

# Get Focused: Provider Interviews

EXPLORE EXPERTISE | CULTURE CHECK | DISCOVERY CALL | A BIT OF EVERYTHING



Catalyst:Ed has highlighted four areas you can focus on to ensure you select the best provider for your organization and project.

**The different focus areas will prompt you to think about:**

- What is the most important thing(s) I want to learn through these interviews?
- What key factors will inform my decision?

The focus areas are not meant to be mutually exclusive, rather are curated to help you determine what is most relevant to you and your organization when selecting a provider.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCE**

Check out [Preparing for a Provider Interview](#) for additional tips.

# Explore Expertise

**USE WHEN:** Prior experience working with similar projects, organizations, contexts, etc. is your primary decision criteria



Ask questions about their approach and experience as it relates to this project and how they will work with you as their client.

Approach this interview differently than a job interview. The selected provider will work with you for a short period of time to achieve a very specific goal; and some “job interview” questions are not designed for this context.

## YOU SHARE

- Concerns, challenges and other context relevant to the project and/or your organization
- Areas/topics where you want to leverage their expertise (e.g., change management, silos, etc.)

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- Please share some specific skills and knowledge you have that are relevant to our needs.
- How do you ensure your solutions are actionable and effective?
- Walk me through a similar project you completed. What did you achieve? What went well? What would you change?

# Culture Check

**USE WHEN:** A provider whose style aligns with your organization's culture is your primary decision criteria



Select topics most critical to identifying a provider that can successfully work with and across your organization.

Discuss expectations, communication and feedback as these areas are often the culprits when projects go awry.

## YOU SHARE

- 3-5 words that best describe your culture
- Team's readiness for change
- Expected level of engagement and collaboration

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- What practices do you use to ensure clear communication throughout the project?
- How do you give and receive feedback when working with clients?
- What sparked your interest in our project?

# Discovery Call

**USE WHEN:** You want to explore new ideas or topics that emerged after reading proposals



Unearth challenges not previously considered, introduce new ideas or considerations and get a sense of what thought-partnership could look like with each provider.

Focus on topics, especially new information, and questions that may impact the project scope and/or the provider's approach.

## YOU SHARE

- Vision for how your organization will function differently as a result of this project
- Things that have changed since publishing the RFP
- How you are currently navigating the issue you seek to address

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- What factors would change or impact your proposed approach?
- You mention “x” in your proposal, can you please say more about that?
- Please walk us through your proposed budget.
- We are thinking about “X new idea” for this project. What are your thoughts on that?

# A Bit Of Everything

**USE WHEN:** Multiple factors are important for you when selecting a provider



With preparation, you can learn about the providers' expertise, project approach and get a sense of what working together could look like in 30-minutes.

When conducting this interview, consider your level of interest in each area to determine the best combination of discussion topics and interview questions.

Pacing strategies you can use when more than one area will influence your provider selection:

## PACING

**15 minutes | 15 minutes**

**20 minutes | 10 minutes**

**10 min | 10 min | 10 min**

## USE WHEN

You are equally interested in learning about two of the focus areas.

There are two focus areas that will impact your decision, however one is of more importance than the other.

You want to spend time covering multiple areas.

An example of this:

1. **First 10 min** - Provider does a brief info and you share additional context about your org
2. **Middle 10 min** - Ask questions about their expertise and/or approach
3. **Last 10 min** - Discussing how they may work with your team/compatibility and leave a few minutes for the provider to ask questions