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# Successful Phone Interviewing

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LOUDOUN WORKFORCE RESOURCE CENTER

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# What You'll Learn

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- 📞 Preparation
- 📞 Questions You Can Ask
- 📞 During the Phone Interview
- 📞 Common Phone Interview Questions
- 📞 Ending the Conversation
- 📞 Follow Up
- 📞 How will a Phone Interview be Evaluated?
- 📞 The 3 C's

# Preparation

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- ☛ Do your research
- ☛ Make your list of questions to ask
- ☛ Know if you can take the call when it comes. It may not be a scheduled call. If you are in the middle of something like driving, it's really best to let your phone go to voicemail and return the call as soon as possible.
- ☛ Dress as for a face-to-face interview. Dressing professionally will bolster your confidence and remind you of the importance of the call.
- ☛ Have your documents about the job and/or employer ready (i.e. job posting, prepared questions, your research notes).
- ☛ Be in a private setting so you won't be interrupted or disturbed.
- ☛ Keep "comfort" items nearby (i.e. water bottle, throat lozenge, tissue)
- ☛ Use a landline to ensure a clear connection. If you must use a cell phone, be sure you are in an area with good reception.



# Questions You Can Ask

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- ☛ What characteristics does a successful person have at your company?
- ☛ What are the most important factors sought in the ideal candidate at your company?
- ☛ What are the challenges I will be expected to solve?
- ☛ What is a traditional career path for this position?
- ☛ How is an employee's performance evaluated?
- ☛ Could you describe a typical week within your organization?
- ☛ What are some of the reasons you believe people enjoy working there?



# Questions You Can Ask

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- ☞ How would you describe the leadership's communication and approachability?
- ☞ How does leadership communicate with the organization?
- ☞ Can you tell me something about how your career has developed working there?
- ☞ What do you enjoy about working there?
- ☞ How would you describe the company culture?
- ☞ What initial projects could I expect to work on if I'm hired?
- ☞ Do you have any unanswered questions about my qualifications?
- ☞ What are the next steps in the hiring process?



# During the Phone Interview

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- ☛ Stand up – when you stand up, there is more energy in your voice
- ☛ Smile – your voice sounds more upbeat and engaged when you smile
- ☛ Watch your tone – it's all about the voice. On the phone, it's the words and tone that the interviewer has to go on
- ☛ Speak clearly and at a slower pace
- ☛ Don't interrupt the interviewer
- ☛ If you didn't hear the question clearly, ask the interviewer to repeat it



# During the Phone Interview

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- ☞ Tell them what you are doing (i.e. if something is said you want to remember, tell that to the interviewer so you'll have a moment to write it down.
- ☞ Practice your responses to common interview questions ahead of time. Paint visual pictures with your words by telling stories that demonstrate results you achieved or projects you've contributed to.
- ☞ Answer the question asked. Answers that express actions you took to achieve accomplishments and the outcomes will demonstrate you have the skill being asked about. Use numbers or other values to quantify things.
- ☞ Be succinct – do not ramble. Get to the point when responding to questions.



# Common Types of Interview Questions

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- ↳ **Behavioral** - questions that are indicators of how you responded to a situation/problem/circumstance etc. as to how you will respond in the future. These questions determine how you would operate on the job. (“Tell me about a time when\_\_\_\_\_.”)
- ↳ **Traditional** – questions asked to clarify points on your resume, evaluate your accomplishments and goals, and assess your expectations of the company and/or position.
- ↳ **Difficult** – questions you hope aren’t asked. Prepare in advance and anticipate these types of questions. Come to terms with the issue at hand, see the positive side of it, and demonstrate that you are eager to move on with your career. (i.e. gaps in employment, being terminated from a previous job). If something from the past is now resolved, say so.





# Common Interview Questions

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- 📞 What things do you look for in an organization?
- 📞 What has been a high-pressure situation for you and how well did you cope with it?
- 📞 In your last review, what did your supervisor suggest needed improvement?
- 📞 How do you handle stress?
- 📞 What qualities do you look for in a supervisor?



# Common Interview Questions

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- ☛ What would you say is the most important thing you learned from your last position?
- ☛ List three things that former co-workers would say about you.
- ☛ Give me an example of a conflict you have encountered and how you handled it.
- ☛ What do you know about this company?
- ☛ What are your career goals for the future?



# Ending the Conversation

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- ☞ Take your cues from the interviewer and let the interviewer end the conversation
- ☞ Thank the employer for his/her time
- ☞ Re-state your interest in the position
- ☞ Ask about next steps in the interview process
- ☞ State that you would like to meet in person
- ☞ Be sure you have the name (correct spelling) and contact information of those you interviewed with



# Follow Up

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- ☛ Send a thank you 24-48 hours after the phone interview
  - ☛ Your name and the position you applied for in the Subject Line
  - ☛ Summarize what you talked about
  - ☛ Re-state your interest in the position
  - ☛ Include a link to an interesting article about the company, something related to the industry or job, or your own website



# How a Phone Interview is Evaluated

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- ☛ Did you have an enthusiastic voice?
- ☛ Did you answer questions vaguely or directly?
- ☛ Did you research the company well, or did you ask simple questions?
- ☛ Did you express interest in a second interview?



# How a Phone Interview is Evaluated

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- ☛ Did you follow up with a thank you letter?
- ☛ Did you pursue this opportunity with a phone call or email?
- ☛ Did you send supporting material (online app, resume, portfolio, link)?



## The 3 C's

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- ☛ **Concision** – avoid long winded answers. Phone interviews are typically shorter than face-to face interviews, which means you have less time to make a good impression.
- ☛ **Concentration** – Listen carefully so your responses are on-point. Stay focused & take notes.
- ☛ **Courtesy** - Be professional and polite. It's usually the last few words of a conversation that are most remembered.

# Resources Available at the Loudoun Workforce Resource Center

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- ☛ So You Think You Can Interview workshop ([online](#))
- ☛ Tough Interview Questions ([online](#))
- ☛ Mock Interview (call 703-771-0150 to request an appointment)
- ☛ SCARQ – Discover Your Competencies workshop ([register online](#))
- ☛ Interviewing Styles workshop ([register online](#))
- ☛ Employer Events, Employer Panel discussions, Career Fairs



# Loudoun Workforce Resource Center

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[loudoun.gov/wrc](http://loudoun.gov/wrc)

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Hours of Operation:

9:00 am – 4:30pm

Except Wednesdays 9:00 – Noon