VII. Interviewing

Interviews for public interest fellowships vary widely. Some funders interview candidates with an entire committee of lawyers and community members (Independence Foundation). For other fellowships, candidates are interviewed by the fellowship director and one other person, such as a board member (Skadden). Some last for twenty minutes and others can last for an hour or longer.

*When interviewing remember to:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOW YOUR PROPOSAL AND BE PREPARED TO EXPLAIN ALL PARTS OF THE PROPOSAL.</th>
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<tr>
<td>FOCUS ON THE CLIENTS AND COMMUNITIES TO BE SERVED BY YOUR PROJECT.</td>
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<td>SHOW AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES, GOALS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF YOUR PROJECT.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BE ENTHUSIASTIC AND FOCUS ON THE SKILLS YOU HAVE THAT WILL HELP MAKE THE PROJECT SUCCESSFUL.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATION.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DON’T FORGET TO PREPARE FOR STANDARD INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.</td>
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A. How and What to Prepare

*To prepare you should know your application inside and out.*

This includes the project proposal, personal essays, your resume, the needs of the community, and the goals, strategies and outcomes of the project.

*You will need to be able to explain all parts of the project and you will need to show an understanding of the issues, the community, the goals and the strategies outlined in the project.*

This is true even if the host organization took the lead in developing the project. Likewise, you should be able to explain why you included certain life experiences or volunteer work in your personal essays. Make sure you have gone over the essays and project proposal several times before the actual interview.

*Everything in a fellowship application can be questioned by the interviewers.*
You should be able to use some of the research and preparation you did in creating and writing the proposal to prepare for the interview. Not everything that you researched or read, and not every issue you investigated or developed will be used in the project proposal. However, you should not discard this information as it can help prepare you for the interview process.

B. Questions and Issues That May Come Up in an Interview

**GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

You should be able to discuss the goals of the project and why you chose each goal. You should also be able to state why it is that a lawyer is needed to accomplish the goals of the project. Additionally, you should be able to answer questions not only about what is in your project, but also about what is not included in your project. There may be strategies or issues that have not been addressed in the project proposal and you may need to explain why you have excluded them.

**OUTCOMES AND IMPACT**

You may be asked to discuss what you hope to accomplish through the project. You may also be asked how you intend to measure the project’s outcomes. Here it is important to have carefully thought about what the project is trying to accomplish. You should be able to discuss how the outcomes you are seeking to achieve relate to the strategies outlined in the proposal. You should discuss the proposed outcomes in relation to both your skills and experiences, and the clients to be served.

**THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATION**

It is important to discuss your relationship with the host organization, how you chose the organization and what their role was in developing the project. The fellowship provider may even ask how the project idea was generated and how the proposal was developed. Additionally, you may be asked about the supervision and training that will be given by the host organization. Fellowship providers want to know that the organization believes in your project and is fully supportive of it and of you. It is important these issues be addressed with the organization before the interview.

**YOUR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

Be prepared to talk about your skills and experiences as they relate to the proposed project. You should be able to convey that you have the necessary skills, enthusiasm and determination needed to execute the project plan.

It is also a good idea to have thought about what you might do if you do not get the fellowship. Fellowship providers like determination and tenacity and they will very often want to hear that you have thought of ways to do your project without the fellowship.
STANDARD INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

You should expect some of the standard interview questions such as why you went to law school your strengths and weaknesses and what will you be doing in five years. It is always a good idea to have thought about these and other possible questions while preparing for the interview.

A final thought about interviewing

REMEMBER TO BE ENTHUSIASTIC, CONCISE IN YOUR ANSWERS, CONFIDENT AND POISED.

ARRANGE A MOCK INTERVIEW WITH CP & P, THE TPIC, AND/OR YOUR SPONSOR ORGANIZATION. ALSO, SPEAK WITH FORMER AND CURRENT FELLOWS WHO HAVE BEEN THROUGH THE PROCESS.