

Career services

COVER LETTERS AND OTHER JOB SEARCH CORRESPONDENCE

A cover letter (sometimes called a letter of inquiry or letter of application) is a business style letter that accompanies each resume you send to prospective employers. It serves as an introduction, telling the employer who you are and why you are sending a resume. If written well, your letter allows you to provide a more detailed account of skills and experiences in your background that relate directly to the organization or position you are seeking.

Be Sure To:

- Address your letter to a specific individual within the organization.
- Research the organization so you can make a case for your interest.
- Target your letter to match each position being sought.
- Emphasize ways you can meet the organization's needs.
- Support your claims with evidence.
- Communicate interest, motivation, and confidence.
- Ask for an interview.
- Keep it to one page.
- Pay attention to grammar and spelling.
- Use an easy to read font.

Sending Cover Letters

- Send your cover letter (and resume) through the means indicated in the job posting.
- If mailing your cover letter, use the same type of paper on which your resume was printed.
- If you fax your documents, follow-up by mailing hardcopies to the employer.
- If emailing your resume to an employer, you may copy and paste your cover letter directly into the text of the email.

Follow-Up Letters

If you do not receive a response to your cover letter/resume within a reasonable amount of time (two weeks to one month, depending upon the position), it may help to follow up by letter or telephone. A follow-up letter should inquire about the status of your application, offer to provide additional information on your qualifications, and reaffirm your interest in the position and the organization.

Thank-You Letters

Immediately following an interview, you are encouraged to write a letter to those individuals with whom you interviewed. The thank-you letter should be typed or very neatly handwritten in business letter format and either emailed or mailed to the employer within 24 hours of the interview. In this letter, you should:

- Thank the individual for the opportunity to discuss your interests and qualifications.
- Introduce new information (items you may have neglected to mention).
- Reaffirm your interest in the position and the organization.

Websites for Additional Information:

200 Cover Letters for Job Hunters - www.careerlab.com/letters

College Grad - www.collegegrad.com/coverletters/index.shtml

JobStar Central Cover Letters - www.jobsmart.org/tools/resume/clletters.htm

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

Your Street Address
City, State, Zip Code
Today's Date

Mr./Ms. First Name Last Name, Title
Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr. /Ms. Last Name:

Be direct. Tell why you are writing the letter (be clear about the position or type of position you are seeking). Is this an inquiry or are you formally applying for a specific job? How did you find out about the organization/position? You may wish to add a brief statement demonstrating the reason for your interest in the company or organization.

Your middle paragraph(s) should **communicate precisely what you have to offer** the employer. Select details and skills from past experiences that you feel directly relate to the organization and position at hand. Avoid vague statements; back up your claims with specific examples.

Use as much space as is necessary to convince the employer to consider your candidacy further, but state your case concisely, and get to the point quickly. Cover letters should be no longer than one page in length. Try to connect your background as closely as possible to the particular job for which you are applying.

Indicate your desire for a personal interview and offer information about how you may be contacted. Another approach is to mention that you will telephone to schedule an interview. Thanking your reader for the time and consideration given to your application is also a good idea. If you don't receive a reply within a reasonable period of time (2-3 weeks), write a follow-up letter or call the employer directly to see if your materials have been received.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

Your Full Name typed

Enclosure