Application Developer Information Guide

What to Expect on the Panel Structured Interview

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Jefferson County Commission

Human Resources Department

Employee Selection Division

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this information guide is to help explain what to expect on the upcoming panel structured interview for the Jefferson County Application Developer position. It will also give you information on how to prepare for the interview. This booklet contains information about the interview process, including:

- Introduction
- Interview Description and an Example Question
- Content Measured by the Structured Interview
- Preparing for the Interview
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- Contact Information

You were determined to be minimally qualified for this job by the Personnel Board of Jefferson County, and your name was placed on a list and shared with us here in the Human Resources Department of Jefferson County Commission. This step in the process was considered the primary selection process.

Now you will be participating in the secondary selection process which is a live structured interview conducted by a panel of two to three individuals. You must complete the structured interview in order to be considered for this position. Please remember that the material in this booklet is designed to help prepare. You will not need the material in this booklet at the time you actually take the interview. **Therefore, you will not be allowed to carry this booklet into the interview session.**

II. INTERVIEW DESCRIPTION

The upcoming interview for Application Developer consists of a panel structured interview and a work sample. There will be approximately six scenarios and associated focusing questions on the interview. There will be approximately three parts to the work sample. The scenarios will be about issues, situations, responsibilities, activities, incidents, etc., which a new Application Developer may have to address. The interview questions will be read to you by the interviewers. You will respond orally to each interview question.

On the day of the interview, you will be provided with a interview guide that contains some or all of the actual interview questions you will respond to during the interview. You can take time to gather your thoughts before answering the questions, as this will not affect your score.

While you are reviewing the interview questions, you may make notes for your use during the interview. **Raters will only be evaluating you on what you say during the actual interview session**. They will not evaluate what you have written down in your notes. Only your verbal responses will be scored.

When it is time for your interview to start, you will be escorted to an interview room. You will be the only candidate in the interview room, along with a panel of interviewers. When the interview starts, you will see information in your guide and hear the same information read by a narrator.

The narrator will present each scenario, or question, verbally. To complete the interview, you must verbally respond to each scenario. You may use your notes when providing your response; however, your notes will not be evaluated. Only your verbal response will be assessed.

After each interview question has been presented, you will then have a specified number of minutes to respond to each interview question.

Remember, there will be approximately six interview questions. Each interview question will be read aloud prior to your response time beginning. Keep in mind the following things when responding:

- More detail is better than less detail. That is, more details which show one's knowledge, skills and abilities relevant to the question may improve a candidate's evaluation
- The evaluators will not "read in" to what you say
- Your responses will be evaluated against a defined set of performance standards
- You should answer all focusing questions related to each scenario
- Be sure to talk about what you would do and why

Sample Question

The following question is presented as an example of the form or type of scenarios with which you will be presented. Please note that the content, or subject matter, of the actual interview scenarios will vary and may or may not be similar to that of the questions presented below. The scenarios to which you will respond during the interview will be related to the job for which you are applying.

Example

The department that you work in recently purchased some new equipment. Today, you are able to use the new equipment for the first time. You have been told that the new equipment is similar to what you have had previously. While you are using the new equipment, it stops working and shows an error message that you have never seen before.

Focusing Question(s)

What are the next steps that you would take to determine the meaning of the error message and continue with your work?

Work Sample/Simulation

Work samples and simulations require candidates to demonstrate their ability to perform tasks and behaviors that would be expected on the job. The activities presented to candidates are representative of job tasks, equipment, and materials that are actually part of the job. These tests are quite versatile; they may require candidates to produce a job-related product (e.g., written sample, verbal presentation, product assembly, typing exercise, in-basket exercise, etc.) or to demonstrate their interpersonal skills (e.g., telephone interaction, group facilitation, etc.).

To complete the work sample component for the Application Developer examination, you will be provided materials in your individual testing room. This room will contain writing utensils and all of the materials you will need to reference during the work sample exercise. The work sample/simulation for the Application Developer examination will consist of approximately three (3) exercises and you will have approximately thirty minutes to complete all of the exercises.

III. CONTENT MEASURED BY THE INTERVIEW

An analysis of Application Developer job was conducted prior to developing the structured interview. Employees who work in this position, and their supervisors, participated in this process. When the job analysis study was completed, the results showed that a new employee in the Application Developer position may perform several of the duties listed below, including:

- Serves as a site administrator for various systems or applications by providing user support, installing system/application updates, and managing user access rights for user systems in order to establish system security and integrity and monitor system performance.

- Designs, develops, edits, and tests applications and programs using an integrated development environment (e.g., Visual Studio) by writing, editing, or updating computer code or scripts using various programming languages (e.g., ASP .NET, Java, C# SQL, Python) in order to meet end-user, department, or jurisdiction application, system, or programming needs and requirements.
- Creates, updates, or modifies system documentation and user guides for applications by reviewing reference materials, testing system application and functionality, and assessing users' needs in order to provide users with reference materials.
- Conducts training by creating training materials and facilitating training sessions in order to provide knowledge and understanding of work processes to ensure compliance with procedures and standards.
- Serves as project manager on various system or application designs, implementations, updates, and/or integrations by acting as a team leader of technical personnel (e.g., System Analysts, Programmers), in order to resolve technical issues and lay out project planning, execution, monitoring, and completion.
- Analyzes and monitors system applications, programs, and databases by reviewing computer codes, scripts, or programming languages (e.g., ASP .NET, Java, C#, SQL, Python) in order to provide system documentation, identify programming/coding errors, and enhance system and application performance and usability.
- Analyze user needs to determine technical requirements of an application, system program, database design, and other information technology and processing needs by meeting with users, management, and technical staff in order to define scope and context of the application development process.
- Designs, builds, and maintains Web sites, applications, or programs, by developing content using authoring or scripting languages, content creation, and management tools (e.g., Internet Information Services (ISS)) in order to meet end user, department, or jurisdiction web application needs.

The study of the job also showed that a number of knowledge, skills, and abilities were very important and needed from the moment a person becomes an Application Developer (that is, before receiving any training for Application Developer job.). These knowledge, skills, and abilities include:
- Knowledge of application development tools (MS Visual Studio, Dreamweaver, Git source control, etc.).
- Knowledge of markup languages (e.g., HTML, XML).
- Knowledge of open source software for web programming (e.g. PHP, ASP.net, core).
- Knowledge of style sheet languages (e.g., CSS, DSSSL, XSL).
- Ability to adjust to changing work demands, procedures, technology, and/or priorities.
- Ability to assess the importance of, and consequences associated with, tasks in order to set priorities in light of competing demands.
- Ability to balance interests of clients and the department/organization and respond to pressing and changing client demands.
- Ability to orally communicate information and ideas so others will understand.
- Skill in verbally delivering information in a clear and concise manner to an audience.
- Skill in managing one's own time and the time of others.
- Skill in organizing information, materials, and/or documentation in a systematic and logical manner.
- Ability to work collaboratively with a group or team in an effort to achieve a common goal.
- Skill in maintaining a positive working relationship through comfortable and appropriate interpersonal interaction.

- Skill in working through differences in goals or interests with an individual/group.
- Knowledge of application, construction, development and maintenance.
- Knowledge of computer programming languages (e.g., HTML, XML, JAVASCRIPT, ASP, JSP, JAVA, MapObjects).
- Knowledge of formal procedures for project management and reporting tools.
- Knowledge of information/web/application security protocols and procedures.
- Knowledge of object oriented programming methods (e.g. Visual basic, .NET, Java).
- Knowledge of systems and application documentation.
- Knowledge of techniques involved in gathering, compiling, reporting information about programs, projects, policies and outcomes.
- Knowledge of the project life cycle where a project is divided into phases with discrete deliverables and management controls.
- Knowledge of user interface design principles.
- Knowledge of web browser capabilities and troubleshooting.
- Knowledge of web site design and redesign/content migration.
- Skill in creating scripts and applications to automate information technology reporting processes.
- Skill in managing, restructuring, and combining data within databases/datafiles.
- Skill in understanding and modifying programming code or scripts to troubleshoot and produce desired outcomes for automated data reporting systems.
- Skill in writing programs that enable a computer to perform various operations.

The structured interview will give you an opportunity to demonstrate many of the knowledge areas, skills, and abilities you have just read.

As discussed, the upcoming interview for Application Developer is a panel structured interview involving reading and listening to questions, taking notes to prepare, and providing verbal responses. If you require special interviewing accommodation to participate in this interview, you should notify Jefferson County Human Resources immediately using the contact information at the end of this guide.

In the remainder of this "What to Expect" Booklet, you will read about ways to prepare to take the interview, what to bring to the interview, and whom to contact if you have a question.

IV. PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

A. General information on "What to do before the interview":

Here are some suggestions for what to do before the interview. This includes getting to the interviewing place on time and with the proper things that you will need to take the interview.

1) Be well rested. Get a good night's sleep for several nights in a row before the interview.
2) Allow plenty of time to get to the interview. If you are rushed and late, you will be upset when you get there. Plan to arrive at least 15-20 minutes before earlier than the scheduled time for check-in. Due to the nature of the interview and the number of candidates that must be processed, NO exceptions will be made to accommodate individuals arriving more than 15 minutes after their scheduled check-in time.
3) Come in to the interview dressed comfortably. You will be there for up to two hours.
4) Do NOT bring any electronic communication devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops, tablets, smart watches, etc.) with you to the interview. If you bring a cell phone or any other electronic communication device, you will be asked to return it to your car. Jefferson County will not confiscate them or "hold" them for you during the interview. You must comply with this rule in order to be admitted and you will still be subject to the check-in deadline. Using any communication device

after you have checked into the interview site will be considered a violation of interview security and you will be disqualified. ALL electronic communication devices are prohibited from the interviewing facility (e.g., cell phones, tablets, smart watches, cameras, etc.).

    a) If any device is seen, heard, or used during the interview process it will be considered a violation of interview security and you will be disqualified and dismissed from the interview process.

    b) You are allowed to bring reading materials, such as magazines or books not related to the position or interview.

5) Do not bring any of your study or reference materials to the interview. This includes any notes, manuals, source documents, reference materials, or study materials that you have used or created to prepare for the interview.

6) Do not bring this booklet to the interview location. You will not be permitted to bring it in. All the materials you need for the interview will be given to you at the interview.

7) You should read this booklet to get comfortable with the interview process.

8) You should read this booklet to understand which job duties, knowledge, and abilities are important for Application Developer job.

9) You should bring the confirmation email that you have received from Jefferson County to the interviewing location. The confirmation email lists the name of the interview (i.e., Application Developer), the place you should go to in order to take the interview, and the time, day, and date of the interview.

10) You must bring valid PHOTO IDENTIFICATION (i.e., Valid Driver's License, Valid Nondriver ID, Valid Photo Voter ID Card, Valid State Issued ID [Alabama or any other state], Valid Federal issued ID, Valid US passport, Valid Employee ID from Federal Government, State, County, Municipality, Board or other entity of the state, Valid student or employee ID issued by a state or private institution of higher learning [including postgraduate technical or professional schools], Valid Military ID, or Valid Tribal ID). You will not be allowed to enter the interview location nor take the interview without your photo identification.

B. General information on "What to do during the interview":

1) Some people are nervous when they take interviews. Up to a point, there is nothing wrong with that. Whenever you are going to do something important, it is good to feel a bit nervous. It is nature's way of getting you warmed up and ready, like an actress or actor about to go out on stage for a performance.

2) However, it is not good to be so nervous that all you can think about is how nervous you are. You need to keep your mind on the interview questions, and not on your feelings. To improve your ability to do that, you will find useful ideas in this booklet on how to prepare for the interview and what to expect. **The more prepared you are, the more comfortable and less nervous you will feel during the interview.**

3) Several things that you can do that will make you feel more comfortable taking the structured interview including: following the guidelines presented in this booklet on what to expect on the interview and how to prepare for the interview; becoming familiar with what the structured interview process will be like (including reading the sample question); and, understanding the interview instructions.

4) You must not leave the room in which you are taking the interview unless you are told that you may do so. Once the interview begins, you must remain in your room. There will be Interview Monitors nearby at all times. They will be available to assist you if you have any problems.

5) You will be given the opportunity to use the restroom, stand, and stretch throughout the time you are at the interviewing location. You should use these opportunities as necessary. Once the interview begins, you will not be able to stop the process to use the rest room.

6) You are not to open any interview material or instructions or begin working on the interview until you are instructed to do so.
7) Candidates making any disturbances or caught cheating will be disqualified from the interview.
8) There will be an audio recorder in the room in which you take the interview. The audio recorder will be used to record your spoken responses to the interview.
9) You should speak in a normal speaking voice when you are required to give spoken responses to questions. It is not necessary to shout, but do not talk in a whisper either. Simply speak in a normal voice.
10) On the day of the interview, you will be provided with an interview guide to help you prepare to respond to the structured interview questions.

V. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR TAKING THIS INTERVIEW

The following information will help you prepare to take the structured interview.

A. What To Bring To the Interview

Please remember to bring to the interview the confirmation email that you received from Jefferson County.

You must bring a PHOTO IDENTIFICATION to the interview location. This might be a valid driver's license, a military identification card, a passport, etc. You only need to have one form of photo identification. You will **not be allowed** to enter the interview location or take the interview without your photo identification.

You should plan on bringing your own beverages and food to snack on during the day. You will be onsite for up to two hours. Once on the interview site, you will NOT be permitted to leave to get food or drinks. You should also bring something to read such as a book or magazine. The reading material should be for pleasure only. You **may not** bring outside interview-related materials into the interview. All written materials needed for taking the interview will be provided. You do not need to bring writing utensils with you to the interview—they will be provided to you.

B. What Not To Bring To the Interview

Do **NOT** bring this Booklet to the interview location. You will not be permitted to bring it in the interviewing room.

Do **NOT** bring any of your study materials to the interview. This includes notes, manuals, and other study materials.

Do **NOT** bring any electronic communication devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops, tablets, smart watches, cameras, etc.) with you to the interview.

C. Effective Note Taking

The structured interview asks about issues, situations, responsibilities, activities, incidents, etc. which a newly hired Application Developer may have to address. You will have a chance to think about your answers for the interview, and you should take notes to help guide your responses. Good notes contain the essential or important details. The notes do not need to be written in complete sentences. You are the only one who needs to be able to read and understand your notes. Your notes will not be graded. Your notes will be collected at the end of the interview.

Why Take Notes?

There are several good reasons to take notes during the preparation phase of the interview process.

- In order to take notes, you are forced to carefully consider the information being given.
- Taking notes can help you remember. Notes you take in your own words are easier to understand and remember.
- Writing down notes may actually make the information clearer to you.
- The notes will help you respond to the interview scenarios and focusing questions.
- Having notes can help you feel less anxious or nervous while taking the interview.

VI. INTERVIEW CONTACT INFORMATION

General Questions about the Interview

If you have questions about the interview administration, you may contact the Employee Selection Division at (205) 325-5249 or careers@jccal.org. Jefferson County employees are not allowed to divulge, and do not have access to, specific information about the content of the interview.

Reasonable Accommodation

If you would like to request special interviewing accommodation or have any questions concerning the interview site or interviewing conditions, please contact Ian Peters at petersi@jccal.org.