home placement, the number of children placed in substitute care has continued to rise. Since 1983, the number increased 27 percent, from 11,866 in that year, to 15,062 in 1989. This is part of a nation-wide trend. According to a Congressional report:

"Mounting child poverty and rapid increases in child abuse reports are major contributors to the dramatic increase in placement of children outside their families. It is also impossible to ignore the devastating impact that drug and alcohol abuse are having on families, propelling children into out-of-home care at an escalating rate."¹

During this same period of time Minnesota passed several watershed pieces of legislation. In 1983 the Minority Racial and Ethnic Heritage Protection Act was enacted. Key to this legislation is the requirement that child-placing agencies give due consideration to a child's race or ethnic heritage when making foster and adoptive care placements. In 1985 Minnesota passed the Indian Family Preservation Act. This legislation expanded the tribal identification and placement standards for Indian children required by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978. Finally, in 1988, Minnesota enacted the Minority Family Preservation Act. This Act

¹No Place to Call Home: Discarded Children in America, Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, U.S. House of Representatives, January 12, 1990, page 2.

was meant to further the goals of the 1983 and 1985 legislation by mandating the development of a state minority recruitment specialist position to assist child-placing agencies in their placement compliance and recruitment efforts. This Act also holds agencies further accountable by mandating that each agency develop a written plan which must outline: strategies for recruiting minority foster and adoptive families; efforts to train families, as well as agency staff, in minority cultures; and if located in an area with a significant minority population, strategies for employing minority social workers.

This report provides information on the status of minority children in foster and adoptive care by describing: trends in placement; the pre-placement screening process; and child-family race matching. The report also examines county efforts to recruit and retain minority foster and adoptive families. An analysis of these efforts is required by the 1989 Minnesota Session Laws, Chapter 282, Article 1, Section 2, Subd. 4.

2. TRENDS IN OUT OF HOME PLACEMENT

Substitute Care

Table 1 provides a picture of the recent trends in substitute care in Minnesota from 1987 through 1989.

 Table 1. Out-of-Home Placement of Children in Minnesota
 Total Caseload^a

Year	1987		1988		1989	
	no.	percent	no.	percent	no.	percent
White	8683	68.7%	9409	66.4%	10161	67.5%
Minority	2917	23.1	3436	24.3	4705	31.2
Other	42	.3	177	1.2	41	.3
Unreported	994	7.9	1141	8.1	155	1.0
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
TOTAL:	12636	100.0%	14163	100.0%	15062	100.0%

^aTotal caseload is calculated by adding the total number of children in care at the end of a calendar year, to the total number of children who exited substitute care during the same year.

As can be seen, the total number of children placed out-of-home is rising. From 1987 through 1989 total out-of-home placements grew from about 12,600 to over 15,000, or a total increase of 19.2%. Between 1987 and 1988 the rate of increase was 12.1 percent, while

the rate of increase slowed to 6.3 percent between 1988 and 1989. The data also indicate that the rate of increase is greater for minority children. Between 1987 and 1988 the rate of increase among white children was 8.4 percent, but that rate among minority children was 18.0 percent.²

Worsening economic conditions have a direct impact on these numbers. It is known that a greater proportion of minorities live in poverty; there has been an increase in families living in poverty with fewer resources to alleviate stress and resolve family conflicts. Involvement in criminal activity is more likely for drug users that are poor, so they are more likely to come to the attention of authorities. The lack of prenatal medical care may increase the number of medically fragile infants. Finally, there is a rise in teen pregnancy with fewer supports from extended family.

There is also a lack of adequate social service resources. In times of worsening economic conditions, social workers have less time and higher child protection caseloads and fewer resources (fiscal and service), and there is a tendency to use foster placement as an option in resolution of casework problems; reunification efforts are less likely to be done for the same reason.³

Minnesota appears to be part of a nation-wide trend. According to a recent Congressional report:

" . . . nearly 500,000 children are currently estimated in out-of-home placement. If current trends continue, by 1995, that population is projected to increase by an estimated 73.4% to more than 840,000 children."⁴

Pre-placement screening

There is, however, some good news hidden in the Minnesota data. The rates of increase would have been higher without the Permanency Planning efforts.

Local social services agencies are required under the Permanency Planning Grants to Counties Act to use a screening procedure before placing a child out of the home. This pre-placement screening

²Unfortunately, that same calculation cannot be made with any confidence between 1988 and 1989, because of the very large drop in the number of children whose race was unreported in 1989.

³See LeRoy H. Pelton, "Resolving the Crisis in Child Welfare," Public Welfare, Fall, 1990, pp. 19-25.

⁴No Place to Call Home, p. 5.

generally involves a social worker and supervisor and often is performed by a formal review committee. These individuals determine the necessity of a child's placement out of the home and the type of placement to be utilized. This could be a foster family home or a more restrictive facility placement. In addition, the pre-placement screening process for minority children must be culturally appropriate; it must facilitate access to culturally sensitive services.

As can be seen in Table 2, county agencies reported that they screened 21,541 children for possible out of home placement during 1989. The total caseload for that year included 8901 children who entered care that year. This means that only 41 percent of those screened entered care in 1989. By contrast, in 1987 the number of children screened was 8062 and 7091 new children entered care; that is, 88 percent of those screened because of placement risk were actually placed out of the home. Although many more children were screened in 1989 than in 1987, (an increase of 140 percent), the data suggests that the effectiveness of the screening process may have improved. It appears that without a variety of Permanency Planning efforts, the number of children in out-of-home placement would have been much higher in 1989.

 Table 2. Children Screened for Out of Home Placement, 1989

	no.	percent
White	11,522	53.5%
Minority	7,867	36.5
Unreported	2,152	10.0
	-----	-----
TOTAL:	21,541	100.0%

The Indian Child Welfare Grants, established in July of 1987, provided \$1.5 million in placement prevention, reunification, family support and advocacy efforts. Indian children were often diverted from foster placement or more rapidly reunified through the efforts of tribal or urban Indian agency staff working in the grant programs.

The Minority Family Preservation Act which reemphasized the placement preference requirements may also have contributed to keeping minority children within their own communities.

Foster Care

The patterns in the data on foster care placements are similar to those in the overall substitute care caseload. Table 3 indicates that foster care placements have risen significantly in recent

years, increasing from just under 5900 in 1987 to 7700 in 1989 (or 30.5% over the two years). Between 1987 and 1988 foster care placements rose overall by 19.5 per cent, and between 1988 and 1989 by 9.3 per cent. Combining the data in Tables 1 and 3 indicates that foster care comprised 46 per cent of out of home placements in 1987 and that this percentage had risen to 51 by 1989.

 Table 3. Minnesota's Foster Care Caseload, 1987-1989

Year	1987		1988		1989	
	no.	percent	no.	percent	no.	percent
Black	600	10.59%	756	10.99%	1136	14.84%
Am. Ind.	642	11.33	735	10.69	862	11.26
Asian/PI	259	4.57	325	4.73	283	3.70
Hispanic	83	1.46	139	2.02	185	2.42
<hr/>						
Minority						
Subtotal:	1584	26.85%	1955	27.74%	2466	32.03%
White	4064	68.89	4807	68.21	5170	67.14
Other	18	.31	115	1.63	17	.22
Unreported	233	3.95	170	2.41	47	.61
<hr/>						
TOTAL:	5899	100.00%	7047	99.99%	7700	100.00%

The minority proportion of the foster care caseload continues to increase annually. A closer look at these three years reveals that while the growth in white foster home placements slows between 1988 and 1989, the rate of growth in minority foster home placements does not. For whites, foster care placements rose 18.3 per cent between 1987 and 1988 and only 7.6 per cent between 1988 and 1989. For minorities, foster care placements increased by 23.4 per cent between 1987 and 1988 and by 26.1 per cent between 1988 and 1989.⁵ This may demonstrate a disparity between the effectiveness of permanency planning efforts between minority and non-minority clients.

When the four minority categories are examined separately, each indicates an absolute numeric increase during this three year period. During this time, the number of Black children in foster family homes passed American Indian children to become the largest minority group in foster care in Minnesota.

⁵Because proportion of "unreported" and "other" races is so low in the foster care data, the percentages between 1988 and 1989 can be meaningfully interpreted despite the drop in the percentages of "unreported" and "other" in 1989.

There are sharp differences in the rates of increase in foster home placements among the four minority groups. The rate of increase for Blacks is very high, rising from 26.0 per cent between 1987 and 1988, to 50.3 percent between 1988 and 1989. American Indian foster placements rose more slow and steadily; the rate of increase being 14.5 percent and 17.3 per cent, respectively. The Asian/Pacific Islander foster care placements actually dropped 12.9 per cent between 1988 and 1989 after showing a 25.5 per cent increase between 1987 and 1988. Although the number of Hispanics is not large, Hispanics show the largest total percentage increase during this three year period with a 67.5 per cent increase between 1987 and 1988, and a 33.1 per cent increase between 1988 and 1989. In summary, between 1987 and 1989 Blacks and Hispanics showed very large increases in foster care placements, American Indians had a modest rate of increase, and there was no clear trend among Asian/Pacific Islanders. The different patterns in the rise in placements between Indian and Black populations is suggestive both of the effectiveness of the Indian Child Welfare grants and of the need for funding minority community based services.

Minority children appear to be heavily over-represented among foster care children. Table 4 presents a comparison between the 1989 foster care placement data and 1985 Minnesota population estimates from the State Demographer's Office.

 Table 4. Race of Children in Foster Homes, 1989
 Compared to Minnesota's Population

	<u>Foster Placements</u>		<u>Minnesota^a</u>	<u>Over^b</u>
	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>1985 Est.</u>	<u>Repr.</u>
Black	1136	14.75%	1.73%	8.53
American Indian	862	11.20	.96	11.67
Asian/PI	283	3.68	1.05	3.50
Hispanic	185	2.40	.94	2.55
White	5170	67.14	96.26	.70
Other	17	.22		
Unreported	47	.61		
TOTAL:	<u>7700</u>	<u>100.00%</u>	<u>100.94%</u>	

^aThese are population estimates from the State Demographer's Office. These percentages sum to more than 100.00 because the Hispanic category includes persons of all of the other races. Remove the Hispanic percentage, and the remaining numbers sum to 100.00.

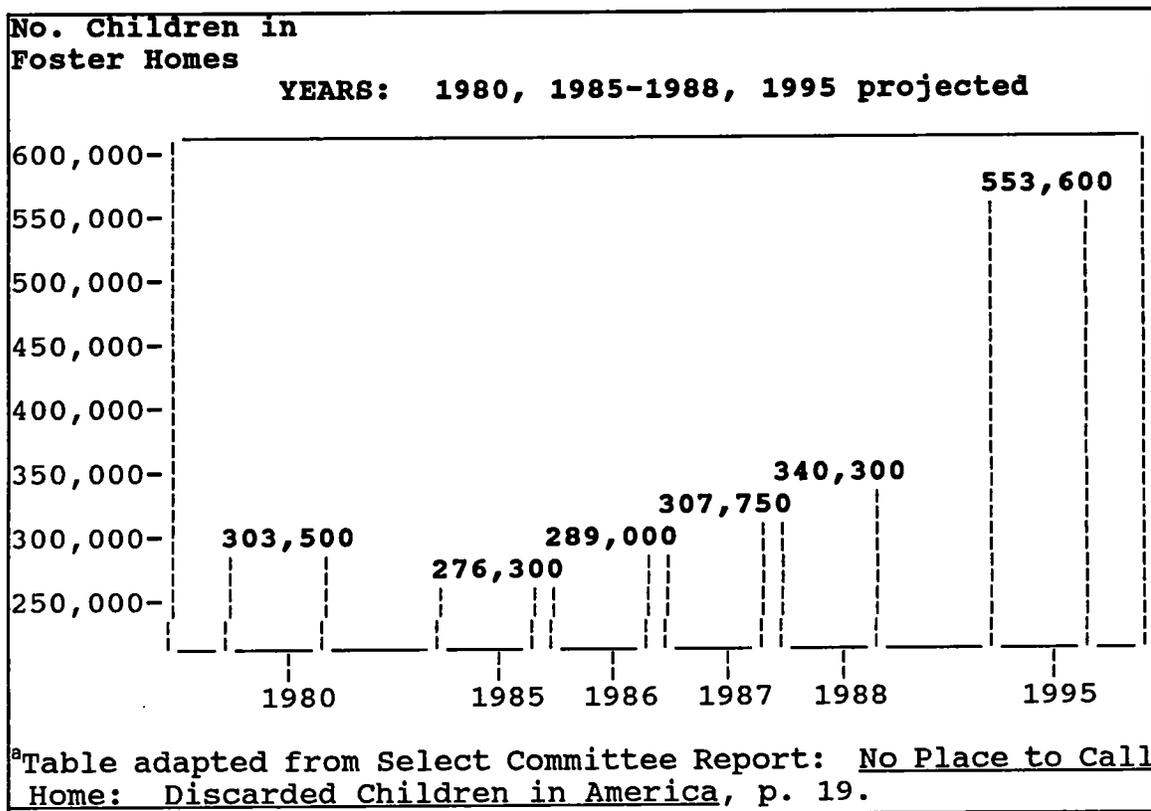
^bThis number is calculated by dividing the population percentage into the percent of foster placements.

From the data it can be seen that each of the four minority groups is substantially over-represented in contrast to their proportion of the population, ranging from about 2.5 times for Hispanic children to a high of 11.67 times for American Indian children. Collectively, these four minorities are almost seven times more likely to be in foster care than their proportion of the total population.

These findings point to the necessity for specialized prevention programs which are culturally appropriate. Also, it is necessary to focus financial resources on minority families. Finally, there is a need for more minority staff within DHS, counties, and licensed child placing agencies. The percentage of minority staff in any agency should reflect the minority client population.

Once again, Minnesota appears to be part of a national trend in both the amount and composition of children in foster care. Figure 1 presents data on trends in foster care taken from a nationwide study.

Figure 1: FOSTER CARE TRENDS IN THE UNITED STATES^a



As can be seen there was a sharp rise in the foster care case load after 1987. If the projection for 1995 is accurate and if Minnesota follows this national pattern, then Minnesota's foster home placements would increase from 7700 in 1989 to a projected 11,464 by 1995.

The tendency for minority children to be a disproportionate and rapidly growing component of foster care is also national. According to the same nationwide study:

" . . . while the majority of children in foster care is white, in 1985, minority children comprised 41% of the children in foster care; by 1988, that proportion is estimated to have increased to approximately 46%--more than twice the proportion of minority children in the nation's child population."⁶

This quote points to the fact that the over-representation of minority children within Minnesota's foster care system is substantial when the state's seven-to-one ratio is compared to the national two-to-one ratio.

⁶No Place to Call Home, p. 7.

Child-Family Race Matching

Table 5, shows the number and proportion of minority children in like-race minority foster homes. Overall, there has been virtually no change in the proportion of children being placed in foster homes of the same race/ethnicity, this proportion being almost exactly half during the years 1987 through 1989. This pattern, however, is quite different when each minority is examined separately.

 Table 5. Minority Children in Foster Homes of Same Race,
 Where the Race of the Foster Family is Known^a

	1987	1988	1989
Same Race Family Black Children	340 (68.8%) 494	372 (68.8%) 541	579 (61.7%) 938
Same Race Family Am. Indian Children	254 (51.3%) 495	326 (54.0%) 604	331 (50.1%) 661
Same Race Family Asian-PI Children	35 (17.4%) 201	46 (18.8%) 255	21 (13.6%) 154
Same Race Family ^b Hispanic Children	11 (16.4%) 67	15 (14.2%) 104	15 (10.6%) 141
Same Race Family All Minority Children	640 (50.9%) 1157	759 (50.8%) 1494	946 (50.0%) 1894

^aThe numbers presented are the number of minority children placed with foster families whose race are known. The base numbers do not equal those in Table 3, because there were a substantial number of foster care placements in which counties were not able to identify the race of the foster parents in their reports to the state. For additional discussion of reporting problems regarding race, please see Appendix A.

^bIn the future DHS will be eliminating Hispanic from the race breakdown, and a separate question will be asked about Hispanic heritage.

More Black children are placed in Black foster homes than is the case for any other minority group in Minnesota. The number of Black children placed in like race foster homes grew from 340 in 1987, to 579 in 1989. However, the percentage these comprise of all Black foster placements did not rise. This percentage is almost 68.8 in both 1987 and 1988; it then drops to 61.7 per cent in 1989. What appears to have occurred in 1989 is that the sharp

growth in Black children placed in foster care outstripped the capacity of Black foster homes.

American Indians have the next highest proportion of children placed in foster families of the same race. The number of American Indians placed in Indian foster homes rose from 254 in 1987 to 331 in 1989. Their percentage remains rather constant at slightly more than 50 per cent in each year. For this group the addition of new foster homes appears to have only kept up with the increase in the number of American Indians entering foster care placements. No explanation is known for why placement in same race foster homes is 10 to 15 percentage points lower for American Indians than for Blacks.

The seemingly low rate of same race placements for Asians and Pacific Islanders does, however, have partial explanation. Included in these caseload numbers are two special groups of children that cannot be separated out of the data. These two groups are: children imported for adoption and refugee unaccompanied minors. Children imported for adoption are not covered by the Minority Heritage Protection provisions. Refugee unaccompanied minors account for the majority of Asian children in foster care, and most of these children, although the financial responsibility of a local social service agency, are placed in foster care by a private agency. Data provided by private agencies for the first six months of 1989 indicated that 20 percent of the Asian children on their caseloads were in like race homes (the entire 20 percent were refugee unaccompanied minors).

The quite low rate of placement in same race families for Hispanics does not have a clear explanation. Although the absolute numbers are small, the percentage of Hispanic children placed in Hispanic foster homes dropped from 16.4 per cent in 1987 to 10.6 per cent in 1989. This minority group begins with a low base of foster homes with no growth despite sizeable increases in the number of Hispanic children being placed in foster care. Additional research on this problem and additional recruitment efforts for Hispanics is clearly indicated.

In conclusion, the bottom line is that a greater number of minority children are being placed outside of their own community. In 1987 517 children were placed in a family of different heritage, and that number grew to 948 by 1989.

3. FOSTER HOME RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

1989 Minority Recruitment Needs and Results

During 1989, counties reported that they had 4009 licensed foster family homes. Of these, 442 were licensed minority homes; about 25 percent (107) of these minority homes received their initial license in 1989. Also during 1989 counties reported that a total of 666 foster families left the system. Of these, 89% (or 592) were White families and 11% (or 74) were minority families. This results in a net gain of 33 minority foster homes during 1989, which represents an annual percentage gain of 8.1 per cent. Clearly this small increase cannot keep pace with the large increases in actual minority placements reported above.

How these numbers compare with the perceived and estimated need for additional foster homes can be seen in Table 6. The perceived need for additional foster homes was compiled from county responses to a DHS request for information. Only thirty-four of 87 counties (or 37%) felt that the number of minority foster family homes available was adequate to meet their placement needs (39%); The remaining 53 counties (61% indicated their minority homes needed for each category. The left hand column in Table 6 presents the distribution by minority groups of these statewide unmet needs. The unmet needs, as reported by counties, are thus 73% of the current total of 442 minority foster homes.

Juxtaposing the net gain of 33 homes in 1989 to the perceived total need of 324 indicates the seriousness of the shortfall. It would require a quadrupling of the rate of recruitment of new foster homes to meet this acknowledged unmet need in 1989 (four times 107, minus 74 not retained, equals 344). Clearly, major improvements in recruiting and retaining foster homes in Minnesota are needed.

Table 6. Unmet Need for Minority Foster Homes, 1989

	<u>Perceived Need</u>		<u>Estimated Need</u>	
	<u>Homes</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Homes</u>	<u>Children</u>
Black	148	400	161	435
American Indian	117	316	159	430
Asian/Pacific Islander	23	62	90	244
Hispanic	36	97	61	165

TOTAL:	324	693	581	1244

The remainder of Table 6 is based upon estimates. It is estimated that each minority foster family averages 2.7 child placements during each year.⁷ The number of children to be served in the foster homes to be recruited in Table 6 (the second column of data) is then estimated by multiplying the number of homes by 2.7.

The number of children needing foster care in 1989 (the fourth column of Table 6) is estimated by a process described in Appendix A. The estimated number of homes needed (the third column of data in Table 6) is calculated by dividing the estimate of children by 2.7. These estimated needs are calculated based on the assumption that every minority child should be placed in a same race home.⁸

Based upon these estimates there are an additional 147 family foster homes currently needed. The perceived need and the estimated need are close for Black foster homes. County estimates of need are significantly lower than state statistical estimates for American Indians, Asians/Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics. This may reflect the fact that Blacks are largely concentrated in the large metropolitan areas, while the other minority populations are more dispersed across the state. Smaller counties with only an occasional need for a minority placement may not perceive this as a recruitment problem, but these isolated incidents of need add up to a sizeable statewide under estimate. In addition, if the placements are short term, the county may not see this as a recruitment need. The Department will continue to monitor these trends, and will undertake special studies to focus on these problems if these trends continue.

Another issue of concern is the substantial number of cases in which the race/ethnicity of the foster families is unknown. As noted in Appendix A, the proportion of Asian/Pacific Islander children for whom the race/ethnicity of the foster parents is unknown is quite high. The Department intends to provide additional information and training to counties in an effort to reduce the amount of this missing data.

⁷The 2.7 figure was determined by dividing the 946 children in same race foster homes by the 442 minority foster families in 1989.

⁸This assumption of 100% placement of minority children in same race homes is based upon the intent of state and federal minority heritage legislation.

Foster Home Recruitment Issues

Local social services agencies were surveyed regarding their foster home needs. As previously noted, 61% of Minnesota counties indicated a need for more minority foster homes. Counties also reported that the foster home pool for White children is insufficient. Seventy-four per cent reported a shortage of white foster homes. A grand total of 85% of counties indicated a need for either white or minority foster homes; that is, only 15% felt that they had adequate foster homes to meet all their current needs.

In response to a DHS request for information in 1990, Minnesota counties indicated that the general barriers preventing the recruitment of adequate homes included:

- Homes unwilling to take teenagers
- No staff time for recruitment
- No interest by the public
- Child problems too difficult--emotional/behavior problems, multiple problems, special needs
- High costs, low pay, can't count on steady income
- Both parents now working full-time
- Lack of agency support
- Hard to find families in the right geographic area/school district
- Competition with private agencies in recruitment efforts
- Inadequate housing--wouldn't qualify under licensing rules
- Single parent families lacking financial resources to be foster parent

An almost identical list of general barriers that local social services agencies encountered in recruiting foster homes was obtained from the County Social Service Plans prepared in 1989.

This list of problems is very consistent with national trends. Several national studies have pointed out that foster care programs are being squeezed by social trends beyond either local or national control. In terms of families, the available potential pool of families in which one or more of the caregivers have adequate time to devote to being a foster parent are dwindling. The majority of families are now either single-parent or have both caregivers working full time. One study concludes:

". . . Recruitment of foster parents is a major problem. The traditional foster parent--a married woman, mostly working class or lower middle class, living with her husband, who has raised her children and is now looking for an activity which is part community service and part a very low pay occupation--no longer exists in large numbers. The increased rates of

female labor force participation, the decline in the proportion of families that are husband/wife families, and the growing discrepancies among the costs of rearing children, what women can earn in the labor market, and the limited costs foster care parents are reimbursed, has resulted in major shortages of foster parents."⁹

In terms of children, more children with very severe behavioral problems or with severe handicaps and disabilities are in need of foster home placements. These children generally demand more time and training by the caregivers. The national study concludes:

"There is no doubt, however, that the increased severity of the problems brought by many children coming into care complicates the problem of recruiting foster parents and may make it necessary to refine or reorganize the assignment. Most children entering out-of-home now are diagnosed "abused" where a decade earlier "neglect" or dependency were the major factors. The numbers of children in placement may have declined for a while in the early 1980's, but they are now rising again; and the cases are more severe and complex than before. It is not parental illness, temporary absence or unavailability that leads to placing children now, but pathology, danger, and special needs which dominate the picture. More children need residential treatment or foster homes offering specialized kinds of help, and these are not now generally available. In a major reversal of trends, more very young children (under age 5) are again entering care, and they, too, often need very specialized help. Where once foster care was adequate if a good custodial service was provided, today the complicated problems of babies with AIDS, babies born drug-addicted, babies with severe physical handicaps, difficult and unmanageable adolescents, require sophisticated, highly skilled, well-trained foster parents."¹⁰

Minority Recruitment Efforts and Issues

Minnesota Statutes, section 257.072, subd. 1, and section 259.455, mandate that child-placing agencies make special efforts to recruit foster and adoptive homes from among a child's relatives and from among families of the same racial or ethnic heritage. The statutes state that these efforts shall include contacting and working with community and religious organizations, utilizing local resources

⁹Shiela B. Kamerman and Alfred J. Kahn, Social Services for Children, Youth, and Families in the United States (The Annie B. Casey Foundation; June, 1989), pp. 179-80.

¹⁰Kamerman and Kahn, pp. 181-82.

which includes the media, and conducting outreach activities. As previously noted, 39% of counties don't perceive a need for minority foster homes. A special study would be required to evaluate the adequacy of each county's recruitment efforts. Each county's specific needs would have to be compared to resources devoted to recruitment for each minority population. That is beyond the scope of this current report.

However, local social services agencies were asked to describe county efforts to recruit minority foster families during 1989. The responses included:

- Media (newspaper, cable, radio, schools, churches)
- No special minority efforts; general recruitment
- Work with tribe or reservation
- Tribal agency does the recruitment
- Get referrals from current foster families
- Information sessions/public meetings
- Contact specific families

From the information gathered, it appears that the most organized minority foster family recruitment efforts are for American Indian children. There seem to be cooperative efforts between many counties and tribal organizations. In addition, some counties reported that they use a minority home licensed in a neighboring county.

Several counties reported that they made no special recruitment efforts because of the lack of minority placements made in their counties. Given limited resources, it would not be cost effective to recruit families where there is a low likelihood of need for homes.

In spite of county efforts, the data clearly indicate that problems exist in recruiting minority foster homes. Local social services agencies noted the following barriers specific to the recruitment of minority foster homes:

- Migrant or seasonal minority population
- Language barriers--Spanish and Asian languages
- Lack of minority staff to work in the recruitment area

Related to recruitment effort issues are issues which pertain to the retention of existing foster families. If current families leave the system, this makes it necessary to recruit additional families just to maintain the current number of foster care beds available to each county. This makes it difficult for counties to increase the foster home pool because effort and resources must be expended just to maintain the existing system. As was noted earlier, Minnesota counties lost 666 foster homes during 1989. Seventy-four of these homes were minority.

Minnesota counties also reported the following reasons as to why families left the foster care system:

- Health issues
- Burnout, stress
- Moved from county
- Licensed for specific child and child reaches adulthood
- License revoked or family encouraged to quit
- Changed from public to private agency licensure
- Lack of time due to work or other responsibilities
- Low pay
- Retirement age
- No children available which fit specific license
- Adopted the foster child

In addition, a number of families left the system because they were licensed solely for children from Northern Ireland.

Counties reported that the majority of families left the foster care system due to personal reasons. These included reaching retirement age, going back to school, getting a full time job, illness, family problems, divorce, and just wanting a change. Other cited important reasons included: lack of support services, lack of financial resources, and the appeal of private agency licensure.

Even though lack of support was a noted reason for leaving the public foster care system, local agencies do provide resources within their means to help support foster parents. These included: training for foster parents, counseling or visits with a social worker, and foster parent support groups or foster parent organizations. A few counties provided family-based services to foster families, and still fewer provided daycare or respite care. In small counties, activities such as a foster family picnic were organized to help families get together and share experiences.

4. ADOPTIONS

Under the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation and the Minority Heritage Acts, agencies are expected to recruit and place children of minority heritage for adoption into homes of extended relatives or other families of similar heritage whenever possible. Within Minnesota, agencies collaborate among themselves and the State Adoption Exchange to comply with these minority placement guidelines in placing children.

Adoptions is a much more complex process than foster care placement, however, with regard to the administration of family preservation policies. First, the distribution by race for adoptions where the race of the child is known is very different

than for foster care placements. Second, almost half of all adoptions are decrees granted to relative petitioners. Third, a substantial number of children are imported into Minnesota for adoption, usually children born in a foreign country.

As can be seen in Table 7, the distribution of adopted minority children is almost the reverse of the distribution of children placed in foster care (see Table 3, p.). The vast majority of adopted minority children are Asian and Pacific Islanders. Hispanic children are the next largest group. Blacks and American Indians, in sharp contrast to foster care placements, comprise only a small minority of adoptions. Although there are a large number of children whose race is unknown, there is reason to believe that most of these are white.

 Table 7. Adoption Summary by Child's Race, Total Decrees Granted

Race of Child	1987		1988		1989	
	no.	percent	no.	percent	no.	percent
Black	88	3.78%	112	4.22%	86	3.48%
Am. Indian	29	1.25	36	1.35	31	1.26
Asian-PI	628	27.01	735	27.66	555	22.42
Hispanic	128	5.51	171	6.44	184	7.43
Min. Tot.	873	37.55%	1054	39.67%	856	34.59%
Other Race	1	.04	2	.08	3	.12
White	706	30.37	792	29.80	693	28.00
Race Unk.	745	32.04	809	30.45	923	37.29
Total	2325	100.00%	2657	100.00%	2475	100.00%

As can be seen in Table 8, almost all of the children whose race is unknown are adoptees in decrees granted to relative petitioners. In these cases the court usually waives the investigative process which triggers the detailed DHS form. As a result, race is not available for most relative adoptions. In most of these instances the child's race is not reported and is presumed to be identical with the adopting relative.¹¹ As can be seen, when the race of relative adoptions is known, most of these children (over 80%) are white rather than minority. Over 80% of the relative adoptions involve families having a natural mother and a stepfather. These adoptions based upon remarriages can be expected to occur in proportion to the divorced population, which is overwhelmingly white in Minnesota.

¹¹There are a few exceptions in the data. There are a few stepparent adoptions where the race of the adopting stepparent is different than the race of the child.

Table 8. Relative and Nonrelative Adoptions by Race

	1987		1988		1989	
	Rel. <u>Pet.</u>	Nonrel. <u>Pet.</u>	Rel. <u>Pet.</u>	Nonrel. <u>Pet.</u>	Rel. <u>Pet.</u>	Nonrel. <u>Pet.</u>
Minority	39	834	58	996	34	822
White	259	447	346	446	323	370
Race Unkn	730	15	797	12	900	23
TOTAL:	1,028	1,296	1,201	1,454	1,257	1,215

Tables 9a through 9c provide data on the matching of children and adopting families by race for all those children for whom race is known. Most of these children are, therefore, adopted into non-relative homes. These tables break out these children by place of birth: Table 9a provides data on foreign born children; Table 9b on Minnesota born children; and Table 9c on children born elsewhere in the United States.

Table 9a. Foreign Born Minority Children with Adoptions Finalized
Adoptive Family Same Race and Total race known by race.

	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>
Same Race Family	3 (37.5%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (00.0%)
Black Children	8	6	12
Same Race Family	0 (00.0%)	0 (00.0%)	0 (00.0%)
Am. Indian Children	0	0	0
Same Race Family	9 (1.5%)	22 (3.1%)	8 (1.5%)
Asian-PI Children	605	715	536
Same Race Family	6 (6.1%)	1 (0.7%)	1 (0.6%)
Hispanic Children	99	141	159
Same Race Family	18 (2.5%)	24 (2.8%)	9 (1.3%)
Minority Children	712	862	707

As can be seen, the vast majority of the Asian and Pacific Islander children and most of the Hispanic Children are imported for adoption from another country. Since the Korean War, Minnesota has had a long history of adopting foreign born Asian children. Table 9a also reveals that very few of these children are placed in like race/ethnicity homes; from other sources it is known that most of these homes are white. It should be noted that the provisions of the Minnesota Indian Family Heritage Preservation Acts do not apply to children imported for adoption.

Table 9b. Minnesota Born Minority Children with Adoptions Finalized
Adoptive Family Same Race and Total race known by race.

	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>
Same Race Family	22 (55.0%)	34 (59.6%)	16 (51.6%)
Black Children	40	57	31
Same Race Family	11 (52.4%)	14 (51.9%)	10 (40.0%)
Am. Indian Children	21	27	25
Same Race Family	1 (9.1%)	4 (44.4%)	1 (7.7%)
Asian-PI Children	11	9	13
Same Race Family	7 (37.5%)	3 (21.4%)	5 (33.3%)
Hispanic Children	16	14	15
Same Race Family	41 (46.6%)	55 (51.4%)	32 (38.1%)
Minority Children	88	107	84

Although the numbers are small, Table 9b indicates a pattern of adoption into like race/ethnicity families which is similar to that found among minority foster care placements. The fact that the percentages are slightly lower for adoptions may reflect the fact that some of these families were former foster parents and that the foster care placements in earlier years for which racial data are not available had even lower rates of placement in like race/ethnicity foster homes.

Table 9c. Other U.S. Born Minority Children with Adoptions
Finalized Family Same Race and Total race known by race.

	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>
Same Race Family	3 (7.7%)	11 (22.9%)	8 (18.6%)
Black Children	39	48	43
Same Race Family	4 (66.7%)	0 (00.0%)	4 (66.7%)
Am. Indian Children	6	3	6
Same Race Family	2 (40.0%)	2 (33.3%)	0 (00.0%)
Asian-PI Children	5	6	2
Same Race Family	2 (15.4%)	2 (16.7%)	0 (00.0%)
Hispanic Children	13	12	2
Same Race Family	11 (17.5%)	15 (21.7%)	12 (22.6%)
Minority Children	63	69	53

Table 9c presents data on minority children born in other states, most of whom were imported for adoption. As can be seen, a very small proportion of these children are adopted into like race/ethnicity families. Apparently, agencies in other states are also seeking adoptive homes for children of minority heritage and are also facing a shortage of minority homes. Consequently, many children of minority heritage, especially of Black heritage, are placed in Minnesota into non-like race/ethnicity homes.

Agencies are working more closely with American Indian Tribes to identify the Indian child's eligibility for Tribal membership and to work cooperatively on locating Indian adoptive homes. Efforts are also made to seek adoptive families with Indian heritage when a child is not eligible for tribal membership. To reflect policies established by Public Law 96-272 and the Indian Child Welfare Act, agency adoptive home studies are to reflect the prospective family's knowledge and appreciation of the child's minority heritage.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department can do little about the state and national demographic trends and the unfortunate trend that has more seriously impaired young children requiring foster home placements. There are, however, ways to improve Minnesota's public foster care system. Recommendations include:

1. Increase the availability of culturally appropriate services to strengthen families, avoiding the need to place children out side the family home.
2. Increase the understanding and implementation of the following pieces of legislation to ensure the appropriate placement of minority children: the Minority Child Heritage Protection Act, the Minority Heritage Family Preservation Act, and the Indian Family Preservation Act.
3. Develop and implement targeted recruitment efforts to increase the number of minority foster homes within each minority population.
4. All public and private agencies should develop recruitment efforts to employ and maintain a culturally diverse staff reflective of the families and children they serve.
5. Develop strategies to remove barriers to licensing requirements.
6. Develop a funding base for foster parents which competes with employability opportunities.
7. Develop a foster family recruitment strategy that facilitates access for persons on public assistance.
8. Develop and provide support services which will enhance the retention of foster parents currently in the system. Examples include: increased respite care, increased day care, employee assistance programs, and access to behavior management information.
9. Increase cultural sensitivity training efforts. This training should be aimed at social service staff as well as foster parents.
10. Improve data reporting in such a way that the number of children and foster families whose race is unreported decreases.

Appendix A. Race codes, estimation procedures and data quality

The Department is now engaged in several efforts to improve the quality of data regarding the race and ethnicity of persons. During 1990 and 1991 the Department will be shifting to the Census Department race codes. These codes separate the racial data (white, black, american indian, asian or pacific islander) from data about ethnicity (hispanic, non-hispanic). In addition, there will be three race codes per individual providing substantially more data about multi-racial persons and families. Since minorities in Minnesota include both racial and ethnic groups, the correct, but awkward, adjective "race/ethnic" is used throughout this report.

Table A-1.
Minority Racial/Ethnic Data and Estimates, 1989

<u>Race</u>	(a) <u>Total Children</u>	(b) <u>Race of FH Known</u>	(c) <u>Race of FH Unknown</u>	(d) <u>No. of Ch. in Min. FH</u>
Black	1136	938	198	579
Amer. Ind.	862	661	201	331
Asian/PI	283	154	129	21
Hispanic	185	141	44	15
Min. Total	<u>2466</u>	<u>1894</u>	<u>572</u>	<u>946</u>

Table A-1, Cont'd.

<u>Race</u>	(f) <u>Estimate of Children in Same Race Family Where Race of FH Unkn.</u> <u>(d/b*c)</u>	(g) <u>Estimated No. of Children in Same Race FH</u> <u>(d+f)</u>	(h) <u>Estimated Placements Needed</u> <u>(b-d)+(c-f)</u>
Black	122	701	435
Amer. Ind.	101	432	430
Asian/PI	18	39	244
Hispanic	5	20	165
Min. Total	<u> </u>	<u>1192</u>	<u>1274</u>

Table A-1 presents data on minority children by whether the race of the foster home is known or not known. An estimate for the number of children needing minority family homes can be estimated from these numbers in the following manner. The number of children in like race/ethnicity homes is the number of such children in those homes plus an estimate of the number placed in like race homes where the race of the foster parent is unknown. If we assume no bias in whether the race of the foster parents is known or not, then the ratio of same race to different race among the homes where race is known is a good estimator for that number where the race of the foster homes is unknown. This calculation is performed in column (f); column (d) is divided by column (b) to derive the proportion of children in same race/ethnicity family which is then multiplied by the number of children placed in a family where the race/ethnicity is unknown. The total estimate of children placed in same race/ethnicity homes is then column (d) plus column (f).

If the 1192 children estimated to be in like race/ethnicity foster homes is divided by the 442 minority foster homes statewide, the average number of foster placements each home handled is estimated to be 2.7. This includes both homes with multiple children and homes that have many different children for short periods of time during the year. This estimate assumes that very few white children are placed in minority foster homes.

The number of children not placed in same race/ethnicity foster homes is estimated by calculating the residuals by the formula in column (g). That number of children is then divided by the 2.7 ration of children/home to arrive at an estimate of needed homes. These calculations assume that the new homes would have the same "utilization" patterns as the existing homes.

Dividing column (c) by column (a) indicates that the race/ethnicity of the foster family was unknown for 17.4% of Black children, 23.3% of American Indian children, 45.6% of Asian or Pacific Islander children, and 23.8% for Hispanic children. This is a high percentage generally, but this percentage is especially high for Asian or Pacific Islander children. The Department intends to distribute information and provide training to counties in an effort to reduce this high level of missing data.