

# Interview Resource Guide

The candidate interview is a vital component to the hiring process. If done effectively, the hiring process will align with the agency’s values – People, Accountability, Trust, and Honesty – while gaining in-depth information on a candidate’s skills, experience, work history, and personality to meet the job requirements.

Having an objective hiring process also helps assess whether a candidate would likely fit in with the organizational culture and contribute to positive change within the organization. In addition, by having an effective interview process, candidates can determine if their employment needs, and interests would likely be met if selected.

With careful preparation, hiring managers can make the most out of the interview process and obtain the information they need. This document provides a guide for hiring managers on various types of interviewing methods, suggested interview questions around TxDOT’s four interview categories, and considerations when conducting interviews.

Hiring managers are highly encouraged to work with their local HR partners in the preparatory stages to help ensure an effective interview process. This document is to serve as a tool to assist the hiring manager to select and determine the appropriate interview questions and format. HR is available in a consultatory role throughout the hiring process.

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# Types of Interview Methods

Implementing a fair interview process starts with selecting the appropriate type of interview techniques. The types of interviews are dependent on the nature of the position being filled, the division/district, and the type of information the hiring manager seeks to gain from the applicant pool. The following interview methods can be used in either the first or second interview rounds.

## *Telephone Prescreen Interviews*

Telephone interviews are often used to narrow the field of applicants who will be invited for in-person interviews. During this prescreening, the interviewer should ask the applicant enough carefully prepared questions to determine if they are in fact a viable candidate for the position. Telephone prescreen interviews are useful for assessing whether a candidate's qualifications, experience, and skills are compatible with the position and the district/division.

## *One-on-One Interviews*

One-on-One interviews can be either the traditional face-to-face or virtual. During this interview it is only between the candidate and the hiring manager.

## *Panel Group Interviews*

Panel group interviews can be either the traditional face-to-face or virtual. The panel group interview is typically made up of two or more people but should not be more than five. When organized properly, a panel interview can create a broader picture of the candidate.

# Types of Interview Questions

For both the hiring manager and the candidate to get the most out of an interview, it is essential to consider what type of interview questions will be asked. The hiring manager should choose the most important attributes that are required to be effective in the job. Questions should be based on the competencies (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities) and the questions should be organized by one of the following interview types:

***Behavioral Interview Questions.*** These questions are based on the theory that experience and previous behaviors are a good indicator of future behaviors and performance. Behavioral questions generally ask the candidate to provide specific examples of when they demonstrated certain behaviors or skills in a certain situation.

Encouraging the candidate to use the STAR method in their response helps the candidate formulate their response and allows for the interviewers' insight into a fuller picture of how the candidate handled a situation. Share the following with the candidate, asking them to answer using the STAR method noted below:

S – Situation: What happened?

T – Task: What did you do in this situation?

A – Action: What did you do to complete this task?

R – Result: What did you accomplish?

***Case-Study/Job Simulation.*** This interview technique gives the candidate a hypothetical scenario or job simulation to gauge how they would demonstrate certain skills or behaviors.

***Technical Questions.*** These questions are based on competencies identified for the position and will vary by position.

***Informational Questions.*** The purpose of these questions is to gather general information about the candidate, their past work experience, skills, interest in position, and the agency.

## Categories of Questions

Interview questions fall into four general categories, culture, safety, relationship building and competency. By asking questions from each of these categories, the hiring manager can get a fuller picture of the candidate. Below is a definition of each category and sample questions. The questions below may be used for any level of interview, while questions with an asterisk (\*) can be geared for lead and management positions.

### Category 1: Culture

*A workplace culture shapes an employee's way of working, and it is important to consider how an employee will work, interact with others, and learn from a values perspective. It is valuable for candidates to understand TxDOT's values and organizational culture.*

1. How would you advocate for diversity within your work environment?

2. Provide us with an example of how you work with people to create or foster civility in the workplace.
3. Describe how your career has been enhanced by exposure to different people, places, or experiences.
4. Tell me about a time when you served as an ally for a coworker or employee who was being treated differently.
5. What steps have you taken to reduce bias and champion understanding of everyone's perspective in your work environment?
6. \*Tell me about a time when you had to mediate a disagreement or conflict between individuals who had issues due to their diverse differences or backgrounds.
7. \*Tell us about a time when you took steps to ensure that everyone on your team or in your organization felt included.
8. \*How will you promote diversity, and inclusion among employees who report to you?
9. \*How have you incorporated the viewpoints and perspectives of underrepresented groups into your or your team's decision making?

## Wellbeing Related Questions

1. How can TxDOT support your health and wellbeing?
2. How do you manage stress?
3. Describe the work environment in which you are most productive and happy.
4. What management style motivates you to do your best work?
5. What support would you like to have in a work environment that allows you to function at a high level?
6. What professional development opportunities are you interested in?
7. What accomplishment are you most proud of?
8. What has been the most rewarding experience of your career thus far?
9. Tell me/us about a time when you had to stand up for something you believed in.
10. In what ways can I/the team support you in maintaining a healthy work/life balance?
11. \*How did you contribute to or support the culture and wellbeing of the last team you worked with?
12. \*How do you help your team manage their workload and stress?
13. \*What qualities do you believe are the most important for a supervisor to have to ensure employees feel comfortable approaching them with challenging opinions, feedback, and other difficult conversations?

## Category 2: Safety

*Safety is a core value and top priority at the agency. These questions help candidates understand our commitment to safety. Answers to these questions will guide managers in determining which candidates are providing an appropriate and responsible response based on this priority.*

### Safety Related Questions

1. How would you conduct a workplace safety audit?
2. If there was a coworker who ignored safety procedures, what would you do?
3. What is a job safety analysis (JSA)? Can you walk me/us through a time when you conducted a JSA.
4. Tell me/us about a time when you noticed a safety-related issue in the workplace. What was it and how did you handle it?
5. What would you do if you saw a coworker (\*or employee) not using PPE?
6. \*What does safety mean to you and how do you cultivate a safety culture within the team?
7. \*\*Role-specific questions as determined based on job duties.\*\*

## Category 3: Interpersonal Skills

*Interpersonal skills refer to the ability to communicate or interact well with other people. Questions in this category will allow hiring managers to determine a candidate's skills in the areas of communication, relationships, conflict, and collaboration.*

### People Related Questions

1. When you start a new job/new project, how do you establish good working relationships with others?
2. Describe a time you went out of your way to help someone.
3. Give an example of a situation when you disagreed with someone on your team (coworker or manager). What was your involvement and how did you resolve it?
4. Tell us about a time that you had to have a challenging conversation with a co-worker or supervisor. How did you approach this conversation and what was the outcome?
5. What did you do to support your coworkers in your last position? Please give me/us an example of a time when you helped or supported another team member.
6. Tell me/us about a time when you had differing opinions or conflict when working as part of a team and how you reached a solution.

7. Tell me/us about a time when you had to get buy-in from leadership. What did you do to motivate them to act and get their support?
8. Tell me/us about a time when you had to take the lead with your workgroup to get a task/project done. How did you get cooperation?
9. \*What was your working relationship like with your last co-workers/team?
10. \*What is an ideal relationship between you and your team members?
11. \*How do you encourage or how would you encourage professional development for people on your team?
12. \*At what point do you involve other members of the team in your decision-making process?
13. What process do you put in place to monitor employee accountability?
14. \*What actions would you implement to repair a poorly functioning relationship?
15. \*Can you share a time when you had a challenging employee issue/situation that you had to manage? What was the situation, what steps did you take, what was the outcome?
16. \*Give an example of how you dealt with both problematic and high performing employees regarding performance and discipline issues. Describe what management/leadership tools you used in each instance.
17. \*Describe a highly functioning team. What attributes would they have?
18. \*In previous jobs, have you created an open-door policy or environment? If so, describe how you have communicated that and worked within that environment.

## Category 4: Competency Related Questions

*Skill-based questions allow a hiring manager to collect more in-depth information in a variety of areas, including previous projects, leadership, organization, time management, and remote/hybrid work. This category includes behavioral interview questions that look more at tasks and processes, rather than relational skills.*

### Skill-Based Related Questions

1. What methods have you used when you had to learn a new job?
2. Tell me/us about a time when a project failed. What was the situation and what did you learn from it?
3. Describe a project that you led. What did you do to keep it on track?
4. How do you stay organized?
5. How do you monitor the progress of assignments and projects?
6. If you could change one thing that is inefficient at your current job, what would it be?

7. Give me/us an example of a time when you were given a task to accomplish without advance warning.
8. Describe a time when you were leading a project and had to make a decision. Explain the situation; describe how you handled it, specifically what was your involvement, and what was the outcome?
9. Give me/us an example of a process or procedure you recommended but was not adopted. What did you recommend and what could you have done differently?
10. Have you ever been assigned several important projects at roughly the same time? How did you go about setting priorities for your time?
11. If you have worked in a remote or hybrid role before, what were the challenges you faced and how did you overcome them?
12. What tools have you used in the past to work effectively while working remotely or in a hybrid work environment?
13. \*How essential is teamwork and collaboration to you, and how do you expect to make this work while working remotely?
14. \*Tell me/us about a time when you had to make a decision before you had all the information. What was the situation and your response?
15. \*Describe a time when you made a decision you knew would be unpopular.
16. \* Describe your experience monitoring an operational budget.
17. \*What approach do you take when you need to make a recommendation to higher management? Please provide an example.

**General Related Questions for Consideration:**

1. Walk me through your resume.
2. Tell us a little bit about yourself and why you are interested in this position.
3. Why are you interested in working at TxDOT?
4. What do you know about TxDOT?
5. What sets you apart from other candidates?
6. What value would you add to the team?
7. How would you describe yourself in 3 words?
8. Describe the qualities your favorite manager/supervisor had and why?
9. What impact do you feel you could make if selected for this position?
10. What skills are you looking to gain in this position?