

Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association

Career Center Tips: Anticipate & Practice for that Interview!!



In order to perform at your best during an interview, you need to anticipate the questions you may be asked, then ***practice-practice-practice*** how you are going to respond. Practice in front of a colleague or with friends. If you practice, you will be more relaxed, confident, and more likely to be considered a good candidate.

These following questions are examples of some you might be asked. Not all of them are overtly age-related. But each one gives you an opportunity to present yourself as a skilled, energetic worker who would bring high value to an employer.

1. **So, tell me about yourself.** Here's where you need to make your answer short and sweet. Provide experiences and goals that relate to the specific job for which you're applying. Please resist the impulse to stress your years of experience. It's more important to talk about your skills and achievements that show you can deliver. Also, emphasize your flexibility and positive attitude.
2. **Why are you looking for employment?** Keep it short and succinct. A straightforward answer is usually best. For example, "My organization was forced to downsize." Avoid negative statements about yourself, your work, or your ability to get along with others. Never, ever criticize former employers or coworkers. You never know if the interviewer is an acquaintance of your former employer or coworkers.
3. **It's been a long time since you have been employed.** Why not? You may have gaps in employment for many reasons. Be honest. Speak confidently about your experiences during the gaps. Some could transfer to on-the-job skills. For instance,

if you were a caregiver, you managed complex financial issues. As a volunteer, you might have worked with diverse groups and on flexible schedules.

4. **What are you interested in?** It takes a lot of planning and insight to be ready for this question. Never speak in generalities. Be prepared to name the type of position you think would be appropriate for you and how your skills would translate to a new employer.
5. **You sure seem overqualified for this position?** Even though “overqualified” can really mean “old” or “expensive,” it’s important to stay positive. Express your enthusiasm for the job and pride in your qualifications. Explain what makes you interested in this position at this point in your career—such as wanting to apply your skills to a new field or to achieve more flexibility and work-life balance.
6. **We have state-of-the-art technology. What skills do you have that would meet these needs?** Show you are adaptable and tech-savvy. Give examples of projects you’ve done which required computer skills and familiarity with electronic media. Emphasize training you’ve taken to keep your skills up to date.
7. **There aren’t many employees here who are your age. Would this pose a problem for you?** Explain that you believe your age would be an asset, you are eager to learn, and it doesn’t matter who helps you. Describe recent experiences, whether at work or in other situations, where age diversity has been an asset. Federal law bars employers from considering age in employment decisions. Though it’s not illegal to be asked your age, the question could be a red flag about the employer’s commitment to age diversity.
8. **What’s your biggest weakness as it relates to this position?** This is a reverse invitation to toot your own horn. Do it with an answer that puts you in a good light. For example, “I’m too detail-oriented, but I work hard to control that.” Keep it simple—and smile.
9. **What are your salary requirements?** Try to postpone this question until a job offer has been made. Prepare by knowing the going rate in your area, (countless sites on the Internet). If you don’t know the range and the interviewer persists, reply, “What salary range are you working with?” The interviewer may very well tell you.
10. **Do you have any questions?** Show your interest and initiative by asking specific questions about the organization and what you can expect in the job. Use your questions to demonstrate how your skills can contribute to the organization. Answering “no” to this question says you’re not really interested in the job.