Vacancies and Hiring
Department Heads--Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. How do we communicate with stakeholders about the vacancy and next steps?

   Connect first with Regional Director about communication strategies. Let the local partner know soon after the resignation or retirement has been communicated formally, through a letter or email. Do not indicate a colleague will leave until they have formally notified UW-Extension. The local oversight committee or administrative body should be made aware of the employee's last day and updated throughout the hiring process as facts become known, such as whether or not the position can be refilled, visioning session details, budget implications, etc. Often the Department Head will contact the head of the oversight committee or other county administrative body, soon after the retirement or resignation is formally announced and the vacancy will be discussed at the next committee meeting. Assure the local partner that there will be opportunities for them to be involved in determining programming directions and that the oversight authority (committee or administrators) will also be involved in the final selection of the new hire. Typically, we do not involve other stakeholders, such as 4H Leaders or community partners in the interview; only those officials that are contributing directly to the salary. The Regional Director will need to know that there is county financial support for the position before rehiring can begin. Work with the Regional Director and Program Area to develop a set of talking points about the vacancy that can be shared with clientele and media or other concerned parties.

2. Who is going to cover while we have a vacancy?

   The Regional Director and Program Area will work with you to develop a strategy for covering while there are vacancies. There are numerous alternatives which may include putting projects on hold, hiring interims or ad hocs, asking volunteers to step in, increasing the FTE of part-time colleagues, tapping into neighboring county programming or assigning responsibilities to state administrators.

3. Is a visioning session necessary before we rehire?

   It depends on the situation. Visioning can be valuable for multiple reasons and there are instances where it doesn't need to be done or it isn't in the best interests of the stakeholders. See this intranet link for more in-depth discussion and resources: [*https://workspaces.ces.uwex.edu/sites/hiringvision/SitePages/Home.aspx*](https://workspaces.ces.uwex.edu/sites/hiringvision/SitePages/Home.aspx)

4. Who is to be involved in the hiring?

   Hiring in UW-Extension is a decentralized process and a number of people are involved. Contact the Regional Director and they can assist you in assembling the necessary array of staff and partners.

5. Help, I'm feeling overloaded with the hiring process!

   Do you have other colleagues who can assist temporarily with hiring or department head responsibilities? They may be able to share some of the load. Work with your program area, community partners and other stakeholders to inform them about your additional responsibilities during this time frame. Know that the hiring process can be busy and demanding for a period of time, but there is closure. Remember to seek out others in the process if you are experiencing challenges.

6. When do we hire a job share?

   Job shares may be an option when there is a buyout of 25% or more of an employee's time by a grant, UW-Extension unit or partnering agency. Communicate with the Regional Director and the program area to see if funding and a buy-out is possible.

7. How fast can we hire someone?

   A number of factors affect the speed of hiring in UW Extension and many of them are out of our control, including the applicant pool, state and county budgets, accrued leave time of the person leaving, work schedules of those involved in hiring, institutional policies and legal mandates, and the political landscape. Normally, do not expect a hire to occur in less than three months.

8. Who do I go to when I have a question about the hiring process?

   During the hiring process, the hiring authority is likely your best contact. In most cases, this is the Regional Director. For benefit questions and payroll issues after hiring, contact those offices. Also refer to the new colleague orientation site.

9. Who do I communicate with if there is a road block or a difference in opinion during the hiring process?

   Hopefully discussions on courses of action can be collegial even if there are differences of opinion or setbacks. Work with the Regional Director and if you are not feeling supported or heard, contact the Associate Dean and Director of UW-Extension.

10. My county doesn't understand the value of employing faculty and/or requiring a graduate degree.

    Listen first to their concerns, tackle what you feel comfortable addressing and refer their concerns to the Regional Director. As the hiring authority, they will work with you and the Program Area and Human Resource Development to help bring information to address the concerns.

11. What do I say if an individual has someone in mind for the position and they are advocating for them to be hired?

    Remind them about federal, state and county public hiring practices that ensure hiring will be fair and equitable. The University of Wisconsin had very clear laws on nepotism: https://www.wisconsin.edu/general-counsel/legal-topics/ethics/. *Encourage them to* *recruit widely for the position and direct the advocate and other interested people to the UW-Extension job site.*

12. What if we hire someone who I don't think is right for the job?

    UW-Extension's hiring process is quite thorough and every effort is made to hire qualified, experienced people yet there can be cases where there isn't a good fit or a person isn't performing to expectation. The "Great Start" process is one method of connecting all the individuals who are there to support the new colleague. Use this network, continual feedback and the performance management system to help identify and address performance concerns.