Foster care agencies in San Luis Obispo County launch a state-of-the-art interactive web portal to increase the number of foster families in their communities

Matching potential foster families to youth in need is made easier by a new website that answers questions for prospective foster parents to reduce concerns that make families hesitant to commit.

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In the past <x months>, there have been over 150 days where youth were placed in Motels requiring 24/7 trained staff supervision due to lack of foster families. Today, FCNI has launched a new web portal that provides potential foster parents with a streamlined exploration experience of how they might fit in to a foster child's life. The portal takes in their personalized information and routes them to the right starting point. The portal also provides testimonials from existing foster families with real-world experience, clears out any misunderstandings the potential parents might have and helps them to quickly understand the realities of foster parenting while connecting them with the resources they need to move forward.

There is a critical need in San Luis Obispo County to provide more foster families to children and youth in our communities. Prospective foster families have questions, concerns and uncertainties of becoming foster parents. Whether the future household is an older, retired family with adult children or a single parent with young children, all people considering foster care need help deciding if this is a good decision for them.

By launching a new interactive website, interested individuals and families can determine which options are available to them by answering key questions about their personalities and lifestyles. This personalized experience helps prospective foster families conceptualize what it might be like to be a foster family.

"We understand that people considering foster care are apprehensive. This new web portal will help address their concerns so they can feel more confident to move forward towards becoming foster parents", said Jim Roberts, CEO of Family Care Network, Inc.

When visitors enter the interactive web portal, they will share their hobbies, location, time commitments, housing information, and other questions directing them to areas providing the best fit based on their availability and qualifications. Information that describes how foster care works and support agencies provided to foster families is described in detail. Guidelines to connect with other foster parents and agency representatives will be provided, as well as videos visualizing real experiences.

"Before this web portal was launched, I struggled to commit to being a foster parent even though I knew I wanted to help children in need. I just didn't have enough information to ease my uncertainty. Now that I'm able to find information and support specific to me, I can visualize what foster family life is like. With this certainty, I' m moving ahead and will soon have a foster child to care for", said Martha, a new foster parent.

Citizens in San Luis Obispo County can now use an interactive web portal to get pertinent information and support options to help with the decision-making process to become a foster family. The portal is a critical tool for increasing the number of foster families in our community, building successful fostering

environments, and providing foster children with the stability that they need to re-establish themselves and live healthier, more productive lives. To learn more about Foster parenting, go to https://fcni.org/.

Frequently Asked Questions

Customers

- Can I book appointments with FCNI via your interactive site to meet a child if their psychographics and demographics match my needs?
- Will a child's case manager be willing to meet with me during the process?
- What sort of guidelines will you have to connect me with other foster parents and agency representatives?
- What are the steps of the fostering process?
    - How long will the process take?
    - What is it like?
- Academic performance and medical history of the child are both important factors for me in deciding who I want to foster. Will those be available to me?
- What does being a foster parent mean?
- What other foster care services are available for me?
- What information do you store about me if I choose to use your site?
- What happens if I don't qualify for the service I want?
- Can I use this portal anonymously?
- What organizations are a part of this portal?
- Am I committing to anything when I use this portal?
- How will I be able to meet the need for foster youth?
- How will becoming a foster parent impact my children?
- What sort of support will I get from FCNI?
- Will somebody contact me after I fill this out?
- What will this cost?
- Will the way that I answer count against me?
- How can I improve my qualifications?
- Are you giving my data to anyone else?
- Is this website collecting data on me?

- If I get certified, are my certifications transferable to other agencies?

  - What certifications should I get?

- Do I get any monetary compensation for being a foster parent?

- Does the portal say how long until I can help or have a child placed?

- Can I view this web portal on a mobile device?

- How long does it take to become a foster parent?

- How will being a foster parent impact my life?

- Can I work full-time and be a foster parent?

- Is there financial assistance for my foster child if they want to go to college?

- What happens when my foster child turns 18?

- When can I see more information about the children in need?

- Why do I have to put all this information on the web?

- How can I contact a real human?

- How long should I wait to hear from someone?

- Is my data secure?

- How long does the process of approval take?

- Are there any disqualifying qualities that prevent me from becoming a foster parent?

Stakeholders
- Is it secure?

- What is the cost of implementation?

  - Will the cost produce positive results? How will we measure those positive results?

- Are there going to be measurable outcomes using this portal? Do these metrics help us understand whether the foster care rate is increasing?

- Does it succeed in providing support?

- Does it integrate well with current systems?

- How is success being measured?

- Does this portal protect personal information for both the child and the potential foster parent?

- Who will build and maintain the portal after it is launched?

- Does the new site have the potential consequence of dehumanizing the kids? How do you prevent this from occurring?

- Will the new site leave even more room for selection biases to occur?
- Who will continue to maintain and update the site after it is launched?
    - How will you ensure the site maintains uniformity if it is passed between different parties?
- How will you ensure the web portal is user friendly?
    - What tools do you plan to implement to ensure this?
- How will this website/portal encourage and increase the number of foster parents?
    - How many more parent matches will result because of this?
- How will this improve our operations as a company?
- Do employees need to be trained on how to navigate the new website?
- Will you open source the application so others can use it?
- Will this automate my job?
- How will we be using people's data?
    - Where is the data stored?
    - Is data being collected for future analysis?
- How can you scale this?
- What is the cost-benefit analysis of implementation?
- How will this assist the county and state in meeting state and federal outcomes?
- Is the data going to be anonymized after inquiry for privacy purposes?
- How many people are visiting our site?
- How do we market the new site in a way that draws interest from potential foster parents?
- Can I see the effectiveness of our marketing campaign or web traffic data?
- Can this success be publicized on our site as a marketing tactic for bringing in even more foster parents?