

Interviewing Information and Tips:

The Employment Interview

Questions in an employment interview must be directed primarily to the individual's qualifications and suitability for the prospective position of employment. A request for verification of a person's educational background is appropriate, as well as any inquiries directly related to an applicant's ability to perform the job. Medical examinations may be conducted following a conditional offer of employment, but must be restricted to determining the applicant's ability to perform essential job requirements. Any questions that are directly or indirectly related to any prohibited grounds of discrimination, such as age, marital status, national origin, religion and other such discriminatory areas are potentially in violation of existing civil rights legislation.

Application for Employment

Any questions relating to an individual's age, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, race, religion, citizenship, record of offenses, health and even memberships in organizations could amount to discrimination in connection with applications for employment. Any questions which may have the effect of disclosing irrelevant or personal information in relation to the job applicant should be avoided by employers out of an abundance of caution.

Interview Tips

Interview Tip 1: Plan Ahead - Do a little homework! Research the camp and the position you are applying for. Be ready to describe your past experiences –at camp and in other related jobs. Have some highlights of each of your past paid and volunteer experiences.

Interview Tip 2: Role Play – Try rehearsing through the answers to some of the questions listed below. Practice describing your past work experiences. Practice asking some questions of the camp. Write down your thoughts ahead of time if it will help you remember them.

Interview Tip 3: Eye Contact - Maintain eye contact with your interviewer. Show you want the job with your interest. It is okay to take some notes while you are being interviewed, but don't focus on your paper or notebook

Interview Tip 4: Be Positive - In particular, avoid negative comments about past employers or teachers. Be honest but not with a negative slant.

Interview Tip 5: Relate - Try to relate your answers to the camp and their specific needs. If you did your research, try to fit your skills and style into what you are hearing from the interviewer.

Interview Tip 6: Ask – Be sure to ask the interviewer to share information about the camp and the position that you are applying for.

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself? (try to hold your response to 2 minutes)
2. What do you know about our Camp?
3. Why should we hire you?
4. What can you do for us that someone else can't?
5. What do you look for in a job?
6. What skills and qualifications are essential for success in the position of _____?
7. How does this camp position fit with your school and career goals.
8. What do you believe is the most difficult part of being a supervisor of people?
9. How would your co-worker describe you?
10. How would a past supervisor describe you?
11. Why do you want to work at our camp?
12. What are your strong points?
13. What are your weak points?
14. Do you have any questions for me?

Questions to ask the Interviewer

1. What are some of the more difficult problems one would have to face in this position?
2. How do you think these could best be handled?
3. What type of support does this position receive in terms of people, supplies, time off. etc?
4. In what ways has this organization been most successful in terms of products and services over the years?

Lawful and Unlawful Inquiries

Here are some examples of ways that you can get the information that you need without running afoul of anti-discrimination laws.

Subject	Lawful Inquiry	Unlawful Inquiry
<u>Age</u> See below the Age Discrimination in Employment Act	Are you 18 years of age or older? (to determine if the applicant is legally old enough to perform the job)	How old are you?
<u>Marital status</u>	Is your spouse employed by this employer? (if your company has a nepotism policy)	Are you married?
Citizenship	Are you legally authorized to work in the United States on a full-time basis?	Are you a native-born citizen of the United States? Where are you from?
<u>Disability</u>	These [provide applicant with list of job functions] are the essential functions of the job. How would you perform them?	Do you have any physical disabilities that would prevent you from doing this job?
Drug and alcohol use	Do you currently use illegal drugs?	Have you ever been addicted to drugs?

The Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act has very strict rules about what you can and cannot do during the hiring process.

Of all the anti-discrimination laws, none confuses employers more than the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), especially when it comes to hiring. Employers want to make sure that the person they hire can actually perform the job, but often aren't sure how to explore this issue without running afoul of the law.

If you remember one simple rule, you'll be in good shape: You can ask people about their abilities, but you can't ask about their disabilities. This means that you can ask how an applicant plans to perform each function of the job, but you can not ask whether the applicant has any disabilities that will prevent him or her from performing each function of the job.

One way to ensure that you stay within the rules is to attach a detailed job description to the application or describe the job duties to the applicant during the job interview. Then ask how the applicant plans to perform the job. This approach gives applicants an opportunity to talk about their qualifications and strengths. It also allows them to let you know whether they might need reasonable accommodations to do the job.

Some other rules to keep in mind:

- If you have no reason to believe that the applicant has a disability, you cannot ask whether he or she will need an accommodation (meaning special help or equipment) from you to perform the job.
- If you do have reason to believe that the applicant has a disability (for example, the disability is obvious or the applicant has told you about the disability), you can ask about accommodations.

If you still feel a little lost about which questions are legal and which aren't, see the list of permissible and impermissible questions below.

For more information on the ADA, including a discussion of who is covered under the law and an explanation of "reasonable accommodations," see [Reasonable Accommodations for People With Disabilities: The ADA](#). For a comprehensive guide to hiring and the ADA, refer to the website of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at www.eeoc.gov.

Job Interview Questions That You Can and Can't Ask Under the ADA

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is the federal agency that enforces the ADA.

According to the EEOC, you should **never** ask the following questions in a job interview:

- Have you ever had or been treated for any of the following conditions or diseases? (Followed by a checklist of various diseases or conditions.)
- List any conditions or diseases for which you have been treated in the past three years.
- Have you ever been hospitalized? If so, for what condition?
- Have you ever been treated by a psychologist or psychiatrist? If so, for what?
- Have you ever been treated for any mental condition?
- Do you suffer from any health-related condition that might prevent you from performing this job?

- Have you had any major illnesses in the past five years?
- How many days were you absent from work because of illness last year? (You may, however, tell the applicant what your attendance requirements are and then ask whether he or she will be able to meet those requirements.)
- Do you have any physical defects that preclude you from doing certain types of things?
- Do you have any disabilities or impairments that might affect your ability to do the job?
- Are you taking any prescribed drugs?
- Have you ever been treated for drug addiction or alcoholism?
- Have you ever filed a worker's compensation claim?

According to the EEOC, you may ask the following questions in a job interview:

- Can you perform all of the job functions?
- How would you perform the job functions? (If you want to ask any applicant this question, you should ask all applicants this question.)
- Can you meet my attendance requirements?
- What are your professional certifications and licenses?
- Do you currently use illegal drugs?

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act

The federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) is the major federal law that prohibits employers from discriminating against employees and applicants who are at least 40 years old on the basis of their age. Those who are under the age of 40 are not protected by the ADEA.

The ADEA prohibits discrimination in all phases of the employment relationship, except benefits and early retirement, which are addressed by a different law (see below). The aspects of the employment relationship that the ADEA governs include help wanted ads, interviewing, hiring, compensation, promotion, discipline, job evaluations, demotion, training, job assignments, and termination.

The ADEA applies to all private employers that have at least 20 employees. It applies to government employees as well, although state employees are prohibited from filing age discrimination lawsuits.

Not only does the ADEA prohibit you from discriminating against older workers in favor of those who are younger than 40, but it also prohibits you from discriminating among

older workers. For example, you can't hire a 43-year-old over a 53-year-old simply because of age.

State Laws

Many state laws also prohibit discrimination on the basis of age. Although some of these laws essentially mirror the federal law and only protect people older than 40, other laws are broader and protect workers of all ages.

State laws tend to include employers with fewer than 20 employees, so you might have to comply with your state law even if you aren't covered by the federal law.

To find out more about the age discrimination law in your state, contact your state fair employment office.