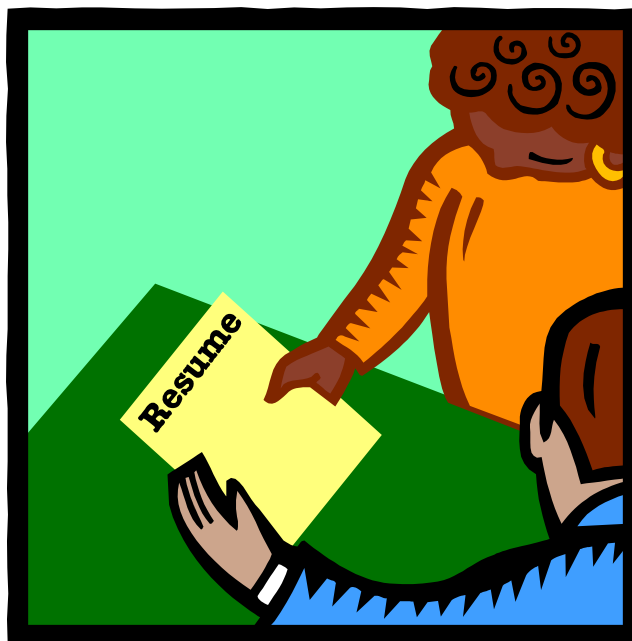


Employment Interviewing for Success in Public Child Welfare



This workshop is part of a ten-day child welfare supervisor curriculum Committed to Excellence through Supervision, developed with funding from the Children’s Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Grant #90CT0111

Interviewing for Success in Public Child Welfare

Learning Objectives.

A participant in this workshop will be able to:

- 1) Identify at least three elements of effective interviews.
- 2) Describe elements of the four interview styles.
- 3) Describe at least three strengths of behavioral based interviewing techniques in assessing for applicant's fit (i.e., knowledge, skills, values) for position.
- 4) Describe examples of pre-screening tools used to more accurately assess and forecast applicant's suitability to employment in public child welfare.
- 5) Decrease the role of bias in interviewing through exploration of subtle patterns in assessing applicants' qualifications and suitability.
- 6) Integrate "best practices" shared by peers in workshop and as a result of collective input across all cohorts.

Learning Activities

- Red Light; Green Light: The Best Hire Ever....Qualities; Warning signs from the worst
- Developing Behavioral-based Questions
- Review Michigan DHS "Realistic Job Preview" DVD

Resource Packet

- Components of a Successful Selection Process
- Four Interview Styles
- Types of Interview Questions
- Examples of Behavioral Based Questions
- Asking the Questions Activity
- Realistic Job Preview
- Common Pitfalls in Employment Interviewing
- Over Fifty Ways Culture Influences Us
- What's in a Name?
- Summary Guide to Application Pre-Employment Questions
- Tips for Effective Reference Checking
- Iowa Department of Administrative Services, Low-Cost Recruitment Strategies

Components of a Successful Selection Process

1) Develop Job Description and Task Analysis

2) Prepare Interviewers

- Interview Team: If more than one person, be intentional about creating diverse teams
- Create Interview Plan: Specific set of questions and activities that will be required: assignment; rating documents
- Review Elements of Effective Interviews
- Inoculate for Unconscious Bias: Offer reading packet (e.g., “What’s in a Name?,” “Permissible/Impermissible Inquiries”); openly engage in commitment to avoid bias

3) Recruit Applicants: Formal & Informal

4) Prepare Applicants

- Organization Public Relations Materials (written/verbal): This may include job descriptions, brochures, etc.
- Realistic Job Preview: Job Description, Day-in-the-Life Vignette (written/visual)

5) Screen Applicants

- Review resumé and any required work sample (e.g., writing sample, portfolio, letter of reference)
- Phone conversation/interview

6) Conduct Employment Interview

- Open the interview and establish rapport
- Use consistent and multiple methods to assess K-V-S
 - **Behavioral-based questions**, re: work samples, Response to assigned tasks, Applicant walk-through in work environment
- Exchange information per candidate’s questions
- Close the Interview: Thank for interviewing; Inform of remaining process

7) Document and Assess Individual Qualifications

- Document all relevant information, including observations made during informal interactions when touring the agency
- Compare candidate to qualifications, not to previous or other interviewees.
- Rate each candidate according to “fit” with job qualifications, not as compared to other candidates
- If team, rank candidates and review assessments with other interviewers
- Agree upon top three candidates
- Check references on all three or top candidate
- Make final selection

8) Evaluate and Select

9) Make the Offer

10) Close with Other Candidates

11) Ensure Effective Use of Probationary Period

Four Interview Styles

Personal Rapport

Interviewer spends time building personal rapport with candidate; subjectively assesses desirable personal attributes; uses intuition to make judgment about applicant's "fit" in organization.

Make or Break

Interviewer remains emotionally detached from applicant. Delivers questions in such a way to assess how applicant does under stress; makes quick assessment using narrow range of personal attributes and job qualifications.

Information Exchange

Interviewer is focused on formal qualifications for position; seeks specific facts about the candidate (e.g., dates, numbers, degrees); also spends extensive time in interview giving information about the organization and asking candidate if they have questions.

Mutual Exchange

Interviewer prepares self and candidate to engage in directed conversation to develop an interview environment in which needed data is exchanged by both. Multiple methods are used to explore K-V-S in action.

Types of Interview Questions

Rapport Building Questions

- Designed to put the candidate at ease, gain the candidate's confidence, show that you and the organization care about the people you are interviewing, demonstrate to the candidate that this is a good place to work, and get the candidate to talk about past job behavior (Deems, 1994)
 - Example: "I see from your resume that you have volunteered for five years at the Human Society. That must be interesting work! What has been the most rewarding aspect of those five years for you?"

Behavioral Based Questions

- Designed to discover how the interviewee acted in specific employment or related situations in the past. The rationale is that description of previous behavior will best predict future behavior.
 - Example: "Describe a decision you made that was unpopular and how you handled communicating it to others."
- Follow up probing questions will provide more detailed information on the situation.
 - Example: "Thanks for sharing that story; it certainly sounds like it was a challenging interaction. When you had that conversation with your co-worker, what were the specific skills you used to make it so successful?"

Critical Reflection Questions

- Designed to gain additional information and to assess candidate skills at critical reflection on difficult situations.
 - Examples: "Tell me how you wish the situation had turned out differently." "Interesting...what do you see as the elements that most impacted that outcome?" "Can you tell me a time when a similar work experience didn't turn out so positively?"

Examples of Behavioral Based Questions

- Give an example of an occasion when you used logic to solve a problem.
- Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.
- Describe a decision you made that was unpopular and how you handled implementing it.
- Have you gone above and beyond the call of duty? If so, how?
- What do you do when your schedule is interrupted? Give an example of how you handle it.
- Have you had to convince a group of people to work on a project they weren't thrilled about? How did you do it?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker? How?
- Tell me about how you have worked effectively under pressure.

- Source: Adapted from Alison Doyle, Your Guide to Job Searching. Downloaded 6/6/05, Available from:
<http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/interviews/a/behavioral.htm>

Common Pitfalls in Employment Interviews *

Everyone has biases, prejudices, and false assumptions that influence their judgment. When interviewing it is important to minimize these influences so that candidate evaluation is as fair and accurate as possible. Reduction of these influences begins by being able to identify errors associated with the interview process. According to research, the following are some common sources of interview error.

1. Inconsistent Interview Administration

Interviewers can fail to cover material consistently with each applicant and thus possibly give one applicant an advantage over another. For example, one candidate may be given more time. In order to be fair to all candidates (and to conduct a legally defensible interview), the interview should be followed consistently for all candidates.

2. Contrasting Applicants

This is when an interviewer compares one applicant to another, rather than to objective criteria which should have been defined before the interview began. For example, if an average candidate is being interviewed and all the previous interviewees were poor performers, the candidate may be given an excellent rating because the candidate is excellent in comparison to the other applicants. In terms of ability to perform the job, however, the candidate is average.

3. Stereotyping

Sometimes interviewers use stereotypes when evaluating applicants. This can result in: (1) matching people to jobs based on traditional race or gender roles; and (2) hiring people who are similar to the interviewer in background instead of on their ability to do the job.

Handout I-26
Page 2 of 3

4. Closure

If an interviewer does not have enough information about someone, they are likely to form a complete picture by adding information until a final judgment is possible. The accuracy of the added information may be questionable because the interviewer's perception of the applicant will affect the quality of the information they use to form a complete picture. Consequently, an interviewer expecting a good interview answer will

* Bernotavicz, F., Berdie, J., & Hodgins, L. (2005). *Child welfare caseworker competency-based screening curriculum*. Unpublished document. Child Welfare Training Institute, University of Southern Maine: Portland, ME.

typically fill in the desired response when the candidate has not provided enough information. An interviewer expecting a poor answer from the same candidate will likely fill in an incorrect response. Because of this, the interviewer should try, as much as possible, to avoid preconceived ideas and use as many questions and probes as necessary to ensure all relevant information is elicited from the candidate.

5. Halo and Pitchfork Effect

This means allowing a general impression or one particular characteristic of a candidate to affect all evaluations of the individual. Some raters will consistently rate some individuals higher or lower than others not because of actual differences in performance but because of their general impression of the individuals. For example, an applicant who is well dressed, groomed immaculately, and an engaging conversationalist may impress raters to such an extent they tend to be overly generous in their evaluation of the candidate. Or a candidate may respond poorly to the first two questions out of nervousness, with the result that the interviewers fail to rate fairly their responses to subsequent questions. It is important to rate each question and each component of the screening process on its own merits.

6. Responsibility Error

When assessing performance we often view failure or success as a result of personal factors rather than a result of factors outside the control of the individual. Blame or praise is given to the individual rather than taking into account the circumstance surrounding the behavior. For example, a project an applicant was in charge of may have been cut due to insufficient funding rather than the quality of the work. Nevertheless, the applicant is seen less positively for failure to complete a project.

7. Leniency Error

Leniency error is when raters are reluctant to give someone a poor rating. This gives poor candidates an advantage.

8. Central Tendency Error

This refers to the tendency of raters to score a candidate using the middle points of a scale, avoiding the positive and negative extremes. It is the safe rating since no one receives a particularly good or particularly bad rating. The normal impact of this type of error is that it negatively affects particularly good performers while being overly generous with poor performers.

Over Fifty Ways Culture Influences Us

ETIQUETTE AND BEHAVIOR

- How we greet each other.
- What is considered common courtesy.
- What is considered impolite.
- How we show respect and disrespect.
- What is embarrassing.
- What makes us feel good.
- What we eat and how we eat.
- What we wear.
- What we buy and how we behave in stores.
- How often we touch each other and how we touch each other.
- How closely we stand next to each other.
- The holidays we celebrate and the way we celebrate.
- How we use money, credit, and bartering.
- What is risqué.
- How we seek and use health services.
- What we find humorous.
- How we use mass transit.
- Seating placement in a room.

BELIEFS AND VALUES

- What is beautiful or ugly.
- What are worthwhile goals in life.
- The nature of God and other religious beliefs.
- Whether a person is in control of his or her own life or whether fate determines one's life.
- Common sense.
- Our perceived needs.
- Whether privacy is desirable or undesirable.
- Appropriate health care.
- Appropriate personal hygiene.
- What is "right"; what is "wrong".

Adapted from Aguilar, Leslie and Stokes, Linda.
Multicultural Customer Services: Providing Outstanding Service Across Cultures.
Chicago: Irwin Professional Publishing. (1996)

TIME

- How time is scheduled and used.
- Whether schedules are important or unimportant.
- The importance of maintaining tradition.
- The importance of preparing for the future.
- Whether old age is valuable or undesirable.
- The importance of understanding one's history and passing it on.

COMMUNICATION

- The language we speak.
- What should be said; what should be left unsaid.
- What is appropriate "small talk".
- Whom we speak to; to whom we should not speak.
- Whether conversation should be formal or informal.
- The meaning of hand gestures, facial expressions, and other nonverbal communication.
- How often we smile, whom we smile at, and the meaning of a smile.
- In which environments it is "safe" to speak one's mind; in which environments we must censor identity.
- Our tone of voice, use of emotion, use of stories.

HUMAN RELATIONS

- The role of the individual.
- The role and structure of the family.
- The roles of men and how men should behave.
- The roles of women and how women behave.
- The importance of individual competition.
- Social class system.
- Hierarchy in business relationships.
- Interactions between strangers.
- How to interact with a person in authority (e.g., boss, police officer, teacher).
- How to interact with person serving us.
- Relationships and obligations between parents and children and other family members.
- Crowd or audience behavior.

What's in a Name?

Perhaps Plenty if You're a Job Seeker

By Alan B. Krueger

Source: NYTimes.com, December 12, 2002

What's in a name? Evidently plenty if you are looking for a job.

To test whether employers discriminate against black job applicants, Marianne Bertrand of the University of Chicago and Sendhil Mullainathan of M.I.T. conducted an unusual experiment. They selected 1,300 help-wanted ads from newspapers in Boston and Chicago and submitted multiple résumés from phantom job seekers. The researchers randomly assigned the first names on the résumés, choosing from one set that is particularly common among blacks and from another that is common among whites.

So Kristen and Tamika, and Brad and Tyrone, applied for jobs from the same pool of want ads and had equivalent résumés. Nine names were selected to represent each category: black women, white women, black men and white men. Last names common to the racial group were also assigned. Four résumés were typically submitted for each job opening, drawn from a reservoir of 160. Nearly 5,000 applications were submitted from mid-2001 to mid-2002. Professors Bertrand and Mullainathan kept track of which candidates were invited for job interviews.

No single employer was sent two identical résumés, and the names on the résumés were randomly assigned, so applicants with black- and white-sounding names applied for the same set of jobs with the same set of résumés. Apart from their names, applicants had the same experience, education and skills, so employers had no reason to distinguish among them.

The results are disturbing. Applicants with white-sounding names were 50 percent more likely to be called for interviews than were those with black-sounding names. Interviews were requested for 10.1 percent of applicants with white-sounding names and only 6.7 percent of those with black-sounding names.

Within racial groups, applications with men's or women's names were equally likely to result in calls for interviews, providing little evidence of discrimination based on sex in these entry-level jobs.

There were significant differences in interview-request rates among the nine names associated with black women, but not among the names within each of the other groups. At the low end, the interview-request rate was 2.2 percent for Aisha, 3.8 percent for Keisha and 5.4 percent for Tamika, compared with 9.1 percent for Kenya and Latonya and 10.5 percent for Ebony.

Only part of this variability reflects chance differences resulting from sampling, although the authors have not been able to find a good explanation for the wide range. Thus it is important that the names chosen for black women were not uncommon; they represent 7.1 percent of all names listed on Massachusetts birth certificates for black girls from 1974 to 1979.

The 50 percent advantage in interview requests for white-sounding names held in both Boston and Chicago, and for both men and women.

This discrepancy complements findings from earlier studies in which researchers sent a small number of matched black and white "auditors" to apply for jobs in person. Typically, though not always, the black job seekers were less likely to be invited for an interview or offered a job. Those findings, however, were criticized because the applicants knew the intention of the study and might have behaved differently. In addition, the auditors might not have been well matched with the jobs in question; they could have been overqualified or underqualified.

Professors Bertrand and Mullainathan's study is less susceptible to these concerns. First, they used a large number of names and inanimate résumés. Second, the job openings involved administrative, sales, clerical and managerial positions, and they submitted résumés patterned after real résumés of people who were actually seeking similar jobs.

Their most alarming finding is that the likelihood of being called for an interview rises sharply with an applicant's credentials - like experience and honors - for those with white-sounding names, but much less for those with black-sounding names. A grave concern is that this phenomenon may be damping the incentives for blacks to acquire job skills, producing a self-fulfilling prophecy that perpetuates prejudice and misallocates resources.

Two main theories explain labor market discrimination. One, known as taste-based discrimination, posits that employers - or customers, co-workers or supervisors - have a preference against hiring minority applicants, even if they know they are equally productive. The other, known as statistical discrimination, assumes that employers personally harbor no racial animus but cannot perfectly predict workers' productivity. In this case, an employer assessing an applicant would assign some weight to the average performance of the person's racial group, instead of basing the judgment solely on the individual's merits.

A difference between these models is that employers sacrifice profits to indulge in taste-based discrimination, while, in principle, statistical discrimination, if based on accurate information, can help the bottom line. Professors Bertrand and Mullainathan cannot distinguish between the models - and both may be applicable - but they suspect that their finding that employers in heavily black areas of Chicago are less likely to discriminate against black-sounding names augurs for taste-based discrimination.

Nevertheless, either rationale for discrimination is illegal and prohibited.

"That which we call a rose," Juliet said, "by any other name would smell as sweet." An organization like the Civil Rights Commission or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission could perform a service if it routinely monitored discrimination by conducting audit studies similar to Professors Bertrand and Mullainathan's.

Realistic Job Previews

Description:

- Tools to provide applicants with a day-in-the-life depiction of a job in an eligibility worker.

Outcomes:

- Increases understanding of job descriptions
- Increases self-assessment of job fit
- Increases public understanding of public child welfare
- Decreases employee turnover through facilitating self-assessment of “fit”

Examples of Realistic Job Previews:

- Video demonstrating job and workforce (see Additional Resources on p.21) :
- Internships
- Job Shadowing
- Site Visits
- Informational Materials
- Dramatizations
- Job Sample Tests

SUMMARY GUIDE TO APPLICATION, PRE-EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONS*

	ACCEPTABLE	INADVISABLE
1. AGE	Whether candidate meets minimum legal age requirements for the job.	Age, date of birth, any inquiry aimed at identifying age or excluding persons of a particular age (e.g., high school or college attendance, graduation dates, what are your retirement plans, how long do you plan to work, how can someone so young handle this job?)
2. ARREST RECORDS	None. (For convictions, see No. 5)	Number and kinds of arrest.
3. AVAILABILITY FOR WORK ON WEEKENDS, EVENINGS	If asked of all applicants and is a business necessity for the person to be available to work weekends and/ or evenings.	Any inquiry about religious observance, child care, inquiries directed only to persons of one sex.
4. CITIZENSHIP, BIRTHPLACE & NATIONAL ORIGIN	The only legitimate concern here is whether the applicant is eligible to work in the United States, under Terms of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. There is a fair and advisable way to obtain this information. The best approach is to ask: Are you EITHER a U.S. citizen OR legally authorized to work in the United States? The "Yes" or "No" answer that follows provides all needed information while not disclosing citizenship or national origin information.	Birthplace, national origin, ancestry, or lineage of applicant, applicant's parents, or applicant's spouse.
5. CONVICTION RECORDS	Inquiry into convictions if job-related. Include disclaimer stating that conviction does not automatically bar candidate, depending on the job, time, nature and seriousness of the conviction and related rehabilitation.	Any inquiry about conviction unrelated to job requirements.

**These are questions considered inadvisable, and in some very limited instances, illegal on their face, by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Iowa Civil Rights Commission.*

	ACCEPTABLE	INADVISABLE
6. CREED OR RELIGION	None, except where religion is a bona fide occupational qualification.	Applicant's religious affiliation, church, parish, or religious holidays observed.
7. CREDIT RECORDS/ FINANCES	None, unless job-related.	Inquiries about charge accounts, bank accounts, car and home ownership, credit rating, garnishments, fidelity bonds, etc., that do not relate to performing the particular job.
8. DISABILITY	Whether applicant can perform essential functions of the job, with or without accommodation.	To ask applicant if he/she is disabled and/or to list illness or disabilities or any inquiries that elicit information about disabilities or health, e.g., "Do you have any medical limitations that would prohibit performance of this job? How many sick days did you use in your last job? Have you ever sought treatment for a mental condition?"
9. DRINKING	May ask if an applicant drinks alcohol or has ever been arrested for driving while under the influence.	Any questions that could elicit information about alcoholism, which is a disability.
10. FAMILY STATUS	Whether applicant has responsibilities or commitments which will prevent meeting work schedules, if asked of all applicants regardless of sex.	Marital status, number and age of children, spouse's job.
11. HEIGHT & WEIGHT	None, unless job-related.	None, unless job-related.
12. LANGUAGE	Language applicant speaks or writes fluently, if job-related.	Language used by applicant or family members at home, or how applicant acquired the ability to read, write, or speak a foreign language.
13. MARITAL STATUS	None, other than if candidate can meet work schedule of the job, whether candidate has activities, responsibilities, or commitments that may hinder work requirements. (Should be asked of both sexes.)	Whether applicant is married, single, divorced, separated, engaged or widowed.

	ACCEPTABLE	INADVISABLE
14. MILITARY SERVICE	Military experience or training, or education.	Type or condition of discharge, unless it is the result of a military conviction.
15. NAME	All previous names used by applicant.	The original name of an applicant whose name has been legally changed or the national origin of an applicant's name.
16. ORGANIZATIONS	Applicant's membership in professional organizations if job-related.	All churches, clubs, social fraternities, societies, lodges, or organizations to which an applicant belongs.
17. PHOTOGRAPHS	None except after hiring.	Photograph with application or after interview, but before hiring.
18. PREGNANCY	None.	Any inquiry into pregnancy, medical history of pregnancy or family plans.
19. RACE OR COLOR	None.	Applicant's race or color of applicant's skin.
20. REFERENCES	Name/s of references.	Name of applicant's pastor or religious leader.
21. RELATIVES/ FRIENDS	Names of applicant's relatives, friends already employed by employer if employer has assignment policies, practices related to friends, relatives and/or an anti-nepotism policy. Employer may not give preference if women and minorities are underrepresented in its workforce.	Names of relatives, other than those working for the company, names of friends, relatives working for a competitor.
22. SEX	None, except where sex is a bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ).	Any inquiry except where BFOQ.
23. SEXUAL ORIENTATION	Although not prohibited by all discrimination laws, such inquiries may be illegal in certain jurisdictions.	Sexual orientation of applicant.
24. WORKERS' COMPENSATION	None.	Past workers' compensation claims.

Iowa Department of Administrative Services

SECTION 2.60 LOW-COST RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Last Update: 11/03

Low-Cost Recruitment Strategies, Including Targeted Recruitment of Minorities

Recruitment is a long-term proposition

Develop a recruitment plan for the specific vacancy, for like positions, for the unit or the agency as a whole. Develop a long-term recruitment plan with input from managers, supervisors, and employees as well as specialists in the areas of human resources and EEO/civil rights/special emphasis. Be creative.

Know the competition and their recruiting needs

Issuing one vacancy announcement is no longer an effective method of finding candidates. Learn where the candidates go to find jobs and information about finding jobs – make sure the agency's message can be found.

Develop a high-quality recruiting team

1. Select a diverse cadre of recruiters that includes representatives from program areas as well as staff areas such as human resources or EEO. They should have the ability to deliver the recruiting message effectively.
2. Ensure that senior managers are involved in planning and conducting recruitment activities. As leaders who are familiar with their agency's cultures and needs, as managers who understand competency needs, and as selecting officials.
3. Design a training program for recruiters that includes information about internal hiring procedures, personnel flexibilities, effective recruitment techniques, affirmative action goals, and appropriate questions and behavior.
4. Include recent graduates to whom college students can relate when recruiting team visits colleges and universities.

Engage new hires

1. What attracted them to the job?
2. What concerns did they have?
3. Do they know others (at their school or elsewhere) who should be contacted?
4. Do they have additional suggestions where or how to recruit?
5. Could they mentor other new hires?

Enlist assistance of AA/EEO/Diversity Committee

1. Suggestions for how to recruit.
2. Suggestions of contacts, recruitment resources.
3. Assessment of current recruitment process.
4. How can they help recruit?
5. Ask for regular time on their agenda to discuss recruitment and staffing.
6. Offer to do special session on recruitment.

Engage current staff

1. Ask them to pass along job information to qualified friends and contacts.
2. Ask for recruitment suggestions – how to improve the process.
3. Ask them to watch for people they'd like to work with.
4. Ask them to help promote the Department in a positive light with outside contacts.
5. Ask them to identify potential negative aspects the Department should be aware of when recruiting.

6. Provide them with cards they can share with others listing recruitment information.

Retain connections with former staff

1. Encourage exit interviews with all staff; when appropriate, encourage them to keep in touch, consider returning (but don't promise things you can't deliver).
2. When appropriate, ask if you can put their name on your job announcement distribution list.
3. Stay in touch.
4. Ask them to refer others.

Maintain an informative, attractive website

1. Be sure to include current vacancy information, provide easy link to obtain more information.
2. Write informative vacancy announcements that grab interest.
3. Keep the application process simple.
4. Review your website periodically to assure it's still current and includes needed information.
5. Ask others for their input on website.

Market the Department

1. Include short, informative description of the department/lowa on website that would make others want to work there.
2. Make sure vacancy announcements provide a realistic preview of the jobs and that they highlight points of interest. Think about what would make an exceptional person want to work for the agency.
3. Contribute articles to professional journals, newsletters, etc., to get the department's name in front of potential applicants.
4. Identify related websites on which to place a link to yours.
5. Periodically, review all brochures, announcements, and other written materials for attractiveness, simplicity, layout, currency, and redundancy.
6. Identify locations to send/display your written materials where potential applicants will see them.
7. Are there opportunities to appear on panels, guest lecture, etc. that would interest potential applicants in your department?

Treat applicants as a precious resource

1. Candidates must feel there is a match between their personal goals and the agency's goals. To create and foster a positive image, state the agency's goals and mission clearly and include an inspiring vision. Develop a theme for the recruitment message and craft it to fit each audience.
2. Respond promptly to all inquiries.
3. Respond promptly to all applicants you have screened out.
4. Be sure your application process is clear and non-confusing.
5. Maintain electronic lists of non-selected applicants you would consider for future appointments. Stay in touch with them as appropriate.

Learn how placement offices operate

1. Develop and maintain long-term partnerships with academia for the purpose of recruiting high-quality candidates. The goal of partnering is to start the process ahead of the actual recruitment schedule. Relationships with these sources can afford both sides opportunities for increased awareness and opportunities.
2. Identify key schools that offer the programs for the type of applicant you are seeking; Who is your key contact? How is the placement office organized? Does a specific college or dean or others do most of the placement? How do they display/distribute your vacancy information? What other ways do they have for getting information out? What is the most advantageous season for recruiting? Do they hold on-site events? How long do they maintain your information?
3. When appropriate, separate key schools into regions (surrounding states, Midwest, rest of USA, international).
4. Does the school have a minority placement officer? Name? What special services can this office provide in your recruitment efforts?

5. Are there student organizations you can use as a resource? Who are the contacts? What are the major ways they can help in your recruitment activities?
6. Are there minority student organizations on campus/national that you can use as a resource? In what ways can they help you recruit?

Enlist the support of professional organizations

1. Will they take vacancy announcements? Is there a fee? Will they allow you to put a link on their website?
2. If they advertise in their newsletter, how many applicants does this tend to generate?
3. Do they maintain salary surveys? How does Iowa compete?
4. Do they/can they hold recruitment workshops as part of conferences?

Set up cooperative arrangements with similar units in other states or public jurisdictions

1. Do they experience similar recruitment issues?
2. Would they consider sharing applicant information with staff who are relocating?
3. Could a group form a consortium to hold a regional/national recruitment fair?

Enlist the assistance of local minority recruitment resources

1. Pinpoint the community in question and go through their phone directory and newspaper to identify potential resources. Do these resources maintain websites?
2. Contact these resources to determine what types of assistance, if any, they would be willing to provide.
3. If they are willing to distribute vacancy announcements, how will they do it? Bulletin boards? Through newsletters and periodicals? Word of mouth? As announcements at meetings?

Revised: November 2003

Note: Some of the above suggestions have been taken from or adapted from "Building and Maintaining a Diverse, High-Quality Workforce: A Guide to Federal Agencies," U.S. Office of Personnel Management, ES-DO-05, June 2000.

Tips for Effective Reference-Checking

- Plan and ask the same questions of each reference source.
- When contacting the reference, identify yourself, your position; give the name of the candidate and the reason for your call. Explain to the reference your intent and how long the questions will take.
- If the candidate has signed a release, you can inform the reference and possibly encourage more answers from the reference.
- Start with general basic questions and transition into more specific performance based questions.
- Before asking questions, describe the job and the competencies you are seeking, and then make sure the questions are all job related. This will give the reference a chance to structure their thinking. Start with general basic questions and transition into more specific performance based questions.
- Develop behavioral questions based on job competencies that are included in the job description. A competency is the knowledge, skill, motivation and behavior associated with success on a job.
 - **Example:** A competency for the job is providing *quality service*. You could ask what level of customer service the candidate has provided to difficult customers in the past.
- Ask the reference if they think the candidate will perform these behaviors successfully and seek specific examples from past performance. You could ask for examples of how the candidate has interacted with customers.
- Follow the questions you prepared to avoid getting side-tracked and to ensure consistency and reliability. Ask open-ended questions rather than yes/no questions to collect more information on the candidate. Use the following reference form which includes follow-up questions to yes/no inquiries to keep your questions focused.

Source: Bernotavicz, F., Berdie, J., & Hodgin, L. (2005). *Child welfare caseworker competency-based screening curriculum*. Unpublished document. Child Welfare Training Institute, University of Southern Maine: Portland, ME.

- Use follow-up questions for clarity and thoroughness.
- In your interviews with reference contacts, strive to obtain job-related facts and relevant information based on past behavior and experiences, rather than opinions. Ask for examples of specific incidents.
- Stay on the alert for any signs of evasiveness, unusual pauses or even overly enthusiastic responses.
- Know what laws protect candidates against discrimination. The American with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and other laws suggest certain questions you should avoid when reference checking including some questions concerning age, race, sex, religion or national origin. Typically, these are not job-related questions, so avoid them as appropriate.
- Ask if you can call back if you have additional questions.
- Ask for names of other reference sources.
- Thank the reference for their time and cooperation

Bernotavicz, F., Berdie, J., & Hodgins, L. (2005). *Child welfare caseworker competency-based screening curriculum*. Unpublished document. Child Welfare Training Institute, University of Southern Maine: Portland, ME.

Additional Resources

Deems, Richard S.. “More Than a Gut Feeling” (book, video). Available at:
<http://openlibrary.org/b/OL1127453M/Interviewing--more-than-a-gut-feeling>

EEOC, “Federal Laws Prohibiting Discrimination.” Available at:
<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/qanda.html>

Iowa DAS HRE, “Filling a Vacancy.” Available at:
http://das.hre.iowa.gov/ms_manual_chapter_04.html

Iowa Workforce Development, “Successful Interviewing Guide,”
www.iowaworkforce.org/sig.htm.

Examples of Realistic Job Previews:

“Is This the Job for Me?” Michigan Department of Human Services
DVD

Realistic Job Preview, Child Welfare Training Institute, Maine DHHS
and University of Southern Maine, accessible at:
<http://www.cwti.org/RR/JobPreview.htm>