Guidelines for Interviewing
Interviewing is a chance for you and the employer to have a conversation and assess your fit for the position. If you reach the interview stage, there’s a chance you could be hired -- but you must be prepared. There’s a lot of work to do before, during, and after an interview.

It’s common to get nervous when you think about interviewing. Remember that interviewers want to hire a qualified person; they want to find out if you are that person. When you’re called for an interview it means you appear to be qualified for the position based on your resume. The employer wants to find out if your personality matches the position and the organization. So try to relax and let them see what a great candidate you are!

Before the Interview
Practice, Practice, Practice
Practice answering interview questions with a partner. Have answers prepared for questions you know will most likely be asked (see Common Questions, attached). It’s very important to practice your responses out loud – don’t just think, “okay, I have an answer.” Verbalize your answer and see how it feels. Practice the questions over and over until you’re happy with your performance.

Common Questions
Here’s a list of questions you may be asked during an interview. Use this list as a starting point for your practice.

- Why do you want to work here?
- What position are you interested in the most?
- Have you ever worked as a cashier in a previous job?
- Why are you currently unemployed?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Are you dependable?
- Tell me about your computer skills.
- How many hours can you work? Can you work weekends/evenings?
- Do you have reliable transportation?
- Tell me about your previous customer service experience.
Your Questions
An interview is a two-way conversation. The employer will obviously ask questions, but you will be given a chance to ask questions as well. Here’s a list of sample questions to consider:

- What are the duties of the job?
- Who will my manager be?
- What are the hours?
- Are evenings and/or weekends required?
- How will I be trained?

Prepare for the Interview
- For some positions it may be appropriate to dress casually for an interview, but for most it is not. If you aren’t sure how to dress, it’s safest to dress conservatively. Clean, pressed pants with a shirt, collared jersey, sweater or blouse is usually safe. It shows you are taking the interview seriously. Do not wear jeans, shorts or t-shirts.
- Make sure your interview outfit is clean, pressed, and ready to go before the day of the interview.
- Don’t forget to polish your shoes!
- If you wear a dress or a skirt, you should wear hose.
- It’s best not to wear fragrance of any kind to an interview; you could turn off an interviewer just with the scent you choose.
- Have a professional-looking folder in which to carry copies of your master applicant worksheet and/or resume, and paper for taking notes.
- Remember to get a good night’s sleep before the interview day. You will be sharper if you are well rested.

Know How To Get There
When employers call, it’s easy to get nervous and forget to ask for directions to the interview site. Remember to get directions and try driving the route a day or two before the interview. If you’re planning to take public transportation, do a trial run as well. Do your run through on a similar type and time of day (i.e. Monday morning traffic is very different than on a Sunday afternoon). Make sure you have a full tank of gas and/or money for transportation and parking.
During the Interview

There are many things to think about during the interview process. Here are a few key items to remember:

- Arrive 10-15 minutes before your scheduled appointment.
- Be professional with everyone you encounter, including receptionists.
- Extend a firm (but not crushing) handshake.
- Be aware of your nonverbal signals (eye contact and posture).
- Show enthusiasm.
- Be aware of your “like’s” and “um’s”.
- Have your questions ready.
- Collect business cards from everyone you speak with, if possible.
- Ask about the next step (when can you expect to hear from them?).

After the Interview

Your work is not done yet! Here are some steps to remember after the interview:

- Shake the interviewer’s hand firmly and thank him or her.
- Act professionally all the way out of the building and while you are in the parking lot.
- Jot down notes as soon after the interview as you can so you can incorporate them into your thank you notes.
- Write and mail your professional thank you notes within 24 hours of the interview.
- Be sure to follow up within a few days.