

# Involving Staff in Recruitment

Research shows that current employee referrals significantly improve the chances of a successful hire<sup>1</sup>. Referred candidates are more likely to accept an offer than candidates who don't have a personal connection with a current employee. Involving your staff in recruitment helps distribute this work more widely, making overall recruitment efforts more efficient and effective. Tapping into your employees' personal and professional networks can also yield a broader and higher-quality candidate pool. Your staff know your school community best, are likely to recommend strong candidates, and help sell these candidates on your school. See below for suggestions and best practices to involve staff in recruitment.

## Launch a referral campaign.

Systematize a way for current staff to refer potential candidates and encourage them to do so. To do this:

1. Identify a referral campaign manager to lead communication with current staff, track referrals, and send follow-up emails to referred candidates.
2. Create an online Google form or similar tool where staff can share referrals. This form should ask for their names, contact info, and any relevant notes (e.g., subject area, specific role, etc.).
3. Craft template communications to send to referred candidates. You may also have staff, especially recent hires, provide feedback on recruitment messaging. Communications should include:
  - **Sample emails and phone scripts** all staff can use with their referrals. These should align to your recruitment collateral and reinforce the same messages.
  - **Sample social media posts** all staff can post to their networks that share opportunities at your school and how to learn more.
  - **Sample emails, text messages, and phone scripts** the referral campaign manager can send to referrals.
  - **Customization to specific types of candidates** your system or school is trying to attract (e.g., secondary math teachers or Black male elementary school teachers).
  - See below for sample general cultivation messages:

### Email for staff to directly refer candidates

Hi <Name>,

I hope you're doing well! I'm writing to share that my <school/network/district> is hiring

strong<insert role/specific teacher content area>, and I thought of you, given your strengths in

<name a few experiences and/or qualities that make the referral a strong candidate>. My time

at <school/network/district> has been a great professional experience, and I've really enjoyed

<insert appealing specific characteristics/experiences at school/network/district>. I encourage you to apply! You can do so <here; insert link> and make sure to share that I referred you. If you have any questions, or want to learn more, let me know, and I'd be happy to chat!

Warmly,

<Name>

### **Phone script for staff to directly refer candidates**

Hi <Name>, is now a good time to talk for a few minutes?

If not: Plan another time to talk and/or follow up with a version of the above email. If yes:

Great! I wanted to talk to you because my <school/network/district> is hiring strong<insert

role/specific teacher content area>, and I think you'd be an excellent fit! I know you have lots of expertise in <insert role specific expertise/experience>, and as you probably know I've really enjoyed my time at <school/network/district>. What do you think?

<Gauge interest, provide additional information, offer to answer their questions, highlighting what you've enjoyed about <school/network/district>, and why this person would be a good fit>

Thanks so much for talking. I hope you apply, and you can do that <share directions for applying> and make sure to share that I referred you. If you have any other questions, let me know. I'd be happy to talk more!

### **Social media post to share with personal/professional networks**

Calling all educators looking for a great opportunity! My <school/network/district> is currently hiring. I love teaching here because <insert appealing specific characteristics/experiences at school/network/district>. Want to know more? Feel free to get in touch! Interested in applying? You can do so <here; insert link>

- If budget allows, incentivize referrals. This may be an individual incentive such as offering a bonus to staff whose referrals accept their offer (we recommend paying half at their start dates and the other half three months into their roles) or a group award like a staff breakfast at the start of the next school year to the school whose staff makes the most successful referrals.
- Share the referral campaign with staff. Take time in a virtual staff meeting to introduce the referral program, including why it's important, how staff can make referrals, who is eligible, and the communication templates staff may use. Be sure to share what staff can expect after they make referrals. Be sure to continue to remind staff to make referrals and share updates to maintain momentum.
- Run the campaign and track effectiveness. Ensure the campaign manager follows up with all referrals regularly and that staff are also sending individualized emails/phone calls to their referrals.
- Track referral applications and let staff know when you're making offers to their referrals so they can encourage them to accept.

**Identify talent ambassadors.** Find staff who are interested in being talent ambassadors. Be sure to outline what participation will look like and a time estimate (we recommend being flexible here, so that staff can contribute as much as they're able to). They should be in good standing in their roles, able to speak to the positives of their school communities, and represent the diversity of your team (e.g., by role, race/ethnicity, age, gender, etc.). Leaders may invite specific staff members to join or invite them to apply via a simple application that asks questions like 'why are you interested in this role' and 'what would you share with a potential candidate'. Lean on this group to participate in the activities below, provide feedback on current initiatives, and brainstorm additional recruitment ideas. Finally, consider how ambassadors will be compensated for their time and effort; at the least, be sure to thank talent ambassadors regularly and recognize their impact.

**Prepare talent ambassadors to speak to candidates.** Share recruitment collateral and sample talking points with talent ambassadors to ensure their candidate communication is aligned, consistent, and reinforces your primary marketing messages. Additionally, be sure ambassadors can speak to the benefits package (it may be helpful to share a one pager they can use with candidates). Prepare for any challenging questions candidates may ask (e.g., questions around workload, performance evaluations, or compensation) so that ambassadors are ready to respond. You may also ask for feedback on recruitment messages from the group. What would they highlight to prospective candidates based on their experiences?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.glassdoor.com/research/interview-sources/>

**Involve talent ambassadors in recruitment events.** Have talent ambassadors join events like information sessions, webinars, and job fairs to provide their perspectives on why they enjoy working at your school/system and to answer candidate questions. They should illustrate or reinforce your primary recruitment messages. For instance, if professional growth is a strong selling point, have a staff member share a specific example of what their development looks like. Encourage staff to use pictures, video, sample student work, or other media to bring these messages to life. If staff can't join events live, have them record their contribution in advance or document them in recruitment collateral to share with candidates. Ensure that ambassadors are clear on their roles during events, have internalized talking points so they can articulate them in their own words, and have an opportunity to rehearse before the event.

**Have talent ambassadors cultivate high-need candidates.** For your strongest candidates, and/or those applying to high-need roles, ask ambassadors to reach out to these people individually via email, text message, or a phone call. Be strategic about this communication. For instance, have current staff members reach out to candidates applying for similar roles or who share common backgrounds (e.g., attended the same university). Use a tracker or signup form to monitor follow-up to avoid overloading candidates and provide ambassadors with sample communications templates they can customize.

**Offer 1-1 informational sessions with talent ambassadors.** Give candidates informal opportunities to get to know current staff via casual calls and during in-person recruitment events. These may look like one-on-one talks with a current candidate and a specific ambassador who can speak to that candidate's interest (e.g., a science teacher and a science teacher candidate) or a group session where elementary teacher candidates meet with talent ambassadors working in elementary schools. For these events, ensure both ambassadors and participants are prepared. Provide talent ambassadors with a basic structure and FAQs for these interactions (like a sample agenda, talking points and candidate questions, or a PowerPoint or media to share with candidates), and let candidates know what they can expect.

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