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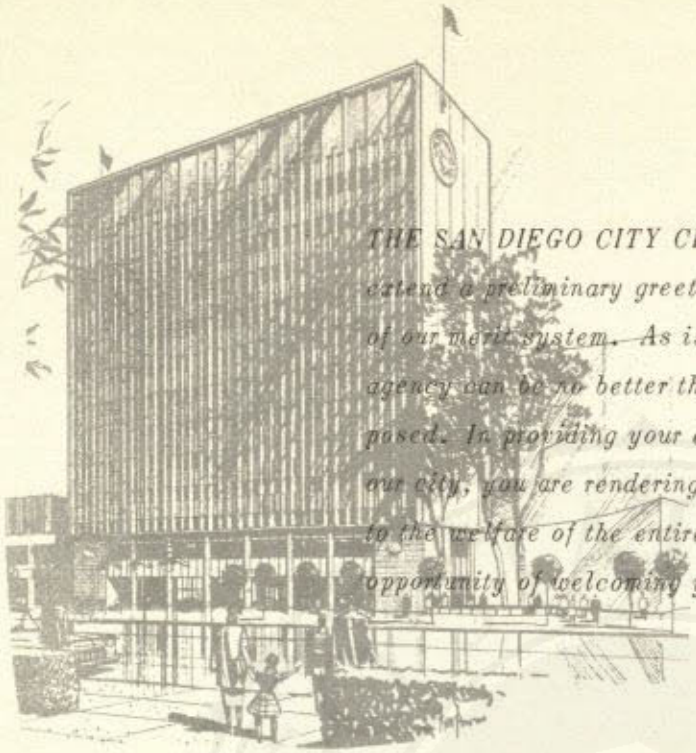
MANUAL
FOR
INTERVIEW BOARD MEMBERS

SAN DIEGO
CITY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION



THE SAN DIEGO CITY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION and staff wish to extend a preliminary greeting to you as a future fellow worker in the operation of our merit system. As is true in all human organizations, a governmental agency can be no better than the individual employees of which it is composed. In providing your expert assistance in selecting key personnel for our city, you are rendering a vital public service that contributes directly to the welfare of the entire community. We are looking forward to the opportunity of welcoming you in person.

MANUAL FOR INTERVIEW BOARD MEMBERS

GOOD GOVERNMENT DEMANDS THE INTELLIGENT INTEREST OF EVERY CITIZEN

You have been selected to serve on a City Civil Service Interview Board because your knowledge, experience, and judgment are highly regarded. Accordingly, there is no doubt concerning your ability to function well as a board member. However, it is believed that some orientation to City Civil Service procedures would be of value to you. It is the purpose of this pamphlet to briefly provide such an orientation with the goal of giving all board members a common understanding of their mission. In addition, the Personnel Analyst responsible for the examination will conduct an orientation session immediately before the board begins its work. At that time information pertinent to the particular examination will be presented, and any questions that you may have can be discussed.

ORGANIZATION

For most examinations, the interview board consists of three members. One member is selected to act as chairman and it is his duty to introduce the other board members to the candidates as they are presented, to regulate the time of the interviews, and to be responsible for guiding

the proceedings, whenever necessary, by keeping the interviews focused on the business at hand. For the most part, however, a board should function as a relaxed, informal team without obvious leadership when the actual interviewing is under way.

PURPOSE

All candidates appearing before a City Civil Service Interview Board have already passed either a comprehensive written test or a careful evaluation of their education, training, and work experience. It is desired, therefore, that the interview be concentrated on the candidate's personal qualifications that are best evaluated in interview, rather than on technical qualifications. This would include such areas as poise, bearing, emotional stability, grooming, speech, judgment, leadership potential, and similar factors not susceptible to evaluation in a written test. This does not mean that technical questions need be entirely omitted, but rather that they should be de-emphasized as probably being repetitive of prior testing. While appropriate questions concerning a candidate's personal history are quite proper, discussions of physical or medical histories should be avoided. Judgments of that nature are the responsibility of the physician making the required pre-employment physical examination for the City.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

In private enterprise an employer may properly set arbitrary standards involving such things as social and financial status as requirements for certain positions. In City Civil Service, however, merit must be the chief criterion of acceptability with equal competitive opportunity extended to all citizens without bias or favor being extended to any candidate because of his racial or national origin, religion, fraternal affiliations, or social status. The Civil Service Rules state in part: "No question in any test shall relate to race or to political or religious opinions, affiliations, or service." This rule is eminently practical as well as being supportive of the highest ideals of merit system operations. A candidate who had been questioned concerning his racial or national origin, religion, or politics, and who subsequently received a low interview score, could be expected to infer discrimination and to properly protest to the Civil Service Commission. It should be kept in mind that all Civil Service operations are of public record and must be so conducted as to be able to successfully withstand unfriendly scrutiny.

Two other major aspects of fairness and equality in interviewing concern length and content. As the day wears on and the interviews become repetitive, there is a natural tendency to shorten them. This is undesirable for obvious reasons. While interviews need not be timed to exactly the same number of minutes, an effort should be made to give all candidates approximately equal time. Likewise, the content of the interviews should be kept relatively uniform. This does not mean that all candidates must be asked the same questions, but it is recommended that the interviews be guided so as to cover the same general areas of discussion. In most examinations, at least some of the candidates get together afterward to compare notes on their interview experiences. They are quick to spot any glaring inequities in treatment, but are equally able to recognize fairness and equality of opportunity.

SCORING

Included in this pamphlet is a copy of the rating form to be used in the interviews. The form is essentially self-explanatory. In using it, the rater checks off the candidate's degree of possession of certain traits or qualifications, but only one over-all numerical score is assigned. Details concerning use of the form will be discussed with you before the interviews begin.

The first objective in scoring will be to determine whether a candidate is acceptable or unacceptable regarding basic fitness or competence to fill a position. It is quite proper to give a failing score (less than 70%) to any candidate who you feel does not measure up to the minimum standards. The next major aspect of scoring is to rank the candidates who are found acceptable. That is, they should be measured against each other as well as against your concept of the ideal qualifications for the position. Passing scores may range from 70% to 100% and the greater the range of passing scores, the more effective the interview will have been as a selection device.

KNOWING THAT YOUR READING of this booklet was probably done at the expense of other important personal activities, we have tried to make it brief but informative. Its only purpose is to attempt to assist in enabling Board Members to work together in the greater harmony that comes with a mutual understanding of mission and methods. We appreciate your taking time to read it and hope that you will find it helpful and worthwhile.

SUGGESTIONS

In general, one of the best indicators of an interviewer's skill is the ratio of the interviewer's speaking time to that of the candidate. The more time the candidate spends in speaking, the better, and questions should be designed with that goal in mind. Situational questions (What would you do if you found yourself....?) that require lengthy, elaborate structuring are to be avoided as are those with obvious answers (Do you think you could handle the job....?)

The best interviewing atmosphere is one of a friendly, get-acquainted meeting with respect for the candidate's personal dignity. A board interview should not be an occasion which needlessly brings humiliation, embarrassment, or degradation to the candidate. It is very seldom desirable to deliberately place a candidate under stress for experimental reasons. As a matter of simple kindness as well as good public relations, if it occurs that questioning has produced a series of obviously poor answers or complete inability to answer, it is well to close the interview, or that portion of it, with a question or questions that the candidate would be certain to be able to answer.

Disgruntled candidates can and do utilize channels of protest and appeal when they feel board decisions have been improper or unfair. To avoid such complaints, or to reduce their validity, it is well to close all interviews by doing these three things: (1) Ask the candidate if he wishes to make any further statement or add anything to what has been covered in the interview, (2) Ask him if he feels he has been given a fair interview and opportunity to present his qualifications, and (3) Request that he not discuss his interview with any one until all interviews have been completed.

FORM CS-R-9A (REV.)

SAN DIEGO CITY CIVIL SERVICE

Index Code: 10.2911

PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS APPRAISAL

NAME _____ POSITION TITLE _____ DATE _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Ask yourself how this candidate compares with those who are doing work of this kind and how he compares, trait by trait, with other candidates for the position. Show by a check (✓) that point on each scale where, in your judgment, the candidate stands. At the close of the interview, assign a final percentage score, make appropriate comments and sign the appraisal form --- ALL IN INK.

1. APPEARANCE: What do you think of the applicant's personal appearance and dress?	1. Unfavorable	Unimpressive	Acceptable	Above Average	Excellent
2. ALERTNESS: Does the applicant appear alert and intelligent?	2. Often Misunderstands	Slow to Grasp Subtleties	Average Keenness	Bright and Quick	Unusually Alert
3. EMOTIONAL STABILITY: Is the applicant at ease and well poised?	3. Easily Disconcerted	Self-Conscious	Good Self Control	Superior Self Command	Exceptional Poise
4. PRESENTATION OF IDEAS: How does the applicant present his ideas?	4. Confused and Illogical	Some Difficulty	Moderate Clarity	Clear and Effective	Unusually Clear and Convincing
5. ABILITY TO GET ALONG WITH OTHERS: Does the applicant inspire confidence and command loyalty?	5. Unpleasant or Abrupt	Somewhat Tactless or Antagonistic	Likeable and Friendly	Arouses Cooperation	Extremely Inspiring
6. DECISIONS AND JUDGMENT: What do you think of the applicant's judgment?	6. Notably Lacking	Poorly Considered	Acceptable Judiciousness	Firm, Well Considered Answers	Exceptional Soundness
7. GENERAL FITNESS FOR THE POSITION: Consider your overall evaluation of the candidate, based on a composite of the above traits plus any additional traits or qualifications which are important in the position, as indicated below in your comments.	7. Unsuited for this work	Not quite up to Standard	Would make an Average Employee	Definitely Above Average	Outstanding

COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

Appraisal Score _____ %
(NOTE: 70% is the minimum passing score.)

EXAMINER _____