



# ERSEA: Developing Effective Recruitment Services

Head Start recruitment is a systematic year-round process that reaches out to families in your program's service area. Recruitment should be data-informed and measurable.

## THE GOAL

Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) systems require programs to develop recruitment efforts that reach and inform families with eligible children. Programs also must include specific efforts to actively locate and recruit children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness or children living in foster care, and other vulnerable children.

### Questions to consider

- Do you use your community assessment data to locate income-eligible children, including children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, or children living in foster care?
- Do you reach those most in need of your services?
- Do you maintain an overall waiting list that is representative of the needs at all sites?
- Do you support families in the completion of the enrollment application?

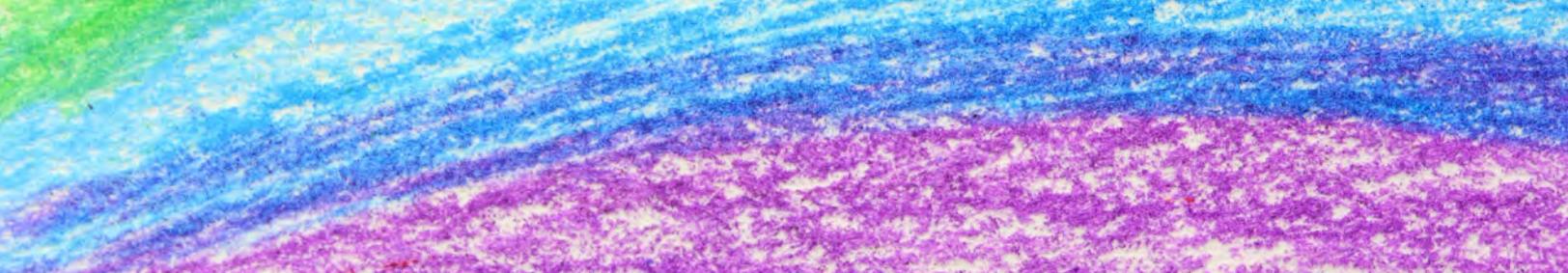
Programs need to be strategic and thoughtful in their recruitment planning efforts.

## PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Ensure that all staff regardless of their role in the program are informed and have a basic understanding of all areas of ERSEA and can articulate the program's process for recruitment.

### Questions to consider

- Have you identified key management staff who will be responsible for overseeing the recruitment effort?
- Have you developed a system for training ERSEA staff and monitoring recruitment activities?
- Do your recruitment and enrollment materials reflect the language and literacy needs in your community?
- Do you have a list of key recruitment sites and organizations across the program service area?



Revisit your recruitment strategies and make changes as needed based on the updated community needs assessment.

## MESSAGING

All messaging should be culturally sensitive and representative of families in the service area. Be sure to write and speak using plain language principles.

### Questions to consider

- Does your messaging follow the four As—*accurate, audience specific, appealing, and accessible*?
- Have you established a follow-up system for inquiries?
- Have you maximized the use of social media?

Make sure **all of** your community partners understand your services and target populations.

## CANVASSING AND TRACKING

Map and track the program service area to ensure recruitment efforts are underway and ongoing. Staff should frequently canvas neighborhoods with a high concentration of low-income housing.

### Questions to consider

- Have you established procedures and determined staff assignments?
- Have you trained staff on safety policies and procedures when they are visiting neighborhoods?
- Are you tracking current recruitment activities to inform future efforts?

Develop and maintain formal and informal partnerships with community-based organizations that provide services to vulnerable children and families. Such partners may include local educational agencies (LEA), the state Department of Social Services, public health centers, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), housing projects, mental health centers, and homeless shelters.



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