

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Administration for Children and Families is pleased to request nominations for the 2009 **Adoption Excellence Awards**. These awards demonstrate our national commitment to rebuild the lives of the 496,000 children in foster care and to achieve permanency for the 130,000 of those who are waiting for adoption. **The Department will honor those States, Tribes, agencies, organizations, businesses and individuals that have demonstrated excellence in providing stable, permanent homes for our nation's children in foster care.**

The Department invites you to nominate candidates for these prestigious awards (self nominations will be accepted). Nominations will be reviewed and award winners recommended by a panel of recognized experts in the adoption field, including members from Federal and State agencies. To assist you in the nomination process, you will find enclosed a description of the award categories, eligibility and selection criteria, and a nomination form. To access nomination materials electronically and review the list and descriptions of the 2008 awardees, you may visit our web site at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/current_initiatives/aeawards.htm.

All nominations must be **received by COB Friday, May 22, 2009**, and should be sent to: Adoption Excellence Awards, Children's Bureau, DHHS, Room 8148, 1250 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20024, Attn: La Chundra Lindsey. For more information about the awards, please contact Bob Lindecamp, at (302) 436-7559 or Robert.Lindecamp@acf.hhs.gov.

I encourage you to take a few minutes to recognize a person or program that has shown dedication, innovation and accomplishment in providing safe, permanent, loving homes for America's waiting children.

Sincerely,

Maiso L. Bryant
Acting Commissioner

Enclosures