

**IRRC Technical Support Team Meeting Notes**

**Clearwater, Florida – January 17th and 18th, 2018**

Present: Matt Flaherty (ME), Jessica Castañeda (IRRC), Odilia Coffta (NY), Will Messier (NY), Emily Hanehan (NY), Travis Williamson (NY), Maria Paxson (DE), Maria Mendoza (DE), Zach Taylor (SC), Emily Williams (SC), Justyn Settles (TN), Bernardo Sánchez-Vesga (GA), Eva Jimenez (IL), Bernardo Lopez (NM), José Henríquez (OK), John Farrell (KS), Cye Fink (OR), Michael Maye (IRRC), Alex Johnson (IA), Barbara Patch (Coordination), Sue Henry (NE), Aaron Thompson (CO), Nelly Garcia (CO), Geri McMahon (IA)

States Unable to Attend: Arizona (will conduct individual follow up via telephone)

**Meeting Notes- Day 1, Wednesday**

Michael opened the meeting by welcoming the group and making introductions. After going over the highlights of the agenda for the day:

**State highlights and challenges-**

IRRC member states were invited to provide updates, challenges, and highlights as discussed below.

**TN:** Hiring and retention of new recruitment staff has been an issue. Tobacco has been a major crop in the past but is quickly disappearing. In spite of this, student numbers continue to climb. Farm operators and owners are increasingly defensive and suspicious so this has been a challenge.

**DE**: Finding and serving OSY students has been a challenge. Colorado uses text books and mp3 players as OSY tools so the DE team is interested in learning more about this. The DE MEP has a new state director, Maria Paxson. She is familiar with the program. Most of department leadership is new. The positive side of this is that team is responsive and communication is positive. An asset is that Maria Mendoza, statewide recruiter, is known all throughout the state.

**CO:** CO MEP is in the process of developing a new data base and is working on implementing the electronic COE. This process is in trial stage. Trainings will begin in the spring. Recruiters have adjusted reasonably well to ESSA changes at this point. CO program has managed to reconnect with communities on the western slope. In the western region they conducted a targeted group recruitment effort and it went well. School districts seem to be more receptive. The program is trying to share information about program highlights. Some areas of the community still seem a bit reluctant to talk or share.

**OR:** Cye Fink is a regional director in Oregon. Cye has 14 recruiters and 12 of them have been in the Migrant Program for a very long time. For more experienced recruiters, the adjustment to ESSA changes has been a real challenge. Numbers seem to be increasing steadily and ESSA changes have been seen as an opportunity because eligibility definitions are more generous than before.

**IA:** ESSA changes and regulations pose a challenge when difficult scenarios are encountered by recruiters. Are striving to use creative methods to ensure recruiters fully understand new law and regulations. Providing services in non-project areas continues to be a challenge. In spite of challenges that are faced, student numbers continue to increase. A strength is that good recruiters are in place and supported by a strong infrastructure. There is positive communication with school districts, liaisons, and migrant staff. Recruiters were involved with summer school programs and cross training in this context was very effective.

**NE:** A strength in Nebraska is the recruiter corps. Most recruiters have anywhere between 10-20 years of experience. Newer recruiters receive strong and positive support. The concept of targeting free lunch recipients across the state has been a strong focus. Nebraska team is excited because at the state level they are working to automatically tap into food program certification pool to help identify migrant children. This has been an exciting development. Team has been looking at costs relating to ID&R and working to keep costs reasonable.

**NH/Cross Cig**- Barbie mentioned that OME has indicated a modification in how we formerly termed “OSY” students. Moving away from OSY designation to use phrase from ESSA language “migratory children who have dropped out of school”. Vista volunteers are used in New Hampshire. They use 27 volunteers across the state who work 5 hours per week.

**KS**: Kansas MEP has switched to MIS-2000 and this has been a challenge. Kansas program conducted a study as to how much, on average, they expend to recruit one migratory student. The cost is high so new and creative methods are being explored to reduce costs. Change and adjustment is always a challenge. A positive aspect is that they have a good relationship with U.S Senators who represent Kansas and they are familiar with migrant education. John encouraged group to talk with their legislative representatives about the positive things to do with migrant education so they can advocate for its continuation.

**NY:** New ESSA materials have been helpful. Positive rapport with recruiters has helped facilitate the transition to ESSA law and regulations. Most experienced recruiters seem to be the ones that struggle the most with ESSA. Also, oldest recruiters are the ones who are most apprehensive about transitioning to the eCOE. All NY recruiters will be using the eCOE within the coming months. A challenge is aging student population. OSY students age out and there is not the regular influx of new students to replace them. Training is very effective. Group recruitments are successful. They have been working to have recruiters get involved with providing a basic service during the initial visit. They use GOSOSY mini lessons successfully. Negative attitudes about the immigration issue has been a noticeable challenge.

**GA-** The GA MEP conducted ESSA training with 140 recruiters and 8 statewide recruiters. State training was conducted with the 8 statewide recruiters and this was straightforward, effective, and well-received. Then there were multiple trainings conducted at the district level. Bernardo emphasized the importance of facilitating friendly, understanding communication with the recruiters. Recruiters should always be shown patience no matter how many times they ask a question. Bernardo mentioned that they conducted the tri-annual re-interview this year and it went very well. The benefits of the Migrant Education Program has been shared in an effective way. The process for local schools and districts to apply for MEP funding has been simplified. Each local district has a local ID&R plan.

**NM-** A challenge has been hiring and retaining recruiters. Another challenge has been recruitment in out of the way places. Staff members have had a tendency to focus on familiar areas. There is potential in untapped areas. In spite of challenges, a summer program was conducted for the first time in a long time and overall statewide numbers have increased.

**SC-** There has been transition in the South Carolina MEP. Zach Taylor is now the state director. Zach and his team are excited about new possibilities and the direction of migrant initiatives. The CNA process was conducted this year. It is evident that the district based model has had limitations. A regional model based on working with non-profits is being explored as a viable option. The SC team is working with the homeless program to have the occupational survey placed in school registration packets on a statewide basis to improve and enhance MEP recruitment. This is a promising avenue. Interstate coordination has been a great benefit to the South Carolina program. Also, the SC MEP partnered with the YMCA and this collaboration was very successful. The YMCA conducted a summer program. This partnership with the YMCA has been effective and has a lot of potential.

**IL-** The team managed to get everyone trained on ESSA. A real challenge is that recruiters will demonstrate proficiency and understanding. Then at a later time, errors will appear regarding content areas that have already been covered. This is an ongoing process.

**ME-** As is the case with many other states, turnover has been a great challenge. A big improvement has been that, in the past, the state handled hiring for summer recruiters. Now, the ID&R coordinator was able to oversee this process. This is a key improvement in the process. A challenge this year was that a major blueberry producer did not harvest this summer. This lead to a significant decrease in numbers. A highlight has been that there is a new recruiter who is highly effective. 50 new students were enrolled in short period of time.

**OK-** Have been working on mapping methods. It is evident that they are not finding and recruiting a high percentage of eligible migrant students in Oklahoma (perhaps as many as 45% of the population). They are working on putting together a statewide targeted recruitment effort. They believe that the district based model has not been effective. They are exploring the possibility of moving to a more regionally based model so that “unconventional” populations can be targeted and recruited. OK has implemented the IRRC competency skills assessment and newer recruiters perform better than more experienced recruiters. Recruiters are often thrown off by new technology and don’t get it. The OK MEP is spending 60,000$ to improve the student data base to help school districts and are testing it right now.

**ESSA Updates and Review-**

Michael began by updating the group on some new developments with ESSA related issues. The Pennsylvania MEP has shared a letter of response from OME. This OME letter gave the PA team the latitude to enroll students beyond the 60 day “soon after” window if the administrative process of obtaining work permits lasted too long for a worker to meet the typical 60 day time threshold. John Farrell mentioned that Kansas has a similar letter from a law firm that specializes in immigration matters. This letter clearly outlines administrative processes refugees must engage before they can actually begin to work. This letter gives a clearly documented basis for which workers are unable to begin working 60 days after a move through no fault of their own but due to well established administrative processes they are required to engage before they can begin to work legally. Both of these letters were made available to the TST in hard copy and in electronic form during the TST meeting. Michael then began to outline new ESSA resources available to IRRC member states. At the IRRC website there is a prototype of an interactive eligibility scenario. The scenario is presented with an option for yes or no. Once a recruiter selects, the prompt indicates if the recruiter answered correctly or incorrectly. When the incorrect screen appears, the recruiter is given an explanation regarding the factors of eligibility. The group was then shown the scenario bank. There are 22 scenarios housed at the website. Many of these are contained in the ESSA power point presentations. Having them all in a word file saves the coordinators and trainers from having to sift through the training materials to find suitable scenarios to use during trainings. The packet of scenarios was also printed out and placed in TST member packets. Also presented were a set of visual aids to help explain and demonstrate ESSA rules and regulations. These were also printed out and placed in member packets of materials. Michael then mentioned that a new “mini-test” containing only ESSA related content had been prepared and will be shared during the meeting that same day. And lastly, a set of the non-regulatory guidance has been prepared with hyperlinks that connect each heading in the table of contents with that paragraph or section in the guidance itself. Then, a couple of eligibility points were covered that arise from time to time through feedback and questions from state coordinators. The soon after requirement does not apply to moves under recent history of moves. Also, moves used for recent history of moves do not have to be qualifying moves. And lastly, while migratory worker status under 4a is for a three year term, that same status under 4b is not necessarily for three years. Then two eligibility scenarios were covered by the group. We will continue to post additional interactive scenarios for use at the website and continue to develop the bank of scenarios.

**Agricultural trends and updates**- Jessica Castañeda-

Jessica started by mentioning that, in reality, agricultural activity only accounts for 1% of the American economy, but when you add in indirectly related industry like food and restaurant activity, that percentage goes up to 5%. Also mentioned was the fact that, under historical farm bills, only a small and exclusive set of farms (very large) and crops receive government support in the way of subsidies. 72% of U.S. farms receive no subsidies at all. Jessica then discussed the factors involved with crop insurance and the impact natural disasters and occurrences have on farmers. The group was given lots of different information about the most commonly seen disasters that effect farmers and their crops. Again, this important and crucial area is heavily influenced by government subsidies. Then Jessica discussed and presented pros and cons of the NAFTA trade agreement. The advantages were that trade between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico is increased, prices for products are lower, economic growth has increased and jobs have been created. Disadvantages were that many companies (and jobs) went to Mexico. Companies that remained in the U.S. reduced wages by threatening to go to Mexico. In Mexico wages are much lower. Because of U.S. government subsidies, U.S. enterprises flooded the Mexican market with cheaper products so a high number of Mexican jobs were lost. Jessica then talked a little about food waste patterns in different countries. To wrap up, a fascinating video was shared that highlighted and outlined some extraordinary farming practices in the Netherlands that are frugal, efficient, and highly productive. While it is one of the smallest countries in the world, the Netherlands is one of the largest exporters of fruits and vegetables. As Jessica wrapped up, Bernardo from Georgia commented on the notion of decreasing student numbers and an overall reduction in new arrivals. He mentioned that, through more effective recruitment, coverage of typically off the beaten path areas, and through unusually effective communication and coordination with recruiters, dwindling numbers of new arrivals could be off set and neutralized.

**The mini-quiz concept-** Cye Fink

Cye Fink presented on the mini-quiz concept that the competency skills assessment workgroup is working on. Cye presented a group of 5 questions on football as an example of the process. This area is meant to be conversational and guided, not evaluative nor forced. At this time the group received a prompt and were encouraged to come up with additional topics for mini-quizzes. The concept involves targeting highly specific areas of content so that recruiters can digest information piece by piece and build knowledge in a gradual (and non-threatening) way. New categories were listed and the workgroup will begin to draw up a prototype of mini quizzes to present to the group. Interestingly, a lot of the proposed topics and ideas went far beyond eligibility into issues to do with field-based recruitment (safety issues, how to deal with unfriendly owners, modeling an interview, etc…).

**Memory Linking**- Matt Flaherty

The Maine team (Amelia Lyons) has developed an interesting training approach they term “memory-linking”. This involves attaching a concept to a visual image to aid the trainee in remembering key learning concepts. Matt first presented a list of grocery items, then asked the group how they might go about memorizing the list contents. Everyone explored for a moment. Matt then transitioned to ESSA terms and definitions. A series of images was presented. These are associated with each component of ESSA eligibility. The group spent some time practicing at remembering individual components using images presented. Then Matt walked the group through some actual eligibility scenarios. After some practice it is evident that this can be an effective and useful approach. The material was very well-received. After a short time practicing and using the images one can see that memorizing and internalizing is a much simpler matter than approaching eligibility from purely text based materials.

**Workgroup Breakout Sessions-**

At this time TST members broke out and arranged themselves according to workgroup membership in order to pursue tasks that are specific to the focus of each workgroup.

**Meeting Notes- Day 2, Thursday**

**Re-interview Process Overview and Discussion**- Jessica Castañeda

Jessica went over the state plan workgroup efforts to update and revise the re-interview form according to ESSA changes. The group reviewed a workable form developed by ESCORT. The group will fabricate a new form. Questions were listed and worked on. The workgroup reviewed an OME Q&A letter that was published in February of 2015 that addresses many important factors relating to the re-interview process. Jessica then asked the TST group to consider questions such as how re-interviewers are selected when a state has to conduct the re-interview process and how results are handled and reported. Jessica indicated that the workgroup will set out to develop a brief but clear set of re-interview protocols so that when IRRC is involved in the re-interview process, expectations and responsibilities are very clear for everyone involved. John F. mentioned that it will be important to outline a quality control process so that if errors or discrepancies are identified in a state, there is a clear process outlined for that state to address the errors that have been identified so that, in the long term, the re-interview process is a positive and corrective one, not punitive. Barbie mentioned that if a state is uncertain as to how to proceed they should contact another state that is familiar with the procedures so they can receive valuable technical assistance.

**Competency Skills Assessment**- Michael Maye

Michael provided a brief overview of the assessment. There are 30 questions that cover eligibility determination, case scenarios, and COE completion. Patterns regarding frequently missed items were discussed. Michael indicated that, based on results from the online learning platform, common errors are seen with scenarios related to multiple moves in which the final move is a qualifying move under the new definition but is not related to agricultural activity. This type of scenario has thrown recruiters off. Michael highlighted the functionality of the Classmarker site and described some of the data analysis tools available to each state. When a recruiter completes the assessment, a message with the grade is sent automatically to the recruiter (only the grade, not missed items or any other information). Another message highlighting which questions the recruiters missed is sent to Michael. Michael forwards these immediately to the state coordinator for them to use for training or follow up purposes as they see fit. States are encouraged and expected to conduct retraining of recruiters based on assessment results. One of the key objectives of the assessment process is to inform statewide recruiter training and professional development opportunities. Based on questions from the TST group, Michael will forward a mock message containing results messages automatically generated by the Classmarker site so the group has an example of the material generated by the Classmarker site. Assessment guidelines were discussed and Michael shared with the group that a Spanish version of the assessment is now available. Colorado had volunteered to translate the assessment and the translation has been completed. Odilia from New York picked up an error in the Spanish version that can be corrected. The group then took a few minutes to look over the assessment for any suggestions. Barbie asked which questions were modified since ESSA implementation. Michael listed on the screen the items that had been modified and are ESSA specific. Michael then asked for volunteers in the group who are native Spanish speakers or have such on their staffs in order to read through the Spanish version. We will also pilot the Spanish version with a handful of recruiters. Bernardo from Georgia, Alex from Iowa, Odilia from New York, and Emily from South Carolina all agreed to participate in this effort.

**Website Survey-**

At this time the TST members were asked to complete a one page survey on the usefulness and helpfulness of the IRRC website. Everyone was encouraged to share anything at all in the way of suggestions or comments that would help us to improve the website as a resource and clearinghouse for valuable tools and materials related to effective ID&R practices and activities.

**Dissemination Event Planning-** Michael Maye

Michael presented to the group some of the basic factors of the event. The event will be held on September 18th and 19th, 2018 at the Hilton in Clearwater, Florida. This event has been planned as a collaborative event with the GOSOSY and PI CIGS. Many of the topics the group had brainstormed on during past meetings was reviewed. John Quiñones from the show “What Would You Do?” will be the keynote speaker. Michael described the format and how the IRRC portion of the event will run all day Tuesday of that week, and half day on Wednesday. On Wednesday at midday there will be a general session including everyone who is attending for any of the CIGS. We will also have to strategize to develop an opening, a kick-off, to set the tone for the event. A vendor has been identified who will support the costs associated with a luncheon. Michael asked for volunteers from states who might be able to bring a projector to the event as this will save on equipment costs (Bernardo, Alex, Bernardo from NM, SC team). Then the group was asked to explore more specific ideas for sessions. Some of the ideas posed were:

* TRI panel
* The re-interview process
* Assessment process
* How to develop a state ID&R plan
* Veteran recruiter session
* Networking session (mixer)
* Urban recruitment

Sue recommended working from the FII to identify content areas for sessions. A call for proposals will be sent out soon to states. From here on the Dissemination Event committee will take over a lot of the decision making to keep the process moving along. We still have time but the process must be kept moving for us to hit our benchmarks.

**Workgroup Reports**

**TRI** (Emily Hanehan):

Emily described that during break out sessions, the TRI workgroup focused primarily on materials, strategies, and processes that would assist recruiters and team members during interstate coordination events. Travis and Alex will develop a padlet containing resources useful for a TRI visit. This involves a bar code that, when scanned, brings the user directly to a virtual space where useful resources can be accessed. The group will also work up a description of the expectations, requirements, and demands of a TRI team member during a deployment so that everyone is clear on what to expect and what is expected of them. The idea of a profile was discussed that outlines the pool of recruiters available to TRI activities. A very general and generic brochure will be developed that can be placed into bags and handed out to family members and community members during TRI activities to assist the effort or activity by increasing the profile of the event. The group has a Zoom meeting planned for mid-February.

**Competency Skills Assessment Workgroup** (Matt Flaherty):

Matt described how the efforts of the workgroup are centered upon the concept of the development of training modules. A module would involve a short pre and post mini-quiz, a brief 4 or 5 slide power point that contains the key elements of a lesson, an activity or some visual to aid in the internalizing of the lesson. Matt asked the group to forward any learning aids or lessons they think might be helpful. Matt expressed concern that when recruiters are assessed they do not have access to missed items so the opportunity for valuable review is lost. With the more informal design of the mini quizzes this issue can be overcome. Matt explained how his experience at the ID&R Forum showed him that recruiters and coordinators are looking for a resource like this. The workgroup will work independently then will reconvene in late February to check in, review progress, and chart out activities and expectations through the spring meeting. A list of questions will be finalized at this time.

**State ID&R Plan Workgroup:**

Main topics and ideas were covered during the share out related to the re-interview process.

**Next Meeting-**

During our most recent TST meeting in New Orleans in September, TST members elected as a group that it would be best to meet in conjunction with the national conference in Portland. We will work to arrange a meeting at this time. If we cannot carve out time during the conference we will meet just after on Wednesday afternoon after the NASDME luncheon.

**TRI Form and Processes-**

Michael outlined the process for requesting TRI assistance. A request form was placed in everyone’s folders for review. The TRI protocols and request form are also housed at the IRRC website. The group was asked to reflect on the activities of the TRI group. Maria Mendoza from Delaware commented that visits to Delaware had been extremely helpful and effective. Zach Taylor from South Carolina mentioned that South Carolina had participated in two TRI activities and visits and that they were both immensely helpful and very successful. Zach shared with the group that the key to a successful TRI event has to do with extensive prior planning and coordination. These elements magnify the positive benefits of such an activity.

**IRRC Data Collection-**

Michael spent a few minutes outlining data collection and reporting responsibilities for IRRC member states. Forms 1, 2, and 3 had been placed in TST member folders for the meeting. These were reviewed as a group and Michael briefly reviewed each form and went over the deadlines and explained the contents of each form. Michael also explained how our evaluator, Susan Durón, was now retired but that we would still be working closely with META Associates. Our new evaluator is Cari Semivan. We will more than likely meet Cari during our meeting at the national conference. Susan and Cari work very closely and communicate so there will be no interruption in the relationship between the evaluator and IRRC. All data collection forms and the outline of deadlines are posted at the IRRC website under the tab “data collection”.

**Meeting adjourned**