



*Compiled by the Career Development & Counseling Center • Founders Hall, Room 121
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The Cover Letter

The cover letter is often a forgotten protocol. Many people when submitting their resumes skip over this because employers do not ask for it directly, since many advertisements often just state, “send resume.” Making it more confusing, a cover letter may also be called by other names, including letter of interest, letter of application, and letter of intent. A well-written cover letter accompanied by a well-crafted resume enables you to explain why you are applying for the position and to share your experience, education and strengths. Moreover, the cover letter gives you the opportunity to state how your particular profile relates to the job specifications and the contributions you will make as an employee. A potential employer, when reading your cover letter, will also get a sense of your writing ability, your sincerity, your personality, and your overall desire for the position.

A cover letter need not be long—three to four paragraphs on one page will do. Typically, the format is as follows:

- The first paragraph, after a salutation, briefly explains why you are writing, the position for which you are applying, and how you learned about the opening. It refers the reader to your enclosed resume that summarizes your skills and qualifications.
- The second and (maybe) third paragraph more specifically states how your skills relate to the job and/or how your skills can benefit the organization.
- In the last paragraph, indicate your desire for a personal interview. Finish the letter with a complimentary closing.

The cover letter can be arranged in many styles, such as the block and semi-block. The most preferred is the block-style, where all typing begins at the left margin with no indentation and is single-spaced with a double space between paragraphs (such as this document is set up).

You should also include your return address, which is placed before the date of the letter. When possible, the cover letter should be addressed to a specific person in the company; if not, you may use “To Whom It May Concern” or “Sir/Madam.” A complimentary closing with “Sincerely” or Sincerely Yours” should be used followed by your signature and printed name at the end of the letter, which indicates other accompanying documents, i.e., resume, application, and letters of references.

(Over)

SAMPLE: Cover Letter

73 Saybrook Road
Middletown, CT 06457
April 25, 2008

Dr. T. J. Jones
Director, Volunteer Council
230 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06027

Dear Dr. Jones:

I am writing in response to your classified advertisement for Program Director – Volunteer Council, which appeared in The Hartford Courant on April 20, 2008. This position is of utmost interest to me because of my interest and background in volunteerism. Therefore, I am forwarding my resume and letters of reference for your review.

As you will see by my enclosed resume, I have been actively involved in a broad range of non-profit agencies, from Literacy Volunteers to Help in Emotional Trouble. In these experiences, I have managed budget and human resources, organized volunteer recruitment efforts, and initiated community activism. In addition, my education in human services and business administration will enable me to make a positive contribution to your organization.

I am excited about the potential of joining your agency. I plan to contact you in the next few weeks to arrange for an interview to further discuss my qualifications and the position of Program Director – Volunteer Council. In the meanwhile, if you have any questions or need additional information, please call me at 860-555-5555. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Maria Smith

Enclosures (resume and letters of reference)