

The Essentials of the EFNEP Paraprofessional Model:

Hiring EFNEP Paraprofessionals

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What qualities are most important in hiring an EFNEP paraprofessional?

- Indigenous
- Life experiences vs. professional skill set

Desired criteria for successful paraprofessionals (Spindler, 1967)

- Are empathetic and have compassion for low-income families
- Keen perception/appreciation of various values and standards of our society
- Demonstrated ability to work with people
(homemakers who have functioned effectively only as organizational leaders are not recommended as they tend to project organizational features into the program rather than to conduct an educational program to meet the specific needs of a homemaker)
- Mature and flexible, receptive to new ideas, accept supervision
- Energetic, enthusiastic, willing to work – even if results minute and delayed
- Possess acceptable standards in homemaking skills
- Educational background to understand and follow training and policies

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program: A Precedent-Setting Program, Muriel S. Brink, 2000.

Your turn:

With a partner, come up with 2-3 qualities you think are most important in a successful EFNEP paraprofessional.

Sources:

- Maximizing Paraprofessional Potential. Joye Norris and Susan Baker, Krieger Publishing Co., 1999*
- University of Wisconsin,
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wnep/hire/index.cfm>
- Your university's hiring guidelines and resources

Possible process for hiring:

- Allow plenty of time
- Develop the job description
 - Use core competencies to inform the description
- Advertising the position
 - Where (local agencies, churches, program graduates, neighborhood publications, radio stations)
 - Be creative – go where the people are

- Review applications
 - What to look for – matrix (WI)
 - Minimum – GED or HS diploma
 - “Over-qualified”
- Conduct successful interviews
 - Group (basics of EFNEP program, the job, benefits, etc)
 - Individual (more about them as well as job)
 - Interview questions – behavior focused (examples – Montana, Indiana, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Wyoming)
 - Who should be part of the interview? (supervisor, county educator, local administrators for Extension)
- After the interview – making the decision
 - References
 - Criminal background check
 - Matrix for assessment

Your turn:

With your partner, come up with 2-3 behavior focused questions you could ask related to the qualities you mentioned earlier.

Places you can go for more information:

EFNEP Coordinators Web Site – www.efnep.org

Training Section

PPT of Paraprofessional Session

Links and handouts provided by other states

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