



## GOVERNOR GINA M. RAIMONDO

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### **Raimondo Announces Investment and Initiatives in Support of Foster Families**

**PROVIDENCE, RI** - Leading in to her upcoming State of the State address, Governor Gina M. Raimondo announced today an investment of \$1.36 million in resources for foster families in Rhode Island, as part of her administration's work to increase the number of children in foster care and reduce the number of children in group homes and other congregate care. This proposal will be included in the Governor's FY19 budget, which will be released Thursday, January 18, 2018.

"If you have been contemplating opening your home to a child, now is the time," Raimondo said. "All children deserve to live in stable, loving families who can provide support and encouragement. Here in Rhode Island, we have an immediate need for 250 loving, supportive families for children who are currently in institutional care but who could be better served in a family setting."

This would be the second investment in foster care rates since Raimondo took office in 2015. The General Assembly passed Governor Raimondo's FY16 budget, which included \$1.4 million in additional funding to support resource families. Prior to 2016, the foster care rates were last raised in 2001.

Raimondo also joined with Rhode Island Foundation President Neil D. Steinberg to announce investments of \$70,000 from the Rhode Island Foundation and \$25,000 from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to support the administration's work to increase the number of available foster homes in the state. DCYF says that 250 children currently need placements.

"We simply have to make it easier for families to give these youngsters a safe place to call home. The benefits of ensuring that they have stable, caring foster homes will ripple through their lives forever. We're glad to help put them on the path to doing better in school, living healthier lives and having a more secure economic future," said Neil D. Steinberg, president and CEO of the Rhode Island Foundation.

The Rhode Island Foundation and Casey Foundation grants will enable DCYF to conduct a first-of-its-kind Resource Family Retreat—a weekend-long event aimed at reducing the length of time it takes for foster parents to become licensed. The retreat will be held on March 9, 10, and 11, 2018.

"The Annie E. Casey Foundation is pleased to support Rhode Island's commitment to quality family caregiving for children and youth in foster care. These efforts are critical for sustaining reform and ensuring more Rhode Island children grow up in safe, stable, and permanent

families," said Tracey Field, Managing Director of the Child Welfare Strategy Group at the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

"The Raimondo administration is dedicated to promoting health, protecting children, and nurturing people's quality of life. These targeted investments in our foster care system will help children who cannot safely live with their own families," said Health and Human Services Secretary Eric J. Beane. "Every child deserves a safe, stable and loving home."

"Since the start of 2015, the Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) has reduced the use of institutional care by more than 25 percent and reduced the number of children placed out-of-state by more than 50 percent, but there is still more work to do," DCYF Director Trista Piccola said. "I thank the Rhode Island Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation for their commitment to partnering with us to ensure there is a loving foster home for every child in state care who is best served in a family setting."

"Most foster parents say I wish I would have done this earlier, including me," said Kim Zandy, a foster and adoptive parent and 92-Pro FM radio personality.

To learn more about becoming a resource family or for more information about the Resource Family Retreat, call 401-952-0262 or visit [www.dcyf.ri.gov/anchor](http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/anchor).

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