

Employee referral request email template

Ask employees to refer people they know for open roles, with clear bonus terms and an easy way to submit.

Updated October 15, 2026. Written and reviewed by the HRTally Research Team.

When to use this template

Referred candidates are often hired faster and stay longer, and many recruiting teams count referrals as their best source of hire. Most employees will refer a good person if you ask clearly, make it easy, and tell them what kind of person you need. A vague all-staff message saying we are hiring rarely works.

Use this for a specific role or a hiring push. Describe the job in plain terms, say who would be great, explain the referral bonus rules exactly, and give a single link. Afterward, tell referrers what happened to their candidate. Referrers who hear nothing stop referring. Our recruitment process guide covers how to set up a referral program.

Version 1: Role-specific referral ask

SUBJECT Know a great [Job title]? We're hiring

Hi team,

We are hiring a [Job title] for [Team], and the best hires usually come from people you already know.

The role: [Two sentences on what the person will do and why it matters].

Who would be great: someone with [two or three must-have skills or experiences].

Pay range: [Range]. Location: [Office, hybrid, or remote].

Refer someone at [Referral link]. It takes two minutes, and you can add a note about why you thought of them.

Referral bonus: \$[Amount], paid [after the new hire completes Number days]. [Any rules, such as hiring managers aren't eligible for their own team.]

Questions? Ask [Recruiter name] directly.

Thanks for helping us build the team.

[Recruiter name]

[Company] Talent Team

Version 2: Hiring push across several roles

SUBJECT [Number] open roles, and a bigger referral bonus this month

Hi everyone,

We are growing [Team or location] and have [Number] open roles, including [Role 1], [Role 2], and [Role 3]. The full list is here: [Link].

For referrals submitted by [Date], we are increasing the referral bonus to \$[Amount] for each hire. [Payment rules.]

Think of former coworkers, classmates, or friends who do great work. If you aren't sure whether someone fits, refer them anyway and our recruiters will take a look.

[Recruiter name]
[Company] Talent Team

Subject lines to try

- Know a great [Job title]? We're hiring
- Your network could be our next hire
- [Number] open roles, and a bigger referral bonus this month
- Help us find our next [Job title]
- Referral bonus: \$[Amount] for [Job title]

How to personalize it

- Describe the person you want in plain words, not the full job description.
- Spell out bonus rules: amount, timing, and who is eligible.
- Send role-specific asks to the teams most likely to know the right people.
- Report back to every referrer within a week.

Mistakes to avoid

- Paying bonuses only for certain schools or groups, which can narrow diversity.
- Changing bonus rules after referrals are submitted.
- Ignoring referrals from employees in hourly roles.
- Promising the referral will be hired.

Legal and compliance notes

Referral bonuses are taxable wages, so they go through payroll with normal withholding. Heavy reliance on referrals can reproduce the demographics of your current workforce, which the EEOC has flagged as a possible source of disparate impact. Balance referrals with other sources and track the results. For nonexempt employees, keep referral activity voluntary and outside required work time.

When to send it

Send role-specific asks when a role opens, then a reminder two weeks later if it's still open. Quarterly hiring pushes work well for growing teams. Avoid sending during the busiest week of the quarter.

Before you hit send

- The job title, pay range, and dates match what is in your applicant tracking system.
- Every placeholder in brackets has been replaced or deleted.
- Candidates who will be interviewed or assessed are told how to request an accommodation.
- Nothing in the message comments on age, family, health, or other protected characteristics.
- A real person is named as the contact, with a reply address someone checks.

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