

# MIGRANT

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# MAGAZINE



## Kentucky Migrant Education Program

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## Who are 'Priority for Service' Students and How Can We Best Serve Them?

By Christina Benassi

Several factors determine whether or not a student is Priority for Service (PFS). According to the [Draft Non-Regulatory Guidance for the Title I, Part C Education of Migratory Children](#) [Chapter V: questions B1 to B7], PFS students are those “who are at risk of failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the state’s challenging state academic content standards and challenging state student academic achievement standards, and whose education had been interrupted during the regular school year.”

In Kentucky, a student must attend two or more schools during the current school year AND have a combination of other risk factors that determine PFS to have “school interruption.” These PFS students are those who should have the greatest need and should be a higher priority for migrant educational services over other migrant students.

Recently, the Migrant Needs Assessment was updated to better define terms for clarity. As the Kentucky Migrant Education Program (KYMEP) identification and recruitment (ID&R) coordinator, I will begin spot checking PFS students this month and asking districts to provide their documentation on the students. Districts should keep report cards, test scores and/or other educational data to prove a student’s PFS status. Furthermore, the district should be able to tell me what they are doing for this student since he/she is PFS.

I pulled a PFS report from MIS2000, our state database, recently and one district had two PFS students listed. When I asked district staff what they were doing

for one of the students (who we will call “Ethan”), the advocates provided me with these details:

“Ethan has already been referred for an additional educational support program class at the high school. It is an RTI-type class facilitated by the migrant advocate. This will give him extra assistance for academics. Ethan’s academic weaknesses are his largest hurdle right now, along with his attendance. The advocate has scheduled a meeting with the district pupil personnel (DPP) director in the district to make sure Ethan is on the radar for drop-out prevention. Ethan also will be placed on his Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) at the high school.

“This team focuses on students in grades 9-12 who may be potential drop-outs for any reason. The advocate is a member of this team and can continue to facilitate between school and home to remove as many barriers as possible. The district also will offer Ethan’s family support in the home with supplies as needed to work on both improving his reading and math levels.”

This description is what all districts should be thinking about when asked what they do to help PFS students. This advocate has gone above and beyond to help this student by referring him to programs to prevent dropping out and providing academic support.

As a district advocate, think about, “How am I helping this student? What am I doing to help him or her stay in school?” These questions will help you answer the big question of “How can I help my PFS students?”

# My Story

By Olga Valentin

My name is Olga Valentin, and I am 16 years old. My life as a migrant student has been really hard.

My family has moved around the United States approximately 14 times. Moving and starting a new school has been difficult for me because I wasn't good at meeting new people. One of my biggest issues in my childhood was not having my mother around. I don't have many memories of her due to that she would work a lot. She hardly spent time with me and my sister. My

mom has worked in many types of jobs such as domestic work, tobacco and picking many different types of fruits.

*“It was scary coming back because my mom left me on the border line...”*

When I was about 8 years old, my mom used to take me to work with her in the fields or her domestic job. Around the age of 12 she started to take me in the fields to work along with my sister. My mom could never afford a place of our own, so we would have to live with my aunt and sometimes with my uncles. My mom would work extra hours just to earn a couple more dollars. I could never imagine how tired she was every day. I could hardly handle working in the fields and always complaining about pains that I felt or how tired I was.

Even though I didn't have a good mother figure, I give thanks to God for giving me a mother who worked really hard to provide us whatever we needed.

I was never close to my mom but often I saw her crying – crying because she didn't get to see us much and especially for my sister in Mexico whom she had to leave behind to come here to the United States searching for a job. My mom would always tell us “finish your studies, go to



Olga with Roger Rosenthal, executive director of the Migrant Legal Action Program in Washington, D.C.

college and be someone in this world and not like me working out in the fields.”

I give thanks to Mrs. Judy Littleton and Mrs. Christina Benassi for everything they do and for the opportunities they give to migrant students like me. Without the Migrant Education Program, I probably would have been a dropout student just to start working and wouldn't have met Migrant Advocate Sherrill Tanner who has helped me a lot. My goal in life is to work in the medical field as a pediatrician or a neonatal nurse. My dreams are to bring my baby sister from Mexico so she can start kindergarten

here in the United States, where she was born. Another dream is to apply for my mom's residence or citizenship. My mom desires to have her papers because she has worked really hard and lived here for about 21 years.

On Oct. 23, 2012, my mom, my baby sister and I returned to Mexico because my mom could not find a job.

I stayed in Mexico for about two months until my sister had money to bring me back to the United States. It was scary coming back because my mom left me on the border line and a taxi crossed me over to Brownsville, Texas, where I got on a bus to Nashville, Tenn. Now, I am here by myself with my sister, feeling alone in life again.

I wish that kids would appreciate everything their parents do for them instead of complaining how bad they are.

When I was little, I used to curse at my mom's jobs because it was the reason she was never there for me when I needed her, especially on reward days at school.

I remember waking up every morning crying for my mom, but she was never there.

I give her thanks for her hard work, and I want to make her proud of me so that all her hard work was worth it.

# Understanding the Certificate of Eligibility (COE)

By Christina Benassi

During the All-Recruiter Session at the 2013 Fall Academy, I mentioned that I would be providing all migrant staff with a list of the Certificate of Eligibility (COE) errors for the month. In September, there were 19 errors and/or questions on the COEs. These errors were noted in all four regions and in 15 districts.

To reduce these errors, it is essential to understand the types of errors to improve your skills in completing the COE. The summary below explains the errors:

- Do not use initials: When you have a COE, never put, for example, “Christina N. Benassi” as the student’s name. You must put what the “N” denotes, even if it was used somewhere else on the COE. As for the parents, only use initials when the parent is not the qualifying out-of-school youth (OSY). If the parent is the qualifying OSY, you can write the entire middle name if room permits.
- Make sure names match: When you complete a COE, make sure that the person signs the COE with the same name that appears on the COE.
- Comment on multiple births: If you put “Y” for multiple births and the other sibling is not on the COE, provide a comment as to where the sibling is located and his/her name to show that you understand that he/she is a multiple. This clarifies to the reviewer and the regional center

clerk in the event that students must be merged later.

- Explain why it took longer than a year to recruit: Remember to denote why it took longer than a year to find the family. If there is room on the COE, put it there; otherwise, note the reasoning in the Basic Interview Pattern (BIP) comments section.
- When to use more than one COE: When you sign up an OSY, their spouse and/or children, there should be two/three COEs: one with the OSY as “Self” and one with OSY as “guardian.” There should be a new COE whenever the worker’s role changes.
- Complete the BIP: Be sure all boxes are checked appropriately on the BIP. This shows the migrant story, and it needs to be accurate. If they found work, then check “yes work was found.” If this is the first move to the United States, then note that on the BIP.
- Note time of temporary work: A defined amount of time in months is necessary to denote temporary work. A best practice would be to get a direct quote from workers or employers stating how long they plan to work.

When in doubt, check the [Draft Non-Regulatory Guidance for the Title I, Part C Education of Migratory Children](#) [Chapter II: Child Eligibility; Questions H6 to H9 (temporary) and K1 to K8 (national COE and SEA requirements)].

## Nurses Give Clark County Migrant Program Shot of Success

By Madeline Potter, recruiter, Clark County

In October, the Clark County Migrant Education Program held a parent engagement meeting with a unique group of guests – nurses from the Bluegrass Community Health Center in Lexington.

The nurses administered free flu shots to all of the program participants’ and various other farm workers who wished to be protected from influenza this season. In addition, they provided educational materials about “Green Tobacco Sickness,” healthy eating, dental health and several other health-related topics.

The Bluegrass Community Health Center in Lexington is a clinic that accepts both insured and uninsured patients. Uninsured patients are often able to receive discounts on a sliding scale. This allows many uninsured patients to receive healthcare services at a discounted and affordable rate. The clinic has a long history of working with farm workers. As part of its outreach efforts to farm workers, staff came to Clark County to

give flu shots to farm workers and their families.

They expressed great interest in a continuing partnership with the program and in conducting more events like this one.

For this event, Clark County MEP used an elementary school cafeteria. One corner of the large room was dedicated to administering flu shots. In the remaining space, nurses hosted an informational session on health.

This was followed by a session about what one should know about the new Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) health care system.

With such a large turnout, Clark County MEP also was able to host an engaging and productive Parent Advisory Council meeting that allowed our parents to make a genuine impact on the program and their experiences as a part of the program.

If anyone from areas surrounding Fayette County is interested in conducting a similar event, please contact

Madeline Potter at [madeline.potter@clark.kyschools.us](mailto:madeline.potter@clark.kyschools.us).



# Lessons learned at ID&R Forum in Tampa

By Christina Benassi

This session was one of my favorites as it concentrated on safety for recruiters. This is a very important factor that many conferences neglect. Roy Paz, master patrol officer for Tampa's police department, presented some valuable information for recruiters to remember when going into strange areas. He did an excellent job engaging the audience and discussing best practices to protect yourself when you are recruiting.

Paz talked to the audience about showing confidence as they walk. Most people will not bother a person who is walking briskly, with authority and purpose, and looking straight ahead. However, if the person looks down and seems intimidated in any way, "opportunistic" criminals may take advantage of this situation and approach this person. Be aware of how you walk and your confidence level.

Paz also provided some suggestions for women who carry purses. If you have a cross-body purse, wearing it over your chest does not protect the items. If a criminal wants to steal your purse, he or she will grab the purse and drag you along with it. It is best to let your purse go, because those items can be replaced.

Also, he mentioned that you should flip a larger purse upside down and tuck it under your arm. This way if a criminal tries to grab your purse all the items in the purse will fall out when grabbed. This will cause a distraction, and you will be able to get away or startle the criminal, making him or her flee.

The safest thing is to not carry a purse, especially when recruiting. Simply lock your purse in your trunk before recruiting so it is out of view and then proceed without that added distraction.

Here are helpful tips to remember when out recruiting:

- Walk briskly with authority and purpose.
- Keep your head up; don't look at the ground.
- Look and act confident.
- Trust your instincts: If it doesn't feel right, avoid it.
- Avoid isolated areas.
- Keep valuables close to you, under your coat.
- Carry your purse upside down under your arm
- Be careful if giving money to homeless/vagrants.
- Consider carrying some type of defense weapon or alarm and have it ready to use.
- If you only have your car keys, hit the person in the eyes.

The best way to defend yourself is to stick your fingers in the person's eyes, pull their ears or crush their throat, but only use in situations where you feel you may die otherwise.



On Oct. 1-3, [Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training \(ESCORT\)](#) hosted the first Identification and Recruitment (ID&R) Forum in Tampa, Fla. All four of Kentucky's migrant regions were represented at the forum. Some of the session topics were electronic COEs, quality control, recruiting out-of-school youth (OSY), temporary work, recruiting tips and personal protection. Here are two attendees' perceptions of new knowledge from the forum.

## Creative Recruiting

By Kelsey Chadwick, regional recruiter, western region

The creative recruiting session facilitated by Florida's Volusia County Migrant Program was very informative. The idea behind the presentation was that recruiters should always be thinking of new ways and places to recruit outside of their comfort zone. It was encouraging, and we acquired a couple of ideas to try out.

One of the ideas that I liked is a letter from the district to families that have been interviewed for the program. This letter allows the recruiter to give the family notice of eligibility or ineligibility, and list the students that are eligible with the End of Eligibility (EOE) date. The letter also can list the students that are ineligible.

I liked this idea because it helps clarify some of the details that often confuse families regarding the eligibility determination, such as when a child is born after the Qualifying Arrival Date (QAD) or a child from a different move is not eligible when other children in the house are enrolled in the program.

The letter is used upon initial notification of eligibility so that the recruiter can present information up front that is sometimes difficult to convey to families, and the family can have that information later for reference.

I also liked how the EOE date is covered with families as soon as they are notified of program eligibility. If the family ultimately decides to settle in the area, prior knowledge of the eligibility period would keep them from being unpleasantly surprised that they are no longer enrolled in the program after three years.

# Making the Out-of-School Youth (OSY) Connection

*By Lisa Champion, migrant advocate/recruiter, Christian County*

Christian County leads the state in agricultural cash receipts. There are more than 300,000 acres of farmland amongst 1,100 farms. Burley and dark-fired tobacco are an integral part of the farming unit, with more than 10,000 acres produced in the county. Many farmers have more than 200 acres, with one having 360 acres. The majority of the dark-fired tobacco in the world is grown in this area.

Tobacco is a labor-intensive crop; few advances have been made to mechanize the process. Due to this, our farmers must rely on H2A agricultural workers for the tobacco production. These workers arrive at various times of the year – some as early as March to work in the greenhouse production of the plants, others in May for setting tobacco and the balance arriving in late July/ early August for cutting tobacco. The men live in bunk-houses on the farms. They work 12 hours a day, six days a week.

I have learned over the years that you must make a genuine, caring connection with the guys to be successful. I sometimes feel like they see me as “one of them,” for I present myself as a real person and not just an employee.



Knowing about their residence in Mexico is beneficial. Many of our workers are from Nayarit, the tobacco state in Mexico where their season is different than ours due to the equatorial location. Tobacco is set in October/November, so when our workers return to Mexico in December they are then hoeing tobacco. You can make a connection easily here.

Birthdays are special. I often prepare meals or bring pizza in celebration of their birthdays. Last year I had two farms with workers that stayed through Christmas. In talking with them I realized how much they missed spending the holidays with their families. I prepared Christmas dinner for one farm and New Year's dinner for the other. This “random act of kindness” rewarded me and the program in so many ways.

Facebook has its drawbacks, but it has been a tool I have used in establishing relationships. I am “friends” with several of my guys. Additionally, they love to post pictures on Facebook. This leads to another tool I use, and that is taking photos of them. I often take pictures of interesting things I see at the houses (all with permission) and of the guys when doing their lessons. The most interesting thing I have photographed this year has been an octopus they were preparing to eat. They enjoy seeing the pictures of other guys from other farms. I often use this as a reward after our lessons.

I have a strong connection with the farmers, too. I ask the farmers, “What do you want me to do to help your guys help you?” By doing this, I develop lessons that are relevant to their everyday life on the farm. The lessons should be useful and interesting. Some of my lesson topics have included safety, parts of the car/truck/tractor, ordering in a restaurant, common farm phrases and laws in Kentucky. Again, I address topics they use daily. If you keep the farmer happy, you can return year after year. Building the relationship with the farmer will help you identify and recruit.

In summary, my keys to success in connecting with the OSYs include:

- present yourself as a real person, relate to them
- take photos to promote relationships
- give relevant and interesting lessons at a time convenient to them
- be accessible to them when they need you
- build rapport with the farmers
- work with businesses to help them; promote bilingual signage
- continually think of ways to connect and show you care

Farmers in Christian County could not survive without the assistance of the H2A workers. I must do what I can to help the OSYs, and thus help the farmers.

# Fall Academy 2013 in Review

By Christina Benassi

The Migrant Education Fall Academy, *Thinking Outside the Box: KYMEP's Next Steps*, concluded successfully Sept. 20.

A very special thank you goes to Judith Littleton, State Migrant Education director, and April Willis-Harper, central regional coordinator, for working together to pull this academy programming together.

Survey results from the 2013 Fall Academy have been tabulated and are being reviewed.

Thanks to all who took time and gave us

great insight and suggestions.

Planning for Fall Academy 2014 has already started.

We are working with the Sloan Convention Center and the Holiday Inn University Plaza about hosting the Academy again.

We have a tentative date set for Sept. 17-19, 2014, in Bowling Green.

More information will come in future Migrant Magazines and via e-mail.

We look forward to seeing everyone together again at our Fall Academy 2014.

## Update on Continuation of Services

By Judy Littleton

Some have wondered if there are circumstances in which a district may continue to provide Migrant Education Program (MEP) services to children and youth who are no longer eligible.

End of eligibility (EOE) occurs if a child or youth has 36 months without another qualifying move, the youth graduates high school in the United States, the youth has obtained a General Education Diploma (GED) or the youth has reached his or her 22nd birthday.

So, when can a district provide services after the end of eligibility? The regulation provides three circumstances in which a local education agency (LEA) may continue to provide services to children whose eligibility has ended:

- a child's eligibility ends during the school term and the district provides services for the duration of the term
  - a child's eligibility ends and the district provides services for an additional school year because comparable services are not available through other programs
  - a district continues to serve secondary school students who were eligible for services in secondary school through credit-accrual programs until they graduate
- However, before the district provides services under these provisions, it should consider whether the child's unmet special educational needs are addressed by the general school program and whether migrant children who have a priority for services have already been served.

## Upcoming Dates to Remember

- **November 14** – Southeastern Regional PAC meeting
- **November 15** – Central Regional Meeting
- **November 18-22** – Western Region's Re-Interviews
- **December 3** – Clerk Meeting in Richmond
- **December 5** – Southeastern Regional Meeting
- **March 10-14, 2014** – Northeastern Region's Re-Interviews
- **April 6-9, 2014** – NASDME Conference, San Antonio, Texas
- **September 17-19, 2014** – Fall Academy 2014, Bowling Green

## Welcome to the KYMEP

By Judy Littleton

The Kentucky Migrant Education Program (KYMEP) is pleased to announce that Heather Rhorer will be joining the team.

Rhorer comes from many years in migrant education as a recruiter and outreach specialist.

Her experiences and passion for migrant education and migrant students and youth will be an asset to KYMEP.

She will work primarily on the administrative side of KYMEP (e.g., budget, meetings, and allocations). However, she also will be in the field assisting with monitoring and recruiting. Please join us as we welcome Rhorer to the KYMEP family.



## Completing MEP Program Amendment

By Judy Littleton

Program plans and budgets for individual district MEPs are complete and approved.

As discussed at the Fall Academy during the administrator's session, there will be times when a program amendment is necessary. Beginning this year, program amendments must be completed prior to requesting a budget amendment.

The reason for this new process is to focus the district in determining the why before the how. The goal of the program amendment is for districts to first think about the new initiative and why it is new to the already-developed program.

Then the district can determine if it needs additional funds for this new initiative and, if so, where these funds will be reallocated.

If you have questions about the Program Amendment process, contact [Judy Littleton](#).