



## Hiring a Library Director Designing a Successful Interview Process

- I. **Introduction.** Hiring an executive director is one of the most important actions a library takes. The board and city and/or county depends on its library director for day-to-day operations. Also, the working relationship between the library director and the board, staff, volunteers, clients, funding organizations and other service agencies can significantly influence the agency's effectiveness and reputation in the community.
  
- II. **General Steps in Hiring an Executive Director.**<sup>1</sup>
  - A. Determine future needs of agency and develop profile of ideal candidate
  - B. Plan hiring strategy and recruit applicants
  - C. Screen applicants
  - D. Assess candidates
  - E. Hire director
  - F. Establish and maintain a good relationship

In Colorado, items A through C above (**Search Process**) are addressed in accordance with Title 24 of the Colorado Revised Statutes. These requirements apply even if the search is conducted by a private firm at the request of the city, county or library district.

### III. **Search Process.**

- A. Search Committee. The Board will appoint a search committee, which shall establish job search goals. These goals include the following:
  - i. writing the job description
  - ii. setting deadlines for applications
  - iii. listing the requirements for applicants
  - iv. describing the selection process; and
  - v. identifying the timeline for appointing the executive director at an open meeting.
  
- B. List of Finalists Is Public. The Board must make public the list of finalists under consideration for the position of executive director:
  - i. No later than **fourteen** days prior to appointing one of the finalists to fill the position.
  - ii. No offer of appointment shall be made prior to this public notice.
  - iii. The appointment must be made at an open meeting.
  
- C. Finalists. They will:
  - i. Consist of the applicants who are members of the final group of applicants made public.
  - ii. If only three or fewer applicants possess the minimum qualifications for the position these applicants will be considered finalists.
  
- D. Open Records Act Requests
  - i. Determining the finalist list is important because the process of hiring an executive director is open to the public.
  - ii. The information provided by finalists under consideration for the position of executive director is open to public inspection.
  - iii. The following information concerning finalists **shall not** be made available to the public:

---

<sup>1</sup> Jenne, Henderson, Popular Government, Summer 2000

- a. letters of reference
  - b. medical data
  - c. psychological data; and
  - d. sociological data.
- E. Executive Sessions of the Board. The Board may conduct limited discussions in executive session as it related to hiring the executive director. The statutes limit the executive session discussion to the determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategy for negotiations and instructing negotiators.

**IV. Assess Candidates.**

- A. Design and consider the interview in advance:
- i. Carefully design and consider your questions and why you are asking them.
  - ii. Review and discuss the criteria to be measured by each question before the first interview question.
  - iii. Interview consistently across the candidates so that you have a fair basis for comparison.
  - iv. Candidates should be given the opportunity to ask questions of the interviewers (materials on benefits should be provided).
  - v. Conduct the interview; we can provide sample interview questions and “do’s and don’ts” for your reference if you wish, as can Mountain States Employer’s Council: <https://www/msec.org>

**V. Hire the Director.**

- A. Agree on a choice: (i) candidates should be ranked because the first choice may decline and (ii) references provided should be consulted before the final offer is made.
- B. Negotiate the details.
- C. Notify unsuccessful candidates only after final details of the position have been negotiated and accepted.

**VI. Establish and Maintain a Good Relationship with the Library Director.** Set clear expectations for the new director, and plan for a formal evaluation on an annual basis. We can provide forms and detailed information on evaluating library directors if you wish.