

## Recruitment: Guidelines and Tips

The recruitment strategies you choose will depend on the type, location and purpose of your specific mentoring program. They will be different if you are in a big city or a small rural community. They will be different if you are working with families who have recently arrived in Canada or who are of First Nations, Metis or Inuit descent. The following are some general things to consider as you develop recruitment strategies that are appropriate for your program and your community.

- Use your strengths and needs assessment (Step 2) to inform your recruiting efforts. Develop materials and strategies specific to the populations you are trying to reach.
- Assign one person to coordinate and oversee the recruitment efforts.
- Change your materials regularly so that people in your community continue to notice and pay attention to them.
- Get support from your advisory committee or Board. Often members of these committees have strong networks of adults that they can tap into. Ask for their support in developing appropriate messages for particular target groups and then working through their contacts to help with recruitment.
- Support existing volunteers to recruit their friends. Word of mouth is often the best strategy.
- Use common, accessible and strength-based language in all of your recruitment materials.
- In smaller communities try to connect personally with potential mentors. Set up booths at community events, fairs, farmers markets, etc.
- Work with local businesses who are interested in supporting their staff to mentor. Deliver presentations at staff meetings or brown bag lunches.
- Identify specific strategies to recruit your mentors and your mentees. These strategies will be quite different.

### Tips for Recruiting Mentors

- Create appropriate materials to raise awareness about your program and encourage people to become a mentor. Consider simple flyers, brochures, press releases, and/or short bulletins that could be included in other newsletters or websites.
- Use strength-based language in all of your marketing/recruitment materials. Labeling your mentees “at-risk” or “vulnerable” may be necessary for funding proposals but, at local level and in the community, may be very damaging to the youth and the program. Focus on their strengths, the fact that they are in the brink of success, and that just a bit of support could make all of the difference.
- Create recruitment materials that emphasize what the mentor will get from the relationship. For example: “I became a mentor because I wanted to give. The thing I didn’t realize is how much I’d get” (*Iowa Mentoring Partnership slogan*).
- If you are trying to recruit mentors with particular characteristics develop specific strategies to support this. For example, if you want mentors of immigrant or Aboriginal heritage to connect with organizations or networks related to these people. If you are looking for particular expertise tap into professional networks (teachers, engineers, other professional associations).



- Posting information within social work, psychology or child development departments at local universities or technical colleges is an effective way to reach students who are interested in working with young people. Remember that many students may not be residents of your city or town so you will need to ensure they can make a longer term commitment or that your program is built around the school year.

## Tips for Recruiting Mentees

- Develop different materials for children and youth. For children, materials could be focused on fun, social connections and support. For youth, they can be pitch leadership, career development and/or personal growth opportunities.
- Know the children and youth you are trying to attract and develop materials that reflect their interests.
- Create opportunities for youth to self-refer.
- Liaise with schools, community agencies and child and youth professionals in your community to let them know about your program and the opportunity for children and youth they may work with. Provide them with referral forms.
- Remember that even though the adults in his/her may want a child or youth to take part in a program, not all children and youth will be interested. It is essential that the young people want to take part for the match or program to be successful.

