

A background image showing a business meeting. A person in a light blue shirt has their hands clasped on a wooden table. Another person in a light blue and orange striped shirt is writing in a notebook with a pen. A laptop and a tablet are also visible on the table.

Recruiting for Retention

Part Three: Matching & Committing

Powered by the National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network

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About 3RNET

3RNET is the most trusted resource for health professionals seeking careers in rural and underserved communities.

3RNET Mission

3RNET works to improve rural and underserved communities' access to quality health care through recruitment of physicians and other health care professionals, development of community based recruitment and retention activities, and national advocacy relative to rural and underserved health care workforce issues.

3RNET Vision

3RNET is the national leader for community-based health professional recruitment and retention, using interactive technologies and communication.

3RNET is a nonprofit organization focused on people. Our members connect professionals searching for jobs in rural or underserved areas with health care facilities.

3RNET is powered by the National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network which is made up of member organizations such as:

- State Offices of Rural Health
- Primary Care Offices
- Area Health Education Centers
- University programs
- State-based non-profit organizations
- Primary Care Associations

Learn more about 3RNET by visiting www.3RNET.org.



About this Guide

Where did this guide come from?

This guide includes the collective expertise of 3RNET and is powered by the National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network.

3RNET has been the leader in rural and underserved recruitment and retention best practices since 1995.

The content of this guide is based on content from 3RNET's longtime-published *Recruiting for Retention Manual*.

This streamlined, more modern guide hopes to further what the *Manual* always intended to accomplish: provide best practices by combining the years of collective expertise from 3RNET's National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network for rural and underserved healthcare recruiters.

“Recruitment”

Recruiting with a goal toward retention, or “recruitment” as a best practice is one of the core beliefs of 3RNET education. Recruitment is a term coined by one of 3RNET's previous Executive Director's, Tim Skinner. Tim, along with other early 3RNET leaders, believed passionately in the idea presented in this guide: use best practices to find the *best fit* for your organization.

About Marketing to & Finding Candidates

In today's marketing climate it is important to have a great virtual presence and that communication be candidate focused.

Recruiting health professionals can be competitive. So, it is important to put your best foot forward. And, since many job seekers browse for jobs online, we have compiled some strategies to consider as you work to create your best digital footprint.

How to Use This Guide

There are a few ways to approach the *Recruiting for Retention* guides:

- Read all four guides at once, from cover to cover.
- Focus on each guide individually as it pertains to your specific situation.
- Come back to individual sections or one individual guide for a quick reference.

Several of the tools (Recruitment Team Action Plan, Market Your Community Assessment, Budget Worksheet, etc.) can be viewed separately and used as stand-alone tools.

Learn More

For additional information on any topic discussed in the *Recruiting for Retention* guides contact 3RNET at 1-800-787-2512 or info@3rnet.org.

3RNET also provides primary care recruitment and retention training and assistance. If you feel more hands-on education could help, please contact 3RNET's Director of Education, Mandi Gingras at 1-800-787-2512 or gingras@3rnet.org.

Rural Specific

Many of the best practices, tactics, and ideas within this guide are both practical and useful for health care employers serving both rural and underserved (also urban underserved) populations.

Why? Although in some ways vastly different, there are many similarities within the employee-employer relationship that translate no matter where you are located geographically.

We recognize that even with similarities across the health care safety net, recruiting for rural areas presents unique challenges.

Throughout the guide, you'll notice this mark: **r** which calls attention to rural-specific considerations.

Introduction

Health care professionals are critical to the stability of medical services in rural and underserved areas. Recruiting and retaining hard-to-find health care professionals is one of the biggest challenges facing the health care industry. It's vital to use a strategic approach that emphasizes recruiting the right candidate who will stay for an extended period of time.

There is no single "right" way to recruit and retain health care professionals. Yet, there are certain critical activities or processes that should take place to ensure timely placement and lasting retention of a quality healthcare professional in your community.

Recruiting for Retention guides you step-by-step through the key elements of the recruitment and retention process. From assessing need to integrating the health care professional and family into the community, *Recruiting for Retention* explains the most important steps in finding and retaining the ideal candidate for your community.

We break down the four parts of the recruitment for retention process: planning and preparation, marketing to and finding candidates, matching and committing, and retaining for the lifecycle of the employee.

In each guide you will learn tips and tools for making your recruitment and retention efforts a more manageable, productive and efficient process.

As its title implies, *Recruiting for Retention* will show you how to build staff retention during the recruitment process itself – long before the employee begins with your facility.

Finally, *Recruiting for Retention* identifies state, regional and federal resources that can most help you in your recruitment and retention efforts, as well as help improve health care delivery in your community.



3RNET's Recruiting *for* Retention Core Beliefs

Process & Teamwork are Key

Recruiting is not a one-person activity. Even in small facilities one person may wear many hats but it takes a team to successfully recruit and retain employees. A process is also important so that you can ensure that all activities, strategies and compliance items are performed to enable a successful outcome.

Recruitment is Both a Science & an Art

If recruitment was a science, you could follow a manual, and everyone would succeed.

If recruitment was an art, there would be no best practices or guidelines to follow.

The most successful outcomes come from those organizations that have the person recruiting following a process and also adapting strategies depending on their circumstance.

Competition is Fierce, Therefore Communication Must be Candidate Oriented

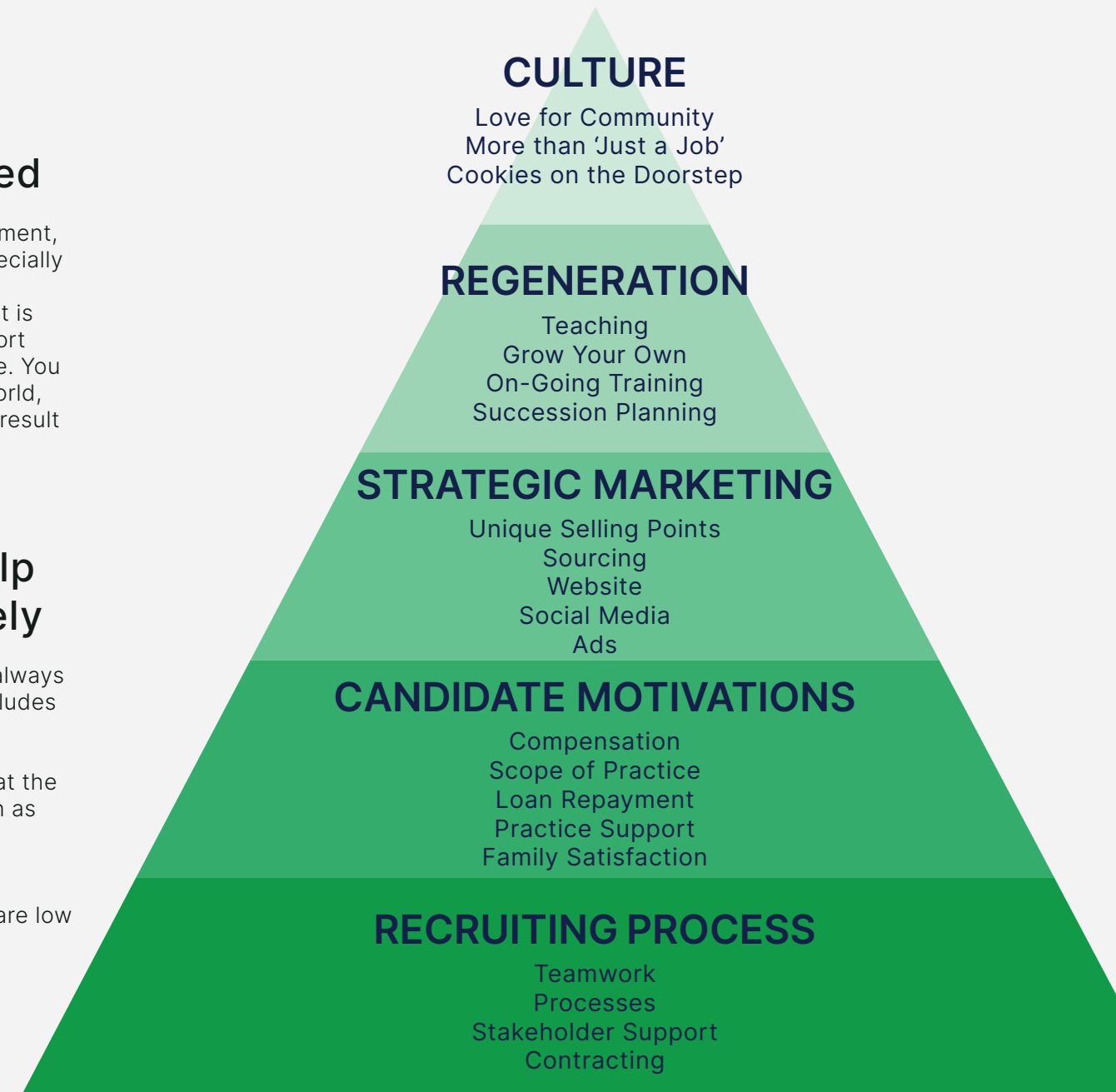
Communication is key in every aspect of employment, but even before that relationship starts, it is especially essential to start off on the right foot. When communicating your opportunity to a candidate it is important to think through what you think is important versus what would be important to the candidate. You might have the best "insert factor here" in the world, but if the candidate doesn't need or want it, the result is null.

People & Tools Exist to Help You Recruit More Effectively

Those who work in the health care industry are always aware of the cost of doing business and that includes recruiting and retaining employees.

The good news is there are many organizations at the state and national level that have resources such as incentive programs to help you.

Along with those organizations there are many marketing and technology tools available which are low cost or free.



Interviewing

Interviewing is where you get to determine how closely a fit you and your candidate are. In today's world interviewing can be conducted in many different ways, both in person and virtually. It is best to have processes for both types of interviewing and your interviewers properly trained.

Interviews can go through a series of steps from a phone screen to a panel interview to an in-depth on-site interview. It is important to use those steps to not only assess what you need from the candidate but to be able to relay information that may be important to candidate as well.

Strategies

Doing a little prep work for your interview process can ensure the right kind of impression.

Before you begin ask these questions:

Is everyone on board?

- Administration, peers, medical staff and community
- Having buy-in before someone starts can help with retention.

Is your interview team prepped?

- Give them the résumé/CV
- Share candidate interest
- Share spouse/partner interest
- Children's interest
- Hobbies
- Culture
- Community interest *r*

Has the preferred type of communication for the recruitment process been established? (For example: text, phone, or email)

- Different generations respond better to different types of communication.

Prepare next steps.

- If a contracted employee, have contract or letter of intent ready.
- Know a date you will decide on final candidate and share that.
- If a new provider, be prepared to discuss guarantee, marketing and building a practice.

Different Interview Approaches

There are multiple approaches for interviewing, you could use any combination of the three or focus on one:

- Behavior-based interview questions – high value but not always providing a full 'picture' of whether the candidate fits your need.
- Data gathering/fact finding – does the candidate meet your minimum requirements, do you meet candidate's minimum requirements, etc.
- Open-ended questions – opportunity for candidate to share in a less 'directed' fashion.

A case could be made for behavior-based interviewing because of the predictive nature of the interview that is based on fundamental psychology research and principles:

- Premise: Past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior.
- Not a new concept but becoming more and more prevalent in use.
- Minimizes the 'halo' effect and subjectivity
- A good way to collect meaningful information about possible cultural 'fit' for your organization.

The essence of a behavior-based question includes:

- More than just an 'open-end' question.
- There are no 'magic' questions.

Frequently used question 'starters' include:

- "Tell me about a time..."
- "Describe for me..."
- "Give me an example of ..."

Bottom line—ask for a specific example of a situation or task, learn the action taken and get the result!

Candidate Perspective

Just like your job postings should be candidate focused, your interview should be thought out to address the candidate's perspective of the opportunity. How do your questions answer the common questions a candidate will have?

Here are some examples of questions which candidates could be asked by a spouse/partner or someone vested in their accepting the position.

- Did you like the culture of the practice, the people you met, and can you see yourself enjoying working with them?
- Do you see yourself being excited and challenged in the role?
- Did you get a chance to see the community? What was your experience like?
- Did you have any concerns (practice or community)?
- What are the next steps?

Tips on Interviewing Behavioral Health Professionals

- Address safety concerns and share your processes for their safety both with patients and pandemic situations like Covid 19.
- Give real life examples of ways they will make a difference in patients' lives.
- Explain in detail how they will be able to perform at the top of their licensure.
- Be open to remote work.
- Consider flexible schedules.
- Incorporate work and life balance strategies.



Virtual Interviewing

The way you interview has changed a lot. If you aren't already, in the near future you will most likely be conducting virtual interviews. This can pose a barrier or challenge for both the candidate and the interview team.

Remember, a positive of virtual interviewing is that it is possible to schedule more interviews in a timely manner because of convenience.

Strategies

We have included some tips to help ensure that you and the candidate are able to assess the fit between you both.

It could be beneficial to include a Tip Guide when scheduling the interview with the candidate. The Tip Guide could include:

- Keeping distractions to a minimum, find a quiet place to conduct the interviews.
- Have the candidate test the software before hand to make sure their computer is prepared to run your virtual meeting software.
- Include step-by-step instructions on how to adjust volume, unmute/mute, set background. Many virtual meeting software have links to easy to view videos you can include.
- Set expectations for the candidate so they know the length of time, who will be involved in the interview, and what will be expected during the interview.
- Remember generational differences in virtual interviewing. Some candidates will be more comfortable with technology than others and it is important to acknowledge that so every candidate is treated fairly.
- Preparation is key. Preparing your team and candidates will ensure a smooth interview experience.



Interviewing a Spouse/Partner

Conducting a spouse/partner interview can be a great recruitment and retention tool.

Strategies

The person conducting the spouse/partner interview should have:

- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Knows the community really well
- Shares a common background or interest with the spouse/partner

The type of information you should gather includes:

- Geographic
 - Climate
 - Recreation
 - Housing
 - Schools
 - Shopping
- Professional
 - Education opportunities for spouse/partner
 - Career opportunities for spouse/partner
 - Volunteer opportunities for spouse/partner
- Personal
 - Location of family/friends
 - Knowledge of the opening/opportunity
 - Hobbies



On-Site Visits

For some positions like providers or leadership role an onsite visit may be an option. This is generally anywhere from a half day visit to a two-day visit if the candidate is coming to you from another location and will be relocating to the area.

Strategies

- Make each site visit unique as possible to the candidate.
- Site visits should last one to two days.
- The site visit should balance professional and personal venues.
- Don't overwhelm the candidate and spouse/partner, keep people who escort them to a minimum.
- Tour and experience the community – first with an escort and then alone – allowing the candidate and spouse/partner to see the pros and cons of your community.
- Tour the location of the practice.
- Meet and visit with each physician one-to-one, unless it is a very large practice, in which case it may be more appropriate to select several key members of the medical staff to meet with one-to-one.
- Visit at length with the lead medical staff member on the recruitment team.
- Tour the hospital and meet key hospital staff members, especially the administrator and the director of nursing.
- Tour other relevant health care facilities.
- Visit places of particular interest to each candidate and spouse/partner– ask them before the site visit.
- Have a social gathering with the Recruitment Team.
- Conduct a business interview between the recruiter, contract negotiator, the benefits recruiter at the practice site, and the candidate.
- Ask the spouse/partner what he or she would like to do or see while the candidate is involved in itinerary stops of professional concern. In case he or she does not have a long list of interests, create an itinerary to be led by the spouse/partner recruiter.
- Incorporate your recruitment team into the site visit. Use your real estate agent to give a community tour, have the school contact give a tour of the schools, find a local person well versed in the history of your community and have them meet for coffee. Showcase your community along with your practice.
- The site visit is where you can share practice specific information with the candidate, include a job description and an organizational chart that list all departments to showcase the facilities integrated services. Create a talking points flyer similar to the one for the Board that discusses future plans of the clinics, include any new technology, medical advances or new areas of specialties that will be implemented. Outline any potential leadership roles if the candidate is interested in that.
- Continue to conduct a business meeting at the site visit. Create a letter of intent.
- Include a meeting with a financial advisor to assess the candidate's short term and long term financial goal. The advisor should be well versed in your benefits package and be able to communicate how your compensation package, including benefits, will help the candidate achieve their goals.
- Experience a unique event in your area, sporting event with a group or any festivals, fairs, etc. **r**

Conducting Virtual On-Site Visits

The on-site visit may look very different than it did in the past and if you are in a position that you may have to conduct it virtually here are some things to keep in mind.

- Communicate safety precautions/expectations to make candidates and current employees feel comfortable.
- Consider virtual tours of facilities, locations, schools, real estate.
- Set up video meetings with recruitment teams, community recruiters (bankers, real estate, superintendent of school).
- If the interview or "site visit" will be all virtual, have more than one meeting to determine fit.
- If your facility is closed on weekends, take a tour then to help with social distancing and Covid 19 protocols.
- Give a community tour by having the candidate follow in a vehicle behind and utilize speaker phone.
- Use a picture of the facility as your background on video calls.

Negotiations

It is important to get a commitment from the candidate and it is important for the candidate to have that commitment from you.

Strategies

- Be prepared to make an offer! Use a letter of intent or contract.
- Follow up within 48 hours with a thank you message based on communication preferences and include:
 - Links to festivals
 - Photos of time spent in community
 - Letters or testimonials from employees
- If the candidate is still undecided the negotiator must identify and address reservations right away.
- If you get a “no” find the specifics why and if you can eliminate barriers or offer solutions for the next candidate do so.



Free and Low Cost Tools

All tools are located in the Recruiting for Retention Resource Center (R4R Resource Center). When listed, use the reference number to identify the document or tool you're looking for.

Sample Interview Questions

These behavior based questions can aid you in finding the right fit for your organization.

[Reference 3.1](#)

Interview Question Dos and Don'ts

For those new to interviewing or as a guide to those on your interview panels here is a list of topics to keep your interviewers compliant.

[Reference 3.2](#)

Sample Letter of Intent

Offer a letter of intent when a contract isn't necessary or to show your candidate you are ready to start the employer/employee relationship.

[Reference 3.1](#)

Virtual Interviewing Tips

Virtual Interviewing is different but it doesn't degrade the interviewing experience and doesn't have to be an obstacle. Remote work is not a passing phase and virtual recruiting solutions are critical for future work.

[Reference 3.4](#)



Rural Focused Strategies

Your Community can be one of the best strategies during your on-site visit with providers moving to the area. Rural can have an advantage over urban:

- Leadership roles within the community to allow provider to give back and invest in family's future.
- Connecting with the community, usually the provider is providing a much needed service and the community appreciates it, which in turns, allows for an easier transition into the community.



Generations in the Workplace

Virtual interviewing

Different generations in the workplace have a different level of comfort with technology, remember to eliminate barriers to ensure you are getting to experience the full potential of each candidate.

Communication preferences

Each generation has different communications preference, meeting the candidate where they are can ease anxieties and allow the candidate to put their best foot forward.



Conclusion

Finding the right match is vital to your overall recruitment efforts. Why? It's the core of our R&R philosophy: recruiting *FOR* retention.

We encourage you to take simple steps from this guide and incorporate them into your recruitment processes. We know from experience that finding the right person for the job, rather than just anybody, will help in multiple ways: they are more likely to stay, be satisfied in their job, and as an organization you'll save money (it's more expensive to recruit than retain), and most important: the overall delivery of healthcare will improve.

Finally, keep your "planning and preparation" hat from Guide 1 on and use the information and accompanying tools available with this Guide to make sure that when you find that "right" person you are ready to commit -- fast. Have your letter of intent, negotiator, and other peices in place.

As you continue to work on your recruitment efforts, remember: focus on what works for your organization!

Explore the complementing tools mentioned in this guide (available when logged into 3RNET.org).

Questions, Comments, & Feedback

Share with us! We love hearing from the hard working recruiters like you who are helping to ensure access to health care for all Americans.

For additional information on any topic discussed in the Recruiting for Retention guides contact 3RNET at 1-800-787-2512 or info@3rnet.org.

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