

DEPARTMENTS

Ethics Inquiries

Receptionist Applicants Raise Eyebrows

Scenario: The town manager has had headaches in filling the receptionist's job. After he offered the position to one woman, she stayed on the job for just three days. The other strong applicants took other jobs or decided they were not interested. Now, the mayor has begun to apply pressure on the manager to offer the job to the girlfriend of the mayor's son.

The girlfriend was ranked at the bottom of the list of candidates. The town manager needs to fill the job, but he is not convinced that she is right for the position. How can he handle this situation diplomatically and retain his professionalism about the recruitment process?

Response: One of the most important principles in the ICMA Code of Ethics is a commitment to the merit system. The town manager should resist the temptation to appease the mayor and hire a candidate that he does not feel is well qualified for the job. The manager may want to advertise the position again and allow the questionable candidate to reapply. In addition, if the town did not use a job-related test to assess the candidates' skills the first time, administering this type of exercise the second time might strengthen the process and help provide an objective basis on which to evaluate candidates.