

IQ REPORT

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RECRUITING KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

A public organization managed by persons with appropriate technical competencies, strong people skills, vision, high energy, and a record of past success has the most important resources it needs to achieve its objectives.

Chief executives/managers and department heads should view every vacancy in a key management position as an opportunity to improve their organization and bolster their own success. But placing outstanding managers in key positions does not typically happen without a great deal of thought and hard work.

This report describes the steps for an effective recruitment and selection process. It includes resources available to help local government entities in their search for qualified candidates and suggests ways to stimulate potential candidates' interest in the position while providing for interim management. It also reviews the various steps in a successful recruitment process, including communications with candidates, interviews, and the use of assessment centers, as well as the issues involved in finalizing arrangements, such as compensation package negotiations.

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These reports are intended primarily to provide timely information on subjects of practical interest to local government administrators, department heads, budget and research analysts, administrative assistants, and others responsible for and concerned with operational aspects of local government.

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Recruiting Key Management Personnel

Heather Renschler is the president/CEO of Ralph Andersen & Associates, a managing consulting firm specializing in executive search. She has been with the firm for more than sixteen years. This article is an update of one she first published in August 1987; it has been revised to reflect changes in the executive recruitment field as well as to incorporate the use of the Internet.

In most local government entities, the chief executive/manager is responsible for the selection of department heads, department heads are responsible for the selection of division heads, and so forth throughout the organization. The selection decisions they make are important because

- Having competent managers is critical to the success of their organization
- Their own success is dependent upon the managers they choose.

Decisions this important are not easy. Some candidates may have good technical skills but lack interest or experience in management. Others may be experienced managers with good technical skills but lack the ability to work well with people. Practical considerations also contribute to making selection decisions difficult. Candidates with experience in urban areas may be reluctant to take positions in rural areas, and vice versa. The cost of relocation may limit mobility, or a public agency may simply not be able to compete with the private sector for cash compensation.

Selecting managers in a local agency is usually not as difficult as selecting the chief executive. Normally one person is making the selection decision rather than a group of elected officials. The public and press are usually not involved in the selection of managers as they are with chief executives. The absence of these constraints gives the chief executive flexibility in conducting the recruitment for managers. This can make the selection process less complex and help the chief executive focus upon selecting the right person for the job.

OVERVIEW

A successful recruitment and selection process need not be complex and difficult. It is a straightforward process whether done internally or by an executive search

firm. The steps described below provide an overview of the recruitment process for a key management position.

- **Develop a specific process:** Specifically designate the individual who will have responsibility for all aspects of the recruitment. That person should then develop a specific recruitment process and be held accountable for its success.
- **Define the position:** Make sure you know what you are looking for. Consider the job description, the organizational structure and reporting relationships, and the specific challenges facing the unit that will be headed by the manager selected.
- **Formalize the outreach strategy:** Decide how the availability of the position will be made known. Consider advertising in the print media, professional publications and associations, and Internet resources including job postings, as well as direct candidate outreach.
- **Communicate effectively with candidates:** Courtesy is impressive to candidates because it is uncommon. Acknowledge resumes as they are received. Make sure the acknowledgment indicates timing for the balance of the search process and specifically identifies an individual to contact for more information.
- **Screen candidates:** Read all resumes carefully with regard to the position requirements. An initial screening of candidates should narrow the field to those candidates who most closely meet those requirements.
- **Select a focus group of candidates:** Identify those candidates (from five to ten) who most closely meet the position requirements. Careful review of the qualifications of these candidates should include thorough reference checks.
- **Select finalists:** Identify as finalists the apparent best of the focus group of candidates and include

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them in the selection process. Provide them with background information and resources about the agency before the interviews.

- **Make the hiring decision:** Spell out a specific process leading to the hiring decision when developing the recruitment process. This process could include the use of panel interviews, assessment centers, or a series of one-on-one interviews. The result of the selection process should be a timely job offer.
- **Negotiate compensation:** Follow up the hiring decision with an informal discussion of compensation with the candidate. After reaching an informal agreement, put the offer into writing for formal acceptance by the candidate.
- **Ensure a successful transition:** Begin the transition process before the candidate arrives for work. Provide information such as budgets, organization charts, staffing schedules, goals, objectives, and major projects and initiatives. Make sure that the new manager is introduced to key staff and officials, community groups, and others as appropriate.

The successful recruitment and selection of managers is highly dependent upon having a plan and carrying it out. For those most directly involved in the recruitment, including the person making the hiring decision, it is important to

- **Know what you are looking for:** If you do not have a clear understanding of what you want in the new manager, your chances of making the wrong decision are increased.
- **Recognize that recruiting is a two-way street:** The person you want to hire is already successful in his or her current position. You need to present an attractive alternative and can help to do so by being responsive and interested.
- **Organize the process:** The recruitment process needs to be clear and coordinated by a single individual.
- **Maintain control:** Do not give up control of the recruitment process or the hiring decision unless you really want to relinquish control.

Because the recruitment and selection process takes several months, it is easy to put in the background. Don't do it. Remember that the decision you make as a result of the process is critical to your own and your organization's success. Keep the key points identified above in mind throughout the process.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

When faced with the need to recruit department heads or other key management personnel, local government entities will find a variety of resources available to as-

sist them (see Appendix A). Four examples follow:

1. **Professional organizations:** The league of cities/counties in each state; the National Association of Counties; the American Society for Public Administration; and related local, regional, state, and national professional organizations can assist in advertising the vacant position.
2. **Current and former local agency officials:** Local government officials in adjacent communities or retired local officials may also be able to assist. For example, a neighboring local official may be able to help review resumes, and a retired local government official may be available to coordinate the recruitment process or to provide interim management assistance. Interim assistance is typically provided through the league of cities/counties.
3. **Others having an interest in local government entities:** Depending upon the situation, college or university faculty members, local government consultants, or community leaders may be able to provide leadership and assistance in some part, if not all, of the recruitment process (e.g., as participants in the interview panel).
4. **Executive search firms:** A number of nationally recognized firms are available to assist in recruitment efforts. Depending on the level of participation desired, the recruiter may coordinate the overall recruitment process or assist on specific pre-defined tasks of recruitment, such as identifying potential candidates, conducting background checks, or developing and managing the selection process.

INTERIM MANAGEMENT

When a vacancy occurs in a department head or other key management position, an opportunity arises to reassess the position and its responsibilities in relation to the total organization and its goals and objectives. Changes may have occurred that dictate organizational restructuring, or long-term plans may suggest a different role for the position than it played in the past. As a result, filling management vacancies can be an opportunity to make constructive change.

To meet the immediate need for continuity in day-to-day management and to have adequate time to think about the position before starting a recruitment process, the entity should consider providing for interim management. Four principal scenarios may occur:

1. *The incumbent department head or manager may give significant advance notice and stay in the position until a replacement has been recruited.* This situation usually occurs when a manager with long tenure in an organization decides to retire and is able to give longer-term notice in conjunction with retirement planning. In this case, there is no need to provide

interim management, but the opportunity to re-think the position before undertaking a recruitment is still there. When a successor has been named, it may even be possible to provide some overlap (give consideration to the new hire's feelings on overlap), thus giving the new person a limited opportunity to counsel with or work with the retiring individual before assuming full responsibility for the position.

2. *Someone from within the department may be available to assume the position on an interim basis.* If there is a natural successor, it may be assumed that this person will be appointed and no recruitment will take place. If there is a person in the department who is a possible candidate but the appointing authority is unsure whether that person is ready or is the best person for the position, assigning the individual interim management responsibility may be a good way to meet the short-term management needs of the organization and, at the same time, observe the candidate's strengths and weaknesses.
3. *Someone from another department within the entity may be available to assume the position on an interim basis.* If no one in the department is available or suitable to be appointed to the permanent position, an alternative may be to appoint a competent manager from another department to the interim position. The person might be a staff member who has no interest in the position but who has demonstrated administrative ability and is respected by others. Or it might be another individual who would benefit from an opportunity to assume greater management experience and responsibility or who, perhaps, works in a related functional area and would benefit from exposure to the area of the vacancy.
4. *The chief executive/manager might assume the management responsibility on an interim basis.* In some cases, the organization and objectives of the department are clear, and short-term, day-to-day management is not a real burden for the chief executive/manager. In other cases, things may be unclear. To recommend change, the chief executive/manager may believe that he or she can best assess the situation by being more directly involved for a short period. When naming an interim manager might unreasonably increase the person's expectations about the permanent position, or when things are so complex or controversial that naming someone else might simply aggravate the overall situation, interim assumption of the position by the chief executive/manager might be the most appropriate alternative.

Regardless of who assumes the interim management responsibilities, the person who will do the selection should first consider what the entity wants in a candidate. As soon as it is known that there is or will be a vacancy, a summary of the organization, includ-

ing pending issues, priorities, and objectives, should be prepared. Ideally, the departing manager would prepare this summary, but the chief executive/manager or another appropriate staff person may have to oversee preparation if this is not possible. The summary can serve as a helpful resource to the interim manager and can be an important starting point for the appointing authority in reviewing specifically what the entity will be looking for when filling the vacant position.

THE RECRUITMENT

The recruitment is described here in its primary components of planning, the recruitment process, the selection process, and finalizing arrangements. Each component is described in sufficient detail to guide the manager through initiating the recruitment to making the selection decision.

Planning

Before filling the vacant position, the chief executive/manager (or department head) should first determine who is going to be responsible for conducting the overall recruitment. There are three main alternatives:

1. **Conduct the recruitment in-house.** The chief executive/manager may decide to have the human resources department conduct the recruitment. This recruitment method is the most common, and it is used because funds are usually not available to retain a search firm or because the human resources department has experienced staff with a record of success in conducting recruitments for key managers.
2. **Retain an executive search firm.** The chief executive/manager may feel that no existing staff person can handle the responsibility for a major recruitment. Or he or she may not wish to commit a key person to the time involved in identifying and talking with candidates and conducting background checks. Or he or she may know or suspect that the recruitment will be difficult, necessitating a more comprehensive, aggressive recruiting effort. For any of these reasons, the local government entity may choose to retain an executive search firm to work with it in conducting the recruitment.
3. **Combine in-house effort with an executive search firm (known as a partial search process).** In some cases, the entity will assume overall responsibility for conducting the recruitment but will supplement the in-house effort by retaining an executive recruiting firm to assist with one or more tasks in the process, such as generating resumes, screening candidates, or conducting the interview or assessment center process.

After responsibility for conducting the recruitment has been established, several things need to be ad-

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dressed in order to establish a sound framework for a successful recruitment.

Confirm the recruiting and selection process. Even if an executive search firm will be responsible for conducting the recruitment, the chief executive/manager or department head must understand and approve the basic parameters of the process at the outset. The following are matters they should consider and finalize:

1. Participants in the recruitment process: In many cases, the only staff person involved in the recruiting process is the person who will make the hiring decision. In other cases, the chief executive/manager may look to the human resources department for leadership because of either local requirements or its experience in the area. The chief executive/manager may also choose to notify the governing body (city council, board of supervisors, board of directors) that the recruitment is under way and may solicit the governing body's input on important factors. For some agencies, past practice may provide for governing body participation in the selection process.

In addition, an inter- or intradepartmental team may be invited to participate in the process. Because of the nature of some positions, the entity may wish to involve members of the business community or other resources from a specialized area. Who will be involved in the recruitment process, and at what points, should be confirmed at the outset to ensure good understanding and coordination. Remember, any individual or group participating in the selection process has an effective veto over any candidate.

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To elaborate, employees or community groups may be included in the interview/selection process "to provide input" to the chief executive/manager making the hiring decision. Even if these individuals or groups are clearly told that they are not making the selection but only providing ad-

Recruiting and selecting key management personnel

Summary checklist

Timetable

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> If necessary, designate an interim manager. | Week 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain a status report on related organizations and projects. | Week 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm the recruiting process that will be used. | Week 2 |
| —Determine who will be responsible for conducting the recruitment. | |
| —Establish recruiting guidelines for the position. | |
| —Confirm the scope of the recruitment. | |
| —Confirm steps involved in the recruitment process. | |
| —Confirm compensation parameters. | |
| —Establish a timetable for the recruitment process. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare and place advertisements for the position in appropriate publications. | Week 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identify outstanding potential candidates and send them a written invitation to apply for the position. | Weeks 3 and 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personally contact outstanding potential candidates as a follow-up to the written invitation to apply. | Weeks 5 and 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledge all resumes as they are received. | Weeks 5 and 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Review all resumes received after the application deadline has passed. | Week 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct work-related background checks on a smaller group of candidates. | Week 8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm the selection process that will be used. | Week 9 |
| —Confirm finalists. | |
| —Agree on a specific selection process. | |
| —Establish a timetable for the selection process. | |
| —Determine a policy on reimbursement of finalist expenses. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notify finalists and schedule them for interviews. | Week 9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct interviews and follow-up interviews, and make a selection. | Weeks 10 and 11 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate terms and conditions of employment, and reduce them to writing. | Week 12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize related arrangements. | Week 12 |
| —Determine a starting date. | |
| —Confirm a method of announcing the hiring decision. | |
| —Advise all other candidates of their status. | |
| —Plan an orderly transition. | |

vice, the chief executive would be hard-pressed to make an appointment over their strong objections. However, the responsibility of hiring excellent staff ultimately rests with the chief executive/manager or department head and that authority should not be delegated to anyone else.

2. Scope of the recruitment: Even if advertising for the position is limited to in-state publications, the entity will probably receive resumes from individuals in different parts of the country. With the addition of technology in the recruiting arena, the expanse of candidates often extends well beyond the local area. It is assumed that the entity will look carefully at all resumes received, and that the objective is to hire the best candidate.

However, chief executives/managers can have different opinions on what is the desirable scope of recruitment. Some may want to look nationally; others may prefer to focus in-state or regionally. The type of position can dictate the scope of recruitment that will be necessary. Because there are differences in approach and choice, the chief executive/manager should establish preferences at the outset.

3. Advertising: Although the hiring authority typically no longer relies solely on advertising to generate candidates for a vacant department head or other key management position, advertising remains an important part of the recruiting process. The scope of the recruitment will suggest where the vacant position should be advertised.

Unless it is required or there is a particular interest in the local private sector labor pool, advertising in general circulation newspapers is not necessary, usually expensive, and seldom helpful. Rather, key management positions are typically advertised statewide or regionally in league of city/county publications, newsletters of professional associations related to the vacancy, established publications that specialize in public sector management positions, various minority publications, and Internet sites (refer to the appendix). Today, Internet job postings become necessary in a search process as candidates rely more heavily on technology during their job search. However, the use of such postings needs to be carefully weighed as it does not always ensure quality candidates and often expands the number of unqualified inquiries and creates untailored (mass-produced) computer-generated responses.

Placing advertisements is one of the first steps in the recruitment process. As with scope of the recruitment, it is desirable to confirm at the outset the preferred placement approach. Advertisements can be costly, and a budget should be set to allow for optimum use and exposure. Print ads and Internet postings should be placed selectively as spending more money does not ensure success.

Nevertheless, casting the net wide enough allows for greater potential for a diverse candidate pool.

4. Steps to be followed: Confirming the steps that will be followed during the recruitment process will provide a basis for establishing a recruitment timetable and will help clarify who is responsible for each phase of the process. Regardless of who is responsible, the primary steps are typically confirmation of what the local government entity is looking for in the position, placement of advertisements, identification of and contact with potential candidates, review of resumes and references, and an interview/assessment center process.
5. Timing: The recruitment process must be well organized and coordinated, if for no other reason than that candidates are impressed when everything moves forward smoothly. Timing is important not only in establishing a deadline for submitting resumes, but also in ensuring that the various elements of a recruitment, some of which overlap, mesh into an efficient, smooth-running process (see sidebar on page 4).

When the above items are confirmed, the framework for the recruitment is established. All that remains before the recruitment process moves forward is to confirm where the position fits into the organization and what work experience and personal characteristics the local government entity is actually looking for, and to establish recruiting guidelines.

Review classification and compensation questions associated with the position. In addition to confirming the recruitment and selection process that will be followed, the chief executive/manager should confirm where the position fits into the organization and what the base salary range will be. The responsibilities of the vacant position may be well defined with no changes contemplated. However, a management vacancy sometimes gives the chief executive/manager an opportunity to restructure the organization to the extent deemed necessary or desirable. Further, because the organization has changed or the local government entity is behind in the market, some adjustment may have to be made to the base salary.

These items obviously need to be considered and refined, to the extent possible, at the outset of the recruitment so that the local government entity can respond positively to related questions and the recruitment is directed at individuals with an appropriate level of training and experience. If the current salary range is known to be too low, it should be changed sooner rather than later. If it is revised before the advertisements are placed and other steps are taken to initiate the recruitment, the organization will be able to attract more candidates for consideration.

Establish recruiting guidelines. This step does not have to take a great deal of time, but it is extremely important to ensure that the local government entity

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ends up with an outstanding group of finalists to consider. The objective is to generate interest that yields the submittal of resumes from individuals who will meet the entity's needs. Recruiting guidelines help the local government entity focus its efforts when identifying candidates, conducting interviews, and doing reference checks. Recruiting guidelines do not have to be extensive, but they should specifically define desired work experience, specialized qualifications, and personal characteristics. They also may include specific priorities or objectives to be accomplished during the first year or two.

After the recruitment planning is complete, the recruiting process can begin.

The Recruitment Process

The recruitment process is distinguished from the selection process in that it focuses on generating a sufficient pool of qualified candidates. The objective of any recruitment process is to be responsive to the needs and interests of candidates and ensure the widest possible search for qualified candidates. Recruiting is a two-way street. It is just as important for the employer to be persuasive and express an interest in the candidate as it is for the candidate to express a sincere interest in the position. Accordingly, it is appropriate to consider ways to interact positively with candidates as a prelude to a more general discussion of interest in the position.

Interactions with candidates. Although it is always possible to generate resumes just by placing advertisements in various publications, the goal of the chief executive/manager should be to obtain quality candidates rather than quantity. Those individuals whom the chief executive/manager would consider outstanding are employed elsewhere and may give little consideration to a job change. More than likely, these candidates are not monitoring job opportunities and will need to be sought out.

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When potential candidates do focus on a vacant position, the key information must be packaged and presented effectively. The recruitment process must be flexible and well organized so as not to discourage the potential applicant from pursuing the job. The image that others have of the entity is affected by how the recruitment is conducted. Thus, the following considerations should be kept in mind to establish positive relations with candidates:

Application form. While some local government entities may wish candidates to complete a standardized ap-

plication form, most provide some flexibility to potential candidates for key management positions by permitting them to submit a resume in whatever format they believe will be most effective. This approach enables the candidate to relate past work experience directly to the position in question while permitting the chief executive/manager to see how the candidate organizes and presents written material. The manner in which materials are prepared can be an important initial indication of the person's real interest in the position. If a standardized application form is used, it should be easy to complete, and the information requested should be specifically related to the vacant position. Whenever an application form is required, it should be in addition to, and not instead of, a resume.

Provision of information. Serious candidates will not submit a resume until they have done their homework and satisfied themselves that the position represents a good career opportunity. Often they will seek information about the entity and the position.

If an executive search firm is coordinating the recruitment, it will be available to discuss the entity and the position with anyone who expresses an interest. Typically, the firm will have a brochure or information packet that it will make available to candidates.

If the chief executive/manager is responsible for conducting the recruitment, the individual actually handling the recruitment should have sufficient time available to respond promptly to inquiries from potential candidates. This is particularly important because it is through inquiries that a potential candidate often forms an initial impression of the public sector agency and the position in question. If the candidate's impression is that the recruitment is disorganized, that the chief executive/manager is not sure what he or she is looking for, or that sufficient information about the local government entity or the position is not easily obtained, the candidate may simply lose interest and not apply. On the other hand, if the candidate's impression is that management has spent time considering the position; that the recruitment is well organized; and that information about the entity and the position is positive, complete, and effectively packaged, the candidate may decide to apply.

Whoever is conducting the recruitment should prepare a basic information packet that includes the following:

- A copy of the recruiting guidelines indicating key objectives and priorities and what the local government entity is looking for in the position
- Ordinance or charter requirements, if they contain significant or unusual provisions regarding the position
- Summary information about the local government entity and the department or division in question, including organizational structure, personnel practices, number of employees, services provided, and budget data

- A summary of benefits offered in the position
- A timetable indicating the principal steps and time frame for the recruitment
- Information about the community in the form of an attractive brochure or publication.

Some agencies have excellent publications describing their community and their organization. Where these publications exist, they can be supplemented with a page or two describing the position requirements. Those agencies that do not have such publications should prepare a brief but attractive description of their community and organization. The use of desktop publishing software and color printers makes this task fairly easy.

If an agency needs to prepare a publication, information may already be available in some form. Sources may include preliminary information from comprehensive plans or a bond prospectus. Other sources may include the local chamber of commerce, visitors and convention bureaus, and economic development commissions. Placement of the full publication on the entity's Web site has become common practice. Additionally, providing Internet links to other resources helps to acquaint candidates with all aspects of the organization and the community.

Acknowledgment of resumes/status report. A simple, courteous step in the recruitment process that is often overlooked is to acknowledge resumes as they are received and to apprise candidates of their status as the recruitment proceeds. Prompt acknowledgment of resumes is one indication that the process is being handled in a businesslike fashion; apprising all individuals of their status, even if they are not selected as finalists, is a basic courtesy that will pay benefits in how the candidates view the entity. The initial acknowledgment should also mention the recruitment timetable and give the name and telephone number of the person to contact for more information. Unless there are unusual or unanticipated delays, this notice should be sufficient until candidates are actually notified about their final status. To maintain confidentiality, correspondence from the entity should always be directed to the candidate's home address.

Confidentiality. Confidentiality is important in any recruitment. Open record and disclosure statutes vary from state to state, and obviously a recruitment must be conducted consistent with applicable state law. Candidates recognize that the entity, or its representative in the recruitment process, will need to conduct reference checks before a hiring decision is made. They are also aware of the problems that can be created for them if premature disclosure of their interest in the position is made public.

It is in the interest of the local government entity to maintain confidentiality throughout the recruiting process. Assurance of confidentiality will simply mean

more candidates for the entity to consider. Candidates realize that the entity will want to contact their current employer at some point to assess the job they have done, but they will prefer that the local government entity wait until they are going to be considered as finalists for the position.

There is no faster way to lose good candidates . . . than to violate assurances given regarding confidentiality.

Because confidentiality is important to both parties, the entity, with advice from legal counsel, should determine at the outset the extent to which the recruitment process will be confidential. If disclosure of the names of candidates is likely to occur at any point, potential candidates should be advised of it before they have to decide whether to pursue the vacant position. Contacts with the current employer should be coordinated with a candidate to allow the candidate adequate time to first notify his or her employer.

Assurances regarding confidentiality should be honored. There is no faster way to lose good candidates and, in the process, damage their current security and career than to violate assurances given regarding confidentiality.

Recruiting candidates. It is an understatement to say that recruitment of candidates is the heart of the recruitment process. Without a pool of qualified applicants, the other steps in the process have little value. Recruiting individuals should be comprehensive and incorporate the following elements:

Advertising. It is to the benefit of the public sector agency to be sure that everyone who might have an interest in the vacant position is aware that the recruitment process is under way. Even if considerable time is going to be devoted to identifying potential candidates, a comprehensive advertising program is important to ensure that no one is overlooked.

An advertising program does not have to be extensive or expensive to be comprehensive. For example, there is no need to advertise in newspapers of general circulation unless it is required locally or private sector experience is a high priority. This is typically the most expensive form of advertising, and it produces the least in results. Some commonly used sources are the newsletters of national and state professional groups, local government league publications, job bulletins specializing in the public sector, and publications of organizations such as the National League of Cities and the American Society of Public Administration. Affirmative action objectives can be achieved by carefully placing advertisements in minority publications. Many print publications have corresponding Internet sites available. Often, when deadlines are too tightly constrained for a printed publication, an Internet posting may be an option that enables candidates to explore career opportunities confidentially and on their own

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timetable. Again, selected local government and public section organizations and their Internet sites are listed in the appendix.

Local government entities have some flexibility when preparing and placing advertisements, but at a minimum, ads should include the name of the entity, the title of the vacant position, the population of the jurisdiction, the amount of the operating and capital budget for the department or division in question, the number of full-time employees in the department or division, the services provided, a statement regarding salary, and the filing deadline. Special items of information required for submittal with a resume should also be noted, such as a brief description of key areas of interest, desirable experience, qualifications, current salary (or salary history), and work-related references. Some publications accept display ads, which can offer the entity, usually for a modest extra cost, an opportunity to impress potential candidates through the use of an innovative format incorporating the entity's logo.

An ad should *not* consist of the entire job description for the position; an ad of this type not only shows a lack of creativity but is also expensive because of its length. More important, it is a turnoff to potential candidates.

Further discussion of the salary aspects of an advertisement is warranted. Salary should be listed in the advertisement as dependent on qualifications only if this is truly the case. If there is a specific range, it should be stated. More specific information about salary can be covered in the detailed position brochure. It is important not to misrepresent the flexibility or ceiling on compensation.

The chief executive/manager who will make the hiring decision should approve the ad before it is placed.

Identification of candidates. To ensure a sufficient number of good candidates, advertising should be supplemented by aggressively identifying outstanding individuals and inviting them to apply. This is a key part of what an executive recruiting firm does in the initial stages of a recruitment. In accordance with the chief executive/manager's specific requirements for the position, the firm uses its knowledge of individuals in the profession and its base of contacts to invite individuals to apply. Those invited typically vary from agency to agency since different backgrounds, experience, and personal characteristics are required in different management positions.

The identification process can also be used when a chief executive/manager is conducting the recruitment. Candidate identification is extremely time-consuming. To be effective it must be done by the person responsible for handling the recruitment. The person must be mature, be knowledgeable about the local government entity, and understand specifically what the entity is looking for. Perhaps, most impor-

tantly, the person must combine directness and persuasiveness with an honest assessment of the job's duties and responsibilities. He or she should not over- or undersell the position but should rather address the career opportunity overall for what it is.

The person responsible for handling the recruitment . . . must combine directness and persuasiveness with an honest assessment of the job's duties and responsibilities.

Identification of potential candidates that the chief executive/manager would like to consider is one way to ensure that those individuals are made aware of the opening. Suggestions regarding potential candidates may come from a variety of sources, including the departing manager and local government officials in adjacent communities, staff members and officers of related professional groups, and individuals who work with local government entities in a related professional capacity and in whose judgment the chief executive/manager has confidence.

Once a list of names has been compiled and again, the emphasis should be on quality rather than quantity—a letter of invitation can be sent advising the person of the opening and requesting that a resume be submitted if there is interest in the position. The letter should also be used to transmit the basic package of information describing the local government entity and the position in question. Once the letter has been mailed, a follow-up telephone call should be made to discuss the position and answer questions. The same deadline for submitting resumes should be used in the advertisements and the letters of invitation.

In-house candidates. In addition to resumes submitted in response to advertisements or invitations to apply, the chief executive/manager may receive inquiries from other local government entity employees. In fact, it would not be unusual for individuals to ask whether there are in-house candidates.

The entity's advertising program should apprise employees of the opportunity and of how and when to apply. The chief executive/manager may even want to invite one or more interested employees to submit a resume. In-house candidates should be treated the same as other candidates. It should be made clear that if an in-house candidate is ultimately selected, it is only because that candidate is considered to be the best choice. Whereas the chief executive/manager will notify most candidates in writing as to their status, he or she may wish to talk personally with in-house candidates who were not selected. This is a way of promoting good communication with employees, good morale, and an orderly and positive transition.

The Selection Process

When the deadline for submitting resumes has passed, the selection process begins. The selection process includes those activities leading to the final selection of a department head or key management position. The three main steps in the selection process are (1) screening resumes and determining finalists, (2) interviewing finalists, and (3) postinterview activities.

Screening resumes and determining finalists. The process leading to the determination of finalists is extremely important because it separates individuals into two groups: those who will receive further consideration and those who won't. Unless this process is followed with care and consistency, outstanding individuals may be overlooked.

The selection process begins with a review of all resumes that have been submitted. While a deadline for submitting resumes is typically established, this is usually viewed as a planning deadline; all resumes are considered, even if they arrive after the planning deadline. That said, it is not unusual for a local government entity to receive more than fifty resumes for a vacant management position. With this volume, a comprehensive review of resumes will obviously take time.

Unless the chief executive/manager has retained an executive recruiting firm to assist in the selection process, a system for reviewing resumes must be developed. One approach is simply to have the person handling the recruitment review all resumes and personally winnow them down. Whether doing this informally or with a formal rating or evaluation process, the reviewer should compare the background and experience of each candidate against the recruiting guidelines initially prepared for the position.

Another approach is to use a small group of people and develop a consensus among group members as to which candidates should be given further consideration. Such a group (i.e., the selection committee) might be composed of other managers in the public sector agency or of three or four leading managers in other departments or communities who have responsibilities similar to those of the position being recruited.

The following issues are particularly important in the resume screening process:

1. All resumes should be acknowledged—ideally, when they are received. The acknowledgment letter should incorporate a broad timetable that gives the chief executive/manager adequate review time before finalists are selected.
2. The process should move forward as promptly as possible, consistent with a thorough review. A review process that takes too long signals to the candidate a lack of leadership and a poorly organized process. As a result, the entity can lose qualified individuals who simply have second thoughts and change their minds.
3. Consistent with applicable state law and the advice of legal counsel, the confidentiality of submit-

ted resumes should be maintained. Contact with others as part of the review process normally occurs after the field has been narrowed down to a smaller group that will be subject to more thorough, work-related reference checks. Such contact is important but should be coordinated with the candidate as a courtesy and to avoid jeopardizing the candidate's current position.

4. Those reviewing the resumes should compare them against the recruiting guidelines that were developed at the outset of the recruiting process. This will take into account the factors that were most important to the chief executive/manager. In narrowing down the field, the reviewers should look for the following information:

- Has the candidate had experience working in a public sector agency of comparable size?
- Has the candidate had experience with the variety of services delivered by the department or division? Has the experience been comparable in size of budget and number of employees?
- Has the candidate worked in a similar geographic area? Is he or she likely to be comfortable in a rural or urban setting? Is the candidate familiar with the problems faced generally by the entity?
- What specific responsibilities has the candidate had, and what has the candidate accomplished? How do these responsibilities and accomplishments compare with the objectives and priorities of the entity?
- Has the candidate had broad administrative and supervisory authority, or has his or her experience been limited to research or administration activities in specialized areas?
- Has the candidate worked directly with a chief executive/manager or department head in the past? Does the candidate have experience working with citizen organizations and other groups?
- What is the employment history of the candidate? Does it suggest a pattern of broad experience and increasing responsibility? Does it show stable tenure with each employer or a pattern of frequent movement from one position to another?
- What is the current salary of the candidate? Does it fit within the stated parameters?
- How have the resume and letter of transmittal been prepared? Does it suggest a real interest in the vacant position? What does the resume itself tell you about the person?

When the resume review process has been completed, it should be possible to narrow the total number of candidates to perhaps ten to fifteen. This group will be subject to reference checks and will ultimately be narrowed to a smaller group, who will be designated as finalists and invited for interviews. Two consider-

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ations are important at this point. First, the chief executive/manager should resist the temptation to select finalists before reference checks have been completed. When reviewing resumes, employers may want to pick candidates who appear on paper to be the best and to move ahead to the interview. But while resumes are helpful as an initial screening device, they can also be misleading. They tell nothing about the individual's ability to work effectively with people. They may also leave an exaggerated impression of the person's actual background, responsibilities, and accomplishments. It is neither practical nor necessary to conduct reference checks on all candidates, but it is important to conduct them on a select group as a prelude to—and basis for—picking finalists.

Second, the chief executive/manager should be sure that the reference checks are work related. There is nothing wrong with talking with community leaders and general references about a candidate's strengths and weaknesses. But the purpose of the background check is to obtain a solid reading of the candidate's ability to handle the job administratively and work effectively with management, staff, and people in general. Consequently, reference checks should be conducted primarily with people who know local government, who understand the nature and responsibilities of the vacant position, and who have firsthand knowledge of the candidate's performance. Work-related reference checks are normally based on conversations with current and former staff members and others whom the candidate has worked closely with or supervised.

When conducting reference checks as a basis for narrowing the field to a group of finalists, the following guidelines should be used:

- The reference checks should be done by the same person to ensure consistency.
- Similar areas and questions relative to the candidate should be covered with each reference contact to provide a good basis for comparison.
- Enough people should be contacted to get a consistent reading as to the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate. If a person can say only good things about the candidate, he or she should be asked directly what weaknesses the candidate has.
- The reference check should be used to learn about the person's ability to work effectively with people, as well as to develop a more complete understanding of the candidate's work experience and specific accomplishments.

Using the results of the reference checks (and keeping in mind the original recruiting guidelines that indicate what the agency is looking for), the chief executive/manager should be able to narrow the field to a small group of finalists, who will then be invited for an interview. Each agency obviously makes its own decision as to who, and how many, will be interviewed,

but the finalist group should be large enough to expose persons doing the hiring to an array of personalities. In most cases, a minimum of five should be interviewed. The agency may also wish to establish a backup group in case some of those selected decide not to pursue the position further.

Interviewing finalists. After finalists have been selected, the person responsible for conducting the recruitment should call each finalist and take the appropriate next steps. In addition to telephone notification, a confirming letter and packet of information/resources should be sent to each finalist. Specifics and other steps would include the following:

1. Inform each remaining candidate that he or she has been selected as a finalist. Offer congratulations, impress upon the individual that the entity is delighted to have his or her resume, and confirm the candidate's continuing interest in the position. Be realistic: individuals often have other options for career growth. This position may not be the only opportunity that the candidate is considering.
 2. Advise each finalist of the nature and format of the interview process, the time, and the date. State how many will be interviewed, whether there are any in-house candidates, and when you expect a decision to be made. Indicate that this will all be confirmed in a follow-up letter and that supplemental materials about the entity and/or the vacant position will be included (if applicable).
 3. Unless state law or the advice of legal counsel dictates otherwise, assure the candidate that confidentiality will be maintained. If the names of finalists are to be made public (i.e., in the case of public right-to-know or "sunshine" laws), advise the candidate of this immediately and give him or her an opportunity to withdraw before this critical point in the process arises.
 4. State the entity's policy on reimbursement of expenses in conjunction with the interview. It is the practice of most agencies to reimburse candidates for key management positions for any out-of-pocket expenses, such as transportation, room, and board. Reimbursement of expenses is another way the entity can demonstrate interest in the candidate. It tends to reinforce the positive nature of the process, and in some cases, it can make the difference as to whether the finalist will continue to be a candidate. Where the entity has a strong reluctance to reimburse or current policy limits its ability to do so, some organizations have agreed to share expenses with the candidate or indicated that they will reimburse all expenses after the first trip.
- The entity may also offer to handle all reservations, transportation, and related matters. In most cases, the entity confirms the time and place and lets the finalists make their own arrangements. Finalists tend to prefer this latter approach.

In planning the interview process, the chief executive/manager obviously has the ability to structure an approach that feels comfortable personally and that he or she believes will promote making the best decision. The following two techniques are commonly used:

Personal interview. Local government entities use this approach most frequently. Typically, the chief executive/manager, alone or with a panel, meets with each finalist for an hour or more. The interviewer questions the individual about a variety of matters: overall work experience, specific accomplishments, career objectives, alternative approaches to practical problems faced by the department or division, and similar issues. The candidate, of course, has an opportunity to assess the chief executive/manager and to ask questions as well.

The personal interview is easy to organize, does not require a large time commitment from any of the participants, and can take place in a comfortable setting that contributes to an open and relaxed discussion. Because the initial interview may be limited to an hour, the chief executive/manager may wish to schedule a second interview with one or more of the finalists.

More than one interview may be used. Finalists may be interviewed separately by a panel and by the chief executive/manager. When two different interviews are held it provides more time to find out about the qualifications and experience of the finalist. Importantly, the use of two interview sessions can help make a better selection decision.

Assessment center. An assessment center is frequently used in the recruitment of public safety personnel and other key management positions. If well planned and organized, an assessment center can be an effective selection technique. Because it involves role playing and other exercises in addition to an interview, however, those local government entity officials who will be involved in the hiring process must be able to take the time necessary and must feel comfortable participating in an “acting-like” situation that goes beyond the traditional interview. One advantage of an assessment center is that the employer can see how one candidate acts in relation to others. Because the process tends to pit one candidate against another in a group situation, the candidate must be properly briefed to minimize concerns about the process.

Regardless of which technique is used, the following guidelines are important:

1. The interview process should be well organized and the setting comfortable.
2. The process should help cement the candidate’s interest in the position. The chief executive/manager may wish to arrange a tour of the facilities and the department before (preferably) or after the interview. The local government entity should act as a good host, extending the same level of courtesy to all candidates equally.

Suggested interview questions

NOTE: These general questions may be supplemented with more specific questions on the position’s particular objectives, problems, and priorities.

1. Describe your background and experience. What have been the areas of emphasis?
2. How does your experience qualify you for this position?
3. Have you had experience in all areas of service related to this position? If you have not had experience in certain fields, how would you approach management in these areas?
4. What particular experience do you have in budget preparation and finance?
5. What particular experience do you have in personnel and labor relations?
6. How do you describe your management style?
7. What is your experience as a supervisor? How many people have you supervised?
8. Have you ever had to terminate someone? What process did you follow?
9. What are your thoughts on performance evaluation? What process do you follow to set objectives and monitor performance?
10. How will you assess the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and identify opportunities to improve it?
11. How do you approach the planning process? What system do you use to set objectives and priorities?
12. What is important to you in establishing effective working relationships with others?
13. To what extent do you believe contact with citizens and citizen groups is important? How do you typically handle this responsibility?
14. What experience have you had working on an intergovernmental or interdepartmental basis? Have you worked directly with the state and federal government, councils of government, and other units of the local government entity?
15. What will be your first steps upon assuming responsibility for this position? What do you hope to accomplish in the first year?
16. From your limited vantage point, what do you believe to be the challenges and opportunities facing our organization? How is this likely to change in the future?
17. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
18. Where do you want to be five and ten years from now?
19. Why are you interested in this position?
20. What are your expectations with respect to compensation?

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3. Most often interviews are simply discussions among the chief executive/manager, the oral interview panel, and the finalist. Sometimes, however, the entity may choose to supplement the interview process and invite other staff or community leaders to participate. For example, the finalist may meet with department heads or other staff to review departmental operations in detail or tour the facilities. Similarly, the finalist may meet with selected community leaders to receive input on matters the leaders consider important to the local government entity. If this is done, it should be emphasized that the purpose is to provide the candidate with additional information about the entity and that these individuals will not be involved in the actual selection.

Obviously the local government entity should use care in selecting individuals with whom the finalist will meet, and the importance of maintaining confidentiality should be emphasized to all concerned. Care should also be taken that the process does not confuse, offend, or take the candidate by surprise.

4. If the spouse is invited to accompany the finalist, this part of the process also must be well organized. The interests of the spouse should be determined and accommodated. Activities could in-

clude a tour of the facility, an opportunity to talk with realtors and visit homes, and a briefing on schools in the area. Spouses should never be included in a formal interview process or made to feel that they are being interrogated in any way. Including the spouse should be viewed as a courtesy. It also allows the chief executive/manager and the spouse get to know each other, and this may result in the spouse having the same positive impression of the local government entity and the vacant management position as the candidate. Inclusion needs to be at an appropriate level with well-selected involvement of internal staff.

5. During both the formal and informal meetings between the finalist and chief executive/manager, discussion and questions should focus on issues found in the recruiting guidelines. Obviously discussions should stay within acceptable legal parameters, which suggests, in part, avoidance of questions concerning politics, religion, family-related particulars, and sexual preference.
6. Time should not be spent during the initial interview talking about compensation, except to ask what the finalist's expectations are. A chief executive/manager who is aware of general expectations can take them into account in making a final selection and negotiating total compensation. To

Assessment centers

An assessment center is a group process through which trained evaluators assess the capabilities and behavior of finalists for a job. The candidates participate in several exercises designed to simulate the kinds of responsibilities that the person hired will be expected to handle.

The assessors evaluate each candidate using criteria selected because of their importance for success on the job. At the conclusion of the exercises, the assessors pool their findings to obtain a consensus as to those candidates who most strongly exhibit the qualities that the hiring department or local government entity is seeking.

Some believe that, compared with traditional interview techniques, assessment centers are more helpful in evaluating candidates' management potential because they present a more complete portrait of each candidate. Assessment centers enable the appointing authority to evaluate behavior in situations that simulate job-related situations. However, critics of assessment centers note these drawbacks: experienced, top-level candidates may not agree to participate; some candidates may be very good in this environment and mask important negative characteristics; some candidates have a tendency to give up if they don't do well in early exercises; candidates with previous negative experiences with assessment centers may shy away from the process; and assessment centers can produce anxiety for candidates.

The first step in conducting an assessment center is to develop a preliminary job analysis that identifies specific requirements for the position, such as leadership ability, flexibility, creativity, and interpersonal skills. With this information in hand, exercises can be developed to assess these skills. Exercises that have been used in assessment centers include biographical presentations, in-basket exercises, management games, role playing, verbal presentations, written exercises, and peer evaluations.

Candidates recognize that assessment centers give them both more time and additional opportunities to demonstrate their abilities. Candidates have more than the typical hour interview to offset what may have been a poor first impression. They also know that the assessment center evaluation criteria are job related. Finally, the process provides feedback to the candidates on their skills, which can be helpful in planning their personal skill development objectives.

Since assessment centers typically take at least one full day to conduct, they can be expensive. Travel, food, and lodging for candidates are standard costs. If a consultant is used to organize, plan, and facilitate the assessment center, there will be an additional fee for professional services. If assessors from outside the community are asked to participate, the local government entity should expect to cover their expenses and, in some cases, pay honoraria to the assessors.

discuss this subject in any detail during the initial interview can deprive the chief executive/manager of the chance to consider more substantive questions and can result in a defensive or argumentative atmosphere before it is even clear that the position will be offered.

7. While an assessment center can span a period of more than one day, the personal interview with the chief executive/manager should occupy at least an hour whether part of an assessment center or not. To pursue a range of questions in less time is difficult, and it will be offensive to the candidate who may have traveled some distance to meet with local agency heads.

As a supplement to the personal interview or assessment center process, some local government entities have used psychological testing in the selection process. This may involve a written test and may also include an in-depth interview with a clinical psychologist. The purpose of this form of testing is to further identify the candidate's strengths and weaknesses in relation to the specific responsibilities of the management position in question. Candidates should be fully briefed on the purpose of the testing and notified in advance that it will be a part of the selection process. The results should be shared with the candidate, and the employer should simply consider the results additional information to be considered when making the final hiring decision.

Postinterview activities. When the interview or assessment center process is over, one of two things usually happens: either one person has emerged as the clear choice, or the field has narrowed to two or perhaps three candidates to pursue further. If one person is the clear choice, the chief executive/manager can simply notify the candidate, confirm the person's willingness to accept the position, and then move right ahead to finalize a total compensation package and other arrangements. This activity can be handled with another trip by the candidate for a face-to-face discussion of these issues.

If there are still two or three candidates whom the chief executive/manager would like to consider further, several options exist. One is to invite each candidate, and possibly the candidate's spouse, back for a second interview. A longer interview, coupled perhaps with some sort of function like a dinner, often provides the insight needed to make a final decision.

Two other options are conducting more extensive reference checks with individuals in each candidate's current community or visiting those communities in person. Both activities can help the chief executive/manager reach a final decision. These steps, without exception, must be coordinated and conducted with the full advance knowledge of the candidate.

Regardless of which approach is taken, the chief executive/manager should take whatever time is necessary to arrive at a comfortable and well-reasoned

Recruitment considerations involving the spouse

It is increasingly difficult for public sector agencies to recruit qualified personnel for top management positions. One factor contributing to this difficulty is that many good candidates today have spouses who are also pursuing a career and whose career needs will affect the candidate's decision to accept a job offer. Ultimately this situation must be resolved by the candidate and his or her spouse, but local government entity officials who are prepared to provide assistance may have greater success in hiring their first-choice candidate.

Candidates may not expect the entity to actively participate in finding new career opportunities for their spouses. However, local government entities, both alone and in concert with their executive recruiting firms, can take the initiative in providing some preliminary assistance to help both the candidate and the spouse facilitate a transition. Steps that local government entities may choose to include are

- Providing counseling assistance to the spouse regarding career opportunities in the community
- Providing professional resume preparation assistance to the spouse
- Arranging meetings and interviews for the spouse with prospective employers and others in the community
- Paying the costs of trips by the spouse to the new community in advance of actual relocation to facilitate the job interview and search process.
- Providing temporary housing in the new community as well as financing for permanent housing as one way to mitigate the potential loss of income until the spouse locates a career opportunity.

In addition to assisting in job placement, local government entities may involve the spouse during the selection process. Their goal is to be a good host and to do those things that can contribute to an orderly, smooth, and pleasant relocation. The range of activities can include

- Tours of the community
- Appointments with local school officials
- Introductions to qualified realtors
- A reception to welcome the new employee and spouse to the community and to introduce them to community leaders and others

Recruitment of key managers is a two-way relationship. Sensitivity to this fact and a sincere desire and willingness to help can be the ingredients that make the difference in a final decision by the candidate and spouse to relocate.

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decision. At the same time, the interview process and follow-up activities should move forward as promptly as possible so as not to lose momentum or encourage serious candidates to have second thoughts. Of course, once a final decision has been made, all the other candidates should be promptly notified.

Until all arrangements have been finalized, the entity may wish to hold off notifying the other finalists. The chief executive/manager may be unable to conclude negotiations satisfactorily with the chosen candidate and may want to reopen discussions with some or all of the other finalists. Again, from an image standpoint, it is important that all candidates first learn about their status from the local government entity and not from another person, a newsletter, a professional publication, or the press.

Finalizing Arrangements

Once the chief executive/manager has made a decision and the individual has accepted the position, several things need to be done to finish the process: a compensation package needs to be negotiated, and several transition activities need to be completed before the individual relocates and begins work.

Negotiating compensation. Negotiating a total compensation package does not have to be a long and frustrating process. But the chief executive/manager needs to handle negotiations correctly so that relations with the new person get off to a good start and that nothing happens to make the new person reconsider.

When negotiating compensation, the chief executive/manager needs to be firm, but at the same time friendly, flexible, and realistic. Being friendly will help both parties relax in what can be an unusual and tense situation. Being flexible helps in that there may well be more than one way to meet the financial objective of the new person; negotiation implies a willingness to consider alternatives in pursuit of an acceptable package. Being realistic means understanding that, no matter how beautiful and desirable the community, the candidate will not accept the new position for an amount equal to or less than his or her current salary, except in highly unusual circumstances.

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Base salary usually is the place to start when negotiating compensation. Knowing the candidate's current salary and compensation expectations should give the chief executive/manager an idea of where salary is likely to end up. Executive recruiting firms are often

asked to serve as an intermediary between the local government entity and the candidate to negotiate compensation. If an executive recruiting firm is not involved, ICMA, the National Association of Counties, and the state league of cities/counties can help by providing salary information on positions having similar management responsibilities in other public sector agencies.

Before negotiating a compensation package, the chief executive/manager should ask the person selected to itemize his or her current total compensation. This can serve as a starting point for the preparation of a proposed compensation plan that is both competitive and realistic.

Often there will be no negotiation on benefits that are similar from one local government entity to another—for example, medical insurance or holidays. The variables will most likely relate to cash compensation, take-home pay, and particular financial objectives, such as deferred compensation, that the new person may have. The following are elements of a total compensation package:

- Base salary
- Deferred compensation
- Local agency car or car allowance
- Retirement plan
- Medical and related insurance (e.g., dental, optical, life, disability)
- Vacation
- Holidays
- Sick leave
- Membership, dues, and conference attendance.

After receiving a listing of the new person's current total compensation package, the chief executive/manager should outline a proposed package that leaves the individual whole on basic benefits, provides an appropriate step forward in cash-related benefits, assures no reduction in take-home pay, and deals with the person's particular financial objectives.

The compensation negotiation will raise some issues that don't relate to the ongoing compensation package but may well have significant financial implications for both the local government entity and the selected candidate. In dealing with the following issues, both parties need to be flexible and realistic.

- Moving expenses: It is common for an agency to pay the one-time cost of key managers to move their family and household furnishings to the new community. Sometimes a "not-to-exceed figure" is agreed upon on the basis of estimates from moving companies. Another option is paying the lowest of three bids from a professional moving company.
- Temporary housing: Until the new person is able to sell the family home or relocate the family, the new employer sometimes provides an allowance

for temporary housing. Typically, this amount is sufficient to cover the cost of a furnished apartment or condominium. Again, both parties may agree to a fixed time period or amount.

- **Commuting expenses:** The entity will often agree to reimburse the new person for periodic trips to visit his or her family or for the spouse to visit the new community for house-hunting purposes.
- **Housing assistance:** It is unrealistic to assume that a person will accept a position having increased responsibility for less take-home pay. Regional variations in the cost of housing or housing finance contribute to this difficult recruiting situation. A variety of responses exist: a local government entity loan, a salary supplement, or local government entity participation in a shared-equity purchase. There is considerable precedent for local government entities, using appropriate safeguards and limits, to assist in the purchase and/or financing of housing for key management personnel. Repayment clauses are built into the contract to allow for early termination and unforeseen circumstances (death or disability).
- **Signing bonus/incentive:** In some instances, a select number of public sector agencies have permitted the chief executive/manager to entice finalists to join the organization with the inclusion of a one-time signing bonus. This added incentive or supplement to cash compensation is typically payable upon employment. Inclusion of a signing bonus is more often seen on positions that are typically difficult to recruit for and where attracting and maintaining outstanding candidates has been extremely difficult.

Occasionally, an entity is unable to reach agreement on compensation or other matters with its first-choice candidate. The entity then typically enters into negotiations with its second-choice candidate. When an agreement has been finalized, all other candidates should be promptly notified that they were not selected.

After salary, benefits, and other finance-related issues have been worked out, it is time to move to a few remaining important transition activities.

Transition activities. Transition activities refer to actions that occur between the time the chief executive/manager selects the new person and that person begins the job. Such activities can be grouped under two broad categories: general assistance and setting the stage for “a proper start.”

General assistance. To effect a smooth transition, the chief executive/manager should offer general assistance as the new person prepares to move to the community. This might include introductions to realtors and bankers and assistance to the spouse in finding suitable employment.

A proper start. The chief executive/manager can initiate other actions that will be constructive and will get things off to a good start for all concerned. These steps include

- **Orientation meetings:** The chief executive/manager should arrange to introduce the new person to all department heads and other appropriate staff. While the new person may have met some of these people during the interview process, a special meeting or reception can be a pleasant way to officially welcome and introduce the new person. In addition, the chief executive/manager may wish to arrange meetings, briefing sessions, or receptions to introduce the new person to appropriate community groups and civic leaders.
- **Review of objectives:** Although objectives may have been discussed during the interview process, it is desirable for the new person to have an initial work session with the chief executive/manager to discuss and clarify expectations on both sides and to review goals and objectives. This initial communication can help ensure that both sides are working in the same direction from the outset.
- **Performance evaluation:** Using the goals and objective as a starting point, the chief executive/manager and the new person should agree to annually or semiannually review overall performance. This process helps maintain communication between the parties, monitor progress, and review and refine goals and objectives regularly.

CONCLUSION

If the recruitment is well organized and planned, a new manager can be recruited and selected within ninety days, and sooner if necessary. There are many opportunities for shortcuts, but shortcuts increase chances for a bad decision or a less than satisfactory relationship. On the other hand, when chief executive/managers or department heads commit themselves to a comprehensive recruiting process—on their own or with the assistance of an executive search firm—chances for a long-term relationship that will benefit the local government entity and the community are greatly enhanced.

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APPENDIX A

Principal Resource Groups

A variety of state newsletters and publications exist that can be used to advertise for key management positions. These include publications of state leagues of cities and state professional associations in different functional areas, as well as private job bulletins focusing on public sector vacancies. The following, along with other selection public sector Web sites, are available online at www.ralphandersen.com. Resource sites are hot-linked for easy access.

The resource groups listed below have publications that typically are distributed nationally or are a viable resource for conducting candidate outreach.

Airports Council International – North America

1775 K Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: (202) 293-8500 • Fax: (202) 331-1362
Web site: www.aci-na.org

American Association of Airport Executives

601 Madison Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Phone: (703) 824-0500 • Fax: (703) 820-1395
Web site: www.airportnet.org

American Association of Port Authorities

1010 Duke Street
Alexandria, Virginia 55314-3589
Phone: (703) 684-5700 • Fax: (703) 684-6321
Web site: www.aapa-ports.org

American College of Health Care Administrators

1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 355
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Phone: (703) 739-7900 / (888) 88-ACHCA
Fax: (703) 739-7901
Web site: www.achca.org

American Library Association

50 East Huron Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
Phone: (800) 545-2433 / (312) 280-2518
Fax: (312) 440-9374
Web site: www.ala.org

American Planning Association

122 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 1600
Chicago, Illinois 60603
Phone: (312) 431-9100 • Fax: (312) 431-9985
Web site: www.planning.org

American Public Gas Association

11094-D Lee Highway, Suite 102
Fairfax, Virginia 22030-5014
Phone: (703) 352-3890 • Fax: (703) 352-1271
Web site: www.apga.org

American Public Power Association

2301 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
Phone: (202) 467-2900 • Fax: (202) 467-2910
Web site: www.appanet.org

American Public Transportation Association

(formerly American Public Transit Association)
1666 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: (202) 496-4801 • Fax: (202) 496-4323
Web site: www.apta.com

American Public Works Association

2345 Grand Boulevard, Suite 500
Kansas City, Missouri 64108-2641
Phone: (800) 848-APWA / (816) 472-6100
Fax: (816) 472-1610
Web site: www.apwa.net

American Society for Public Administration

1120 G Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 393-7878 • Fax: (202) 638-4952
Web site: www.aspanet.org

American Society of Association Executives

1575 I Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005-1103
Phone: (202) 626-2723 • Fax: (202) 371-8825
Web site: www.asaenet.org

American Society of Civil Engineers

1801 Alexander Bell Drive
Reston, Virginia 20191-4400
Phone: (800) 548-2723 / (703) 295-6300
Fax: (703) 295-6222
Web site: www.asce.org

American Society of Mechanical Engineers

Three Park Avenue
New York, New York 10016-5990
Phone: (212) 591-7722 • Fax: (212) 591-7674
Web site: www.asme.org

American Society on Aging

833 Market Street, Suite 511
San Francisco, California 94103
Phone: (415) 974-9600 • Fax: (415) 974-0300
Web site: www.asaging.org

American Water Works Association

6666 West Quincy Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80235
Phone: (303) 794-7711 • Fax: (303) 795-1989
Web site: www.awwa.org

Building Officials and Code Administrators International

4051 West Flossmoor Road
Country Club Hills, Illinois 60478-5795
Phone: (708) 799-2300 / (800) 214-4321
Fax: (708) 799-4981
Web site: www.bocai.org

Community Transportation Association of America

1341 G Street, NW, 10th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 628-1480 • Fax: (202) 737-9197
Web site: www.ctaa.org

Conference of Minority Public Administrators

(A broad-based minority membership section of the American Society for Public Administration)
P.O. Box 3010
Fort Worth, Texas 76113
Phone: (202) 393-7878 • Fax: (202) 638-4952
Web site: www.compa.org

Council for Urban Economic Development

1730 K Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: (202) 223-4735 • Fax: (202) 223-4745
Web site: www.cued.org

Government Finance Officers Association

180 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 800
Chicago, Illinois 60601-7476
Phone: (312) 977-9700 • Fax: (312) 977-4806
Web site: www.gfoa.org

Institute of Transportation Engineers

1099 14th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005-3438
Phone: (202) 289-0222 • Fax: (202) 289-7722
Web site: www.ite.org

International Association of Assessing Officers

130 East Randolph Street, Suite 850
Chicago, Illinois 60601
Phone: (312) 819-6100 • Fax: (312) 819-6149
Web site: www.iaao.org

International Association of Assembly Managers
(formerly International Association of Auditorium Managers)
 635 Fritz Drive
 Coppell, Texas 75019-4442
 Phone: (972) 255-8020 • Fax: (972) 255-9582
 Web site: www.iaam.org

International Association of Chiefs of Police
 515 North Washington Street
 Alexandria, Virginia 22314
 Phone: (703) 836-6767 • Fax: (703) 836-4543
 Web site: www.theiacp.org

International Association of Fire Chiefs
 4025 Fair Ridge Drive, Suite 300
 Fairfax, Virginia 22033-2868
 Phone: (703) 273-0911 • Fax: (703) 273-9363
 Web site: www.ichiefs.org

International Association of Women Police
 P.O. Box 50365
 Tulsa, Oklahoma 74150-0365
 Phone: (918) 628-0854
 Web site: www.iawp.org

International Conference of Building Officials
 5360 Workman Mill Road
 Whittier, California 90601-2298
 Phone: (562) 699-0541 • Fax: (562) 695-4694
 Web site: www.icbo.org

International Institute of Municipal Clerks
 1212 North San Dimas Canyon Road
 San Dimas, California 91773-1223
 Phone: (909) 592-4462 • Fax: (909) 592-1555
 Web site: www.iiimc.com

International Personnel Management Association
 1617 Duke Street
 Alexandria, Virginia 22314
 Phone: (703) 549-7100 • Fax: (703) 684-0948
 Web site: www.ipma-hr.org

Job Opportunity Bulletin (J.O.B.) for Minorities and Women
c/o International City/County Management Association
 777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 500
 Washington, DC 20002
 Phone: (202) 289-4262 • Fax: (202) 962-3500
 Web site: www.icma.org

National Animal Control Association
 P.O. Box 480851
 Kansas City, Missouri 64148
 Phone: (913) 768-1319 • Fax: (913) 768-1378
 Web site: www.nacanet.org

National Association of Counties
 440 First Street, N.W., Suite 800
 Washington, DC 20001
 Phone: (202) 393-6226 • Fax: (202) 393-2630
 Web site: www.naco.org

National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
 630 Eye Street, NW
 Washington, DC 20001
 Phone: (202) 289-3500 • Fax: (202) 289-8181
 Web site: www.nahro.org

National Association of Regional Councils
 1700 K Street, Suite 1300
 Washington, DC 20006
 Phone: (202) 457-0710 • Fax: (202) 296-9352
 Web site: www.narc.org

National Fire Protection Association
 1 Batterymarch Park
 P.O. Box 9101
 Quincy, Massachusetts 02269-9101
 Phone: (617) 770-3000 • Fax: (617) 770-0700
 Web site: www.nfpa.org

National Forum for Black Public Administrators
 777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 807
 Washington, DC 20002
 Phone: (202) 408-9300 • Fax: (202) 408-8558
 Web site: www.nfbpa.org

National Institute of Governmental Purchasing
 151 Spring Street
 Herndon, Virginia 20170-5223
 Phone: (703) 736-8900 / (800) 367-6447 • Fax: (703) 736-9644
 Web site: www.nigp.org

National League of Cities
 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
 Washington, DC 20004-1763
 Phone: (202) 626-3000 • Fax: (202) 626-3043
 Web site: www.nlc.org

National Public Employer Labor Relations Association
 1620 Eye Street NW, 3rd Floor
 Washington, DC 20006
 Phone: (800) 296-2230 • Fax: (202) 293-2352
 Web site: www.npelra.org

National Recreation and Park Association
 22377 Belmont Ridge Road
 Ashburn, Virginia 20148
 Phone: (703) 858-0784 • Fax: (703) 858-0794
 Web site: www.nrpa.org

Public Housing Authorities Directors Association
 511 Capitol Court, NE
 Washington, DC 20002-4937
 Phone: (202) 546-5445 • Fax: (202) 546-2280 / (202) 543-4381
 Web site: www.phada.org

Public Risk and Insurance Management Association
 1815 North Fort Myer Drive, Suite 1020
 Arlington, Virginia 22209-1805
 Phone: (703) 528-7701 • Fax: (703) 528-7966
 Web site: www.primacentral.org

Public Technology, Inc.
 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 800
 Washington, DC 20004
 Phone: (800) 852-4934 • Fax: (202) 626-2498
 Web site: www.pti.org

Society for Human Resource Management
 1800 Duke Street
 Alexandria, Virginia 22314
 Phone: (703) 548-3440 • Fax: (703) 535-6490
 Web site: www.shrm.org

The Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
 5400 East Olympic Boulevard, Suite 210
 Los Angeles, California 90022
 Phone: (323) 725-3970 • Fax: (323) 725-0316
 Web site: www.shpe.org

United States Conference of Mayors
 1620 I Street, NW
 Washington, DC 20006
 Phone: (202) 293-7330 • Fax: (202) 293-2352
 Web site: www.usmayors.org

Water Environment Federation
 601 Wythe Street
 Alexandria, Virginia 22314-1994
 Phone: (703) 684-2400 • Fax: (703) 684-2492
 Web site: www.wef.org

Women in Fire Services, Inc.
 4414 Regent Street, 2nd Floor
 Madison, Wisconsin 53705
 Phone: (608) 233-4768 • Fax: (608) 233-4879
 Web site: www.wfsi.org

World at Work
(formerly the American Compensation Association)
 14040 North Northsight Boulevard
 Scottsdale, Arizona 85260
 Phone: (460) 951-9191 • Fax: (460) 483-8352
 Web site: www.worldatwork.org

Recruiting Key Management Personnel

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