



TOWN OF ROCKY HILL DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES INTERVIEWING APPLICANTS – BEST PRACTICES

(Rev. 03/05/15)

The goals of an interview are to further evaluate applicants based on their application materials; collect additional information on the applicant's job-related knowledge, skills, abilities, and prior work experience that may enhance qualifications—and then finally, identify the best qualified candidate for the position. You must collect information accurately and consistently to objectively and equitably evaluate the pool of applicants. To that end, you must provide each applicant with substantially similar interview experiences

Keep in mind, that while the search committee's and interviewers' purpose is to evaluate the applicant for the position, the applicant also is assessing the Town and determining if this opportunity is right for him/her. Positive interactions with the search committee and the interviewers may be the deciding factor for the best applicant to accept an offer.

INTERVIEWS VIA PHONE/SKYPE:

Telephone and Skype interviews are an efficient way of reducing a large group of qualified applicants down to more of a manageable list. If the search committee decides to conduct phone/Skype interviews for the first round of interviews, all applicants must be interviewed using a comparable method.

If an applicant requests an interview via phone/Skype due to geographical location or other circumstances following an invitation for an in-person interview, the search committee may change interviewing methods for that applicant.

The same best practices listed below apply to a phone/Skype interview.

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW:

- Notify each applicant about the interview and logistics. Send a letter or e-mail confirming the interview. **Sample confirmation letters are available from Human Resources.**
- Make sure that all applicants are provided with comparable travel, transportation, and/or hotel arrangements. Arrange for hosts or escorts to and from the Town Hall campus, if and where appropriate.
- Give all applicants an equal opportunity to meet with the entire search committee, department members, and other stakeholders.
- If the applicant will be expected to provide a job talk or presentation, ensure in advance that all technical needs are discussed at the time of scheduling interviews, and can be accommodated.

- If an applicant requires an accommodation for a disability, contact Human Resources for further assistance.

DEVELOPING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Review Human Resource's Guidelines regarding interviews to ensure that all questions are non-discriminatory and legally permissible.
- Develop questions related to the job duties and required qualifications described in the job description and job posting. Craft open-ended and behavioral questions (see samples provided by Human Resources) that prompt the candidate to offer information about his/her skills and encourage applicants to "do the talking", as such provides the best insight into an applicant's qualifications for the position. Avoid questions that require a "yes" or "no" response.
- Develop questions that will allow the committee to make an objective assessment of each applicant and minimize bias.
- Ask the same core group of questions of each applicant so the search committee can conduct a comparative evaluation and ensure the interview process is consistent for all applicants. Follow-up questions can be asked to clarify answers or address individual experience or skills.
- Determine how questions will be posed by the committee and assign questions to members, where appropriate.

THE INTERVIEW:

- Plan for someone to greet the applicant upon arrival. Prepare a designated area where applicants can wait for the interview to begin and where the applicant will not encounter other applicants if multiple interviews are scheduled in one day.
- Introduce search committee members to the applicant prior to beginning the interview.
- Describe the format of the interview and the interview process as a whole.
- Share pertinent background information about the job, department, and the Town.
- Remember the applicant should do the majority of the talking during an interview.
- Keep your reactions to an applicant's answers to yourself. Try not to influence other search committee members as they are evaluating the applicant.
- Keep the interview moving and on schedule.
- Leave time for applicant questions.
- At the end of the interview, inform the applicant that you will be checking references and ask if you can pursue references not provided by the applicant.
- Describe the remainder of the search process, how applicants will be notified of the search committee's decision, and the anticipated timetable.

Ensure that every employee involved in the interview process has reviewed the Town's guidelines and is aware of inappropriate topics. It is very important to remember that all time

spent with the applicant, whether in a formal interview or in an informal social setting, is considered part of the interview process. Questions that are inappropriate or illegal in an interview context must also be avoided in a social setting (i.e.: coffee, meals, car rides, one-on-one meetings).

POST-INTERVIEW

Evaluations of the applicants must be related to qualifications and must be based on the applicant's performance in the interview and/or presentation combined with the strength of their written application materials.

Depending on the charge given by the hiring manager, search committees may recommend candidates for hire or provide a ranked/unranked list of the top number of candidates.

Each applicant, especially those that were interviewed, has made an investment of time and resources in the search process and it is important the applicants are treated in a manner that acknowledges that effort. A decline letter should be sent from the search chair or hiring manager. By the end of the search, each applicant should have received a communication regarding his/her status—the number one complaint from applicants is not hearing about their status in a search.

Following the selection decisions, the members of the search committee should discuss and evaluate the search process and forward suggestions to Human Resources.