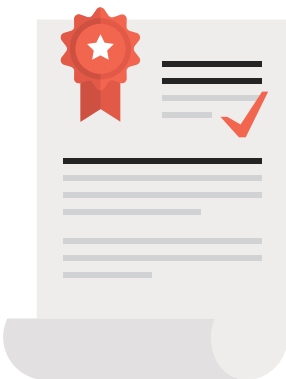




## 10 Steps to Acing an Employment Interview

As executive recruiters, the staff at GovHR have had the opportunity to observe thousands of interviews. They've provided us with a list of tips to help you avoid making some of the most common missteps they see.

📄 Find a handy PDF of these tips, along with GovHR's *Top 10 Tips for Developing a Resume* and GFOA's employment agreement template at [gfoa.org/employment-resources](https://gfoa.org/employment-resources).



### 1

#### **Make a good initial impression.**

Smile when entering the room. Make eye contact. Shake hands with every interviewer.

### 2

#### **Watch your appearance.**

Project a professional image. Wear a suit that fits you well. Be aware of any nervous habits you have that may creep into an interview like shaking your leg under the table, saying “um” frequently, or turning red. For habits you can't fully control, you might be able to minimize them by working on it beforehand.

### 3

#### **Don't use dated language.**

Don't say “girls in the office” or anything else that indicates you might not be current with appropriate professional conversation.

### 4

#### **Always answer the question.**

Answer directly, give an example to support your answer, and conclude. If you have to ask if you answered the question, you probably haven't. If you're unsure, you could say, “Can I provide you with another example?”

### 5

**Stay on point.** Strike a balance between being succinct and getting your story out. If the recruiter or interviewer brings up time constraints and the need to focus your answers, take heed. You can still salvage the interview if you adjust going forward.

### 6

#### **Convey your accomplishments.**

Write down a few key points that you want to make. If you don't have the opportunity to make all of your points, ask for a chance at the end of the interview to make a brief closing comment.

### 7

**Prepare!** Do your research on the community and organization. Read website materials and include some of your observations in your answers. Practice answering questions you think might be asked. Also, make sure your social media presence is what employers will find acceptable—more and more candidates are not advancing because of social media missteps.

### 8

**Don't say “retire.”** Do not say this word in an interview if at all possible. Indicating that you are interested in a job because you want to retire in that area makes an interviewer worry that they will pay for relocation and get you up to speed, only to have you retire in a year or so.

### 9

#### **Ask thoughtful questions.**

If you're given the opportunity to ask one or two questions, do so. If you are not given the opportunity, ask the interviewers if you can ask a question. Be sure your questions reflect research you've done on the organization.

### 10

#### **Show your passion for the position and for public service.**

Smile, lean forward with your forearms on the table, and engage the group with your answers.