



VT-FUTRES
Fostering Understanding To
Reach Educational Success

Generate Multidisciplinary Networks Toolkit

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TEAMS: Collaborating with Community Partners to Meet the Need for Foster/Kin Families.

DCF staff regularly work with other family support agencies and child placement organizations in the community including mental health centers, social service non-profits, residential entities, schools, etc. It can sometimes feel like we are in competition with these organizations for scarce resources such as foster/kin families, funding, and placement openings. In fact, they are our valuable community partners. By building strong working relationships and sharing local resources, all of these social service providers are more effective at supporting children and families.

Resource family recruitment and training are two areas with strong collaboration potential. All of these partner agencies are working towards the same goal: to license quality local foster homes and to retain them. Doing this well and not being afraid to share resources, allows organizations to pull from the widest pool of family options and make the best possible matches.

ENGAGING COMMUNITY PARTNER AGENCIES

1. The Initial Meeting and Building Relationships

- Generate a list of recruitment and training staff from other organizations in the community or region.
- Send an [email](#) inviting these people to a meeting to discuss local resource family recruitment and where partners can collaborate. Attaching an [agenda](#) will encourage participation.
- Plan for a 2 hour meeting if possible. Having your District Director there is helpful.
- Open with a welcome and acknowledgement of everyone's shared mission.
- Consider showing [Educational Stability and Success PPT for Community Partners](#) or [PPT for Rural Recruitment](#).
- Leave time for the group to brainstorm shared recruitment ideas/events.
- Plan for next follow up steps and next meeting. Take notes.





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2. Ongoing meetings

- Ongoing collaborations need a caretaker. DCF Resource Coordinators are encouraged to take that role by ensuring that the community partner meetings happen on a regular basis.
- A monthly meeting is suggested. Plan the agenda, ideally with a training topic. Send out the agenda and the notes before each meeting.
- These meetings are a wonderful opportunity to discuss Educational Stability for kids in care. Consider sharing the Endless Dreams video and pieces of the [Endless Dreams curriculum](#).
- Refer to the Toolkit section on [Building Teams](#) if you have questions on this topic.

3. Collaborate on Activities

EVENTS - Once the group has chosen to host a recruitment activity or set up a booth at an outside event, have a brain storming session regarding what each agency needs and what each agency can offer to the activity. *Hint:* Event venues may need deposits and letters of liability insurance. Non-profits often have a checkbook and can carry the rider insurance policy for recruitment booths.

TRAININGS – Supporting new or existing foster/kin parents with training is also an important place for collaboration. Community partner agencies often are working with the same children at different times and in different capacities. We see a strong benefit for all foster/kin families that work with each of our partnering agencies to be trained in the same curriculum as DCF's licensed families. It is beneficial for recruiting organizations to work together so that the children to have a level of consistency that joint training will help support. As a DCF staff person, you are in the position to make sure that information about Educational Stability is included in those trainings.

Developing local protocol regarding how this all this happens begins with the full team and may require separate meetings with the individual agency partners due to their practice guidelines.

