

Interview Tips

Introduction:

The initial phone screen or in-person interview can be intimidating when searching for a professional or volunteer opportunity. Keep in mind that an interview is often your chance to give an excellent first impression, whether it is for a professional, academic or volunteer opportunity. If you do some research, come prepared and confident, you will be on track to come out of an interview feeling confident that you were at your best.

General interview tips:

- Confirm the interview details: date and time, who you are meeting with, directions to the location, etc.
- If you use public transportation, consider practicing your route so you are aware of any bus or train detours or route changes.
- If you have to cancel or reschedule an interview, provide as much notice as possible to your recruiter.
- Be on time (or a few minutes early) for your interview.
- Our application does not require a resume, however, if you have one, feel free to bring it along.
- Research the organization and use your knowledge during the interview.
- If you find interviews stressful, try practicing being interviewed with family, friends or a workforce/career center employee.
- Dress professionally.
- Give a firm handshake.
- Maintain good eye contact.
- Maintain good posture throughout the interview.
- When on a phone interview, walk around and smile while talking, as this can energize you as well as convey your excitement over the phone.
- Be honest about your experience.
- Be positive about past employers, co-workers, etc.
- Ask for a business card at the end of the interview so you can follow up with a thank you.
- If you are not offered a position, remain positive in your interactions with the organization. Sometimes you might not be a fit for one position, but could be the perfect fit for other openings.

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Sample questions you could be asked in an interview:

Tell me about yourself.

- Keep the answer brief and work-related. This is an open ended question often used to break the ice in an interview.

Why are you interested in this position and serving in Minnesota Reading Corps or Minnesota Math Corps?

- Mention the positive things you have learned about the organization and the position and fit them into your professional and/or volunteer goals. This will show the recruiter or potential supervisor that you care enough about the interview to prepare for it.

Why do you believe you'd be a great fit for this position?

- Speak genuinely about how your aspirations and skillset match this position. As you are preparing, think about those things that can potentially differentiate you from other candidates – your passion for the mission, your previous experience, or skills and accomplishments that can demonstrate a correlation to the position expectations.

How do others describe you?

- Balance your positive attributes with humility. Try not to come across as arrogant, but don't be shy either! If you don't feel comfortable with this question, before the interview call some friends or past co-workers and ask how they would describe you.

"Do you have any questions for me?"

- Be ready for this question! Most interviewers will give you time to ask them questions about the position or organization. By asking questions that emerged in your research or during the interview, you again show the interviewer that you are interested and prepared.

Sample questions you could ask in the interview:

- What are the key responsibilities of this position?
- What do people like most about serving in Minnesota Reading Corps or Minnesota Math Corps?
- What's a typical day like for a Reading Corps or Math Corps tutor?
- What are the key challenges to this position?
- How would you describe the ideal candidate?
- What are the next steps in the process?