

RECRUITING TIPS

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THE ROLE OF THE RECRUITER¹

The recruiter may encounter families who are living far below the poverty level and who have great needs. Regardless of the level of poverty the recruiter finds in a home or shelter, the recruiter cannot confuse empathy for the family with the duties of the job. The recruiter should be careful not to perceive herself or himself as having the “power” to decide which children are eligible to receive services and which ones are not. Furthermore, the recruiter cannot use the MEP as a way to “level the playing field” by making a questionable eligibility determination to help a particularly deserving family “once in a while.” While it might feel good to be able to help a deserving family, the role of the MEP recruiter is to identify and recruit eligible migrant children, not needy children.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW: “PREPARING FOR THE MIGRANT FAMILIES”

TIP #1 KNOW ABOUT THE MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM (MEP)¹

A migrant family will often ask the recruiter questions about the MEP services that the school and other programs offer, such as: Does the MEP offer a pre-school program or a summer school program? Are dropouts eligible for the MEP? The recruiter should learn about the MEP and other school and community programs.

TIP #2 DETERMINE WORK PRIORITIES¹

If the recruiter is expected to recruit and do other work for the MEP, the recruiter should find out what work the supervisor considers the highest priority, and allocate time accordingly. The recruiter will need to assess which of these activities provides the greatest benefit to the MEP when setting priorities.

TIP #3 ASK QUESTIONS¹

If the recruiter has a question or does not understand how something should be done, the recruiter should ask someone who is knowledgeable and write down the answer. In this way, the recruiter will become increasingly knowledgeable over time.

TIP #4 BE AWARE OF FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL REQUIREMENTS¹

The recruiter should be knowledgeable about Federal, State and local requirements. Some States and LOAs may have their own requirements for the recruiter that goes beyond the federal requirements.

TIP #5 EMPLOYERS AND CREW LEADERS²

Enlist the help of the employer or crew leaders to insist that his or her families send their children to school rather than let them work. It keeps the kids out of the workplace, and frees the parents to work.

TIP #6 ENLIST THE AID OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL²

You will ask a lot of people to help you find children. In exchange for the help that they give you, entice them with acts of kindness. A thoughtful gesture occasionally can payoff in handsome dividends.

TIP #7 SCHEDULING YOUR VISITS

It is very important that your supervisor(s), colleague(s), friend(s), and/or family know your schedule when you plan your home visits. Your personal safety is at stake. Have a plan of action in case help is needed. A designated travel route is always a good idea. Bad weather, old cars, personal health conditions and/or unsafe areas could delay your travels and a plan can avoid undue stress and worry.

TIP #8 WELCOME WAGON APPROACH²

Assemble a packet of information for newly arriving families. Include emergency phone numbers, directories of social service agencies, schools, churches, businesses, etc. Put the materials in a folder. Carry the packets with you to distribute to new families as they arrive in town.

TIP #9 HELPFUL GIVE-AWAYS²

Have something to give to the parents or to the children that will be useful. It helps break the ice, and the family feels that they gained by your visit. Some examples could include: a calendar with information in two languages on immunizations, nutrition, the Migrant Education Program (MEP), parenting for success in school, school schedules, free books, or a hygiene kit and supplies.

TIP #10 DON'T GIVE FAMILIES RECRUITMENT INCENTIVES¹

Don't give families gifts like jackets or backpacks for enrolling their children in the MEP. The purchase of gifts or promotional items is not an allowable use of MEP funds. However, donated materials from local community resources, such as: used books, old magazines or personal hygiene supplies, could be handed out after the interview, on subsequent visits, or whenever parents make contact with the school at a later date.

TIP #11 STUDENT HANDBOOKS²

Get a copy of the student handbook from all of the schools in the area where you recruit. Read the handbooks and become familiar with the policies for such things as attendance, discipline, graduation requirements, and grading periods. Keep the handbooks for reference. Then you'll be prepared to help the parents when they have questions.

TIP #12 INELIGIBLE FILE²

One recruiter, having had many problems with families wanting to be in the program when they didn't qualify, started keeping a card file/electronic data file of families whom he had interviewed and determined to be ineligible. He always consults the card file first when approached by a new family.

TIP #13 TAKE THE OLD CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY (COE) ON HOME VISITS²

When visiting families you've had before, take the old COE with you and compare Qualifying Arrival Date (QAD) dates that they gave last time with what they're saying now. They'll sometimes give a date for the same move that is slightly different from the one given last time. This will save many problems with date conflicts. Be careful, though; the date on the old COE might be wrong.

TIP #14 CONTACT CARDS²

Have a several contact cards printed up with your name, title, address, and phone number on them. Give them out freely wherever you go, and encourage people to call you. Staple them to brochures, posters, or fliers that you use to advertise the program. Keep this information before people as much as possible.

TIP #15 DON'T SET RECRUITMENT QUOTAS¹

At times, the recruiter may use techniques that are similar to the strategies used in sales and promotion to find and recruit migrant children; however, the recruiter is not a "salesperson." The recruiter should never feel compelled to meet specific recruitment targets or quotas. Instead, the recruiter should concentrate on finding all of the eligible children in the recruitment area. The recruiter should never feel pressured to make questionable eligibility determinations to increase the number of identified migrant children.

REFERENCES CONSULTED:

- ¹ United States Department of Education, Office of Migrant Education, Draft Identification and Recruitment Manual, October 2007.
- ² Adapted from U.S. Department of Education. Recruiter's Guide. National Identification and Recruitment Contract. By Leon Johnson. Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office of Migrant Education. Harrisburg, 1989.

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