

Calling a Next Gen staff member to your church should be an exciting endeavor, but there are definite things that need to be done in order to ensure that you find the right person.

Here's a detailed step-by-step guide:

Step 1: Identify the Need

A. Session Discussion: The church's Session meets to discuss the need for a Next Gen staff member. This includes evaluating the current Next Gen ministry, staffing needs, and the church's long-term goals.

1. Things to consider would be
 - a. Is this a full time or part time position?
 - b. Ordained or non-ordained?
 - c. Heavy teaching, mostly fellowship, or a mix of the 2?

B. The session should begin to set the tone for the whole process by devoting the matter to a long time in prayer.

Step 2: Form a Search Committee

A. Appoint a Search Committee

1. The Session appoints a Next Gen Search Committee (NGSC), often made up of elders, parents, Next Gen ministry leaders, and perhaps youth members. The committee reflects a variety of perspectives from the congregation.
2. Ideally, an online group shared folder is created using something like Google Drive where documents, resources, resumes, etc can be stored and easily accessed by all members of the search committee.

B. Job Description

1. The committee develops a clear and detailed job description.
 - a. It should outline the responsibilities, qualifications, theological expectations, and goals for the Next Gen leader role.
 - b. Include expectations regarding teaching, event planning, and spiritual development of Next Gen members.

Step 3: Budget and Compensation Planning

A. Determine Compensation

1. The Session, in consultation with the church's finance committee, establishes a salary package, benefits, and any other support the Next Gen leader may need (e.g., housing, continuing education, ministry budget).
 - a. A good rule of thumb for a full time position would be to look at what local public school teachers make with the same education and experience.
 - i. Bachelors vs. Masters; first year vs. 5 years of experience.
2. Budget Approval: Ensure the compensation package aligns with the church's overall budget and has the congregation's support, if necessary according to church's bylaws.

Step 4: Advertise the Position

A. Church Website and Social Media

1. Advertise on the church's website, social media platforms, and newsletters.

B. Denomination/Presbytery Listings

1. Post the job opening through the denominational and local Presbytery's job board or network.

C. Seminary Networks

1. Submit listings to Covenant, Westminster, and Reformed (etc) Theological Seminaries.

D. College Campus Ministries

1. CCO, RUF, Intervarsity, Cru, etc.

E. Youth Ministry websites

1. RYM, Rooted, CPYU

F. Church Job websites

1. churchstaffing.com, The Gospel Coalition Job Board, etc

Quick word: In days past, sites like these could quickly generate many responses. Recently, especially when searching for youth workers, this has not been the case. I highly advise being willing to send representatives from your church to seminary and college campuses to pitch your church to potential candidates the seminary or campus ministry might suggest. If travel to these places is too much financially or logistically, try to set up Zoom calls.

Step 5: Receive and Screen Applications

A. Application Process

1. Set up a system to receive applications, which might include resumes, statements of faith, and references, and teaching videos\audio.
 - a. Again, something like Google Drive will be invaluable here.
 - b. Create an email thanking candidates for their interest to be sent shortly after their material is received.
2. Ensure candidates are aware of the timeline and process for consideration.

B. Initial Review

1. The search committee reviews applications to create a shortlist of candidates based on qualifications, theological alignment, experience with Next Gen ministry, and references.

C. Conduct Preliminary Interviews

1. The search committee conducts initial interviews via phone or video conferencing to further narrow the candidate pool.
2. Respond in a timely way to those you do not select to go on to the next phase.

Step 6: In-Depth Interviews and Evaluations

A. Second Round Interviews

1. The committee conducts more thorough interviews with the top candidates, asking about theology, vision for Next Gen ministry, and how they handle common challenges in Next Gen ministry.

B. Preaching/Teaching Sample

1. Ask candidates to provide a recorded sermon or teaching session, preferably focused on the age group this position will primarily focus on.
2. In some cases, a candidate may be invited to the church to teach or lead a Next Gen event as part of the evaluation process.

C. Background and Reference Checks

1. Conduct thorough background checks, including criminal background, reference checks, and denominational requirements for working with minors.

Step 7: Select the Final Candidate

A. Discernment Process

1. The search committee meets to discuss and prayerfully discern the best candidate.
2. Consider theological fit, relational chemistry with your Next Gen students, and leadership potential.

B. Final Interview with Session

1. The final candidate should meet with the Session and/or senior pastor for one last interview, to ensure full alignment with church leadership.

Step 8: Extend a Call

A. Congregational Approval (if required for an Associate Pastor or due to bylaws)

1. In some cases, the call to a Next Gen pastor may require a congregational meeting for a vote of approval, depending on church's bylaws or denominations standards.

B. Offer Letter

1. If the Session (and congregation if calling an Associate Pastor) approves, the church extends a formal offer letter that includes the agreed salary, benefits, start date, and job expectations.

C. Candidate Acceptance

1. The candidate reviews and accepts the offer, after a period of prayer and consultation.

Step 9: Onboarding and Installation

A. Welcome and Installation Service

1. Plan a special welcome and/or installation service to formally welcome and/or install the new Next Gen leader. This often involves prayers, blessings, and a commitment from the congregation to support the new leader.

B. Orientation

1. The new Next Gen leader is onboarded, introduced to the congregation, and oriented to the church's ministry culture, policies, and Next Gen programs.

Step 10: Ongoing Support and Evaluation

A. Mentorship and Supervision

1. Ensure the Next Gen leader receives mentorship from senior leadership or experienced pastors, especially in the early months.
2. Regular meetings with the Session or a staff supervisor help ensure smooth integration.

B. Annual Review

1. Establish an annual review process to evaluate the Next Gen leader's effectiveness in ministry, growth, and alignment with the church's vision.

This process ensures that the church is careful, prayerful, and thorough in discerning the right candidate for Next Gen ministry leadership.

One closing thought: do not settle. If you have been searching for a number of months with no "luck" and a candidate arises who 'might could, sorta, maybe' do the job, then I highly advise continue searching. Hiring the wrong person comes at a great cost.