

The Hiring Process: Best Practices

When conducting a search process for staff positions, there are several options to consider. If the position is one that will have a great deal of interaction with parishioners and committees throughout the parish (Director of Faith Formation, for example) or will represent the parish within the community (Director of Development), you may consider creating a Search Committee. A Search Committee could be comprised of the Pastor and representatives of constituencies who work most closely with this position. Having a parish director or member of the Finance Council as part of the Search Committee is also recommended. To facilitate the process, Search Committees should be limited to three or fewer members; a larger group is not only difficult to coordinate meetings but can also be intimidating to candidates.

For other positions, a committee may not be necessary, but consider having more than one person conduct the interview. If the opening is for a new parish bookkeeper, for example, consider having a member of the finance council assist in the interview process, along with the pastor. Staff from the Diocese would also be willing to assist in this process, dependent upon the position for which the parish is interviewing. Having more than one person able to consider the candidates background, personality and potential for success can be extremely beneficial in a hiring process.

Steps in Hiring:

1. The job description should be written or revised prior to advertising for any openings. Open positions should be announced within the parish (using the parish bulletin or pulpit announcements) either before, or at the same time, that ads are placed in appropriate newspapers, websites or neighboring parish bulletins.
2. As applications/resumes are received, an acknowledgment (letter or email) should be sent to all applicants, indicating that their information has been received.
3. Applications and/or resumes should be reviewed to make sure that they meet the qualifications and background outlined on the job description.
4. After the Pastor (and any Committee members) has reviewed resumes and determined who will be interviewed, written questions will be developed. These written questions will be used in each interview, with some variation dependent upon the candidate's background and work history. Preliminary screening interviews could be conducted by telephone, if, for example, the applicant lives far away or if there are questions pertaining to the applicant's qualifications.
5. If applicant has sent a resume, he/she should be asked to complete an application prior to the interview (Diocesan Application recommended). The application can be mailed or emailed to the candidate prior to the interview.

6. During the interview process, the position description should be reviewed with the applicant. The applicant will also be informed at this interview that any offer of employment would be contingent upon the completion of a criminal background check, as well as checking professional references, in keeping with the policies of the Diocese of Sioux City. Salary information and, if full-time, an outline of the insurance benefits should be provided to each candidate.
7. Prior to an employment offer being extended, candidates under consideration must have their professional references checked by the Pastor or a member of the search committee. A written record of the references checked should be maintained with each candidates' personnel file. The background check should be conducted at this time.
8. An offer is extended to a candidate and a reasonable length of time is granted for the candidate to consider the offer and respond (no more than a week is recommended).
9. If the offer is accepted, the applicant will receive a Letter of Acknowledgment from his/her direct supervisor which confirms the beginning date of employment, initial salary, benefits, titles, duties and the results of the background check. A copy of this letter will be kept on file in the employee's personnel file. The original job application and resume (and all originals of documents used in the hiring process -- references, scripted questions etc.) will be filed in the employee's personnel file; the direct supervisor may keep copies of any of these documents.
10. If the offer is not accepted, another candidate will be considered (after the reference check is complete) or the hiring process will be continued until a qualified candidate is hired.
11. On the new employee's first day of employment, he/she will receive all necessary insurance and payroll forms. These completed forms must be returned to the HR office *for processing at least one week* prior to the next scheduled pay date. An orientation meeting for new staff will be coordinated through the Office of Operations and will include input from various departments.
12. Applicants no longer under consideration will be sent a letter to that effect; their resume will be kept on file for up to six months, in the event that there is another opening, suitable to their background.