

# PREPARING JOB SEEKERS FOR INTERVIEWS

## Guidelines:

- Allow 30 minutes for the mock interview, including time to provide feedback to the client.
- Unless instructed otherwise, the mock interview should focus on general qualifications, skills and past experiences. This is not an interview for a specific job.
- Review the client's resume before the interview so that you are familiar with their background.
- Be prepared to provide specific feedback to help prepare the client for the real thing!
- Following the mock interview, return to the Chicago Urban League's webpage to enter the feedback you provided to the client so that our Workforce Development Team can follow up as needed.

## Before beginning a mock interview, remind the job seeker of the following advice:

- When answering "behavioral questions," try to steer clear of the pat answers that interviewers are adept at spotting. For example, don't try to portray yourself as a person who never makes mistakes. Or as a person, whose only failings are that you work too much, are too dedicated, too loyal, etc.
- Be honest about your mistakes since the experienced interviewer will be looking for "progress" and "growth", not perfection. But, do give an example of how you learned from your mistake and how that experience has benefited you in the long run.
- Be succinct and concise! In all behavioral answers, the interviewer wants to hear:
  - A brief description of the problem, challenge or situation.
  - What your action was & how you decided that action.
  - A brief description of the result of your action and your assessment of its result.

# SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Based on your review of the client's resume, select questions from the list below. Aim to include at least one question from each category (Accomplishments, Challenges, Collaboration, Decision Making, Problem Solving)

## **Accomplishments**

1. Describe your three greatest accomplishments to date.
2. Tell me about a time when you tried to accomplish something and failed. What did you learn from that failure?
3. Give an example of when your persistence had the biggest payoff.
4. Describe a situation where you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.

## **Challenges**

5. Tell me about a situation when you had to learn something new in a short time. How did you proceed?
6. Describe a situation when you have motivated yourself to complete an assignment or task that you did not want to do.
7. Think about a complex project or assignment that you have been given. What approach did you take to complete it?
8. How have you most constructively dealt with disappointment and turned it into a learning experience? Please give me a concrete example in your life.
9. Tell me of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
10. Tell me about a challenge that you successfully met.

## **Collaboration**

11. Can you tell me about an occasion where you needed to work with a group to get a job done? What were the challenges and difficulties and how did you face these?
12. Tell me about a time when you worked with a person who did things very differently from you. How did you get the job done? Would you work with that person again if given the choice?
13. Describe a situation when you or a group that you were a part of was in danger of missing a deadline. What did you do?

14. Think about a difficult boss, professor or other person. What made him or her difficult? How did you successfully interact with this person?

### **Decision Making**

15. Tell me about the riskiest decision that you have made. What were your considerations in making that particular decision?

16. Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split-second decision.

17. Give me an example of a bad decision that you made and what you learned from that mistake?

18. Please tell me about one or two unpopular decisions you have made. What were the positive and negative outcomes of those decisions?

### **Leadership**

19. Tell me about a time that you demonstrated initiative.

20. What leadership positions have you held? Describe your leadership style.

21. What aspects of your leadership style have you changed after you learned that these aspects were not successful?

22. Summarize a situation where you successfully persuaded others to do something or to see your point of view. Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.

### **Problem Solving**

23. Can you tell me about a complex problem that you solved? Describe the process you utilized.

24. Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem. What did you learn from that mistake?

25. Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.

26. Describe a situation in which you effectively developed a solution to a problem by combining different perspectives or approaches.