



## **Recruiting, Developing, and Supporting Resource Families to Address Racial Disproportionality**

### **1. Recruitment successes and challenges**

Diligent recruitment requires us to reach out to potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom homes are needed. See NRCDR's tip sheet, [What Is Diligent Recruitment?](#) (164 KB PDF) for more information.

- a. Does our pool of foster and adoptive families reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in our care?
- b. Which families are we most successful in recruiting through our current efforts?
- c. Which families are we least successful in recruiting?
- d. Do our recruiting successes and challenges impact how long children remain in foster care?

### **2. Barriers to recruiting, developing, and supporting kinship families**

- a. Do we include and support kinship homes with the resources they need to care for children?
- b. Have we overlooked some kinship families that could be considered as potential resource families?
- c. Is there anything we could do to support kin with possible modifications to the home, payment for travel expenses, additional counseling, etc.?
- d. Are the reimbursement rates for kinship (vs. other foster care) creating a barrier to recruiting kinship caregivers?

- e. Is limited availability of pre-placement training for emergency placement providers a barrier to kinship care?
- f. Do licensing standards create an unnecessary barrier for kin families?
- g. Are there ways to help kinship families meet realistic and important licensing standards?

### **3. Agency barriers**

- a. Does your agency provide flexible access to staff after normal business hours?
- b. Does your agency provide flexible schedules and opportunities for foster parent training?
- c. Is your staff representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the children in foster care?
- d. Are there staff persons with whom all potential families can relate?
- e. Does your agency interact with all families within their communities?
- f. Are there some communities, neighborhoods, etc., that are not considered or engaged through recruitment plans and efforts?

### **4. Community interactions**

- a. Does your agency build community trust before recruiting? (Sometimes, this takes months or years.)
- b. Are there some racial and ethnic groups that are overlooked when building relationships and trust?
- c. Does your agency engage known and trusted community members from all racial and ethnic groups to recruit and support resource families? If not, why not?
- d. When the agency approaches different parts of the community, is it to “recruit”, i.e., meet the agency’s goals, or to assist families and neighborhoods in achieving their own goal of caring for their own children?

## **5. Retention of resource families as recruitment**

- a. Is the agency supportive of all families, and particularly of families from communities that are underrepresented in the pool of potential resource families?
- b. Is there a clear diligent recruitment and retention plan to support all families?
- c. Is there sufficient post-placement follow-up? Is the agency immediately available during times of crisis? This is critical to retaining families, who, in turn, recruit others.
- d. Are staff in all positions culturally competent, supportive, and ready to assist all families who choose to foster?

## **6. Rural and faith communities**

Rural families, including African American, Native American, and Hispanic/Latino families, have shown exceptional success in both fostering and adopting the most difficult to place children in systems across the country.

- a. Does your agency have staff members who form relationships in rural communities? Are they trusted, supportive, reliable, and available?
- b. Rural cultural competence is critical to rural successes, particularly in recruiting and retaining African American, Native American, and Hispanic/Latino families. Does your agency have staff members who demonstrate rural cultural competence?
- c. Faith communities can make excellent partners. Are faith communities engaged as partners and collaborators, or are they viewed as places to recruit? Is there racial and ethnic diversity in your agency's partnerships with faith communities?

## **7. Racial disproportionality for Native American children in foster care**

- a. An understanding of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is essential to caring for Native American children in state child welfare systems. It is important that all staff (not just one ICWA worker, and not just foster care or

adoption staff) understand ICWA. Do all child welfare staff persons in your agency understand ICWA, including recent amendments?

- b. At intake with a family (i.e., child protection investigation), and before every change or potential change in custody, does the state case worker ask a client family how they self-identify their race/ethnicity? Do they then follow up by asking if the child or family has any Native American, American Indian, or Alaska Native ancestry? Does an ICWA worker then make a determination of Indian child eligibility? What structures has your agency put into place to ensure that time and care are devoted to this?
- c. How is your system developing partnerships with tribes to collaboratively recruit, develop, and support families for tribes' Native American placement preferences?

NRCDR's publication, [\*Recruiting Families for Native American Children: Strengthening Partnerships for Success\*](#) (107 KB – PDF) offers strategies for recruiting families for Native American children, including strengthening relationships with tribes.