

# Cover Letter Guide

## Cover Letter Essentials

The cover letter introduces you to potential employers and demonstrates how your strengths and background match the experience required. This is your opportunity to let the employer know why you are applying to the position. Be sure to demonstrate your excitement for the position you are applying. Your cover letter should be focused on the needs of the employer, not your own, and should always accompany a resume. You will need to tailor your cover letter for each position!

## Quick Tips

- Tailor the cover letter to the employers' needs
- 1 page, concise, consistent format with .5" to 1" margins, white paper (if printing)
- Do not use a template from Microsoft Word
- Address the name of the person directly
- Use the same header (contact information format) as your resume
- Try not to start every sentence with "I"

### Opening Paragraph

The opening paragraph addresses the question, "**why them?**" Use the first sentence to let the employer know what you are applying for and how you found the position. If someone referred you, start the cover letter with the person's name (Example: Barb Smith recommended I apply for...). Highlight why you are applying to this organization, and specifically why you are interested in this organization of all that you could apply.

### Middle Paragraph(s)

Here is your chance to expand on your qualifications with concrete examples demonstrating your skills and experience. Use the job description (if you have one) to guide you in mapping your experience to the organization's needs in this paragraph. Incorporate industry language and action verbs from the job description. The middle paragraph(s) answers the question, "**why you?**"

### Closing Paragraph

This can be a simple paragraph reiterating your interest in the position and thanking the employer for taking the time to read your cover letter. Be sure to indicate how or when the employer can reach you. You may want to include that you will follow up within a week to ensure they received your application and/or answer any questions. Following up is a great way to show your enthusiasm for the position.

**NOTE:** Creating cover letters takes time and you will go through many versions and revisions. Plan to have your cover letter(s) reviewed by a career counselor, professor, employer or others in your field. Always spell check before sending it out! Small grammatical mistakes may result in an employer rejecting you for an interview.

Use a cover letter building tool, **Optimal Resume**, at <https://potsdam.optimalresume.com/>. This tool is an interactive, web-based program which allows you to build high quality resumes and cover letters while viewing samples. Tips, video tutorials, and career exploration tools are also available.

# Cover Letter Guide

## NAME

Address - Phone - Email

SAMPLE  
COVER  
LETTER

April 6, 20xx

Dear Hiring Manager,

My previous experience coordinating volunteers, my knowledge of social factors that impact hunger, and my strong decision making skills make me an excellent candidate for the Program and Volunteer Coordinator position. I am so excited about the prospect of working for Operation Frontline Colorado because of its innovative, yet practical solution to addressing hunger issues. Its wide variety of classes targeting diverse populations, including Eating Right, Kids Up Front, and Saving Smart Spending Smart, make it unique among organizations dealing with similar issues.

In May, I received my Bachelor's degree in Sociology. Through my coursework, I learned how social factors impact hunger, and how neighborhoods and socioeconomic status are intertwined with hunger issues. In addition to the knowledge I gained through my school work, during my undergraduate career, I engaged in many relevant work and volunteer opportunities. For example, I have trained, motivated, and recognized over 200 volunteers including health professionals, health educators, and students, while working for a regional health fair and as Director of Operations for the Health Outreach for Latin American Foundation.

Through balancing these experiences with being a full-time student, I learned how to prioritize and work well under pressure. I am confident that with my experience and my passion, I can help Operation Frontline Colorado provide a positive experience to both program participants and volunteers. Thank you for your time and consideration. I will contact you next week to follow up. Should you have any questions before that time please feel free to contact me at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

Name

## SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION FOR 2<sup>nd</sup> SAMPLE COVER LETTER

### **Sample Position: Crime Analyst, NY Crime Analysis Center**

The Crime Analyst will work on-site at designated NY Crime Analysis Center. The Center is staffed with a team of crime analysts and sworn law enforcement members who support area law enforcement agencies in their efforts to track and reduce Part I Crime.

#### Duties Include:

- Collect, compile, validate, interpret and analyze data and trends using standard practices and techniques of crime and/or law enforcement intelligence analysis.
- May perform statistical, spatial, and/or qualitative analyses as needed, making use of standard software packages.
- Work on assignments that are moderately complex under direct or indirect supervision, where there is latitude for independent action and decision-making.
- Prepare and deliver reports and presentations of analytic results.

#### Qualifications:

A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in criminal justice, criminology, public administration, or a related field plus 0-1 year of experience in the field of criminology, criminal justice research, or criminal justice policy.

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## NAME

Address

Phone - Email

**SAMPLE TWO-  
COLUMN COVER  
LETTER**

April 6, 20xx

Dear Ms. Smith,

Please accept my application for the Crime Analyst position found on your website. I am a criminal justice student with a passion for law enforcement and skills in analytic problem solving. Having grown up in Rochester, NY, it always concerned me to know there was a higher rate likelihood of becoming a victim of violence in Rochester vs. New York City; therefore, I was excited to learn about your organization's mission to reduce lethal violence. I spent hours studying the cutting edge research conducted at the Rochester Institute of Technology, and would be thrilled to be part of a team helping to impact policy and address public safety concerns. The following demonstrates how my background and abilities match the position requirements you seek.

### Your Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university
- Collect, compile, validate, interpret and analyze data and trends
- May perform statistical, spatial, and/or qualitative analyses, making use of standard software packages
- Work on moderately complex assignments providing independent action and decision-making
- Prepare and deliver reports and presentations of analytic results

### My Skills:

- Bachelor's degree from State University of New York at Potsdam in Criminal Justice with a minor in biomedical anthropology.
- Collected and compiled literature to write papers researching trends in elder abuse, domestic violence, and child abuse, rape, and neglect in the country, for coursework assignments.
- Coursework in statistics, including multiple projects that entailed analyzing quantitative and qualitative findings, using SPSS statistical package.
- Interned with the SUNY Potsdam Police Department; patrolled the grounds independently by foot and car, and made independent decisions regarding parking violations.
- While pursuing my bachelor's degree, I have written multiple papers and presented research, including a presentation of analytic results in statistics course.

I believe my background and education in the criminal justice field makes me a qualified candidate. I would love to discuss my qualifications further with you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Name

**TAILORED TO JOB  
DESCRIPTION ON  
PREVIOUS PAGE**