

# SKILLS-BASED HIRING GUIDE



This guide was developed using resources from The Markle Foundation and the DC Workforce Investment Council (WIC). Thank you to Markle, DC WIC, and DC Mayor Muriel Bowser for their contributions to this guide.

# Inside You'll Find...

This guide contains step-by-step guidance, case studies, tools, and tips to help you adopt more inclusive and effective hiring practices.

**What Is Skills-Based Hiring?** 2

**Why Use Skills-Based Hiring?** 3

**Your Roadmap for Hiring New Employees** 4

## Job Listings & Candidate Recruitment

Reflection Worksheet	6 - 7
Step-By-Step Checklist: How To Write Job Listings	8
Comparison: Traditional Vs. Skill-Based Job Listing	9
Job Listing Template	10
Step By Step Checklist: How To Recruit Job Candidates	11 - 12
Additional Tools & Resources	13

## Candidate Interviewing & Evaluation

Reflection Worksheet	15 - 16
Step By Step Checklist: How To Screen, Interview & Evaluate Candidates	17 - 19
Candidate Screening Guide Template	20
Interview Guide Template	21 - 22
Candidate Evaluation Rubric	23
Example Work-Based Assessment	24
Additional Tools & Resources	25

**Case Studies** 26 - 27

**About This Program** 28

# What Is Skills-Based Hiring?

Rather than relying on education, credentials, or past experience, a skills-based strategy recognizes that there are many ways to acquire knowledge and ability. Skills-based hiring practices help employers identify and articulate the skills needed in a role, and then recruit and evaluate candidates based on those skills.

## Traditional Hiring

- **Uses credentials**  
(e.g., degrees, work experience, etc) to assume skill level.
- **Long list of qualifications in the job listing**  
that lack specificity and prioritization.
- **Unintentional bias in the job listing**  
keeps qualified applicants away.
- **Uses unhelpful interview questions**  
(e.g., "what are your strengths and weakness")
- **Uses a superficial assessment (e.g., a personality test) or no assessment at all**

Vs.

## Skills-Based Hiring

- **Uses competencies**  
(e.g., the specific skills and abilities a person needs to effectively perform a job) to attract candidates with the skills needed.
- **Distinguishes qualifications**  
between required and preferred competencies (i.e., skills)
- **Inclusive and non-gendered language in the job listing**  
attracts a wider pool of qualified applicants.
- **Uses behavioral and situational interview questions**  
that focus on relevant competencies for the job
- **Uses a work-based assessment**  
that replicates job-specific tasks and tests their level of competency

# Why Use Skills-Based Hiring?

Are you struggling to hire and keep employees? Covid-19 has dramatically changed the labor market as we know it. To adapt, small businesses must change the way they recruit and hire employees.

Using inclusive, skills-based hiring practices will help your business access a wider talent pool, hire faster, reduce the cost of employee onboarding, and retain employees.

**5x better hiring:** Research shows that hiring for skills is 5x more predictive of job performance than hiring for education and 2.5x more predictive than hiring for work experience.<sup>1</sup>

**42% more responses:** Job descriptions that use gender-neutral language lead to 42% more responses<sup>2</sup> and a two-week faster hiring time than those that use masculine-language<sup>3</sup> (e.g., assertive, dominant, competitive).

**Increased equity:** Women tend to apply to jobs only when they meet 100% of the job requirements, while men will apply if they meet 60%. Similar gaps exist for candidates of color.<sup>4</sup>

**2.5x more engagement:** Workers who strongly agree that the job description was a good reflection of their job are 2.5x more likely to be engaged as an employee.<sup>5</sup>

**Improved retention:** Employees who pass a pre-hire job test have higher retention.<sup>6</sup>

## Skills-Based Vs. Traditional Hiring: what's the difference?

**EFFECTIVE**

### Skills-Based

Uses various forms of skills assessments to discover and highlight candidates with the **best skills** match for the role.

- Predicts job performance
- A lot less biased
- Faster time-to-hire
- Better candidate experience
- Higher employee retention



### Traditional

Prioritizes education and work experience to find candidates that have the best *on-paper* job fit.

- Can't predict job performance
- Prone to biases
- Typically slower
- Candidate ghosting
- Lower retention due to poor fit



**OUTDATED**

1. Hunter, J. E., & Hunter, R. F. (1984). Validity and utility of alternative predictors of job performance. *Psychological Bulletin*, 96(1), 72-98.

2. ZipRecruiter. Removing These Gendered Keywords Gets You More Applicants.

3. Gaucher, D., Friesen, J., & Kay, A. C. (2011, March 7). Evidence That Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Advance online publication.

4. Katty Kay and Claire Shipman. May 2024. *The Confidence Gap*. The Atlantic.

5. Skillful, Rework America Alliance, A Markle Initiative

6. The New York Times. *Is Blind Hiring The Best Hiring*.

# Your Roadmap For Hiring New Employees



# **Job Listings & Candidate Recruitment**

# Reflection Worksheet

Take a moment to reflect. Why do we begin this series discussing job descriptions?

Have job requirements *discouraged* you from applying to jobs in the past? How could these requirements be reframed?

Write down 2-3 examples of credentials you've used on job postings in the past, and reframe each one as a competency instead.

**Example:**

**Credential:** Minimum 4 years of experience working in the banking industry

**Competency:** Thorough knowledge of banking and financial services

**Credential #1:**

**Competency #1:**

**Credential #2:**

**Competency #2:**

# Reflection Worksheet

Choose two or three competencies to define.

What competencies could you have included in your job postings to attract a more diverse set of applicants?

How has your understanding of writing job postings evolved? What steps will you take to update your job postings in the future?



# Step-By-Step Checklist: How To Write Job Listings

- ☐ **Identify the occupational skills (aka: competencies) required for the job.**  
Occupational competencies are specific to the job or occupation. For example, if you are hiring a loan processor, some occupational competencies might include knowledge of home loans, familiarity with the loan application process, and expertise in analyzing credit standings.

- ☐ **Identify the foundational competencies required for the job.**  
Foundational competencies are broader skills that can be valuable in multiple job roles. For example, public speaking or writing proficiency.

**TIP**

Need help identifying occupational and foundational skills? Use **SkillsEngine** (free) or the **Skillful Job Posting Generator** (free) to identify potential skills.

- ☐ **Distinguish between required and preferred competencies.**  
Which skills are most important to succeed in the job? Which skills does a new hire need to have on day one? Rank the skills in order of importance (low/medium/high). Then, divide them into skills that the candidate must have on day one and ones that can be taught on the job. Important skills that a candidate must have on day one are required skills. The rest are preferred. Use clear, plain language that avoids industry jargon.

**TIP**

Instead of specifying the exact software used at the company (e.g., Toast), list the type of software (e.g., point-of-sale system).

## How To Determine Preferred vs. Required Skills

		SKILL TRAINABILITY	
		Trainable	Preferred
IMPORTANCE	Essential Job Duties	<b>Preferred:</b> Skill is needed but can be trained after hiring.	<b>Required:</b> Skill is needed to perform job duties and cannot be trained.
	Non-Essential	<b>Preferred:</b> Skill can be learned over time to improve job performance.	<b>Preferred:</b> Skill is not necessary, but having it improves job performance.

- ☐ **Narrow the job listing down to no more than 10 competencies.**  
Too many skills can turn off applicants and de-emphasize the skills you need most.
- ☐ **Review for credential requirements, and remove where possible.**  
Credentials and time-based experience requirements (e.g., 4 years sales experience) dissuade applicants, especially female candidates who are less likely to apply if they don't check all the boxes. Consider what skill(s) you are equating the credential to, and ask if those can be acquired without earning a credential. If they can, remove the credential and replace it with the specific skills needed for the position.
- ☐ **Check your job description for bias.**
  - ☐ Copy your job description into a free gender decoder tool to identify gendered words and alternatives.
  - ☐ Remove any gendered pronouns (e.g., use salesperson instead of salesman)
  - ☐ Invite your employees to review the job listing and provide feedback

- ☐ **Include an inclusivity statement**  
Even a basic statement saying "We are an equal opportunity employer" can reassure candidates and signal a commitment to diversity. Some companies offer longer and more explicit statements.

**Here's an example:** "[Name of Company] is committed to creating a diverse environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or veteran status."

# Comparison:

## Traditional Job Listing

**TITLE:** Recruiter

**JOB SUMMARY:**

The recruiter role provides support in all the processes and efforts to find and manage relationships with all candidates.

**RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

- ♦ Process, verify, and maintain candidate related documentation, including staffing needs, recruitment, choosing organizations to partner with for recruitment, candidate relations, interview coordination, and offer negotiations.
- ♦ Record data for each candidate.
- ♦ Explain company personnel policies, benefits, and procedures to job applicants.
- ♦ Answer questions regarding the interview process, assessments, eligibility, salaries, benefits, and other pertinent information.
- ♦ Prepare, coordinate, and conduct phone interviews.
- ♦ Coordinate with HR manager and hiring manager to understand open positions and talent needs.

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

- ♦ Requires a BA/BS in Related Field
- ♦ Minimum of 1 year of experience working in a recruiting environment
- ♦ Exceptional interpersonal and communication skills; friendly, tactful, good negotiator, ability to influence others
- ♦ Analytical skills
- ♦ Proficient using the Internet to recruit
- ♦ Managing the entire hiring process (from sourcing to offer stage) in an efficient and effective manner
- ♦ Experience with Workday ATS (Applicant Tracking System) application
- ♦ Building dynamic relationships with hiring managers
- ♦ Sense of urgency is helpful
- ♦ Financially driven, energetic, confident go-getter who can maintain integrity
- ♦ General knowledge of various employment laws and practices

SKILLFUL® TALENT SERIES: ATTRACT THE RIGHT TALENT

## Skills-Based Job Listing

**TITLE:** Recruiter

**JOB SUMMARY:**

The recruiter role provides support in all processes and efforts to find and maintain relationships with all candidates. They draft hiring materials, source candidates for open positions, conduct screening, and interview candidates. They track information on applicants, arrange interviews, and build working relationships with hiring managers, HR staff, and community partners.

**RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

- ♦ Process, verify, and maintain candidate documentation in our Applicant Tracking System.
- ♦ Source qualified candidates from various channels (e.g., online, job fairs, community partners).
- ♦ Draft and refine hiring documents.
- ♦ Prepare, coordinate, and conduct reference checks, screening and phone and in-person interviews.
- ♦ Evaluate applicant eligibility and qualifications for employment.
- ♦ Engage and collaborate with HR manager and hiring manager to understand talent needs.
- ♦ Evaluate and use new sourcing techniques to identify, cultivate, and attract qualified candidates.

**REQUIRED COMPETENCIES:**

- ♦ **Interview and Assessment Techniques** - Develop structured interview guides and use assessments to evaluate skill sets of applicants.
- ♦ **Process Improvement** - Monitor and evaluate recruiting processes and update recruiting and sourcing methods to improve the quality of candidates and reduce time to hire.
- ♦ **Interpersonal Skills** - Guide conversations to assess applicants' eligibility and qualifications in person and over the phone; build relationships with community partners to hire their clients/students.
- ♦ **Judgment and Decision Making** - Assess eligibility and qualifications of applicants during recruitment, screening, and interviewing; partner with HR and hiring managers to decide on new hires.
- ♦ **Writing** - Communicate clearly in writing as appropriate in email, digital platforms, and hiring documents (e.g., job postings).

**PREFERRED COMPETENCIES:**

- ♦ **Employment Law** - Knowledge on legality for acceptable conduct and questions during interview and hiring process; understanding of employment eligibility.
- ♦ **Recruitment Software** - Use Application Tracking Systems to track applicants for multiple open positions.
- ♦ **Persuasion** - Persuade top candidates online and at job fairs to apply to our positions.

# Job Listing Template

**Title:**

**Company Overview:**

**Job Summary:**

**Required Skills:**

**Preferred Skills:**

# Step-By-Step Checklist: How To Recruit Candidates

Traditional sourcing strategies focus on a narrow set of colleges, job boards, and peer companies. Expanding your sourcing channels enables you to reach untapped pools of talent, leading to better and more diverse hiring.

It's also important for you to continuously build your "talent pipeline" — meaning your pool of prospective candidates — even when you do not have an open position available. This helps make sure you have a diverse pool of potential candidates at the ready when it comes time to hire.

## Before You Begin

- ☐ **Review Your Past Applicants**  
Before you begin, take some time to review your past hiring efforts. Who applies for jobs at your company? Who is making it through the interview process? Are there gaps in the diversity of your applicant pool (e.g., gender, ethnicity, age, etc)?
- ☐ **Set Up An Applicant Tracking System (*Optional, But Encouraged*)**  
Applicant tracking systems help make the hiring process easier for you by keeping everything organized in one place, and they also give you better visibility into your candidate pool.  
**Here are a few applicant tracking system options:**
  - **MightyRecruiter** (free)
  - **JobScore**
  - **Seekout**
  - **Opportunity@Work**
  - **DC Works** (free)

If your website is built using WordPress, there are also several applicant tracking system plug-ins available, both free and paid versions (for example, WP Job Manager).
- ☐ **Build Your Own Local Pipeline**  
It's important to continually build your talent pipeline, even when you do not have an open position. Here are a few tactics that can help you build your pipeline:
  - Establish paid pre-employment training programs, such as apprenticeships and internships.

## TIP

**DC offers several workforce building programs for local employers.**

### **School Year Internship Program + Summer Youth Employment Program**

These two Department of Employment Services (DOES) programs partner with DC-based employers to provide meaningful and constructive work experiences for District youth ages 14 - 21. DOES directly pays the wages of youth participating in the program, so there is no cost to you (the employer).

### **DCPS Career Bridge Program**

This program provides high school seniors with the opportunity to participate in professional skill building and internship opportunities. Their wages are covered by DCPS, at no cost to the employer.

- Participate in local job fairs. Most local colleges host career fairs at least once a year. The DC Department of Employment Services (DOES) also regularly hosts hiring fairs to help local employers connect with DC residents.

# Ready To Start Hiring?



## **Post Your Job Listing Online.**

Expand your sourcing channels by posting on as many job boards as possible, with an emphasis on diversity-focused job boards. Here are a few suggestions to get your started:

- **Disabled:** Gettinghired, Recruit Disability, Hire Autism
- **Veterans:** Veteran Recruiting, Hire Purpose
- **Criminal records:** Honest Jobs
- **LGBTQ:** Out for Undergrad, Pink Jobs, Campus Pride, Out & Equal
- **Black and Hispanic:** Jopwell, Diversity.com, PDN Recruits, iHispano, Black Career Network, Black Jobs, Hispanic/Latino Professionals Association (HLPa)
- **Female:** Fairygodboss, PowerToFly, Career Contessa, The Mom Project
- **Immigrant and refugee:** Upwardly Global, Amplio Recruiting
- **Local Universities:** All of the local colleges and universities (including Howard University and University of the District of Columbia) use the platform Handshake for job listings. It is free to join.
- **Local Residents:** DC Works

## **TIP**

If you're using an applicant tracking system, direct applicants to apply through your tracking system, wherever that may be, instead of applying on each individual platform to help keep all of your applications centralized. Make sure to include those instructions and a direct link to the application in the job listing.



## **Share Your Job Listing With Local Community Groups**

Reach a more diverse set of candidates by sharing your job opening with local community groups in your area. This could include nonprofits like the Latin American Youth Center or DC Central Kitchen, or a neighborhood church.



## **Look For Candidates Outside Your Industry**

Expanding beyond the target role or industry opens up huge pools of talent exposing new ways of thinking and problem solving. Look for roles with related skills even in different industries. For example, a waiter or bartender likely has strong skills in customer management and organization that could translate into a role as a salesperson or executive assistant.

# Tools & Resources

## For Writing Job Listings & Recruiting Candidates

### Get Help Writing Your Job Listings & Identifying Competencies

- **Skillful Job Posting Generator** (Free)
- **SkillsEngine** (Free)
- **O\*Net** (Free)

### Analyze Your Job Listings For Bias

- **Gender Decoder** (Free)
- **employ** (Free)
- **Applied** (Paid)
- **Ongig** (Paid)
- **Textio** (Paid)

### Population-Specific Job Boards

- **Disabled:** **Gettinghired**, **Recruit Disability**, **Hire Autism**
- **Veterans:** **Veteran Recruiting**, **Hire Purpose**
- **Criminal records:** **Honest Jobs**
- **LGBTQ:** **Out for Undergrad**, **Pink Jobs**, **Campus Pride**, **Out & Equal**
- **Black and Hispanic:** **Jopwell**, **Diversity.com**, **PDN Recruits**, **iHispano**, **Black Career Network**, **Black Jobs**, **Hispanic/Latino Professionals Association (HLPa)**
- **Female:** **Fairygodboss**, **PowerToFly**, **Career Contessa**, **The Mom Project**
- **Immigrant and refugee:** **Upwardly Global**, **Amplio Recruiting**

### Local DC Job Boards:

- **Local Universities:** All of the local colleges and universities (including Howard University and University of the District of Columbia) use the platform **Handshake** for job listings. It is free to join.
- **Local Residents:** **DC Works**

### DC Internship & Apprenticeship Programs

- **School Year Internship Program**  
This Department of Employment Services (DOES) program partner with DC-based employers to provide meaningful and constructive work experiences for District youth ages 14 - 21. DOES directly pays the wages of youth participating in the program, so there is no cost to you (the employer).
- **Summer Youth Employment Program**  
This initiative sponsored by DOES partners with DC-based employers to provide enriching and constructive summer work experiences for youth ages 14 - 21 through subsidized placements in the private and government sectors. DOES directly pays the wages of youth participating in the program, so there is no cost to you (the employer).
- **DCPS Career Bridge Program**  
This program provides high school seniors with the opportunity to participate in professional skill building and internship opportunities. Their wages are covered by DCPS, at no cost to the employer.

### Applicant Tracking Systems & Hiring Platforms:

- **Seekout**
- **Opportunity@Work**
- **Mathison**
- **YUPRO**
- **Turning Basin Labs**
- **MightyRecruiter** (Free)
- **JobScore**
- **DC Works** (Free)

# **Candidate Interviewing & Evaluation**

# Reflection Worksheet

Take a moment to reflect on whether you would call either candidate in for an interview and how the activity has altered your approach to screening.

Try to develop a skills assessment.

Specify a competency:

Consider how you might assess for that competency:

Outline what the assessment for the competency will look like:



# Reflection Worksheet

Record any reflections you have on these types of interview questions.

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Why are you a good fit for this job?

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

Tell us about our company – what do you know?

Look at each of these biased, traditional interview questions below. How would you update these questions to make them skills-based?

What's your biggest weakness?

What was your highest level of education?

Why did you choose this career?

# Step-By-Step Checklist: How To Screen, Interview & Evaluate Candidates

Candidate evaluation is when you use a skills-based approach to review, screen, and interview candidates using a defined competency to see if they match or don't match the skills you are looking for in a candidate. This step-by-step checklist will help you evaluate and interview candidates in order to find the right fit for your position!

## Step 1: Screen Your Candidates

Focus screening processes on determining whether the candidate has demonstrated proficiency in the required skills. At this phase of the process, the only question you should focus on is: **does the candidate have the specific skills needed for the job?**

☐ **Mask The Names On The Applications (*Optional, But Encouraged*)**  
Hiding the name of the candidate on the application helps reduce bias during the initial application review.

☐ **Send Candidates A Pre-Screening Assessment (*Optional, But Encouraged*)**  
It can be difficult to evaluate whether a candidate truly has the required skills by looking at their resume. Depending on the job, pre-screen assessments may enable you to quickly validate key skills and identify top candidates.

- These assessments can include short answer questions, mini-tests, and work samples. You can find a list of assessment providers on page X.
- Keep the pre-screen assessment short – no more than 5-10 minutes long.

☐ **Use A Screening Guide To Review Applications**  
Use a screening guide that lists the required skills for the job to the reviewer fairly and consistently evaluate candidate applications. Don't work just from memory, which can bias you simply to replicate folks who currently hold the job. You can find a template on page X.

### TIP

If you are using an Applicant Tracking System to automatically screen candidates, carefully review your screening criteria and try to reduce your reliance on the automatic screening process. Automatic keyword searches or criteria requiring a 4-year degree can remove top candidates before you have a chance to evaluate them.

☐ **Check To Make Sure Your Interview Pool Is Diverse**  
Before you move on the interview step, make sure there is diversity among those you have chosen to interview. Research shows that the racial and gender composition of your interview pool has a big impact on selection. If there is only one woman or person of color in a pool, they have virtually no chance of being hired. Before moving on to the next step, make sure you interview at least two candidates for each group of focus (e.g., people of color, non-degree holders).

## Step 2: Prepare Your Interview Tools

The interview process is often where the greatest number of qualified, diverse candidates are unintentionally screened out as interviewees select candidates most like themselves. This process prevents employers from hiring the best talent for the role.

### **Create An Interview Guide**

A skills-based interview guide helps the interviewer assess each candidate consistently and makes it easier to compare responses across interviews.

- The guide should align with the required and preferred skills listed within the job description. Each question should focus on evaluating one specific skill.
- Use behavioral questions that ask how a candidate has acted in the past (e.g., “Tell me about a time when...”) and situational questions that ask how a candidate would respond to a situation (e.g., “What would you do if...”).
- Avoid asking about things outside the job scope or items that do not directly relate to a competency you’re evaluating. Questions like “What do you do for hobbies outside of work” are not inclusive and can introduce bias into the process.
- Do not include questions that could reveal information about their citizenship status, family status, age, ethnicity, or disability. These questions violate a candidate’s rights under the US Equal Employment Opportunity laws.
- See page X for an interview guide template.

### **Develop A Work-Based Assessment To Evaluate Ability**

Work-based assessments force candidates to go beyond talking about their skills to demonstrating them. Consider adding some sort of simulation / work assignment as a step in the interview process to distinguish between top candidates.

- Assessments during the interview process can be more involved than pre-screen assessments.
- You can issue the assessment during their initial interview or as a final step in the process.
- See page X for an example of a work-based assessment

### **Create A Candidate Evaluation Rubric**

Use rubrics to evaluate and compare candidates across the interview process. The rubric should outline the skills interviewers should evaluate candidates on and provide benchmarks to help compare responses. Rubrics help keep interviews focused and forces reflection on how the candidate’s skills align to the role. Forcing an interviewer to write out their rationale for why they support or do not support a candidate can help combat implicit bias.

- Define a minimum proficiency level required for each skill. The minimum level should reflect the team’s capacity to train a new hire. Set this standard prior to interviewing candidates.
- See page X for an evaluation rubric template.

### **Choose Which Employees Will Conduct The Interviews**

Your interview panel should include racial and gender diversity to help 1) communicate that you’re serious about diversity, 2) show candidates that there are leaders like them at the organization, and 3) check unconscious bias of interviewers.

## Step 3: Interview Your Top Candidates

Skills-based interviewing is a fantastic tool to find not only the right person for your job but also someone who brings the right skill set to the table.

- ☐ **Create An Inclusive And Accessible Interview Environment**  
Be mindful of how interview environments might impact people with different backgrounds and abilities. For example, as part of its Autism Hiring Program, Microsoft provides breaks after interviews.
  - If you are conducting virtual interviews, be sure to offer phone interviews for people who may not have access to a computer or high-speed Internet.
  - If you plan to use video interviews, provide your candidates with interview video best practices in advance. Also, keep in mind that candidates may not have access to a webcam or quiet space at home. Do not let their background visuals or noise impact your evaluation of their skills.
  
- ☐ **Stick To The Interview Guide**  
Give each interviewer a copy of the interview guide that you created during the last step. Make sure they know to stick to the guide and ask all candidates the same questions. This gives all candidates the same information and opportunity to speak to their relevant skills and experiences.  
  
It is often helpful to ask follow-up questions. For example, “is there anything else you would like to add about X?”
  
- ☐ **Remember: Do Not Ask Personal Questions**  
Avoid asking candidates about their personal lives or activities outside of work. This can introduce bias and also can cause you to violate Equal Employment Opportunity laws. This means you **should not** ask questions like:
  - “Where are you from?”
  - “Are you married?”
  - “Do you have children?”
  - “Will it be hard to be away from your family if you have to travel for work?”
  - “Congratulations on your pregnancy – when are you due?”
  - “When did you graduate high school?”
  - “I noticed you use a wheelchair. What kind of disability do you have?”
  
- ☐ **Focus On What They Say, Not How They Say It**  
Remember that it is normal to be nervous in a job interview. This does not mean that the candidate would perform poorly on the job.
  
- ☐ **Fill Out The Candidate Evaluation Rubric Immediately After The Interview**  
Once the interview is over, use your candidate evaluation rubric to score the candidate immediately while the interview is fresh in your mind. Do not do this during the interview – you want to stay focused on the candidate you are interviewing.
  
- ☐ **Conduct A Debrief Session**  
Once all of the initial interviews are complete, bring all of the interviewers together for a debrief to discuss how the candidates compare to one another.

# Candidate Screening Guide Template

**Instructions for use:** Use the template below to organize your initial resume/candidate screening process. Fill in the required competencies. The screening guide should only screen for competencies/skills that are required (not preferred skills).

It might be helpful to add the definition of each competency for reference. Each person reviewing the applications/resumes should use a screening guide to review the resume.

Each reviewer should add a check mark if they have a competency, question mark if they might, and X mark for competencies they are missing in the boxes next to the competencies. Then the reviewer should decide if the candidate will proceed to the next round.

**Applicant Name:**

**Date:**

**Reviewer:**

☐

[First Required Competency] - [Competency Definition]

☐

[Second Required Competency] - [Competency Definition]

☐

[Third Required Competency] - [Competency Definition]

☐

[Fourth Required Competency] - [Competency Definition]

☐

[Fifth Required Competency] - [Competency Definition]

☐

[Sixth Required Competency] - [Competency Definition]

# Interview Guide Template

**Instructions for use:** Use the template below to develop your interview questions. The questions should be the same for each candidate. Each question should focus on evaluating one specific skill. You can ask questions to evaluate both required and preferred skills.

Use behavioral questions that ask how a candidate has acted in the past (e.g., "Tell me about a time when...") and situational questions that ask how a candidate would respond to a situation (e.g., "What would you do if...").

## Question 1: Write The Question Here

**Skill Being Evaluated:** [Write down the skill you're evaluating here]

**Candidate's Answer:**

## Question 2: Write The Question Here

**Skill Being Evaluated:** [Write down the skill you're evaluating here]

**Candidate's Answer:**

## Question 3: Write The Question Here

**Skill Being Evaluated:** [Write down the skill you're evaluating here]

**Candidate's Answer:**

# Interview Guide Template

## **Question 4:** Write The Question Here

**Skill Being Evaluated:** [Write down the skill you're evaluating here]

**Candidate's Answer:**

## **Question 5:** Write The Question Here

**Skill Being Evaluated:** [Write down the skill you're evaluating here]

**Candidate's Answer:**

**Note:** Repeat as needed based on the number of questions you intend to ask during the interview.

# Candidate Evaluation Rubric

**Hiring Position Title:**

**Interviewer's Name:**

Rating Scale	
<b>4 - Far Exceeds Requirements</b>	Highest skill set evident. Demonstrates competency accurately, consistently, and independently.
<b>3 - Meets Requirements</b>	Strong skill set evident. Demonstrates competency accurately and consistency with minimal follow-up required.
<b>2 - Below Requirements</b>	Demonstrates competency inconsistently.
<b>1 - Significant Gap</b>	Fails to demonstrate competency.

Candidates					
Criteria	Candidate Name	Candidate Name	Candidate Name	Candidate Name	Candidate Name
Skill #1					
Skill #2					
Skill #3					
Skill #4					
Skill #5					
Work-Based Assessment					

To download an editable version of this template, visit the [Candidate Evaluation course](#).



# Example Work-Based Assessment

**Position: Recruiter**

**Main Competency: Interpersonal Skills**

**Additional Competencies: Writing and process improvement**

*Interpersonal skills are crucial for recruiters developing partnerships with community organizations such as community colleges, non-profits, etc., to hire students and clients who are served by the community organizations.*

## Instructions:

In order to complete this assessment, you will have 30 minutes and access to a computer with an internet connection to conduct research. Please provide a Word document with answers to the five questions below to your interviewer for review. Be prepared to discuss your answers during your interview.

## Your Task:

You are going to be responsible for building partnerships with community organizations to develop recruitment channels to hire their participants and students for customer representative roles at our company. In your efforts to begin building these partnerships in your role, conduct the following preparations:

1. Identify 3 community organizations to reachout to.
2. What department at the organization will you be contacting?
3. How will you initiate contact with the organization(e.g.,cold call, event, etc.)?
4. What will you say when you initiate contact?
5. What approaches will you take to determine if their students or participants are qualified for the customer representative roles?

# Tools & Resources

## For Candidate Interviewing and Evaluation

### Pre-Hire Skill Assessments

- **GapJumpers** (Paid) *Custom assessments and masks application materials*
- **Pymetrics** (Paid) *Pre-set behavioral pre-hire assessments*
- **Togglhire** (Free & Paid Versions) *A skills assessment platform*

### Evaluate EEOC Compliance of Assessments

- **SHRM** (Paid)
- **EEOC Guidance**

### Mask Application Materials To Reduce Bias:

- **Entelo** *Diversity, equity, and inclusion software that helps businesses automate sourcing, screening, and employee engagement.*
- **Diversity TalVista** *Applicant tracking system with a job description optimizer, redacted resume review, and structured interviews*
- **Pinpoint** *Applicant tracking system with blind recruiting built in*

### Resources For Writing Skills-Based Interview Questions:

- **Competency-Based Interviewing:** *Key Concepts for Managers (Indeed.com)*
- **Competency Based Interview Questions to Ask Job Seekers** *(Lever.co)*

### Bias Training Providers

- **Managing Unconscious Bias** *(Free) Facebook training series*
- **Paradigm** *(Paid)*

# CASE STUDIES:

## The Case For Skills-Based Hiring

### JetBlue Switches To Skill-Based

In 2013, JetBlue decided to implement a skills-based approach to hiring reservation agents.

- **The Problem:** Reservation agents require extensive training before talking with customers, and completion rates among new hires were low.
- **The Solution:** Talent leaders conducted focus groups, interviews, and job shadowing to identify the skills most essential for success in training and on the job. They then redesigned their interview process to focus on a call simulation test that assesses those critical skills.
- **The Impact:** 25% decrease in attrition during training. Scores on the assessment also became good predictors of performance. JetBlue is now working to extend a skills-based approach to all customer-facing roles. [Learn more.](#)

### Clifford Chance Implements College-Masked Hiring

In 2013, Clifford Chance, a major UK law firm, implemented college-masked hiring to increase representation beyond the most elite universities.

- **The Problem:** After reviewing a study that revealed that attending one of the UK's elite universities was a de facto requirement for working at the firm, leaders at Clifford Chance decided to make a change. They knew that limiting hiring to a narrow set of universities was homogenizing their workforce and preventing them from reaching top talent. As one senior employee put it: "We're looking for the gems and they're not all in the jeweler's shop."
- **The Solution:** The firm adopted a college-blind hiring process. Interviewers were prevented from seeing information on where a candidate went to university during the interview process.
- **The Impact:** In the first year alone, the firm experienced a 30% increase in the number of schools represented in its entry-level hiring program, accepting candidates from 41 institutions. [Learn more.](#)

### Intel Switches To Diverse Interview Panels

In 2014, Intel began using diverse interview panels for all interviews.

- **The Problem:** Intel needed to increase diversity in hiring.
- **The Solution:** Intel began using diverse interview panels for all interviews. The panels include at least two women and / or people of color.
- **The Impact:** In the two years following the change, the share of women or people of color at the company increased by 32%.

# CASE STUDIES:

## The Case For Skills-Based Hiring

### Airbnb Increases Women Hired In Data Science Positions

- **The Problem:** Despite representing 30% of applicants, in 2016, women made up only 10% of new data scientists.
- **The Solution:** Airbnb worked to increase the profile of women in data science, which is a male-dominated field, hosting panels highlighting women and publishing articles describing experiences of women in the field. It also moved to a binary scoring system for take-home assessments and required women to make up half of the interview panel for female candidates.
- **The Impact:** The share of new hires for data science increased from 10% to 47%, and overall representation of female data scientists at the company rose from 15% to 30%. [Learn more.](#)

### Microsoft Removes Barriers For Autism Applicants

- **The Problem:** Despite possessing a number of traits well suited for complex work, 90% of adults and 85% of college graduates with autism in the US are unemployed.
- **The Solution:** In 2015, Microsoft launched the Autism Hiring Program, an initiative to proactively remove barriers candidates with autism faced in the recruitment process.  
  
The program includes explicit outreach to autism communities, awareness training for interviewers, interview accommodations, and a multi-day event to bring candidates to the company's headquarters. It also works to create a smooth onboarding experience and transition to the company.  
  
New hires made through the program are provided with a support system that includes a peer mentor, a mentor from the autism community, and a job coach. HR works to provide accommodations like noise-canceling headphones, and managers and team members receive disability awareness training.
- **The Impact:** Since 2015, over 100 individuals have been hired through the program. Learning from the program is driving changes in the general hiring process, especially around the idea of "screening in" talent from different backgrounds.

# About This Program

**The Talent Development Technical Assistance (TDTA)** initiative supports District businesses in adopting inclusive, skills-based hiring practices. The initiative provides technical assistance and training for businesses and offers a suite of business-facing tools and resources, highlighting best practices to widen the talent pool, decrease recruitment and hiring time, reduce costs for training and employee onboarding, and improve retention rates.

The TDTA is a program of the DC Workforce Investment Council (DC WIC)—the District’s state and local workforce investment board. The TDTA program is being implemented by **District Bridges**, a community ecosystem development nonprofit working to foster equitable, resilient, and connected communities.

## What Is the **WIC**?

The District’s Workforce Investment Council (WIC) is a private-sector led board responsible for advising the Mayor, Council, and District government on the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of an integrated and effective workforce investment system. Members of the WIC include representatives from the private sector, local business representatives, government officials, organized labor, youth community groups, and organizations with workforce investment experience.

## About District Bridges

District Bridges is a nonprofit organization with a mission to enrich neighborhood vitality by bridging community engagement and economic development opportunities so individuals, businesses, and organizations can thrive together. As a community ecosystem development organization, District Bridges is working to foster equitable, resilient, and connected communities in DC and beyond. Founded in 2005 by neighbors in Columbia Heights, our values of relationship, collaboration, innovation, diversity, action-oriented, fun, story, and inclusion drive our mission and work. District Bridges operates six Main Street programs covering ten neighborhoods and serving over 900 businesses: Chevy Chase, Cleveland Park, Columbia Heights and Mount Pleasant, Lower Georgia Avenue, Logan Circle, and U Street.