

# **South House Hiring Policy**

**Updated 19/04/2016**

## **PURPOSE:**

South House recognizes that with regards to people's experiences and job qualifications, a 'level playing field' does not exist because of structural injustices that form our society. We believe that employment equity is a necessary practice to challenge these injustices.

South House believes that employment equity is a proactive measure to recruit people from historically marginalized groups. A non-comprehensive list of these groups includes women, indigenous people, people of colour, queer people, transgender people, single parents, working class women, members of ethnic minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities, and lesbian, bisexual, gay, two spirit, and intersex people.

## **GOAL OF POLICY:**

South House's Hiring Policy seeks to ensure that employment equity is central in our hiring procedures. We understand employment equity to be the intentional and active seeking out and prioritization of people from diverse social locations and experiences. South House takes this approach to promote our belief that having staff who have different lived experiences and who are from different social locations is vital in demonstrating commitment to equitable representation.

We hope that these choices in staffing will begin to build trust between South House and communities we have not supported or partnered with in the past. We also hope that this will lead to an organization that will effectively decentre the staffing of white, cis, middle class, heterosexual, male, and otherwise privileged people.

1.1 All hiring notices shall state the (below) Employment Equity Statement:

“The South House welcomes and prioritize the contributions that individuals from marginalized communities bring to our organization. We encourage applicants to describe the ways in which their lived experiences will inspire and lead their contributions to their role at South House in their cover letter. We recognize that writing a cover letter is not always accessible so we will also consider applicants that communicate these experiences through other media. Examples of this would be links to creative writing, a blog, video blogs, visual art, a non “formal” letter or email. South House will give options within the call for applicants that outline these alternatives to cover letter writing.”

1.2 The position must be advertised for at least 14 days.

1.3 Notices should appear at the South House, the DSU, local employment websites, partner organizations’ websites, local community centres, public libraries, the Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre and other community and business spaces as determined, as well as online spaces which intentionally centre and prioritize, including but not limited to, the following groups: women, aboriginal people, people of colour, queer people, transgender people, single mothers, working class women, members of ethnic minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities, and lesbian, bisexual, gay, two spirit, and intersex people.

1.4 Notices should contain the qualifications, locations(s), duties, payment, date of commencement of employment, date of notice, and the method of making and submitting an application for the position. Notices should also indicate how interested persons may go about further inquiring about the position’s nature.

## **2 Hiring Committee**

2.1 The committee shall be comprised of 3 – 5 people. At least 50% shall be South House board members. At least one member shall be a South House staff member **or** a representative from the DSU or KSU, however, a staff member’s presence on the committee will be prioritized. At least one member shall be a community partner (member external to South House) who is involved in similar work (such as a member of NSPIRG, DalOUT, CKDU, student or community member actively involved in feminist/anti-oppressive work, etc.).

Due to the collaborative nature of staff roles and given that there are only two full time staff who operate the centre, it is vital that the continuing staff person is involved in the hiring process when possible. This could include writing a job posting, shortlisting candidates, reviewing interview questions and interviewing candidates. It is of the utmost importance that

the current staff person is consulted in order to ensure that the new hire has the necessary skills to fill the role of the outgoing staff member. Board and Community members have voting rights. Staff members do not have voting rights.

When determining the voting membership of a hiring committee, it is recommended that a backup board or community member is chosen, should a conflict of interest arise necessitating that one of the voting members step down.

2.2 As per our commitment to decentering the historic whiteness and cis-ness of South House staff, the Hiring Committee must represent members of the Dalhousie and greater Halifax community who identify as trans and as racialized. It is important when striking this committee that these guidelines are followed in a way that allows for any potential community feedback, as well as with the intention of choosing these participants without perpetuating/enacting tokenism.

When determining the membership of a hiring committee, it is recommended that a backup board or community member is chosen, should a conflict of interest arise necessitating that one of the hiring committee members step down.

2.3 All committee members should have the same responsibilities/duties, including giving advice, criticisms, and other necessary aspects of a functional, consensus-based committee.

2.4 External members should be equally involved in the hiring committee, and should feel comfortable making suggestions, or taking a leadership position.

2.5 Decisions of the Board shall be made by consensus. If, on a given motion, the consensus process has been exhausted, this motion may be passed with a majority vote with 2/3 of Board members in favour. Calling a second interview is possible if necessary, but should be avoided in order to decrease additional unpaid labour for the candidates.

2.6 At the striking of the committee, the committee shall elect a chair among its members who will be responsible for ensuring that:

- Meetings are arranged
- Applications are collected and passed out to committee members
- Interviews are arranged
- References are contacted
- Successful and unsuccessful applicants (only those interviewed) are contacted
- A final report is prepared and submitted to the Board

2.6 All hiring committee members will sign South House's confidentiality statement.

2.7 All hiring committee members must declare conflicts of interest according to South House's constitution. It is ideal to have the same committee members in the hiring process from start to finish; however, given the nature of Halifax's close-knit community, it can sometimes be difficult to find hiring committee members without potential conflicts of interest. In the event that a conflict of interest is identified in the initial review of applications and requires the hiring committee member in question to step off the committee, it is recommended that the committee member be replaced immediately. If the candidate around whom the conflict of interest arose is not short-listed, however, and if the committee is unsuccessful in finding a replacement committee member, the committee may consider asking the original committee member to re-join.

### **3 Interview Preparation**

3.1 To determine criteria for hiring, the committee should set out a rating system for candidate quality. This should prioritize how much the interview is weighted compared to the resume/cover letter (e.g. 60:40), and prioritize listed qualifications from job posting (e.g. how important anti-oppression analysis is compared to administrative experience)

3.2 Prepare interview questions either based on or using old South House questions and the job description being filled

3.3 Each member shall look over all resumes, sort them into piles based on whether people have satisfied minimum requirements, such as basic qualifications met, etc.

3.4 Each member shall make a shortlist of applicants based on qualifications and employment equity statement

3.5 In the case of insufficient quality or number of applicants, the committee shall not start interviewing any candidates. They shall repost the job through all the same venues as previously accessed, and they shall reconvene after the newly determined submission deadline.

3.6 If there are few, but obviously qualified applicants, the committee shall go directly to the interview process.

3.7 If all candidates interviewed are deemed insufficient for job requirements, the committee shall not offer any candidate a position, and shall repost the job at all previous venues.

### **4 Interview process**

4.1 The committee should explain the process to all candidates selected for an interview, including location, accessibility details, what materials will be provided, whether notes or written work will be required, etc.

4.2 At least one staff member that will be working with the selected candidate must be involved in the interview process as a member of the Hiring Committee.

4.3 The committee will ask all candidates prior to interview if they have any special needs/requests during the process.

4.4. The committee should ensure interview room is booked well in advance, and the space is accessible. If using space at the South House, make sure that the Centre has no other commitments during the process. Make sure required technologies are present, e.g. a note-taker if required.

4.5 Candidates are usually given questions to look over 10 minutes before their interview, so they can take basic notes for answering the interviewer(s). People who have identified themselves as having learning disabilities or who face other barriers (e.g. as stated in cover letter, or on the phone) should be given extra time depending on their requirements. After explaining the interview process to the candidate, the candidate should be able to offer a suggested time allowance based on their needs, e.g. double time as in a school exam setting, no time limit at all, etc.

4.6 Questions should be provided in any alternative format document necessary to ensure accessibility to all applicants (i.e. large print, e-mail, etc.). The method for questioning should be consistent with regards to time allowance, note-taking, etc. Questions given out to candidates should be collected after the interview to be shredded.

4.7 Interview time shall be chosen by the committee, based on position being filled. Interviewers will ask candidates questions and keep record of responses. It is possible to have a designated scribe during the process to take more detailed notes, while other committee members record basic notes. All notes from the interview process need to be shredded.

## **5 Post-Interview**

Committee reconvenes without candidates present, discusses candidates based on the criteria agreed upon

- Select best candidates (likely one or two)
- Call candidate references
- Reconvene to discuss references, confirm candidate
- Call successful/unsuccessful applicant(s)

- Write a report about the hiring process, put it in the South House hiring committee binder, keep questions and any document that are about the process.
- All notes taken during the hiring process need to be collected and shredded, including all resumes and cover letters sent by unsuccessful applicants.

## **6 COMMUNICATION OF POLICY**

6.1 The Hiring Policy shall be made available to any and all candidates and is accessible through the South House website.

6.2 The Board shall be responsible for ensuring the Hiring Committee follows the procedures as outlined above; the Hiring Committee shall report to the Board throughout the hiring process.

### **PROCEDURE AND GOOD PRACTICE: APPLICATION OF POLICY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

These attached guidelines are not part of the policy document, nor are they binding. They serve as interpretations of and practices applying this policy, and are offered as a tool to understand South House's history and how past boards have understood the spirit of this policy.

Boards are encouraged to make dated additions to these guidelines to reflect how South House's practices have evolved.

#### **Recommendations regarding confidentiality**

Information regarding the candidates and the selection of candidates is highly confidential. It can be extremely damaging to South House, the DSU and the applicants if details surrounding the hiring process become public. Information received during the hiring process should not be discussed with or in the presence of anyone outside of the selection committee. Confidentiality extends beyond the timeline of the hiring process; therefore, discussions after the fact with board, staff, volunteers or outsiders should be limited and should not reveal personal details or identities of the candidates.

#### **Recommendations regarding conflicts of interest**

In the event that a conflict of interest is identified in the initial review of applications, requiring a voting member in question to step down from the committee, it is recommended that the committee member be replaced immediately. Should the candidate around whom the conflict of interest arose not be short-listed, however, and should the committee not be successful at finding a replacement committee member, the committee could consider asking the original hiring committee member to re-join.

Voting and nonvoting members of the Hiring Committee who are currently in an intimate relationship, are family members (including chosen family and close friends), are roommates, and/or are in a situation of financial (co)dependency with the applicant, will be asked to disclose this information to the Hiring Committee and step back from the process. The committee member's replacement will be called upon. A voting member of the Hiring Committee cannot also be an applicant for the material contract in question.

A voting or nonvoting member of the Hiring Committee who has unresolved personal conflict of a nature that would not violate South House's mandate with an applicant, will be asked to disclose this information to the Hiring Committee and step back from the process if deemed necessary by the committee. The outgoing voting member's replacement will be called upon to take their place. A voting member of the Hiring Committee can not also be an applicant for any material contract or transaction with South House.

A voting or nonvoting member who is an acquaintance or community member, co-organizer, co-worker with the applicant will be asked to disclose this information to the Hiring Committee and step back from the process if deemed necessary by the committee. The outgoing voting member's replacement will be called upon to take their place. A voting member of the Hiring Committee can not also be an applicant for any material contract or transaction with South House.

If a board member intends to apply for a staff position, they must step down as a board member and state their intention of applying for the position in question to the Human Resources (HR) Chair. This would allow the Human Resources Committee to adequately organize a hiring committee that seeks to include community members and DSU representatives who have not directly worked with this member during their term(s), in their capacity as a board member. All voting and nonvoting members should be made aware of this applicant's previous South House Board experience, and further that this person in question stepped down from their role in order to apply for a staff position within South House, as to provide transparency and accountability within the hiring process.

### **Recommendations regarding organizational assessment**

The creation of a hiring committee should account for many potential factors, including but not limited to the capacity and experience of board members, required specialized knowledge of the position in question, potential conflicts of interest, outgoing staff members' ability and interest in participating, and availability of an outside community member's participation, (given this community member is engaged in anti-oppressive feminist work/ organizing), etc.

### **Recommendations regarding the general hiring process**

It is recommended that exiting staff be involved in the hire. This involvement does not need to be extensive, and could look like being more involved in drafting questions, writing the job posting, their opinions would be garnered for the shortlisting (rather than in the final interview

process), depending on the needs of the hiring committee. It is recommended that the short-list be comprised of a maximum of 5 candidates for the sake of efficiency in the hiring process.

### **Recommendations for interview planning**

The committee will compare each member's short-listed candidates and come to a consensus for interview candidates. It is recommended that the committee select no fewer than 3 and no more than 10 interview candidates.

Scheduling of the interviews should leave enough time between candidates so that interviews are not conducted consecutively. The hiring committee should have time to debrief and prepare for the next candidate in between interview timeslots. This measure ensures that members of the hiring committee do not become exhausted during the process.

Prior to the interview date, candidates should be clearly informed of how many people will be interviewing them and in what language(s) the interview will be conducted, in addition to other relevant information concerning accessibility. It is also recommended that the committee ask the candidates if there are any other accessibility measures that are needed that have not been named by the hiring committee.

### **Recommendations during the interview**

At the beginning of the interview, it is recommended that the committee remind the candidate how long the interview will last, the structure of the interview, and how many questions will be asked. It is not advisable to include two-part questions.

Candidates should be given the option to take notes throughout the process. They should also be given the opportunity to return to previous questions, to add statements before the interview concludes, and should be encouraged to ask their own questions.

It is also helpful to provide water and snacks to the candidate, and to give them a copy of the questions. It is also important to find out at the end of the interview if the candidate is available for the specific start date.