

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1 TO 1 EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW PREPARATION SUBCOMMITTEE

PROPOSED CURRICULUM

The following information presupposes that you have successfully scheduled an interview with a prospective employer. Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, it could well be that an interview may take place by way of videoconference. Various sections below address that possibility.

1) Preparing for the Interview

- a) Use online resources or contacts with employees of the company/organization/agency to develop an understanding of what field you would be working in (office settings, trades, manufacturing, etc.). Having this knowledge will help you to formulate relevant things to say and relevant questions to ask during your interview
- b) For in-person interviews, have specific but flexible plans to ensure that you arrive timely (10 to 15 minutes early) for your appointment. Be prepared for traffic, weather anomalies (storms), or anything else that might slow your progress.
 - i) Driving –
 - (1) Have sufficient gas to drive to the interview
 - (2) Have a good route to the interview location
 - (3) Plan for parking (pay stations versus general parking)
 - ii) Public Transportation –
 - (1) Familiarize yourself with the routes/lines that will get you where you need to go
 - (2) Have a backup plan if your primary plan is disrupted (train delays, bus delays, etc.)
 - (3) Afford yourself time to walk, cab, Uber/Lyft, etc. to the interview location from train/bus stations
- c) For telephone or teleconference interviews-
 - i) Ensure your phone, tablet or other device is charged
 - ii) Ensure you have any applications or programs installed and ready for use

2) Day/Evening before the Interview

- a) Prepare the clothing you intend to wear for the interview (even for teleconference interviews)
 - i) Plan to dress professionally. As with many other aspects of this process, know that you want to make a good first impression with the prospective employer. Avoid wearing casual clothes or attire typically worn at informal social gatherings (e.g., “going out with friends” clothes).
 - ii) Think positively about what you want to achieve during your interview. Visualize performing well.
 - iii) Allot yourself enough sleep time. You will perform better at your interview the better rested you are.
 - iv) Regardless of the legality of alcohol, tobacco, and/or marijuana, do not use these substances the day before your interview. They will not help your performance, and the smells of these substances may cause the prospective employer to overlook you.

3) Day of the Interview

- a) Rise early – give yourself all the time you need to take good care of yourself in advance of the interview
- b) Feed yourself – be satiated, hydrated and comfortable for your interview
- c) Practice good hygiene –
 - i) Be showered
 - ii) Tend to your hair, nails, and oral hygiene
 - iii) Don't overuse fragrances (colognes, perfumes, etc.)
- d) To the extent you can, cover tattoos
- e) For in-person interviews, arrive at the interview location 10-15 minutes early –
 - i) Show your prospective employer your ability to be organized and punctual
 - ii) Show your prospective employer that you respect his/her time
- f) For teleconference interviews, be online and ready to proceed at least 5 minutes early
- g) Maintain a professional demeanor at all times –
- h) Understand that as soon as you are near the interview location, or online for your teleconference interview, you may be unknowingly interacting with, or being assessed by, people who can influence the decision to hire you (for example: the person sitting in the reception area staring into their phone, or the person quietly drinking coffee on your screen, may be part of the group that will be interviewing you), ACT ACCORDINGLY!

4) During the interview

- a) Be prepared for there to be multiple or even several persons interviewing. This can be intimidating; however,
 - i) Having interview panels of multiple interviewers is completely normal,
 - ii) It is completely normal to be somewhat nervous, and
 - iii) Think of this as a positive, you have multiple people who you can impress
- b) Maintain eye contact with the interviewers –
 - i) This can feel forced and uncomfortable. A good trick you can use is to look at the bridges of the noses of the interviewers. To them, it will look as though you are looking them in the eye.
- c) Use good posture-
 - i) Sit upright
 - ii) Shoulders back
- d) Smile –
 - i) Show your prospective employer that you would be a positive presence in the workplace
 - ii) Demonstrate that you are grateful for the opportunity to be considered for a job
 - iii) Be confident but appreciative
- e) Be self-aware, not self-conscious –
 - i) Things to avoid are –
 - (1) Fidgeting with your hands, legs, feet, etc.
 - (2) Grooming gestures – patting yourself on the leg, pulling on your clothes, tending to your face or hair
 - (3) Slang speech, in other words, use a polite and professional tone
- f) Don't fear talking about yourself on a personal level –
 - i) Hobbies

- ii) Interests
- iii) How you like to spend your time
- iv) Sports you enjoy
- g) Be ready for the most obvious of questions –
 - i) How did you hear about this position?
 - ii) Why do want to join our team/organization?
 - iii) What are your most positive attributes?
 - iv) What skills would you be bringing to this position?
 - v) What can you tell us about the criminal convictions noted on your application?
 - (1) Be brief in explaining the charge(s)
 - (2) Briefly talk about the penalties imposed on you (incarceration, probation, supervised release)
 - (3) Focus on the things you've done to improve your situation while in custody or under supervision (education, GED, job training, etc.)
 - (4) Discuss what you want to do moving forward and why those improvements are important to you (self-improvement, support of family, etc.)
 - (5) Do you have any questions for us?
 - (a) This is an extremely common question. It is perfectly acceptable to ask about work schedule, anticipated wage, and how soon the prospective employer plans to bring on a new employee.
- h) When the interview is concluding –
 - i) Thank all of the interviewers for their time
 - ii) Politely express that you look forward to hearing from them in the near future
 - iii) If in-person and appropriate, shake hands
- 5) Follow-up/Post-interview*
 - a) One day after your interview, send an email to the prospective employer –
 - i) A short message once again expressing appreciation for the opportunity to be interviewed
 - ii) You may also offer to answer any other questions that the interview panel might have about you
 - iii) Again indicate that you look forward to hearing from the prospective employer

***If you do not get the job for which you interviewed, be positive. Each interview is a chance to sharpen your communication skills. One thing you could do is reach out to the interviewer(s) and ask if there is anything you could do to make yourself a more attractive applicant in the future. They may tell you something you didn't even realize had occurred during the interview, and that could help you for the next interview. Also, this step could help you down the road with the same company that did not hire you. It might have been a close call for them to not hire you but showing this initiative might help you to stand out in the crowd and create an opportunity for you during a future hiring cycle.**