

## Preparation and Events for the County Administrator Interviews

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The following is a list of items that need to be addressed to prepare for the County Administrator Interviews and Selection Process. It probably contains more detail than necessary, but we felt it was best to provide as much information as possible so nothing is forgotten.

### Pre-Interview Tasks – After Finalists Are Selected

**Notification:** Colin Baenziger & Associates (CB&A) will notify the finalists and alternate who have been selected to be interviewed. *Responsible Party: CB&A.*

**Preparatory Material:** As soon as the finalists and alternate have been selected, the County should send each of them as many of the following materials as are available if not available on the internet: the current year budget, an organization chart, the latest certified audit and management letter, any County strategic and long range plans, enabling legislation and other materials that define the role and duties of the County Administrator, and any evaluations of the organization completed in the previous twelve months. The County should also try to include other materials, such as housing guides, welcome kits from the Chamber of Commerce, maps of the area, etc. *Responsible Party: The County.*

**Candidate Travel:** We will ask the candidates to purchase their airline tickets and rent a car, with the cost reimbursed directly by the County after the candidate is interviewed. *Responsible Party: CB&A*

**Candidate Meals:** We will tell the candidates to follow the county's travel policies. *Responsible Party: CB&A*

**Candidate Lodging:** The County should make reservations for the finalists at a local hotel and pay the hotel directly (thus avoiding the sales tax). *Responsible Party: The County.*

### Interview Tasks

**Candidates Meet the Staff:** Many local governments want the candidates to meet their senior staff, and conversely, the candidates like to meet the staff people with whom they would work. There are several ways to accomplish this. One is a "meet and greet" which normally lasts an hour or two. Another is to divide the senior staff into groups of three from different departments, such as someone from Public Works, Human Resources, and Parks and Recreation forming a group. The candidates then rotate among the groups, spending 30 to 45 minutes with each group. Normally, meeting the staff occurs just before the County tour, but can occur afterwards. *Responsible Party: The County.*

**County Tour:** We highly recommend the County conduct a tour for the candidates and their spouses early Friday afternoon. A van or small bus will be needed, and a knowledgeable staff member should be assigned to conduct the tour so that everyone hears the same information. We suggest the tour start at 1:00 P.M. *Responsible Party: The County.*

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**Reception:** The County will choose a location for the candidate reception, and typically, it is held at a public facility, a local restaurant, a country club, or other suitable location. It can be scheduled to begin as early as 5:30 P.M., or as late as 7:00 P.M., and usually lasts 90 minutes. The County will need to determine who should be invited. In addition to the elected officials (and their spouses) and the candidates (and their spouses), chairpersons of key committees are often invited, as well as other County officials and local business leaders. With the entire governing body in attendance, the reception should be noticed as a public meeting to avoid any possible appearance of a violation of the public meeting statutes. As a public event, news media representatives will often attend, as well as some members of the public. The County should arrange for food and drink and bear the cost. In some cities and counties, the local Chamber of Commerce has sponsored the event and assumed the cost.

The reception provides the first opportunity for the elected officials to meet the finalists, and although the event need not be lavish, it should put the County in its best light. We are often asked if alcohol should be served, and that is a matter for the County to determine. Occasionally, it can be revealing to see how candidates react when alcohol is available. We also recommend the County provide name tags. What seems to work best is something simple such as the self-adhesive name tags which can be purchased at an office supply store. We suggest the candidate name tags be one color while all the other attendees be given name tags of a different color. That makes it easy for the elected officials and the public to identify the candidates. [*Responsible Party: The County.*]

### Interviews with Elected Officials

**Interview Morning Breakfast:** The County should arrange for a light Continental breakfast on the morning of the interviews. Coffee, juice, Danish, and fruit are usually served 30 minutes before the start of the one-on-one interviews. Generally, very little is eaten so the breakfast need not be lavish. *Responsible Party: The County.*

**One-on-One Interviews:** The candidates will rotate between the offices of individual member of the elected body for approximately 40 minutes according to a pre-determined schedule. CB&A will provide sample questions that the Commission may wish to ask. CB&A representative or member of County staff will usher each candidate to each elected official at the appropriate time to keep the process on schedule. *Responsible Party: CB&A and the Elected Body*

**Interview Day Lunch:** The County should arrange for a light lunch for the elected officials and the candidates. It is served immediately after the one-on-one interviews. Usually, 30 to 40 minutes are allocated for lunch, and it is done in the same facility where the interviews are held. Again, it need not be lavish. Sandwiches (or subs), a salad and drinks are typical. *Responsible Party: The County.*

**Interviews by the Elected Body as a Whole:** We recommend the elected body as a whole interview each of the candidates for approximately 30 minutes. These interviews will be conducted at public meetings. We start with a brief 5-minute session to discuss procedures and

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settle on the questions to be asked. The staff member will then usher the first candidate to the podium and introduce him or her. The Chairman typically welcomes the candidate and provides the candidate with a few minutes to describe his or her background briefly. Each elected official in turn asks the candidate one or two questions, and any follow-up questions. If time permits, more questions may be asked. While each interview generally lasts 30 minutes, since the interviews are sequential, the Commission can take more or less time with each finalist. The important thing is for the Commission to get the information it needs to make the right decision. *Responsible Party: The Elected Body with staff assistance.*

**Recap, Discussion of Next Steps and Possible Selection:** At the conclusion of the last interview, the Commission will briefly recap the day's events. Some elected bodies make the selection of the Administrator that day. Others prefer to consider what they have learned for at least a day or two before making their selection. *Responsible Party: County Commission with County Staff and CB&A.*

If you have any questions, please let us know, and we will be happy to provide answers.