

COVER LETTER WRITING GUIDE

The two basic types of cover letters are the **Letter of Inquiry** and the **Letter of Application**. The letter of inquiry is written to inquire about opportunities or request information from an organization. The letter of application is written to apply for a specific position within a company. Writing either letter may be the first time you have had to compose and produce professional-level correspondence. The following guide will help you with the process of writing a cover letter.

COVER LETTER BASICS

Names and Contact Information

- Include your full name in a larger font than the rest of your cover letter.
- Include your permanent address with zip code, phone number with area code, and email address.
- Your cover letter should replicate the top of your resumé in appearance.

General Guidelines

- Keep your wording professional and use block or modified block business letter format.
- Address each letter to a specific person (ie: company owner, human resources director).
- Tailor each letter by incorporating key words found within the job description and information you obtained after researching the company.

Purpose of the Cover Letter

- To make a good first impression and sell yourself.
- The cover letter gives you the opportunity to entice an employer to read your resume.
- Highlight your transferable skills and demonstrate your written communication skills.
- Strengthen your chances of securing an interview.

SECTIONS OF THE COVER LETTER

Introductory Paragraph

- Briefly introduce yourself and your reason for writing.
- Capture the employer's interest and give them a reason to continue reading.
- If sending a letter of inquiry:
 - Indicate that you are inquiring about employment opportunities and express your knowledge and/or interest in the organization.
- If sending a letter of application:
 - State the specific job title and mention how/where you learned of the job opening.

Body Paragraphs

- Highlight your strengths and qualifications for the position.
- Provide evidence by using specific example if possible.
- Elaborate on key accomplishments and/or experiences listed in your resumé.
- Describe how your skills, education, and experience are relevant to the position and fulfill the organization's needs.

Concluding Paragraph

- Invite the reader to review your resumé for additional information.
- Indicate the actions you would like to have happen (ie: desire for an interview) and the best way to contact you.
- Encourage the reader to contact you if they have any questions regarding your qualifications or experience.
- Express your appreciation for their time and consideration.