

ERERTF Interview Questions

- I. General department overview
 1. Specifications
 - a. Name of county?
 - b. Location of county?
 - c. Is the county classified as small/medium/large?
 2. Employees
 - a. How many employees total?
 - b. How many employees involved in the document handling?
 - c. Are they full or part-time employees?
 - d. What is their title/job description?
 - e. Who handles what documents? (Maybe need to move this – too high-level of a question at this point.)
 - f. Are they overworked?
 - g. Is there a busy season?
 - h. Where is the bottleneck in the document handling process?
 - i. Where is the bottleneck for each person’s job?
- II. Review basic process flow diagram
 1. Current Manual/Automated process (simple residential, abstract transaction)
(Note: we need to keep track of the recipient and the originator in this process)
 - a. Torrens/Abstract
 - i. Residential/Commercial
 1. Purchase/Sale
 - a. all information correct
 - i. no exceptions
 - ii. exceptions
 - b. missing information
 - i. no exceptions
 - ii. exceptions
 2. Change to document(s)
 - a. all information correct
 - i. no exceptions
 - ii. exceptions
 - b. missing information
 - i. no exceptions
 - ii. exceptions
- III. Review county indexing process
 1. What is currently “indexed”?
 2. What indexes do you use today?
 3. What indexes would you like to see?
 4. What indexes do you not use today?
 5. How do you use the indexes today? (What types of searches – exact match, wild card, etc)
 6. What index matching would you like to see? (pseudoname match: St. verses Saint?) (refers to 20 in deliverables)

7. Do you currently enforce a standard for names spelling (St. verses Saint?). Can you enforce? Do you have to enter information exactly as it appears on the document?
8. Why do you use the indexes?
9. Who asks for the search?
10. How do they request the search?
11. Why do they need the information?
12. What do you do with the information once you find it?
13. What does the requestor do with information once they receive it?
14. How do you send the information to them?
15. Frequency of use for each type of index?
16. How far back is the search for references (ie. If a piece of land is bought today, when would you end up using it for an index in the future)
17. Memorandum of lease, foreclosure of lease – how are these indexed?
18. Would you recommend a single number for identifying the documents? (refers to 21 in the deliverables)
19. Do you charge a fee for searches? What types of searches and how much is the fee?

IV. Identify county process exceptions

1. Does another division review documents/records before they are recorded? (e.g., in Otter Tail the Planning and Zoning division reviews real estate records first.)

V. Identify abstract vs. Torrens process flow differences

1. Percent of Torrens verses Abstract documents being processed:
 - I. Purchase/sale
 - II. Change to document(s)
 - III. Other reasons?
2. Volume of abstract transactions
3. Volume of Torrens transactions

VI. Identify residential vs. commercial process flow differences

1. Volume of residential transactions
2. Volume of commercial transactions

VII. Identify time allocation within process steps

1. Largest time allocation areas
2. Lag time areas
3. Wait time areas

VIII. Identify external touch points

1. How many external companies do you deal with for the documents?
2. What type of external companies do you deal with for the documents?
3. What are the documents that come from these companies?
4. How do the documents reach you?
5. How do you return the documents to them?
6. What is the turn around time for processing the documents?

IX. Review archival standards

1. Would you recommend integrating the existing archived data with the current system.

2. What are the different numbers that are used to identify the documents? (refers to 25 in deliverables)
 - a. What is the document number used for?
 - b. What is the tract number/index used for?
 - c. What is the certificate number used for?
 - d. What is the tax id number used for?
 - e. Do you record the PIN (parcel id number)?
 - f. What information is used for the PIN number?
 - g. Who assigns the numbers?
 - h. Are the numbers reused within the county or across counties?
3. How are current documents archived or retained? (by computer or manually stored)

X. Discuss county best practices

1. What processes do they recommend other counties adopt?
2. How do you think plats could be handled? (refers to 24 in deliverables)
3. What works?
4. What doesn't work?
5. How do you handle the "race state" policy?
6. UCC – Uniform Commercial Codes?
7. What is the worse case scenario that you have seen?
8. What is the best case scenario that you have seen?
9. How do you handle audit trails currently?
10. Do you have reports? Would you need reports? If so, what kind of reports?

XI. Identify documents required

1. How many documents? (Volume by type of document)
2. How many same documents, but different in format?
3. What is the life cycle of a document? (refers to 7 in deliverables)
4. How do you handle the "exceptions" to the current document?
5. What numbers do you currently use/record for the documents?
6. What is the life cycle of a document? (refers to 7 in deliverables)
7. Can you categorize the documents based on handling procedures (workflow process)? (This will probably come out in the workflow process exercise) (refers to 4 in deliverables)
8. What are all recording and similar fees, copying and certification charges collected during the workflow process? Why are they collected? When are they collected? Who pays them? Who collects them? How is the fee paid for? How much is the fee? (refers to 16, 32 and 37 in deliverables)
9. Percent of purchase/sale? Why?
10. Percent of change of current document. Why? (change of name, error on original, etc)
11. Percent of searches: What kind of searches? Why? Who requested the searches? Who performed the searches? Why did that person perform the search?
12. Percent of Abstract verses Torrens?
13. Percent of Residential verses Commercial?
14. Are there any other percents that we need to consider?

15. Current means of receiving and returning documents?
16. What information do you look at when receiving the documents?
17. Percent of documents with missing information? How do you handle?
18. Who handles the documents? (incoming, within the office, outgoing)
19. Why do you need to retrieve existing documents?
20. What information in particular do you look at when retrieving the documents?
21. Percent of documents searched in a week/month/year? When were they introduced to your office?
22. Do you ever have to communicate with other counties to find information (multi-county deeds, multi-state deeds)?
23. How do you handle multi-county deeds and multi-state deeds?
24. Why would documents be returned? Who would return them? How would they be returned? What is the turn around process for these documents?
25. What fees do you collect. How do you collect them? How do they affect the document lifecycle? How do you handle paid fees currently? Do you record them?
26. If many documents arrive at a time, how do you organize your work (sequence of processing documents)? Does it make a difference?
27. Do documents get returned to you for just filing?
28. How do you handle the “exceptions” to the current document?
29. What numbers do you currently use/record for the documents?
30. Who signs the documents? Do they need a witness?
31. What documents have carbon copies and why?
32. Do documents have pictures associated with them or anything other than the original piece of paper and text? Any attachments? How do you store these items?

XII. Identify ancillary documents used

1. How many documents? (Volume by type of document)
2. How many same documents, but different in format?
3. What is the life cycle of a document? (refers to 7 in deliverables)
4. Can you categorize the documents based on handling procedures (workflow process)? (This will probably come out in the workflow process exercise) (refers to 4 in deliverables)
5. Do you record the Certificate of Real Estate Value? How do you use it after the fact? Who files it?
6. Do you record the Well Certificate? How do you use it after the fact? Who files it?

XIII. Identify volume of documents by type

1. How do you handle the “exceptions” to the current document?
2. What numbers do you currently use/record for the documents?

XIV. Identify document owners

1. Who needs to see the original? Why?
2. When do you receive the documents? (morning, noon, evening?) Why?
3. When do you return the documents? (morning, noon, evening?) Why?
4. Private verses public?

5. Who sends documents? (ingoing and outgoing)
 6. Who signs documents (prior to receiving, after receiving, after returning)?
 7. What other state departments do the documents have to be sent to or have access to them?
- XV. Obtain sample documents and forms
- XVI. Discuss potential funding sources
1. How do you think you could fund this project? (refers to 33, 34 and 36 in deliverables)
- XVII. Current Technology and related systems (refers to 35 in deliverables)
1. What system(s) do you have in place today for the recording process?
 2. What is their functionality? (ie. Indexing, imaging)
 3. Technology of system?
 4. Who developed it?
 5. Why was it developed?
 6. What do you like about it?
 7. What can be improved?
 8. Who uses the system?
 9. What data is stored on the system today?
 10. Do the current systems interface to any other systems?
 11. Does anyone interface to this system?
 12. How many records/data currently exists on the system?
 13. When was the system installed?
 14. Are you currently working on upgrades or new releases to it?
 15. Is data on it worth migrating/convertng over to a new system?
 16. Do you use any online or third party system today? (ex. GIS)
 17. Is there a GIS system in the county?
 18. Who is responsible for maintaining the GIS system (county department)?
 19. Is it parcel based? --- Do you use a parcel identifier as a key?
 20. Do you re-use parcel ID numbers? ---- How do you handle expired numbers?
 21. How frequently is GIS data updated?
 22. How are zoning maps stored, if digital – was software and what department owns this?
 23. What is the GIS investment your county has made to-date?