

Handbook Highlight from the Montana Municipal Officials Handbook

3.1 Hiring Process

3.101 The Hiring Sequence

Hiring a new municipal employee is an important yet time consuming process. Before advertising, the municipality should take the time to analyze what is really needed in the position. Most employers rush to replace an employee who is leaving, but a vacant position is a great opportunity to slow down, review what role the position plays, and organize the process to ensure the best fit. Steps to consider in the hiring process include:

- **Review the job description.** Make sure it is current and accurately reflects the job. What combination of skills and experience are necessary to do the job effectively?
- **Create a recruitment plan.** Where will the municipality advertise the position and for how long? What will the application process be (application form, resume, letter, etc)? Who will be conducting the interviews? Will a selection committee be used?
- **Advertise the opening.** The municipality can use newspapers, on-line postings (<https://montanaworks.gov/employers>), word-of-mouth and the local job service work force center. The hiring process needs to be open and/or advertised. The municipality can advertise the position internally first, but if it does not hire internally, it will need to publicly advertise the position.
- **Develop the screening criteria.** Prepare a list of interview questions that relate directly to the job description. Decide how the municipality will evaluate the candidates post- interview.
- **Screen the applicants.** Use the same criteria for all applicants to select the most qualified individuals for interview.

- **Schedule and conduct the interview.** Use the same set of questions for each applicant and have the same selection committee present during the interviews. Be sure that the selection committee understands what they can and cannot ask in an interview.
- **Skills testing.** Will the municipality be testing the candidates for basic skills (word processing, customer service, phone skills, excel spreadsheets)? If so, all applicants must be given the same skills test.
- **Check references.** Remember to ask only for job related information.
- **Make the job offer to the successful candidate.** Remember to notify all applicants that the position has been filled.
- **Welcome the new employee to the organization.** Have her/him complete the required employment paperwork (For example, the W-4 form or I-9 Proof of Authorization to work in the USA).

3.102 Essential Functions

Essential functions are the basic job duties that an employee must be able to perform, with or without reasonable accommodation. When hiring a new employee, finalists for any position must be able to successfully perform the essential functions of the position which have been clearly defined by the employer in the job description. In addition, employers must be vigilant that the hiring process does not violate Title I of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) which protects qualified individuals with disabilities from employment discrimination. Under the ADA, a person has a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. An individual with a disability must be qualified to perform the essential functions of a specific job with or without reasonable accommodation in order to be protected by the ADA. In the State of Montana, ADA applies to any employer with an employee.

In the hiring process, municipalities should take the following items into consideration:

- The individual must satisfy the job requirements for educational background, employment experience, skills, licenses and any other qualification standards that are job related; and the individual must be able to perform those tasks that are essential to the job, with or without reasonable accommodation.
- The ADA does not interfere with the employer's right to hire the best qualified applicant.

It simply prohibits employers from discriminating against a qualified applicant

because of a disability.

- Questions regarding whether or not an aspect of a job is essential and should or should not be accommodated should be researched with appropriate legal counsel before a decision is made.

3.103 Job Description

A job description is a summary of the important facts and essential functions of a specific job. A list of model job descriptions for municipalities is available from MMIA at www.mmia.net/resources_personnel_management.asp. In addition, contacting other similarly sized cities and towns might provide additional examples of quality job descriptions. The job description can be used directly or indirectly to assign work, clarify mission, establish performance requirements, assign titles and pay levels to jobs, recruit for vacancies, explore reasonable accommodations, train employees, check for compliance with legal requirements (related to equal opportunity, equal pay, overtime eligibility, etc) and make decisions on job restructuring. A basic job description may include the following areas:

BASIC JOB DESCRIPTION OUTLINE:

Job Title:

Reports to:

FLSA Status: (Non-exempt/exempt from overtime)

Prepared by/Approved date:

Position Summary:

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

Competency: To perform the job successfully, an individual should demonstrate the following competencies: (This area could include customer service, interpersonal skills, oral communication, teamwork, attendance/punctuality, dependability, etc.)

Qualifications: To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill and/or ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Education and/or Experience: List the minimum required education, years of experience or a combination of education and experience (equivalency statement). If the job could be performed without a college education, do not list a college education as a requirement for the position. Instead list the minimum combination of education and experience that prepares the applicant to be successful in the position. Examples of education/skills to include are:

- Language Skills
- Mathematical Skills
- Reasoning Ability
- Physical Demands
- Work Environment