

September 15, 2022

Dear Foster Caregiver,

The Department of Community Services is excited to announce the launch of MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ and Constellation homes as part of Nova Scotia's Foster Care Redesign.

The Department is on track to launch the first two MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ Constellations, an extended family model consisting of one Hub Home and six to ten Satellite Homes.

A Hub Home is a foster caregiver "Grandparents house", a place that is familiar and comfortable, where the children or youth may go for fun or social events, as well as a location for peer support and respite care when the child, youth and/or foster caregiver needs a break.

A Satellite Home is a full-time foster caregiver and constellation supporter or could be a respite provider if needed.

The selection of the first two Hub Homes is underway. Using the criteria provided by MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™, a shortlist of potential Hub Home candidates has been identified. The following criteria were considered in this initial process:

- Has the demonstrated skills and experience to serve as resources and provide peer support to Satellite Homes
- Is in close proximity to Satellite Homes to ensure utilization of services and to promote connectedness.
- Is SAFE assessed and approved by the Department
- Has two open beds that are available nearly 24/7 for planned respite use by the Constellation
- Is comfortable talking with children / youth and with adults
- Is skilled in interacting with a group of children / youth
- Is sensitive and responsive to the diverse needs, culture and ethnicity of the children / youth being served and is able to provide leadership on anti-racism and anti-bias practices

While many foster caregivers fit these criteria, we will launch the program with two constellations, and take key learnings from these families before expanding across the province.

Over the coming weeks, the Department will be engaging Hub Home candidates to review the details and expectations of the role. The Foster Care Supervisor and Social Workers for these candidates will also be engaged in this process. A further update will be provided once the first two Hub Homes have been confirmed.

In the future, there will be many more opportunities for others to become a Hub Foster Caregiver.

Recruitment and Retention of Foster Caregivers

To support increasing the number and diversity of foster caregivers, engagement sessions were held throughout the summer to inform the development of a Recruitment and Retention Strategy.

The Department also partnered with the Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW) to consult within eight Black and African Nova Scotian communities to make recommendations on strategies that could lead to an increase in the recruitment and retention of foster caregivers, which will be incorporated into the overall strategy.

More information on the Recruitment and Retention Strategy will be shared in the coming months.

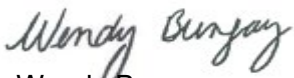
New Placement Types

As presented earlier this year in the Roadshows, there will be new foster care placement types rolled out, and the Department is currently working on how these new placement types will be part of the first two MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ Constellations.

For questions, comments, or additional information, please contact the Foster Care Redesign Project Team through email at fostercareredesign@novascotia.ca.

We want to thank you for your continued commitment to caring for children and youth in care.

Best regards,



Wendy Bungay
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