**ED Candidate Review Matrix – User Guide**

**What is a Candidate Review Matrix?** A candidate review matrix is a tool that helps to facilitate equitable applicant assessment and interview practices. It highlights key skills and competencies to provide consistent focus on priority areas throughout the recruitment process.

This helps us to assess each candidate fairly and avoid contrast error, design bias and bonus bias.

* **Contrast error** occurs when comparing candidates to one another other rather comparing candidates to the job description. This can lead to a disproportionate emphasis on competencies or talents that aren’t necessary for success in the role.
* **Design bias** shows up when we are "wowed" by a visually appealing resume and cover letter. Particularly well-designed resumes can unconsciously lead us to assume an applicant is more professional or creative when this might not be the case.
* **Bonus bias** occurs when we favorably assess an applicant due to impressive strengths or qualifications they possess that aren’t needed for success in the role.

**What is included in a Candidate Review Matrix?**

1. **GOTR Leadership Competencies:** Column A lists the 13 task-focused and people-focused GOTR Leadership Competencies identified through ED surveys as critical in building sustainable and healthy councils as well as an additional section focused on strategic planning. Hiring teams are encouraged to review these competencies alongside their strategic plans to identify 4-5 primary competencies that will be essential strengths in their next ED in order to advance the council's goals and mission. Centering these attributes as the root for subsequent reviews and conversations keeps the hiring process focused on what matters most to the success of the organization.
2. **Candidate Review:** The candidate review section adds color to each of the listed competencies, including experiences, attributes and behaviors that represent each. These are a few (but not all!) of the ways the core competencies will show up in experience on a resume or answers in an interview.
3. **Initial Interview Questions:** Focusing even initial interview questions on important and specific skills makes the process more meaningful for candidates and more efficient for your hiring team. Do your best to steer clear of classic interview questions and instead develop questions that are phrased and focused to be reflective of your team’s authentic culture. Below are a few examples of typical interview questions and ways to evolve the focus to be more specific and in-depth:

* What are your biggest strengths and weaknesses?
  + Tell us about one of your biggest strengths. How do you leverage that to advance inclusion, diversity, equity and access?
  + When you reflect on the skills needed to be successful in this role, which area do you feel is one where you would need the most support and growth? How do you ask for help and support when you need it?
* Tell me about a difficult situation at work.
  + One of our core values is finding strength in our connectedness, so when challenges arise at our council, we pull on support from each other to navigate it. Can you tell us about a difficult situation at work and how the support of others and/or your support of others made an impact?
  + Please share an example that highlights your ability to navigate challenging situations with intentionality.

Pro tip! Early in the conversation, center the candidate’s wants and needs – ask questions about what the candidate is looking for in their next opportunity and what they value in a work team. Reference specifics from their application when framing questions and make note of the questions they ask in the interview so you can follow up after. The more seen, heard and respected a candidate feels, the more comfortable they will be opening up and giving us an opportunity to understand how their unique qualities would come to life in this role.

1. **Second Interview Questions:** As the interview process progresses, our questions evolve to include a combination of relevant past experiences (“Tell us about a time when...”) and future forecasts of how a candidate would respond to current and future tasks at the council. At this stage, we also dig deeper into more complex attributes of Girls on the Run leaders like vulnerability, bravery, and humility.
2. **Prompts/Activities:** Craft questions and activities that allow candidates to experience how their strengths and skills would be used in the role day-to-day. Ask them how they would approach an upcoming project or to provide feedback on a draft of something your team is currently working on. Creating contextual experiences for candidates and inviting feedback embodies our organizational culture of collaboration and gives candidates an opportunity to walk in on “day one” with ideas to contribute. When possible, consider sending questions or materials in advance so candidates can provide a comprehensive response.

Note about Activities: When crafting prompts and activities, be mindful of the time and creative energy required of your candidates. Activities should be specific, have clear expectations and should not take longer than one hour for a candidate to complete. Provide the candidate with all data necessary to complete the activity and give them a choice in the way they would like to share their information. If a prompt or activity is in-depth, consider compensating the candidates for their time and energy.

Maintaining focus on key competencies at every stage - from initial review to final interview – makes the hiring process a cohesive and organized experience for hiring teams and applicants alike.