

Recruitment & Retention

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What is Diligent Recruitment?

A Plan for the recruitment of resource families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom homes are needed.

Diligent recruitment efforts include:

- Description of the characteristics of waiting children
- Specific strategies to reach all parts of the community
- Diverse methods of disseminating both general and child-specific information
- Strategies for assuring that all prospective parents have access to the home study process, including location and hours of service that facilitate access by all members of the community

- Strategies for training staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities
- Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers
- Non-discriminatory fee structures
- Procedures ensuring a timely search for prospective parents awaiting a child, including the use of exchanges and other interagency efforts, provided that such procedures ensure that the placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for the same race or ethnic placement.

Recruitment & Retention Plans

Effective Recruitment and Retention Plans include well thought out strategies for four main areas:

- General Recruitment
- Targeted Recruitment
- Child-Specific Recruitment
 - Retention

General Recruitment

- General Recruitment broadcasts the overall need for foster and adoptive parents by building public interest and awareness. General recruitment requires an organized, concise plan of action and good customer service to all perspective families who call your agency. Examples include: Television & Radio Advertising, Billboards, Newspaper/Publication articles, Booths at Community Events. Advertising the need for all ages, all genders, all ethnicities.

Targeted Recruitment

- Targeted recruitment considers the unique needs of children and youth in need of foster and adoptive families by developing recruitment strategies and messages based on their needs. Effective targeted recruitment uses demographic data to inform your recruiting by identifying characteristics of current foster and adoptive parents and children and youth in care. Target the recruitment efforts to resources that meet the needs in areas such as: Faith-based communities, Culturally diverse communities, Resource families willing to foster and/or adopt sibling groups or adolescents/teens, parents for LGBT youth.

How do we determine our targeted needs?

- Ongoing dialog with custodial agencies and AASK Adoption Specialists
- Using FRAME demographic report
- Using your region's census data

Example of Targeted Recruitment

Currently there are 192 children in the custody of Grand Forks County Social Services. Of those, 80 are Native American - that is 40%. According to the most recent census data for GF County, 2% of the children in GF County are Native American. Many Native American children are placed with non-Native foster families.

Ways you can help:

- **Mentor a non-native foster family** to help them learn about the Native American culture and ways they can nurture this culture in Native American foster children
- **Mentor the Native American foster children** by taking them to cultural events or sharing your traditions with them directly
- **Become a licensed foster parent to Native American children**
- If you are not in a position to help with any of the above, pass this message on to friends or family members and encourage their involvement

Child-Specific Recruitment

- Child-Specific Recruitment strategies help recruit foster, adoptive, and kinship families for specific children and youth in foster care. These strategies begin with a comprehensive child assessment and preparation process. Every effort should be made to involve the child as developmentally appropriate. The main emphasis is on relationship development – knowing the child and knowing families who might be a well-suited match.

Example of Child-Specific Recruitment

- AASK Program Waiting Children Flyers
- Photolisting with AdoptUSKids
- Matching children with caring adults who are currently working with them in other capacities – therapist, teacher, respite provider

**Doesn't always mean adoption – might be a guardianship or non-foster care arrangement

Developing a Recruitment & Retention Plan

- General Recruitment Strategies
 - Think beyond just “give aways” and advertising campaigns
 - All staff within all coalition agencies should be trained in customer service to address questions about foster care and adoption from foster care – if even just to know how to direct a prospective family.
 - Other ideas...

Planning continues...

- Targeted Recruitment Strategies
 - Analyze your data for need – FRAME, census data
 - Analyze your data for resources – Census, Community-based
 - Partner with current foster and adoptive parents as a professional part of your team – CFSTC has resources on website
 - Identify community partners – radio stations, newspapers – who will assist you with recruitment efforts

Planning continues...

- Child-Specific Recruitment Strategies
 - AASK Waiting Children and other photolisting sites
 - Relationships building is HUGE!
 - Other ideas...

Retention Strategies

- Customer Services
- Support – such as mentoring and support groups
- Training opportunities
- Recognition & “Thank you’s”
- Analyze why people are leaving and why they are staying

Tracking Your Plan

- Ask every person who inquires what led them to contact you for information
- Track the effectiveness of everything you do – get the most “bang for your buck”
- Use a tracking spreadsheet or other data collection form
- Other ideas....

Final Thoughts

- An effective, well thought out recruitment plan should be the driving force of your efforts
- Funding is the fuel for the plan...which is based on your needs and resources
- Other thoughts and comments?