

COVER LETTER STRUCTURING & FORMAT

STRUCTURE

Your cover letter should be a brief document with all of the relevant information about your interests and qualifications seamlessly integrated into three or four short paragraphs. The following is a sample cover letter outline:

1ST PARAGRAPH: INTRODUCTION

State the position for which you are applying, where you heard about it, and if applicable, the name of the person who referred you. Think about the organization's characteristics that you gathered from your background research. Briefly state an important detail about their work that you find particularly interesting or compelling. This statement should demonstrate your knowledge of the employer's field of practice and your shared interests. Finally, state that you are an ideal candidate for the position. See the example below:

Dear Ideal Employer:

I am writing to apply for the Program Coordinator position at The Building Bridges Women's Center (BBWC) posted on the Andrew Young LinkedIn group. BBWC has a long, successful history of preparing teenage mothers to enter the workforce. With my in-depth experience in workforce development and commitment to women's economic empowerment, I am uniquely qualified to help advance BBWC's work through superior career coaching and innovative program development.

2ND PARAGRAPH: PROFESSIONAL/ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Focus on the aspect of your experience (professional or academic) that is the greatest asset to you in applying for this position. Lead with a topic sentence that establishes a connection between this aspect of your background and the employer's hiring needs. Follow-up by discussing the specific responsibilities, accomplishments, research, analysis, and/or technical skills that are directly related to the position requirements. See the example below:

My professional background is a direct match to your stated employment needs. In my current role as Program Associate at the Atlanta Resource Center (ARC), I provide comprehensive career counseling to unemployed young adults and teenage mothers who live in Atlanta Public Housing. I also manage the organization's employer recruitment program, successfully developing and implementing an employer cultivation initiative that increased ARC client recruitment by 40% over two years.

3RD PARAGRAPH: ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL/ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Focus on the aspect of your experience (professional or academic) that you did not discuss in your second paragraph. Again, refer to the position requirements outlined in the job description. Describe your professional or academic experience in a way that highlights how you have gained and used the required skills. See the example below:

In addition to my professional experience, I am currently pursuing a Master of Public Administration degree at Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. Through my education, I have honed invaluable management skills, including budget analysis, evaluation, and research. I make full use of these skills in my current position, leading efforts to design, implement, and evaluate the ARC's internship and mentoring programs. I am eager to leverage these skills to support the BBWC's goal of enhancing programs through evidence-based practice.

4TH PARAGRAPH: SYNTHESIS/CONCLUSION

Conclude the cover letter by restating the most pertinent information in a concise sentence or two. You may want to:

- Stress your commitment to what the organization does
- Mention your high level of motivation
- Restate that you have the professional and academic qualifications to do the job

Tell the employer that your resume is enclosed. Include your telephone number and email address. Thank the employer for their time and consideration and state that you look forward to hearing from them. See the example below:

Given my professional background, academic experience, and commitment to the workforce development field, I am confident that I would be an excellent addition to your team. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and talk more about the position. Please review the attached resume and contact me at 222-666-7777 or jane.candidate@student.gsu.edu to schedule a follow up interview.

Kindest Regards,

FORMAT

Your cover letter must look flawless! A single error in a cover letter may cause the employer to assume that you are careless in your work. Proofread your cover letter. Proofread it again. Have at least two other people proofread your cover letter. Then, proofread your cover letter at least one more time.

PAGE LENGTH

Generally, your entire cover letter should be one page and no more than three or four short paragraphs long.

FONTS & MARGINS

- Use consistent and clear fonts. Resist the urge to be fancy. “Times New Roman” or “Arial” are safe bets.
- Avoid the use of italics. They can be difficult to read.
- Do not use a font size smaller than 11.
- Maintain a sufficient amount of white space on the page so that your letter is easy to read.
- Use consistent margins – they should never be smaller than 0.5 in.

February 2, 2011

Mr. Ideal Employer
CARE USA
151 Ellis Street
New York, NY 10040

Dear Mr. Employer:

I am writing to apply for the Countries in Crisis Program Manager position at CARE USA. Like CARE USA, I am committed to the improvement of economic conditions for individuals and families in the world's poorest regions. I also possess the requisite knowledge and experience to be an excellent fit for this position.

As a second year student at Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, I've gained an in-depth understanding of best practices in international public administration. Having completed coursework in International Economic Development, Program Development for International Organizations, and Managing Humanitarian Challenges and Conflicts, I am excited by the prospect of applying my knowledge to CARE USA's current work, while developing innovative models for new programs.

You will find that I also possess highly relevant experience in emergency humanitarian programming and microenterprise ventures. As an Intern at Mercy Corps, I collaborated with senior staff to develop economic empowerment programs for populations living in post conflict/post natural disaster contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa. Prior to that, I worked with Trickle Up to facilitate business trainings for entrepreneurs in Zambia. I also developed partnerships with lending institutions to help ensure the availability of financial services to support future microenterprise ventures. In both of these positions, I routinely monitored, evaluated, and reported on outcomes for major programs.

I am confident that my knowledge and experience in international development would be of great value to CARE USA. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss my background and relevant qualifications. Please review the attached resume, and feel free to contact me at 646-555-1212 or janecandidate@gsu.edu. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Cleaver

February 2, 2011

Ms. Melody Cooley
Moody's Investor's Service
56 Broadway
New York, NY 10003

Dear Ms. Cooley:

I am writing, at the suggestion of your colleague Mark Stevenson, Senior Director of Diversity, to express my interest in the Senior Associate Position within the Moody's Healthcare Group. As an experienced healthcare administrator, I understand and appreciate the value that Moody's adds to the healthcare industry as the leading provider of credit ratings and research. With my strong analytical and financial skills, I am ideally suited to help the Healthcare Group maintain this quality standard.

In my current position as the Logistics Manager at Emory Medical Center, I prepare and monitor a \$1.2M non-salary operating budget for 14 separate cost centers within the Nursing Department. This involves conducting detailed analysis of the monthly financial reports for each cost center; formulating and substantiating budget management recommendations; and reporting outcomes in written and oral form to senior administrators. I am also responsible for the examination of changes in patient acuity, census, and other trends in order to ascertain total cost ramifications of proposed equipment purchases and supply utilization practices.

In addition to the aforementioned, I have spent the past two years enhancing my expertise in quantitative research and analysis through the pursuit of an MPP in Health Policy at Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. I am also taking supplemental finance coursework at the GSU Robinson College of Business.

Through my education and experience, I possess an in-depth knowledge of the healthcare field, as well as highly relevant research and finance skills that directly lend themselves to your stated employment needs. I have enclosed my resume for your review. If you have any additional questions, feel free to call me at 646-234-5678 or email me at r7@gsu.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,