

# RECRUITING TIPS

## DURING THE INTERVIEW: “CONDUCTING THE HOME VISITS”

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### THE ROLE OF THE RECRUITER<sup>1</sup>

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.

### TIP #16 PERSONAL SAFETY

Always be aware of your surroundings when making home visits. If you are unsure of the area you will be visiting, request that someone else accompany you. Calling ahead to the family you will be visiting will assure you that someone will be home. If the area is unsafe, have a family member you will be visiting meet you at the car and escort you back when you finish your visit. Carry a cell phone, whistle, or other personal safety items that you think will assist you in your protection. When in doubt about any given situation, go with your instincts.

### TIP #17 START EARLY<sup>2</sup>

Start your recruiting as early as possible before school starts. You can then be at school for the first few days to sign up the latecomers as they bring their children in and for other last minute things.

### TIP #18 USE THE SAME CAR<sup>2</sup>

Try to use the same vehicle on your recruiting visits with an identifiable school or program logo.

### TIP #19 NAME TAG<sup>2</sup>

Wear a name tag prominently displayed when you go on home visits. You can make one inexpensively with a piece of paper and a plastic holder of the type you get at conferences. Or you can get a rigid, engraved name tag made at a trophy shop for a few dollars. Try to include the migrant logo. It identifies the program to the parents, and the name tag reminds the parents who you are.

### TIP #20 GO WITH AN EXPERIENCED RECRUITER<sup>2</sup>

If you are a new recruiter, find a good, experienced recruiter and ask if you can tag along when he or she makes home visits. After a few visits, ask if you could try a door approach or a parent interview. You’ll learn far more seeing it done and doing it than you will just talking about it. You might try this even if you’re not a new recruiter. We can all learn new things.

### TIP #21 GETTING FAMILIES TO COME TO THE DOOR<sup>2</sup>

*“I go to the door and knock. I keep knocking and knocking because I*

*know that they are there. During this time I am saying ‘Mrs. Lopez, this is (name and I am here to talk about (child’s name)).’ Eventually she will answer the door.”* (Recruiter Quote)

### TIP #22 BREAKING THE ICE<sup>2</sup>

*“I start talking like I’ve known them forever. Once I’ve got the fear out of the way I can tell them about the school that their child will be attending. I tell them that I represent a special program that can help their child. Then, I pull out the forms. You have to establish a trust first.”* (Recruiter Quote)

### TIP #23 WARNING SIGNS<sup>1</sup>

At the time of an interview, there may be certain warning signs or “red flags” that alert the recruiter that a child or youth may not be eligible for the MEP. The recruiter should note that the presence of these “red flags” would not automatically disqualify a child from being eligible for the MEP, but instead indicate that the recruiter needs to ask additional questions and, after concluding the interview, perhaps discuss the situation with others.

## TIP #24 RECRUITER KIT<sup>2</sup>

Always travel prepared. Put together a supply of the forms and materials that you would normally need. Put them in a briefcase or a portfolio so that they are all together and portable. Keep your Recruiter Kit in the car so you'll always have it with you.

Suggested content:

- Good pen
- *Sample Interview Script*
- Supply of Certificates of Eligibility (COEs)
- Other school forms
- Brochures explaining the program
- While-You-Were-Out slips
- List of local social service agencies and services
- Maps of the area, other States, and housing projects
- Examples of student records to use to explain to parents
- Other language/English dictionary
- Electronics tools such as Personal Digital Assistant, Laptop, cell phone, etc.

## TIP #25 SERVICES VARY<sup>1</sup>

States and school districts offer a variety of different types of services through the MEP. A child may receive a service in one State that is not available in another State. Therefore, the recruiter should inform the family that services can vary from one MEP to the next.

## TIP #26 SCRAPBOOK<sup>2</sup>

*"I put photos of the program in a binder. These are pictures of what the kids are doing, how the teachers are working one-on-one with the kids. I let the parents look at these while I am explaining the program to them."* (Recruiter Quote)

## TIP #27 DOUBLE-CHECK GENDER OF CHILD<sup>2</sup>

Be careful when taking down the name of a child to make sure that you have the gender right. Some names, such as Guadalupe or Matilde, can be either a boy or a girl. Others, such as Francis, Frances, and Marion, Marian, though spelled differently, are pronounced the same. Don't assume anything.

## TIP #28 GETTING PARENT APPROVAL<sup>2</sup>

*"When they say 'no,' we tell them to talk to Mrs. [name] down the way. They talk to her about the program, and 95% of the time they will call us."* (Recruiter Quote)

## TIP #29 TAKE SCHOOL OFFICIALS ON HOME VISITS<sup>2</sup>

Take the opportunity to invite your project director, the superintendent, the principals, and others to accompany you on a home visit occasionally. This will break down a lot of barriers. The officials will learn about the families, and the families will be impressed that someone so important will come to visit them.

## TIP #30 CALL BACK FORM<sup>2</sup>

Design a CALL BACK or a WHILE YOU-WERE-OUT form and have a quantity printed up. It should have several different message lines that you can check, and a line or two for you to write in your own message. Include your name, title, phone number, address, and

a line or two explaining who you are. When you call on a family that is not home, check the appropriate message on one and leave it on their door to let them know that you were there.

## REFERENCES CONSULTED:

- <sup>1</sup> United States Department of Education, Office of Migrant Education, Draft Identification and Recruitment Manual, October 2007.
- <sup>2</sup> 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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