CPAWS · SNAP
CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY
SOCIÉTÉ POUR LA NATURE ET LES PARCS DU CANADA

# HIRING THROUGH A JEDI LENS

## The big picture

At CPAWS, we recognize that the conservation movement in Canada has a complex and often problematic history. Although we have moved a long way, there is still significant work required for it to become an equitable, just, and inclusive space for everyone. To address these inequities, we have committed to making our organization as welcoming and as transparent as possible.

The goal of this document is to provide a set of tools that will help CPAWS staff mitigate gender, racial, and other hidden biases as well as structural inequities in our recruiting and hiring processes. It includes structural pieces and guidelines seen through a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) lens that we will implement to recruit, retain, and promote a broader range of talented people. This is a living document that we'll update as we become aware of new research and ideas.

## Maintain accountability

The leadership team at CPAWS is accountable for fair and inclusive hiring practices, including:

- Ensuring all hiring follows the process outlined in this document and accompanying checklist;
- Pursuing an inclusive workspace where employees see themselves reflected and have rewarding employment. This means an openness to feedback from new and existing staff on what will help them feel included and respected at work. This is particularly true for people from groups that have been historically underrepresented within our sector.
- When we feature images or videos with people, we're working towards ensuring that a diversity of prospective candidates can see themselves reflected. This includes on our website, photo and video projects, printed marketing materials, and reports.

## Recruit intentionally

We are putting systems in place to adjust for inequalities and ensure we give the best opportunity possible to hire someone we may have otherwise overlooked due to systemic barriers. This starts with being intentional with how we recruit.

We post all calls for applications on a variety of job sites. In addition to posting on local and national job boards, we make a commitment to recruit outside our traditional network or sector (environment, conservation). We use the relationships we've built with various partners to recruit from affinity groups, including First Nations, Metis and Inuit.

# Our commitments for Job Descriptions/Postings

We will include a statement about our organization's values and vision, as well as a mention of the traditional territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation on the job posting.

> *"CPAWS National is based on the unceded and unsurrendered lands of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation and works in both unceded and treaty lands of First Nations, Métis and Inuit throughout the country known as Canada.*
>
> *CPAWS is committed to operating in a way that upholds justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI). Our goal is to create an inclusive place for people from diverse backgrounds."*

We will have a thoughtful statement of equal opportunity and non-discrimination on the job posting and on our website.

> *"CPAWS is committed to operating in a way that upholds justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI). In our hiring processes, we take active measures to overcome biases and to address systemic imbalances. Our goal is to create an inclusive and safe place for people from diverse backgrounds. To learn more about the action we're taking, please visit the CPAWS website."*

## Use clear language

The job description/posting needs to attract a broad range of candidates and we commit to using clear language that's free from jargon and acronyms. Our organization's values and what sort of culture we have all need to be part of the job posting (i.e. why work with us, dog-friendly / kid-friendly, and why the office location is great, etc.).

***Check the use of coded language in your job description.***
Examples of language coded as masculine: *lead, individual, persist, analyze, assertive*.
Examples of language coded as feminine: *cooperative, interpersonal, responsive, supportive, understand*.

Although there is no suggestion that non-male gendered people cannot hold male coded attributes, studies show that more women apply to positions where there is a balance between the two.

## Include only the bare necessities

All job descriptions should be kept as brief as possible, as we know that potential applicants can be discouraged from applying if they feel they do not meet all qualifications. Postings need to focus on the key responsibilities and as much as possible, describe the desired skills for the role. For example, "the ability to take initiative and produce results is a skill as demonstrated by ___".

Avoid including completely open language like, "other duties as assigned".

## Separate required and 'nice to have' (helpful) skills

Skills that are not specifically required of a candidate will be removed from job posting, including asking for specific degrees, X years of experience, and prior non-profit experience unless it is particularly relevant to the job.

If we include a separate 'nice to have / helpful' skills section, we'll make it clear that you don't need all these skills to apply.

***Include less of the teachable skills and more non-teachable skills.***
Organizations often overvalue skills and qualifications that are teachable (e.g., familiarity with a specific environmental law) and undervalue skills that are less teachable (e.g., ability to work well on a team, ability to accept feedback gracefully and integrate it, communication skills). In fact, those skills that are typically labeled "soft" are in fact some of the most technical skills a person will need to learn. (TREC)

## Honor multiple types of education and accept equivalent experience for degrees

We're aware that dominant culture values and elevates Eurocentric knowledge over non-White, Indigenous, and non-European knowledges. Job descriptions should encourage applicants to describe any pertinent experience, including professional and personal experience.

## Be clear about the wage/salary and the benefits package

When hiring, we always include this wage in the posting, so that potential applicants can judge whether it is sufficient for their needs before applying. We spell out the benefits (when does eligibility start?), and include details about vacation days, statutory holidays & some additional paid days off during our seasonal office closure between December 25th and January 2nd.

When defining a salary range, we will make sure that the range is narrow and reasonable. Where possible, we will provide guidelines for how the range is connected to experience. For example, "The salary range begins at $40,000 for candidates with limited experience (e.g., a recent graduate) and may be up to $50,000 for someone who meets all essential criteria and has 5 years or more relevant experience".

***From the Nonprofit AF blog***
**"**No one will get offended if you offer somewhere within the range, have valid justification and don't do crappy stuff like having a pattern of offering women, BIPOC, disabled, older, etc. candidate's salaries at the lower end of your range."

## Describe the work schedule and flexibility

We include the normal bi-weekly hours, and let candidates know if hours can be worked from the office and/or remotely, and where we offer flexibility. If travel or availability on evenings or weekends is a part of the job, we're clear about these expectations by including the reasons why and an indication of the likely frequency. This is because including the need for travel and after-hours work to a job description may result in qualified candidates choosing not to apply because they are caregivers of others or have other life priorities.

## Describe the hiring process and timeline

We want to be transparent about our process and will include the hiring timeline and anticipated start date in the posting - and then make every effort to stick to it. Also included are details on when and how we plan to interview, for what length of time, how many rounds in total, whether and when writing samples or other supplemental materials are required, and when we hope to make a decision. We'll make it clear that the candidate can choose to come in for an in-person interview (if they live near the office) or choose an online interview if this works better for them or if the circumstances prevent a meeting in person.

List contact information in case people have questions.

# Reviewing applications

A hiring committee will be formed to review applications, and it will consist of no more than 3 people, led by the direct manager. Application reviews for the Executive Director position are led by the Board of Directors and will include additional committee members.

We take steps to prioritize diversity. We actively work to identify applicants from under-represented communities where possible and may implement special programs designed to assist disadvantaged persons to achieve equal opportunity.

## Steps:

1) Update the candidate scoring table template with the top 4 attributes or skills that we believe are important for success in the position (e.g., experience in a similar position). Accomplishments and/or degrees won't be valued higher than cultural knowledge, relationships people hold, time spent on activism/advocacy, volunteerism etc.

2) In addition to the above scoring categories, consideration will be given if the candidate identifies as being part of a historically under-represented community. This is to help balance any structural disadvantages that may exist.
3) Each person in the hiring committee should review every applicant's cover letter and resume, to identify their top 5 - 12 candidates, while being conscious of considering candidates who identify as coming from an under-represented community. The top candidates can be entered into the scoring table.
4) Members of the hiring committee should compare rankings and discuss their rationales, in order to determine which candidates will be invited for an interview. Where possible, only 3 or 4 people should be invited to interview because the process is emotionally costly - particularly for unsuccessful candidates.

## Interviewing

The interview committee will include up to 3 people (excluding the Executive Director or other Director level positions, which may require more), including the direct manager.

Interview questions will be shared with candidates prior to the interview. This gives candidates an opportunity to consider their responses in advance, which is particularly helpful for those candidates who need time to reflect and consider.

The hiring committee decides in advance what we're looking for so that we all have the same understanding of what the skill is. The hiring committee should also decide in advance what is negotiable and what isn't.

Committee members should look for ways to engage different candidates. The most charismatic candidate isn't always the best person for the job. We're committed to providing a comfortable interview environment, with the space for the candidate to pause, reflect, and ask questions.

Interviews always start with an opportunity for chit-chat, to allow the person to settle into the interview. We then offer introductions of CPAWS staff, followed by a short introduction of the candidate.

**Moving from Culture Fit to Culture Add**
When we talk about "*culture fit*", it often means hiring people who are like us, or who make us feel the most comfortable. While we do not want to hire people who are hostile to the values of the organization, focusing on "*culture fit*" can be riddled with unintended biases.

Instead, it is better to think about "culture add". According to Gallup, "...*culture add* promotes hiring decisions that focus on candidates' unique and beneficial attributes, values, beliefs and behaviors, making it possible for organizations to add valuable elements to their culture that it lacks. *Culture add* celebrates diversity and acknowledges that the organizational culture is in a constant state of improvement."

## All interviewers will:

1. Look for answers that show the candidate has the essential skills required to do the job and aligns with the defined organizational culture. We are looking for people who can do the job and whose overall values align with the organization.
2. Ask open ended and probing questions to the candidate, to help them unpack their different ways of knowing/experiencing the relevant subject matter.
3. Understand that different people respond differently to high pressure situations like interviews. Sometimes the best candidate is also the most nervous - focus on what they have to say, rather than how they present themselves.

The direct manager will lead the interview and assess if the candidate does indeed meet the skills criteria. Any other participants will support the lead interviewer.

## Interview questions should be based on the skills list:

- The function of the interview is to confirm that the candidate indeed has the skills needed, and to learn how to create an environment where the candidate will thrive
- Were there things in the cover letter or resume that needed more clarity?
- Ensure the questions are simple and open ended, don't use jargon or acronyms, etc.
- It is useful to integrate JEDI concepts into multiple questions, rather than a standalone question, as it also gives a chance to weave in our organizational values. E.g., 'how do you ensure that the voices of all constituents are heard'?
- Always close with these two questions:
  - Is there anything you'd like to tell us about yourself that you didn't get a chance to, or something you said previously that you'd like to expand on?
  - We've asked you a lot of questions. Do you have any questions for us?

We are conscious that it's important to ask the same core questions to everyone. Of course, follow-up questions or clarifying questions will be different but we're careful to check our biases as they will come through on what we ask, who we ask, and why.

It's okay to ask someone to unpack their answer more if we aren't clear what they said or meant, but we'll do so without judgment nor offering what we hope to hear. The same goes for reframing questions if a candidate needs it. e.g. "How do you manage your projects" - versus - "We need people to be independent, how do you project manage"?

## The decision-making process

Before the decision-making process starts, we need to decide who makes the decision on the candidate. In almost all cases, the direct manager will lead the process and will maintain significant influence, but the most senior member of staff in the interview committee may retain the right to the final decision where there is a disagreement.

Assess, per the checklist, if the candidate meets the skills criteria:

- Caution against prioritizing someone based on skills and/or experience we don't need for the position. If this is an entry-level position, we hire for entry-level criteria as per determined in advance of the interview process. Unless there is a clear benefit to the organization from their studies, a person with a PhD is not more likely to be offered the job. <u>We have set the criteria based on what we need: hire for that.</u>
- Consider if we are looking to fill an immediate need or if we're looking for a long-game approach to staffing. This is something that comes up often when we interview individuals who are newer to the workforce - think of their possible contributions to our long-term vision and strategy too.

### Reference checks

Asking a candidate to provide references should always be the final step in the process. Do not ask until you are ready to hire the person, if the reference check doesn't raise any red flags. Many people are not able to inform their best references (i.e., a direct supervisor) until this point in the process and asking them to do so earlier can put people in a very uncomfortable position.

While reference checks often seem like an extra step, we know that they do provide a great opportunity to cross-check claims and learn more about how to best support the new candidate (e.g., what management style works best; strengths and weaknesses so we can build or support, how can we facilitate a better workplace for them, etc.).

## Offering the Position

Use the correct *Employment Agreement Template* for the position. Do not provide both an offer letter and an employment agreement that both relate to the terms and conditions of employment.

The new employee must execute one legally binding document, which must be read, understood and signed.

When making the offer, and assuming the reference checks are complete, complete the following steps:

1) The direct manager calls the person and offers them the position subject to the terms of conditions of a written employment agreement that will follow. If they tentatively accept, discuss any details to finalize prior to sending them the employment agreement. If they need time to think about it, provide them with a clear deadline that's within our capacity to allow.
2) If we get their voicemail, we leave a brief message and let them know that we'll send them an email. Include something in the email to the effect of 'further to my voicemail' and give the same information you'd give by phone. In both the phone message and email, provide a clear timeline for the prospective employee to reply, including an expiration for the offer. Never offer the position to another candidate until after the deadline has elapsed.
3) If they accept the position, email them the employment agreement. Include the Job Description (as posted) and the CPAWS Human Resources Policies (and all related documents) with the contract. In the body of this email add a warm note, letting them know that you are excited to bring them onto the team, etc.
4) Either as part of the offer process, or on the first day, walk the person through the Job Description to ensure that it is clearly understood, and that the employee knows what your expectations are.

Once we know that the successful candidate has accepted the position, it is important to reach out to any other candidates who were interviewed to let them know the outcome. It is usually better to contact them via email, but make sure you offer to make yourself available to answer any questions they have. This allows them to process the news, and then speak to you at a time when they feel ready. If they for a conversation, make sure to prepare 2-3 points of feedback in advance, to help them with future interviews.

Sometimes you may interview someone who you think is amazing, but not the best candidate for the job you are advertising. Keep them in mind for other opportunities within the organization, or if you know of another position at a partner organization, you may want to offer to connect them. It's important to make sure they have given you permission before you do this.

# Onboarding

In addition to following the onboarding process as described in the HR Policy and the onboarding checklist the Operations Manager uses, we also commit to:

- Share the strategic plan for the organization as well our most recent annual report
- Share our organizational values and how they show up in day-to-day behaviours at our organization.
- Optimize the start date for both parties, based on the availability of the supervisor / other staff, office holiday closure, etc.
- Consider a mid-week start to not overwhelm them.
- Give them space to settle in: HR stuff, reading, researching, getting to know the team, time for them to set up their own workspace and learn programs, etc.
- Create personal touch opportunities: a warm welcome on the first day, snacks at staff meeting, let them choose a CPAWS merch gift, etc.
- Create the opportunity for quick wins: we give them their own project to get started on. This 'real' work is a nice addition to / give a break from the onboarding work.
- Map out an agenda for the first month to provide an overview of topics to cover, when, and by who.
- Ask for feedback. Make sure it's weaved into our values, offer various ways (formal/informal), with the entire team and/or one-on-one, etc.
- Be open to adjusting the job description in collaboration with the new hire. We acknowledge that any individual brings different things to the position, and this should be reflected in what we ask from them. The goal is to set them up for success.
- Prepare the existing team for someone new: we're a new team now and they're an equal part.

## Sources used to create this document


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2. 19 tips for making your job posting so amazing, unicorns will weep tears of joy – Nonprofit AF blog May 8, 2017 (https://nonprofitaf.com/2017/05/19-tips-for-making-your-job-posting-so-amazing-unicorns-will-weep-tears-of-joy/)
3. CPAWS BC chapter May 2020 document ((draft) Hiring Steps and Process Through a JEDI Lens)
4. Inspiration for the statement on the website taken from http://www.nonprofitinclusiveness.org/example-non-discrimination-statement-and-policy
5. TREC webinar: Recruiting, Hiring, and Onboarding Staff: Implementing Better Practices and Mitigating Bias.