

RECRUITING CANDIDATES

- Advertise to as wide an audience as is appropriate for the position and use existing lists and posting sites such as AAHSL.org. Director openings are posted on the AAHSL website.
- Use personal contacts whenever possible.
- Identify leadership programs, such as the [NLM/AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program](#), to solicit highly qualified candidates.
- Post the position to job boards to attract and recruit a diverse pool of non-white candidates. The diversity of candidates, like the diversity of the profession, has changed in recent years.
- Professional search firms can do valuable outreach to potential candidates to fulfill the role.

Recruitment employs dual strategies – broad-scale advertising and focused contacts [9]. Advertising has the potential to reach a wide audience and locate qualified individuals otherwise unidentified and helps ensure that all potential candidates are given a fair opportunity to consider the position. AAHSL lists on its [website](#) postings of current vacancies for directors that are provided by the institutions. In addition, vacancies can be advertised in online job listings and email distribution lists of other professional associations. Resources listing employment opportunities are available online. The choices of where to post announcements will depend on the characteristics of the job as established by the institution, but an effort should be made to notify a broad audience. Institutions may have additional requirements for recruitment. Recommendations for possible locations for postings have been compiled by AAHSL and are included in this document.

Advertisements will be supplemented by focused contacts with individuals. Personal communication can be used to ask for recommendations and to encourage individuals to consider the position. This can take the form of letters or emails to members of a group, such as AAHSL. Targeted communication is particularly effective when it is directed to persons identified as especially qualified candidates. This outreach should be as individualized as possible, initiated by one or more persons, such as a representative of the search firm, the committee chair, with telephone or other follow-up communication tailored to the potential candidate. If homework is done before and after the contact, personal communication can be the most fruitful source of candidates.

Current directors of other academic health sciences libraries are another important source for identification of potential candidates. They may be able to recommend qualified individuals. They are familiar with their peers and have often assisted colleagues in taking on broader responsibilities and in acquiring skills that will prepare them for leadership roles. Since 2002, AAHSL has co-sponsored with the National Library of Medicine a program to identify and develop candidates for director roles, the [NLM/AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program](#) and makes the program's [rosters of graduates](#) available on its website.

Efforts to encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds are undertaken in the context of the potential pool. Although the makeup of professionals employed in health sciences libraries, and the library profession, has historically been predominantly white and female, a more diverse group is entering the pipeline of graduates and library leadership positions. The Association of Research Libraries, which includes some academic medical libraries, reported in 2020 that 78% of its medical library directors were female [28]. Of all the directors reporting data in for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, 73% were female and 16% were non-white. [25]

Search committees and recruiting firms should consider advertising and contacts targeted to identify and encourage minority applicants. Current data on gender and race and ethnicity of librarians are maintained and available from professional organizations [6,24, 25].

Networking and recruiting opportunities as well as a diversity and inclusion plan needs to be part of everyday institutional activities to be effective at the time of a search [26]. Search committees and recruiting firms should seek to maximize the pool of qualified candidates from the beginning. Many other senior positions in academic health sciences centers enjoy a larger potential pool of applicants than is true for library directors. Consequently, it is advisable to undertake a wide range of recruitment approaches.