PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERVIEW WITH US

GUIDE TO COMPETENCY BASED INTERVIEWS AT ACTION AGAINST HUNGER USA
Preparing for your interview with Action Against Hunger USA

We thank you for your interest in Action Against Hunger USA. Throughout our recruitment processes, we are committed to upholding our organizational values and the tenets of non-discrimination, transparency, and professionalism.

We want to make sure that you know what to expect from an interview with us and that you have the relevant information available to you ahead of time so that you can prepare for what may be your next career move.

This document helps you to prepare for our competency based interviews.

What is a competency based interview

A competency based interview is a style of interviewing candidates to evaluate their competencies and behaviors. It is particularly useful for positions in which hiring on the basis of technical merit alone will not suffice. The key philosophy behind competency based interviews is that the best predictor of future behavior is past performance and experience. As such, your competency based interview will focus on gaining insight into your preferred style of working and natural preferences on the basis of your past experiences.

Examples of competency based interview questions

Competency based interview questions can look like this:

Q Tell us about a situation where you used your problem solving skills to resolve an issue? What action did you take? What was the result?
Q Give us an example of a situation in which you had to make a difficult decision? What role did you play? What was the impact on others?
Q Tell us about a time when you had to adapt to an unexpected situation? What concrete steps did you take? What was the outcome at the end?

10 tips to prepare for the competency based interview

1. Prepare a range of 6 – 8 brief real life examples about your accomplishments. Be aware of the specific skills each example illustrates and remember to include the outcome or lesson learned from each experience.
2. Be ready to discuss your strengths and your ability to learn from past experiences. Also think about how you could contribute to the wider work of Action Against Hunger USA and to the specific position you are applying for.
3. Review the skills and experiences listed in the job description and vacancy announcement. These will be probed in your interview, so your stories should show your skill in these areas.
4. Prepare to highlight positive results and achievements using these skills and experiences and also challenges you have had in each of these areas.
5. The structure of your answer should be: Situation/Task, Action, Result.
6. Share information you feel is appropriate and relevant.
7. Listen to the question carefully. Keep to the point. Be as specific as possible.
8. Do some research on competency, or behavior based interviews. There is a lot of material available about preparing for such an interview structure. One link you should explore is: Preparing for a Competency Based Interview.
9. Learn as much as you can about Action Against Hunger USA.

What are we looking for during the interview?

During the interview we are interested to get to know you, how you function as part of a group and a wider team. At the same time this is also your opportunity to ask us any questions about the organization, the position or the country context.

Owing to our global nature, many of our interviews take place over the phone or web-conferencing. Make sure to find a place that is quiet and where you are not disturbed. Check your network access in advance and verify your microphone and webcam settings.

Frequently asked interview questions

Some interview questions come up very regularly to give the interviewers are better insight into who you are. This means you can prepare them well before the interview. So when these questions arise, it will take away some of the stress and anxiety of the interview.

Q  "Introduce yourself": present yourself in 2 - 3 minutes. Do not repeat your CV and focus on the experiences most relevant to the position in question. Be factual, give figures, examples. Go from the most general to the most detailed (the organization, your role, your objectives, your achievements and finally how it has helped you prepare for the current role you are applying for).

Q  "What are your areas for improvement?" Identify 3 areas of improvement, in the professional sphere, that are real. Tell us what you are doing to work on them. Avoid the classic answer (e.g.: I am a perfectionist) and be sincere in the choice of your areas of improvement.

Q  "What interests you about the position?" Analyze the announcement well before the interview, search the internet for terms you do not know, to limit the risks of misunderstanding the role.

Q  "What is the biggest professional challenge you have encountered?", "What was your greatest professional achievement?" and “What motivates you to go to work”? These are questions to get to know you better and knowing a bit more about how you work. There are no right or wrong answers. The wrong answer would be to remain silent and not to have an answer at all.

Q  "Why you?" During the interview we want you to put forward you qualities and competencies. We want to know why you would be the right fit. Sometimes this question
is asked at the end. The question makes it possible for you to summarize the key points you expressed during the interview as well as add any information you may have left out.

**After the interview?**

**If you are not selected:**
Sometimes we are not successful during an interview: learn from this experience to improve your presentation and your answers. Through the interview, you will have discovered the culture of the organization, requirements of the positions as well as encountered questions that may well be asked during future interviews.

Sometimes, you may want to ask the recruiter or hiring manager for feedback. This will allow you to step back, reflect on your interview and be better prepared for the next one.

**If you are selected:**
We will be in contact with you via email and inform you on the next steps.

Good luck!