Chapter 4. Building a Recruitment Network

Networking creates a supportive system to share information and services among individuals and groups having a common interest. (National ID&R Curriculum)

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| Chapter 4 Learning Objectives |
| The recruiter will learn how to |
| identify the local organizations and individuals who work most closely with the migratory community; |
| develop profiles of key local employees, school staff, community organizations, and the migratory community; |
| determine the best way to build relationships with each of these key contacts (e.g., find out how they can be assisted, provide awareness training on the MEP); |
| follow up regularly with key contacts, particularly when they provide leads on local migratory families (e.g., call or visit them, attend important meetings, send thank you notes); |
| work with schools, community organizations, etc., to see if they will include pre-screening questions for the MEP as part of their enrollment or intake process; and |
| create a recruitment map that shows areas where migratory families are likely to live and work, services they use, and where their children go to school. |

Finding Migratory Children

The recruiter often finds locating migratory children to be the most time consuming and labor intensive ID&R responsibility, particularly since the children who have the greatest needs are often the most difficult to find. While recruitment consists primarily of finding and interviewing families, it is by no means a simple task. The process is strenuous and requires many skills including communication and building effective relationships with migratory families and youth, the agricultural community, and service providers who work with migratory families. The recruiter should also learn how to approach key community leaders to make them aware of the MEP and to gain their respect. Over time, experienced recruiters recognize that migratory families, agricultural employers, and service providers who work with migratory families are helpful to the recruiter in locating other migratory families, children, and OSY. Building this level of personal trust and an awareness of the benefits of participating in the MEP should be every recruiter’s goal.

This chapter addresses the type of research the recruiter and other MEP staff should conduct to learn about local agricultural activities, farmworker labor, and organizations that serve the local migratory community. This information will help the recruiter and supervisor determine the best way to identify and recruit eligible migratory children.

Conducting Research

The value of developing key contacts within the migratory community cannot be overstated. As a starting point, the recruiter should learn as much as possible about his or her recruitment area. In particular, the recruiter should find out what is known about the local migratory community and which local people and organizations are trusted within that community. Local people and organizations are the recruiter’s best sources of current and accurate information and referrals. Once the recruiter has identified these important contacts, the recruiter should determine how best to build strong working relationships, to exchange information on an ongoing basis, and to promote the MEP.

The recruiter may be instructed by his or her supervisor to “talk with farmers” or “go to the schools.” But a new recruiter, or even a seasoned recruiter taking on a new territory, needs to know which farms and schools are the most likely to have migratory children in order to be productive. Conducting basic research will help the recruiter find migratory children more quickly and efficiently. This is particularly true for those children who are not in school and are more difficult to identify, such as preschool children and OSY.

Some key questions the recruiter should try to answer through this research include

* What is already known about migratory workers in my local area?
* Who are the local agricultural and fishing employers?
* What are the employers’ work activities (e.g., packing freshly picked apples)?
* Which of their jobs are temporary or seasonal?
* Which employers hire migratory workers (i.e., workers who have moved to this community to do this type of work)?
* Where are the employers located?
* Where do the migratory families who work for these employers reside in the local area (e.g., migratory labor camps, inexpensive apartments, trailer parks)?
* Where do the migratory workers in the area come from (i.e., where do they consider their home base to be)?
* When do migratory workers leave the area (i.e., what time of year)? Do they look for temporary or seasonal employment in agriculture and fishing in other places? When do they return?
* Where do migratory workers go to seek employment?
* What type of seasonal or temporary employment do they seek?

This type of information can be found through a number of sources including websites and the field offices of federal, state, and local agencies that focus on agriculture, fishing, labor, and housing issues. LEAs and community organizations that work with migratory families are also good information sources.

Some general Internet sites can be helpful resources for a recruiter. For example, a recruiter can go to an Internet mapping service, such as Google Maps ([https://maps.google.com](https://maps.google.com/)) or Map Quest (<https://www.mapquest.com>), and enter the name of a local town and state and a search word (e.g., migratory, migrant, orchard, farm, nursery, name of a specific crop, laundromat). The mapping service will provide names and addresses of businesses or organizations related to the search word along with a map that indicates where each is located. More information on using electronic tools to recruit is discussed later in this chapter and a list of resources that the recruiter can use is found in Appendix II of this manual.

In some communities migration patterns are so well established that the local MEP staff know in which residences migratory families and youth live and which employers hire them. In these areas, the MEP staff can often share successful, time-tested methods for finding and enrolling migratory children. Also, many MEPs have recruitment databases that contain helpful information including a list of employers in the area who hire temporary and seasonal migratory workers, approximate dates of workers’ arrivals, the jobs conducted by workers, and their housing unit locations. While recruiters in areas that receive migratory workers may first go to the local migratory labor camps to interview families, the recruiter should also look outside of traditional locales because migration, employment, and housing patterns may change over time. Although a specific approach and strategy may have been successful in the past, this does not mean it will always be successful. It is important for the recruiter to continually conduct new research to find all eligible migratory children in the recruitment area.

Terminology Used to Describe Migratory Farmworkers

Over time, recruiters have developed a shared vocabulary of terms related to ID&R. Knowing these terms makes it easier for the recruiter to conduct research to effectively locate local migratory workers and their families. While states and local project sites often develop their own terms, the following are terms that are commonly used in many states that recruiters may benefit from knowing.

Home Base. Many migratory families have a home base, or hometown, where they live for much of the year. They travel or migrate from this home base to other places to work for temporary or seasonal work. For example, a migratory family might consider Florida to be its home base; the family members live in Florida all winter and work through the citrus harvest in the spring, but then they move to South Carolina to work during the peach harvest. They might also travel to other states or locations and then return to their home base in Florida in the fall.

Send and Receive. A location may either send migratory workers (i.e., workers live in a particular place for most of the year but move to other places to work) or receive migratory workers (i.e., workers come from other places to this place to work). In the example given above, Florida is the family’s home base, so Florida is the sending state. When the family moves to South Carolina to work, South Carolina becomes the family’s receiving state. Some areas send and receive migratory families. A county may receive migratory workers who move from state to state (interstate) as well as those who simply move from place to place within a state (intrastate).

Migratory Streams. Historically, the majority of migratory workers were believed to follow one of three distinct patterns of migration: (1) the Eastern stream, (2) the Mid-continent stream, and (3) the West Coast stream. The Eastern stream flowed east of the Appalachian Mountains, the Mid-continent stream flowed to and from Texas in all directions, and the West Coast stream flowed between Arizona, California, Oregon, and Washington.

Follow-the-Crop Migrants. The term “follow-the-crop migrants” comes from the U.S. Department of Labor’s National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS). The term refers to workers who travel at least 75 miles to “multiple U.S. farm locations” over a 12-month period in order to work. This term is now a relative rarity. These workers make up just 5 percent of those surveyed by the NAWS in 2007-09, down from a high of 14 percent in 1992-94 (United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, 2012).

Shuttle Migrants. The term “shuttle migrants” also comes from the NAWS. The term refers to migratory farmworkers who move more than 75 miles between a home base in the off-season and one or more farm job(s) located in the U.S. during the harvest season. For example, a migratory farmworker who lives in Mexico, travels to the U.S. to obtain a seasonal farm job in agriculture, and then returns home to Mexico to live inexpensively or to supplement his or her farm earnings with nonagricultural work during the off season is considered a shuttle migrant. Shuttle migrants can travel both domestically (i.e., within the U.S.) and internationally. The term is not defined for purposes of establishing eligibility for the MEP.

Bi-national shuttle migrants (usually between Mexico and the U.S.) are often sensitive to changes in economic conditions, employment opportunities, and immigration policies. As these conditions change, so do the migration patterns of workers (e.g., when migratory workers move, where they move from and to, how many move, what type of employment they seek, etc.). The recruiter needs to be aware of any changes in migration patterns.

Settled Out. This term means that the migratory child or family has become permanently established in an area and has stopped migrating for seasonal or temporary farm work.

Identifying Important Information Sources

When I started recruiting, I talked to the recruiters who found the most migratory children. I asked if they would introduce me to the people who were the most respected by migratory families. Over time I’ve developed many good friends, and they help me do a better job of finding migratory children.

As the recruiter begins researching the local migratory community, the recruiter should become familiar with the information sources that are essential to building an effective recruitment network. A recruitment network is a system of contacts, including individuals, agencies, and other institutions, that provides information on identifying and locating potentially eligible children. Establishing a recruiting network and developing a strong working relationship with each member of that network is an important way of finding migratory children who could be eligible for MEP services. When done properly a recruitment network can serve as the eyes and ears of the recruiter.

The five most common information sources when building a recruitment network are

* employers;
* local school staff;
* community contacts, organizations, and commercial establishments;
* other government agencies; and
* migratory families and youth.

The recruiter should encourage members of the recruitment network to refer potentially eligible children to the MEP. At the same time, the recruiter should let network members know that only MEP staff can determine whether a child is eligible to receive MEP services. As a result, network members should be careful not to promise families that their children will receive services. The key sources of information to consider in establishing a recruitment network are discussed below.

In my state, our relationship with local growers is so good that they give us a carbon copy of the pre-employment forms that job candidates fill out when they apply for work. They avoid privacy concerns by having the applicant sign an agreement that the information can be shared. The pre-employment forms help us recruit more efficiently and we also staple it to the hard copy of the COE to corroborate the worker’s employment.

Employers. The recruiter should identify the local employers that are the most likely to hire migratory agricultural workers or migratory fishers. Once identified, it is important to establish good working relationships with them and to explain the value of the MEP, since employers can serve as the greatest allies in the recruiter’s ID&R efforts. Making a good first impression with agricultural employers is key; their cooperation is necessary for the recruiter to gain entry to places where migratory families and youth work and to obtain permission to interview migratory workers during work breaks or after hours.

To break the ice with a new employer it is often beneficial for an administrator to send a letter to the employer that explains the MEP and asks for the employer’s help in identifying potentially eligible children (see Appendix V). The administrator may also wish to follow up with a telephone call. Once the administrator has made this initial contact, the recruiter can contact the employer directly, using the letter as a conversation opener. It is important for the recruiter to gain the trust of the employer, which can be done by demonstrating honesty, responsibility, confidentiality, and consideration to the employer. The recruiter should maintain regular communication with the employer while being mindful that farmers are busy people. The recruiter should make sure not to overburden the employer with constant inquiries as this is sure to diminish their working relationship. The recruiter should do his or her best to make conversations direct and to the point. Additionally, the recruiter should take notice of times when the employer seems less busy, as these times provide quality opportunities to build relationships. When an employer is dealing with a crisis on the farm the recruiter should turn around and come back another time; this is not the time to promote the MEP. The recruiter should wait for a time that is convenient to the employer to explain the purpose of the program and how the employer might benefit from participating in the recruitment network. The best chance for a successful working relationship with agricultural employers is to create a win/win situation. For example:

* Many workers have children and will seek employment in areas that can provide extra services for their children.
* Workers whose children are engaged in school are less likely to leave their jobs, which reduces costs associated with employee turnover.
* Workers whose children are engaged in school are often more productive since they are less concerned about their children and, therefore, better able to concentrate on their jobs. Their children are less likely to be brought to the workplace (creating a liability problem for the employer), to miss school in order to care for a younger sibling, or to be left in an unsupervised home.
* A small investment of time on the part of the employer can result in a happier workforce and better relationship with the larger community.

Because of these benefits, employers are generally supportive of having employees and their families participate in the MEP. In addition, the recruiter can provide other valuable resources to an employer, such as referring migratory families to other useful services including a local migratory health clinic. The recruiter should also build relationships with migratory labor contractors or crew chiefs who can alert the recruiter when new workers who have children are hired.

The recruiter should develop and maintain profiles of the major employers that hire temporary or seasonal agricultural or fishing workers in the local recruiting area. When consolidated, these individual profiles will create an informational directory that the recruiter can expand over time, ultimately serving as the primary agricultural recruitment tool. This resource is not only beneficial to the current recruiter, but it also builds a historical record for future recruiters who may one day take over the region. A profile survey form could include

* general information regarding the workplace (e.g., name, owner, foreman, etc.);
* directions to the work site;
* crops or products, hiring practices (i.e., peak hiring dates);
* housing offered; and
* other facts pertinent to the specific geographic MEP area or work conditions.

The profile form could also include personal notes that are helpful for the recruiter’s future reference, such as where the employer prefers the recruiter to park or the best times of day to visit. Additionally, profiles can reference safety concerns or anecdotes summarizing positive and negative experiences at the work site. A sample workplace survey form that can be used to gather profile data is included in Appendix III. Other sample survey forms are also provided.

Schools. The local schools are another important source of information for the recruiter since schools collect information on every child who enrolls and withdraws. Developing school-based information sources requires the recruiter to think about with whom migratory families are likely to interact within the school (e.g., school secretaries, registrars, attendance clerks, school nurses, guidance counselors, teachers, superintendents, principals, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and staff members from Title I, Part A, and Title III programs). For example, the family will go to the main office to register, see the nurse to have immunization or health records checked, and in the case of secondary students, visit a guidance counselor to develop the student’s class schedule and check transcripts. A knowledgeable and cooperative secretary can be helpful to the recruiter by referring potentially eligible students and their families to the MEP. In many cases, migratory children ride school buses that transport them to and from school. When bus drivers are educated about basic eligibility requirements, they can inform the recruiter when new children board the school bus at places where farmworkers often live. It is important to ensure that these valuable contacts are aware of the MEP and know how to contact the recruiter with leads.

It is also important to carefully establish and nurture a relationship with district and/or school administrators. Administrators can support the recruiter’s efforts by providing access to key district or school staff, providing information on newly arrived children, and communicating throughout the system that the recruiter’s work is important to the district, schools, and families.

Community-based Organizations and Commercial Establishments

We get permission from the local grocery stores where migratory workers shop most frequently to put flyers about the MEP in grocery bags.

Many local community organizations are funded to provide outreach, social, health, or legal services to migratory and seasonal farmworkers. The recruiter should think about which organizations and services migratory families and OSY are most likely to use in the local community. For example, migratory families may attend local churches, wash their clothes at the local laundromat, shop at local ethnic food markets and flea markets, enroll in ESL classes, enroll their children in Head Start, visit community health centers, and use local cultural centers. They may also receive benefits from local service agencies or farmworker organizations. The recruiter should also think about which agencies and organizations collect data on migratory workers or communicate with farmers in the area (e.g., farm bureaus, growers’ associations).

As with the employers, the recruiter should develop a listing or profile of the businesses or organizations that are the best sources for locating migratory families and OSY. Some communities have interagency committees that work together to coordinate the services that they provide to migratory families and OSY, and may even have community service fairs for migratory workers during peak hiring periods. At service fairs, local service providers typically set up temporary intake offices in a single location to allow migratory families to sign up for a number of benefits and services at one time. This provides a great opportunity for recruiters to enroll migratory children in the MEP and to share important information.

Temporary agencies are another good source for finding leads on seasonal and temporary farmworkers. Many temp agencies provide workers for farms and processing plants on a regular basis. Working with these agencies may open another door to potentially eligible migratory families.

It is also important for the recruiter to think about where migratory families are likely to live, such as migratory labor camps, local apartment complexes that offer month-to-month leases, or shared houses or trailers (sometimes located on the farm itself). The recruiter should cultivate relationships with the owners or managers of these housing units because they can become vital members of the recruitment network. For example, they can alert the recruiter when migratory workers begin moving into the community. The recruiter should visit migratory housing regularly since housing complexes that have previously housed migratory families and/or OSY may have changed policies for accepting new tenants. In this case, the recruiter will need to determine where these workers now reside and start building a relationship with the owners or managers of those units.

Some organizations may not be able to share their contact lists, but may be willing to include information about the MEP in mailings that they send out to local farmers.

Other Government Agencies. The MEP is not the only government program that serves the migratory community. For example, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) provides grants to public and nonprofit health centers that support the development and operation of migrant clinic sites throughout the United States and Puerto Rico (<https://bphc.hrsa.gov/uds/datacenter.aspx?fd=mh>).

The Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Program provides grants to local public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to preschool children of migratory and seasonal farmworkers and their families, with a special focus on helping preschoolers develop the early reading and math skills they need to be successful in school. Other programs that serve the migratory community may include the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program, the Housing Assistance Council, the Migrant Clinicians Network, and Head Start Centers. The recruiter should keep in mind that not all organizations have the same definition of “migrant” or “migratory” as the MEP, and should check with each organization before referring clients. The recruiter should also realize that not everyone who is served by these programs is eligible for MEP services.

Each state has a land grant college or university that addresses agricultural issues and supports a statewide system of Cooperative Extension offices. Extension agents and outreach professionals for each Cooperative Extension office often have in-depth knowledge of local farms and crops and have many contacts in the farming community. Cooperative Extension offices may also offer annual statewide activities, such as farm shows or agricultural days that are good places to meet employers. In addition to local Cooperative Extension offices, recruiters may find the national online extension site (<http://www.extension.org>) a valuable resource. “eXtension” is an interactive learning environment delivering researched information from land grant university minds across America. The recruiter can enhance his or her knowledge of agricultural crops and industries to better understand and communicate with the farm community in the recruitment regions. Furthermore, the recruiter can find useful research and articles specifically on migratory farmworkers by typing “migrant” into the search engine.

In addition to Cooperative Extension offices, state Departments of Agriculture are another diverse source of information for the recruiter. Most state Departments of Agriculture have marketing boards for the different commodities, such as meat, dairy, fruits and vegetables, etc. These boards are composed of employers and can provide the MEP with access to other employers. Additional sources of information might include state agencies that license or inspect migratory labor camps, National Farmworker Jobs Training Grantees (<https://www.doleta.gov/Farmworker/html/NFJP.cfm>), and One-Stop Career Centers. Many One-Stop Career Centers (<http://www.servicelocator.org>) have outreach workers that visit migratory workers regularly. To identify whether a One-Stop Career Center has an outreach worker, you may contact the center directly or contact the State Monitor Advocate (<http://www.doleta.gov/programs/MSFW.cfm>).

Some government agencies maintain electronic tools that may be of assistance to the recruiter. For example, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) (<http://www.nass.usda.gov/>) operates a comprehensive on-line database on agricultural production. NASS conducts hundreds of surveys every year and prepares reports covering virtually every aspect of U.S. agricultural production including numbers of hired farm labor and contract farm labor. Data are available at the state and county level; some data are available by zip code. There is also an Interactive Statistical Map (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2. The National Agricultural Statistics Service Website



The NASS website enables you to conduct a county level search (<https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Census_by_State/>).

While the data obtained can be valuable in finding out total production data, information about individual farms is not available to the recruiter on the NASS site.

Another diverse resource is the U.S. Department of Labor. This is the government agency that manages the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) (<http://www.doleta.gov/agworker/naws.cfm>). This survey is the most comprehensive employment-based, random survey of the demographic, employment, and health characteristics of the U.S. crop labor force. The Department of Labor also maintains the iCERT Visa Portal site (<http://icert.doleta.gov/index.cfm>). This site provides current and past job order postings for H2A workers made by agricultural employers. The H2A temporary labor certification program allows farms to contract temporary workers when local labor force is not available. While not all H2A workers are eligible due to MEP age requirements, the recruiter may find this site useful for identifying agricultural employers who contract H2A workers. The site is user friendly.

Migratory Families. It is important for the recruiter to develop strong relationships with migratory families. Migratory parents can inform the recruiter about the kinds of community activities in which they participate and the services they use, which is useful information as the recruiter develops a recruitment network. Additionally, migratory parents whose children are currently in the MEP can often provide information regarding other migratory parents who live in their neighborhood, go to their church, or work at a neighboring farm. Finally, migratory families who have had good experiences with the MEP are more likely to seek out the MEP when they move to a new town.

Migratory Out-of-School Youth (OSY). OSY have unique needs resulting from their migratory lifestyle. Some recruiters state that it is even more difficult to locate and recruit the OSY population than it is to locate and recruit migratory families. Fortunately, providing services to OSY can be very rewarding.

OSY need advocates: people who can both motivate them and help them access needed services. Young people not in school have little or no access to federal or state resources.

Building Relationships and Gathering Data

Recruiting students by waiting in the school for migratory families to come through the door is like lying under a cherry tree with your mouth open. Sooner or later, a cherry will fall in your mouth, but look at all of those you lost out on.

The primary benefit of a recruitment network is to get referrals of potentially eligible migratory children and youth. For example, a community healthcare worker in an agricultural region may notify the MEP if a large number of new families have their children immunized at the local clinic at spring planting time. Each time the recruiter interviews a migratory family the recruiter should ask if the family knows of other migratory families or OSY in the area that the recruiter should visit. Furthermore, the recruiter should actively seek out new organizations to add to the recruitment network. It takes time and effort to build and sustain a recruitment network since the recruiter must continually make fresh contacts, as well as nurture long-standing contacts. However, the benefits outweigh the time commitment required. Here are some strategies for building and maintaining networks.

Personal Relationships Build Professional Relationships. Migratory families often use personal relationships to share information about jobs, housing, schools, and services (including MEP services). Information shared within these informal networks often moves faster than more formal communications (e.g., learning about job openings by word-of-mouth versus in a newspaper). The recruiter can learn valuable lessons from migratory families about how to develop and maintain a network. Over time, the recruiter will develop his or her own networking and communication strategies to develop a strong professional recruitment network.

First Impressions. Making a good first impression can be critical when a recruiter meets a potential member of the recruitment network. The recruiter should be friendly, but should also be sensitive to the responsibilities and workload of the contact. The recruiter who is met with resistance may find it helpful to locate someone who already has a good relationship with the contact and who can allay any concerns the contact might have about the MEP (e.g., a peer, a respected school or community leader, another local agricultural employer who has given permission to do so, or a migratory family who is familiar with the MEP).

Importance of Trust. It is important for the recruiter to earn the trust of migratory families and agricultural employers, as well as the trust of professional organizations that serve the migratory community. Migratory families often have good reasons for being careful about whom they trust. They are vulnerable because they may not have legal standing in the U.S. or financial security. In addition, the words “migrant” or “migratory” may have a negative connotation attached to it for some families, so the recruiter may need to be careful about terminology. In other languages, the word “migrant” may imply or be confused with immigration status. Organizations that work with migratory families recognize the importance of maintaining the trust of their clients and therefore are careful about the information they share and with whom they share it.

The recruiter who is trusted by migratory families and youth reaps many benefits including having migratory families seek him or her out to enroll their children in the MEP and refer other migratory families to the program. Families are also more likely to share the personal employment and family information that is needed to document their children’s eligibility for the MEP (including qualifying employment that may have been performed without a legal work permit or for cash). The recruiter who is trusted by those who work with migratory families can gather important information on where migratory families gather, live, and work.

Trust is built slowly and is based on the experiences migratory families and organizations have with the individual recruiter and with the MEP. Some steps the recruiter can take to build trust include
the following:

* Provide clear information on why the recruiter is interested in finding migratory families.
* Describe what migratory families can expect from the MEP.
* Keep promises to migratory families and organizations; be careful not to make promises that cannot be kept.
* Protect the family’s privacy and confidentiality by not discussing other migratory parents and children except in the most positive and professional manner. Always ask permission before sharing information with other professionals or organizations (in writing, if needed).

Develop a Personal Relationship. As with everything else, personal relationships are key to achieving success and to feeling fulfilled. This is true for both recruiters and members of the recruiter’s network. Learning specific information about key contacts can help the recruiter develop an effective professional relationship with members of the recruitment network. For example:

* What is the crew chief’s name?
* When is the school secretary’s birthday?
* Has a local farmer fully recovered from a recent illness?
* When is the best time of day to catch Jaime, an OSY?
* Where do local migratory workers congregate on a Saturday night?

Many successful recruiters make an effort to learn these types of details, include them in their contact sheets, and act on them. For example, the successful recruiter asks about the secretary’s children each time they meet, wishes people a happy birthday, asks for the crew chief by name,
visits Jaime at 7:00 p.m. after he gets off work, and participates in the social life of the migratory community.

Communicate Regularly. The recruiter should maintain ongoing contact with the members of the recruitment network by attending key meetings and events. Schools, employers, and community service providers may have their own meetings, or may have collaborative groups that meet for everyone’s benefit. In addition to maintaining professional contacts, this is an opportunity for the recruiter to educate the recruitment network on the MEP. If it is not possible to have ongoing
one-on-one contact, there are other ways the recruiter can develop and maintain professional relationships. For example, occasional telephone calls can be an effective way of reminding
contacts about the services and successes of the MEP. It is important that the recruiter follow up with contacts regularly to get new information and to let the contact know the relationship is valued.

Follow Up Quickly on Referrals. Each time the recruiter receives a referral it is important to call or visit the contact to acknowledge the referral and to share the results, particularly if it resulted in a child’s enrollment in the MEP. Many programs send cards or official letters from the MEP offering thanks. Taking the time to follow up with contacts validates their effort and good will and can motivate them to provide future leads.

If the recruiter does not follow up on leads quickly, migratory children may not receive extra support and educational services they urgently need. Furthermore, contacts may stop providing leads if the recruiter does not visit the family or youth in a timely manner.

Getting information through personal contacts is one of the most valuable strategies the recruiter can employ. The recruiter should think carefully about how to establish good relationships with key members of the recruitment network, and how to increase their awareness and understanding of the MEP. For network contacts to understand the benefit of sharing information, the recruiter and the MEP must be perceived as credible and as delivering a quality service.

Surveys/Questionnaires. Surveys are another effective way of gathering information from the recruitment network. Survey forms often vary depending on where and how they are administered. However, common survey questions often include

* Have you or your family moved within the past three years?
* Have you looked for work in agriculture or fishing?

Some programs try to ask questions in more than one way on a survey form in case the reader does not fully understand the question the first time. The following are common types of surveys:

* Employer/workplace surveys. The recruiter should survey local employers to determine which ones are the most likely to hire migratory workers (see the sample Migrant Education Program Workplace Survey form in Appendix III). Once the recruiter has identified these employers, the recruiter should encourage them to have new employees complete a MEP survey as part of the hiring process. Other programs have found success by having MEP surveys and recruiter contact information inserted in with workers’ paychecks. The purpose of the MEP survey is to identify those workers who are the most likely to have children who qualify for the MEP (See the sample Migrant Education Program Employee Survey form in Appendix III.)
* School surveys. The recruiter should determine the schools that are the most likely to enroll migratory students based on the presence of a local agricultural community and industry and ask them to distribute migratory surveys to every family during the annual registration process. These schools should also be encouraged to distribute surveys to families who enroll their children after the school year begins (See the sample Migrant Education Program School Survey form in Appendix III.)
* Community agency surveys. The recruiter should encourage community agencies to include screening questions as a part of their intake process to help the MEP identify migratory families. At the same time, the recruiter may refer families to these agencies, where appropriate. This two-way cooperation benefits all involved. Sometimes agencies will want the recruiter to refer clients to them but will not reciprocate. If this is the case, the recruiter should advise his or her direct supervisor. A meeting on the supervisory level between the agency and the MEP may resolve the problem.

The recruiter should ask if the state or local project has conducted any surveys. If so, the recruiter should find out what forms were used and when the surveys were last updated. If the state has not been conducting surveys, the recruiter should initiate the process. As mentioned previously, over time, the collection of surveys will serve as a detailed directory for the recruiters key recruitment networks.

The recruiter should be aware that survey forms alone are not sufficient to record or document a child or youth’s eligibility for the MEP. However, information obtained through surveys provides a good starting point for recruitment efforts by identifying those families who are the most likely to have children who qualify for the MEP, the employers who are the most likely to hire migratory laborers, etc. All states are required to use a COE form to document a child’s eligibility for the MEP (see Chapter 8 for detailed information on completing the COE).

I work closely with the Chamber of Commerce and give out materials from the local town such as lists of business and community resources, maps, and emergency contact phone numbers.

Promotion. In addition to using the recruitment network for referrals or surveys, the recruiter can also use the network to promote the MEP. To use this strategy, the recruiter provides promotional materials to employers, schools, community organizations, and previously recruited migratory families to share with other families that might be eligible for the MEP. In this way, migratory families learn about the MEP and can contact a recruiter to see if they are eligible for services.

Promotion through a network can happen in a variety of ways. The National Institute of Cancer’s Pink Book identifies several ways to promote a program, including interpersonal, organizational, or mass media promotions. These strategies have been adapted to the MEP, as described below:

Interpersonal Promotion. Every time a contact in the recruitment network meets with a family, interviews a family, or makes a home visit, there is an opportunity for that contact to share information about MEP services and to disseminate information about the MEP. Other examples of interpersonal promotion include using a hotline that migratory families can call when looking for MEP services, or having informal discussions about the MEP at migratory “hotspots.” Materials and equipment that can support interpersonal promotion include business cards and toll-free numbers. Even providing a small informational item like a school calendar may remind the migratory family that the recruiter and the MEP are available to help the child participate effectively in school.

Organizational Promotion. A common organizational promotion is to present at a community agency meeting or workplace to educate potential members of the recruitment network about the MEP. This could occur during a regularly scheduled meeting or at a special community fair. A particularly effective form of organizational promotion is providing awareness training about the MEP for key contacts (e.g., bus drivers, registrars, attendance clerks, school nurses, counselors, and teachers). Other common organizational promotions are MEP newsletters, articles in newsletters of other organizations that serve migratory families, posters, brochures, and display tables.

Mass Media Promotion. Mass media offers one of the best means of promoting the MEP to a broad group of people. Radio, television, and newspapers may reach remote areas that the recruiter cannot easily or efficiently explore. Local radio stations and newspapers may be willing to broadcast community service announcements that welcome migratory families to the area. These announcements should reflect the language and culture of the local migratory population (e.g., Spanish-language radio stations in areas where migratory families are predominantly Latino). Newspaper stories, letters to the editor, and visits from local politicians are all ways to maintain community awareness of the MEP and are examples of strategies that help the recruiter “get the word out.” Posters left in strategic places such as churches, supermarkets, laundromats, convenience stores, auto repair shops, health clinics, and other locations that migratory families frequent can educate migratory families who may have eligible children or migratory youth about MEP services.

The recruiter should be aware of community sentiment regarding migratory and farmworker issues; some communities may react to MEP mass media promotions in a negative way. If the recruiter is unsure how the local community will accept mass media promotions, he or she should talk with fellow recruiters and/or the state ID&R coordinator before including it in the ID&R action plan. Furthermore, the recruiter should follow state and local policies on media review, releases, and approvals. In any mass promotion, the recruiter should provide clear information on the basic eligibility requirements so as not to be flooded with families who need help but are not remotely eligible for program services. However, recruiters should avoid providing too much specific information on eligibility requirements so families do not learn the eligibility requirements and provide the information they believe the recruiter wants. In response to specific questions about eligibility criteria, it is best to say, “There are general eligibility requirements and guidelines, but program eligibility is determined on a case-by-case basis.”

Promotions may be particularly effective at reaching the migratory community in both densely and sparsely populated areas. It may be too difficult or expensive to recruit in these areas, so promotions can be used to encourage migratory families to find the MEP, rather than the reverse. Promotions can also be done through cultural or social clubs that may attract migratory farmworkers.

In any promotion of the MEP, it is important to present a consistent message. In particular, everyone who comes into contact with the MEP should have the same understanding of its mission. Promotions should also use uniform symbols or images. One of the greatest tools the recruiter can use is the national MEP logo (shown in Figure 3). Families who are familiar with the MEP may recognize the logo when they arrive in new areas. This familiarity can make the recruiter’s job easier.

Figure 3. The Migrant Education Program Logo.



Conclusion

In order to effectively conduct ID&R activities the recruiter needs to research the local migratory community, develop relationships with key contacts, build and use the recruitment network, and find migratory children. Gathering information on the migratory community before beginning recruitment activities can save both time and effort. Furthermore, it helps the recruiter prioritize key activities and manage time efficiently. Once the recruiter has identified areas that are likely to have migratory families and youth, the next step is to develop an individual action plan. Chapter 5 will discuss developing action plans, contacting migratory families, and implementing safe practices while recruiting.