



**EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM SERVICES:**  
President  
Northwest Florida State College  
Response to Communication 1: 2023-2024-01 Notice



**BUFFKIN / BAKER**  
*Recruiting Leaders. Impacting Organizations.*

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1. Does your firm allow any contractual relationships between the search firm and candidates for a position (e.g., but not limited to, guarantee placement, payment of fees upon placement, or bonus upon placement)?

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Buffkin / Baker does not have, and will not have, any contractual relationship with any candidate for any position. Our contract is with you, our client. We represent you and work on your behalf. We do not work for, or represent, any candidate. This policy is consistent with the ethics and practice guidelines of the professional association of which we are a long-time member, the Association of Executive Search Consultants (AESC).

2. Will your firm agree to forego and avoid any contractual relationships with candidates you would recommend for the NWFSC President position or who would be included in the pool for the NWFSC president position?

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Buffkin / Baker does not have, and will not have, any contractual relationship with any candidate for any position. Therefore, this question does not apply to us or our agreement with you.

3. Does your firm offer social media and print media reviews on candidates? If yes, please describe the scope of such a review and whether there are any additional charges beyond those disclosed in your original submission.

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Buffkin / Baker will conduct media and social media checks if requested. Most of our clients choose to conduct social media (and background checks as discussed in the answer to question #4) for the final, or finalists, candidate(s) only.

In general, Buffkin / Baker consultants will:

- Use Google to check every candidate presented to identify adverse media. If negative or questionable content is found, we share it with the search committee at the time we present candidates.
- Conduct a more detailed Google search on candidates selected to interview—significant findings will be shared with the search committee verbally and before the interviews so that the committee can ask the candidate about any issue.
- For finalists: We can conduct full media checks (beyond just adverse media) and social media checks.

For the media checks we conduct in-house, and within the bounds of all legal restrictions, we can target our checks using keywords/subjects important to our client.

For full media checks, we can provide a document with links to the information/articles discovered.

For social media checks, Buffkin / Baker typically engages a third-party, Professional Background Screening Association (PBSA) accredited vendor. The information provided is a consumer report as defined in the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act [15 U.S.C. 1681-1681u]. It contains confidential information on the individual (candidate) named. This third-party company maintains strict procedures designed to ensure the information is complete and up to date. While the information furnished is from reliable sources, its accuracy is not guaranteed.

The candidate(s) providing permission to run a social media check may be the subject of a “consumer report” which may include information about their character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and/or mode of living. These reports may contain information regarding their publicly available social media/internet content, including but not limited to content they have published or endorsed on social networking sites, blogs, file-sharing sites, or other websites/social media platforms, subject to any limitations imposed by applicable federal and state law. We provide our client with the exact report the vendor supplies to us.

Further, these reports generally come with a legal disclaimer to the effect that the report has been prepared for lawful purposes solely for the end-user identified. It may contain certain social media entries, internet content, and news stories related to the individual identified. The information about the subject of this report is found exclusively in publicly available sources, including social media platforms and search engines. The end-user may use this report strictly in compliance with applicable federal, state/provincial, and local laws. The report does not guarantee the accuracy or truthfulness of the information as to the subject of the investigation, but only that it is accurately copied from public records. Information generated as a result of identity theft, including evidence of criminal activity, may be inaccurately associated with the consumer who is the subject of this report.

The cost for third-party vendor-conducted social media checks may vary from \$50 - \$100 per candidate. This cost is billed to you as a reimbursed expense consistent with our proposal.

#### 4. Describe the type and level of criminal background assessment your firm completes on candidates and, if applicable, whether there are any additional charges beyond those disclosed in your original submission.

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With the approval of the final candidates, it is our practice to conduct a background check which includes MVR, degree verification, employment verification, SSN, County Criminal, Federal Criminal, Nationwide Criminal, Statewide Criminal, Sex Offender Registry, and Credit History/Report.

Some clients prefer to use their own, well-established, background check process. Other clients, especially public sector clients, may be required by statute to use a state agency, or other provider, for these checks.

We are flexible to meet your needs/requirements as it relates to the appropriate background checks. If we are responsible for managing these background checks, we outsource them to a Professional Background Screening Association (PBSA) accredited vendor. We provide our client with the exact report the vendor supplies to us. Since these reports are legally protected, confidential, and unique to the person who is the subject of the report, we are not allowed to share these reports with anyone except the client who is hiring.

The cost for a background check typically ranges between \$200-\$250 per candidate. This cost is billed to you as a reimbursed expense consistent with our proposal.

Please note that, as stated in our proposal, reference checks for candidates are a service included in the professional fee.

5. Does your firm conduct any form of personal fiscal review on candidates? If yes, please describe the scope of such a review and whether there are any additional charges beyond those disclosed in your original submission.

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Please see our response to question #4. The background check includes a credit history/report check.

6. Describe the type of report or data your firm will provide to the search committee and/or Board of Trustees regarding each candidate's experience.

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At a minimum, we provide the search committee with the candidate's cover letter and resume/vitae. We also provide any other pertinent materials/documents supplied by the candidate. The documents included in our candidate presentation are most often shared via a confidential client portal, which is accessible by members of the client organization whose access to that information has been approved.

In addition to the application materials submitted by the candidate, we provide an evaluation report via oral review by the search consultant, describing the experiences and qualifications of each candidate. Ideally, the search team will meet with the search committee and Board (if desired) to provide this information and discuss the candidates presented.

The maintenance of confidentiality throughout the search process is ensured through this private, confidential portal. The majority of candidates we present to clients are not only employed but are also not actively looking to change employment. We make every effort to protect candidate confidentiality without compromising our client's search. During the client/candidate interview process, prudent scheduling is of utmost importance to ensure that the candidates remain unknown to one another and the public until FOIA requirements (if any) dictate the disclosure of the names of finalist candidates. In these cases, we make sure that candidates are aware, early in the process, of any possible disclosure points in the timeline. Since Buffkin / Baker has significant experience working on public searches, we are skilled at managing these situations.

For candidates selected for first-round interviews, the Buffkin / Baker consultant(s) may also prepare additional executive summaries/bios. As the candidate pool is narrowed to finalists, written reference reports, and the documents discussed in the answers to the earlier questions, can be provided.