

VOLUNTEERS IN PARKS PROGRAM

Camp and Park Host Program

The Interview Process

Planning the Interview Questions

When developing questions for an interview, consider two very important questions:

1. Will the question elicit an answer that could screen out minorities or members of one gender or disqualify a significantly larger percentage of one particular group over any other group?
2. Is the information you are requesting really needed to evaluate the applicant's competence or qualifications for a specific assignment?

There are two ways to structure your questions:

1. Open-ended questions encourage the applicant to provide additional information about a certain subject. They might include the following:
 - Tell me, how would you. . . .?
 - What did you like best about. . . .?
 - Why are you interested in being a Host?
2. Restricted questions tend to elicit short answers: yes, no, or a brief response:
 - Can you work the required five days a week, six hours per day?
 - Are you available to work on Tuesday afternoons?
 - Do you have experience handling cash?

A combination of questions is usually used in an interview.

Subjects that May Not be Asked About During an Interview or Reference Check

Subjects that may not be asked about include:

1. Any disease or conditions for which the Host has been treated.
2. If the applicant has ever been hospitalized or treated for any medical condition.
3. How many days the applicant was absent from work due to illness or injury (as the employer, you may describe attendance requirements and ask if the applicant is able to meet those requirements)
4. If the applicant is taking any prescribed medication.
5. If the applicant has ever filed for workers' compensation benefits.

Pre-Interview

Before the interview, take time to review the questions that will be asked, the duty statement, and the potential volunteer's application form. Remember to relax, because the interviewer is often as nervous and self-conscious as the applicant. Give the applicant an opportunity to review the duty statement. Choose a location for the interview that is comfortable and free from interruptions.

Opening the Interview

You should make every attempt to establish rapport with the volunteer and make him or her feel at ease. Welcome the applicant, introduce everyone on the panel, and provide a brief overview of your volunteer program.

Conducting the Interview

A critical issue in interviewing is listening to what the candidate has to say. Allow the volunteer to answer your questions free from interruption. This is a two-way interview. Invite questions, comments, and concerns so both parties will have the information needed to make a decision on whether or not the volunteer is right for the position and the position right for the volunteer. Be sure that the same questions are asked of all volunteers who apply for a specific job, although additional questions may be asked of individuals in order to clarify or amplify a point. Give the potential volunteer a chance to ask questions, too.

Closing the Interview

In closing, it is important to be concise and upbeat. Briefly review the interview to ensure that both parties understand the same information, and then explain to the potential volunteer what the next steps will be. Finally, thank the applicant for his or her interest and effort.

An interview should be conducted as well at the end of a volunteer's term of service. A sample Exit Interview is included in this Appendix.