

Address Hiring Risk with Inclusive Practices



By Rachel Sams

Lead Consultant and Editor

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Nonprofit leaders sometimes create restrictive hiring practices because they fear the consequences of hiring someone who isn't a "perfect fit" for a role.

But we encourage nonprofit leaders to consider the risks of overly restrictive hiring criteria and processes. If you don't invest time to connect with a variety of people in your hiring process, or if you make job criteria so restrictive only a handful of people could meet them, you undermine your nonprofit's ability to build a team with a mix of skills that complement one another.

There's plenty of risk in hiring—but we encourage you to broaden the way you think about hiring risk and try some new things to attract a variety of people who could do the job to your hiring pool.

Here are [some of our favorite tips](#) to make your hiring process more inclusive and fair.

Craft job descriptions thoughtfully. Your job descriptions should use gender-neutral words, and they should read the way people at your organization talk. Avoid 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 inclusion prominently on your website and spell out the steps you've taken to make your workplace inclusive. Don't rely on stock photos of 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 a variety of backgrounds for the workforce. Attend job fairs and networking events of industry associations that represent professionals from all kinds of communities.

Tell the truth. The candidates you want will ask tough questions about your organization's progress on 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 include people from a mix of backgrounds on your panels. Create scorecards for your interviews to directly compare candidates on job skills.

Assess the candidate's skills, 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 who haven't done this exact job before. Focus on skills-based questions like asking the candidate how they would solve a problem the organization might face.

Be careful with automated hiring systems. If you're using any AI-fueled system or tool, remember to 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 a variety of backgrounds did your organization interview for recent job openings? How far did those candidates progress in the hiring process? If you find that candidates from a variety of backgrounds aren't advancing in the process, research why that's happening and address the causes.

Want to learn more about inclusive hiring? [Join us at the 2025 Risk Summit, October 27-28](#) in Reston, Virginia, where Bob Corlett, President of Staffing Advisors, and Samantha Rosenberg, Chief People and Governance Officer for the Association for Diagnostics & Laboratory Medicine, will lead a session on "[Inclusive Hiring for a High-Performing Culture](#)."

Rachel Sams is Lead Consultant and Editor at the Nonprofit Risk Management Center. Reach her with thoughts and questions about inclusive hiring for nonprofits at rachel@nonprofitrisk.org or (505) 456-4045.