



SEATTLE CITY LIGHT

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

INTERVIEW PREPARATION GUIDE

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Introduction

Welcome to the interview stage of the apprenticeship hiring process. This is your opportunity to meet current City Light employees and discuss the skills that make you qualified to be a successful apprentice.

The interview panel will be made up of several City Light employees that are familiar with the essential job functions. The panel will ask the same prepared questions of each candidate interviewed.

The interview questions will be situational questions—this means the panel will describe a work situation or problem and ask you how you would approach it. Although these are just sample situations, you can use similar experiences you've had as examples.

Always ask for clarification if you don't understand a question, and make sure you address every part of each question. You may ask the panel questions about the position at the end of the interview.

Please remember that apprenticeship hiring process can be long and time consuming, so we ask for your patience at this part of the process. It can take several weeks for every candidate to complete their interview. Human Resources staff will contact candidates as soon as hiring decisions have been finalized.



Situational Interview Questions

Your interview will consist of a set number of situational interview questions. In this type of interview, you are given a hypothetical situation and asked how you would handle it. You may also be asked to give an actual example from past work experiences and explain how you handled it. In both cases, the interviewer is trying to assess your problem solving skills and gauge whether you understand how to handle on-the-job challenges.

How to Prepare

To answer these questions use specific examples from work, volunteer experience or education that will show your ability to do the job. To prepare for a situational interview, study your resume and the “buzz words” in the job description. Look for qualifications that stand out, as these are key traits you'll want to convey during your interview. Have an example situation for each of the Skills and Personality Traits listed. You can also make a list of some difficult situations you encountered in the past, and think about how you solved them. If you would have done something differently, share that with the interviewer. Learning from your past experiences is a quality employers look for.

Structuring Your Answer

Answering these types of questions gives you an opportunity to show you have excellent communication skills, prepared to solve problems and make good decisions. The answers you give should be relevant to the question and focus on the positive outcome. Structure your answer using the following order: situation, action and outcome. This will prevent you from straying away from the question, and remind you to finish with the positive outcome.

Skills and Personality Traits

The following page includes several personality traits and skills that City Light looks for in apprenticeship candidates. The professional experiences you share with the panel should show that you possess some or all of these qualities. Be prepared to discuss a situational example of how you have demonstrated these attributes in the past. Your examples can be from your work history, volunteer experience, or your personal life.

Remember to relate your situational examples back to the apprenticeship job description. It is important to connect the dots for the interview panel, and make it clear how your skills and experiences will make you a great apprentice. If you need help remembering your examples, take notes and bring them with you to the interview.



Skills and Personality Traits

- **Flexibility:** able to handle changes, willing to try a new way of doing things.
- **Cooperation/Team Player:** can work with others successfully and take direction.
- **Problem Solving/Decision Making:** can identify problems, get the right information, develop possible courses of action, and make a decision.
- **Initiative:** can work without close supervision; able to go above and beyond normal job requirements.
- **Tolerance for Stress:** can maintain stable performance under pressure.
- **Enthusiasm:** has passion for the job, and a desire to do well.
- **Reliability:** can be counted on to get the job done.
- **Communication Skills:** ability to talk, write and listen effectively to customers, coworkers and management.
- **Determination:** has the willpower to see projects through to the end.
- **Safety Conscious:** follows all safety guidelines and performs work duties in a safe manner.
- **Honesty:** truthful, straightforward, and consistent when working with others.
- **Diversity Orientation:** works cooperatively and harmoniously in a diverse work environment; demonstrates behavior that values differences in culture/ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, and religion.
- **Willingness to Learn:** shows a desire to improve personal skills and knowledge.
- **Accountability:** takes responsibility for actions, and acknowledges and learns from mistakes.
- **Integrity:** keeps to an acceptable set of ethical standards and values when working with others; behaves in a way that is consistent with City Light expectations and guidelines; avoid conflicts of interest.



Interview Preparation

Before Your Interview...

Research

Carefully read over the job description, and browse the SCL apprenticeship website. Get familiar with City Light's accomplishments and history.

Practice

Prepare for the interview by going over your Skills and Personality traits. Make sure you feel comfortable speaking in front of a panel. Write down your skills and situational examples, and bring those notes with you to the interview. Know what skills you can offer.

Dress Appropriately

The skilled trades may require certain work clothes while on the job, but for your interview you should look professional.

What to Bring

Your interview invitation letter will specify if you need to bring anything. It is suggested you bring a copy of your resume for you to reference while in the interview, a pen and paper for note taking, and a bottle of water.

Location

Know the exact location and time of your interview. Our North and South Service Centers have very specific parking instructions, so pay particular attention to where you can and cannot park. Give yourself plenty of traveling time. Do not arrive to your interview late.

When You Arrive

It is recommended that you arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled interview time. Once you arrive at either our North or South Service Center, check in with the front desk receptionist to let them know you have arrived. Maintain your professionalism from the moment you enter to the moment you leave. Take advantage of the extra time before your interview to look over your notes and mentally prepare.

Tips and Hints

- ★ Do your best to be available on the date and time of your interview. Occasionally there are options for rescheduling, but not always.
- ★ Prepare note cards and bring them with you to the interview to ensure you don't forget critical information.
- ★ If you want to gain confidence in speaking about your skills, take the time to prepare your interview materials and practice. Remember—you can bring notes with you.
- ★ Have questions prepared to ask the interview panel. What do you want to know about being an apprentice at City Light?



During the Interview

- Come prepared and on time. A good first impression counts for a lot. Listen and show an interest in what the interview panel is saying. Be attentive, thoughtful and look directly at the interviewer. Project a positive attitude and show enthusiasm for the position.
- When you arrive to the interview, the panel members will introduce themselves and give you a brief overview of how the interview will be conducted. You will be given a copy of the job description, the interview questions, and a list of definitions for terms that will be used in the interview. You will have an opportunity to review these documents before you start the interview. Let the panel know when you're ready to begin.
- You may find that you know someone on the interview panel. If this happens, be sure to answer the interview questions as if they do not know you; be as detailed as possible in your responses. Panel members cannot assume a candidate has a certain skill or ability unless they verbally tell them so.
- Any notes you take during the interview regarding the questions asked will need to be left with the panel at the end of the interview. This is to maintain the security of the interview questions. Any interview notes you bring with you are yours, and don't need to be given to the panel.
- Panel members will be taking notes throughout the interview. Do not get discouraged or think they are ignoring you if they do not make constant eye contact; they are trying to listen and record your responses as accurately as possible to aid them in rating your interview.
- If you get stuck on a question or can't put together an answer, say, "Can we return to this question at the end of the interview?" Just make sure you allow yourself enough time to finish all your answers.
- Give specific examples for each interview question. Give relevant details without going off on tangents. It's OK to pause before you answer a question. Say something like, "I'm going to take a moment to organize my thoughts," to let the panel know you are processing your answer.
- If you have extra time at the end of the interview, it is acceptable to go back to any of the questions and add any information you forgot to share.
- After you finish your interview it's very important you don't share the questions with other candidates, friends, coworkers, etc. You don't want to give another candidate an unfair advantage over you by prepping them for the interview!



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After Your Interview

After your interview, a Human Resources representative will contact you as soon as hiring decisions have been made. The apprenticeship hiring processes are very competitive; there may be a few dozen other candidates interviewing for the same positions, which could take a few weeks to complete. We appreciate your patience during this time.

Because of the large number of candidates typically involved, please do not send follow up correspondence to the panel members after the interview. Panel members do not have information about the status of the hiring process, so please direct all your questions to Human Resources staff.

Make sure you contact Human Resources immediately if your contact information changes, so we can update our records. Most communication will be sent to your home address through the mail, but there may also be phone and email correspondence.



Interview Do's and Don'ts

DO...

- ✓ Dress appropriately for the industry; err on the side of being conservative to show you take the interview seriously.
- ✓ Know the exact time and location of your interview, and plan to arrive 15 minutes early. Make sure you know where to park.
- ✓ Offer a firm handshake, make eye contact, and have a friendly expression when you are greeted.
- ✓ Treat other people you encounter with courtesy and respect. You start making an impression as soon as you enter the building.
- ✓ Emphasize positive qualities about yourself. Don't accentuate the negative.
- ✓ Respond to questions and back up statements about yourself with specific professional and educational examples.
- ✓ Be thorough in your responses, while being concise in your wording.
- ✓ Have a high confidence and energy level, but don't be overly aggressive.
- ✓ Sit still in your seat with excellent posture; avoid fidgeting and slouching.
- ✓ When the interviewer concludes the interview, offer a firm handshake and thank them for their time. Depart gracefully.

DON'T...

- ✓ Don't treat the interview casually; remain professional from the moment you arrive until the moment you leave.
- ✓ Don't allow your cell phone to sound during the interview. If it does, apologize quickly and turn it off.
- ✓ Don't make excuses. Take responsibility for your decisions and your actions.
- ✓ Don't be late! Arriving late will take away from your interviewing time and will not set a good first impression.
- ✓ Don't use slang or acronyms, unless you first explain what they mean.
- ✓ Don't go off on tangents. Stick to the questions being asked and information that is relevant to the job you are applying for.
- ✓ Don't make negative comments about previous employers or coworkers.
- ✓ Don't answer with a simple "yes" or "no." Give a detailed explanation whenever possible.
- ✓ Don't rely on your application or resume; you still need to sell yourself.
- ✓ Don't share information that will not play a role in the hiring decision on the application, such as marital status, religious affiliation, etc.



Sample Interview Questions

1. A co-worker tells you in confidence that she plans to call in sick while actually taking a week's vacation. What would you do and why?
2. If you believed strongly in a recommendation you made in a meeting, but most of your co-workers disagreed with your idea, how would you handle that situation?
3. You disagree with the way your supervisor says to handle a problem. What would you do?
4. Consider a situation where you and a co-worker are jointly working on a project. You divided up work in a manner you both agreed to. However, your co-worker fails to do his or her share of the work. What would you do?
5. Describe a situation where you had to adapt to change and how you handled it.
6. Give an example of a problem you faced in school or in a previous job and how you solved it.
7. Tell me about a time when you had to use organizational skills. What were the results?
8. Tell me about a time you had a conflict with a co-worker and how you resolved it.
9. Can you describe a situation in which you had to think outside the box to solve a problem for a co-worker, client or customer?
10. Describe an instance in which you disagreed with instruction or criticism from your boss and how you approached the situation.
11. Tell me about a time in which you had to really manage your time well, how you went about doing so, and how you were able to meet your goal.
12. Can you tell me about an instance in which you were able to positively motivate others?