

DATA-DRIVEN DILIGENT RECRUITMENT

Partnering and Prioritizing to Strengthen Your System's Use of Data

Webinar questions and answers

This webinar from the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment (NRCDR) at AdoptUSKids helps child welfare systems explore ways to build capacity to use data effectively to inform recruitment, development, and support of foster, adoptive, and kinship families to meet the needs of children and youth in care. Many child welfare systems have extensive data on the children in foster care but lack data on how prospective families move through the process from recruitment to licensure or approval and beyond. This webinar provides strategies for advancing cross-unit collaboration and prioritizing data needed to strengthen your system's use of data.

This resource from NRCDR provides responses to questions that were raised by participants and that presenters did not have time to address during the brief question and answer period of the live event. [View the archived webinar on the AdoptUSKids YouTube channel.](#)¹ [Access webinar details and resources.](#)²

The questions are organized into the following topical areas:

- [Data collection](#)
- [Family recruitment](#)
- [Developing and supporting families](#)

Data collection

QUESTION:

***What information is important to collect when someone is inquiring for the first time?
How do you use this information?***

ANSWER:

This would really depend on what you want to know, so it might vary for different states/counties/tribes/territories/agencies. For instance, it might be helpful to know how the person inquiring heard about your agency and/or what led him or her to contact you, in order to inform recruitment efforts (as then you will have more information about which specific recruitment efforts are leading to inquiries). As one example, you can visit the AdoptUSKids website to see the [information request form that we use](#)³ to collect information from people seeking more information about becoming foster or adoptive parents.

Additionally, it is important to consider what information you provide to people inquiring and how you are engaging them. The family support section of the NRCDR website, which provides information and [resources on customer service in child welfare](#),⁴ may be of interest.

QUESTION:

How can states collect data from private agencies or counties?

ANSWER:

Some jurisdictions require private providers or counties to collect information on recruitment in spreadsheets and submit them to the central office on a monthly basis. The spreadsheets contain data on everything from recruitment activities to inquiries and steps in the licensing process. The key thing is to determine the specific data elements you want from those providers or counties and to make sure the data that you're collecting is going to answer the questions you're asking about the recruitment process.

Ideally, you might use a web-based system for all recruiters (including private providers/counties) to enter and collect data so that you can use the information to assess recruitment efforts. A state or tribe can elect to implement a SACWIS/TACWIS (Statewide/Tribal Automated Child Welfare Information System); this can be one way to collect some types of information from counties and private providers. "The SACWIS/TACWIS is a comprehensive, automated case management tool that meets the needs of all users, including the following state, tribal, county, or privately contracted staff: caseworkers and supervisors; managers and administrative staff; providers involved in foster care and adoptions assistance management."⁵ Using SACWIS/TACWIS in this way does not mean that everyone entering data must be permitted to access all of the data in the system. For example, in one privatized system using SACWIS, an agency can enter and see data for their own agency but not for other agencies. In another partially privatized system that uses SACWIS to track private agency resource family data from inquiry throughout the process, private agencies do not have direct access to SACWIS, but enter data into a separate system. Individual reports are produced from the private systems and shared with the states on a monthly basis.

Many states use the AdoptUSKids FITT (Family Intake Tracking Tool) as a way to track information about families' inquiries and status in the process of becoming foster/adoptive parents. This tool provides child welfare professionals easy access to the names of families who have contacted AdoptUSKids and indicated an interest in fostering or adopting from foster care. Professionals can also use the tool to log and track families who contact them directly. States and counties can use the system collaboratively as a data-sharing tool with the capacity to run reports. States, tribes, and territories that are interested in learning more about FITT or requesting a demonstration can call (800) 901-6911 or email web-training@adoptuskids.org.

QUESTION:

Do you also track relative placements?

ANSWER:

It is important to collect data about kinship families, similar to the data you need to collect about other resource families, but with some categories specific to the kinship experience, because it is different. For example, kinship caregivers may need support with navigating family dynamics; another example is that the training/licensure process may be somewhat different for kinship caregivers. The data you collect might include: characteristics of kinship families who are successful in serving children, challenges and needs of these families, where they live, and outcomes toward permanency in kinship placements. It is important to collect data about relative placements whether the family serves as a resource informally

or formally through guardianship or licensure. It helps the system to identify needs and strengths of kinship caregivers and develop resources and supports to appropriately engage, train, and support kinship families.

It may be helpful to review some of the information tracking tools developed by [The Recruitment and Kin Connection Project](#),⁶ a 2010 diligent recruitment grantee project administered by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services in Chicago, IL. Some of the project highlights and products are available on the NDCDR website.

Family recruitment

QUESTION:

What are some possible recruitment events to draw in new foster and adoptive families?

ANSWER:

The NRCDR website provides [ideas from the field about general recruitment](#)⁷ that may be of interest. (The [child-specific recruitment ideas](#)⁸ may also be helpful because this section includes ideas like developing a Heart Gallery—a traveling exhibit of photographs capturing the unique personalities of children/youth in your agency's care who are waiting to be adopted.)

The webinar, “Engaging Community Stakeholders: Strategies for Effective Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Families” highlights creative strategies used by several of the Children’s Bureau 2008 Diligent Recruitment Grantees. The [archived webinar](#)⁹ is available on our website.

Additionally, many states organize recruitment events for [National Foster Care Month](#)¹⁰ in May and [National Adoption Month](#)¹¹ in November.

You may also want to consider localizing public service announcements for the [National Adoption Recruitment Campaign](#)¹² with your agency’s contact information. [Information about National Adoption Recruitment Campaign localization](#)¹³ is available on the NRCDR website.

QUESTION:

Do you do anything different to recruit for placement of high-need youth (youth with behavioral and mental health care needs)?

ANSWER:

RESPONSE FROM THE ARIZONA TEAM

Recruiting foster and adoptive homes for children with behavioral and mental health care needs is challenging! We encourage our contractors to focus recruitment efforts for these children on specific populations, such as healthcare workers. This includes ads in statewide nursing publications and building relationships with staff that may lead to hosting informational sessions/brown bag lunch meetings at various care facilities

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM THE NRCDR

Here are some resources that can help you recruit families for children and youth with behavioral and mental health care needs:

- **Diligent Recruitment Grantees**

You may be interested in exploring some of the highlights and lessons learned, as well as resources developed by grantees that are shared in the [Diligent Recruitment Grantees](#)¹⁴ section of the NRCDR website. The NRCDR recently posted materials from the 2010 grantees, and many of these projects had target populations that included children with special needs (including behavioral and mental health needs). A few examples are highlighted below.

- [The Diligent Recruitment and Retention Grant \(Mississippi\)](#)¹⁵:
Target population includes children with severe behavioral problems and children with emotional, intellectual, or physical challenges (including being medically fragile).
- [Texas Permanency and Family Resource Development Model](#)¹⁶:
Target population includes children with special physical or behavioral mental health needs.
- [I-CARE 365 \(Michigan\)](#)¹⁷:
Target population includes youth in psychiatric inpatient settings.

- **Photolisting and AdoptUSKids Find a Family web tool**

[Photolisting](#)¹⁸ can be a great resource for targeted recruitment for families for children with special needs, including special behavioral and mental health needs. The AdoptUSKids [Find a Family web tool](#)¹⁹ allows you to do targeted searches of home studied families who are approved to adopt and meet specific criteria you're looking for, including the level of care needed based on a child's physical/medical, emotional, or behavioral special needs. Public and private child welfare agencies that register with AdoptUSKids have access to a database of almost 4,000 profiles of families who are homestudied and approved to adopt a child or sibling group from foster care. You can find hundreds of potential matches for children on your caseload by cross-matching their needs and preferences with those of families in the database. AdoptUSKids recently enhanced the family registration and family search processes to make it easier for registered caseworkers to find families for children on their caseload. Family profiles now include additional information, such as the disability levels and specific conditions families will consider and the type of foster care training they attended. If you or your agency are not registered on adoptuskids.org, please read more about [how AdoptUSKids helps caseworkers find possible matches for children](#).²⁰

- **Supporting and developing families**

It is also important to consider the child welfare system's role in developing and supporting foster, adoptive, and kinship families so that they are equipped to meet the needs of the children and youth they are parenting, including any special behavioral and mental health care needs and the impact of trauma. Just as your staff needs ongoing professional development in order to meet the ever-changing demands of their work, families need ongoing development so that they can feel competent in caring for children and youth, accessing appropriate and high-quality services, and advocating for their children's needs. Please visit the ["develop and support families" section of the NRCDR website](#)²¹ for more information, including strategies for developing and supporting families, ideas from the field, and tools and resources.

QUESTION:

What are the more successful strategies for recruiting families?

ANSWER:

RESPONSE FROM THE ARIZONA TEAM

The strategies we have found to be most successful are those that allow us to meet prospective families where they are. This is best accomplished, in our experience, through a combination of general and targeted recruitment. By general recruitment, we are referring to broad campaigns that may include radio and television public service announcements or paid advertising, Internet campaigns that could include Google ads, banner ads on websites, and Facebook ads, or perhaps bus placards or exterior wraps on buses in high need areas. Targeted recruitment activities have included providing information via a fridge magnet attached to pizza boxes/wrappers (Papa Murphy's has been good for this in Arizona) and reaching out to home gardeners by giving out forget-me-not seed packets at area farmers' markets.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM THE NRCDR

You may also be interested in visiting the NRCDR website for information and [ideas from the field](#)²² for general, targeted, and child-specific/child-centered recruitment strategies.

On the [webinars](#)²³ page of the NRCDR website, you can find the archived webinar, "Engaging Community Stakeholders: Strategies for Effective Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Families."

QUESTION:

What is a "quality, model, or successful" family?

ANSWER:

RESPONSE FROM THE ARIZONA TEAM

Here is some information the Arizona presenter team shared about recruiting, supporting, and developing the "right" families for children in care (beyond just more homes):

Initially, Arizona's segmentation study was based on a study of all licensed foster parents. Based on recommendations from the NRCDR analysis of foster family demographics and marketing behaviors was refined. Their first recommendation was to develop criteria for foster parents who were considered to be "successful." To do this we assembled a work group in Pima County (Tucson) composed of foster and adoptive families, home recruitment study and supervision contractors, and Department of Child Safety staff. Using feedback collected from this work group, successful foster families were defined as families who met the following criteria.

- Were licensed as a "Family Foster Home" with the DCS Office of Licensing and Regulation (OLR) on March 31, 2014
- Did not have kinship restrictions on their license
- Had renewed their license at least one time
- Had no concerns raised against them during their license period or, if the family did have concerns raised against them, none of the concerns were closed with the any of the following dispositions:

- Closed during investigation
- Closed license
- Denial
- Revocation
- Suspension

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM THE NRCDR

Here is some information shared by the NRCDR consultant team with expertise in market segmentation:

In order to fully implement use of market research/segmentation data, each jurisdiction must identify the criteria that defines which families are deemed to be “successful/model/quality.” Criteria used for the definition must be able to be extracted from a database and “code-able” to existing family addresses. Examples of criteria used by jurisdictions supported by the NRCDR are included in the chart on page 8.

DEVELOPING AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES:

It is also important to consider the child welfare system’s role in developing and supporting foster, adoptive, and kinship families so that they are equipped to meet the needs of the children and youth they are parenting. Just as your staff needs ongoing professional development in order to meet the ever-changing demands of their work, families need ongoing development so that they can feel competent in caring for children and youth, accessing appropriate and high-quality services, and advocating for their children’s needs. Please visit the “[develop and support families](#)”²⁴ section of the NRCDR website to find strategies for developing and supporting families, ideas from the field, and tools and resources.

Developing and supporting families

QUESTION:

Once families are recruited, what method is utilized to provide the required training for rural homes (webinar, online, in-person at mandatory training sites)?

ANSWER:

RESPONSE FROM THE ARIZONA TEAM

Arizona contracts with private agencies to provide home recruitment, study and supervision services. At this time all trainings are done in person. Arizona uses PS-MAPP (which has been customized for Arizona) and Deciding Together (DT) as curricula. DT is used for one-on-one trainings and small groups (defined as no more than three couples or six participants).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM THE NRCDR

An NRCDR consultant with expertise in rural child welfare provided the following response, which offers anecdotal information about this subject, including solutions that she helped to develop.

In the spirit of broadening the response, I’d like to first broaden the question, which is what we did in 1997 in East Texas. In 1997, we—Stephen F. Austin State University (SFAU), Texas Department of

Family and Protective Services (TDFPS), and the East Texas Foster Parent Association—developed our Title IV-E collaboration. We tackled rural foster parent training as part of the project and decided that training served a number of purposes—not just education, but also socialization, affirmation, and collaboration with others. Additionally, we decided that rural foster parents had limited access to good speakers and even great national speakers. We developed a collaborative annual foster parent conference, funded by TDFPS, SFASU's IV-E program, and by fees and sponsorships. Child care is provided at the conference. There is a luncheon during the conference, with awards to foster parents and to agency staff. This particular response to rural training needs covers and exceeds training opportunities. Our conference speakers have included national experts, regional speakers, state agency speakers, and others the committee (representing the partners) chose to invite.

TRAINING ALSO SERVES THE PURPOSE OF ANSWERING SPECIFIC QUESTIONS.

We asked what kinds of training foster parents wanted and searched for books and videotapes that would answer those questions, and developed a periodic newsletter. The newsletter used to be mailed, but now may be fully online. The books and videotapes are part of our child welfare professional development library, and are checked out over the phone and mailed to foster parents.

TRAINING ALSO SERVES THE PURPOSE OF LICENSING OR CERTIFICATION.

Training hours are given for the conference, for answering specific questions about checked out books and tapes, and even for reading the *Reachout News* (the newsletter). You can learn more about this approach at the [Child Welfare Professional Development Project | School of Social Work | SFASU website](#).²⁵

In addition to this, other states and programs have developed online training for foster parents and staff, and other states have used lending libraries of books and videotapes. I have heard of trainers hired to go to specific areas to provide sessions and one-day trainings, particularly for mandated training (addressing topics like the use of restraints, or new policies). There are pieces of this approach across the country: conferences, online courses, lending libraries, and itinerant trainers, but I personally like the three-dimensional collaboration between the university, agency, and foster parent association that strengthens and unites all three.

Additionally, PRIDE training curriculum is now offered online (See [PRIDE Digital Curriculum](#)²⁶). [Child Welfare League of America \(CWLA\)](#)²⁷ and [FosterParentCollege.com](#)²⁸ are collaborating to provide a new generation of the PRIDE Model of Practice pre-service preparation and assessment program, which is a hybrid in-person/online approach, integrating the strengths of in-person group sessions, family assessment (home study) consultations, and online self-paced training to meet the needs of diverse families and resources.

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Market Segmentation</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">EXAMPLES: Criteria for Defining “Successful/Model/Quality Family”</p>		
Criterion	Reflects	Foster/Adopt
Licensed as of (specific date)	Historical starting point to achieve sufficient cohort for analysis	Foster/Adopt
Been re-approved/licensed at least once	Commitment	Foster
Open license for two or more years	Commitment Longevity	Foster
Currently has child placed in home	Viable for placement	Foster/Adopt
Paid placement within last two years	Commitment Viable for placement	Foster/Adopt
Receiving adoption assistance	Able to meet special needs	Adopt
Three-plus years of experience	Longevity	Foster
Completed more than minimum training hours	Motivated	Foster/Adopt
Have had placements that achieved permanency outcome	Support of case plan	Foster/Adopt
Relative/kinship caregivers who return to care for non-kin	Commitment	Foster/Adopt
EXCLUSION: Substantiated abuse/neglect	N/A	Foster/Adopt
EXCLUSION: Willful violation of policy or current licensing violation	N/A	Foster/Adopt
EXCLUSION: Placement disruption in past two–five years	N/A	Foster/Adopt
EXCLUSION: Relative/kinship ONLY family	N/A	Foster/Adopt

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmOvnBxCuKo>
- 2 <http://nrldr.org/news-and-e-notes/story?k=NRC-DR-Webinar>
- 3 <https://www.adoptuskids.org/for-families/request-information>
- 4 <http://www.nrldr.org/develop-and-support-families/tools-and-resources>
- 5 ACF Children's Bureau. SACWIS / TACWIS FAQs. Retrieved 4/17/15 from:
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/state-tribal-info-systems/answers>
- 6 <http://nrldr.org/diligent-recruitment/dr-grantees/2010-grantees/story?k=recruitment-and-kin-connection-project>
- 7 <http://www.nrldr.org/placement-stability-and-permanency/ideas-from-the-field/general-recruitment>
- 8 <http://www.nrldr.org/placement-stability-and-permanency/ideas-from-the-field/child-specific-recruitment>
- 9 <http://www.nrldr.org/diligent-recruitment/dr-grantees/highlights-and-lessons-learned>
- 10 <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/>
- 11 <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/>
- 12 <http://adoptuskids.adcouncil.org/>
- 13 <http://www.nrldr.org/placement-stability-and-permanency/tools-and-resources/national-recruitment-campaign>
- 14 <http://www.nrldr.org/diligent-recruitment/dr-grantees>
- 15 <http://www.nrldr.org/diligent-recruitment/dr-grantees/2010-grantees/story?k=diligent-recruitment-and-retention-grant>
- 16 <http://www.nrldr.org/diligent-recruitment/dr-grantees/2010-grantees/story?k=texas-permanency-and-family-resource-development-model>
- 17 <http://www.nrldr.org/diligent-recruitment/dr-grantees/2010-grantees/story?k=i-care-365>
- 18 <http://www.adoptuskids.org/for-professionals/how-to-photolist-and-manage-cases>
- 19 <http://www.adoptuskids.org/for-professionals/how-to-photolist-and-manage-cases/finding-families>
- 20 <http://adoptuskids.org/for-professionals/register-with-adoptuskids>
- 21 <http://www.nrldr.org/develop-and-support-families>
- 22 <http://www.nrldr.org/placement-stability-and-permanency/ideas-from-the-field>
- 23 <http://nrldr.org/webinars>
- 24 <http://www.nrldr.org/develop-and-support-families>
- 25 <http://www.sfasu.edu/socialwork/97.asp>
- 26 <http://pride.opusworks.com/page.asp?wrk=1&bhcp=1>
- 27 <http://www.cwla.org/>
- 28 <http://www.fosterparentcollege.com/>



More free resources at:
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