

selection process

Human Service providers know that quality supports and services start with competent, qualified staff. Finding the right person to fill an open position can be challenging. Selecting a qualified candidate involves more than just conducting interviews. Implementing a good selection process will save your organization time and money as well as protect you from risks associated with illegal hiring practices.

why implement a selection process?

DECREASE TURNOVER If you hire the right person the first time around, there is more chance that they will stay—and that you will want them to.

SAVE TIME Following a process is more efficient and helps to eliminate the need for re-work later.

SAVE MONEY Avoid the costs associated with a bad hire. Spending time searching for a replacement, conducting orientation, and providing retraining can add up to major expenses, not to mention the costs associated with terminating an employee if you made a bad choice.

ENSURE CONSISTENCY A selection process provides peace of mind that recruitment is standardized. This is especially important when different people or departments participate in hiring.

PROTECT YOUR ORGANIZATION AND REDUCE LEGAL RISKS Standardized hiring procedures can help make hiring decisions more objective and reduce liability exposure from lawsuits for employee discrimination.

BUILD A BETTER QUALITY WORKFORCE A good selection method means you will be more apt to find people who are a good fit for your organization and who are happy doing the job. Increased staff morale will lead to better services for the people you support.

IT MAKES A GOOD IMPRESSION Many times the application process is the first, and sometimes only, impression a candidate has of your organization. Whether you hire them or not, you want to leave every applicant with the feeling that your agency is organized and respectful.

REDUCE THE RISK OF “WARM BODY” HIRING It is tempting to fill a position with the first available candidate. But “first available” is not necessarily synonymous with “best.” Following a selection process helps guide hiring managers away from making an easy decision and leads them toward making good ones.

selection process tips

KNOW WHAT QUALIFICATIONS YOU ARE SEEKING What are the minimum requirements the candidate will need to meet to be considered for the job? Make sure you are prepared to talk to candidates about them. Candidates who do not meet your minimum requirements are not worth pursuing.

IMPLEMENT A PRE-SCREENING PROCESS Conduct a brief phone interview with a standard set of questions prior to setting up an initial in-person interview. This will help you determine whether the candidate meets your minimum standards. Pre-screening is a quick, inexpensive way to help you determine if a candidate is truly interested in the position and to eliminate unqualified applicants.

USE AN EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION This is one of the best ways to capture information about each applicant in a consistent way. All candidates who are interviewed should be required to complete a written application. The interviewer should take a few minutes to review the job application prior to meeting with the candidate.

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PROVIDE THE CANDIDATE WITH A JOB DESCRIPTION Making the job description available helps ensure that there is clear communication about requirements and expectations. Remember, just because someone is capable of doing a job does not mean they are going to enjoy doing it. If a candidate is not truly interested in the job you have to offer, you are wasting your time. A job description can help uncover that early in the process.

BE PREPARED WITH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS and ask each candidate the same questions. Preparation is critically important. A good interviewer comes to the interview prepared and can extract information about the candidate without straying too far from a standard set of questions.

USE A SERIES OF OPEN-ENDED AND BEHAVIORAL-BASED QUESTIONS This gives candidates an opportunity to tell you what they have done in past situations, while giving you the opportunity to gauge what they would do in future ones. Avoid questions that can be answered “yes” or “no.”

AVOID ILLEGAL QUESTIONS There is no better way to offend a candidate or invite a lawsuit than to ask questions about age, disability, lifestyle, or other off-limits topics. If the question is not job related, do not ask it. Even unintentional or innocent questions or comments could be the basis for a discrimination suit.

TAKE NOTES A good interviewer makes sure there is a written record that factually describes each candidate and how they answered interview questions. Do not count on your memory to recall their answers. If different people at your organization regularly conduct interviews, consider implementing a standard job interview evaluation form.

GET A SECOND OPINION Involve at least two people in the selection process. This helps to eliminate biases—intentional or unintentional.

INCORPORATE REALISTIC JOB PREVIEWS INTO YOUR INTERVIEW PROCESS This can be done either by using a video prepared for this purpose or by developing a process for site visits or observations. Providing candidates with the opportunity to see what the job is really about helps give a better picture of your organization and what will be expected. It also gives you an opportunity to gauge their interactions with staff and the people you support, and to see their reactions to real life situations.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK Check references and other background information prior to making a job offer, and document your efforts. While it might seem labor-intensive, it is time well spent. Interviews offer only limited exposure to an applicant. If you are interested enough to invite a candidate to a second interview or offer them a job, you should be interested enough to find out more about them. Employment references, especially from the current or most recent employer, can provide valuable insight into your prospective employee. You may think that former employers will not share information, but you would be surprised how many will—especially when it really matters.



Good hiring practices can reduce legal risks, decrease costs, and improve retention. Taking a look at your selection process will help you increase the quality of people in your organization and find the right person for the job the first time around.

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