MARIPOSA COUNTY

RECRUITMENT/SELECTION POLICY AND DEPARTMENTAL SELECTION GUIDELINES

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MARIPOSA COUNTY

RECRUITMENT/SELECTION POLICY

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RECRUITMENT

The Human Resources Department will be responsible for directing and evaluating the recruitment and testing to fill all County positions, including but not limited to regular/full-time and extra-help positions, with current delegation of the hands-on test administration given to the departments. When a vacancy occurs, the department head/designee submits a request that Human Resources begins the recruitment process. Examinations may consist of the completed Mariposa County application, any and all supplemental applications, a rated evaluation of training and experience (T&E), performance tests, written tests, oral appraisal boards, reference checks, or any combination of these. All tests are designed to be job related and to aid in the selection of the best qualified applicants. All appointments are based on merit without reference to actual or perceived age, ancestry, color, religious creed, disability (mental or physical), marital status, medical condition, genetic information, military and veteran status, national origin, race, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or other basis protected by law. The eligibility list of all candidates who passed the employment tests or were placed in alphabetical order without any employment testing will be certified to the department head/designee for interview, from which an appointment will be made to the position available.

The candidates' applications together with any supplemental questionnaires, shall be provided to the department head/designee with the certification list. The department will handle all confidential candidate information with the utmost care, sharing the information on an as-needed-only basis. The certification list will be provided to the department head/designee. The department head/designee shall conduct a hiring interview with at least three, but preferably five, candidates from the list and who wish an interview, assuming that the list contains at least five candidates. Candidates shall be considered for interview in rank order. If the candidates have not been ranked by Human Resources, in order to select which candidates from the eligibility list to invite to the hiring interview, the department will be responsible for ranking the candidates using an objective selection process such as a T and E rating. If the candidates have been ranked by Human Resources, then another process besides the hiring interview is not necessary as the candidates will already be ranked and placed on a list in rank order.

If fewer than five qualified and interested candidates remain on this list subsequent to completion of all interviews, the department need not make a selection from this list, but may request that Human Resources open a new recruitment.

RECRUITMENT OUTREACH

When a new position is created, or a present position becomes vacant and is not filled by a qualified County employee as a transfer, the County policy is to use announcement advertising, and any other method of publicizing employment opportunities so that the greatest possible number of applicants may be recruited.

Recruitment sources may include, but are not limited to:

1) Local and/or multi-regional newspapers.

2) Various online sources.

3) Specialized public sector recruitment publications, including trade journals for certain professional positions, online and/or in hard copy.

4) Electronic distribution of job announcements to county and state human resources offices.

5) Distribution of job announcements to community, ethnic and women's groups and organizations, preferably in electronic format.

6) Electronic distribution of job announcements to county and state agencies and departments having similar job classifications.

Applications

All application materials shall be available online or in the Human Resources Office with the ability to apply electronically. Hard copy applications for employment are to be submitted to the Human Resources Office on the County's official electronic or hard copy application form.

Screening

At times, recruitment may result in a large number of applicants who meet the minimum qualifications. When such circumstances arise, the County may limit the number of applicants or candidates to advance through the examination process by screening the applications to the most qualified candidates based on such considerations as the following:

1) Length, type, and level of work experience related to the position;

2) Applicability of past work experience to meet the County's needs or requirements; and

3) Type, degree, and recency of job preparation for prescribed responsibilities, to include certificates, technical training or course work, and educational achievements.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

All County job opportunities will be announced both electronically on the County's website and by posting on the County's weekly job bulletin. Job announcements may include:

1) Job Title;
2) Current Salary Range;
3) Filing Period (where and when);
4) Description of Position;
5) Job Requirements;
6) Selection Process;
7) Special Requirements (if any);
8) A statement that no appointment will be made prior to passing a pre-employment physical, if required, and proof of citizenship or right-to-work certification; and
9) A statement that the County is an equal opportunity employer.

INTERNAL PROMOTION/DEMOTION

It is the policy of Mariposa County to allow department heads the discretion to promote qualified, regular employees to a higher or lower classification level within the department when such a vacancy occurs. A voluntary demotion may be enacted to fill a vacancy at the request of a qualified employee seeking such a demotion. Prior to such promotion or demotion, a currently dated County employment application form must be completed and submitted to Human Resources for certification of the employee's minimum qualifications. A demotion, as authorized by this section, includes any classification to which the employee meets minimum qualifications, including appointment as an extra-help, hourly employee. An employee who promotes to a higher classification will have a new anniversary date, which is the promotion date, and his/her salary will be adjusted to a step in the new range that gives him/her at least a five percent (5%) increase over his/her current salary. An employee who transfers to a different position with the same salary range will maintain his/her anniversary date and salary.

RECRUITING/HIRING FROM WITHIN THE COUNTY

When a vacancy occurs and a recruitment is conducted, County employees are encouraged to apply. Job announcements published by Human Resources are updated weekly and are posted on the County's website. It is up to each employee to stay abreast of openings by regularly visiting the website or job bulletin. Job announcements describing the position shall also be available in the Human Resources Office. Further, special recruitments open to permanent County employees only shall be announced by electronic communication from Human Resources sent to all departments for posting. Hard copies shall be posted in each department for viewing by all employees. Job interest cards may be completed online at the County's website at any time.

All applicants, including current County employees, must comply with any announced recruitment deadlines. Applications received after the final filing date of any advertised/posted recruitment will not be accepted.

Appointment Of Current Extra-Help Employees To Fill An Existing Vacancy Within A Department To Which They Are Currently Assigned

Extra-help employee(s) may be employed where there is a temporary need for help within a department. The Board of Supervisors must approve an appropriation for extra-help in a departmental budget. An extra-help employee must meet the minimum qualifications of the position he or she is to fill and is limited to a total of eight hundred and sixty (860) hours of work in any one fiscal year. A department head may extend the extra-help employee's hours of employment to a total of nine hundred and ninety-nine hours of employment during any one fiscal year with the prior written approval of the Human Resources Director.

If a department head has been unable to fill an existing vacancy by transfer or promotion, in lieu of requesting a new recruitment from Human Resources, the department head shall have the option to appoint a qualified extra-help employee who is currently working in a like capacity within the department to the vacant position without additional interviews, with the approval of Human Resources.

Notification To All Candidates

Each applicant for a position will be notified as to the status of his/her application at each stage of the process.

Each applicant passing all parts of the examination shall be notified by Human Resources of her/his final rank on the eligibility list.

Any applicant who fails any part of the examination or the total examination shall be notified.

<u>Establishing Eligibility Lists</u>: After each examination, Human Resources shall prepare an eligibility list of persons with passing scores. The names of each such person shall be placed on the eligibility list in rank order based on his/her final test score, starting with the

highest score. The names of all persons with the same (tied) score will be placed in the same rank.

Departmental/Hiring Interview

After appropriate screening and/or testing of applicants has been completed by Human Resources, a selection/hiring interview by the department shall be held to interview qualified candidates. If an unranked, alphabetical list of more than ten qualified candidates is established by Human Resources, the candidates must be ranked through a departmental screening and evaluation process in advance of the hiring interview.

Uniform oral interview questions will be used. Other non-biased evaluation procedures also may be used. All files shall be handled by the department with strict, need-to-know-only confidentiality.

The successful candidate and all applicants who participate in the interview process will be notified of the results in writing by the department. (Detailed information related to the department's role is provided in the "Departmental Hiring Guidelines" section, below.)

Standards And Qualifications For Employment

Applicants for employment will be required to meet such reasonable standards of education and experience, knowledge, skills and abilities as are prescribed in the classification specification, and which will ensure that the candidates are reasonably well qualified to successfully perform the duties of the positions for which they seek employment. The evaluation of a candidate's suitability for the job is determined by the examinations conducted during the selection process, and once hired, by evaluation of the employee's performance during the one-year probationary period.

It is Mariposa County's policy to provide reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with disabilities, or those who must report for military service, who are employees or applicants for employment.

All applicants must meet the minimum qualifications and standards for county employees/officers prescribed by the State Legislature or as prescribed in the official Mariposa County classification specification.

References and criminal checks, scheduling of pre-employment physicals, and completion of new hire paperwork will be handled at the departmental level.

Records Retention

Records of applicants and interview work sheets will be retained by Human Resources for a period of not less than two (2) years.

TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS (EMERGENCY HIRES)

1) Temporary appointments are limited to a maximum of 320 hours (40 working days) per position during a period not to exceed six consecutive months.

2) Temporary appointments shall first be made from suitable eligibility lists. The acceptance or refusal to accept such employment on the part of persons on the eligibility list shall not be a bar to such individuals' appointment to a regular position from such eligibility list. In the absence of suitable eligibility lists, or if there are not at least five candidates on the eligibility list interested in the temporary assignment, extra help appointments may be made of other qualified persons.

3) To appoint a temporary employee other than from an eligibility list, a copy of the application for employment shall be submitted to Human Resources for prior approval before a job offer is made. Temporary employees are not eligible for consideration to extra help or permanent full-time positions unless the temporary employees appear on the appropriate certified eligibility list. If a department head foresees an ongoing requirement, he/she must request an immediate recruitment to establish an eligibility list from which an appropriate appointment may be made to fill the vacancy.

4) Pre-employment medical examinations, except for positions requiring strenuous physical activity, may be waived for all temporary assignments with the recommendation of the department head and the approval of the Human Resources Director.

5) No time served under a temporary appointment shall contribute towards acquiring probationary or permanent status, nor shall temporary employees be entitled to other rights extended to regular County employees appointed to budgeted positions.

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MARIPOSA COUNTY

DEPARTMENTAL SELECTION GUIDELINES

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Policy

Selecting individuals for employment with the County is one of the most important functions that a manager or supervisor will perform. The long-term success of the County is predicated on a workforce of highly skilled, motivated people whose behavior exemplifies the stated values of the organization.

The purpose of this section of the Guidelines is to ensure that the County has sound and valid selection procedures in place that are fair, consistent, and job-related. It also ensures that managers and supervisors will have the tools necessary to participate effectively in the employee selection process, and to make good hiring decisions. To facilitate that goal, these Guidelines include:

- Operational definitions of important procedures and terminology;
- Philosophies as they apply to the selection process; and
- Specific guidelines applicable to each aspect of the process.

The decisions managers and supervisors make today in hiring staff are key in achieving our mission in the years to come. There isn't a more important decision you will make than to hire quality people. It is important to know and apply the tools to make those decisions, and take the time to do it properly.

These Guidelines provide information that is derived from best practices in the human resources and selection fields. While the information provided within complements and is consistent with the County's Recruitment/Selection Policy, these Guidelines are written as more of a practical guide in order to operationalize the policies and practices provided in the Recruitment/Selection Policy into actual procedures. Therefore, it is recommended that the Recruitment/Selection Policy be used for exact policies and direction when making important recruitment and selection decisions.

Recruitment And Selection Processes

The hiring process consists of two procedures: Recruitment and Selection. The Recruitment activities center around developing a plan, announcing an opening, advertising the opening, and overall outreach to attract qualified applicants. Both Human Resources and the departments have a role in this process. The Selection portion of the process involves all the activities related to testing, interviewing, and selecting a new employee. In some cases, most of these activities will be handled by the departments, including the testing phase. In other cases, Human Resources will conduct the testing and will provide the ranked list to the departments to conduct the hiring interviews.

Overall recruitment strategies should be reviewed regularly for a number of reasons: techniques that worked in a period of high unemployment may not be appropriate when unemployment is low. Over time, the applicant pool for a given occupation may change. Working with Human Resources, recruitment patterns should be reviewed by making comparisons both with past recruitment efforts and with current labor force statistics. Once specific recruitment problems are identified, a plan can be formulated to address these problems.

In preparation for a new recruitment, work with Human Resources by asking the following questions:

- Was there a good response to the recruitment in the past?
- Did the applicants possess the specific skills required?
- Is there a high turnover in this classification, and if so, is it due to inappropriate placement of applicants?
- Has there been traditional underutilization of certain groups in this field of work, i.e. lack of women in the trades?

Recruitment Process: Working with Human Resources

Whether a specific recruitment will be mostly handled by Human Resources or the hiring department, it is important that both departments work closely together to ensure the best, most effective and well-run process possible. This is accomplished by:

- Reviewing past recruitment efforts to determine extent of outreach and advertising required (see bullet points above).
- Determining if recruitment should be open or promotional. If there are a sufficient number of internal candidates for one vacancy who most likely will meet the minimum qualifications, then the recruitment can be conducted on a promotional/internal basis. Otherwise, the recruitment should be opened up to the public.

- Determining the length of the recruitment period (from date the announcement is posted to the deadline for filing of applications). For recruitments where a large applicant pool is anticipated, a two-week period is sufficient. For difficult-to-recruit jobs, recruitment periods can be open anywhere from three weeks to "open until filled."
- Conducting a task and knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) review to ensure that the job description is up to date and to determine the most important KSAs to focus on when developing selection tools such as the oral interview test questions and rating criteria.
- Determining the selection process (supplemental questionnaire/Training & Experience Rating {T&E}, written test, structured oral interview test, performance test, and/or other selection procedures) and which party (Human Resources or the department) will be responsible for this step.
- Developing the job announcement that includes information about the position, the application filing deadline, the minimum qualifications, the hiring process, and the monthly salary. The benefits information is outlined on the announcement. Human Resources will take the lead on this step.
- Writing and placing ads. For all jobs, Human Resources handles the typical minimal advertising which includes placement of the job opportunity on the County's website (through NeoGov) on governmentjobs.com and in the weekly job bulletin. Departments may request additional advertising at their expense.

Selection Process Development

In the case where Human Resources provides the department with a list of unranked candidates, this step in the process is conducted by the department. This selection process development can be segregated into four general stages:

- Selection and use of the Subject Matter Experts;
- Development of the Selection Tool (based upon an assessment of the important tasks and KSAs required to be successful on the job); some recruitments do not include a Selection Tool, and the eligibility list is forwarded to the department in alphabetical order;
- Administration of Tests (T&E ratings, written tests, oral panels, etc.) if there are any; and
- Evaluation of Test Results and Ranking on List in test score/rank order.

Subject Matter Experts

A Subject Matter Expert (SME) is a job expert in a subject matter or occupational area for which the test is being developed. The SME can either be a seasoned employee in the same classification or can work in a classification at one level or higher than the classification being tested.

The SME will assist by performing the following tasks:

- Determining test structure and components;
- Reviewing and verifying job content information and important KSAs for job performance;
- Developing supplemental application questions and rating guidelines, when applicable;
- Screening the applications or conducting T&E ratings in the department;
- Maintaining test security regarding the entire test process;
- Identifying potential oral panel members, raters, and proctors, if needed; and
- Participating in a test appeal process.

Test/Selection Tool Development

Test development is intended to identify those candidates who will be successful on the job by determining the most appropriate testing tool. The type of test used is usually based on the type of position and the skills needed for the job. Each position should be reviewed, but here are some general guidelines.

Tests can be:

- T&E Rating – An examination process ranking candidates based on a pre-determined formula to evaluate education, training, and/or experience using the candidate's responses from a supplemental questionnaire;
- Written Examination – An examination process (booklet examination) consisting of multiple choice and/or true-false questions that include specific technical knowledge and job-related issues;
- Structured Oral Interview – An examination process conducted in an interview setting. A panel of two to three members examines and rates applicants on prepared, structured questions or situations in an occupational area (NOTE: This is the test panel that determines candidate placement on the eligibility list. It is not the final, department hiring interview);
- Performance Rating – An examination process consisting of one or more work sample situations or "stations" where the candidates perform simulated or actual job tasks; and/or
- A combination of any of the above.

The type of test is usually based on the type of position and the skills needed for the job. Each position should be reviewed, but here are some general guidelines:

Manager	Structured Oral Interview and/or T&E Rating
Supervisory/Technical	Structured Oral Interview, T&E Rating, and/or Written Examination
Maintenance	Performance Rating, T&E Rating, and/or Structured Oral Interview
Clerical	Written Examination, T&E Rating, Structured Oral Interview, and/or Performance Rating (computer/software skills, typing, etc.)

Rating or Interview Panel – Test Administration

The Rating Panel assesses and ranks each candidate's qualifications for the position based upon specific job-related criteria by reviewing applications and completed supplemental questionnaires received during the application filing period or at a later point in time. The Interview Panel conducts the in-person structured oral interviews. Each panel member should be familiar with the requirements of the job. Typically, a panel consists of two to three members: one or more persons familiar with the job requirements of the classification. Sometimes a Human Resources representative may serve on the panel.

Panels:

- May be scheduled for one-half day to a couple of days, depending upon the number of qualified applications received; and
- Use structured guidelines and interview questions to review and rate applications and supplemental applications and/or responses to oral questions.

Test Results and List Creation

Applicants who meet minimum qualifications and successfully complete the screening and assessment process will be ranked on a list according to the score they received in the screening or assessment process, with the highest score receiving the highest rank (1), the second-highest score receiving the next highest rank (2), and so on. As long as they are viable, the County's eligibility lists are good for two years.

While the County has a "rule of the list," which means anyone from the list may be considered for the next step, the County requires that at least three, but preferably five, candidates from the list will be invited to the hiring interview. It is a good practice that typically produces the best results to use the candidate's test score as a guideline in determining who to invite to the hiring interview (see next section covers hiring interviews). If the selection process has been developed as outlined in this section, then the final score and list ranking will reflect how well the candidates will ultimately perform on the job.

DEPARTMENTAL HIRING INTERVIEWS

Once the list or candidate ranking is finalized, a critical step in the employee selection process is the final hiring interview process conducted at the departmental level. The hiring interview provides department heads, managers, and supervisors with an opportunity to ask detailed questions that may reveal a candidate's work-related strengths, weaknesses, behavioral traits, and organizational fit.

The interview's success will be directly proportional to the preparedness of the interviewer. The more prepared the interviewer, the more comfortable the process, the less time will be wasted, and better will be the chances for selecting the best candidate.

Candidates Eligible for Interview

Candidates will be ranked in order of the score received from the testing process, either by Human Resources or the department. All of the candidates on the list provided by Human Resources are eligible for consideration for hire. The hiring authority and/or his/her designee may review the applications of the candidates on the list for consideration of a final hiring interview. While there is no hard and fast rule about how many candidates should be invited to a hiring interview, it is strongly encouraged that at least three, but preferably five, candidates be interviewed for each vacancy, and that candidate ranking be used to determine who to invite to the departmental hiring interview. It is highly preferable that candidates be invited to interview in rank order.

Contacting the Candidate

The basic key points to mention when contacting a candidate for a hiring interview are:

- Describe the job;
- Date, time, and place of the hiring interview;
- Describe the interview process;
- Ask the candidate to bring copies of past performance reviews, references, and/or letters of recommendation, if desired;
- Provide a contact name and phone number; and
- Ask the candidate if he/she needs any reasonable accommodation to be interviewed.

Additional Candidates

Additional candidates can be contacted if a candidate waives the hiring interview or job offer or if there are more vacancies than anticipated.

Hiring Interview Process

There are five stages in the hiring interview process:

1. Preliminary Set-Up;
2. Development of the Hiring Interview Questions;
3. Interviewing the Candidate;
4. Reviewing Notes; and
5. Reference Checks.

1. Preliminary Set-Up

The preliminary set-up includes four areas: room selection, hiring interview panel selection, and creation of panel packet and candidate information packet.

The room selected should be large enough to accommodate the interview panel and the interviewee, yet not so large as to make the interviewee feel overwhelmed. Since the process can be intimidating, it will be normal for the interviewee to feel warm and confined. Therefore, proper ventilation and a cooler-than-usual temperature may create a more comfortable atmosphere. Provide a water pitcher and cups.

The hiring interview panel would typically have two or three members: the manager and/or the position's supervisor, and one or two optional members. Appoint a “lead” interviewer to do introductions and general coordination.

Create an interview packet for each panel member. Items contained in a panel packet may include:

- interview schedule;
- job description;
- copies of hiring interview questions;
- copies of applications in sequential order; and/or
- pencils and paper.

Each candidate may be given a packet upon arrival for the interview. Each candidate information packet should include:

- a job description for the vacant position;
- a list of duties (expectations); and
- the names and titles of the panel members.

- Conviction questionnaire.

The candidate should not be kept waiting for more than 5-10 minutes (just enough time to review the packet). Provide a comfortable place for candidates to wait. A staff member should be appointed to greet candidates outside the interview room, answer questions, and explain what will take place in the interview session.

2. Development of the Hiring Interview Questions

a) Gut Feelings

The majority of untrained interviewers rely on their intuition as a basis for making employee selections. They develop "gut feelings" in the first few minutes of the interview without having sufficient opportunity to gain enough information about the candidate's skills. Not only will this approach be difficult to document, but it is also prone to generate unreliable information, leading to poor selection decisions. In contrast, the behavioral-based interview process emphasizes the importance of providing evidence about the person's ability to do a job.

b) Hiring Interview Questions

Questions should be developed that allow the panel to view behavioral and technical traits and organizational fit. Interviewers should focus their attention on the behavioral-based interview process, which encourages interviewers to preplan their interviews by conducting a thorough review of job requirements, creating a series of interview questions, gaining behavioral examples in the interview, and rating the interviewee's skills. The fundamental concept is that behavioral examples (specific life/work-history events) provide information regarding the presence or absence of skills.

c) Rapport-Building Questions

A rapport-building question is one that puts the candidate at ease, and is typically asked during the initial stages of the interview. Possible topics include weather, the trip to the interview, a desire for water, etc. The rapport-building question is usually followed by anecdotal conversation on a friendly, conversational basis.

d) Warm-up Questions

Warm-up questions are designed to be "ice-breakers" and should follow the rapport-building questions. Warm-up questions may not provide information on which to base a hiring decision, since they are standard, anticipated questions. However, they encourage applicants to talk about themselves, especially for applicants who are not very expressive.

e) Behavioral Examples

Through behavioral examples, interviewers discover facts about a person's history, and uses these facts as a basis for predicting whether the individual demonstrates skills important for a specific job. These questions are in an open-ended format. This approach is based on the axiom that "the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior." Although this statement is almost a truism in behavioral sciences, all interviewers should recognize that past behavior does not always predict future behavior. It is only the "best" predictor of future behavior. People may change and break out of their past behavior patterns.

f) Open-Ended Questions

An open-ended question is one that guides the interviewee to give an expanded, detailed answer. It is contrasted with a closed-ended question that can be answered by a simple "yes" or "no" response. Ideally, the interviewers will ask many open-ended questions to get the interviewee talking and relating behavioral examples. These types of questions will also allow the candidate to answer freely and select the type of information to be included in the answer. Typically, these questions begin with such phrases as "Would you tell me about…" or "I'm interested in learning about…." Be aware that some candidates' responses may become rambling, trivial, or bogged down in too much detail. The interviewers must be prepared to control the amount of time a candidate spends replying to this type of question.

g) Interview Cautions

i. Do not ask any questions regarding race, physical or mental disability, religious creed, sex, national origin or ancestry, age, marital status, medical condition, political beliefs or affiliations, or any question that can be construed as implying such discrimination. **All questions should be based on bona fide occupational qualifications.** This is true for anyone who is pregnant, has been convicted of a crime, or is disabled.

ii. The same interview questions should be asked of all candidates. This allows for consistent application of selection criteria and comparison of the candidates. However, it is appropriate to ask additional questions of an individual candidate in an effort to clarify information in resumes and applications, or in response to the candidate's answer to a question. As always, these questions should be pertinent to the essential skills and duties of the job being filled. Finally, be sure to obtain permission from all candidates to check their references of current and past employers. This is best done using the Waiver and Release forms found in the County's Reference Check Policy.

iii. Don't ask personal questions – information regarding marital status, age, number of children, childcare arrangements, spouse's occupation, etc., are purposely omitted from the County employment application. Additionally, do not ask about sick leave balances or any question which may force an applicant to reveal the presence of a disability. This information should not be sought in the interview because it is not job-related, and could be discriminatory as a pre-employment inquiry.

However, in order to evaluate attendance, it is acceptable to ask if a person is able to meet an attendance standard (e.g., “We need someone here from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Can you meet this attendance requirement?”). For applicants with obvious disabilities, consider asking them to explain or demonstrate how they will be able to perform essential job functions, with or without an accommodation. However, if the known disability will not interfere with or prevent the performance of a job-related function, the employer can request a description or demonstration by the applicant *only* if it routinely makes such a request of *all* applicants in the same job category. Additionally, it is illegal to ask such applicants about treatment or prognosis.

If an applicant volunteers any of this type of information, DO NOT write it down or pursue it. Bring the topic back to job related information and move on.

iv. Avoiding common mistakes – Interviewers will often prepare questions that sound "good," but which have nothing to do with the job or performance. Avoid these. Also, it is imperative to balance questions between technical skills and performance skills. If not done, a one-sided view of the candidate will result.

3. Interviewing the Candidate

Once the questions have been developed, the candidate is now ready to be interviewed. It is important to consider the following techniques to conduct a productive interview.

a) Taking Notes

Studies show that when interviewers don't take notes, they remember and are influenced most by what happened at the beginning and end of the interview. Subtleties are lost; first and last impressions loom.

Taking notes doesn't have to be a burden. For privacy, use a clipboard and jot down key words and phrases that will jog one’s memory later. Write down descriptions, not judgments, and facts, not opinions. If a candidate seems fidgety, write down "tapping fingers" or "swinging leg" instead of "candidate seems fidgety." Do not write notes to record any physical characteristics. Pictures of candidates should not be taken to assist the panel in remembering a particular candidate or for any other reason.

After interviewing all the candidates, the written record will be helpful in making a methodical comparison. Irrelevant details won't be misleading; patterns will become evident.

b) Allowing Silence

Silence can be uncomfortable for both the interviewer and interviewee. Still, it is important to allow silence at times to give the candidate time to think through an answer. The interviewer may want to comment on the silence, suggesting the candidate take time in answering, and use the time personally to write or clean up notes.

c) Controlling the Interview

It is often difficult to control the very talkative interviewee. When this person over-talks, digresses, or occupies time with casual conversation, the interviewer may not have sufficient opportunity to gain enough information about the candidate's skills. A well-prepared list of questions will move this interviewee to the next question. Using closed-ended questions may also bring the interview back into control. Remind the candidate that only a certain amount of time is available in which to answer all questions.

d) Finding Contrary Evidence

Contrary evidence is information that profiles both sides of the interviewee's skills. Although motivated to find as many positives as possible about his or her skill level, it is important for the interviewer to ask questions that will reveal mistakes, weaknesses, or problems in the past. This enables the interviewer to gain balance on strengths and weaknesses. When forming an overly negative opinion, look for opportunities to identify strengths.

e) Adjusting Time Allocated to Describing Job

Many managers make the mistake of wasting interview time by describing the job and the kind of person they are looking for. All that does is reveal to the candidate the answers one wants to hear. Save this discussion of the job for the end of the interview. By then it will be evident as to what the candidate's interests are, and which aspects of the job to stress. Five minutes of information tailored and adapted to a candidate's interest is far more persuasive than 25 minutes of mere facts. If an interviewer decides he/she is not interested in the candidate, this tactic will help save time because the interviewer can keep this portion of the interview brief.

f) Being Aware of Traps Set by Applicants

Using the Word “We”

Applicants commonly, sometimes deceptively, overuse the word “we,” as in “We planned and implemented such and such program,” or “We succeeded in carrying out that assignment.” Often this is a truthful statement: a group of people – not just the candidate – did the work. However, the interviewer is not concerned with hiring an entire group. The interviewer needs only to resolve whether or not to hire the candidate being interviewed.

When a candidate says "we" in a context that makes it hard to discern specifically what the candidate did, the interviewer can say:

> "I understand that you worked on this project with other people. However, I’m particularly interested in what you did on the project. So, please tell me specifically about your role."

Offering Generalities

Candidates may gloss over the specifics of what they did on a job or project, offering generalities, such as, “I succeeded in implementing the such and such program.” This generality may not tell the whole story. For instance, how specifically did the candidate implement the program? And did the program achieve its goals?

To move candidates beyond generalities and into specifics, when an applicant gives a generality, follow up with open-ended probes:

> “Tell me specifically what you did.”
>
> “Give me some examples of how you implemented the program.”
>
> “Explain exactly how you managed to do that.”
>
> “I’d like to hear about the results of the program in detail.”

g) Adjusting Length of Interview

The length of the interview should correspond to the position level: the higher the position, the longer the interview. However, for any position, make sure enough time is allowed to ask all needed questions. Extra time spent during the interview process to identify qualifications and performance attributes is a wise investment.

There are many reasons why extended interviews can be helpful. Many applicants can "talk a good talk" and come across well for an hour. However, even a well-rehearsed candidate may not be able to sustain such a good show. In an interview, the candidate should be doing about 80 to 90 percent of the talking; after an hour, if she/he has not been totally truthful, she/he may start contradicting herself/himself or tripping over what she/he has said earlier.

4. Reviewing Notes

Between candidates, take a few minutes to review and clarify your notes.

Once the panel is finished with the interviews, convene and discuss the candidates. Panel members should take time before this discussion to personally rank the candidates. This will help the panel members to independently consider each candidate and come to their own conclusions before discussing the candidates as a group. Upon meeting, the panel can discuss the candidates further and a tentative selection may be made.

5. Reference Checks

Human Resources will provide copies of each candidate's application/resume. It is important to have the candidates that you are seriously considering for a job offer review the County Reference Check Policy that contains necessary forms, such as the Waiver and Release form that should be completed and signed by the candidate prior to conducting any reference checks. (Note: obtain a copy of said policy from Human Resources for overall guidelines and forms.)

Do not just use the references that are provided by the candidate. Ask these contacts for some alternate references.[1] Also ask the applicant to account for any period of time omitted from the application. NOTE: If applicant states that the unaccounted period of time was due to illness, do not explore any further. Such an inquiry may be impermissible under ADA and HIPAA.

At least two (2) reference checks are strongly recommended on all tentatively selected external candidates.

Hiring Guidelines

The following guidelines are helpful hints to consider in determining the best candidate to hire for your vacancy:

- **Verify past behavior**. A person's past behavior is a good indicator of future performance. Do everything possible in the interview and reference check process to obtain past behavior information.
- **Hire for attitude**. Positive attitude cannot be taught, whereas most skills and subject matter expertise can be.
- **Hire for long-term**. In general, hire a person that can expect to work with the County for at least 10 years, so hire for the long-term. Do not let short-term considerations unduly influence one's decision.

[1] Follow County Reference Check Policy regarding the Release and Waiver Form.

- **Consider the short-term**. On the other hand, don't eliminate someone because it is believable that they won't stay long. A few years with a star performer is worth the time spent and the opportunity to change their career perspective.
- **Encourage diversity**. Be open to hiring those who look, dress, and talk differently than you. The County's overall work environment is enriched by people with varied backgrounds and cultures.
- **Use office values.** Office values should be a guide in the decision-making process. They detail those ideals most important to the office environment.
- **Settle only for the best**. If no candidate is suitable, do not settle on a lesser-qualified candidate. It is better to spend the time to pursue new applicants than to burden the office with a substandard performer. During this period, it may be possible to hire temporaries until a qualified candidate is found.
- **Conduct reference checks**. Do not hire any candidate without obtaining a positive reference. Always conduct reference checks, even for internal hires. Unless prohibited by an MOU, always review a current employee's personnel file.

Hiring Procedure

Once a candidate is selected, the department calls and makes an offer contingent upon satisfactory completion of the medical examination if required, and other pre-employment requirements, including alcohol and drug testing. If the candidate accepts and no contingencies exist, the department arranges for a medical exam through his/her department and sets a tentative start date. Some possible contingencies that may delay the start date are:

- Candidate requests a higher pay step than introductory; and/or
- Candidate cannot start as soon as requested due to current employment, planned vacation, etc.

Once the above exigencies are solved, a tentative start date can be determined.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

Final Step in Testing Process

The probationary period is the final step in the testing process. It should be treated as that and the new employee should be so informed. The probationary period is one year for new hires and six months for promotions or transfers. This time is used to train the new employee and to verify a fit between job and employee.

Regular Evaluations

During this period, the supervisor conducts formal employee performance evaluations on a regular basis, as a matter of policy. The probationary period is divided into two equal evaluation periods, one at six months and one at the end of probation, and an evaluation is conducted for each period.

Final Evaluation

The supervisor should have learned the employee's strengths and weaknesses prior to the final probationary evaluation, and the decision whether this employee will be permanent should now be clear. If it should take until the final evaluation period to make this determination, and the employee is a previous County employee that will be released, timing is critical for that employee in order to exercise his/her return rights.

As a general rule, a probationary employee may be released during the probationary period for any reason other than discrimination based on race, color, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry, political beliefs or affiliations, age, or physical or mental disability, or any other basis protected by law.

Importance of Regular Meetings

Especially during the period prior to the first formal probationary evaluation, it is very important for the supervisor to meet regularly (preferably weekly) with the new employee to discuss strengths, weaknesses, and expectations. Even if only for 10 minutes, these meetings allow the employee to verify the things he/she is doing right and time to correct areas that need improvement. Weekly guidance is especially important for newly promoted personnel in supervisory/lead-worker type positions. Too often, employees who were great line workers are promoted to supervisory roles with little guidance. Their performance, and that of their staff, ultimately suffers needlessly without regular, targeted reviews and directions.

Out-of-Cycle Evaluations

Supervisors can perform evaluations earlier in a probationary evaluation period. This could occur if an employee’s performance is obviously substandard, and/or the supervisor has significant concerns about the employee passing probation, and the supervisor wants to formally bring those concerns to the attention of the employee. A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) may be necessary. The decision to conduct an out-of-cycle evaluation and/or to put an employee on a PIP should be discussed with Human Resources before proceeding.

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APPENDICES

A. Hiring Procedure Checklist

Vacancy (upon termination, resignation, promotion, retirement)

- ❑ Complete and submit a Staff Requisition Form to Human Resources with appropriate approvals
- ❑ Develop selection process; review tasks and KSAs; determine type and elements of selection process; develop rating factors, questions, other selection tools; administer selection process.
- ❑ Obtain eligibility list and consider candidates for hiring interview
  If no list, request new recruitment
- ❑ Conduct Departmental Hiring Interviews
- ❑ Check references on prospective employee
  - ❑ Complete the Waiver and Release of Information form found in the County's Reference Check Policy
- ❑ Schedule pre-employment medical exam, finger printing, drug screen as required by the position.

Hire

- ❑ Notify Human Resources and the Auditor's offices regarding selected candidate
- ❑ Once pre-employment results are received and reference checks are completed and everything checks out well:
  - ❑ Provide actual start date (department)
  - ❑ Once hired, will have necessary forms completed by employee (done by Auditor for full-time/permanent part-time; by the department for extra-help)
- ❑ Upon hire but before employee start date, department prepares for new employee (use "New Employee Checklist")

Probationary Period

- ❑ Conduct timely employee evaluations at 6 months and then at end of the one-year probationary period (new hires)
- ❑ Discuss and review progress with employee on regular and needed basis

B. New Employee Checklist – Department

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION	
Name:	Start date:
Position/Dept:	Supervisor:

WELCOME

☐ Make the employee feel welcome.	• Place a “welcome” card on employee’s desk • Make yourself available most of the first day • Plan to have lunch with the new employee and other staff • Place a name marker at the work space even if it is just a paper one • Have workplace cleaned and stocked with supplies

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

☐ Review general administrative procedures.	• Office/desk/work station • Keys • Mail (incoming and outgoing) • Shipping (FedEx, DHL, and UPS) • Business cards • Purchase requests • Uniforms (ordering and cleaning)	• Telephones • Building access codes • Conference rooms • Picture ID badges • Expense reports • Office supplies • Staff meetings

INTRODUCTIONS AND TOURS

☐ Give introductions to department staff and key personnel during tour.

☐ If possible, assign a "buddy" employee to answer questions and be available (make sure the “buddy” demonstrates the behaviors you appreciate and the performance you expect, and who is reasonably available. He/she should be a good communicator and have a positive attitude).

☐ Acquaint new employee with departmental goals, polices, and unwritten rules or customs.

☐ Tour of facility, including:	• Restrooms • Mail areas • Copy areas • Fax machines	• Bulletin board • Parking • Printers • Office supplies	• Kitchen • Coffee area/vending machines • Break areas • Emergency exits and supplies

POSITION INFORMATION

☐ Introductions to team.

☐ Review initial job assignments and training plans.

☐ Review job description and performance competencies, goals, and standards.

☐ Review job schedule and hours (if the employee is to be on an alternate work schedule, make sure they have completed the form).

☐ Review payroll timing (calendar), time clocks (if applicable), timesheets, time off, and overtime requests/forms.

COMPUTERS

☐ Hardware and software reviews, including:	• E-mail • Intranet	• Microsoft Office System • Data on shared drives	• Databases • Internet

Signatures once this part of the orientation is complete (return to Human Resources):

Employee Signature	Date
Departmental Signature	Date

C. COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Typically, a wide variety of questions can be used to gain information about a candidate's job skills. Use these questions as a guide to help develop questions that target specific skill requirements.

Warm-up Questions

Warm-up questions are designed to be "ice-breakers." They should follow the "rapport-building" questions that lead the interview. Warm-up questions may not provide information on which to base a hiring decision since they are standard, anticipated questions. However, they encourage applicants to talk about themselves, especially for applicants who are not very expressive.

1. Tell me about your last job (or job most relevant to this job).
2. Describe a typical day at your last job.
3. What did you enjoy doing most (least) on your last job? Why?
4. If you could have changed one thing about your last job, what would you have suggested?
5. To what extent did you act independently?
6. What kind of decisions did you make?
7. Among the supervisors you have had, which one was the best? Why?
8. What are you most proud of doing during your working career to date? (Greatest accomplishment.)
9. What would be your ideal job?
10. What is your most difficult work-related situation?
11. What has been your greatest disappointment?
12. What has caused you the most frustration – when you just couldn't get the job done?
13. What is most appealing to you about this job?
14. Do you prefer to work alone or in a group? Why?
15. Do you prefer specific directions or non-specific assignments? Why?
16. What would your last boss say about your strengths? In what areas would he/she say you needed coaching?

Education: The following questions would be more meaningful to a recent graduate than to an applicant with five or more years of experience.

1. Tell me about what you did in school? What courses did you take?
2. What courses did you like best in school? What courses did you least like in school?
3. Which courses did you do well in? Which course did you not do well in?
4. What did you want to obtain from school? Did you get what you wanted?
5. Why did you decide on your particular major?
6. Have you taken any specialized training or courses since leaving school? What did you take?

Performance Skill Questions

Typically, a wide variety of questions can be used to gain information about a candidate's job skills. Use these questions to develop questions that target a specific job's skill requirement.

Self Skills

1. Describe a time on any previous job when you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills. What did you do?
2. Tell me about a time when you were placed in a situation that posed an ethical dilemma. What did you do?
3. Tell me about a time when you had to take a position that went counter to a group. How did you manage?
4. Can you recall a time when you had to resolve a conflict at work with either a colleague or an employee? Tell me how you did it.
5. Tell me about a time when you were part of a group that didn't work well together. Tell me about the group and how you handled the situation.
6. Give me an example of when you could not participate in a discussion or could not finish a task because you did not have enough information.
7. Give me an example of when you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision. Describe the situation and the decision you made.

Other Skills

8. Tell me about a time when you had to use verbal skills to get a point across that was important to you.
9. Tell me about a job experience when you had to speak up to be sure that others knew what you thought or felt?
10. Give me an example of when you built motivation in your co-workers or subordinates.
11. Give me an example of when you successfully communicated with another, even when that individual may not have personally liked you.
12. Describe a situation when you effectively "read" another person and guided your actions by your understanding of their personal needs or values.
13. Describe a time when it was necessary to modify or change your actions to respond to the needs of another person.
14. Give me an example of when you had to understand another person or situation to be effective in guiding your action or decision.
15. What did you do in your last job to contribute toward a team environment?

16. Describe a situation when you positively influenced the actions of others in a desired direction.
17. Give me an example of when there was a miscommunication with one of your co-workers/subordinates/bosses. How did you solve the miscommunication?
18. Describe a time when you had a disagreement with someone you had to continue working with. How did you handle the disagreement or situation?
19. Describe your worst customer or coworker and explain how you handled him or her.
20. Tell me about a situation in the past year when you had to deal with a very upset customer or coworker.
21. Describe a situation in which others within your organization depended on you.
22. Describe your most recent group effort.

Environment Questions

23. Give me an example of a specific occasion when you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree.
24. Describe a situation when it was necessary to be very attentive to your environment.
25. Give me an example of when you had to use your fact-finding skills to solve a problem. Tell me how you analyzed the information to make a decision.
26. Give me an example of any job-related problem and explain how you solved it.
27. Have you worked in a situation with constant surprises or unexpected events? How did you handle them?

Task Skills

28. Give me an example of an important goal that you set in the past. Tell me about your success in reaching it.
29. Describe the most significant written document, report, or presentation that you completed.
30. Give me an example of when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get a job done.
31. How did you organize and plan your work in your previous job?
32. Describe the most creative work-related project you have completed.

D. PERMITTED MEDICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

ADA Title II, Section 102

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

a) A covered entity may not make inquiries as to whether an applicant is an individual with a disability, or as to the nature or severity of disabilities.

1. **It is illegal to ask interview questions which force a job candidate to reveal the presence of, or nature and severity of, a disability, as such inquiries could lead to discrimination in the hiring process.**

   a. **It is illegal to ask:**

      Sick leave balances from a current or former job

      Sick leave balances from a previous department or supervisor.

   b. **However, in order to evaluate attendance it is legal to ask:**

      If a person is able to meet an attendance standard (i.e., "We need someone here from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Can you meet this attendance requirement?").

      How an applicant can perform specific job functions, tasks, or duties (as long as questions are not phrased in terms of a disability).

2. **Applicants with obvious disabilities can be asked to explain or demonstrate how they will be able to perform essential job functions, with or without an accommodation.**

   a. It is **illegal** to ask such applicants about treatment or prognosis.

Disability-Related Inquiries During the Interview Process are inquiries/a series of inquiries that are likely to elicit information about a disability. Inquiries about the ability to perform job functions are not disability-related inquiries.

The following examples are inquiries which are not disability-related:

- Can you perform the functions of this job (essential and/or marginal), with or without reasonable accommodation?
- Please describe/demonstrate how you would perform these functions (essential and/or marginal).
- Can you meet the attendance requirements of this job? How many days of leave did you take last year?
- Do you illegally use drugs? Have you used illegal drugs in the last two years?
- Do you have the required licenses to perform this job?

- How an applicant can perform specific job functions, tasks, or duties (as long as it is not phrased in terms of a disability).
- Applicants with obvious disabilities can be asked to explain or demonstrate how they will be able to perform essential job functions, with or without an accommodation.

The following examples are illegal disability-related inquiries:

- Do you have AIDS? Do you have asthma?
- Do you have a disability that would interfere with your ability to perform the job?
- How many days were you sick last year?
- Have you ever filed for workers' compensation?
- Have you ever been injured on the job?
- How much alcohol do you drink each week? Have you ever been treated for alcohol problems?
- Have you ever been treated for mental health problems?
- What prescription drugs are you currently taking?
- What are your sick leave balances from your current or previous job?
- How would you rate your sick leave balances? (High-medium-low, 1 to 10, etc.)
- Are you currently undergoing treatment for your cancer? What is your prognosis?