

The Collaboration to AdoptUsKids

Training & Technical Assistance E-Notes
September, 2007

Recruitment Works/Retention Matters

A recent paper by Economist Mary Eschelbach Hansen of American University identifies contracting with private agencies as an effective way for States to increase adoptions. *Using Private Contracts to Create Adoptions from Foster Care* contains the following conclusions:

- As found in Hansen's earlier research, each adoption from foster care results in significant long-term financial benefits to service systems and society: "... each dollar spent on the adoption of a child from foster care yields between 2 and 3 dollars in benefits to society."
- Orientation and recruiting contracts were identified as the type of contracted services yielding the greatest results, increasing adoption creation by 245%.
- Training contracts increased adoptions by 86 percent.
- Contracts for application and homestudy tasks both increased adoption by about 40 percent.
- Matching or placement contracts were the least effective in producing increased numbers of adoptions. (A potential explanation offered is that "states that use private contracting for matching and placement may have larger populations of harder-to-place children.")

The paper is available for download at:

<http://www.american.edu/academic.depts/cas/econ/workingpapers/2007-03.pdf>

Inter-jurisdictional Placement Services

When children move quickly from one jurisdiction to another in a time of disaster, educational placements may be a particular challenge. Guidance can be found in *What Relief Agencies Should Know About the Educational Rights of Children Displaced by Disasters*, published by The National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE and available on line at http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/csds_relief.pdf.

The publication explains that students displaced by disasters are generally covered by the educational provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and outlines requirements and procedures to assure timely and appropriate school placement and supportive services.

Tips and Tools

Connections Count is an electronic newsletter from the Annie E. Casey Foundation / Casey Family Services focusing on best practices information, tools, research and data emerging on youth permanence in child welfare.

The August issue features birth family relationships for youth in foster care. Articles address birth parents as permanency resources after TPR as well as maintaining family ties when permanency is found elsewhere. The newsletter can be accessed at www.caseyfamilyservices.org/enewsletter/august/index_august.html

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Memo from Melody

Welcome to our final edition for this fiscal year! It's the end of summer and the end to a whirlwind tour of the nation!

Dr. Ruth McRoy and I finished the last of ten Roundtables on August 30th in Philadelphia, PA. Over 200 of you were able to join us to hear the findings from two longitudinal research studies conducted by the University of Texas at Austin's School of Social Work. During our discussions, the major themes that emerged were 1) the need to do a better job of customer service, 2) the need to use data to help inform recruitment efforts, and 3) the need to provide post-placement support to both foster and adoptive families. Many, many thanks to Dr. McRoy - your expertise and knowledge brought the findings to life and helped us to hear about and reflect on old issues in new ways. Many thanks also to the staff in each of the ACF Regional offices and my staff at The Adoption Exchange. These meetings simply wouldn't have happened without your support

T/TA Highlights

Earlier this year, the State of Washington requested assistance from AdoptUsKids in targeting recruitment and refining existing recruitment campaign plans. The State has contracts with three private agencies to conduct recruitment in the regions and is committed to helping contractors and regional staff maximize results from their efforts.

In June, AdoptUsKids T/TA consultants, John and Judith McKenzie, led a stakeholders meeting involving 39 State, regional and private agency contractor staff from all six regions of the State. They presented information on targeted recruitment methods and facilitated discussions and activities. Areas of focus included using resource family data to target recruitment; messaging and branding; and sharing regional accomplishments and initiatives. A follow-up meeting was held with State and regional staff and private agency representatives to plan ongoing efforts. Meeting participants formed three workgroups: using data to target recruitment, adoption recruitment/responding to resource families; and recruitment messaging and branding. AdoptUsKids T/TA consultants will be returning to Washington this month to facilitate follow-up sessions of the three workgroups and to assist with planning and implementing next steps.

Recruitment and Retention Network

We are doing something a little different this month by highlighting in this space two individual programs, from two separate states. Although they differ in focus, something common to both efforts is the production of materials that we think our readers will find interesting and useful.

The Tennessee Youth Advisory Council (TYAC) is sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Children's Services and the Vanderbilt Child & Family Policy Center's Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. It is housed at a local organization, Oasis Center, and composed of current and former foster youth from Nashville and surrounding counties. TYAC operates a website offering informational resources for young people in the foster care system. A pamphlet entitled *Your Rights in Juvenile Court* is an example of one of the items available and can be downloaded at <http://www.tnfosteryouth.org/index.htm>.

melody@adoptex.org. Across the country, The Center for Families, Children & the Courts in California has published a *Court Adoption and Permanency Resource Guide* compiling a large collection of State and national programs to promote permanency for children in foster care. Designed particularly for use by local courts, the guide has been made available for general use and can be found at: <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/programs/description/AdoptPermGuide.htm>.

Please send us your stories and ideas that have shown results in recruitment, retention and interjurisdictional placements. Email your offerings to melody@adoptex.org.

FYI

Profiles of the Child Welfare Demonstration Projects describes each of the demonstration projects funded by the Children's Bureau over the last several years. It can be found at: http://216.38.216.37/adoptusa/documents/profiles_cw_demo2006.pdf.

Additionally, Casey Family Programs and the American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law recently announced the official launch of the *Legal Center for Foster Care & Education*. The Center was developed with support from the National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues and in conjunction with the Education Law Center-PA and the Juvenile Law Center in Philadelphia. Many resources for professionals and families are available on the Center's website: <http://www.abanet.org/child/education/>.

and hard work.

As I reflect on the last five years – on what we had hoped to do and what we have been able to accomplish – I am humbled by the investment and dedication of so many of you. My most heartfelt thanks goes to the TA Consultant Team. Without you – your belief in this work and your expertise / willingness to share it – I wouldn't have had a service to lead. Thanks for mentoring me through the process with patience and humor. I've learned a lot from you and together we've laid a solid foundation upon which to build!

Thanks for reading!

Melody Roe

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