

**ConQIR**  
[Consortium for Quality and Consistency in Identification and Recruitment\*]

# Tip Sheet

January 2007

**Instructions: Please mark out all tips you believe not to be appropriate for your state.**

## **When preparing for a new recruiter**

- **Use a Briefcase or Portfolio**
  - Provide a briefcase or portfolio so materials are together and the recruiter looks professional as he/she visits the home.
- **Create Recruiter Kits.**
  - Put together recruiter kits so the recruiter is prepared with all the tools necessary to do the job. Refill daily, weekly, monthly or as needed. Some suggested items are as follows:
    - Good pens
    - Supply of COEs
    - Other needed forms
    - Brochures explaining the program
    - Calling cards with the recruiter's name, title, address, and phone number
    - Doorknob hangers with English on one side and other dominant languages on the other side
    - List of social service agencies and services provided
    - Maps of the area, your state, other sending states, and housing projects
    - Other language/English dictionary
- **Recruiting is a year-round activity.**
  - Explain to recruiters that recruiting is a year-round activity to ensure that eligible children are identified.
  - Intensify efforts during high volume times when there is a high frequency of migrant families coming into an area.
- **Bilingual and cultural awareness is essential in most geographic areas.**

## **Before You Hit the Streets**

- **Have business cards, calling cards, or job id badges to identify you as a migrant recruiter.**
  - Have the migrant logo, your name, title, address, and phone number on the cards.
  - Job ID badges should include your picture and the migrant logo. Also have your emergency numbers on the back of your badge in case of a personal emergency.
- **Arm yourself with knowledge.**
  - Become knowledgeable about all regulations regarding identification and recruitment (ID&R) by studying the ID&R manual provided by your SEA.
  - Attend training sessions.
  - Participate in professional development opportunities.
- **Identify geographic areas.**
  - Map neighborhoods where migrant families may take up temporary residence.

- Identify areas where migrant families may frequently shop, do laundry, buy food, or seek social services.
- **Get student handbooks.**
  - Get student handbooks from schools in the area so you can familiarize yourself with policies such as attendance, discipline, graduation requirements, grading periods, and dress code.
  - You can help prepare parents and students for what they will find when enrolling in the new school or answer questions parents may have about the child's current school.
- **Always plan and be prepared with back-up plans.**
  - Manage your time effectively by planning a loop of visits so you can schedule times for visits so you do not waste time and gas driving out of your way.
  - When you have planned your day, know the names of the people you will visit.
  - Be well organized with the tools and materials you need to do your job.
  - Be prepared for the unexpected, and always have an alternate plan.
  - At day's end, record the places you visited and the time it took to get from point A to point B. It will help you plan in the future.
- **Identify high volume times of the year.**
  - Intensify recruitment efforts during peak seasons to make sure all eligible children are identified.

### ***The Importance of Networking***

- **Establish partnerships.**
  - A single recruiter cannot accomplish effective and efficient recruiting. Partnerships are essential to getting services to eligible children in a timely manner.
  - While most schools and community agencies are willing to help provide direct services to children, an occasional thoughtful gesture or an act of kindness can increase the assistance provided to you as well as to our migrant children.
  - Introduce yourself at all the local schools in the area.
    - The best sources in the school may be the principal, school secretary, school nurse, ESL teacher, or bus driver.
    - Have business cards with your name, title, address, and phone number.
    - If school personnel refer families who may be eligible, follow up on the referrals promptly. Advise them of your progress.
    - Work with schools and MEP projects to schedule times to screen potentially eligible families.
  - Contact health departments for available services to which you may refer families. Explain the program and ask personnel to refer families who may be eligible for MEP services.
  - Go to non-profits to find donations of food/clothing, etc.
  - Enlist the help of agri-business employers and crew chiefs to allow you to recruit at the work place at a time when work is not interrupted.
    - Approach employers at their least busy time.
    - Call ahead to set up an appointment.
    - Carry a phone book to find employer's address if referred by another agri-business employer.
    - Show interest in the agri-business. Do prior research, if necessary. Don't take up too much time with questions or conversation.
    - Be persistent, but not pushy. Let the farmer/grower get comfortable with you.
    - Have calling cards available to leave with the agri-business or crew chief.

- Have your job ID available and visible for the farmer, crew chief, or agri-business.
  - Avoid looking official on the first visit (e.g., carry a kid's book, rather than a clipboard or fancy case).
  - Don't share information about one farm with another.
- **Increase the awareness of the Migrant Program in the community.**
  - **Post flyers throughout the community** - Flyers can be posted in sites where migrant families frequent (Laundromats, churches, libraries, grocery stores, etc.) Flyers describe the program and basic eligibility requirements.
  - **Reach out to the school and community** – Inform key school personnel (i.e., principals, counselors, registrars, secretaries, bus drivers, etc.) about the MEP.
  - **Reach out to the community**- Inform key community members (priests, social services agencies, employment offices, health clinic staff, etc.), about the MEP.
  - **Calling cards** - Distribute calling cards with the recruiter's name, title, address, and phone number to school and community personnel. Encourage them to call if they find families who they think are potential migrant families.
  - **Supply School and Community with Brochures** – and any other information about the program that would be useful to them as program ambassadors. In turn, learn about their locations, hours of operation, phone numbers, names of key personnel and applicable fees for future referrals to them.
- **Begin recruiting early.**
  - Begin recruiting before the school year or project term begins.
- **Welcome new families.**
  - Be on hand to welcome newly arriving families to labor camps, project sites, school campuses, etc.
  - Work with schools and MEP projects to schedule times to screen potentially eligible families. During pre-registration, set up a MEP table to screen families for eligibility. Be prepared to complete COEs as families come in to register their children.
  - Have materials on hand to entertain the children while you talk to the parent.
- **Collect information about the presence of migrant families.**
  - Visit schools, neighborhoods, community agencies and businesses to network and make contacts.
  - Survey agri-businesses (farmers, growers, plant managers, foremen) where seasonal and temporary work may occur.
  - Obtain directories listing any community agencies/organizations (ESL night classes, workforce commission, food stamp office, job banks) where migrant families and out-of-school youth may seek assistance.
  - Interview school personnel regarding new enrollees.
- **Ask qualifying families to refer families that they believe may qualify as migrant.**
- **Partner up with more experienced recruiters.**
  - If you are new to recruitment, partner up with veteran recruiters for the first few family interviews with prospective migrant families.
  - Observe the experienced recruiter as he/she conducts the interview.
  - Ask the experienced recruiter to observe you as you begin to interview families and give constructive critiques until you feel comfortable and competent enough to set out alone.

### ***Before You Interview the Family***

- **Review all relevant family information before conducting an interview.**
  - Family's migrant history from the state's database
  - Previous COE's
  - School attendance records
- **If this is a family who has had a previous COE,...**

- Retrieve the previous COE completed by the family and take it on the home visit with you.
- Complete, type if possible, the basic student information from the previous COE before leaving the office. Then the family can review it for accuracy as the COE is updated. Typing makes the COE more legible. This saves time and the stress of writing out the entire COE in front of the family.
- Compare newly obtained information with the family's previous history to check for accuracy.
- During the visit, follow up with any unanswered questions, concerns, and issues from the previous COE to avoid making subsequent trips and phone calls, intruding upon the family.

### ***When Interviewing Families***

- **Always be polite and respectful to the family members you are interviewing.**
- **Introduce yourself and present your credentials.**
- **Never talk down to the family. Let them know you are someone who cares.**
- **Wear casual, but not sloppy, clothing.**
  - Dress to make the families comfortable.
  - Avoid wearing clothes or jewelry that are too expensive.
  - Dress so that the family would respect you. Consider cultural parameters.
- **Visit the home at respectful times**
  - Take into consideration the parent's work shift.
  - Do not recruit during Sunday mornings, Saturday evenings, or Wednesday nights when families might be preparing to go to church.
- **Recruit Safely**
  - Always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
  - Interview outside the dwelling is preferable if you feel unsure about the area or circumstances.
  - Keep your keys accessible.
  - Always wear a name tag with the migrant logo to associate yourself with the Migrant Education Program. You can have an inexpensive paper one or get one engraved at a trophy shop. Wear it in a prominent place to save the family the embarrassment of not remembering your name.
  - Take time to adequately explain the program and the reason for asking questions about the family.
  - Leave your purse or wallet locked in the trunk before you get into the family's neighborhood.
  - Bring a cell phone when you are recruiting, but turn the ringer off. Do not talk on the cell phone while you are in the family's home. It may make them uncomfortable or doubt you. Besides, it is just rude!
  - Travel in twos in dangerous areas and be aware if it is not safe to be in an area after dark,
  - Wear protective clothing at work sites
  - Have a reliable car and have it serviced regularly, know how to fix a flat tire.
  - Prepare for weather emergencies by carrying extra water, food, and a blanket.
- **Maintain flexible hours outside the normal workday to locate and identify potential families.**
- **Always keep appointments you set up with the family.**
  - If you have to cancel due to bad weather or illness, call or contact the family as soon as possible.
- **Take time to build rapport and trust with the families.**
  - Be friendly; smile when you enter the family's home.
  - Associate yourself with someone the person may know.
  - Make a connection with the person you are talking with, for example, know something about their home, country, or their current type of work.

- Realize that parents may be embarrassed or feel fear at the beginning of the visit.
- Talk to the children in the home. It helps parents feel more comfortable when a new acquaintance shows interest in their children.
- Talk freely with parents before asking them to give you information.
- Remember that parents and older children may give an incorrect age. Let the parent or older child feel comfortable with the purpose of your visit before you start asking for their ages or the last move the family made.
- Let them know that you are there in the best interest of their child.
- Take along your own children (if this allowed in your state). It will break down barriers and make you seem more approachable. No one would bring their children if their intentions were bad.
- Use the same car. Your car becomes a symbol of who you are. Avoid using a green or tan car because it may be mistaken for a border control or some other kind of state official.
- **Demonstrate cultural competence at all times.**
  - Be aware of the cultural boundaries, practices, and taboos of the families you are interviewing.
  - Do not assume that there is literacy in the family's language of origin.
  - Respect decision(s) of the head of the household in regard to identification and service (if refused).
  - In some cultures, the family feels obligated to offer you something to eat or drink, even if all they have is a glass of water. You must understand enough about these situations so that you do not refuse what is offered, even if you are not hungry or thirsty.
- **Have information ready for the families.**
  - Have calling cards containing the recruiter's name, work address and phone number. Encourage people to call with information about their own families or other families that may qualify as migrant.
  - Have packets ready to hand parents with information pertaining to the school, community, and social service agencies. Include the school handbook and a list of emergency numbers, i.e., hospital, police, fire, poison control, etc. for families newly arriving to your town.
  - Provide a small packet of school supplies for children such as pens, pencils, paper, rulers, etc.
  - Make a scrapbook of pictures of what the kids are doing in migrant education classes and how the teachers are working one-on-one with them. Parents can look at the pictures while the recruiter is explaining the program.
- **Have a clipboard or hard surface to write on when interviewing.**
- **Have something useful to give the parents or the children**
  - Having a give-away will help break the ice and make the family feel they have something to gain from your visit. Examples would include:
    - Pens, pencils, paper, rulers, resource packets depending on the age of the child.
    - A calendar in two languages with immunizations and school dates
    - Nutrition information
    - A school calendar
    - Parent tips
    - Brochures explaining the program
    - Key chains with the migrant logo and the local phone number
    - Coupons
- **Help the families understand about the migrant program**
  - Explain the program in general, enough so the parents understand that it is beneficial for their child and family. However, do not explain in such detail that you increase the family's hopes and expectations until you find out if the child qualifies. Then explain in greater detail.
  - Provide information to leave with the family that explains the program in English as well as other dominant languages

- **Ask the family if they have a cell phone. This is often the only way to reach the family.**
- **Make referrals when families are in need of other service**
  - Learn about federal, state and local programs that supply much needed services to migrant families.
  - Refer families to other federal programs, legal aid services, local food banks, homeless shelters, clothing resources, health clinics, etc.
  - Call or visit the family within two weeks to inquire if they successfully accessed the needed services.
  - In some cases, arranging transportation may be required.
- **Always explain that you may come back for additional questions or that your supervisor may call or visit to check your work.**
- **If parents are reluctant to sign their children up with the program**
  - Recommend the parent talk to Ms So and So down the road. Often the parent will feel comfortable and call to enroll their child after talking with another parent.
- **Do not make any promises that you cannot keep.**
- **Always thank the family for the time they have spent talking to you whether the family qualifies or not.**
- **If the family does not come to the door**
  - Knock, wait a respectful time, knock again, and then announce who you are and what you want.
  - Explain that you want to talk to them about a program that may be able to help their children.
  - Do not give up with a single knocking or even a triple knocking. The parents will eventually come to the door – keep knocking.
- **When families are not home**
  - Doorknob hangers can be left for families that are not at home when the recruiter visits. The doorknob hangers can be pre-printed with the migrant logo and several options such as phone number, time slot when the recruiter will return, a recruiter signature line, and date. It will be important that it is in the family's language and cannot be confused with other government agencies such as INS.
- **Make follow-up visits**
  - Communicate with families after initial recruitment to build and foster families' trust in you and the MEP.
  - Additional visits should be timed after your classroom visits to communicate their children's academic progress and/or with community events to provide an opportunity to engage them in the community at large.
  - Ask family permission to occasionally bring principals, federal program directors, and teachers along on home visits. Explain that these accompanied visits spread the word about the program's purpose and the recruiter's role as advocate. The officials will learn a lot about the families and the families will feel like they have someone to contact at the school or agency that they know.
- **Locating a family that has moved**
  - Send a letter to their old address. On the envelope, request that the postal service notify you of the new address.
  - When recruiting get the phone number of a close relative or friend that does not move, so you can call them to locate the family if they move.
- **Keep a card file on families who did not qualify.**
  - Make cards for families that you have interviewed who did not qualify and note the reason the family was ineligible. If the family approaches you or you find them again, you can shorten the interview by targeting the area of ineligibility from the last interview.

### **When Recording Information on the COE**

- Ask for first and last names of the children. Do not assume that everyone's last name is the same.
- Double-check the gender of the child; don't assume anything from the name.
- Don't assume that all children in the family made the move to which the parent is referring.

### **Be Cautious About:**

- Interviewing in low-income projects. In many areas, families must live in the area for some time to qualify to live in these units.
- Saying that program is federally funded. It may scare parents who are undocumented.
- Sharing information about agri-businesses or farmers with anyone.
- Sharing family information unless legally required to do so.
- Getting involved with questions regarding pay levels with any one
- Sharing personal information about yourself or your family.

Tips have been received from the following states: Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, and Washington

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