

be required of them. If the recruiting organization overlooks this transition step, it may lose qualified applicants who mistakenly think that delays between steps in the hiring process indicate that the organization is no longer interested in them or who are fearful that they "didn't have what it takes" to successfully compete in the next steps.

The city of Columbus, Ohio, has done an excellent job preparing job seekers from external recruitment sources to apply for the position of firefighter. To become a firefighter, an applicant must pass a series of physical ability exams in which he or she completes an obstacle course, carries heavy equipment up stairs, and performs a number of other timed physical exercises. Many applicants have never encountered these types of tests before and are afraid that they don't have the physical ability to successfully complete them.

To prepare job seekers and applicants for these tests, videos were developed that give instructions for taking the tests and show a firefighter taking the tests. The videos are shown to those who have applied for the position, and they are also shown on public access television for those who are thinking about applying for the job. The city of Columbus also provides upper-body strength training, as this is a stumbling point for some job applicants in the selection process.

This example indicates that to successfully prepare people for the transition to selection, organizations should consider reviewing the selection method instructions with the applicants, showing them actual samples of the selection method, and providing them with practice or training if necessary. These steps should be followed not just for physical ability tests but for all selection methods in the hiring process that are likely to be unfamiliar to applicants or uncomfortable for them.

## LEGAL ISSUES

External recruitment practices are subject to considerable legal scrutiny and influence. During recruitment there is ample room for the organization to exclude certain applicant groups (e.g., minorities, women, and people with disabilities) as well as to deceive in its dealings with applicants. Various laws and regulations seek to limit these exclusionary and deceptive practices.

Legal issues regarding several of the practices are discussed in this section. These include definition of job applicants, AAPs, electronic recruitment, job advertisements, and fraud and misrepresentation.

### Definition of a Job Applicant

Both the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) require the organization to keep applicant records. Exactly what is a job applicant and what records should be kept? It is necessary to provide guidance on the answer to this question in terms of both traditional hard-copy applicants and electronic applicants.