

Recreation Officer interview questions

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What to expect

Recreation Officer interviews usually focus on how you plan and deliver community programs, work with volunteers and clubs, and handle the practical side of bookings, budgets and safety. Expect a mix of behavioural questions and scenario-based problems that reflect the day-to-day realities of the role.

- **Process and planning:** Questions about how you would design, schedule and promote a recreation program from start to finish.
- **Behavioural and stakeholder:** Questions that ask you to describe past experiences working with community groups, volunteers, clubs or difficult stakeholders.
- **Scenario and problem-solving:** Situations like low participation, a facility double-booking, or a safety incident, to see how you think on your feet.
- **Safety and risk:** Questions about risk assessments, child safety, first aid and making sure activities meet council or organisational requirements.

Typically a panel interview with a hiring manager and sometimes a coordinator or team leader. It may include a short practical task such as outlining a program plan or responding to a written scenario. Some councils run a single interview, while others combine it with a tour of facilities or a meet-and-greet with the team.

1. Walk me through how you would plan a new community recreation program from start to finish.

Why they ask

This tests your planning process, community engagement, budgeting and promotion skills, which are central to the role.

How to structure your answer

Walk-through: identify need, consult community, design program, budget, schedule, promote, deliver, evaluate.

Example answer

"In a previous role, I was asked to set up a new weekend walking group for older residents. I started by checking local health data and talking to a seniors group about what would work. I then designed a six-week program, booked a meeting point at a local reserve, set a small budget for first aid supplies and promotion, and worked with a volunteer leader to lead the walks. I promoted it through the council newsletter, local pharmacies and a Facebook page. We had 18 people sign up for the first walk and kept the group going with a roster of volunteers. I surveyed participants at the end and used their feedback to change the start time to earlier in the morning."

2. Tell me about a time you worked with a volunteer or community group to deliver an event or program. What was your role and what was the outcome?

Why they ask

This assesses your stakeholder management, volunteer coordination and ability to get things done with community partners.

How to structure your answer

STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result.

Example answer

"At a community centre, I worked with a local soccer club to run a come-and-try day. The club was keen but had no experience with event permits. I set up a planning meeting, helped them complete

the booking forms, and coordinated a risk assessment for the oval. On the day, I managed the registration table and made sure volunteers had water and shade. We had 45 kids attend, and the club signed up enough players to start a new under-8s team. The club president told me it was the smoothest event they had run."

3. Imagine a popular after-school program has had a steady drop in attendance over the last few weeks. How would you investigate and turn it around?

Why they ask

This probes your problem-solving, data use and community engagement under a common recreation challenge.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: clarify the problem, gather information, consult users, trial changes, review.

Example answer

"I would first look at the attendance records and speak to the regular families to understand why they stopped coming. Maybe the time clashes with another activity, or the cost is a barrier, or the activities are not engaging. I would also check if transport is an issue. Then I would trial a change, like moving the session to a different day or bringing in a guest coach, and promote it again through schools and social media. I would monitor the next few weeks and ask for feedback. If it still did not work, I would consider a different location or partner with another group."

4. How do you approach risk management when running a recreation activity in a public reserve?

Why they ask

Safety and compliance are non-negotiable in this role, and interviewers want to see a systematic approach.

How to structure your answer

Process: identify hazards, assess risks, apply controls, document, communicate, review.

Example answer

"Before any activity, I would walk the site and identify hazards like uneven ground, broken glass or weather risks. I would check the risk assessment template and make sure controls are in place, like marking hazards and having a first aid kit. I would brief volunteers and participants on safety rules. During the activity, I would keep monitoring and be ready to stop if conditions change. Afterward, I would document any incidents and review the plan for next time."

5. How would you promote a new recreation program to a community that has not previously engaged with your council's activities?

Why they ask

This looks at your outreach, social media and partnership skills, which are key to increasing participation.

How to structure your answer

Audience and channels: research the community, identify trusted contacts, use appropriate promotion, offer a taster, collect feedback.

Example answer

"I would start by finding out what that community already does for recreation and who the trusted local contacts are. Maybe there is a community centre, a church group or a sporting club. I would meet with them to understand barriers and ask what they would like to see. Then I would promote through those groups, local schools, noticeboards and social media, using simple language and images. I would also offer a free taster session and ask attendees to bring a friend. After the first program, I would

collect feedback and adjust.”

6. Describe your experience monitoring a program budget and reporting on outcomes.

Why they ask

This checks your budgeting, data tracking and accountability, which are part of the role's administrative side.

How to structure your answer

Situation, action, result: describe the budget, how you tracked it, reporting, and any adjustments.

Example answer

“I have managed a small program budget for a youth drop-in session. I tracked all expenses in a spreadsheet, kept receipts and checked the balance monthly. I also prepared a report for a council grant that included participation numbers and a summary of how the funds were spent. When we had a shortfall for a guest speaker, I found a free alternative and adjusted the schedule. The grant acquittal was approved without any issues.”