

In-Depth Profiles™



Will's podcast about his future ambition to visit four countries in Africa.

Macy's written narrative about what a permanent family would mean to her: unconditional love and parents to have fun with!

Charlie's video series about how to make lasagna, one noodle at a time.

An In-Depth Profile™ is what a youth in foster care wants to share with potential permanent families—in just the way they want to share it.

Our youth engagement specialists work with youth to create these multimedia projects to:

- Give youth an active voice in their own future.
- Connect youth in foster care with families who can provide them permanency—adoption, guardianship, or kinship care, for example.

Some youth want to share goals and future hopes, and some just showcase their interests. Many youth also choose to include voices of trusted adults in their lives—social workers, teachers, therapists, CASAs, and others—who can speak to their personality and strengths.

How are In-Depth Profiles different?

- **Multimedia:** In-Depth Profiles are podcasts, magazine layouts, drawings, stop motion films, or anything else a youth might dream up. Youth get to choose a medium that they feel best represents who they are.
- **Youth driven:** Created by the youth, approved by the youth. Youth choose what to include in their In-Depth Profile and how that information is shared. Centering youth voice and choice results in authentic profiles that potential families love and that youth feel proud to share.
- **Professionally supported:** Our youth engagement specialists use expertise in both digital media and working with youth in foster care to support youth in sharing their story.
- **One of a kind:** Every In-Depth Profile is one of a kind, because every youth has their own vision and story to share.



View In-Depth Profiles on Northwest Adoption Exchange at nwae.org/profiles by clicking on profiles with the pink "In-Depth Profile" tag.

How we create In-Depth Profiles

Our youth engagement specialists follow these five steps when making In-Depth Profiles . . .

Step 1: Identify youth

Our youth engagement specialists partner with caseworkers to identify youth who are excited to participate in their own permanency planning.

Step 2: Engage and create

Youth are asked, “What do you want to share and how do you want to share it?” Then we work with them to make it happen. Youth often enjoy a highly collaborative process and the chance to let their creativity shine. A profile is completed through a series of sessions, including brainstorming, creating, filming, drafting, and editing. The process often includes interviews with trusted adults in the youth’s life, both in person and virtually. When a complete profile is produced, youth are asked “Are you ready for us to share your profile?” Nothing about a youth is posted until the answer is a resounding “Yes!”

Step 3: Inspire matches

We publish the In-Depth Profile on the Northwest Adoption Exchange and distribute it via email, social media, and other appropriate communication channels—wherever a potential family for the youth might view the profile and be inspired to express their interest.

Step 4: Respond to families

We review inquiries, verify licensing information, and connect inquiring families, or their caseworkers, with the youth’s caseworker. We make ourselves available every step of the way to answer questions and be a resource to families, youth, and their caseworkers.

Step 5: Evaluate success

Our staff monitor website analytics for the profile for how families are responding to it. Updates to the profile are made as necessary. If the youth no longer wants their profile posted or wants to make changes, we remove or help update their profile accordingly.



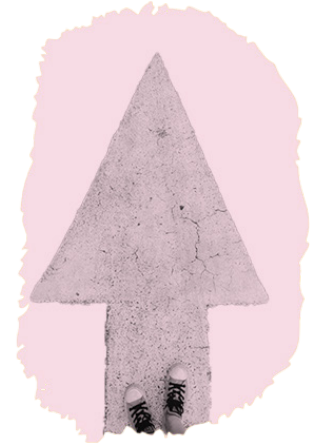
Who can benefit from an In-Depth Profile?

In-Depth Profiles are for youth in foster care who are excited to engage in a collaborative multi-media project. Caseworkers may suggest to a teen that they create an In-Depth Profile; however, the youth ultimately decides whether the opportunity is right for them.

Benefits of In-Depth Profiles

Engaging youth isn't just the right thing to do, it's a path to permanency.

- Youth are excited and engaged: When youth have the highest amount of control over what is shared about them, they report feeling excited to have their profile shared and engaged in their own permanency planning process.
- Increased number of matches: Teens with In-Depth Profiles see a 200 percent increase in inquiries from families, compared to a traditional photolisting profile.
- Professionals serve youth better as a team: The In-Depth Profile process is a unique opportunity for the youth's team to collaborate. When we as professionals work as a team to have engaged, authentic relationships with the young people we serve, we can better understand and meet their unique needs.



Bring In-Depth Profiles to your agency

We'd love to partner with you to carry out this best-practice model in your agency or region.

We offer:

- Full-service contracted assistance.
- Training and coaching, in-person or remote.
- Technical assistance materials, including training manuals, style guides, and templates.
- Multimedia content production.
- Specialized support tailored to fit your needs.

Learn more

See how we worked with the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange in 2020 to help youth in Michigan create In-Depth Profiles of their own at <https://professionals.adoptuskids.org/engaging-youth-isnt-just-the-right-thing-to-do-its-a-path-to-permanency>.

Learn more by contacting Tyler Helbach, director of program development and impact at thelbach@nwresource.org.