

June 2024

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with the Bloom team about foster care and volunteer support in Tennessee. We learned so much from our conversations and workshops with foster parents, child placing agencies, volunteer organizations who support foster families, the TN Department of Children's Services, and the Governor's Office for Faith-based and Community Initiatives. We are grateful to you for walking us through your journey or process and for providing valuable feedback. All of it will contribute to the new Every Child Tennessee website.

Part of our process is to share back what we heard so you know your feedback is being used productively. This is a short summary of what we learned from all of you.

### **What we heard from foster parents**

- You want the site to be easy to use on your phone, because so many of you are likely to view it that way.
- When you were new to fostering, you wanted to know what to expect, so that you were prepared and confident that you could foster. You asked for more specifics about the certification process, how agencies help families, and stories about what it's really like to foster.
- You were also interested in selecting organizations that fit your values and knowing how your personal information would be used in the matching process.

### **What we heard from foster agencies**

- You want Foster Leads that will support and affirm the kids in care for who they are, so that you can create safe placements and supports for all children in foster care.
- You want to leverage Every Child TN's targeted marketing to amplify your outreach, so that you can fill the gaps and recruit the types of foster families needed most. In particular, you're looking for homes for teens and young adults, homes for sibling sets, Spanish-speaking families, Black families, Hispanic or Latino families, or other families of color, queer-affirming families, families that can support children with higher medical or behavioral needs, and families with lived experience or generational trauma. A few agencies are looking specifically for Christian couples.
- You want to have better data to track your efforts.

## What we heard from volunteer organizations

- You want Volunteer Leads that will support and affirm the kids in care for who they are.
- You want Volunteer Leads who reflect the demographics of kids in foster care, so that they can more easily identify with volunteers and have role models to look up to. In particular, you're looking for volunteers who want to serve teens and young adults, speak Spanish, are Black, Hispanic or Latino, or other person of color, are queer affirming, represent diverse churches, are male, are younger, and are from a lower socioeconomic status.
- You want Volunteer Leads to know that you will provide options tailored to them, based on whether they're a group or have specific interests and abilities.

The team at The Contingent is now working to build the website, incorporating your feedback, which is currently set to launch in August 2024.

Thank you for all your contributions to this work! If you feel like we missed something or didn't capture something correctly, please let us know at [bloom-ectn@bloomworks.digital](mailto:bloom-ectn@bloomworks.digital).

Thank you,

The Bloom Every Child Tennessee Team