

One Church One Child

One Church One Child (OCOC) was founded in Illinois in 1980 by Father George Clements. It was created to address long-standing gaps in recruitment of adoptive and foster families in the African-American community. The program is based on the idea that it is achievable to find one family in every participating church to adopt one child.

OCOC programs educate, recruit, and advocate for families to foster and/or adopt African-American children in the child welfare system. *One Church One Child* works in partnership with state and local social service departments and agencies to recruit potential foster/adoptive families and decrease the amount of time children are in foster care waiting for permanent placement. The relationships built between churches and child welfare agencies are key to the program's success.

OCOC programs are developed within the community that they serve. Local volunteers are trained to present at community churches and then engage church members to recruit foster/adoptive families. For example, the Texas OCOC program familiarizes church congregations with the children waiting to be adopted, identifies families in each church that are willing to adopt, educates the minority community about the need for adoptive homes, and provides support services to adoptive families and children. Programs also may provide orientation sessions for prospective adoptive families.

OCOC programs have operated in at least 32 states, including New York, Virginia, Idaho, Mississippi, Maryland, Oklahoma, North Carolina, and Texas.

Resources needed for implementation

Agencies or organizations interested in becoming OCOC member programs undergo an intake process with the national office. Staffing varies among programs, but may include a program coordinator and board members of various religious dominations. A member of the congregation may serve as a liaison between the church and OCOC program. According to a 2004 survey that sampled a small number of OCOC programs, funding was predominantly from federal and state sources. Many programs reported receiving smaller levels of funding from private foundations and donations.

A manual is available for purchase from National OCOC's website and best practices for governance and implementation of programs are outlined in the OCOC Best Practices Document.

For More Information

<http://www.nationalococ.org/>

Evidence base

In 2004, the Children's Bureau funded the National Network of Adoption Advocacy Programs (NNAAP) to provide technical assistance and evaluation support to OCOC. No recent studies are available. One Church One Child has been reviewed by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC) and is listed in the CEBC registry.