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National Office for Social Responsibility

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CC	Community Council
CETA	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act
CRQ	Community Resources Questionnaire
DOL	U.S. Department of Labor
IS	Impact Schedule
NOSR	National Office for Social Responsibility
TA	Technical Assistance
TRC	Technical Resource Committee
YNA	Youth Needs Assessment

Series Editor:	William W. Keller
Senior Consultant:	Margaret L. Rogers
Technical Assistance:	Rudi A. Leonardi
Consultants:	Linda Greenberg , *Ph.D.*
	Linda W. Gruber

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GUIDE 7: RECRUITMENT, CLIENT SELECTION, AND ENROLLMENT

NATIONAL OFFICE FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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RECRUITMENT

Introduction

Recruitment is a series of activities which require specific steps in a timed sequence, whether entrance to the Program is open or cyclical. It is the recruitment activity sequence which makes the first direct contact with the client community. Therefore, it sets the tone for the Program as well as a level of expectation, and the Program designers should be careful to project a feeling about the Program which will produce a tone they can live with, and that accurately reflects what they hope to gain for the community through the success of the Youth Work Experience Process.

Initial Considerations

No recruitment can or should begin until enrollment criteria and the selection process have been carefully defined. CETA criteria, both federal and local, will have to be met. These are spelled out in the guidelines regarding:

- age
- sex
- ethnic group representation
- economic disadvantage
- student or nonstudent status
- definitions of those most in need

Criteria relating to the Program goals and objectives must also be considered. Is the target population a group considered delinquent, or pre-delinquent? The age of the client population may be a critical factor. For example, if the Program is to serve youth aged twelve ot fourteen years, it will be difficult to meet the Department of Labor definitions for job placement. But if positive termination and career development or awareness are the goals, then those adolescents can be accommodated within the frame of the Program.

In establishing recruitment criteria, community imput and special concerns such as the wish to have the Program serve a specific population should be considered. The actual recruitment process will normally be a subject of considerable community concern. Community residents will want to feel that the degree of objectivity in the selection process (criteria uniformly known and applied) gives opportunity for real and fair access to the Program. In other words, getting into the Program must not depend on "who you know." In fact, this may well be key in gaining community acceptance for the Program. Details of the selection process are taken up later in this guide.

Designing a Recruitment Plan —Basic Information

As a basic preliminary requirement to designing a recruitment plan, the following specifics should be clearly assessed and delineated:

- *The target client population:* This will be based on specific enrollment criteria.
- *Location of the target population:* This should be narrowed down to a general geographical location and to individual addresses.
- *Community involvement in the recruitment process:* This involves an assessment of community concern and expectations.
- *Methods of reaching the target population:* This will necessitate answering the following questions:
  1. What media are popular with the target population? Assess which radio and television stations and which publications reach the target population.
  2. What style of publicity will attract them, and will there be special language considerations?
  3. How visible is the population? For example, who really knows how to reach school dropouts?

Some Precautions

Before attempting to implement a recruitment plan, some precautions should be taken. If recruitment is on several levels and with different agents, ample time for response must be allowed. Everyone involved in recruitment should know the timetable and agree to meet deadlines which have been built into the process. The recruitment outreach is the first opportunity for the public to become acquainted with the Program. If the persons in charge of implementing the recruitment phase of the Program vacillate in setting deadlines and selection criteria, responses may be vague, and an unfavorable atmosphere and precedent may be generated. Accordingly, the timetable and deadlines must be adhered to, and everyone involved in the recruitment process should possess a clear grasp of specific eligibility requirements. Moreover, a consistent attempt to discuss and address potential language problems and other community concerns should be made.

Recruitment Through Public Media

The publicity plan for any Youth Work Experience Program will be determined in part by budgetary restrictions. Some kinds of exposure cost money and some are free. For programs with ample publicity budgets, paid ads and brochures, with or without graphics, are effective. These programs, as well as programs with more limited budgets, should utilize press releases and public service announcements. Unfortunately, these and other sources of free publicity often prove to be a less effective means of recruitment. For example, a description of the Program might be consigned to the obituary page of the local paper—an unfortunate and hopefully not ironic event.

In choosing any public medium, be aware of its schedule and deadlines. All publicity items should include:

- a description of the Program
- the name of the Program director
- eligibility criteria

- application requirements specifying procedures
- the place
- the time
- the deadline for application

The Community Council, as a knowledgeable source, should be consulted. Its members in all likelihood will know which recruitment procedures have proved effective and will work in the particular community. Program staff should also develop an outreach recruitment approach by which they survey, meet, and talk with potential clients. This may include, among other activities, visits to the local pool hall, school playgrounds, recreation centers, drop-in centers, and community organizations.

Referrals

In addition to a general publicity campaign, a plan for referrals to the Program should be made. This is particularly necessary if the target population is unaffliated with local institutions or otherwise difficult to reach. If the community manifests an active interest in the process of recruitment, a referral plan is often the best place to begin. This is an excellent means of coordinating community agencies and organizations in the interest of the Program.

Referring agents, together with the target population, should be identified. Specific limits should be imposed on the number of applicants needed to establish a pool. The referrals will then be alloted on the basis of agency capability and number of agents dealing with a particular target group. Normally, Police and Probation Departments can produce a good referral basis. However, referring agents do not need to be drawn exclusively from public agencies: rather, community and youth-serving agencies should be solicited for the performance of this function as well.

The referral procedure should be clear, including at the minimum answers to most of the following questions:

- What forms are to be used?
- Is the referral source certifying eligibility?
- Has the referring agency made direct contact with the client before making the referral?
- Who is the official contact within the referring agency?
- Will referrals be delivered by mail, in person, or will the Program agent pick them up?
- What are the deadlines to be met?

A referral timetable should be established to fit within the total recruitment process.

The referring agents should not make copies of the referral form, but should be given enough forms to cover their allotment plus a reasonable number of errors. Forms should be numbered to insure controlled distribution. Further, the Program should maintain a record of the number of forms received from each agent and should give the referring agency feedback on the appropriateness of individual referrals. This feedback is important in the Program's public relations. In particular, it is crucial in establishing and maintaining symbolic relationships with public agencies and community organizations.

The Program director should take full advantage of the opportunity to establish trust relationships with the community that the referral system provides. If conducted with courtesy and appropriate respect, it provides an excellent basis for future mutually beneficial relationships between the Program and the community's agencies and organizations.

The Application Process

The application form should be as detailed as possible. It should request at the minimum:

- all information required to determine eligibility
- information needed to provide a data base for meeting enrollment guidelines
- parental permission for initiating the Program
- parental signature for income verification
- client health history
- educational background
- previous work experience
- occupational interests

The application process should be closely controlled by the Program. After an inquiry or referral has been made, the Program staff will usually issue the application with instructions that it be returned directly. Alternatively, the applicant can fill out the application and have an immediate interview at the Program offices, and the application can then be mailed for the parent's signature. If this method is used, eligibility can be determined immediately from the face sheet of the application, and evaluation tools such as the Impact Scales can be administered as part of the application process. This method is helpful in several ways:

- the seriousness of the applicant can be ascertained quickly
- follow-up can be developed if necessary
- if a control group is to be established, information on its make-up will be readily available

Alternatively, the application process may begin with the distribution of application forms through referring agents or public agencies. This method is harder to control and is more time-consuming than the one outlined above. It may also produce misunderstandings and conflict, since people who submit applications tend to think they will automatically be accepted into the Program. Under this method, the Program staff. will have to arrange to

- interview applicants
- explain the Program
- administer the Impact Scales

This more diffuse approach requires

- the establishment of a pick-up or mail-in system and a way to determine eligibility
- notification by mail or telephone of applicant eligibility
- arrangement of interviews

It is much easier to contact a referral or answer an inquiry with a simple "When can you come in to fill out an application?" Accordingly, this alternative method is not recommended in NOSR programming.

The Recruitment Calendar

When the application process has been completely worked through and defined, it is possible to establish an overall Recruitment Calendar. The Recruitment Calendar can begin either with simultaneous release of recruitment information to all parts of the community, or else can follow a plan of staged recruitment to various targets. Whichever procedure is followed, the target population should be barraged by several different methods to insure comprehensive contact. The Recruitment Calendar should allow response time for:

- the media campaign to take effect
- the referral agents to respond
- the outreach activity to produce serious applicants

There should be a specific period during which the referrals can be made, and it should allow time for applications to be made between the referral deadline and the deadline for receipt of all applications. In addition to this firm deadline for the receipt of all applications, a period must be allotted for certification of applicants and for the actual selection of Program participants. Finally, it must be decided when, how, and what the applicants will be told concerning their admission or rejection from the Program.

CLIENT SELECTION
Three Different Methods

As has been noted above, the "fairness" of the selection process is an important factor in the acceptance of the Youth Work Experience Program by the community. Random selection, especially if it can be computerized, is an eminently objective method. Attention must be given to the following proportions in the pool of potential candidates:

- ethnic background
- male-female balance
- geographic representation

The pool of candidates should be large enough to ensure that the final random selection will be balanced in terms of the above variables. The number of candidates recruited will normally outnumber those accepted into the Program by three or four to one. The remaining clients, those eliminated in the random selection process, become a pool of candidates for the selection preceding the next Program cycle.

An apparently simpler objective procedure is the "first come, first served" approach. Assuming that recruitment is targeted toward all elements of the community uniformly and simultaneously, this method can be reasonably fair. However, it has a built-in bookkeeping problem because the receipt of applications has to be logged, and cut-off periods for telephone inquiries must be established.

"Slot allocation" is a third general selection procedure which is usually considered fair. If the Program is intended to serve a large geographic area, or many ethnic groups, places in the Program can be allocated to match the proportions of various groups in the population. It is very likely that this third method will be used in combination with one or both of the foregoing procedures, depending on what makes most sense in the particular community.

The Screening Process

When a general method of selection has been decided upon, the screening process should be established. It has been implied above that the Program staff determine or certify procedures during an initial interview, but many certification procedures are possible. Whatever method is chosen will determine where and how the application is received and thus becomes an important part of the recruitment plan, as does the final selection process. The Community Council and the Program director should decide whether the final selection is to be done by a computer, the staff, a committee, or a council. The result of this decision will determine a time span in the recruitment plan which will strongly impact the way applicants are notified of their status, whether or not they are eligible, selected, or wait-listed.

The Selection Process Based on Research and Evaluation Instruments

The greatest objectivity and the most certain means of repeating a successful program will be secured if instrumentation (the Impact Scales) is used for research and evaluation during the selection process. Whether or not the Program will establish an experimental group and a control group for research and evaluation purposes, the simplest way to secure the initial or pre-test Impact Scales Instrument is to administer it during the application process. If there is going to be a control group, and there should be for meaningful Program evaluation, the pre-test must be administered prior to selection.

If all pertinent data—participant characteristics such as ethnic group, age, sex, referral source, residence—are fed into a computer at the same time as the Impact Scales, "turn around" time in the selection and enrollment process will be reduced greatly. Hand analysis of this data is very time-consuming even in a small Program. In fact, even with computers, it may take as long as two or three weeks for the computerized system to provide matching (for controls) and final selection after the participant data has been submitted.

Coding Data for Computer Analysis

What follows is a sample procedure for coding data for computer analysis. First, the completed application and the impact questionnaire are assigned a code number. The same number is placed on both the application and the questionnaire. In order to avoid later problems, a master file should be made of the numbers used, together with the following information for each:

- applicant's name and telephone number
- the date the application was received
- the date the Impact Scales were administered
- the date on which data was submitted to the computer

As the completed application and Impact Scales are received, staff should fasten them together and place them in a holding file for completed eligible applications. The inventories with attached questionnaires are thus packaged for forwarding to data processing. As a precaution, great care must be exercised in handling these forms to avoid error and loss. In establishing procedures for handling, try to build in safeguards which will allow you to trace information necessary. A specialist in electronic data processing will be able to suggest facile methods.

The Matching and Selection Process

When a control group is established, the matching and selection process proceeded as follows: With technical programming and key punch assistance, the data are programmed to the computer. First the Impact Scales are key punched. Scores are obtained so that clients with similar Impact scores can be matched. Other data are then fed in so that a composite for each client, showing both characteristics and Impact scores, is obtained. Clients are then matched on all variables. This process can be further refined by grouping clients into types by similarities ascertained from the Impact Scales. Matched pairs or clusters of clients are randomly assigned to one experimental (participant) group and one to the control group. Then by sending a list of the code numbers, the processing agent notifies the Program that the clients have been selected. The Program staff, in turn, identifies the applicants by name from the code number master file and then proceeds with the enrollment process.

Enrollment

Once an adequate number of participants have been selected, enrollment can begin. Whether enrollment is on a cycle or is open entry, certain basic steps will be taken. A pre-orientation session, though optional, has the advantage of providing an opportunity to find out whether all selected applicants are still available to the Program. Some participants may have moved, lost interest, been arrested, or even found jobs between the time of application and the actual enrollment period. Pre-orientation also gives a potential participant one more chance to determine whether or not he or she really wants to be in the Program and minimizes later dropout rates.

First, Program staff should notify candidates of their selection and request that they attend the introductory meeting. This pre-orientation will be held just before the actual enrollment activities and the initial implementation of the Program. It can be done in informal groups. The agenda for these meetings might include a more detailed explanation of the Program than was given at application interviews, and the introduction of the staff to the clients. If a handbook for participants has been developed, it should be presented and time should be allowed for the participants to review it. A general question-and-answer period might follow. Before closing this meeting, the selected participants should be told when to come to complete the enrollment process, assuming they still wish to participate in the Program.

The formal enrollment procedure includes the completion of all documents necessary for entering the payroll system, such as W-4 forms, state withholding (if applicable), and any other forms required under the established system. These documents will be processed according to local procedures. Participants should be informed of the exact starting dates of Program activities. All schedules and necessary information should be put in writing. This information can be reinforced by telephone calls. The information distributed to new participants should be very clear in stating what will be the first activity, whether it is an orientation meeting, assessment, or a conference with a counselor. If health examinations are required by the Program, it is helpful that these be scheduled and out of the way before any activity is undertaken. Health concerns can then be dealt with from the beginning in participant agreements. Finally, care should be taken that no one begins paid participation until all enrollment documentation has been completed and all local CETA requirements have been met.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM

INSTRUCTIONS:

All information must be filled out comletely. Please PRINT clearly. If you do not understand the question, ask the interviewer to explain.

How did you hear about the Youth Work Experience Program? ____________________

Date of interview: ____________________
Name ____________________
Address ____________________ Zip __________
Date of Birth __________ Soc. Sec. # __________
☐ Male ☐ Female U.S. Citizen ☐ Yes ☐ No
Permanent Resident ☐ Yes ☐ No Alien ☐ Yes ☐ No
Highest School Grade Completed __________
School Presently Attending ____________________

Previous Employment: (list last job first)

Name of Company	Address	Phone	Supervisor
A.			
B.			
C.			

Vocational Interests:

(list those jobs you are interested in learning about, in order of preference)

A. __________ C. __________
B. __________ D. __________

Hobbies: (things you like to do or would be interested in learning)

A. __________ C. __________
B. __________ D. __________

Family Information:

Names and ages of family living in household

Name	Age	Relationship to applicant
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

(cont.)

Name of Head of Household ______________________________

Family Income: (all sources, including amount)

Name Where employed Amount before taxes

(include AFDC, Soc. Sec., Retirement, Disability, etc.)

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

3. ______________________________

Any other income (rental, alimony, interest, etc.) ____________ Amt/mo. ________

Name & Address of Parent/Guardian. I certify all income information is true and accurate, to the best of my knowledge.

Name ______________ Address ______________ Phone ________

Signature of Parent

In case of emergency, person to contact if parent cannot be reached:

Name ______________ Address ______________ Phone ________

My Son/Daughter, if selected, has my permission to participate in all activities sponsored and organized by the Youth Work Experience Program. I understand that if selected for the Program, he or she will be covered by Workmen's Compensation and Public Liability, but that any accident or injury occurring on the way to Program activities or outside of authorized activity hours is my responsibility. I understand it may be necessary for Program staff to secure records (school, police, health, etc.) in order to assist my child and agree to cooperate fully, being assured all such information will be kept strictly confidential.

Parent/Guardian Signature ______________________________

Date Signed ______________________________

Health Statement:

Health Insurance: (check which one)

☐ Blue Cross ☐ Kaiser ☐ Medical

Other (Name) ______________ insurance account ____________

Name of doctor or clinic where treated ______________________

Name of dentist ____________ Address ______________ Phone ________

Immunization Status:

☐ DPT - Complete	☐ Partial	☐ None
☐ Measles - Complete	☐ Partial	☐ None
☐ Polio - Complete	☐ Partial	☐ None
☐ Test for TB - Positive	☐ Negative	☐ Date ________

Date of last Tetnus shot ______________________________

(cont.)

If you have had any of the following (please check)

☐ asthma	☐ heart disease	☐ epilepsy
☐ hay fever	☐ serious injury	☐ chronic disease
☐ kidney disease	☐ VD	☐ tuberculosis
☐ cancer	☐ ulcer	☐ major operation
☐ rheumatic fever	☐ diabetes	☐ back strain

If you have checked injury or major operation, state what and when ____________

____

Medical treatment received in last five years? (explain) ____________

____

Presently under doctor's care? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name ____

Address ____________________________ Phone ____________

Are you taking medication now? ☐ Yes ☐ No What? ____________

Applicant's signature ____________________________

Drivers' license number ____________________________

National Office
for Social Responsibility
1901 N Moore St., Arlington, VA 22209 (703) 558-4545
180 Lombard St., San Francisco, CA 94111 (415) 598-7300

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