

Interviewing Tips



A job interview can be described as a mutual "exchange of information" because it provides the candidate with an opportunity to both gain information about the department and position, and to discuss his/her own skills, and career goals in relation to the job.

Interviewing helps managers determine three things before they make a hiring decision:

- 1. Can you do the job?**
Managers want to know if you possess the necessary knowledge and abilities to successfully perform the duties of the job.
- 2. Are you motivated to do the job?**
Managers want to know if you are interested in the job and if you will do the job with consistent effort.
- 3. Are you a good fit in the organization?**
Managers want to know if your work ethic, values, and goals are consistent with the organization, if you will be a team player, and how well you will work with the team.

Preparation is an important part of the interview process. The time you spend preparing prior to the interview will be time well spent in your job search process. The following are some tips on what you can do to prepare yourself before, during, and after a job interview.

Before the Interview

- Review the Job Specification and Position Description. Job Specifications can be found at www.michigan.gov/mdcs under Job Specifications/Pay and Position Descriptions are attached to the job posting.
- Learn more about the department by visiting their web page.
- Review your résumé and be prepared to discuss your relevant skills.
- Decide who your references are. They should be a current or past supervisor, coworker, teacher/professor or associate who has knowledge of your work history, skills, abilities, accomplishments, initiative, education and integrity. Get permission to use their name in advance and collect their current contact information (including e-mail address).
- Bring extra copies of your résumé and a notebook.
- Dress for Success - Appearance should reflect maturity and self-confidence. Be neat, clean, and dress in good taste.
- Find out where the interview will be, obtain clear directions, and confirm the time. Plan to arrive 10- 15 minutes early.

During the Interview

- Relax! Think of the interview as a conversation, not an interrogation.
- Be enthusiastic, confident, courteous, and honest.
- Listen to the questions carefully and give clear, concise, and thoughtful answers.
- Convey interest in the organization and knowledge of the position.
- Ask relevant questions about the job or department.
- Present a list of your references and any letters of recommendation or reference that you may have to offer.
- End the interview with a firm handshake and thank the interview panel for their time and consideration.

After the Interview

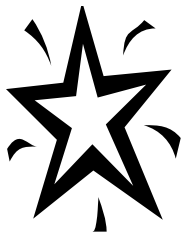
- Send a concise 1 - 3 paragraph thank-you letter within 24 to 48 hours of the interview. Reiterate your interest in the position, mention anything you know reinforces you as a good fit for the job, and your contact information.
- If you are not selected for the job, it is OK to politely ask an interviewer which area(s) you could improve on in the future!

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Preparing for the Interview

Behavior Based Interviewing



A Behavior Based Interview (BBI) is based on the belief that past performance is the best predictor of

future performance. Therefore, expect to be asked to describe a situation or task you encountered, what action you took, and what the outcome was. We commonly refer to this as the STAR approach:

S= Situation

T= Task

A= Action

R= Results

Watch our online training video at www.michigan.gov/mdcs, click on MI Careers and then click on the BBI Training Video link and learn more about how to prepare yourself for a BBI. Read the Competencies so you can begin planning and practicing what "stories" you will share. Arm yourself with negative situations too and be prepared to say how you made the best of a bad situation and learned something in the process.

Interviews are a two-way process so you should ask questions to learn more about the job and the organization. Below are questions for you to ask:

- Where does this job fit into the organizational structure?
- What qualities do the people possess that have already been successful in this job?
- What kind of orientation and training are available to new employees?

Questions to ask yourself

To help you develop information about "you," ask yourself these questions:

Your Qualifications

- What qualifications do you have that relate to the position?
- What skills or abilities have you developed recently?
- What are some examples from a previous job where you've shown initiative?
- What have been your greatest accomplishments?
- What is important to you in a job?
- What motivates you in your work?
- What qualities do you find important in a manager or a coworker?

Your Career Goals

- What would you like to be doing five years from now?
- How will you judge yourself to be a success? How will you achieve success?
- What type of position are you interested in?
- How will this job fit in your career plans?
- What do you expect from this job?
- When can you start?

Your Work Experience

- What have you learned from your past jobs?
- What are/were your major responsibilities?
- What specific skills used in previous jobs relate to this position?
- How does your previous experience relate to this position?
- What did you like most/least about your last job?

Your Education

- How has your education prepared you for this position?
- What were your favorite classes/activities at school?
- Why did you choose your major?
- Do you plan to continue your education?