**Interactive Session on Recruitment of Foster Homes (Emphasis on Native Homes)**

**RECRUITMENT IDEAS Room 1**

* Have a 5k – include t-shirts and have FP participant. Spreads awareness but also shows appreciation for FP. Someone had mentioned the Happy Runs in Palmer where you can be sponsored and be a “theme” for the day. Less planning on our part.
* Commercials to get faces out there that include different aged kids as well as the caseworkers and professionals to help show the dire need for FP in our community.
* Mentoring program in different regions, helps FP feel supported and not alone.
* Specific/deliberate recruitment- having OCS licensing workers or others ask pending or current FP if they have friends or family members who would be interested in fostering.
* Compensate FP at a higher rate and have financial obligations lessoned. More financial support and assistance.
* A Resource list available for different age groups. So, if you are a licensed for 0-5, have a list available that you can reach out for daycares, therapies, head start Teens- Counseling, life skills help, college
* Better and more effective communication between OCS and FP.
* Respite care providers available in each region.
* Reaching out to teachers in rural communities to be able to provide short term placement until relatives can be found. Allows the children to stay in community.
* Cultural Swag- Berry picking basket, potholders, advertising the need for foster homes.

**RECRUITMENT IDEAS Room 2**

Current Tactics/Options

* Pizza Parties where OCS speaks, flyers are distributed (recruiter will do this in large communities and travel to villages)
* Aleut Foundation for Culture Camp (contact Denise Godbehere at deniseg@apiai.org)

Needs

* Immediate resources for foster parents (counseling, child care, clothing)
* Resources for foster parents with teems, especially those with challenging behaviors who have been in the system for extended periods of time
* Training
* Time, effort and money to solicit recruitment efforts
* Better communication/continuity between OCS caseworkers, GALs, SSAs, ILP specialists and ICWA workers

Ideas for Change

* Policy changes for considerations for those that work in the child care profession and want to foster (this was a specific situation)
* “A Day in The Life of a Foster Parent” video on social media for potential foster parents to view and gain a better understanding
* The opportunity to give away incentives at recruitment events such as fuel cards to perspective foster parents
* Parent coaching for families who are about to be reunified or adopting such as during a trail home visit, possibly utilizing the Prudent Parenting curriculum
* Designated foster care recruitment specialist that works directly with tribal partners
* The opportunity for cultural activities for Alaska Native and American Indian children who are in care in every region/area of AK
* Support groups in every region/area of AK for not only foster parents, but adoptive parents, relative care givers, other family members of those who have a child relative in care
* Having ICWA workers reaching out to families directly to plan, give update, and communicate with tribes instead of working through OCS

**RECRUITMENT IDEAS Room 3**

Hire an Alaska Native Marketing Firm- to do a recruitment campaign

Speak at AFN about the need for foster homes- have a resource family share their experience and also a youth speak of their experience.

Policy change with OCS to place relatives more easily (have some barriers not be so hard to work around) – have a variance person available at beginning of the process

Have relatives receive the whole stipend without having to get licensed.

Redo the application packet so it is easier to fill out.

Do a Family Share- where a child go can back and forth between family members

Have respite funds available to all foster parents-if needed up to 7 days in a month.

Have childcare available to working parents- even if it is just temporary until a permanent solution is available.

Have Alaska Native staff members in OCS licensing positions- some tribal members may not feel so intimidated by the process

**RECRUITMENT IDEAS Room 4**

hosting gatherings with tables or stations that are staffed by current foster parents, OCS staff, tribal staff, and other agencies that can provide a list of their available resources (funding for safety equipment, car seats, food, support groups, ect.).

Creating packets of information that go with the child that share some specific information about the child’s culture, educational needs, known behaviors, resources that the specific child might need, extended family, favorite activities, and places that the child can find access to resources for themselves.

Honor and recognize the length of time someone has been a foster parent with a pin or some other kind of recognition.

Share resources for foster parents up front instead of them learning about small grants, programs and agencies that can help with little things long after the child was placed with them.

Foster parent mentor program – having a person to call at 2 in the morning when a child is melting down and ask for advice or help, share respite, share supplies and whatever else may be needed.

Communicate with foster parents up front about expectations – why reunification is important, why family visits need to happen, what the whole team is doing to work toward those goals.

**RECRUITMENT IDEAS Room 5**

Advertising on Radio, Facebook

Have recruitment personnel attend many community events like PrideFest, Juneteenth

Continue foster parent appreciation events

Hold Potlatch in villages

Have foster families share their experiences in some format.

Make sure current foster families are supported fully (needs are met, resources are received, support from OCS)

Improve communication between OCS and foster families

Provide supplies (food, bed, clothing, gas, four-wheeler, boat, boat motor, help with freight expenses)

Partner with airlines/trucking companies for delivering goods to remote areas.

Disposable place mats for restaurants

Child care- speed up OCS process to get it set up, hold places specifically for child care

Recruitment at child care facilities

Visit small communities to talk about mandatory reporting and include foster recruitment

Recruitment at Native medical centers

Recruit for respite care - Include other relatives in helping the foster families

**RECRUITMENT IDEAS Room 6**

Focusing on circles of influence- Heighten Communication-Expand your circle of who you are asking- Ex. Loop in Tribal Court Staff to ask around about interest in placement or licensing

Assisting with practical needs such as

There is a deficit in trust; need to educate. Create a traveling team to go to communities for Q&A and relationship mending/building- an OCS worker, a tribal representative, a foster home, a birth home that had kids placed in native home…

A 5K Walk/Run promoting the need for homes and hosting the 5 K in several communities

Recruit with a Community Navigator

Need for brochures relevant to communities- logo and labeling

Annual foster care event- for appreciation, recruitment and training

Interviews for radio, tv, newspaper, securing booths yards signs and flyers for distribution

Supported housing for foster care in rural communities

Asking former Native foster youth who were in an ICWA versus a Non-ICWA placement

Attending Potlatches and other celebrations in the community