

Inclusive Hiring Strategies and Practices

Resource Type: Articles

Topic: HR Risk and Employment Practices

Job openings at your nonprofit present a tremendous opportunity to bring in new, diverse perspectives that will strengthen your team—or to hire people who look, sound, and think just like you, and will bring your nonprofit more of the same. Here are some ways to make your hiring process more inclusive.

Create a diversity recruitment strategy. Set specific goals for how the composition of your workforce needs to change in the short and long term to fortify your mission and meet the needs of your community. Spell out what actions you will take to make that happen. Clarify who will be responsible for the activities your nonprofit will take and how you will measure whether your strategy is successful.

Craft job descriptions thoughtfully. Your job descriptions should use gender-neutral words, and they should read the way people at your organization talk. Avoid all jargon! Include only job criteria the position truly requires—for example, making a master's degree a job criterion automatically eliminates thousands of qualified candidates for many jobs. Include information about how candidates with vision, mobility, or hearing needs can request interview accommodations.

Make communications about job openings welcoming and accessible. State your commitment to diversity and inclusion prominently on your website, and spell out the steps you've taken. Don't rely on stock photos of diverse teams. Include images of your real staff members, with their permission. Implement Web content accessibility guidelines, alternative text for images, and transcripts and closed captioning for video and audio files.

Stay in recruitment mode. Seek out partnerships with organizations that train people from diverse backgrounds for the workforce. Attend job fairs and networking events of industry associations that represent professionals from diverse communities. When you do post a job, post to sites that target diverse audiences, not just the standard nonprofit or industry job boards.

Tell the truth. The candidates you want will ask tough questions about your organization's progress on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Don't just share information about your improvements. Speak openly about your challenges and how you've tackled them. Those great candidates are probably already reaching out to connect with your employees. If you gloss over important issues, candidates will find out.

Standardize the job interview process. Ask all candidates the same set of questions in the same order. Use interview panels, and make sure to include people from diverse backgrounds on your panels. Create scorecards for your interviews to directly compare candidates on job skills.

Assess the candidate's skills and learning abilities, not "cultural fit." Consider asking, "How would you do this type of task?" instead of "Tell me about a time when you did this type of task," to better assess the capabilities of candidates with lived experience. And consider skills-based questions like asking the candidate how they would solve a problem the organization might face.

Be careful with automated hiring systems. Ask lots of questions about how the algorithms the vendor uses work and how the vendor controls for algorithmic bias. Algorithms can tune into the preferences of the human

running the search, bringing human bias right back into the mix.

Monitor your results and take action to improve. How many candidates from diverse backgrounds did your organization interview for recent job openings? How far did those candidates progress in the hiring process? If you find that you're struggling to diversify your candidate pool or that candidates from a variety of backgrounds aren't advancing in the process, research why that's happening and address the causes.

Resources:

- [12 Inclusive Hiring Practices You Should Implement – Academy To Innovate HR](#)
- [6 Best Practices to Creating Inclusive and Equitable Interview Processes – Harvard Business School](#)
- [3 Essentials to a More Inclusive Hiring Practice – UVA Darden Business School](#)
- [9 Diversity and Inclusion Recruitment Best Practices – Factorial HR](#)