



Guide to Recruiting a City Administrator

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Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction.....	3
Recruitment Techniques.....	4
Pros and Cons of Various Techniques	5
Interim Management	6
Steps in the Selection Process	8
Conclusion.....	13

Appendices

APPENDIX A Selection Process Checklist (for council use).....	14
APPENDIX B-1 Format for Administrator Profile.....	15
APPENDIX B-2 Format for Administrator Profile (for council use)	17
APPENDIX B-3 Sample City Administrator Profile	18
APPENDIX C Sample Applicant Acknowledgment Letter.....	22
APPENDIX D Interview Guidelines.....	23
APPENDIX E-1 Suggested Interviewing Techniques	24
APPENDIX E-2 Sample Interview Questions	26
APPENDIX F Sample Oral Interview Rating Form	30
APPENDIX G Sample Press Release	32

Introduction

As a city councilor, one of the most important responsibilities you may have during your tenure is to select a new manager or administrator. Your city administrator or manager (referred to as "administrator" in this guide) is the most pivotal employee in your city organization. The city administrator functions as the critical link between the council and staff. The administrator guarantees that council policy becomes reality in day-to-day services and that those services are delivered effectively.

The optimal relationship between the administrator and the council, employees, and the community is different for each city. Because hiring an administrator is such an important decision, you will want to be very deliberate. For the sake of your community, it is critical that a thorough, well-defined process be used to select the best candidate possible.

Fortunately, most cities do not have to replace administrators very often. On the other hand, since cities generally do not have a lot of experience in the recruitment process, they can be uncertain about how best to proceed. This guide can help your council review recruitment technique alternatives, understand each of the required steps, devise a recruitment plan that meets your community's needs, recruit an administrator, and execute an employment agreement. The options below will be discussed in greater detail, and tools will be provided to help the governing body carry out specific steps.

Disclaimer

The Guide to Recruiting a City Administrator is not a substitute for legal advice. To ensure compliance with federal, state, and any applicable local laws, city officials conducting a city manager or administrator recruitment are advised to seek the advice of their city attorney.

Recruitment Techniques

There are two basic alternatives available to a city that is seeking an administrator:

1. Hire a private recruiting firm to do all or some of the following:
 - a. Search for appropriate candidates;
 - b. Screen the candidates based upon city requirements; and
 - c. Set up interview schedules and assist the council with interviews and selection;or
2. Perform all the steps in-house.

Pros and Cons of the Two Techniques

TECHNIQUE	PROS	CONS
<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Private Executive Recruiting Firm</p>	Full-service, relieves staff and council from recruiting/screening chores. Level of service depends on community's specifications	Often expensive, depending on level of services purchased
	Actively solicits candidates	
	May be able to dedicate more time to the project than the city is able to	
	Knows current availability of managers, often throughout the United States, who are seeking a new community	
	Have experience; can verify success record	
	Acquainted with many managers on regional or national basis	
<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Self-Administered Recruitment Process</p>	Least expensive	Unfamiliar with process which may result in serious or costly mistakes
	Provides council with greatest involvement in process	Of these alternatives, requires most time from council members
	Works best when city has professional human resources staff	Council does not normally solicit or know of potential candidates
		Outside resources required for background checks unless a full-service human resources program is available
		Recruitment can interfere with normal city business and require extensive staff time
If using city staff, it may place them in an awkward position as they would be reviewing their potential supervisors in an unsupervised portion of the process		

Interim Management

Often the first questions elected officials must face when a vacancy occurs are:

1. What should we do to ensure that the affairs of the local government are properly administered until a new manager is selected and on board?
2. Who should be in charge?

First and foremost, local government officials must avoid acting impulsively and succumbing to the temptation to hurriedly appoint an administrator as a quick fix. Local government officials need an interim period to carefully consider the criteria they are seeking in a new administrator and to recruit and select the best possible successor who meets these criteria. To ensure a smooth transition and to allow the city the time necessary to consider the right skills and qualifications needed, an interim administrator can help buy valuable time. Here are several steps for a council to consider:

- ***Appoint an interim administrator.*** It is important to clarify who will be responsible for directing the local government while the new administrator is being recruited. The interim administrator could be a current staff member in whom the council has confidence or could be an individual available elsewhere for interim positions. The council's discussion of whether and who to appoint as an interim must be made in an open public meeting unless the council has satisfied the requirements in ORS 192.660(2)(a) to conduct those discussions in executive session. City councils are advised to seek the advice of their city attorney to determine if they are complying with ORS 192.660(2)(a) before meeting in executive session.¹ The League hosts an [interim registry](#) where people interested in serving as an interim administrator may post their information. This is a voluntary listing, and the League does not screen the postings and is not thereby making any recommendations regarding the qualifications of the persons offering their services. The League recommends cities do background and reference checking for interim appointments.
- ***Ensure the organization understands that the interim administrator has the same authorities and responsibilities as the regular manager.*** Regardless of who is appointed, it should be clear to all local government officials and staff that the interim administrator is in charge. It should also be clear that this person does not have an inside track to the new position. If the interim administrator is ultimately selected, it is because that person proves to be the best of the applicants. Some cities choose to appoint interims who agree not to be a candidate for the permanent job.

¹ State law gives the Oregon Government Ethics Commission the authority to assess fines against individuals who violate Oregon's public meeting laws by meeting in executive session without proper authority. However, if a governing body met in executive session upon the written advice of its legal counsel, state law prevents the Ethics Commission from imposing fines against those officials even when a violation might have occurred.

- ***Defer key actions when possible.*** Obviously, the local government must continue to operate during the recruitment period. The council and interim management team should do whatever is necessary to make sure that important projects and the delivery of services continues to move ahead. However, they should defer major actions where possible until the new administrator is appointed. After all, to ensure effective administrative leadership in the future, it is desirable that the new administrator be involved in as many policy decisions as possible. Just filling a vacant department head position, for example, is an opportunity for the new administrator to begin building an administrative team. In fact, such an opportunity can be used successfully to pique the interest of potential candidates during the recruitment process.
- ***Act in a timely fashion.*** The recruitment process should be conducted pursuant to a realistic timeline that provides sufficient opportunity to develop a profile, attract and screen candidates and come to a timely conclusion.

Steps in the Selection Process

The following explains the steps in a selection process. In addition, it provides rough estimates of the time that each step may take are indicated. After reading this section, it is useful for the city to use Appendix A to develop a recruiting plan, complete with estimated time frames, for your community. Please keep in mind that at each step, the council, or a subcommittee of council, must conduct its business in a meeting open to the public, unless the council has satisfied the requirements in ORS 192.660(2)(a) to conduct that step in executive session. City councils are advised to seek the advice of their city attorney to determine if they are following ORS 192.660(2)(a) before meeting in executive session. City councils should also keep in mind that executive sessions are limited to deliberations, and councils may not make a final decision or take a final action in executive session.

Step 1. Define Position and Develop Profile

Time Required: up to two weeks

- The council meets to review recruiting steps and adopt a schedule. This meeting should be held in a meeting open to the public.
- Review any charter provisions or ordinances creating the manager/administrator position and the job description to ensure they continue to accurately reflect the city's expectations and job requirements.
- The council should prepare a profile of the skills, training, and qualities of the "ideal" candidate. This is discussed more in Appendix B. This step is critical to subsequent steps in the recruiting and screening process.

Step 2. Prepare Advertisement and Review Salary Range

Time Required: can be completed within time identified for Step 1

- A review of the present salary range is useful to ensure the city remains competitive.
- Draft a complete job announcement. A closing date should be specified and should be set a minimum of four weeks after publication of the first announcement.
- Remember, many national publications require four to six weeks' notice for publication.
- At a minimum the advertisement should include these items:
 - Name of the local government;
 - Title of the vacant position;
 - Population of the local government;

- Amounts of the operating and capital budgets;
- Number of full-time employees;
- Type of services provided;
- Statement of starting salary or that salary is open and commensurate with background and experience. A local government with a formal salary policy should openly declare it on the announcement;
- Statement that qualifying veterans and disabled veterans will receive veterans preference with instructions on how applicants should claim the preference if desired;
- Filing deadline, including any special items of information desired such as salary history, writing sample and work-related references;
- Brief description of key areas of interest, and required and desirable experiences and qualifications;
- Where and to whom to send resumes;
- Web site address of the local government; and
- Contact person who can answer questions about the recruitment.

Step 3: Decide Where to Advertise

Time Required: four to six weeks

- The most common publications in which Oregon cities advertise are the League's *Local Focus* magazine and the *ICMA Newsletter*. These two publications will generally reach the vast majority of interested applicants.
- The Oregon and Washington Leagues' Web sites are another effective resource for posting advertisements.
- Some jurisdictions choose to include major regional newspapers (Portland, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, etc.), although they are more costly.
- Many cities publish the announcement on the city's web site as well.

Step 4. Send Acknowledgment Letters

- A letter thanking each candidate for his or her interest should be sent as soon as an application is received. This is a good opportunity to tell the candidate a little more

about the city and the geographic area. Many cities insert a brochure describing the community.

- Details of the selection process should also be provided to avoid numerous phone calls and personal inquiries later.
- A sample letter is provided as Appendix C.

Step 5. Screen the Applicants

Time Required: two weeks

- Screening can begin following the closing date. Whether the full council, or a subcommittee, or a private firm conducts the screening, the primary document used in the screening should be the profile developed earlier in the process by the council. The process selects a maximum of 15-20 candidates which most closely fit the profile developed.
- Occasionally, a city prefers to further narrow applicants by asking for submissions of a writing sample or response to essay questions relative to the position. The council can use the response to evaluate applicant opinions, breadth of experience and expertise. The written response is useful to evaluate timeliness, thoroughness, use of the English language, etc. If the city chooses to add this step, the written exercises should be sent to those who make the first cut after screening and responses should be limited to five pages or less. From these responses, a smaller number are selected for background checks or interviews. If the quality of a writing sample or response to essay questions could result in disqualification of an applicant be sure to factor in veterans' preference points, as they must be applied to the writing samples or essays submitted by qualifying veterans. *Note: If this option is taken, generally allow three to four weeks additional time.*
- Confidentiality is an important consideration in any recruitment. The elected body should determine, at the outset, the extent to which the recruitment process will be public. The confidentiality of resumes should be maintained and should be consistent with applicable state law and the advice of the local government attorney.
- Regret letters explaining that the candidate is no longer being considered should be mailed throughout the process at each step along the way.

Step 6. Application of Veterans Preference and other Employment Laws

- Public employers are required to provide qualifying veterans and disabled veterans with preference in employment in accordance with Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 408.225, 408.230, and 408.235. Local ordinances or policies might also require the council to give preference to other candidates. The veterans preference laws and the interplay of those laws with other local preferences has been the subject of litigation and legislation. Consequently,

the law in this area is constantly evolving and cities should work closely with their legal counsel and human resources professionals to ensure the city is complying with the law.

Step 7. Background Checks

Time Required: three to four weeks depending on number of candidates and who performs the checks

- Background checks are conducted with work-related contacts. Although some jurisdictions seek written references, phone calls are quicker and often more candid. Reference checking is a tedious, expensive, and time-consuming process if done well. However, time and money spent during this step will save time in the long run by avoiding travel costs for interviewing unqualified finalists. A minimum of three weeks is normally necessary to complete background checks. The city may wish to contract for additional information from a reliable source on items such as degree verification, credit history and criminal history.
- Note: It is perfectly acceptable to conduct background and reference checks for only the finalist(s) the city is actually considering appointing. Many applicants do not want to alarm their communities with a possible resignation unless the appointing community is seriously considering a job offer.

Step 8. Interviews

Time required: three weeks; allow two weeks' notice to fit interviews into applicants' schedules.

- Prior to the interviews, the council may wish to send the applicant additional information about the city, such as the budget, audits, comprehensive plan, charter, etc. Occasionally applicants will request information about housing costs, spousal employment opportunities, schools, etc. The local chamber of commerce can provide helpful information to respond to these requests.
- Some councils choose to conduct telephone interviews to narrow the list of finalists prior to the in-person interviews. If the council takes this step, only appropriate questions may be asked. Prior to interviewing applicants, the council needs to decide whether to pay travel expenses, whether to pay for spouse's expenses, and whether to arrange tours, etc. It is common for a city to pay transportation costs, meals, and lodging for interviewees. Many cities arrange tours of the community and facilities for candidates prior to the interview.
- The entire council should interview the finalists. Consensus is important in selecting an administrator. Consensus is not likely to be achieved if only one or two people conduct the interviews and inform the rest of the council of the selected candidate.

- Interviews should be scheduled as close together as possible—preferably the same day—to assure equal treatment of all candidates. Job-related questions should be prepared in advance and asked of all candidates. The administrator profile is useful in deciding which questions to ask and in evaluating responses. See Appendices D through F for interviewing techniques, sample questions, and an interview rating form.
- If the council is not able to select a new administrator following the first set of interviews, a second interview with the top finalists may be necessary. At this stage, the city may want to pay expenses for the candidates' spouses to accompany them.

Step 9. Deliberations, Selection, and Negotiation

- When the city selects its preferred candidate, there are still several decisions to be made. Additional details also need to be discussed and finalized, including salary, moving expenses, fringe benefits, etc. The council should also be prepared to discuss an employment contract with the new administrator or appoint one of its members to represent the council in those discussions.
- Other finalists should not be rejected until the city has reached a final agreement with the successful candidate. Negotiations between the city and its top candidate occasionally break down, requiring the city to turn to another choice. Occasionally, there will only be one finalist who meets the city's needs. If that person refuses the job, the city must either turn to the next qualified candidate or begin the recruitment process again. Remember, this is an extremely important selection. A decision based on expediency may turn sour later. The council should not shy away from re-advertising if they are not satisfied with applicants the first time around.
- The city may want to have their city attorney prepare a draft contract for council review prior to beginning negotiations.
- Most administrators will require a minimum of 30 days to give notice to current employers and relocate to a new community. Notice of 30 days is considered professional and should be honored.
- As soon as the new administrator has advised his/her former community that he/she has accepted a new position with your community, it is appropriate to issue a press release or public announcement. A sample announcement can be found in Appendix H.

Step 10. The New Administrator Arrives

- It is desirable to have an initial work session with the new administrator to discuss and clarify initial expectations on both sides and to review goals and objectives. Even though some of these issues may have been raised during the interview process, communication from the outset can help ensure a smooth working relationship.

- Any information and introductions that the council can provide to the new administrator will be most welcome and helpful in making the transition to the city smooth.

Conclusion

Hiring an administrator is making an investment in your community. Approach the task methodically, one step at a time. The time you spend now is likely to be reflected in the quality of administrator you eventually hire. Like anything else, you can reduce the risk of making a poor decision by doing a thorough job. Some councils have found that the process of recruiting a new administrator provides a unique opportunity to review and revise council goals. It can even make the council a stronger and closer team.

Appendix A: Selection Process Checklist (for council use)

Steps	Estimated Time Required	Assigned To	Targeted Completion Date
1. Define position and develop profile			
2. Prepare advertisement and review salary range			
3. Decide where to advertise			
4. Prepare and send acknowledgement letters			
5. Screen applicants			
6. Determine applicant's veteran status and apply preference points for qualified veterans			
7. Conduct background and reference checks (if conducted before interviews)			
8. Select candidates and conduct preliminary phone interviews (if desired)			
9. Select candidates for interview			
10. Determine level of reimbursement for candidate (travel, lodging, meals, spouse expenses)			
11. Select top candidates			
12. Negotiate with top candidates			
13. Make hiring decision			
14. Issue press release/announcement regarding selection of new administrator			
15. Advise any candidates still in the selection process that a new administrator has been selected and has accepted			
16. Welcome the new administrator			

Appendix B-1: Format for Administrator Profile

Suggested Areas for Skills and Experience

This form shows one possible format that the council can follow to develop an “administrator profile.” In addition to assisting the council (and any recruiting service the council may hire) in the selection process, the profile can be an important community document. It allows the city to see the qualifications the council will seek in the next administrator. Some cities obtain public comment on what kind of administrator residents desire.

A blank copy of the profile form is found in Appendix B.2 for use by the council to use when developing an administrator profile.

Profile Information

Education

Many cities prefer a bachelor’s degree or a master’s degree in public administration, business administration or a related field. Some may allow a candidate to substitute experience for some required education.

Experience

Most cities will seek someone with management experience, either as a local government manager, assistant city manager or department head. Any special experience desired, such as operating an electric utility, is important to note in the profile. The required number of years of experience should be included in the announcement. In addition, most cities will require skill and/or proven experience in the following areas:

- Administrative and management ability needed to help determine whether the applicant can manage the size and complexity of the particular city or that seeks an administrator.
- Governmental budget and finance including debt management, enterprise accounting and other special funding mechanisms, depending on the local government’s needs.
- Labor relations and personnel experience that will allow the administrator to effectively bargain labor contracts and manage diverse groups of employees. Level of experience and training will depend on the city’s organizational structure and complexity.
- Community relations experience that will allow the administrator to effectively speak publicly and communicate with the media and citizens in a variety of methods.
- Council relations experience that will allow the administrator to work effectively with the entire council as well as individual members.

- Intergovernmental relations that will allow the administrator to effectively work with state officials, other councils, and intergovernmental organizations, such as councils of governments and special districts, to the extent the city desires.
- Innovations and major achievements should be highlighted in any area in which the council seeks new information, creative solutions, etc. Common areas for innovations include responses to environmental regulations, financing services in times of decreasing revenue and effectively delivering services to diverse populations.

Appendix B-2: Format for Administrator Profile (for council use)

Describe the background, skills, and qualities you believe your city needs in an administrator based on the suggested skills listed in appendix B-1 and other attributes that are necessary for your community.

Skill/Experience	Notes/Comments	Importance (High, Medium Low)
Education		
Experience		
Administrative and management ability		
Governmental budget and finance		
Labor relations and personnel experience		
Community relations experience		
Council relations experience		
Intergovernmental relations		
Innovations and major achievements		
Other important skills and experience		

Appendix B-3: Sample City Administrator Profile

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE OREGON DRAFT ADMINISTRATOR PROFILE

General Roles and Responsibilities

The position of city manager is established in the city charter. The city manager is hired by and serves at the pleasure of the mayor and six-member city council. The manager assists the mayor and council in the development of city policies and carries out policies established by ordinances and resolutions approved by the council. The city manager is the chief executive officer of the city and exercises supervision over its general affairs, and all department heads and employees, except the Municipal Judge. While the city charter does not have a residency requirement for the city manager, the council is looking for someone who will become actively involved in the community, and residency will be valued.

Background Requirements

Education. The city manager is required to have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in public/business administration or related field. A master's degree is a plus. Any satisfactory combination of practical experience (beyond that required for initial qualification) and education will be considered if the candidate is able to demonstrate they can satisfactorily perform the job functions.

Experience. The position requires at least five years' progressively responsible experience in local government. Progressive management responsibilities would ideally include positions such as city manager/administrator, assistant manager, finance director, community development director, other department head or equivalent. Telecommunications experience would be a plus. CEO level municipal experience is preferred.

Skills and Performance Standards

Administrative/Management Abilities. The city manager must be able to establish and maintain positive and cooperative working relationships with citizens, city officials, and employees. They must be a team leader who can hire the right people and develop a team that works effectively together. They must be someone who can take policy direction from the council and lead staff to make things happen. The manager will be able to effectively manage and organize projects and provide effective delegation and supervision to make sure budgets and timelines are met. The manager must know municipal government organization, powers, functions, and relationships. Excellent written and verbal communication skills are essential. The manager will need to have the ability to talk with small and large groups on issues of importance to the city.

The city manager must have experience in and be able to manage and oversee all city operations, including the following: budgeting and finance; planning and land use; city utilities; public safety; emergency management; public works; personnel; and all other city departments and services. The manager also acts as the city's business agent in the sale of real property and other

matters relating to city contracts, permits, franchise agreements and leases. They must understand public purchasing and contracting requirements, as the manager acts as the city's purchasing agent and signs all requisitions on city accounts. In order to perform the duties expected of the manager, the successful candidate must be computer literate and be proficient in the use of standard word processing, spreadsheet and online communication programs such as email. Knowledge of Oregon land use laws and procedures is necessary to be successful in this position.

Budget/Finance. The successful candidate will have a working knowledge of Oregon's budget laws and will be able to deal creatively with declining revenues and limited resources. Independence is a full-service city and, as such, has city utilities including a jointly owned telecommunications fiber network. The manager must have the skills and knowledge to oversee the finances of these utilities to assure the citizens can count on receiving these services for years to come. This will include knowledge of water and sewer rate structures, debt tools for enterprise funds and systems development charges. Additionally, the city manager needs to understand the components of successful economic and business development, particularly working in concert with the other local stakeholders. A successful track record in grantsmanship is a huge plus for this position.

Personnel/Human Resources. The city manager exercises control and general supervision over all city employees. They must know and apply the principles of personnel management, assigning and supervising the work of others, including department heads. The candidate must understand and be able to work within federal and state employment laws and must have knowledge in the area of collective bargaining. The city manager acts as the chief negotiator for the city's labor contracts. They must be able to work productively with both classified and management employees.

Community Relations. The city council is looking for someone who can work on the city's behalf as a partner with the business community. A manager who can encourage community involvement and foster volunteerism in the community is important. The city manager should have a demonstrated record of community involvement and active participation in their community. The city manager needs to be receptive to hearing input and complaints from and be open and attentive to citizens; and committed to following through on solutions. The manager is expected to exercise the highest degree of tact, patience, and professional courtesy in contacts with the public, personnel employed by the city and all elective and appointed officials to maintain the highest possible standards of public service. The manager must have strong communication skills, including public speaking to large and small audiences. In order to successfully promote the city, the manager must have the desire and ability to work closely with and participate in community groups and organizations. The manager will be the city's representative on a variety of local boards such as the Minet Board (fiber network) the chamber of commerce, and others as the opportunity arises. The manager will exhibit leadership, promote the city and serve as a model for other city employees.

Council Relations. The mayor and city council expect to have open, honest, and direct communication with the city manager. The manager is expected to provide ongoing regular communication to the council on the needs and affairs of the city, including information about

city department activities. The manager will need to provide the council with complete information on policy options for matters requiring a decision, to allow the council to make informed decisions. An open-door policy is expected for citizens, councilors, department heads, and employees to have easy access to the city manager. The council is looking for someone who can work effectively with the council to facilitate and implement annual goal setting and strategic planning. A good understanding of local government processes and procedures, board policy development, and equal access to information by all councilors will be necessary for a candidate to be successful in this position.

Economic Development. The manager will be an innovative partner, working with the council to build on Independence's current efforts and successes in economic development. An understanding of urban renewal districts and tax increment financing is vital. An awareness and knowledge of the principles, methods, and practices of development, including downtown development/ redevelopment and industrial development are essential.

Intergovernmental Relations. It is important that the city manager is able to network in the region and at the state level to maintain and further develop good working relationships with a wide variety of other local governments and state agencies, including intergovernmental work within the Willamette Valley. The manager will be responsible for keeping the council informed about intergovernmental relations and issues involving the city. The council is looking for someone who is interested in and will keep the council informed on statewide issues affecting cities.

Innovation and Major Achievements/Miscellaneous. The city manager needs to be able to work with the council to implement the recently identified ten-year vision for the city of Independence. The manager must have the ability to foster productive, trusting relationships with city department heads and staff to promote teamwork. Membership and participation in professional organizations will be encouraged. The council is looking for someone who is creative, and who can work with the council to identify areas for improvement and help implement best practices.

Independence is a diverse community with a large Hispanic population; a manager who can involve multi-cultural groups in the city is desired. Bilingual language skills are also a plus. The successful candidate will be confident but not hardheaded, full of energy and vigor, and be a good sales person in order to protect and highlight quality of life issues in the city. Independence is looking for a people person who can gain community support and encourage citizen involvement for the numerous projects going on in Independence.

About the City

Independence is a long established and culturally diverse community, centrally located between the Pacific Ocean and the Cascade Mountains. The city has a large National Historic District; a varied industrial base; a residential airport and state-owned airport; an urban renewal district; and is the co-owner of a fiber-to-the-home operation. Independence is an optimistic "can do" community that takes active responsibility for its future.

The city of Independence has approximately 39 full-time and 18 part-time employees who serve the 8,240 population of the city. Each department has specific duties to meet the needs of the community. Independence provides a variety of services including the following: streets; water; wastewater; police; parks (including a city-owned, event-oriented amphitheater); museum; library; urban renewal; fiber network; planning; and economic development.

Appendix C: Sample Applicant Acknowledgement Letter



(City letterhead)

(Date)

Dear _____:

Thank you for your application for the position of City Manager for the city of _____, Oregon. Here are some details about our selection process and an outline of our general time frame.

Applications will be reviewed based on a profile developed by the city council. Approximately 15-20 applicants will be presented to the council for further consideration. The council will screen those applications and by mid-June identify a smaller group on which to perform background checks. We expect that the background checks will be completed by late June. Shortly thereafter, a few individuals will be scheduled for interviews. The council hopes to make their final selection by late July.

We will try to keep you advised of the status of your application as decisions in the selection process are made. Enclosed is some information about our community that you might find interesting and helpful.

Thank you for your interest in the great city of _____!

Sincerely,

Mayor

City of _____ Oregon

Appendix D: Interview Guidelines

Prior planning and organization are the keys to ensuring a successful interview. The interview process should be well-organized and the setting comfortable. All members of the council should participate, but one discussion leader should be designated. Only appropriate interview questions should be asked. It is a good idea to have your city attorney conduct a legal review of the questions to be asked.

During both formal and informal meetings between the council and the finalist, discussions, and questions should focus on the criteria for the position that were established at the outset of the recruiting process. The council may choose to supplement the usual discussion between council members and finalists by inviting staff, community leaders or technical experts to participate. For example, finalists may meet with department heads or other staff to review departmental operations in more detail or to receive a tour of the local government.

The interview panel should plan for at least one hour for each candidate. It is difficult to pursue a range of questions in less time, and it is in your best interest to maximize the interview time with the candidate who may have traveled some distance for the meeting. Individual meetings will probably take less time.

A final guideline, regardless of which interview technique is used, is that the council should continue to avoid impulsive action and should take whatever time is necessary to arrive at a comfortable and well-reasoned decision. However, the interview process and related follow-up activities should move forward as promptly as possible so as not to lose momentum or cause desirable applicants to have second thoughts.

Just as with other steps in the hiring process, when the council or a subcommittee of council conducts the interviews, those interviews must occur in a meeting open to the public, unless the council or subcommittee has satisfied the requirements in ORS 192.660(2)(a) to conduct interviews in executive session. City councils are advised to seek the advice of their city attorney to determine if they are in compliance with ORS 192.660(2)(a) before meeting in executive session.

Appendix E-1: Suggested Interviewing Techniques

The following are some *do's* and *don'ts* when interviewing candidates. Remember, the law does not always prohibit employers from obtaining all the information about a candidate they deem important, as long as the questions are job-related and do not elicit information that could be used for discriminatory purposes.

Do...	Don't...
Create a comfortable atmosphere. Remember, you are trying to impress the candidate as well as the candidate attempting to impress you.	Let early biases form. Finish the interview job before forming a final opinion of the candidate.
Let the applicant do most of the talking.	Ask unnecessarily long questions or do most of the talking. Remember, you want to learn about the candidate, not share your own views.
Question objectively. Questions should be job-related and consistent from one applicant to the next.	
Ask questions that require more than a yes or no answer. Use general or open-ended questions.	
Avoid unduly sympathetic or unsympathetic words, gestures or facial expressions which would make the candidate think you agree or disagree with their answers.	Let the candidate digress beyond the point of answering the question satisfactorily or showing that they are unable to answer the question.
Avoid posing a problem or situational question combined with possible solutions. Let the candidate generate their own solution.	
Develop questions based on earlier statements made by the candidate or information provided by the applicant in their resume, application or other source.	Ask stress-producing questions which are not relevant or job-related. Delicate questions of this type should be pre-planned and should not be used to humiliate the candidate. Remember, if you like the candidate, you want to ask them to accept the job.
Ask questions designed to encourage the candidate to reveal their knowledge and opinions.	
Avoid "trick" questions.	
Avoid displaying your personal opinions or viewpoints through the questions you ask.	
Listen attentively to every question asked and every answer given. Maintain eye contact with the candidate while they are speaking to show that you are listening.	

Areas that cannot be inquired into with candidates any part of the recruitment and hiring process are:

- Marital status
- Age
- Family composition/issues – such as children/daycare
- Sexual orientation
- Disability or illness or medical conditions or absences due to illness
 - You may inquire if the person can perform specific duties, but you cannot inquire of disability or at this stage probe beyond applicant’s answers regarding ability to perform a duty.
- Financial such as home ownership, debts (a credit check in compliance with applicable laws should be conducted as part of the background and reference checking²)
- Political affiliation
- Religion
- Race/national origin/ethnic

² By default, credit checks are prohibited unless an exception applies. The position of city administrator may qualify under the “substantially job-related exception.” See OAR 839-005-0080. Before obtaining credit history information, the city should determine whether the position qualifies under the exception and obtain appropriate authorization from the applicant.

Appendix E-2: Sample Interview Questions

The following lists some suggested interview questions. Of course, the questions you choose to ask should be custom-fit to your entity's particular needs and circumstances. Typically, 15 to 20 well-planned questions will create sufficient responses for an hour-long interview.

1. How would you characterize your style of management?
2. What style of management do you use when in an emergency/stressful situation?
3. How do you relate to employees, department heads, advisory committees, the council, and the general public? How would they describe your ability to relate to them?
4. What do you perceive to be the administrator's role in dealing with the council?
5. What do you do when an individual councilor asks you to perform a task that is not approved by the entire council?
6. How do you view the role of the council in dealing with the administrator and the administration?
7. Based on your education, experience and background, what do you consider to be your strengths in dealing with local government problems? What are your weaknesses?
8. Recognizing the limits of span of control in an organization, how and when do you delegate responsibility and authority?
9. In your opinion, what role should the administrator play in the community?
10. What benefits, if any, would an administrator or the city gain if the administrator became an active member of a service organization within the community?
11. To what extent do you believe contact with citizens and citizen groups is important? How do you typically handle this responsibility?
12. What is your approach in dealing with the news media?
13. What experience have you had in labor negotiations?
14. Describe any experiences you have had in actively negotiating a contract or any other issue at the bargaining table.
15. How have you dealt with mediation, fact finding or arbitration? Have you ever managed a strike?

16. What approach have you used in dealing with personnel problems?
17. What personnel skills have you used in disciplining, demoting or firing an employee?
18. What experience have you had in training or motivating employees?
19. What steps have you taken to adhere to state and federal laws relating to diversity in the workplace, non-discrimination and equal opportunity?
20. Describe your experience, if any, in dealing with charges of discrimination or grievances filed against you or the city you served.
21. What involvement have you had in developing personnel rules, regulations, and procedures?
22. What is your municipal finance experience?
23. What role have you played in the preparation of a budget?
24. In budgets that you have prepared, how do you communicate the effectiveness of service delivery?
25. Have you ever gone to a vote of the people for a funding measure?
26. What was your role in the campaign?
27. What was your rate of success? What would you consider to be the keys to success?
28. Have you ever been involved in a vote on a new tax base?
29. What is your experience with debt management?
30. What is your experience with enterprise funds?
31. What experience have you had in administering various grant programs?
32. What success have you had in attaining grants for various projects in a city?
33. Specifically, what programs have you administered with either state or federal grants?
34. Describe any experiences you may have had in developing and recommending policies to the council relating to growth (e.g., annexation, expansion of utilities, subdivision standards, etc.).
35. In the field of intergovernmental relations, what experience have you had in dealing with:

- a. Councils of government or regional governments
 - b. Neighbor counties
 - c. Neighbor cities
 - d. State agencies
 - e. Federal agencies
 - f. State Legislature
 - g. Congress
36. What legislative committees have you appeared on before?
37. In what way have you been an active participant in the activities of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and other professional organizations?
38. What is the extent of your experience in the field of public works, and did it cover the following:
- a. Street maintenance and construction
 - b. Operation, maintenance, and construction of utilities
 - c. Supervision of construction projects
 - d. Seeking funding
39. What advantage would there be for a city to form a local improvement district (LID)?
40. If you have been involved with the formation of an LID, what cities were involved?
41. What was being constructed or improved?
42. How would you put together a general obligation bond measure?
43. What experience have you had in land use planning and zoning requirements?
44. Why did you apply for this position?
45. What conditions would you set up for accepting the appointment if it were offered?
46. What will your first steps be upon assuming responsibility in this position?
47. What would you hope to accomplish in the first year?

Appendix F: Sample Oral Interview Rating Form

Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Category	Not Recommended	Somewhat Qualified	Qualified	Well Qualified	Superior
	1	2	3	4	5
Applicability of experience to the city's challenges					
Involvement in all phases of local government operations					
Depth of experience					
Degree of responsibility in previous positions					
Level of education - college or advanced degree					
Specialized training					
Keeps updated on new technology, management techniques and advancements					
Ability to transmit ideas clearly					
Ability to organize ideas, summarize and express them with confidence					
Non-verbal communication skills (e.g., physical, eye contact)					
Ability to work with others					
Ability to make decisions					
Openness to alternative approaches					
Individual type of leadership fits with the city					
Fits your idea of individual for the position					
Manner in which applicant presents themselves					

Category	Not Recommended	Somewhat Qualified	Qualified	Well Qualified	Superior
	1	2	3	4	5
Personality traits in relation to personality of city					
Approach to news media					
Possible to blend in the organization					
Understanding of mechanics of budget					
Grasp of financial administration					
Formation of Local Improvement Districts					
Ability to work with scarce resources					
Experience with personnel problems					
Ability to delegate responsibilities					
Training and employee motivation					
Overall knowledge of community growth problems					
Experience in downtown/urban development					
Dealing with community development and/or urban renewal					
Knowledge of street maintenance and construction practices					
Knowledge of operation, maintenance, and construction of utility services					
Knowledge of public works administration					
Knowledge of application and administration process					
Track record in obtaining grants					
Experience in working with other governmental agencies					

COMMENTS: (Special observations/notes during interview)

Appendix G: Sample Press Release



(City letterhead)

(Date)

Contact Information:

The city of _____ announces that Jane Doe of __ (former position or location) _____ has been selected as the new administrator for (city). Ms. Doe was selected from among seven applicants interviewed by the city following a regional recruitment effort.

Ms. Doe brings to the city ten years of top-level administrative experience in the states of Oregon, Washington and Montana. She was instrumental in seeing her last city through the construction of a power plant and a mill closure.

Mayor Mary Jones states, “We are really looking forward to Jane's arrival. We have many projects for her to complete and we believe she will take our city to the next level.”

Ms. Doe replaces Ralph Smith, who retired at the end of last year. Ms. Doe will begin her duties July 1, 2015.