



# **RECRUITING FOSTER FAMILIES OF COLOR**

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# WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994 (MEPA)
  - Diligent Recruitment
  - Reflect children in need of placement
- Belief that children's identity is best supported when placed with families who represent their race/ethnicity/culture



# WORD OF MOUTH

- Relationship Building
- Incentives
  - Tiered Approach
  - Recognition
  - Financial
- Using friends and family as respite providers
- Business Cards
- Foster Parent Parties



# FOSTER PARENT APPRECIATION

- Negative news travels fast! So....
  - Make it a whole agency effort
  - Send thank-you notes or other tokens of appreciation
  - Hold regular appreciation events
  - Feature families in agency publications, such as newsletters
  - Send reminders about their importance to agency recruitment



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Hire staff that reflect the target community
  - Volunteers and paraprofessionals are a great resource
- Target neighborhoods where children are from
  - Use available census data
- Be a visible/involved member of the community or neighborhood
  - Attend community events



# MASS MEDIA STRATEGIES

## If using....

- Mailings
- Television
- Radio
- Bus Advertisements
- Newspaper/magazine
- Billboards
- Website
- Fliers

## Remember to.....

- Target specific neighborhoods
- Ask current families what they read, listen to, and watch
- Use culturally inclusive language and pictures
- Build positive media relationships



# AGENCY RESPONSE

## First Contact

- Warm Welcome
- Timely Response
- “Screening In” vs. “Screening Out”
- Describe children in need of homes

## Short Term Follow Up

- Flexibility
- Prompt face-to-face contact
- Provide information
- Connect with current foster parents



# EVALUATION :

## FINDING OUT WHAT WORKS

- Tracking recruitment efforts
  - Ask each prospective foster parent where/how they learned about fostering or the agency – get specifics!
  - For sample evaluation forms, see “Treat Them Like Gold” resource
- Secret Shopper



# RESOURCES

- Working with African American Adoptive, Foster and Kinship Families
  - <http://adoptuskids.org/images/resourceCenter/Working-With-African-American-Families.pdf>
- Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center
  - [www.wifostercareandadoption.org](http://www.wifostercareandadoption.org)
- Finding African American Families for Foster Children: Tips for Workers & Agencies
  - <http://www.nacac.org/adoptalk/findingfamilies.html>



# RESOURCES

- Treat Them Like Gold: A Best Practice Guide to Partnering with Resource Families
  - [http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/publications/docs/Partnering\\_with\\_Resource\\_Families.pdf](http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/publications/docs/Partnering_with_Resource_Families.pdf)
- Casey Family Programs – “Knowing Who You Are”
  - <http://www.casey.org/Resources/Initiatives/KnowingWhoYouAre/video.htm>

