

Interviewing Techniques

- Establish rapport: make the potential member feel welcome- be prepared, start on time, greet her/him by name, make eye contact and give her/him your undivided attention
- Start Easy: ask the easy questions first to make the candidate feel comfortable
- Let the applicant speak: Ask open ended questions which allow the candidate to do most of the talking.
- Open ended questions: Avoid questions that can be answered “yes” or “no”
- Phrase your questions without “leading” the candidate toward the answer you would like to hear
- Stay neutral: Avoid giving advice or offering personal opinions
- One at a time: stick to one question on one subject at a time
- To the point: ask questions directly related to the candidate’s ability to perform and interest in the service opportunity under consideration. Make an effort to keep the interview on track.
- At the interview, tell the applicant how soon they will know whether or not they have been accepted and the start date for the position for which they are applying.

Equal Opportunity Interviewing Guidelines

Remember, National Service members have the same civil rights and protections as employees! When interviewing candidates stick to questions directly related to their ability to perform the duties of the member position. Do not ask questions relating to:

-Age

-Marital Status

Children, childcare arrangements, future family planning, other dependents or family life- including the candidate’s ability to work overtime or travel

Medical conditions or disabilities

Ethnic or racial background

For further guidance regarding equal employment opportunity standards, contact the Corporation for National Service Equal Employment Opportunity office at (202) 606-5000, ext 312.

Member Screening Strategies

- **Establish Selection Criteria:** Identify the criteria that will be the basis for accepting or rejecting your candidates. When considering potential members, determine whether or not the skills required by the service position match those of the applicant.
- **Look beyond the paper:** Be cautious about rejecting applicants based only on what you see on paper. Some of your applicants may not be able to describe themselves well in writing, while others may not convey all of their talents in an interview. It is helpful to have a variety of ways to assess skills the applicant may have developed in previous life and work experiences. You don't want to pass over a gem in the rough!
- **Check References:** An applicant's references may provide further insight on their abilities. Motivation for service, perseverance, ability to handle stress and willingness to learn are key traits you will want to know about. Checking references personally by phone allows you to confirm the information given by the applicant.
- **When Checking references:**
 - identify yourself, your organization and the reason for your call
 - verify the relationship between the candidate and the reference
 - identify the position for which the candidate has applied
 - ask questions regarding the candidate's appropriateness for the position

- **Consider A Group Interview Process- involve members and site staff**

Many times a group interview is more effective than a one-on-one; it gives you a broader picture. An interview process that includes others such as current members and site staff can be a great way to involve people from your organization and to give the candidate a better sense of the program and the people that they may be serving with as a member. You may wish to start off with a one-on-one interview and then move to a group interview, if the candidate is still under consideration at that point. Remember to brief your fellow staff and members on interviewing ground rules- both the legal guidelines and the standards that you have established. Also, be sure to set a comfortable, informational tone for group interviews so that the candidate is at ease-

keep in mind that the candidate is meeting with several people at once, who she/he may not know.

Resources for further information on member interviewing:

AmeriCorps Recruitment Manual. This publication was developed by the Corporation for National Service. To request a copy, contact: (202) 606-5000, ext 268

Resource Connection Volume 4, Number 1: Recruitment and Retention. Available through the National Service Resource Center (NSRC): www.etr.org/NSRC or 1-800-860-2684

Also Available through the NSRC:

101 Ideas for Volunteer Programs. McCurley, Steve and Sue Vineyard. Heritage Arts Publishing, Baltimore, MD 1986. Lists and checklists to consider for volunteer programs. Included are planning a volunteer program, recruiting volunteers and screening and training them, leadership characteristics, volunteer/staff relations, and marketing and public relations. # R0261.

Volunteer Recruitment Book, The. Ellis, Susan J. ENERGIZE, Inc., Philadelphia, PA 1994. Information on how and where to recruit volunteers. Details techniques of recruiting and focuses on recruiting for diversity and appealing to special target audiences. # M0044