BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERVIEWING

PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW:

- The hiring manager should confirm the participants on the interview team and their specific roles (assign the competencies, areas of focus, escort to next interview, etc.)
- Thoroughly review the candidate's resume and develop appropriate questions based on progression, gaps in employment, etc.

DURING THE INTERVIEW:

- Eliminate distractions that take your attention away from the candidate, including email and mobile phones.
- Encourage your team to be fully present in the conversation.
- Refer to the "Attributes to Look For" on each of the interview question pages as points of comparison for candidate responses.
- Use the "Follow-Up Techniques" included in the guide to get all of the detail you need from each interview response.
- Adjust the language of the questions to make it more comfortable and personal, i.e., include the candidate's name ("Sally, tell me about a time…") or the company's name ("At ABC Company, we work collaboratively, tell me about a time when you collaborated with others.").

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

- Utilize the "Candidate Evaluation" at the end of this guide to:
  - rate the candidate on each competency, and
  - note other observable behaviors of the candidate, i.e., was the candidate prepared, did the candidate ask appropriate questions, did the candidate take notes.

  Review page three of this guide for reminders on legal documentation.

- Participate in a debrief session with other participants on the interview team to assess the candidate.

ASSESSING INTERVIEW RESPONSES

THE STAR METHOD:

The STAR method is a structured manner of assessing the responses to behavioral-based interview questions that requires the candidate to discuss the specific situation/task, action taken, and result of their experience.

- **Situation/Task:** Look for the candidate to describe a specific situation or task, not a generalized description of what they did in the past. Listen for: who, what, where, when and why.
- **Action:** Listen for an appropriate amount of detail to understand how the candidate accomplished the goal. Make sure they answer what they personally did; not necessarily what the team/others did. Listen for: how.
- **Result:** What was the outcome? How did the event end? What did they accomplish? What did they learn? What would they do differently next time? A lesson learned is just as important as a positive result in the answer. Listen for: measurable results and self-learning.

FOLLOW-UP TECHNIQUES:

Expect the candidate to respond to all three aspects of the STAR model. As necessary, ask follow-up questions to get all of the detail you need, particularly if responses are incomplete or vague. Move on to the next question when you are fully satisfied with the depth and specificity of the candidate's answer. If you feel you have provided adequate time and prompts and the candidate continues to struggle, you should move on to avoid putting the candidate "on the spot" – please take this into consideration in your evaluation.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:

- What exactly did you do?
- What was the outcome? What happened?
- What was the situation or task you faced that led you to take that action?
- It sounds like your team accomplished the goal. Can you tell me a little more about what you personally did to reach the goal?
- What will you do differently the next time you are in a similar situation?
- What was the exact problem you were trying to solve? Why was this important?
- Tell me a little more about the exact process you followed to solve the problem.
- What did you learn?
- What data did you use to make your decision?

REMEMBER:

- Questions must be relevant to candidate's skills, experience and attitudes as it relates to their ability to do the job.
- Assess a candidate's ability to perform required work and confirm whether they possess the desired competencies and skills.
- AVOID:
  - Questions specific to any aspect of the candidate's protected class (age, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, marital status, national origin, veteran status, pregnancy).
  - Questions or discussions about politics, religion or other potentially sensitive social issues.
  - Asking different questions of men and women.
  - Making commitments about the job, salary, length or other terms or conditions of service.
- All documentation can be discoverable in legal proceedings. Here are some tips, which pertain to any documentation of conversations with candidates (i.e., on the resume, interview guide, etc.)
  DO DOCUMENT:
  - Applicant responses to questions
  - The business reason each applicant is/is not qualified for the job
  - The business reason why the applicant was hired over those who were not

  DON'T DOCUMENT:
  - Any information relevant to a protected classification
  - Personal traits (hair/eye color, clothing worn, etc.)
  - Your evaluation in terms of any protected classification (too old, won't fit in, unable to handle physical work, strong accent, etc.)

Candidate:

Interviewer:

Position:

Date and Time of Interview:

WELCOME THE CANDIDATE:

- Introduce yourself (members of the interview panel if applicable) and how your role interacts with the open position for which the candidate is interviewing.
- Establish a relaxed tone, put the candidate at ease (offer a drink, ask how the traffic was, etc.)
- Describe the interview process
  - Estimated time of the interview
  - Using behavioral based questions
  - Looking for specific examples
  - Time will be provided for candidate's questions
- Explain that you will be taking notes.

QUICK REVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND

Address potential concerns: job hopping, gaps in employment, reasons for leaving.

ACCOUNTABILITY

ATTRIBUTES TO LOOK FOR:

☐ **EXCEEDS**

Consistently exceeds deadlines/expectations. Proactively solicits and acts on feedback received, both positive and negative. Prevents things from going wrong. Finds solutions to problems.

☐ **MEETS**

Willingly accepts responsibility for the results of one's actions or behaviors. Explicitly claims ownership of, takes action and answers for consequences, both positive and negative.

☐ **DOES NOT MEET**

Does not take responsibility for own actions. Places blame elsewhere. Frequently fails to follow through on commitments. Takes a "wait and hope" approach to problems. Makes excuses. Is unaware there is a problem.

QUESTIONS:

1. Describe a time when you took accountability for a situation that was out of your control. What steps did you take? What happened?

2. Describe a time when you were recognized for taking full accountability for your results or actions.

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

ATTRIBUTES TO LOOK FOR:

☐ **EXCEEDS**

Is mindful in all interactions and decisions. Consistently demonstrates respect, fairness, and civility; and is approachable, welcoming, and relatable to all. Has a growth mindset, and is focused on inclusion in an authentic and meaningful manner.

☐ **MEETS**

Understands and appreciates the differences in backgrounds, values, personal beliefs, experiences, actions, and attitudes of others; resulting in a culture of acceptance, respect, civility, and belonging, enabling positive business results. Is committed to equity and inclusion, and creating an environment that is fair, just, and welcoming.

☐ **DOES NOT MEET**

Demonstrates behaviors such as judging or shaming of others, inappropriate, or potentially illegal comments. Decisions, actions, and behavior appear to be driven by bias. Behavior conflicts with company values. Has a fixed mindset, creates an air of superiority, or creates a perception of exclusion.

QUESTIONS:

1. Tell me about your most memorable experience where you found yourself to be in the minority in a situation. What happened? What did you learn?

2. Give me an example of a time where you were not aware of, or did not understand, cultural differences. What did you learn and what would you do differently next time?

DRIVE FOR RESULTS

ATTRIBUTES TO LOOK FOR:

☐ **EXCEEDS**

Typically exceeds expectations. Finds effective and efficient ways to do more than what was asked, while providing more value in the outcome. Effectively leads others to exceed goals.

☐ **MEETS**

Consistently meets or exceeds expectations. Ensures timely and accurate completion of all assignments and projects. Pushes through challenges to achieve quantifiable results.

☐ **DOES NOT MEET**

Frequently misses deadlines or does not meet expectations. Lacks follow-up or follow-through on projects. Demonstrates lack of commitment to putting forth best effort.

QUESTIONS:

1. Give me an example of an important goal you have set for yourself. What obstacles did you face? How did you overcome those obstacles?

2. Give me an example of a time when your results far exceeded expectations.

CONCLUDING THE INTERVIEW

OPTIONAL CLOSING QUESTIONS (CHOOSE ONE):

- What one question were you prepared to answer that I didn't ask, and what is your answer?
- Why should we choose you over someone else?
- Tell me anything else you would like us to know about you that will aid us in making our decision.
- How will your work performance enhance (Company Name)?
- Now that you have learned more about the company and position, what hesitation or reluctance would you have in accepting the job if offered to you?

CLOSING STEPS:

- Provide the candidate an opportunity to ask questions.
- Explain next steps/follow-up process to the candidate.
- Provide the candidate with your business card.
- Escort the candidate to the next interviewer or to the exit, and thank him/her for his/her time.

CANDIDATE EVALUATION

Candidate:

Interviewer:

Position:

Date and Time of Interview:

A rating of "Does Not Meet" in any one competency does not necessarily imply that the rater believes that the candidate would not be successful in the position. Whereas an "Overall Rating" of "Does Not Meet" indicates that the candidate's deficiencies are likely enough to remove the candidate from further consideration for this position.

COMPETENCY	RATING	COMMENTS
ACCOUNTABILITY		
CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE		
DRIVE FOR RESULTS		

Candidate may also be considered for the following position(s):

COMMENTS/SUMMARY/OBSERVABLE BEHAVIORS: