Agency Response to Information Requests

Every agency works diligently to recruit families. Much effort is put into advertising, talking to potential resource families, building relationships with members of the media and so forth.

So when your hard work pays off and prospective foster or adoptive parents contact your agency, what type of information do you provide? A verbal conversation with them to explain programs and processes is a great start. But do they have something to take with them? In the recent Foster Parent Recruitment Survey (November 2013) over 50% of the respondents indicated taking at least 12 months to make the decision about licensing for foster care. Many indicated their concerns were not based in fact, but rather information they thought to be true about the licensing process. If factual information is provided to them to read and review the decision becomes less overwhelming, dispelling myths and misunderstandings.

Having an inquiry packet should be essential for every licensing agency. Providing families with the basic facts in a way which allows them to take time to process the information at their own pace is crucial to recruitment success.

To build a useful inquiry packet, you will need basic handouts with local contact information. On the next page, you will find a series of tools including a brief explanation and link to the document. Each template may be customized to your agency and region. There are also several suggested resources to include in your packets. Once you've selected and customized all of the information, organize it in a two-pocket folder and presto you have an inquiry packet! You may also include the pamphlets from agencies within your region. Hand deliver or mail your packets to each person who inquires about foster and adoptive parenting. When they are ready begin the licensing process, they can complete the Application and mail it in to the agency that best fits their skills and lifestyle.
**Tools for your Inquiry Packet**

"**Cover Letter**—Your cover Letter should include specific contact information not only for your agency but it is helpful to include contact information for each agency in your area. After all, we are all working together to find the best fit for each family. The template can be customized and pasted onto your agency’s letterhead or Recruitment Coalition letterhead (if you have it).

[Inquiry Packet Cover Letter]

"**Step One/Application to Provide Family Foster Care SFN 893**

[Link to Fillable SFN Form]

"**What is Foster Care and Adoption from Foster Care**—This informational tool will provide very basic information about foster care and the adoption of children from the foster care system.

[What is Foster Care and Adoption from Foster Care]

"**When a Child Comes into Foster Care**— From the North Dakota Foster Parent Handbook, this offers information about why children come into care, how placement matches are made, and being prepared for placements.

[When a Child Comes into Foster Care]

"**Training Requirements for Foster and Adoptive Parents**— Will provide an overview to prepare the prospective family about North Dakota’s requirements.

[Training Requirements for Foster and Adoptive Parents]

"**PRIDE Pre-Service Training Overview**—Because this is a mandated training for all foster and adoptive parents, it is important to introduce the PRIDE philosophy to potential families as early as possible. You may customize this tool with your areas specific training dates, locations and contact information.

[Pride Pre-Service Training]

**Additional Optional Tools**

"**Bridging the Gap Between Resource Families and Birth Families**—This tool from the North Dakota Foster Parent Handbook, addresses commonly asked questions about working with the child’s birth family.

[Bridging the Gap Between Resource Families and Birth Families]

"**North Dakota Foster Care and Adoption from Foster Care Pamphlet**—May be given out aside from the packet as a “snapshot” of services.

[North Dakota Foster Care and Adoption from Foster Care]