

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
Western District of Washington

ATTORNEY DIVERSITY HIRING PLAN

It is the responsibility of the Federal Public Defender to strive for diversity among the attorneys employed by the Office. In order to meet this goal, a hiring plan and strategy must be employed to increase the pool of women and minority applicants, interviewees and decision makers. And the plan should include a selection process that favors objective criteria for selection over concerns about the applicant's "fit" within the office.

For each attorney position, the following steps shall be taken:

Recruitment

The Defender shall make an effort to personally reach out to individuals and organizations which may have information about qualified and interested minority and women applicants.

In addition to posting the job announcement on the usual Defender web sites and bar association web sites, the ad must be provided to various women and minority bar associations.

Review and Interview Process

Other than emergent hiring situations, the Defender shall establish a Hiring Committee which includes one non-lawyer from the Administrative staff, and at least three lawyers in addition to the Defender. The composition of the Committee shall reflect the goal of diversity in hiring. There must be at least one woman and one minority attorney on the Hiring Committee.

Applications and resumes shall be sent to the Defender Office in a uniform manner, and be made available to all Committee members for review. The Committee will review the applications and narrow down the group of applicants to those who meet the criteria for the position as set forth in the advertisement.

The Committee shall create a uniform set of general questions to ask of references, and shall create a uniform set of questions for the applicants who are selected for interview.

In determining who to interview, the Committee shall include minority and women applicants in the interview pool. If the Committee concludes that none of the minority and women applicants meet the requirements of the position as advertised, the Defender shall attempt a second effort at recruitment before interviews are scheduled.

Once the applicant pool is narrowed to those who may be interviewed, they will be requested to provide an original writing sample. That writing sample will be redacted to remove all identifiers about the applicant, e.g. their race, ethnicity and educational and work background. The writing samples will be provided to other lawyers in the office with a reputation for strong written communication skills. Those lawyers will be asked to rate and comment on the writing samples.

The interview shall include all members of the Committee and efforts will be made to ensure that the same general questions are asked, and the same procedures applied to each applicant.

Selection Process

Among the objective criteria for making the hiring decision, the goal of promoting a diverse attorney staff in a Defender Office shall be included as a consideration. Concerns about implicit bias should be openly discussed by the Committee in conducting its evaluation of the candidates and in its decision making process. After consideration of these factors and other objective criteria, the Committee shall individually and as a group make its recommendation to the Defender. The Defender shall make the hiring decision based on those recommendations and the Defender's independent review of these factors and other objective criteria.