



INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Home Visiting Program Staff

As the interview is so important in the employment decision, specific recommendations for the conduct and content of the interview are provided under these guidelines. Employment procedures should involve, at a minimum, the following:

- a review of the applicant's resume,
- an interview,
- a second interview for final candidates, and
- information from references.

A well-conducted interview should provide information to help the Program Manager and other staff decide if they are going to choose the applicant, as well as an opportunity for the applicant to decide if s/he will choose the agency. It is recommended that the Program Manager be involved at all phases of interviewing; however, if this is not possible, the Program Manager must be involved in the final interview and decision to hire an applicant. It is also helpful for the potential peers of the applicant to participate in the second interview. They may provide insights, which are unavailable to upper level staff.

The interviewer should do the following:

- 1) Assure that all important program goals are explained to and understood by the applicant.
- 2) Assure that the position's specific work responsibilities and work environment are identified.
- 3) Assure that all expectations concerning supervision, evaluation and professional development are identified.
- 4) Provide information on salary and benefits.
- 5) Assess the interpersonal characteristics of the applicant.

Each of these areas is discussed below:

1) Program Goals: The goals and objectives should be made very clear during the interview. The interviewers should avoid using program jargon in their descriptions, as an applicant may not be familiar with these phrases.

2) Position Responsibilities and Work Environment: Describe all responsibilities and work environment of the position so that the applicant has a clear idea of what to expect. Of particular importance are the following:

- a) work setting, including information about office space, out-of-office work requirements, and working conditions; if possible, show the facility to the applicant
- b) required documentation, forms and reports
- c) work hours, especially those that fall outside of normal workdays
- d) work expenses to be incurred by the worker, such as car insurance

3) Supervision, Evaluation and Professional Development: The degree of autonomy with which the worker can function should be described in the interview, and the program expectations for the worker's involvement with supervision should be explained. This should include information on frequency and type of supervision; the worker should be made aware that her field performance will be observed and by whom. Program evaluation procedures and criteria for the worker should be specified. The worker should be informed if the agency has an introductory period.

Any expectations for ongoing professional development, including costs and time, should be identified.

4) Salary and Other Staff Benefits: The interviewer should describe the salary and other staff benefits, including vacation time, sick leave, health insurance, retirement, and tuition fees for continuing education. (Depending on the situation, a full discussion of benefits may be reserved for a second interview.)

5) Interpersonal Characteristics: During the latter portion of the interview (or during a second interview), the applicant should be presented with questions and scenarios which will help to provide information on attitudes and beliefs about children, families, and home visiting, as well as information on how the applicant might respond in difficult situations related to home visiting. Many programs have found the use of role plays during a final interview to be very useful. See Supervisor Core Training manual for ideas around "Hiring Role Plays."

It is recommended that the Interpersonal Rating Scale for Interviewing Home Visitor Program Applicants, or a similar document, be completed immediately after the interview to provide qualitative judgments on the applicants. It is recommended that more than one staff person be involved in the screening process so that their collective judgments can facilitate accuracy in hiring decisions.

A writing sample is also recommended. Two ideas for writing samples are: A) the applicant is given a vignette concerning a family and asked to write a progress note or a description of how they would approach the family. B) Based on the

interview they've just had, the applicant is asked to write a paragraph describing their understanding of the position. The writing sample will serve to determine the applicant's writing style and grammar, and will also give further information on her/his beliefs and attitudes about working with families.