



Skills for Work. Confidence for Life.

# StreetWise Partners Winter 2020

## Session 9 Module: Interview Prep



# Interview Prep

## Beware of Illegal Questions

Illegal questions are questions that have the potential to place a company at risk of a discrimination law suit.

### 1) Questions about arrests or criminal background

- DC/NYC: Employers are not legally allowed to ask about a criminal record until after a job offer has been made. They are allowed to ask about currently pending arrests or accusations.
- Maryland/Virginia/Michigan: Only in the public sector is it illegal to ask about criminal record until after a job offer is made.

### 2) Questions about your relationship or marital status

- This not only reveals your marital status, but also potentially your sexual orientation.

### 3) Questions about religion or religious holidays

### 4) Questions about having children or childcare

### 5) Questions about country of origin, including if English is your first language

- Note: Employers CAN ask you about your English proficiency, but not your nationality

### 6) Questions about outstanding debt

- Note: Employers can't ask about your personal finances or property you own. If you are required to work with large amounts of money, employers may ask to see your credit history, but they must ask for your consent.

### 7) Questions about alcohol or drug use

- Asking about your drinking habits violates the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- Note: Employers can't ask about your past drug addiction, but they CAN ask about your current drug use.

### 8) Questions about your age or anything that can give away your age such as the year you graduated from high school or college

### 9) Questions about military discharge

- Note: Employers CAN ask about education, training, or work experience you've received while in the military.

### 10) Questions about your current or previous salary

- They can ask for the salary you are looking for at this time or a salary range.

# Interview Prep

## 3 Ways To Answer Illegal Questions

### 1) Answer the question

- If you don't mind providing the information and you don't want to make waves, you can respond to the question and move on to the next one.
- Keep in mind, however, that you should only answer the question if you are truly comfortable providing the information. This approach can work against you.

### 2) Refuse to answer the question

- Inform the interviewer that the question doesn't seem to be legal or relevant to the specific requirements of the job.
- Be forewarned, though, that such a direct response should really be saved for questions that are offensive or deeply troubling.

### 3) Don't answer the question, but answer the intent behind the question

- This is usually the best option, since it allows you to provide a tactful answer without sacrificing your rights.
- To answer the intent behind the question, try to figure out what the interviewer REALLY wants to know.
  - Example: if the interviewer asks if you have children, a good answer would be, "if you are asking about my ability to be at work everyday and commit to this job, I can assure you that I am fully committed to my work and finding success in any job I do. Part of that commitment is being in the office and attending all meetings."
  - Example: If the interviewer asks how much you are making at your current job, a good answer would be, "At this time I am looking for a salary range between \$35,000 a year and \$45,000 a year."
  - Example: if the interviewer asks if you are a U.S. citizen, a good answer would be, "I am legally authorized to work for your company."

# Interview Prep

## Common Interview Questions

### Questions: Past Jobs

- What were/are your specific responsibilities at your most recent position?
- What did you like and dislike about the position?
- What did you learn from the job?
- Describe a time you encountered a difficult situation. How did you handle it?
- Were you responsible for the supervision of others?
- Why do you want to leave your most recent job?
- Describe a typical day in your current job.
- Tell me about an accomplishment that makes you feel proud.

### Questions: New Job

- What are your specific goals for this job? What would you like to get from this new job?
- What experience do you have that you think will be helpful?
- This job will require a lot of [describe]. Will that be a problem for you?
- This job will require interacting with [describe the types of people]. What experience do you have working with such people?
- What qualities are you looking for in a supervisor?
- One requirement of this job is writing various types of reports – e.g., weekly, monthly, projections, goals, employee evaluation, etc. What relevant experience have you had? Do you have any writing samples?

### Questions: Skills

- Do you have the technical skills we listed that are required for this position?
- What additional skills can you contribute to this position?
- Are there software applications you are particularly familiar with?

# Interview Prep

## Common Interview Questions (continued)

### Questions: Behavior

- Describe a time that you had any conflict with your supervisor/colleagues. How did you handle it?
- Who do you have the most trouble working with?
- Describe a time when you had to change someone's mind.
- Talk about a risk you have taken.
- What motivates you at work?
- What are your great strengths? Weaknesses?
- Is there anything that's not on your resume that we should be aware of?

### Questions: Motivation and Goals

- Why do you want to work here?
- If I asked your coworkers to describe you, what would they say?
- What do you do for fun?
- Tell about when you dealt with a contentious situation.
- Describe a setback/disappointment you encountered and how you overcame it.
- What areas of leadership do you hope to develop more?
- What are your long-term goals?
- What is your salary expectation for this position?



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## Interview Thank You Email - Sample

**Subject Line:** "Thank you –Title of Job"

Dear Mr. /Ms. Last Name,

Thank you for taking the time out of your schedule to interview me for the *(title of position you interviewed for)* position at *(company's name)*. I really enjoyed our discussion about *(add specific topic discussed at interview such as mission or company culture)*.

After speaking with you, I am even more enthused about this opportunity. I believe that I would be a perfect candidate for this position. *(Here: Include the reasons why you are a strong candidate for the job by listing specific skills that relate to this position and/or previous accomplishments at past jobs that are relevant. Make sure you reference the conversation you had during your interview regarding these skills)*.

Again, your time and consideration is greatly appreciated. Please feel free to contact me at any time if further information is needed. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

***Your name***

***Email Address***

***Phone Number***

***LinkedIn URL***

# Interview Prep

## Interview Checklist

- ❑ **Dress for success – Business Professional Attire Required!**
- ❑ **Do your research**
- ❑ **Bring extra copies of your resume**
- ❑ **Bring a notepad and pen to take notes**
- ❑ **Print the job description for you to reference**
- ❑ **Have questions prepared for the end of the interview**
- ❑ **Practice responses for the top 8 interview questions so you're prepared – Connect responses to the job description and **practice!****
- ❑ **Ask for a business card(s) so that you can write a thank you letter and follow up as needed**
- ❑ **Be confident!**