

Tips for DSS Interviews (from DSS Interviewers)

Listed below are some tips to help you prepare for DSS interviews. This information is based on feedback from those who have served on DSS interview panels. A consistent theme in the feedback is that DSS interviewers look for candidates who have thoroughly prepared for the job interview. This preparation is reflected in their knowledge of the position, unit, and agency; how they respond to the interview questions; and their behavioral interactions with the interviewers.

- Do your homework before the interview. Research the job and the type of work done by the unit. Interviewers will want to know how much you understand the responsibilities of the position that you are applying for; and how your skills, knowledge and experience will make you a good candidate for that position. What makes this a good fit for both you and DSS?
- Be prepared to fully explain your current job duties, experiences, knowledge and skills, as well as your knowledge of the agency, even if you have been with DSS for a while, or know someone on the interview panel.
- Come prepared to discuss what you can bring to the new position. Elaborate and provide details on how your previous experience, work skills and attributes relate to this position. For example, if you describe yourself as a “team player,” give an example of how you demonstrated this. Or if you talk about your “communication skills,” you might provide more elaboration by referring to how you have used negotiating, active listening, or clarifying questions in specific situations.
- Dress for the interview in a professional manner. Do not chew gum during the interview.
- Demonstrate positive interpersonal skills. Treat the interview panel in a professionally courteous and polite manner. Smile and make eye contact when you have the opportunity. How you interact with the interviewers will help them determine your ability to work well with others. Be prepared to give work examples of your interpersonal skills.
- Avoid negative comments or complaining about previous jobs, co-workers, or bosses.
- Rehearse your responses to typical questions prior to the interview. For example, “What did you do to prepare for this interview?” “What are your strengths and weaknesses?” “How have you developed the skills needed for this position?” Your answers to interview questions should be supported with relevant examples.

- Do an honest self-assessment prior to the interview about what you have done to improve your job performance. Provide examples that are relevant to the new position. For example, taking a class or workshop; completing computer-based training, reading or self-paced study; or taking on job assignments and projects.
- Be ready to ask your own questions at the end of the interview. For example, “What is a typical day like?” “What are the biggest challenges facing the person in this position?” They demonstrate your interest in the position, and also give you an opportunity to add important information about you that may not have been covered by the interviewers’ questions.