

Culturally Responsive Recruiting

Recruitment Efforts and Effectiveness

Before you begin, learn your reputation in the community as an attractive place to work for candidates of color. Often our reputation discourages strong candidates from applying. If you are serious about improving racial equity and cultural responsiveness in the organization, you will be able to communicate this to potential candidates. For candidates who might previously not considered applying, get on the phone and share the work you are doing to improve the conditions of the organization. Here are advice for steps to improve recruitment activities:

- When writing job descriptions - add "bicultural", "bilingual", "experience with a similar community" or "worked with diverse populations".
- Learn where candidates of color get their employment news and post in these spaces.
- Use community networks and distribution lists to get the position in front of potential candidates of color. This can include making requests of members of such networks to distribute electronic versions of your posting.
- Are there volunteers who have had significant experience in the program? Are volunteers culturally responsive to the community?
- Are there previous participants or service users in your programs that could be good candidates?
- In after-school programming, talk to the school's community, to local residents and families of students. Send the job posting to staff and their friends Ask them if they would like to start by volunteering for experience, or if they have experience, interview them for instructor or coordinator positions.
- Work upstream – contacting universities and colleges who might be doing workforce development in your sector. Ask for two things: (1) to distribute the position to potential candidates, and (2) to ask for a handful of recommendations for you to connect with directly.
- Use your existing employees to assist with distribution, particularly if they are well connected to a community where you are under-represented.
- Ask your employees and your community leaders for advice on how to reach strong candidates. Get on the phone and personally invite them to apply.
- Has a racially diverse pool of candidates been recruited for the position? If not, the hiring should be delayed until the pool is diversified.
- Is a racially diverse pool being interviewed for the position? Again, delay until this can be achieved.

Community Engagement

Being exposed to counter-narratives of people of color prior to entering interviews and deliberations will increase understanding of community being served, and will enrich relational work and support of said community. Such an approach can involve working with community members, building relationships with service users and families, watching videos of exemplary leaders of color, historic figures, and local current employees, reading their stories and learning about their contributions. Dialogue about this issue and intentional surfacing of counter-narratives can also be made available for the hiring committee. The intention is to interrupt stereotypes, with this approach being shown to have a significant impact on reducing implicit bias. The strongest impact is likely problematic to introduce intentionally: to link the positive features of people of color with negative features of white people. The contrast leads to a stronger reduction in implicit bias that works to the benefit of white candidates.

Adapted from 'Protocol for Culturally Responsive Organizations', Coalition of Communities of Color, 2014.