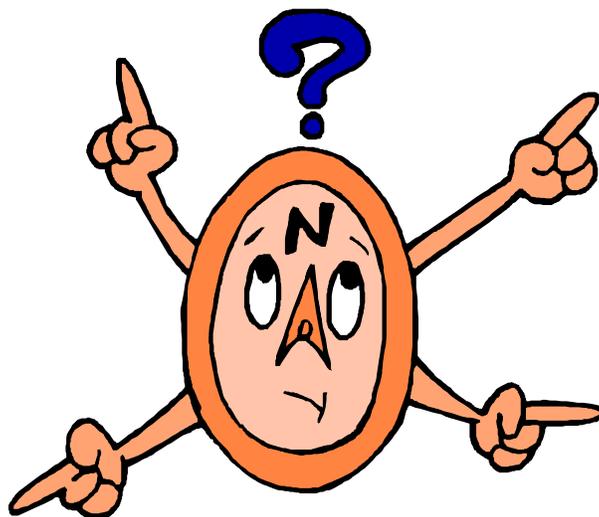


# Navigating the City of Madison's Hiring Process

## Applicant Preparation Guide



12/21/2015  
City of Madison Human Resources

**Table of Contents**

INTRODUCTION ..... 1

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT..... 1

    Job Interest Cards..... 3

APPLICATION PROCESS ..... 4

    The NEOGOV Application..... 4

    Completing the Application..... 6

    Cover Letter ..... 7

    Resumé..... 7

SCREENING PROCESS..... 8

NOT MINIMALLY QUALIFIED..... 9

EXAM PROCESS ..... 10

EXAM TYPES..... 11

    Written Exam..... 11

    Performance Exam..... 11

    Comparative Analysis/Resumé Screen/Application Assessment ..... 11

    Supplemental Questions/Achievement History Questionnaire (AHQ) ..... 12

    Oral Board..... 12

ELIGIBILITY LIST..... 13

REFERRAL ..... 13

INTERVIEW PROCESS ..... 13

    Before the Interview - Advance Preparation ..... 14

    During the Interview - Communication..... 17

    Conclusion of Interview..... 18

    Following the Interview..... 18

JOB OFFER ..... 19

CONCLUSION..... 19

APPENDIX A – INTERNET RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPING COVER LETTERS AND RESUMÉS ..... 20

APPENDIX B – SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ..... 21

APPENDIX C – SAMPLE TRADITIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS..... 22

RESOURCES ..... 24

## INTRODUCTION

The City of Madison is an equal opportunity employer functioning under an affirmative action plan. The City employs more than 3,000 full-time, part-time, and hourly employees who provide services to City residents. As an employer, the City strives to provide a work environment where:

- Creativity is encouraged.
- Diversity and differing opinions are valued.
- Continuous learning and improvement are fostered.
- Teamwork and open and honest communication are encouraged.
- Meeting customer needs through quality service is a shared goal.

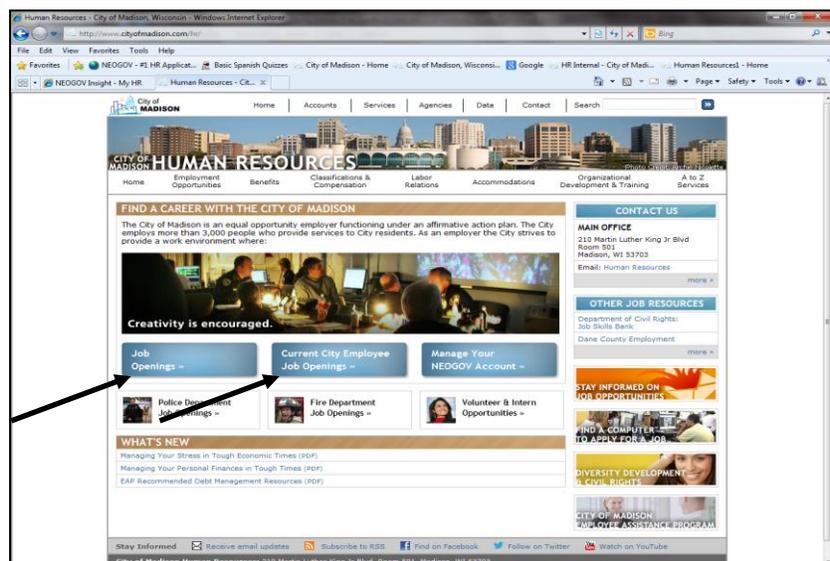
The City of Madison is committed to hiring talented and diverse individuals. The City operates under a Civil Service system, which is a set of rules defining how an individual is appointed to a permanent position, among other things. The Civil Service system is designed to ensure that all job applicants have an opportunity to be selected for a position. This means all permanent positions will be announced, and will generally include a testing component. The information in this guide is being provided to help applicants better navigate through the City's Civil Service hiring process.

The City's application process is entirely online, using a system called NEOGOV to post jobs and have applicants apply for positions. All communication with applicants is done online through email. Applicants needing assistance with the application process and/or those without computer access are encouraged to visit one of the nine Madison Public Libraries. Library staff is familiar with the online NEOGOV system and is available to help the public.

## JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

The City's hiring process begins with a job announcement. All job announcements are posted on the City website at [www.cityofmadison.com/hr/](http://www.cityofmadison.com/hr/), as well as on bulletin boards within individual City agencies. Vacant positions are also announced on the Job Opportunity Line (608-266-6500), which is updated each Friday afternoon.

Positions are posted in a variety of formats, and may restrict who is eligible to apply. An open competitive recruitment means anyone is eligible to apply. Other postings may be limited to a specific group of applicants such as: City employees; employees in a particular bargaining unit; or employees of a particular Department/



## Navigating the City of Madison Hiring Process

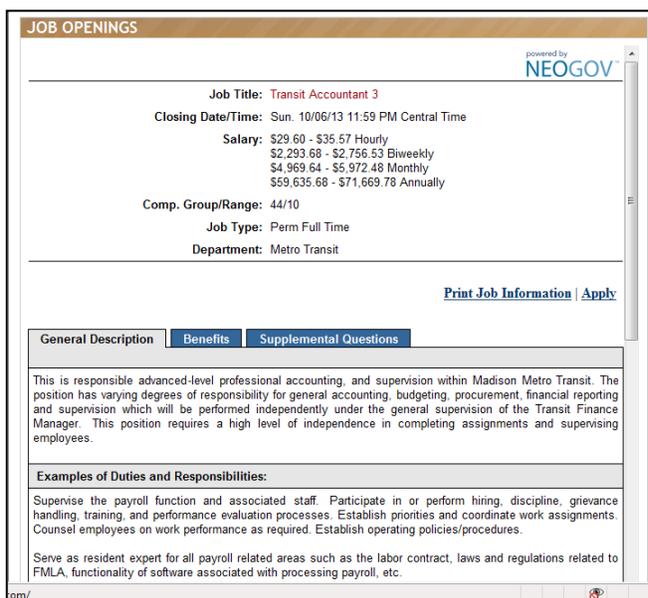
Division. If a job is posted to all applicants, it will be found under the “Job Openings” box on the HR website. Jobs under the “Current City Employee Job Openings” will be restricted to current employees of the City and should not be accessed by the general public. People applying for these jobs who do not fall into the group that is being recruited for (City Employees, Employees of a bargaining unit, etc) will automatically be screened out of the process.

In order to access the job openings, click on the “Job Openings” box on the HR website. At this time, the screen on the right will appear. This screen gives information about the hiring process, and also lists the job openings that are available. The available jobs will be towards the bottom of the screen, depending on the size of the monitor being used. In fact, you may need to scroll within the window to find the job openings.

The first openings will be for permanent positions. The first column lists the position title, followed by the employment type (permanent, acting, limited term, and full-time or part-time), the salary, and the closing date. The closing date is the last date applications will be accepted, and generally the closing time is 11:59 p.m. on the closing date. Scrolling down further within the job opening window will reveal any hourly/seasonal opportunities that are available. The same information will be listed for these postings as for the permanent positions. (City employees can access job openings limited to certain City employees by clicking on the “Current City Employee Job Openings” box, and the same information will be on that screen.)



If there is a job that is appealing, in order to access more detailed information about the position and to apply, simply click on the position title. Doing this will display the full job announcement. The specific details of the position are listed on the job announcement and include:



- Job Title;
- Closing date and time for the posting;
- Salary;
- Compensation Group and Range;
- Job Type - permanent, limited term, full-time, part-time and/or hourly;
- Department/Division;
- General Description—This section will indicate whether the posting is limited to a specific group. If there

is no limiting language here, then the posting is open to all applicants;

- Examples of Duties and Responsibilities;
- Knowledge, Skills and Abilities required for the position;
- Training and Experience – the minimum qualifications required to continue in the selection process; and
- Special Requirements – required licenses or certifications, physical requirements, etc.

Please note that while all positions have training and experience requirements listed, most positions also include language that says “Other combinations of training and/or experience which can be demonstrated to result in the possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the duties of this position will also be considered.” This means that even if you do not possess the required experience or degree, you may still be considered if your work history demonstrates that you otherwise have obtained the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the duties of the position. It is important that your application is detailed enough to

allow the HR Analyst reviewing the position to make that determination.

The screenshot shows the 'CURRENT CITY EMPLOYEE JOB OPENINGS' page. It has tabs for 'General Description', 'Benefits', and 'Supplemental Questions'. A callout box with arrows pointing to the 'Benefits' and 'Supplemental Questions' tabs says 'Sign up for email notification of new job announcements'. The page content includes sections for 'Compensation', 'Benefits', and 'Leave'.

Benefit information associated with the position may also be viewed with the job announcement. Some job announcements may include supplemental questions to be answered by applicants when applying for jobs. The benefits information and/or supplemental questions may be accessed by clicking the respective tab on the job announcement.

The duration of the recruitment period varies and is dependent upon many factors, including labor contract language, level of the position, specialty of the position, and the anticipated number of candidates that are expected to apply for the position. For example, an hourly laborer position that has minimal training and experience requirements can expect to generate well over 100 applicants in a week whereas a specialized high-level manager may not generate 20 candidates in a month.

### Job Interest Cards

Applications are only accepted during the recruitment period. **The City does not accept unsolicited resués.** Individuals are encouraged to complete and submit an electronic Job Interest Card when they are considering employment with the City. This will ensure they are notified via email of vacant positions of interest upon posting. A Job Interest Card can be completed at

The screenshot shows a form titled 'STAY INFORMED ON JOB OPPORTUNITIES' powered by NEOGOV. It contains instructions for selecting job categories and a grid of checkboxes for various categories.

| Select Category                                  | Select All Categories  | Clear All Categories                                   |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting and Finance  | <input type="checkbox"/> Administration                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Assistant      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture            | <input type="checkbox"/> Attorney                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Audit                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Automotive              | <input type="checkbox"/> Building & Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> Building & Safety             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Maintenance    | <input type="checkbox"/> Business                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Clerical & Data Entry         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Code Enforcement        | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Community and Social Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Development   | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Services                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction Maintenance      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction Trades     | <input type="checkbox"/> Court Administration                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Criminology                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Custodial               | <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Database Administration       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Development/Fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity Management/EEO                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Drivers                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development    | <input type="checkbox"/> Elections                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Electronics                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Management    | <input type="checkbox"/> EMS   | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Executive Management    | <input type="checkbox"/> Facility Management                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire & EMS                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fleet Services          | <input type="checkbox"/> Forensics                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Forestry                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Hydrology       | <input type="checkbox"/> Grants Administration                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Arts                  |

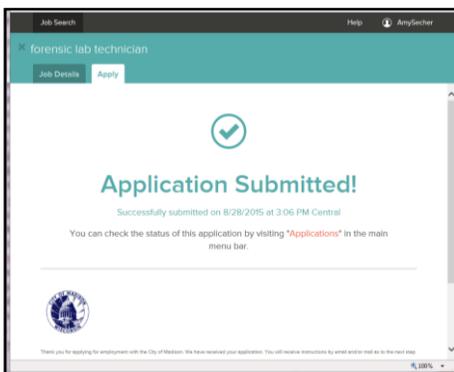
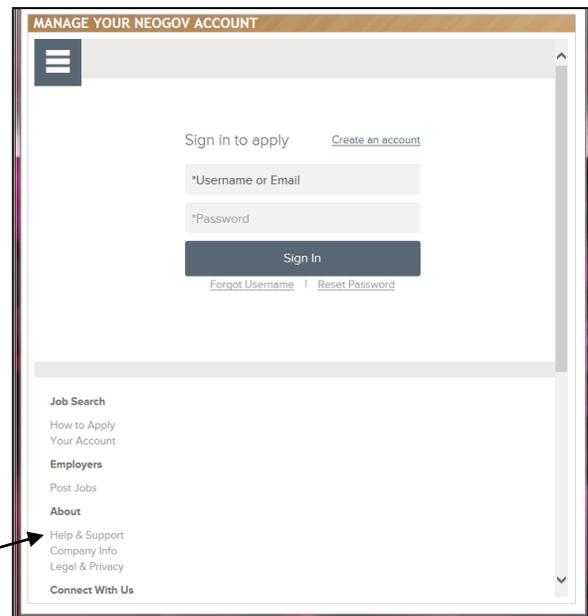
<http://www.cityofmadison.com/HR/employment/StayInformed.cfm> and is valid for one year. Clicking on the box titled “Stay Informed on Job Opportunities” will also bring you to the Job Interest Card screen. Once here, you can select any and all job categories with jobs that you may be interested in and when a job is posted that falls within that particular category, you will receive an email notification.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

### *The NEOGOV Application*

When a position of interest is posted, individuals will apply online. Once in the job announcement, there will be a button called “Apply.” By clicking on this, applicants will be brought to a log-in screen, pictured at the right. First time users must create an online NEOGOV account, and select a Username and Password. You will also be required to provide an email address as part of the set-up process. Numerous free email providers exist, including Google, Yahoo, and Hotmail. This email address will be the way the City contacts you throughout the application process. Detailed instructions on setting up an account and applying for jobs are available in the Online Employment Application Guide which can be found at [www.governmentjobs.com/AgencyInstructions.cfm?&topheader=madisonwi](http://www.governmentjobs.com/AgencyInstructions.cfm?&topheader=madisonwi).

Once an account is established, an application template can be created and saved, which will be available to use in applying for future job openings. While the master profile will ask for a notification preference, paper or email, **the City of Madison will only communicate with applicants via email**. It is important when applying for a job to regularly check your email account that you use to create your NEOGOV account to receive updates of your status in the process.

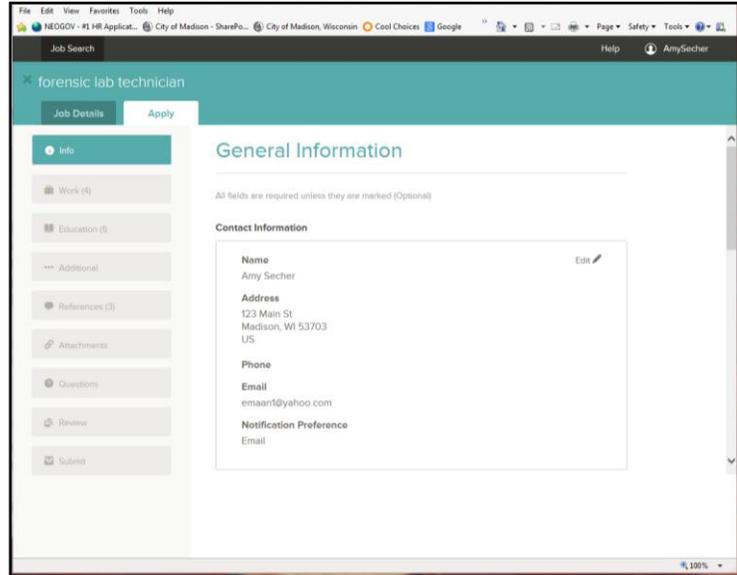


Please be aware that if you just log into NEOGOV without going through the job announcement, you will be invited to create an application template. However, you will not be able to access the application for a particular job opening without pressing the “Apply” button on the actual job announcement. If you create an application template, and you do not receive a message at the end that you have successfully applied for the position (see the message at the left), you have not applied for the job and your application cannot be considered!

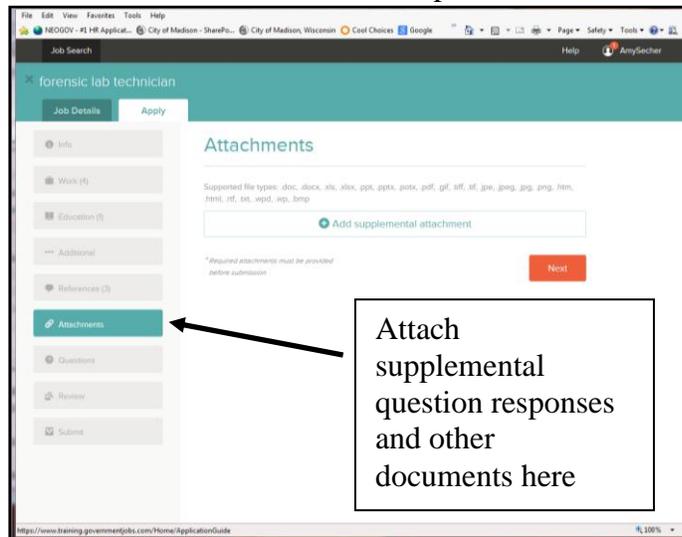
## Navigating the City of Madison Hiring Process

Once you have logged into NEOGOV through the “Apply” button on the job announcement, the job application will appear. The job application generally has a number of sections, including

- Job Application (contact information, personal information, education, work experience, etc.),
- agency-wide questions,
- supplemental questions (if any),
- a confirmation screen where all the information can be reviewed, and
- certification and submittal.



The agency-wide questions may vary by job announcement, and may include information such as criminal history, driving record, veteran status, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) data, etc. Positions may have different agency-wide questions, so even when using an existing application, you will need to go through this step. When you answer the EEO questions, be aware that this information is kept confidential in Human Resources and is not shared with the hiring agency.

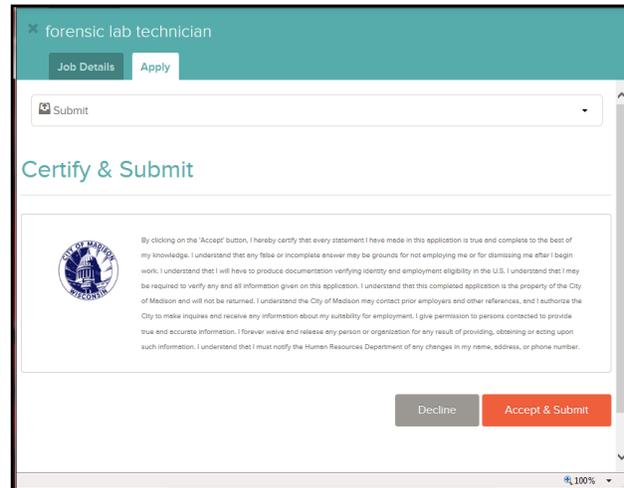


If supplemental questions are asked as part of the application process, it is important to include responses as directed. Some questions require the applicant to attach a written response to their application. These responses can be prepared in Word or other word processor and uploaded to the application. Failure to respond to the required questions at the time of application may disqualify an applicant from continuing in the process. See the “Testing Process” section for more

information on supplemental questions and responses.

Once you have completed all sections of the application, you will be given the opportunity to review the application. Following that, you will be shown the notice to the right and asked to accept. This notice confirms, among other things, that you have provided truthful and accurate information on the application. False information on the application will be grounds for removal from the selection process (and may bar you from future applications). Finally, while you may be able to submit more than one application during the period of the job announcement, only the

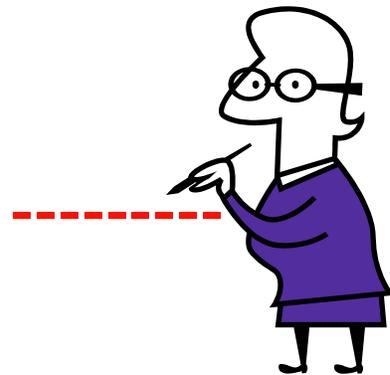
application that is submitted closest to the closing date of the job announcement will be considered. This does allow you to go back and attach documents if you forgot the first time, such as supplemental question responses. Once you click “Accept,” your application is submitted and you will receive the notice shown on page 4. Again, if you do not receive this notice, you have not applied for the position. If you click “Decline,” your application will not be submitted or considered as part of the selection process.



### *Completing the Application*

Here are some tips to keep in mind when filling out your job application:

- Be thorough, listing all relevant education, work and/or volunteer experiences, training, skills, certifications and references, highlighting duties and responsibilities that are pertinent to the position being sought.
- Include specific dates of employment, including month and year, as well as detailed job duties.
- If you are applying for a position that is in a restricted category, such as bargaining unit, your application must include the position that shows you are a member of the restricted category. Do not assume that Human Resources is aware of where each of the City’s over 3000 permanent and hourly employees work.
- Complete every line on the application, thoroughly responding to every question exactly as requested.
- Be sure to proofread the application and correct any typos.
- It is best to contact in advance anyone who you are considering listing as a reference to verify their willingness to provide the reference and to ask what they would say if you use them for a reference. An unwilling or unaware individual may not provide the most favorable reference.
- Since you are able to reuse your existing applications for newly announced positions, it is important to verify all information in the application before submitting it each time to ensure completeness, accuracy and relevancy. You may also want to update the objective field. Any new skills, education or experience should be added. Attachments, such as answers to supplemental questions from prior job announcements, should be removed when applying for a new position.
- If you want to update your application after submitting it, but prior to the closing date, you may submit another application with the updated information. However, HR will only consider the most recent application in the system when evaluating for the position’s minimum requirements. **Once the job announcement is closed, however, you are not able to edit the application you submitted for that particular job.**



You will be evaluated to determine whether you are minimally qualified for the position based on this application, and the information you include or exclude, and the appearance of the finished product set the tone for the entire selection process. Your application provides a first impression of you as an employee, and that impression stays throughout the process. Hiring managers will review the submitted application materials and see the effort put forth while applying for the position, which may be viewed as a reflection of an applicant's motivation and engagement.

In addition to filling out the NEOGOV application, you have the ability to attach relevant documents to your application, such as cover letters or resumés. While not generally required, if you choose to attach a cover letter and/or resumé, the cover letter and resumé should not include photos or personal information, such as marital status, children, age, height, weight, race, religious beliefs, hobbies, etc. Only job-related information should be included.

### ***Cover Letter***

Although not required, you may want to provide a cover letter to express interest in the position and the City as an employer, to highlight relevant information about yourself, and to explain why you would be a good candidate for the position. Many times, if your work experience isn't directly related to the position you are applying for, a cover letter can be a good way to explain why you meet the minimum qualifications for the position.

It is important that your cover letter is tailored to the job for which you are applying. A standard cover letter shows you are not serious about the position whereas a cover letter that discusses the actual job and your qualifications demonstrates your interest in the position. Also, you should ensure cover letters from prior recruitment processes are deleted and replaced with an updated one. And again, it is important to proofread your cover letter and correct any typos. A list of websites that provide information about cover letters is provided in Appendix A.

### ***Resumé***

Similar to the cover letter, a resumé is not required to apply for a position. However many applicants have a resumé and want to include it with their application. If you choose to attach a resumé, it is not necessary to also complete the text Resumé section of the application, especially if the information is the same. Providing both formats may lengthen the screening process by Human Resources and delay the process.



Resumés are typically one page in length and no greater than two pages for applicants possessing extensive relevant experience. Similar to a cover letter, your resumé should also be tailored to the position for which you are applying. Never include a resumé that is not current and missing vital changes in your employment history. It is not necessary to list every job you have had, especially if the positions are unrelated to the current open position. For instance, jobs you held in high school or college may not be relevant 20 years later. Rather, the resumé should highlight your relevant positions and the duties and responsibilities that are directly applicable to the job for which

you are now applying. Resumés should be in a format that allows the reader to easily find relevant information. If you have relevant work experience, that should be listed first. Conversely, if you have no relevant work experience, then your related education and training should be listed first. Once again, it is important to proofread your resumé and correct any typos. A list of websites that provide more detailed information about creating a resumé is provided in Appendix A.

### **SCREENING PROCESS**

Once applications are submitted, the process of screening applications is conducted by Human Resources. All applications are initially reviewed to determine if applicants are eligible to apply for the position and if applicants have submitted all the required application materials, such as responding to supplemental questions. Human Resources also verifies that applicants meet any age, license and/or other special requirements. The applicants not meeting these requirements will be screened out and notified of their status via email.

Human Resources then thoroughly reviews the remaining applications to determine who meets the minimum requirements listed in the job posting. The Training and Experience requirements are evaluated first. Your qualifications, as listed on your application, are compared to the training and experience requirements listed in the job announcement to determine if you meet the minimum standards in terms of education and/or experience to continue in the selection process. It is extremely important for you to provide detailed duties and responsibilities for each job listed on your application. While it may seem obvious what an Accountant does, Human Resources still needs to review the actual duties and responsibilities of each position to ensure that they line up with the training and experience requirements. Human Resources staff is not able to assume what the job duties are just based on a job title, and you may be screened out even if you otherwise possess the minimum requirements if your application is not clear. Also, just because you work for the City, do not assume that Human Resources staff is aware of your specific duties and responsibilities. Rather, without a detailed listing of your job duties, you may be screened out of the process if Human Resources staff cannot tell from the application whether you meet the minimum training and experience requirements.

If you do not meet the specific training and experience requirements from the job posting, then Human Resources staff will evaluate your application based on the knowledge, skills and abilities listed in the job posting. At this point, Human Resources staff will rely on the duties and responsibilities you list on your job application to determine if you possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities listed on the job announcement. Therefore, it is especially important for those applicants who do not directly meet the training and experience requirements to have a thorough description of the duties of each relevant job so that Human Resources can perform this second evaluation.

In order to perform this second evaluation, Human Resources staff will review the job duties for relevant positions and determine whether, through the work experience, you would possess the required knowledge, skills, and ability even though you do not have the required combination of education or experience. As shown in the job announcement on the following page, knowledge can be listed at three different levels:

|   |
|---|
| <b>Minimum Qualifications:</b>  |
| <b>Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:</b>   |
| Thorough knowledge of directly related general accounting/financial theories, principles and practices. Working knowledge of revenue/expense forecasting principles and techniques. Working knowledge of related information system applications. Working knowledge of municipal accounting. Working knowledge of budgeting principles and practices. Working knowledge of and ability to use computer software applicable to the duties of the position. Knowledge of staff supervision and scheduling practices and techniques. Ability to supervise, schedule, and evaluate assigned staff. Ability to establish policies and procedures. Ability to assist program managers in the development of capital improvement plan budgets. Ability to administer/reconcile/balance accounts, to provide all related coordination; to anticipate and respond to audit requirements (including cash handling activities); and to prepare diverse accounting/financial reports. Ability to administer the capital procurement and fixed asset systems. Ability to assist in the development of Capital and Operating budgets. Ability to develop complex accounting systems and procedures. Ability to provide required training and coordination. Ability to plan, coordinate, organize and implement assigned work activities. Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing. Ability to maintain effective working relationships with co-workers, subordinates, other City employees, and the public. Ability to work independently with minimal guidance. Ability to maintain adequate attendance. |
| <b>Training and Experience:</b>   |
| Four years of directly related professional accounting experience. Such experience would normally be gained after graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree in Accounting or a degree in a related program, including completion of accounting major coursework. Other combinations of training and/or experience which can be demonstrated to result in the possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform the duties of this position will also be considered.   |

- *Knowledge* refers to the fact that the incumbent/applicant should be familiar with the concept being described;
- *Working Knowledge* refers to the fact that the incumbent/applicant has been in positions that would have required application of the concept for at least two years; and
- *Thorough Knowledge* refers to the fact that the incumbent/applicant has applied the concept for at least four

years and could teach/explain the concept to others.

So when screening for the above position, if an applicant does not possess a bachelor's degree in Accounting or a related field, the Human Resources staff will still review the applicant's job history, and duties and responsibilities to determine whether the candidate would possess the level of knowledge listed. An applicant who has an associate's degree in bookkeeping, but has worked for 10 years as a professional accountant in a municipal setting performing forecasting, and budgeting would likely still be screened into the process, even without meeting the specific training and experience requirements.

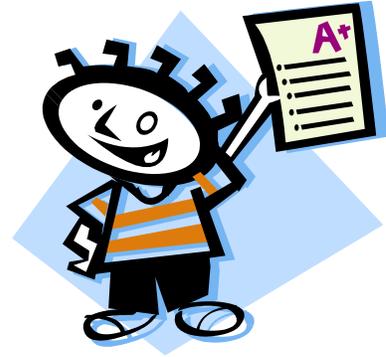
If, after reviewing for training and experience, and reviewing to determine if the knowledge, skills, and abilities are met, you do not meet the requirements, you will be screened out and notified of your status via email. You then have five business days to provide additional information if you feel you are qualified (see below). This is why it is important to frequently check your email account during a hiring process as this time limit is strictly enforced. The time limit starts from the time the email is generated by Human Resources, not from when you actually read the email.

### **NOT MINIMALLY QUALIFIED**

Applicants have a right to contest exclusion from the selection process. An applicant eliminated from consideration at any time in the selection process will be notified by email. An applicant may contest exclusion from the selection process by replying to the rejection email with the reasons why the applicant believes s/he should not have been eliminated from the process. This email must be received within five business days from the date of the notice informing the applicant of her/his elimination from the process. Time is of the essence as the recruitment/selection process will continue during this time. Upon receipt of such a request, the Human Resources Director or designee will review the application and supplemental information and determine whether to uphold the initial determination or whether to restore the applicant to the selection process. The applicant will be notified of the final determination by email within another five business days. The decision of the Human Resources Director or designee will be final, and an applicant will have no further rights to contest the decision.

## EXAM PROCESS

Because the City operates under a Civil Service system, as discussed in the introduction, Civil Service Exams are used to rank candidates for a particular position. The Civil Service Exam is a test designed to evaluate a candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities in performing the duties of a vacant position and to ensure that selection is based upon merit. As such, exams are developed based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of the position as listed in the job announcement. Human Resources works in connection with the appropriate Departments/Divisions to create relevant exams and scoring criteria. All exam questions are job-related.



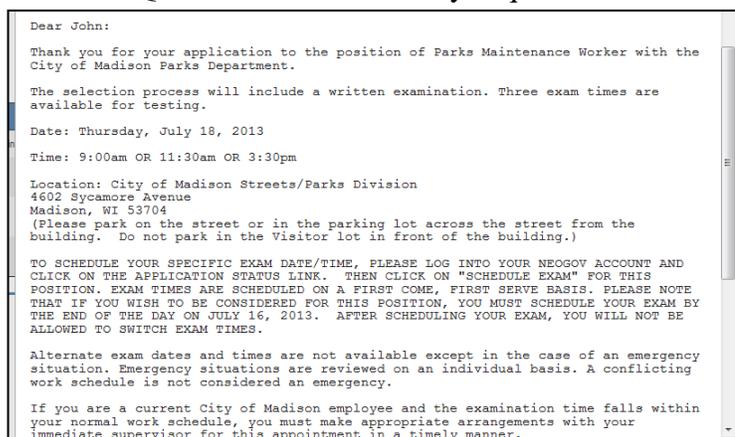
While this manual provides information relative to the City's testing process, for additional information, including test taking tips and sample questions, please see the "Introduction to Wisconsin State Government Employment Examinations" at [http://wisc.jobs/public/links\\_summary\\_page.asp?catid=85](http://wisc.jobs/public/links_summary_page.asp?catid=85). Although some of the information in the State guide may not be directly applicable to the City's testing process, many of the "Strategies to Prepare for In-Person Examinations" and sample multiple choice questions are relevant.

The City administers several different types of exams, depending upon the type of position. It is possible a position may have more than one exam. In such cases, weights are established as appropriate for each exam.

If there is a significantly large number of candidates eligible to test and minimal vacancies available, random selection may be utilized to limit the number of candidates invited to test. In those cases, all City candidates will be included in the exam pool. This method is most common when recruiting for entry-level positions. If random selection will be considered, this information will be included in the job announcement.

Candidates who are invited to an exam will be given at least five business days notice before an exam. Notices are sent to candidates via email (See the sample below). Depending upon the process, candidates may be allowed to self-schedule their exams through NEOGOV, selecting a date and time that works within their schedule. Qualified candidates may request a reasonable accommodation for testing purposes. Instructions for requesting a reasonable accommodation are provided with the exam invitation notice.

Candidates are required to bring picture identification and sign in for all exams. Once an exam has started, candidates will not be allowed to enter the exam room. Make-up exams are only administered in



emergency situations and are reviewed on a case by case basis. It is the candidate's responsibility to make this request in a timely manner (as quickly as possible) so that the recruitment process is not unduly delayed.

Generally, candidates must pass each separate exam component (written/performance) with a passing score; failing one exam component means failing the exam process. A passing score is 50% or higher. Candidates will be notified of their exam results via email. All candidates passing the exam(s) are placed on an eligibility list.

No candidate will be permitted to review scored exams in accordance with the City of Madison Personnel Rules.

## EXAM TYPES

### *Written Exam*

This type of exam may be in the form of multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank or essay, and may be administered by paper/pencil and scantron, or using computerized testing software. A Written Exam is one of the most common types of tests used with union represented positions. Some non-represented positions may also have a written exam.

### *Performance Exam*

This is an exam where candidates are evaluated based on how they physically perform certain job-related tasks. A keyboarding test is a performance exam commonly used with administrative and clerical positions. A number of other positions may also include a performance exam, such as Lifeguards, Firefighters, and Local 236 promotional processes. Many times, a performance exam will be combined with another exam, such as a written exam.

### *Comparative Analysis/Resumé Screen/Application Assessment*

This exam process is most commonly used for hourly positions. It is a method used to compare qualifications of candidates based upon the submitted application/resumé only. Objective criteria are developed before screening begins in order to compare the applications. Criteria are directly related to the Training and Experience, and Knowledge, Skills and Abilities requirements. Under this testing process, candidates who otherwise meet the minimum qualifications for the position may not move forward in the selection process based on the comparative evaluation, as only the **most qualified** candidates will proceed.

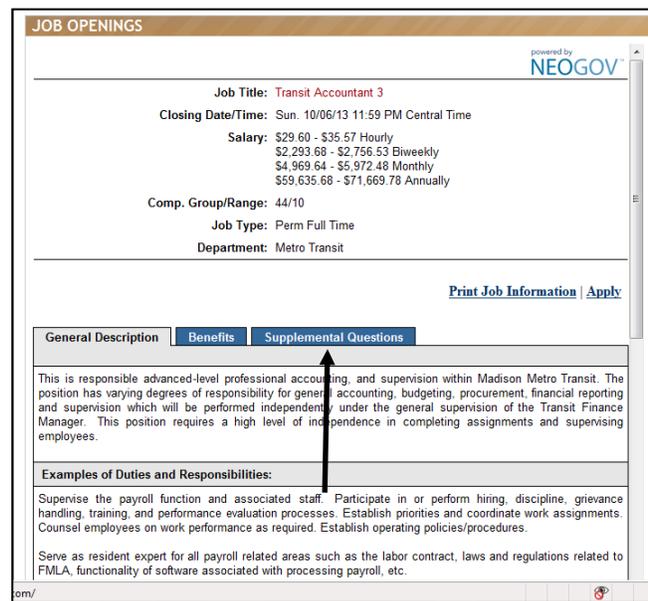


For example, an hourly clerical position may only require as a minimum qualification that an applicant work in an office environment for 6 months. However, since a large number of applicants will likely meet this minimum qualification, criteria for comparative analysis may be developed to include the number of years an applicant has worked in an office, with more years being given greater points, as well as points being assigned based on the type of duties performed as indicated on the job announcement. An applicant who merely lists a job title with dates of employment, but

gives no detailed explanation of the duties will perform poorly in this type of examination, compared to someone who thoroughly lists their job duties and emphasizes those found in the job announcement. Both may meet the minimum qualifications, but the second candidate will likely move on to an interview as compared to the first applicant. Therefore, having complete information on your application is critical to ensuring that you are given full credit for your qualifications under this type of exam.

### ***Supplemental Questions/Achievement History Questionnaire (AHQ)***

This is an exam where a candidate’s qualifications for a particular position are assessed through written narrative fashion. It is commonly used with non-represented professional positions where more information about particular qualifications is desired than a resumé/application would provide. The non-routine nature of the work makes a written exam less appropriate. Candidates will submit responses to standardized questions either at the time of application (Supplemental Questions), or in rare instances following the application screening process (AHQ). Human Resources, in conjunction with the Department/Division with the vacancy, is responsible for creating specific benchmarks with corresponding scores. These benchmarks will be used to score the candidate responses. **A candidate’s writing and grammar skills will also be evaluated.** Responses are typically scored by a diverse group of subject matter experts with experience in the field.



In most cases, supplemental questions will be asked as part of the application process. Because the NEOGOV application system allows applicants to upload documents, as described earlier, applicants should use a word processing program to create responses to the questions, and then upload the document as part of the application. This way, applicants can take their time in responding thoroughly to the questions. Again, if a job announcement has supplemental questions, the questions may be accessed under the “Supplemental Questions” tab in the job announcement.

### ***Oral Board***

This exam process is used to assess a candidate’s qualifications for a particular position through oral questions, similar to an interview. Oral Boards occur before a diverse panel of subject matter experts with experience in the field, and in addition to the candidate’s knowledge, skills, and/or abilities, the candidate’s oral communication skills are also evaluated. This exam is most often used for Department head and high-level professional positions. Similar to supplemental questions, Human Resources works in connection with the appropriate Departments/Divisions to create questions and benchmarks for scoring the questions. The results from this exam are then used to determine who would be referred for interview. Since Department Head positions are not technically civil service positions, the Oral Board for a Department Head position only can

determine who is sent forward for referral, and this is generally based on consensus, and not strictly based on score.

### ELIGIBILITY LIST

An eligibility list consists of candidates who have successfully completed and passed the applicable civil service exam(s), and are deemed qualified and eligible for referral to the hiring manager.

Candidates are placed on an eligibility list in rank order. A candidate's rank is determined by calculating their final weighted test score and adding any applicable veteran's and seniority points. This becomes the candidate's final total score.

Candidates must provide proof of veteran's status by submitting their Form DD-214 before the testing process concludes in order for it to be considered. Human Resources will evaluate the documentation and determine if points should be applied and if so, how many. Points are only added for those candidates with passing test scores and who are not currently permanent City employees. Points may not be used in order for a candidate to secure a passing exam score.

In accordance with labor agreements, some positions may require the addition of applicable seniority points for current represented employees. The number of points to be added is outlined in the labor agreement.

The eligibility list is used to fill the current position and may be used to fill other vacancies that arise within six months. Eligibility lists may be extended beyond six months for up to two and a half years when deemed appropriate by the Human Resources Director. For positions represented by Local 60, if an eligibility list is going to be created, the job announcement will include language to that effect. **If you are potentially interested in a position in that classification, but not necessarily the one specifically listed in the job announcement, you must apply anyway to be considered for other vacancies that arise while the eligibility list is active.**

### REFERRAL

Human Resources will refer the top ranked candidates from the eligibility list to the hiring agency for interview. Referrals are made in accordance with applicable labor agreements and the Personnel Rules. A candidate's rank has significance only in that it allows a candidate to be referred for an interview. It does not imply any preference for the final selection.

### INTERVIEW PROCESS

Thank you for your participation in the examination process for Parks Maintenance Worker with the City of Madison Parks Department.

You received a score of 82.7% on your examination. The maximum possible score on the examination was 100%. As a result of the selection process and with the proper distribution of seniority and veterans points, you received a final rank of 2.

In accordance with AFSOCME Local 60 Hiring Procedures, we have certified you to the Parks Department for final consideration. Please contact Mr. Craig Klinko at [redacted] to make arrangements for an employment interview. You must contact Mr. Klinko no later than five working days from the date of this notice if you wish to be considered for this position.

Candidates requiring an accommodation for the interview process should notify the Parks Department when scheduling the interview appointment.

Your rank is significant only in that it allows you to be certified for an employment interview. It does not imply departmental preference for final selection. Your name has been placed on an eligibility list for the position of

Candidates are advised of their referral for interview in notices sent via email. Candidates have five business days from the time the notice is generated in NEOGOV to contact the hiring agency to schedule an interview. Any candidate who is not interested in the

current position, but wishes to remain on the eligibility list for future vacancies, must contact Human Resources or the Hiring Department. If contact is not made and no interview is scheduled, the candidate will be removed from the eligibility list and will not be considered for subsequent position vacancies.

Qualified candidates may request a reasonable accommodation for the interview process. Instructions for requesting a reasonable accommodation are provided with the referral/interview notice.

Job interviews are usually formal and often stressful for candidates. Depending upon the level of the position, they can last from 15 minutes to a couple of hours. Hiring agencies may schedule a single interview or may elect to have a screening interview for all candidates, followed by a final interview with only the top candidates. Interview panels are often used in a screening interview and consist of multiple subject matter experts who evaluate the responses from the candidates. The panel members will then come to a consensus on the top candidates for final interview.

It is important to remember an interview is the time to “promote” yourself as an employee to the hiring agency explaining why you are the best candidate for the position and what you can contribute to the City. As such, it is important for you as a candidate to prepare before you arrive for your interview. In most cases, the interview panel will be scoring candidates on their responses. Therefore, the more detail you can provide in a response, the better you are likely to do in the interview. If you find you are answering questions with only one sentence, you likely are not giving the interview panel enough information to separate you from the other candidates. Rambling, as opposed to clear, concise responses, may indicate that you are unable to gather your thoughts effectively. It is better to pause before answering the question to think about your response and provide a complete answer than to start speaking without a clear goal in mind.

This section will include information for you to consider before the interview, during the interview, and following the interview.

### ***Before the Interview - Advance Preparation***

- Review the job announcement to ensure you fully understand the job duties and responsibilities of the position.
- Review your qualifications, application, and resumé, and identify major accomplishments, projects and results. Be sure you can fully describe each item listed on your application/resumé. Remember that you may be asked questions about your application so it is important to remember what it is you have submitted.
- Be prepared to describe your education, training and/or experience, showing how it relates to the position. For each job duty and responsibility on the job announcement, be able to provide an example or two from your work history or education.
- Be aware of the different types of interview questions you may be asked:
  - *Behavioral* – Behavioral interview questions are designed to identify a candidate’s actual behaviors and choices based on his/her behavior in similar past situations. This type of interviewing process requires candidates to respond to scenarios by drawing on specific experiences in their past and identifying how

they managed similar situations. These questions are designed around specific competencies that are required to perform the work of the position. Candidates may find the S.T.A.R. approach useful in responding to these types of questions.



**S**ituation – State the *Situation*; this provides background.

**T**ask – Explain the *Task*; this could be a problem or a project.

**A**ction – Describe the *Action*; any action taken directly by you.

**R**esult – Describe the *Result*; highlight successes.

Candidates should provide a sufficient amount of detail so the interviewers understand the applicability and connection between the candidate's experience and the employer's position. Be sure to also specifically describe your role in the example you provide. Additionally, if you do not have a specific example that applies to the question asked, then you may draw a correlation to a similar type of situation and explain how, given your past experience, you would address the question at hand.

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions are provided in Appendix B.

- *Traditional* – Many interviewers tend to ask standard questions that could be asked of candidates for most positions. Prepare answers to these traditional questions in advance so you do not need to formulate a response on the spot and can focus more on the behavioral questions.

Sample Traditional Interview Questions are provided in Appendix C, along with considerations when answering them.

- Practice mock interviews with friends or family members, or videotape yourself. Ask for feedback on how you can improve your interview skills and style.
- Research the City and/or the specific department. View the City's website, review any literature, and search for relevant newspaper/online articles. Ask questions of current employees if you know any.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask the interviewer.
  - Why is the position open?
    - Why did the person who held this position most recently leave?
    - How often has the position been filled in the past five years?
    - What have been the primary reasons for employees leaving?
  - What significant changes do you foresee in the near future?
  - What would a typical work day be like?
  - What are some of the objectives to accomplish in this job?
    - What challenges lie in the first 3 to 6 months?
    - What are the long-term challenges?
  - How does this job relate to the overall goals of the department or City?



- What freedom would I have in determining my work objectives, deadlines and methods of measurement?
- What kind of support does this position receive in terms of people, finances, etc.?
- Does this position work as part of a team or more independently?
- Who is the supervisor?
- Where does this position fall in the organizational structure?
- How does the supervisor like staff to communicate with him/her? Orally, in writing, informally, in meetings, only when necessary?
- How would you describe the working atmosphere where this position is?
- Why is this a great place to work?
- What opportunities are there for professional development?
- What opportunities for advancement are there for a person who is successful in this position and within what time frame?
- Prepare copies of your resumé and list of references. Provide these to the interviewers upon request.
- Plan your attire – dress professionally for any level of position.
- Physical Appearance Considerations, etc.
  - Dress a level or two above what would be required if you got the job (avoid wearing t-shirts, jeans, shorts, etc.).
  - Wear well-maintained (pressed and clean) attire.
  - Wear well-fitted attire, not too tight or loose.
  - Polish shoes, if applicable.
  - Be well groomed, proper hygiene.
  - Avoid excessive cologne/ perfume/ makeup/ jewelry.
  - Avoid pungent foods prior to interview (garlic, tuna, onions, etc.).
  - Don't chew gum.
- Get plenty of sleep the night before the interview so you are alert and functioning at your best. Yawning could be viewed as a lack of interest, motivation and/or preparation.
- Know where the interview is, how to get there, how long it takes to get there and where available parking is located. Prior to your interview date, it's imperative that you know exactly where you're going so you can get there on time. Make a trial run of the actual trip if you are unsure of the timing. Be timely for the interview, arriving early 10 to 15 minutes. However, do not arrive more than 15 minutes before your interview time as the people in the department have other work going on and may not appreciate candidates "camping" in the lobby.
- Turn off all electronic equipment, such as a cell phone. A distraction such as this can not only hinder your thought process, but it indicates a lack of courtesy and planning on your part.
- Go into the interview alone. Family members and friends should not accompany you into the interview office. If someone gives you a ride to the interview, they should make plans to go somewhere else during the actual interview and not wait in the lobby of the office.



- Be patient, pleasant and professional with all reception staff. Rude or inappropriate behavior will likely be conveyed to the hiring manager.
- If you are provided a copy of the interview questions in advance, be sure to review all the questions, ensuring you are familiar with all parts of each question. Then, take some notes about information you want to cover during the interview itself. This will help you to keep your thoughts in order when you are in the actual interview.

### ***During the Interview - Communication***

Use words, tone of voice and visual image to communicate your confidence, credibility, trustworthiness, intelligence, experience and education.

In any interview, you communicate on at least three levels. Be aware what you convey to the interviewers.

- 7% is through the actual words you use to convey information (verbal).
- 38% is communicated through tone, pitch, volume, rate (vocal).
- 55% is conveyed through your clothing, eye contact, gestures, body posture, and facial expressions (visual).

#### DOs

- Shake hands firmly.
- Introduce yourself.
- Exhibit a positive attitude.
- Be professional.
- Smile and use good manners.
- Show interest and enthusiasm, be attentive.
- Use good posture, sit up.
- Use good eye contact with all interviewers.
- Exhibit confidence, be careful about being overly self-assured.
- Listen carefully and be sure to answer all parts of the question.
- Use proper grammar, no slang.
- Speak clearly in a good friendly tone.
- Answer questions in full rather than simply nodding or saying “yes” or “no.” Give examples.
- Allow time for note taking by the interviewers.
- Be truthful; Answer questions honestly; Don’t exaggerate.
- Be positive about former employers.

#### DON’Ts

- Look at a clock or your watch.
- Engage in distracting habits (hair twirling, pen clicking, leg bouncing, coin jingling, knuckle cracking, biting nails, excessive hand/arm gestures, gum chewing, etc.).

- Engage in too much pre-interview chit chat.
- Try to control the interview, allow the panel to lead.
- Assume the panel knows your qualifications and all of your job duties when answering the questions. You may be a City employee and a panel member may work with you, but the panel can only rate your qualifications based on your interview responses and information provided on your application/ resumé/ cover letter. While you may bring additional materials to the interview, they should be job related, and the panel will decide whether to accept the information.
- Spend too much time answering one question. Get to the point and stay on track.



### ***Conclusion of Interview***

- Ask what the next step is in the process and the approximate timing.
- Ask the questions you prepared in advance regarding the position. Do not expect to have more than five minutes to ask your questions. If you have more questions than that, ask if you can talk to someone at another time to get more information so that the interview panel can stay on its' schedule.
- Reaffirm to them your interest in the position.
- Thank the interviewers for their time.
- Shake hands firmly with each interviewer.

### ***Following the Interview***

- Contact your references immediately and notify them of your status with respect to the position. Briefly explain the position to them, so they are prepared to respond to questions.
- Respond timely to phone calls and/or messages regarding the position. This will show your level of interest in the position. Make sure your voice mail greeting is professional.
- Make notes from the interview so you remember pertinent information about the position, department, employer and/or interviewers.
- Send a Thank You note/email.



## **JOB OFFER**

When the hiring manager has identified the candidate(s) to be hired, reference checks will be performed and Human Resources will complete any applicable criminal background and driving checks. If a pre-employment medical or drug/alcohol test is required, these will be scheduled following a conditional offer of employment. Once all checks are cleared, the hiring manager may make the official offer of employment to the selected candidate(s). The hiring manager will discuss the salary, start date and any other applicable information related to the position and hire. Candidates should be sure to ask any questions they may have before accepting a job offer. It is acceptable to ask the hiring manager if you can take a day to consider the offer.

## **CONCLUSION**

Thanks for your interest in employment with the City of Madison. Hopefully the information in this guide is useful as you navigate your way through our civil service hiring process. If you have any questions regarding this process, please call Human Resources at (608) 266-4615. Good luck!



## APPENDIX A – INTERNET RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPING COVER LETTERS AND RESUMÉS<sup>1</sup>

### Cover Letters

[www.cover-letter-now.com](http://www.cover-letter-now.com)

[www.myperfectcoverletter.com](http://www.myperfectcoverletter.com)

[www.jobsearchjimmy.com/coverlettertips](http://www.jobsearchjimmy.com/coverlettertips)

[jobsearch.about.com/od/coverlettersamples/a/coverlettsample.htm](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverlettersamples/a/coverlettsample.htm)

[www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Cover-Letter](http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Cover-Letter)

### Resumés

[www.resumé-now.com](http://www.resumé-now.com)

[myfuture.com/careers/tools-checklists/resumé-builder?campaign\\_id=SEM2013:on:google:Resumé\\_Builder:job\\_resumé\\_samples:Broad](http://myfuture.com/careers/tools-checklists/resumé-builder?campaign_id=SEM2013:on:google:Resumé_Builder:job_resumé_samples:Broad)

[www.smartresuméwizard.com](http://www.smartresuméwizard.com)

[jobsearch.about.com/od/resumés/Resumés.htm](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/resumés/Resumés.htm)

[www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Resumé](http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Resumé)

[susanireland.com/resumé/how-to-write/](http://susanireland.com/resumé/how-to-write/)

---

<sup>1</sup> The City of Madison does not endorse any specific website and is merely providing this list as a resource for applicants.

## **APPENDIX B – SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

- Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion. What happened?
- Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree. How did you handle it?
- Please discuss an important written document you were required to complete.
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks. How did you do this?
- Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split second decision.
- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
- Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
- Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year. What was the outcome?
- Give me an example of a time when something you tried to accomplish and failed.
- Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
- Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker. How did you resolve the situation?
- Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
- Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
- Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
- Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
- Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
- Please tell me about a time you had to fire a friend.
- Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).
- Tell me about a time when you felt most engaged at your last job. What were you working on and why did you feel engaged at that time?

Note: The above questions were obtained at Quintessential Careers: [http://www.quintcareers.com/sample\\_behavioral.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/sample_behavioral.html). Additional questions may be found on the State of Arizona website at <http://www.careercenter.az.gov/userfiles/file/SAMPLE%20BEHAVIORAL%20INTERVIEW%20QUESTIONS.pdf>.

## APPENDIX C – SAMPLE TRADITIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

| Interviewer’s Question   | Considerations When Answering   |
|--|---|
| Tell me about yourself.  | Don’t spend too much time answering (only 1-2 minutes). Provide an overview of your background, avoid details, don’t ramble.<br>Touch on these areas:<br>Education/Training/Work Experience<br>Current Situation/Position   |
| What do you know about our organization/department?  | Highlight mission, products, services, revenues, problems, people and history.  |
| In your current or last position, what were your most significant accomplishments?                       | Share accomplishments that can relate to the position you are seeking.  |
| Why do you wish to leave your present position?  | Focus on what you want in your next position. Refer to an opportunity for growth and learning.  |
| Would you describe a few situations in which your work was criticized?                                   | Give only one and tell how you have corrected or plan to correct your work.   |
| If I spoke with your previous boss, what would he or she say are your greatest strengths and weaknesses? | Be consistent with what you think they would say as a reference. Position the weakness in a positive way.   |
| How would your co-workers describe you?  | Refer to your strengths and skills.   |
| What are your strengths?   | Present at least three. Relate them to the job opening.   |
| What are your weak points?   | Don’t say you have none; give only one and show how you are improving it. Position it in a positive answer like, “I am sometimes impatient and do the work myself when we are working against tight deadlines. I have taken a course on time management to improve in this area.” |
| In your current or last position, what features did you like most? Least?                                | Be prepared with a list of “likes” about your jobs. Give only one dislike and make it brief.  |
| What do you look for in a job?   | Use information from above to discuss the ideal job.  |
| Describe what would be an ideal working environment?   | Share your ideal job and environment, and relate them to that particular employer.  |
| How would you evaluate your present department and your role?  | Be positive. Refer to the valuable experience you have gained.  |
| Why do you want to work in a department of this size? Of this type?                                      | Refer to ideal job and the goals you have. Explain how this size or type of department works well for you.  |

| Interviewer's Question   | Considerations When Answering   |
|--|---|
| What are you doing or what have you done to reach your career objectives?                        | Talk about formal studies, workshops, seminars. Also talk about reading, mentors, advisors.   |
| What would you do for us?  | Relate past experience which represents success in solving problems and which may be similar to those of the employer.  |
| Why do you want to work here?  | Align your response with the mission/vision/goals of the employer. State what attracts you to the job.  |
| How much money did you ever account for? Largest budget responsibility?                          | If you haven't had budget responsibility, say so, but refer to an accomplishment that demonstrates the same skill or a personal responsibility.   |
| In your present position, what problems have you identified that had previously been overlooked? | Share your accomplishments.   |
| Give an example of how you have been creative.   | Share an accomplishment.  |
| Give examples of times when you were a leader.   | Provide examples from your professional experience, if possible. Personal experiences may also be shared.   |
| What are your goals in your career?  | Talk first about doing the job for which you are applying, then talk about longer range plans.  |
| What position do you expect to have in two years?  | Discuss promotional desires and opportunities.  |
| What are your objectives?<br>What are your long- and short-term goals?                           | Long range: Keep long range answers fairly general. Short range: Be more specific; talk about a position like this with growth opportunities, maybe having more responsibilities or moving into management. |
| Why should we hire you?  | Summarize your experiences. Provide an overview of your experiences matching them to the requirements of the job.   |

Additional questions may be found on the State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development website at: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/publications/dwsj/pdf/DWSJ-9406-P.pdf>.

## RESOURCES

“Hidden Elements of Interviewing,” Wisconsin Job Center  
([dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/publications/dwsj/pdf/detj\\_9484\\_P.pdf](http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/publications/dwsj/pdf/detj_9484_P.pdf))

“Keys to Successful Interviewing,” Wisconsin Job Center  
([dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/publications/dwsj/pdf/detj\\_6951\\_p.pdf](http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/publications/dwsj/pdf/detj_6951_p.pdf))

“Questions, Questions, Questions,” Wisconsin Job Center  
([dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/publications/dwsj/pdf/DWSJ-9406-P.pdf](http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/publications/dwsj/pdf/DWSJ-9406-P.pdf))

“Career Center Job Search Guide,” State of Arizona Career Center  
([www.careercenter.az.gov/userfiles/file/Revised%20Job%20Search%20Guide%20JP%204-2011.pdf](http://www.careercenter.az.gov/userfiles/file/Revised%20Job%20Search%20Guide%20JP%204-2011.pdf))

“Interviewing Strategies & Techniques” State of Arizona Career Center  
([www.careercenter.az.gov/userfiles/file/Interviewing%20Module%20Final\(1\).pdf](http://www.careercenter.az.gov/userfiles/file/Interviewing%20Module%20Final(1).pdf))

“Behavioral Interviewing: A Competency-Based Selection Process,” Zero-Risk HR, Inc.  
Training Materials March, 2011.  
([www.ZERORISKHR.com](http://www.ZERORISKHR.com))

“Introduction to Wisconsin State Government Employment Examinations,” Wisconsin Office of State Employment Relations (OSER)  
<http://oser.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=7472>