

Recruitment and Selection

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Implementation Checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delineate clear responsibilities for tutors based on your Value Proposition and Model Design • Articulate the knowledge, skills, and mindsets necessary for tutors to be effective and successful in their role • Distinguish between what you will select for and what you will train for and have a clear rationale for your choice • Establish clear eligibility criteria based on your value proposition and model design • Design an application process to evaluate eligibility criteria and ensure a diverse set of tutors • Establish an intentional recruitment strategy for recruiting a diverse set of tutors with the necessary skills
Implementation Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor Job Description Guidance • Tutor Recruitment Strategy • Tutor Selection Strategy
Key Insights	<p>Proactively develop a recruitment strategy. It will save you time and serve as a roadmap for recruiting tutors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your plan should cover how you will recruit potential tutor candidates and who is best positioned on your team to reach out to them. • Determine multiple application deadlines and set benchmarks for how many applications you'd like to receive at each deadline. <p>Regardless of how selective a program's recruitment is, every program should clearly define the essential tutor qualities that it is seeking. These desired qualities depend on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community served: Community-specific competencies (like bilingualism or familiarity with learning differences) are crucial to a program's success serving its chosen community. • The value proposition: Depending on the niche a program aims to fill, some qualities may be more important than others. For instance, a program whose value proposition is its exceptional academic rigor compared to other programs in the community would need to place a higher emphasis on recruiting tutors who will hold students to

high expectations.

- **The training provided:** Programs should carefully consider what they will select for versus what they will train for. Some programs select tutors with relationship-building soft skills, then provide training around both content knowledge and pedagogy. Others select tutors with teacher training and content proficiency, narrowing their applicant pool but reducing the need for training.

Make your expectations clear upfront to prevent problems with tutor retention.

- Prospective tutors need a clear understanding of the program’s expectations and the training it provides right from the start (i.e. during the recruitment and selection process) so that they know what to expect and can prepare appropriately. Programs have struggled to retain tutors when they fail to communicate concrete expectations for tutors until after tutor onboarding.

If you plan to scale up significantly, consider the requirements that are most necessary.

- The more selective the recruitment process, the harder it will be to recruit enough tutors in a short timeframe, so consider your plans to scale up the program when developing a recruitment and selection strategy. While some requirements are necessary, others may not be; the important thing is to establish which ones are which in a principled way.

It is important to have a cohort of tutors that reflects the diversity of the students being supported. Without a diverse candidate pool, a program cannot recruit a diverse cohort of tutors. To attract a diverse candidate pool:

- **Be explicit about your program’s prioritization of hiring tutors that reflect the diversity of their students:** Potential candidates may not assume that this is important to your program. Make it clear on your website and in promotional materials that this is a priority and why.
- **Make the application process accessible:** The application tasks might be challenging to complete, but the directions should be easy to understand. The application itself should live on one platform, and completing it should not require too many steps. A convoluted application with confusing directions discourages qualified applicants from getting started.

- **Get input from stakeholder communities on where and how to recruit:** Students, parents, schools, and current tutors can be resources for tapping into pools of potential tutors. Some programs involve members of these stakeholder groups in their recruitment process (e.g. by having prospective tutors lead model sessions under interviewer supervision, then soliciting student feedback).

Recruit more tutors than you think you need.

- **Some tutors will miss scheduled sessions.** Some tutors will consistently fall short of the program’s expectations (e.g., showing up on time) and may need to be let go. Some tutors may leave the role for their own reasons. Dropoff is normal; plan for it ahead of time by “over-recruiting” at the outset.
- **Consider creating a “wait list.”** If you’ve reached your recruitment goals, use your last application deadline to create a pool of tutors that sit on a wait list. Write an offer letter with adjusted language and be transparent about when they can expect you to reach out with an update.

Tutor Job Description Guidance

Why create a tutor job description?

If your program plans to *recruit* tutors from outside the community, you will need a job description to post online or otherwise circulate. If your program plans to rely on teachers at partner schools, students' families, or peer tutors, you should still create a job description internally for *selection* purposes. The checklist and the examples below will help you make sure your job description gets read, attracts applicants, and targets the specific kind of candidates you think would make ideal tutors in your program.

Tutor Job Description Checklist

Use your Model Dimensions, Value Proposition and Measurement Plan to aid you in drafting your job description.

- **Job Title.** Keep it simple. “Creative” titles won’t show up in search results. Include grade level & content area.
- **One-paragraph overview of the tutor role.** Put it *first*; it’s what applicants want to know. Use “you” phrasing.
 - **Model Dimensions.** Where will tutors work? Teaching what? How often? With how many students? Etc.
- **One-paragraph overview of the program itself.** Put this *second*, or applicants may just skip past it to the role.
 - **Value Proposition.** Well-established programs may not need to describe themselves, but newer programs should.
- **Brief list of responsibilities.** What tutors will actually do. Start each item with a specific and meaningful verb.
 - **Measurement Plan.** What everyday actions will tutors need to take to make progress towards key goals?
 - Don’t forget to include a catch-all (“other duties as necessary”) in case unexpected needs arise.
- **Brief list of qualifications.** This section should make clear all criteria selectors will use to evaluate applications.
 - **Eligibility.** What are the bare minimum criteria an applicant must meet?
 - **Education:** High school diploma, in college, college degree, graduate coursework/degree, etc.
 - Do you require specific college majors or coursework? A minimum or preferred GPA?
 - **Required Content Knowledge:** If none/minimal, clearly say so (to broaden your applicant pool).
 - **Legal requirements:** USA work eligibility, background checks (and who pays for them), etc.
- **Beliefs & mindsets.** Make these clear to help find and attract candidates who actually share your values.

- Examples: Commitment to equity, growth mindset (for self and students), high expectations, etc.
- Though harder to measure, these are more important than skills, which are easier to train for.
- **Skills & qualities.** Distinguish *required* skills (what you *select* for) from *ideal* skills (what you *train* for).
 - Examples: Clear communicator, engaging & relatable to students, empathetic listener, etc.
 - List community-specific skills (e.g. Spanish fluency); this may also help diversify your cohort.
- **Compensation.** Leaving this out may mean that high-quality applicants with other options don't bother applying.
 - **Pay:** Be upfront about compensation or applicants may research it elsewhere (i.e. Glassdoor) and find outdated info.
 - Is this a volunteer role? Is there an hourly wage? A stipend? A salary range? Are there pay steps?
 - If pay is variable, what does it depend on? Prior experience? Longevity in the role? Make it clear.
- **Benefits:** Easier to overlook, but listing these can help applicants imagine themselves thriving in the role.
 - **Health:** Health insurance may be less relevant for college-age tutors, but critical to those over 26.
 - **Education:** College credit, student loan forbearance, an education award, tuition remission, etc.
 - **Perks:** List as many as you can, but keep it objective. (“Free coffee,” not “inspiring coworkers.”)
- **Equal Opportunity Statement.** Applicants may not read these in detail, but they'll notice if you don't have one.
 - These values also should be integrated throughout the entire job description, not just as a separate addendum.
 - Review all sections with this lens, correcting biased language around gender, race, religion, etc.
 - Examples for equal opportunity statements and guidance for writing them can be found [here](#).

Tutor Job Description Examples

Denver Fellows: [Tutor Job Description](#)

Content Area & Grade Level: High School Math
Target: Curriculum-Driven and Problem-Driven
Setting: In-School
Take-Up: Required
Tutor Type: Paraprofessional (Fellows)
Delivery Mode: Traditionally In-Person
Dosage: 45-minute sessions
Student-Tutor Ratio: Small Group
Tutor Consistency: Consistent



Reading Corps: [Tutor Job Description](#)

Content Area & Grade Level: Pre-K through 3rd Grade Literacy
Target: Curriculum-Driven and Problem-Driven
Setting: In-School
Take-Up: Required
Tutor Type: Paraprofessional (AmeriCorps)
Delivery Mode: Traditionally In-Person
Dosage: 20-minute sessions 5x per week for ~16 weeks
Student-Tutor Ratio: 1:1
Tutor Consistency: Consistent



Tutor Recruitment Strategy

Why build an intentional recruitment plan?

The more applicants your program can recruit, the more **selective** you can be when choosing tutors. If your program cannot recruit enough qualified tutors, it must either serve fewer students or provide each student with less support. Poor recruitment can make it harder for your program to serve its mission, starting a downward spiral of lower impact, less funding, and fewer high-quality tutors. A strong, intentional recruitment strategy can attract qualified, diverse applicants for the tutor role, giving you the freedom to be more selective, expand your pool of tutors, and serve more students.

Building a Recruitment Strategy

WHOM are you trying to recruit?

- **You need at least 4x more applicants than tutors:** From most pools of applicants, less than 50% will likely meet your goals and, thus, deserve offers. Less than 50% of those likely will accept your offer.
- Set explicit goals for the number of applicants from minority backgrounds to help develop a diverse, qualified cohort.

WHEN should the recruitment timeline start and end?

- **Fundamentals first.** When are you going to start training tutors? How many tutors are you going to need?
- **Work backwards.** Set multiple application deadlines and benchmarks for applications received by each deadline.
 - Not all deadlines have to be public-facing. Your public application deadline might be the last of many internal deadlines, each with its own benchmark you aim to hit by that date.
- **Start early.** Start earlier than you think you need to. The earlier you start, the more **selective** you can afford to be.

WHERE will you recruit applicants?

This will vary greatly based on your program's Tutor Type. Consider these questions to help build your recruitment plan:

- Where can you recruit within your students' own communities?
- How can you leverage your current employees' professional networks?
- What organizations similar to your own could you partner with?
- What colleges and universities could you cultivate relationships with?
- What career fairs could you present at? Who should present?
- How will you advertise and recruit on social media platforms?

To find a **diverse** applicant pool, **diversify** your methods of **recruitment**. Recruit **first** from the communities you **serve**. Do not rely **purely** on this tool: Get **input** from your **stakeholders!**

- What online job boards will you post your tutor [Job Description](#) on?
- Where will you distribute your marketing materials, like flyers and brochures?

HOW will you recruit applicants?

Congratulations, you've found a pool of potential applicants! Now, what are you going to say? How are you going to pitch your program to them? All marketing materials, presentations, and conversations should answer the following questions:

Tailor your language to your audience in your recruitment materials. Choose presenters strategically based on context.

- What is your program's [Value Proposition](#)? What is its mission and vision?
 - Ask questions to find commonalities with the person you're talking to.
- What is the level of commitment involved as a tutor with the program?
 - Have the [Job Description](#) ready and available to share easily.
- How can I apply today? What does the process entail?
 - Outline the [application process](#) and rationale for each step.
- Where can I find more information? Where can I sign up for updates?
 - Provide links to your website and additional program information as well as contact information for the staff member in charge of recruiting.

WHY should someone apply to tutor with you?

Follow up individually to convince initial recruitment contacts, prioritizing particularly promising prospective applicants.

Connect prospective applicants with your **most persuasive messenger** for them. Leverage **multiple methods** of follow-up.

- Collect and manage all contact information from prospective applicants.
- Share updates and reminders about upcoming (or extended) deadlines.
- Create opportunities for conversations with current and former tutors.
- Offer to meet one-on-one with prospective applicants.

Tutor Selection Strategy

Why design a cohesive selection strategy?

The quality of your program’s work depends on the quality of your tutors. As a result, choosing the right people for the job is critical: tutors’ values should align with your own and tutors’ skills should be suited to their work. However, the more complex your application process becomes, the harder it will be to **recruit** enough tutors. Every step of the tutor application process, therefore, should be streamlined as much as possible and designed to select for something in particular — ideally, for several things at once.

Your candidate pool should **reflect the backgrounds** of the students being served. Also, when developing selection criteria, **consider how advanced you need tutors to be when it comes to understanding systemic oppression and being anti-racist**. Some programs look for an openness to learning and an acknowledgement of intrinsic bias as this sets the foundation for future training.

Determining Selection Criteria

You must first know what you are looking for in tutors. You cannot design the selection process without knowing what you are selecting for.

- Start by listing all the qualities of your ideal tutor.
 - Use your **Measurement Plan** as a guide. What do tutors need to *know*, *believe*, and *do* to reach their goals?
- Then, identify which qualities you will provide training for.
 - It is easier to impart practical skills through training than it is to change beliefs and mindsets.
 - What content knowledge will tutors need to brush up on before starting work?
- What’s left? If you want tutors to have a certain quality, and you’re not going to *train* them on it, you’ll have to *select* for it.
 - Is there a baseline of content knowledge all tutors must have before even starting training? What is it?
 - Are there beliefs and mindsets that all tutors should hold? (e.g. high expectations, open to feedback, etc.)

Identifying Indicators

Once you know what qualities you want to select for, you must then identify the observable behaviors that will serve as objective proxies for each one. These are your *indicators*. Selectors should use these indicators to evaluate applications. For example, an indicator that a tutor is *adaptable* might be: “tutor came up with clear and correct responses to hypothetical scenarios on-the-fly with calm confidence.” You may also consider *negative indicators*, or *flags*, that are cause for concern (e.g. incorrect answers on a content knowledge assessment). All selection decisions should be traceable to specific indicators observed during the application process.

To **ensure equity** in this process, provide **all** your selectors **anti-bias training** to help counter **implicit biases**.

Requesting References

In addition to conducting [background checks](#) prior to tutors working with students, your selection process should also include a reference check, such as a character reference, or letter of recommendation from a current or former employer. Professional reference checks will provide you with a wealth of information about the applicant and (ideally) should explicitly address the applicant's experience working with children. Include both quantitative and qualitative questions; for instance, request both a rating and an open-ended response. Examples:

- How would you rate this person's ability to work well on a team? Why?
- How would you rate this person's openness to receiving and implementing feedback? Why?
- How would you rate this person's ability to connect with young people in low-income, urban communities? Why?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share with us about this person as an applicant?

Students as Selectors

Tutors ultimately work for their students, not the supervisors of the program. (*All* program staff, from new hires to veteran leadership, ultimately work for the students!) So involving student voices in the selection process can be both empowering for the students and helpful for the program. Gathering student feedback is usually best achieved through *demo sessions* with actual students once prospective tutors have cleared most of the hurdles in the selection process. The goal is not to assess tutors' content knowledge, but to gauge how well they can connect with the students they will serve.