



# Tips and Traps: Recruitment

WORKFORCE **INNOVATION**  
through **SELF-MANAGED SUPPORTS**

A Project of the  
National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations



# Tips and Traps: Recruitment

This Tips and Traps sheet covers job descriptions, advertising and short-listing, and pre-employment screening (reference and police checks).

## TIPS: *How to find people*



### PERSONAL NETWORKS:

You might already know the person you want to employ. They could be someone from your child's school or a friend or neighbour. Think about people you have met at peer networking meetings or workshops or other interest groups. You can ask other people or families who self-manage if they know anyone with the skills or interests you are seeking. Your personal network is a good source for support with writing job descriptions.

### ADVERTISE WHERE THE PEOPLE YOU WANT ARE:

You might be looking for a specific interest, skills or age group. If you want someone with a therapy-based background advertising for students studying in this area at the local university or TAFE. This is also a good source for workers who are peers for a young adult. School newsletters or Facebook page is another source for recruiting younger people. If you want someone who is interested in a specific sport or recreational interest go directly to the source, e.g., the football club and use their newsletter, notice board or Facebook page.

### ADVERTISE IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY:

You can use free resources in your own community such as the community notice board at your local shopping centre or library or access free online local community groups or Facebook page.

### CURRENT WORKERS:

Ask your current workers to get the word out that you are looking for new people to join the team. They might know someone already or be willing to ask around among their friends and community connections. People often start working with someone who self-manages because a friend told them about the rewards of this type of work. If you have a good team of people, word gets out. If you have a key worker or coordinator in your support team, they can do some of this work: drafting the job description, communicating with applicants, checking references etc.

### USE AN ONLINE EMPLOYMENT PLATFORM:

This allows you to specify what you are looking for in a profile that potential workers can read. For example, the profile could be about the skills and interests of the worker you are seeking. You can also go through the profiles of people who are seeking work to create a shortlist for interview. Applicants are pre-screened by the service for references, certification Checks (e.g., First Aid certificate) and police checks. Some online employment platforms have feedback loops so you can read other people's reviews.

### HR SERVICES:

Some agencies will do short listing and pre-employment checks for you. This means that you are only interviewing people who have the essential qualifications you require and all their clearances in place.



If you want, you can use these services just for references and checking (which some people prefer to protect their privacy) and do everything else yourself. Alternatively, some agencies will do the whole recruitment process for you including drafting the job description and arranging interviews. Using an agency does not mean you have to interview everyone they shortlist. You still have choice and control. You are the boss.

## TIPS: *Writing Job descriptions*

Workers often say that they were attracted to a specific job. For example, a phrase such as **“Would you like to help someone achieve their dream?”** can capture people’s attention. Think about the skills that are essential for this job and the key purpose. Is the person’s values more important than having a disability-specific qualification? Can you train them on the job to support you in the way you need and prefer? Is the job purpose and focus something else such as art, soccer or making a good barista coffee?

Sometimes it is easier to employ **a team of people where each has a specific role** than searching for someone who can do everything. It is likely there is someone who wants to work a few hours a week doing the specific task you are looking for such as sport coaching or art work.

Make the ad **colourful and attractive**; written to reflect the type of person you want so that you get a ‘good fit’. You are selling the work environment and the team.

**Sometimes specific experience is more important** than matching on peer group. For example, if you want the worker to build capacity and independence, you might want a person with experience in teaching meal preparation or housework step-by-step for some aspects of this role and someone who is a peer for building social connections.

**Your ad does not have to use the job title ‘Support Worker’.** Think about what the job tasks are and chose an appropriate title. Some job titles used by others include Career Mentor, Social Connector, Lifestyle Coordinator, Soccer Coach, Wellbeing and Health Coach, Executive Assistant or Personal Trainer.

## TRAPS:

- University students might not be the best source for workers if you need someone for a **fixed number of hours every week with the same start and finish times**. University students can sometimes have many timetable changes across the year.
- Online employment platforms could **limit some of the flexibility** you have to offer better pay and conditions.
- Think about how much personal information you are including in your ad. Don’t include too much disability-specific information. **Keep the focus on the type of person you are seeking**. Some people save more details for the second interview or a follow-up meeting over coffee or at home.
- Weigh **up costs versus benefits**. For example, you could pay for an ad in the local paper or use a commercial employment site (like SEEK) and not get any responses. On the other hand, if you are looking for a certain level of professionalism, this might be better than more general free sites like Gum Tree.
- Make sure you **do reference checks** or that someone else has already done them. This person will be coming into your home. You need to be confident that they are the right person. Checks do not need to be rigidly formal if that is not your style, particularly if the worker comes from your personal or peer network. For example, you might speak to a teacher if you are recruiting from your child’s school or to other people in your community who have used the service if you are recruiting for someone to do home maintenance or gardening.