



Diocese of St. Petersburg

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:

Hiring Procedures

Crib Sheet

Number 3

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The majority of termination problems can be avoided by good hiring procedures. By far the most common difficulty relates to a mismatch between a person's abilities and aptitudes and the requirements of the position for which they have been hired.

Keyed in part to National Association of Church Personnel Administrator's (NACPA) Parish Personnel Administration handbook and the personnel practices in the Diocese of St. Petersburg, this "Crib Sheet" is designed to assist pastors and those responsible for hiring in making the right choices and avoiding costly errors in hiring.

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

As noted above, many employment problems occur when there is a mismatch between a person's abilities and aptitudes and the requirements of the position for which they have been hired. The first step in preventing these types of problems is to be clear in understanding and describing the expectations of each position that will be staffed in an organization.

It is recommended that position descriptions be developed for all paid staff and unpaid volunteer positions in an organization. As valuable management information they:

- Identify responsibilities and timelines
- Clarify employer/employee expectations
- Serve as a tool for performance evaluations
- Aid in identifying and planning training programs
- Provide a basis for a sound wage and salary program

Position Descriptions should contain the following:

- Position Title
- Name of employee after the person is hired
- Notation as to exempt / non-exempt status
- Notation as to full-time or part-time status
- Supervisory responsibilities
- Position summary
- Details of essential duties and responsibilities
- Qualifications required for the position
- Information regarding lines of accountability

RECRUITMENT

Once it has been determined that a position needs to be filled, it is advisable to advertise its availability in some public forum. Newspaper ads, bulletin boards, professional journals, the Internet, etc. serve as valuable means for identifying interested applicants. By advertising the position, employers broaden their list of potential candidates, demonstrate their

openness to consider everyone, avoid preferential treatment claims, and comply with equal opportunity standards.

In addition to summarizing the job's content, advertisements should also provide information on how applicants should apply and to whom. The application can consist of a simple completed application form or it can be much more detailed, consisting of a resume, samples of an individual's work, proof of their academic credentials, etc. Depending on the position, there may also be a need for their response to a few carefully chosen essay questions, which relate very directly to the position for which they are applying.

Though not required, a response to all applicants noting the receipt of their application or resume is a courtesy that should be extended.

SELECTION

Having advertised the available position, the task then becomes one of selecting the best-qualified and most capable individual from the field of applicants. Depending on a number of factors, this may be a relatively simple process or may involve a systematic process of elimination.

- **Search Committee** - The filling of a particular position may require input from additional people. In these situations, it may be advisable to put together a search committee to assist in the selection process. If this is done, however, there are a number of things that should be addressed at the outset:

Authority and responsibility - Issues sometimes arise as to whether the committee has hiring authority, decision-making authority or is simply advisory in nature. In the Diocese of St. Petersburg, search committees are advisory only and are asked to make a recommendation to the pastor or individual that has hiring authority.

Timelines and budget - As committees are established it is also advisable to develop specific timelines and budgets to help in guiding the committees' activities. (travel expenses, housing, meals, etc.)

Legal considerations - Inherent in personnel administration are a number of legal considerations that the committee members should be made aware of. As an example, there are specific questions that must not be asked of applicants because of the Civil Rights Act and other state and Federal laws. A description of these questions and other ethical concerns are provided in the Parish Personnel Administration handbook from N.A.C.P.A. (copies available in the diocesan HR office)

- **Initial review** - The purpose of the initial review process is to thin the field of applicants by eliminating those who do not qualify. The Parish Personnel Administration handbook suggests that the employer: "Gather together the job description and advertisements for the position. Extract from them a list of desired qualifications, read through each applicant's materials and categorize:

Very qualified ---- Qualified --- Not qualified

After completing the first reading, re-read the applications placed in-group #2 to compare against the higher-ranking persons in #1. Don't be afraid to move applications between groups.

- **Telephone Interview** - A telephone interview is simply a means of obtaining additional information that will help in selecting the best applicant for the position. On some occasions, it may be used to obtain missing information and on other occasions it may be used to further refine the list of potential candidates.
- **Reference Checks** - The last step in the ranking process is the pre-employment reference check. As the term implies, a decision has essentially been made and all that remains is to simply verify much of what has already been presented by the candidate through their application packet and interviews. Reference checks may be split up among the committee members or conducted by the hiring authority.

Although reference checks are important, some consider them to be a legal mine field. Care should be taken to plan them out carefully and limit discussion to questions that are pertinent to the position for which the person is being considered.

"Some sample questions are as follows:

- What is the type of work performed by the applicant?
- What are the applicant's strengths?
- What are the applicant's weaknesses?
- What is the applicant's interaction with co-workers?
- What is the applicant's interaction with supervisors?
- What is the applicant's interaction with clients?
- What is the reliability of the applicant?
- Does the applicant have any negative work habits?

- What is the attendance record of the applicant?
- What was the reason the applicant is leaving?
- Would you re-employ this applicant?"

- **Formal Interview** - After the initial screening process is completed, the number of applicants remaining should consist only of the few best qualified candidates for the position. The formal interview is one of the last steps in this elimination process and should be planned for and conducted properly.

"When preparing to conduct an interview:

- Review the position description
- Identify the qualifications for the job
- List the questions to ask of all candidates
- Carefully study the candidate's application form/resume
- List additional information that is needed

Interviews should be conducted in a private room where the candidate will be able to speak freely. Do not allow interruptions during the interview. Provide the candidate with a copy of the position description in advance to save precious interview time for questions. Each interview should last between 30 to 60 minutes."

NOTIFICATION

Once the committee reaches a decision, the ranking is presented to the pastor or hiring authority. He or she should then provide a formal offer of employment to the top candidate, which includes, at a minimum:

- the position description
- the beginning date of employment
- the starting salary
- any special conditions relating to the positions, including ending date of employment if appropriate.

A copy of this letter must be kept in the employee's personnel file. Once this person formally accepts employment, brief letters should be sent to all the other applicants noting the fact that the position has been filled by a qualified applicant.

ORIENTATION

On their first day of employment, an orientation meeting is to be held, during which they should:

- Be given a copy of the personnel policies
- Key policies should be discussed
- The position description should be discussed and clarified
- Complete the necessary paperwork re. insurance, IRS, etc.

As another courtesy, the new employee should be introduced to other members of the staff and acquainted with parish procedures.