



National Council For Adoption



ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2024

May 1, 2023 – April 30, 2024

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends of adoption,

Do you know how many lives your support for NCFA touches? The numbers tell a story of increasing reach and impact, of evolution and growth which wouldn't be possible without you.

But that's only part of the story! I also wanted to share with you the words and voices and heartfelt thanks of the individuals whose lives you've touched. You'll find them throughout the pages of this year's NCFA annual report.

Some of these comments have come spontaneously, from emails or social media posts; others were shared with us through surveys and questionnaires evaluating our work.

Together, they tell a story of thriving children, flourishing families, and profound gratitude to you for your loyal and generous support.

Sincerely,

DR. RYAN HANLON
PRESIDENT & CEO



OUR YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

With prior year comparisons



5,350

Advocacy messages sent via
our online action center

2023: 2,632 | 2022: 1,350



43

Meetings with policymakers

2023: 25 | 2022: 24



51

Interviews & Media Citations

2023: 41 | 2022: 36



2,226

Individuals taking adoption
education courses through our
learning management system

2023: 2,127 | 2022: 1,400



4,744

Individuals taking adoption
education live webinars

2023: 2,701 | 2022: 1,337

*All numbers reflect NCFA's 2024 fiscal year
(May 1, 2023-April 30, 2024)

LEARNING FROM ADOPTION EXPERIENCES

Beginning in 2021, NCFA has been working to assemble the largest and most comprehensive collection of data to date covering the entire adoption experience from all perspectives. In 2022, we published our findings from surveying more than 4,600 adoptive parents, and in 2023 we released the results we received from more than 1,400 birth parents.

In April 2024, we completed this ambitious project with survey data collected from more than 1,200 adult adoptees. Our questions focused on some essential but unexplored questions: the nuances of adoptees' experiences, their wellbeing into adulthood and across the lifespan, and the best parenting strategies to support that wellbeing.

"The research that NCFA is doing is so crucial and helpful to our work. We can only continue to serve birth parents and adoptive parents better if we hear from them and include their voices and experiences!"

—NCFA member agency



WHAT WERE OUR KEY FINDINGS?

- The majority of adoptees are satisfied with their adoption and enjoy good overall life satisfaction.
- The majority of adoptees believe adoption can work in the best interests of adoptees, birth parents, and adoptive parents.
- Many adoptees lack information about their birth family health history.
- Many adoptees wanted but did not receive post-adoption services.
- Adoptees stressed the importance of open and honest communication about adoption-related issues.
- Adoptees emphasized the importance of birth family connections and engagement.

WHAT WILL WE DO WITH THIS INFORMATION?

- Encourage hopeful parents to step forward with confidence into an adoption journey.
- Increase education and support for adoptees searching for their health history.
- Help agencies to increase post-adoption support offerings and opportunities.
- Counsel open conversations and connection with birth family.

WHAT ADVICE DID ADOPTEES HAVE FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS?

"Be in community with other adoptees and if possible, people from the adoptees' birth culture in the case of interracial or international adoption."

"[It is] very important to seek counseling, not only for the process with the child, but for yourselves so you have a safe place to process all the emotions, changes and life experiences adoption brings."

"Always keep the door open for discussion. Feelings can change. Even as an adult, difficult feelings can come up and need to be processed."

"Your child's biological background and relationships are an important part of who they are and can be a gaping hole if missing...and is in no way, shape or form a reflection of your parenting or any perceived shortcomings...All you can do is be supportive and loving about it."

"Understand that adoption can be complex, and it'll take a lot of education and stepping out of their comfort zone. It's not as easy as 'you can JUST adopt.'"

"One of the most important things we can do, is have the child more involved in the decision process of where they will be placed. It is so important for them to be placed somewhere 'they chose' rather than just being placed with a family the agency chooses."

Profiles in
Adoption
ADULT
ADOPTEE
EXPERIENCES

By Ryan Harrison, Nicole Davi, Matthew Quade, and Abigail Lindner

NCFR
National Council For Adoption

READ ALL THREE
PROFILES IN ADOPTION
REPORTS AT

adoptioncouncil.org/research

NATIONAL ADOPTION CONFERENCE

The National Adoption Conference is the nation's premier annual gathering of adoption social workers and agency professionals.

In 2023, the conference drew 330 attendees from all of the country to St. Louis, Missouri, for three separate professional tracks: the adoption process, clinical practice, and ethics and cultural competency. The anchor and connecting thread of the 2023 conference was learning directly from those we serve, and our keynote sessions included a panel of birth mothers and one of adult adoptees.

The full conference offered thirty different breakout sessions and workshops, with the opportunity for adoption social workers to earn eleven continuing education credits that are required for their licensure, covering topics like:

- addressing the long-term impact of trauma on children
- preventing adoption disruption and dissolution
- providing ongoing support for adult adoptees
- sensitively managing contact between adoptive and birth families
- improving services for families adopting children with special needs or medical challenges



FALL VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

While the support of our donors and sponsors helps to keep the National Adoption Conference affordable for attendees, we also know that not everyone in our network is able to travel.

To that end, in November 2023 we hosted our second annual online conference, presented over Zoom so that busy adoption professionals can participate from their offices or homes. The online conference featured three workshops that each built on previous NCFA trainings to deepen knowledge and understanding:

- *Elevating Home Study Assessments to Equip and Strengthen Families*
- *Overcoming Blocked Care: How to Reach Families Resistant to Support*
- *Adoption After Infertility: Answers to Tough Questions*

The fourth session, *Putting it All Together: A Comprehensive Look at Adoption Experiences*, drew from NCFA's *Profiles in Adoption* research projects, with a panel of one adoptive parent, one birth parent, and one adoptee discussing their experiences in light of NCFA's findings from this project.

HEAR WHAT OUR CONFERENCE ATTENDEES ARE SAYING!

"We are so grateful for the opportunities you offer to learn and grow with others passionate about adoption."

"Thank you for an inspiring lineup of speakers and for bringing the adoption community together!"

"Thank you for the knowledge gained, connections made, and inspiration to be the BEST for the families we serve."

READ ABOUT NCFA'S
ANNUAL CONFERENCE
AND OTHER EVENTS AT

adoptioncouncil.org/events



ADVOCATING FOR ADOPTION

During this past fiscal year, NCFA's advocacy work – meeting with lawmakers, educating the public, and rallying support from our network – has been focused on these priority items of legislation.

The ADOPT Act (H.R. 6220)

This comprehensive legislation protects adoptive families, children, and expectant mothers from exploitation by unlicensed adoption intermediaries (“baby brokers”) and ensures that adoption providers and attorneys operate only in states where they are licensed to do so.

Adoption Tax Credit Refundability Act (S. 2895/H.R. 3662)

This bill would make the preexisting Adoption Tax Credit refundable, helping more families, especially low and moderate income families, afford the costs of adopting a child, so that more children can both find permanent homes and get access to essential support services.

Adoption Counts Act (H.R. 6700)

This bill would require states to report adoption data annually to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), allowing providing policymakers and service providers to make more informed decisions by providing more accurate, comprehensive data on private domestic adoptions in the United States.

ADVANCING POLICY TOGETHER



While we work toward a more broad-based legislative solution, at NCFA's request, the federal appropriations bill that passed this spring included a directive to the Federal Trade Commission to review false advertising by unlicensed, for-profit online intermediaries that prey upon vulnerable expectant parents and hopeful adoptive parents.

In Good Standing Adoption Agencies Act (H.R. 5540)

This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to publish an annually updated list of adoption agencies in good standing in each state across the United States, helping expectant and birth parents as well as hopeful adoptive parents to avoid working with an unlicensed baby broker.

Protecting All Parents and Adoptees Act (H.R. 6529)

This bill would create a National Responsible Father Registry to increase coordination between states and involved parties throughout the adoption process and facilitate the timely notification of adoption proceedings to out-of-state possible biological fathers.

Hospital Adoption Education Act (H.R. 1475)

The majority of ob-gyn nursing staff are uninformed or misinformed when it comes to adoption. This bill directs the development of programs to close the gap in adoption education and standardize healthcare practice in providing ethical, compassionate care to expectant, birth, and adoptive parents.

Voluntary Limited Accreditation for Adoption Services Act (S. 3551)

Since 2008, when adoption agencies first became federally accredited for intercountry adoption, the majority of agencies have chosen to relinquish their accreditation, because federal accreditors currently require agencies to demonstrate capacity to meet standards that do not apply to them. This bill changes that – allowing agencies that don't have international placement programs to maintain accreditation and oversight of the services they do provide.

FINDING COMMON GROUND

Last year the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) released a flurry of proposed regulatory changes that would have increased processing times and costs for families adopting internationally. NCFA mounted a strong response, challenging regulatory changes that would make it more difficult for families to adopt. This past winter, USCIS informed us they dropped many of their proposed fee increases and even *eliminated* a \$1,000+ fee for adoptees who need a certification of citizenship.



NCFA also launched two petitions this past year to rally support for urgent intercountry adoption issues.

China

It has been more than four years since China suspended the adoptions of approximately 400 waiting children who are matched with families in the United States. During this time, waiting families have remained steadfast in their hope and desire to complete their adoptions. In December, NCFA gathered **more than 2,700 signatures** on a petition to U.S. and Chinese authorities to open communication and work together to get answers for waiting families, helping trigger a meeting at Chinese embassy in Washington D.C. to discuss solutions work toward a solution.

Haiti

As humanitarian conditions deteriorated in Haiti, NCFA has urged Congress and the State Department to find a solution for approximately 100 children waiting in Haiti who have been matched with adoptive families in the U.S. Earlier this year, after NCFA generated **4,600 contacts to Congress and 5,200 petition signatures**, we received word that exit letters were issued for all children with a completed adoption, which constitutes more than half the total group of waiting children.

"The support of NCFA means everything to us and our families."

"Speaking on behalf of my family and many others, thank you for your unwavering support. We are so incredibly lucky to have you in our corner."

HEAR WHAT OUR ADVOCATE FAMILIES ARE SAYING

ADOPTION HALL OF FAME

Each year since 1982, the NCFA community has celebrated those who are making a difference in the adoption community. The roll of past honorees for our awards program has included Olympians and Presidents, business leaders and journalists, alongside ordinary Americans who open their hearts and homes to some of the most vulnerable children.

Last November, the Adoption Hall of Fame ceremony and reception honored six individuals:

- Rep. Annie Kuster
- Rep. Jackie Walorski (posthumously)
- Rep. Danny Davis
- Celeste Liversidge
- Rep. Robert Aderholt
- Mary Beth Chapman

Our 2023 AHOF awardees are united by their work to make adoption more affordable for more families, while ensuring it operates on an ethical footing. Earlier in the same day as the ceremony, NCFA partnered with Ethical Family Building and the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute to host a briefing for Members of Congress and their staff on both adoption affordability and on the problem of unlicensed intermediaries (which, in addition to their unethical activity, also drive up the cost of adoption across the board).



Meet Carolyn!

Carolyn Bolton joined NCFA this year as our Advocacy Manager, responsible for rallying support around legislative priorities that bolster adoption and strengthen families. Before joining NCFA, Carolyn was communications and marketing director for a charitable fund in northern Virginia. She has also previously worked in journalism as a general-assignment reporter and content editor, and as a senior content specialist for a public relations firm. She is a graduate of Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, where she earned her bachelor's degree in political communications. Her work has appeared in numerous media outlets, including the Wall Street Journal, USA Today and CNN, among others.



EDUCATING FOR EVERY ADOPTION EXPERIENCE

NCFA staff produced and presented eight new adoption education webinars in FY2024:

- Adult Attachment Styles as a Home Study Assessment Tool
- Navigating Adoptions with Children Already in the Family
- Adoption Subsidies 101: Understanding Federal and State Adoption Assistance
- Maintaining and Strengthening Birth Family Relationships Postplacement
- Promoting Adoption of Teens: Innovative and Intentional Approaches
- Completing and Preserving Adoption for Children with Challenging Behaviors
- Parenting Children of a Different Race or Culture
- Trauma-Informed Parenting for Adoptive Parents, Part 1



ADOPTION SUBSIDIES

The vast majority of children who are placed for adoption from foster care are eligible for an adoption subsidy from their state government, and even some children who were not in the foster system will qualify based on a medical need or other special situation.

To help more parents take advantage of this little-understood benefit, last year NCFA produced a comprehensive set of resources: *How to Know if You Qualify for Adoption Assistance*; *What Expenses Does an Adoption Subsidy Cover?*; and *The Top Five Mistakes People Make When Applying for Adoption Assistance*.

Find all this information at adoptioncouncil.org/adoption-assistance-and-subsidies.

HEAR WHAT OUR WEBINAR ATTENDEES ARE SAYING!

"I recently adopted children from foster care and I wish I had taken this training earlier! I will use it to advise other foster parents."

"We are in pre-adoption. This has definitely helped us understand our boys and we will definitely be using many of techniques spoken about."

"I love this webinar because it gave tangible advice on how to support adoptive parents before and after adopting a child."



NCFA'S ONLINE COURSE CATALOG NOW INCLUDES MORE THAN 90 **FREE OR LOW-COST ADOPTION EDUCATION WEBINARS FOR PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS**, COVERING EVERY TYPE OF ADOPTION EXPERIENCE. SEE THEM ALL AT:

adoption.TalentLMS.com

ADOPTION ADVOCATE

NCFA also continues to publish the Adoption Advocate, distributed to an audience of more than 20,000 parents, professionals, and advocates in the adoption constellation.

"As we get ready to adopt, this is the first and ONLY adoption training we've found that addressed this important topic."
-NCFA webinar attendee

Adoption Advocate #177: I Spy Helpful Help

Have you been in search of a therapist to support your foster, adoptive, or kinship family, but stopped looking because you didn't know what qualifications to look for, what questions to ask, or how to know if they would be a good fit for your family? This article offers a guide to seeking adoption-competent support.

Adoption Advocate #176: Stepping Out of Adoption's Shadow

With the ever-increasing cost and unpredictability of private domestic adoption corresponding closely with the internet's increased role in private domestic adoption, many in the adoption community are worried about unlicensed adoption intermediaries and online adoption advertising. This article offers an in-depth analysis of hundreds of online advertisements targeting expectant mothers and prospective adoptive parents.

Adoption Advocate #175: Understanding the Adoption and Safe Families Act

The Adoption and Safe Families Act legislation (ASFA) is under increased scrutiny, with some even calling for its repeal. An accurate understanding of the history and implementation of this landmark child welfare legislation is more important than ever. This article will help readers understand what ASFA does and its impact on children and families.

adoptioncouncil.org/adoption-advocate

Meet Leah!

Leah Sutterlin joined NCFA this spring as our Adoption Communications Manager, working to share stories from those connected to adoption about its positive impact on their lives. Leah comes from a business and technology background and is passionate about data-driven storytelling. She also brings personal experience as an adoptee from China and previous work experience in the foster care and adoption space with the Christian Alliance for Orphans and Help One Child in the foster care and adoption space. Leah graduated from the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. She and her husband live in California's Bay Area.





Meet Emily!

Emily Kwiatkowski joined NCFA in 2024 as the Education and Training Coordinator. Prior to joining NCFA as a staff member, Emily served as a caseworker for children in foster care. Emily brings her lived experience as a domestic adoptee to elevate the voices and best interests of children and families.

Emily earned a B.S. in Social Work from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2022 and an MSW from The University of Pittsburgh in 2023, and interned with NCFA during her college years. She serves as Secretary of the Emerging Leaders Council at the Center for Adoption Support and Education, where she writes, speaks, and shares her story to make a lasting impact in the world of adoption.

Adoption Advocate #174: Improving Open Adoptions

This article covers what openness means in the context of adoption and how adoptive parents can, through openness, help adoptees integrate and heal. Lori Holden, adoptive parent, author, speaker, and podcaster, proposes three shifts adoptive parents can make to support healing and integration for adoptees in the ways they “do” adoption in their homes and within the larger culture?

In fiscal year 2024, NCFA was cited or quoted by these media outlets:

The Washington Post
National Public Radio
The Daily Mail
ABC News
WebMD.com
NBC Nightly News
Politico



Adoption Advocate #173: Exploring Medication for Adopted Children

As more adoptive parents seek healing for their children through mental health services, they are part of an overall rise in the general population of children and adolescents whose mental health and behavioral treatment plans involve medication. In this article, a child psychiatrist outlines common concerns and considerations for psychotropic medications, when to worry, tips for observing, describing, and understanding your child's behavior, and how to develop a team approach for parents, children, doctors, and teachers.

Adoption Advocate #172: The Value of Adoptee Voices

In a field saturated with research and best practices on adoption competency and adoption-informed care, there is much value in creating intentional spaces where we can learn directly from adoptees. This article discusses how adoptees hold valuable perspectives and can offer a wealth of knowledge to adoptive parents, prospective adoptive families, adoption professionals, and the wider community.

FINANCIALS & FUNDRAISING



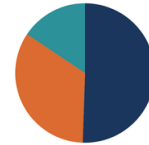
Income: Fiscal Year 2024 (May 1, 2023-April 30, 2024)

● Contributions and grants	\$521,794
● Program revenue (conferences, membership, training)	\$411,437
● Investment and other income	\$122,558
Total Income, FY24	\$1,055,789



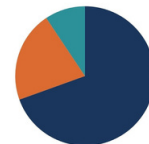
Income: Fiscal Year 2023 (May 1, 2022-April 30, 2023)

● Contributions and grants	\$528,033
● Program revenue (conferences, membership, training)	\$353,745
● Investment and other income	\$163,151
Total Income, FY23	\$1,044,929



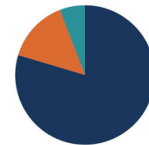
Expenses: Fiscal Year 2024 (May 1, 2023-April 30, 2024)

● Program services	\$1,017,971
● Management and general	\$309,379
● Fundraising	\$137,357
Total Expenses, FY24	\$1,464,707



Expenses: Fiscal Year 2023 (May 1, 2022-April 30, 2022)

● Program services	\$929,195
● Management and general	\$169,790
● Fundraising	\$68,330
Total Expenses, FY23	\$1,167,315



HIGHLIGHTS OF NCFA'S FY24 FUNDRAISING

\$336,699 in-kind support in the form of donated professional services*

224 gifts received

Donors in **35 states**

156 total donors

24 donors who increased their support over the previous year

*This figure is not included in total FY24 income numbers shown above

FAMILIES FOR ALL DEVELOPMENT FUND

In early 2021, NCFA announced the culmination of a longtime organizational goal to create an investment fund that will help sustain our work until the day that it is no longer needed - until every child, everywhere has a permanent, loving family.

The Families For All Development Fund is a long-term-investment fund that ensures long-term stability for NCFA's key initiatives; it offers a financial backstop to ensure that NCFA can meet urgent needs and opportunities, and provides supporters with assurance of NCFA's long-term financial sustainability. Pledges and gifts made through April 30, 2025 qualify you to be honored as a Charter Contributor to the Fund.

FOUNDING CONTRIBUTORS

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LOU STERN LEGACY SOCIETY

The Lou Stern Legacy Society recognizes donors who have chosen to support us through their estate plans. The society honors the life's work of our longtime friend and champion Lou Stern, a charter board member, founder, and supporter and advocate of NCFA. A legacy gift to NCFA through the Lou Stern Society offers tax planning advantages while ensuring that your gift is invested in accordance with your wishes and recognized during your lifetime.

Those listed below have informed us of their intention to support NCFA through their estate plans – contact our development office to find out how you can join us in making our work part of your legacy.

Evelyn Spielmann*
George McDonnell*
Jane & Greg Castanias
Wayne & Linda Sharp
Mike & Maggie Thorne
Christiane Waldkirch Crupe

**deceased*



WAYS TO GIVE



Give with confidence! NCFA has earned high ratings from the most trusted charity rating services, providing assurance that your donation is well-managed for the greatest impact.



Platinum Transparency 2024

Candid.



Give monthly!

NCFA is set up to accept secure one-time, monthly, or quarterly, online donations through ACH (direct withdrawal from your bank account), PayPal, Apple Pay, Google Pay, and Venmo. See all your options at adoptioncouncil.org/donate

Give through an IRA.

You can save some tax dollars with a Qualified Charitable Distribution! Donors aged 70 ½ years and older can transfer up to \$100,000 directly from an individual retirement account to any qualified nonprofit, including NCFA. Consult your financial advisor and use our federal tax ID number (75-1721671) to take advantage of this tax-advantaged giving opportunity.



Contribute stock or securities.

Your broker may electronically deliver the gift of shares directly to our account at UBS using the following information: DTC #0221 to National Council For Adoption's account, #TS34816-DK, UBS Financial Services, 200 Park Avenue, 30th Floor, New York, New York 10166.



Make a gift through your workplace.

Many employers will match employees' charitable gifts, multiplying the impact of your support! [Search Charity Navigator's free database by scanning the QR code at right](#) or check with your human resources office to see if these options are offered.



National Council For Adoption is also registered for workplace giving via United Way, Independent Charities of America (ICA), and the Combined Federal Campaign (ID # 12128).

Host an online fundraiser.

Friends of adoption like you are the best advocates for our work, especially within your own circles of influence. It's easy to set up your own fundraiser for NCFA via your personal Facebook page or your Instagram stories. Celebrate a birthday, an adoption day, or an awareness campaign like National Adoption Month or National Foster Care Month with a social media fundraiser.



Questions about any of these options?
Interested in making the greatest impact possible for children and families?
Contact Megan Judt, Director of Development, at (703) 299-6633 or mjudt@adoptioncouncil.org.

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Passionately committed to the belief that every child deserves to thrive in a nurturing, permanent family, **National Council For Adoption's mission** is to meet the diverse needs of children, birth parents, adoptees, adoptive families, and all those touched by adoption through global advocacy, education, research, legislative action, and collaboration.

Our vision is a world in which all children everywhere have nurturing, permanent families.

adoptioncouncil.org



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