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NYC ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES LAUNCHES NEW DIGITAL FOSTER PARENT CERTIFICATION PROCESS

New Online Software Will Bring the Foster Parent Certification Process into the 21st Century, Making it Simpler for New Yorkers to Apply & Improving the Matches Between Children & Potential Foster Homes

NEW YORK, NY – The New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) today launched a new online portal that will modernize the foster parent certification process. The new technology has been made possible thanks to a partnership between ACS and Binti, an online software company dedicated to helping every child have a safe and loving home. The software will make it simpler for New Yorkers to apply to become a foster parent, and for current foster parents to recertify, by replacing a paper process with an automated one. The new technology will also facilitate better matches between children and potential foster homes, based on a child's unique needs.

"The Administration for Children's Services' partnership with Binti is a win-win: it will mean a simpler and more efficient application process for potential foster families and their caseworkers, and improved matches between youth and foster homes," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell**. "Now more than ever, in an age where remote technology is crucial, the Binti software is a gamechanger for New York City's foster care system. As we continue to see the number of children in foster care decrease to historic lows, we remain committed to finding nurturing homes for all youth in foster care, and we look forward to this partnership with Binti."

"We're thrilled to launch a partnership with ACS and their partner agencies in the NYC community. Our software makes it easy for families interested in fostering or adopting to apply online on their laptop or mobile phone and also saves social worker time in the licensing process." **said Binti CEO Felicia Curcuru**. "On average, agencies approve 80% more families per year after working with Binti compared to before, and we're excited to get going in our partnership with ACS to approve more families more quickly. We look forward to helping ACS achieve these kinds of great results, and giving families easy, mobile technology to help them open their homes to youth."

When children must be placed into foster care due to safety concerns, ACS works with a network of non-profit organizations, known as foster care providers, to place them in temporary homes. Whenever possible, ACS works to place children with a relative or family friend, which reduces trauma. ACS has increased the proportion of children placed with relatives and friends from 31% in 2018 to 41% in 2020. Today, the number of children in New York City's foster care system is under 8,000, a historic low. Comparatively, 25 years ago, there were nearly 50,000

children in New York City's foster care system, and nearly 17,000 just a decade ago. Additionally, under Commissioner Hansell's leadership, ACS has redesigned the way foster parents are recruited and supported and strengthened all aspects of the foster care continuum to promote children's wellbeing. ACS increased the number of new foster homes by 50 percent from FY17 to FY19, turning around a previous six-year decline in the number of new foster homes recruited.

Binti provides foster care agencies with tools geared towards streamlining the licensing and certification process for prospective foster parent applicants (as well as for recertifications) using an online portal. This software allows foster parents to move through the certification and track the application process virtually. The entire application process is mobile-friendly, so applicants and agency staff can navigate the software using a computer, tablet or mobile device. Binti helps streamline the process for foster parents while increasing staff efficiency and productivity with modernized workflows.

"We are excited to be part of ACS's launch of the Binti platform," **said Georgia Boothe, Executive Vice President at Children's Aid.** "This technology will help streamline foster parent certification and represents another leap forward in using technology to modernize the foster parent recruitment processes."

"Binti is a great brand to bring to our foster care program. It offers us a way to efficiently engage prospective foster parents," **said Dr. Arlene Goldsmith, Executive Director at New Alternatives for Children.** "Binti is an intuitive platform that will assist in streamlining our specialized foster parent licensing process by allowing our foster parents to seamlessly engage in the process virtually by use of their smart devices and home computers. We are excited to streamline our licensing process with Binti! The program is very efficient and user friendly."

"We were impressed with the program and all that it has to offer. It centralizes the many areas of working with foster parents, from recruiting, training, opening, reauthorizing, and monitoring," **said Wayne W. Woodburn, Director of Intake & Homefinding at Saint Dominic's Family Services.** "Binti brings them together in one place, making it easier for everyone involved to monitor progress. We are excited about this launch."

Agencies across the country have improved outcomes using Binti's software, approving 80% more foster families in the first year after launch, and approving them 16% [faster](#). Features include:

- **Completion of documentation online of all steps in the foster family licensing process** – Applicants can access the portal directly, via a custom link provided for each agency or via a welcome email generated by a worker, to begin their licensing process. The application is mobile-friendly, so applicants can log on from their computer, tablet or mobile phone.
- **Conditional Logic** and Automatic population of forms– The platform intelligently eliminates portions of the application that aren't relevant to an applicant by using answers to previous questions. The software also only asks a question one time, regardless of how many times it shows up on either the applicant forms or the worker's casework. This eliminates the need for duplicate entry of information and significantly simplifies the process for both applicants and licensing workers.

- **The ability to save and continue work at any point in the process** – Because Binti is web-based, applicants and workers can make progress, save it, and log back in another day to pick up where they left off. You can log back in on any device, your computer, tablet or mobile phone, as long as you have your email and password.
- **The ability to upload documents as attachments and electronically sign documents within Binti** – Social workers and applicants can upload documents as needed into Binti, using their phone or electronic device. The electronic signature functionality allows applicants to sign and complete documents directly within Binti.
- **The provision of multilingual web experience and support in English & Spanish** – Binti can be made available in English or Spanish for applicants, allowing them to complete their certification process in their preferred language. Binti also has comprehensive customer support in both English and Spanish that is available via live chat, email, and phone for all Binti users (including foster parent applicants, references, and other adults in the home).

ACS is always looking for qualified and committed people who are interested in becoming foster parents, and it's especially important now, as the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting children and families across NYC. New Yorkers interested in learning more about foster parenting can do so even now while staying home, via virtual foster parent orientations. For information about becoming a foster or adoptive parent, please visit: <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/acs/child-welfare/foster-adopt.page>

About Binti

Binti is a mission-driven software company designed to revolutionize the child welfare system by providing modern tools to empower social workers in their effort to help every child have a safe and loving family. Since launching the Approvals Module in 2017, Binti has expanded quickly around the country. Binti is used by more than 120 child welfare agencies across 18 states to increase family permanency for children by streamlining the adoption and foster care process, freeing social workers to focus on children and families in need instead of paperwork. Learn more at www.binti.com.

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