



County Administrator Recruitment Services

A Guidebook for Assisting Counties in the Recruitment
and Selection of a County Administrator

Florida Association of County Managers

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Tallahassee, Florida 32301

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Introduction

The Florida Association of County Managers (FACM) is pleased to provide the following document, which is intended to serve as a guide for future efforts by the Association to assist Florida counties in the recruitment, evaluation, and hiring of County Administrators. A County's selection of a County Administrator is one of the most crucial decisions a Board of County Commissioners makes for its community, and FACM's efforts to provide recruiting guidance and peer-review services to those counties that desire assistance presents a unique opportunity for the Association to enhance the visibility and public awareness of the value provided to communities by professional local government administrators.

This guidebook, which synthesizes knowledge gained through previous recruitment efforts by Florida County Administrators and FACM, is designed to provide future FACM County Administrator Search Committees with a detailed description FACM's approach to its recruitment process. The guidebook presents a step-by-step narrative, together with supporting documentation, describing each component of the recruitment process from start to finish, including follow-up actions and services offered by the Association. Electronic files comprising this guidebook as well as a sample Search Committee Final Report are also included for use by future Search Committees in their efforts.

This guidebook is presented in the spirit of furthering FACM's dedication to promoting the highest standards of governance, service, and leadership while embracing individual and regional diversity as a strength of our organization. Through future efforts to provide recruiting guidance to counties throughout Florida, FACM will continue to build and convey value and the relevance of professional local government management among the communities we serve.

Work Plan and Approach

A County's selection of a County Administrator is one of the most crucial decisions a Board of County Commissioners makes for its community. The recruitment and selection process requires thoughtful planning, a thorough evaluation of applications submitted for the position, and a clear understanding of the qualities and experiences the elected body seeks in its next administrator. To that extent, it is critical that the Search Committee maintains an organized approach to the recruitment process that builds from and remains consistent with the guidance provided by the client County's Board of County Commissioners.

The Search Committee's recruitment process begins with the initial correspondence between the client County and FACM regarding the recruitment services offered. FACM will send an engagement letter to the client County detailing the terms of the engagement and each party's responsibilities. If approved by the client County, FACM will then designate the Search Committee, which should be comprised to the greatest extent possible of current and/or recently retired administrators with experience in the same area of the state as the client County. At this point, FACM prepares a press release announcing that it will be assisting the client County in the search for its next administrator. This helps to build confidence in the community that the County is using professional, expert assistance in finding the best candidates possible for its administrator position and also raises public awareness of the value of professional local government management.

After receiving applications for the position from the client County, the Search Committee members conduct an individual assessment of each applicant based on the materials submitted, experience working with the applicant, reference checks, and other information. The Search Committee then meets in a public meeting in the client County to discuss individual applicants and to develop a short list of candidates to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners for further consideration. Because the candidates that will be recommended by the Search Committee represent the highest quality of candidates available nationally for a given position, it is expected that some candidates may be hired by other cities or counties during the recruitment. Accordingly, the committee's short list should ideally include seven to ten candidates. This ensures that the client County's Board will have a sufficient number of quality candidates with a variety of background and experience to evaluate further. In addition, should the Board wish to interview fewer than seven to ten candidates, it has the option to adjust the short list in any way it chooses.

To provide the greatest value to the client County, the Search Committee offers support throughout the recruitment process. At the beginning of the recruitment, the Search Committee assists with developing the position announcement. It also recommends publications in which to advertise to maximize the reach of the announcement and to produce the highest quality applicants. During the recruitment, the Search Committee attends a meeting of the client County's Board of County Commissioners to present an overview of the search process and to receive any specific direction or guidance the Board wishes to provide. This also helps raise the visibility of FACM's participation in the recruitment process. A later meeting of the Search Committee to discuss candidates and develop a short list is held in the client County in order to allow members of the public the opportunity to attend and observe the committee's work. Finally, in delivering a final report to the client County, the Search Committee provides a series of recommended next steps and best practices for the Board during the remainder of the hiring process. In all, a key objective of the Search Committee is to provide the greatest value possible to the client County in order to enhance the visibility and relevance of professional local government administration.

Fee Schedule

The flat fee associated with FACM's recruitment services is as follows:

- Small County (Population Less than 100,000): \$5,000
- Medium County (Population Less than 500,000): \$7,500
- Large County (Population more than 500,000): \$10,000

This fee will be used to cover direct and indirect costs associated with the services performed, including any expenses incurred for conference calls, mileage, travel, copying, and other administrative costs. The Association will not invoice the County for the fee until the delivery of the candidate review report and short list.

Recruitment Timeline

Following is a template of the Search Committee's timeline from the issuance of an engagement letter to the delivery of a final report to the client County (FACM Recruitment Week 6). It also includes suggested next steps for the client County for the remainder of the interview and hiring process. The involvement of the Search Committee should take no more than 12 weeks, unless the Board extends the application window.

This document is provided in Word format as part of this guidebook and can be adjusted to reflect the actual dates associated with a specific recruitment effort. The proposed timeline should be included as an attachment to the engagement letter sent to the client County at the beginning of the recruitment process. In addition, the timeline should be updated during the recruitment to indicate when each step occurred, and a final *as-conducted* timeline should be included in the Search Committee's final report to the Board.



Florida Association of County Managers

County Administrator Recruitment Process

Recruitment Timeline

**Dates subject to change if application window is extended/re-opened*

Advertisement/ Pre-Review Period (4-6 weeks)	<p>FACM provides the BOCC a proposal in the form of an engagement letter to assist in the recruitment process; BOCC approves and returns a signed copy to FACM</p> <p>FACM designates members of the Search Committee and issues a formal press release</p> <p>Search Committee provides initial guidance and suggestions to the client County</p> <p>Client County posts County Administrator position announcement</p> <p>Representatives from FACM and FAC attend a County Commission meeting to introduce search committee members, receive any specific guidance from the Board on the recruitment process, and answer any questions</p> <p>Application window for County Administrator position closes</p>									
FACM Recruitment Week 1	County's Human Resources staff screens applications, compiles a list of candidates meeting the minimum qualifications, and sends applications to FACM's search committee									
FACM Recruitment Week 2	Conference call of FACM's search committee to determine whether to move forward with initial applicant pool or recommend that the County re-advertise the position									
FACM Recruitment Weeks 3-6	Review period; FACM's search committee reviews applications, checks references, and works with County staff to conduct background checks	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Week 3</td> <td>Review period for search committee</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Week 4</td> <td>Search committee conducts a public meeting in the client County to develop a tentative short list of candidates</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Week 5</td> <td>Client County staff conducts background checks on tentative short list</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Week 6</td> <td>Search committee delivers final report to BOCC including a short list of recommended candidates to interview</td> </tr> </table>	Week 3	Review period for search committee	Week 4	Search committee conducts a public meeting in the client County to develop a tentative short list of candidates	Week 5	Client County staff conducts background checks on tentative short list	Week 6	Search committee delivers final report to BOCC including a short list of recommended candidates to interview
Week 3	Review period for search committee									
Week 4	Search committee conducts a public meeting in the client County to develop a tentative short list of candidates									
Week 5	Client County staff conducts background checks on tentative short list									
Week 6	Search committee delivers final report to BOCC including a short list of recommended candidates to interview									
Interview/Selection Period (3-4 weeks)	<p>BOCC selects finalists to be interviewed; County's Human Resources department notifies finalists that they have been selected for an interview</p> <p>County's Human Resources staff confirms travel arrangements for finalist candidates and arranges for tours of the County with candidates</p> <p>BOCC conducts candidate interviews</p> <p>BOCC selects its preferred candidate</p> <p>BOCC Chairman confirms preferred candidate's willingness to accept the position</p> <p>County's Human Resources staff sends employment contract to the preferred candidate</p>									



DATE

_____, County Administrator
_____, County Board of County Commissioners
Address
City, State, Zip

Re: Florida Association of County Managers Consulting

Dear Mr./Mrs. _____:

Thank you for reaching out to the Florida Association of County Managers ("the Association") regarding your upcoming search for a new County Administrator. We understand that _____ County will soon be embarking upon a process to hire your successor. It is the Association's pleasure to propose to assist you in this effort.

A county's selection of a county administrator is one of the most crucial decisions a Board of County Commissioners makes for its community. The professional execution of county commissions' policy decisions is the foundation of a healthy, thriving county. In recognition of the importance of this selection, the Association has launched a new initiative to provide recruiting guidance and peer-review services to those counties that desire assistance.

The Association proposes the following terms of engagement:

Florida Association of County Managers Inc.'s Responsibilities

If the County chooses to take the Association up on its unique offer, the Association will assist the County with the following tasks:

- (1) Brief Board members on the best practices for the recruitment process of a professional administrator;
- (2) Assist County staff, through the provision of recommendations on recruitment techniques, by providing suggestions on where to place advertisements to solicit qualified applicants and suggestions on the wording of the County's recruitment profile and advertisement for the position;
- (3) Assist the Board and County staff to develop a list of identified characteristics and attributes of a successful candidate, the appropriate selection criteria, and a suggested selection process and timeline; and
- (4) Facilitate a volunteer group of Florida county administrators and/or former county administrators to review the qualifications of the list of candidates, as the list is identified by the Board and/or County staff for review, and to report the findings of that review to the Board

and/or County staff, as directed. (Note: this group will review external candidates only with review of internal candidates being the responsibility of County staff.)

- (5) Pursuant to item (4) above, the Association will recommend a short list of external candidates for consideration.

County Responsibilities

County staff would be responsible for carrying out the suggestions provided in (1), (2), and (3) above, including but not limited to receiving the applications, screening the applicants, conducting the background checks of applicants, placing (or being responsible for placing) all advertisements soliciting applicants, scheduling and coordination of interviews and other necessary or requested County meetings related to the recruitment and selection process. The County would also be wholly responsible for negotiating the terms of any employment offer and will provide the primary point of contact for all questions and inquiries relating to the recruitment process.

Compensation

The Association proposes a flat fee of \$_____. This fee will be used to cover direct and indirect costs associated with the services and any remaining funds will be retained for the Association's mission in support of educating County Administrators throughout Florida.

The Association will not invoice the County for the \$_____ fee until the delivery of the candidate review report and short list. Upon delivery of that report, this arrangement will terminate. In addition, if either the Association or the County believes it is in its individual best interest to end this particular arrangement, either one can do so by providing written notice to the other (via U.S. Mail, facsimile or email). Once that notice is received, this arrangement will be at an end. The County will have no financial obligation to the Association if termination by either party is sought before the delivery of the Florida county administrator candidate review report.

Costs

The County will solely bear the costs of its activities and responsibilities for the filling of the county administrator position (including, by way of example only, the costs of advertising for the position, any reimbursements of travel and per diem for candidates, copying, overhead, and postage). Expenses incurred by the Association relating to this effort including conference calls, mileage, travel, copying, and other administrative costs are included within the \$_____ fee. There will be no additional obligations on the part of the County for the Association's costs.

It is anticipated that most of the work under this arrangement will be conducted by way of conference call. However, the Association is offering to include_____ trips to the County for meetings, briefings, and workshops, as requested by the County. If there are additional trips that the County requests of the Association, the Association and the County will mutually agree on a rate of cost reimbursement for the Association from the County.

Timeline

The Association understands the County's need to move efficiently, quickly and deliberately. The Association believes that it can deliver the Florida county administrator candidate review report within 90 days of the County's counter signature to this letter.

Association Point of Contact

The Association anticipates that Mr./Mrs. _____, _____ County Administrator and President of the Florida Association of County Managers, will be the primary point of contact for the Association under this arrangement.

County Point of Contact

The Association anticipates that Mr./Mrs. _____, _____ County Administrator, will be the primary point of contact for _____ County under this agreement.

If this letter and its contents are agreeable to the County, please sign and date at the bottom of this letter. Then, please return the counter signed letter to the attention of Mr./Mrs. _____ at the Association.

We are excited about this collaboration and look forward to assisting the County in this crucial decision.

Sincerely,

President

Agreed to by _____ County, Florida

_____, County Administrator

_____, Board of County Commissioners

This ___ day of _____, _____

Designation of the Search Committee

Once the client County has executed and returned a copy of the engagement letter, FACM will designate three to five individuals who will comprise the Search Committee. The committee should include, to the greatest extent possible, the following:

- A current member of FACM's Board of Directors
- A current County Administrator from an adjacent county
- A current or recently retired County Administrator from a nearby county

The chairperson of the Search Committee may be designated by the FACM President, or alternatively, may be selected by the Search Committee members. Whenever possible, the chairperson should be a current member of FACM's Board of Directors.

It is important to appoint members of the Search Committee who have experience working in or near the client County. These individuals will add value to the recruitment process by virtue of their experience working with similar issues facing the client County and by their ability to evaluate prospective candidates' work experience and accomplishments against the qualifications needed of the client County's next administrator.

Once appointed, each Search Committee member should provide a brief bio, three to five bulleted statements summarizing their qualifications, and a recent photo to the committee chairperson. These will be included in the final report that will be delivered to the client County, providing an overview of how the members of the Search Committee were selected and why they are uniquely qualified to assist in the recruitment of the client County's next County Administrator.

Sample Press Release

Once the Search Committee has been appointed, FACM will issue a press release announcing that it will be assisting the client County in the search for its next administrator. This helps to build confidence in the community that the County is using professional, expert assistance in finding the best candidates possible for its administrator position and also raises public awareness of the value of professional local government management.

Following is a sample press release, utilized during FACM's most recent recruitment for Santa Rosa County. The Search Committee chairperson's Public Information/Communications staff should work together with FAC in developing the release. The release itself should ultimately be issued by FAC, although Search Committee members are encouraged to forward it to their local media contacts to increase visibility.

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 3, 2015

CONTACT:

Jon D. Brown, Director

Community & Media Relations [\(850\) 606-5300](tel:8506065300)

Cragin Mosteller, Communications Director

Florida Association of Counties [\(850\) 294-9307](tel:8502949307)

Florida Association of County Managers to Assist Santa Rosa in Search for New Administrator

-Association to Lend Expertise to Selection Process-

The Florida Association of County Managers (FACM) will aide Santa Rosa County in the search for a new county administrator. By bringing together a selection of existing and past county administrators, FACM will help Santa Rosa by reviewing applications and recommending a short list of candidates.

"A county's selection of a county administrator is one of the most crucial decisions a Board of County Commissioners makes for its community," said FACM President and Leon County Administrator Vincent S. Long. "The professional management of county government is one of the foundations of a health, thriving county."

FACM is an affiliate of the Florida Association of Counties (FAC), made up of professional Florida county managers to provide peer to peer collaboration among county governments. The search committee for the Santa Rosa County Administrator includes Vince Long, Leon County Administrator; Chris Holley, Executive Director, Gulf County Economic Development Coalition, former Suwannee and Okaloosa County Administrator and former FAC executive director; Jack Brown, Escambia County Administrator and former Taylor County Administrator and Ernie Padgett, former Santa Rosa, Manatee and Okaloosa County Administrator.

"I believe FACM's new initiative to provide recruiting guidance and peer review services will prove to be invaluable to counties," continued Long. "The FACM search committee established for Santa Rosa County has over 100 years of combined Florida county government experience."

Florida Association of County Managers

County Administrator Recruitment Services

A Guidebook for Assisting Counties in the Recruitment and Selection of a County Administrator

This spring, Santa Rosa County Administrator Hunter Walker announced he would be leaving the position in December after serving 20 years. Walker's involvement in FACM, led him to recommend that Santa Rosa use these county managers to review applicants. FACM's county administrators know the skill set needed to direct a county from dealing with tough budgets to managing thousands of employees.

"This service aligns with a county manager's commitment to advance and strengthen the profession and our obligation to serve the community with our best efforts," said Long.

The Florida Association of County Managers was established in 2014 as a professional association of county chief executive officers to address common challenges and opportunities that impact Florida county government.

For more information, please contact Jon D. Brown, Director of Leon County Community and Media Relations, at [\(850\) 606-5300](tel:8506065300) work / [\(850\) 694-1405](tel:8506941405) cell / cmr@LeonCountyFL.gov or Cragin Mosteller, Communications Director for the Florida Association of Counties, at [\(850\) 922-4300](tel:8509224300) work / [\(850\) 294-9307](tel:8502949307) cell / cmosteller@fl-counties.com.

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Guidance Provided to the Client County

In accordance with the engagement letter executed by FACM and the client County, which specifies FACM's obligations in the recruitment process, the Search Committee provides several forms of specific assistance to the County, including:

- Briefing Board members on the best practices for the recruitment process of a professional administrator
- Assisting County staff, through the provision of recommendations on recruitment techniques, by providing suggestions on where to place advertisements to solicit qualified applicants and suggestions on the wording of the County's recruitment profile and advertisement for the position
- Assisting the Board and County staff to develop a list of identified characteristics and attributes of a successful candidate

FACM has developed a standard information packet for use by future Search Committees. Once the Search Committee is established, the Search Committee chairperson should send this packet to the client County's Board of County Commissioners, County Administrator, Human Resources Director, and County Attorney. This packet, provided on the following pages, is also included in this guidebook in electronic format.

FACM's standard information packet includes the following components:

1. Best Practices for Recruiting a Professional Administrator
2. Identifying the Attributes of the Successful Candidate
3. Developing a Recruitment Profile
4. Advertising the Position

FACM and Client County Roles

FACM's role in the recruitment process is straightforward – FACM designates a Search Committee to assist a client County through each phase of its effort to fill its vacant County Administrator position. To do so, the committee conducts the following tasks, generally delineated in the engagement letter:

- Briefing Board members on the best practices for the recruitment process of a professional administrator;
- Assisting the County, through the provision of recommendations on recruitment techniques, by providing suggestions on where to place advertisements to solicit qualified applicants and suggestions on the wording of the County's recruitment profile and advertisement for the position;
- Assisting the Board and County staff to develop a list of identified characteristics and attributes of a successful candidate, the appropriate selection criteria, and a suggested selection process and timeline;
- Facilitating a volunteer group of Florida County Administrators and/or former County Administrators to review the qualifications of the list of candidates;
- Personally reaching out to colleagues who may be qualified for the position to encourage them to apply; and
- Recommending a short list of candidates to the Board of County Commissioners for further consideration.

Throughout the recruitment process, the Search Committee acts in an advisory role to the client County in its hiring process. Accordingly, the County is responsible for the following tasks:

- Publishing public notice and maintaining meeting minutes of any meetings of the Search Committee;
- Receiving and maintaining records of the applications;
- Screening the applicants and forwarding those applicants who meet the stated minimum qualifications to the Search Committee;
- Conducting background checks of candidates included on the Search Committee's short list and/or those selected as finalists by the Board of County Commissioners;
- Developing and placing all advertisements for the position;
- Scheduling and coordination of interviews and other necessary or requested County meetings related to the recruitment and selection process; and
- Negotiating the terms of any employment offer.

Meetings of the Search Committee

Once the Search Committee is designated, its members will receive confirmation by FACM via e-mail. Committee members will receive a copy of this guidebook to familiarize themselves with the work plan and process of assisting the client County with its recruitment. Since the Search Committee acts in an advisory capacity to the client County, its meetings are subject to Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine requirements. Accordingly, all meetings of the committee must be properly noticed, meeting minutes must be kept, and the public must be afforded the opportunity to attend. Since the committee's work is part of the client County's hiring process, the notice should be published and official meeting minutes kept by the County, with copies of each provided to FACM for its records.

The first meeting of the Search Committee will occur after its members have received the applications forwarded by the client County. This meeting will be conducted via conference call and should be held for the sole purpose of determining whether the initial applicant pool is sufficient to yield further evaluation or if the committee should recommend the client County extend its application window. At this stage, there should be no discussion of individual candidates or narrowing of the candidate pool. This discussion should be reserved for a later meeting of the Search Committee held within the client County, which enhances the visibility of the recruitment process within the community.

If the committee determines that the initial applicant pool is sufficient, or after the applications submitted during an extended application period have been forwarded to the Search Committee, the committee then schedules a second meeting approximately two weeks later. This meeting should be held in person within the client County, typically in the County Administration building. During this meeting, the committee will discuss individual candidates and formulate a short list of seven to ten candidates to recommend to the Board for further consideration.

Finally, while not strictly a meeting of the Search Committee, one or more members of the committee may be requested to attend a Board of County Commissioners meeting when the committee's final report is presented in order to answer any questions from the Board or to provide any requested clarification.

Receiving Applications from the Client County

Under the terms of the engagement letter, and as indicated previously in this guidebook, it is the client County's responsibility to advertise the County Administrator position and to screen applications based on the Board's stated minimum qualifications. At that point, the client County's Human Resources department will forward application materials submitted by qualified applicants to the Search Committee. The County's initial screening of applications enhances the overall recruitment process, since Search Committee members have only to review applications from candidates deemed to be qualified for the position. This allows the Search Committee the time needed to thoroughly review each qualified candidate. In certain circumstances, however, a County may elect to send all applications received to the Search Committee. If this occurs, the Search Committee may contact the client County's outgoing administrator to discuss the value added to the recruitment process by the County's initial screening. Ultimately, the committee should honor the wishes of the client County.

Initial Assessment of the Applicant Pool

Approximately one week after application materials are received by the Search Committee, members should conduct a preliminary conference call to determine whether the initial applicant pool is sufficient to yield a short list of seven to ten strong candidates. During this initial meeting, the committee should not discuss the merits of individual candidates, nor should it attempt to narrow the applicant pool at all. These discussions should occur at a later meeting held in person in the client County.

If the committee determines that the applicant pool is insufficient to yield a strong short list, the committee should recommend, by a motion or official action of the committee, that the client County extend its application window an additional 30 days. In this instance, at the close of the extended application window, the search committee should consider all applications received during both application periods.

If the committee determines that the initial application pool is sufficient, then the members of the committee should proceed to individually evaluate the applicants in greater detail. The committee will have approximately two weeks to review each applicant's qualifications, research his or her work history, and conduct reference checks prior to the committee's in-person meeting. Search Committee members should check each the references listed in each applicant's resume and also contact colleagues with whom an applicant has previously worked.

Developing the Committee's Short List

After individually reviewing the pool of qualified applicants, the Search Committee will conduct an in-person public meeting in the client County. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss members' evaluation of candidates and to develop a short list of seven to ten candidates to recommend to the client County for further consideration. The committee's short should be unranked, leaving it to the Board of County Commissioners to determine which candidate is the best fit for the position. FACM recommends that the Search Committee develop a short list of at least seven candidates, as many of qualified applicants may also be applying elsewhere and could be hired by a different county or city during the recruitment process. To that effect, presenting the Board with a list of more, rather than fewer, candidates ensures that the Board will have a sufficient number and variety of candidates for its consideration.

At the Search Committee's meeting, the committee may use any method it chooses to select the candidates to be included on its short list. During FACM's effort assisting Santa Rosa County in 2015, the Search Committee members found nine candidates who were included on two or more of the committee members' individual lists. The committee agreed that each of the nine candidates was qualified and deserved further consideration from the Board, and considered those nine candidates the committee's short list.

In future recruitment efforts, a similar approach may yield more than ten candidates depending on the depth and quality of the applicant pool. In this case, the committee may elect to refine its list further by determining which candidates appear on at least three (rather than only two) committee members' individual lists. Or, the committee may elect to take a completely different approach to developing a short list. Ultimately, this stage of the recruitment process is conducted at the discretion of the Search Committee.

Requesting Additional Information from Shortlisted Candidates

The value that FACM's participation adds to the client County's recruitment process is derived from the unique perspectives and experiences of the Search Committee members. Each committee member has extensive experience in local government administration in Florida. Generally, committee members will also have more specific experience managing an organization in the same geographic area of the state as the client County. As a result, each Search Committee is uniquely positioned to ascertain which candidates from the applicant pool are best suited to fulfill the needs of the client County based on their knowledge and experience with the issues the client County faces.

The Search Committee's evaluation up to this point in the recruitment process yields, in the committee's collective opinion, the handful of applicants best suited for the position. In its final report to the Board, however, the committee has the opportunity to glean some additional important information about the candidates before the County begins its interview process. Once the committee's short list is determined, and while the committee is producing its final report, the chairperson of the Search Committee should contact each candidate via e-mail and ask them to respond to the questions listed below. Candidates should be given three business days to respond, and each candidate's responses should be included in the final report along with the committee's summary analysis and the candidate's résumé.

1. Can you provide an example of a problem you see in the field of local government management that you'd like to solve and why?
2. How do you find others in the field of local government management to connect with, and how often do you connect with others in the field outside your organization?
3. How do you stay up to date in the field?
4. At what point in your career were you most satisfied in your work? At what point were you the least satisfied?

These questions, adapted from Kris Dunn, founder and executive editor of talent management blog *Fistful of Talent*, are designed to help determine the degree to which candidates are truly passionate about their work. The responses delivered to the Board will assist in determining not only which candidates are capable of fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of the position, but also which candidates possess the intangible qualities that are more difficult to determine by only reviewing a résumé and cover letter.

Background Information

After designating a short list of candidates to recommend to the Board for further consideration, the Search Committee begins developing a final report to the client County's Board of County Commissioners. This report begins by providing background information related to the Search Committee's recruitment process. This background information includes the following:

1. A cover letter issued by the chairperson of the Search Committee – this letter should generally express thanks to the Board for the opportunity to contribute to its County Administrator search, recognize the efforts of the Search Committee members, and indicate the added value the report provides in the form of recommended next steps and best practices provided by FACM to the County.
2. A description of the Search Committee, its members, and its members' qualifications to serve on the committee – this section should include a photo and brief bio of each committee member, particularly emphasizing each member's history in Florida local government and experience in the same region of the state as the client County.
3. An overview of the recruitment process – this section should include a narrative summarizing the work plan and approach utilized by the Search Committee in conducting its work, as well as a final timeline describing what steps were taken during the recruitment process and when they were completed.

A sample final report is included in this guidebook, both in hard copy and digital format, for future Search Committees' reference.

Presentation of Short List and Candidate Analysis

The Search Committee's final report will present the committee's short list of recommended candidates to the Board. This will include a summary analysis of each candidate's qualifications and experience, followed by a copy of the candidate's résumé. This summary analysis should include, at minimum, the following elements:

- The candidate's present position
- A summary of the candidate's work history, with particular mention of total years of experience as a City or County Administrator and experience as an administrator in Florida
- The candidate's education
- Areas in which the Search Committee feels that the candidate is strong, particularly with respect to the needs of the client County
- Areas in which the Search Committee feels that the candidate may be weak and/or lacks experience

For the purposes of developing this section of the final report, it may be useful for each committee member to prepare notes from his or her individual evaluation of the candidates. The Search Committee may include these notes in the backup documentation for its meeting to discuss candidates and develop a short list. This will assist the Search Committee in synthesizing the summary analysis of each candidate for the report.

Recommended Next Steps and Best Practices for the Board

The search committee's final report will also include a series of recommended next steps and best practices for the client County during the remainder of its hiring process. Including this information in the final report adds value to the services provided by the Search Committee and enhances the visibility and relevance of professional local government administration. This material is included in hard copy and electronic format as part of this guidebook as a component of the sample final report from FACM's Santa Rosa County recruitment effort.

The recommended next steps and best practices provided in the final report include:

- Suggestions for planning the interview process, including initial steps, preparation tips, and sample interview questions;
- Considerations regarding the selection of the Board's preferred candidate;
- Guidance in negotiating an employment contract, including a discussion of compensation and benefits and other common elements of an administrator's contract;
- Ways the Board can assist the new administrator in the transition process; and
- Developing initial evaluation criteria for the new administrator

Delivering the Final Report

When the Search Committee's final report is complete, it should be delivered as early as possible by the chairperson of the Search Committee to the client County's Commission chairperson via e-mail as a single PDF file. The report should also be printed, tabbed, and bound, with copies delivered by mail to the client County, together with a thank-you letter and invoice for services (discussed in the next section). One copy should be included for each County Commissioner, the County Administrator, and the County Attorney. FACM should also retain two copies for its records. FACM can coordinate the printing of the final report.

Following is sample language that can be included in the body of the e-mail delivering the PDF version of the final report:

Dear Chairman _____:

On behalf of the Florida Association of County Managers, I am pleased to submit the County Administrator Search Committee's Final Report, which you will find attached to this e-mail. With sincere thanks to the members of the Search Committee, who collectively lend over years of Florida local government experience to this effort, the report includes the committee's final recommendation of # highly qualified candidates for further consideration and evaluation by the _____ County Board of County Commissioners. In addition, the Search Committee is pleased to also include in the report a series of recommended best practices for the Board during the remainder of its recruitment, including tips on planning the interview process, selecting a preferred candidate, negotiating an employment contract, and more. We hope that these resources will add extra value to the County's search.

In the coming days, you will receive printed and bound copies of the Final Report for your records. Should you wish, the Search Committee would be happy to attend an upcoming meeting of the Board of County Commissioners to answer any questions you may have.

As you are aware, a County's selection of a County Administrator is one of the most crucial decisions a Board of County Commissioners makes for its community. On behalf of the Search Committee, and of the entire Florida Association of County Managers, we thank you for the opportunity to assist you in this important effort.

Sincerely,

Thank-You Letter and Invoice

Delivery of printed copies of the final report to the client County is accompanied by a thank-you letter from the chairperson of the Search Committee and an invoice for the services provided. FACM will coordinate the printing of the final report (as described in the previous section) and will prepare the invoice.

Following is sample language for the thank-you letter to accompany the delivery of the final report and invoice:

October 13, 2015

Hunter Walker, County Administrator
Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners
6495 Caroline Street, Ste. D
Milton, FL 32570

Re: Florida Association of County Managers Consulting

Dear Mr. Walker:

Enclosed please find an invoice for services rendered to Santa Rosa County in accordance with the Engagement Letter dated June 24, 2015. On October 9, 2015, FACM submitted its final report to the Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners containing the list of County Administrator candidates recommended for further consideration.

On behalf of the Florida Association of County Managers, thank you again for the opportunity to assist in this very important process. Should you need anything further, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Vincent S. Long
President

Enclosure

Search Committee Outreach to the New Administrator

As a final consideration – a month or so after the new administrator starts in his or her new position, members of the Search Committee should follow up by reaching out the new administrator to offer any advice or guidance that may be helpful. Search Committee members who have experience working in or around the new administrator’s community will be familiar with the many of the issues facing the administrator in his or her new position. The committee members can also offer to make introductions to key individuals in the community and other Florida city and county managers to help build the new administrator’s network. Finally, if the new administrator is not a member of FACM, this is a great opportunity to invite him or her to join.