

# TELEPHONE SCREENING

Telephone screening is a beneficial standard recruitment practice.

- Saves time and resources (no need for multiple panel members) (only 10 – 15 min)
- Assess candidate's skills for the job and their communication skills, verify “must haves”
- Clarify information on application materials
- Determine interest of applicant
- Provides you a chance to sell the agency and build the agency's reputation.
- Provides a chance for applicants to self-select out once they know more if it isn't a fit for them.
- Cuts down on unconscious biases based on appearances

## PREPARING FOR TELEPHONE SCREENING

Develop your short-list

- Screen through applications finding a match for the qualifications listed in the job posting.
- Develop a list of 3 – 6 questions to target the qualifications in conjunction with the manager.
- Focus on the must haves and then move to “nice to have” attributes
- Include questions about what the person liked or disliked about prior roles, what motivated the person to stay and move away from an organization. You're assessing fit with these questions.
- Create a score or rating sheet. Know what your ideal candidate profile will look like (not the perfect candidate, the ideal candidate)

- Decide to conduct a scheduled or unscheduled interview based on the job. If you really want to give your applicant a chance to shine, schedule a few minutes so neither of you are distracted.
- Prepare to answer questions regarding pay and benefits. Although it may be too soon for this discussion, be prepared.

## CONDUCTING THE TELEPHONE SCREEN:

- Review applicant's resume and cover letter or application.
  - Identify questions that you may have regarding gaps in employment, length of time in a position and any responsibilities listed that you would like additional information.
- Introduce yourself and explain the goals and process of the conversation. Let them know you are taking notes. Goals: you learn more about the applicant, the applicant learns more about the job and agency.
  - Only record job-related information. Don't write on apps or resumes.
- Provide a brief overview of the agency, the position and its purpose within the agency.
- Ask your questions.
  - Be alert to verbal cues. A hesitation or sigh may be a signal to ask for more information.
  - Ask probing questions to clarify responses that you are uncertain about.
- Let the applicant ask questions.
- Thank the applicant for their time and outline next steps. I often prepare three ways of ending the call, 1. I'm going to talk with you further, 2. This doesn't appear to be a good fit, 3. I might want to talk with you some more. (*Developed a sample scripts for this.*)
- Follow-up, don't leave them hanging.

## ASSESSING APPLICANTS:

- After the telephone screen, spend time scoring or rating applicant while it is still fresh in your mind.
  - Did they answer questions with direct and relevant responses? Did they clearly describe what they do and how they have used their skills in past jobs?” Do they seem genially interested in the work and the agency mission?
- Review your ratings with the hiring manager and make recommendations for interviews.

## RESOURCES:

### **Phone Screen Best Practices: Sample Questions**

#### **Here's How to Screen Potential Candidates by Phone**

By Susan M. Heathfield

Updated July 01, 2017

<https://www.thebalance.com/phone-screen-best-practices-sample-questions-1916800>

### **HOW TO DO THE HR INITIAL SCREENING INTERVIEW**

by Ruth Mayhew

<http://work.chron.com/hr-initial-screening-interview-17711.html>

### **HOW TO CONDUCT A TELEPHONE SCREEN: TOP TIPS**

Recruitment Coach, 22 Feb 2012

<http://www.recruitmentcoach.com.au/content/how-conduct-telephone-screen-top-tips>

### **Guide to Conducting Effective Screening Interviews**

<https://www.stthomas.edu/media/humanresources/managerstoolkit/searchandselection/effectiveScreening.pdf>

### **Tips for Recruiters: How to Conduct Effective Phone Screens**

by Roy Maurer Mar 11, 2016 SHRM

<https://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/talent-acquisition/Pages/Tips-for-Recruiters-How-to-Conduct-Effective-Phone-Screens.aspx>

### **HOW TO CONDUCT A KILLER PHONE SCREEN INTERVIEW**

by Justin Reynolds on Mar 22, 2017 8:00:00 AM

<https://www.tinypulse.com/blog/killer-phone-screen-interview>