DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ADOPTION EXCELLENCE AWARDS
2004 NOMINATION GUIDELINES

Thank you for your interest in the Adoption Excellence Awards. To facilitate processing, a complete nomination package must be **received by**:

Monday, August 2, 2004

Please send your nomination package to:

> Adoption Excellence Awards
> USDHHS, Children's Bureau
> Switzer Building, Room 2412
> 330 C Street, SW
> Washington, DC 20447
> ### Attention: LaChundra Thomas

Selection of the Adoption Excellence Award winners for the year 2004 will be based on the contents of the nomination submission. Please review all of the guidelines and review criteria before preparing your nomination.

Purpose
In the United States, there are currently 532,000 children in foster care. Of those children, 129,000 are free for adoption and awaiting a permanent home. These awards, presented by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, demonstrate the Department's national commitment to expedite rebuilding the lives of those children and achieving permanency for those waiting for adoption.

Who May Receive These Awards?
The Department will honor those States, agencies, organizations, businesses, individuals and families that have demonstrated excellence in providing stable, permanent homes for our nation's children in foster care. Unless specifically designated in the award description, nominees may include, but are not limited to:

State agencies	families
local public agencies	courts
businesses	State legislatures
foundations	universities
faith-based organizations	tribal courts and governments
media	advocacy organizations
individuals	community-based organizations
child welfare organizations	

Who May Nominate?
Anyone may nominate one or more candidates. Self-nominations are welcomed. Please submit a separate package for each candidate nominated.

Award Categories
The recipients of final awards must have demonstrated clear and measurable success in one of the following award categories:

1. **Decrease in the Length of Time that Children in Foster Care Wait for Adoption** - recognition of a **State(s) or local public agencies** that have achieved a decrease in the average length of time children stay in foster care.

2. **Increased Adoptions of Older Children** - recognition of a **State(s) or local public agencies** that have significantly increased the number of children over age 8 adopted from the public foster care system.

3. **Interjurisdictional Adoptions** - recognition of a **State(s)**, **local public agencies, and child welfare organizations** that have overcome interjurisdictional barriers to adoption for children in foster care.

4. **Faith-Based Initiatives** - recognition of **faith-based organizations** that have contributed to an increase in the number of adoptions for children in foster care.

5. **Support for Adoptive Families** - recognition of **organizations** that provide significant support to help families adopt and promote the stability of those adoptions through recruitment, preparation, training, post-placement and post-legal adoption services for adoptive families.

6. **Individual and/or Family Contributions** - recognition of the personal contribution of an **individual(s)**, **professional(s)** or **family(ies)** that promotes the adoption of children in foster care.

7. **Philanthropy** - recognition of works or endeavors that promote adoption for children in foster care, such as financial aid, endowments, gifts, scholarships, or other charitable support.

8. **Business Contributions/Initiatives** – recognition of **businesses** that promote adoption for children in foster care through activities such as partnerships, sponsorships, donations, or volunteerism.

9. **Judicial or Child Welfare System Improvement** - recognition of **court or public child welfare agency** systems change that resulted in fewer children coming into care or expedited the movement of children from foster care.

What are the Selection Criteria?
Awards will be recommended for excellence of accomplishments using the following criteria:

o Measurable impact or outcomes	o Outreach
o Collaboration/Partnerships	o Use of Volunteers
o Use of Technology	o Return on Investment
o Innovation/Uniqueness	o Ability to Replicate
o Leadership	o Community Involvement

What is Included in the Nomination Package?
The nomination package should include the following:
1. **Nomination Form**: WORD or PDF (66 KB) One page of identifying information on the nominator, the nominee and the award category for the nomination.
2. **Nomination Letter**: Not to exceed two double-spaced pages, that reflect the nominee's accomplishments and services in support of permanency for children in foster care.
3. **Supporting Documentation**: Letters of support, newspaper articles, etc.

The nomination package must include information about the measurable impact and outcomes of the nominee's accomplishments, as well as all other selection criteria that apply. Supporting documentation, such as letters of support or newspaper articles, may be attached. Only letters of support and material submitted in the nomination package will be accepted. Material sent under separate cover will not be considered. Audio and video tapes cannot be reviewed as part of the selection process. **The complete nomination package should not exceed 8 pages**.

How will Award Winners be Selected?
Awards will be made in the categories listed above. Nominations will be reviewed and awardees recommended by a panel of recognized experts in the adoption field, including members from Federal and State agencies. Recommendations will be submitted to the Secretary for approval. Recipients will be recognized in November during National Adoption Month.

For more information about the awards, you may contact **LaChundra Thomas, at (202) 205-8252** or **lthomas@acf.hhs.gov**, or visit the Children's Bureau website, http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/initiatives/aeawards.htm

Who Received the Awards in 2003?
To review the list and descriptions of the 2003 awardees, you may visit our website at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/initiatives/aeawards03.htm