

Hosts

Merrick Chan, Talent Sourcing Consultant
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Pauline Paular, Accountant

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Merrick

Hi everyone. My name is Merrick Chan and I'm joined by Allen Manuel and Pauline Paular, Accountants at the City of Edmonton. Allen has successfully completed the City's 30-month CPA Training Program, and Pauline is in her final rotation of the program and they're both here to chat about their experiences.

Welcome Allen and Pauline!

Allen

Thank you Merrick for the introduction.

Pauline

Yes, thanks for having us.

Merrick

So to kick us off, I was wondering if you could speak about how you discovered the City's CPA Training Program and what initially drew you to the program?

Perhaps, Pauline, you could start followed by Allen?

Pauline

Yes, for sure, thanks Merrick! For me I discovered the City's CPA Program through some old colleagues. And what initially drew me to the program was the work and life balance and an opportunity for me to get to know how our city operates. I love the rotation in different areas such as the Business Financial Analytics Team, the Budget Office, we also have Corporate Accounting and Internal Audit. And, I think it really gave me an opportunity to be a well-rounded accountant.

And how about you Allen?

Allen

Similarly to Pauline's experience, I learned of the program through a former colleague who had friends applying to the position and thought it would be a good fit.

What really drew me to the position and the program was the scope of work and the ability to see not only what the City had to offer but as Pauline has mentioned, a well-rounded perspective of all the City's accounting functions. To be honest, I didn't really know what I wanted to specialize in as an accountant, but the position provided me the experience to see what I really enjoyed.

Merrick

Thanks for sharing, those are both very exciting stories. Building on my first question, were there specific aspects of the program that stood out to you? Perhaps a particular rotational area or a newly formed working relationship? I'm sure our listeners would be delighted to hear about some of the program highlights.

Let's switch it up this time and have Allen start us off.

Allen

I found that the teamwork and relationship building aspect really stood out for me. Because rotations are so short, anywhere between 3 to 6 months, one quickly needed to build both a mentoring and professional relationship with the individuals we supported. Fortunately, although my time was short, I was able to make many working relationships with so many of my fellow colleagues in different areas.

One area I found especially interesting was the Office of the City Auditor. Because it is a bit of a smaller team and performs such a unique function within the City, it's difficult to get that sort of exposure anywhere else. I'm definitely grateful that during my time, I had the opportunity to experience an audit from start to finish before the end of my rotation.

Pauline, how was your experience?

Pauline

A particular aspect of the program, I think [is] certainly the rotational piece. I got to have experience in Finance, Corporate Accounting, Budget and Internal Audit, all within those 30 months. And in addition to the knowledge in those areas, I got to be a part of different teams and also build those connections.

Another aspect of the program that I love is the support that I got during my studies as well. My mentor really made sure that I am on track to accomplish my goals and I really got to experience the requirements that I needed to complete the program through our regular one-on-one meetings. The team really showed support in our individual goals. For example, one of the things I wanted to work on was my communication skills, and my mentor referred me to the City's Communication Clubs and also assigned tasks to help me accomplish the goals, such as leading meetings, drafting external emails and letters, and I really felt supported that way.

Merrick

Wonderful, your responses are making me want to enroll in the program myself! To wrap things up, let's say I'm a prospective applicant tuning in right now. Do you have any advice for me to help my application stand out from the crowd and land an interview?

Allen

Personally, I think the key success factors for anyone looking to apply to a position like this is self-management and adaptability. Managing both the CPA PEP Program, in addition to the constantly changing working environment of this position, can be difficult.

Being self-reflective, and gauging how you're doing, how to get to where you need to be, what you're struggling with and realizing there's going to be hiccups down the road, can be a real asset.

Pauline, thoughts?

Pauline

So I think to stand out, I think there are four things you need to show. I think you need to show that you are a well-rounded candidate and that you're adaptable to changes, especially going through different rotations. I also think the ideal candidate should also be good at making connections and building great working relationships with different teams. And lastly, I think the candidate is someone who can really show commitment to the program.

Merrick

Alright, so it looks like that's all the time we have for today. Thank you Allen and Pauline for the wonderful insights, I'm sure all our listeners found them very valuable.

If you're interested in learning more about the City of Edmonton's CPA Training Program, visit edmonton.ca/careers and select "Finance and Accounting" under Job Categories.

Thanks for tuning in and take care, everyone.