

## **GENERAL INTERVIEW INFORMATION**

### **PRE-INTERVIEW PREPARATION**

Familiarize yourself with the minimum qualifications and the typical duties and responsibilities of the position.

Review the applicant's resume and application.

Formulate questions which will focus on job related aspects such as asking about situations that may have occurred in previous positions.

Write down questions and organize them in the order in which they will be asked. For committee interview, ensure there is a systematic approach to how the questions will be asked and by whom.

Be prepared to answer general questions about the company, benefits and compensation, on-call responsibilities, etc.

My recommendation would be that the board assigns the Liaison of the department to start and close the interview. After the initial start, all board members should take time to ask some interview questions and at the close the Chairperson should explain the timetable.

### **DO'S AND DON'TS**

DO utilize the same questions and interview format for all applicants for the same position.

DO attempt to put the applicant at ease by utilizing icebreakers and appropriate "small talk". Be cordial and receptive. Be natural and yourself.

DO listen, don't do all of the talking.

DO utilize questions, which have primary emphasis on the job site and are not related to personal lifestyles. Attempt to ask these questions in an open-ended format.

DO be aware of body language, neatness of dress, posture and facial expressions. All of these send messages concerning what you and the interviewee really think and feel about the situation.

DO repeat some of the interviewee's phrases regarding work-related questions to explore more fully thoughts and feelings that the interviewee began to express.

DO NOT invade applicant's privacy rights.

DO NOT interrupt. Not only does this cut off the interviewee's thought it is just plain rude.

DO NOT show disbelief or use cliches, as these do not effectively convey sincerity.

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### **AVOID THESE TOPICS**

Age-Irrelevant unless you are concerned about child labor violations under the Fair Labor Standards Act, in which case you can ask for proof that the applicant is old enough to work.

Arrest Record-Do not address issue at all. You may ask about convictions but even then it would need to be *relevant* to the position in order to lead to immediate rejection. *Tread cautiously*.

Association with Present Employees-Irrelevant to an applicant's ability to perform the duties of the position successfully.

Bankruptcy and Credit Affairs-Illegal to discriminate on this basis.

Citizenship-Do not ask if an employee is a US Citizen, but you may ask if they are authorized to work in the US.

Disability-It is illegal to ask an employee about a disability or perceived disability. Focus on the job, not the disability.

Drivers License-Avoid this topic unless it is essential to the position.

Educational Attainment-Only relevant if it is required and directly related to position.

Marital Status/Name Change/Spouses/Children-None of these questions are job related and may be construed as discriminatory especially against women.

Organization or Club Membership-Irrelevant and could possibly, based on the organization, reveal protected class information.

Race, Color, Religion, Sex or National Origin- All classes are protected by law. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidelines prohibit asking questions that may reveal this information. This area is highly susceptible to lawsuits.

Union Affiliation- It could be considered an unfair labor practice and although the position may be exempt from the union, applicant could claim discrimination based on prior support of union activity.

Veterans Status/Military Records-Specific questions as to branch, type of discharge etc. should only be asked if information is pertinent to position for which applicant is applying, otherwise do not ask any questions related to military as it is a protected class.

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### **FINAL INTERVIEW**

Interviewers should stay focused on the position and the qualifications necessary for the position. Oral statements made during the interview process can lead to liabilities for the employer.

Keep in mind that an uncomfortable and nervous interviewee is not necessarily a bad candidate, just a nervous one.

Keep expectations realistic. Although you may land a better candidate with fluff and flowers, it may undoubtedly cause problems in the future.

Start and end the interview on a friendly and professional note. It is important to put the applicant at ease in the beginning and ensure they go away with a positive feeling about the organization at the end of the interview.

Notify interviewee that the board will be taking notes for later use.

Ensure the applicant is offered the opportunity to ask any questions, which they may have regarding the position or the employer.

### **POST INTERVIEW**

Conduct candidate evaluations based on job-related abilities and experience.

Ensure all candidates are interviewed and evaluated based on the same credentials and guidelines. When the committee conducts the interviews, each interviewer conducts individual evaluation and then may discuss strengths and weaknesses with committee members.

Conduct reference and education verification checks on top final candidates.

## **SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Attached are questions dealing with three different types of questions: general interview questions dealing with stress and ability to think clearly, specific job related questions, and scenarios relating to specific job related issues. The questions are designed to be difficult and thought provoking and are designed for Management positions, which will be expected to handle crises and deal with public relations.

Keep in mind that these questions are for your assistance in developing questions that will target the desired best-qualified applicant. You may choose to create additional and/or use some or all of the below questions.

### **General Stress and Thought-Provoking Questions:**

1. If your last boss were able to wave a magic wand over your head, what aspect of your performance would he/she fine-tune?
2. Have you ever had to work with a manager who was unfair to you, or was just plain hard to work with? Please give details.
3. What is more important to you, truth or comfort as related to the working environment?
4. Have you learned more from your mistakes or your successes? Why?
5. Analogy: You want to go swimming in a pool. The water is a little colder than comfortable. Are you the type of person who jumps in or do you wade in?
6. Your boss (es) tell you to do something in a manner you are convinced is dead wrong. What would you do?
7. Is honest always the best policy? Why?
8. On what occasions are you tempted to lie?
9. What is the unwritten contract between you and the people who report to you?
10. How has your tolerance for accepting mistakes from your managers, peers and subordinates changed over the years?

### **Specific Questions (Supervisor Level Questions):**

1. Describe work, which you have performed, that would closely be related to the responsibilities of this position.
2. Describe your budget experience and experience you have had with public funding.
3. What do you feel are the current strengths and weaknesses of the Department?
4. What do you see as goals and projects for this department?
5. What type of leadership style do you follow and how do you manage people---staff, co-workers, volunteers, peers, and management?
6. Tell us about a challenging situation in your past employment and how you handled the situation and what the final outcome was.
7. Do you have any experience in working with boards? If yes, then please describe how you see the process working and any problems and/or advantages in working through or with a board or commission. If no, then what do you see possible problems and/or advantages?

**Scenario Questions:**

1. The XXXX Department has several functions to complete during an emergency situation, you have also been receiving a number of complaints concerning volunteers ...how will you streamline the department to ensure that all work is completed and that the department is functioning as an advisory or assistant to other department, entities, agencies, etc?
2. XXXX Department handles several different types of working situations, what would you bring to the department that would benefit SDBOR. How would you ensure employees are following procedures, rules, regulations, etc?
3. How do you feel about working odd shifts, long hours, and on weekends?

Remember there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Interviewers should resist the temptation to favor applicants whose responses closely follow his/her belief system, but rather should analyze the candidate's reasoning and communication skills.

- Was the applicant able to think clearly and on his/her feet?
- Did the candidate take time to think about the question or did the candidate respond quickly with an answer?
- After considering the response, did the candidate change his/her mind or answer?
- Were the candidate responses organized?
- Was the applicant technical or people orientated...which best fits the position?

Define a timetable and process for the candidates.

I.e., We will be concluding our interviews today. We are hoping to narrow the field to two or less at that time. You should be notified verbally or in writing by the end of next week. We want to thank you for your time and your interest in the XXXX Department with the SDBOR.

**\*\*\*Note-** Keep notes during the interview, so that you may reflect on those during the evaluation process of the interview.

## **INTERVIEWER EVALUATIONS**

It is best to evaluate an applicant, as soon after the interview as possible, while impressions are fresh. If notes were taken during the interview, they should be reviewed at this time, clarifying or amplifying any information that may be important to the selection decision. When recommending an applicant for hiring, the interviewer should keep in mind:

- Requirements of the job- an applicant may be friendly and interesting to talk with but lack the basic qualifications for successful job performance. Recommending that such an applicant be hired would be a mistake. Need to hire the best qualified.
- Personal biases- Interviewers should be as objective as possible when assessing an applicant's strengths and weaknesses, but inexperienced interviewers sometimes have trouble overcoming their own prejudices. An interviewer experiencing negative feelings toward an applicant should try to determine why such feelings have arisen. It may be that the applicant really is a poor job candidate, or simply that the interviewer is allowing personal preferences to cloud judgment.

### **Interviewer Bias**

Two forms of interviewer bias that commonly interfere with objective evaluations, and that should be blocked out, are:

- The “halo” effect, which occurs when an interviewer who is predisposed toward a particular applicant invests the applicant with too many positive attributes and underestimates the person's negative characteristics. The result is that few, if any, of the candidate's faults are acknowledged.
- The “devil's horns” effect, which occurs when an interviewer fastens onto a particular characteristic that he or she finds completely unacceptable. When this happens, the applicant is presumed to have no positive attributes and is downgraded in all areas when evaluated.

**LEGAL PROBLEMS -- WHAT YOU CAN AND CANNOT ASK**

**Nation Origin - You cannot ask:**

- About the applicant's or the applicant's parents' or spouse's nationality, ancestry, lineage, or parentage.
- Whether the applicant's parents or spouse are native-born or naturalized citizens.
- The name of the next of kin.
- The applicant's or the applicant's family's birthplace.

**You can ask:**

- Whether the applicant is eligible to work in the US.
- The various languages he or she speaks (*ONLY as long as the question is relevant to the job*).

**Religion and Political Beliefs -- You cannot ask:**

- About the applicant's political belief or affiliations.
- About the applicant's religious belief's, affiliations, denomination, his or her parish, synagogue, church, etc.

**You can ask:**

- About the applicant's willingness to work on Saturdays or Sundays (if the job requires it).

**Sex -- You cannot ask:**

- About the applicant's name, maiden name, or original name.
- About the applicant's current or previous marital status.
- About the applicant's preferred form of address (Miss, Mrs., or Ms.).
- About the applicant's spouse.
- About the applicant's number, names or ages of children or dependents.
- About the applicant's method of birth control or reproductive ability.

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### **You can ask:**

- Whether the applicant has ever worked for the company under another name.
- Whether any of the applicant's relatives currently work for the company.

### **Race -- You cannot ask:**

- Any questions regarding an applicant's complexion or skin color or that of the applicant's family.
- About the applicant's feelings towards working with coworkers of different race.

### **You can ask:**

- If you still think there's a good reason for asking about race and you still think that it has anything to do with the job performance then you deserve the lawsuit you get.

### **Age -- You cannot ask:**

- The Age Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination in employment against applicants over the age of forty (40). Don't ask how old they are.

### **You can ask:**

- Whether the applicant is 18 (eighteen) years old or not. If they are not can they produce a work permit upon hire.

### **Convictions -- You cannot ask:**

- About arrest and conviction records (unless you can prove that the information has a direct relevance to the job).



**Military History -- You cannot ask:**

- In what branch of the military the applicant served.
- What type of discharge the applicant received.

**You can ask:**

- Whether the applicant has military experience in the Armed Forces of the United States (*ONLY if job related—tread cautiously*).

**Disability - You cannot ask:**

- The applicant to describe a particular physical condition or disability.
- The applicant to state whether he/she has ever been treated for a specific disease or medical condition.
- If the applicant has ever been hospitalized or if so for what.
- If the applicant has been treated by a psychiatrist or psychologist.
- If they have had any major illnesses.
- If they have any physical defects that would preclude them from performing certain kinds of work.
- If they are taking any prescribed drugs or if they have ever been treated for drug addiction or alcoholism.
- If they have ever filed for workers compensation.
- If the applicant's disability is visible, you cannot ask about the nature of the disability or whether the applicant will need treatment or special leave because of the disability.

**You can ask:**

- You can provide information relating to your attendance policy and ask if they can meet your requirements.