Job Descriptions

Job descriptions are one of the most important parts of human resources policy because they will serve as the basis for both hiring and, if necessary, discipline. Job descriptions should include:

- A detailed description of the **results of the work** to be done by the position
- A description of the **responsibilities of the position** and **how results will be achieved**

Hiring

To avoid discrimination or any appearance of discrimination, all job openings at the library should be advertised in multiple locations, not just in the library. Multi-branch districts should advertise in all newspapers in the district, provided that there are still local newspapers in the area. Larger libraries should advertise professional positions more widely, through the national library media. The advertisement should briefly describe the position and the minimum educational and experiential requirements that qualify for the position as well as a description of other desired educational and experiential traits (competencies) of the ideal candidate for the position. The posting can also include the anticipated starting salary or salary range and the URL where those interested in applying for the position can find additional information, including the complete job description and the anticipated starting salary, if these are not included in the advertisement.

The only exception to this procedure is when your library has a written policy of filling positions by promotion from within the agency, and when you have a qualified employee who is seeking the promotion. As with all personnel policies, any internal promotion policy should be reviewed by your attorney or risk management provider.
Some Sites Where You Can Post Your Library's Employment Announcements

- **LibIdaho** – The Idaho Library Association’s e-mail discussion list for people interested in all aspects of libraries and librarianship in Idaho. Membership is not limited to librarians or Idaho residents, but the list will probably be of greatest interest and value to those who are working in libraries in Idaho.
  - To subscribe or unsubscribe to LibIdaho, visit http://lists.ala.org/sympa/info/libidaho.
  - To post to the list, send a message to libidaho@lists.ala.org. You do not have to be subscribed to LibIdaho to post a job to the list. However, if you want to see the job that you have posted, you will need to be subscribed to LibIdaho before you send the posting to the list.

- **PNLA’s Job Page** - The Pacific Northwest Library Association is an organization of people who work in, with, and for libraries in Alaska, Alberta, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, and Washington. On PNLA’s Jobs page, the newest jobs are listed at the top of the page. To view current job openings, visit http://www.pnla.org/jobs.

- **INALJ** – I Need a Library Job is a clearinghouse where information professionals can find and share job postings. Visit http://inalj.com/?p=1441 to browse library and information jobs from all over the world. There is no charge for this service, although donations are welcome.

- **ALA JobLIST** – Visit http://joblist.ala.org/ to search or browse the American Library Association’s listing of current library and information jobs in the U.S. and Canada. There is no fee to search, but employers are required to pay for this service.
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Application Forms

The application form (paper or online), in addition to asking for name, address, and telephone number, should ask for information that will tell you how well the applicant meets the minimum requirements and desired traits of the ideal candidate for the position. The application should not, however, ask for unnecessary information that could lead to a charge of discrimination. Such information would include, age, race, marital status, number of children, pregnancy status, social security number, or religion. In other words, ask only for the information that you need in order to evaluate the person’s ability to perform the duties of the advertised position. Do not ask for information that you do not need to make this evaluation.

A reasonable deadline for the applications should be set. Applications received after the deadline should not be considered.

If it is possible to quantify information, that is the best way of evaluating applications. For example, if years of applicable schooling are important for the position, you could award a certain number of points for each year of schooling. The same can be done with years of relevant experience. This scoring system needs to be worked out before looking at the applications. It should be applied — in writing — to each application that has been submitted.

I.C. 65-502 through 65-506 also spells out a requirement that military veterans be given some preference for hiring for public employment in Idaho, which means that you should ask for veteran status on your job applications. This requirement can be met by using a 100-point scoring system, as outlined above, that automatically adds five points for veterans or veterans’ widows, or 10 points for disabled veterans. If you do not wish to use such a system, you would probably be wise to interview all veterans who apply.

From the written application, the top three to five applicants can be chosen to interview. The interview should help you explore the applicants’ qualifications further, and it should also help determine how well they satisfy the more “personal” traits that you might be interested in. For example, if you are hiring someone to work with the public, but they come across as very shy or very aggressive in the interview process, you may want to think about whether they will meet your needs. You do not have to hire the person who gets the highest score on the written application; the interview can be used as a separate test of an applicant’s suitability, for the job. As with the written evaluations, an objective way of scoring these interviews should be worked out before the interviews take place. Each applicant should be asked the same set of questions during the interview process. A written evaluation of each interview should be
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made immediately after the interview is completed. This, and all notes taken during the interview by the interviewer(s), should be retained as part of the recruitment record.

Once the decision has been made, and the person you have chosen has accepted the position, it is a matter of courtesy to inform other applicants of the decision. This is usually done via e-mail these days, although it would be a very nice gesture to send a short note through the postal service. Such a note should simply state that the position has been filled, and wish them luck in their future job searches. You should not explain your decision in the note.

All applicants and evaluation materials should be kept on file. It is important to remember that personnel information relating to a public employee or applicant is exempt from disclosure. See 9-340C for full details.