

**UCLA Luskin Career Toolkit
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Overview of UCLA Luskin Career Services

The UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs prepares its graduates to enter the workforce with a broad range of practical and professional skills. Luskin graduates are prepared to take on leadership roles and effect change as practitioners, researchers and policymakers in the public, private and non---profit sectors.

UCLA Luskin is dedicated to the professional development of its students and alumni. Career Services offers professional development programs and resources that are tailored to areas of interest within the fields of Public Policy, Social Welfare and Urban Planning. Career Services offers the following professional development services throughout the academic year:

Professional Development Workshop Series

Professional Development workshops provide an overview of resume and cover letter writing, developing a professional network, preparing for interviews and conducting a salary negotiation. For more personalized feedback, students may make individual appointments for resume reviews or mock interviews.

Employer Information Sessions / On---Campus Recruitment

Hiring managers and recruiters that are looking to hire UCLA Luskin students for full---time positions or internships are invited to campus to share information about their current job openings and to provide insight into their organization's hiring process. Students are invited to submit resumes directly to recruiters. Organizations that have recruited at UCLA Luskin in recent years include the Office of Management and Budget, Education Pioneers, Fehr and Peers, the CIA, City of Santa Monica, Pacific Clinics, California State Auditor, Parsons Brinkerhoff and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Alumni Speaker Panels

UCLA Luskin alumni oftentimes return to campus to share specialized skills or areas of expertise with current Luskin students. Topics of Alumni Speaker Panels from recent years include: Careers in Green Technology, Starting a Private Practice, Careers in Education Policy, Landing a Job with the Federal Government, Current Trends in Economic Development, an Overview of the Mayor's Performance Management Unit and Visual Communication for Urban Designers.

International Practice Pathway

The goal of the International Practice Pathway is to prepare students to work with local and global underserved populations by providing cross---disciplinary education in such international issues as urban planning, social welfare, public policy, economics, administration, public health and environmental sciences. It also trains practitioners who are qualified to work in diverse settings by providing hands---on experience in research and practice in international resource---poor settings. For additional information about the Pathway, please see page 6.

Networking Events

Departmental and School---wide networking events provide Luskin students an opportunity to meet potential employers and expand their professional networks.

Public Affairs Career Fair

Our annual Career Fair in Winter Quarter brings together Public Affairs employers from the public, private and non---profit sectors that have job and internship vacancies. The fair provides an opportunity for students to make personal connections with hiring managers and ask questions

Individual Career Advising Appointments

Students may make individual appointments for career guidance, assistance with their job or internship searches, resume critiques or mock interviews. Students are connected with UCLA Luskin alumni in their field of interest when applicable. Career advising hours are Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 8:00am---5:00pm, by appointment. Please contact Michelle Anderson, Director of Career Services, at manderson@luskin.ucla.edu to schedule an appointment.

Other Career Resources at UCLA

Students may also take advantage of other career resources on campus including the [UCLA Career Center](#), [Graduate Student Resource Center](#) and [Graduate Writing Center](#), all of which offer workshops and programs specifically for graduate students.

Selected Luskin Alumni Career Titles and Places of Employment

Public Policy Alumni

Recent MPP Alumni (0---2 years after graduation)
Public Policy Manager, Southern California Grantmakers
Program Associate, Conrad Hilton Foundation
Fellow, U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs
Education Policy Advocate, Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Research Assistant, Local SEIU 721
Project Coordinator, Innovations for Poverty Action
Program Assistant, Government Relations and Public Policy, National Trust for Historic Preservation

Mid---Career and Senior---Level MPP Alumni (6 years +)
Director of Transportation Project Delivery, Los Angeles Mayor's Office
Advocacy Director, Amnesty International
Budget Analyst, State of California
Vice President of Governmental Affairs, Community Clinic Association of LA County
Economic Development Policy Coordinator, Alliance for a Better Community
Vice President of Finance Policy, CA Association of Public Hospitals and Health System

Social Welfare Alumni

Recent MSW Alumni (0---2 years after graduation)
Clinical Social Worker, City of Hope
Care Consultant, Alzheimer's Association
Psychiatric Social Worker, Department of Mental Health Specialized Foster Care Program
Project Coordinator, Community Youth Center of San Francisco
Bilingual Clinical Social Worker, Women Helping Women
Assistant Program Coordinator, CA Department of Public Health

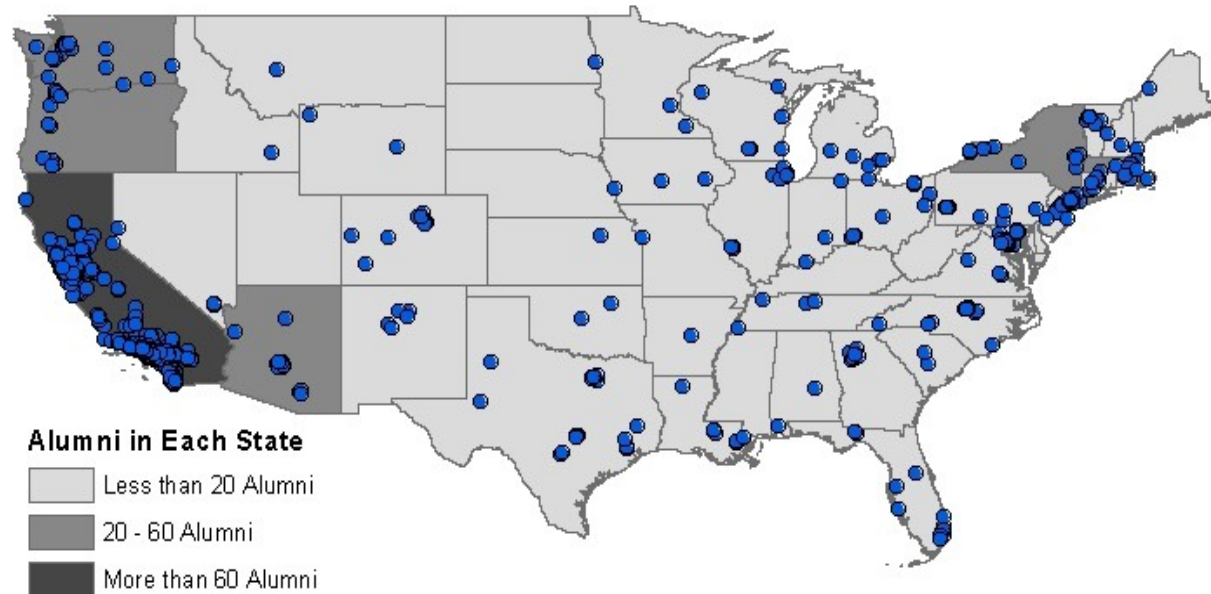
Mid---Career and Senior---Level MSW Alumni (6 years +)
Senior Vice President, United Way, Bay Area
Executive Director, Transgender Law Center
Community Therapist, The Help Group
Vice President, Corporation for Supportive Housing
Director, Azusa Senior Center
Director, Children and Youth Services, Kedren Community Health Center
Director, Continuing Care, Kaiser Permanente
Mental Health Clinical Manager, LA County Department of Health Services

Urban Planning Alumni

Recent UP Alumni (0---2 years after graduation)
Transportation Planner, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Urban Designer, Gensler
Senior Associate, Environmental Science Associates
Researcher, Good Jobs LA
Project Manager, Kounkuey Design Initiative
Policy Analyst, Healthy Eating Active Living Cities Campaign
Urban Planner, City of Pasadena

Mid---Career and Senior---Level UP Alumni (6 years +)
Senior Management Analyst, City of LA Department of Housing
Director, SEIU Local 721
Senior Urban Planner, Parsons International
Lead Regional Planner, Skid Row Housing Trust
Senior Transportation Planner, City of Beverly Hills
Environmental Engineer, Boeing Company
Community Development Manager, City of Glendale

Geographic Location of UCLA Luskin Alumni

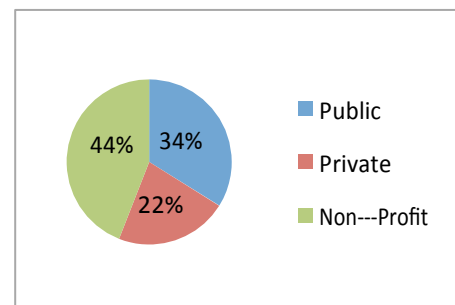


Map courtesy of Kristen Figueira, Urban Planning Master's Student

Top Five Counties/Districts Employing UCLA Luskin Alumni:

5. Washington, D.C.
4. San Diego
3. Orange County
2. San Francisco
1. Los Angeles

Sector Placement of Recent Luskin Graduates:



Top Industries of Recent Luskin Graduates:

- Advocacy
- City Planning
- Child and Family Services
- Community Development
- Consulting
- Economic Development
- Environment / Sustainability
- Public Health
- Transportation

International Practice Pathway

Program Goals

The goal of the International Practice Pathway is to prepare students to work with local and global underserved populations by providing cross---disciplinary education in such international issues as urban planning, social welfare, public policy, economics, administration, public health and environmental sciences. It also trains practitioners who are qualified to work in diverse settings by providing hands---on experience in research and practice in international resource---poor settings.

Examples of Past Speakers:

Derick Brinkerhoff: Luskin Senior Fellow, International Public Management, RTI International

Stephen Narsoo: Urban Planning alumnus, Policy/Strategy Specialist for the City of Johannesburg

Jane Regan: Multimedia journalist and scholar; International relief efforts in Haiti

Chris Odell: Public Policy alumnus; School---based interventions in Kenya

Rio Howard: Principal Administrator in the Council and Executive Committee Secretariat in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

Career and Applied Project Assistance

Pathway participants have access to an International Practice web resource page that includes several LinkedIn sites and blogs that connect students to different groups within the international aid/development community. Pathway students also have access to internationally---focused Applied Policy and Planning Research Projects as well as a list of courses (campus---wide) that focus on international practice that students are encouraged to take as electives.

How to Join

To learn more about how to participate in the International Practice Pathway, please attend the kick---off meeting at Fall Orientation at the end of September.

CareerView

UCLA Luskin's Online Employment Database

Luskin Career Services maintains a searchable online employment database for its students and alumni. CareerView features full---time career positions, part---time positions, internships and applied policy or planning research projects. Students and alumni may access the postings free of charge.

[Access CareerView](#) by registering for a new account.

Using CareerView as a Job Seeker

In CareerView, job seekers may search vacancies by industry, geographic location, type of job (full---time, part---time, research project) or keyword. Job seekers may also view archived jobs and employer profiles. Other available options include uploading a resume for employers to view and signing up for a weekly email digest so that users are notified of positions that match their interests in one convenient weekly email. CareerView also includes a calendar of upcoming career events and a resource library.

Application instructions vary by posting and are always listed in the announcement. Positions typically have specified application deadline dates, and in the event that a deadline date is not included in the announcement, the deadline date assigned is one month from the date that the position was initially posted.

UCLA Luskin's CareerView is part of the NACELink Network, a national collaborative recruiting network of career centers. This means that CareerView users have access to positions that have been posted at over 700 other career centers in the U.S. in addition to the vacancies that have been posted to UCLA Luskin's site. When using CareerView, users can select the tab to view either the "UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs Jobs" or the "NACELink Extended Network Jobs" when conducting a search.

Using CareerView to Post a Job

UCLA Luskin alumni that wish to post job vacancies may register for an Employer Account in CareerView. Individuals may maintain separate job seeker and employer accounts in CareerView.

To post a job, please register for an employer account [here](#). There is no charge to post jobs for UCLA Luskin students and alumni to view.

Industry---Specific Job Search Sites

The following sites have been recommended by UCLA Luskin students as being useful in their job searches:

[APA](#) American Planning Association

[Bloomberg BusinessWeek](#) Aggregate job search site

[BruinView](#) UCLA Career Center's online job and internship database

[CareerView](#) Online job and internship database exclusively for UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs students and alumni

[Commongood Careers](#) Non---profit executive jobs

[Council on Foundations](#) Foundation jobs

[DevEx](#) International development

[Dot Org Jobs](#) Non---profit jobs: Fundraising, project management, etc.

[EcoEmploy](#) Environmental jobs and careers

[Eco.org](#) Environmental jobs

[Geography Jobs](#) GIS, urban Planning, transportation, environment, housing, remote sensing

[Grantmakers without Borders](#) Job opportunities in social change

[GreenBiz](#) Sustainability jobs

[Green Jobs](#) Renewable energy jobs

[Idealist](#) Non---profit job listings

[InterAction](#) International job listings

[Jobs LA](#) Aggregate job search site hosted by the Workforce Investment Board of Los Angeles

[LA Non---Profit Careers](#) Non---profit jobs in Los Angeles

[Making the Difference](#) Federal jobs and internships

[NCSL Jobs](#) National Conference of State Legislature

[Non---Profit Career Network](#) Non---profit job resource center

[Non---ProfitJobsCooperative](#) Non---profit jobs

[Opportunity Knocks](#) Non---profit jobs

[Philanthropy News Digest](#) Job openings at U.S. foundations, grant---making public charities and non---profit organizations

[Planetizan](#) Urban planning, design and development

[PolicyJobs.net](#) (The Department of Public Policy maintains an account for Luskin School of Public Affairs students; Username and password are both UCLASPA)

[Public Service Careers](#) Co---sponsored by ASPA, APPAM and NASPAA; Includes public sector job listings nationwide, as well as articles and salary information

[Riley Guide](#) Jobs in public service and administration

[Silicon Valley Microfinance Network](#) Jobs in microfinance

[SocialServices.com](#) Social work, counseling, psychology, mental health, case management

[Social Work Job Bank](#) Professional social work jobs

[Urban Land Institute](#) Real estate, affordable housing, land development

[USA Jobs](#) Federal government's official job site

Regional Job Listings:

[Bay Area Careers](#) Jobs in the Bay Area

[D.C.Jobs](#) Jobs in the Washington, D.C. area

Preparing to Write/Update a Resume

Purpose of a Resume

Your resume is an advertisement of you and your brand. It is a forward---thinking document and should convey both who you are and where you want to go.

The resume:

- is an introduction used for networking and informational interviews
- lands interviews when combined with a cover letter (and networking)
- is used as a reference piece during interactions
- is a take---away reminder used during a department's decision---making process

Market Yourself. Create your strategy!

Determine how you want to present/sell yourself, what you can do, and what you want to do.

- What do you have to offer?
- What have you accomplished? What have you achieved in your previous roles?
- Who is your audience – what do they need?
- What are your interests, strengths and skills? Only incorporate skills that align with your target department's needs.

Gather Information

- Learn as much as possible about the role/function that you are targeting.
- Research criteria and skills that the organization is typically recruiting for. Do they value creativity? Research Skills? Analytical skills? Leadership? Team work?
- Learn your audience's language. What is the department lingo?

Strategy and Targeting

- Analyze components of past projects. Identify relevant and transferable skills/accomplishments relevant to your target role.
- Translate what you've done into what you will do for your target organization.
- Filter out less relevant work experience (i.e. college internships, part---time jobs, skills not needed for new work, etc.).
- Highlight UCLA Luskin accomplishments, if applicable.

Resume Content and Formatting Tips

- 1) **A resume is a forward---thinking advertisement** – it is marketing your successes and value to your target audience/department and not just describing tasks that you performed on a daily basis. It is NOT a laundry list of past responsibilities; it is promoting your transferable skills.
- 2) **Situation, Action, Result (S---A---R)**
Write accomplishment statements focusing on achievements, rather than just describing the situation. Focus on:
 - New processes or programs you implemented or initiated
 - Goals you accomplished
 - Problems you solved
- 3) **Prove that you added value** by showing results whenever possible. Demonstrate that you are contribution---focused.
- 4) **Start bullets with action verbs** as opposed to more generic phrases such as “responsible for,” “worked with,” “assisted,” etc. (See Action Verbs list on the following page)
- 5) **Prioritize bullets based on their relevance** to targeted company/position (most important at top).
Strategize: What are the five to seven key skills you are marketing that are relevant to your audience? Determine whether each bullet is clearly selling one of these skills.
- 6) **Update your resume regularly** – make sure it is current. Include new events, awards, projects, responsibilities.
- 7) **Bullet points** are most effective when limited to only one to two lines of text.
- 8) **Be concise** and avoid redundancies. Consolidate related bullet points when possible. Every word counts. Are you expressing your point as concisely as possible?
- 9) **Formatting:** Keep it simple and clean. Style is important, but do not overuse italics, underlines or bold font. Avoid decorative bullets and fonts.
- 10) **Watch for consistency** throughout each section of the resume both in terms of format and content. For example, if the months are spelled out, then make sure all of the dates listed follow this same format.

Action Verbs for Your ResumeCommunication:

- Addressed
- Arbitrated
- Arranged
- Authored
- Collaborated
- Convinced
- Corresponded
- Developed
- Directed
- Drafted
- Edited
- Enlisted
- Formulated
- Influenced
- Interpreted
- Justified
- Lectured
- Mediated
- Moderated
- Negotiated
- Persuaded
- Promoted
- Publicized
- Reconciled
- Recruited
- Spoke
- Translated
- Wrote

Creative:

- Acted
- Built
- Conceptualized
- Constructed
- Customized
- Designed
- Developed
- Directed
- Established
- Fashioned
- Founded
- Illustrated
- Initiated
- Instituted
- Integrated
- Introduced
- Invented
- Originated
- Performed
- Pioneered
- Planned
- Revitalized
- Shaped

Financial / Analytical:

- Administered
- Allocated
- Analyzed
- Appraised
- Audited
- Balanced
- Budgeted
- Calculated
- Computed
- Developed
- Forecasted
- Managed
- Marketed
- Planned
- Projected
- Researched

Helping / Social Service:

- Advocated
- Assessed
- Clarified
- Coached
- Counseled
- Demonstrated
- Diagnosed
- Educated
- Empowered
- Expedited
- Facilitated
- Familiarized
- Guided
- Modeled
- Motivated
- Referred
- Rehabilitated
- Represented

Action Verbs for Your ResumeLeadership / Management:

- Achieved
- Administered
- Anticipated
- Assigned
- Consolidated
- Contracted
- Coordinated
- Delegated
- Developed
- Directed
- Evaluated
- Executed
- Increased
- Led
- Organized
- Oversaw
- Planned
- Prioritized
- Produced
- Recommended
- Reviewed
- Scheduled
- Strengthened
- Supervised

Research:

- Analyzed
- Clarified
- Collected
- Critiqued
- Diagnosed
- Evaluated
- Examined
- Extracted
- Handled
- Identified
- Inspected
- Interpreted
- Interviewed
- Investigated
- Measured
- Observed
- Organized
- Reviewed
- Summarized
- Surveyed
- Systematized

Teaching / Training:

- Adapted
- Advised
- Clarified
- Communicated
- Coordinated
- Developed
- Enabled
- Encouraged
- Evaluated
- Explained
- Facilitated
- Guided
- Informed
- Inspired
- Instructed
- Motivated
- Persuaded
- Stimulated
- Strengthened
- Trained

Administrative:

- Approved
- Arranged
- Classified
- Compiled
- Executed
- Generated
- Implemented
- Monitored
- Operated
- Organized
- Processed
- Recorded
- Scheduled
- Specified
- Systematized
- Unified

Resume Checklist

Once you have completed the final draft of your resume, check for the following:

Visual Appearance: Is it neat, clean and organized? If this were someone else's resume, would you want to read it, or would you rather avoid reading it?

Layout: Is the sequence and the arrangement of headings logical and easy to read? Do your key selling points stand out? Does it have adequate spacing, margins and underlining?

Length: Could the same story be told if it were shorter? Have you limited the resume to one or two pages? Has extraneous material been eliminated?

Wording: Have you made good use of action verbs and industry---specific language?

Specificity: Does the resume avoid generalities and focus on specific information about experiences, projects, products, responsibilities and objectives?

Abilities: Have you adequately emphasized your skills and your accomplishments?

Completeness: Does it touch upon most, if not all, of the skills required for the job? Refer to job description to double---check.

Proofread: Have you had your resume critiqued or proofread by someone else?

5322 Live Oak View Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90041

Joe Bruin

xxxxxxxxxxxxx@gmail.com
(310) 591---7269

EDUCATION

Master of Urban and Regional Planning (*Focus: Sustainable Transportation*) *University of California, Los Angeles*
Member: UCLA Bicycle Coalition, Bruins for Transit *June 2012*

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Sociology, *summa cum laude* *University of Mississippi, Oxford*
Cumulative GPA: 4.0; Phi Beta Kappa *May 2008*

EXPERIENCE

CICLAVIA

Intern/Volunteer *Los Angeles, CA*
August 2010 – Present
Surveyed over 300 participants at the October 2011 event as part of my UCLA Master's capstone project
Helped plan and coordinate efforts for Los Angeles' inaugural CicLAvia, which attracted over 80,000 participants
Canvassed businesses and residents along the 7.5---mile route to articulate the benefits and gain community support

BIKE LONG BEACH

Intern *Long Beach, CA*
March 2011 – April 2012
Helped establish the nation's first Bicycle Friendly Business District program
Recruited over 145 local businesses to participate in the Bike Saturdays incentive program for cyclists

CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN URBAN TRANSPORT, CEPT UNIVERSITY

Intern *Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India*
July 2011 – August 2011
Conducted a pedestrian access audit for a proposed metro station and recommended improvements

URBAN LAND INSTITUTE--LOS ANGELES

Intern *Los Angeles, CA*
August 2010 – April 2011
Organized for and supported staff at various meetings and conferences, including FutureBuild LA
Provided administrative assistance, such as editing press releases and reports

LEWIS CENTER FOR REGIONAL POLICY STUDIES, UCLA

Research Assistant *Los Angeles, CA*
August 2010 – October 2010
Conducted research on urban growth management scholarship and policies

PROGRESSIVE STRATEGY PARTNERS

Project Assistant/Office Manager *Los Angeles, CA*
July 2008 – July 2010
Solicited and processed contributions for a successful multi---million dollar U.S. Senate campaign
Did community outreach and coalition building for statewide ballot initiative campaigns

VOLUNTEER WORK

Spring Street Public Life Survey & Count *March 2012*
Pacoima Bicycle Count *January 2011*
Metro Blue Line Bike & Walk Audit *December 2009*

CONFERENCES/EVENTS

Peds Count! – *Volunteer* *May 2012*
Complete Streets for Los Angeles & California – *Volunteer* *February 2011 & March 2012*
Transit---Oriented Development Summit; Urban Land Institute – Los Angeles *June 2010 & 2011*

SKILLS: ArcGIS; CUBE; SPSS; Excel; PowerPoint; Analytical Writing; Spanish language (intermediate proficiency)

AFFILIATIONS: Southern California Planning Congress (Board Member), LA County Bicycle Coalition, Transportation Research Board, Urban Land Institute, American Planning Association

KELLY JANA E LINDBROOK

3250 Public Affairs Building, Los Angeles, CA, 90095 • Phone (310) 206-8034 • E-mail upinfo@publicaffairs.ucla.edu

Education:

- **University of California, Los Angeles**
Masters in Urban and Regional Planning, Current GPA 3.9 expected June 2013
Leaders in Sustainability Certificate
Concentration: Transportation Policy and Planning
- **University of California, San Diego**
B.A. Urban Planning June 2010
Certificate in Sustainability June 2010
Dean's Honor List, Magna Cum Laude, GPA 3.9 (cumulative)
- **Santa Monica City College**
A.A. Political Science June 2009
Dean's Honor List, President's Honor List, Honor Fraternity, GPA 4.0

Experience:

- **Energy Conservation Research Lab and Social Medial Lab, San Diego, California** January 2010- August 2011
Data Lab Manager for Energy Conservation Lab, Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program Grant Recipient
 - Managed data set for the entire lab, organized meetings and oversaw progress on coding; coded data and performed meta-analysis research. Data analysis included qualitative and binary logistic regression analysis, and integrating results in to manuscripts
 - 2010 & 2011 UC Undergraduate Research Symposium; Presented at Society for Human Ecology (SHE) 2011 & Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA42) 2011, manuscripts under review
- **San Diego City College, San Diego, California** January 2010- June 2011
Teaching Assistant for Psychology Research Methods
 - Assisted in teaching and preparing students to run laboratory experiments; graded papers and tests, taught statistics and software programs, maintained contact between students and professor
- **Fehr & Peers, San Diego, California** September 2010- December 2010
Environmental Planning Intern
 - Prepared Environmental Documents per CEQA & NEPA regulations (EIR/EIS, EA, CE, etc), mapped data using GIS software, and analyzed environmental elements including: HAZMAT, environmental justice, and noise and vibration
- **Invisible Children Inc., San Diego, California** June-August, 2009
Business Operations/Office Management Intern
 - First-response to donors and international offices; coordinated office events and kept every department informed about other departments; oversaw and trained volunteers; helped manage customer service, shipping and fulfillment needs; learned back-systems for computer frameworks

Activities:

- Community service 2007-present
 - Organized and participated in local, national, and international projects including: Rancho Genesis, Artesia Christian Home, Special Olympics, Chosen To Be Loved, Circle of Friends, and Royal Family Kids Camp
- RESET College Ministry, member and leader June 2007- present
- Organized lobbying of Congressional members with Resolve! Uganda and Invisible Children June 2007- present

Skills:

- Computer-
 - Proficient in Microsoft programs including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
 - Experience with GIS, SPSS, AutoCad, Adobe Suite, Kintera, Magento, and Sales Force
- Language- Conversational Spanish

Writing Customized Cover Letters

Purpose of Cover Letters

Well---written cover letters/emails are an extremely important part of the job search process. They are your opportunity to grab the employer's attention, highlight relevant skills, experience and education, and illustrate what you know about the employer and the position. Cover letters also provide an opportunity for you to showcase your excellent writing and communication skills.

Things to think about before you start writing:

- 1.) Know your strengths. Understand the value that you bring to the organization.
- 2.) What relevant skills, experience and education do you want to highlight for this particular position and organization?
- 3.) Know your audience. Who will be reading this letter? What skills will they be looking for?
- 4.) Research the company. Show familiarity/understanding of the department and why your background would be of value to the role that you're targeting.

Focus on the following:

- **Customize/personalize your letters.** Tailor EVERY cover letter you write to the organization and specific position. Always address the letter to an individual, not "to whom it may concern" unless you are unable to find this information.
- **Be positive and contribution---focused.** Focus on what you have to offer.
- **Be concise** – in most cases, cover letters should be no longer than one page.
- **Proofread!** Mistakes or typographical errors convey a lack of attention to detail.
- **Use action verbs** (LINK) whenever possible.
- **Clearly express why you are a strong fit** for the position and **how you will contribute** to the organization.

Sample Cover Letter Format

Specific Name of Hiring Manager

Title / Department

Company

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Date

Dear Name:

1st paragraph

Express why you are writing, naming the specific position or career area to which you are applying. Mention how you heard about the vacancy or the organization, if appropriate. Show that you have done your research by mentioning something specific about the company and/or position. Explain why you are interested in this particular job and/or organization and why you are a strong fit.

2nd / 3rd paragraph(s)

Discuss your professional and/or academic qualifications for the position. Avoid repeating information from your resume word for word, but highlight areas of particular relevance. Include information about your relevant education, skills and experience. Expand upon these and include tangible examples that focus on your achievements and accomplishments, when possible. Try to touch upon the majority of the important skills/qualifications listed in the job description. If you lack relevant professional experience, focus on transferable skills. Again, be sure to illustrate why you are a good fit and that you understand the needs of the organization by sharing your knowledge about the company or the position.

Closing paragraph

Be proactive, express confidence and request action from the reader. Point out that you would be happy to provide additional information regarding your background/interests/qualifications upon request. Thank the reader for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your handwritten signature)

- or --- Your
typed name

Sample Student
1045 4th St. Apt 5
Santa Monica, CA 90403

Dan Ichinose,
Director, Demographic Research Project
Asian Pacific American Legal Center
1145 Wilshire Blvd., 2nd Fl
Los Angeles, CA 90017

September 25, 2009

Dear Mr. Ichinose,

The Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC) shares my passion for social and political change. Advocating for community empowerment has been the cornerstone of my career goals, as illustrated in my work experience. I hope to use that experience to further strengthen APALC's role in increasing public awareness and participation in the national 2010 Census.

My involvement with key organizations throughout Washington, D.C. and California make me a great asset and an ideal candidate for the Census 2010 Statewide Network Manager. Through working together with nonprofits, unions, foundations, businesses, government, students, community members, and other organizations, I have planned and provided outreach for campaigns, fundraising events, mentoring programs, policy analysis, membership recruitment and other community outreach. I would use those skills and contacts to better implement APALC's mission while also leading, coordinating and conducting census education and outreach for the statewide network of AAPI community organizations.

My devoted work ethic and outgoing personality have shaped my interest in public service. Most recently, my role leading and coalition building for some of California Common Cause's federal and local campaigns as well as my advocacy experience with OMB Watch's government accountability policies exemplify my desire to implement social change through different mediums. Additionally, my recent summer internship with the Nonprofit Voter Engagement Network strengthened my organizing and training skills by educating and mobilizing nonprofits who serve underrepresented communities to conduct voter outreach and civic engagement. Equipped with this knowledge, I hope to effectively oversee and manage APALC's statewide network while also coordinating with media, legislative staff, foundations, Census officials, and other community organizations.

Included is a copy of my resume and three references, which illustrate my diverse experience and skill set. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or require any further information. My phone number is (310) 445-8362 and my email is samplestudent@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Sample Student

July 26, 2012

I am writing to express my interest in the Planner I position with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency. The agency's goals match my own passions and interests. Further, I believe I can use my recent experiences in transportation planning and research to strengthen SFMTA's efforts to improve the city's built communities at every scale.

I have been studying and working on active transportation initiatives in Southern California since moving here in 2008. Through courses in the Urban Planning department at UCLA, I have developed a strong theoretical and practical understanding of the many development and transportation issues facing our state and nation. I have supplemented my education with a variety of work experiences, which have allowed me to learn successful strategies and help initiate some new tools. Most recently, I have been working with two organizations to reduce the share of trips made by private automobiles in Southern California, in favor of sustainable modes such as bicycling and walking. In Long Beach, I helped implement the city's Bicycle Friendly Business District program that encourages residents to run local errands on bicycles while also supporting small businesses. In addition, I have been involved in the planning and production of CicLAvia – Los Angeles's open streets event. I recently completed my master's degree capstone research project on the participants of CicLAvia, which will inform planning for future events.

I have also developed many important skills through my classroom and work experiences. I have conducted planning research and produced reports to highlight important findings, including a Safe Routes to School plan for Eagle Rock Middle/High School. I have also learned and currently use many technical software programs, including ArcGIS, SPSS (statistical analysis), and CUBE (transportation modeling). Finally, I have picked up highly valuable work skills on the job. I frequently interact with key stakeholders in public settings, and I am comfortable working with diverse groups and individuals; I have supervised volunteers and interns in different capacities; and I have further improved my time management and project management skills.

I welcome the opportunity to assist SFMTA in your current and future Livable Streets planning projects. I am passionate about and committed to increasing the opportunities for efficient, clean, and active mobility in our communities, especially in the neighborhoods that are often overlooked. In addition, this opportunity will help me grow professionally as I begin a long career in sustainable, active, and healthy urban planning.

Please contact me if you have any questions. I look forward to speaking with you in the near future. Thank you for your time and consideration,

Joe Bruin

KELLY JANA E LINDBROOK

3250 Public Affairs Building, Los Angeles, CA, 90095 • Phone (310) 206-8034 • E-mail upinfo@publicaffairs.ucla.edu

March 1, 2012

City of Santa Monica
1685 Main St.,
Santa Monica, CA 90401
(310) 458-8411

To The Hiring Committee:

My passion for sustainable planning, coupled with my strong work ethic, attention to detail, and innovative solutions to difficult problems combine to make me a great asset to the City of Santa Monica. Not only do I have an educational background in planning, I also have the enthusiasm and skills to contribute as an administrative intern during Summer 2012. Given my experience with transportation analysis and environmental policy, I am particularly interested in the internship positions in the Big Blue Bus Department, Office of Sustainability and the Environment, and the Public Services Department.

I am currently a UCLA graduate student in the Luskin School of Public Affairs and am pursuing a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning. As a student I have enrolled in many urban planning classes and have an emphasis in environmental sustainability and transportation policy and planning. As a first year graduate student I have sought to balance classes that provide a strong theoretical framework with practical skills classes such as Advanced GIS and Transportation Behavior Analysis.

During my internship with Fehr & Peers I prepared many environmental documents to fulfill local, state, and federal requirements. I worked on historic preservation bridge projects, highway development/expansion, and portions of the California High Speed Rail project.

Based on my academic and work experience, I am confident that my ability to adapt and excel in new situations will not only make me an excellent intern, it will also greatly benefit the future of the City of Santa Monica.

Attached you will find my resume, which provides information about my school and job experience. I look forward to speaking with you in the future and possibly establishing a time for an interview. In the mean time, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (310) 206-8043 or upinfo@publicaffairs.ucla.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelly J. Lindbrook

Interview Preparation

I. Before the Interview

For many people, the interview process is their least favorite aspect of the job search. What do I wear? How do I present myself? What am I supposed to ask? What are the best responses? For others, the interview process is where they feel the most confident, secure in the knowledge that "If I can just get the interview, I'll get the job."

Regardless of how you feel about interviewing, good planning and preparation can substantially improve your ability to participate in a productive manner, while increasing your confidence level during this important step in the job search process.

The following are some areas to prepare before the first interview is ever accepted:

Interviewing Isn't Just About How You Answer the Questions

Effective interviewing is more than simply responding to the tough questions with the best answers, it also requires knowing the questions to ask in return so that you can learn all the information you need to make an educated decision. Job candidates sometimes have their eyes so set on the goal of getting a job that they fail to completely evaluate the position or company's fit for their own needs, goals and interests.

To avoid misunderstandings, equal responsibility falls to the candidate to clarify expectations of the position, prior to accepting a job. How many times have you heard a friend or colleague comment, "This job isn't what they said it would be."

Some questions you may want to ask a potential employer include:

- What do you see as this position's responsibilities on a daily basis? Weekly? Monthly? How, if at all, do you see these responsibilities changing over time?
- What do you feel are the *most* important responsibilities of this position? (take notes!)
- What are some additional aspects of this position that are unique to your company? (hidden responsibilities?)
- How many people do you employ? How long does the average employee remain with your company? (frequent turnover is a warning signal)
- What are this company's current challenges? (this question can produce surprising information)
- What do you view as this company's greatest goals and missions? (consider how you can be part of the solution here)
- How long have you worked for this company, and what do like the most about your position here? (is your interviewer happy with this company?)

Never forget that you have some amount of control regarding the course of this interview. By being prepared and perfecting your responses, and taking an active and participatory role in the process, you'll not only make the interview process easier and more productive for you, but for your interviewer as well.

Prepare for the Tough Questions

Before the first interview, prepare answers to interview questions that are especially difficult for you to answer. These questions may be as "simple" as "Why do you want to work here?" to as complicated as "Why did you leave your last position?" or "Why should we hire you?"

References

Before accepting the first interview, you should decide on your reference and you may want to request that a letter of recommendation be written on your behalf. This is not something you should be thinking about after references have been requested.

Contrary to common practice, you don't want to provide references prior to an interview or include them with your resume submission, unless the job ad specifically states that references are to be included with the submission.

Keep in mind that a potential job may not live up to your expectations. You're not going to know for certain until after you've had the opportunity to interview. There's no good reason to have your references contacted needlessly or repeatedly for jobs you don't plan to accept. References contacted repeatedly also tend to lose their enthusiasm in the repeated telling.

Another reason to hold on to your reference list information until the interview is that you want the opportunity to be able to contact your references prior to the interviewer's call, so that you can give them a heads---up, "John Doe from ABC company is going to be calling you sometime today or tomorrow. I interviewed with him today about the Project Manager position they have open." This will give you the opportunity to tell your reference about the important issues discussed at the interview. A reference who is prepared for a call, and not caught off---guard, will appreciate the heads---up, and by understanding what the interviewer is hoping to secure, beforehand, will likely provide a better reference. Your references want to help you, so you should try to make this process as easy for them as possible.

Your reference list should match your resume and cover letter in letterhead style and stationery, and should include the following information for each reference listed:

Reference Name
Current Title, Current Company
Relationship to You (Supervisor, Client, Mentor, Colleague, etc.)
Phone Number
Optional e---mail address

Make sure your references have given you permission to provide the numbers you're releasing. Providing e---mail addresses for your references is an additional option, but again, get your reference's permission prior to releasing this personal information.

Dress for Success

Attention needs to be placed on appropriate interview attire, and the time to do this is before the first interview is scheduled.

Interview attire should **not** necessarily reflect the style or uniform of the company or position for which you're interviewing. In other words, if the company dress code is relaxed (khaki slacks, casual shirts), your attire for the interview should remain conservative, professional, and appropriate to the event (a business interview).

A suit coat and tie is appropriate interview attire for men, a dress suit or suit jacket with tailored slacks is appropriate interview attire for women. Avoid loud patterns or excessive color. You don't want to distract your interviewer by your attire.

Your clothing need not be new, but it should be in good condition; clean, well---pressed and well---fitted. If your interview clothes are new (it's not recommended to wear brand new, out---of---the---box shoes --- break them in first!), nothing can put a person ill---at---ease faster than clothes that feel uncomfortable, unnatural or don't fit well. Try your interview clothes on before an interview is scheduled (sit, stand, and walk in them), and make sure they're comfortable, as well as appropriate (ask someone else's opinion). See how the combination of clothes you've put together really look when worn together --- "Wow, this tie does not match this jacket," or "This jacket needs to be tailored, it's just too long for me" are things that should be determined long before having to walk out the door for an interview meeting. Inspect your clothing closely for any wear, stains or damage.

Interview Attire Checklist:

- Don't wear cologne (this may be offensive to your interviewer, no matter how good it smells to you).
- Make sure your socks match the outfit you're wearing.
- Wear shoes that are in good condition, match your attire, and are comfortable to wear. No loud colors. No open toes.
- If you carry a purse or briefcase, these too should be conservative in color and design.
- Make certain your hands and nails are clean and in good condition (you probably "speak" with your hands more than you're aware). Nail polish should be conservative in color.
- Check your clothing for stains, tears, loose stitching and/or loose buttons --- and repair.
- Do not smoke and avoid being around others who are smoking --- the odor will stay on your clothing and may be offensive. If you have worn the clothing previously, have it cleaned or dry---cleaned to remove all cologne, smoking, and other odors.
- Limit the amount of jewelry you wear. Keep it simple and conservative.

Thank You Cards and Postage Stamps

The time to purchase "thank you" cards and postage stamps is before you begin to interview. Have these in supply.

Extra Resumes and Reference Sheets

Be sure you have extra copies of your resume and reference list printed. You'll want to take at least two clean copies of your resume with you to each interview: extras for any additional interviewers in the meeting, and an extra copy to help you complete an application with the correct dates and information.

II. You Have An Interview!

Congratulations! Being requested to interview is a clear indication of your potential as a job candidate for this position at this company. Very few employers will interview candidates they feel are unqualified. Knowing this, it's now your job to convince the employer or hiring manager that you're not just a potential candidate, but you're the right person for the job.

The following are some preparatory steps you can take before and during the interview that will aid your chances for a successful outcome:

Where am I Headed?

Knowing where you are going is half the battle. How well you present yourself will depend on how well you know yourself. What do you have to offer? What are your unique professional and personal characteristics, as they directly relate to the positions you are targeting? What are your personal and professional aspirations? What is it you are looking to achieve?

When that self-knowledge, or literal meaning of "knowing where you are going," is completed, you need to take care of the figurative meaning of "knowing where you're going" by figuring out where the interview is going to be held and how you're going to get there.

One of the first things you should do after an interview is scheduled is to drive to the interview location (at least a day before the actual interview) to determine the location and how long it takes to get there. You certainly don't want to be late for this all-important appointment by underestimating travel time or travel conditions (or worse, get completely lost). By driving to the location (or taking the bus or whatever other transportation you'll) at the same time of day for which your appointment's scheduled, you'll be able to clock the time it takes you to get there, identify the level of traffic and any potential hold-ups (due to construction or road conditions), and locate where you'll be able to park your vehicle (is there a parking fee involved?). If you're taking a bus or other form of public transportation, you should time the distance from your bus stop to the front door of the building.

Once at the location, you should determine which building entry door leads to your interviewer's office, and on which floor the office is located. Is there a public restroom close by? Knowing this will save you time if you want one last opportunity to check a mirror, fix a tie or comb your hair.

If you add at least ten minutes to your travel time, you'll help to avoid any unexpected delays. If this added time makes you a few minutes early for your appointment, so much the better.

Darn, I Forgot To Ask . . .

Prepare a brief, written list of questions to take with you. A question you desperately wanted to ask the night before may vanish once you find yourself in the interview ("I've answered twenty questions, what was I going to ask?!"). Some questions may have arisen during the phone contact you had with the interviewer in setting up the interview appointment ("Mr. Jones mentioned _____, I need to ask him about that"). Or you may have questions regarding information you have learned about the company during your homework investigation ("ABC Company is showing expansion into the European Market. I'd like to learn more about this.").

Don't trust your powers of memory during an interview appointment, and don't allow the interviewer to take total control of the course the interview. This is a two---way exchange, and the only way that you can learn all the information you need to know to make an informed decision is by asking the types of questions that are meaningful to you. Expect your interviewer to ask, "Are there any questions you have about ABC Company?" or "Is there anything else you would like to know?" and be prepared to have a response.

What Did They Say?!

It's a good idea to take notes during the interview (so add a clean pad of paper and working pen to the list of items to bring). The very first thing you should write down is your interviewer's name (this may not be the same person who called you), including the correct spelling (even if you have to ask the receptionist).

During the interview, write down the key criteria discussed and reiterate this information with your interviewer, "As I understand it, Mr. Jones, this position will require . . ." Using these notes to clarify your understanding of the position, both its responsibilities and expectations, and communicate your understanding back to your interviewer -- this is called "mirroring." Mirroring will help clear any potential misunderstanding and will also give you a better record of what was discussed and agreed upon during the interview.

The notes you take will also be used when you write your follow up thank you note following the interview.

What to Take to the Interview

Be prepared to bring along at least two clean copies of your resume to the interview. You may be interviewed by more than one person, and you will want to make sure these additional interviewers have clean copies of your presentation (rather than a photocopied version). You also may be required to complete an application. Having your resume with you will help you complete the form without trying (again) to remember specific dates and events.

Bring along at least two copies of your reference list to the interview appointment (one to give, one to use to call your references following the interview). Provide this to your interviewer only after you've determined that this is a position you still want to pursue. There's no need (or benefit) in having your references contacted needlessly.

You shouldn't need a suitcase, but here are some suggestions of items to take:

- Directions and phone number for the company, in case something deters your arrival.
- A folder (to prevent bending) containing at least two clean copies of your resume and two copies of your reference list.
- A pad of paper with a list of prepared questions you want to ask (and for taking additional notes).
- Two pens (now is not the time to find out your only pen is out of ink).
- A comb or hairbrush, tissues, travel---size antiperspirant and a pocket mirror.
- Umbrella (if there is any potential for rain).
- Women: an extra pair of pantyhose or clear nail polish for quick repair.
- Correct change for parking, if necessary.

Final Preparation

- Re---read all the information you have gathered about the company and re---read your prepared questions.
- Practice your interview responses to tough questions (best if done out loud).
- Make time to relax, even if it's just for 10 minutes, and do positive affirmation exercises (envision yourself working for this company and envision a positive outcome to the interview).
- Continue to give yourself positive messages throughout the day ("I'm a great candidate for this position" or "I can make a positive difference in this company").
- Get a good night's sleep, and get up earlier than normal for early morning appointments, so that you have plenty of time before the interview to get ready and relax.
- Take a leisurely walk if you find yourself feeling overwhelmed with pre---interview jitters.
- Eat well (do not skip meals!) and avoid foods that commonly disagree with you.
- Even if your interview appointment is scheduled for your lunch hour, prepare to take something with you that can be eaten beforehand.
- Have backup transportation.
- Make certain any other responsibilities are accounted for, in case the interview runs longer than you assumed (clear your schedule, if possible).
- For people who suffer from sweaty palms during stressful situations, apply antiperspirant followed by foot or body powder to the palms of your hands.

III. After The Interview

You've had the interview. Now it's time for taking notes.

Write down everything you can remember from the interview, including:

- The responsibilities of the position as you understand them
- Questions you were asked

- Any key points or concerns discussed at the interview (particularly any deficits noted)
- Specific goals of the company and/or company projects for which the position is responsible
- Names of key personnel in the company (and the correct spelling and pronunciation)
- Any other issues or information you have learned about the company or interviewer that is of value

Contacting Your References

Contact each of your references to let him or her know that a call will be coming and from whom (name of interviewer / name of company). Tell each of your references about the position (title and responsibilities) and any key areas that need to be addressed. What is the interviewer trying to secure in potential candidates for the position?

Writing the "Thank you" Letter

A "thank you" card should be sent within 24 hours following an interview. It's preferable to send an actual card, rather than a letter (more personable), and it should be handwritten if your handwriting is neat and legible.

You should send a "thank you" card to each individual involved in your interview. Include the following in your letter:

- Your interviewer's name (and correct spelling). If there was more than one interviewer, each should receive his or her own personalized thank you letter.
- Key points discussed during the interview. These should include the objective of the position you're targeting, the goal and mission of company or department, and any special concerns or considerations discussed.
- Any positive contributions you feel your particular skills and experience will bring to this particular company's goals and missions (including any that were actually discussed during the interview).

Preparing for the Next Interview

The initial interview may not have resulted in the guarantee of a position, so you need to be prepared for the next interview, whether it's a second interview with this company or an initial interview with another company.

Your interview clothing needs to be cleaned and prepared for the next opportunity. For second interviews, a second interview dress needs to be made ready (this doesn't have to be an entirely new outfit, it can simply be a different shirt, tie, blouse or skirt worn with the same basic suit).

For second interviews, a new list of questions and responses need to be prepared. Take what you've learned from the first interview (including any questions or concerns you or the interviewer may have expressed) and formulate a plan. What answers do you need to secure? How can you reduce the interviewer's concerns during round two? What types of solutions can you suggest? What problems can

you solve? Use what you've learned from this interview to avoid any potential pitfalls in interviews with new companies, too.

If you've exhausted your resume copies, it's time to have new ones printed.

Until a job offer has been presented AND you've accepted it, your job search isn't over. Keep submitting resumes, polishing your interview skills, and being prepared for the next opportunity.

Sample Interview Questions

Questions That Your Resume and/or Cover Letter Should Answer

Why do you think you'll be a good fit for this company?

What are your qualifications for this position?

What personal and professional qualifications do you possess that have allowed you to be successful in your field?

What specific strengths did you bring to the table?

What has been your most important work---related contribution?

What were your most significant accomplishments in your last job?

What is the most important thing you've learned from your previous experience that will enable you to be successful in your next position?

What personality traits do you possess that you think are necessary to succeed in this field?

What is the most significant improvement in (your field or area of expertise) that you have achieved in the last year?

What can you do for us if we hire you?

Commonly Asked Interview Questions

What do you think it takes for a person to be successful in your field?

What do you look for in a job and a company?

How would you define a conducive work environment?

Can you multitask?

What activities do you / did you perform in your last position, and what was the approximate time devoted to each of these activities?

How have previous jobs prepared you for greater responsibility?

What did you enjoy most/least about your last job?

If there were two things you could change in your last or present job, what would they be and how would you change them?

Of all the work you have done, where have you been the most successful?

How could you have improved your performance in your last position?

Why do you want to work here?

Tell me about your understanding of the position.

Tell me about a situation or position where you assumed responsibilities that were beyond your written or understood job description.

How much do outside influences play a role in your job performance?

Are you more of a task---oriented or project---oriented worker?

Why have you chosen this particular field?

Why do you want to work for our company?

If you could eliminate one responsibility from your last job, what would it be?

What motivates you to put forth greater effort?

Describe your “dream” job.

Please rank the following from most important to least: job duties, hours, distance to work, pay, work environment.

How do you feel about your present workload?

What do you do when things are slow at work?

What have you learned from your mistakes?

Have you done the best work you’re capable of?

If you could start your career over again, what would you do differently?

How do you keep professionally informed?

What is the most recent skill you’ve learned?

What is your learning style? (Hands on, research, by example?)

What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?

How can we best reward you for doing a good job?

Why do you think you'll be successful in this job?

Do you set performance standards for yourself? Do these evolve over time?

How do you cope with stress on the job?

What does the word "success" mean to you?

What does the word "failure" mean to you?

How do you go about making important decisions?

What kinds of people do you prefer to work with?

What kinds of people do you find difficult it to work with?

What is the most useful criticism you've ever received?

How, specifically, do you contribute toward a team environment?

Describe your leadership style.

What is the most intellectually challenging thing you are looking for in a job and why?

What is the most creatively challenging thing you are looking for in a job?

What are the advantages of diversity in the workplace?

Can you sell me on our product/service?

How would you describe your verbal skills and written skills?

Do you prefer to communicate in person, by phone or via e---mail?

When you're assigned to work with new people, how do you go about getting to know them; who they are, how they work and what their strengths and weakness are?

What organizations do you see as this company's major competitors? Can you compare and contrast the organizations?

What do you do to make the people around you feel important, appreciated, and respected?

How do you prioritize your time?

What decisions are easiest for you to make?

What decisions are the most difficult for you to make?

What project methodologies have you found most effective?

How do you confront subordinates when results are less than acceptable?

How do you handle interruptions, breaks in routine and last minute changes?

What is the most important feature to you in a job?

What pace do you prefer: steady, controlled, and predictable or fast---paced and deadline pressured?

I've interviewed several very good candidates, and you're certainly one of them. What single message would you like me to remember that will convince me that you are the right person for this job?

Tell me in 30 seconds why you are the best person for the job.

How does your position relate to the overall goals of your current company?

What area of your skills would you like to improve in the next year?

What does "growth" mean to you?

What does "challenge" mean to you?

Tell me how you've added value to your job over time.

Have you ever needed to reinvent or redefine your job in order to meet your company's expanding needs?

What proactive steps have you taken to increase the output of your position?

Is your leadership style one of comfortably delegating responsibilities, or do you expect your reports to come to you for added responsibilities?

How would you describe the type of structure, feedback and direction you need in order to excel?

How would you gauge your ability to predict needs before they arise?

In what areas do you typically have the least amount of patience at work?

How would you grade your ability to communicate with peers, subordinates, customers, competitors and upper-level management?

Tell me about the last time you failed to meet a goal or objective. What plan of action did you take to get you back on track?

Tell me about the last time you inherited a problem.

How do you typically stay in the information loop?

What is the reason you're leaving your current / left your last position?

How did you learn about this position?

There appears to be a gap of _____ months/years on your resume. What were you doing during this time?

Describe a situation where a team you were working with a team. What was your role in the team's project?

Questions for Recent Graduates

What made you choose this field?

Why did you attend this particular school?

How does your degree prepare you for a career in this industry?

What natural skills do you possess that made this the ideal academic and career choice?

How will your education help you to excel at a job here?

What qualifications do you have, beyond your academic achievements, that will enable you to excel or succeed within our company?

Do you think your grades are a good indicator of your ability to succeed here?

What other types of positions and companies are you considering right now?

Questions Job Candidates May Want to Ask During Interviews

What do you see as this position's primary responsibilities on a daily/weekly basis?

How, if at all, do you see these responsibilities changing over time? What do you feel are the *most* important responsibilities of this position?

What are some additional aspects of this position that are unique to your company?

What are this company's current challenges?

What do you view as this company's greatest goals and missions?

Has this company experienced a downsizing at any time in its history, and if so, when?

What do like the most about your position here?

What is the work environment like day to day?

Is there anything else I should know about this company?

Are there any aspects of my skills or background that you would like to hear more about?

How would my performance be measured and how is successful performance usually rewarded?

Can you describe your organizational culture?

Where does this position fit into the organization?

What kind of person are you looking for?

What problems might I expect to encounter on this job?

Tell me about promotions and advancement in this company.

What are your expectations of the person hired for this position?

What are the three most significant things that need to be accomplished in this position in the first year and what do you foresee as the major hurdles?

Describe the performance evaluation procedures you use.

When can I expect to hear from you about the next stage in the interviewing process?

<http://www.1st---writer.com/tough---interview---questions.htm>

Networking

Networking is one of the most important skills that job seekers need to master to be truly effective in their job searches. In fact, it has been reported that upwards of 60% of all jobs are secured through networking. A well-developed career network can provide support, information and job leads. There are a number ways to develop a career network – joining professional associations, attending industry-specific social events and conferences, setting up informational interviews, or even just meeting colleagues for lunch. Getting involved with your alumni association, participating in volunteer opportunities and actively utilizing LinkedIn are additional ways to expand your circle.

Elevator Pitch or Sound Byte

When attending networking functions, it is helpful to have your “elevator pitch” or “sound byte” prepared. This is a 20---30 second statement that succinctly summarizes who you are, what you do (and what the value is), what makes you unique, and your immediate goals. Imagine that you are standing in the elevator with a potential employer or business contact and you have 20 seconds to make an impression. What would you like them to take away from the interaction? It is helpful to practice your elevator speech with friends/colleagues so that you are comfortable with it and it sounds natural. Don’t forget to deliver your pitch with enthusiasm – show your passion for what you do!

Keeping the Conversation Going...

After the initial introduction, it is helpful to ask questions to keep the conversation flowing. Here are some questions that you can ask if your conversation comes to a lull:

- 1) Tell me about what you do. What has your experience been like working there?
- 2) What advice do you have for someone [that is getting ready to graduate from a master’s program; that is looking to transition into “x” field, etc.]
- 3) Would you mind telling me about the professional atmosphere at “x” company?
- 4) How did you get involved in “x?” or What made you decide to do “y?”
- 5) What do you like most about what you do?
- 6) What do you see as the current trends in your field?
- 7) What would make someone the ideal employee for your company/industry?
- 8) Why did you choose this profession?
- 9) What projects are you working on?
- 10) What can you tell me about “x” firm?

Informational Interviewing

One form of networking is called “Informational Interviewing.” This is a process where job hunters research companies of interest in order to contact individuals doing the type of work they want to do as a way to gain information about a type of position or industry.

While informational interviewing isn’t intended to secure a job offer, the information gained can help job candidates determine a course of action or determine whether or not a particular position or industry is a good choice for them. While securing a job may not be the immediate goal, this form of networking can create the building blocks necessary to secure the right networking contacts and stepping---stone positions that will lead to the fulfillment of a dream career.

In exchange for twenty or thirty minutes of their time, or lunch, the job hunter asks specific questions related to the position, company or industry being targeted. These questions may include:

- What are the typical responsibilities of this position?
- What do you enjoy most about the work you do?
- What personal and professional characteristics do you feel are important to this position or industry?
- What do you enjoy least about the work you do?
- What would be the best types of stepping stone positions I could take in order to gain the experience I need to do this job well?
- What type of courses or education would you recommend?
- What professional associations have you found useful?
- Or for hiring managers: What personal and professional characteristics do you look for in the people you hire for this type of position?

Sample Informational Interview Questions

General questions about your interviewee's career field:

- What are the various jobs available in this field?
- What types of training do companies offer those who enter this field?
- In what ways is your occupation changing?
- How is the economy affecting this industry?
- What is the employment outlook like in your career field? How much demand is there for people in this career?
- How quickly is the field growing?
- What are the growth areas of this field?
- What are the opportunities in this career like in [geographical area you are most interested in]?
- What is the typical entry---level salary in this field?
- What do you find unique about your career field?
- What skills or personal characteristics do you feel contribute most to success in this industry?
- What sacrifices have you had to make to succeed in this field, and do you feel the sacrifices were worth it?
- When people leave this career, what are the usual reasons?
- What are the typical entry---level job titles and functions?
- What entry---level jobs offer the best opportunities for the greatest amount of learning?
- What are the most significant characteristics of this industry?
- What trends in the field would be most likely to affect someone just entering this career now?
- What kinds of people experience the greatest success in this field?
- What is the most important thing that someone planning to enter this career should know?

All about your interviewee's job:

- What are the duties/functions/responsibilities of your job?
- What is a typical day like?
- What kind of hours do you normally work? Do you have to put in much overtime or work on weekends?
- Are the time demands of your job specific to this company, or would anyone in this career be expected to put in the same hours?
- Do you ever take work home with you?
- What kinds of problems do you have to solve on a regular basis?
- What do you do if you can't solve a problem on your own?
- Do you have to deal with a significant amount of conflict in this job?
- What systems are in place for dealing with conflict?

- What constraints, such as time and funding, make your job more difficult?
- What kinds of decisions do you make?
- Describe some of the toughest situations you've faced in this job.
- To what extent do you interact with customers/clients?
- What percentage of your time is spent doing each function?
- How does your time use vary? Are there busy and slow times or is the work activity fairly constant?
- Which other departments, functional units, or levels of the hierarchy do you regularly interact with?
- How much flexibility do you have in determining how you perform your job?
- Is your work primarily individual or predominately in groups or teams?
- How are work teams or groups organized?
- What are the most important personal satisfactions and dissatisfactions connected with your job?
What part of this job do you personally find most satisfying? Most challenging?
- What are your interests and in what way does this job satisfy your interests?
- What do you like/dislike about working in this job?
- Are there aspects to your job that are repetitious?
- What projects have you worked on that have been particularly interesting?
- What particular skills or talents are most essential to be effective in your job?
- How did you learn these skills?
- What are the educational requirements for this job?
- What other types of credentials or licenses are required?
- What social obligations go along with a job in your occupation?
- Are there organizations you are expected to join?
- To what extent does this job present a challenge in terms of juggling work and family life?
- What are the major frustrations of this job?
- If you could change anything about your job, what would it be?
- What interests you least about the job or creates the most stress?
- What is the job title of your department head or supervisor for this job?
- Where do you and your supervisor fit into the organizational structure?
- How many people do you supervise?

About preparing for this career:

- Does your work relate to experiences or studies you had in college?
- How well did your college experience prepare you for this job?
- What courses have proved to be the most valuable to you in your work?
- What courses do you wish you had taken that would have prepared you?
- If you were a college student again, what would you do differently to prepare you for this job?
- How important are grades/GPA for obtaining a job in this field?
- What do you feel is the best educational preparation for this career?
- How do you think [name of your college]'s reputation is viewed when it comes to hiring?
- If you were entering this career today, would you change your preparation in any way to facilitate entry?

About your interviewee's career path:

- In what way did this type of work interest you and how did you get started?
- What was your major in college?
- How did you get your job?
- Did you enter this position through a formal training program?
- What jobs and experiences have led you to your present position?
- What kinds of things did you do before you entered this occupation?
- Which aspects of your background have been most helpful?
- What other jobs can you get with the same background?
- What were the keys to your career advancement?
- How did you get where you are and what are your long-range goals?
- If your job progresses as you like, what would be the next step in your career?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- If your work were suddenly eliminated, what kinds of work do you feel prepared to do?
- If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why? What would you change?

About the culture of your interviewee's company or organization:

- Why did you decide to work for this company?
- What do you like most about this company?
- How does your company differ from its competitors?
- Why do customers choose this company?
- What is the company's relationship with its customers?
- How optimistic are you about the company's future and your future with the company?
- Has the company made any recent changes to improve its business practices and profitability?
- What does the company do to contribute to its employees' professional development?
- What systems are in place to enable employees to give management feedback and suggestions?
- How does the company make use of technology for internal communication and outside marketing? (Use of social media, intranets, the web, Skype/videoconferencing, etc.)?
- What other technologies are integral to the company's operation?
- How would you describe the atmosphere at the company? Is it formal or informal?
- What are the people like with whom you work?
- How would you describe the morale level of people who work here?
- Do you participate in many social activities with your coworkers?
- Is there a basic philosophy of the company or organization and, if so, what is it? (Is it a people---, service--- or product---oriented business?)
- What is the company's mission statement?
- What can you tell me about the corporate culture?
- Is the company's management style top-down, or do front-line employees share in decision-making?

- Is there flexibility in work hours, vacation schedule, place of residence, etc.?
- What work---related values are most highly esteemed in this company (security, high income, variety, independence)?
- What kind of training programs does the company offer? Is it highly structured or more informal?
- Does the company encourage and/or pay for employees to pursue graduate degrees? Is there a tuition reimbursement program?
- Does the company offer an employee discount on the products it sells?
- What's the best thing about the company?
- How does the company evaluate your job performance?
- How does the company recognize outstanding accomplishments of its employees?
- What does the company reward?
- Does the company observe any traditions or ceremonies?
- What is the typical job---interview process at the company? How many interviews do candidates generally go through before being offered a position?
- What does the company do to foster innovation and creativity?

About the company's needs:

- In what areas do you perceive there to be gaps in personnel in this company? If the company had unlimited resources for creating new positions, in what areas should those positions be created?
- In what areas do you see the company expanding? Do you foresee the opening of new markets or greater globalization? Do you predict development of new products and/or services? Building of new facilities?
- How can employees prepare for any planned changes at the company?
- What obstacles do you see getting in the way of the company's profitability or growth?
- If you needed someone to assist you in your job, what tasks would you assign to your assistant?

About opportunities for advancement within this company and/or field:

- How does a person progress in your field?
- What is the highest---level job one can hold in this career?
- What is a typical career path in this field or organization?
- What are the advancement opportunities?
- What is the average length of time for an employee to stay in the job you hold?
- How rapidly do people move to the next level in this career?
- What incentives or disincentives are there for staying in the same job?
- Would someone in this field need to relocate to advance in his/her career?
- If I performed well at this company, where could I expect to be in five years?

Seeking advice if you are a career changer:

- My current career is _____. How easy or difficult do you think it might be to make a transition from that career to your career?
- The skills I use the most in my current career are _____. To what extent and in what ways do you think those skills are transferable to your career?
- What aspects of my background do you feel would be the most helpful in making the transition to your career field?
- What aspects of my background do you feel would be the biggest obstacles to someone making the transition to your career field?
- What would be the best kind of training to get to make the transition from my current career to your career?
- What's the best way for me to get more experience in your field without taking major steps backward from the level to which I've progressed in my current career?
- How do you think someone in my current career would be viewed by those with hiring power in your career? Would you personally hire someone coming from my current career field?
- The things I like the best about my current career are: _____. Will I find some of those same things if I switch to your career?
- The things I dislike the most about my current career are: _____. Will I encounter any of those same challenges in your career?
- Do you know of any other people in your career who have made the transition to your field from my current career? How did the transition work out?
- I've heard that people in your field have characteristics such as _____, which I have not had the opportunity to develop in my current career. How important is/are that/those characteristic(s).
- What sacrifices do you think I might have to make to make the switch into your career field?
- Could you take a brief look at my resume and suggest ways I could tailor it to make myself more marketable in changing from my current career field to your career field?

Seeking general advice and referrals from your interviewee:

- What is the best way to obtain a position that will get me started in this occupation?
- What do you wish you'd known before you entered this field?
- What are the major qualifications for success in this occupation?
- What courses should I be taking?
- How can I assess whether or not I have the skills needed for a position such as yours?
- With the information you have about my education, skills, and experience, what other fields or jobs would you suggest I research further before I make a final decision?
- Do you know of other people whom I might talk to who have similar jobs?
- Which professional journals and publications should I be reading to learn about this career?
- Are there any other written materials (such as company brochures) that you suggest I read?

- Which professional organizations associated with this career should I join?
- What kinds of experience, paid or unpaid, would you encourage for anybody pursuing a career in this field?
- What qualifications would you be looking for if you were hiring for a position such as yours?
- Do you have any written job descriptions of positions in this field/company?
- What areas of the company would be most interested in hiring people with my background?
- If I wanted to obtain a job here, what would be the best way to learn of job vacancies?
- If you were conducting a job search today, how would you go about it?
- Would you be willing to answer more questions, by phone or in person, if I need additional advice in the future?
- Would you mind taking a look at my resume to see if you have any suggestions?

Salary Negotiation

Why do so many job candidates come unprepared to the salary negotiation table?

The idea of "winging" it seems to be a popular one, but not a very prudent course of action when you consider that the decisions made here, at the time of hire, will have a direct impact on your career for years to come.

For example, a loss of \$1,000 in negotiated annual salary at the start of hire will not only reduce your immediate income, but will reduce your income for the rest of your employment with this company, because all subsequent raises will be based on this lower rate.

Salary negotiation may not present a life or death situation, but it certainly has a direct impact on the quality of one's life. So why do so few people adequately prepare themselves for this part of the job search process? And why do so many choose to navigate blindly, simply hoping for the best?

To begin, you need to understand the base figures you'll be working with in your calculations. These are your three key figures:

1. **Your living wage** --- the minimum income requirements you need to survive. The income required to maintain your rent or mortgage, your utilities, car payment, groceries, fuel, clothing, etc. --- the basic necessities. You need to know this number, but you share it with no one. To calculate this figure you need to have 12 months of records: bills, utilities, etc. You can calculate this with six months, but your figures may not be entirely accurate. You want to add up each category, individually, and then add the categories together. Divide by 12 and you'll have your living wage. Keep in mind that this figure may not address luxury items.
2. **Your current worth** --- Research pay scales for individuals at your current skill and qualification level, in this type of position, in this particular industry, in this specific location, and in the current business climate.
3. **Top of the scale** --- for this type of position, in this type of industry, in this location, and in the current business climate. The amount that would make you jump out of bed on Monday mornings, even if you're not quite there yet.

There are several ways to research pay scales, and your best bet is to utilize all the resources available to you:

Salary Research and Pay Scale Calculators:

[PayScale](#)

Salary survey, salaries, wages, compensation information and analysis. Includes evaluations for job offers or raises, and salary in your current position.

[The Occupational Outlook Handbook](#)

The statistics you need on that targeted position or potential career path, including educational requirements, national salary levels, working environment, and more.

[Salary.com](#)

The Salary Wizard can help you determine what positions are paying in your choice of industry and location.

[National Association of Realtors® Salary Calculator](#)

Calculates salary and cost of living factors by location.

[SalaryExpert.com](#)

A leading provider of online compensation data, including salary comparison, serving both individual employees and HR/Compensation professionals.

[Salary Surveys by JobStar](#)

General and position specific salary guides.

Recruiters, headhunters and temporary agencies in your location of choice.**Professional Associations and Journals:**

[Weddles Association List](#): A well---organized and easy---to---use list of several thousand associations from around the world organized by their primary professional/occupational focus and/or industry of interest. Provides individual links to the professional association websites.

Company Research

Keep in mind that location is a large factor in pay scale. Just as some locations have higher or lower costs of living (which need to be factored into your research, in addition to your minimum pay requirements), some markets bear higher or lower compensation rates.

Once you have your three key figures in place (living wage, current worth, and maximum pay scale), disregard the living wage. You need to know and understand this figure, because it is essential to your survival, but you won't be using this figure in your salary negotiation with potential employers. This information is for your use and benefit, only. It is the card you keep close to your chest.

If you have done your research well you should have a clear picture of your current job market worth, and you should know what the highest pay scale is for individuals in your field who present the greatest amount of experience and expertise (the top level).

Between these two figures is your salary negotiation starting point.

So if you have determined your "current worth" to be \$45,000 (for your level of experience), and the highest compensation for someone in your field with the greatest amount of experience is \$100,000, somewhere between these two numbers is your **negotiating** salary range.

It is always easier to negotiate down, rather than up, and it is practically guaranteed that the potential employer is going to want to negotiate *down*. Therefore, you want to be able to give the potential

employer the room to do this without losing your negotiation advantage or ending up with a compensation that is less than your current market worth --- or worse, lower than your living wage.

With this information (living wage, current market worth, and maximum pay scale), and with an understanding of the negotiation process (which we will explore in a moment), you now have the figures necessary to negotiate a fair exchange.

But Having the Figures Alone Isn't Enough

You are not done yet. Navigating a successful salary negotiation includes:

1. Understanding the position.
2. Understanding the company.
3. Understanding the competition.

When you are in a job interview situation, you may think the entire focus is on what you bring the table. And while it is true that this is an essential aspect of the interview process, your ability to listen well and ask the right questions is equally important. The more you understand about the demands and requirements of the position, the better you will be able to assess suitable compensation.

It is interesting to note that in today's economy, and with an ever-growing pressure to downsize, employers are requiring more and more from the employees they hire and retain. So while you can assume what the normal responsibilities will be for a given position, the job may actually include responsibilities atypical of the job title. You may be expected to perform or master skills well outside the original job description. Therefore, it becomes even more important that a job candidate fully understand the role and responsibilities of positions he or she considers.

If the salary negotiation phase begins before you have achieved a solid understanding of the position's full requirements, back up the process a bit by asking questions, such as, "Before we discuss salary, may I ask you a couple more questions about the position? If I understand you correctly, the most important aspects of this job are..., but in addition to these responsibilities the position also requires..." Keep the dialogue going until you feel that you have achieved enough information to make a sound assessment.

Company research is also vitally important in an effective salary negotiation. It is important that you know the company's goals, that you understand their products or services, that you recognize their branding (and the message they are trying to send), what they are most proud of, who their competition is, what they consider their greatest problems, how well they are doing, and the types of candidates they hire. Some of this information can be gained through the interview process by, again, asking the right questions.

How can you know the types of candidates a company hires? Take a look at their corporate website and read their annual reports. What types of skills and experience do their key players have? Who is currently working for them? What is written in the professional bios they post? Chances are you will see a pattern here.

Company research can also indicate the level of compensation they offer to current employees, giving you an idea of what they have budgeted for the position you are targeting. A company who is struggling may be less willing to negotiate a higher starting salary, but may be more willing to offer higher compensation for successful results (just make sure you get it in writing).

The more you know about the other player at the negotiation table (the company), the better you will be able to negotiate how well your salary requirements will fit within this particular organization.

You also need to know about the competition. And I don't mean the company's competition (although that can be a key piece of information as well), but your competition. How do your skills, background and experience measure up with other candidates applying for the same types of jobs?

While it may be impossible to learn about your direct competition (for this job), it is very easy to learn what competing candidates are offering in general. Take a look at various corporate websites in your industry and read the professional bios of individuals doing the type of work you are targeting. How does your history measure up to theirs? Talk to recruiters and headhunters and have them evaluate your resume. How do your skills and background measure up with similar candidates in your field and location? If you look hard enough, you will find out that your competition has posted their information all over the internet. Let this information guide you. Are you being underpaid? Would it be prudent for you to acquire a new skill or polish those you currently possess? Would it be financially valuable for you to take a class, or get certified in a particular area? Are you competitive?

Show Me The Money!

Even with all the research and information on your side, you still have to talk about the money, and for many people money is an uncomfortable topic. As previously mentioned, it is easier to negotiate down than up (and hopefully the salary range you have developed will give you the room you need to negotiate effectively without putting you at financial risk).

You also know the potential employer is looking for a deal. This doesn't mean that the employer wants to cheat you out of fair compensation, but every dollar saved looks good on the company's bottom line.

And, finally, you can bet a budget has been established for the position. It may have very little flexibility, or it may have more. If you can find out what that budget is you will have taken one big step forward in the salary negotiation process.

It all begins with the tough money questions that you may be asked, such as:

- "What salary are you hoping for?"
- "What would you consider fair compensation for this position / for someone with your experience/background?"
- "What would it take to bring you on board?"
- "What were you making in your last position?"
- "What is your current salary?"

Since knowing what the company has budgeted for the position is critical to your salary negotiation, getting this information early in the process is important.

The questions above leave an opening for you to ask, "Can you tell me what has been budgeted for this position?" It may not be a question the interviewer is willing to answer, but it is a fair question. Another way to phrase this question would be, "Can you tell me what the salary range would be for someone of my skills and background with ABC Company?"

To help keep negotiating options open, offer a salary range, as discussed previously, rather than a single, set amount. Present this range with a lead---in statement that helps to qualify the amount, and also suggests some flexibility. For example, "If I understand the needs and requirements of the position, I believe my level of experience would merit a starting range of \$55K to \$65K. This is, of course, negotiable." "Naturally, I want to make as much as my skills and background will allow, which I believe to merit a \$55K to \$65K starting range. At the same time, I truly want to work for ABC Company, and, therefore, I want to offer some flexibility in this negotiation." Open door.

If the interviewer states "That's above what we were hoping to pay for this position," or "That's outside of what we can offer you at this time," or any similar type of statement --- and it is a job you want to continue to pursue --- then the salary negotiation doesn't have to stop here. A simple "I'm still very interested in working for ABC Company. What did you have in mind?" or "Well, what has your company budgeted for this position? ABC Company is a company I truly want to work for." This should keep the negotiation table open. If not, then take it to heart that they really can't afford you.

If the salary negotiation continues, the interviewer may ask you, "What would be the minimum salary you would be willing to accept?" If they have continued to avoid the budget question (and at this point it would be silly, as it would no longer be to their advantage to keep it a secret), then you may want to ask (again), "Can you tell me what has been budgeted for this position?" Failing that, you need to consider how much you want this position, how much you need this position, and what you are really willing to accept, financially, to consider the position --- because, again, what you accept now will affect your compensation levels for some time to come.

Questions about previous salary and salary history are trickier issues. If your previous position paid less than your skills and experience warrant (compared to local and/or national averages), it can diminish the validity of the salary range you are presenting. However, this fact can also be used as one of the reasons why you are looking to secure new employment. Take a word of warning, however, and NEVER say anything directly negative about a previous employer. Instead, suggest: "One of the reasons why I'm seeking new employment is to gain the opportunity to be fairly compensated for my skills and level of experience. My previous position paid \$10K less than the national average, not because my skills or achievements were lacking, but because that was as much as the previous company could bear."

When considering your previous salary, take into consideration any additional benefits and their financial value, such as insurance, 401K, profit sharing, bonuses, stock options, parking/commuting allowances, etc., and include these as part of your total salary amount.

This information is important not only for stating previous salary to a potential employer, but also for your ability to compare offers. For example, if you do not already know what these items would cost you if you were to pay for or purchase them yourself, find out. A company that offers you \$4K more in salary, but offers no medical insurance, may actually be a raw deal when you learn that covering your own insurance plan will cost you \$5K or more per year.

Once you have reached an acceptable offer, get it in writing. You do not want to quit one job only to have a verbal offer withdrawn on another. You also do not want to burn any bridges. Give appropriate notice to the company you are leaving, contact any and all companies you were in negotiation with (you may want to renew these options later) to show your appreciation for the opportunity and for the company, and contact everyone who has helped you in your job search campaign, such as contacts, references, etc., and thank them for their efforts.

http://www.1st---writer.com/negotiation_skills.htm