

What is **DILIGENT RECRUITMENT?**

The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994, as amended, prohibits the delay or denial of any adoption or placement in foster care due to the race, color, or national origin of the child or the foster or adoptive parents. It also requires States to provide for diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom homes are needed. To meet MEPA's diligent efforts requirements, States must have a comprehensive plan that includes:¹

- 1** A description of the characteristics of waiting children;
- 2** Specific strategies to reach all parts of the community;
- 3** Diverse methods of disseminating both general and child-specific information;
- 4** Strategies for assuring that all prospective parents have access to the home study process, including location and hours of services that facilitate access by all members of the community;
- 5** Strategies for training staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities;
- 6** Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers;
- 7** Non-discriminatory fee structures; and
- 8** Procedures ensuring a timely search for prospective parents awaiting a child, including the use of exchanges and other interagency efforts, provided that such procedures ensure that the placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for a same race or ethnic placement.

State agencies are required to submit a five-year, comprehensive Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) that outlines initiatives and activities the State, tribe, or Territory will carry out in administering programs and services to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families. In the CFSP, the State must describe its plan for the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.²

The Children's Bureau established the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment at AdoptUSKids to provide training and technical assistance that helps State, local, tribal, publicly-administered or publicly-supported child welfare agencies, and diligent recruitment grantees implement comprehensive, multi-faceted diligent recruitment programs, for foster and adoptive parents for children and youth served by public child welfare agencies, as a means of improving permanency outcomes. These diligent recruitment programs should include:³

- 1** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. **Funding Opportunity Announcement for AdoptUSKids, HHS-2012-ACF-ACYF-CQ-0269**. Released April 25, 2012. Accessed online at www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/foa/view/HHS-2012-ACF-ACYF-CQ-0269/html
- 2** For more information about the Children's Bureau's guidance for States and Tribes on CFSP see: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs/state-tribal-cfsp>
- 3** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. **Funding Opportunity Announcement for AdoptUSKids, HHS-2012-ACF-ACYF-CQ-0269**. Released April 25, 2012. Accessed online at www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/foa/view/HHS-2012-ACF-ACYF-CQ-0269/html

- Procedures for consistently updating the characteristics of children in care utilizing information and analysis of AFCARS data and other data available to the State, region, or county;
- Procedures for ongoing analysis of the current pool of available foster and adoptive placement resources;
- Collaboration and public-private partnerships with groups representative of the communities from which children come, to help identify and support potential foster and adoptive families;
- General, targeted, and child-specific recruitment, including relationship mining for youth, to meet placement needs of children in care;
- Recruitment and development of homes, including relative homes, that can provide placement as a part of concurrent planning for the child;
- Recruitment and development of homes that can accommodate siblings in care so siblings can be placed together or reunited when they have been separated in care;
- Recruitment of foster homes to ensure children and youth may be maintained in their schools when placed in foster care;
- Procedures to ensure that all prospective parents, including relatives and people who have important existing relationships with youth in care, have access to the home study process, including foster and adoptive parent training at a local or community level and that the home studies are initiated and completed in a timely manner;
- Utilization of a “customer service” model in responding to prospective foster and adoptive parents, and to reduce the dropout rates;
- Procedures or processes to address barriers presented by the agency in order to increase the rate of retention of prospective foster and adoptive parents and to reduce the dropout rates;
- Procedures for training staff to engage effectively with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities who are reflective of the children and youth in foster care;
- Procedures for providing training to prospective foster and adoptive parents regarding the characteristics, needs, and issues of children who have experienced trauma, as well as adoption clinical issues;
- Procedures to deal with linguistic barriers;
- Procedures to ensure a non-discriminatory fee structure, including the use of purchase of service arrangements with public and private agencies (including community-based and other organizations) when necessary to facilitate and support placement;
- Dual licensure of foster and adoptive homes;
- Utilization of adoption exchanges, including *adoptuskids.org* and/or regional or local exchanges;
- Procedures and processes to eliminate barriers to the interjurisdictional placement of children; and
- Training strategies for staff and community partners.



More free resources at:

www.nrcdr.org

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