

# WPRA Job Center



## Interviewing Basics

It is important as an employer to find a qualified applicant for the job opening you posted on the WPRA Job Center. Visit the Sample Job Description resource section for help on creating your job description. Below are some tips to help you prepare and to conduct a successful interview.

### Designing Your Interview Questions

**What is the ideal employee?** Write out a paragraph describing the ideal employee, make it specific to the opening you have AND the environment of that job opening (skills lacking in that division, personalities, etc.).

**What skills are needed?** Evaluate the position you are hiring for and write questions based on the experience needed to qualify for the job. The questions about experience should ask about employment history and education, as it pertains to this position. Be sure to ask questions about 'soft skills' as well, these include questions designed to show loyalty, dedication, and communication skills.

#### Examples of good, open-ended interview questions:

What professional successes are you most proud of?

Please tell us about your background experience and/or training that qualifies you for the \_\_\_\_\_ position. Please also include any special certifications or education.

What do you see as the greatest challenge of this position?

Give us an example of a time when you had to work closely with a co-worker to accomplish a task?

What are your long term career goals, and how do they fit in with this position?

What do you feel is your greatest strength as it relates to this position?

What personal accomplishment, either personally or professionally, are you most proud of and why?

What do we need to know about you that we haven't already heard?

## Questions to Avoid

**These are not the only questions that you should abstain from asking, but samples to help remind you to be aware during the hiring process. Our goal is to help you hire the most qualified person possible, while using criteria that is not discriminatory.**

**Age Related Questions.** The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) protects people over the age of 40, who work in companies with more than 20 employees, from employment discrimination. You may not ask when someone was born, when they graduated high school, or other questions for which age can be easily determined.

**Gender Related Questions.** Questions related to a person's gender may imply you will make a decision based on the applicant's answers, which is a violation of the Civil Rights Act. This also applies to family life questions, including asking about children or starting a family.

**Race Related Questions.** Do not ask questions referring to someone's race or nationality. If you are seeking to determine if the applicant has the legal authority to work in the United States, the question should be phrased "Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?"

**Disability Status Related Questions.** The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination against an applicant or employee because of a disability. Do not refer to an applicant's disability or health status during the interview.

**Organization Affiliation Questions.** Questions asking whether the applicant is affiliated with or a member of any political, social, or religious groups, is not allowed (this includes unions). \*Title VII of the Civil Rights Act allows religious organizations and sectarian educational institutions to express religious preference when hiring.

For further information visit the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for laws, regulations and guidance; <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/index.cfm>.

## Evaluating the Applicant Following the Interview

In addition to comparing the applicant's background and abilities to the job requirements, ask yourself these questions following the interview to further evaluate the applicant's overall qualification for the job. Keep in mind some items are more subjective than others. A defensible selection process is best based on the most objective information available.

*Did the applicant arrive for the interview on time?*

*Was the applicant appropriately dressed, well-groomed and neat?*

*Did the applicant have good communications skills?*

*Was good eye contact maintained?*

*Did the applicant use active listening skills?*

*Did the applicant ask a reasonable number of appropriate questions?*

*Were the applicant's responses complete?*

*Did the applicant concentrate on skills and accomplishments when describing past work experiences?*

*Did the applicant seem informed about our industry, the agency and the job?*

*Were the applicant's remarks about past employers neutral or positive?*

*Does the applicant's past work style compare favorably to the job's requirements? (For example, is the applicant able to work independently, with the public, as part of a team?).*

*Is the applicant available immediately or within an acceptable time frame?*

*Did the applicant indicate a need to give reasonable notice to the current employer?*

Once you have evaluated all your candidates, you may now contact your selection and make them a job offer. When contacting your candidate you should always call, that way you can convey your enthusiasm and also gauge their excitement. Make sure your candidate is aware of the deadline to accept the position. Follow up in writing. This should include all the elements of the job, including, title, salary, benefits, etc. Once the offer is accepted, make sure you are prepared to properly train the individual and get them accustomed to the work environment.