

Notes from the BCLA/CLA Student Chapter's Getting Hired in Public Libraries panel (Thursday, March 13th, at 6:00pm).

Students had the opportunity to listen to six panelists from all facets of public library service, who described their experience with the hiring process and gave advice for students entering the field.

Vancouver Public Library

- Be patient and tenacious
- Leave yourself open to opportunities (a circuitous career route is ok!) Just say yes to opportunities!
- Skill, knowledge, ability, seniority add up to the perfect candidate
 - Seniority prevails when s, k, and a are equal → as an external without seniority you have to score 10 points higher
- Resume/cover letter:
 - Employers look at it 20 seconds unless something catches the eye
 - Cover letter: market yourself – give examples.
 - 3 or 4 main qualities from the job description
 - submit a specific resume for a position
 - UBC Alumni website for resources (find them under “Career Resources” tab)
 - Other resources on VPL website (at bottom of homepage)
- Not really hiring for the reference desks – that will mostly be lib techs
- Want to see coursework on your resume – annotate them
- Want to hear about technical skills
- A good buzzword for applications is “community engagement”
- Include your involvement in professional orgs.

North Vancouver City Library

- Different hiring process than VPL
- Don't hire many auxiliaries
- Desk work is primarily done by paraprofessionals
- Librarians are program focused, autonomous, project-based
- Customer service & teaching and training experience are positives

West Vancouver Memorial Library

- Cover letter is what gets you the interview – put in the effort, personalize for the library you’re writing to. Mention the name of the library at least once in the cover letter!
 - Identify the 3 most important things they are looking for
 - Give 3 reasons why you meet those things
- Imagine yourself in the position of the employer – 200 resumes to go through in 1.5 hours. Make yours stand out!
- Do your research: visit the library, website, etc.
- Read the job description and understand it!
- Bring your whole self to the interview—all your life experiences count!
- Be true to your BEST self in an interview. Still YOU, just the most polite version.
- If you don’t have an answer to a question, find something to say
 - Even, “here’s how I would go about learning it...”
- Interview scoring
 - Have lists of perfect answers – looking to see how close you can get to them → don’t leave anything unsaid!

For all libraries

- Being able to speak an Asian language (particularly Cantonese or Mandarin) or Farsi, in the case of West Van, is a HUGE asset, make sure to highlight on resume.
- Experience in children’s programming will also be an asset – the willingness and ability to do a storytime at 30 mins notice is a major plus.