



**Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities**

Phone/Video Interviews

What to Expect

Employers often use phone interviews to narrow down their pool of candidates and decide who will move forward in the hiring process. However, as most offices are closed and employees are working remotely at this time, we expect that all interviews will take place either by phone or video for now.

If you are unsure whether this will be a screening or a more in-depth interview, ask how much time to allot for the call. This can tell you what type of interview to expect. If you're told it'll take 10-15 minutes, it's just going to be a simple screening to check your basic match-up with the job. But if you are asked to set aside 45 minutes or an hour, expect a much more thorough call where you might be asked in-depth about past accomplishments and to respond to behavioral interview questions.

If you require an accommodation and/or if do not have the technology to support the software the employer uses, notify the person scheduling the interview as far in advance as possible.

Setting Up for Your Interview - Logistics/Technology

Phone Interview:

1. Use a phone that will give you good reception and sound clarity.
2. Identify somewhere quiet to talk where you will not be interrupted. You should not be on the subway or in a moving vehicle. Not only does this come across as unprofessional and as if you're not taking the opportunity seriously, but it also will harm your ability to focus.
3. Dress like you would for an in-person interview. It can help you focus and sound professional.
4. Turn your phone ringer on and be prepared to pick up the call at the scheduled interview time. Answer the phone politely and professionally.
5. Practice taking a call from the location you have selected.
6. A benefit of phone interviews is that you can have all the notes in front of you that you want. Take advantage of this and prepare notes about the points you want to make. You don't want to sound like you're reading a script, but you can use your notes to prompt you.
7. Phone interviews can be tricky because you and your interviewer can't make eye contact or see each other's body language. As a result, tone of voice really matters! Make sure that you sound upbeat, and engaged, and focused. While the interviewer wants a sense of your personality, a phone interview is still an interview, not an informal phone call with a friend.

Video Interview:

1. Download any software beforehand. If possible, use a device that can be stabilized during the video, such as a desktop, laptop, or tablet with a stand, rather than a cell phone.
2. Do a trial run a few days before the real interview, with someone on the other end to give you feedback. Treat this as a trial run, including wearing the outfit you'll wear for the interview.
3. Keep other programs on your device closed and silence your cell phone.
4. Pay attention to your physical background and the lighting. You will look professional sitting at a desk or table and against a neutral background. Position yourself correctly in the frame and do not sit too close to the camera. Instead, sit a bit further back, so that your face and upper shoulders are framed in the shot.
5. Look into the camera, not at the picture of yourself. If you look directly at the image of your interviewer on your computer screen, you'll appear to be looking slightly away. Instead, looking directly into your webcam will read as direct eye contact on your interviewer's end. If you find the image of yourself distracting, cover it.
6. Use the highest speed Internet connection you can. On slower Internet connections, video may not align well with the audio and can cause awkward time lags.
7. Plan for technological difficulties! Keep your computer plugged in so the battery doesn't die. Keep your phone on hand in case the interview mode changes at the last minute.

How to Prepare

You should prepare for a phone or video interview similarly to how you would prepare for an in-person interview.

1. Research the company. Hiring managers want to know *why you* want to work for them. You can expect to be asked some version of "what do you know about us?" In addition to reviewing their website, what else can you learn about the company? Review the company's website, social media presence, and news sources. Make notes for yourself.

Know the facts:

- Where are they located/headquartered?
- How many offices/sites do they have?
- Who started the company and for what purpose?
- Who are their customers or clients? What programs, services, or products do they provide?
- What differentiates them from their competitors?
- What is their company culture? What diversity programs do they promote?
- What is their mission, vision, and/or values? What resonates with you and your values?

- Do they have any new initiatives, strategies, or programs they are promoting?
 - What is included in their annual report, press releases, and/or media? What have they shared on social media recently?
 - Who does this company partner or collaborate with?
 - What do they look for in prospective employees, especially in the kinds of roles you're targeting?
2. Review the job description and think about how your experience and skills fits in with what the company is looking for.
 3. Practice answers to common interview and behavioral questions. Prepare questions for your interviewer. You can ask the interviewer what the next steps in the interview process will be and when you can expect to hear back.

After the Interview

1. Review your notes from the interview.
2. Submit any information or documentation requested per the interviewer's instructions.
3. Send a thank you note to all interviewers within 48 hours, reviewing what was discussed and why you are a good fit.