

Guidance on Conducting the Ministry Partner Interview

(Required under LUMC SS Policy, para. II.B.1)

Interviews are an extremely important step in the screening process. Most forms don't allow people to share some of the special stories that give wonderful insight into who they are, so they cannot substitute for the personal discussion. In our church setting, discussions with someone who would like to serve God as part of the Church's mission to be the hands and feet of Jesus as we share God's light in the world, allows us the blessing and privilege of helping them find a role in ministry to do just that. Although the interview is required, it does not have to be a sterile interaction like those designed to weed out job candidates. Instead, it can be a celebration of who each potential ministry partner is and how God is working in their lives.

We do, also, have the important responsibility of assessing that person's capacity and suitability for safely working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, which can be accomplished in the framework of such a conversation. Asking appropriately designed questions to help in that assessment does not have to be an accusatory process, but instead be framed as genuine interest in that person's experience and ideas on how to handle different situations that can come up in ministering to the most vulnerable among our congregation.

The purpose of the interview includes:

- Getting to know the potential ministry partner's interests, strengths, special qualifications, and to identify any issues that may impact the volunteer's ability to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults
- Clarifying any questions you may have about information on the application or after reference checks

Ideally, this interview will be conducted by the staff member under whose ministries the volunteer's position would fall.

Usually, this interview would be conducted after receiving the completed interest form, however it may be conducted (in part or whole) prior to the volunteer filling out and submitting the required ministry partner interest form.

If conducted prior to receiving the interest form, before the interview is over, use this opportunity to explain the Safe Sanctuaries process for becoming a ministry partner with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

- Provide a copy of any position descriptions for which the volunteer may be interested
- Provide a copy of the ministry partner interest form and discuss how best to return them to you after they are completed.
- After reviewing the completed interest form and reference checks, it may be appropriate to follow up on the initial interview.

Tips for Interviewing:

- Make the environment comfortable for the applicant
- Provide an opportunity for the applicant to ask you questions about the position or opportunities to serve in ministry
- Be ready to describe the screening process for the applicant and to provide all materials necessary to begin the process if they have not already done so
- Take notes that will help you summarize whether the applicant is a good fit for ministry with children, youth, or vulnerable adults

- It is appropriate to explore faith-based questions with volunteers who wish to serve in ministry. Questions such as “How does faith play a role in your life?” or “How have you seen God at work in your teaching?” provide helpful insight regarding a person’s faith journey and what role they might best serve in your ministry.
- Think about what might help you as the ministry supervisor to aid this person to thrive in ministry over time, and include questions (based on what they might be doing) such as “What makes you feel appreciated?” “Do you prefer to work independently or collaboratively?” “What challenges to volunteering do you anticipate? How can we help?” (for example child care)
- If you have any questions based on information provided during reference checks, be prepared to follow-up in a way that protects the confidentiality of the reference.
- Ask yourself the following question before the end of the interview:

Do I have any concerns about the applicant’s attitudes towards children, youth, or vulnerable adults, or general values that do not fit with serving in ministries for children, youth or vulnerable adults? If so, leave the door open for a follow-up conversation in the future.

Each interview needs to be tailored to the person and for the position, and will naturally include spontaneous questions that follow the give and take of the conversation. However, if you would like to see an example of past questions asked of long-time volunteers being screened to come into compliance with the 2016 Conference Minimum Standards requirements (which were not grandfathered for volunteers already in place), please [click here](#).

The Safe Sanctuaries Team will be glad to walk through any of these requirements or serve as a sounding board to help you in any way throughout this screening process. Thank you, on behalf of LUMC for your essential work in ensuring the physical and emotional safety and spiritual growth of all participants in our ministries!