

# Cover Letter Writing

**SPRINGFIELD**  
COLLEGE



**Career Center**

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## **What is a cover letter?**

A cover letter is a document sent with your resume to provide additional information on your skills and experience. A cover letter typically provides detailed information on why you are qualified for the job you are applying for. Effective cover letters explain the reasons for your interest in the specific organization and identify your most relevant skills or experiences.

## **Do I always need a cover letter?**

The short answer is “*Yes.*” It is generally an accepted practice that if you send a resume to an employer for a job or internship you also include a cover letter.

## **Why?**

The cover letter serves as your sales pitch. It highlights the main points on your resume, summarizes your basic skills and talents, and serves to get the prospective employer excited about YOU!

Here are some basic tips before you start drafting your letter:

The cover letter is your opportunity to introduce yourself to an employer and provide an overview of yourself. Detail how your skills and experiences match the requirements of the position.

Convey your enthusiasm, motivation, and sincere interest in the job.

The objective is to market your accomplishments and competencies, with the goal of securing an interview.

## **Is there ever a time when I should not send a cover letter?**

If the application instructions expressly say not to include a cover letter, or if an online application offers no opportunity, then you can forego the cover letter in these cases. If you are applying via email you can sometimes use the body of the email as a cover letter; however, if you do this be sure to maintain professional format and content.

## **Types of Cover Letters**

### **Letter of Application**

Written for a specific position and used when responding to a posted opening.

### **Letter of Inquiry**

Written to ask organization if there are opportunities available (company has not publicly advertised an opening) or to propose an opportunity.

This can also be used to ask for an Informational Interview.

### **Letter of Referral**

This is an extremely effective letter that stems from a network contact.

Allows you to make connection through a mutual acquaintance to attract attention and secure an interview.

## **Cover Letter Do's**

Employers are thinking, "What can this person do for me?" Your letter should answer that question.

Keep to one page with 3 or 4 short paragraphs.

Use standard business letter format (i.e. modified block style).

Every line should be in alignment with the left margin.

Double space between paragraphs.

Three words: spellcheck, spellcheck, spellcheck.

No errors in grammar or punctuation.

Address the letter to the appropriate person; make sure that the individual's name and title are correct.

Personalize your letter if possible.

Identify a contact name; it will help you stand out.

If your research fails to identify a proper contact then use Dear Hiring Manager.

Last names and proper titles are important.

Pay attention to beginnings and closings. Begin your letter by clearly stating the job you are applying for and how you learned of it. Close your letter by restating your interest in the position and thanking the employer for their consideration.

## **Cover Letter Don'ts**

Don't use a generic template you found online. You absolutely must tailor your cover letter (and resume) to fit the company and position.

Don't explain what the job will do for you. Explain what you can bring to the job.

Avoid empty clichés, such as "I am a hard worker" or "I am a self-starter."

Demonstrate/show skills.

Don't reiterate your resume.

Describe one or two experiences more fully.

Describe your particular qualities and why they are an asset for this job.

Do not indicate a disability, visa status, or make reference to a religious organization.

Do not discuss salary requirements.

## **Cover Letter Format**

### **Opening Paragraph**

- The cover letter is the first introduction to you.
- A great first impression is crucial.
- First paragraph is only two or three sentences in length.
- State clearly why you are writing: Be specific to what position you are applying for and why you would be a strong candidate.
- Human Resources will then know the exact position to connect with your resume.
- If you are not applying for a specific position, you still need to state reason for writing (inquiry, networking, etc.).
- Mention how you learned about the position and any contacts that you have.
- Discuss why you are interested in the position.
- Research the company's website, articles, annual reports, etc. to familiarize yourself about the company/organization needs and its culture.
- Describe how you can be a contributor.

### **Body Paragraph(s)**

- In the second paragraph introduce your education and experience.
- Highlight your skills and experiences that directly relate to the position responsibilities and qualifications. Provide examples.
- Summarize your skills, talents, and accomplishments.
- Do not simply repeat the content of the resume.
- Focus on your skills, awards, achievements; project outcomes (include class projects).
- Express your knowledge and familiarity with the company and why you really want to work for this specific company.
- Indicate why you want to enter their industry or their particular company.
- Demonstrate your knowledge and enthusiasm!

### **Closing Paragraph**

- Refer the reader to your resume.
- Ask for action.
- Tell the employer that you are available for an interview.
- Don't end on a neutral tone. Show the employer you care about landing this position.
- Thank the employer for his/her time and that you look forward to hearing from them.
- Do include your contact information. When you end your letter with your name, also include:
  - Your preferred phone number.
  - Your email address.
  - Your LinkedIn profile (or consider creating one).
  - Your Signature (under the paragraph.)

## Cover Letter Outline

Your Address  
City/State/Zip  
Date  
(2 blank spaces)

Contact Name  
Title  
Organization  
Street Address  
City/State/Zip  
(2 blank space)

Dear Mr./Mrs./Dr. Last name, (Use Title if name is not available)  
(1 space)

Opening Paragraph: (Capture attention, build a match)  
State purpose, position seeking  
Use name of mutual colleague, person who recommended you  
Mention source of lead  
Very briefly state why you would be good for the position

Body Paragraph(s): (Explain why you are best qualified)  
Back up your statements about why you would be good for the position  
Show enthusiasm  
Demonstrate your skills and state your credentials  
Identify how skills were obtained  
Tell a brief story, give examples of achievements  
Use self-descriptive words  
Put adjectives with activities  
Use action verbs

Closing Paragraph: (Ask for the interview)  
Restate solid match  
Take charge . . . say you will call to follow up  
Explore potential meeting/interview  
Affirm confidence  
Express thanks for consideration of your interest  
(1 blank space)

Sincerely,  
(3 spaces)

*Your Signature*

Type Your Name

## Sample Letter of Application

Springfield College  
263 Alden Street, Box 2888  
Springfield, MA 01109  
September 1, 2017

Mr. Paul Phillips  
General Manager  
Healthy You Fitness, Inc.  
3346 Main Street  
Dustin, CO 33404

Dear Mr. Phillips,

I have been interested in working for Healthy You Fitness for some time now because I consider it the premier fitness training facility in the Denver area. My goal is to work in a highly professional environment where every member is valued and the focus is on helping each person achieve his or her individual fitness goals. I am confident that I possess the skills and experiences that you are looking for in the personal trainers you hire to be a part of your team.

I have recently completed my Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science at Springfield College and have become a certified personal trainer (ACE). Through my internship at HealthTrax I gained confidence in my ability to create and lead group exercise classes and to design individualized fitness programs for members. I initiated a new exercise class entitled Power Up, an upper body strengthening program. I assisted in designing and marketing the class and taught it three times per week. Interest in the class grew by word of mouth and the class size doubled within the first three months. I possess excellent interpersonal skills which allow me to develop positive rapport with members by listening to their needs and concerns, and encouraging them through each stage of their program. My strong communication skills not only impact club members, but colleagues, visitors, and student interns as well.

My studies in Exercise Science have given me a comprehensive understanding of anatomy, kinesiology, management concepts in sport and fitness settings, worksite wellness, fitness assessment and prescription, and stress testing. I have also taken courses related to fitness for special populations including the elderly and the disabled. Through my coursework and fieldwork experiences, I feel very competently trained to work with members of all ages and fitness levels. I enjoy continual learning and will take advantage of educational opportunities to stay current with new trends and research in the Exercise Science field so that I can best serve the members of Healthy You Fitness.

Thank you for considering me for a position at Healthy You Fitness. As a reliable and energetic new professional, I will bring strong fitness training skills and a positive attitude to your staff. I will contact you within two weeks to confirm your receipt of my application materials and to learn more about your timeline for hiring. If you wish to reach me you can contact me at (413) 555-5467 or [sallen@springfieldcollege.edu](mailto:sallen@springfieldcollege.edu). I look forward to the opportunity to interview for this position.

Sincerely,

*Samantha Allen*

Samantha Allen

## **Sample Letter of Application**

4113 West Main Street  
East Hartford, CT 06478  
July 13, 2017

Dr. Gary M. Wells, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
232 Williams Street, P.O. Box 789  
Glastonbury, CT 06033

Dear Dr. Wells,

As a School Counselor I am a firm believer in advocating for students and creating a community atmosphere where children can learn and grow in a supportive environment. While reviewing the Connecticut Education Association website, I learned of the Guidance Counseling position opening in your school district. I am very interested in the current grade 6-school counselor position, and would welcome the opportunity to become an active member of Glastonbury's developmental guidance program.

Through my School Counseling experience I have had the opportunity to utilize my education in developmental guidance in working with students, parents, teachers, and administrators as part of a collaborative team. I have been working with children and families for the past nine years. From summer camp counseling, to after school programs, to practicum experiences, I have found working with children to be an extremely educational and rewarding experience.

One of my key to successes had been my ability to multitask. As a school counselor it is essential to be able to manage several tasks at once. I have demonstrated this trait through many experiences, but one I am particularly proud of is the production of two theatre performances I produced during my practicum. In addition to carrying a full caseload of students, I utilized my teamwork attitude, exceptional organizational and time management skills, and patience to produce two fantastic performances of Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory and Peter Pan.

Given the opportunity to join your team I will bring an optimistic yet realistic attitude with a dedication to student education and success. I feel that the knowledge I have gained from my educational background as well as my experiences working with people will allow me to make a positive contribution to your school. Thank you for reviewing my qualifications. I can be reached at (413) 555-5555 or [jcross@springfieldcollege.edu](mailto:jcross@springfieldcollege.edu). I look forward to interviewing with you.

Sincerely,

*Jane Cross*

Jane Cross

## Sample Letter of Inquiry

2907-B Maple Drive  
Orleans, NH 03044  
August 31, 2017

Ms. Maria Shea  
Rehabilitation Manager  
Essex Park Rehabilitation and Nursing Center  
265 Essex Street  
Beverly, MA 01915

Dear Ms. Shea,

As I begin my career as an Occupational Therapist, my goal is to affiliate with a dynamic sub-acute and long term care facility whose mission is to increase the independence and quality of life of their clients. Ms. Ann Aberin, a HealthBridge Management Talent Recruiter, who attended a recent Springfield College networking event, encouraged me to contact you.

In browsing Essex Park's home page, I was very impressed by its specialized programs, experienced and dedicated staff, and commitment to high quality care. My clinical internships, encompassing the complex medical, cognitive, and orthopedic diagnoses of a sub-acute skilled nursing facility and the focused musculoskeletal injuries of an outpatient rehabilitation clinic, provide a broad background well suited for Essex Park's clinical rehabilitation needs. In addition, previous experience teaching yoga and providing therapeutic massage at a health spa, and training in the Feldenkrais method, bring to my Occupational Therapy practice communication, education, and client rapport skills.

Over the past year, while preparing for the national board exam and obtaining a license to practice, I have managed the daily care of an elderly family member with dementia. During this time, I introduced a daily reminder journal, established a regular walking routine, improved nutrition and normalized body weight, and increased participation in personal hygiene, cooking, and enjoyed activities. This experience not only reinforced my interest in working with the elderly, but has broadened my awareness of both the professional and family centered issues of this population.

I would welcome the opportunity for an interview and to further discuss my qualifications for an Occupational Therapy position with Essex Park. I can be reached at (413) 555-5551 or [JJohnston11@springfieldcollege.edu](mailto:JJohnston11@springfieldcollege.edu) and I will contact you within the week to verify receipt of my resume. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Janelle Johnston*

Janelle Johnston

## Sample Letter of Referral

17 Southcrest Boulevard, #11  
Hartford, CT 06117  
July 3, 2017

Mr. Tom Foley  
Youth Services Director  
Riverside Family Services  
888 Elm Street  
Riverside, CT 94606

Dear Mr. Foley,

During recent conversations with Scott Dranka, Interim Director of the Career Center, I learned about the Youth Counselor Internship at Riverside Family Services. As a junior Psychology major at Springfield College, I am very interested in developing skills to work effectively with high-risk adolescents. After graduation, I wish to pursue a career in social services working with a similar population.

My coursework and summer work experience have prepared me well for this internship opportunity. I have taken several courses in the areas of child and adolescent development and counseling in multicultural environments. In addition, my volunteer experience has afforded me exposure to societal issues regarding poverty, homelessness, and the effects that drug use and alcohol abuse have on the whole family. I feel passionate about my career choice where I will be able to provide services, education, and hope to young people who have lived in difficult family situations. This past summer I worked at Windsor Hills Camp in Portland, Oregon where I was the Activity Coordinator. I learned valuable skills in supervising youth, coordinating a daily schedule of activities, and working as a part of a team in order to provide a safe and fun environment. Providing a variety of structured activities as well as opportunities for creative, free play was the key to our success with the camp participants.

Through the Partner's Program at Springfield College, I had a very rewarding experience tutoring a third grade student from a level four inner-city elementary school who struggled with reading. Not only do I feel that I made a positive impact on this student academically, but socially as well. After tutoring sessions, the program allowed tutors to interact recreationally with the children and take them to dinner in the campus dining hall. I enjoyed building the rapport with this student to increase both his literacy skills and college awareness. I am eager to use these skills to assist the children in your program, and I am extremely interested in learning from your dedicated staff of counselors and assistants.

Thank you for considering me for the Youth Counselor Intern position. I am available at your convenience to meet for an interview.

Sincerely,

*John Newbury*

John Newbury

## **Sample Cover Letter**

977 Upper Church Street  
Hardwick, MA 01037  
September 5, 2017

Mr. Mark McKensie  
Director, Human Resources  
Well Flow Inc.  
188 Flower Street  
Meriden, CT 06457

Dear Mr. McKensie,

I am writing to express my interest in the International Marketing position open at Well Flow Inc. I am very familiar with your products, and would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about how I could help increase your international market share. Janna Dooley, the Senior Direct Marketing Associate for Well Flow Inc., recommended that I contact you directly about this position. Jana and I have worked closely in the industry for many years, and she thought that I would be an excellent match for Well Flow Inc.

My extensive experience marketing similar products internationally has given me an overall knowledge of the business, directly applicable to your interest in increasing sales abroad. In my previous position as International Marketing Manager with InfoTech, I successfully increased our revenue in each of my territories by over 40% within my first year. In the six years I spent at InfoTech, I helped to establish a market share in an additional ten countries, while increasing revenue and profits in all locations.

I am confident that I am an excellent candidate for this position, and would very much like the opportunity to meet with you discuss what I have to offer Well Flow, Inc. If you wish to reach me you can contact me at (413) 555-5595 or [Jarmour@comcast.net](mailto:Jarmour@comcast.net). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*John Armour*

John Armour

## Sample Thank You Note

Ms. Pam Winger  
Human Resources Manager  
Acme Organization  
2000 Line Drive  
Holyoke, MA 01030

Dear Ms. Winger:

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to visit with you and see your facilities today. Both the interview and the tour made for an exciting and complete day. The Marketing Trainee Program you outlined sounds both challenging and rewarding.

As mentioned during the interview, I will be graduating in May with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management. Through my education and experience I've gained many skills, as well as an understanding of marketing concepts and working as part of a team. I have worked as an Office Assistant in our Marketing Department for the past two years and held the position as V.P. of Promotions for our Outing Club. I feel strongly that my education and work experience would complement the Marketing Trainee Program.

I have enclosed a copy of my college transcript and a list of references that you requested.

I appreciate the opportunity to be considered by Acme Organization. The interview reinforced my strong interest in becoming a part of your organization. I can be reached at (413) 555-1111 or by e-mail at [jbolder@springfieldcollege.edu](mailto:jbolder@springfieldcollege.edu) should you need additional information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Jane Bolder*

Jane Bolder

## ACTION VERBS

<b>Management Skills</b> administered analyzed assigned attained chaired contracted coordinated delegated developed directed evaluated improved increased organized oversaw planned prioritized produced reviewed scheduled strengthened	<b>Research Skills</b> clarified collected critiqued diagnosed evaluated examined extracted identified inspected interviewed investigated organized reviewed summarized surveyed systematized <b>Technical Skills</b> assembled built computed designed devised engineered fabricated maintained operated overhauled programmed remodeled solved upgraded <b>Financial Skills</b> administered allocated analyzed appraised audited budgeted calculated computed developed forecasted managed marketed planned projected researched	<b>Creative Skills</b> conceptualized created customized designed developed directed established fashioned founded illustrated initiated instituted integrated introduced invented originated performed planned revitalized shaped <b>Helping Skills</b> assessed assisted clarified coached counseled demonstrated diagnosed educated expedited facilitated familiarized guided motivated referred rehabilitated represented <b>More Verbs</b> achieved expanded improved pioneered reduced (losses) resolved (problems) restored spearheaded transformed	<b>Organizational Skills</b> approved arranged catalogued classified collated collected compiled dispatched executed generated implemented inspected monitored operated organized prepared processed purchased recorded retrieved screened specified systematized tabulated <b>Teaching Skills</b> adapted advised clarified coached communicated coordinated demystified developed enabled encouraged evaluated explained facilitated guided informed instructed persuaded set goals stimulated trained motivated
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