ARA

Interview Story Worksheet

Public Service Transition Program · November 2026

HOW TO USE THIS WORKSHEET

Interviewers learn the most from specific examples. Use this worksheet to prepare six to eight true stories that you can adapt to many questions. You can type into the Word version or print the PDF.

Each story follows the situation, task, action, and result method: the situation you faced, the task you were responsible for, the actions you took yourself, and the result, measured wherever possible.

Step 1. Choose your stories

For each skill, write a short title for a story that shows it. One story can cover several skills. Draw on your evaluations, award citations, and the Skills Translation Worksheet for ideas.

SKILL EMPLOYERS ASK ABOUT	STORY TITLE
Leading a team	
Working across groups	
Handling conflict	
Learning from a mistake	
Solving a problem	
Improving a process	
Adapting to change	
Acting with integrity	
Serving a customer or the public	
Managing competing priorities	

Step 2. Build each story

Write notes, not a script. The example shows the level of detail to aim for.

Story title	Rebuilding a backlogged supply operation
Skills it shows	Leading a team; improving a process; managing competing priorities
Situation	A logistics section supporting 600 people had a three-week backlog of supply requests after two experienced staff members transferred out.
Task	As the section supervisor, I was responsible for clearing the backlog without slowing new requests.
Action	I sorted the backlog by urgency, cross-trained four team members on the ordering system, set a daily 15-minute status meeting, and built a simple tracker that customers could check themselves.
Result	We cleared the backlog in nine days, cut average processing time from six days to two, and kept it there for the rest of the year.
What I learned	Visible tracking and short daily check-ins kept everyone focused, and I now use both on every project.

Story 1

Story title

Skills it shows

Situation

Task

Action

Result (with numbers)

What I learned

Story 2

Story title

Skills it shows

Situation

Task

Action

Result (with numbers)

What I learned

Story 3

Story title

Skills it shows

Situation

Task

Action

Result (with numbers)

What I learned

Story 4

Story title

Skills it shows

Situation

Task

Action

Result (with numbers)

What I learned

Story 5

Story title

Skills it shows

Situation

Task

Action

Result (with numbers)

What I learned

Story 6

Story title

Skills it shows

Situation

Task

Action

Result (with numbers)

What I learned

Step 3. Practice

- ☐ Tell each story aloud in about two minutes.
- ☐ Record yourself, or practice with a friend or mentor, and ask what they remember afterward.
- ☐ Remove every acronym, rank, grade, and program name that a private employer would not know.
- ☐ Make sure each result includes a number, a comparison, or a clear outcome.
- ☐ Practice adapting each story to two or three different questions from the Interview Questions Guide.
- ☐ Check that nothing in your stories is classified, sensitive, or about other people's private information.

Where to get help

Other program materials. The Résumé and CV Guide, the interview guides, the worksheets and checklists, the Referral Guide, and the résumé and cover letter templates are available to download at library.agardresearchassociates.org/public-service-transition.

One-on-one help. If you would like one of the program's directors to read your materials and help you tailor them to the jobs you are applying for, request one-on-one help through the program page at agardresearchassociates.org/public-service-transition. Requests are reviewed on a rolling basis as volunteer time allows, and veterans are served first.

If you are in crisis or worried about someone, help is available at any hour. Veterans, service members, and their families can reach the Veterans Crisis Line by dialing 988 and pressing 1, or by texting 838255. Anyone can call or text 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

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