

SELECTION GUIDELINES

FOR

MONTGOMERY COUNTY



A USERS GUIDE FOR HIRING MANAGERS



TO: Selection and Interview Panel Members

FROM: Joe Adler
Director, Office of Human Resources

SUBJECT: Selection Interview Process

The selection interview process for a new staff member in your department/agency is one of your most important job duties. It is the policy of Montgomery County to conduct all employment activities in a manner that will ensure equal employment opportunity for all persons without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, genetic status, or political affiliation. We have an obligation to assure that all people seeking employment, a promotion or a transfer opportunity with Montgomery County have an equal opportunity to gain it, and that individuals competing for positions are treated fairly.

As suggested by guidelines enacted by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and as a result of our own observations, we have made the decision to formalize the selection process to achieve the goals stated in the above paragraph. In addition to achieving these goals, this process will also ensure consistent selection interviews are conducted throughout the County.

Attached is information outlining the selection process and the manner in which it should be conducted. We welcome your participation in this process. Your commitment to clear and ethical interviewing is an integral part of Montgomery County's current and future ability to provide services to its residents. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact a Human Resources Specialist on the Recruitment and Selection Team.

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Selection Interviews: A Tool Kit For Managers

Confidentiality

Identifying Candidates for Interview

**Assembling the Interview Panel and Developing Interview
Questions and Evaluation Criteria**

Conducting the Interviews

Reference Checks and Candidate Notification

After the Interview

SELECTION INTERVIEWS A TOOL KIT FOR MANAGERS

CONFIDENTIALITY

Please remember that all candidate information is CONFIDENTIAL. You should not discuss candidate names, rating categories or any other information pertaining to candidates or the rating process with anyone not DIRECTLY involved in the selection process. Questions from individuals who are not directly involved in the selection process should be referred to the Human Resources Specialist conducting the recruitment.

IDENTIFYING CANDIDATES FOR INTERVIEW

- Review the class specification, position description (if possible) and job announcement and identify the most important Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) and other criteria needed to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position.
- Review the resume of EVERY candidate on the eligible list focusing on the KSAs and other criterion with the intent of selecting candidates for interview.
- Identify candidates for interview based on their possession of these KSAs.
- Document the process (must be job related) by which those chosen to interview were selected. (This is not required if all candidates are interviewed).
- Make documentation part of your file.

SELECTING THE INTERVIEW PANEL AND DEVELOPING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Composition of Interview Panel

- Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and individuals knowledgeable of the job and KSAs are preferred panel members.
- Should consist of an odd number of panel members when possible to break ties in the decision making process.
- Panels should be diverse (gender, race/ethnicity, age). Departments should utilize other departments/agency employees with requisite subject matter knowledge as well individuals who are not employed by the County to achieve diversity if necessary. If using outside interviewers, the hiring manager or designee, who has completed the selection guideline training, is responsible for providing training/ materials on the interview process.
- Individuals who served as SMEs in the rating process for the position should not be interviewers in the selection process to ensure a fair and impartial process.
- For a few "unique" positions, interview panel members may be a lower grade than the position interviewing for (i.e., departments should check with their OHR Specialist to discuss appropriateness).

Developing Interview Questions and Evaluation Criteria

- Select interview questions that relate to the job responsibilities of the position.
- Ask open ended questions that allow candidates to provide descriptive information rather than just "yes" or "no" answers.

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEWS

- Make sure that the interview panel members understand the requirements of the job, the KSAs and other criterion.
- Make sure that all panel members understand the interview questions, evaluation process and evaluation criteria prior to beginning the interviews.
- Maintain fairness and equity by reminding panel members of the importance of remaining impartial and maintaining confidentiality of the selection interview process; information is given to appropriate staff on a need-to-know basis.

The Interview

- Detailed instructions can be found under the tab for Instructions for Interviewers.

Interview Panel Responsibilities

- Stay focused on the job and its requirements.
- Interview panel members must complete an individual evaluation form.
- Complete the individual evaluation of one candidate before moving on to the next one.
- As a group, panel members must complete a consensus evaluation form for each applicant interviewed. Care should be taken to only record remarks that relate to the requirements of the job on these forms as they will become a permanent record of the selection process.
- Once all candidates have been interviewed, panel members should review their evaluation forms and determine the top candidate(s), based on evaluations received in the interview.
- Federal Law requires that all records be kept for one year. All selection material, including how candidates were selected for interview (if not all are interviewed), evaluation forms and interview notes should be placed in a file and maintained by the hiring manager in case needed by the Office of Human Resources.
- Utilize interview evaluation criteria and forms to evaluate responses to the questions for each applicant. Interview evaluation criteria and forms are attached.

SALARY NEGOTIATIONS – A Snap-Shot

Prior to conducting selection interviews you should have a general idea of the salary you feel is reasonable, what you wish to offer and how much you are willing to negotiate as well as the impact of any potential wage compression limitations.

A higher salary may not be the only benefit a potential employee is seeking. You should negotiate salary from a “total compensation” perspective. Review the benefits the County offers with the selected candidate. Be sure to convey to the candidate that Montgomery County has a lot to offer its employees. Generally, it is a great place to work!

In determining the salary you wish to offer a candidate, you need to consider internal salary equity, wage compression studies, salary history, current market value of the job and working conditions. All of these issues should be a part of your salary negotiations.

- **Internal Salary Equity**
Is the salary you would like to offer in line with (usually not above) the salaries of your current employees with similar training and experience in the same job class? Does this candidate bring a skill set or unique experience to the organization that others in the class do not possess?
- **Previous Salary History**
Is the salary you intend to offer the candidate reasonable considering their salary history, particularly their current or most recent salary for a similar position?
- **Market Value**
Is the salary reasonable as compared to others in the same profession both inside and outside of the County? There are web sites that will assist you in determining current market value of a certain profession or field of work. An example of such a web site is www.salary.com. This web site provides national salary data but not regional salary data. Benchmark salary information relating to the County and other local jurisdictions is also available through the County's Human Resources web-site located at this address:
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/ohr/ResourceLibrary/ResourceSearch.cfm> and insert Personnel Management Review into the search engine. Your OHR Specialist may also be able to assist you in obtaining this information.
- **Wage Compression (bargaining union employees only)**
You must ensure the salary you intend to offer the candidate does not exceed the incumbents who possess similar levels of experience/education. You can contact your department HR Liaison who can review the salaries within the area of consideration in your department to determine how salaries match those within the organization for MCGEO employees.
- **Above Mid-point Salary Negotiation**
For non-bargaining employees a salary recommendation above the mid-point must be approved by the Office of Human Resources

REFERENCE CHECKS AND CANDIDATE NOTIFICATION

- Check job-related references for the top candidates only. If there is only one clear choice, just check the references for that candidate. Appropriate areas of inquiry in a reference check include **job related** factors such as technical or managerial skills, quality and quantity of work, degree of supervision required, dates of employment, and salary history. Discussing subject areas not related to the work performed by the applicant must be avoided including any direct or indirect reference to the applicant's protected status (for example, race/ethnicity, age, gender, disability, familial status [presence or absence of children], marital status, religion, etc) residence, social activities, political beliefs, or medical status. See guidelines outlining appropriate and inappropriate interview questions –available in OHR.
- A form to aid in checking references is included in this packet. See pages 36-37.

- Select the candidate(s) to be recommended for hiring and contact OHR with a recommendation. Remember that only OHR can make a formal job offer unless otherwise delegated.
- After the selected candidate(s) has accepted the offer, notification of non-selection should be made to the interviewed applicants. This can be done either verbally or in writing. A sample notification letter can be obtained from your HR Specialist in OHR. A copy is also included in this packet. For internal candidates it is recommended that a personal phone call or conversation be held.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Do not debrief those not selected. You can either refer the candidates back to the HR specialist or provide feedback yourself.
- If discussing non-selection with a candidate yourself, do not use language such as “not a good fit”, “did not like you”, or issues regarding their “personality” or the “culture” of the workplace. Rather, tell candidates that it was a difficult decision with several qualified candidates, but ultimately you selected the person you/the panel felt was the most qualified.
- If specific items stand out that negatively effected the interview (i.e., questions weren’t answered, information wasn’t clear etc.) provide constructive feedback as an opportunity to help prepare for future interviews.
- Remind raters of the confidential nature of the selection interview and they should not discuss the process with anyone inquiring about the selection.

Preparing For the Interview

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

1. Identify competencies that are important for the position (see attached). Identify the questions you wish to ask to assess each competency (choosing from the attached list or drafting original ones). If you write your own questions, ensure they are job-related and will not elicit personal information.
2. Take the opportunity to watch the video “You be the Judge”.
3. Identify how many questions you will ask for each competency and how many questions you will ask in total. Remember, you will ask the same questions of all applicants interviewed.
 - a. Include questions that elicit different information (asking the same question phrased different ways does not provide new information).
 - b. Consider if this will be the only interview or if more than one round of interviews will be conducted. Each interview should have different questions or there is no need for a second interview.
4. Type out the questions to be asked and draft preferred responses or benchmarks to those questions for the job to be filled. This sheet of questions will be used by the interviewers to ask the questions and then evaluate responses.
5. Fill in the competencies on the evaluation forms using the list of competencies from page thirteen and fourteen (13-14) that are pertinent to the job and group the questions that relate to each competency. For example, if “Job Qualifications” is to be assessed, write “Job Qualifications” on the form under “criteria” and then arrange those questions which evaluate job qualifications under that heading. Ensure questions that elicit responses to more than one competency are listed under corresponding competencies.
6. When selecting individuals to serve on your interview panel, choose individuals who are subject matter experts or knowledgeable about position when possible. Try to avoid including individuals who will work under the selected applicant as interviewers. This may create animosity that they are not under consideration for the job or an issue of indebtedness for the selection. Individuals from other units, departments or other agencies can be utilized as subject matter experts for the purposes of interviewing.
7. Identify for the interview panel members the number of candidates they should recommend to move forward for final consideration as a result of the interview.
8. The panel chair should do the following:
 - a. Copy enough forms for each candidate being interviewed – these include: questions and targeted responses for each question.
 - b. Have copies of the questions (without targeted responses) for interviewers to ask the candidate.
 - c. Have copies of questions only for candidates.
 - d. Identify any material relative to the County or the position to be given to the candidate prior to going before the interview panel.
 - e. Determine if interviewers will have resumes to consider in their evaluation.

9. At the conclusion, collect the questions from the applicant and ensure all interview forms are signed and dated. Make sure all forms including interviewer notes are retained for one (1) year.

10. FOR POSITIONS DESIGNATED AS REQUIRING MULTILINGUAL SKILLS:
 - a. Seek out an individual who is proficient in English and the second language required to serve as a member of the interview panel (preferably chosen from the Interpreter List in the OHR Resource Library).
 - b. Consider asking one or two interview questions in the second language required to identify applicants who can communicate effectively in both English and the second language. This will serve as an initial assessment of bilingual skill however; it will not substitute for language certification provided by OHR.

Evaluation Competencies

COMPETENCIES

JOB QUALIFICATIONS – Does the applicant possess a relevant educational/training background and/or work history and does it relate to the duties and responsibilities of the position? Does the applicant possess the skill, knowledge and expertise that would be appropriate for this position? Does the applicant maintain up-to-date knowledge of the field/area of expertise consistent with the level of the position? Does the applicant have a level of skill/expertise to conduct business at the level required of this position or to learn this within an acceptable training period?

CUSTOMER SERVICE ORIENTATION – Does the applicant demonstrate the desire, enthusiasm and willingness to help others? Does the applicant demonstrate a willingness to work collaboratively with internal and external customers to identify needs and provide quality service? Does the applicant recognize the importance of courtesy, sensitivity and patience in dealing with customers, especially in dealing with difficult or emotional individuals/situations? Does the applicant demonstrate support of the County's vision and essential values?

PROBLEM SOLVING/SOUND JUDGMENT – Does the applicant analyze information/situations effectively, weigh factors, troubleshoot and identify problems, draw valid conclusions and make sound decisions? Does the applicant demonstrate a willingness to change a course of action if and when new information dictates? Does applicant demonstrate a willingness to accept responsibility for problem solving and decision making? Does the applicant demonstrate the flexibility to reassess and change priorities as new information/situations dictate? Does the applicant identify time frames and deadlines?

PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY/ETHICS – Does the applicant accept personal responsibility for accomplishing work assignments in a timely and appropriate manner? Does the applicant value good work habits, responsiveness and integrity? Does the applicant apply fair and ethical standards in work? Does applicant work to instill trust and confidence in others? Does applicant respect and maintain confidentiality?

SENSITIVITY/DIVERSITY AWARENESS – Does the applicant demonstrate respect and sensitivity for feelings, thoughts and values of others who are both similar and different from the applicant? Is applicant sensitive to how people of diverse backgrounds and cultures interpret and express ideas and information? Does applicant demonstrate an understanding that differences in race, sex, religion, natural origin, etc. may affect behavior and values? Does applicant find effective ways to approach others about sensitive issues and resolve situations where individuals have competing and conflicting goals?

RESULTS ORIENTATION – Is the applicant focused on obtaining measurable improvements in the quality of service or a process? Does the applicant take initiative and seek ways to obtain improvement through creativity, attention to detail, optimizing use of resources and working collaboratively with others? Does the applicant consider the impact of their work on others they are collaborating with or those depending on their work product?

PRESENTATION/COMMUNICATION* – Does the applicant organize ideas clearly and concisely when communicating verbally? Does the applicant demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in written format?

***Evaluation of this competency should be focused on the substance and content of communication and not on other factors which may be impacted by cultural norms (eye contact or lack of), disabilities (articulation, non-verbal communication) or stereotypes of expected behavior based on one's protected class.**

Interview Question Database

Job Qualifications

Customer Service Orientation

Problem-Solving/Sound Judgment

Personal Accountability/Ethics

Sensitivity/Diversity Awareness

Results Orientation

Planning/Organization

Presentation/Communication

Closing Questions

INTERVIEW QUESTION DATABASE

JOB QUALIFICATIONS

- What strengths did you rely on in your last position to make you successful in your work?
- Describe what you see as your strengths related to this position. Describe what you see as your weaknesses related to this position.
- Tell us a bit about your work background, and then give us a description of how you think it relates to our current opening.
- What skill sets do you think you would bring to this position?
- Would you share with us a recent accomplishment of which you are most proud?
- What one area do you really need to work on in your current career to become more effective on a day-to-day basis?
- What do you think you bring to this organization that someone else would not?
- Tell us why you applied for this position?
- What are your short and long-term career goals?

Examples with Answers:

- Briefly describe the following:
 - A. Your educational background and work history
 - B. Your strengths and weaknesses in education and work history
 - C. How your education/training and work history have prepared you for this position.

Answer – A) Candidate should provide a thorough response that addresses the extent and relevancy of education and work history. B) Candidate should identify strengths and weaknesses and discuss how they relate to the job. C) Candidate should identify any specific education/training or special experiences which would contribute to successful adaptation to the job.
- What personal characteristics do you possess that will aid in your success in this position?

Answer - Candidate may mention such things as perseverance, taking on assignments and completing them with little direction, good ability to follow directions, attention to detail, interest in investigating new things and new methods of completing tasks, upbeat personality, ability to problem solve, work as a group, follow-up, etc.
- Please explain why you are interested in this position and how it fits in with your career goals.

Answer - Candidate should identify the positive aspects of the position, ability to be part of the organization, make a difference, provide customer service, learn from others in the field. Candidate should identify an enthusiasm for growing with the organization and moving forward in their career to accept more responsibility within the organization.

CUSTOMER SERVICE ORIENTATION

- Describe a difficult time you have had dealing with an employee, customer, or co-worker. Why was it difficult? How did you handle it? What was the outcome?

- Tell me about a time when you went out of your way to provide great customer service to a customer. What actions did you take that was different than your normal approach and what was the outcome?
- Describe a process or system that you improved so customers would be better served.
- Tell me about a time when you knew that your customer might not get what he or she needed on time. How did you handle this?
- Tell me about a time you had to say “No” to a customer because it was against organizational policy.
- Tell me about a time when you had trouble working with a difficult or demanding customer. How did you handle this?

PROBLEM SOLVING/SOUND JUDGMENT

- What methods do you use to make decisions? When do you find it most difficult to make a decision?
- Describe a decision you made which would normally have been made by your supervisor. What was the outcome?
- Give an example of how you have reinvented or redefined a job to meet your organizations’ changing needs. What pro-active steps did you take to increase the output of your position?
- If your supervisor is unavailable for guidance, how do you approach taking action?

PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY/ETHICS

- If someone told you that you had made an error, describe how you would react and what you would say in your defense?
- If someone asked for your assistance with a matter outside the parameters of your job description, what would you do? (Customer Service Orientation also)
- Suppose your supervisor asked you to get information for them that you know is confidential and he/she should not have access to. What would you do?
- Give an example of a time when you were trying to meet a deadline, you were interrupted, and did not make the deadline. How did you respond?
- Describe a time when you were asked to apply a questionable business practice; how did you handle the situation?
- Have you ever faced a significant ethical problem at work? How did you handle it?

SENSITIVITY/DIVERSITY AWARENESS

- If you observed a co-worker make inappropriate sexual or racial comments to an employee, what would you do?
- How would you handle a situation where there may be difficulty working with people who may not be like you or may have different views, opinions or backgrounds?

RESULTS ORIENTATION

- Can you tell me a time during your previous employment when you suggested a better way to perform a process?
- Tell me about a personal or career goal that you have accomplished and why that was important to you.
- What do you think are the best and worst parts of working in a team environment? How do you handle it?

- What was your most creative/innovative achievement at work?
- Tell me about your understanding of the job you are applying for. Give an example of how you have reinvented or redefined a job to meet your organizations' changing needs. What pro-active steps did you take to increase the output of your position?
- Tell me about your current position or most recent position and how you helped the organization accomplish its goals and mission.
- What have you done for an organization that made a difference and for which you believe you will be remembered?
- What makes you stand out among your peers?
- How have you added value to your current job over time?
- Is it your natural inclination to report to some one else for sign-off or do you operate better with independent responsibility and authority?
- What do you do when others resist or reject your ideas?
- In hindsight, how could you have improved your performance at your last position?
- How do you stay current with changes in (name area of expertise)?
- If your supervisor is unavailable for guidance, how do you approach taking action?
- What traits and characteristics do you think a team player should possess? How would you handle an employee who does not exhibit these traits/characteristics?

PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

- Suppose you are in a situation where deadlines and priorities change frequently and rapidly. How would you handle it?
- How would your past employers describe your response to hectic or stressful situation?
- How have you participated in planning work and/or processes?
- Is it more important to be a detail oriented person, or a big picture person? Explain.
- How would you describe the amount of structure, direction and feedback that you need to excel?
- Would you consider yourself more of a task-oriented or project oriented worker?
- How do you handle interruptions, breaks in routine and last minute changes?

PRESENTATION/COMMUNICATION

*Evaluation of this dimension should be focused on the substance and content of communication and not on other factors which may be impacted by cultural norms (eye contact or lack of), disabilities (articulation, non-verbal communication) or stereotypes of expected behavior based on one's protected class.

Questions pertaining to written and/or verbal communication should be based on requirements of the job rather than the ease of communication.

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- If we were to make you an offer, tell me ideally when you'd like to start. How much notice do you need to give to your current employer?
- What final questions can I answer for you that would help you make an informed career decision?
- Why should we hire YOU?
- What do you know about Montgomery County (Dept.)?
- Why do you want to work here?
- What makes you stand out among your peers?

Scenario Questions

-CONFIDENTIAL-

SCENARIO QUESTIONS, INCLUDING SUGGESTED RESPONSES, DESIGNED TO EVALUATE THE EVALUATION DIMENSIONS LISTED ABOVE ARE AVAILABLE TO ALL HIRING MANAGERS. DUE TO THEIR CONFIDENTIAL NATURE THEY ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THIS DOCUMENT. YOU MAY CONTACT YOUR HUMAN RESOURCES STAFFING SPECIALIST TO OBTAIN THESE QUESTIONS, BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN THESE QUESTIONS IN A SECURED LOCATION.

THESE QUESTIONS WILL ONLY BE EFFECTIVE IF APPLICANTS PARTICIPATING IN THE SELECTION INTERVIEW DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THEM. PLEASE BE MINDFUL THAT MANY APPLICANTS FOR MANY POSITIONS ARE OUR OWN EMPLOYEES. IF THESE QUESTIONS ARE RELEASED THEY WILL NO LONGER BE EFFECTIVE.

Instructions For Interviewers

INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS

As part of this process you are responsible for assessing each candidate for the position based on the identified criteria. This requires your good and fair judgment of the candidate's potential for effective performance in this position, and a careful evaluation of the quality of his/her experience, skills and attributes.

During the interview process, candidates are to be evaluated from a general perspective of experience, training, and expertise. Based on your own judgment and knowledge, you should evaluate the diversity, duration, and relevance of each applicant's training, experience, and expertise as it pertains to the responsibilities of the position.

Remember that all candidate information is CONFIDENTIAL. You may not discuss who applied for the position, outcome of interviews or any other information pertinent to the candidates with anyone who is not DIRECTLY involved in the process. Questions from individuals not directly involved in the process should be referred to the HR Specialist who conducted the recruitment.

Prior to, during, and at the conclusion of the interview, the panel members and/or chair of the panel should consider the following:

- Greet applicant in the waiting area.
- Provide applicant with a copy of the job announcement and interview questions for review prior to the start of the interview. Allowing time to prepare answers to questions will reduce anxiety, ensure more comprehensive information is provided and save time during the interview. Make sure the same amount of time is provided to each candidate.
- Once the applicant is brought in to be interviewed, introduce your panel members. Try to put the applicant at ease.
- Describe the selection interview process including how much time you have set aside for the interview.
- Ask all applicants the same questions.
 - **Follow up questions for clarification are allowed**
 - **Follow up questions to seek additional information is not**
- Have each member of the panel ask at least one question.
- Listen to the applicant; refrain from doing too much talking.
- During the interview process, **only job related information should be considered.** Special care must be taken to ensure that all applicants are treated the same. Any reference to race, gender, ethnicity, medical or disability status, national origin, marital status, age, pregnancy, number or ages of children, plans to have children, lifestyle, religion, organization/club membership, arrest record, credit affairs, associating with current employees or other non-job-related criteria must be avoided. Even if the applicant brings up the issue, do not pursue it, return to job related information. Should you need specific guidance in this area, please contact the Office of Human Resources (OHR).
- Stay focused on the job and its requirements. Remember, any oral statement that an interviewer makes during the interview can lead to potential liability.
- At the conclusion of your planned questions, allow time to answer any questions the applicant may have regarding the position.

- End the interview on a friendly note, thank the applicant for his/her interest and describe the next step including duration of interviews, and when a decision will be made.
- Although you are selling the job and the organization, remain realistic.

During the interview process you should:

- Review all information provided. Including questions, resume if provided prior to the interview.
- Take notes on an applicant's responses to the questions as they are speaking. Do not try to evaluate their response until they have left the room.
- Once the candidate has left the room, weigh strengths and weaknesses of experience and training within each area and use your own judgment in determining the best evaluation for each candidate using the individual evaluation form.
- Evaluate each criteria separately, do not let your evaluation in one area influence your evaluation of a candidate relative to other areas.
- An individual evaluation form should be completed by each interviewer for each candidate. Refer to your notes and decide on a tentative evaluation for each candidate for each of the competency areas.
- Once you have completed your individual evaluation you should discuss strengths and weaknesses in each area with other interviewers to determine a final evaluation. Consensus is the best determinant as it takes into consideration the perspectives of each interviewer. Interviewers should complete one consensus form for each candidate.
- All interviewers must discuss each candidate, if an interviewer does not speak up you need to ensure they provide their opinions before making final determinations on each candidate.
- It is not necessary for your individual evaluations to match the evaluations of the other interviewers or the consensus form. It should be viewed as your preliminary evaluation and should be subject to change once you discuss the candidate's responses with the other interviewers.
- Remember most specific job tasks can be learned on the job. Your primary focus should be in looking for the individual(s) with the potential and interest to succeed in the position if selected.
- This process is not a mathematical process. Based on the consensus evaluation of which candidates should be hired, the interview panel will make a recommendation of 'recommended' or 'not recommended'. Those you do not recommend at this time due to a particular number to be sent forward or other factors should be recommended for 'consideration at a later date'.
- Any particular notes interviewers feel the hiring authority should consider may be provided in the section labeled 'notes'.
- All interviewers should sign and date the consensus form to indicate they agree with the recommendation. Final documentation for each candidate should consist of the individual evaluation form with each interviewer's notes stapled to the back of each and the consensus form.

Evaluations should be based on one of the following scales:

Five Level Scale (for interviewing larger numbers of applicants):

Well Below Average – applicant is not capable of performing the duties/responsibilities of this position as they relate to the functional area under review. He/she has no substantive experience relative to this area.

Below Average – applicant is somewhat capable of performing the responsibilities of this position as they relate to the functional area under review. He/she has some relevant knowledge/experience relative to this area but would require a substantive amount of training to adequately perform in this area.

Average – applicant is adequately prepared to assume responsibility for the functional area under review. However, applicant does not possess a high level of expertise in the area and would require an average amount of training to perform at an effective level.

Above Average – applicant has credentials significantly above the average candidate and would be considered well qualified in the functional area under review. Applicant reveals a high level of knowledge/experience and would require a small amount of training to be competent in this area.

Well Above Average – applicant has outstanding credentials and would be considered very highly qualified in the functional area under review. Applicant reveals an expert level of knowledge/experience such that no additional training would be required for applicant to perform in this functional area. Superior candidate.

Three Level Scale (for interviewing smaller numbers of applicants):

Below Average – applicant is not capable of performing the duties/responsibilities of this position as they relate to the functional area under review. He/she has no substantive experience relative to this area.

Average – applicant is adequately prepared to assume responsibility for the functional area under review. However, applicant does not possess a high level of expertise in the area and would require an average amount of training to perform at an effective level.

Above Average – applicant has outstanding credentials and would be considered very highly qualified in the functional area under review. Applicant reveals an expert level of knowledge/experience such that no additional training would be required for applicant to perform in this functional area. Superior candidate.

Selection Panel Evaluation Forms

Selection Panel Individual Evaluation Form (5 category scale)

Selection Panel Individual Evaluation Form (3 category scale)

Selection Panel Consensus Evaluation Form (5 category scale)

Selection Panel Consensus Evaluation Form (3 category scale)

FIVE CATEGORY SELECTION PANEL INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION FORM

(Job Title)

APPLICANT: _____

COMPETENCIES	WELL BELOW AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE	WELL ABOVE AVERAGE
Fill in competency to be evaluated here and the question numbers that will relate to those competencies (see examples below)					
<i>Competency #1: Job Qualifications</i>					
Question #1					
Question #4					
Question #5					
<i>Competency #2: Sound Judgment/Problem Solving</i>					
Question #2					
Question #3					
Question #4					
Question #5					
<i>Competency #3 Results Orientation</i>					
Question #1 (2 nd part)					
Question #2 (overlap with job qualifications)					
Question #6					
Question #7					

Signature

Date

Notes:

THREE CATEGORY SELECTION PANEL INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION FORM

_____ (Job Title)

APPLICANT: _____

COMPETENCIES	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE
Fill in competency to be evaluated here and the question numbers that will relate to those competencies (see examples below)			
Competency #1: Job Qualifications			
Question #1			
Question #4			
Question #5			
Competency #2: Sound Judgment/Problem Solving			
Question #2			
Question #3			
Question #4			
Question #5			
Competency #3 Results Orientation			
Question #1 (2 nd part)			
Question #2 (overlap with job qualifications)			
Question #6			
Question #7			

Signature

Date

Notes:

FIVE CATEGORY SELECTION PANEL CONSENSUS EVALUATION FORM

_____ (Job Title)

APPLICANT: _____

COMPETENCIES	WELL BELOW AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE	WELL ABOVE AVERAGE
Fill in competency to be evaluated here and the question numbers that will relate to those competencies (see examples below)					
Competency #1: Job Qualifications					
Question #1					
Question #4					
Question #5					
Competency #2: Sound Judgment/Problem Solving					
Question #2					
Question #3					
Question #4					
Question #5					
Competency #3 Results Orientation					
Question #1 (2 nd part)					
Question #2 (overlap with job qualifications)					
Question #6					
Question #7					

Panel Recommendation:
Consider at a later date _____

Recommended _____

Not Recommended _____

Signature

Date

Notes:

THREE CATEGORY SELECTION PANEL CONSENSUS EVALUATION FORM

_____ (Job Title)

APPLICANT: _____

COMPETENCIES	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE
Fill in competency to be evaluated here and the question numbers that will relate to those competencies (see examples below)			
<i>Competency #1: Job Qualifications</i>			
Question #1			
Question #4			
Question #5			
<i>Competency #2: Sound Judgment/Problem Solving</i>			
Question #2			
Question #3			
Question #4			
Question #5			
<i>Competency #3 Results Orientation</i>			
Question #1 (2 nd part)			
Question #2 (overlap with job qualifications)			
Question #6			
Question #7			

Panel Recommendation:
 Consider at a later date _____

Recommended _____

Not Recommended _____

Signature

Date

Notes:

Rating Biases

RATING BIASES

When people evaluate the performance of others, bias can creep into the process. Described below are eight types of rating bias.

First Impression Effect - This bias evidences itself when a candidate does very well at the beginning of the process (i.e., exercise, questions, etc.), but then "poops out". The rater observing this candidate may become so impressed with that early behavior that a high rating is given, even though the total behavior warranted a lower rating. Related to this rating error is the Last Impression or Recency Effect where behavior occurring at the end of the process, good or bad, is given undue weight by not taking into consideration the total behavior.

Halo Effect - This bias evidences itself in the tendency to allow a candidate's performance on one dimension to influence the rating on all the other dimensions, even when there is little evidence for such ratings on those other dimensions. It is important that raters try to keep the dimensions as distinct as possible. For example, a candidate may show a great deal of effective written communication skill, but this does not necessarily imply an equal amount of decision making, problem analysis, or judgment skills. Related to this rating error is the Horn Effect where a candidate does poorly in one area and is seen to be deficient in all areas (e.g., nonverbal cues). Some of the dimensions are closely related, of course, and skill in one area often goes along with skill in another. Nevertheless, careful attention to the amount of actual behavior justifying a rating will help to avoid this type of rating bias.

Leniency Effect - This bias evidences itself in the tendency to be an "easy" rater. It is often less offensive to be generous than it is to make objective, but lower, ratings. Conversely there is also the tendency, among a fewer number of raters, to be excessively and unjustifiably harsh. The key is to focus attention on the behavior observed in the process.

Central Tendency Effect - This bias evidences itself in the predisposition to "play it safe" by avoiding the use of extreme ratings, even when they are called for and justified. Sometimes raters fail to assign a high or low rating on the assumption that no candidate could be that bad or good. However, it is very important to make fair distinctions among the candidates, and the full range of scores should therefore be utilized.

Contrast Effect - This bias evidences itself when a particular candidate's evaluation is influenced by the evaluation of the preceding candidate. For example, when two candidates are rated consecutively who are quite far apart due to the differences between them, an average candidate can appear excessively good or excessively bad in contrast to the other very "low" or "high" candidate, respectively. Once again, the key is to focus upon the actual amount and nature of the behavior observed.

Similar-To-Me-Effect - This bias, also known as the Similarity effect, evidences itself when candidates remind you of your own approach to situations thereby resulting in higher ratings than are justified. The reverse situation can also occur, resulting in lower ratings than the actual behavior would dictate. Here it is important to remember that the rater is not the one being evaluated, and the candidate is not the rater.

Stereotyping - This bias evidences itself when a rater forms generalizations about how people of a given gender, religion, or race think, act, feel or respond. The key is to focus on what a candidate actually says or does and not on what the candidate is expected to demonstrate.

Negative Emphasis - This bias evidences itself when undue weight is given to negative information. Often without realizing it, raters attach a significant amount of weight to unfavorable information, far more than they attach to positive information. The important thing is to focus on the actual amount of behavior demonstrated and weigh factors accurately.

It should be realized that the rating biases described above may influence rater evaluations. This does not mean that they automatically will have some impact. Awareness of the types of rating bias which may occur however is an important step in reducing their potential effects.

Interview Subjects

INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

SUBJECT	ILLEGAL	LEGAL IF JOB RELATED
AGE	Any question which tends to identify applicants between 40-64 years of age is illegal. EXAMPLE: "Do you remember the 1940 election?"	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject. The HR Specialist may verify age, if necessary, to ensure legally set minimum age limits are met.
CITIZENSHIP	Any of the following questions can not be asked: Are you a citizen of the United States? Are your parents/spouses a US citizen? When did you acquire US citizenship? Are you/spouse/parent native born or naturalized?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject. The HR Specialist may verify citizenship requirements, if they exist for the job being filled.
NATIONAL ORIGIN	Any of the following questions can not be asked: What language is spoken in your home? What is your native language?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject.
RACE/COLOR	You may not ask any question that directly or indirectly relates to race or color.	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject.
RELIGION	The following questions can not be asked: What church do you attend? What religious holidays do you observe?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject.
DISABILITY	You may not ask if someone has a disability, about someone's medical history, or if a medical condition affects the person's abilities.	You may ask if a person can perform specific duties of the job.
SEX	You may not ask any question which inquires as to one's gender. For example, what are your plans regarding having children in the near future? Do you mind having a male/female supervisor? Can you work with a group of men/women?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject.
MARITAL STATUS/FAMILY	Many of the following questions can not be asked: Are you married? Divorced? Widowed? With whom do you live? Do your children live with you? What ages are your children? Is your husband/wife in the military?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject. The HR Specialist may verify if other family members work in the County for administrative purposes.
EDUCATION	You may not ask questions that specifically ask the nationality, racial, or religious affiliation of a school; the candidate's education level in general, if not related to the job being filled.	You may ask questions concerning a candidate's academic, vocation, or professional education as long as it pertains to KSAs related to the position being filled.

ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION	You may not ask the following question: To what organization, societies and clubs do you belong?	You may ask questions related to this subject if they are related to the job being filled and how the candidate's participation in the organization may fulfill the KSAs.
POLICE RECORD	Do not ask: Have you ever been arrested?	If the job being filled has special requirements (i.e., bonding), you may ask a question such as: In order to fill this job, you must be bonded. Is there any problem that this presents?
WORK SCHEDULE/TRAVEL	Do not ask any questions that relate to child care, ages of children or other non job-related areas.	If the job being filled has special requirements (i.e., travel, overtime, unusual hours, etc.) these conditions may be stated. For example: In this job you would have to travel 1 week in every month. Does this present a problem to you?
MILITARY DISCHARGE	The following question may not be asked: Were you honorably discharged from military service?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject. The HR Specialist may verify this information if there is a requirement to do so.
ECONOMIC STATUS	The following questions may not be asked: Do you have a good credit rating? Do you have any trouble with bills/collection agencies?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject.
SECURITY CLEARANCE	The following question may not be asked: Do you have a secret/top secret/other security clearance?	If the job to be filled requires a certain type of security clearance, this condition may be stated. For example: "This job requires a top secret clearance. Does this requirement present any problem?"
PERSONAL PLANS	The following question may not be asked: Do you have plans to live in this area long?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject.
PARTICIPATION IN CERTAIN ACTIVITIES	Do not ask the following questions: Do you plan to take savings bonds/contribute to the Combined Federal Campaign/join the coffee club/join the Air Force Association?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject.
MISCELLANEOUS	You should not ask any question that is not job related or necessary for determining a candidate's possession of required KSAs.	You may notify the candidate that statements, misstatements or omissions of significant facts may be cause for non-selection.

Reference Check Form

REFERENCE CHECK FORM

The reference check form may be submitted as a written request but reference checks are better conducted on the telephone. This format may be modified for use with different positions. Check 2 references. Ask follow-up questions as necessary.

Applicant: _____ Position: _____
Contact: _____ Tel/E-mail: _____
Organization: _____
Address: _____

(Identify yourself.) The above-named person has applied to us for employment. He/She has listed you as a former employer and has authorized us to conduct a reference check. We need your assistance in verifying and providing certain information regarding his/her work performance.

1. _____ worked in the _____ department as a(n) _____ from _____ to _____ () correct; () incorrect. If incorrect, please explain.
2. His/Her primary responsibilities were:
3. How would you evaluate his/her overall work performance?
4. This job calls for the ability to be on time to work regularly and consistently. Was punctuality exhibited by him/her while he/she was employed by you? What about absence?
5. What were his/her greatest strengths?
6. What areas required improvement and/or additional training?
7. Describe how he/she responded to new assignments. Please be specific.
8. Tell me about an assignment he/she performed exceptionally well. Also, tell me about a time when he/she performed unsatisfactorily.
9. How effectively did he/she interact with peers? Senior management? Employees? Customers or clients? Please be specific.
10. This position requires the ability to provide excellent customer service to clients/public. What experience did he/she have doing this? What ability did he/she exhibit to multi-task, meet deadlines and provide courteous customer service? How did he/she handle agitated clients?
11. How did he/she react to criticism? Give a specific example.
12. This job calls for the ability to _____.
What experience did he/she have in doing this? (This question can be expanded to encompass several different factors. Use your job description as a guide.)
13. How would you compare his/her work on termination with his/her work performance at the time of hire?
14. Is there anything else we should know about his/her work performance?
15. Would you rehire him/her? () Yes () No. If not, why not?

Reference conducted by: _____ Date: _____

Reference Check Questions

Candidate's Name: _____

Position (being considered for): _____

Date: _____ Reference (person contacted): _____

Title: _____ Organization: _____

Phone: _____

Completed by: _____

1. Can you verify the following information?
 - a. Dates of employment:
 - b. Salary:
2. In what capacity do you know (candidate's name)?
3. Please give a brief description of the current or previous duties for the position this candidate held.
4. Did you evaluate (candidate's) performance? Can you speak to candidate's strong and weak points?
5. Can you tell me about candidate's attendance/dependability?
6. What was/is the reason for separation from your organization?
7. Is this individual eligible for rehire?
8. How did the candidate relate with others? (customers, co-workers and management)
9. Did you ever have to discipline for gross misconduct *or violations of rules*?
10. If the vacancy requires supervisory experience, include the following? *
 - a. Was the candidate's position one that included supervisory or lead worker responsibilities?
 - b. How many workers did this individual supervise?
 - c. How would you characterize applicant's performance as a supervisor?
11. Is there anything I haven't asked that you would like to share about this candidate's work performance?

*Position specific questions can be used (i.e. customer service skills, specialized or unique skills)