

KENTUCKY MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM  
13 DECEMBER 2011

CENTRAL KENTUCKY/REGION B  
RECRUITING BLITZ REPORT  
SUBMITTED 13 DECEMBER 2011

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## **Overview**

For the past two years, the Kentucky Migrant Education Program (KY MEP) has performed a recruitment blitz in one of the four regions. This year, the Central Region (also known as Region B) was selected for a recruitment blitz. The Regional Coordinator, April Willis-Harper, wanted to focus on two main areas of concern in the central region, Warren and Casey Counties. There is sufficient evidence that migrant workers reside in the Warren County School District and Bowling Green Independent School District areas. As of this date, neither Warren County nor Bowling Green Independent School Districts have their own MEP. Casey County was chosen because the recruiter, Barb Pelley, was recently hired as a part-time recruiter and could benefit from assistance finding additional migrant families.

The three goals of the blitz were to: 1) identify and recruit new migrant families and youth into the program; 2) survey the areas to identify recent migrant patterns in order to develop appropriate recruiting strategies; and 3) provide an opportunity to identify local training and resource needs for recruitment efforts.

## **Implementation**

The recruitment blitz took place during the week of October 24-28, 2011. The week was divided into two blitzes to address the areas of concerns identified by the local Regional Coordinator. During the first part of the week, October 24-October 26, the recruitment efforts were focused in Bowling Green, the second half, October 26- October 28, efforts were focused in Casey County.

The blitz was planned and lead by the KY Identification & Recruitment (ID&R) Coordinator, Christina Benassi, and ESCORT's Jorge Echegaray, who is the State ID&R Trainer in Florida. Teams of several recruiters and advocates participated in the Central Region Recruitment Blitz. The team that assisted with the Bowling Green and Warren County recruitment blitz consisted of: April Willis-Harper, Central Region Coordinator; Becca Neal, Central Regional Recruiter; Cristiane Bastien, Central Regional Recruiter; Claude Christian, from the KY Department of Education; Lisa Edwards, Caverna Recruiter; and Mrya Duncan, Logan County English as a Second Language (ESL) interpreter. A second team assisted with the Casey County recruitment, including; Barb Pelley, Part-time Casey County recruiter/advocate; Becca Diana Hernandez, Adair County Recruiter; Maddie Conrad, Southeastern Regional Recruiter; Miguel Vieyra, Southeastern Regional Recruiter; and Linda Smith, Boyle County recruiter. Also, Becca Neal, Cristiane Bastien, and Lisa Edwards from the Warren County and Bowling Green blitz participated in Casey County.

The recruitment blitz started with an introductory meeting facilitated by both ESCORT and the state ID&R Coordinator. The introductory meeting was important to cover the agenda and goals of the blitz. It ensured that everyone would be on the same page and made it possible for everyone on the team to know what was expected of them. The introductory meeting also covered the schedule for the week, and gave an opportunity to discuss local demographics and any concerns or obstacles that the teams may face during the blitz. One concern that was addressed was how recent immigration raids in the areas may make families reluctant to speak with recruiters. The most important discussion during the introductory meeting was about the

leads that were already investigated by the local recruitment staff. These leads provided effective groundwork for the blitz team. Each of the leads shared during the introductory meeting was followed up.

The following table describes the schedule implemented during the recruitment blitz. At the end of each day, the recruitment blitz teams met for daily debriefs and made modifications to the agenda as needed.

|               |                |                  |                 |               |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Monday</b> | <b>Tuesday</b> | <b>Wednesday</b> | <b>Thursday</b> | <b>Friday</b> |
| Warren County | Warren County  | Warren County    | Casey County    | Casey County  |

### **Results**

The recruitment blitz yielded positive numbers of new Certificates of Eligibility (COEs). In total, there were 19 new COEs resulting in 36 new migrant students for Central Region's MEP. Of the 36 new migrant students, five (13%) were Out-of-School Youth (OSY). The breakdown of COEs per county is as follows:

| <b><u>County</u></b> | <b><u>Number of New Migrant Students</u></b> |
|----------------------|--|
| Warren County        | 10   |
| Casey County         | 24   |
| Mercer County        | 2  |

### **Summary**

The most impressive highlight of this effort was completing the 19 new COEs and finding new families that were in need of services. It is always a good feeling to help those that need it the most.

As mentioned before, one of the goals for the blitz was to identify any migrant patterns that would help with future recruitment initiatives. By the time of the recruitment blitz, cutting tobacco was completed and the stripping had not yet started. Therefore, some families had not yet not moved into the area to strip the tobacco. Timing is always crucial when finding migrant families. If the blitz was scheduled a few weeks later, the tobacco may have been ready to strip and it may have been easier to find migratory workers in the tobacco barns stripping. This is something that will be considered for our next blitz. However, given that the blitz took place between the cutting and stripping seasons of tobacco, the recruitment blitz was still a success.

An important part of the blitz was to promote the KY MEP in the community. The teams brought brochures that explained the program and handed them out to possible lead. The teams also provided posters to local Mexican stores to further promote the MEP.

Finding leads is another important aspect of the blitz. The teams uncovered several new leads while recruiting for both Warren and Casey Counties. Several of these leads generated new COEs, while others should be revisited in the spring. These leads will be valuable during the spring recruitment. The local recruiters need to stay in contact with these leads to improve

recruitment practices. For example, a contractor was found in Casey County whom assisted the team with recruiting five OSY in Casey County. Several restaurant workers in Bowling Green will also be valuable as well. The OSY and migrant workers come to these restaurants during their lunch breaks, so recruitment in that area will be important.

Recruiting in Bowling Green proved not to generate as many new COEs as anticipated. Prior to the blitz, the local Regional Coordinator made contact with the Refugee Center in Bowling Green. According to the Refugee Coordinator, the refugee programs assist families' transition into the area with English language support and e obtaining work. One of the main employers that hires refugees is a local Tyson chicken processing plant. Unfortunately, when the refugees move into the area looking for "any" work, they are usually not hired until three or more months after arriving. This timeframe excludes a family for being eligible for the MEP, since the minimal timeframe of 30 days expires before obtaining work at the processing plant. Beyond that, workers at the processing plant stay longer than the one-year eligibility time limit for temporary work according to the current MEP regulations.

The blitz teams developed a sense of camaraderie that came from spending time with recruiters from all over the state. It was beneficial that best practices and suggestions were shared among the new and experienced recruiters. This blitz provided on-the-job-training for our newer recruiters who have been here less than a year. After participating in the blitz, KY recruiters should continue their collaborative efforts across the State.

This recruiting blitz was successful. New migrant students were identified and recruited for the KY MEP. They and their families will now be able to benefit from what the KY MEP can offer. Recruiters collaborated with other recruiters across the state and share ideas. It was a beneficial time for new and experienced recruiters alike.

### **Recommendations**

- The regional recruiters and local programs must continue to utilize and enhance the leads and resources listed in this report.
- Follow up with the recently recruited families and OSY should occur. Programs must maintain contact to ensure the services that were discussed during the interview are provided (when available). By providing the families with resources right away, you leave them with a good impression of the MEP.
- Continue to establish relationships with the farmers and maintain contact with them once the relationships are established. The feed and farm supply stores are a great place to keep in contact with farmers in Casey County.
- Conducting searches for money wire establishments like Western Union may help identify grocery stores that migrant families frequent. Many Western Union points are housed in Mexican stores.
- Instead of completing work in the office, dedicate one day to do "office work" at an establishment where migrant families frequent, such as a Spanish restaurant. Working in that type of location will provide insight into how much migrant families use the establishment and will provide more opportunity for recruiters to be out in the field.

- Become familiar with the eligibility requirements of other programs and understand how they compare or differ from the MEP eligibility requirements. For example, not every family who is eligible for the Migrant Head Start program is also eligible for the MEP.
- Team up people who never work together. This brings more diverse experiences and talents to each group. This also allows for more exchange of ideas and ID&R strategies.
- Provide a backpack with Basic Interview Pattern Forms BIPs, COEs, blue pens, door knockers, brochures in Spanish and English, business cards, posters, etc. These bags are great when recruiting to have everything you need in one easy place.
- Carry qualifying bags made up in the car; they are very helpful to give to families after they sign up for the MEP.
- Consider time changes when involving people in different time zones, eastern and central. Keep in mind the times some people have to leave in order to begin recruiting, because not everyone will stay the night before due to unforeseen circumstances.
- Provide the recruiters with a list of people that are currently in the program, if possible. You will have a list of names you can mention while recruiting. Also, ask families if they have heard of the program or have previously been involved with the MEP.