

FINE TUNING YOUR CAPACITY INTERVIEWS



SAY “WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW LONG” UP FRONT

- » Notify all groups of the dates you plan to conduct interviews upon application submission. Extending this professional courtesy helps to ensure full attendance for groups ultimately invited for a face-to-face interview.
- » Determine location(s) that will mitigate barriers against attendance, such as offering a central point or video conferencing capability. This is particularly important for applicant groups with limited or no external support.
- » Allow at least 90 minutes for each applicant group. Most authorizers reserve the same amount of interview time for all applicants to ensure a fair process.



KNOW WHEN TO SCRIPT... AND WHEN NOT TO

- » Open the interview with a generic overview of the process. Please see our Interview Introduction Script for a sample you can adapt.
- » Use stock questions to start the conversation. These can address common issues such as requests for external validation for programmatic decisions or practices, and/or evidence of the applicants' success in previous ventures.
- » Draft customized questions to follow up on specific concerns or inconsistencies within the application, and to probe on the applicants' abilities to execute on their plans.



MAKE EVERY MINUTE MATTER

- » Each 90-minute interview should include:
 - Introduction and Overview (5–10 minutes)
 - Applicant Introductions and Opening Statement (5–10 minutes)
 - Questions and Discussion (60–70 minutes)
 - Review of Next Steps and Opportunity for Applicant Questions (10 minutes)
- » Appoint roles ahead of time (team lead, timekeeper, notetaker) to streamline the process.
- » Schedule 30 minutes for debriefing between applicants.



TAKE YOUR PRACTICE TO THE NEXT LEVEL

- » As we seek to grow innovative and diverse charter schools, performance tasks can provide applicants opportunities to demonstrate hidden strengths that might not have come across in the application.
- » Consider committing 15 to 20 minutes of your question block to a performance task exercise. The scenarios should include realistic and common challenges associated with operating a charter school, test the collective skill sets of the applicant group, and provide you with additional information on the following—in ways that individual questions cannot:
 - **Group dynamics:** Is there a clear leader? Do all members participate in the discussion? Does the team seem to work well together? Is each team member's participation consistent with what would be expected from their respective role?
 - **Consensus:** Is the team able to reach consensus in a reasonable manner and timeframe? How do they consider and resolve differences to productively move forward?
 - **Analysis:** Does the team recognize key issues and challenges presented in the scenario? Does the discussion reflect a sound understanding of the obligations of operating a public charter school?
 - **Engagement:** Do members of the team demonstrate fluency with respect to components of their proposed school design? Do they exhibit a sense of excitement for the undertaking, as well as willingness to hold themselves accountable?



For foundational information on capacity interviews, please refer to *Authorizer's Quick Guide to Capacity Interviews 101*