

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING AND REGULATION

Guide to Interviewing

Prepared by the Office of Fair Practices

Jennifer Dashiell Reed, Director



Guide to Interviewing

Important Competencies to Include

Job competencies are the skills and personal characteristics that an individual should possess in order to be successful in a position. Below is a list of commonly identified competencies, key behaviors, and interview questions.

Achievement Oriented
Analytical Ability
Communications Skills (Oral & Written)
Creativity
Decision Making Skills
Diversity Orientation
Flexibility
Initiative
Interpersonal Skills
Job Motivation
Judgment
Leadership
Management Skills
Persuasiveness
Planning and Organizing Skills
Presentation Skills
Problem-Solving Skills
Team Building/Team Work
Time Management

This should not be viewed as an exclusive list. This list is shown here to give you an idea of what competencies you may want to consider and how interview questions can be developed from them.

Achievement Oriented

Definition: Identifies and accomplishes challenging objectives or personal goals.

Key Behaviors

Sample Questions to Ask

- Establishes challenging short-and long-term goals.
 - Takes initiative, persists at tasks and pursues completion of objectives.
 - Takes reasonable risks.
 - Overcomes obstacles and resistance to change.
 - Engages in healthy competition.
-
- Tell me about the accomplishment you are most proud of and why.
 - What risks were you willing to take to achieve goals you set for yourself?
 - Describe your future goals and the steps you plan on taking to reach these goals.
 - Explain a project you undertook o your own initiative that made a major impact on your department.

Analytical Ability

Definition: Reviews & analyzes a wide variety of information and recommends a specific course of action.

Key Behaviors

Sample Questions to Ask

- Grasps new concepts, approaches and systems.
 - Examines & interprets a wide variety of data/information and makes recommendations or decisions.
 - Defines parameters of task and desired objectives.
 - Develops results-oriented conclusions.
 - Anticipates problems, opportunities and needs of the organization and the constituent.
 - Organizes ideas and information in unique ways.
-
- Tell me about a time you were asked to evaluate a situation and recommend a new approach. What factors did you take into consideration when analyzing the data?
 - Give me an example of a potential work problem that you anticipated and resolved. What are some of the measures you took to prevent the situation from becoming a problem in the future?
 - How do you stay attuned to new trends in your area of expertise?

Communication Skill (Oral & Written)

Definition: Takes the initiative to communicate accurate, up-to-date plans and information to subordinates, peers, and management. Expresses thoughts clearly, both verbally and in writing. Listens and understands the views of others

Key Behaviors

Sample Questions to Ask

- Writes in a concise and organized manner.
 - Writes results clearly & grammatically.
 - Appears knowledgeable & confident in communicating information.
 - Shares information with others to help them perform their jobs & seeks information from others.
 - Is sensitive to the communication levels required by different audiences.
 - Listens actively & speaks clearly and directly.
 - Conducts effective meetings.
-
- When communicating with others, do you generally write them a memo, call them, or talk to them in person?
 - Tell me about a time when someone returned one of your reports or memos because they didn't understand it. What did you do?
 - What courses have you taken in communication, business writing, effective speaking, etc.?
 - Describe a time when your ability to listen helped you communicate better.
 - This job requires you to spend a large amount of time writing. How would your supervisor describe your writing skills?

Creativity

Definition: Develops new ideas and unique and novel solutions to problems.

Key Behaviors

Sample Questions to Ask

- Challenges current procedures to develop other alternatives.
 - Seeks ways to improve all aspects of the job.
 - Brainstorms to develop suggestions and new ideas.
 - Develops several approaches or solutions to a problem.
-
- Give me an example of a unique and novel solution you had for a recent problem you encountered in your work.
 - Tell me about a time when you were creative and explored new ways of thinking.
 - Describe a time when you broke away from the regimented way of thinking and developed a creative solution.

Decision-Making

Definition: Makes decisions while exhibiting judgment and a realistic understanding of issues; ability to use reason, even when dealing with emotional topics.

Key Behaviors

Sample Questions to Ask

- Identifies purpose and objectives.
 - Gathers and analyzes data and develops rationale for decision.
 - As appropriate, involves subordinates and others in making decisions.
 - Considers alternatives and assesses their impact and potential problems.
 - Implements decision and evaluates results.
-
- What technique do you use in making decisions?
 - Describe, in detail, a situation in which you used your training and experience in making a decision that required sound judgment.
 - What is the most difficult business decision you have had to make?
 - Tell me about a time when you involved others in the decision-making process.
 - In your prior job, what decision did you ponder the longest before making? Why was it difficult?

Diversity Orientation

Definition: Recognizes and values the benefits in the diversity of people, ideas and cultures. Encourages differences as a way to enhance group productivity.

Key Behaviors

Sample Questions to Ask

- Treats each person in the department as an individual with individual needs and issues.
- Maintains and enhances the self-esteem of others.
- Understands and responds to others' needs and priorities.

- Values differences among team members.
- Promotes equal treatment while refusing to tolerate workforce bias or racism.
- Gives equal time to all staff within department.
- How do you value the differences that employees bring to the job?
- What benefits have you seen in the changing demographics in your work environment?
- How have you adapted your behavior to the changing workforce?
- Give me an example of how you manage the members of your staff differently but equitably.

Flexibility

Definition: Recognizes and responds to unanticipated events and requirements. Willing to do what is necessary to get the desired results.

Key Behaviors

Sample Questions to Ask

- Copes successfully with unexpected events.
- Handles several projects simultaneously.
- Adapts own behavioral and communication style to gain cooperation of managers, co-workers, peers, customers or suppliers.
- Adapts well to, and supports, change.
- Brings simplicity and order out of complexity and chaos.
- Describe a time in your current job when you boss assigned you a rush project even though you had other important priorities at the time. How did you feel and what was your response?
- Explain a situation where you adapted your behavior and communication style to gain cooperation on a team project.
- Tell me about a time when you were able to adapt to a difficult-to-deal-with employee.

Initiative

Definition: Actively seeks opportunities to make a contribution rather than passively accepting situations. Takes action to achieve goals beyond what is necessarily called for; originates action.

Key Behaviors

Sample Questions to Ask

- Actively seeks solutions to problems before being asked or directed.
- Questions the way a process is done and suggests changes.
- Initiates self-development efforts.
- Seeks additional job responsibilities to assume.
- Looks for new ways to contribute to the business.
- Tell me about a project you generated on your own & what prompted you to initiate it.

- Give me an example of how you made a change in a work-related procedure or process, why you made the change & the results.
- Tell me about some new ideas and suggestions you have made to your supervisor in your current job. Which were accepted and why.
- What do you do differently than other employees in your current job?
- What have you done to add value in your department?

Interpersonal Skills

Definition: Establishes productive, cooperative relationships with subordinates, peers and management. Understands and responds to others' needs and priorities. Resolves conflict in positive ways.

Key Behaviors Sample Questions to Ask

- Resolves conflict in positive ways.
 - Gives and seeks feedback that will increase the productivity of relationships.
 - Deals with the diverse behavior of others in groups in order to increase the group's productivity.
 - Maintains and enhances the self-esteem of others.
 - Recognizes strengths and limitations of self and others.
- Give me an example of a time when you encountered conflict with another department. Tell me how you resolved it.
 - Describe a difficult employee relations issue you were involved with and how you managed it.
 - Tell me about a situation where you had to demonstrate empathy or sympathy to someone.
 - Explain a time when you were sensitive to the diversity of a team or group you were working with and how you affected the productivity of that group.

Job Motivation

Definition: Maintains a high level of interest and enthusiasm for job responsibilities. Has demonstrated record of being a self-starter and self-motivated.

Key Behaviors Sample Questions to Ask

- Takes pride and derives satisfaction in one's job.
 - Assumes ownership for getting the job done.
 - Enthusiastic about taking on challenging projects.
 - Goal oriented; concerned with achievement & doing better.
 - Makes plans and follows through.
- Give me an example of when you felt the greatest sense of achievement.
 - All jobs have their frustrations & problems. Describe an example of specific job conditions, tasks or assignments that have been dissatisfying to you. What did you do?
 - What gave you the greatest feeling of achievement in your job at _____?

- What makes a job interesting to you?
- What "turns off" your motivation in a job?

Judgment

Definition: Weighs alternative courses of action and makes decisions that reflect factual information and are based on rational and logical assumptions that take organizational resources into consideration.

Key Behaviors Sample Questions to Ask

- Makes sound decisions by considering alternatives.
- Considers impact in other areas of the organization.
- Weighs alternatives and selects practical solutions.
- Reviews decision to see if it satisfies long-range plans.
- Describe a decision you recently made and identify the process that led you to that decision. What were some of the sources you used to reach that decision? What were some of the issues you took into consideration?
- Give me an example of a good decision you made in the last six months. What were the alternatives? Why was it a good decision?
- What was the toughest decision you had to make in your current job? Tell me about it.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to ask your manager for assistance on a project or situation.

Leadership

Definition: Uses appropriate interpersonal styles and methods to guide individuals or groups toward achieving results.

Key Behaviors Sample Questions to Ask

- Develops and communicates a vision of challenging goals, growth and progress.
- Motivates others to work together toward common objectives.
- Successfully gains cooperation in situations where the person has no direct authority.
- Works effectively in cross-functional groups.
- Takes on a leadership role in school, work and/or community.
- Describe a situation in which you had to gain cooperation of others outside of your organization where you had no direct authority. What were the challenges and how did you overcome them?
- Have you ever developed a mission statement for your department? How did you go about it?
- Describe the role you usually take in a task team situation.

Management Skills

Definition: Motivates, trains, and develops a diverse workforce and provides an environment conducive to achievement and growth.

Key Behaviors

Sample Questions to Ask

- Delegates effectively and acknowledges accomplishments.
 - Responds positively to innovative ideas and suggestions from subordinates.
 - Resolves personnel problems quickly and effectively.
 - Communicates plans and information to staff in a timely & thorough manner.
 - Promotes teamwork and cooperation within the department.
 - Meets budget responsibilities.
 - Provides constructive, ongoing feedback.
 - Balances concerns for results, deadlines, tasks, and people.
-
- How would your staff describe you as a manager? What would they say are your strengths? Opportunities for improvement?
 - How would you describe yourself as a manager?
 - Describe a personnel problem you had recently. How did you handle it and what was the outcome?
 - How do you communicate organizational changes and other relevant information to your staff?
 - What methods do you use to accomplish the projects that add value to your department?
 - Give me an example of a performance issue in your department and how you managed it.

Persuasiveness

Definition: Utilizes appropriate interpersonal styles and methods to gain agreement or acceptance of an idea, plan, activity or product.

Key Behaviors

Sample Questions to Ask

- Gains approval of a plan or idea by focusing on the benefits of the proposal to the audience.
 - Persuades people from various levels, positions or backgrounds by using a variety of interpersonal techniques and approaches.
 - Improvises, thinks quickly on his/her feet.
 - Sells ideas despite resistance.
-
- When convincing others of your ideas, what skills or personal abilities do you use?
 - Describe a situation where your enthusiasm persuaded a person(s) to your point of view.
 - Tell me about one of your toughest "sales" experiences and the steps you took to gain acceptance.
 - Give me an example of a situation when you were unsuccessful in selling your idea to the "customer" and changed your approach to gain support.

Planning and Organizing

Definition: Establishes a course of action for self or others to accomplish a specific goal.

Key Behaviors

Sample Questions to Ask

- Develops plans to achieve objectives.
 - Identifies resources needed to accomplish objectives.
 - Resolves conflicting priorities and accomplishes work on time.
 - Utilizes a "to do" list, calendar, or some type of planning tool.
 - Maintains a balance and awareness of status of all projects.
 - Anticipates obstacles and ways to overcome them.
 - Develops short-and long-range plans.
-
- How do you ensure you meet your objectives?
 - Give me an example of a project you were given and how you accomplished it.
 - How do you prioritize your daily, weekly, etc. responsibilities?
 - Give me an example of when you had conflicting priorities and how you completed them on time.
 - Tell me about a time when you used your organizing and scheduling skills to create a productive work environment.
 - What kinds of project planning and administration do you enjoy in your current job?

Presentation and Public Speaking

Definition: Expresses oneself in a clear, concise manner during individual or group situations.

Key Behaviors

Sample Questions to Ask

- Presents in a confident and enthusiastic manner when addressing people in a large or small group.
 - Demonstrates a sound knowledge of the subject matter.
 - Delivers information in a clear, concise, and logical manner.
 - Gains acknowledgment of audience and is able to understand the communication level required.
 - Effectively uses various audio-visual media to enhance presentations.
-
- Describe your presentation style.
 - What steps do you take before making a presentation? How do you prepare?
 - What has been one of your most successful presentations? Why?
 - How often do you present? To whom?
 - Describe a presentation where you had to persuade an audience on an idea, service or change.
 - Tell me about a time when you had to present information outside of the scope of your responsibilities.
 - Tell me about a time when a presentation did not go well and what you did to "rescue" it.

Problem Solving

Definition: Identifies and defines problems through the gathering of relevant information leading to the development of alternative solutions.

Key Behaviors

Sample Questions to Ask

- Identifies the existence and cause of a problem
 - Brainstorms potential solutions.
 - Identifies conditions that solutions must meet.
 - Evaluates alternative courses of action.
 - Identifies key people involved in evaluating solutions to the problem.
 - Implements solutions and evaluates results.
-
- Do you use any particular problem-solving techniques? Please explain.
 - Describe a problem you solved where you used your investigative skills to get to the heart of the problem.
 - Give me an example of a problem you dealt with that frustrated you. Explain why, and what you did about it.
 - How much autonomy do you have in the problem-solving process? When does your manager get involved?
 - Describe a problem you identified and explain how you obtained agreement & support from key individuals as you developed solutions.

Team Building/Team Work

Definition: Promotes cooperation within the department and in interactions with other departments. Values differences among team members and can manage work groups with diverse influences.

Key Behaviors

Sample Questions to Ask

- Promotes open participation and communication within department and throughout the organization.
 - Shares pertinent information with all members of the team.
 - Adapts to other people's behavior style in order to achieve the desired goals of the team.
 - Provides opportunities for subordinates to participate in project teams, task forces, etc., for development purposes.
 - Promotes a team spirit within and outside department; partners with other groups.
-
- What sets your work group or department apart from others in your organization?
 - Tell me about a task force or project team that you were a member of and the role you played in that group.
 - Give me an example of a difficult situation with another department that you need to work with regularly and how you resolved it.

Time Management

Definition: Manages a variety of responsibilities in a timely, efficient manner.

Key Behaviors

Sample Questions to Ask

- Effectively prepares and uses a daily "to do" list.
 - Allocates time to planning, thinking and mapping out tasks.
 - Assigns priorities to tasks.
 - Controls time spent in attending meetings.
 - Controls interruptions.
-
- What methods or techniques do you use to help manage your time
 - Describe how you manage to maintain balance between accomplishing projects and attending meetings.
 - How do you handle interruptions to ensure that you complete your projects on time?
 - Describe a time when you had several projects to complete and how you prioritized your workload.
 - In your present position what limits your ability to manage your time? How do you work with these limitations?

Approved Interview Questions

Achievement

Past

- Do you enjoy working on difficult projects?
- Do you have accomplishments you are proud of?
- Do you have initiative?
- Have you ever accomplished something difficult?
- Have you ever accomplished something you did not think you could?
- How have you shown initiative?
- How have you shown willingness to work?
- Tell me about a time when you went beyond the call of duty.
- Tell me about accomplishments of which you are the most proud.
- Tell me what initiatives have you undertaken recently?
- What challenging accomplishments have you had?
- What are some examples of important recommendations or decisions you've made recently?
- What are some of your recent accomplishments in your current job?
- What are the five biggest accomplishments of your life?
- What are your major accomplishments? Your failures? Your disappointments?
- What challenging experiences have you had?
- What difficult challenges have you solved?
- What difficult problems have you worked through?
- What do you consider to be your most important accomplishment and why?
- What has been your greatest accomplishment? Your greatest disappointment?
- What have been the most memorable accomplishments of your career?
- What have been your biggest accomplishments?
- What have been your greatest accomplishments?
- What have been your greatest disappointments?
- What initiatives have you undertake recently?
- What is the accomplishment that you are most proud of?
- What is the most difficult task you have undertaken?
- What is the most important accomplishment in your life?
- What is the most challenging thing you have ever done?
- What is the most stimulating thing you are looking for in a job?
- What is your greatest accomplishment?
- What is your most significant accomplishment?
- What is your proudest accomplishment?
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
- What was the job's biggest challenge?
- What was the most/least challenging part of the job?
- What was your greatest accomplishment?
- What was your greatest disappointment?
- What was your most significant accomplishment in your last position?
- What were your most memorable accomplishments with your last employer?

Future

- Are you willing to take risks?
- Describe a significant risk you took to accomplish a task.
- Describe how you can take risks to accomplish tasks.
- What kinds of risks do you face when implementing a new initiative?
- What risks have you undertaken recently?
- What risks did you take at your previous job?

Experience/Responsibilities

Past

- Describe your experience handling telephones.
- Describe your experience working with computers.
- Describe your experience working with difficult people.
- Describe your experience working with money.
- Describe your experience working with numbers.
- What experience did you gain from your internships?
- What experience do you have for this job?
- What experience do you have in making oral presentations?
- What experience do you have?
- What experience do you have with computers?
- What experience do you have with (____)?
- What experience do you have working with (other/difficult) people?
- What experience do you hope to gain from this position?
- What experience do you think makes the best employee? Manager?
- What experiences did you gain from college?
- What experiences did you gain from your (previous/current)?
- What experiences did you have in the military?
- What experiences have influenced you?
- What experiences have benefited you the most?
- What experiences have taught you the most?
- What experiences led you to choose this occupation?
- What experiences led you to choose your career path?

Knowledge Gained

- What have you learned from participation in extra-curricular activities?
- What have you learned from some of the jobs you have held?
- What have you learned from some of the other jobs you have held?
- What have you learned from your (education/college)?
- What have you learned from your experiences?
- What have you learned from your extracurricular activities?
- What have you learned from your jobs?
- What have you learned from your (previous/current) job?

- What have you learned from your mistakes?
- What have you learned on your current job?
- What was the most important lesson you've ever learned?
- What work experience has helped you the most?
- Which of your jobs presented the best (learning) experience?
- Describe a mistake you made. What have you learned from that mistake?

Typical Experiences

- Can you describe a typical day at your (last/current) job?
- Describe your typical workday.
- What is your typical day?
- What are the responsibilities of your position?
- What are your (major/primary) responsibilities?
- What is an example of a working relationship outside of your company that you've handled successfully?

Creativity

- Are you an innovator?
- Are you creative?
- Did you implement any new procedures in any of the positions you've held?
- Do you consider yourself creative?
- How would you get subordinates who didn't like each other to work together?
- What are some innovations you're particularly proud of?
- What are some of the most creative things you have done?
- What is the most creative thing you did on your last job?
- What new products are we working on now?
- What was your most creative idea?
- Would you prefer routine or creative work? Why?

Behavior

- A fellow employee told you what his/her salary is and wants to know yours. How would you react and what would you do? (situational)
- Describe a conflict with an employee and how you handled it.
- Describe a complex problem you solved.
- Describe a work situation in which you were not proud of your performance. What did you learn from this mistake?
- Describe an important goal you have set and tell me how you reached it.
- Describe how you have been able to apply something you learned from your degree program to a real-life or work-related situation.
- Describe a (recent) project in which you failed? What did you learn from this?
- Describe a (recent) situation in which you asked for advice?
- Describe a (recent) situation in which you asked for help?
- Describe a (recent) situation in which it took several tries or approaches before you were able to figure out what was going on.

- Describe a (recent) situation in which you had to quickly establish your credibility and gain the confidence of others. What did you do ?
 - Describe a (recent) situation when you didn't know who you needed to speak with in an organization too get something done. What did you do ?
 - Describe a (recent) situation when you were able to identify a conflict between two individuals and were instrumental in the solution to that conflict. (skills)
 - Describe a (recent) situation when you worked in a team environment.
 - Describe a (recent) situation in which what was really going on with someone else was much more complicated than it might have seemed on the surface.
 - Describe a (recent) situation on your last job that you did not handle as well as you might have.
 - Describe a (recent) situation that you just couldn't handle.
 - Describe a (recent) situation when miscommunication created a problem on the job.
 - Describe a (recent) situation when you were confronted by a difficult problem and how you solved it.
-
- Describe a time when you had to take on something very new or different and you had little or no guidance and support in doing so. How did you handle it ?
 - Describe a time when you organized a project where your directions were vague?
 - Describe a time when you simplified or clarified a situation by putting your finger on the key issue.
 - Describe a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.
 - Describe a time when you accomplished a challenging goal.
 - Describe a time when you accomplished a difficult goal.
 - Describe a time where your performance went above and beyond expectations.
 - Describe how you work under pressure. Do you anticipate problems effectively or just react to them?
 - Describe how your (office/department/company) is organized.
 - Describe how you would handle rude, difficult or impatient people.
 - Describe how you have handled rude, difficult or impatient people.
 - Describe projects that have required accuracy and attention to detail.
 - Describe situations you have been under pressure in which you feel you have handled well.
 - Describe projects you have been involved in the last few years.
 - Describe techniques you've used with great success in your field. Have you ever managed people in the positions you've held?
 - Do you feel you can ask for help?
 - Do you feel you can assist others in their jobs?
 - Explain how you overcame a difficult situation.
 - Finish this sentence: Successful managers are the ones who....
 - Given a situation when you disagree with your supervisor, how would you deal with it?
 - Has competition had any positive or negative impact on your achievements? How?
-
- Have you ever been absent from work? If so, how often?
 - Have you ever been late for work? If so, how often?
 - Have handled rude, difficult or impatient people?
 - Have you prepared and communicated ideas and information in a formal setting?
 - How do you complete a boring job?
 - How many hours a week does it take you to get your work done?
 - How many hours can you work in a week?
 - How many hours do you usually work in a week?
 - How many hours do you work per week?

- How would you ask for advice?
- How would you ask for help?
- You effected considerable organizational changes in you last position. Could you tell me how you did it?
- I notice you failed your second year initially. Tell me about that?
- Looking back now, is there anything that you could have done to improve your relationship with that one bad boss?
- Please give me an example of your experience in staying late to finish a project. How do you feel about that?
- Please tell me a situation where you were in a dilemma to make a decision and how you dealt with it.
- Please tell me a situation where you were very stressful and how you handle it.
- Tell me about a particularly difficult or awkward conversation you needed to have with someone?
- Describe a particularly difficult or risky challenge you took on because you felt it was important for you to do so.
- Tell me about a significant failure in your life.
- What do you feel would be an acceptable attendance record?
- What role do you take ina group situation? Give examples.
- What would you define as a satisfactory attendance record?
- When have your verbal communications been important enough to follow up in writing?
- Your supervisor left an assignment in your 'in' box, then left town for a week. Now, you can't reach him and don't understand the assignment. What would you do?
- Your supervisor tells you to do something in a way you know is ineffective. What would you do?
- You've been with your current employer for a very short time. Is this an indication that you'll be moving around a lot throughout your career?
- You've changed jobs quite frequently, what assurances do we have that you will stay with us?

Flexibility

- After being with the same employer for so long, do you think that it might be difficult to start at a new job?
- Can you forget your education and start from scratch?
- Can you start in this new profession?
- Can you work irregular hours?
- Describe how your job changed.
- Describe the biggest change you've brought to your present company?
- Describe the changes that took place at your (previous/current) employer.
- Describe the most difficult problem on your last job, and tell me how you overcame it.
- Describe situations in which you had a variety of projects simultaneously.
- Do you feel comfortable making procedural changes affecting your department?
- Do you have a problem with irregular hours?
- Do you have a problem with non-routine tasks?
- Do you like routine work?
- Do you think you've been with one company for too long?
- Do you view job security as of prime importance?
- Has your job changed as a result of re-organization? Please explain.

- Have you been through a re-organization?
- How do you cope with change?
- How do you deal with surprises?
- How do you handle change?
- How have you handled difficult changes in your working situation in the past?
- How have you responded to your greatest disappointments?
- How important is job security to you?
- How would you change your current working conditions?
- How would you handle a decision for which no procedure existed?

- If you could change something about this position, what would it be?
- If you could change something in the course of your life, what would you change?
- This is a much larger company than you've ever worked at. How do you feel about that?
- This is a much smaller company than you've ever worked at. How do you feel about that?
- What adjustments do you expect to make in this job since it is so different from your (previous/current) employment?
- What are your opinions on the challenges facing our company?
- What can you do to help adjust to a new job?
- What changes do you see this industry making in order to stay competitive?
- What changes would you make in your current job?
- What do you do when starting a new job?
- What happens when two priorities compete for your time?
- What is the most difficult change you've encountered in your career?
- What is the most difficult change you've faced in your career?
- What job responsibilities would you like to avoid on a new job?
- What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
- What major problem have you encountered and how did you handle it?
- What major problem have you encountered? How did you resolve it?
- What problems do you have tolerating people different from you?
- What will be the most difficult aspect of making the transition from college to your career? Why?
- What will you do to compensate for your deficiencies?
- What will you do to correct weaknesses?
- What would you change about your current job or position?
- What would you do to meet a deadline of a project?
- Would you be happy in an entry-level job?
- Would you consider a career change?
- Would you prefer a large or a small company? Why?

Goals

Past Goals

- How are your present goals different from those of ten years ago?
- How did you choose your last employer?
- How did you choose your career?
- How did you decide on this profession?
- How did you have an impact on your company's goals?

- How has working for your employer changed your goals?

Future Goals

- What would you like to be doing in five years? Ten years?
- What would you like to be doing in two years?
- Where do you see yourself next year?
- Where do you see yourself five years from now? Ten?
- What are goals you would like to accomplish in the next year?
- What are your long range and short range goals and objectives, when and why did you establish these goals and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
- What are your long range career goals?
- What are your long range career objectives?
- What are your long range career objectives? How will you achieve them?
- What are your long term goals?
- What are your personal five-year goals?
- What are your personal long-term goals?
- Tell me about your most important long-term goals.
- What are your short term and long term career goals? How are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
- What are your short-term and long-range goals and objectives and how have you prepared yourself to achieve them?
- What are your short-term and long-term objectives?
- What are your short-term career goals?
- What do you hope to be doing five years from now?
- What do you see yourself doing five years from now, 10 years?
- What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
- What do you want to be doing five years from now?
- How, on a long-term basis, do you plan to achieve your goals?
- If you get hired, what do you think you will be five years from now?
- What goals do you want to achieve within the next five years?

Short-Term Goals

- What would you like to be making in 3 to 5 years?
- What are your personal short-term goals?
- What are your short-term goals?
- How did you set goals for next year?
- How, on a short-term basis, do you plan to achieve your goals?
- What are your goals and your plans for reaching them?
- What are your goals for the next year?
- What are your goals for the rest of this year?
- What do you plan to do in the coming year?
- Did you set goals for next year?

Interests

Employment

- Do you like working?
- Are you looking for a permanent job?
- Are you really interested in this job, or are you thinking more about getting out of your present job?
- Are you seeking employment in a company of a certain size? Why?
- How did you choose this occupation?
- What do you like most about your profession?
- What do you like most about this job opening?
- What did you like (most/least) about your previous job?
- What interests you about our product (or service)?
- What interests you about this position?
- What kind of job are you looking for?
- What kind of job do you like to do?
- What kind of job do you want immediately?
- What kind of work interests you most?
- What kind of work interests you the most? The least?
- What position are you interested in?
- Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
- Why did you choose this career?
- Why did you choose your (previous/current) job?
- Why did you leave your previous position?
- Why did you quit your job?
- Why do you like working in this (field/profession)?
- What job do you want to do immediately?
- What jobs do you like to do?
- What profession do you want to work in?

Current Employment

- What do you like/dislike most about your current position?
- What do you like most about your current employer?
- What do you like most about your current job?
- What did you like about your previous employer?
- Why do you want to leave your current employer?
- What did you (like/dislike) about your current job?
- What didn't you like about your previous (position/employer)?

Employment Expectations

- What are the most important rewards you expect in your (business) career?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your profession?

Negative Experiences

- What was your most boring job?
- What was your most boring employer?
- What was your most interesting employer?
- What was wrong with your last employer?
- What was wrong with your last job?

Working for Us

- What do you like most about our Agency?
- Why do you want to work for our Agency?
- Why do you want to work for our organization?
- What position in our company interests you?
- What interests you about our Agency?
- What about our company interests you the most?
- What are you expecting from an employer?
- What do you think is the most important thing in working in a company? What do you think is the least important?

Working Conditions

- Do you like working in different locations?
- Do you like working indoors?
- Do you like working inside?
- Do you like working long hours?
- Do you like working outside?
- Do you like working overtime?
- Do you like working with computers?
- Do you like working with gadgets?
- Do you like working with numbers?
- Do you like working with machinery?
- Do you like working with people?

Education

- If you were to start college over tomorrow, what courses should you take? Why?
- Is there any class you have completely disliked? Why?
- What did you like least about college?
- Why did you choose this (college/university)?
- Why did you major in (____)?
- Why did you pick this minor?
- What lead you to choose your (college/university)?
- What lead you to choose your field of study?

- What led you to choose your major? What courses have you enjoyed most? Least? Why?
- What led you to choose your major field of study?
- Is there anything you have been involved in at college that you are really proud of?
- Why are you majoring in (____)?
- Why did you choose the career for which you are studying?

Changes in Employment

- What is the reason for a career change?
- Why are you looking for a career change?
- Why are you changing jobs?
- Why are you looking to change jobs?

Knowledge of DLLR

- Are your work practices similar or different from ours?
- Describe our (products/services).
- Describe our agency for me.
- Describe your work (methods/processes) in comparison to ours?
- Do our competitors do things that we should be doing?
- Do you have any questions about (our/this) company?
- Do you know how long we have been in business?
- How do you think our agency determines success?
- How does your present employer communicate with others in your department?
- How was your company management viewed by your subordinates?
- How would you evaluate your present employer's strengths?
- Tell me how you found out information about DLLR?
- Tell me what you know about DLLR?
- What about your present employer (do/did) you like best?
- What advantages do you think our competitors have over us?
- What do you dislike about DLLR?
- What do you know about (DLLR)?
- What do you know about our customers?
- What do you know about our web site?
- What do you know about this position?
- What do you think are the challenges facing DLLR?
- What do you think are the greatest challenges facing DLLR in the near future?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in our agency?
- What do you think the atmosphere here is like?
- What questions do you have about our organization?
- What would make someone successful in our business?
- What is the (best/worst) thing you have heard about DLLR?
- What is the (best/worst) thing you have heard about DLLR?

Leadership/Supervision

- Are you a better leader or follower?
- Are you a leader? Give some examples.
- Are you a natural leader or a natural follower?
- Are you able to lead others?
- Are you more of a leader or follower?
- As a department manager, how would you establish staff rapport?
- Can you lead a group of (___) employees to complete a task? If so, give an example or explain.
- Can you instruct a group of employees without feeling intimidated?
- Can you take instruction without feeling upset?
- Can you take instructions without feeling upset or hurt?
- Can you take instructions/criticisms without feeling upset?
- Can you take instructions?
- Can you work with direct supervision?
- Define cooperation.
- Describe an incident in which you had to discipline a subordinate.
- Describe an incident in which you had to give a verbal warning to a subordinate.
- Describe how you are mentoring an employee.
- Describe how you supervise other employees.
- Describe how you would discipline a subordinate for tardiness.
- Describe how you would discipline a subordinate for missing work.
- Describe how you would discipline a subordinate for missing a deadline.
- Describe how you would discipline a subordinate for inappropriate behavior.
- Describe the (best/worst) manager you have ever had.
- Describe the (best/worst) subordinate you have ever had.
- Describe the ideal supervisor-subordinate relationship.
- Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and subordinates.
- Describe the toughest (manager/subordinate) you have ever had.
- Describe your approach to management or supervision.
- Describe your management philosophy. Have your disappointments helped you improve yourself?
- Do you consider yourself a leader or a follower? Why?
- Do you have a unique approach to management or supervision?
- Do you have job performance appraisals?
- Do you have the attributes of a good manager?
- Do you need direct supervision?
- Do you publicly disagree with your supervisor?
- Do you report to more than one supervisor?
- Do you require close supervision?
- Do you see yourself as more technically or management oriented?
- Do you sometimes get flustered when working with supervisors?
- Do you supervise others?
- Do you think you have the personality to be a (manager/supervisor)?
- Do you think you would make a good (manager/supervisor)? Why?
- Do your subordinates come to you with personal problems?
- Explain an instance when you used your leadership skills to solve a problem.
- Explain how you have used your skills to resolve a conflict between your boss and a co-worker.
- Explain how you have supervised others.
- Explain how you have worked successfully with a team.
- Explain how you motivate others to work more efficiently.
- Have any employees you have mentored been promoted?

- Have you ever had to make decisions when your supervisor was unavailable? Explain.
- Have you had any supervisory experience? Explain.
- Have you held any leadership responsibilities? Explain.
- Have you mentored (anyone/a subordinate)?
- Have you supervised any subordinates? Explain.
- How closely are you supervised?
- How closely do you supervise others?
- How closely have your past supervisors managed you?
- How closely would you supervise an employee who was having difficulty?
- How did the employees you hired work out?
- How did you get along with your last supervisor?
- How did your boss rate your job performance?

Communication

- How do you communicate with your subordinates?
- How do you communicate with your superiors?
- How do you delegate responsibility?
- How do you establish rapport with your subordinates?
- How do you establish rapport with your subordinates?
- How do you feel your supervisor could have done a better job?
- How do you get along with superiors?
- How do you handle leadership?
- How do you supervise your staff?
- How do you think that supervisors and subordinates should act toward one another?
- How do you think your boss or a co-worker would evaluate your current job performance?
- How good are you at personnel management?
- How have past managers gotten the best out of you?
- How have you selected any subordinates you've had in the past two years?
- How many employees do you supervise?
- How many employees have you mentored?
- How many immediate subordinates have you removed from their jobs recently?
- How many levels of management did you interact with?
- How many people are you comfortable supervising?
- How would you characterize your leadership and use of authority?
- How would you deal with a subordinate who violated a company policy?
- How would you decide who to fire?
- How would you define your management philosophy?
- How would you discipline a subordinate?
- How would you evaluate your present employer's weaknesses?
- How would you go about creating a plan for your department if you were the boss?
- How would you go about terminating an employee?
- How would you handle a supervisor challenging one of your decisions?
- How would you handle reporting to more than one supervisor?

Organization

- How would you organize your staff if you managed this operation?
- How would you typify your relationship with your former boss?

- How would your subordinates describe you?
 - How would your supervisor describe your leadership abilities?
 - In relation to others, how do you view yourself on taking initiative?
 - In what respects have you improved as a supervisor in the past few years?
 - In what ways do your leadership skills show?
 - Tell about your leadership skills?
 - Tell me about a time where you had to stand firm and make a tough or unpopular decision in order to maintain the standards you had set.
 - Tell me about an experience where you had to manage people conflicts at work -- could you describe an incident like this?
 - Tell me about the best boss you've ever had.
 - Tell me about the worst boss you've ever had.
 - Tell me more than your resume does about managing our department -- for example, how do you handle acquisitions?
 - What are the most important attributes of a good manager?
 - What are the qualities that are most important to a manager?
 - What are you looking for in a supervisor?
 - What are your team-player attributes?
 - What challenges have you faced in a leadership position?
 - What did you dislike about your supervisor?
 - What do your subordinates consider your strengths?
 - What do your subordinates think of you?
 - What factors do you think have contributed to your effectiveness as a supervisor?
 - What is the title of the person who you report to, and what were his or her responsibilities?
 - What is your management philosophy?
 - What is your opinion of your current boss?
 - What is your opinion of your last boss?
 - What kind of boss do you prefer?
 - What kind of boss/supervisor do you prefer?
 - What leadership positions have you held?
 - What management positions have you held?
-
- What organizational techniques do you use to manage your workload?
 - What qualities do you think successful manager possess?
 - What qualities make the best manager?
 - What qualities should a successful manager possess?
 - What quality should a successful manager possess?
 - What role do you take in a group situation? Give examples.
 - What steps would you take to terminate an employee who is not performing adequately?
 - What techniques do you use to motivate people?
 - What type of supervisor brings out the best performance in you?
 - What was the best boss you've ever had?
 - What was the worst boss you've ever had?
 - What would you look for in hiring people? For this job?
 - What would you say about a supervisor who was tough to work with?
 - What would you say about a supervisor who was unfair?
 - What would your former supervisor say about you?
 - What would your past supervisors tell me about you?

Difficult Questions

- Have you ever been in the position to fire anyone? Why did you fire that person?
- Have you ever received a grade lower than expected? What did you do about it?
- How do you deal with pressure situations?
- How do you deal with surprises?
- How do you deal with tension?
- How well do you work under a deadline?
- How well do you work under pressure?
- Is there anything you haven't revealed that would affect our decision?
- Tell me about a time you had a problem with decisiveness.
- What are some things you had planned to accomplish that were not carried out?
- What are your pet peeves?
- What do you least like about writing a term paper?
- What is your biggest professional challenge?
- What job experiences have angered you?
- What mistakes might we make in hiring you?
- What types of things make you angry?
- Why aren't you making more money with all this background?
- Why do you want to work in a job for which you are overqualified?
- Why is your grade point average so low?
- Why were you in school for so long?
- You've been with your current employer for a very short time. Is this an indication that you'll be moving around a lot throughout your career?
- You've changed jobs quite frequently, what assurances do we have that you will stay with us?

Terminated/Fired

- Have you been asked to resign?
- Have you ever been asked to resign?
- Have you ever been demoted?
- Have you ever been denied a promotion?
- Have you ever been fired for reasons that seem unfair?
- Have you ever been fired?
- Have you ever been laid off?
- Have you ever been rejected?
- Have you ever been turned down for a promotion?
- Have you ever laid off anyone?
- What did you do during the gap in your employment history?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Why did you leave your last job? Or why do you want to leave your current job?
- Why do you want to leave your current employer so soon?
- Why do you want to leave your job if you like it so much?
- Why have you been out of work for so long?
- Why haven't you accepted a job yet?
- Why haven't you been hired yet?
- Why haven't you found work yet?
- Why is there a large gap in your employment history?
- Why were you let go?

Poor Evaluations

- How was your last performance review?
- How were you evaluated in your last job?
- What were the results of your last performance appraisal?
- What's the biggest mistake you can recall making?

Dislikes Others

- Have you ever had a communication- problem with anyone?
- Have you ever lost your temper?
- Have you ever openly criticized someone else?
- Have you ever worked with someone you didn't like?
- In the past, how have you dealt with co-workers who have disagreed with you?
- Tell me about the last time you got angry on the job.
- Tell me about the time when someone has lost his/her temper at you in a business environment.
- Tell me about your last situation with an unhappy customer? What did you do?
- What bothers you?
- What did you dislike about your previous company?
- What did you dislike about your supervisor?
- What did you dislike most about your previous job?
- What kinds of people do you have problems working with?
- What types of people seem to rub you the wrong way?

Dilemmas

- Did your former employer have any policies that you consider unfair?
- Have you ever been discriminated against or treated unfairly?
- Have you ever intentionally deceived someone?
- Have you ever used drugs?
- How did you resolve the last moral dilemma you solved?
- How do you react when your honesty is questioned?
- How would you deal with a subordinate who violated a company policy?
- How would you react to a situation in which a fellow employee confided in you that he was stealing from the company? (situational)
- Tell me about a time when you felt it might be justifiable to break company procedure.
- To what extreme do you use liquor?
- Would you be willing to take a drug test?
- Would you submit to a drug test?

Failures

- Can you give me an example of one of your failures?
- Did you have any problems in your previous jobs?
- Have you ever been put on the spot by a professor when you felt unsure of yourself? How did you respond?
- Have you ever been turned down for a salary increase?

- Have you ever missed a deadline?
- How do you deal with failure?
- How often do you miss deadlines?
- Tell me about a situation that you just couldn't handle.
- Tell me about a situation when miscommunication created a problem on the job.
- Tell me about something in your last job that you're not proud of.
- What are your biggest failures in relation to your career?
- What are your weaknesses a person?
- What are your weaknesses as an employee?
- What are your weaknesses?
- What have been your greatest disappointments?
- What have you done that you regret?
- What was the greatest disappointment in your last job?
- What was the worst mistake you made at work? How did that affect the company?
- What were your biggest failures?

Disagreements with Supervisor

- Have you ever had a demanding supervisor?
- Tell me about the worst boss you've ever had.
- What are some areas you disagreed with your supervisor?
- What would you say about a supervisor who was tough to work with?
- What would you say about a supervisor who was unfair?

Accepts Criticisms

- Did you ever have a customer get mad at something that wasn't your fault?
- Have you ever been openly criticized?
- Have you ever been reprimanded?
- How do you deal with rejection?
- How do you handle people who are critical? (or How do you handle rejection?)
- What has been the biggest criticism of you?
- What have you been most frequently criticized for?
- What would you say if I said your presentation was awful?
- When has your work been criticized?

Areas of Weaknesses

- What about your performance do your bosses tend to criticize most?
- What are some problems you found in your job?
- What decisions are difficult for you?
- What difficult problems have you dealt with?
- What do you think are the biggest challenges you'll face in this position?
- What do you worry about?
- What do your subordinates consider your weaknesses?
- What duties did you find the most troublesome?
- What is your greatest weakness?
- What is your worst personality trait?

Interviewing – Guidance on Appropriate Questions

Presented by
Office of Fair Practices
Jennifer Dashiell Reed, Director
Yvette Dickens, EEO Specialist

Training Overview

Discrimination laws can be confusing, and interviewers sometimes find themselves surprised at what questions can be considered discriminatory. With time and effort, however, interviewers can get the information needed for decision making without violating the law.

EEO Role in the Recruitment Process

- To ensure that every applicant receives a fair and impartial opportunity with DLLR
- Maximize the potential of the State's diverse population by removing barriers so all employees/applicants are afforded a fair opportunity to exhibit their abilities and talents
- Minimize the possibility of discrimination hiring complaints.

Objectives

At the end of this training, you will be able to:

- Recognize laws that affect what questions you ask in interviews and how you phrase questions.
- Avoid questions that could put DLLR at risk of discrimination claims.
- Ask questions that obtain the information you need.

Protected Categories

- Marital Status
- National Origin
- Race
- Age
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Religious affiliation, belief or opinion
- Ancestry
- Color
- Creed
- Disability
- Gender Identity or Expression
- Genetic Information

Laws that affect the interview process

- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - Race
 - Sex
 - Color
 - Nation of Origin
 - Religion
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)
 - Citizenship
 - Nation of Origin

Laws that affect the interview process

- National Labor Relations Act (NLRA)
 - Union membership
- Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)
 - Membership or service in the uniformed services
- Bankruptcy Act
- Child Support Enforcement Amendments

Laws that affect the interview process

- The ADA make it illegal for employers to discriminate against employees/applicants with disabilities
- The law also requires that employers make "reasonable accommodations" for individuals with disabilities

Developing Interview Questions

Interviewers should refrain from asking questions that would identify particular characteristics of individuals that would single them out as being members of a protected class or group as defined by Law.

What to ask and not ask

- **Age**
 - **Instead of:**
 - When did you graduate?
 - When do you intend to retire?
 - **Ask:**
 - Can you supply transcripts of your education?



What to ask and not ask

- **Disability**
 - **Instead of:**
 - Do you have a disability?
 - Have you ever filed a workers compensation claim?
 - Do you have a history of drug or alcohol abuse?



What to ask and not ask

- **Disability**
 - **Ask**
 - After reviewing the job description, "Can you do the duties listed in the job description, with or without accommodation?"
 - If a worker has an obvious disability or reveals a hidden disability, you may ask the person to describe or demonstrate how the applicant would perform job duties.
 - **Must do**
 - Employers must provide reasonable accommodation to candidates who have disabilities.

What to ask and not ask

- **Race**
 - A candidate's race will usually be at least somewhat evident, but race related discussions or questions may imply a preoccupation with that factor.



What to ask and not ask

- **Religion**
 - **Instead of:**
 - What outside activities do you participate in?
 - **Ask:**
 - What professional associations are you a member of?



What to ask and not ask

- **Sex/marital status**
 - **Instead of:**
 - Are you married?
 - When do you plan to start a family?
 - Do you have children?
 - **Ask:**
 - Are you available to travel frequently?
 - Can you work overtime with no notice?
 - Can you work evenings and weekends?
 - When we check references/do a background check, are there other names we should look under?

What to ask and not ask

- **National Origin/Citizenship**
 - **Instead of:**
 - Are you a citizen of the US?
 - What country are you from?
 - Where is your accent from?
 - What nationality is your last name?
 - When does your visa expire?
 - **Ask:**
 - If you are hired, are you able to provide documentation to prove that you are eligible to work in the US?

Appearance

- **Appearance**
 - **Guidelines:**
 - Employers need to be aware of religious and cultural variations on appearances.
 - **You can discuss DLLR's dress and grooming requirements, but may need to make accommodation if a worker's religion requires specific clothes or hairstyle**



What to ask and not ask

- **Military**
 - **Instead of:**
 - Please provide the status of your military discharge.
 - Will you miss work to perform military service?
 - **Ask:**
 - What experience did you gain in the uniformed service that is relevant to the job you would be doing?



What to ask and not ask

Arrests and convictions

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission approved guidance on employer use of criminal background checks. While the EEOC guidance does not prohibit employers from considering criminal information during the hiring process, it does require employers to take new steps to prevent discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII pre-empts a state or local law requiring a criminal background check if the check is not job related and consistent with business necessity.

Questions

Select and design questions carefully to ensure that you get the information that you need to make quality hires while avoiding inquiries that might imply discriminatory intent.



Interview Panels

- Select a Diverse Panel
- Interviewers should have a familiarity with:
 - The interviewing Process
 - Questions
 - Follow up Question Process
 - Interviewing Protocol
 - Resumes and Applications provided

Guide to Interviewing

The Office of Fair Practices has developed a "Guide to Interviewing for your use. The guide contains approved questions that are to used during the interview process.

Questions ?


