



## Highlighting PIC Work...

For potential job seekers, the PIC website has a section on career exploration (<http://www.personnelcenter.org/careerexploration.cfm>) that includes descriptions of various professions within the field; links to state licensure websites; and a database of professional preparation programs that is fully searchable by state, profession, level of preparation and tuition assistance. The PIC also offers free recruitment materials (<http://www.personnelcenter.org/materials.cfm>). Contact us at [info@personnelcenter.org](mailto:info@personnelcenter.org)

## About Us...

We are the National Center to Improve Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Personnel for Children with Disabilities (Personnel Improvement Center), a federally funded technical assistance and dissemination project, created on October 1, 2008 and maintained through cooperative agreement, H325C080001 between the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) and the U.S. Department of Education.

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## IN THIS BRIEF...

You will learn how states and local programs are using online recruiting systems to attract, identify and select candidates that best fit their needs for qualified personnel.

## RECRUITING SPECIAL EDUCATION PERSONNEL USING ONLINE RECRUITMENT SYSTEMS

by Eve Müller, Ph.D.

In order to streamline the recruitment of qualified education personnel—including special education personnel—increasing numbers of states and localities are developing online recruitment systems. These systems are being used to recruit to the field, to specific jobs or both. Using examples drawn from California, Nevada, South Carolina and Virginia, this practice brief provides suggestions for developing online systems and describes how these systems can be used to recruit qualified special educators. We also highlight the Personnel Improvement Center's (PIC) use of its website to recruit persons to special education-related careers.

### RECRUITMENT TO THE FIELD

California's online recruitment system, TEACH California, is designed to promote recruitment to the field of education, including special education. TEACH California (<http://www.teachcalifornia.org/>) was originally funded by the California State University system, but in the wake of significant budget cuts is now funded on a much smaller scale by the California Department of Education. Virginia's program, TeachVirginia (<http://teachvirginia.org/index.cfm>) recruits both to the field of education, including special education and to specific jobs in both general and special education.

TeachVirginia is jointly funded by general and special education, using money from the state's Personnel Development Grant (SPDG).

Features of online systems designed to recruit qualified personnel to the field may include the following:

**Career Information.** Systems can provide various types of career information for individuals interested in learning more about the education field (for teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators). For example:

- The TEACH California and TeachVirginia websites include information on what to consider when choosing education as a career, requirements for various types of credentials, instate preparation programs and financial aid opportunities. They also provide information on critical shortage areas, alternative routes to licensure for career switchers, state recruitment initiatives, teacher incentives and benefits of living in the state.

These databases are updated frequently to ensure that users are getting accurate information. For example:

- TEACH California revises its list of personnel preparation programs annually after consulting the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing's list of approved programs.



## RECRUITING SPECIAL EDUCATION PERSONNEL USING ONLINE RECRUITMENT SYSTEMS

**Customized Services.** Systems that recruit to the field of education may require online registration, enabling provision of customized services and resources based on a user's education level, experience and career plans. When registering online for TEACH California, for example, site users are asked to provide background information as well as identify a career goal (e.g., letting the program know if they are a high school student, college graduate or career changer planning to become a special education teacher). The registration process enables TEACH California to provide customized information about requirements necessary to meet each user's goals, let users update their personalized "checklists" and send reminders about deadlines and/or announcements about the availability of grant money.

**Tracking Outcomes.** A comprehensive online recruitment system includes the capacity for tracking outcomes. For example, TEACH California keeps track of the numbers of registered users (currently more than 1,000) as well as total page views. The system plans to track future users from registration through enrollment in a preparation program.<sup>1</sup>

**Special Education.** Systems address the recruitment of special education personnel in different ways. For example:

- As part of the state's "Become One" campaign, TeachVirginia includes a separate page on special education as a career. This page includes links to information on becoming a special educator, institutions of higher education (IHEs) with state-approved special education-related programs, contact information for each program and tuition assistance programs specifically for special education-related personnel, including related service providers.
- TEACH California's website has a page devoted to special education under "Shortage Areas" that includes a collection of video testimonials from special education teachers, as well as a list of financial aid opportunities specific to special educators. The site also includes information for paraprofessionals seeking certification.

### RECRUITMENT TO SPECIFIC JOB

South Carolina's online recruitment system, the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA) (<http://www.cerra.org/home.html>) and Nevada's Clark County School District (CCSD) online system (<http://ccsd.net/jobs/>) focus on recruitment to *specific job offerings* in education and special education. As mentioned above, TeachVirginia recruits to specific jobs in addition to recruiting to the field. CERRA, funded by an annual legislative allocation, developed its online employment application in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Education and the South Carolina Association of School Administrators.



Features of online systems designed to improve recruitment of qualified personnel to specific jobs often include the following features:

**Job Listings.** Systems may or may not allow applicants to browse job listings. For example, CERRA and TeachVirginia enable users to search their job banks, with TeachVirginia using Teachers-Teachers.com as its database of job openings. CCSD's system, however, does not publish a list of vacancies, preferring instead to have building-level administrators contact applicants who have specified their qualifications and job preferences.

**Online Job Applications.** In some states and districts, a paper application system can take up to three or four months to process. Online job applications can play a significant role in reducing the time it takes from application to hiring. CERRA and TeachVirginia allow job applicants to apply for multiple positions throughout the state, but require job applicants to complete only one application. For applicants using CERRA, this means they need only request one set of letters of reference, PRAXIS scores, documentation of certification and college transcripts. For TeachVirginia applicants, this depends on whether the LEA chooses to require only the Teachers-Teachers.com application available via TeachVirginia's website, or whether LEAs require job seekers to also complete an LEA-based application.

<sup>1</sup>Teach California also links to EDJOIN, California's online system for recruiting applicants to specific positions in California public schools. For more information, see: <http://www.edjoin.org/login.aspx>.



# RECRUITING SPECIAL EDUCATION PERSONNEL USING ONLINE RECRUITMENT SYSTEMS



**Tracking and Targeted Follow-up.** Another benefit of an online system is the built-in capacity to track applicants' progress throughout the application process and customize follow-up communication. For example:

- CCSD color codes all of its applicants according to their stage in the application progress. When a potential applicant has completed an online interest form, CCSD staff screens the form to ensure that the potential applicant has completed the necessary education/certification requirements. If these requirements are met, applicants are coded "blue" and sent a password admitting them to the application system. Automated reminders to submit missing documentation can be sent to "orange" applicants (i.e., those who have not yet completed the application process). Once applications are submitted, and CCSD has conducted background checks and approved applicants for hiring by the district, they are coded "red" and passed along to building-level administrators.
- TeachVirginia enables LEAs to track applicants according to status (e.g., application incomplete, interview set up, application fully screened) and upload internal documents such as interview scores.



**Hiring.** Online systems help building-level administrators quickly identify eligible candidates (i.e., those who have completed applications and/or been approved for hiring) without any need for outside advertising. For example:

- CERRA and TeachVirginia enable building-level administrators to view all candidates who have submitted applications for their district and/or school. Both screening and hiring are handled at the local level.
- CCSD screens all candidates prior to releasing applications to building-level administrators for hiring.

**Additional Features.** The following are examples of additional features employed by CCSD and CERRA as part of their online recruitment systems/websites:

- Several years ago, the CCSD partnered with the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce as part of its "We Care" program. The purpose of this program was to match volunteers from the community with potential applicants who had expressed interest in working for the school district but had not yet completed an

application. Volunteers would personally call potential applicants, promote Las Vegas as an appealing place to live and work and help link potential applicants with community resources including affordable housing.

- In addition to providing a one-stop employment and certification application site for individuals seeking teaching positions in South Carolina's public schools, CERRA also uses its website to promote the statewide annual educator recruitment exposition.

**Outcomes Measures.** Well-designed online recruitment systems can automatically track outcome data. For example:

- CCSD, CERRA and TeachVirginia track numbers of applicants per year.
  - CERRA also tracks how many times each district accesses the online database of applicants.
  - TeachVirginia tracks growth of the job seeker pool within the state, how many job seekers view postings within each district and estimated numbers of teachers hired, based on employer hire lists matched to names of registered Teachers-Teachers.com users.

**Special Education.** Although all online recruitment sites include special education personnel as part of the overall system (i.e., enabling applicants to specify that they are seeking jobs as special education teachers and/or related service providers), systems may or may not include specific features targeting recruitment specifically for special education. Examples of system features specific to special education include the following:

- TeachVirginia's job application allows applicants to identify their job preferences and job qualifications based on a list of almost 30 different special education positions including related service providers.
- CERRA's website includes an area under job listings where districts can note if they offer bonuses for special educators or other teachers. Also, as part of the website's section on supply and demand, CERRA lists annual numbers of special education vacancies and hirings.



## Personnel Improvement Center

National Center to Improve Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Personnel for Children with Disabilities

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This practice brief is part of a series intended to provide examples of how states and localities throughout the nation are employing recruitment and retention strategies to address personnel shortages in the area of special education, early intervention and related services. The series is produced by the Personnel Improvement Center (PIC) and highlights recruitment and retention efforts in states and localities supported by the PIC. There are no copyright restrictions on these practice briefs, but the PIC requests that proper citation be used.

