TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Select an interview type or format that is most appropriate for the position the agency is filling.

Sometimes an agency will hold several levels of interviews to reduce a large applicant pool. At times, a panel is used to do an initial screening of candidates and present only the few top candidates to the manager for consideration. Sometimes the hiring manager will want to be a panelist. The hiring manager may choose to have a conversation with finalists once a panel has made their recommendation.

Some of the interview types listed below may be used as the sole method for interviewing and other types may be used in combination with other interview types. Not all types of interviews are appropriate for all types of positions.

TELEPHONE & VIDEO

Telephone and video interviews can be used as a screening tool to determine if the applicant has the required knowledge, skills and abilities prior to bringing in for an in-person interview. Interviews by telephone or video can also prevent candidates from traveling a long distance to attend a first-round interview.

PANEL INTERVIEWS

This is the most commonly used type of interview. The panel interviews each candidate. Questions are asked of the candidate about their experience and how it relates to the position. Panelists record the candidate's responses to prepared questions.

GROUP

A group interview can be used for positions where the incumbent is expected to interact in a group on an ongoing basis. In a group interview, a panel assesses several candidates at the same time. A group interview generally includes some type of group activity that shows how a candidate interacts with others and the style of decision making the candidate uses. Often each candidate is given a few minutes to talk about their abilities, education, experience and skills relating to the position.

Best practice for group interviews is to simulate the actual work experience. Hypothetical activities should not be used.

PRESENTATION

Having a candidate make a presentation related to the duties of the position is an interview type that fits positions requiring an individual to speak before an audience as a trainer or a media representative.

SIMULATION OR INBOX EXERCISE

The candidate is presented with a business-related scenario, accompanied by a list of related tasks as if the candidate was on the job.

HIRING MANAGER'S CONVERSATION

When a candidate pool is reduced to one or two candidates, a hiring manager may wish to have a "conversation" with each finalist. This format avoids the structure of the formal interview setting to help the candidate relax. The manager asks only appropriate questions and avoids any conversation that causes the candidate to provide information about the candidate's personal life.

Whatever type of interview is chosen, make the interview purposeful and conduct it in a way that gives each candidate a chance to succeed.

FACILITATING INTERVIEWS

Interviews tend to run more smoothly when a facilitator provides direction to the panelists and the candidates, trains or briefs the panel, records any group information, makes introductions, escorts the candidate in and out of the room, and in general ensures proper procedure and decorum are followed.

If a panelist should ask an inappropriate or potentially illegal question, the facilitator takes immediate steps to mitigate the potential damage and redirects the interview. If a candidate provides information that is personal and not related to the requirements of the position, the facilitator informs the candidate of the type of information the panel is looking for. The facilitator asks any questions of the candidate regarding accommodations. A facilitator can serve as a dual role as a panel member, or just facilitate the process.

The documentation on which panelist notes are recorded, may become a public record and subject to disclosure. It is very important that panelist comments are objective and not subjective, or reflective of their personal opinion.

See the following: Veterans' Preference Toolkit