



**Personnel Services and
Human Resources Development**

REFERENCE CHECK GUIDELINES

Factors to consider before checking references:

- All questions should be job related. It is illegal to ask questions of the person providing the reference that cannot legally be asked of applicants.
- References should be asked the same set of questions. It is often beneficial to ask references to respond to specific questions via letters of reference.

Factors to consider while checking references:

- Identify yourself immediately, explain your position with YCCD, and tell the person why you are calling about the candidate.
- Ask whether he/she is free to respond to reference questions at this time.
- Assure the contact that any discussion you have will be held in confidence.
- Try to establish rapport with the person you are calling. Many times an open exchange of information comes about when the individual you are calling identifies with your organization, and/or your position.
- Describe the position for which the candidate is being considered. A better evaluation can be determined if made in a relation to a specific job.
- Let the person talk freely in answering for as long as he/she wishes without interruption. An interruption could shut off further information.
- Follow up and probe when you feel the reference is reluctant to discuss certain factors. An explanation of why you are asking a specific question could elicit the information you want.
- Be alert for obvious pauses in answering when you ask questions: often these are a sign that further questioning may bring additional information you may not have otherwise received.
- Do not hang up until you are sure that you are clear about the opinion of the person contacted. Ambiguous answers are common. The person called may provide very little useful information. One technique that often works is to summarize the conversation by making either of the following statements: "I take it that you do not recommend the candidate for the position?" or "I take it that you highly recommend the candidate for the position?" Sometimes one or the other of these summary statements evokes the responses you need.
- Be sure to thank your contact for his/her help.

(Over)



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**REFERENCE CHECKS
SAMPLE QUESTIONS/FORM**

Position Title _____

Applicant Name _____

Reference Contact – Name, Company, and Title _____
Supervisor ___ Yes ___ No

Sample Questions – choose any questions which will assist in your review, add or remove as applicable to the position or pose your own. For further information contact your HR Analyst.

In what capacity and how long have you been associated with _____?

Describe what it has been like (was like) to supervise _____.

Have you had occasion to witness _____ teaming skills? Describe.

What unique talent/skill has _____ brought to your organization?

Explain how _____ deals with multiple deadlines/projects?

Describe how _____ handles stressful situations?

Have there been any performance issues with _____ during the time he/she reported to you?

Describe _____ performance related to reliability?

Describe how _____ handles constructive criticism and feedback?

Based on the way I've described this position, please tell us how you would assess _____ ability to perform in this position?

Would you describe _____ as primarily aggressive, assertive, or passive in dealing with important issues?

Describe _____ performance as it relates to being results-oriented.

Describe _____ communication skills, both written and oral.

What one thing about _____ experience, skills and work style would you change if you could?

What one thing about _____ experience, skills and work style would you not change?

Describe what you know or have observed about _____ knowledge of, experience in or appreciation/interest for diversity and working in a multicultural environment.

Would you rehire _____? Why or why not?

Interviewer's Signature _____ **Date** _____

2/2/2007