



Alliance for ETHICAL INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT Practices

A division of CGFNS International, Inc.®



QUICK GUIDE: Selecting a Recruitment Partner

The Alliance for Ethical International Recruitment Practices is proud to provide this quick guide on what to consider when selecting an agency to assist your U.S. healthcare organization in adding foreign-educated healthcare professionals (FEHPs) to your care delivery team.

If there's a singular piece of advice to consider, it's to work with an Alliance Certified Ethical Recruiter. Each has undergone a rigorous application process and demonstrated compliance with our [Health Care Code](#). Look for the seal shown to the right, which identifies certified firms.



If you have questions, email us at staff@cgfnsalliance.org.



Benefits of Working with an Alliance-Certified Firm

Certified Ethical Recruiters (CERs) adhere to the Voluntary Code of Conduct for the Ethical Recruitment of Foreign-Educated Health Professionals to the United States (Code) and participate in external monitoring to ensure they adhere to transparent, ethical recruitment practices. They also agree to participate in mediation and remediation processes as necessary.

In short, choosing a CER provides peace of mind that your healthcare organization will not become embroiled in a sundry of potential immigration, licensure, discrimination, wage, or labor issues originating from within the U.S. or from the home countries of the FEHPs.



Types of Firms

You will see two types of organizations you can sign on with to add FEHPs to your care delivery team. These two options are:

Staffing Firms generally handle all the recruitment, credentialing, licensure, immigration, relocation, and U.S. settlement of FEHPs for their client healthcare organizations. In this model, FEHPs will work on an assignment within your organization and remain staffing firm employees. The firm handles all pay and benefits and is actively involved in ongoing employee satisfaction and performance. Assignment lengths vary by the staffing firm partner. Your organization will pay for the hours the FEHPs work at their assignment, and you may owe a separate fee at the time of FEHP selection.

Placement Firms recruit for career opportunities for their U.S. client healthcare organizations, and your organization will be the U.S. visa sponsor and employer of the FEHPs. Placement firms vary in the level of support services they provide. At the highest service level, the support leading up to the first day of the FEHP's employment may be near the full-service offerings of a Staffing Firm. On the other hand, U.S. relocation expenses and services, housing, and clinical readiness training may be your singular responsibility at lower service levels. Your organization will pay agreed-upon fees at various milestones during the FEHP's journey to the U.S. and commencing work at your facility.

A typical difference between the two models is that once a FEHP begins work for you, placement firms are seldom as involved in the retention, training, and acculturation of your selected FEHPs. And after an agreed-upon time, a Placement Firm is not engaged in finding replacements for FEHPs who leave their positions.

The staffing firm versus placement firm decision is critical, and good organizations represent both options. Therefore, it's vital to research and understand the firm's obligations, pricing, and contract before committing. You should also evaluate your organization's ability to handle your responsibilities if you choose a firm providing lower-tier service levels.

Ethical Considerations Regarding Recruitment of FEHPs

U.S. healthcare organizations should consider the ethics of the recruitment of FEHPs and the ethical recruitment practices and investments of the firms they select. CERs are committed to ethical recruitment practices and respect for the sending country. Therefore, CERs refrain from recruiting FEHPs who have existing obligations to their country's health system and limit activity in regions with critical shortages of healthcare workers sans efforts to rebuild supply.

Unfortunately, the same ethical practices are only sometimes followed by non-Certified firms that may charge FEHPs hefty recruitment fees, focus on recruitment in devastated areas, and not honor their contractual obligations to clients and FEHPs.

Setting a Reasonable Arrival Timeline

Recruiting FEHPs to improve staffing is not a fix for critical vacancies. It is reasonable for it to take many months to nearly two years from the time you choose a firm until your first selected FEHPs arrive in the USA. But this may vary widely by the size of the healthcare professional pipeline the firm has built and the number of their healthcare professionals who have already completed the required English language and U.S. licensure exams.

Before selecting a firm, assess your organization's tolerance for waiting and ask intelligent questions about the number of healthcare professionals in the firm's pipeline and their various stages of U.S. readiness. Likewise, once you select individual FEHPs, your firm is responsible for status updates on U.S. arrivals and informing you of changes that may impact the timeline.



Supporting Foreign-Educated Healthcare Professionals

Even FEHPs with several years of professional experience will require extra time for orientation once they arrive in the USA. Remember that they are also strained with adjustments in their personal and family lives, from finances and culture to the loss of connections with loved ones. Therefore, it is reasonable to ask potential firms what they do to facilitate the clinical practice and U.S. acculturation process.

It is also wise to assess your organization's readiness for FEHPs. In other words, are you a good fit? While your C-suite and VPs may be on board with the decision to staff FEHPs, your unit directors and staff nurses must also be supportive. In the best case scenario, FEHPs arrive in your area feeling they have an immediately expanded network of friends and family; in the worst, they feel isolated and question their professional ability. Many firms have a robust new client onboarding process wherein they bring all these constituents aboard the exciting journey. If they don't, you'll need to assume this critical responsibility.



Additional Resources

The following is a recommended list of resources for review when selecting an agency for assistance with adding foreign-educated healthcare professionals (FEHPs) to your care delivery team.

- [Alliance Code of Practice](#)
- [American Association of International Healthcare Recruitment \(AAIHR\) Code of Ethics](#)

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