

NOAA Workforce Management Office
Sample Interview Questions
September 2007

When the candidate arrives for the interview, immediately meet and greet him or her, thank the candidate for coming, and chat informally for a few minutes (try to keep your topics limited to commuting, weather or traffic). You can build rapport by giving the candidate an idea of how the interview process will unfold.

As you begin the formal interview, provide the candidate with a brief overview of the job and the mission of the agency. Next, you can begin asking the candidate the questions you have prepared for the interview. You may want to begin the interview with a few warm-up questions to put the candidate at ease before working up to more substantial, behavioral questions. A few opening questions are:

- What interests you most about this position?
- Why do you want to work for this organization?

The following are sample questions only and should be modified as they apply to the particular requirements of the position. You should not limit yourself to these questions or to these categories of questions.

- **Attention to detail:** Describe a project or task that required your exacting attention to small points and issues in order to keep the project on track and produce a quality project. How did these matters come to your attention? How did you handle them?
- **Change management:** We often face many changes in the workplace. Describe a specific situation in which you feel you were especially effective in adapting to an unanticipated change.
- **Clerical skills:** Describe the type of routine office procedures that you have had to follow. What volume of paperwork have you been responsible for? What experience have you had in handling confidential records? How do you ensure the confidentiality and security of information and records maintained in the office?
- **Skill areas:** Please describe the skills, abilities and experience you have that qualify you for this position.
- **Customer service:** In this job you will be interacting with a variety of individuals both within and outside the agency. Occasionally, you will interact with individuals who are dissatisfied with the service they received. Describe a difficult customer situation you have encountered and how you solved it.
- **Decision-making:** Describe some examples of decisions or recommendations you are called upon to make in your current or past position? What has been a stubborn or recurring problem area you would like to solve in your current job? How would you solve it?

- **Interpersonal skills:** How would you describe your relationship with your most recent supervisor and coworkers? If I were to contact them today, what would they say about you?
- **Teamwork:** Provide me with an example of when you worked very effectively as a member of a team. What was the task? How many people were involved? What was your role?

After you have finished asking the candidate questions, allow the candidate time to ask questions of you. This is an excellent opportunity for you to elaborate on the agency, your component, and details of the specific job. You should be prepared to answer a variety of questions from the candidate.

Inform the candidate of your anticipated time frame for decision making.

Remember, always ask questions that are:

- a. Related to the job.
- b. Designed to build rapport with the candidate: "So, how do you like living in Baltimore?"

Avoid asking questions that are:

- a. A potential violation of the rights of a protected group: "What kinds of organizations do you belong to?" (The candidate's answer may lead to topics involving religious or ethnic background.)
- b. Never ask questions that are a clear violation of the rights of a protected group: "How old are you?"

For additional information: [WFMO Contact Lists](#)