



ebook

How to Recruit for Local Government in the Digital Age



CIVICHR[®]

Local government human resource teams across the country are faced with the same challenge: how to attract quality talent in today's digital-first society. To remain relevant in the job market, and attract millennial job seekers, public sector human resource managers are enhancing their talent search strategies to ensure they are reaching qualified talent using the most appropriate channels and effective messaging. To optimize your talent acquisition model and recruit the most qualified pool of applicants possible, make sure your strategy includes impactful performance profiles, is mobile optimized, and leverages social media.

Turn Your Job Descriptions into Performance Profiles

One of the biggest priorities in recruiting should be focused on the quality of your recruitment advertising. If you're using job descriptions today to recruit candidates, it's time to convert them into performance profiles. While job descriptions attract task-oriented doers, performance profiles attract goal-minded achievers.



[Click here to learn how to convert your job descriptions into performance profiles.](#)

Be sure to review and customize each performance profile for each new position. It's easy to get stuck in the trap of re-posting the same ad repeatedly, but in doing so, you will be missing connections with high quality applicants. Instead, customize each performance profile to attract your ideal candidate.



Job Advertisement Best Practices

The job advertisements and performance profiles you create will impact the type of candidates that you connect with, which in-turn will shape the quality of applications you received. If you want to boost company culture, improve employee job satisfaction, and increase retention, then you need to closely examine your job advertisement strategy.

The ads that you place for job openings can draw in the right types of candidates that you want working for your company. Improving the candidate pool will make it easier for you to hire people who are highly qualified for the open position, which increases the likelihood of success that they will have with your local government administration.

Hiring the wrong candidates can lead to greater issues across your organization, such as individuals whose lack of productivity puts a strain on an entire department. Do not be tempted to rush the hiring process just to fill a vacancy. Make sure anyone you hire shares a commitment to your community and has the skills needed to excel in the role.

Read our list of common job ad mistakes on the next page to make sure you are best positioning your community to hire quality talent:

- **Lack of Formatting:** Big blocks of text are hard to read, and potential candidates might move past your posting because they can't easily skim the information. Use bold, italics, bullet points, subheadings, and short paragraphs to make the content easier to read.
- **Missing Community Information:** The goal with recruiting is to help people see why they should be working for your community. Make sure that you share positive information about your administration to set the right tone for the community culture they can expect.
- **Wrong Expectations:** Are you requiring too much in the application process? If your expectations are too high, then people might not be interested in jumping through the hoops to see if the job is a good match. Be clear about the expectations for the position, and make sure that you set realistic expectations.
- **Call to Action:** Don't forget to include your call to action in the job advertisement, so that potential applicants know how to apply for the position. Include contact information, application details, and any other important pieces of information that are needed before they apply.

Also, consider testing different formats of the job ad, to see the type of language that is most effective for your administration. A robust applicant tracking software (ATS) will allow you to create a variety of custom performance profiles and track the effectiveness of various promotional channels.

The main take-away for job ad success is to make sure that you are proactive with your postings, instead of getting caught up in the same patterns of recruiting. You might be surprised to see how much of a difference it can make to change your job ads. Small adjustments can make a big impact to the quality of applications you receive.

The Paradigm Shift to Digital

Having a stellar job ad is just the first step, because a good job ad won't be useful unless it is posted in the right place. Consider the options that are available for the job posting, and try to maximize the opportunities as much as possible. Also, keep in mind when strategizing promotions that the majority of today's job seekers are starting their job search online.

According to a 2015 survey by [Pew Research Center](#), the proportion of Americans who have researched jobs online has doubled in the last ten years:

- 54 percent of adults have gone online to search for a job.
- 45 percent have applied for a job online.

Today, more Google searches are performed from mobile devices than desktop computers. Not only are job seekers searching for employment from a desktop computer, they are searching on-the-go from their mobile devices.

- 28 percent of Americans have used a smartphone as part of a job search.
- Half of smartphone job seekers have used their smartphone to complete a job application.
- 6 percent of adults have used their smartphone to create a resume or a cover letter.
- 53 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds have used a smartphone as part of their job search, as have 37 percent of 30- to 49-year-olds.

Despite the proliferation of mobile technology, the mobile resources and tools available for job seekers do not always enable a convenient, streamlined experience. Nearly half of smartphone job seekers have reported experiencing difficulties accessing job-related content due to issues with usability and mobile functionality. In addition, 30 percent have reported having difficulty entering a

large amount of text into mobile interfaces, or having difficulty submitting supporting documentation from their mobile devices.

To attract today's mobile-savvy job seekers, local governments need to ensure any job postings or digital talent acquisition tools are optimized for mobile. To create a mobile-friendly job search and application process, follow these best practices:

- If you are using an applicant tracking software solution to streamline your job recruitment process, make sure it is optimized for mobile so that job postings can be easily read and responded to by mobile device users.
- Write concise job ads that can easily be read or scanned from a mobile device screen.
- Ensure the employment page of your local government website is mobile optimized. Not only will it give job searchers viewing your site from a mobile device a better experience, mobile optimized content will rank higher on search engines such as Google and Bing. Remember that mobile optimization includes the use of large, clickable buttons and eliminating large files and graphics that are slow to load.
- Use online forms for job applications, rather than downloadable PDFs that can be impossible for some users to download, complete, and submit from a mobile device.
- Reduce the total number of career pages a job seeker will need to search through on your website. Slow, repeated page loads can be frustrating to mobile users.
- Use dropdown menus and yes/no responses to primary application questions to minimize free-text response requirements, which are more time consuming to complete for mobile users.



Leverage the Power of #SocialMedia

In addition to starting their job hunt from a search engine, many Americans are passively and actively searching for jobs using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Many job seekers are even using social media to share employment opportunities or refer friends and colleagues, making it a powerful platform for amplifying the reach of your job openings. If you haven't yet incorporated social media into your talent acquisition strategy, consider these facts from the Pew Research Center:

- 35 percent of social media users have utilized social media to look for, or research, jobs.
- 21 percent have applied for a job they first found out about through social media.
- 34 percent have used social media to inform friends about available positions at their own employer.
- 13 percent of social media users say information that they have posted on social media has helped them get hired.

Getting Started: Quality Over Quantity

If social media is not currently a component of your social media strategy, we can help you get started. Keep in mind that it is important to be strategic with your social media strategy. Some human resource hiring managers start posting

too much information online, which can become less impactful to passive and active job seekers. Instead of overwhelming social followers with messages about your job openings, look for ways that you can naturally connect with individuals who are a good fit for your administration.



STEP ① Build A Foundation

During the recruiting process, candidates are likely looking online for more information about your community. They want to know more about the administration's goals and community culture, to help them determine if a position within your local government is a good fit for them. Every piece of information that you publish online will impact your community's reputation, so make sure you are careful about the way you are building your community brand.

Create social pages for your community on the major social media platforms that you are planning to use: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc. If you're not currently utilizing social media, start with just Facebook, and after you have established a consistent posting schedule and feel more confident, add a second, like Twitter or Instagram. These profiles should share details about your

community and give a brief glance into what it's like to work for your local government.

These social media profiles are the foundation of your online recruiting campaign, so make sure that you take the time that is needed to get it done right.

STEP ② Be Clear About Your Goals

Make sure that you have clarity about your online recruiting goals, so that you know who you are trying to connect with through your efforts. Gaining this clarity will allow you to tailor your content to match your target demographic so that you can talk with the right people who might be interested in working on your team.

Also, it is a good idea to set measurable goals in the beginning. For example, you might put together a publishing calendar at the beginning of each month, so that you know exactly what should be posted on specific days.

STEP ③ Leverage Advertising

Spending a little bit of money on advertising can be very beneficial if you want to be sure that people are seeing your message. Social media can be noisy and there are many competing voices on the Internet. Still, advertising increases the likelihood that your target demographic will see the information that you want to share about your company.



[Click here to learn how to market your local government using paid and social advertising.](#)

Facebook and LinkedIn can be impactful platforms for social media advertising. In certain industries, companies have experienced success with sharing details about the job opening and then boosting the post to expand the number of people who see that post.

LinkedIn is one of the most powerful options to connect with quality talent, especially since the website is designed as a business networking site. On LinkedIn, you can have access to resume, work history, and experience details for the people that you might be interested in hiring. Use LinkedIn to build your network, and target advertisements to people who match your hiring qualifications.

STEP ④ Think Outside the Box

Make sure to target your job advertisements to both active and passive job seekers. There are many more potential employees who might be a good match for your position, so you need to be willing to share your job information with people who aren't actively looking for employment. One of the best places to search for passive job seekers is in your very own recruitment database. An ATS will allow you to search through past applications to identify potential candidates based on identified qualifications.

Also, look for ways to connect with these people through LinkedIn or other social media platforms, and make sure that you are branding your company in a way that will be appealing to your target demographic. As a result, it might be possible to have people change positions because they are interested in the benefits that you can offer.

Using the Right Tools

Social media can be a powerful way to spread the word and connect with more people who might be interested in the job openings that are available in

your community. Leverage your online efforts even more by using tools that can help you keep your job postings updated. Automating certain parts of the recruiting process can be very beneficial because these tools allow you to save time and focus more efforts on other activities.

Tips and Best Practices

A social media marketing plan might sound overwhelming or time consuming, but it doesn't have to be difficult. A few focused tasks can help you to ramp up your online recruiting efforts so that you can hire the people who are a good fit for your local government. If you're already using social media today and are ready to amplify your strategy, start by implementing these best practices:

- Create a YouTube Channel and post videos that describe what makes your community unique and the benefits of working for your local government.
 - Share job openings on your community Facebook page, and encourage leaders in your administration to share the posts as well.
 - Make sure your Facebook community page includes a job board to offer citizens another channel to learn about open positions.
 - Provide the ability to apply to open positions using a LinkedIn profile. This expedites the ability for job seekers to submit an application.
 - Promote available job positions using paid Facebook ads. For a minimal investment, you can set-up highly targeted advertisements to ideal candidates, regardless of whether they are actively searching for a position.
 - Keep all your community social media profiles active by constantly updating content that demonstrates the benefits of civic employment.
-

Conclusion

Goal-oriented performance profiles, advertising in the digital space, and leveraging social media are the three key components necessary to target public sector job seekers in today's digitally-focused society.

Feeling overwhelmed? Don't be. We have summarized the key action items from this eBook in the check list below. Use this as your guide to enhance your talent recruitment and new hire strategy.

MESSAGING

- ☐ Turn your traditional job descriptions into performance profiles. [Click here](#) for detailed instructions.
- ☐ Format your performance profiles and job advertisements consistently.
- ☐ Include information in your job ads about the benefits of working for your community.
- ☐ Use your performance profiles to set clear expectations for those achievements that will indicate an ideal hire.
- ☐ Include a call-to-action.
- ☐ Track referral sources to determine which advertising channels are most effective. An ATS can help automate such reporting.

ADVERTISING

- ☐ Post your job ad online to target digitally-minded job seekers, including posts on:
 - ☐ Your local government website.
 - ☐ Online job boards such as Career Builder and Indeed.
 - ☐ Social media.

MOBILE OPTIMIZATION

- ☐ Make sure your job ads are optimized for mobile devices:
 - ☐ Use an ATS that is mobile optimized.
 - ☐ Write concise job ads.
 - ☐ Ensure your local government website employment page is mobile optimized.
 - ☐ Use online job forms, rather than downloadable PDFs, to enable mobile applications.
 - ☐ Reduce the total number of career pages a job seeker will need to search through on your website to find appropriate job listings.
 - ☐ Use dropdown menus and yes/no responses to primary application questions for ease of use on mobile.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- ☐ If you're new to social media, start with just one platform, like Facebook, and then add others as you feel more confident.
- ☐ Share job openings on your community Facebook page, and encourage leaders in your administration to share the posts as well.
- ☐ Make sure your Facebook community page includes a job board to offer citizens another channel to learn about open positions.
- ☐ Provide the ability to apply to open positions using a LinkedIn profile.
- ☐ Promote available job positions using paid Facebook ads.
- ☐ Create a YouTube Channel and post videos that describe what makes your community unique and the benefits of working for your local government.
- ☐ Keep all your community social media profiles active by constantly updating content that demonstrates the benefits of civic employment.

About the Author - JONATHAN WIERSMA

As the General Manager for CivicHR, Jonathan understands the challenges that human resource professionals in local government face when looking to recruit, identify, and hire the best talent in their community, for their community. Jonathan's primary focus at CivicPlus is on following the trends in the local government human resource landscape, and leading product enhancements for CivicHR to ensure the solution evolves as the needs of local government evolve. Jonathan holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration. He has over fifteen years of experience in software research and development, client service, product implementations, sales, and marketing.



302 South 4th Street • Manhattan, KS 66502
info@civicplus.com • 888-729-3407

www.civichr.com