



## **SAMPLE EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS Safety Coordinator/Organizer Position**

Hiring a strong safety coordinator with the right relationships, instincts and skills can be the lynchpin for project success. The following interview questions have been used by hiring teams in many cities working with LISC's Community Safety Initiative. An important tip for your interview process is to ensure that representatives from your top two or three institutional partners (including the police department or prosecutors' office) are involved in final interviews. While some organizations hesitate to invite this level of input from "outsiders" in their staffing decisions, engaging partners in this way can help solidify their buy-in to collaborative safety work and can greatly smooth the way for the coordinator/organizer who is hired.

### Suggested Overview for Interviewees

- A. Context for neighborhood improvement efforts and LISC's national Community Safety Initiative, as appropriate
- B. Local project history
- C. Current conditions in neighborhood
- D. Overview of link between safety coordinator and other lead neighborhood improvement partners
- E. Past victories and challenges
- F. Primary responsibilities of safety coordinator

### Sample Questions

1. This position will require you to reach out and organize residents in a specific area of \_\_\_\_\_ on a regular basis. Tell us about your experiences as a community organizer.
  - a. Who were you organizing for?
  - b. What issues were you organizing around?
  - c. How many persons were mobilized?
  - d. What was the outcome? Include an approximate timeline.
  
2. Your work is part of a comprehensive community development effort locally, with links to LISC's national agenda. In that context, documenting the details and processes of your work in a timely manner so that we can celebrate successes and learn from challenges is an important part of your job. Give us an example of your experiences in documenting your work.

- a. What were your strengths in documenting?
  - b. Where do you feel you need improvement?
3. (two-part question regarding relationship building between police and community)

The project calls for fostering a good working relationship with local police and a number of community-based partners.

Tell us about your experiences working with local police.

- a. How did you go about starting the relationship?
- b. How often did you meet with them?
- c. What concerns would you have about working with the police?
- d. How could you help residents and community-based organizations improve their relationship with local police?

Tell us about your experiences working with community-based organizations and residents.

- e. How did you go about starting the relationship?
- f. How often did you meet with them?
- g. What concerns would you have about working with community-based organizations and residents?
- h. How could you help the police improve their relationship with community-based organizations and residents?

4. What special skills or experiences can you bring to this project and how would this benefit the project?

SAMPLE "CASE STUDY" QUESTIONS (Note: Some sites have chosen to use this as a writing exercise instead of interview questions.)

(1) Imagine yourself as the safety coordinator for this project. This project has very specific boundaries in an area that is approximately 40 square blocks. You call a meeting attended by a police sergeant, members of the business community, representatives from a variety of social service providers and community developers, and concerned residents. A number of issues are expressed by individuals and the reports show them scattered across the entire target area: prostitution, unkempt properties, open-air drug dealing, dumping in vacant lots, reports of high violent crime at a certain apartment building, truants hanging out in a retail strip, poor lighting, graffiti, and minor gang activity. The target area has had several initiatives in the past

few years with mixed results, and resident participation, with the exception of several key grassroots leaders, is not strong.

Describe how you would go about crafting a strategy to tackle the above conditions. It should include participation from each of the project's partners (the meeting attendees), and a timeline for completing the first major task.

(2) Imagine that you have been working as a safety coordinator in the same project area described above for a number of months, and you feel good about the progress you have made in building resident participation and relationships between community groups and police. One morning, you learn of an incident the night before involving an altercation between police and several young people from the neighborhood. An officer and two young men were injured. The media is all over the story, playing up the dichotomy between the young men's version of events and that of the officers involved. What do you do? Why?