



## Interviewing Tips for Public Interest Jobs

**Do mock interviews.** Participating in mock interviews (which can be set up through your career services office) will help you identify areas which may require more preparation and calm your nerves by giving you a sense of how and actual interview will progress.

**Enthusiasm and confidence are a must.** These characteristics are perceived immediately by an interviewer, and they set the stage for fluid conversation instead of a more formal “interrogation” format.

**Most interviewers want to know you and not just your skill set.** Employers want to know who you are as a person, and why you are motivated to pursue public interest work with their organization. Remember that employers are not just hiring a unit of labor; they are hiring someone with whom they will interact and collaborate, and someone they want to be around!

**Do your homework.** Many job seekers research employer organizations’ websites and memorize facts/figures (“there are 14 attorneys in this unit”). These facts are certainly useful, but remember to step back and look at the larger public interest community in which the employer operates: who it collaborates with, how it is funded, whether it has a longer-term strategic plan, etc.

**Have a demonstrated commitment to the employer’s mission.** While academic credentials do matter, it is equally – and sometimes more – important that you can demonstrate a commitment to the organization’s mission through past work experiences, clinic participation, volunteerism, course selection, etc.

**Be prepared to discuss weaknesses.** If asked about a weakness in your resume (bad grade, etc.) explain it but don’t dwell on it. If asked to discuss what you perceive to be a weakness in yourself, show a self-awareness of that weakness AND talk about concrete ways that you act to correct it and prevent it from hindering your work.

**Good questions for the interviewers.** Always be prepared to ask the interviewer questions that are not answered on the organization’s website. Below are some examples.

- ◆ How did your interviewer get their job?
- ◆ What do they find to be the most challenging facet of their work?
- ◆ What are three things they find rewarding about their work?
- ◆ What attributes are required to successfully do the job you’re applying for? (This may present a chance to further sell yourself by noting that you possess them and giving examples).
- ◆ What is the supervisory structure for your position?

**Always send a thank you note/email.** This does not need to be long, but be sure to include something that will remind the interviewer of a highlight during your interview (ex. “Thank you for your suggestion to join the Pro Bono Committee at the Akron Bar. I did so earlier this week and look forward to my involvement.”)

Information adapted from PSJD.org. Visit PSJD for more information on public interested interviewing and other job search fundamentals. For a mock interview contact Dean O’Brien: [ab139@uakron.edu](mailto:ab139@uakron.edu) or Assistant Director Bencze: [anb77@uakron.edu](mailto:anb77@uakron.edu)