

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

APPLICANT & PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS

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PLAN, PREPARE, PRODUCE

Planning and preparation for interviews will lead to

- ✓ An effective interview
 - Even when the family is unprepared or uncooperative
- ✓ A well-educated applicant/participant
- ✓ Less administrative burden
- ✓ Proper spending of subsidy
- ✓ An organized file

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EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWERS ARE:

- Skilled at human interaction
- Professional
- Possess specific competencies
- Build rapport with their clients
- Know it's not all about them
- Ask tough questions

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MINDSET OF THE INTERVIEWER

- Interviewer condition
- Distractions
- Empathetic
- Sympathetic
- Apathetic

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INTERVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

Accessibility

Checklists

Use a script

Body language

Interview guides

Purpose



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INTERVIEWING ACCESSIBILITY



Applications/Forms



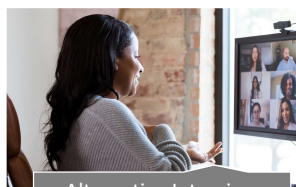
Service Animals



Formats



Physical Setting



Alternative Interview Methods



Types of Questions

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CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Clearly identify and explain next steps in the process✓ Written instructions and deadlines for outstanding items✓ Ask for and answer any remaining or additional questions✓ Provide/obtain contact info
Information Gathering	
Information Review	
Wrap Up	

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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Direct questions requiring a specific declaration	Expanding upon and clarifying the response to the primary question	Open questions obtain explanations and encourage discussion
Primary	Secondary	Open-ended
Designed to obtain a specific fact or a "yes" or "no" answer	Probing questions are used when additional information is needed	Leading, confusing, or complex questions that solicit unwanted responses
Closed-ended	Probing/Clarification	Questions to Avoid

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Applicant Intake & Orientation	Purpose	Types of Questions	Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application Applicant reporting Pre-screening Briefings Intake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gather information to determine eligibility and suitability for occupancy in our programs. To collect data necessary to process applications. To educate applicants and participants about our programs, policies, and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Secondary Open ended Closed ended Probing Clarification Mirroring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application packet Guides Scripts Forms Releases Program information Blue pens

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Re-Exams	Purpose	Types of Questions	Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Reexamination Interim Reexamination Participant reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gather information to determine eligibility and suitability for <i>continued</i> occupancy in our programs. To collect data necessary to process reexaminations. To educate participants about our programs, policies, and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Secondary Open ended Closed ended Probing Clarification Mirroring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recertification packet Personal declaration Guides Scripts Forms Releases Program information Blue pens

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COMMON INTERVIEW MISTAKES

- Failing to prepare
- Not allowing enough time
- Failure to build rapport
- Not listening

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COMMON INTERVIEW MISTAKES

- Failing to probe when appropriate
- Losing control of the interview
- Focusing on the paperwork and not the person
- Not recognizing personal bias

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COMMON INTERVIEW MISTAKES

- Failing to accurately record responses or take notes
- Trying to “catch someone up”
- Not clarifying responses
- Not seeking understanding

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THE UNCOOPERATIVE INTERVIEWEE

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THE UNPREPARED INTERVIEWEE

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THE INTERVIEW & EDUCATION BRIEFING & UNIT-FINDING TIPS

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs)

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WHY DO WE NEED SOPs?

- Uniformity
- Helps to stay compliant with Fair Housing
- Training tools
- Reduce mismanagement of funds
- Support the Admin Plan

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WHAT ARE SOPs?

- Manuals outlining procedures and requirements for PHAs
- PHAs should have multiple SOPs
- Step-by-step processes that incorporate procedures and all mandatory and discretionary measures that the PHA has adopted for the topic

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EXAMPLES OF SOP NEEDS

- Pre-application
 - ✓ Accepting the application, preferences, placement on WL, etc.
- Eligibility
 - ✓ WL pull, interview, determining eligibility, etc.
- Briefings

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EXAMPLES OF SOP NEEDS

- Reexaminations
 - ✓ Interview, calculation, notifications, etc.
- Informal Review Process
- Informal Hearing Process
- Reasonable Accommodations

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ELIGIBILITY SOP START TO FINISH STEP-BY-STEP

Notification

- ✓ How will the agency determine who receives notification of appointment for eligibility interview? (How am I pulling families from the WL?)
 - Preferences need to be listed out along with how they will be verified
- ✓ Notification information and length of time between notification and appointment

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ELIGIBILITY SOP

START TO FINISH STEP-BY-STEP

Notification (continued)

- ✓ What the PHA requires the family to provide during the interview
 - Be sure this list is in the interview notification
- ✓ What happens if the interview is missed
 - They called to reschedule vs no call/no show
- ✓ Include Reasonable Accommodation language when necessary
 - Consider LEP families also

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ELIGIBILITY SOP

INTERVIEW

- Use of interview guides
- What original documents should staff copy for the file
- Verification process for all other items for which family did not supply 3rd party verification
- Documents requiring signatures
 - ✓ i.e. background check release, Declaration of Citizenship, HUD-9886-A, HUD-92006, HUD-52675, others as required

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ELIGIBILITY SOP VERIFICATIONS

- Verifying income
 - ✓ Using current Income Limits
 - ✓ ELI requirements
- Verifying SSN
 - ✓ What documents will be accepted
- Verifying citizenship
 - ✓ Ensure at least one family member is eligible
 - ✓ What documents will be accepted
- Verifying background
 - ✓ Qualifications and disqualifications

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ELIGIBILITY SOP VERIFICATIONS (continued)

- Verifying all other calculation requirements
 - ✓ Assets, deductions, allowances, family member status, etc.
- Verifying all other mandatory and discretionary items
 - ✓ Duplicate subsidy, doesn't owe any PHA money, terminated from any assisted housing, etc.
- Use of a verification checklist

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ELIGIBILITY SOP

- What happens if there is something missing
 - ✓ Family needs to sign written 3rd party notification release
 - ✓ Family needs to provide by when?
 - Give missing document checklist with date
 - How will you accept the documentation?

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ELIGIBILITY SOP

- What happens if the family is not eligible?
 - ✓ Notification timeframe
 - ✓ Reasonable Accommodation language
 - ✓ VAWA protections notification

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ELIGIBILITY SOP

→ What is next if the family is eligible?

- ✓ Notification timeframe
- ✓ Education pieces

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**THOROUGH SOPs
ARE NEEDED
BEFORE, DURING, & AFTER THE
INTERVIEW**

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