ID&R TIPS for recruiting Out-of-School Youth (OSY)

Planning and Networking

Always ensure you have an ID identifying job position in the Migrant Education Program (MEP)
- Ensure your business card has office logo, your name, title, address, and phone included.
- Always ensure that you have a badge with your photo, job title, and/or program title.

Always use your best judgment of what is appropriate. For example, sometimes OSY could be wary of a job ID badge since it looks very official, but it may be requested by a grower.

Arm yourself with knowledge
- Become knowledgeable about all regulations regarding identification and recruitment (ID&R) by studying the ID&R Manual provided by your State Education Agency.
- Review program guidance periodically as eligibility questions arise.
- Attend regional and national training sessions.
- Participate in professional development opportunities.

Identify geographical areas
- Be familiar with all areas where migrant families and youth live. Often OSY live in the same places as traditional migrant families. Map out areas where migrants have been identified in the past and visit them frequently.
- Identify areas where OSY may frequently shop, do laundry, buy food, seek social services, and spend free time. Ensure to document those areas and continue to look for new areas that are unfamiliar.
- Use internet resources such as GoogleMaps and CropScape USDA (nassgeodata.gmu.edu/CropScape), and H2A website (icert.doleta.gov) when necessary.

Always plan and be prepared with backup plans
- Manage your time effectively by planning your recruitment efforts to maximize time and mileage and be sure to have backup visits in place.
- Be well organized with the tools and materials needed each day.
- Wear clothing that is appropriate for the work site and consider having a change of clothes in your car. Remember you could be visiting farms and school districts on the same day.
- At day's end, record the places you visited and the results of those efforts. Be sure to include notes on any issues about which you need to follow up.

"When I am working with OSY I always find I need to make sure I explain the program in relation to what services I can offer them at the time of recruitment. It doesn't help them to know we have a program for K-12 students. I need to have a specific service to offer them."

Helpful materials to bring when recruiting OSY:
- materials to help OSY learn English
- dictionaries
- guides to local resources
- hygiene bags
- gloves
- business card
- maps
- Bilingual Tip Sheets with relevant life skills info
Planning and Networking continued...

**Identify high volume times of the year**
- Contact the Department of Labor and Department of Agriculture to determine types of qualifying work and seasons in your area. These agencies are also good sources for agribusinesses and employers.
- Use resources such as the Agriculture Census to familiarize yourself with qualifying activities in your area.
- Intensify recruitment efforts during peak seasons to make sure all eligible OSY are identified.

**Establish partnerships**
- Community partnerships help a recruiter work in a more effective and efficient way.
- Partnerships are essential to getting services to all eligible OSY in a timely manner.
- Examples of important partners for MEP recruiters are local health departments, migrant legal aid, and Migrant Head Start. Both agencies have available services to which you may refer OSY. In addition, agency personnel can refer possible OSY who may be eligible for MEP services.
- Other partners can include non-profit agencies and community organizations to find donations for food, clothing, homeless shelters, etc.
- Introduce yourself at all the local schools in the area.
- The best sources in the school may be the principal, school secretary, school nurse, ESL teacher, McKinney-Vento/Homeless liaison, or bus driver. Explain to staff the difference between recovery youth and here-to-work youth and how both are eligible for services.
- If school personnel refer OSY and/or families who may be eligible, follow up on the referrals promptly. Advise them of your progress.
- When sharing information with OSY regarding community partners it is helpful to have a map of the agencies’ location, hours, and requirements.
- Survey agribusinesses (farmers, growers, plant managers, foremen) where seasonal and temporary work may occur.
- Work to enlist the help of agribusiness employers and crew chiefs to allow you to recruit at the workplace at a time when work is not interrupted. Always be mindful of the work schedule of the youth.
- Be persistent, but not pushy. Let the farmer/grower get comfortable with you.
- Increase the awareness of the MEP in the community by posting flyers and brochures describing the program and basic eligibility requirements at places where migrant youth frequent (laundromats, churches, bakeries, grocery stores, etc.).
- Ask to speak at relevant community events such as Agricultural Expos, etc.

"I find the best way for me to find OSY in my county is to visit the check cashing places and discount grocery stores on Friday evenings. It may not be the ideal time for me to work, but I always find youth when I am out at this time."

**Important Community Contacts for OSY Recruiters:**
- Health Department
- Adult Education programs
- Local school district staff
- Current migrant families
- Agriculture Extension agents
- Police Departments
- Apartment Managers
Collect appropriate OSY materials

- Make a community resource guide for your area or state relevant to OSY. Include a list of emergency numbers, i.e., hospital, police, fire, poison control, etc. for youth newly arriving to your town. Familiarize yourself with the eligibility rules and restrictions for OSY regarding health, legal, and referral services (documented vs. undocumented; legal age to receive services, etc.).
- Bring along English and/or Life Skills Lesson materials that can be taught or left with OSY.
- Get maps of states and information regarding pertinent consulate locations.
- Have MEP program brochures with OSY-specific information ready to hand out to all youth.
- Provide a small bag of hygiene materials including soap, deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, sun block, lip balm, and insect repellant, as well as work gloves and baseball caps to youth in need of these items.
- Have a clipboard or hard surface to write on when interviewing.
- Create door knob hangers with a place for your name and phone number.
- If your state uses an electronic COE, always carry a paper COE as backup.

The Interview

Working with employers

- Don't take up too much time with questions or conversation. Be polite and to the point.
- Do not share information about one farm with another.
- Maintain flexible hours outside of the normal workday to locate and identify potential migrant youth.
- Familiarize yourself with area jobs and the times of day the shifts start and finish.

Working with migrant youth

- Always be polite and respectful to the migrant OSY you are interviewing.
- Introduce yourself and clearly explain the program.
- Never talk down to the youth. Let them know you are someone who cares.
- Wear casual, but not sloppy, clothing.
- Avoid wearing clothing and jewelry that looks too expensive.
- Often there will be many workers living together and one worker seems to be the most comfortable speaking with a recruiter. It is helpful for a recruiter to speak with that person, gaining trust and confidence, and explain the reason for the visit so that that person can assist them in their recruitment efforts with the other youth.
- Be friendly. Work to make the youth feel comfortable. Try to make a connection with the person you are talking with, for example, take the time to get to know something about their home, country, or their current type of work.
The Interview continued...

- Let them know that you are there in their best interest.
- Use the same car for each visit. Your car becomes a symbol of who you are. Understand what is taboo in the community (state official seal, certain colors, etc.).

Demonstrate cultural competence at all times
- Be aware of the cultural boundaries, practices, and taboos of the OSY you are interviewing.
- Do not assume that there is NOT literacy in the youth's language of origin.
- Respect decisions of the youth in regard to identification and service (if refused).
- Be prepared to connect with OSY in their preferred mode.

Help the OSY understand the Migrant Education Program
- Explain the program clearly, enough so the youth understand that it is beneficial for them. However, do not explain in such detail that you increase the youth’s hopes and expectations of program services until you find out if they qualify. Then explain in greater detail.
- Provide information to leave with the youth that explains the program in English as well as their home language.
- Ask the youth if they have a cell phone and call/text the number immediately. This is often the only way to reach them.
- Make referrals when OSY are in need of other services.
- Call or visit the youth within two weeks to inquire if they successfully accessed needed services.
- In some cases, arranging transportation may be required. Always explain that you may come back for additional questions or that your supervisor may call or visit to check your work.
- Encourage OSY who are reluctant to sign up to talk with other OSY who have already been recruited.
- Do not make any promises that you cannot keep.
- Always thank the youth for the time they have spent talking to you whether they qualify or not.

If the OSY does not come to the door
- Knock, wait a respectful time, knock again, and then announce who you are and what you want.
- Explain that you want to talk to them about a program that may be able to help them.
- Doorknob hangers can be left for youth that are not at home when the recruiter visits.

"The best part of my job is working to gain the trust of the OSY. They may be wary at first but they will really help you find others if they know they can trust you. You just have to follow through on what you tell them and never make a promise you can’t keep."
Locating an OSY who has moved

- When recruiting, try to get the phone number of a close relative or friend that does not move so you can call them to locate the youth if they move.
- When feasible keep a list of youth that do not qualify.
- If the youth approaches you or you find them again, you can shorten the interview by targeting the area of ineligibility from the last interview.

Obtaining referrals

- Make sure to ask OSY for referrals of other possible qualifying youth in the area.

Safety Tips

Whenever recruiting, always be cautious

- Let others know when and where you are recruiting.
- Use good judgment in the places you go to recruit.
- If something doesn’t seem quite right use extra caution.
- Do your interview outside the dwelling if you feel unsure about the area or circumstances.
- Keep your keys accessible.
- Take time to adequately explain the program and the reason for asking qualifying questions.
- Leave your purse or wallet locked in the trunk before you get into recruiting areas.
- Bring a cell phone when you are recruiting, but turn the ringer off. Do not talk on the cell phone or text while you are in a home or during an interview.
- Travel in twos in dangerous areas and be aware if it is not safe to be in certain areas after dark.
- Always bring along a map instead of just relying on a GPS.
- Prepare for weather emergencies by carrying extra water, food, and a blanket.
- Have a reliable car and have it serviced regularly, and know how to fix a flat tire.
- Request that your employer provide a local safety training.