

Hiring an Effective and Diverse Staff

Friday, January 29, 12:30 PM – 2:00 PM

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CongressFoundation.org

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New Member Office Training

Congressional Operations

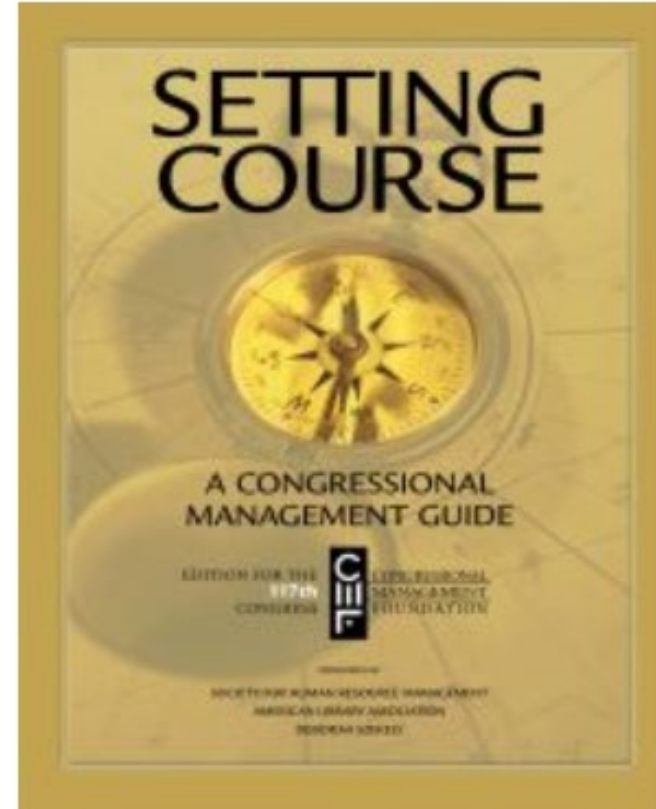
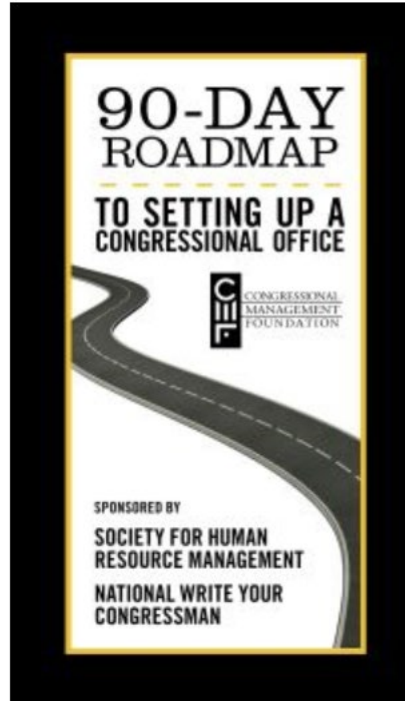
- Training, consulting, research to support a functioning Congress
- 1,000 staff from 300 offices

Citizen Engagement

- Unique studies, trainings, and resources for citizen advocates
- Connected to 90,000 Americans

- New Member Resource Center
 - Google: “CMF New Member Resource Center”
- New Member Training Series
 - December 2020 – June 2021
- Legislative Assistant Training
 - Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University
- District/State-Based Guidance
 - *Keeping It Local*
 - Templates/Manuals/Forms
- Website Guidance
 - Gold Mouse Awards for Best Website

CMF Guidebooks for Freshman Offices



CMF's Crisis Preparedness & Response Center

- Managing Issues Related to January 6th Attack
- Managing Congressional Staff Remotely
- WFH Guides
- Best Practices for Online and Telephone Town Halls
- Managing Stress in Constituents and Staff

Today we will cover:

- Critical guidance for your first term
- The benefits of investing in your team
- Intentional steps for diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging
- Reaching, hiring, and retaining the best talent
- General tips and recommendations
- Q&A

Moderator

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Presenters

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Laura Maristany

Associate Director for Constructive Politics at
Democracy Fund

Co-author of “[*Building and Maintaining a Diverse
and Inclusive Congressional Office*](#)”



Lisa Sherman

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of the House
Former Chief of Staff, Rep. Susan Davis



Guidance for Your First Term

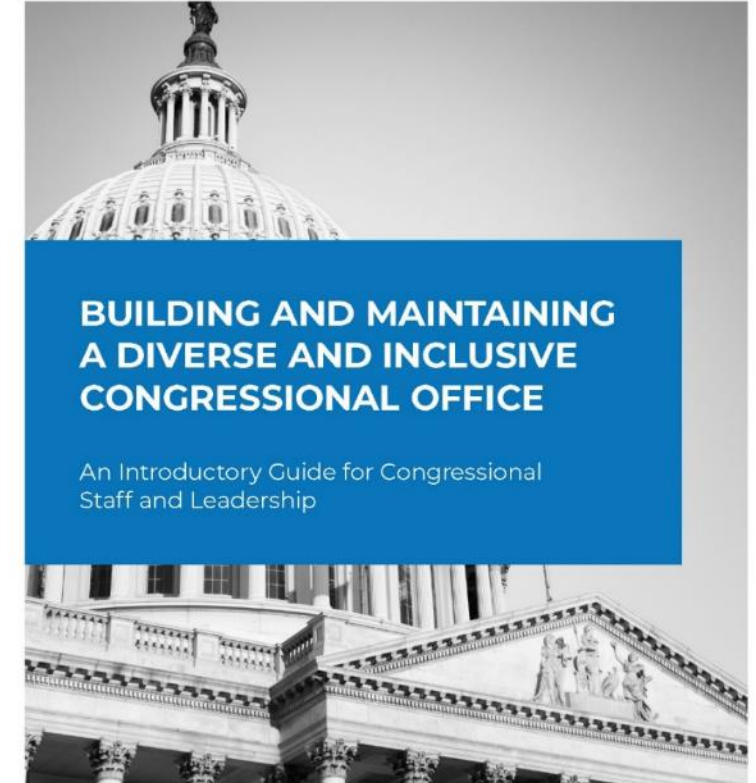
1. Go slow.
2. Your office's mission/goals/priorities should drive your staffing.
3. Don't hire the maximum number. (*House offices*)
4. Don't hire someone you cannot fire.

Building and Maintaining a Diverse and Inclusive Congressional Office

Laura Maristany

DEIB Guide: An Introduction

- The 116th Congress is the most racially and ethnically diverse in history.
- Hill staff face job-related demands unlike any other work environment.
- This work will make your office more effective and increase capacity to achieve your member's goals.
- DEIB is not an end goal. It is a process of operating and a manner of being.



Intentional Steps Your Office Can Take

1. **Be intentional** in establishing your DEIB policy.
2. **Define what diversity means** for your office.
3. **Be clear** about the recruitment, hiring, and retention process.
4. **Create an equitable office environment** through transparent and standardized practices.

Download the guide at www.repdemocracy.org

The Ongoing Effort of Building a DEIB Hiring Process

- Even if your office is fully staffed, find time once or twice a year to meet with potential candidates and include other members of your team in the process.
- Maintain an ongoing process of collecting resumes from a broad range of sources to create a pool of diverse candidates when you do have a job opening.

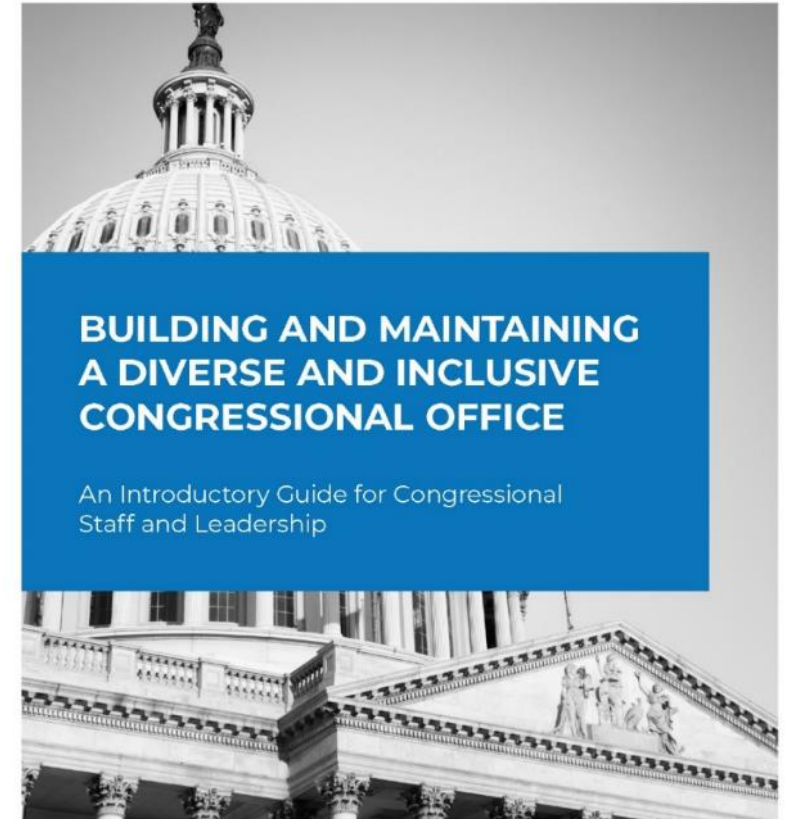
Beyond Hiring: Strategies for Retaining Talented Staff

- Have a plan to keep the talent you hired.
- Create a plan to help new hires be successful in your office.
- Consider developing mentorship plans.
- Set aside funds and time to host team retreats.
- Consider establishing targets for training and for staff participation in professional development opportunities.

Additional Resources in the Guide

- Anonymous congressional staffer quotes
- Sample office DEIB statements
- Further-reading recommendations
- Training opportunities
- COVID-specific resources

Download at www.repdemocracy.org



House Office of Diversity & Inclusion

Kemba Hendrix, Director

Jeyben Castro, Deputy Director



HIRING AN EFFECTIVE AND DIVERSE STAFF

Welcome to the 117th
Congress



IMPACT STATEMENT



The House Office of Diversity and Inclusion will provide positive impact to the U.S. House of Representatives by cultivating, building, and sustaining a diverse and inclusive workplace. We will accomplish these goals by advancing the business case for diversity and inclusion and leveraging these values to the benefit of House Offices, specifically, and the U.S. House of Representatives, in general.

CRITICAL TASKS

Phase One Develop Capacity for Data Collection and Analysis

- Improve Capacity for Data Reporting and Analysis
- Engage in Barrier Analysis and Strategic Goal Setting
- Provide diversity, equity, and inclusion resources/toolkits for House Offices
- Develop and promote supportive resources for diverse job applicants

Phase Two Facilitate Culture Change

- Develop Diversity-based Speaker Series
- Develop Diversity-based Training, Education, and Development Programming
- Engage with House Officers around diversity, equity, and inclusion plan development
- Develop Diversity Advisory Council

Phase Three Assess and Adapt

- Continue scheduled/periodic data collection and analysis
- Reassess and adapt strategic goals as necessary
- Continued implementation of Diversity Best Practices
- Engage with Diversity Advisory Council, House community, and external stakeholders to gain additional feedback and insight on strategic goals



RECRUITMENT & OUTREACH

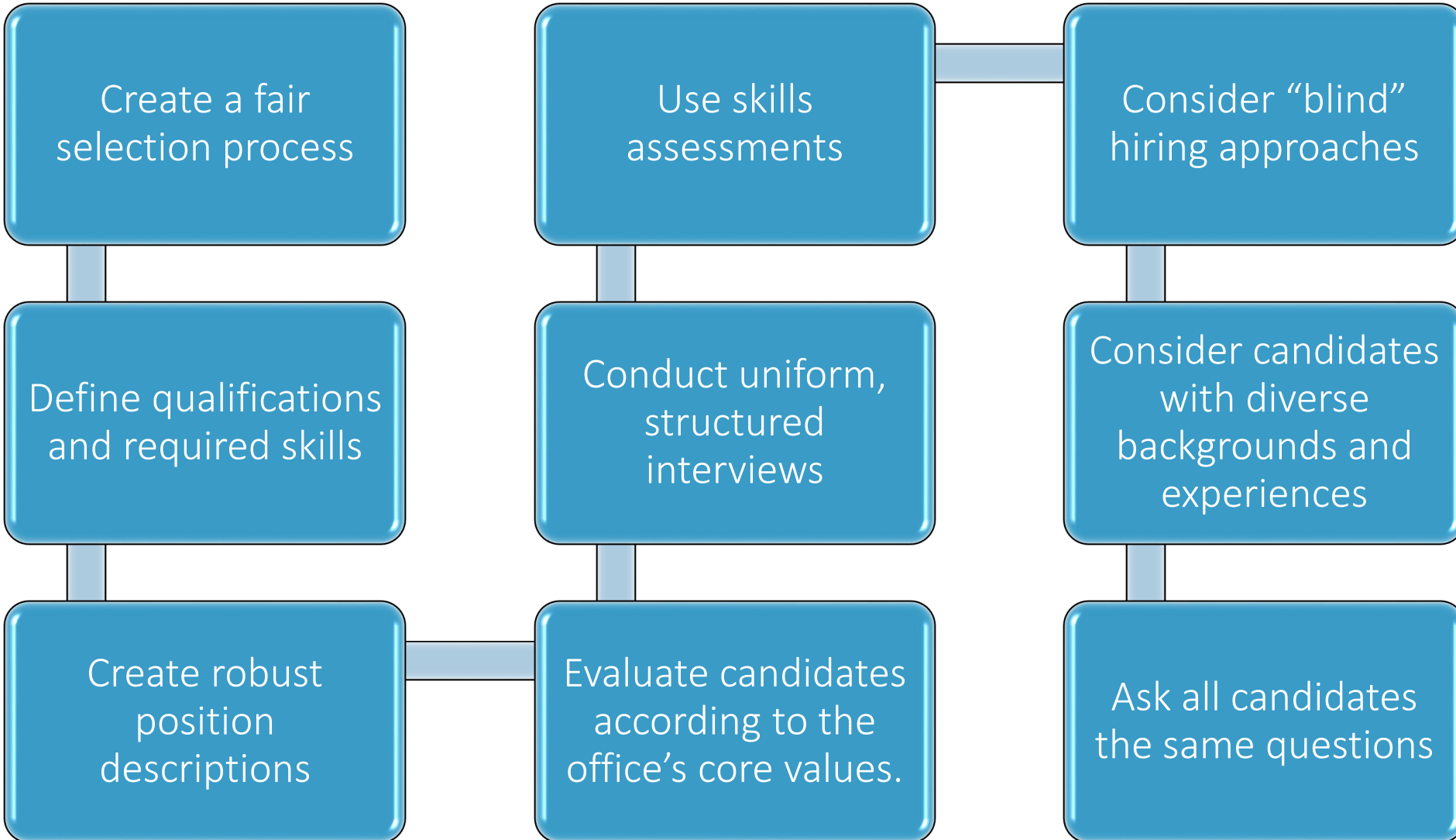
- Work with the House office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) to identify diverse talent. Share any information that will be helpful to the ODI in matching candidates based on capability, experience, skills, interest, and fit.
- Work with your state staff to advertise employment opportunities back home.
- Create gender-neutral job announcements.
- Work with the congressional staff associations.

WORKING IN A DIVERSE ENVIRONMENT

- Creating a diverse environment is inherently about change.
- The benefits of diversity is realized when we benefit from all the different qualities that people bring to work with them, and not in trying to make people conform to one way of being or assimilate to the dominate culture.
- The issue is not that difference exists; it is that we evaluate people unconsciously.



INTERVIEW PROCESS



RETENTION



Create a robust onboarding program

- Assign an onboarding buddy (a seasoned staff member) to new hires.
- Set expectations for new hires during their first week and follow up with them 60 days later.
- Work with your District staff to advertise employment opportunities back home.
- Create gender-neutral job announcements.
- Create and share an office manual.
- Encourage new hires to meet with the team during their first month of employment.

Develop staff by giving them appropriate and constructive feedback, as necessary

- Provide alternative incentives for top performers (think beyond financial).
- Offer tuition reimbursement, details in other offices, and longer maximum allowances for bereavement.

CONTACT US



 : Diverse.House@mail.house.gov

 : Diversity.House.gov

 : [@DiverseCongress](https://twitter.com/DiverseCongress)

 : [House Office of Diversity and Inclusion](https://www.facebook.com/HouseOfficeofDiversityandInclusion)

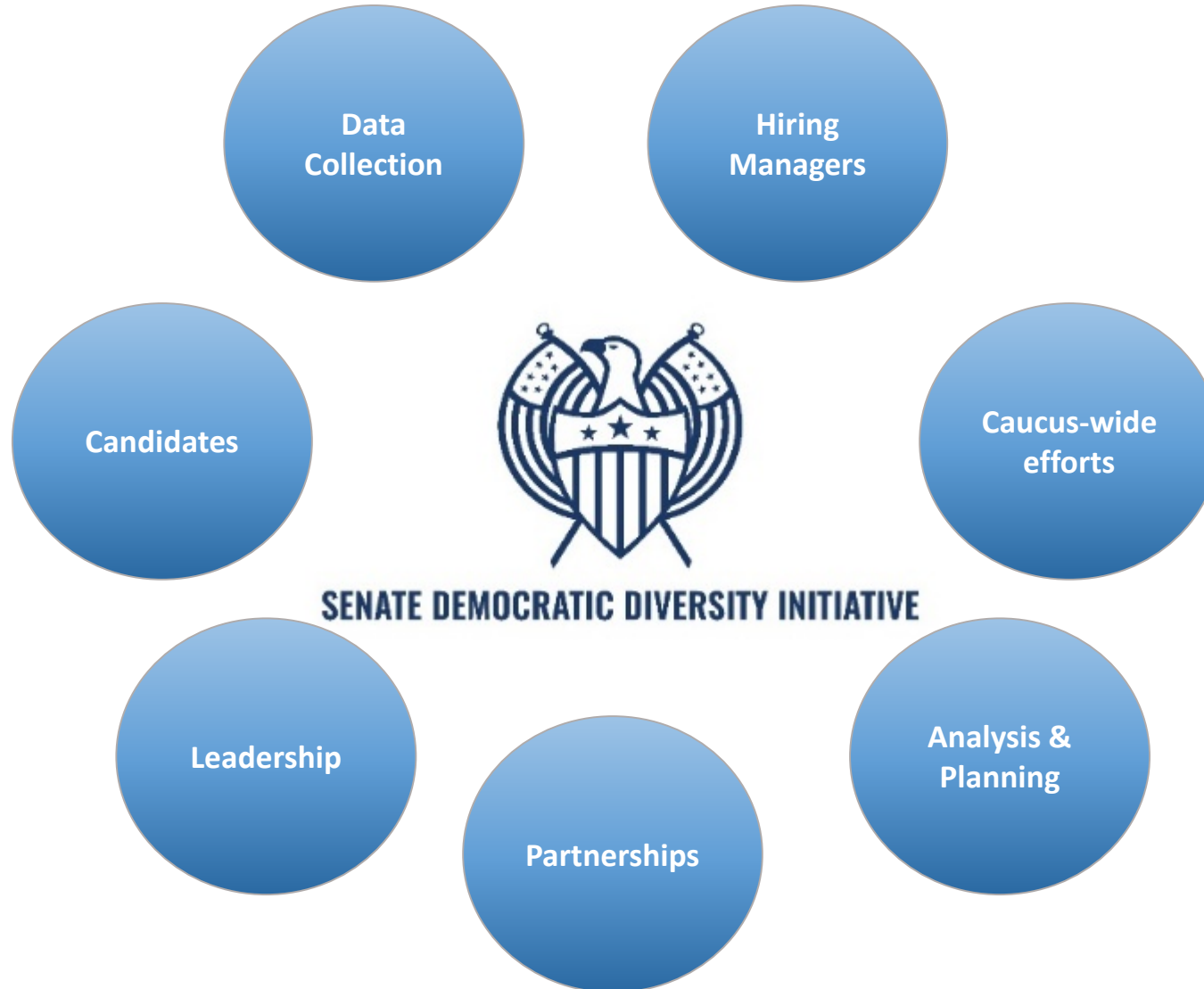
 : [@Diversity Congress](https://www.instagram.com/DiversityCongress)

Senate Diversity Initiative

Lorenzo Olvera, Director

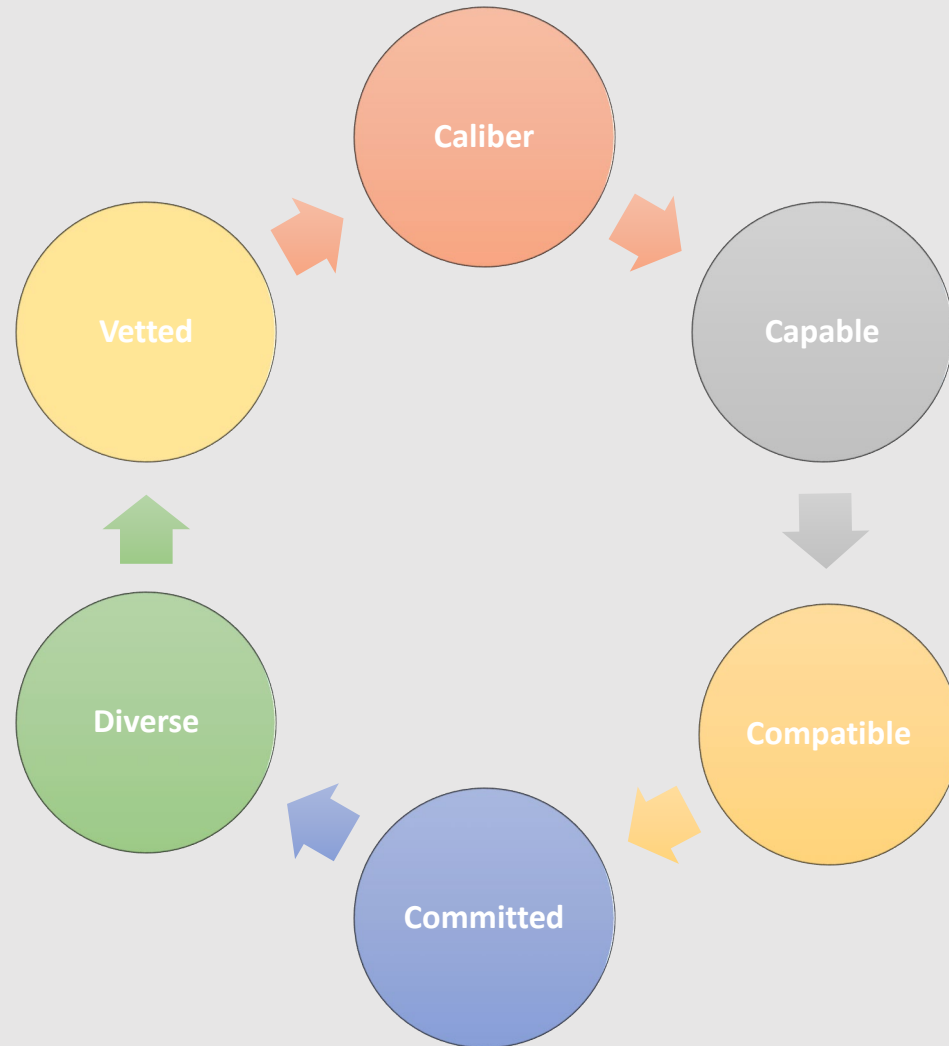
Will Reese, Deputy Director

Senate Diversity Initiative





Talent Acquisition



Top 3 Actions



Team Davis Hiring Process

Lisa Sherman

Why Good Hiring Matters

- Increase office effectiveness
- Decrease office mistakes, drama, turnover and supervision
- More work/flex environment opportunities with solid staff

General Recommendations

- Keep an open mind: Do not get attached too early or dismiss anyone too soon.
- Look at each candidate from many angles.
- Make sure expectations and reality match for both the new hire and the office.
- Hire for the exact job you are trying to fill.
- Pay attention to potential red flags → red flags become fires – pay attention
- Only hire people you feel GREAT about.
- Treat applicants with respect.

Why Our Hiring Process Works

- We hire great people who fit, move up and stay.
- We review many applications efficiently.
- We avoid bad fits by identifying red flags.
- We find superstars who might be overlooked.
- We involve our entire staff.
- We use the process as an outreach opportunity.

In Every Job We Look For...

- Position-specific skills
- A positive & collaborative attitude
- People who want to help others
- Great writing skills
- Sound judgement
- Organizational skills
- Loyalty
- Creativity
- Proactive Outlook
- Desire to learn and grow
- Optimism
- Grit
- Balance with other staff strengths
- Value-Added skills or background

Across the Staff We Look For

- Balance of policy, political and outreach backgrounds
- Gender balance
- Diversity
- District community balance
- Issue expertise
- Language skills
- Tech skills
- Past career balance—veterans, teachers, lawyers, etc.

10-Step Team Davis Process

Step 1: Determine Needs (CoS/DD)

Step 2: Advertise the Position

Step 3: Sort Resumes (Hiring Assistant)

Step 4: Sift Through Resumes
(CoS/DD)

Step 5: Create a Testing Schedule
(Hiring Assistant)

Step 6: Conduct Testing

****Each Step is
Detailed in the
Team Davis PDF
Handouts****

10-Step Team Davis Process *(continued)*

Step 7: Conduct Reference Calls (CoS/DD)

Step 8: CoS/DD Interview Top Applicants

Step 9: Member Interview Finalists
(MC/CoS/DD)

Step 10: Closing the Deal

- With the Member
- With the Candidate
- With Current Staff
- Wrap-up with Other Candidates
- With the Public

****Each Step is
Detailed in the
Team Davis PDF
Handouts****

How to Involve the Whole Staff

- Invite staff to circulate the opening announcement and recommend people.
- Make staff writing test judges.
- Listen to staff feedback on test takers.
- Let staff know the news before anyone else outside.
- DC and DO coordinate throughout process—candidate recruitment, test scheduling, test judging, news sharing.
- Staff respect the new hire because they went through the process themselves.
- Warning: Do not let staff judge people too quickly.

Bonus Documents and Examples in Handouts

- Advertisement
- Testing Email
- Testing Schedule
- Writing Test & Instructions
- District Questionnaire
- General Written Interview
- Specialized Job Tests (ex: district scheduling test)
- Score Sheet & Instructions
- Best Reference Questions
- Reference Reports
- List of what should be provided in Member “Interview Book”
- Rejection Letters
- Announcement of New Hire

Q&A/Evaluation

...and more resources!

Additional Resources

Visit **CongressFoundation.org** for:

- Sample Job Descriptions (House)
- Management Brief: “How to Develop Job Descriptions”

CRS Report: “Congressional Staff: Duties, Qualifications, and Skills Identified by Members of Congress for Selected Positions”

Staff Up Congress Resources at **<https://naleo.org/staffupcongress/>**

Upcoming Programs

- 2/12 – Setting Up a Scheduling Operation
- February – Setting Up Constituent Communications & Engagement Systems
- March – Creating and Implementing a Legislative Agenda

Go to CongressFoundation.org/calendar to sign up
or watch for the link in follow-up email

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