

Questions Supervisors Should Consider

Identify top contributions of the position

If possible, give yourself time to review the position and what the library needs. Even if you need to immediately recruit for a position consider the following questions. They will help you update the job description, create a job announcement and interview questions.

1. How does this position contribute to the library's mission? What are the top 3-5 contributions of this position to the library?
2. What skills, knowledge, or characteristics does someone need to make those contributions?

Consider the library culture

These questions help you identify blind spots. They should be used in conjunction with the questions about the most important contributions. It's important to have a wide range of skills and different personality types. It's also important to recognize what works well and what characteristics might need more training or support to be successful.

1. What characteristics will be a good fit for the organization? Is the library a fairly serious place? Or is it a playful place? Neither is a problem, but a person drawn to something that is the opposite of the current library culture may not be successful.
2. What characteristics would NOT be a good fit? This question helps highlight any blind spots and gives you an opportunity to consider what you might want to change.

Consider your management style

Again, these questions should be used with the other questions about a successful candidate. What is needed is the highest priority. However, knowing the answer to these questions can help you identify areas where you may need to be flexible.

1. What characteristics do you need as a boss? Alternatively, what characteristics do you work with best when it comes to employees?
2. What characteristics present the most difficulty for you?

Overview of the process of hiring from start to finish

This may vary. Every library is different. Some libraries have human resources (HR) assistance. Others do not. Some libraries have employees who belong to a union. Some communities receive a lot of applicants for a position while others do not. Adjust the process, as needed.

Before the interviews

- Identify what you need for the position, its contributions, and knowledge, skills, and characteristics needed.
- Update or create a job description.
- Create a job announcement.
- Plan the screening and interview process. Will you do this alone? Will you have assistance? Who will help?
- Advertise.

Preparing for interviews and conducting interviews

- If applicable, create a screening tool that helps you identify which candidates to interview.
- Create the interview questions. Ask every candidate the same questions. It's okay to ask different follow-up questions to get the information you need, but every candidate must be asked the same set of questions.
- Consider a library tour and/or opportunity for candidates to meet other library employees and/or the board. This helps the person get a sense of the organization and whether it's a good fit for them.
- If appropriate, include an opportunity for them to "try" the job. Ex. If it's a children's position, ask them to lead a story time for the interview committee.
- Schedule interviews.
- Welcome candidates, do your best to help them feel at ease, and consider making the first question an easier question to give them time to warm up.
- After conducting any tours or introductions, de-brief with any other interview committee members. If you are the only one, write down any observations about the candidate.
- Give yourself time between interviews. This is better for you AND for later candidates.

After the interviews

- If a group of people assisted with the interviews, meet to discuss each candidate and decide on a finalist. If it is just you, review your notes and select your finalist.
- Call any references. Listen for tone and what is NOT being said.
- If all is good, call the candidate to offer them the position verbally. If they say yes, follow up with a written letter with start date, pay, and a welcome note. Ask them to sign it and return it to you.
- If the candidate refuses the position, consider whether any other candidates would be a good match and follow the same process listed above.
- If at all possible DO NOT HIRE if no candidate is a good match for the position.

Key Resources

- [US Department of Labor Employer. Gov](#) – links to posters and information employers need to know.
- [US Department of Labor Career One Stop](#) – resources for employees and employers including a valuable hiring and recruiting section.
- [Montana Department of Labor and Industry](#) – site for employers in Montana with Montana specific information.

Questions?

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