

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE CANDIDATE SITE VISIT

By Ashley Colwell, Manager of Workforce Development, IPHCA

After the time-consuming task of searching for a candidate, your health center finds a candidate they want to interview. The overall experience the candidate has while visiting is the key to attracting them to the health center.

One new trend many organizations are using to screen candidates from out of state is the use of videoconferencing services, such as Skype. Through this technology, a site and candidate can easily meet each other face-to-face before any travel takes place. This is a great way to determine if a health center wants to pay for a candidate to come for an on-site interview.

Once a health center determines whether to bring a candidate for an interview, they will need to find out if the candidate will be bringing anyone with them on their visit. This could include a spouse or children. One way to ask this question is, "Are you bringing anyone with you that will be involved in your decision-making process?" Remember, you are not only recruiting the candidate, but potentially an entire family.

Try to find out in advance if there are any specific things the family is interested in and create a personalized visit for them. Schools are important to families so if possible, arrange a tour of the schools and help them find out what activities are available within the community for children. Creating a packet filled with materials specifically geared toward children is a great way to incorporate them into the process.

Housing is another big issue in the decision to relocate. Setting up a meeting with a local realtor is important. Realtors can provide information on the local market and give the candidate a tour of the community. Be sure to show them local landmarks, housing options

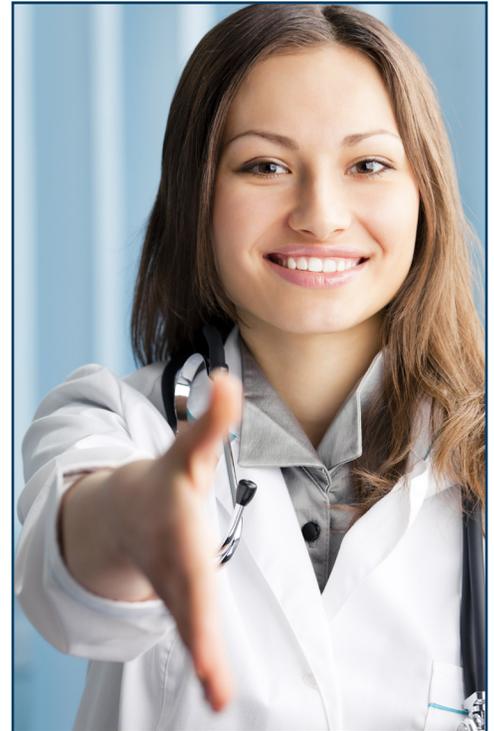
and businesses in your area. If they are familiar with the area, they may be able to imagine themselves relocating.

Including your health center staff in the recruitment process is another great way to connect with a candidate. For example, if you are taking the candidate out for dinner, include key staff and potentially their spouses. The more people a candidate meets during their visit the more they can learn. By including staff members they would work with on a daily basis, candidates can get a better idea of the culture of the organization.

Another way to incorporate staff is to promote the loan repayment programs available. If your health center has a loan repayment participant from the National Health Service Corps or Illinois Department of Public Health, have them speak with your candidate. Candidates are often interested in these programs and this provides a great opportunity for someone on staff to explain the steps and the program. Your candidate may not have been aware of this option so including handouts in their packet is also a great idea.

A one-on-one meeting with the candidate's direct supervisor and potential colleagues can also help both parties determine the professional and cultural fit. If your candidate does accept a position with your health center, this meeting allows the candidate the opportunity to already know fellow employees, making the transition much easier.

If your new candidate will be working inpatient at a local hospital, coordinate a tour of the hospital for the clinician. A successful candidate visit is beneficial to both the health center and the hospital; and, many hospital recruiters can help with this process.



During the visit, be sure to promote your health center involvement in the community. Let candidate's know what activities take place that benefit the community you serve, such as health fairs, community gardens, and other volunteering opportunities.

Finally, don't forget to share materials such as brochures, benefit breakdowns, vacation time, schedules and a sample contract with candidates before they leave. Having a process in place can make the visit easier on everyone involved.

If you have any questions about putting together an effective site visit, contact Ashley Colwell at acolwell@iphca.org.