

CHECKLIST FOR HIRING STAFF

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LEGAL NORTHWEST

Hiring new staff members is a decision that should be made with adequate consideration. There are many options for assembling a team, including virtual staff, part-time, and/or independent contractors instead of or in addition to full-time staff. Here are some aspects to review and take into consideration prior to, during, and after the hiring process.

Prior to Hiring

1. Start by fully assessing WHY you need to hire assistance. Is your firm's workload overwhelming; are you growing your practice or adding specialty positions? Determine:
 - Do you need temporary or permanent help?
 - Will the position be part-time or full-time; how many hours per week?
 - If hiring for a permanent position, would it be beneficial to evaluate the candidate over a trial employment period?
 - If hiring for temporary support, how long do you anticipate needing help?
 - Is there another way to solve your challenge outside of hiring?
2. Evaluate your financial position.
 - What is your budget for the hire? Keep in mind not only salary, but benefits, headcount, approval, incentive pay, bonuses, PTO, taxes, desk, parking, computer, etc.
 - Resource: "[How to determine the true cost of an hourly employee](#)" (Intuit)
3. Get to know your local labor market. Including employment numbers, current hiring salaries, and what's important to job seekers. Being aware and responsive to your market can help you be more competitive.
 - Resource: "[Legal Industry Labor Market Trends – Multnomah County, OR](#)" (Legal Northwest, June 2022)
4. Plan ahead of time for staff onboarding. Determine who will be responsible for overseeing onboarding and training – and who can provide additional support as needed. New hires with a thoughtfully planned and supportive onboarding experience are more likely to be engaged, successful, and retained long-term.
 - Have a 'desk manual' that includes useful, basic firm information like logins, resources, contact information, etc.
 - Resource: "[To Retain New Hires, Spend More Time Onboarding Them](#)" (Harvard Business Review, December 2018)
5. Remote vs. Remote Hybrid vs. Onsite. Some considerations: What is your business need? While remote and remote hybrid work are strong candidate preferences, you must decide what works best for your firm.
 - Do you have clients who come into the firm?
 - Do you need in-person assistance full-time, or can you support remote or hybrid remote staff?Working remotely is 70% more desirable to professional industry staff now compared to pre-pandemic; see "[The Great Rehire: What Job Seekers Truly Care About](#)" (ClearlyRated, June 2022).

CHECKLIST FOR HIRING STAFF

- Resource: [“Why Employers Should Support Post-Pandemic Remote Work”](#) (NW Staffing Resources, March 2021)

During the Hiring Process

1. Advertise your open position strategically. In a highly competitive labor market, you can use your posting as a way to differentiate your practice and attract viable applicants.
 - Where to advertise: Consider your audience, who they network with and where they spend time online (what social media they use). Legal-specific job posting sites such as LinkedIn, Oregon Paralegals Association, Association of Legal Administrators: Oregon, and the Oregon State Bar may offer free posting options.
 - What to include in your ad: Job description, compensation, benefits, etc.
 - Job ads with compensation get more responses
 - Resource: [“Thinking About Including a Salary Range in Your Next Job Posting? Here’s What You Need to Know”](#) (BambooHR, January 2022)
 - Share benefits at the top of the ad
 - Include a basic simple task within the posting to see if they can follow directions (i.e. submit resume in PDF format, list references with resume)
 - Always include a ‘call to action’ that the candidate must take in order to learn more or apply for the position
 - Create a company template that matches your website branding and shares what you’re proud of about your practice
 - Develop an appropriate job title and description.
 - Keep your ideal candidate in mind – how would they search for your position?
 - Include compensation and benefits, and your firm’s differentiators
 - Embrace your firm’s authentic voice – avoid copying/pasting a past job description, or one from the web
 - What not to include in your ad – exclusive language, current salary or a salary requirement
 - Make it easy to apply by reducing application steps and friction points
2. Be prepared with candidate screening and interviewing best practices.
 - Watch out for red flags such as frequent typos in written communication and inability or unwillingness to follow instructions
 - Conduct background checks in accordance with state law
 - Be consistent with new hires
 - Have a written policy – one that can be shared with hiring partners – is best, including the type of check and disqualifiers
 - Resource: [“Hiring discrimination and ‘Ban the Box’”](#) (OR BOLI)
 - Utilize in-person and remote interview formats based on your firm and candidates’ needs
 - Keep in mind that in a competitive talent market time is of the essence – don’t delay the interview process
3. Make a successful job offer by reaffirming your competitiveness as an employer and staying on top of communication.
 - Be clear with your offer – share full position and benefits details
 - Keep your offer date to start date as short as possible, planning for regular, frequent contact between you and the candidate during that time

CHECKLIST FOR HIRING STAFF

- Share a gesture of appreciation for your candidate's consideration of your job offer – send a note of thanks, flowers, etc.
- Provide the candidate with a reasonable offer expiration date
- It's best to always assume your candidate is still open and considering other offers until they've started with you
- Resource: "[Hiring Is Hard Enough. Now New Workers Are Vanishing Before They Even Start.](#)" (Wall Street Journal, May 2022)

After the Hiring Decision

1. Thoughtfully plan your onboarding experience – especially day one, week one, and month one. This is your first impression and chance to set the stage for successful employment.
 - Prepare the new hire for day one success by ensuring they have the documents they need for onboarding (identification, employee handbook), and know any relevant day-to-day information (where to park, etc.)
 - Can you take the new hire for coffee or lunch?
 - How and when will staff introductions be made?
 - Determine other staff members who can serve as point of reference/assist as needed
 - Schedule onboarding check-in meetings the first week, month, and quarter
 - Resource: "[15 Steps Managers Can Take To Set New Employees Up For Success](#)" (Forbes, July 2022)
2. Setting clear performance expectations, providing regular feedback and recognition of good work, maintain an open dialogue, and value life/work balance are strategies to help your firm reduce costly turnover – both throughout the onboarding period and beyond. Resource: "[13 Effective Employee Retention Strategies](#)" (Indeed).

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