SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Trustworthiness
1. Give an example of when you got off on the wrong foot with someone. Thinking back, what would you have done differently if you could start over?
2. What concerns you most about this position?
3. Give an example of a time when your ethical conduct was challenged and how you dealt with the situation?
4. If you could change something in your past, what would it be?
5. Why should I hire you for this position?
6. Share a time when you demonstrated a high level of commitment to an organization through your words, as well as your actions.
7. Recall a situation when you had to communicate an important or unpleasant change or decision to an individual or group.
8. What have you done when there was conflict between your personal goals and the goals of your organization?
9. Share a time when you have found it most difficult to keep a promise or commitment to another person or to your organization. What was the final outcome?
10. Share a tough decision you had to make when it would have been easier to compromise.

Respect
11. Describe a situation when a person disagreed with you and what steps you took to work it out with that person.
12. Describe a time when you were able to build rapport with someone even when the situation was a difficult one.
13. Describe a situation that illustrates your ability to create an environment that improved the effectiveness of your work team.
14. Describe a situation where you had to deal with a very difficult or disagreeable person. Tell me what you did to handle it.
15. If a co-worker came to you with a complaint about the job, how would you react?
16. What types of people cause the most problems for you?

Responsibility
17. Share your most significant accomplishment and how you achieved it.
18. Describe a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get something done.
19. Share a time when you had to make a decision that you knew would be difficult for others to accept. What happened?
20. Share something you have done in the past to help someone move from a “complainer” to a “problem-solver”.
21. Who are some of your heroes?
22. Describe a difficult obstacle you have had to overcome. How did you handle it?
23. What do you think are the most important characteristics and abilities for any person’s success?

Fairness
24. What kinds of decisions are most difficult for you?
25. Describe a situation where you felt you were treated unfairly. How did you handle it?
26. Share a relationship where it was difficult for you to be objective in regards to giving feedback.
27. Who do you turn to for help when making decisions?

Caring
28. Share a time when you made a special effort to treat another person in a way that showed your concern for other’s feelings.
29. Share a time when your ability to listen helped you communicate better.
30. Share an example of how you incorporated a caring spirit in your previous work-site.
Citizenship
31. Give an example of a time you helped a person without expecting anything in return.
32. Describe a community involvement you believed had a positive impact.

Warm-up Questions
33. What made you apply for this position?
34. Briefly summarize your work history and education.

Work History
35. What aspects of your work experience have prepared you for this job?
36. Describe one or two of your biggest disappointments in your work history.
37. Why are you leaving your present job, or why did you leave your last job?

Job Performance
38. What are your strong points for this job?
39. What would you say are areas that need improvement?
40. How did your supervisor on your most recent job evaluate your job performance? What were some of the pros and cons of that evaluation?
41. What kind of people do you find it most difficult to work with? Why?
42. What are some of the things in your job you feel you have done particularly well or in which you have achieved the greatest success? Why do you feel this way?
43. If I were to ask your present or most recent employer about your abilities, what would they say?

Education
44. What special aspects of your education or training have prepared you for this job?

Career Goals
45. What is your long-term employment or career objective?
46. What kind of job do you see yourself holding five years from now?
47. What do you feel you need to develop in terms of skill and knowledge in order to be ready for that opportunity?
48. Who or what in your life influenced you most with your career objectives?
49. What might make you leave this job?

Self-Assessment
50. What kind of things do you feel most confident in doing?
51. What do you think are the most important characteristics and abilities a person must possess to become successful?
52. Do you consider yourself a self-starter? If so, explain why and give examples.
53. What do you consider your greatest achievement? Why?
54. What things give you the greatest satisfaction at work?
55. What things frustrate you the most? How do you usually cope with them?

Creativity
56. In your work experience, what have you done that you consider truly creative?
57. Can you think of a problem you have encountered when the old solution didn’t work and you came up with a new solution?
58. Of your creative accomplishments great or small, at home or at work, what gave you the most satisfaction?

Decisiveness
59. What was your most difficult decision in the past six months? What made it so difficult?
60. The last time you did not know what decision to make, what did you do?
61. What was the last major problem you were confronted with? What action did you take?
Range of Interests
62. How do you keep up with what's going on in your company/industry/profession?

Motivation
63. Did you achieve your goals last year?
64. Describe how you determine what constitutes top priorities in the performance of your job?

Work Standards
65. In your position, how would you define doing a good job? On what basis was your definition determined?
66. When judging the performance of your subordinate(s), what factors or characteristics are most important to you?

Leadership
67. How frequently do you meet with your immediate subordinates as a group?
68. How do you get staff who do not want to work together to establish a common approach to a problem?
69. How would you describe your basic leadership style? Give specific examples of how you practice this.

Oral Presentation Skills
70. Have you ever done any public or group speaking? Recently? Why? How did it go?
71. Have you made any individual presentations recently? How did you prepare?

Flexibility
72. What was the most significant change made in your company in the last six months which directly affected you? How successfully do you think you implemented this change?

Stress Tolerance
73. What has been the highest pressure situation you have been under in recent years? How did you cope with it?

Stability and Maturity
74. What in your last review did your supervisor suggest needed improvement? What have you done about it?

Self-Development
75. Who or what has been the most important person or event in your self-development?
76. What kind of books and other publications do you read?
77. Have you taken management development courses? If so, what were they?
78. How are you helping your subordinates develop themselves?

Leadership Qualities
79. Have you ever been assigned to lead a work team on a major project? Describe.
80. Describe a situation in which you were able to positively influence actions of others in a desired direction.
81. Describe your supervisory experience.
82. Describe a time when you believed it was necessary to modify or change your actions to respond to the needs of another co-worker.
83. Describe a situation when your ability to motivate others was more crucial than the ability to supervise.
84. Describe a time you had to get someone to do something he or she was reluctant to do.
85. Describe a project where you demonstrated leadership skills.
86. Give an example of a time when you found a clever way of motivating an employee.
87. Provide some examples of situations in which you feel your leadership style has been particularly effective, and describe another situation in which the style has been less effective.
88. Tell about a situation in which you were required to motivate individuals who report to you and describe the practices you used to get them to perform more effectively.
Organizational/Planning Skills
89. Describe any new plans or programs you've developed.
90. Describe the extent of your responsibility in policy formulation.
91. Have you ever had to reorganize an existing system? If so, how?

Administration/Staffing
92. How do you make sure that your employees are accountable?
93. What do you typically do when you hear of a problem in your area?
94. How useful have you found written procedures and guidelines in helping you manage your area?
95. Do you believe the chain of command is important? Why? When do you think it might inhibit organizational effectiveness?
96. Think of a time in the past when you hired someone to work for you and the person did not work out. What went wrong?

Interpersonal/Communication Skills/Conflict
97. Describe the most significant written document, report, or presentation you have had to complete.
98. Describe how you would notify the people you supervise about a new polity or regulation you were responsible for implementing.
99. Describe your background in making group presentations.
100. What approach worked best for you in the past in communicating with your subordinates?
101. Have you ever been challenged to get others to understand and accept your ideas? How did you do this?
102. Describe a tough situation in which you had to talk to people to get information you needed to make an important decision or recommendation. What was challenging about the situation? What did you do? What happened?
103. Describe a time when you had to communicate unpleasant information to an employee. What happened?

Decision-Making/Problem Solving Abilities
104. Give an example of a time when you had to carefully analyze a situation to be effective in guiding your action or decision.
105. What types of analytical studies have you conducted?
106. Describe your approach to making decision and solving problems. Why do you do it this way?
107. When you recommend something to management, what approach do you usually use? Give an example.
108. How much leeway do you give your employees to make decisions? How do you still maintain control?
109. Describe a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.

Management Attitude/Style
110. How would you describe your management philosophy and style?
111. Have you ever had to initiate corrective action for an employee? If so, what steps did you take?
112. How have you dealt with an employee who did not appear to measure up to increasing job demands?
113. What philosophy and techniques do you use in motivating and energizing your staff?
114. How do you think your staff would describe your style of delegation?
115. How do you get your employees (or others) to follow you?
116. Give an example of how you delegated responsibility for a recent assignment; for instance, how you delegated the assignment, and what you did to monitor it.
117. What are some examples of your ability to manage and supervise others? Give specifics of people who have grown as a result of your influence.

Financial
118. What responsibility do you have for budgeting? What budgeting method do you use?
119. How do you go about estimating expenses and budget?
120. What recent decision have you made that had an impact on finances? How did you assess impact?
121. What experience have you had with long- and short-term budget projections? Please explain.
Evaluating Performance

122. How would you describe your standards of performance? What would your staff say? What would your supervisor say?
123. What do you do to ensure objectivity when you evaluate the work of others?
124. What sort of performance standards have you held employees to? Were they written?
125. How do you get your employees involved in their own evaluations?
126. How do you plan for performance improvements?

Employee Relations

127. How have you helped your employees become committed to a job or to the organization?
128. What types of employees do you find hardest to manage? Why?
129. How have you dealt with an “attitude” problem? Please give a specific example.
130. How often do you think it’s necessary to meet with your employees?
131. How have you handled “complainers”?
132. Describe a time when you had to discipline an employee. What was your strategy?
133. Describe a time when you had to criticize or discipline the performance of someone who worked for you. How did you handle the situation? What was the result?
134. Have you had to manage a personal situation that had a potential legal impact? Please describe what your role was and what you learned from it.
135. How do you develop trust and loyalty in your employees?
136. Describe a time when you had problems getting people to work together in solving a problem or completing an assignment.
137. Describe a time when you had to intervene to solve a conflict. Why did you handle it that way?
138. Describe a time when you had to fire a subordinate.
139. Describe the most difficult performance issue you have dealt with. How was the issue resolved?

Planning/Goal Setting

140. How far in advance do you typically plan activities for yourself and your employees? How?
141. Give an example of a change you saw coming, or something you thought was necessary to change. How did you go about planning for it?
142. How do you assess priorities? How do you then assign them?
143. Describe areas in which you think your organization has been most effective in meeting the challenges of the changing environment and your role in the process.

Organizational Relationships

144. What would you describe as an effective staff meeting? An ineffective one?
145. How do you typically get cooperation from someone in another department?
146. Give an example of a time when you believed it was necessary to be assertive to get what you needed from your manager.
147. Describe a time when you had to “sell” a decision or policy to your employees when you did not agree with it.

Previous Job Experience/Performance

148. Why did you leave?
149. What do you spend the most time doing in your present/past positions?
150. Describe the most creative work-related project you have carried out.
151. What has been the hardest or most difficult part of your present job?
152. Describe some examples of specific job conditions/tasks, or assignment that have been dissatisfying to you.
153. Give an example of when you worked the hardest and felt the greatest sense of achievement.
154. Describe what you consider to be your proudest achievement.
155. Describe a time you made a mistake at your previous job that cost the company time and money.
156. What have been some of the biggest business decisions you made in the last few years?
157. Describe a time when you made a significant impact towards the outcome of a project.
158. Describe a time when you experienced a setback while working on a project.
Expectations for This Job
159. What type of work setting motivates you?
160. Why did you apply for this position?
161. Based on what you know about the position, which aspects of it would be most attractive to you? Least attractive?
162. What do you think are the most important qualities we should look for in someone to fill this particular position?
163. What is important to you in a job and why?
164. Describe the major highlights of your career so far, and tell me where you want to go next.
165. Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).

Management Attitudes
166. What in your opinion is the most important function of a manager?
167. What kind of direction do you prefer from a supervisor?
168. What do you consider to be important attributes of a supervisor?
169. Describe what you liked and disliked about how you were managed in previous positions.
170. Give an example of a specific occasion when you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree.
171. Describe a situation where you didn’t get along with your supervisor.
172. In your current position in which you report to the (Director), describe an incident in which you disagreed with the (Director) and tell me how this issue was resolved.

Decision-Making/Problem Solving/Analytical Skills
173. Describe a specific time on the job when your problem-solving skills were tested. What did you do?
174. Give an example of a time when you had to make a quick decision.
175. Tell me about a major obstacle you encountered in your last job and how you handled it.
176. Describe a time when you had to use your fact-finding skills to get information to solve a problem. Describe how you analyzed the information to come to a decision.
177. Most of us can think of an important decision we’d make differently if we could do it over. Give an example from your experience.
178. Give an example of a difficult decision you had to make at your last job. How did you solve it? Why did you choose that method instead of another solution?
179. What has been a stubborn or recurring problem area you would have liked to solve in your current job, but haven’t yet?
180. What methods do you use to make decisions? Give an example of your approach.
181. What kinds of decisions do/did you have authority over? Which one do/did you have to check with your manager before making?
182. What information or technical support has helped you succeed on the job? (For example, policy and procedure, standardized form, goals, etc.)
183. Describe a time when you had to make a decision without consulting your boss. What did you do?

Interpersonal/Communication Skills/Conflict
184. Describe how you would endeavor to convince your boss to grant you additional funds for a purpose you have in mind.
185. Describe some projects you worked on that required strong writing skills. What was the level of your responsibility? What was the primary audience?
186. How would you characterize your communication skills?
187. Name one recent success you had in dealing with an unhappy customer, co-worker, vendor, etc. How did you accomplish it?
188. How do you persuade others to get what you want?
189. When you started new jobs, how did you establish good relationships with your co-workers? With management?
190. Have you ever had a situation when you found it necessary to confront someone at work? How did you handle it?
191. In your past employment, what kind of co-workers or clients rubbed you the wrong way? How did you respond?
192. Describe a time when you felt you went beyond the call of duty in helping a client.
193. What experiences have you had working with people of different ethnicity’s, age, or physical ability levels?
194. Describe a situation where your ability to listen and establish rapport with someone difficult helped you overcome a tough situation.
195. Describe a time you helped someone else achieve a goal.
196. By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations, and environments.
197. Describe a situation when you had to persuade another person to your point of view.
198. Describe a situation where you had to work with someone who was difficult. How was the person difficult and how did you handle it?
199. Describe a time you had to use your written communication skills to get an important point across.
200. Describe the most significant or creative presentation you have had to complete.
201. Describe a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
202. What are some of the most important reports you have written? Who were they written for? What feedback did you receive?
203. Describe a time when your communication approach differed depending on the individual or group with who you were communicating. Describe the reasons.
204. What changes have you made in your approach to others to become more accepted in your work environment?
205. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.

Motivation/Goal Orientation
206. Give an example of an important job goal you set in the past and tell about your success in reaching it.
207. Give an example of a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get a job done.
208. Describe how your work history reflects your job objectives and abilities.
209. Why did you choose this profession? What rewards does it give you?
210. Describe how you set and measure work goals.
211. How do you monitor the progress of assignments and projects?
212. Describe a time when you took charge as a leader in a work situation without being formally assigned to that role by your boss.

Overall Job Performance
213. How do you handle a heavy workload with many deadlines?
214. You are given several rush projects to be completed in a short period of time. How would you establish priorities? Why?
215. How would you describe your organizational abilities? Attendance and punctuality habits? Work habits?
216. Describe work-related situations that cause stress for you. How do you typically handle such stress?
217. Describe a time on any job that you held in which you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills.
218. Describe a situation where you were over your head on a project. What steps did you take to overcome the situation?
219. Think of a time in your past when you took a risk. Give me a quick overview of the situation and then walk me through that situation, telling me about your part in it.
220. What activities have you pursued in the last two years to enhance your skills? Why these particular activities?

Influence
221. Describe your approach to making decisions and solving problems.
222. What is the farthest you have had to bend your standards in order to succeed?

Teamwork
223. What activities have you engaged in to assure other units in the organization view your work group/department as a positive resource?
224. Describe a time when you anticipated the needs changing in a group you serve. What did you do about it?
225. How have you personally built consensus within a group?
226. Describe a goal you or your organization needed to achieve through teamwork. Describe how you designed that team.
227. What behavior do you use to encourage team members to speak openly?
228. What are some factors you believe constitute a strong team?
229. Share an example of a time when you had to take the lead with your work group to get a task done. How did you get cooperation?
230. Would you rather work on a team or on your own? Why?
231. Describe a time when you were on a team, and one of the members wasn’t carrying his or her weight. What actions did you take?
232. Describe a situation when you had a positive influence on the attitudes and behaviors of others.
233. Describe a time you initiated a team approach to solve a problem. Describe the role you placed on the team and comment on your effectiveness.
234. Describe a project of which you are particularly proud of, and your contribution to that project.

Communication
235. Describe a time when you had to present a new idea, concept, process, or procedure to someone and you felt successful? What was your part in it?

Understanding Self and Others
236. Describe a time in your past when you were in a very uncertain situation, outcomes were uncertain, and there was a lot of change taking place. What did you do? What did you feel? How did you handle it?

Initiative and Innovation
237. Give an example of something you recommended that was adopted.
238. Give an example of a project you were responsible for starting. How did it work out?
239. When have you had to produce results without sufficient guidelines or information? What did you do?
240. Describe a time when you were inventive and offered fresh insights about a situation. What was the situation?
241. Describe a time when you were creative in solving a problem.
242. Describe some projects you generated on your own. What prompted you to begin them?
243. Provide an example of a past initiative in which you have initiated and effected improvement.
244. Describe how you encourage creativity within your group.
245. Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.

Ability to Learn
246. Give an example of a situation at your previous employment when you have had to keep up with the changes in technology, terminology, or information in your field.
247. What was the most challenging work or technical problem you ever encountered? What did you do?
248. In your most recent position, describe how you used technology to increase your work efficiency.

Organization/Attention to Detail/Use of Time
249. Would you rather formulate a plan or carry it out? Why? Give an example of a plan you have implemented.
250. Describe an experience when you were responsible for coordinating several small tasks to accomplish a large job.
251. Describe a way you improved the organization of a system or a task at your last/present job.
252. How do you organize your daily tasks? How do you prioritize them or decide what you should work on next?
253. Describe a specific example of a time when you failed to meet a deadline. What things did you fail to do? What were the repercussions? What did you learn?
254. Describe a specific example of a time when you managed several projects at once.
255. Describe a situation when you faced many competing priorities, and discuss what criteria you used in deciding what to do first.
256. What do you do when your schedule is upset by unforeseen circumstances? Please provide an example of a time when this has happened.
Mandatory Interview Questions
257. Is your application up to date?
258. Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony?
259. Do you have a valid driver's license?
260. Can you perform all of the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodation?