



## How to get better at interviewing

By The N.M. Department of Workforce Solutions

For the Journal

Interviewing is more than sitting down with a prospective employer and answering questions about your previous work experience. It is the first time you present yourself as a total package from how well you speak to your professional appearance. Your mannerisms, body language, and dress are all part of the first impression. With so many things to keep in mind, preparing for an interview is critical, and the more you interview the better you get.

Looking at possible questions and the types of questions that may be asked is an excellent way to start preparing. Review all the research you have done about the company and the job description, and put yourself in the employer's shoes. What would you ask someone applying for this job? Write down 5-10 possible questions, and then formulate your answers with specific examples that highlight your strengths. If there are potential issues that you may have to address during the interview, such as a separation issue from a previous employer, brainstorm how you will best explain the situation.

Some basic types of questions are common in most interviews. Why are you interested in this company or agency, and what can you bring to this position? What are your qualifications and experience as each applies to this job opportunity? What were your greatest achievements and challenges in your last job? What are questions that you have for the employer about the job and/or the company?

Practicing interviews is one of the best ways to prepare. See if a friend or family member will help you with a mock interview. Provide them with a sample set of questions and create an interview-like environment. Chances are you will not be interviewing while watching television or cooking dinner. An ideal set-up for your practice interview would include a table with chairs in a room with limited distractions.

Get their feedback and critique. They may notice that some of your mannerisms distracted them from what you were saying or some habits made you appear nervous. Try on your interview outfit and even wear it while doing a practice interview. Make sure that it is something you are comfortable in and does not have any issues that shake your confidence.

Consider taping your practice or mock interview on a video camera or webcam and then review it. You may be surprised about how you did and will learn from some mistakes you may have made or some behaviors you did not know that you had. See if your speech is clear and understandable. Do you talk too fast? Is your volume appropriate when you are responding to questions? Do you maintain eye contact with the interviewer?

Conduct another mock interview a couple of days later. See if you notice an improvement in your interview after keeping in mind some of the feedback and after seeing yourself through the interviewer's eyes.

Interviews can be intimidating at times, but you will be prepared and feel at ease before you have the chance to meet with employers if you take the opportunity to research the company and brush up on your interview skills. Interviewing is like any other skill. The more you practice, the more successful and confident you will be. Additional interview tips, resume resources, and workshops can be found at [www.jobs.state.nm.us](http://www.jobs.state.nm.us) and at your local New Mexico Workforce Connection Center.

This is a regular column written by the N.M. Department of Workforce Solutions. For more information, go to [www.dws.state.nm.us](http://www.dws.state.nm.us).

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