Chapter 9. Hiring and Training Recruiters

I don’t want to forget what it’s like to be a recruiter—late days and long drives. I also want my recruiters to know that I understand how hard they work. I go out with each recruiter every year so I don’t forget the challenges they face every day.

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| Chapter 9 Learning Objectives |
| The administrator will learn |
| how to develop guiding questions and a job description to use when hiring recruiters; |
| how to establish learning objectives for recruiter training (what a recruiter should know and be able to do at the end of the training); |
| how to develop a training plan for new recruiters; |
| how to incorporate classroom, field-based, and independent study opportunities into the training; and |
| how to develop advanced eligibility training and ongoing professional development for seasoned recruiters. |

Central Role of ID&R Administrators

An effective ID&R administrator understands the work of the recruiter (which is described in Part I of this manual), but also understands the unique responsibilities that come with managing a state, regional, or local ID&R system. The administrator is central to the ID&R process, having primary responsibility for hiring, training, deploying, supervising, supporting, managing, and evaluating ID&R staff. The administrator also helps to develop and implement state and local policies and procedures, and to ensure the quality of eligibility determinations (including looking for defects and errors). In short, the skill of the ID&R administrator and the choices he or she makes define ID&R for the state.

The ID&R administrator’s work is critical to developing and maintaining a healthy ID&R system. Because the role of the administrator is central to ID&R implementation, this chapter and the ones that follow, provide a structure for the administrator to use in managing and supervising a state, regional, or local ID&R system. Chapter 9 describes the administrator’s responsibility in hiring, and provides resources for training recruiters. Chapter 10 explains the planning process for creating effective deployment and support systems for recruiters. Chapter 11 reviews the quality control requirements of an ID&R system and strategies for managing and monitoring a local, regional, or statewide ID&R quality assurance system.

Common Responsibilities of ID&R Administrators

ID&R administrators may have different titles and may operate within different organizational structures. However, most ID&R administrators share most or all of the following common responsibilities:

* hiring and training recruiters
* planning recruitment and deployment of recruiters
* supervising and supporting recruiters
* knowing the child eligibility requirements
* managing a quality control system
* evaluating recruiters and improving the state’s ID&R efforts
* terminating or laying off recruiters, if needed

Among other responsibilities, the administrator’s job is to ensure that recruiters are fully trained, to convene recruiters regularly to discuss eligibility scenarios, and to answer eligibility questions (or forward eligibility questions according to the state’s process if the administrator does not know the answer). In addition, the administrator is often responsible for conducting outreach activities to educate school personnel, employers, and the community about the purpose of the MEP. In this role, the administrator may want to make personal contacts with key officials within local schools, employers, and key community members to pave the way for recruiters to find and recruit migratory children and youth. The administrator may write letters of introduction for recruiters that are sent or hand-delivered to these key contacts. The administrator also often serves as a liaison between the local project site and the SEA, ensuring that the policies and procedures established by the SEA are followed. The administrator ensures the reliability of eligibility decisions via state ID&R quality control measures. In addition, the administrator may determine how much time recruiters should spend on finding migratory children and their families, outreach to local employers, coordination with other programs and agencies, referrals, training and ongoing professional development, and other assigned duties. Finally, the administrator may need to establish and/or share state and local policies on issues like ethics, media contact, safety and security, sexual harassment, and equal opportunity.

Ways to Organize an ID&R System. States may choose to implement a centralized or a decentralized recruitment system, or a combination of both. In a decentralized system, the SEA may either delegate responsibility for ID&R to regions or LOAs or may have a state ID&R Coordinator who plans and leads training activities and supports the state’s recruiters, but does not directly hire or supervise recruiters. In this case, the regional or LOA administrator would hire and supervise recruiters for that region or program. One advantage of a decentralized organizational structure is that the recruiter is part of the local MEP and therefore understands how the local program works and what services are available to migratory children. One disadvantage is that the decentralized structure makes it harder to provide the close oversight and regular training that leads to a highly consistent statewide ID&R system.

By comparison, in a centralized system, the ID&R Coordinator hires, trains, and supervises all recruiters through a central office. This centralized system results in more control and consistency, but has less flexibility, local ownership, and close communication with the local MEP. There are many ways an ID&R system can be organized; every system has its own advantages and disadvantages. Examples of common ways of organizing state ID&R systems are found in Appendix XV.

Hiring Recruiters. Finding the right person to identify and recruit eligible migratory children can be as challenging as finding the children themselves. As discussed in Chapter 2, the successful recruiter should be able to

* make correct preliminary eligibility decisions;
* document child eligibility adequately, accurately, and clearly;
* manage time wisely;
* work independently;
* remain flexible and adapt to a constantly changing environment;
* represent the program effectively
* relate well to others and gain their trust;
* create positive relationships with agricultural employers;
* have good interviewing (i.e., questioning) skills;
* maintain appropriate relationship boundaries;
* follow confidentiality laws;
* demonstrate personal integrity; and
* speak local migratory families’ native language and exhibit cultural sensitivity.

The recruiter must be willing to drive back roads, work at night, knock on doors in poor rural neighborhoods, fend off barking dogs, and enter all types of residences alone, all for the purpose of soliciting the personal information required to fill out a COE. The recruiter’s job is not for the faint of heart. Recruiters must also be able to communicate with different audiences, from recent immigrants to school administrators. It is the responsibility of the administrator to evaluate potential recruiters to see if they possess these characteristics.

Appealing to Potential Recruiters. There are a number of aspects of recruiting that many people find appealing. In particular, administrators might want to keep the following in mind when advertising a recruitment position:

* The opportunity to help children and youth in need has historically drawn good people to the MEP community. Potential recruiters include former teachers, social workers, returned Peace Corps volunteers, those who have worked in agriculture, and as discussed earlier, former migratory workers. It is rarely the pay that draws people to this work, but rather the opportunity to do something beneficial for migratory children and youth. This feature of the job should be emphasized when searching for applicants.
* The job of recruiting is attractive to those who like to work on their own. Many hours are spent alone driving the back roads in rural areas, looking for housing or farms where eligible families and or youth are typically found. Although this aspect of the job may sound daunting to some, it is appealing to others.
* Recruitment may interest those who are active in ethnic communities and community “connectors” who seem to know everyone, enjoy teaching “the ropes” to community newcomers, and can project a sense of trust and friendliness to new **migratory workers and families**.

Deciding Who to Hire. Recruiters are special people and finding the right person is a challenge for any ID&R administrator. Although the administrator should be aware of federal and state laws that govern employment and application for employment, there are some ways the administrator can evaluate these characteristics before hiring. For example, the administrator may want to ask questions like the following during the employment interview:

* How would you handle a situation like [provide a typical situation a migratory recruiter might encounter]?
* How have you dealt with someone from another culture or language background in the past?
* What kind of people do you find the most difficult to work with? Why?
* How would you describe your personality? What things give you the greatest satisfaction at work? What things frustrate you the most?
* Have you been in a situation where someone was not behaving ethically? What did/would you do?
* What is your experience with agriculture or fishing?
* How would you describe the ideal work environment?
* Have you had a project for which you had sole responsibility? How did you organize the project?
* How have you handled a problem with a boss or authority figure?

There are many other questions an administrator can ask to evaluate these skills. The administrator can also expose the applicant to the work by conducting a mock interview or showing a video about recruiting and interviewing. Whatever strategies the administrator uses to evaluate the skills of a possible recruiter, the administrator should keep in mind the following questions:

* Is the applicant a self-starter?
* Is the applicant a person of integrity (e.g., honest, no conflicts of interest)?
* Will the applicant be comfortable talking to strangers?
* Will the applicant be able to explain program services to others?
* Does the applicant pay enough attention to detail to complete a COE adequately
and accurately?
* Is the applicant comfortable talking both one-on-one and to small groups?
* Does the applicant speak the language of the primary local migratory population
(e.g., if most of the local migratory workers are Laotian, does the applicant speak Lao)?
* Is the applicant willing to work non-traditional hours (particularly evenings)?
* Does the applicant have a valid driver’s license, a dependable car, a good sense of direction, map reading and/or navigation skills?
* Does the applicant have relevant prior work experience? Has the applicant developed the skills needed to be a successful recruiter?
* Do others who have worked with the applicant have a high opinion of him or her?

Although the administrator would not have to ask all of these things of an applicant, the administrator should address them in some way through the interview and hiring process. For example, the administrator can give the applicant a list of job responsibilities like the following sample and ask if there are any items on the list that make the applicant uncomfortable.

Sample List of Recruiter Responsibilities. Although there is no all-inclusive job description for a recruiter, the following list, adapted from Chapter III in the NRG, describes typical qualities and responsibilities that make an effective recruiter. The administrator should explain that the applicant may be asked to do some or all of the following:

* fully understand the federal law, regulations, and NRG pertaining to the MEP;
* follow all procedures and practices contained in the state’s ID&R manual (if applicable) and in any other directives issued by the SEA;
* identify and enroll into the MEP all eligible migratory children residing within the boundaries of the assigned school district(s) or region;
* determine the location of migratory labor camps and housing units in the school district or region, which requires good map reading and/or navigation skills;
* develop good working relationships with growers and other employers who use migratory labor for the purpose of identifying migratory children and youth as they move into the school district;
* understand the cycles of seasonal and temporary agricultural employment;
* serve as a communication link between MEP families and youth, the school district’s central office and the schools, growers, and community agencies;
* interview migratory families and youth in their primary language and collect and record the data that is required to enroll or update information on eligible children in the MEP and the state’s student database systems;
* certify the eligibility of children and youth to participate in MEP activities, adhering strictly to the MEP’s eligibility criteria;
* inform migratory families and youth about the MEP and FERPA;
* pay careful attention to detail for completing COE forms accurately, fully, and legibly;
* use the migratory student database to enter information and search for records;
* maintain clear, secure, confidential, and auditable records and other information related to ID&R;
* serve as a home-school coordinator, as requested by the local project director;
* assist the MEP project director with the recruitment of parents for membership in the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and with PAC activities; and
* attend training sessions.

When developing the job description, the administrator should think about how it can be aligned with the job’s performance assessment (i.e., evaluation). Since the administrator is responsible for providing annual feedback on the recruiter’s job performance, it is important to ensure that the successful applicant has or can learn the knowledge and skills required in the job description. Any knowledge or skill that the applicant does not have when hired can be identified as an area of growth that the applicant can work on through training. (See more information on training later in this chapter and performance assessments by supervisors in Chapter 10.) Some recruiters may work under a generic position description, so it is important that they have a full understanding of the position before they are hired.

Language and Culture. Throughout the history of the U.S., our agricultural economy has depended upon countless migratory communities. For example, in the 1880s, 75 percent of seasonal farmworkers in California were Chinese. The next wave of farmworkers were new Asian immigrants from Japan and the Philippines, soon followed by laborers from British India. On the East Coast, French Canadians, Caribbean Islanders, and Europeans labored in U.S. fields. One of the greatest internal agricultural migrations to date was during the 1930s infamous Dust Bowl migration where hundreds of thousands of Midwestern families moved west due to severe drought. Low-income native whites and African Americans made up much of the migratory labor pool for the early part of the 19th century. In the southern U.S. particularly, African Americans have made great contributions to the migratory farm labor economy. However, as World War II intensified, so did the need for the U.S. to grow food. From 1942 to 1964, the U.S. enacted the Mexican Farm Labor Program—commonly known as the “Bracero Program”—which brought between one and two million Mexican agricultural workers to the U.S. Since the 1980s economic crisis and internal conflict in much of Latin America has pushed workers north in search of a better life, landing them employment in the U.S. agricultural farm labor workforce. (Wainer, 2011)

While much of the agricultural farmworker population has remained Latino for the last six decades, there are increasing pockets of micro-migratory communities across the country. It can be difficult for MEPs to hire recruiters who represent every cultural and language group within the migratory population. Moreover, because the population itself changes as a result of economics and cultural migration, programs may find themselves with linguistically and culturally "outdated" personnel within a few years. This can be a serious challenge for the local administrator who strives to employ culturally competent staff for the MEP.

For example, in Pennsylvania there are several concentrations of ethnically diverse migratory groups within a relatively small geographic area. In particular, businesses in Philadelphia, a Mid-Atlantic receiving city, employs workers from Korea, Cambodia, China, Vietnam, Nepal, Burma, Indonesia and other Asian countries. Many of these individuals migrate to the U.S. and obtain qualifying work in temporary or seasonal employment following their move. In all, more than ten different languages and countless cultures reside in one geographic area. To hire, train, and deploy a culturally competent recruitment team takes ingenuity and logistical planning from a recruitment administrator.

Since the MEP provides services to families and youth from many different cultures and countries, the issues of language and culture are particularly important when hiring recruiters. There are many benefits of hiring recruiters who are of the same cultural or language group as the families being served. For example, since the majority of migratory children are Latino, MEPs often try to hire bilingual Latino recruiters to increase the effectiveness of their recruitment efforts and improve communication with migratory families. While speaking the same language and understanding the culture of local farmworkers may help facilitate the recruitment process, it can also present a hiring challenge to the administrator if there is a limited pool of qualified candidates who are comfortable with the language and culture or if there are many language and cultural groups represented in the community.

One possible solution is for the administrator to consider hiring former migratory workers or family members whose life experiences are similar to current migratory families and who, because they understand the culture so well, may be better able to assess the needs of the target population. In cases where a former migratory worker or family member has a strong network within the migratory community, but does not have the English language literacy skills needed to adequately and accurately complete a COE or other required paperwork, the program can try to pair the former migratory worker or family member with an experienced recruiter who would fill out the COE and other paperwork. In this way, the program has the benefit of the former migratory worker’s or family member’s language skills and credibility in the migratory community yet also ensures that eligibility determinations are documented properly. The MEP can also provide professional development opportunities and English language training to help the former migratory worker or family member gain the skills needed to properly document a child’s eligibility for the MEP.

The recruiter who is not of the same language, cultural, or ethnic background as the local migratory population can still be highly effective. A caring and nurturing person who is trusted by the migratory community often makes an exemplary recruiter. When the recruiter is concerned about the welfare of local migratory children, that concern is often apparent to migratory families. The recruiter who does not speak a family's native language often becomes adept at using interpreters and translators to obtain information and to communicate with migratory families. However, it is important that the recruiter understands and respects the language and culture of the families and makes a significant effort to establish networks within the migratory community. Taking the time to learn basic greetings and salutations for the various languages of the local migratory population is one way to develop rapport.

Providing Training

My job as an administrator is to make gray areas black and white for my recruiters.
I try to give clear, simple answers to their questions.

Once the administrator has hired recruiters, the administrator should provide or arrange for training on how to develop individual ID&R action plans, interview families, and complete COEs. Recruiter training programs should be comprehensive and ongoing. Recruiting, like agriculture, is a changing field and, as a result, the administrator should make a long-term commitment to constantly train and re-train recruiters to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date.

The *National ID&R Curriculum*. OME has developed the National ID&R Curriculum that describes the basic knowledge and skills that the OME believes a recruiter needs to master in order to properly identify and recruit migratory children and make preliminary eligibility determinations. The curriculum is made up of eight modules that correlate with one or more chapters of the National ID&R Manual. Each module consists of 1-3 levels that are the training framework for the following five objectives:

1. State and local MEP recruiters understand the background of the MEP, the ID&R process of the MEP, and the duties and responsibilities of the recruiter.

The first objective covers the purpose, basic history, and organization of the MEP. In addition, the recruiter learns the basic eligibility criteria and the general process for ID&R. The recruiter is also made aware of his or her basic duties and responsibilities.

As discussed in Chapter 1 of the National ID&R Manual, the administrator often finds that the recruiter does a better job if he or she understands how the recruiter’s work fits into the national, state, and local vision for the education of migratory children. For this reason, objective one provides a complete picture of the fundamentals of the MEP, thus laying a solid foundation for a new recruiter.

1. State and local MEP personnel implement practices that result in the efficient ID&R of migratory children and youth.

The second objective teaches the recruiter how to develop a recruitment network. The recruiter learns how to determine where migratory families and youth live and work, and
gains the knowledge and skills to find them. The recruiter practices how to explain the MEP to migratory families and youth and learns the major agricultural and fishing work in the local area.

1. State and local MEP personnel implement practices that result in reliable and valid child eligibility determinations.

In this third objective, the recruiter will thoroughly understand the basic eligibility requirements for the MEP as found in the law, regulations, NRG, and state handbooks or policies. The recruiter will also learn the knowledge and skills to effectively interview a family or youth in a culturally competent manner.

The recruiter may be the first and perhaps only MEP staff member with whom migratory families and youth will meet. Additionally, for many parents, the recruiter sets the tone for the home-school relationship. For this reason, it is imperative that the recruiter has a diverse understanding of all MEP eligibility requirements and is able to explain the MEP in a manner which migratory parents and youth understand. The recruiter must be able to strike a balance between the many MEP formalities such as COE completion and quality control measures, while simultaneously maintaining a casual enough presence that puts the migratory family or youth at ease.

1. State and local MEP personnel are aware of and adhere to ethical standards of behavior in child eligibility determinations.

In the fourth objective, the recruiter will learn the ethical behaviors that are expected in determining the eligibility of a child or youth. Additionally, the recruiter will understand why it is so important to make proper eligibility determinations, and what can happen to the recruiter and to the MEP if decisions are not made properly. Finally, the recruiter will know what action is expected if he or she is asked to do something that makes him or her uncomfortable, and how to report suspected cases of fraud, waste, or abuse.

The administrator should consider developing an ethics statement and standards (see Appendix VII). To teach these concepts, the trainer may want to have recruiters work through case studies and discuss whether particular practices are legal and/or ethical and how they should be resolved.

1. State and local MEP personnel implement practices that strengthen coordination and collaboration between migratory families and youth, the school(s), and the community.

In this final objective, the recruiter will learn how to facilitate coordination and collaboration among migratory families, the school(s), and the community. The curriculum training for this objective allows the recruiter the opportunity to practice meeting planning, facilitation, and team building.

A recruiter must wear many hats. Recruiters who understand the importance of case management, while continuously teaching self-advocacy skills to the families and youth they serve, is a best case example for an administrator. Because the MEP is a supplemental educational program, it is vital that recruiters learn to collaborate and partner with other organizations to share the workload. One way recruiters can expand their services is by promoting the MEP to like-minded agencies. To do this recruiters need a firm understanding of basic coordination principles and the professional skills to facilitate the process. Objective five covers the fundamentals for strong coordination, team building, and the positive promotion of MEP services.

*National ID&R Curriculum* Summary. As outlined above, each of the five objectives can be found throughout the modules of the National ID&R Curriculum. The content of each module is taught through research-based instructional strategies designed to meet the needs of all learners. Each module consists of 1-3 levels allowing the SEA the option of selecting specific topics to train based on the composition of the audience. Level 1 will provide the basic information for the module topic, which makes it ideal to train new recruiters and/or MEP staff members or to use as a refresher for veteran recruiters. Subsequent levels provide additional topics of study related to the module for follow-up or in-depth trainings.

The curriculum identifies what OME believes to be the knowledge and skills that a recruiter should have to successfully perform his or her job. It serves as a framework for training developed by OME and as a guide for state programs to use in developing their own training.

The National ID&R Curriculum also suggests knowledge and skills that state trainers may wish to consider in developing their individual ID&R training. For example, the recruiter should learn

* basic information about the local MEP (e.g., services, dates of operation, hours, and
contact information);
* the organizational structure and policies of the state and local ID&R system;
* the content of existing local and state ID&R plans;
* the characteristics of local migratory agricultural workers or fishers and their children, and their mobility patterns;
* agricultural employer locations and contacts;
* organizations with which the state or local education agencies expect the recruiter to coordinate with and the time allocated to this coordination;
* methods of collecting and maintaining data on migratory children and youth; and
* his or her role in the state’s quality control process and how to assist in developing
and implementing the state or local plan for quality control, as needed.

States may also find it helpful to educate the recruiter on case law that affects migratory children, such as the right to a free public education regardless of civil status (Plyler vs. Doe) and the right to a meaningful opportunity for ELL students to participate in school programs (Lau vs. Nichols). For more information on these cases and on relevant legal issues, see Appendix I. States may also want to provide training on specific state or local laws or regulations that directly affect migratory families or ID&R, like those on child abuse and neglect and truancy.

Regardless of a state’s size, location, agricultural and/or fishing industries, or the demographic makeup of migratory, a recruiter training should always be a combination of classroom training, independent study, and field-based training.

Classroom Training. The administrator is responsible for ensuring that the recruiter is trained on the basic information and skills he or she will need to do the job effectively (See Chapter 3). While the National ID&R Curriculum described previously in this section is the most comprehensive classroom training available, for many states it is simply not feasible to administer the entire curriculum prior to deploying the new staff. The administrator will often need to decipher which modules to utilize for the limited training window they have. Administrators must pick and choose which modules and training methods work for their state and design an appropriate training accordingly. The curriculum is designed to be used for any initial recruiter trainings and throughout the year as needed.

Independent Study. The administrator should encourage the recruiter to study key documents on his or her own. In most cases, an initial recruiter training will range from a few days to a weeklong event. A typical recruiter in training may spend two days in the classroom, two days in the field, and finish with a final day back in the classroom. If this training straddles a weekend, this is the ideal time for independent study. Additionally, new recruiters should anticipate that the evenings during the week of training will require independent study. In particular, the administrator should encourage the recruiter to review

1. the applicable laws and regulations (including the instructions to complete the national COE);
2. the NRG;
3. the National ID&R Manual;
4. the State’s ID&R manual, where available;
5. applicable state and local laws, regulations, and policy guidance; and
6. state and local ID&R action plans (more information on this topic is available in Chapter 5).

The first few months on the job are the ideal time for intensive independent study. This is
the time the new recruiter formulates individual recruitment strategies. The stronger his/her comprehension is on MEP policy and background, the more likely it is the new recruiter will
become a competent member of the ID&R team for years to come.

Field-Based Training. No recruiter training is complete without field-based training. For many new recruiters, field-based training will be the most eye opening and valuable component of their learning experience. A classroom setting can only teach so much; to really learn the ropes of recruiting, one must enter the field with an experienced mentor to observe, learn, and absorb the full spectrum of the job. Information on field-based recruiting (mentoring and peer coaching, teams and peer networks) is discussed later in the Chapter 10 in the section entitled “Supporting Recruiters.”

In my experience, the recruiters who make the most errors when recruiting migratory families are either those who are brand new, because they don’t have enough knowledge or experience yet, or those who have been around for a long time who haven’t kept up with changes to the eligibility requirements.

Advanced Eligibility Training and Ongoing Professional Development. The administrator should provide advanced eligibility training and ongoing professional development to help the recruiter keep abreast of changes to the law, regulations, policies, and procedures that affect the eligibility of migratory children and to update and improve the recruiter’s knowledge and skills. This is particularly important following a reauthorization of the ESEA, such as the most recent reauthorization of the ESEA as amended by the ESSA. The recruiter who does not participate in ongoing eligibility training is more likely to make mistakes when determining child eligibility than the recruiter who takes regular “refresher” courses. Some topics for advanced training might include

* Changes to child eligibility requirements. The administrator should offer experienced recruiters periodic reviews of child eligibility requirements to keep them sharp. In particular, this training should focus on any changes or revisions to federal, state, and local laws, regulations, policies, and procedures that affect the eligibility of migratory children and youth.
* Determining child eligibility in difficult cases. The administrator should address any problems identified through the prospective re-interviews, the most frequently asked questions that arose during the year, and any emerging issues that require further study or training. The focus of all eligibility training should be on topics that affect the eligibility status of many migratory children rather than unusual situations that affect a small number of children (see Chapter 7).
* Strengthening the recruitment network. The administrator may wish to train on advanced strategies for developing recruitment networks across the state, and have skilled and experienced recruiters share techniques they have found to be effective at building relationships with employers and other key contacts. Over time, experienced recruiters can develop a set of “best practices” for building a recruitment network that can be shared with new recruiters.
* Improving interview skills. It is important to provide periodic coaching and feedback to individual recruiters on their interview skills through mock interviews or other guided practice. The administrator should also regularly review the Sample Interview Script in Appendix VIII with the recruiter and discuss any needed changes or training. Finally, the administrator may want to cover issues that recruiters have encountered during interviews with migratory families (e.g., information or resources that migratory families need, concerns expressed by migratory families). If recruiters need support materials (e.g., a brochure that describes the local MEP, information on local human services organizations), this time in discussion and review with the administrator could also be used to plan how to develop these materials or how to get them through other sources.
* Common mistakes made by recruiters in completing COEs. The administrator should cover the most common errors identified through the state’s quality control system, as well as any new state or local procedures that have been developed to keep the recruiter from making these errors.
* Ethical dilemmas. The administrator should cover situations that have arisen throughout the year that raised questions regarding how to respond ethically. The administrator should also address questions raised by recruiters and provide time to discuss or role-play possible responses. Recruiter generated questions can be used to develop scenarios for training new recruiters (see Appendix IX).

ID&R Coordinators and key ID&R staff should make a point of attending local, regional, statewide and national trainings when possible as part of their ongoing professional development.

Developing a State or Local Training Curriculum. The initial training provided to the new recruiter is essential to his or her future success and can help ensure that eligibility determinations made in the recruiter’s first year are correct. Experienced ID&R staff report that most eligibility mistakes are made by the inexperienced recruiter, which highlights the importance of effective initial training. As mentioned earlier, experienced recruiters can also make mistakes if they do not stay abreast of changes to eligibility requirements and evolving “best practices” in ID&R. Therefore, it is important to provide ongoing advanced training as well.

Before an administrator begins to develop a training curriculum or to expand on the National ID&R Curriculum, he or she should ask the following questions:

* Has sufficient time been set aside to train new recruiters?
* Does the program have copies of the federal law and regulations that pertain to the MEP and copies of the NRG? (If not, they are available on the MEP RESULTS website.)
* Does the program have a pre- and post-assessment that can be given to new recruiters to find out what they already know and help focus the training on their specific training needs, as well as to measure their increased knowledge?
* Is the State ID&R manual up-to-date and ready to be used as a primary source of guidance for new recruiters?
* Has the program developed or borrowed interesting learning activities, such as games, role plays, or mock interviews, that can be used to reinforce eligibility rules and interviewing skills?
* Has the program determined how to select, train and support mentors?
(See Chapter 10.)
* Is the program prepared to respond to questions that new recruiters will have after they begin their work?
* Has the program developed standards for what a recruiter needs to know before being allowed to make preliminary eligibility determinations and a way of assessing that the recruiter has met the standard?
* Does the training incorporate a combination of classroom, field-based training, and independent study?
* Has thought been given to how to evaluate whether recruiters have learned what the curriculum is designed to teach?

In developing a training program, the administrator might consider the following strategies
and issues:

* Establish objectives and learning outcomes. It is important for the administrator to determine what the new recruiter should know and be able to do at the end of the training. The training activities should then be designed to teach these key concepts. The administrator should also develop a method of assessing how well the recruiter learned what the sessions were designed to teach.
* Connect training with prior learning. The recruiter does not come to ID&R training as a blank slate waiting for the trainer to write on it. Instead, the recruiter comes with a rich set of skills and experiences that are often related to the work the recruiter will do in the MEP. A skillful trainer will connect new learning with experiences that the recruiter may have had in the past. This connection is valuable because it recognizes what the recruiter already knows, it can reduce the amount of time needed to teach the new skill, and the recruiter may have insights from prior experience that could benefit the state.
* Provide opportunities to practice. Conventional wisdom says that learners are more likely to remember things that they have done than things they have read, heard, or seen. A good training strategy is to present new material to recruiters, followed by both guided and independent practice with corrective feedback. For example, the trainer could (1) explain the key components of an effective interview, (2) model an interview and let participants discuss whether all of the components were included and how the interview could be improved, and (3) have participants practice interviewing each other, using the key components being taught. In all cases, the trainer should provide corrective feedback and guidance until the participant masters the content of the lesson.
* Paint both a big and small picture view. The new recruiter benefits greatly when he or she has a general understanding of the larger migratory farmworker community and the current local MEP student population. Providing a historical context for the MEP while telling the local state story enhances a recruiter’s perspective about the job. It is easy to get bogged down in the policy components of the ID&R system, overwhelming a new recruiter with too much legal jargon. It is also important to not simply train about the big picture, focusing solely on the plight of migratory workers without clarifying the MEP eligibility criteria and target audience will surely lead to erroneous recruitment. The best trainings prepare a recruiter to step into the local MEP environment with a strong understanding of the program’s foundation.
* Ask questions beyond “Yes” and “No.” It is common for new staff to want to please their administrators. For example, if the trainer reviews the ID&R information in the NRG and then asks the new recruiter, “Do you understand what is considered a reasonable timeframe to conclude a worker obtained qualifying work ‘soon after a move’?” The response is often a simple “yes.” Instead of asking “yes” or “no” questions, the administrator should ask more in-depth, open-ended questions. For example, asking a question like, “What is the general timeframe a worker needs to engage in qualifying work ‘soon after a move’ in order to be considered a migratory agricultural worker or migratory fisher?” This question encourages the new recruiter to think through the answer and respond with specificity. This approach is a good check for how well the new recruiter understands the nuances of eligibility and gives the administrator immediate feedback on the effectiveness of the lesson.
* Check for understanding. Effective trainings include activities that require participants to review, restate, apply, or reflect on the information learned. While trainers often feel that they need to present the greatest amount of information possible in the time provided, it is critical to devote a significant portion of the training event to reinforce the learning by enabling participants to process the material presented to build knowledge or make meaning. Activities to review and apply the information also allow the trainer to determine if the participants understood the material. Some widely used strategies for reinforcing material presented during training include role playing through scenarios provided, reflecting on material individually or with colleagues, and giving participants the opportunity to “reteach” the material to colleagues. Administrators should follow up with recruiters after the training (one month, three months, or a year) to see how they are utilizing the information and if they have encountered any challenges in applying the information.
* Adapt training for ELL recruiters. The administrator should know whether the new recruiter is an ELL. As language acquisition research reveals, many people learn to speak a new language before they are able to grasp complex content, especially when reading. The administrator can benefit from consulting a teacher who has experience with ELL strategies to review and revise the training agenda and activities, where needed, and to consider ELL recruiters’ different learning styles and ability to grasp verbal and written material.
* Make it fun. Memorizing rules and regulations can be an arduous task and much of the training for the new recruiter focuses on specific, and sometimes complex, policy. In order to make the training more effective, the administrator should develop fun, interactive training activities. Adapting versions of popular game shows, word games, and board games are just a few strategies the recruitment administrator can use to make learning fun. The administrator can check with other state administrators to see what games and similar strategies (simulations) they have developed and which have been the most successful.
* Evaluate. The training is not a success unless the recruiter learned what the curriculum was designed to teach. At a minimum, the recruiter should learn how to use tools like the Child Eligibility Checklist (Appendix IX) and the Sample Interview Script (Appendix VIII) to make a correct preliminary eligibility determination. A simple pre- and post-survey about the child eligibility criteria with room for scenario-based eligibility determinations is very informative for an administrator to gauge the recruiter’s training comprehension. This not only confirms that the recruiter grasped the concepts, but it also provides a concrete assessment of what further training is needed. A well informed and approachable administrator/supervisor yields competent recruiters. Be sure recruiters know their questions are valued and be sure they know who to call when questions arise.

Conclusion

The administration of an ID&R system and supervision of recruiters can be challenging. The administrator needs to find the right people, and provide them with high-quality training. Hiring under-qualified candidates as recruiters and not providing adequate training can lead to significant errors that can take a great deal of time to correct and may result in the MEP having to return funds. Chapter 10 provides additional information on the planning and deployment of recruiters,
as well as ideas for supporting recruiters in their work.