

Interview Questions

Sample Interview Questions

(It is recommended that a maximum of 10 questions be selected for a single interview.)

- What interested you about this volunteer position?
- Is there an aspect of our mission that motivates you to want to volunteer?
- Tell me the story of how you chose your education program OR career path OR life work?
- Have you volunteered in the past?
 - Yes: What have you enjoyed most about previous volunteer work?
 - No: What have you enjoyed most about previous paid work or other activities?
- Are you involved in other organized activities?
- What special skills would you like to utilize as a volunteer?
- Are there tasks that you do not want to do as a volunteer?
- Can you briefly talk about your experiences as they relate to this position?
- What would you say are three of your strengths?
- Do you prefer working independently or with a group?
- What would be the ideal volunteer job for you – and why?
- Describe your ideal supervisor.
- What are your expectations of our organization? Of our employees?
- What are your personal goals for this experience?
- Do you have any concerns about what we expect of you?
- Are you willing to make a time commitment of _____?
- Are you interested in some training pertinent to this position?
- Are you willing to provide training in your area of expertise to other volunteers or staff members?
- Do you have any questions that you would like to ask us?

Why should we interview volunteers?

- To give the volunteer sufficient information to make a decision about volunteering for your organization.
- To demonstrate that you take the volunteer's involvement seriously.
- To gain factual information about the volunteer, complete contact information and references if needed or appropriate.
- To explore whether there is a match between what is needed/offered by the organization/volunteer.

What do we want to find out?

- Do you want to engage this volunteer?
- What are the volunteer's expectations?
- Why does the volunteer want to volunteer for your organization?
- What tasks are appropriate for the volunteer?
- What are the limitations that might influence what tasks the volunteer can undertake?
- What are the volunteer's interests, skills, knowledge and experience?
- When is the volunteer available to work?
- How much support or supervisions will the volunteer need?
- What are the volunteer's attitudes toward your organization – its mission, philosophy, constituency, etc?

Who conducts the interview?

- Often conducted by the person who is generally responsible for managing volunteers
- Existing volunteers often have a good understanding of new/potential volunteers' feelings.
- Involving traditionally under-represented groups as interviewers and decision makers helps break down barriers and reach people from those under-represented groups
- A panel of interviewers may be intimidating; perhaps the volunteer may be interviewed more than once, allowing for different perspectives or a second opinion

Where should the interview take place?

- A quiet location that allows for respect of the volunteer's privacy
- An environment that is comforting, welcoming, easy to find and accessible to all parties

What preparations are needed before the interview?

- Coffee, tea or water and perhaps snacks should be available.
- The interviewer should have a structured framework within which to work.
- The job description should be at hand.
- To make sure all volunteers are treated equally, they should all be asked the same range of questions.
- Simple, unthreatening questions should be prepared, since the volunteer may be uneasy about the perceived imbalance of power (volunteer vs. professional) to start with.
- A brief summary of relevant information about your organization should be prepared; bombarding the volunteer with lots of facts and details should be avoided.
- Information about the selection procedures, training, benefits, reimbursements, etc. should be available.
- Interviewers should avoid using jargon.

Considerations in evaluating the interview questions/process

- If you found yourself skipping certain questions, why?
- Which questions seemed to work? Which questions didn't work? Why?
- What factors about the interview (location, environment, choice of interviewer, etc.) worked or did not work?
- Did the prospective volunteer ask you anything that caught you off guard or you were not expecting?