



Interviewing Basics

for Promotional Opportunities

Dana Lawson, Senior Engineer



Employers typically want to know three things

Remember this!

CAN YOU DO
THE JOB?

WILL YOU DO
THE JOB?

WILL YOU FIT IN
WITH THE
ORGANIZATION?

The Application

- Use personal contact information
- Review positions salary– don't list a preferred salary outside the position's step-range
- Do not use abbreviations (unless industry standard)
- Do not copy-and-paste from your employer's job description or repetitive answers
- Do give specific examples
- Do not give one-word answers (unless instructed)

CENTRAL CONTRA COSTA SANITARY DISTRICT EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION		
CENTRAL CONTRA COSTA SANITARY DISTRICT 5019 Imhoff Place Martinez, California 94553 Main: 925-228-9500 http://agency.governmentjobs.com/cccsd/default.cfm		Received: 5/13/11 2:38 PM For Official Use Only: QUAL: _____ DNO: _____ ☐ Experience ☐ Training ☐ Other: _____
Lawson, Dana L 113-01 SENIOR ENGINEER		
PERSONAL INFORMATION		
NAME (Last, First, Middle) Lawson, Dana L		SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: N/A
ADDRESS: Street, City, State, Zip Code		
HOME PHONE: (925) _____	ALTERNATE PHONE: (925) _____	EMAIL ADDRESS: dlaiv. _____
DRIVER'S LICENSE: ☒ Yes ☐ No	DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER: State: CA Number: _____	LEGAL RIGHT TO WORK IN THE UNITED STATES? ☒ Yes ☐ No
PREFERENCES		
PREFERRED SALARY: \$58.00 per hour; \$120,000.00 per year		ARE YOU WILLING TO RELOCATE? ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Maybe



9. Q: Describe your experience interpreting legal descriptions and title reports. If none, state "no experience".

A: I have over 6 years of experience examining title reports. I find this type of research particularly intriguing. I am skilled at looking at the chain of title and subdivision, parcel or record of survey maps to understand rights that may or may not be in place. I am able to review and map by hand simpler legal descriptions. If a legal description is



10. Q: Describe your experience working with the public (e.g., customers, contractors, or residents). If none, state "no experience".

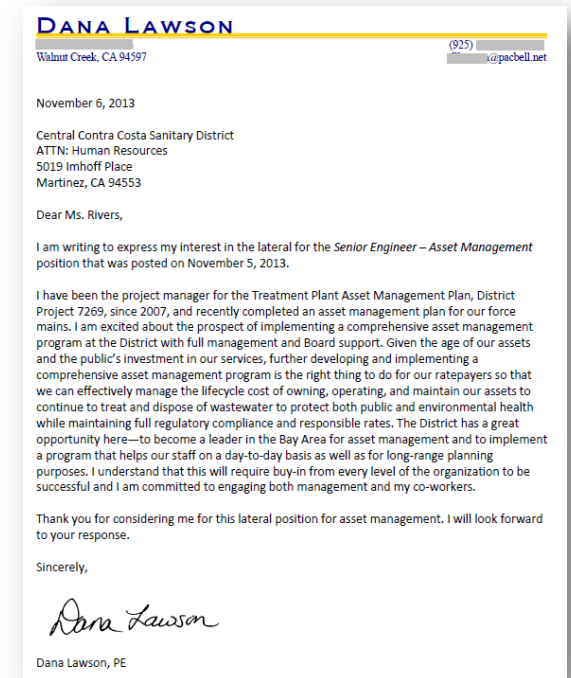
A: Expert

Cover Letter

- Even if it's not required, *submit one*
- Length
 - 1 page
- Purpose
 - Demonstrates your written communication skills



- ✓ Spell & Grammar Check
- ✓ Customize!
 - agency & address
 - correct job title
- ✓ Personal contact info



- ✗ Generic
- ✗ Incorrect agency name, job title, etc.
- ✗ Misspelling, grammar or punctuation errors
- ✗ Current work contact information

Resume

- Even if it's not required, *submit one*
- Purpose
 - Provides supplemental details to verify job experience
 - Familiar format for hiring managers to quickly review
- Length
 - 1 page is recommended
 - 2 pages if senior in your career
- Highlight employment and skills **relevant** to the position you are applying for



Resume - sample

Young in career – list education at top
Senior in career – can be listed later since less relevant than work experience

To save space for 1 page resume, only list position title/ employer/ dates for older positions or less relevant
(but shows you didn't have a significant gap in employment)

Consider key skills that are relevant to the position you are applying for

DANA LAWSON

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Walnut Creek, CA 94597

PE License #C67071
925-229-7287
XXXXXXXX@gmail.com

OBJECTIVE

Advance my career in engineering to a management position.

EDUCATION

University of California at Berkeley, M.S. Civil & Environmental Engineering, May 2002
University of California at Berkeley, B.S. Civil & Environmental Engineering, May 2001

EMPLOYMENT

Engineer, Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, Martinez, CA (June 2002 – present)

Senior Engineer - Development Services Section (Sep 2018 – present)

The section includes Mainline Plan Review (1 FTE), Right-of-Way/Property Management (2 FTE), Permit Counter (6 FTE, plus temps), Construction Inspection (5 FTE, 2018-2021). My primary functions are program/project management, supporting staff with technical escalations and customer escalations. While continuing to oversee these workgroups, I was the project manager for 3 projects averaging \$1.5M/ yr in the CIB: Oracle Permitting and Licensing module implementation, Development Sewerage, and Easement Acquisition.

Senior Engineer - Asset Management Section (Nov 2013 – Sept 2018)

Primary responsibility was development of a comprehensive asset management program across the organization, which included replacement of three computerized maintenance management systems with one comprehensive platform, configured a program management information system, developed inter-departmental workflows; oversaw consolidation and update of the asset registry; coordinated roles & responsibilities, workflows, and practice updates across the organization to ensure alignment with the asset management program, etc. Supervision of 6 staff (plus seasonal interns), including the GIS staff during their replacement of the GIS, web-mapping portal, CCTV software, and implementation of new USA locating software. Drafted Central San's first comprehensive asset management plan.

Senior Engineer - Planning Section (Mar 2013 – Nov 2013)

Senior Engineer - Plant Operations (Sep 2011 – Mar 2013)

Associate Engineer - Capital Projects, Treatment Plant (Jan 2011 - Sep 2011)

Senior Engineer (provisional) - Planning Section (Jul 2010 – Jan 2011)

Associate Engineer - Capital Projects, Treatment Plant (June 2008 – Jul 2010)

Associate Engineer - Capital Project, Collection System (May 2006 – June 2008)

Assistant Engineer - Capital Projects, Collection System (Jun 2004 – May 2006)

Staff Engineer (Jun 2002 – Jun 2004)

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Strong verbal and presentation skills: American Water Summit(2019), CASA (2018), Baywork (2018 & 2015), WEFTEC (2014), CWEA (2014), Competent Toastmaster (2005)
- Software: eSRI GIS; Cityworks and Mainsaver (computerized maintenance management systems); e-Builder (project management system); AutoCAD and SurvCAD (computer aided design); MS Office Suite (Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams, SharePoint), MS Project (project schedules), MS Visio (business process mapping); CommonSpot and WordPress (website management); FS Pro (information mapping for technical communications)

LEADERSHIP ROLES

- Deferred Compensation Advisory Committee 2022-present
- Co-Chair of the BACWA Asset Management InfoShare Group 2013-2018
- MS/CG (a collective bargaining group for mid-management): President 2011-2013 and on Negotiations Team for 2012 contract; 1st Vice President of MS/CG, Oct 2009-11, Member at Large 2005-7
- UC Berkeley, Varsity Track & Field, 2000 & 2001 Team Captain

Prepare for the Interview



- Re-read the job announcement
- Research the organization
- Anticipate questions
 - What would the hiring manager ask for this position to understand your qualifications, experience, motivation, etc.
 - The first and last questions are usually the same...
 - *First:* Please briefly describe your background as it relates to *this position* at *this agency*.
 - *Last:* Do you have anything else to add for the panel's consideration?

Types of Interview Questions



Experience Based

prepare grant of easement document
draft final plans
install pipeline



Decision Making/ Problem Solving

If... then...
how you'd apply standard specifications
utility conflict during construction (changed site condition)



Competency Based

supervisory
presentation skills
project management



Behavioral (Situation) Based

angry customer
difficult situation

Practice

Assume 5 minutes or less per answer

Practice controlling nervous ticks (umms, twirling hair, tapping foot)

Then practice... with yourself, friend, coworker, partner

Interview Basics

- Be on time
- Dress appropriately
 - Business casual (as a minimum)
 - Don't over-scent yourself
- Upon entering: make eye-contact, greet & shake hands
- Before exiting: thank & shake hands
- *If it's an external panel, save agency or job-specific questions for the next round*



Virtual Interview Tips



Test Your Device

meeting platform (Zoom, Teams, etc.)

camera & microphone

internet connection



Set the Stage

Adjust lighting

Remove background distractions

Silence other electronics



Dress appropriately

The Actual Interview



Keep track of time

Do the math... 30 minutes, 10 questions = 3 min/question
If you start to ramble, stop yourself



Listen carefully to understand each question

Organize your response



Answer the question

Sell yourself, honestly
Be confident
Do not digress – read the audience for non-verbal cues



For situational questions

Give specific examples from your experience
If you can't, then demonstrate your ability to think through the situation

The Final Interview

- This interview is for “fit”. Do you “fit” the...
 - Team?
 - Work Culture?
 - Near-term assignments?
- Dress appropriately
- Upon entering: make eye-contact, greet & shake hands
- Before exiting: thank & shake hands



The Job Offer

- **Research the *Total Compensation***
 - Salary
 - Vacation/Sick/Leave accruals
 - Retiree Income (Pension, Social Security, Deferred Comp, 401k, etc.)
 - Retiree Medical
 - Other benefits:
 - Improved commute
 - flex schedules
 - telework
 - wellness program
 - upward mobility/ promotional opportunities

The Job Offer

- **What is negotiable?**

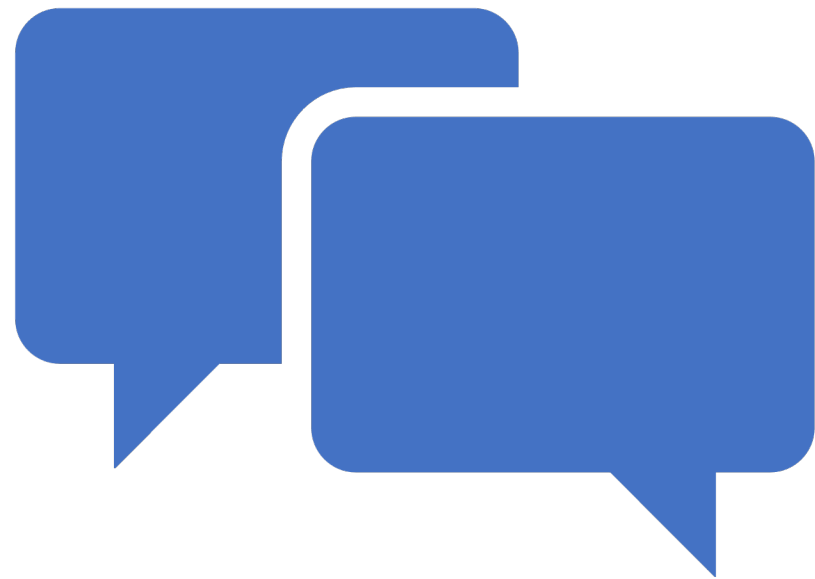
- Starting step in salary range
(if justified by current position)
- Starting accrual level for vacation (if justified by current position)
- Telework (if position allows, and usually after a probationary period)

- **What is not?**

- Salary range
- Sick leave accrual
- Benefits different from the MOU

Next Time

If you were not offered the position, ask for feedback





Questions