



## **A GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWING**

**Interviews are much more effective if they have a consistent format. A suggested structure is presented below. Questions should be prepared in advance and asked of all candidates.**

### **Open the Discussion**

1. Thank the applicant for his/her time.
2. Introduce the interviewers.
3. Mention that you will a) ask the applicant questions to learn more about his / her qualifications, b) provide information to the applicant about the position, then 3) answer any questions that the applicant has.

### **Ask for Information**

4. Begin with lead-in questions to obtain general information.
5. Follow with job-specific questions based upon the position description, especially the key responsibilities.
6. End with wrap-up questions to provide closure.

(The “Planning Your Interview Questions” section gives examples of possible questions. Before the interview, search committee members should decide which questions each of them will ask. During the interview, it is helpful to make notes.)

### **Provide Information to the Applicant**

7. Describe your parish’s mission, organization, and demographics.
8. Explain the key responsibilities of the position and provide a position description (if the applicant did not receive one prior to the interview).
9. Give the applicant a booklet outlining employee benefits, which is available from the Diocesan Office for Administration.

### **Respond to Questions from the Applicant**

10. Allow the applicant to ask questions so he / she obtains an accurate understanding of the position and the parish.

### **Close the Discussion**

11. Give the applicant a Diocesan employment application to complete and return (if the applicant has not already done so).
12. Explain any next steps (such as second interviews) that may occur and when a decision is expected to be made.
13. Thank the applicant again.

### **LEGALITY OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Federal and state laws restrict the questions that can be asked during an interview.

**The following questions may not be asked:**

Are you disabled?

Do you have adequate child care? (Discriminates against women)

What is your ancestry or nationality?

Where is your place of birth?

How old are you? What is your date of birth? When did you graduate from high school? (It is legal, however, to ask if a person is under 18 years of age.)

What is your marital status?

What is your maiden name?

Have you been arrested? (Inquiries can only be made about convictions, not arrests.)

Where does your spouse work?

How old are your children?

Have you had a major illness in the past year?

How many years do you plan to work before you retire?

Do you smoke? (Indiana State law prohibits discrimination against tobacco users. However, employers can have policies that prohibit smoking in the workplace.)

Are you a citizen of the United States? (Discriminates against citizens of other countries who can legally work in the United States.)

What is your religion, denomination, church affiliation or parish? (Questions about religion can only be asked if employment necessity and work relatedness establish them as required occupational qualifications. Religion should be a required qualification when being a practicing Catholic will positively affect the staff member's ability to perform the ministerial duties of the position. Examples include Director of Religious Education or Youth Ministry Coordinator. However, for positions such as Parish Secretary or Maintenance Coordinator, religion is not a required qualification in most circumstances.)

## **PLANNING YOUR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **I. Lead-In Questions**

#### **What to Ask:**

1. Why did you apply for this position?
2. Why do you want to work for our parish?
3. What would be the ideal job for you at this point of your career?
4. What are your greatest strengths/

#### **What to Listen for:**

- \* Reasons for making a job change.
- \* Expectations and whether or not they are realistic.
- \* Commitment to our mission.
- \* Fit within our culture.
- \* Idealistic or realistic expectations.
- \* Clarity of career interests.
- \* Fit between interests and your job requirements.
- \* Degree of self-awareness.

weaknesses? (follow-up by asking for an example)

\* Match of strengths to job needs and requirements.

5. What type of work would you like to be doing in five years?

\* Clarity of career goals.  
\* Interest in promotion.  
\* Risk of turnover.

6. What did you like most / least about your not last position?

\* Personal likes / dislikes and whether or they may be present in our organization.

7. How would your supervisor / co-workers describe you? (follow-up by asking for an example)

\* Perceptions of what others consider to be your strengths and weaknesses (can be verified through reference checks).

8. What were your greatest Accomplishments On your last job?

\* Degree to which the applicant contributed to improvements versus just performing activities.

9. What motivates you?

\* Whether the motivator is something we can provide.

10. What was the most difficult problem that you had to solve on your last job and how did you go about solving it?

\* Personal approach to problem solving; degree of involvement of others; persistence in the face of adversity.

11. Describe a situation in which you had to deal with conflict at your last job.

\* Conflict management style (avoidance, competition, accommodation, compromise, or collaboration).

12. Give me examples of things that your previous supervisor did that you particularly liked.

\* Preferred management style; expectations of supervisor and whether or not they are realistic.

## **II. Job Specific Questions**

Review the position description with particular attention to the key responsibilities of the position. Prepare questions to assess competency for each key responsibility. In your questions, emphasize past performance, not hypothetical situations. If necessary, also include questions about working conditions (willingness to work evenings or weekends, travel, etc.).

## **III. Wrap-Up Questions**

### **What to Ask:**

1. Can you work the hours required for this position?
2. What are your salary expectations?
3. We are interviewing several very qualified applicants. Why should we select you?
4. Is there anything else that you'd like to tell me about yourself and your qualifications for this position?
5. If the position was offered to you, how soon could you start work?

### **What to Listen for:**

- \* Any conflicts with work schedule. (Important: We must make reasonable accommodations for time off due to disabilities.)
- \* Whether expectations are within our range.
- \* Perceived strengths and if they apply to job requirements.
- \* Any special qualifications as well as degree of interest in the position.
- \* Anticipated starting date and whether or not that would cause any problems for your parish.