



Florida Association of City Clerks Fall Academy 2026 – Palmetto



The People Side of Work: Handling Personnel Issues with Confidence

with Anne Schroeder – Fort Myers

People issues are often the most challenging part of a supervisor's job—but they don't have to be the most stressful. This engaging session provides practical guidance for navigating the everyday personnel situations from legal interview questions, hiring the right person the first time, to proper documentation and maintaining professional boundaries. You will learn how to make sound decisions that support team members and the municipality.

What We Will Cover:

- A. Clear job descriptions with required competencies, skills, and tasks
- B. Cultural alignment and compliance with state employment laws
- C. Interview questions: legal and illegal and why
- D. Behavioral interviewing process to make objective decisions
- E. Candidate answers that are red flags in an interview
- F. 10-second rule and how it might add to confirmation bias



Special Note: This course is not legal advice.

Quote for the Day:

“An interview is not an interrogation; it's a conversation. But it's a conversation you must prepare for.” — Anonymous



How can you develop more confidence on the job with Human Resources issues?

Core Competencies for FL City Clerk and Assistant City Clerk

A City Clerk in Florida is expected to master core competencies spanning legal compliance, records management, meeting administration, and public relations.

Key Legal & Compliance Competencies

- **Florida Sunshine Law:** Deep knowledge of Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine Law (Chapter 286, F.S.) regarding public meetings and notice requirements.
- **Public Records Act:** Expertise in Chapter 119, F.S., managing public records requests, retention schedules, and confidential exemptions.
- **Municipal Elections:** Ability to administer and supervise municipal elections according to Florida Statutes and local charters.
- **Statutory Execution:** Skill in attesting and recording municipal ordinances, resolutions, deeds, and contracts, alongside administering official oaths.

Administrative & Technical Competencies

- **Agenda & Meeting Management:** Proficiency in preparing public meeting agendas and drafting accurate, concise official minutes.
- **Records Technology:** Competence with electronic document management systems and specialized legislative software (e.g., Granicus/Legistar).
- **Financial Administration:** Capability to develop, administer, and monitor departmental or city council budgets.

Professional Soft Skills & Interpersonal Competencies

- **Neutral Professionalism:** Exhibiting absolute impartiality and political neutrality when supporting the city council, administration, and public.
- **Discretion:** Managing highly confidential and sensitive legal or personnel information with integrity.
- **Communication:** Clear verbal and written communication to explain complex local laws and procedures to citizens and officials.

Professional Certifications in Florida

- **CMC & MMC:** Certifications through the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC), often coordinated via the Florida Association of City Clerks (FACC) and Florida State University's Institute of Government.
- **FCPC:** The Florida Certified Professional Clerk program, which emphasizes state-specific local government strategies and operational effectiveness.

Below are examples of questions that have been asked in many interviews. Indicate the legality of these questions by checking “Yes” or “No.”

Yes No

- | | | |
|-----|-----|---|
| ___ | ___ | 1. Are you over 18 years of age? |
| ___ | ___ | 2. This job requires quick reaction time. Are you willing to take a reaction time test? |
| ___ | ___ | 3. We need someone in this position who is willing to make a long-term commitment. How far from 65 are you? |
| ___ | ___ | 4. Have you had any recent or past illnesses that might in any way hinder your ability to do the job? |
| ___ | ___ | 5. Do you have any physical disabilities? |
| ___ | ___ | 6. Did you grow up speaking another language? |
| ___ | ___ | 7. What foreign languages do you read, write or speak fluently that will assist you in this job? |
| ___ | ___ | 8. Have you ever been in trouble with the law? |
| ___ | ___ | 9. Your name sounds like a good old American name; is it? |
| ___ | ___ | 10. Where do you go to church? |
| ___ | ___ | 11. What clubs or groups do you belong to outside work? |
| ___ | ___ | 12. What child-care plans have you made? |
| ___ | ___ | 13. How old are your children? |
| ___ | ___ | 14. Will your spouse mind you working the evening shift? |
| ___ | ___ | 15. Are you married? |
| ___ | ___ | 16. What kind of job does your spouse have; does (s)he travel much? |

Behavioral and Situational Interviewing

Behavioral and situational interview questions are designed to provide insight and information into the candidate’s previous experience, skills, and attitudes regarding workplace performance. Excellent questions also open a window into the candidate’s thought process. Does he/she present answers in a logical, sequential manner, or does the thinking appear disjointed? The interview team can now hear the words and the music — the **content** of the answers and **how** the answers are delivered.

Interview Formula

A _____

W _____

M _____

Competency Focused Questions

In the chart below list 3 – 4 essential competencies for successful job performance. Then construct a behavioral or situational question for at least one competency below.

Desired Competency	Competency-based Question

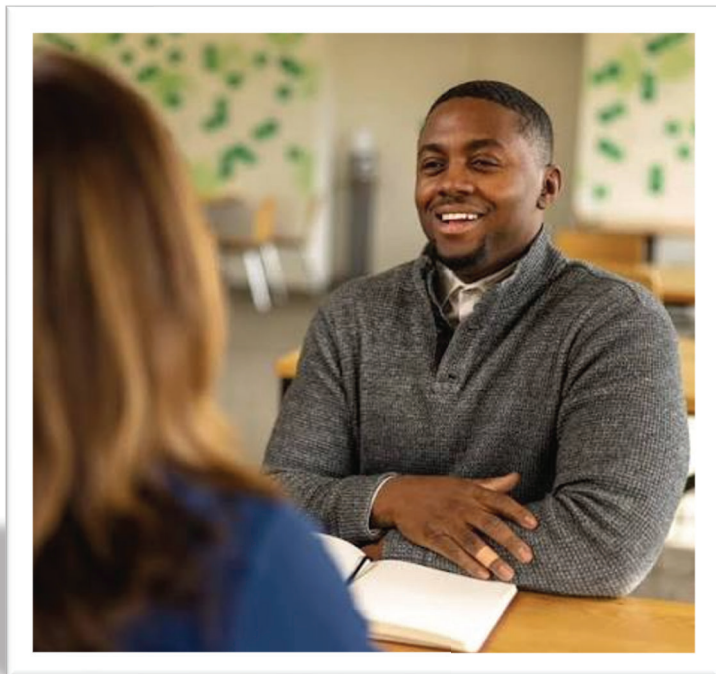
Remember the Competencies: (from page 2)

- Key Legal & Compliance Competencies
- Administrative & Technical Competencies
- Professional Soft Skills & Interpersonal Competencies
- Professional Certifications in Florida



Behavioral & Situational Anchors

- Describe a time when...
- How did you approach...
- Give me an example...
- Tell me about a time when ...
- Describe a situation in which ...
- Cite an example when ...
- Take me step-by-step through ...
- How have you handled...
- What were the circumstances...
- How did you react...
- What would you do if ...
- What did you do then? (Probing)





Power Verbs for Interview Questions, Goals, Action Plans

Achieve	Direct	Interpret	Recommend
Acquire	Distribute	Interview	Reconcile
Adjust	Draft	Investigate	Record
Administer	Edit	Invent	Recruit
Advertise	Educate	Issue	Rectify
Advise	Encourage	Lead	Re-design
Affect	Enlarge	List	Relate
Analyze	Enlist	Maintain	Renew
Apply	Establish	Manage	Report
Approach	Estimate	Manipulate	Represent
Approve	Evaluate	Market	Research
Arrange	Examine	Mediate	Resolve
Assemble	Exchange	Merchandise	Review
Assess	Execute	Moderate	Revise
Assign	Expand	Modify	Scan
Assist	Expedite	Monitor	Schedule
Attain	Facilitate	Motivate	Screen
Audit	Familiarize	Name	Select
Budget	Forecast	Negotiate	Serve
Build	Formulate	Notify	Speak
Calculate	Fund raise	Obtain	Specify
Catalog	Generate	Operate	Staff
Chair	Govern	Organize	Standardize
Check	Guide	Originate	Stimulate
Clarify	Handle	Participate	Summarize
Collaborate	Hire	Perceive	Supervise
Collect	Identify	Perform	Survey
Communicate	Implement	Persuade	Synthesize
Compile	Improve	Plan	Systematize
Conduct	Increase	Prepare	Teach
Coordinate	Index	Present	Team build
Create	Influence	Preside	Train
Decide	Inform	Problem solve	Transmit
Define	Initiate	Process	Update
Delegate	Innovate	Produce	Utilize
Demonstrate	Inspect	Promote	Write
Design	Install	Propose	
Determine	Institute	Provide	

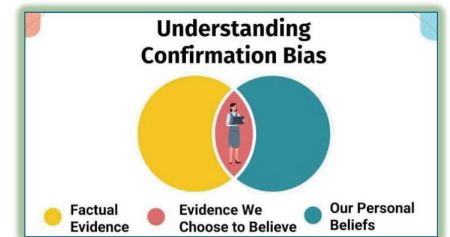


Red Flags During Interviews

- **Badmouthing Employers:** Blaming past supervisors or coworkers for every career problem shows a lack of accountability.
- **Lack of Preparation:** Knowing nothing about the municipality or position.
- **Apathy or Rudeness:** Treating the interviewers or other team members poorly reveals a toxic attitude.
- **Dishonesty:** Getting caught in untruths about past work, skills, or employment dates.
- **Poor Communication:** Interrupting the interviewer or failing to answer the question asked.
- **No Questions:** Having no questions at the end can mean the candidate lacks curiosity or engagement.
- **Inability to Give Examples:** Giving vague answers instead of real stories shows a lack of experience.

10-Second Rule and Confirmation Bias

The **10-second rule in job interviews** refers to the psychological phenomenon where an interviewer forms a definitive first impression within the first 10 seconds of meeting a candidate. This rapid, subconscious judgment triggers **confirmation bias**, a cognitive flaw where the interviewer spends the rest of the interview looking for evidence to **support** their initial impression while ignoring data that contradicts it.



Here's how these two concepts interact to shape—and sometimes distort—the hiring process:

1. The 10-Second Rule (The Trigger)

Within the first moments of an interview, human brains naturally categorize people to assess safety, competence, and rapport. Interviewers subconsciously evaluate non-verbal cues before a candidate even answers the first question:

- **Visual Cues:** Attire, grooming, posture, and facial expressions.
- **Behavioral Cues:** The firmness of a handshake, eye contact, and punctuality.
- **Vocal Cues:** Tone of voice, speech rate, and initial greetings.

2. Confirmation Bias (The Filter)

Once that 10-second impression is locked in, confirmation bias acts as a filter for everything that follows. It splits the interview into two distinct, unfair paths: the interviewer wants the candidate to succeed, or the interviewer wants to find flaws. With someone you know, professional boundaries are vital.

How do we combat this?

And finally ... Jot down one or two ideas, or reminders, you gained today that are takeaways.
