

Diligent Recruitment Planning Tool for Tribes

A Tribal Supplement to the Diligent Recruitment Navigator

Purpose of this tool

As tribes seek to develop diligent recruitment plans and programs to recruit, engage, develop and support kinship, foster, guardianship, or possibly adoptive families—collectively referred to here as “resource” families—for your tribal children who are in care, you may find several resources from the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment at AdoptUSKids (NRCDR) helpful for your process. Our customizable [Diligent Recruitment Navigator](#) provides extensive information to help guide a thorough planning process; however, we recognize that the full Diligent Recruitment Navigator may be more extensive than is helpful for tribes at certain points in the planning process. This *Diligent Recruitment Planning Tool for Tribes* provides condensed information that is tailored for tribes in order to provide a tool that is easier to use and more tribally relevant.

Ways to use this tool

You can use this document in several ways, making it fit for your tribe’s unique needs and your approach to developing a diligent recruitment plan or program. Some options for how to use this document include:

- Use it as a stand-alone tool to serve as a guide for your planning discussions and decisions on your diligent recruitment work.
- Use it as a companion document to the full Diligent Recruitment Navigator (which you can customize for tribes) to help you simplify parts of the Diligent Recruitment Navigator and to focus on more tribally specific information.
- Consider individual parts of this document at various times for ongoing discussions about your diligent recruitment needs, goals, and strategies. For example, you might find it helpful to discuss your data on the children in foster care in your tribe’s child welfare system as a starting point for understanding your placement needs. At a later time, you might want to have community conversations about your current pool of resource families and placement options for children in foster care, as a way to get input on setting goals and strategies for recruiting additional families.

- Identify sections or individual discussion questions from this document to be part of conversations with state, county, or other tribal child welfare agencies when working together to meet each of your recruitment needs. As part of those conversations with state or county child welfare agencies, you may also find it helpful to share our publication, [Recruiting Families for Native American Children: Strengthening Partnerships for Success \(107 KB PDF\)](#) with those agencies.¹

Keep in mind that this recruitment-practice examination may result in the identification of changes that are needed or a need to invite or consult with your tribal council along the way.

For each of the topic areas below, we include suggested discussion questions along with suggested people—by position or area of responsibility—to include in the discussions. These suggested discussion questions and people to include are starting points. You may think of other relevant discussion questions and other people to include as you start the work, and we encourage you to build on these suggestions in any way that fits your tribe and your community’s approaches to stakeholder engagement.

Key considerations for developing your diligent recruitment plans and programs

- Don’t do it alone. As you develop and implement your comprehensive, multifaceted diligent recruitment plan or program, consider how best to involve people in your discussions and decision making, including child welfare system staff, tribal leaders, and community members. Involving tribal council members and other leaders—including directors from your child welfare program and other relevant programs—can be crucial for ensuring that they understand and support the systemic changes that you may need to make in order to meet your recruitment needs.
- Understand specific guidance and relevant requirements related to diligent recruitment, including any existing agreements you have with states or other tribes, requirements tied to any of your funding, and Children’s Bureau guidance to tribes on diligent recruitment plans as part of your Title IV-B plan.²
- Consider connecting with other tribes to learn about how they have approached the process of developing diligent recruitment plans and programs. You may find helpful information

1 Publication available online at:

www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCDR-org/recruiting-families-for-native-american-children.pdf

2 The Children’s Bureau at the U.S Department of Health and Human Services issues guidance on what information tribes should include in a diligent recruitment plan as part of the Title IV-B plan that tribes submit to the Children’s Bureau. For the 2015-2019 Child and Family Services Plan, the Children’s Bureau’s guidance for tribes that operate foster care programs stated: “Describe the tribe’s plan for the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the tribe for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed (section 422(b)(7) of the Act). Examples of components to include in the diligent recruitment plan are: a description of the characteristics of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed; specific strategies to reach all parts of the community; strategies for assuring that all prospective parents have access to the home study process; and strategies for training staff and community partners.” Source: Program Instruction 14-04 from the Children’s Bureau (March 5, 2014) with guidance for tribes on submitting the Child and Family Services Plan for FYs 2015-2019 ([ACYF-CB-PI-14-04](#))

and insights from other tribes that you can adapt for your use, including ideas for strategies for recruiting and supporting families, creative approaches for training and licensing families, and ways to engage your community leaders and partners on diligent recruitment efforts.

- Build on your knowledge about how to work with and across multiple jurisdictions—such as working with counties and states— and the unique dynamics involved in that cross-jurisdictional work. Keep in mind the possible differences in terms and meaning in various jurisdictions. For example, states may talk about “dual licensure” in reference to a family being licensed for both foster parenting and adoption, but “dual licensure” within tribes may mean being licensed dually by both a tribe and a state.
- Remember to recognize and look for ways to build on the many strengths of your tribal community. Building on your tribe’s own unique set of strengths, traditions, customs, and values can help ensure that your diligent recruitment efforts fit well within your tribal community.

Data on children in foster care and procedures for updating data on the characteristics of children in foster care

Discussion questions

- What is our current population of children in foster care? How many of these children are in tribal foster care and how many are in a state child welfare system?
- What data is currently tracked at the tribal, local, and state levels?
- What are the sources of this data, and can our tribe readily access the data?
- Is data on our children collected in different data systems depending on whether a child is on or off the reservation? Do we have access to the appropriate state data systems so we have updated information about the characteristics of our Native children in care both on and off the reservation? If not, how can we access this information?
- What are the barriers to accessing the data we need?
- What data do we need to inform our recruitment efforts?

People to include in the discussions

- Indian child welfare director or manager
- Foster care manager
- Permanency manager
- Recruitment staff
- Data/IT department leadership
- Tribal council members or other leadership representatives
- Resource families, including foster parents, kinship families, and, if applicable, guardianship and adoptive parents

- How do we obtain needed data, if it's currently not available?
- What formats and types of analysis of our data on the characteristics of children in care will be most helpful to inform our work (e.g., dashboard-style data profiles, trend data, and point-in-time data)? For example, what data does our tribal council want to know to help them understand our work and help them make informed decisions? What do our elders, community members, and staff need or want to know about our work and our recruitment needs?
- What are some new ways that we should look at our data to understand our population of children in foster care beyond the common demographic data details (e.g., number of previous placements, number of children placed with relatives, zip code of home of removal, whether placed with siblings, whether specific groups of children are overrepresented in foster care)?
- How often should we review and analyze our data and update our profile of the characteristics of children in care?
- Who needs to be involved (which staff positions, departments) in the ongoing review and analysis of our data in order to ensure that our data informs all relevant activities?
- Who should we share our data with and how frequently should we share it?

Data and analysis of the current pool of available foster and adoptive placement resources

Discussion questions

- How often do we currently review and analyze our data and update our profile of the current pool of available foster and—if desired, adoptive—placement resources? How often should we do these reviews and analyses in the future?
- What formats and types of analysis of our data on the characteristics of our current pool of available foster and—if desired, adoptive—placement resources will be most helpful for our work (e.g., dashboard-style data profiles, trend data, and point-in-time data)?
- How do we assess whether there is a disparity between the needs and characteristics of children and the pool of available families who are prepared to meet those needs?

People to include in the discussions

- Indian child welfare director or manager
- Recruitment manager and staff
- Data/IT department leadership
- Data support staff member
- Foster care manager

- What does our current and trend data tell us about feedback from prospective, current, and former foster parents' satisfaction data, length of placement for each family, number of child-specific placements (such as kinship families), whether families are over-placed, and other key factors?
- What formats and types of analysis of our data on the characteristics of our current pool of available placement resources will be most helpful to inform our work (e.g., dashboard-style data profiles, trend data and point-in-time data)?
- What do we know about retention of prospective or current parents and why they either stay or leave? What do we do with the information about family retention or lack of retention?
- What can we do to be able to gather, collect, track, and monitor data on our recruitment and retention efforts?
- Do we coordinate or work with a state or any counties on developing a pool of resource families for Native American children (e.g., coordinating on recruitment efforts, having options for Native American families being licensed by the tribe or the state), including, for our own children, tribal families who do not reside on the reservation and may be located in other states?

NOTE: As you review your data and data processes on your pool of resource families for children in foster care, consider using our publication, [Data-Driven Recruitment: Key Data Elements on Foster and Adoptive Families \(462 KB PDF\)](#)³ to help you think about ways to prioritize key data elements on prospective and current families that will help inform your efforts to recruit and maintain a pool of resource families and help you assess the effectiveness of your recruitment efforts.

General, targeted and child specific recruitment strategies, including relationship mining for youth, to reach all parts of our community and to meet the placement needs of children in care⁴

Discussion questions

- What is our overall process and approach for recruiting and retaining foster, kinship, and, if applicable, guardianship and adoptive parents?
- What is our current mix of general, targeted, and child-specific recruitment efforts (i.e., what percentage of our recruitment efforts are in each form of recruitment)?

³ Publication available at: www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/NRCDR-org/data-driven-recruitment-110514.pdf

⁴ The NRCDR has many ideas from the field and tools and publications focused on each of these categories of recruitment (general, targeted, and child-specific recruitment) available in our [Placement Stability and Permanency](#) section of our website.

Do we have a clear understanding of what is meant by “general recruitment,” “targeted recruitment,” and “child-specific recruitment”?

- What strategies do we know to be effective for the categories of general recruitment, targeted recruitment, and child-specific recruitment in our community?
- Do we know how effective we currently are at reaching all parts of the community? How is the effectiveness measured?
- Does our community differ across areas where tribal members live? If it differs, how can we address those differences in our approaches to our work?
- What are our agency’s strengths that we can build on to help develop new relationships and partnerships with groups that are representative of the children’s community?
- What tribal values, traditions, images, and practices should we consider incorporating into our recruitment strategies and messages?
- What events in our community would be effective options for us to share our culturally specific recruitment messages to reach community members?
- Which tribal leaders, elders, and other community members would be effective champions for our recruitment messages?
- Are there any special or unique strategies that we need to use or consider to reach parts of our community that are geographically dispersed—either on the reservation, within the state, or in other states?
- What combination of strategies will be effective at recruiting families for the specific children we have in foster care?
- Should we partner with any counties, states, or other tribes on our recruitment strategies? If so, how should we approach these partnerships?
- For child-specific recruitment, what procedures and practices do we have for doing case-file mining to identify existing relationships that might meet each child’s placement needs? Do we have approaches for looking for existing relationships both on and off the reservation?
- Are there recruitment resources from the state or from other tribes that we could tap into and customize for our community?

People to include in the discussions

- Indian child welfare director or manager
- Data/IT support staff member
- Foster care manager
- Staff responsible for recruitment
- Communications or public information staff
- Resource families, including foster parents, kinship families, and, if applicable, guardianship and adoptive parents
- Tribal council members or other leadership representative

- How do we, and our community partners, develop families throughout the process, from first inquiry through child placement and beyond?
- What support and support services do resource families need from us and our community partners in order to help sustain families from recruitment through orientation and approval until after placement and permanency? Have we identified what services we are able to provide? If so, how do we let resource families know about the services available? Do our staff members know what support services are available and that they should offer these services to resource families?

Strategies for assuring that all prospective parents have access to the home study process

Discussion questions

- What is the current process and procedure for responding to and referring inquiries to begin the licensing process?
- What is the average length of time for completion of the licensing process and what might help reduce the length of time?
- Do we have a set schedule for orientations and trainings or are they scheduled based on the number of inquiries? If we have a set schedule, do we publicize it? Who do we invite (e.g., current and prospective licensed families only, kinship families)? Are there other people we should invite?
- Do we have flexibility in office hours to allow staff to customize the licensing process based on the needs of the community and individual families?
- Do we recognize and accept licenses from states or other tribes? If so, what process is in place and is this information shared within our agency?
- Do we use dual licensing, allowing families to be licensed by both the tribe and a state? If so, how do we coordinate with the state on this process? How do we help families understand their options for being dually licensed?
- What barriers may exist for prospective families who seek to complete the licensing process

People to include in the discussions

- Indian child welfare director or manager
- Data/IT support staff member
- Foster care manager and staff
- Licensing staff
- Any contracted partners who are involved in the licensing process for our agency
- Resource families, including foster parents, kinship families, and, if applicable, guardianship and adoptive parents
- Tribal council members or other leadership representative

(e.g., inconvenient times for orientation sessions or training, orientation and training sessions held at locations that aren't accessible via public transportation, long delays in between orientations or training sessions)? How can we break down those barriers?

Training strategies for staff and community partners

Discussion questions

- How can we provide culturally appropriate and relevant foster care training? Are there existing curricula that we could use or modify to fit our community?
- What are our current training strategies and opportunities for staff and community partners?
- How do we assess the effectiveness of our training strategies for staff and community partners?
- What adjustments, if any, to our training approach would be helpful to ensure that our staff and community partners have the information they need to support our multiple recruitment, response, development, and support efforts for resource families?

People to include in the discussions

- Community partners and contracted agencies
- Community stakeholders
- Indian child welfare director or manager
- Data/IT support staff member
- Foster care manager
- Recruitment manager and staff
- Training unit leadership (or leaders from any universities or colleges and other partners involved in staff training)