









City of Seattle - Application, Resume, and Interviewing Tips

The City of Seattle offers an amazing array of career opportunities, with more than 1,100 job titles across nearly 40 operating departments and offices. The nearly 12,000 employees of the City of Seattle enjoy competitive pay and benefits packages, generous leave programs, and the satisfaction of doing work that helps make Seattle a great place to live, work, and play.



This document highlights general tips that may assist applicants with their City of Seattle application, resume, and interview. This information is solely for educational and developmental purposes.

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APPLICATION TIPS

	<p>Prepare: Read and re-read the posting thoroughly so you have a clear understanding of the responsibilities and requirements when you complete the application. Use the posting qualifications as your guide by listing your work experience, education, and achievements that best demonstrate the skills needed for the role.</p>
	<p>Tailor your application and resume to show how your education and experience match with the job posting.</p>
	<p>Job Duties: When listing your job duties in your application, you will have the most success with listing your duties as bullet points rather than in paragraph form. It is much easier to read for a recruiter, making all your accomplishments easier to pick out.</p>
	<p>Impact Statements: Rather than stating a generic duty like “ordering office supplies,” you want to show the impact of that responsibility, or the ‘so what?’ “Ordering office supplies” becomes “Ordered and monitored inventory of over \$50,000 in office supplies for 75-person office.” Similarly, “Scheduled interviews” can become “Coordinated the availability of 5 interviewers to successfully schedule and execute up to 40 applicant interviews per week.” Another example could be “Contracted with shipping vendor,” becomes “Negotiated new contract with shipping vendor, resulting in 30% savings from previous year.”</p>
	<p>Supplemental Questions: Always be sure to read through the supplemental questions very carefully and answer them thoughtfully. These questions are usually written specifically for the position by the hiring manager and are used to make selections about which applicants will be moving forward. Also make sure to carefully read for any special application instructions. For example, some jobs ask you to attach a resume and cover letter documents, while other jobs do not. You do not need to attach anything that was not specifically asked for in the posting or instructions.</p>
	<p>NeoGov Application System Tips: NeoGov is the City of Seattle’s application system. If you need to attach a file, close the file first, and then attach it. NeoGov will not attach open files. Save often. The application times-out every 30 minutes. All City of Seattle jobs close on a Tuesday at 4:00 p.m. Do not wait until the last moment to enter your application, as you will be locked out of the system at 4:00pm, even if you are in the middle of your application. Late applications cannot be accepted.</p>



	<p>Set up Job Alerts! Please click here to set up a job alert so you are notified about new positions! These alerts are active for one year!</p>
	<p>Don't forget about community resources that can support your career development!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- WorkSource offers jobseeker assistance and offers free virtual or in-person workshops. WorkSource also offers an online Career Coach services – including career assessments and resume building assistance.- Learn new skills by taking free online learning through online learning at the Seattle Public Library (library card required – get one here!). You can also check out the Seattle Public Library Job Resources page.






RESUME TIPS

	<p>Formatting: It should be easy to read your resume from top to bottom very quickly. Recruiters can receive hundreds of applications for one position, so to make your resume stand out you need to make key information easy to find. If you gained experience in a particular skill at multiple jobs, you may want to consider a summary section at the top of your resume that highlights your total years of experience doing that work or developing that skill.</p>
	<p>Font: Choose an easy-to-read font and stick with it—do not alternate fonts, as it is more difficult to read. Also, resume font should be a uniform size, except for your name at the top of the resume (which could be larger).</p>
	<p>Employment Dates: List your employment dates first (both start and finish, month and year).</p>
	<p>Job Duties: List your job duties in bullet-point form to make them easy to read.</p>
	<p>Length: Your resume does not need to fit on one page, but it should also not be longer than two to three pages, depending on how much experience you have.</p>
	<p>Organization: You should organize your information by what is most relevant to least relevant, which means you could break your work history into two sections: Related Professional Experience and Other Work Experience. In addition, format your resume based on the qualifications that are featured in the job posting. If your education is the most relevant to the posting, make sure to list it first in your resume. However, if certain certifications or work experience is more important for the role, then make sure they are listed first in your resume.</p>
	<p>General: Writing a strong resume is not something that comes naturally to most. If you have the resources, you may want to take an online course or e-learning. The Washington WorkSource system also offers free job readiness classes. You will learn more information, like the above-mentioned tips, and get practice with writing impact statements and</p>



organizing your information. If this is not an option for you, reach out to a trusted friend to review your resume and get feedback.

INTERVIEWING TIPS

	<p>Review Job Posting: Before your interview, be sure to review the job posting to confirm that you are prepared to provide examples from your work and education history that align with the relevant skills and experience needed for the role.</p>
	<p>Research Organization to Tailor to Audience: To make sure you are speaking to how your skills and experience are in line with an organization's goals and values, it is a good idea to visit that organization's website to learn more about projects they are involved in, department mission and values, etc. With that information in mind, you can tailor your planned responses to highlight your skills and experience that most clearly demonstrate how your work and mission are in line with the department's. You could also reach out to an employee of that department or organization to see if they would be available for an informational interview to learn more about their goals, structure, and values.</p>
	<p>Presence: This is one of the harder skills to focus on, as people are often very nervous in an interview. Anticipating interview questions, and practicing your responses beforehand, may help you feel more comfortable in clearly explaining how your skills, values, and experience are aligned with the position. Also, it's ok to share your enthusiasm for the department, the organization, or public service in general! Keep in mind that your interviewers will likely be taking notes, so don't be discouraged or distracted if you find them looking down or writing while you are talking.</p>
	<p>Details: You will want to make sure to provide enough detail in your answers to give your interview team a solid sense of your knowledge and experience. While being concise is a good trait in interviews, you also need to provide enough context for your interviewers to get to know you and your work style. For instance, if you are asked about why you are interested in a position, you will want to give a bit of information that touches not only on your interest in the role, but also on the experience you have that has prepared you for it. You will also want to make sure that you are providing detailed information in your examples, which should follow a narrative.</p>
	<p>Work Experience Stories: Think of about 3-5 work situations that you have been in that you could use to answer several interview questions. This way, when you are asked a question, you will be able to easily pull one of those stories from your memory to use as an example. The reason that this is an effective way to answer a question is that you can give the full context of a situation and your accomplishments within that situation, which will help you stand out from other applicants.</p> <p>For example, if you are asked about the largest project you have managed, you will want to provide context for your specific role in that project, and the impact it would have. An example of how to tell that story in an impactful way is to think about answering every question with a beginning (share a summary of the problem that needs to be solved and the breadth of the project), a middle (what you did to solve that problem), and an end (the</p>



results or impact of your work). So, using the example of managing a project, you could tell a story like this:

“3 years ago, my company conducted an analysis on the cost of shipping charges we had paid over the last several years. They determined that, by scheduling more shipments to go out together, we could decrease the cost of shipping by 20%, which would save the company over \$50,000 dollars every year. I acted as a project manager to coordinate with other employees on creating a database to schedule shipments. I managed the relationship with our employees as well as the software designer we contracted with and prepared all the contracts and specifications they needed to get the work done. Through my work, we got the database up and running 4 months ahead of schedule, which saved us an additional \$25,000 in contractor fees.”

To break that example down, here are the 3 parts:

- **Beginning:** 3 years ago, my company conducted an analysis on the cost of shipping charges we had paid over the last several years. They determined that, by scheduling more shipments to go out together, we could decrease the cost of shipping by 20%, which would save the company over \$50,000 dollars every year.
- **Middle:** I acted as a project manager to coordinate with other employees on creating a database to schedule shipments. I managed the relationship with our employees as well as the software designer we contracted with and prepared all of the contracts and specifications they needed to get the work done.
- **End:** Through my work, we got the database up and running 4 months ahead of schedule, which saved us an additional \$25,000 in contractor fees.

This style will allow you to better express your accomplishments in a succinct way.

Have an answer to every question: Even if you are asked a question that you do not think applies to you, you should always find a way to relate the question to another experience that would demonstrate the same knowledge. For example:




Being Asked about Weaknesses – In an interview, you want to make sure that you are portraying yourself in the best possible light, but you want to make sure that you are still being genuine as well. While you may be an incredible worker, there is always something that we can improve on. One thing you want to do when someone asks about a weakness is provide a real weakness, but also how you are addressing it.

Example:

- **Weakness:** You are someone that takes longer to get things done because you often get too absorbed in the details.
- **Response:** I find that I get distracted by the intricate details in a project, and a lot of time can go by because I’m so absorbed in the work. To make sure I stay on track, I set a schedule for myself that ensures I don’t neglect other important tasks.





	<p>This answer demonstrates that you recognize a weakness in your work habits, but also that you have developed tools for managing it.</p>
	<p>Be Prepared for Remote/Virtual Interviews: Your interview may be done virtually. Ensure that your technology is in working order and that you've pre-tested it before the actual interview. Have a backup plan in case something doesn't function properly. Look into the camera and try to make eye contact with the interview panelists. Keep your notes and paper nearby. Set the background and lighting before the interview. Choose a quiet place for the interview.</p>
	<p>Bring your Questions: Almost every interview ends with this question: Do you have any questions for us? This is your opportunity to get your questions answered, but it's also an opportunity to show the interview team how interested you are in the role and the department by asking thoughtful questions. Some examples of questions are below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ What would my first 90 days in this position look like?▪ How many people are on this team?▪ What are the most immediate projects I would take on?▪ What is your favorite thing about working in this department and/or on this team?▪ Can you tell me more about what my day-to-day responsibilities would look like?▪ What are some of the challenges you've seen people in this role or on this team encounter?▪ Can you describe some of the department's recent challenges and achievements?▪ Who will I work with most closely? What other departments or organizations will I interact with the most?▪ How does the team I'll be part of continue to grow professionally?
	<p>Get (and Stay) Connected! You can stay up to date on high-need positions, and general City business, by following the City of Seattle on LinkedIn! If you find a particular department that you're interested in, visit www.seattle.gov to find the employee directory and see if you can set up an informational interview with someone in that department who may work in the area you'd like to pursue working in. You may also be able to reach out to employees via LinkedIn!</p>