Tekalo WELCOME TO TEKALO

We are so excited to help you match with technical talent through our platform

Overview: We created this guide because we want to set you up for success.

What's different? These candidates are coming from the tech industry, so they are familiar with a particular process and might have slightly different expectations than your candidates usually do. Throughout this guide we'll provide tips and best practices to ensure you're creating an excellent candidate experience.

New to hiring technical talent? Great! You're in the right place. Our guide will walk you through everything from the first call to your final selection - paying special attention to the details of technical interviews. We know resources that describe how to hire technical folks into a social impact organization are few and far between, so we've outlined the basics and included some of the resources we continually look to as well.

Choose your own adventure by navigating through the links below to get started - but don't miss the **RECOMMENDED** sections! They contain the keys to your process

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Contents of this document

What to expect when hiring with Tekalo: The process

T E K A L O

Understand your organization's needs

As part of the approval process, a Talent Connector will work with you to define your ideal candidate profile. (Make sure to use our Rubric Guidelines to help with this!)

Review our candidate profiles

Using the capabilities you have outlined, Talent Connectors will scour our candidate database to find the folks most relevant to your open role. Don't worry if we don't find some right away, we receive new applications daily! Our team will continue to work to fill your role until you've found the right candidate.

Screening call

Application review and phone screens are 2 of the most time intensive parts of the hiring process - so we'll take them on for you. When we find candidates in our database that are a fit for your role, we will schedule a phone screen with them to further assess their fit.

Y O U R O R G

Connection

When we find candidates who are a match for your role, we will confirm with them to be sure they are available and interested. If they are, we will email their resume over to you. We highly recommend reaching out to these candidates within 24 hours from receiving our email - these are highly sought-out candidates and continuing the momentum will make sure they stay excited about your role!

Select (or not)

Once you're connected to the candidate(s), you can move forward with your selection process. If candidates don't pass your interviews, please reach out to the Talent Connector to provide feedback about why they were not a fit - this will help us find the right role for them and a better fit for you! If a candidate does well, you can move forward with an offer! Please reach out to let us know so that we can celebrate with you (and mark them as hired in our database).

Onboard

The hiring process isn't over until the candidate has completed your onboarding process. Make sure to check out our onboarding guide to ensure you're setting your new hire up for success!

★ Expected timelines (and how you can help us move faster!) ★

While we cannot guarantee any specific timelines, we definitely want you to fill your role as quickly as possible so that 1) you can get on with the important work you're doing, and 2) you can hire from this amazing talent pool while they are still on the market.

When will you get your first candidate?

Expectation: It may take 1-2 months for us to begin to send you candidates.

How you can help: Having a clear rubric will make it easier for your candidates to stand out to our Talent Connectors.

How long should the interview process take?

Expectation: once we have introduced a candidate to you, we'd highly recommend you complete your interview process within 2 weeks. Technical candidates are in high demand right now and you want to complete the process before they receive a competing offer!

How you can help: While you wait for us to send candidates, use this time to thoroughly outline your hiring process. Use a rubric to plan your interviews and interview questions. Ensure your interviewers are trained and prepared to make time to do the interview and submit feedback immediately afterwards.

When should we expect their start date to be?

Expectation: This depends on the candidate - some may want to start right away and some may want to take some time before they dive into their next job. We highly recommend working with the candidate to determine what's best for them. If they express a desire to not start immediately, you should do your best to accommodate those needs - having a well-rested candidate starting a month later than expected is almost always more productive than hiring a burnt-out candidate right away.

How you can help: If you do have a particular start date in mind, be sure to communicate that early on in the interview process with your candidates so that you can set expectations.

When should we kickoff the process to find our next technologist?

Expectation: there is not one right answer to this question, but in general, it can take 2-4 months to hire a great technologist.

How you can help: Reach out to Tekalo the same day you decide to open a new tech role! If we know earlier that you're looking for candidates, we can start to be on the lookout for the right fit.

⚖️ Prioritizing equity and inclusion

Creating an inclusive and equitable hiring process guarantees that you will 1) select the best candidates and 2) build the strongest possible teams. Tekalo's process intentionally centers the needs of marginalized individuals in order to create the most inclusive process for every candidate. (If you build for the most marginalized person, you build for everyone!)

Here are some key ways you can prioritize equity and inclusion throughout your process:

★ Use a hiring rubric ★

Rubrics ensure hiring decisions are made based on consistent and pre-stated criteria. Deciding **before** you interview any candidates that you'll make decisions using your rubric can help prevent comments like, "I don't know, I just liked this person more," which are not productive and can be biased.

Check out our guide to walk through the steps for creating a rubric. (Spoiler: it's easier than you might think!)

★ Involve multiple individuals in the evaluation ★

Including several employees in the hiring process helps in (at least) three ways:

1. When multiple employees interview, your evaluation process will contain multiple perspectives. Though you are using a rubric to evaluate consistently, people with different life experiences might notice different things about those capabilities. The more perspectives you have, the more information you have.
2. Your new hire will likely work with many of your employees, so it's important for you to confirm that they work well with people who are different from them. If an interviewer is treated differently by the candidate, that might tell you something about how they'd work with them in the future.
3. Lastly, it is key for candidate experience. If candidates only speak to a couple employees or a homogenous group of employees, it's less likely that they will be able to picture themselves at your organization. They are interviewing you as much as you are interviewing them. Put your best feet forward to make sure you're impressing them by letting them meet several members of your team.

★ Be aware of common biases ★

Using rubrics and diversifying your interviewers are great ways to mitigate biases, but it's also worth calling out specific biases that creep up. Talking about biases openly is one of the best ways to ensure they do not negatively impact your decision making.

On the next page, you'll find a table with some of the common biases that occur in hiring processes. Take a moment to review them to ensure you and your team are mitigating them appropriately. Remember: do this BEFORE you start interviewing!

Type of bias + Definition	How to mitigate it…
Primacy bias *Primacy bias is the tendency to emphasize information learned early on over information encountered later.*	If you interviewed a candidate earlier in the process and are preparing to debrief all the interviews at the end of the process, it's important to review your feedback but also consider the additional feedback you've received on the candidate since then. It's possible that they've clarified their intentions or adjusted as they learned more about your organization.
Idiosyncratic rater bias *Idiosyncratic rater bias comes up when you rate a candidate based off of your own skills - rather than a rubric. For example, if you are a great writer, you may rate candidates lower for their writing abilities. Alternatively, if you aren't as great at math, you may rate candidates higher for their math abilities.*	Look to your rubric! This is why descriptions of each capability are crucial to your rubric. They ensure your evaluation is based on what you need for the role - not your own abilities.
Like-Me bias *Like-me bias is the inclination to give a higher rating to people with similar interests, skills, and backgrounds as the person doing the rating.*	Any time you're interviewing a candidate similar to yourself (or similar to a friend), put a *** at the top of your feedback. Every time you see that symbol, it's a reminder to you to take a step back and look at the rubric, not just consider your "gut feelings" about the candidate - because those could be informed by your biases.
Confirmation bias *Confirmation bias occurs when you (intentionally, or unintentionally) shape your feedback to match your preconceived notions about the candidate. For example, if you think all project managers are always incredibly organized, in the interview with a project manager you might listen for specific examples of them being organized and miss other important information.*	We all have pre-existing beliefs and biases, we just need to be aware of them so we can mitigate as necessary. Before going into an interview, take some time to prepare. Ask yourself if you've made any assumptions about this candidate, then look at the questions you are assigned to ask: which questions will speak to your assumptions? Which questions might contradict your assumptions? Pay close attention when you get to those questions so you're more aware of your potential bias.
Identity bias or stereotype bias *Identity bias or stereotype bias comes up when candidates have similar capabilities but different identities, so you rate those capabilities differently. For example, if 2 candidates strongly advocated for a particular type of problem solving but the woman was described as "aggressive" (seen as negative) and the man was described as "assertive" (seen as positive).*	One of the best ways to avoid identity and stereotype biases is to describe the specific situation and the candidate's answer without attaching adjectives. Then, check back with your rubric. Based on how the candidate answered that question, does it align with the capabilities the person will need to succeed in this role?

🗒️Evaluating candidates

There are a couple steps that the Tekalo team ***highly encourages*** you to take before you dive into interviewing your candidates. By putting in a bit of work at the front-end of your hiring process, you will ensure:

1. your team evaluates candidates accurately and equitably
2. you identify the right candidates for the role
3. your candidates understand what you're looking for and are eager to accept the position if they get an offer.

If you want a deeper dive than what we offer here, be sure to check out our additional resource: Your Ideal Candidate. This guide will walk you through how to identify capabilities needed for this role and use them to draft a job description. If you're looking for additional support in your hiring process or if you're new to hiring technologists, we highly recommend it!

★ Determining required capabilities ★

Every time you open a new role, you should spend some time considering the capabilities that will help a new hire succeed in this position. This step will be particularly important for your interviews with Tekalo candidates. Many of our candidates are switching industries, and they want to work for organizations that have a clear sense of who and what you're looking for in a role.

Map out the work this person will take on

To generate an outline, ask 2-3 key stakeholders for this role to brainstorm projects and tasks your new hire will take on in their first month, first 3 months, and first year (or 6 months, if a year feels too broad). Combine these lists into a table so you can see them all at once:

First month...	First 3 months...	First year...

Identify the skills and experience they will need

Then, zoom out and discuss with those stakeholders what skills or areas of expertise will help this person accomplish those tasks.

For example, if you expect this person to build and lead a team within the first 6 months, you might look for someone who has hiring and management skills. Or if you expect this person to create a new website for your volunteers to use, you might decide to evaluate for candidate's ability to create websites based on user experience.

You should identify 3-6 capabilities that are key for this role. You want to find the right balance between being specific (so you can identify the skill and experience when you see it, and you can describe it to the candidate) and not limiting yourself or your candidate pool (remember: new hires can acquire new skillsets within the role!)

★ Create your rubric ★

Once you know the projects this person will take on, and you've identified the skills and experience they may need to do it successfully, you should create a rubric to ensure you're making your decisions consistently.

Rubric example

Capability *(aka the skill and/or experience they will need)*	**Description** *(aka how will you know when you see it)*	**Interview questions** *(aka what you can ask to help you know if they have the skill)*

This step is crucial to confirm that the hiring team is all on the same page about what you are looking for and how you will know if a candidate has that skill. When it's clear to candidates that your team understands the expectations for this role, the candidates will also have a lot more confidence in your organization because they will see that they are being set up for success in the role. That way, they are a lot more likely to accept your offer, if you decide to hire them.

★ Design and give technical interviews ★

Your organization may usually rely on behavioral interviews to evaluate candidates for positions. Behavioral interviews are conversational and focus on asking the candidate to recall relevant experiences from their past work and how they used their skillsets to accomplish it.

Technical interviews are an opportunity for candidates to ***demonstrate*** their skills, rather than just talk about them.

Technical interview requirements

The best technical interviews...	
Have a clear objective: *the candidate must be able to understand the problem, even if they are not very familiar with the space that you work in.*	**You'll know you succeeded if:** the candidate can repeat back the task in their own words before they begin. **You can test this before the interview by:** once you've created an interview, ask several people unfamiliar with the interview to read through it. If they understand it, it's more likely that your candidates will.
Are representative of the work they would do in the role: *candidates are interviewing you as much as you are interviewing them, so implementing*	**You'll know you succeeded if:** the candidate indicates interest and/or familiarity with the assignment and/or questions you're asking.

questions that will be similar to the work they will do in the role will help them visualize themselves in the position and determine if this is work they want to do	**You can test this before the interview by:** asking someone who is currently in a similar role if the interview feels relevant to the work they do. If you don't have someone in a similar role, look to your job description. Is the content of this interview related to the details you included there?
Allow opportunities for questions: *even with a clear objective, the candidate may have questions about the problem and/or the methods and technologies they'll use to solve it. In order to know how they would work in your organization, they will need a way to ask questions throughout the interview. (e.g. if they are taking an assessment at home, there should be a point of contact that they can reach out to as they work. If they are working on the problem in real time with one of your employees, that employee should be explicit that questions are encouraged!)*	**You'll know you succeeded if:** the candidate asks questions that help them move forward with solving the problem. **You can test this before the interview by:** having your interviewers run practice interviews and encouraging them to prompt the practice-candidate to ask questions.
Are realistically time-boxed: *communicating 1) how long the interview should take and 2) how much time the candidate has to complete it, will set clear expectations for them and create an equitable experience for all candidates.*	**You'll know you succeeded if:** candidates are able to fully complete the exercise in the time that you provided **You can test this before the interview by:** ask multiple people to test out your exercise and describe how long it took to complete different parts. You want to be sure you leave enough time so that candidates aren't rushing, but not so much that candidates end up doing far more work than they need to.

***Important caveat:** you should always ask candidates if they need any additional accommodations for interviews, especially technical interviews. Some candidates may have test anxiety or dyslexia for example which could impact how quickly they complete a test, though they could still be a great candidate for the position.*

★ (Proposed) Technical interview structure ★

Technical interviews can be formatted in various different ways. If you decide to use this structure, remember that **it is just a foundation and you can adjust it as needed for your org.**

Don't forget - when you're partnering with Tekalo, we are the ones responsible for this stage!

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Within 2 weeks of receiving their application</td><td colspan="2">Introduction to the candidate</td></tr>
<tr><td>Resume Review</td><td>Recruiter Screen</td></tr>
<tr><td>Goal: identify relevant skills + experiences</td><td>Goal: identify the candidate's motivations and interests</td></tr>
</table>

This is where your organization taps in and is responsible for these stages.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Reach out to candidates within 48 hours of receiving the candidate's info from Tekalo

Schedule the interviews within 2 weeks of reaching out</td><td colspan="2">Assess skills</td></tr>
<tr><td>Round 1: Team Screen</td><td>Round 2: Take Home Assignment</td></tr>
<tr><td>Goal: evaluate 1-2 key skills to assess if the role could be a fit

Format: 30-45 minute call total
● [3-5 min] Intros
● [20-30 min] Interview questions
● [5-10 min] Save for candidate questions</td><td>Goal: evaluate 1-2 key skills to assess if the role could be a fit - but with less "on-the-spot" pressure, allowing them to work in their own time

Format: there are many options to format this interview, but generally the assignment should take fewer than 3 hours total. You can provide several days for the candidate to complete it.</td></tr>
</table>

Reminder - If a take-home assignment isn't relevant to the role, no need to include it. You can also provide options for candidates - they could choose between a take-home assignment or a live whiteboard exercise. This allows them to interview in the way that works best for them!

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Reach out to candidates within 3 business days after their previous interview

Schedule these interviews to happen back to back in one day or across two days</td><td colspan="2">Establish if the role is right</td></tr>
<tr><td>Round 3: Technical Assessments</td><td>Round 4: Team addition</td></tr>
<tr><td>Goal: evaluate the additional key technical skills you did not include at the "Assess skills" stage. This is a good opportunity to test technical skills the require collaboration.

Format: 2-3 technical interviews, generally 45-60 minutes each. Saving 5-10 minutes at the end of the interview for candidate questions

Examples:
● A collaborative problem solving interview
● An interview where they demonstrate how to implement a solution
● An interview where they find errors in a solution</td><td>Goal: determine the value add the candidate could provide to your team in addition to their technical skills (teamwork, leadership, clear communication, etc.)

Format: 1-2 behavioral/conversational interviews, generally 30-45 minutes each. Saving 10 minutes at the end of the interview for candidate questions.

Example:
● A conversation with a manager about professional career goals
● An interview with a team member about working styles</td></tr>
</table>

★ Prepare to answer candidate questions ★

Candidates are interviewing you as much as you are interviewing them, so you should make sure to save 5-10 minutes at the end of each interview to answer their questions. This will be a great opportunity to help combat stereotypes some folks from the tech industry have about working in a technical role outside of the tech industry.

How to prepare

Of course, you don't want to have scripted answers to the questions. Your interviewers should be able to respond authentically based on their experiences. But it can help to review the questions in advance and consider the potential motivations behind the questions.

What does a typical day look like for a technical team member?	
Motivations Often, when leaving tech, folks are concerned that they will be expected to clock in at 8am and out at 5pm, wear a suit, and deal with too much bureaucracy.	**How to respond** Your response to this question should set reasonable expectations for the candidate based on what your days actually look like. If you're not a technical team member, make sure to flag how your role differs from what technical team members experience.
What benefits does your organization provide?	
Motivations This question might sound like the candidate is wondering if there's a ping-pong table and/or a laundry service, but that is actually not always the case. We are part of an industry that feels unfamiliar to them and they are trying to understand what will change about their lives as they switch.	**How to respond** It'll be important to clarify about your health, dental, and vision insurance (what % is paid for by the company, are dependents eligible for the plan, etc.), any stipends for WFH equipment, and professional development budgets. And don't forget: an additional benefit is that they will be contributing towards your organization's mission and having a positive impact on the world. That is a key benefit in itself!
Do you have background checks? What are you looking for?	
Motivations Background checks are becoming less common because they often perpetuate inequities in society. Candidates may have been arrested for civil disobedience as part of a protest and want to know that it will not be held against them. Other times, candidates are asking this because they assume there may be a drug test that they would not pass.	**How to respond** If you do have background checks, explain the purpose - what you're looking for (e.g. history of embezzlement) and what you're not looking for (e.g. drug use).
How is your organization changing and evolving?	
Motivations If an organization continues to change and evolve, then there are likely to be more professional development opportunities as well as opportunities for new hires to have a significant impact.	**How to respond** Highlight 1-2 ways your work and/or organizational structure has evolved previously, and also use this as a chance to describe where your organization plans to go - and how this role will impact that growth.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">What is your favorite part of working here? What’s your least favorite part?</th></tr>
<tr><td>Motivations
No workplace is perfect, your candidates know that. They want to hear your authentic perspective on what is really great and what needs work.</td><td>How to respond
Hopefully, telling the candidate about your favorite part of your organization is pretty straightforward. Describing your least favorite part may feel challenging in an interview setting, but candidates will be more suspicious that you are hiding something if you do not share an area of improvement. If you can, after you share your least favorite, let them know the ways the organization is addressing your concerns.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">How does your organization prioritize DEI?</th></tr>
<tr><td>Motivations
Candidates are generally uninterested in joining homogenous teams because the work and the outcomes for those teams often lack innovation. Additionally, candidates with marginalized identities want to know that their identities and life experiences will be valued within your organization.</td><td>How to respond
Your answer to this question should be authentic and optimistic. No organizations are perfect when it comes to DEI and anti-racism work because we exist within a white supremacist culture. This response is an opportunity to comment on the areas you need to work on, and to describe how your organization plans to do so. Giving specific examples and anecdotes may be helpful here!</td></tr>
</table>

Onboarding

Onboarding is the last step of the hiring process - and one of the most crucial! To set your new hire up for success, you want to have a thorough onboarding that makes them feel welcomed and prepared. This process does not have to be heavy lift though, especially if you onboard multiple new hires at once.

★ Designing your onboarding program ★

Onboarding programs need 3 key things to be successful:

- **Clear objectives:** your trainers and your new hires should know exactly what is expected of them in each section of onboarding.
- **Well organized:** starting a new role is already chaotic, providing well-organized communication will provide a grounding element that your new hires will be grateful for.
- **Sustainable:** ideally, you don't want to create a new onboarding program every time a new hire joins. Delegation and setting a regular cadence to update the program (e.g. every 6 months!) will make it feel more sustainable.

★ Your onboarding program checklist ★

Have a check-list ready to go with all of the organization-wide elements of onboarding, then you can add anything specific to particular teams or roles at the bottom of each. Feel free to use this one as a foundation for yours:

Gear	
☐	**Laptop:** *most folks transitioning from the tech industry will expect to receive an Apple computer. For engineers, this additional cost is necessary for them to be able to do their jobs. For other roles, you may have a bit more flexibility.*
☐	**Work from home set up:** *providing a stipend for a desk, chair, monitor, keyboard, etc.*
☐	**ID Badge/Office fob (if applicable):** *if you are working in an office, make sure your new hire gets access on their first day to help them feel welcome and included.*
Software/logins	
☐	**Timesheets/time tracking:** *folks transitioning from tech may not have used these systems before so be sure to provide a training in addition to context about why it's important (e.g. tracking 501c3 time vs. 501c4 time)*
☐	**Benefits software:** *signing up for benefits during a new hire's first week is one of the guaranteed ways to ensure your benefits are used*
☐	**Email:** *access to their email and calendar on their first day is crucial! Most tech folks will be familiar with gmail and may be less familiar with Outlook.*
☐	**Instant messaging:** *slack or another system for quick communication*
☐	**Password management software:** *getting your new hire access to all the passwords needed for a particular team will help them onboard much faster!*

Organization wide trainings	
☐	**Benefits overview:** *one person from your HR team should spend 30-45 minutes going through the benefits your organization provides to ensure your new hires understand and are using them all.*
☐	**Organizational admin training:** *this training can include anything from how to fill out timesheets (c3 vs. c4 time may be a new concept for some folks!) to expectations for internal communication (e.g. when to use slack vs. email). These are elements that the new hire could learn with time, but they will feel much more welcome if you explicitly provide this information upfront.*
☐	**20 minute overview for every department:** *this can take some lift to build, but once created, these trainings are easy to maintain and make a significant difference for employee experience. Ask 2 people from each department to create an overview that outlines:* • *the purpose of their department* • *how and when to work with this department* • *2-3 recent projects this department has led so new hires can see their work in context* *To ensure sustainability, the department lead should be responsible for assigning someone to update this training every 6 months. And there should always be 2 department members qualified to lead this training*
Culture	
☐	**Buddy:** *providing a built-in "friend" and "guide" for your new hires will ensure they feel welcome and have a place to go for questions.*
☐	**Meetings with all key stakeholders:** *oftentimes, organizations expect new hires to set these up when they join, but if you set them up in advance, that means your new hire will have a running start and will be able to use the extra brainspace to think about other stakeholders they want to meet with.*
☐	**Additional coffee chats:** *helping your new hire connect with folks across the org in a social capacity will create additional bonds so they feel welcome.*
☐	**Employee resource group introductions:** *work with your employee resource groups so all new hires can get connected within their first 2 weeks if they are interested.*
Team/Role specifics	
	Use this section to add any specifics for the role!

★ Easing the transition into non-tech industries ★

Every new job is a transition, but when someone changes industries, they may require some additional support for their adjustment period. Spending some extra time with these new hires up front will ensure they have a smooth transition and are set up for success in their roles.

Create space for questions

“What on earth does this acronym stand for?” “What is the dress code for the office?” “Can I get access to this particular software?”

Ensure every new hire has an opportunity **at least** once a day to ask questions. These may be answered by their buddy or maybe there’s a slack channel they can drop them into for their team members to respond. Whatever works best for your culture - just make sure your new hire is explicitly invited to ask all their questions.

Acknowledge differences

Industries operate differently - whether it’s the cadence and purpose of the All Staff meeting or how they get their funding. Remember that though you’ve hired an experienced professional, there will be some elements of your organization that feel brand new to them. Give them time to adjust and opportunities to share what they are noticing.

Rely on fresh perspectives

The advantage of talking to new hires is that they are not burdened by the idea that your org “has always done it this way”. Their new perspectives may help you consider possibilities that you hadn’t previously. Check-in with them regularly and encourage them to share their ideas and suggestions. You don’t have to implement all of them, but they might be interesting!

📚 Resources

Resource	Description
Hire a Social Impact Tech Team	This is an excerpt from FastForward’s “Tech Non-Profit Playbook” and it will help you understand the roles you may want to fill - and how to identify the right candidate to fill them. They also provide important tips on diversity, equity, and inclusion!
Part V: Interviewing	The Holloway Guide to Technical Recruiting has a free preview mode so you can get an overview of their technical interview section (Chapter 5!). This guide will go deeper into different types of interviews to help you develop the right interview loop for your org.
Interview Question Toolkit	Though this guide by The Management Center does not have examples for technical interview questions, it is still a good starting place for behavioral questions and to spark ideas for others.
Job Simulation Exercises	Examples of some job simulation exercises you can use for inspiration as you design your own.