

Recruitment Work Plan Booklet



The Collaboration to AdoptUSKids, A Service of the Children's Bureau
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*Funded through a Cooperative Agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services,
Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, Grant #90CQ0001.*

Name of State and/or planning organization: _____

Main contact person: _____

Write in names of planning team members here:

Name	Position	Stakeholder/Org.	Phone #	E-mail
	Team Leader			
	Team Facilitator			
	Recorder/Writer of the plan			

Planning Team Composition—It is important to establish a representative planning committee comprised of people who are knowledgeable about the State’s current recruiting challenges, the nature of the children being served and are committed to making things better.

Stakeholder—Is a person or organizational representative who will be directly affected by the recruitment plan. This may include: a resource parent, representative of a parent group, private community agency, leader from a community of color, media representative, etc.

Facilitator—It is recommended that an experienced planning team facilitator be used to work with the team’s leader to coordinate activities, insure that an agenda is created and followed and that desired results are achieved. The first responsibility for the facilitator would be to train the team in the planning process to be used, setting a schedule for meetings and expectations for member participation.

Refer to *Toolkit* for additional information about team facilitating, assessment and other problem solving tools/methods.

Recruitment Plan Definitions



There are 10 interrelated elements that need to be considered to develop a comprehensive recruitment work plan. They are defined¹ as follows:

- I. **Vision**—A vision offers a fairly detailed scenario of what the organization’s ideal should be. The mission statement asks the question, “Why are we here?” The vision asks, “What should we be?”
- II. **Beliefs and values**—Beliefs and values are declarations of universal human values as upheld by the people who make up the organization. They are statements of belief in precise language and absolute in application. They are simply formatted, crisply stated and easily understood.
- III. **Mission statement**—A mission statement is a clear and concise expression of the State’s purpose and function as it relates to its responsibilities. It answers the question, “Why are we here?”
- IV. **Parameters**—Parameters are the boundaries in which we are free to operate. They are the imperatives that keep the organization true to itself and its values.
- V. **Internal assessment**—This is a critical analysis of how the organization is functioning in relation to its responsibilities, methods, communications, systems of evaluation and accountability. This critique is aimed at determining what is working and what is not working and identifying resource gaps and redundancies.
- VI. **External analysis**—This is an environmental analysis, which seeks to predict events and conditions that may affect the success of the organization. Categories to include in this analysis may include: the organization’s other initiatives, social/demographic trends, economics, political, technological; and competition and collaboration opportunities.
- VII. **Identification of critical issues**—Critical issues are those in which the organization faces the prospect of getting either much better or much worse. Identifying the critical issues focuses attention on the paramount threats and opportunities and thereby provides compelling rationale for the strategic deployment of resources.
- VIII. **Objectives**—The statement of objectives is the organization’s commitment to achieve specific and measurable end results. The objectives are what the organization must achieve if they are to accomplish their mission and be true to their beliefs.
- IX. **Strategies**—Strategies are statements of how the organization will accomplish its stated objectives thereby achieving its mission. Strategies are the articulation of bold commitments to deploy the organization’s resources toward the stated objectives.
- X. **Action plan**—Action plans are detailed descriptions of specific actions required to implement and achieve strategies. Action plans contain step-by-step directions, timelines, responsibilities and major milestones (milestones at which in process results are to be evaluated).

¹—Definitions of planning elements have been adapted from “Strategic Planning Workbook” The Cambridge Group, A Division of Colonial-Cambridge Management Group, Inc. www.colonialcambridge.com

I. Vision



Definition

A vision offers a fairly detailed scenario of what the organization’s ideal should be.

- The mission statement asks the question, “*Why are we here?*”
- The vision asks, “*What should we be?*”

Agencies may develop agency-wide and program specific vision statements.

Example of a Program Specific Vision

Agency X is recognized in the community as having the most responsive program and services for recruitment and preparing families to adopt and foster.

Why This is Important

Vision statements are meant to express where the agency wants to be 3-5 years into the future. They help the organization “begin with the end in mind.” (Covey, “Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.”) Without a vision that is shared between management and staff, it is very difficult to do effective planning and easy to forget what you are working toward.

Suggested Processes and Tools

A visioning tool is provided in the *AdoptUSKids Toolkit* of this guide, Section Six. Usually the agency’s management team develops the vision statement for the organization. Program level managers, staff and stakeholders, often develop the vision for a program area.



II. Beliefs and Values

Definition

Beliefs are declarations of universal human values as upheld by the people who make up the organization. They are statements of beliefs in precise language and absolute in application. They are simply formatted, crisply stated and easily understood.

Examples

- Agency X believes that most committed adults can be effective parents for foster and adopted children when provided with the necessary information, training and support.
- Our recruitment and response processes recognize the need for capturing and retaining a parent's and local community's passion for doing good for children.
- Our recruitment and response programs seek to rule people in, not out of the process for adopting and fostering children.
- We view our pre-service training as a service to the community and any parent who wants to attend is welcome.

Why This is Important

Beliefs are important because they provide a value system upon which both the State and Local site plans can be developed and evaluated. The belief statement is the organization's platform for planning. It moves the organization to commit itself to a specific mission, objectives and priorities and helps to select out those things that are extraneous or inconsistent with the organization's values.

Suggested Processes and Tools

Once an agency develops its vision statement, many values and beliefs will become obvious from things that have been said already by the planning group. It is useful for this step to ask each member to put a series of beliefs that they have on individual post-it notes. Then it will be useful to use the silent affinity tool to organize these beliefs into categories, see Toolkit, Section Six. Similarities and differences within each category will be discussed. A small group can then be assigned to develop no more than 10 belief statements that will underpin the work of the organization in the area selected for planning.



III. Mission Statement

Definition

A mission statement is a clear and concise expression of the Agency’s purpose and function as it relates to recruitment responsibilities.

Example

Our recruitment mission is to find, develop, and partner with resource parents who are committed and able to provide safety, permanency and well-being for the children and youth in our care.

Why This is Important

The mission is the keystone upon which the entire plan is built. Typically written in one or two sentences, it provides the primary focus of the organization. The mission statement must emphasize the uniqueness, distinctiveness, and the singularity of the organization. It will be the foundation upon which the organization commits its limited resources to its purpose.

Suggested Processes and Tools for Determining Your Mission Include

Planning team members can be asked to individually write their answers to the question, “Why are we here”? Then they can share their answers with one another and discuss the pros and cons of each. The leadership can then draft a statement that reflects the team’s shared conclusions. An individual can be assigned to “wordsmith” the document and present it to the team for final revisions.



IV. Parameters

Definition

Parameters are the boundaries in which we are free to operate. They are the imperatives that keep the organization true to itself and its values. There are two categories of parameters

- State and federal policies
- Strategic parameters for recruitment programs at the local level

Examples

Specific parameters for recruitment programs at the local level

- We will not fund recruitment programs or activities without:
 - Basing the plan on actual data relating to the State's and local sites' specific needs for children and families
 - Participation/representation in the development of the program by adoptive/foster parents
 - Providing for staff training
 - Developing a defined evaluation process with agreed-upon outcomes
- We will not rule families out based on race, religion, culture or marital status.
- We will not screen families out over the telephone.

Why This is Important

Parameters help to establish the scope of work to be done. The purpose of parameters is to place self-imposed limits on the organization. They sharpen the mission and eliminate the need to continuously make the same decision. Parameters must be stated in exact terms and will typically be written in the negative.

Suggested Processes and Tools

For determining the organization's parameters include:

- In advance of the planning meeting, review and list State and Federal policies or procedures that impact recruitment and retention decisions on a regular basis. Decide which of these should be on the parameter list. Those that act as barriers to meeting outcomes might be put on a "parking lot" list for further discussion during the assessment phase. Those that are essential to functioning and/or required by law might be considered for the parameter list, e.g., MEPA, IEPA, ICWA and CFSR requirements. Some organizations do not put policies on their parameter lists, but are mindful of them in doing each plan element.
- Ask the program administrators to describe situations and dilemmas that caused them to get off track in meeting priorities and adhering to the mission and beliefs in the past. Discuss these issues and decide which are likely to occur over and over again. These are the type of issues that might be stated as parameters.
- A list of parameters should be limited to no more than 5-8 crucial items.



V. Internal Assessment

Definition

This is a critical analysis of how the organization is functioning in relation to its recruitment responsibilities, methods, communication with local offices, systems of evaluation and accountability.

Example

This work plan guide provides an assessment tool that can be used for State and local recruitment planning. See the *Assessment Tool for Recruitment Programs* booklet that follows this booklet in the three-ring binder.

Why This is Important

Assessment is aimed at determining what is working and what is not working and identifying resource gaps and redundancies. Child and Family Services Plan Requirements criteria and CFSR indicators related to recruitment suggest many factors that need to be addressed to have a complete plan. To focus your State's assessment process, we have organized best practices and Children's Bureau guidelines into five categories. Consider each of these in your analysis of your recruitment program's strengths and weaknesses. The categories are:

1. Establishing a foundation for effective recruitment
2. Assessing organizational capability
3. Recruitment initiatives and materials
4. Recruitment related services to parents from initial inquiry to placement
5. Tracking and evaluation

Your State, no doubt, will have additional requirements focusing on your unique circumstances. You may want to add these requirements to the assessment tool, if they are not already there, to assess the whole picture. **Internal analysis can be most effective when stakeholders are actively involved.**

Assessment helps the State:

- To understand and determine what areas are most important for the State to work on to get better recruitment results and
- To weigh strengths and weaknesses relative to promising practices, Children's Bureau's and ACF's criteria for "Exemplary Title IV-B Plan Requirements."

Suggested Processes and Tools

Address the assessment questions shown in the assessment tool in Section Five. It is recommended that your recruitment planning team review and rate your current performance on each question. This can be done either in a group or individually. The assessment team may also decide to do process mapping (see *Toolkit* for examples) to assess a particular process to determine changes needed. The recruitment team will need to come to a consensus on their findings and categorize the items (questions) as strengths and areas needing improvement. See *Assessment Tool for Recruitment Programs* in this guide for specific instructions.



VI. External Assessment

Definition

This is an environmental analysis, which seeks to predict events and conditions that may effect the success of the recruitment program/initiative. Categories to include in this analysis may include: States’ other campaigns and initiatives, social/demographic trends, economics, political, technological; and competition and collaboration opportunities. In performing an external analysis, it is helpful to anticipate and identify opportunities and threats and predict their impact on your effort. External analysis can be most effective when stakeholders are actively involved.

Example

The external analysis at the State level focuses on how external factors affect an organization’s ability to perform its roles and responsibilities.

- It is likely that the State budget will continue to decline. This will impact recruitment by limiting the number of staff available to perform recruitment responsibilities.
- The median age of our foster parents is increasing resulting in larger and larger numbers aging out of the system. This will make it increasingly difficult to find enough foster parents to adopt children who wait.
- Recent negative publicity about foster care has resulted in a decline in inquiries.

Opportunities	Threats
National recruitment campaign initiatives	A statewide recruitment contractor is not meeting their stated objectives
Foster parent association is willing to help at all stages of the recruitment process	Major contributor pulls out
<i>AdoptUSKids</i> can provide technical assistance	Families are being recruited but local or State response system(s) is slow and non-responsive

Why This is Important

By identifying political, technical and socioeconomic challenges and determining their probable impact, either offensive or defensive programs can be structured to exploit the potential offered or to soften the total impact.

Suggested Processes and Tools

Your recruitment planning team may find it useful to use the brainstorming and affinity tools in the Toolkit to arrive at a consensus on your State’s own unique opportunities and threats. Another excellent tool to consider is the “Force Field Analysis” tool, which could be used to examine in more detail a particular threat, opportunity or strategy. That tool will help you identify what specific threats (forces against) might be important for you to work on first.

VII. Critical Issues



Definition

Critical issues are those in which the State faces the prospect of getting either much better or much worse. Critical issues are often phrased in the form of questions to be answered through strategies.

Examples

1. How can we maximize our limited recruitment resources to get best outcomes in the face of major budget cuts?
2. How can we improve our Agency's system for responding to families to reduce drop-out rates for prospective foster and adoptive parents?
3. How can we get the most benefit from the *AdoptUSKids* national recruitment campaigns, including the National Ad Campaign in the Spring of 2004?

Why This is Important

Identifying the critical issues focuses attention on the paramount internal issues, threats and opportunities and thereby provides compelling rationale for the strategic deployment of resources.

Suggested Processes and Tools

The planning team will reflect on its work so far and ask: "Have we identified the right strengths, areas for improvement, opportunities and threats? Which of these rank as our top ten critical issues?" A voting process can be used to accomplish this. Each member can be given 5–10 votes, depending on how many items you have to consider. They can use their votes on any item or all on one item if they choose. Once you know the results of voting you will list your top ten items. Be sure to step back as a group and make sure you have all of the ones that must be included on your critical issues list.

Once you have identified the top ten issues, you may want to use one of the prioritizing tools in the *Toolkit* to determine your top five strategic issues. The *Toolkit* provides several tools to prioritize issues including:

- *The Importance, Urgency and Do-ability Tool*
- *Problem Prioritization Grid and Worksheet*

Use this space to describe the **critical issues** impacting your organization's recruitment program.

VIII. Objectives



The statement of objectives is the State's commitment to achieve specific and measurable end results. The objectives are what the organization must achieve if they are to accomplish their mission and be true to their beliefs.

Examples

- Recruit X number of new families in the next year.
- Of the recruited families, at least X% of those who attend orientation will be licensed and/or approved for adoption and/or foster care.
- X% of families who apply will be approved or licensed within 6 months of attending first orientation session.
- X% of families who inquire will be visited by an experienced resource parent within 7 days of first inquiry to welcome them and encourage them to come to orientation.

Why This is Important

Objectives express in measurable terms (time, money, quality, quantity) the results the organization will achieve as they fulfill their mission. They are real objectives and not projections.

Suggested Processes and Tools

Objectives need to be discussed with the group in general terms. The discussion can include:

- What results are we looking for?
- How will we know when we achieved this result?
- Is this result worthy of our effort?
- Will it make a significant difference relative to our vision, beliefs and mission?
- Is this result specific, measurable and achievable (should be a stretch, but not impossible to reach)?

From this discussion, a team leader should write up the objectives in measurable and realistic terms.

Use this space to describe the results-based **recruitment objectives** of your organization.

IX. Strategies



Strategies are statements of how the State will accomplish its stated objectives thereby achieving its mission.

Example

- The agency will develop and support initiatives that engage experienced foster and adoptive parents in supporting the recruitment of new families.
- The agency will establish and enforce timelines from recruitment through licensing and approval of families.
- The agency will implement tracking systems and evaluation procedures for all recruitment initiatives.
- The agency will develop and document the implementation of customer service strategies, in all of its procedures from first inquiry to and including placement services.
- The agency will develop and implement a model for dual licensure that minimizes duplication of effort for staff and parent(s).

Why This is Important

Strategies are the articulation of bold commitments to deploy the organization's resources toward the stated mission and objectives. They are also the basis upon which you develop your action plans.

Suggested Processes and Tools²

In these days of limited budgets and resources, it is crucial that strategies be carefully selected that will have greatest impact on organizational outcomes. The strategies selected should be doable within a 6 to 12 month timeframe. Each strategy will have a work plan associated with it. A process for developing strategies can include:

Step #1—The team leader and facilitator meet to review the work done so far, particularly the critical issues and objectives. Then make a list of a few potential strategies that may have greatest impact on getting results from recruitment efforts.

Step #2—The group is reconvened and asked to review the list of potential strategies and then add strategies to the list if necessary.

²—Content for these five steps were adapted from "Strategic Business Planning" Kluger, et. al., (1998) Child Welfare League of America, Inc.

Step #3—Ask the group to consider each strategy using selected questions from the following list:

- Does this strategy have potential for making a real difference in our organization's results?
- Can this strategy be done with existing staff resources? If not, can it be done by deploying current resources differently?
- What impact will this strategy have on our staff?
- Will this strategy meet with a lot of staff resistance? If so, how can resistance be minimized?
- What training will be needed to implement this strategy?
- Will the potential benefits outweigh the costs of this strategy?
- Can this strategy be accomplished by augmenting resources in some way, e.g., using volunteers and/or trained resource parents?
- Is there funding available for this strategy now? Can funding be developed for this strategy?
- Does this strategy build on our current strengths and/or have potential to strengthen our program long term?
- Can we accomplish this strategy short-term? If not, can we accomplish significant milestones along the way that will lead to high impact longer term?
- Is this strategy a major or minor initiative?
- Is the list balanced or do we have too many major initiatives on our list?

Step #4—The planning group will need to narrow down the strategies to a list of 3-6 manageable items. A prioritization tool like the Importance, Urgency and Do-ability Tool will be useful for this purpose. See Section Six, Toolkit.

Step #5—Each strategy can now be assigned a lead staff person to draft a specific work plan to accomplish this strategy.

Use this space to describe the recruitment **strategies** of your organization.

X. Action Plans



Action plans are detailed descriptions of specific actions required to implement and achieve strategies. Action plans contain step-by-step directions, timelines, responsibilities and major milestones (milestones at which in-process results are to be evaluated).

- An action plan should be tied to a strategy(s).
- Action plans can be prioritized based on the individual action item’s importance, urgency and do-ability.

Example Action Plan State

Strategy: The State will develop and/or support initiatives that engage experienced foster and adoptive parents in supporting the recruitment of new families.

Result Intended: Parents available at identified local sites to support recruited families from first inquiry to placement.

#	Action	Response	Start Date	End Date	Milestone
1	Gather data from local sites (number of new parents required, extent of help needed, current involvement of parents)	Joan	xx/xx/xx	xx/xx/xx	Data compiled and analyzed
2	Report made to administration, resources and budget identified	Joan	xx/xx/xx	xx/xx/xx	Initial budget established
3	Schedule meeting with foster parent association president to discuss the need and detail resource requirements	Dave	xx/xx/xx	xx/xx/xx	Meeting scheduled
4	Prepare for meeting (develop preliminary list of requirements, agenda, list of required attendees)	Joan and Dave	xx/xx/xx	xx/xx/xx	Preliminary proposal developed
5	Hold the meeting	Joan and Dave	xx/xx/xx	xx/xx/xx	Preliminary proposal reviewed, modified, and agreed on

Why This is Important

Action plans ensure that strategies/tactics are carried through to results. They allow specific assignments of tasks to individuals in the organization. They provide an effective system of accountability and the possibility of new discoveries.

Suggested Processes and Tools

Each strategy leader will prepare a preliminary action plan, using the tool provided in this section. He/she will then bring it to the meeting for consideration of the total group for input and approval. For some strategies an appropriate action may be process mapping to determine where a particular process can be improved. (See Toolkit for process mapping examples).

Attachments to Agency's Recruitment Plan



Agency Program Description

1. Definition and demographic data of agency's children who are in foster care and those who will need care
2. List of Agency's recruitment initiatives and methods, e.g., general, targeted, child specific and/or child-centered methods, including use of exchanges
3. Agency's response plan for inquiries including:
 - a. Telephone response system
 - b. Orientation Plan, including materials given to parents
 - c. Pre-Service Training program
 - d. Home Study/Assessment Process
 - e. Licensing and/or adoption approval requirements and process
 - f. Initial placement process
4. Agency's involvement of community in recruitment
5. Agency's involvement of resource parents in recruitment
6. Agency's public relations and media relations strategies
7. Agency's staff allocation and job specifications for recruitment, licensing and parent training functions
8. Staff training plan
9. Recruitment budget and special contracts
10. Recruitment evaluation process and reports
11. Other information and materials, e.g., sample recruitment materials, innovative programs, etc.

Data Reports

Include Agency's current data and/or annual report.

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