

Group Interview Process

This is a step-by-step guide for program staff who participate in group interviews. Following these steps ensures that each interview session is the same no matter who facilitates.

Step 1. Preparing for the Interview

Identify questions you want to ask all candidates. Divide questions into categories (e.g., commitment, teamwork, service, etc.) and select a paper color for each category. Type or print questions on color-coded slips of paper. Paper will be folded and put into a cup; the slips of paper can be reused at subsequent interviews. **See sample questions on page 2.**

1. Pull the applications
 - Each interviewer should read each application before the interview
 - Bring the application to the interview
2. Ensure technology is reserved and ready (computer, PowerPoint if one is being used, etc.)
3. Ensure there are enough copies of materials (PowerPoint or program overview handouts, site selection sheet, etc.)
4. Each program staff has a copy of a an interview notes/evaluation form
5. Prepare the room – have ready 15 minutes before interview begins
 - Arrange tables in the room
 - Set out markers and paper for name tents
 - Set out pens
 - Set out copies of the PowerPoint, education award flyer, AmeriCorps brochure, and other materials; post map of site locations
 - Set out program staff business cards (only of those present)
 - Play light music in the background
 - Post a sign on the door directing people to the room
 - Have water available
 - Set-up PowerPoint
 - Prepare the “Question Bowls”

Step 2. Group Interview

1. Agenda
 - Allow a total of approximately 1.5 hours for interview
 - Introduction: 10 minutes
 - Program overview: 30–45 minutes
 - Small group question period: 20 minutes
 - Site selection: 15 minutes
2. Welcome
 - Introduce program staff
 - State the purpose of the event:
 - Present program information
 - Allow applicants to ask questions and get a full understanding of program
 - Allow program staff to get to know applicants and make decisions about assignments
 - Welcome applicants to ask questions at any point
3. Review agenda (agenda is slide 2 of the PowerPoint)
4. Introduce applicants. Ask each person to say his or her name and answer, “What does service mean to you in your life?”
5. Show PowerPoint presentation or give program overview
6. Small group interview
 - Have applicants number off to get into small groups (3 to 4 applicants per group)
 - Program staff is assigned a small group to interview
 - Each small group has a cup of questions (questions are the same at each table) — **See sample questions on next page.**
 - Each applicant pulls a question and answers it. There are five colors in the cup of questions – each color represents a different

category of questions. We want applicants to answer all of the categories, thus have at least one color of each.

- Program staff facilitates, asks appropriate follow-up questions, and takes notes on the a standardized form.
7. Explain to applicants the next step in the interview process:
 8. Thank applicants for coming and hand out site selection sheet.

After the Interview

1. Immediately following the interview, debrief with other program staff. Compare notes. Make recommendations on your interview notes form.
2. Make a copy of your interview notes form. Put a copy in the applicant's file.
3. Send a follow-up e-mail to the applicant; include next steps. Send the applications to the sites to schedule the interview.
3. Follow up with site in one week to ensure they contacted applicant for an on-site interview.
4. Following the on-site interview, take the recommendation from the site and offer the position to the applicant or send a rejection letter.

Sample Categories and Questions

Category: Commitment/Perseverance

- Tell us about a time at work or school when you had to work under stress. Describe how you dealt with that stress.
- Tell us about at time when you were faced with a challenge at work. How did you respond to this challenge?
- Tell us about a time when you wanted to quit something because it was hard. What kept you going?
- Describe how AmeriCorps will fit into your life during the next year?
- Tell us about a time when you committed to something and followed through on it.

Category: Service

- Tell us about your experience serving your community.
- What motivates you to give back to your community?
- What has been your favorite community service experience? What made it special?
- How have you impacted others through service?
- How do you make the world a better place to live?

Category: Teaching young children

- Describe your experience working with young children or volunteers (if you are applying for a Volunteer Coordinator position).
- Why do you think literacy is important for young children?
- Tell us about a time when you taught someone something.
- Tell us how your skills and / or education have prepared you for working with children on their literacy skills.
- How do you hope to impact the children you will be working with?

Category: Motivation

- Explain your reasons for applying to serve in Minnesota Reading Corps.
- What are your goals and how does a year of AmeriCorps service fit into these goals?
- What will the education award mean to you? How do you foresee a year of service with AmeriCorps affecting other aspects of your life?
- What about this position appeals to you most?

Category: Get to know you

- How would you describe yourself? How do you think your peers and / or colleagues would describe you?
- What has been your favorite job? What did you like about it?
- How do you stand out among your peers?
- How would your past supervisors describe you?