

# BUSINESS OPERATIONS

## PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

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As businesses grow, so does the labor needed to operate them. Before bringing new employees or volunteers into your operation, there are a few things you'll want to do to make the process as smooth as possible.

### JOB DESCRIPTION & EXPECTATIONS

Once you've established you need additional help to get everything done, you'll need to decide which tasks you can hand off to someone else. Write out a clear job description including expected job or volunteer duties. Think through the times of year you will need additional help, how many hours per week, and what the ideal weekly work schedule would be. Make a list of required and preferred qualifications for each job description. Specify if workers will need a valid driver's license and the physical requirements of the position. Think through what you can offer. If you are hiring someone, know before you advertise the position how much you can pay and any benefits you can provide including paid time off and sick leave. For both employees and staff, be clear about what training you will provide and what experience and skills you expect them to bring to the position.

### ADVERTISING & INTERVIEWING

Once you've decided that you want to hire help, you've written out your job description and got ten clear about your internal policies, it is now time to post the job! The Small Business Development Center can help you create a standardized job description. You'll want to post the opportunity widely. The more applicants you get, the better chance you have of finding the best fit for your operation. Utilize your social media pages, local online job listings, and word of mouth. Consider also posting physical advertisements around town and listing

### CONSIDERATIONS

What equipment will you be providing, and what should people bring themselves? Do you have a clear plan to communicate your policies and options in case someone forgets something, such as gloves?

What areas of your farm are open to employees and volunteers, and what areas are restricted? Where will people take breaks, eat lunch, or use the bathroom? If some of the facilities are within your personal residence, what entrance will people use? Do you have a shoes off policy? Be sure to provide an in-person orientation at the beginning of employment/volunteering and provide a copy of your policies in writing. Facilitate a conversation with new hires and volunteers to ensure your policies are understood.

Consider your employees' needs for time off, including sick leave and personal leave. How will this affect your business and the roles employees or volunteers have in your farm? Is there a time frame that is best for folks to take time away? If you provide paid time off to employees, what are your policies about staff taking additional unpaid leave?

If someone must drive for your operation, how will you manage that? Will you reimburse the mileage or provide a vehicle? Before hiring is the best time to inquire with your insurance agent about how changes may impact your plan.

with national agricultural job registries. With all postings, include a brief description of your operation for anyone unfamiliar with your farm or ranch.

Interviews are a good time to discuss the job description and your expectations. For hired labor, make sure to ask for references and to call them. Prior to interviewing, determine whether you want to run background checks on potential hires, or license checks if you are hiring a driver.

## **MANAGING & MAINTAINING OPEN COMMUNICATION**

Having employees and volunteers on your farm will require some regular management tasks to keep everything running smoothly. It is also good practice to employ techniques to ensure your business is an enjoyable place for people to be, with the hopes of retaining them for as long as possible. Onboarding and training new help costs time and money, so keeping employees for the duration of your employment season is a financial benefit to your business. How will you communicate the daily, weekly, or monthly work plan? How will you communicate throughout the day if working apart? Walkie talkies, a centralized whiteboard, and phones are all viable options to consider. What check-ins do you want to build into the season to address problems as they arise? How will you recognize and appreciate the help, especially if they are volunteers? End of season gifts or celebrations go a long way, as well as verbal thanks and acknowledgment throughout the season.