SOUTHERN REGIONAL
Children's Advocacy Center

Human Resources Toolkit

FOR NONPROFIT CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS

Human Resources **Toolkit**

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Introduction

Whether you're a new CAC executive director trying to get your feet on the ground with essential HR practices or a seasoned executive looking to take your CAC's HR practices to the next level, this toolkit is designed for you.

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Healthy organizational practices related to human resources (HR) are essential for any nonprofit. However, children's advocacy centers (CACs) have nuances due to the unique nature of the CAC model that makes HR even more complex. For example, how do you craft hiring questions that assess skillsets necessary for a forensic interviewing position? Are you including questions that address self-care skills when working in this field? How do you (or do you not) engage multidisciplinary team (MDT) members in the hiring process? Are you ensuring both administrative and clinical supervision for specialized direct services roles? Are you aware of resources available to you both within and outside of the CAC field?

This toolkit includes an initial checklist to enhance your HR practices followed by several resources and tools.

Each tool is designed to provide you with concrete, useful information to hire, manage, and retain a team to help you achieve your mission to serve children and families impacted by abuse.

We would like to acknowledge our national Victims of Child Abuse Act (VOCAA) partners, including the Midwest, Northeast, and Western Regional Children's Advocacy Centers; National Children's Advocacy Center; National Children's Alliance; Zero Abuse Project; and the National Native Children's Trauma Center, for reviewing and providing feedback on this document.

Essential First Steps and Best Practices

How to Use This Checklist

The "Human Resources Checklist" is a management tool intended for new or experienced nonprofit children's advocacy center (CAC) directors who want to improve their organizational capacity related to employee policies and procedures but are not sure where to start. While personnel management needs and requirements will vary by CAC and by state, the checklist is a starting place to identify and prioritize some of the areas that need attention.

Human resource (HR) management is an ongoing challenge with frequent new requirements due to laws, grants, and standards, as well as new learnings related to trauma-informed or inclusive practices. Even the highest performing CACs will have HR areas that need attention. Instead of seeing this as a report card, think of it as an ongoing tool to assess progress and continue to increase your organization's capacity and effectiveness to support your staff, clients, and mission.

The checklist is divided into the following four sections. For each section you will have an opportunity to assess "Essential First Steps" and "Additional Best Practices."

- Hiring and Onboarding

- Performance Management, Professional Development, and Staff Planning

- Employee Relations, Policies, and Recordkeeping

- Compensation and Benefits

For each listed policy or procedure, rate your organization according to the following statements:

- Yes, we have this in place.

- Exists, but needs some attention.

- Does not exist or needs major improvement.

After you've rated each item, review how many areas you indicated need attention, determine which ones to address, and prioritize. If you are a new director without prior management experience, this tool will also help you identify concepts or terms that may not be familiar to you and that you may need to learn more about before you can fully evaluate your organization's HR practices.

The checklist is a flexible tool that can be used in whatever way fits your current capacity. You may want to go through the whole list for a full picture of your HR needs. If you are a new or small organization, you may want to start with only "essential first steps" for one section at a time and then come back to the checklist after you have addressed your first set of improvement needs.

Hiring and Onboarding	Yes, we have this in place.	Exists, but needs some attention.	Does not exist or needs major improvement.
ESSENTIAL FIRST STEPS			
Job postings are based on an updated job description and include "required" and "preferred" qualifications, as well as any grant requirements and remote work flexibility.			
All candidates (or at least those selected for an interview) complete a signed application that • provides permission to confirm accuracy of information provided (e.g., prior employment history dates), • acknowledges accuracy, and • is compliant with any applicable federal or state laws, such as not asking for criminal or salary history.			
Prior to making an offer, key qualifications and references are lawfully verified including: • relevant work history, • prior supervisor or professional references, and • required education or licenses.			
Offers are contingent on successfully passing background checks and other required screenings. Before start date, any background checks required by grants, agency policies, and/or insurance providers are then lawfully conducted and reviewed. Recommended checks include: criminal background, child abuse registry, social security number verification, motor vehicle records. Some agencies may require vaccination records and drug screens. Consult an attorney or HR expert if you are considering declining someone based on a criminal background check to meet any state guidelines as well as third party-background check requirements of the Fair Credit Reporting Act to ensure compliance with any necessary documentation, etc. Also note that child abuse registry checks are typically separate from criminal background checks and may follow a separate process entirely, per the design of the child protection system in your state.			
A formal job offer letter is provided. New hire signs acceptance of offer and letter retained for file.			
The organization is prepared to welcome the employee on day one, and there is an onboarding and training plan.			
Required work eligibility documents are completed promptly upon hiring: • I-9 (on or before the employee's first day) and • E-Verify (if applicable).			

Hiring and Onboarding

	Yes, we have this in place.	Exists, but needs some attention.	Does not exist or needs major improvement.
ADDITIONAL BEST PRACTICES			
When possible, job postings include salary ranges to promote equity in the hiring process. In some states, this may be required.			
There is a procedure for documenting hiring decisions and informing applicants of rejection.			
The organization has an interviewing process that includes multiple factors to support a careful decision, such as: • pre-determined list of interview questions, • second interviews for top candidates, • a diverse selection team, • trauma-informed preview of job and working environment, and • appropriate activities to evaluate skills. *(For more information and a detailed checklist of hiring process steps, see the "**Human Resources Hiring Guide**" in this toolkit.)*			
The organization ensures implicit bias training for all employees, including hiring managers.			

Performance Management, Professional Development, and Staff Planning	Yes, we have this in place.	Exists, but needs some attention.	Does not exist or needs major improvement.
ESSENTIAL FIRST STEPS			
Job descriptions are updated annually and identify essential job functions, required skills or competencies, any physical requirements, and reporting relationships.			
Employees receive clear direction, training, and support needed to complete job tasks.			
Employees with unsatisfactory performance ratings receive prompt feedback, and managers address significant performance concerns with written performance improvement expectations and deadlines.			
Disciplinary decisions up to and including termination are handled promptly, documented with confirmed receipt, and are consistent with policies and past practices.			
Employment termination decisions are reviewed in advance with legal counsel.			
The board of directors provides an annual, written performance review to the executive director.			
Formal performance reviews are conducted at least annually and documented consistently.			
ADDITIONAL BEST PRACTICES			
Supervisors communicate job and/or group priorities and goals that are trauma-informed and tied to the CAC's strategic plan and mission.			
Direct service positions have annual training plans consistent with professional development essential components put forth in National Children's Alliance (NCA) *Standards for Accredited Members*.			
Formal or informal methods are used to show appreciation for excellent performance and ensuring self-care practices at both the supervisory and worker levels.			
Both administrative supervision and clinical supervision are ensured for direct service staff - internally if both are available inside the organization, or with a combination of internal administrative supervision and external clinical supervision. Clinical supervision needs to be conducted by individuals with advanced knowledge in the job area (e.g., forensic interviewing for a forensic interviewer, mental health treatment for a mental health provider, etc.).			

Employee Relations, Policies, and Recordkeeping	Yes, we have this in place.	Exists, but needs some attention.	Does not exist or needs major improvement.
ESSENTIAL FIRST STEPS			
Workers' compensation coverage is active, and each employee's place of work is defined.			
Liability insurance requirements are periodically reviewed with insurance provider including any need for employment practices and benefits coverage.			
The organization has written employee policies that are approved by the board, and there is a process for regular updating (and preferably review by legal counsel).			
Written policies include federal and state- or tribal-specific legal requirements.			
Written policies include adherence to NCA *Standards for Accredited Members* (see personnel-related policies under the "Organizational Capacity Standard") and any grantor requirements.			
Each personnel file includes a copy of a signed acknowledgement indicating that the employee has received a copy of the policies.			
Management has a process in place to keep the organization up-to-date on federal, state, and tribal labor laws and has access to legal counsel when needed.			
Federal and state labor law posters are current. (A poster service or FirstStep Poster Advisor are places to start.)			
Personnel files are maintained in a secure area (typically in a locked file cabinet behind a locked door if physical; password-protected non-public folders if electronic) and include required documents; and I-9, medical, and other confidential background information are kept separately.			
Personnel records are maintained for appropriate time as required by law(s).			
Personnel policies are non-discriminatory and consistently applied.			
Harassment, discrimination, ethical and similar complaints are investigated promptly.			

Employee Relations, Policies, and Recordkeeping	Yes, we have this in place.	Exists, but needs some attention.	Does not exist or needs major improvement.
ADDITIONAL BEST PRACTICES			
The organization has evaluated itself for structural and implicit biases and developed short- and long-term plans to address areas for growth.			
Supervisors have proactive plans to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion and enact concrete strategies particular to the organization's plans.			
Management supports trauma-informed practices and procedures at an organizational, supervisory, and worker level and encourages and models self-care for all employees.			
Supervisors are responsive to employee suggestions and concerns, including addressing conflicts when needed.			
Supervisors and staff members encourage and support an inclusive working environment.			
A formal process is in place for seeking and responding to employee feedback, preferably with an anonymous option.			

Compensation and Benefits

	Yes, we have this in place.	Exists, but needs some attention.	Does not exist or needs major improvement.
ESSENTIAL FIRST STEPS			
Payroll processing is consistent with federal and state laws including deductions, garnishments, timing, reporting to state, etc.			
Each job is classified as exempt or nonexempt according to Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).			
There is a process to record and approve time worked, including any eligible travel, breaks, and time-off per FLSA and any applicable state wage hour laws.			
The timekeeping system meets grant time-tracking requirements.			
Contract, volunteer, and intern positions are reviewed to ensure that they are classified correctly and are not employee positions.			
Supervisors and employees are trained in timekeeping policies, recordkeeping, and approvals.			
Pay rates are determined based on job-related and non-discriminatory factors.			
Pay levels are periodically reviewed to ensure fairness and equity within the organization.			
ADDITIONAL BEST PRACTICES			
Pay levels and benefits are periodically reviewed to ensure competitiveness in the applicable job market.			
Rationale for pay rates and increases are communicated to employees.			
Paid time-off policies are communicated and administered consistently.			
There is a process in place to monitor and periodically review outside insurance/benefits vendor(s) and plan(s).			
An insurance/benefits broker or vendor assists with ERISA, COBRA, and other legal requirements, and there is a process in place to keep informed of new federal and state requirements.			

Resources for Next Steps

After completing this checklist, you likely have discovered areas of strength and areas for growth in your organization. Remember, you have many resources to help you implement strategies to strengthen your HR practices. First, see the resources in this toolkit to help strengthen targeted practices or areas for improvement. In addition, don't hesitate to reach out to the network of local and CAC-specific resources for assistance.

Local general resources:

- Board members

- Your chamber of commerce

- Your local chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

- Nonprofit associations

CAC resources:

- Your Chapter

- Your Regional Children's Advocacy Center

- Child Abuse Library Online (CALiO)

- National Children's Alliance

- Children's Advocacy Center Staffing and Salary Survey (administered and published by the National Children's Alliance)

Hiring Guide

The "Hiring Guide" resource section will help assist children's advocacy center (CAC) executive directors, CAC boards, and hiring managers with resources and thought-provoking questions to get your CAC ready to recruit and hire high-performing staff. While not intended to be all-inclusive, this guide will provide a foundation for your CAC to build consistent, thoughtful practices around hiring staff. The "Hiring Guide" is divided into five sections.

- Before the Job Posting

- Screening of Applicants

- The Interview Process

- After the Interview Process

- Orientation and Onboarding

CACs are unique due to the client population served, mission focused on child abuse, and engagement with the multidisciplinary team (MDT). Below are suggestions to consider when establishing or reviewing your CAC's general hiring process. At the end of the guide is a short worksheet ("Hiring Process Guide—Reminders of Key Steps") that you can use whenever there is a job opening.

Before the Job Posting

CACs need to ensure that they have a consistent process when hiring new staff. This process should consider all these questions:

- What is the agency's timely hiring process for filling vacant positions to prevent an interruption of program services or disruption to organization operations?

- Do you have written job descriptions? Do they include the most important core competencies for the role? Does your agency have established core values you also wish to include in every job description organization wide? Sample job descriptions are available from your Regional Children's Advocacy Center and/or Chapter.

- Who will you involve in the hiring process, and at which points will you involve them (updating job description/posting, interview, onboarding etc.)? Are they trained in interviewing and selecting candidates? It's important to include not only managers but a diverse group of peers, direct reports, and other stakeholders who will work with the new hire and are motivated to ensure a great candidate is hired and supported.

- How will the hiring decision be made? It is recommended to involve more than one person but be clear up front if the hiring manager is going to make the final decision or if the group is going to vote or come to a consensus.

- Who is authorized to make job offers and to determine pay rates? What approvals are needed before making an offer?

- What platforms will you utilize to give you the most exposure and access to the best candidates? Do you recruit locally, regionally, or nationally? (Examples: LinkedIn, Googleforjobs, Indeed, professional organizations, local chamber or other state nonprofit job boards, etc. Many CACs also list jobs on NCAEngage to reach a broader field of applicants with direct CAC knowledge or expertise.)

- How will you advertise widely in order to hire people who reflect the demographics of the community? (Examples: DiversityJobs. com, LatinoJobs.org, OverFiftyJobs.com, DisabilityJobs.net, AsianHires.com, NativeJobs. org, LGBTjobsite.com, VeteranJobs.net, BlackCareers.org, and WeHireWomen.com.)

- Does your agency want to utilize a recruiter? Have you researched the pros/cons of a recruiter?

- Do you have other organizational screening requirements (background checks, vaccination requirements) applicants should be informed about through the posting? What work environment considerations should be updated for the posting (remote work policies, on-call expectations, COVID protocols)?

Implicit and Explicit Biases

Addressing implicit and explicit biases throughout the hiring process is important and necessary for making progress toward your organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals and commitments. If your CAC hasn't already embarked on a learning journey

for raising awareness around implicit bias, this is a great place to start. Pay attention to the language you use in your job descriptions as well as any unnecessary requirements for finding someone who can perform the role. Have a conversation about lived experience versus academic or professional experience and how you might broaden your reach by making adjustments. Another common practice when first reviewing candidate resumes is to remove names or any other demographic characteristics (age, sex, race, etc.) that may influence your decision-making. Asking candidates to provide work examples, as we've suggested in this process, will allow you to evaluate quality of work beyond appearance, gender, age, and even personality. Lastly, standardizing your interview process including required questions can help mitigate bias. If you are still struggling to get candidates who reflect the demographics of your community and the families you serve, you may need to start further upstream by building relationships in the community. Your CAC's community needs assessment (required in the NCA *Standards for Accredited Members*) can be a good place to start to determine if your staff is reflective of the community and families you serve.

Screening of Applicants

If all goes well you might be inundated with applications, so it is important to think about who will be accepting, reviewing, and organizing the applications to prepare for the interview process. Once applications start coming in, you need to establish an internal process to organize applications. It is important that you have discussed how long the job posting will remain open and consider having a tiered system for acceptance of the applications (strong, moderate, immediate decline).

After applications have been approved to move on to the next phase, ensure candidates are not advancing receive notification. Turning down applicants is never easy, so it is important that your agency has a standard rejection letter that is given to all candidates who did not advance through the hiring process. It is entirely okay to personalize some of these messages as well. (This person may apply in the future, and you want to leave a positive impression.)

While you may want to ask for resumes, you will also need a standard application that includes a signature section for the candidate to confirm accuracy of information provided and give permission to verify any information and contact references. If you are asking questions about criminal, vaccination, or salary history, be sure to comply with any state restrictions regarding these topics.

The Interview Process

The interview process can be time-consuming, so be realistic with the length of this phase of the hiring process. Conducting initial phone/video interviews might help set apart top candidates and avoid wasting time on in-person interviews with candidates who are not a good match with the requirements. If salary is likely to be an issue, phone interviews are also an opportunity to review the starting rate or range and ensure that it aligns with the candidate's expectations. Consider the format of additional interviews (virtual, in-person, or a mix). Ensure consistency of evaluation of applicants by ensuring uniform formats for each interview stage.

Depending on the position that you are hiring for within your CAC, it might be useful to involve multidisciplinary team (MDT) members in the interviewing process; especially if it is a position that will have direct working relationships with the MDT partners. At what point will these community partners be involved (initial interviews, panel interviews, final interviews, introductions only, etc.)? If you do decide to engage MDT members in the interview process, clarify up front their role in the hiring process. MDT members can provide useful feedback, but the CAC should be the final decision-maker about who to hire, as this is ultimately the employee of the CAC. If you anticipate MDT members would react negatively to a hiring decision that goes against their preference, you may not want to include them. Inclusion or exclusion of the MDT is situation- and job-specific, and you should be thoughtful about the pros and cons in advance.

Are you going to do any type of testing or skill assessment (case analysis and write-up, presentation, mock-MDT facilitation scenario, family dynamics assessment, proofreading, data entry, etc.)? How do you know tests will predict success on the job? Give all candidates "tests" at the same stage and have a formal evaluation tool for the

tests that are administered. Skills testing is one of the best predictors of on-the-job performance, so it's worth the time to include this step. Be mindful of skills tests that discriminate against particular disabilities, and try to build inclusive skills testing that doesn't discriminate against candidates inherently.

Prepare the candidate for success. Provide them with an agenda beforehand and a list of the people with whom they'll be meeting (including job titles) to help ensure a positive candidate experience. Prepare a list of questions ahead of time and ask each candidate the same set of core questions. It is a best and inclusive practice to give at least some of the questions to the candidates in advance. This also helps evaluate how well they prepare. If you choose to do this, provide the questions at a consistent time for each candidate.

Note: *Refer to the Resource: "Interview Questions" later in the toolkit.*

Incorporate questions for applicants that assess their knowledge of child abuse, vicarious trauma, and their awareness and use of coping strategies. Educate applicants about vicarious trauma to ensure they are aware of the potential risks associated with working with victims of trauma. Regardless of an individual's personal experience with trauma, this is a highly recommended part of any CAC job interview process.

Identify which interviewer(s) will discuss the job details – hours, pay, work environment, dress code, workload, professional development expectations, stress level, vicarious trauma, etc. Provide a copy of the job description. Also, share training expectations related to the job, which may relate to the role, professional discipline, or NCA *Standards for Accredited Members*.

The interviewing team needs to discuss ahead of time how they will identify the top candidates. To balance the influence and potential biases of others, have each interviewer complete an evaluation or rating sheet separately before discussing their opinions with others.

If you have several top candidates, consider making a chart that lists the job requirements vs. the candidates. Rate how well each candidate matches

the requirements, then schedule an interview with top candidates if necessary and have them meet more staff members.

While recognizing the importance of diverse backgrounds and experiences, consider assessing how well the candidate's priorities and work style align with the organization's mission, operational and DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) values, and working environment. These factors are just as important to consider as the technical qualifications.

After the Interview Process

Before making an offer, complete reference checks by talking to former supervisors or other professional references the candidate provides.

Develop a standard offer letter template and have the candidate sign receipt of the offer with a copy for their personnel file. List any agreements and contingencies clearly in the letter.

Communicate to the candidate that the offer is contingent on successful results from lawfully conducted and reviewed background checks required by grants, agency policies, and/or insurance. Recommended checks include: criminal background, child abuse registry, social security number verification, and motor vehicle records screens. All checks should be completed and reviewed prior to the employee's start date.

Note: *Consult an attorney or HR expert if you are considering declining someone based on a criminal background check to meet any state guidelines as well as third party-background check requirements of the Fair Credit Reporting Act. Also note that child abuse registry checks are typically separate from criminal background checks and may follow a separate process entirely, per the design of your child protection system in your state.*

The following table is a quick reference checklist of the key steps outlined in the previous section.

Hiring Process Guide—Reminders of Key Steps

Before the Job Posting

☐ Payroll processing is consistent with federal and state laws including deductions, garnishments, timing, reporting to state, etc.

☐ Ensure job description is accurate and reflects what the position will be. (Include necessary information to satisfy grant requirements.)

☐ Develop application requirements, including a standard organizational application and any additional requests (e.g., resume, cover letter).

☐ Develop a job posting or advertisement based on the job description that avoids internal jargon and uses language tailored to market the job to top candidates.

☐ Post the job on all selected job posting and social media platforms. (Broaden the scope of your search to better recruit top candidates who represent the demographics of your community.)

☐ Close the job listing on all sites at the end of the application period.

Screening of Applicants

☐ Organize applications based on a tiered system (e.g., strong, moderate, decline).

☐ Send rejection email or letter to all applicants who will not be considered for interviews. (Do not decline anyone in your "maybe" pile yet though.)

☐ Begin timely communication with candidates for next steps in hiring process.

The Interview Process

☐ Identify staff and MDT partners who will help in the interviewing process (if applicable).

☐ Determine if using any testing tools and when (if applicable).

☐ Prepare interview questions for phone and in-person interviews. (Some questions are aimed around vicarious trauma and applicants' awareness and use of coping strategies as well as the CAC's operational and DEI values.)

☐ Schedule and conduct phone interviews.

☐ Select 3-5 top candidates for in-person (or video) interviews.

☐ Schedule interviews, and at a consistent time prior to the interview, provide each candidate with the primary interview questions and names and titles of interviewers.

☐ Review with the interviewers when they will be involved, what criteria is being used to evaluate candidates, and how the evaluation and decision will be made.

☐ Conduct interviews (initial, panel, final). For key positions, consider a second round of interviews with finalists and provide an opportunity for candidates to meet potential colleagues.

☐ After interviews, obtain individual feedback from interviewers using your evaluation tool or rubric.

☐ Identify top candidate(s).

After the Interview Process

☐ Make the offer contingent on criminal background check, child abuse registry check, and drug screen as well as any other required background checks. Include this in writing in your offer letter. Be sure any decisions based on the results are consistent with current laws (seek legal counsel if there are issues).

☐ Make the final choice, check references, and verify any previous employment or credentials that are essential to the offer.

☐ Make job offer to final candidate. Provide to the candidate a formal written offer letter confirming title, pay, benefits summary, contingencies such as criminal background check, and any other critical details such as work schedule or other agreements (start date, etc.).

☐ Chosen candidate needs to sign receipt of the offer with copy for personnel file.

☐ Send rejection notifications to remaining candidates. You may want to wait until the top candidate has accepted and completed any contingencies.

Interview Questions

RECOMMENDED, NOT RECOMMENDED, AND AVOID COMPLETELY

HUMAN RESOURCES TOOLKIT FOR NONPROFIT CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS

The "Interview Questions" resource section includes a wide variety of interview questions collected from multiple sources. Many of these can be tailored to fit your specific situation. Depending on the stage (e.g., initial screen, finalist), you'll want to pick questions specific to the goal(s) of that particular interview. For shorter interviews (e.g., initial screen), you may want to select 5-10 questions. For longer interviews, you likely want to select 15-20 questions and prioritize essential questions vs. those that may be selected if time allows.

It is important to consider what information you need to obtain from candidates and then identify related questions. How will your questions predict likely success in this role?

Past performance is a good predictor of future performance, so include some questions that ask candidates to describe what they have done in previous roles.

Recommended Questions

Most of these questions go beyond assessing job-specific technical skills and instead focus on how well the candidate's work habits, motivations, interpersonal skills, trauma awareness, and mindset will fit with the CAC collaborative environment.

It can be quite informative to provide at least a partial list of questions ahead of time to each candidate. This is not only an inclusive practice, but it is also a way of assessing how well each candidate prepares for one of their first job "assignments."

General Interest, Personality, and Cultural Fit

1. Why are you interested in this position?

2. What do you like about our organization? (Has the candidate bothered to research your organization?)

3. What strengths do you think you would bring to this position? Where do you think you would need to grow?

4. Why are you seeking a job change?

5. Describe one of the greatest workdays of your life.

6. What's a funny thing that's happened to you at work lately?

7. What's one of the kindest things a coworker has done for you?

8. If you could start your own business, what would the culture be?

9. What's the best working relationship you've had? The worst?

10. What prior experiences have you had with supervisors? What kind of supervision supports your best work?

11. What accomplishments are you most proud of in your current job?

Job-specific Skills for Both Direct and Indirect Services

12. This job requires you to _____ (or to have experience in _____). Give me an example of a project or a case that demonstrates your technical expertise in this area.

13. Describe an issue or case that they may have to deal with and ask how they'd handle it. If they don't volunteer the information, then follow up by asking them if they've had a similar issue in the past and what happened.

14. What is your experience or training in working with interpreters, children with special needs, preschool children, teenagers, etc.?

15. Tell us about one of the more challenging therapy clients you have had recently? What made it challenging?

16. What do you do when you have a client who does not seem to be making progress?

17. Describe one of your most successful work projects that demonstrates your skill as a ___.

18. How would you describe your level of expertise with ____ (name a computer program/application such as Excel)? Give me an example that shows how you used your skills with this software.

Initiative, Innovation, Ability to Influence, and Communications

19. Give me an example of something you've done that was innovative. How did you get the idea? What happened?

20. Describe a time when you sold a new idea to your manager or co-workers.

21. Tell me about a time when you had to introduce an issue at work that you knew would be unpopular. What was the issue? What did you do? What happened as a result?

22. Tell me about a time when you had to go "above and beyond the call of duty" to get a job done.

23. Tell me about a time when you were given some confusing instructions or an unclear task. What did you do to move forward?

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Teamwork

24. What is your approach to understanding the perspectives of coworkers with different backgrounds?

25. Tell me about a time when you had to work on a team that didn't get along well. What happened? What did you do?

26. This job requires working with a multidisciplinary team comprising individuals from different professions (e.g., social work, law enforcement, medical). How would you approach a situation with conflicting legal mandates or organizational priorities within the team?

27. Have you ever had to resolve a conflict with a coworker or peer? What happened?

28. Describe a time when you supported a coworker who needed assistance. What did you do? How did you get involved?

29. Tell me about a time when you worked on a great team.

30. What are some things you do to establish a good rapport with your coworkers?

31. What areas of diversity do you think you have to learn more about and how would you go about doing it?

32. What have you done to further your knowledge or understanding about diversity? How have you applied your learning?

33. This job requires you to work with children and families of different cultural backgrounds. How would you go about approaching each family uniquely?

Time Management and Organizational Skills

34. Sometimes it is necessary to work in rapidly changing or unclear priorities. Describe a time when you have had to work with changing priorities or incomplete information.

35. Describe a time when you were asked to meet an unrealistic deadline.

36. What process do you use to establish priorities? To organize your time? What do you do when things don't go as planned?

37. Tell me about a time when you were up against a huge obstacle to accomplish a task. What did you do to stay motivated and to work through it?

38. Tell me about a project when you had to keep track of a lot of details. How did you handle it?

39. How do you keep your supervisor and/or coworkers informed of the status of your work? Give me an example of a time when it was very important to keep others informed of your progress.

40. Give me an example of a time when you were assigned an uninteresting or boring project.

41. Tell me about a time when you missed a deadline. When did you know that you were going to miss it? What was the impact? Who else was involved?

Customer/Client Service

42. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an upset client, donor, etc. Tell me about a time when that went well and about a time when you wished you had handled it differently.

43. Tell me about a time when you had to communicate some bad news to someone who you knew was going to disagree or be defensive about the news. What happened?

44. What kinds of experiences have you had in relating to people whose backgrounds were different than your own?

Continuous Learning and Change

45. Tell me about the efforts you have made in the last year to learn a new skill on your own. How did you do it? What did you learn? What prompted you to learn it?

46. Tell me about a time when you were asked to take on a new task that required you to learn a new skill. How did you handle it?

47. From time to time we all receive feedback on how we can improve. Tell me about a time when you received critical feedback from a colleague (or a client, etc.). How did you respond to the feedback? What did you do differently as a result?

48. Tell me about a time when you had to implement a change that you did not agree with.

49. How do you stay up-to-date with current trends in your field?

50. What are your go-to resources when you need to learn something new or need some help addressing an issue?

51. What does a growth mindset mean to you, and how does it show up in your life? What are your areas of challenge or the areas where you want to grow?

Handling Stress and Vicarious Trauma

52. Tell me about a work situation that was stressful. What did you do to handle the stress?

53. Tell me about a time when you had an ethical dilemma at work. What did you do?

54. Do you have experience working with child abuse and/or family violence? How does this impact you?

55. This job will require you to work with difficult and sometimes traumatic subject matter. What have you done in past jobs to handle the vicarious trauma and/or stress of this field?

56. How do you know when you're not at your best? What do you need in order to move out of that space?

Leadership Skills, Including in the Areas of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

57. Tell me about a time when you led a successful team. What did you do to help the team succeed?

58. Tell me about a time when you had to lead an effort with your peers or with other departments. What did you do to build consensus?

59. What are two or three of the most important leadership traits? How have you put them into practice in previous positions?

60. Describe a time when you had to coach an employee who was underperforming.

61. How do you determine what to delegate and what to tackle on your own?

62. Tell me about the most difficult person you've had to manage.

63. Tell me about the most successful person you've had to manage.

64. How do you motivate your staff?

65. As a leader, do you think it's better to take risks or to follow the rules?

66. What are some of the things you do to establish your expectations with your staff?

67. What are some things you do to understand and support the diverse needs of your staff?

68. Can you give me an example of something you have done to help your staff feel a sense of inclusion and belonging on your team?

69. Have you ever had to respond to a situation on your team where someone has made a comment that was clearly prejudiced or offensive to others? What did you do?

70. Please tell us about a time when you demonstrated a commitment to equity in the workplace.

71. Tell me about a time when you implemented or advocated for a change with other leaders to make your organization's working environment more inclusive.

72. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are important to the team at ____. Can you describe work you have done to further your knowledge or experience and how you have applied that learning?

Not Recommended/Use with Caution Questions

These questions seldom provide any details about how well candidates will do on the job. For most of these, there are questions in the recommended list that are likely more effective in obtaining useful information.

✕ What are your strengths and weaknesses?

- Depending on why you are asking these, see the *Continuous Learning and Change* section in the recommended list for preferred questions.

✕ What was the last book you read or movie you saw? What's your favorite animal, favorite sports team, restaurant, etc.?

- Questions like these run the risk of bringing in our own preconceptions or bias toward candidates who are "like" us in some personal way – as in, "Oh wow, I love that movie, too!" You might have a fun conversation, but how related is it to the requirements of the work? Other more job-related questions can be helpful in establishing rapport and in finding candidates who share a passion for the mission and the organization's work style. Consider some of the *General Interest, Personality, and Cultural Fit* questions from the recommended list instead.

✕ If I talked to your former supervisor, what would they say?

- Check supervisor and other professional references instead.

✕ How do you define success? Teamwork? Leadership?

- These questions may be useful if you then ask them to give you an example of how they have demonstrated that definition. Or see the questions in the *Leadership Skills* section for more effective questions.

✕ Can you work under pressure? Under stress? In a team? By yourself?

- (Umm…no?!) Avoid yes or no questions like these.

Questions to Avoid Completely

Asking questions in these categories can open up the organization to a claim of discrimination in the interview process, and some states specifically forbid some types of questions related to protected classes or candidate history. If you are inquiring about something that is necessary to perform the job, reframe the question to be specific to the job requirement or function. *Below are examples of some questions to avoid as well as permissible questions that are focused on the job requirement/function. These are samples and not all-inclusive.*

Sex/Marital Status

Do not ask:

- ✕ Are you married?
- ✕ When do you plan to start a family?
- ✕ Do you have children?

Permissible questions, focused on the job requirement/function:

- ✓ Are you available to travel frequently?
- ✓ Can you work overtime with no notice?
- ✓ Can you work evenings and weekends?

Age

Do not ask:

- ✕ When did you graduate?
- ✕ When do you intend to retire?

Permissible question, focused on the job requirement/function:

- ✓ Candidates must be 18 years old. Are you able to meet this requirement?

Disability

Do not ask:

- ✕ Do you have a disability? Can you tell me more about your disability?
- ✕ Have you ever filed a workers' compensation claim?
- ✕ Do you have a history of drug or alcohol abuse?

Permissible questions, focused on the job requirement/function:

☑ After reviewing the job description, "Can you do the duties listed in the job description, with or without accommodation?"

Religion

Do not ask:

☒ What outside activities do you participate in?

☒ What church do you go to?

National Origin/Citizenship/Language

Do not ask:

☒ Are you a citizen of the U.S.?

☒ What country are you from?

☒ Where is your accent from?

☒ What nationality is your last name?

☒ When does your visa expire?

☒ What is your native language?

Permissible question:

☑ If you are hired, are you able to provide documentation to prove that you are eligible to work in the U.S.?

Military

Do not ask:

☒ Please provide the status of your military discharge.

☒ Will you miss work to perform military service?

Orientation & Onboarding

Orientation is how you get an employee up and running at your organization, and onboarding is typically viewed as a longer process over time. An orientation should include meeting staff, learning rules, policies and procedures, and understanding the expectations, norms, and culture of the organization. This "Orientation & Onboarding" resource section provides guidance on setting up effective orientation and onboarding processes.

Consider your onboarding process: Who will be the immediate supervisor for this staff person? Who is responsible to ensure the new hire has what they need for their first week, month, 90 days? Ensure that supportive, respectful, and effective supervision includes open discussion of vicarious trauma, strategies for addressing it, and compliance with relevant policies. Also ensure the employee understands if their position is exempt or non-exempt, per Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and organizational classification. Explain how their employment classification relates to recordkeeping and other organizational policies and/or benefits.

It is a best practice to offer opportunities for feedback from employees on your onboarding process. Especially when trying to increase diversity and inclusion on your team, feedback can be important to ensure an organization isn't hiring for diversity but onboarding for conformity. Organizations can go wrong when they try to hire a more diverse team but have an onboarding process that doesn't honor that diversity and requires new employees to conform to unchecked organizational norms that may be non-inclusive.

Orientation

The following table provides specific tasks for the organization to complete as part of the orientation process so that the new employee feels welcome and can start the process of onboarding and contributing to the organization as soon as possible.

Tasks When Orienting New Employees
☐ Choose a start date with enough notice to prepare for the new hire and on a day when the hiring department has adequate time to welcome the new hire. Plan for who will be responsible for the new hire on their first day.
☐ Inform new hire of expected start time, venue, dress code, and expectations for lunch.
☐ Send out an announcement of the new hire to staff and key stakeholders on or before they arrive.
☐ Prepare first-day paperwork. Involve administrative staff as needed.
☐ Arrange for the workspace, IT equipment, email, badges, etc. to be ready and waiting for them when they arrive.
☐ Prepare a schedule for the first day and preferably first week including: • New hire greeting: Identify who will welcome them upon arrival. • Discussion of priorities for the first week or two and overview of the onboarding process. • Supervisor discussion of communication and office norms and what staff are available to help with questions in addition to the supervisor. • Completion of any payroll and policy paperwork and other administrative tasks.
☐ As part of the first day, assign a staff person to orient the new hire to their workspace. Show them around the office and how to accomplish basic tasks (phone, email, copy machine, restrooms, break room, etc.).

Onboarding

Each new hire should receive an onboarding that is intentional, tailored, and positive. Below is guidance for supervisors on creating a successful onboarding experience. The first week of an individual's employment should be thoroughly scheduled, including priority topics, at least three check-ins with a supervisor, and time for reflection/learning integration. The first month of an individual's employment should be intentionally directed by the supervisor, with clear learning goals for each week.

Role and Job Duties

Everyone's role is different, so orientation about role and job duties is unique. Try to think of what the person needs to know to do their job successfully.

- **Goals:** Each new hire should receive 3-5 goals for the initial 90 days of employment. These should be individual- and job-specific.

- **Relationships:** Are there relationships that need to be established? The supervisor should create warm hand-offs for these meetings.

- **Job description:** The job description should be covered with the individual, with plenty of opportunities for questions and feedback.

Other Staff Roles

The individual being oriented needs basic knowledge of all parts of the CAC. Opportunities to learn from individuals about other staff roles inside the CAC should be prioritized through conversations or shadowing.

Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)

If the job role will interface with the MDT, the individual should be introduced to team members with whom they will engage. If the individual will attend case review meetings, there should be a thorough orientation to the structure of the meetings, expectations of attendees, and the role of the CAC at these meetings. In general, it is highly recommended that CACs develop a process for MDT onboarding for all members. If this exists, use the process that has been established. If it does not exist, consider creating one. All CACs are required to orient new members of the MDT per the

NCA *Standards for Accredited Members*, including orientation to the CAC/MDT process, policies and procedures, and code of conduct.

Systems

Depending on the individual's role, they need to have varying depths of knowledge about systems used. Some areas to consider:

- Payroll

- Financials

    - Invoicing processes

- Travel policies and procedures

- Use of various software systems

- Communication preferences (internal, external)

    - Ensure they are added to appropriate email distribution lists.

- Project management

- Timekeeping

- Supervisors should discuss how they want their staff to submit leave requests.

    - Supervisors should give clear direction on which job codes to use and for what activities.

- Organizational calendaring

- Data entry/records of work

- File storage

- Standing meetings and their purpose

- One-on-one supervision meetings, purpose, structure. (Schedule ongoing meetings at a minimum every other week, but more regular meetings are recommended initially.)

Children's Advocacy Center Movement

Many individuals are drawn to working at CACs because of the mission of the organization. New hires come with differing levels of knowledge about and experience in the CAC movement. We recommend the following foundational concepts be understood by all. If a new hire doesn't come with this knowledge, it should be covered in the orientation, which will take place over several weeks:
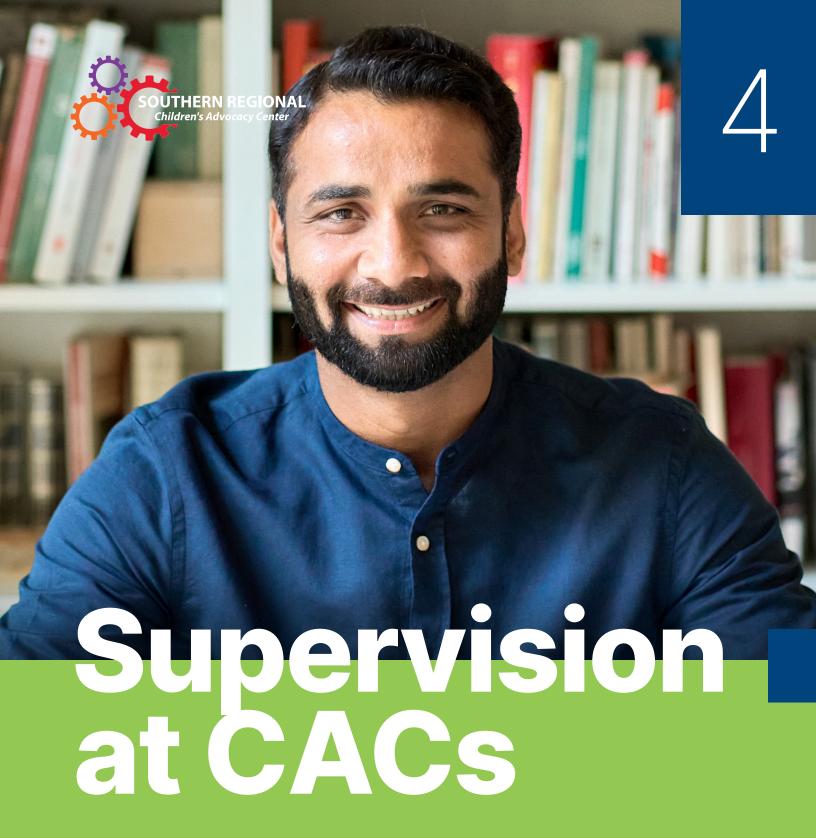
- Goals, design of the CAC model

- History of the CAC movement

- Role of the National Children's Alliance, including *Standards for Accredited Members*

- Role of Regional CACs, Chapters, and other training and technical assistance providers for CACs

Child Trauma and Secondary Trauma

All CAC staff need a baseline knowledge of child trauma, child sexual abuse, and the impact on professions working in high trauma–exposed workplaces. Below are some resources that can provide a baseline knowledge of child trauma.

- Child Victim Web: http://cv.musc.edu/

- National Child Traumatic Stress: https://www.nctsn.org/

- Trauma Types: https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types

- Sexual Abuse: https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/sexual-abuse

- Secondary Traumatic Stress:

  - *Reflect, Refuel, Reset*: https://www.srcac.org/reflect-refuel-reset/

  - *Beyond the Cliff,* Laura van Dernoot Lipsky: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOzDGrcvmus

  - TEND Academy: https://www.tendacademy.ca/

    - https://www.tendacademy.ca/videos/

Supervision at CACs

"Supervision at CACs" is a resource for CACs to use as they consider their organization's structure and establish expectations for supervision of staff. A good supervision structure is essential for staff retention. Supervision meetings should be at regularly scheduled intervals, and supervision meetings should have established structures to ensure effective use of the time. An example might be maintaining a shared agenda where both the supervisor and supervisee can add topics for discussion. Another example is creating a standing agenda structure.

CACs should include and cultivate several functions of supervision (see below for those functions), each requiring different competencies. Because the skills required in supervision are so varied, investment in the professional development of supervisors is highly recommended. Often, all supervisory duties are fulfilled by one individual, but CACs can also create supervision structures that engage an additional individual for a particular function. The most common example of this is clinical supervision, where a staff member receives clinical supervision by an individual with professional expertise that the main supervisor does not have.

Functions of Supervision

Administrative Supervision

Administrative supervision ensures that managerial procedures are completed and follow agency policies.

Examples include:

- Approve timesheets.
- Approve leave requests.
- Conduct performance discussions.
- Initiate remote work agreements, if applicable.
- Ensure proper use of departmental systems.

Task Supervision

Task supervision aims to track workloads, ensure that priorities are clear for the supervisee, and ensure assigned work meets expectations.

Examples include:

- Analyze what is on the supervisee's to-do list, discuss any challenges they have in completing assignments, and clarify priorities.
- Check in to ensure the workload is manageable for the week/month.

Supportive Supervision

Supportive supervision provides needed support to staff.

Examples include:

- Provide opportunities for professional growth and development. All staff should have professional goals they are working on. This might include increasing time management skills, learning a new technology, taking a project management course, or any other skills or knowledge that improves the individual's ability to perform their job.
- Create a safe space for staff to process work-related issues. This might include an opportunity to process a complex project or interaction with a colleague.
- Understand and address secondary trauma exposure. All staff at CACs will have some exposure to trauma, but the amount of exposure varies from position to position. Supportive supervision should create space for employees to reflect on how exposure to child trauma impacts them. Supervisors should also know the signs and symptoms of secondary trauma and be prepared to discuss symptoms staff might be experiencing.

Clinical or Skills-based Supervision

Clinical supervision provides ongoing support and mentoring of specific roles at a CAC, such as forensic interviewers and mental health clinicians, so that these professionals can further develop their skills. All staff at a CAC need skills-based supervision. For example, you may have a staff member who does prevention education, and they need support to develop their public speaking and facilitation skills. Clinical or skills-based supervision requires someone who has expertise in the discipline or competencies required in the role.

Samples

STANDARD HUMAN RESOURCE DOCUMENT TEMPLATES

The "Samples" resource section features sample standard human resources document templates that you can adapt to your CAC.

Sample Application for Employment

Along with your resume and cover letter, please submit the following application form.

Personal Information:

Are you legally eligible to be employed in the United States? (Proof of identity and eligibility will be required upon employment.)

Are you at least 18 years or older? (If no, you may be required to provide authorization to work.)

Have you ever worked for this organization before?

If yes, please provide details (Where/When/Job Title):

Employment Desired:

When would you be available to begin work?

Type of employment desired (full-time, part-time, seasonal):

Hourly rate/salary desired:

Are you currently employed? If so, may we inquire of your present employer?

If presently employed, why are you considering leaving?

Education:

Give record of all High Schools, Colleges, Universities, and Vocational/Technical Schools you have attended.

School Name and Location	Did You Graduate?	Degree Received	Subjects Studied/Major

If you have completed any special courses, seminars, and/or training that would help you perform the position for which you are applying, please describe:

Employment History:

Give your full employment record, starting with your current or most recent employment.

EMPLOYER 1:

Dates Employed:

Employer Name and Address:

Employer Phone:

Job Title:

Supervisor Name and Title:

May We Contact?

Responsibilities:

Reason for Leaving:

[Salary questions are best made an optional field and must conform with state laws.]

Salary/Hourly Rate (Start):   Salary/Hourly Rate (End):

EMPLOYER 2:

Dates Employed:

Employer Name and Address:

Employer Phone:

Job Title:

Supervisor Name and Title:

May We Contact?

Responsibilities:

Reason for Leaving:

[Salary questions are best made an optional field and must conform with state laws.]

Salary/Hourly Rate (Start):   Salary/Hourly Rate (End):

EMPLOYER 3:

Dates Employed:

Employer Name and Address:

Employer Phone:

Job Title:

Supervisor Name and Title:

May We Contact?

Responsibilities:

Reason for Leaving:

[Salary questions are best made an optional field and must conform with state laws.]

Salary/Hourly Rate (Start):   Salary/Hourly Rate (End):

Authorization:

The facts set forth in this application and any supplemental information are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that, if employed, falsified statements on this application shall be considered sufficient cause for immediate discharge. I hereby authorize investigation of all statements contained herein and employers listed above to give you any and all information concerning my employment, and any pertinent information they may have, and release all parties from all liability for any damage that may result from furnishing same. I understand that neither the completion of this application nor any other part of my consideration for employment establishes any obligation for the company to hire me. If I am hired, I understand that either the company or I can terminate my employment at any time and for any reason, with or without cause and without prior notice. I understand that no representative of the company has the authority to make any assurance to the contrary. I understand that I am required to abide by all rules and regulations of the company.

Signature:

Date:

Sample Job Offer Letter

[Date]

Jane Doe
111 Creekside Ct.
Anyplace, State 11111

Dear Jane:

We are pleased to offer you the full-time position of [job title] at [organization]. The [frequency, e.g., bi-weekly, hourly] rate of this position is $[xx].

The [organization] currently offers [list benefits]. Some of these benefits start immediately, and some have a waiting period. More details including premiums and coverage are available if you are interested. New employees earn [enter leave types and accrual frequency]. [If consistent with organizational policies, include the following sentence or modify.] This time is accrued but not credited to your account until you have completed your three-month introductory period. Please see the attached summary for highlights of benefits. Full details will be provided during orientation.

This offer is contingent upon successful completion of the required [enter pre-employment requirements]. [Only if state is at-will] In addition, nothing in this letter or any other policy or communication changes the fact that employment is at-will for an indefinite period unless terminated at any time by you or [organization].

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. We are looking forward to you joining our team.

Sincerely,

[Offeror name]
[Title]

I have reviewed the attached job description and affirm I am able to meet the job requirements. I accept this offer:

_____   _____
Name   Date

Sample Rejection Letter – After Interview

Dear [applicant name],

We interviewed several candidates for [job title or position], and we've decided to move forward with another candidate.

Although your interview demonstrated your credentials and experience well, [reason for rejection]. Thank you so much for your interest in joining [your organization's name] and taking the time to meet our interview team. If you qualify in the future, please feel free to apply for other open positions with our organization.

We wish you the best of luck with your job search. Once again, thank you for your interest in our organization.

Regards,
[Your first and last name]
[Your job title or position]

Sample Rejection Letter – No Interview

Dear [applicant name],

Thank you for your application for the [job position or title] at [your organization's name]. We really appreciate your interest in joining our organization, and we're pleased that you decided to invest time and effort in applying for one of our positions.

We carefully reviewed many applications; unfortunately, at this time we won't be able to invite you to the next stage of the hiring process.

However, we hope you'll apply again in the future if you see a job opening suited to your qualifications.

We wish you much success in your future endeavors.

Once again, thank you for your interest in working for our organization.

Sincerely,
[Your first and last name]
[Your job title or position]

Sample Job Description Format

(Note: A job description is for internal use and is more detailed than a job posting, which is the document that is used to advertise an opening. For a job posting, start with your job description and tailor your information toward an outside audience. Use a general job title and describe what a typical day or week looks like. You may also want to include a brief description of your organization and your working environment.)

Title: [Job title]

Employment Classification: [Exempt or non-exempt]

Supervisor: [Supervisor job title]

Location: [Where work is performed]

Description: [Enter general overview of job.]

Responsibilities:

• [Enter bulleted list of key responsibilities for job.]

• Other reasonable duties, as assigned

Requirements: [May also include preferences; do not list something as required if it is possible for someone to be successful without it.]

• [Educational requirements]

• [Experience requirements]

• [Certifications or licensure requirements]

• [Skill requirements, such as regular attendance or ability to work well with others]

Physical Requirements:

[Describe physical requirements, if any, to perform the job with or without reasonable accommodations; for example, prolonged periods of working at a computer or ability to travel out of town one week per month.]

SOUTHERN REGIONAL
Children's Advocacy Center

210 Pratt Avenue, NE, Huntsville, AL 35801

1-800-747-8122