

## Search Firm Guide

The use of a search firm to assist with the recruitment and screening of applicants may be useful when searching for high level positions. Typical titles where a search firm may be beneficial include Dean, Vice President, Chancellor, etc. The university's recruitment policies can be found in [BPPM 60.17](#)(Administrative Professional) & [60.11](#) (Faculty).

### SELECTING AN APPROPRIATE SEARCH FIRM

There are many important items to consider when choosing a search firm. A strong professional search firm can make the difference between hiring an acceptable candidate and hiring the best candidate. A good firm should be able to quickly assess and understand your needs, culture, environment, and structure to deliver a significant number of highly qualified candidates in an acceptable timeframe. It should be able, and willing, to take a consultative approach; providing you with market analysis, competition information, and recruitment process enhancements.

- ❖ NOTE: Prior to beginning the search firm selection process, obtain statement of approval from the appropriate Appointing Authority and Human Resource Services (HRS).
  - ❖ *Throughout the search process provide HRS with search logistic information (Identification of Search Chair, Search Support, Search Committee Members, Committee Meetings, and Applicant Interviews etc.)*
    - Submit [Executive Recruitment | Search Logistics document](#) to HRS.

In selecting a search firm, consider the following criteria;

1. Evidence of past experience in professional recruiting relevant to this position;
  2. Evidence of past search experience with major land grant research universities;
  3. Evidence of extensive national search capabilities;
  4. Evidence of candidate pool reflecting commitment to diversity including affirmative action standards. Specifically, a demonstrated record of obtaining qualified women and underrepresented candidates who evolve as successful candidates appointed to the position;
  5. An overview of the background and qualifications of the search firm members who will be involved in this project, including the team leader;
  6. A statement of the number and type of ongoing searches the search firm is involved with and a description of the current status of these searches;
  7. A statement of the firm's professional fee arrangements.
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- ❖ Contact Purchasing Services' ([purchasing.wsu.edu](http://purchasing.wsu.edu)), Patty Gropp, Associate Director, at [gropp@wsu.edu](mailto:gropp@wsu.edu) or (509) 335-3582 when there is a need for an Executive Search firm. A brief summary of the Purchasing Services process follows:

1. After the initial contact, Purchasing Services will ask the department to send a Requisition with a first draft of the Request for Proposal (RFP).
2. The RFP is a formal competitive process for selection of the consulting firm in accordance with state procurement laws.
3. The RFP must be posted to the **state's electronic bid notification** board WEBS. Typically the RFP is posted on WEBS for 3 weeks. Purchasing Services may also email it to firms that are not registered on WEBS.
4. Typically 6-10 proposals are received for each RFP.
5. Proposal review and evaluation by the department culminates in the identification and justification of the apparent successful consulting firm. Department provides a recommendation back to Purchasing Services.
6. The recommendation is reviewed by Purchasing Services.
7. Purchasing Services announces of apparent successful consulting firm.
8. After the successful bidder is announced other firms may request a debriefing of verbal information or file a protest within 3 days of the initial announcement of the successful consulting firm.
9. Contract development and negotiation. (As part of the RFP document Purchasing Services provides a sample contract with WSU terms and conditions. This reduces the need to negotiate terms at this stage.) The actual negotiation is done by Purchasing Services.
10. Contract award (includes designation of contract manager. The period of performance is open-ended for example "February 19, 2015 until position is filled."
11. Performance; which can include work with the Search Committee, background checking, collection of resumes, reference checks, presentation of short list to search committee and travel arrangements for interviewees.
12. Consultant bills progress for payments. Invoices must be approved by contract manager.
13. Approved invoices are paid by Accounts Payable.

#### AFTER THE SEARCH FIRM IS SELECTED

Once the firm is selected, the firm and the search committee chair should meet to discuss the selection criteria. At the initial meeting, be sure to discuss these key items.

- ❖ Position responsibilities/job requirements
- ❖ Expectations/objectives (of both Washington State University and the search firm)
- ❖ Timetable
- ❖ Washington State University mission/goals/values
- ❖ Environment/structure of department
- ❖ Competition/market analysis
- ❖ Communication channels/key contacts
- ❖ Compensation

#### WSU RECRUITMENT STANDARDS

Search Firm Guide  
Updated December 2018

The university's recruitment policies and processes apply even if a search firm is used, including collecting and tracking confidential EEO/AA data (see below).

- ❖ Recruitments handled by a search firm are to be posted on wsujobs.com through the Online Position Description & Recruitment System (OPDRS). Two options are available:
  1. The posting may allow candidates to submit application materials directly to wsujobs.com for review by the search firm. This option also allows for the collection and tracking of EEO/AA data directly through OPDRS.
  2. The posting may direct candidates to submit application materials directly to the search firm (no application materials would be submitted in OPDRS). If this option is chosen, the search firm must assist HRS in collecting and tracking EEO/AA data.
- ❖ All search committee members should be familiar with WSU recruitment and selection processes. The search chair should contact their HRS representative to schedule search training.

Additional information can found at the following sites:

Human Resource Representatives <http://hrs.wsu.edu/resources/hrs-information>

Recruitment Toolkit <http://hrs.wsu.edu/recruitment-toolkit>

Pre-employment Inquiry Guidelines [BPPM 60.08](#)