



Interview Guide | Technical Program Manager

Welcome

Thank you for your continued interest in the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. This document provides an overview of your next day of interviews. We appreciate the time you've invested in our interview process and are excited to have you meet the team!

Please review our [Candidate Journey](#) to learn more about CZI, our culture, and [how to prepare for a Zoom interview](#). If you require additional accommodations, have questions, or need support on the day of your interviews, please contact your Recruiter or Recruiting Coordinator. Someone from the team will ensure you are taken care of and that your experience is smooth.



1:1 Interviews

You will meet with 4-5 of our interviewers – some potential teammates and some cross-functional team members – for 60 minutes each. You will mostly meet with one interviewer at a time, but there may, on occasion, be an additional team member observing the interview, we use interviews to help calibrate our interviewing team. At some point during your visit, your Recruiter will meet with you to touch base.



Ask Me Anything (AMA)

There will also be a 30-minute "ask me anything" interview, where a member of the team will meet with you to answer any questions you might have and have the opportunity to learn about us and our work.



Lunch & Breaks

Breaks will be scheduled after 2-3 interviews, and if you're interviewing with us during the hours of 11:30am through 1:30pm PT we will schedule a lunch break. This will be your opportunity to take a break, stretch, use the bathroom, grab a snack, etc. Of course, if you need anything at any point during your interview, please let your interviewer know. Your comfort is important to us throughout your interview experience.



Questions

During these meetings, our interviewers are getting a glimpse of your skills and work style. The questions they ask are not meant to quiz or stump you. We are more interested in how you think and how you overcome roadblocks, so we want to encourage you to think out loud and share your thought process along the way. If something seems unclear, feel free to ask clarifying questions.



You are likely to encounter the following interview types:

1. Project Execution
2. Career and Competencies
3. Technical Aptitude & Systems Design
4. Leadership & Cross-Functional Partnerships
5. Domain Knowledge

Project Execution

During this interview, you will be evaluated on your project management and execution skills. You can share your experiences and give clear, structured examples of how to bring order from chaos across multiple projects and programs and focus on execution.

Career and Competencies

Our Career and Competencies interview allows candidates to highlight their experiences and perspectives through behavioral style interviewing. We believe that teams composed of people with a variety of experiences will allow us to create better solutions and relationships with the communities in which we serve and help us advance our goals under each initiative.

Questions during this interview will focus on your career as well as how you handle situations. Remember to draw upon your professional and personal experiences to answer these questions. The use of real-life examples makes it easier for the interviewer to ask for more details and get a stronger signal. Don't be worried about sharing your failures as well. Learning through failures is a valuable skill that we look for in a candidate.

Domain Knowledge

This interview will be focused on the specific domain focus of this position (i.e. security, infrastructure, etc.). We will ask questions about how you might approach certain technical challenges or situations. The interviewer will assess your technical knowledge in the domain area of the position and engage in conversation with you about possible solutions and potential tradeoffs. Answer as best as you can and draw upon your past experience. We encourage you to ask clarifying questions, this interview should be a discussion.

Technical Aptitude & Systems Design

This interview will be focused on your technical depth and how you communicate that to cross-functional partners. Although Technical Program Managers are not expected to write code, we will be looking for your understanding of modern web architectures and the basics of distributed systems. During this interview, you will be asked to walk us through the technical details of a system you recently worked on. You'll need to be able to articulate tradeoffs and assess how and why certain design decisions might have been made. These questions do not have a single correct answer or a definitive endpoint. Rather, they give you a chance to demonstrate how you handle complexity and help the team make decisions, factoring in a variety of requirements and stakeholders.

Leadership & Cross-Functional Partnerships

Our Technical Program Managers work across teams and initiatives at CZI, helping each other in our shared goals. The purpose of this interview is to evaluate a candidate's experience as a cross-functional leader. This interview, similar to Career and Competencies will be structured more as a conversation, asking you to share examples of your work and speak to successes and challenges you faced over your career.



General Tips for Interviewing

Do your research and bring your questions

Do your research on us and think about what motivated you to engage with CZI. This is your opportunity to interview us as well. We value curiosity and want to answer your questions.

Be yourself

Tell us what you're passionate about and what drives you. We want to learn about you and the perspective you bring to CZI. The best tools are built by teams with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints, so we want you to bring your authentic self to the interview.

Stay focused and positive

We recognize that interviewing can make someone nervous and not able to perform to their full ability. We are not trying to trick you, intimidate you, or otherwise place even more stress on you just to see how you respond. If you feel "stuck" with a question, don't let that throw you off your game during the interview. We hit roadblocks every day - it's about how you navigate them that makes the work fun.

We Are Not Looking For.....

The perfect solution

Our questions are designed to be complex. We don't expect you to come up with a brilliant, optimal solution in 45 minutes. Rather, we look at how you develop and communicate your approach to problems and product spaces. At the same time, don't rush into the first brute force solution that comes to mind; we do like to see that you can develop multiple approaches and compare them to choose the best one. If something seems unclear, feel free to ask clarifying questions.