Sample Reference Questions

The questions below are intended to serve as a guide and may be modified to meet the needs of the position. As a courtesy, provide candidates with advance notice that their references will be contacted.

When conducting reference checks, whether for an internal employee or external applicant, follow these guidelines:

- Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the call.
- Confirm that it is a convenient time to speak.
- Briefly describe the position and its primary responsibilities.
- Confirm the reference's professional relationship with the candidate.
- Ask only questions that are directly related to the position and the candidate's ability to perform its essential duties.
- Ask the same core questions of all final candidates and evaluate the information consistently and objectively.
- Document responses accurately and avoid making assumptions based on information that is not job-related.

SAMPLE REFERENCE CHECK QUESTIONS

Candidate's Name: _____

Reference's Name and Title: _____

Organization: _____

Professional Relationship to Candidate: _____

Date: _____

1. What is your professional relationship with the candidate, and how long have you worked together?
2. Can you confirm the candidate's dates of employment, job title, and primary responsibilities?
3. How would you describe the candidate's overall work performance?
4. What would you identify as the candidate's greatest strengths?
5. What areas of development would you recommend for the candidate?
6. How does the candidate work with coworkers, supervisors, and others?
7. How does the candidate respond to feedback and direction?
8. How would you describe the candidate's dependability, attendance, and ability to meet deadlines?

9. How does the candidate handle conflict or challenging situations?
10. How does the candidate perform under pressure or when managing competing priorities?
11. If the position involves supervising employees: How would you describe the candidate's supervisory or management style?
12. Based on what I have described about this position and its responsibilities, do you believe the candidate would be successful in the role? Why or why not?
13. Is there anything else you believe would be helpful for us to know as we consider the candidate for this position?
14. Would you rehire the candidate? Why or why not?

Reference Check Completed By: _____

Date: _____