

Helpful tips when applying

Learn more about getting your foot in the door at Lac La Biche County with the following tips and information.

COVER LETTER TIPS

A cover letter allows you to: supplement the information in your résumé; convey the unique qualities you can bring to the position and the organization; and add a more personal touch to your application. When writing your cover letter, consider the following tips:

- Be concise.
- Tailor your cover letter to both the position and qualifications in the posting.
- Proofread your cover letter to ensure there are no spelling, typing or grammatical errors.
- Show that you know something about our organization.

RESUME TIPS

Like a cover letter, you will want to ensure that your résumé is concise and clearly identifies how you meet the minimum qualifications as required in the job posting. Think of your resume as a story of achievement rather than a compilation of job duties. Below are some suggestions to keep in mind when creating your resume for Lac La Biche County:

- **Proofread it. Twice.** It is difficult to over-emphasize the importance of proofreading your resume. Proofreading it once is not enough, so do it twice, and maybe even get someone else to do it, too.
- **Consider the length.** There are no definitive rules governing the length of your resume. Generally speaking, try to limit yourself to a maximum of two pages.
- **Tailor your resume.** Using keywords and information from the job posting, demonstrate how your competencies and achievements match those of the County and the position you're applying to.

- **Be specific.** List the actual months of employment, rather than just years (i.e., February 2009 – November 2012). Include numbers, percentages, dollar amounts, or other key details to back up your claims rather than simply mentioning them.
- **Limit employment history details.** Positions that you held years ago may still be relevant and we suggest that you list them. However, only provide detailed information regarding the most recent and applicable experience related to the position you are applying for.
- **Put the most important information first:** In general, the most important information is your education and relevant experience, so put those at the top. Make it easy for someone to read quickly.

INTERVIEW TIPS

Before the interview

- **Research:** take time to check out our website and familiarize yourself with the organization. Find out about the issues and topics that are important to the County and ensure that you have a good understanding of the position that you are being interviewed for.
- **Prepare yourself:** What is it about your competencies and experiences that make you an appealing candidate? Think about how your strengths and competencies match this job. Look carefully at the job posting, the list of qualifications and the job description, because the interview questions will be based on these qualifications. Be prepared to explain specific situations from your past and to provide details regarding the problem you faced, the action you took, and the results you achieved.
- **Notify us if accommodation is required:** The County is willing to accommodate you to meet special needs, such as accessibility needs, at the time of the interview. If you need anything specific please inform us in advance so that we can help to make this a positive experience

During the interview

- Interviews generally last 45 minutes, but may be longer or shorter depending on the position.
- Some interviews will include a practical component, such as a test or assignment.

- It is common practice for there to be at least two County staff members present as part of the interview process.
- Most of our interview questions are behavioural and focus on past experiences and behaviours. When asked these types of questions, focus on answering what has been asked and staying on track. Keep your responses concise, structured and based on the question asked. Feel free to jot down your thoughts and refer to those notes so that you stay focused as you respond.
- Listen carefully to the question being asked. If you are unclear as to what the question is asking, please ask the panelist to repeat it and obtain further clarification if necessary.
- Throughout the interview, you will be able to ask any questions that you may have about the position, the organization, and/or the recruitment process.

Below are some example questions and tips on how to prepare for them.

General

- Questions aimed at asking information about your work history, skills or knowledge, as they relate to the job. This tends to be an opening question in most interviews. Your answer to this question will be assessed and scored based on how well you organize your facts to show that you understand the position and how qualified you are. Be brief, and focus on how you ‘fit’ into the position.

Q: “Briefly describe why you are interested in this position and what skills and experience you possess that make you an ideal candidate.” To prepare for this type of question, read the job ad and job description and develop four or five points that link your work-related strengths, background and experience to qualifications of the position. Remember that the panel has read your résumé already, so try not to just repeat what is in it.

Technical or Job-Specific Knowledge

- Questions aimed to assess your knowledge of specific programs, policies, or procedures that are related to the work of the position. In most cases, you should have prior knowledge or experience that will contribute to a good response.

Q: “Describe how you determine what constitutes top priorities in the performance of your job?” If you know that the position will primarily work with a specific process and you don’t have prior knowledge, be sure to research the County internet site for

relevant documents and directives to increase your knowledge in that topic prior to the interview.

Situational or Scenario - based

- Questions aimed at presenting you with a hypothetical situation that you may be faced with on the job and ask you to suggest a solution. These questions tend to assess analytical and problem solving skills and the ability to handle daily tasks effectively. It is important to think effectively on your feet and to formulate your responses in an organized manner.

Q: You are working on a project that has to be completed by tomorrow a.m. Your manager comes to your desk and gives you an assignment to be completed by noon tomorrow. You know you can't meet both deadlines. What would you do? Take a minute in the interview before responding, so that you can think about the process you would go through to address such an issue, who you would consult with, and what results you would anticipate obtaining.

Behavioural-based

- Questions aimed at drawing on your previous experience and behaviours to provide examples of how you demonstrated specific skills in previous situations. These kinds of questions are also sometimes referred to as “competency-based”. They are specific, and challenge the candidate to provide concrete examples of their previous achievements in different types of situations. These are the most commonly used questions in interviews and they look for how you do your work, not just what you do.

Q: “Conflict is inevitable when working with others. Please describe a recent conflict you had with a co-worker and how you dealt with the situation. Also describe what you learned to help you work with that individual in the future.” OR “Tell me about a time when you had to design a solution to a key problem facing your work unit. What did you do, and what was the result?” To prepare for this type of question, think of job ad qualifications and develop responses including: what you have actually accomplished in the past, what your involvement was, what the scope of your assignment was, what you did, and what the outcome was.

Ask Questions.

- This will show your interest and reveal that you have researched and prepared for the interview. Don't be shy to ask for clarification or jot down your own thoughts. Make sure that you understand the question in order to demonstrate how you are the best person for the job. If you are struggling to formulate a response to a question, you may ask to come back to it at the end.

Think outside the box.

- Don't forget about your experiences that aren't directly job-related. You may have volunteer experience, been elected to a council or board, participated in a professional association, coached a team or contributed to your community in some other way. What did those experiences teach you and how did they shape you as a person?