Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Informed Hiring Toolkit
Developed in collaboration with the San Francisco VAHCS Mental Health Diversity Council, San Francisco VAHCS Psychology Diversity Committee, and the University of California San Francisco Department of Psychiatry Diversity Committee.

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MESSAGE FROM JOHN MCQUAID, ASSOCIATE CHIEF OF STAFF FOR MENTAL HEALTH

The core values of San Francisco Veteran Affairs Health Care System (SFVAHCS) reflect a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. In order to provide high quality, culturally competent care to Veterans, it is necessary to respect the differences of trainees and staff by offering an environment that celebrates diversity and embraces inclusion. A key goal is for all of the SFVAHCS’ staff and veterans—regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, language, abilities/disabilities, socioeconomic status, geographic region, or other defining characteristics—to feel welcome and valued.

In our roles as hiring managers, an ongoing commitment to recruiting a diverse and talented workforce is central to serving our diverse community of veterans. Some supervisors hire more frequently and are experienced in this area; I hope you will send your tips so we can add them. For others who hire less frequently or who are less familiar with this material, we hope you find this helpful.

I appreciate your commitment in building a vibrant workforce that meets the needs of our diverse veteran community.
YOUR ROLE AS THE HIRING COMMITTEE LEAD

Eliminating disparities and ensuring that all trainees, staff, and faculty have equal employment opportunity is vital to the SFVAHCS mission. It is expected that supervisors and managers maintain a standard of practice that reflects SFVAHCS values and priorities. The VA community depends on hiring managers to establish and maintain a healthy campus environment and culture. Managers and supervisors can institute cultural change through hiring practices. Their leadership can improve access and quality of care for all veterans.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

CREATING A HIRING COMMITTEE

- The ideal size for most hiring committees will range from 4-6, depending on the position being hired.
- Selection committee size will be dependent on what is necessary to ensure it is representative of organizational and job position interests while minimizing pull on resources and time required to fill a position.
- Regardless of final committee size, at least two of the committee members should represent content/competency area experts for the position being hired.
- Additionally, at least two members should complement the content/competency area experts and ensure a diverse hiring committee. There is a preference to have these two members be from areas of expertise/disciplines different from the available position (e.g. one social worker and one psychiatrist on the hiring committee for a psychologist position).
- Selection committee members should be made up of diverse composition, including not only people from often-overlooked underrepresented groups, but also from staff members from other departments.
- It is important to remember that diversity includes a range of cultural and identity factors including: race, ethnicity, sexual orientation/identity, gender identity and expression, age, language, abilities/disabilities, socioeconomic status, religion, spiritual practices, geographic region, and other characteristics.

EDUCATING THE HIRING COMMITTEE

- Be open about specific hiring goals.
- Remind the committee members of unconscious bias and the implications of making judgments on a person’s character, experiences, or background based on details unrelated to job performance and work ethic.
- Offer committee members the following tool to raise awareness of Implicit Bias (not mandatory): https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

PRE-INTERVIEW MEETING: DOMAINS AND ASSOCIATED QUESTIONS
- Organize a pre-interview meeting to coordinate and plan the hiring committee and interview process.

- Hiring committee should review the job description and discuss the skills that are necessary for the job. Based on the job responsibilities (e.g. knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) identified in the job description), the committee will determine domains that will be assessed during the interview process (e.g. Clinical Skills & Expertise; Communication & Consultation Skills; Program Evaluation Skills; Supervisor or Managerial Experience).

- Domains can have multiple questions to solicit responses to adequately rate each domain.

- Committee should decide on at least 8 performance-based questions that directly relate to the skills necessary for the job, making sure to include at least one question that directly relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI; See Appendix A: Diversity-Related Interview Questions).

- Decide on at least one question that will be sent to all applicants ahead of time and which remaining questions will be presented during the interview. The committee may also consider printing, emailing, and/or displaying questions as they see fit depending on the medium of interview (e.g. in person/skype).

- The Hiring Committee Lead is responsible for sending all applicants the question(s) to be considered ahead of time, giving each applicant at least one week to prepare responses prior to interview.

- Hiring committee will decide on weight of each domain and their related question(s) on a 5-10 point Likert scale (i.e., domains with greatest impact on position should receive more weight; e.g. Clinical Expertise might be on a 10 point Likert scale and Program Development Skill might be on a 5 point Likert scale for a particular position).

- Decide on which members will ask each question(s) during the interview.

- The questions should be equally dispersed among committee members and should be asked in same order across all applicants.

- The interview questions should be printed in at least 18-point font and presented to the applicant at the start of the interview prior to the first question being asked; this may help to mitigate disadvantage for some applicants (e.g. applicants whose first language is not English or have hearing concerns).

**Disclosure of Conflicts or Multiple Relationships**

- Once the list of applicants is known, each committee member should immediately review the list and identify any applicants that are known to the committee member.

- If the previous relationship with an applicant would render a committee member unable to remain objective, the committee member is asked to let the Hiring Committee Lead know that they are unable to move forward as a member of the selection committee; the committee member is under no obligation to report the specific nature of the relationship.

- Previous experience with an applicant does not automatically mean that the committee member could not remain objective (e.g. formerly mentored or supervised the applicant; attended the same graduate institution as the applicant); it can be helpful for committee members to state these previous relationships with the full committee as a way to help each other identify blind spots or sources of potential bias.
THE INTERVIEW

FLOW OF THE INTERVIEW

- At least one member of the hiring committee should monitor timing to ensure each candidate does not exceed the total amount of allotted interview time.
- Hiring committee members should score each domain and calculate total score prior to discussing interview responses and associated scores.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

POST INTERVIEW REVIEW AND SELECTION

- At the beginning of the post-interview meeting, the Hiring Committee Lead should: restate the job description, the desired skillset of the incumbent, and restate a charge for committee members to focus on recruitment of qualified diverse and under-represented applicants.
- Hiring Committee Lead may choose to have a brief discussion about unconscious bias.
- All committee members will provide committee lead with their scores at this time.
- Prior to discussion, the committee lead should compute the average total score for each applicant (sum of all total scores ÷ total number of committee members).
  - *It may be necessary to remind committee members to refrain from discussing scores and reactions to the interviewees until the final scores have been tallied.*
- After average total scores are computed, the committee lead should disclose the rank order of candidates based on average total score and discuss each candidate prior to voting to approve the selection of the highest ranked candidate.
- When candidates are being discussed, the committee should spend equal time discussing each applicant; appoint a member to monitor time allotment for discussion on each applicant. After discussion, the committee lead will call a vote for “in favor” of selecting the candidate with the highest average total score.
- Majority vote of “in favor” will result in selection of candidate with highest average total score.
- In the case of majority vote “against” the highest scored candidate, the committee will move on to the next highest scored candidate and vote for their selection into the position. This process will repeat until a majority vote of “in favor” is reached.
- In the case a committee vote is equally split, the committee lead will break the split and decide on the selection of the candidate with highest average total score, or to pursue vote of next highest scored candidate.
- If the committee does not have an “in favor” vote of any candidate, they may decide to re-start the candidate search process in favor of a desirable candidate.
- The committee lead will communicate with HR about committee selection/decision.
- All rating forms and voting tallies will be maintained by the Hiring Committee Lead or chief of service.
APPENDIX A

DIVERSITY-RELATED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In addition to domains and related questions developed by each hiring committee, the following diversity-related interview questions can be used to supplement the DEI component of the interview. These have been collected from SFVAHCS staff and departments, the VA Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), informational interviews with recruiters, and internet research.

- What do you see as the fundamental characteristics of organizations that create an inclusive environment?
- What do you see as the most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment? What steps have you taken to meet this challenge?
- Please share an example that demonstrates your respect for people and their differences; and how you’ve worked to understand perspectives of others?
- Provide an example of a time you communicated a complex concept to an individual who spoke English as a second language.
- What tools/techniques do you bring for promoting collaboration among underrepresented groups?
- What is your definition of a diverse patient population? What behaviors, techniques, or decisions allow you to function most effectively as a provider or employee when working with a highly diverse patient population? What tools have you employed in working with a diverse staff?
- How do you define "diversity" from a professional perspective? Please give an example of your ethnicity and/or cultural identity impacting your work.
- Explain how diversity has played a role in your career.
- The VA has a diverse workforce (in terms of ethnicity, class, culture, language, sexual orientation, and disabilities). Can you tell us about your experience working with and serving such a diverse population?
- Please describe experiences you have had leading campus outreach activities for underserved populations (e.g., developing and leading workshops, providing consultation to departments).
REFERENCES


University of California, Berkeley (UCB) University Health Services, Tang Center. “A toolkit for recruiting and hiring a more diverse workforce”, Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2013


RESOURCES

Project Implicit: Implicit Association Task
https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
*Office of Diversity and Inclusion*
https://www.diversity.va.gov/

*Diversity & Inclusion Community of Practice Sharepoint*
http://vaww.wmc.va.gov/Diversity/COP/SitePages/Home.aspx

University of California San Francisco
*Office of Diversity and Outreach*
https://diversity.ucsf.edu/

*Academic Search Checklist for HR Service Centers and Departments*
https://academicaffairs.ucsf.edu/academic-personnel/media/academicsearchchecklist.pdf