

## AVOIDING PITFALLS OF THE PROCESS

When done correctly, the search for a new director can invigorate and energize a library. When needed, this can be an opportunity for rapid change. During the hiring process the library board has an opportunity to take a fresh look at services and to reflect on the library's future direction. The process can be arduous and full of pitfalls that should be avoided. This list of "do nots" should be discussed and considered.

- Hiring to the weaknesses or strengths of the former director – Evaluate each candidate on his/her own merit. Each person has strengths and weaknesses and finding a comfortable balance of skills and attitudes is essential.
- Rushing to resolution – Recognizing the importance of having a director in place, a board may hastily make a hiring decision and not reflect on the qualities and vision they need in a new director.
- Taking the easy way out – Reviewing applicants for a library directorship is a lot of work and takes time. Boards should not take the easy way out and promote an internal candidate without going through the complete search process. Internal candidates should be evaluated as thoroughly as external candidates.
- Assuming that all assistant directors are qualified to be directors – There is a vast difference between being an assistant director under a competent library director and being the library director. Evaluate each candidate for the range and depth of experience but also consider personality, work ethic, and commitment.
- Being penny-wise and pound foolish – This is not the time to be frugal. Taking time, using a consultant, and offering a good compensation package will help attract the best candidates available.
- Assuming all candidates are 100% candid – Sometimes candidates inflate their abilities and achievements. A thorough reference and background check should be conducted. Attention should be paid to both what is said and not said during reference checks.
- Putting too much emphasis on technical abilities – A library director should be more than a good librarian. Great library directors are visionary leaders that communicate well with the board, staff, and community leaders.