***[\*\*\*To get your own editable copy of this template, click here.\*\*\*](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SrZxLKJFK3uQk4O_8i-l9Qqx16jk4XQq5YBrucbjHbw/copy)***

Interview Question Toolkit

The following interview questions can help you identify your strongest candidates. As you plan your candidate evaluation process, use this list to find questions or activities focused on the key traits that you are most interested in—your [must-haves](https://www.managementcenter.org/resources/must-haves-starter-kit/). Remember that the overarching key to each category is to listen carefully, then probe to get beneath the surface.

**3 Tips for Effective Interviews:**

* Make the interview more accessible by sharing a preview of some questions you might ask in advance. Knowing what to expect makes room for diverse thinking and communication styles. If you’re including [scenarios or simulations](https://www.managementcenter.org/article/how-to-ask-job-candidates-for-work-samples-exercises-or-simulations/), give candidates time to prepare. We also recommend compensating people if the exercise asks candidates to invest more than two hours or to produce a real-world product.
* Use a [rubric](http://www.managementcenter.org/resources/hiring-rubric-starter-kit/) to mitigate bias when evaluating candidates. Convene selection team members to get clear on what constitutes a strong answer—your “look fors”—and what kind of responses might raise a red flag. Ask team members to fill rubrics out before you debrief the interview.
* Always leave time at the end for candidates to ask questions.

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[Racial Equity & Inclusion Lens](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QBrW-Goc9AHfION4NPlEpuIMu9ag1Cz16U7ufcq0a1c/edit#heading=h.bxxjezpr0e69)

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|  | **Interview Questions** | **Optional Follow-Up** |
| Inclusive Leadership & Management | Tell us about a time you changed a policy, practice or procedure in order to improve racial equity and inclusion in work experience or outcomes. What was the equity concern and what changes did you make (or propose)? | How did you involve others who were impacted by the equity concern? What was the outcome? |
| Tell us about a time you had to make an unpopular decision. What was the decision and how did you approach it? | How did you attend to team morale and sustainability? How did you engage with differing opinions? What if any fallout did you experience? What did you learn from the process? How will you apply those learnings to sustaining staff cohesiveness? |
| Racial Equity & Inclusion Lens | Tell us about a time when you worked to make sure your workplace/team/project was a place where everyone—particularly those who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color (BIPOC)—could participate and thrive. What was the situation and what was your contribution? | What lines of difference, power, or privilege existed that you had to consider, if any?  How did you know when your attempts to foster inclusion and equity were working, or not? |
| What do you see as your areas of personal growth in terms of equity and inclusion? What’s something you’re working on learning? | How do you make learning about racial equity and inclusion a priority? What strategies do you use? |
| Tell us about a time you realized that something you were doing had unintended negative consequences from an equity perspective (or an example of a time you received critical feedback from someone about an equity issue). | What steps did you take to address the issue or acknowledge the mistake/harm? How did you grow from what you learned? |
| Communication Skills | Tell me about a time you had to [name a common task for the role, such as: explain a complex idea in a simple way, give a speech on short notice, prepare a report, media release or social media post]. Talk me through your approach, any challenges you faced, and the outcome. | How did you know your communication was well received or successful? |
| Scenario: Share a sample brief, report, email to stakeholders, phonebank script, or other content with the candidate. Ask them to participate in a mock meeting where they share 2-3 suggested improvements they might make before it’s published. | Walk us through your edits and the “why” behind them. Overall, what sort of improvements were you aiming to make?  Tell us about a time you sought feedback on your own writing. What was helpful/not helpful? |
| Executive Leadership | The CEO/Director will need to be able to operate at the 50,000-foot level and manage day-to-day operations with leadership from a strong team. How have you balanced big picture strategic priorities and day-to-day operations in the past? Describe a time you did this successfully to ensure a key goal was met. | As CEO/director of [your org name], what factors do you think you’ll need to balance? How will you approach that? |
| Based on what you know of [your org name]’s mission and history, what is your vision for our work if you were to become CEO/Director? By the time your tenure here is over, what would you like to be true (or have accomplished)? | What are 2-3 strategic programmatic or organizational steps the organization needs to take in order to begin implementing this vision?  What about this vision or these steps do you feel most confident about? What about this vision or these steps might be most challenging? Why? |
| Fundraising & Development | As you know, raising resources is an essential part of this role. Please tell us about your background in raising money for previous organizations, campaigns, or causes. Where have you excelled and where have you been challenged? Share one example that clearly illustrates your success in fundraising. | What aspects of resource development might be new to you if you were in this role? What support might you need to succeed? |
| Can you think of a time you failed to meet a funding goal? What did you learn from this experience? | How have you applied what you learned since then? |
| Managing Others | Tell us about a time when you managed someone who worked hard and had good intentions, but didn’t consistently meet expectations of the role. How did you manage the situation? | What specific steps did you take to help the employee improve performance, if any? Did it turn around?  How did you keep equity at the center and ensure you were checking for bias? |
| We have all faced a lot of change and uncertainty this year due to [add factors]. Whether it was this year or in the past, tell us about a time you inspired or motivated others during a time of change or uncertainty. What did you do to motivate others or boost morale? | How did you account for differences in staff experience of [X factor] on the basis of race, income, family status, or other lines of difference?  From your experience, what most helps staff embrace change or navigate uncertain times? How would you apply this now at [name org]? |
| Organizational Systems | Scenario: Provide candidates with an example of how a shared resource is organized now (e.g., student resource center, supply closet, spreadsheet, database, website, or filing system). Ask for 3 ideas to improve the system. Describe who uses the system. Provide a budget, if relevant. | Walk us through your process for tackling this project. How did you decide what to do? What audience/user needs did you consider in the process? |
| Problem Solving & Resilience | Scenario: It’s almost the end of the day. You have been handling logistics for an [event/conference/launch] that is tomorrow and you just heard there is [name a barrier or emergency, such as snowstorm]. Come up with 3-5 ideas and one main recommendation you’d share with your manager for how to handle this. | How might you communicate your recommendation to other staff or stakeholders? |
| Tell us about a time you worked to address someone’s concern and you weren’t able to. What happened and what did you try? Were there lines of difference or power that made this tricky? | What might you do differently next time? |
| Tell me about a day when everything went wrong. What happened and how did you handle it? | What did you learn about yourself and how you manage crisis/stress? |
| Project Planning & Management | Tell me about a project you created or managed start to finish that you are proud of. | What types of systems did you use to keep on track and deliver great results? |
| Scenario: Invite candidates to spend no more than [X time] developing a program or project plan relevant to the role. Describe basic considerations or parameters (purpose, outcomes, audience, typical length or timeline), while leaving enough room to see how well the candidate knows the terrain and makes independent choices. | Talk us through your process. What factors did you consider as you put this plan together?  In the real world, how would you go about getting a diversity of perspectives as you create plans? |
| Relationship Building | When you started your previous job, how did you approach building relationships across lines of difference and power with external partners? What about with colleagues and managers? | How did your own identities influence your approach? |
| [Describe a real-world community building or engagement challenge/disparity your organization faces in reaching a key audience.] Tell us the steps you would take to better understand [name audience] and the barriers or disparity. Then, share 1-2 ideas that could improve [organization name]'s approach to connecting with this community. | Thinking about your prior experience, can you describe a time you faced a challenge like this? What did you do then? How were you successful? |
| Time Management | Tell me about a time when you had a tight deadline. What was the project? How did you get everything done? | Did you make any changes or learn anything as a result? |
| Describe your strategies for juggling multiple priorities and due dates, or an influx of incoming requests. How do you make sure nothing falls through the cracks? | Tell us about a time you needed to ask for help. How did you communicate with your supervisor or colleagues when you were overwhelmed or needed support? |