

Navigating Government Hiring – Part 2


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Agenda

- Welcome and Overview
- Part 1: Brief Review
- Interview Types and Format: What to Expect
- 10 Types of Questions
- Context/Challenge, Action Result (CCAR) Model
- Building Competency-Based CCAR Stories
- Tips for Navigating the Interview
- Navigating an Offer

Part 1: Brief Review

Job Posted and You Apply




HR Screens, Creates "Certificate"



Certificate Referred to Hiring Manager



Hiring Manager Screens Resumes,
Conducts Interviews (Phone, Panel, Final)



Offer and EOD (Entry on Duty)

Interview Types and Format: What to Expect

- **Types:**

- Screening Phone Interview - 1/2 hour, structured, assess interest for full interview
- Structured Panel Interview – More on This Next
- Final Selection Interview - Can be more casual and open/interactive

- **Content:**

- Strictly Competency Based (SES in particular)
- Role/Agency Based (What do you think the problems would be, how would you solve)
- Mixed/Behavioral

More on Government Panels.....

- VERY Structured to ensure consistency/fairness
- 3-4 people read instructions and then pre-prepared questions, one by one. They will take notes on your answers. Answers are then scored afterwards.
- **These can be very surprising format for those new to the process – be prepared for:**
 - Panel follow-up on some questions
 - No interaction, feedback, or dialogue.
- If they don't cover in instructions, ask how many questions there are. Time your answers to allow you to answer all of them, even with follow-ups. OK to use watch/phone to monitor time.

10 Types of Questions

1. Your background/history/resume
2. Prep for Interview (Direct, Indirect)
3. Functional Experience (Technical, Writing, PM)
4. Conflict/Customer Management
5. Strengths/Proud Of
6. Weaknesses/Mistakes
7. Career Goals (1-5 years)
8. Getting Started (First steps/priorities)
9. Supervision/People Management
10. Questions You have For Us

Context, Challenge, Action Result (CCAR) PLUS Implication Model

- **For Context/Challenge:** What the problem or need was, in what larger setting. Balance general and specific so that the story is real, but also so it is recognizable to the organization you want to work with – do not expect them to connect the dots.
- **For Action and Result:** What you did and what the outcome was. Use active voice, so they can picture you in action. Avoid, “I had to...” Sound excited about what you did! Balance “I and We” – you need to talk about what YOU did while also sounding like a team player.
- **Implication:** Based on my understanding of your need/mission, this is how this experience relates to your need.

Building Competency-Based CCAR Stories

- On left side of a piece of paper, list competencies and needs anticipated for role (what problems need to be solved by person who gets the job)
- On right side, brainstorm stories/experiences that highlight your skills (projects, roles, successes)
- For each story/experience, list 3-4 competencies/needs the story can be mapped to.
- Develop CCAR-I stories that integrate competency/need and your story/experience – core stories, and variations that highlight other competencies
- Bring story titles and key word triggers to interview

Tips for Navigating Interview

- Introduce yourself. Match their level of formality, listen to and respect process.
- Don't assume they have read your materials recently. Consider bringing 1-page resume.
- Watch for panelist writing – when they stop writing, consider wrapping it up.
- It's OK to ask them to repeat the question at the start (not near the middle) – write down key words to remember, compose thoughts, and rest. (Silence allows them to rest and process too.)

Tips for Responding to Questions

- Be positive about your experience – if you have baggage about a boss/story/experience, it will show. Avoid “I had to...” (“We needed to” is OK)
- Talk about what you did, not who you are.
- Talk about results: “I am proud of” or “I enjoyed.”
- Balance I and WE (accountability AND teamwork)
- Never say bad things about a past boss – talk about differences only if you must.
- Interviewing is like dating – match your questions to the stage you are at. Don’t ask about your deal-breakers until you get an offer, unless you are willing to withdraw.

Navigating the Offer

- Generally, there is an informal offer followed by a letter.
- Most GS positions start at Step 1 – decide if you would accept at that level. If not, what would you need, and how would you document being deserving of more (e.g., past pay plus benefits/bonus)?
- There are not a lot of negotiables: can try leave category (has some risks), sign-on incentive, tuition reimbursement.
- Once you are in grade/step, you cannot negotiate level year-to-year. If you want promotion beyond ceiling, apply for new job.