







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.

Come Build Your Career and Your Community with us at www.seattle.gov/jobs!


APPLICATION TIPS

	<p>Prepare: Before you start your application, take time to carefully read the job posting — even more than once. This will help you get a solid understanding of what the role involves and what the City is looking for. Use the listed qualifications as your roadmap. Think about your own work experience, education, and accomplishments, and highlight the ones that best show you've got the skills to succeed in the role.</p>
	<p>Tailor: Make sure your application and resume are customized for the job you're applying to. Use the job posting as your guide, and show how your background — your education, experience, and skills — connects directly to what the role is asking for. The more clearly you make that connection, the stronger your application will be.</p>
	<p>Job Duties: When listing your previous job duties, use bullet points instead of writing long paragraphs. Bullet points are easier for recruiters to scan, which means your skills and accomplishments are more likely to stand out. Clear, concise points help your experience shine!</p>
	<p>Impact Statements: Instead of just listing what you did, show the impact of your work — the "so what?" For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instead of "Ordered office supplies," try: "Managed inventory and purchasing for over \$50,000 in office supplies for a 75-person office."







	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instead of "Scheduled interviews," try: "Coordinated schedules for 5 interviewers and successfully arranged up to 40 applicant interviews each week."• Instead of "Contracted with shipping vendor," try: "Negotiated a new contract with a shipping vendor, saving the organization 30% over the previous year." <p>These kinds of impact statements help recruiters see the real value you bring to a role.</p>
	<p>Supplemental Questions: Take your time with the supplemental questions — they're important! These questions are often created by the hiring manager and are tailored specifically for the role. Your responses help determine whether you'll move forward in the process, so read each one carefully and answer thoughtfully.</p> <p>Also, be sure to check for any special application instructions. Some positions may ask for a resume and cover letter, while others may not. Only include documents that are specifically requested in the job posting — no need to attach extras unless instructed.</p>
	<p>NeoGov Application System Tips: The City of Seattle uses NeoGov for all job applications. Here are a few helpful tips to avoid common issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Save your work often. The system will time out after 30 minutes of inactivity, and you could lose what you've entered.• Close files before attaching them. NeoGov won't upload a file if it's still open on your computer.• Don't wait until the last minute. All City jobs close on Tuesdays at 4:00 p.m. sharp. If you're still working on your application at 4:01, the system will lock you out — even if you were in the middle of submitting. Unfortunately, late applications can't be accepted. <p>Give yourself plenty of time so you can apply without stress!</p>
	<p>Set up Job Alerts! Don't miss out on new opportunities! You can set up a job alert to get notified when new positions open that match your interests. It only takes a minute, and your alert will stay active for one year — no need to check the website every day.</p>







	<p>Don't forget about community resources that can support your career development!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- WorkSource offers job seeker assistance and offers free virtual or in-person workshops.- 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.
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RESUME TIPS






	<p>Formatting: Make your resume easy to scan quickly — recruiters often review many applications for each job. To help your resume stand out, highlight the most important information so it's easy to find at a glance.</p> <p>If you've built experience in a specific skill across multiple jobs, consider adding a brief summary section at the top of your resume. This is a great place to highlight your total years of experience or key strengths related to the position — helping the hiring team see your qualifications right away.</p>
	<p>Font: Pick a clean, easy-to-read font and use it consistently throughout your resume. Avoid switching between different fonts—that can make your resume harder to read. Keep your font size uniform, except for your name at the top, which can be a bit larger to stand out.</p>
	<p>Employment Dates: Make sure to list your employment dates — both the month and year you began and ended each job. This helps recruiters quickly understand your work timeline.</p>
	<p>Job Duties: List your job duties using bullet points. This makes your experience easier to read and helps recruiters quickly spot your skills and accomplishments.</p>



	<p>Length: Your resume doesn't have to fit on just one page, but try to keep it between two and three pages, depending on your experience. The goal is to share enough detail without overwhelming the reader.</p>
	<p>Organization: Arrange your resume by what's most relevant to the job — start with your strongest qualifications. You can even split your work history into sections like <i>Related Professional Experience</i> and <i>Other Work Experience</i> to highlight what matters most. Look closely at the job posting and order your resume based on what they're asking for. If your education is key for the role, list it near the top. But if certain certifications or specific work experience are more important, make sure those come first instead.</p>
	<p>General: Writing a strong resume can be challenging — and that's totally normal! If you can, consider taking an online course or e-learning class to build your skills. The Washington WorkSource system also offers free job readiness classes where you can learn helpful tips like these and get practice writing impact statements and organizing your resume. If classes aren't an option, ask a trusted friend or mentor to review your resume and give you feedback. A fresh set of eyes can make a big difference!</p>
	<p>Use of Artificial Intelligence: We recognize that artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as chatbots, automated response generators, or language models, can be helpful during the job search process. If you choose to use them, please carefully review all materials before submission to ensure accuracy, as you will be required to affirm that your responses are true and correct during the application process. Submitting inaccurate or misleading information may result in disqualification.</p> <p>Please also note that relying on AI to complete text-based supplemental questions or during interviews may not accurately represent your skills and experiences, which are critical to applicant success. In some cases, you may be instructed not to use AI tools during the selection process.</p> <p>Learn more about the City of Seattle AI Policy here.</p>



INTERVIEWING TIPS

	<p>Review Job Posting: Before your interview, take some time to review the job posting carefully. Think about your work and education experiences that match the skills and qualifications they're looking for. Being ready to share specific examples will help you feel confident and show the interviewer why you're a great fit for the role.</p>
	<p>Research Organization to Tailor to Audience: Take some time before your interview to explore the organization's website. Learn about their current projects, mission, values, and goals. This will help you tailor your answers to show how your skills and experience align with what they care about most.</p>
	<p>Presence: Feeling nervous in an interview is completely normal, and presence is one of the trickier skills to master. Preparing by anticipating questions and practicing your answers can really help you feel more comfortable and confident when explaining how your skills, values, and experience match the role.</p> <p>Don't be afraid to show your enthusiasm — whether it's for the department, the organization, or public service in general! And remember, interviewers often take notes during your answers. If you notice them looking down or writing, don't be discouraged — it means they're paying close attention.</p>
	<p>Details: It's important to give your interviewers enough detail to understand your knowledge and experience — without going off on a tangent. Being concise is good, but you also want to provide enough context so they can get a clear picture of who you are and how you work. For example, if you're asked why you're interested in the position, share not only what draws you to the role but also how your past experience has prepared you for it. When giving examples, try to tell a brief story that shows your skills in action — this helps your answers feel clear and memorable.</p>
	<p>Work Experience Stories: Think of 3 to 5 work situations that highlight your skills and accomplishments. Having these stories ready will help you confidently answer a variety of</p>



interview questions. When you share a story, you give interviewers the full picture — the context, what you did, and the results — helping you stand out from other candidates. Here's why this works: Instead of giving a short or vague answer, you'll share a clear example that shows your experience and impact.

How to Tell Your Story:

Try to structure your answers like a mini-story with three parts:

- **Beginning:** Set the scene — explain the problem or challenge and the scope of the project.
- **Middle:** Describe what you did to address the problem.
- **End:** Share the results or impact of your work.

Example:

"Three years ago, my company analyzed our shipping costs and found that by scheduling shipments together, we could cut costs by 20%, saving over \$50,000 a year. I acted as project manager, coordinating with staff and a software designer to build a scheduling database. I handled contracts and ensured everyone stayed on track. Thanks to my work, we launched the database 4 months early, saving an extra \$25,000 in contractor fees."

Breaking it down:

- **Beginning:** The company identified the shipping cost issue and potential savings.
- **Middle:** You managed the project and coordinated with the team and contractors.
- **End:** The project launched early and saved additional money.

Using this approach will help you clearly and succinctly express your accomplishments — and make a strong impression.





Have an answer to every question: Sometimes, interviewers ask questions that don't seem to directly relate to your experience. Even then, try to connect the question to a different example that shows your skills or knowledge. It's always better to respond thoughtfully than to leave a question unanswered.


Handling Questions About Weaknesses

When asked about your weaknesses, it's important to be honest while also showing how you're



	<p>working to improve. Nobody's perfect, and sharing a real weakness alongside the steps you're taking to manage it shows self-awareness and growth.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weakness: You sometimes take longer to finish tasks because you get caught up in details.• Response: "I've noticed that I can get absorbed in the details of a project, which sometimes slows me down. To manage this, I create a schedule that helps me stay on track and balance my focus across all tasks." <p>This kind of answer shows you know your challenges — and you're actively working to overcome them.</p>
	<p>Be Prepared for Remote/Virtual Interviews: Your interview might be held online, so it's important to make sure your technology is ready ahead of time. Test your computer, camera, microphone, and internet connection before the big day. Have a backup plan just in case something goes wrong.</p> <p>During the interview, look into the camera to make eye contact with the interviewers—it helps create a connection even through a screen. Keep any notes or papers you might need close by, but try not to read directly from them.</p> <p>Also, pick a quiet, well-lit space with a simple background so you can focus and be seen clearly. Setting this up beforehand will help you feel confident and prepared.</p>
	<p>Bring your Questions: Almost every interview ends with the question: "<i>Do you have any questions for us?</i>" This is a great chance for you to learn more about the role and the team — and to show how interested you are.</p> <p>Asking thoughtful questions helps you stand out and shows that you're thinking about how you'd fit in and contribute. Here are some examples you might consider:</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?



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the most immediate projects I would take on?• What do you enjoy most about working in this department or on this team?• Can you tell me more about what my day-to-day responsibilities would be?• What challenges have people in this role or team faced?• Can you share some recent challenges and achievements of the department?• Who will I work with most closely? What other departments or organizations will I interact with?• How does the team support professional growth and development? <p>Having a few questions ready will help you leave a positive, curious impression and give you valuable insight into whether this is the right fit for you.</p>
	<p>Get (and Stay) Connected! Stay in the loop about high-need jobs and City news by following the City of Seattle on LinkedIn! Many departments also have their own LinkedIn pages where they share job postings and updates about their work in the community.</p> <p>If you're interested in a specific department, visit http://www.seattle.gov/ to explore the employee directory. You might find someone to connect with for an informational interview to learn more about their role and team.</p> <p>You can also reach out to City employees on LinkedIn to build your network and gain insider insights. These connections can give you a better feel for the department and help you stand out when you apply.</p>