



Reviewing Resumes

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the MTAS website ([mtas.tennessee.edu](https://www.mtas.tennessee.edu)). This website is maintained daily by MTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee municipal government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Reviewing Resumes

Reference Number: MTAS-1323

It is not uncommon for a good recruitment effort to generate 40 or more applications for a professional position. It is recommended that you acknowledge the receipt of each application. We have developed a resume checklist [1] that should be used as a tool to screen resumes by assigning a score to each. Criteria for reviewing and scoring resumes should include experience, education, quality and clarity of resume, and length of time in previous positions as related to the job design.

A resume is essentially a personal advertisement. It may be accurate and complete, or it may be exaggerated or deceptive. You decide as you sort through and decode what is before you. As you review each resume with your job design profile in mind, make notations and comments opposite each requirement or characteristic. In addition, we recommend requiring each applicant to complete your standard employment application. As you review each resume, there are other considerations to keep in mind. There are two areas in particular that will require your conscious attention:

- **Employment history.** Are there time gaps in employment? Has the candidate served a reasonable period of time in each job? Is the chronology consistent?
- **Accomplishments.** Experience is fine, but did the candidate accomplish the kinds of things you want accomplished? This is where resumes most often reflect exaggerated claims.

Narrowing the Field

Once you have completed your review of resumes and standard application forms, you are prepared to make some judgments. You will be able to assign applicants to one of three categories:

- Those who do not fit the job design profile (inactive)
- Those who do fit the job design profile (active)
- Those who are questionable

Set aside the resumes of candidates who do not fit the job design profile. Temporarily, also set aside the resumes of candidates who do meet the job design profile. For the moment focus on the questionables.

What you are attempting to determine is which, if any, of the questionable candidates should receive further consideration. To do that, you need additional information, and the best way to secure that information is through a telephone interview. Make a list of the questions and the items on which you need clarification before you make the phone call. When you speak to the applicant, make it clear that the reason for the call is to ensure that you have complete and accurate information to use for evaluation purposes. Record the new information on the resume checklist found later in this section. The summary of the scores can be posted on a screening worksheet, a sample of which also is located in this section. After assessing the new information, assign each of the previously questionable applicants to either the active or inactive category. Candidates who will not be considered further should be advised at this time.

Now, take the paperwork for the candidates in the active category, and review it thoroughly once again. These are the applicants you will be considering further.

Resume Checklist

Reference Number: MTAS-1574

POSITION OF PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR RESUME CHECKLIST

Applicant Name: _____ Rater Name: _____

Use the following scale:

OS: Outstanding (5) VG: Very Good (4) G: Good (3) F: Fair (2) P: Poor (1)
(Note: there are 50 possible points)

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Do the resume and cover letter suggest real interest in the position? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Has the applicant had experience with the variety of services delivered by the city's public works department? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Has the applicant had experience working in a local government of comparable size, including a comparable staff size and budget? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Has the applicant worked in a similar geographic area? Is the applicant likely to be comfortable with the community? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Has the applicant had broad administrative and supervisory authority in public works? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Has the applicant had experience working with citizen groups and appointed boards or commissions? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. What is the applicant's educational background? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Does the applicant have good tenure with most previous employers? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Does the applicant show interest in continuing professional development by participating in training programs and professional organizations? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Does the applicant's employment history suggest a pattern of broad experience and increasing responsibility? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Total Score: _____

OVERALL RATING

OS = Outstanding VG = Very Good G = Good F = Fair P = Poor

Links:

[1] <https://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/reference/resume-checklist>

DISCLAIMER: The letters and publications written by the MTAS consultants were written based upon the law at the time and/or a specific sets of facts. The laws referenced in the letters and publications may have changed and/or the technical advice provided may not be

applicable to your city or circumstances. Always consult with your city attorney or an MTAS consultant before taking any action based on information contained in this website.

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