

Working with Search Firms

Why Use a Search Firm?

Enlisting the services of a reputable search firm can dramatically improve your chances of finding a practice opportunity that truly matches your criteria. It's also a choice that can save you considerable time and energy during this busy time of your life. The services are usually completely free to you, with costs picked up by the client group or facility.

Search firms are staffed by motivated professionals, whose job it is to perform the legwork involved in securing new opportunities for physicians. It is in their best interest to make sure you are completely satisfied with your new practice.

What's more, search firms can be a great source of information. They can provide you with data and helpful tips including:

- Market trends in your specialty
- Salary surveys
- Recruiting hot spots
- Contract review and negotiation
- CV preparation
- Interview coaching

What to Look For

Important points to consider—and questions to ask—when you are evaluating a search firm would include:

- How long has the company been in business? It will benefit you to work with a well-established firm that has a solid reputation and track record, as well as a large and diverse client base.

- Who pays the search fees? You—the physician—should never be required to pay the search firm. All costs should be picked up by the hiring practice.
- How many physicians has the search firm successfully placed? Do they have consultants dedicated to your specialty? Do those experts understand both the fundamentals and the fine points of your specialty? Do they receive ongoing training and attend relevant medical meetings?
- What is the geographic coverage area? Do they service only an isolated region or the whole country?
- What types of practices are represented? Does the firm cover a broad spectrum of practices and offer you ample choices?
- Is confidentiality guaranteed? This is extremely important and says a lot about the firm's ethical standards. Make sure the firm has a policy of not distributing your personal information to clients or anyone else without obtaining your consent.
- What is the firm's reputation in the healthcare community? Will they readily provide you with references in your specialty? Does the firm have a guarantee period? This will ensure the recruiter makes a good match and avoids misrepresentation.
- Will the firm facilitate contract negotiations to make sure you and your new employer are both completely satisfied? Will the firm commit to negotiate the best possible compensation package for you?
- Does the firm provide you with contract negotiation support?
- Does the firm conduct ongoing market research to continually identify new opportunities?

- Do they provide post-placement follow-up services such as assisting with licensure, DEA registration, and hospital privileges?
- Does the firm provide comprehensive relocation assistance services?
- When speaking with a recruiter from the firm, do you feel comfortable and free to ask questions? Do you feel that the recruiter really listens to you? A good recruiter will put you at ease and welcome your questions.

How to Ensure the Best Results

Once you've chosen a search firm, the following tips will help the firm accurately represent you and will facilitate the process of securing a great position in the shortest possible time:

- Be as explicit and detailed as possible in conveying your background, interests, and practice preferences.
- Be frank if you are unsure of your practice preferences. Good recruiters help bring preferences into focus.
- Promptly return all phone calls and emails.
- Do not procrastinate.
- Be professional.