



Las Virgenes Municipal Water District Candidate Recruitment Guide

YOUR PATH TO A STRONG APPLICATION

Executive Summary

Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (LVMWD) is committed to a fair, equitable, and merit-based hiring process that gives every candidate an equal opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications. **This guide is to help candidates understand the application and interview process, submit stronger applications, and perform their best during interviews.** LVMWD's hiring procedures are designed to ensure a consistent and equitable process to hire the most competent and qualified employees, while meeting all federal and state requirements under a general system based on merit ascertained by competitive examination.

FAIR

EQUITABLE

MERIT-BASED

The 6-Step Recruitment Process

Step	Phase	What Happens
1	Job Posted / Application Filing Period	Position is advertised; candidates submit applications by the deadline.
2	Initial Application Screening	HR reviews applications to determine who meets minimum qualifications.
3	Hiring Supervisor Application Screening / Testing	Candidates that meet minimum qualifications have their application reviewed by the hiring supervisor or participate in an examination.
4	1 st Round (Structured) Interview	Candidates that pass the hiring supervisor application screening or the examination are invited to the structured panel interview, where they are interviewed by an interview panel consisting of subject matter experts from outside agencies.
5	2 nd Round (Selection) Interview	The hiring supervisor conducts selection interviews with the highest scoring candidates from the 1 st round interview.
6	Selection is Made	The most qualified candidate is selected, and a conditional job offer is made. The official offer is extended after background check and pre-employment requirements are completed.

Step 1: Submitting a Strong Application

- Read the full job description and posting carefully before applying to understand duties, requirements, and deadlines.
- Complete the application thoroughly— attachments do NOT substitute for completing the application itself.
- Attach all required documents (certifications, resume, cover letters, etc.).
- Clearly state how you meet the minimum qualifications specified in the Education and Experience section of the job posting.
- Include ALL current and previous employment with specific duties for each position.
- Complete all required fields and respond fully to supplemental questions.
- Consider having someone review your application before submission to ensure it is thorough, clear, organized, accurate, and complete.

Application Quality: Strong vs. Weak Examples

WORK EXPERIENCE

✗ Weak Work Experience Entry

"Did all HR for the company." This vague description provides no detail about scope, responsibilities, or accomplishments and will not serve candidates well in the screening process.

SUPPLEMENTAL RESPONSE

✗ Weak Supplemental Response

"I have over 15 years of experience doing everything HR, working in various companies." This response lacks specificity and does not address all parts of a multi-part question.

✓ Strong Work Experience Entry

"Administered the company's human resources functions, including recruitment and onboarding, employee benefits, compensation, training and professional development, rewards and recognition, performance management, personnel actions, employee and labor relations, and records management."

✓ Strong Supplemental Response

"I have over 15 years of experience administering human resources functions. I gained this experience working for X, Y, and Z companies. I have had direct responsibility for administering a comprehensive HR program, including recruitment and onboarding, employee benefits, compensation, training and professional development, rewards and recognition, performance management, personnel actions, employee and labor relations, and records management. I have also contributed to employment policy development during my time with Company Y."

Supplemental Questions: Best Practices

- Resumes are NOT accepted in lieu of responses — do not indicate "see resume" as a response.
- Compose responses in Microsoft Word first to save, revise, and check spelling and punctuation.
- Allow adequate time to complete this portion thoughtfully.
- Use clear grammar, correct punctuation, and professional language.
- Provide specific examples and details demonstrating your training and experience.
- For multi-part questions, address each part completely.

Step 2: Application Screening

- HR conducts initial screening to determine which applicants meet minimum qualifications (MQs).
- Applicants **MUST** meet MQs by the application deadline to move forward.
- Applicants will be notified of their status in the recruitment process via email.
- Employment examinations may include written tests, oral tests, performance tests, evaluations of training and experience, interviews, working style assessments, practical exercises, or any combination thereof.
- All examination content is job-related and designed to test knowledge, skills, and abilities that predict successful job performance.
- Applicants with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations.

Step 3: Hiring Supervisor Application Screening/Testing

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- When the process consists of a hiring supervisor application screening, those candidates determined to meet the minimum qualifications will have their application reviewed by the hiring supervisor to determine which candidates' qualifications most closely match the needs of the position.
- Candidates who demonstrate the best combination of qualifications in relation to the requirements and duties of the position will be invited to the 1st round (structured) interview.
- Responses to the supplemental questions are key in determining candidates' qualifications for the particular role.
- When the process consists of a test, those candidates determined to meet the minimum qualifications will be invited to participate in a test designed to assess their knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the position. This could be a multiple-choice test administered online, for example.
- Those candidates who score highest on the test will be invited to the 1st round (structured) interview.

Step 4: 1st Round Structured Panel Interview

- The first round interview is typically conducted via Zoom but could be in person.
- Structured format: every candidate asked the same job-related questions and scored on the same rating scale.
- May include a practical component, such as performance test, writing sample/exercise, or other practical exercise.
- Panel typically consists of three subject matter experts from outside the District.
- Panel evaluates candidates based solely on information provided during the interview.
- Candidates scored by each panelist; HR calculates overall scores and rankings for eligibility list.
 - An eligibility list is a ranked list of qualified candidates who have successfully completed the recruitment process. It serves as a pool of qualified candidates from which the District can select to fill current and future openings in that particular job classification for up to one year.
- Purpose: give each candidate equal opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Up to 10 applicants may be invited depending on position level and interview length.

Preparing for the 1st Round Interview

- Read the job description thoroughly and identify areas that may be assessed.
- Prepare concrete examples demonstrating your qualifications in identified areas.
- Familiarize yourself with LVMWD's mission, values, goals, objectives, and key initiatives relevant to the position.
- Prepare responses to standard questions about how your background has prepared you for the role.
- Practice your "elevator pitch" — a concise summary of your qualifications.
- Conduct mock interviews with another person or practice in front of a mirror.

During the 1st Round Interview: Best Practices

- Be prompt and dress appropriately for the interview.
- Maintain good posture, body language, and eye contact when speaking.
- Assume the panel does not know you — give full and complete answers to each question.
- Provide specific examples; do not assume your experience will “speak for itself.”
- Speak clearly and answer concisely and to the point.
- Be mindful of timeframe — avoid answers that are too brief or too lengthy.
- Answer all parts of multi-part questions; ask for repetition if needed.
- Exude confidence, but not arrogance.

The STAR Method for Interview Responses

S — Situation

Briefly lay out the scenario using just enough detail to make the interviewer understand the stakes.

T — Task

Talk about what your role was in the situation.

A — Action

Discuss what you did and why you took that approach.

R — Result

Tell your interviewer about the outcome and what you learned from the experience.

Virtual (Zoom) Interview Tips

Tip	Guidance
Be Prompt or Early	Arrive 10–15 minutes early to address any connection or audio issues.
Test Your Technology	Ensure internet connection, camera, and microphone work properly before the interview.
Professional Background	Choose quiet, well-lit space with minimal distractions; use appropriate virtual background or blur.
Dress Professionally	Wear attire matching company culture as for in-person interview; no sunglasses or hats.
Minimize Distractions	Silence notifications, close unnecessary tabs, let others know not to interrupt.
Maintain Eye Contact	Look at camera instead of screen to create natural connection; avoid looking around or moving away.

Step 5: 2nd Round Selection Interview

- Conducted after 1st round interviews are completed and the eligibility list is established.
- The highest scoring candidates, typically the top 3 ranks, from the eligibility list are invited to the selection interview.
- The hiring supervisor conducts the interview along with other District staff.
- The hiring supervisor selects the most qualified candidate for the position, with input from the other panel members.

Preparing for the 2nd Round Selection Interview

- Demonstrate thorough understanding of specific duties, responsibilities, and expectations — you are a top-ranked candidate.
- Research LVMWD's mission, values, goals, and key initiatives in depth.
- Continue using STAR method with concrete, detailed examples showing how your background prepared you for this specific role.
- Do not assume familiarity — give full and complete answers even if you've interacted with District staff before.
- Demonstrate a growth mindset and eagerness to learn, grow, and contribute.
- Showcase knowledge of the water industry, District operations, and how your skills align with District needs.
- Clearly communicate enthusiasm for the position and commitment to LVMWD's mission.

Step 6: Background Check & Official Offer

- After the selection interview, the hiring supervisor selects the most qualified candidate for General Manager approval. Please be patient, as this process may take a few weeks.
- Conditional offer of employment provided to prospective candidate.
- The background check will consist of verification of information provided on the job application such as education, employment history, driving status, possession of certifications, references, criminal records, and other information required and deemed necessary for the position.
- Pre-employment physical examination required.
- Pre-employment drug test required for safety-sensitive positions or those covered under Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy.
- Official written offer of employment provided after successful completion of all pre-employment requirements.

Final Tips to Boost Your Interview Skills

- Tip #1: Prepare thoroughly — research the role, organization, and industry.
- Tip #2: Showcase your organizational and team knowledge.
- Tip #3: Demonstrate a growth mindset and commitment to continuous learning.
- Tip #4: Practice your responses and link them directly to the job requirements.
- Tip #5: Provide specific examples to showcase your experience using the STAR method.

Helpful Resources for Candidates

Resource	Link
Job Opportunities at LVMWD	LVMWD Job Opportunities Sorted by Job Title ascending Las Virgenes Municipal Water District
All LVMWD Job Descriptions	Class Specifications Sorted by ClassTitle ascending Las Virgenes Municipal Water District
LVMWD's Mission & Vision Statement	Mission & Vision Statement - Las Virgenes Municipal Water District
LVMWD's Organizational Chart	Organizational Chart - Las Virgenes Municipal Water District
LVMWD's Employee Benefits & MOUs	Employee Benefits and MOUs - Las Virgenes Municipal Water District