FCPS Youth Apprenticeship Summit

Professional Communication & Interviewing

TASK 1: Before you head into a job interview, you need to be prepared to "sell yourself." Make a list of your three greatest accomplishments (educational or vocational).

1.
2.
3.

Follow-Up: How have you documented these accomplishments? How might you package them to present to a future employer?

BEFORE INTERVIEWING

- *Read Job Postings Carefully*
  - Fully understand what employers are looking for
  - Make an honest assessment of your skills/readiness
  - Be prepared to fully explain how you can help
- *Craft a Focused Resume*
  - Update regularly with experience, education, certifications earned
  - Prepare a list of achievement & artifacts to complement your
  - Consider multiple versions for different positions
  - Share with others for review/feedback before submitting
- *Cover Letter*
  - Be clear and concise
  - Explain why the work interests you and why you'd be a good fit
- *Telephone & Email Communication*
  - Both establish your first impression with the company
  - Speak/write in a grammatically correct style
  - Speak & spell names correctly
  - Respond the same day, within 24 hours at the very longest
  - Be flexible & ready
- *Research & Rehearse*
  - Review the company's website to understand their mission/service
  - Practice responding to the most common interview questions
  - Draft questions you might ask of the employer
- *Physical Appearance & Attire*
  - Dress for the job you want
  - Plan & layout your outfit for the interview
  - Groom to a workplace standard

DAY OF THE INTERVIEW

- Start getting ready early
- Plan to arrive 10-15 minutes before the interview
- Bring something to write with and write on
- Put your phone away
- Relax
- Be friendly to everyone
- Be an active listener
- Ask questions

TASK 2: It is almost a guarantee the first question you will be asked in most interviews is, "Tell us a little bit about yourself." This is your first chance to knock it out of the park with a positive answer about your *skills*, *experience* and the *type of person* you are. Take 1-minute to draft your response.

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Why do you want to work for us?
- What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- Why should we hire you?
- Tell me about a time that you solved a problem at work.
- Why are you leaving your current position?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What's your biggest accomplishment?
- What's something your current supervisor would say you could improve on?
- What would you plan to accomplish in your first 3 months here?

TASK 3: In the next exercise, you will pair up with a peer to respond to two of the questions above in a mock interview format. Select two, and prepare notes for your responses. Then, take turns asking and responding to the questions you have selected. When both partners have played both roles, offer some feedback on the responses your partner shared.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO ASK OF INTERVIEW PANELS

- What does a typical day in this position look like?
- What are the biggest challenges in this role?
- What do the training and evaluation processes look like for this role?
- What do you hope to see the person who takes this position accomplish in the first three months, six months, and first year?
- Why did you come to this company, and what is your favorite part of working here?
- What are some of the company's short- and long-term goals, and how would the person in this role help in reaching those targets?
- Can you tell me more about the team I'd be working with? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the team or department?
- How would you describe the work environment here?
- What are the next steps in the hiring process?

TASK 4: An interview panel will pretty much allow you to ask as many questions as you'd like at the end of an interview. In fact, some good questions posed by a candidate are almost as valuable as some good answers to the questions *they* ask. Read through the questions above, and highlight the questions you might ask at the end of your next interview.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Reflect on your performance, commit to strengthen areas of need
- Return phone call & emails in a timely manner
- Write a thank you note or email (scan QR code for sample & guidelines)

apprenticeship MARYLAND
Earn and Learn Opportunities for Youth