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Our homefinders are listed  
on the back.

*These services are provided by  
Northern Rivers Family of Services  
and member agencies.*

**NORTHERN  
RIVERS**

# Choosing a Foster Care Agency

*Be part of a supportive network of more than 250 foster homes  
across more than 20 counties in upstate New York.*

Congratulations on deciding to be a foster parent! Now comes the next part—finding the right team to support you in your journey. In New York state, you have a choice of agencies that can help you navigate state and county regulations, and provide extra support and additional resources, 24/7/365. Your choice can make the difference between a successful parenting experience or a challenging one. We hope the following hints will help you on your journey to becoming a foster parent.

## Do your homework!

Identify all the agencies that serve your area, and talk to them all. How did each call make you feel? Were your calls welcomed? Were your questions answered respectfully and clearly?

## Ask questions.

- Why should prospective foster parents choose to work through that foster agency?
- When and how often do they hold orientation meetings?
- Is there a stipend to cover costs associated with a youth in care? How much?
- Do they routinely place older children?
- Have they worked with families like yours?

## Attend orientation meetings at all the agencies you feel comfortable with.

At the meeting:

- Did you feel comfortable?
- Was the information clear, realistic, and detailed?
- Was the staff respectful and encouraging to you as a prospective parent?
- Did they speak of the children and their birth families respectfully?
- Were you able to hear from experienced parents who fostered and/or adopted through the agency?
- Can you follow up by phone or email with the staff or volunteers if you have more questions?
- Is there a cost for any part of the services?
- What kind of agency support will be available after a child is placed in your home?
- How are those services funded?
- Did they downplay the difficulties of the children who need placement, or did they overemphasize the negative?
- Look for a balance of realism and enthusiasm.

## After contacting appropriate agencies, think about your reactions to each one.

- Does the agency employ people you trust and feel comfortable with?
- Does the agency have similar goals and beliefs to your own?
- Is proximity and/or transportation an issue?
- Does the agency have experience with the kind of child(ren) you have in mind?
- Does the agency have experience with families like yours?

(over)

## Time to compare and contrast.

Once you've completed your "research," choose the agency that "fits" you, your family, and your lifestyle the best. Feel free to discuss your choice with others whose input you value, but remember that the final decision is up to you. No agency is perfect; no prospective parent is perfect; with the right agency, however, you can make a difference to a child that will last a lifetime.

# The Northern Rivers Difference

We hope you'll be a Northern Rivers foster parent.

As a Northern Rivers foster parent, you're never alone because we believe that foster parents deserve the best support, including:

- A team of clinicians, nurses, case workers, and support staff available 24/7/365, both on call and in home
- Full- and part-time fostering opportunities to make sure you have the right fit
- Monthly stipends for the care and support of foster children
- Full health and wellness coverage for all foster children
- Extensive online resources, including discussion groups, training materials, feedback to and from program staff, and connections with other foster families
- Services delivered through a trauma-informed care model that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of trauma on foster children
- A network of more than 300 foster homes in upstate New York with the ability to serve more than 20 counties

## Ready to become a Northern Rivers foster parent?

Interested in opening your home to a foster child?

With offices conveniently located across New York state, our Homefinders are ready to help and answer your questions.

### Capital Region

#### Albany & Rensselaer Counties

401 New Karner Road  
Albany, NY 12205

Stephanie Klein  
518.223.3828  
Stephanie.Klein@nrfs.org

#### Schenectady County

122 Park Avenue  
Schenectady, NY 12304

Jenny McMillen, MS  
518.257.2919  
Jenny.McMillen@nrfs.org

### Hudson Valley Region

#### Columbia, Dutchess, Greene & Ulster Counties

886 Columbia Street  
Hudson, NY 12534

Alexandra Edwards  
518.281.0760  
Alexandra.Edwards@nrfs.org

### Mohawk Valley Region

#### Fulton, Montgomery & Schoharie Counties

73 N. Main Street  
Gloversville, NY 12078

Jolene Olsen  
518.545.6345  
Jolene.Olsen@nrfs.org

#### Herkimer, Madison & Oneida Counties

417-419 N. Main Street  
Herkimer, NY 13350

Kari Judd  
315.414.9855  
Kari.Judd@nrfs.org

### North Country Region

#### Essex, Saratoga, Warren & Washington Counties

375 Bay Road, Suite 203  
Queensbury, NY 12804

Lauren O'Connor  
518.769.0404  
Lauren.OConnor@nrfs.org

### Southern Tier Region

#### Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Otsego & Tompkins

215 Front Street  
Binghamton, NY 13905

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