

TIP SHEET: Cover Letters

The purpose of a cover letter

It is important to keep in mind when writing a cover letter that the purpose is to motivate the reader to look at your resume.

To catch the attention of your preferred employer clearly explain:

- The reason for your application
- What you have to offer the employer
- Why you want to work for the company
- What the next steps will be

You will want to demonstrate both enthusiasm and professionalism and show that you have done your research into the company – their needs, mission or vision statement, company culture, and anything else that demonstrated you understand the job and its value to the company.

The Structure of a Cover Letter

Information About You

Begin your cover letter with your contact information. It should be in block style, on the left margin of your paper, towards the top.

- Name
- Current home address
- Telephone number/email.

Date

Include a date as you would do with any business correspondence.

Contact Person's Name, Title, Employer, and Address

Include a specific name can get your letter and resume to the hiring manager more quickly and can be an effective personal touch. If you are applying for an advertised position that does not give a name to contact, call the company and ask for the department manager's name.

Salutation

Choose the appropriate way to address the contact person.

Opening Paragraph

In the opening paragraph tell how you learned about the position. You may, for example know of a job through a classified advertisement, an unsolicited mailing, the Internet or a personal referral.

Middle Paragraph

This paragraph gives a summary of your background and critical skills (hard skills) that make you qualified for the position.

Second Middle Paragraph

This paragraph can be used to demonstrate your persuasive skills (soft skills).

Contact Information and Closing

At the end of the letter talk about your availability for the job, where you can be contacted, and when you are going to contact the hiring person for an appointment to discuss your application. If you have no contact name, you may simply want to indicate your anticipation for a response in this part of the letter. Thank the person to whom you are writing for his/her time and consideration of your application.