Interview Preparation Checklist

For more detailed interviewing information, read our packet: You Got the Interview! Now What?

Before the Interview

- Research the organization and the industry.
- Print out or write down directions and the name and phone number of your contact.
- Take a trial run to the organization so you know how to get there and where to park.
- Know how to pronounce the name of each interviewer.
- Practice shaking hands – not too hard, not limp. If you get nervous sweaty palms, try rubbing some talcum, baby powder or antiperspirant on your hands before an interview (however, only use a little).
- List requirements the employer is seeking. For each, write down your experience/skills/qualities that match or relate.
- For the requirements that seem the most important, use your skills, experience and qualities to develop examples of success doing the tasks they are seeking or of how you would be able to do those tasks successfully.
- Complete a mock interview with the ELCDC or by answering questions on http://www.ready prepinterview.com/
- Prepare your 30-second commercial (sales pitch of why they should hire you).
- Prepare a list of 5-7 questions to ask the interviewers. Type your questions, leaving space for you to write each answer (you may choose to write brief answers during the interview or complete them after the interview).
- Be prepared to talk salary, but don’t bring it up! One resource is the NACE Salary Calculator, available on our website.
- Get permission from your references to use their names. Let them know that you are going for an interview and that they may get a call. Send them a new copy of your resume.
- Get a good night’s sleep the night before.

The Day of the Interview

- Check your clothing, teeth, hair in the mirror before you leave.
- Bring:
  - Extra copies of your resume (on resume paper) and your reference sheet.
  - Your questions to ask and information about the organization that you may want to read while waiting.
  - A portfolio and a pen.
  - Directions and name and phone number of contact (in case you are in traffic or get lost).
  - Change/cash in case of meter/parking garage.
  - If wearing a skirt or dress, extra pantyhose in case of a run.
  - A comb.
  - An umbrella if there’s a chance of rain.
- Give yourself plenty of time to get there and arrive 10 minutes early.
- Empty pockets of change and bulky wallets.
When You Arrive at the Company – The Interview Is Already Underway

- Use the restroom – at least to check your clothing for stains, teeth for food or lipstick, and hair for wind damage.
- Do you need a breath mint?
- Turn cell phone off, or better yet, leave it in the car.
- Check in with receptionist – Smile! Be friendly, professional and courteous to everyone you meet.
- Take off your coat.
- Read the organization’s information or your prepared answers as you wait.
- Observe the environment/culture of the organization.
- Take any literature that is available.
- If you are nervous, try this technique: Quietly take a deep breath, hold it for about five seconds, and quietly and slowly exhale. Repeat 3 times. Try silently telling yourself, “I am the best candidate for this position.”