Cover Letter Overview and Sample

The purpose of a cover letter is to introduce yourself, identify what you are applying for, explain why you are a good candidate, invite them to review your resume, and ask for an interview (without actually *asking* for an interview).

Cover letters are always needed when you submit a resume whether it's via mail, email, electronic application or in person.

When emailing your resume, you attach the file of your resume to the email and the text you write in the email becomes your Cover Letter. You may consider attaching your cover letter as well.

Cover Letters should be professional and formatted to business letter standards. This means the letter should be single-spaced, and that you double space between paragraphs (but don't indent).

Cover Letters are the Evil Twin of resumes—they use complete sentences, and follow a more traditional format, while Resumes typically used bulleted phrases, lists, and brief statements.

They are divided in the four basic segments; the setup, and parts 1, 2, and 3.

Part I

In this section you will specify the job you are applying for. If you know someone at the company, this is where you may want to "name drop" who let you know about the job opening (as this example does). Sometimes larger companies ask you to reference a certain job number shown in the job announcement, which this example also shows. This section is typically 1 to 2 sentences long. Make a statement about why you are interested in this position.

Here as an example of part 1 of a Cover Letter:

> *Dear Ms. Bosstobe:*

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> I would like to be considered for the Human Services Assistant position (Ref. # 30325) currently available with the Department of Human Services. I am interested in this position because of the population you serve and my passion to help individuals.
>
> OR
>
> I am very interested in the Human Services Assistant position (Ref. # 30325) currently available with the Department of Human Services. Nick Jones from Self Sufficiency, an acquaintance, is familiar with my background and suggested I apply.

Part 2

In this section you will describe why you are a good candidate. You may want to include how much experience you have, mention any specific abilities that the job description outlines, and demonstrate how your training and background combine to make you a strong candidate. You want to outline the impressive parts of your resume. Remember, using specific numbers to quantify your experience can make it seem more concrete to the interviewer.

Part 2 of a Cover Letter is typically 1 to 2 paragraphs long, with each paragraph being 2 to 3 sentences.

Here is an example of Part 2 of a Cover Letter:

> I am proud to share with you that I am working towards obtaining my Associates degree in Human Services from Clackamas Community College where I am gaining skills in helping individuals and families, learning basic counseling, assessment and documentation skills. I am compassionate, reliable and dedicated to making a difference for individuals who are in need of services. The education and experience I am gaining in school is preparing me to be an effective human services assistant with the Department of Human Services.

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> While attending school I have been a dedicated and reliable volunteer at the local homeless shelter. As a volunteer I check people into the shelter with a warm and welcoming attitude, connect people with resources and meals and offer support with basic hygiene supplies. This opportunity has provided me many skills that are necessary to be an effective human service assistant such as being friendly, welcoming, organized and resourceful.

Part 3

In Part 3, you want to communicate that you would welcome an interview (without making an assumption that they'll be willing to give you one), invite them to review your resume, and –perhaps most importantly—communicate enthusiasm for the position. You also should thank them for their time and consideration.

Here's an example of Part 3:

> I am excited about the Human Service Assistant position, and I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about how I could join the Department of Human Services team. Please take a look at my enclosed resume for a closer review of my strengths and qualifications.
>
> Thank you very much for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Awesome Me

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Awesome Me

503-525-1287 ● AwesomeMe@gmail.com

May 16, 2017

Allison Bosstobe
Volunteer Coordinator
Department of Human Services
145 S. Evergreen Road
Portland, OR 97215

Dear Ms. Bosstobe:

I would like to be considered for the Human Services Assistant position (Ref. # 30325) currently available with the Department of Human Services. I am interested in this position because of the population you serve and my passion to help individuals.

I am proud to share with you that I am working towards obtaining my Associates degree in Human Services from Clackamas Community College where I am gaining skills in helping individuals and families, learning basic counseling, assessment and documentation skills. I am compassionate, reliable and dedicated to making a difference for individuals who are in need of services. The education and experience I am gaining in school is preparing me to be an effective human services assistant with the Department of Human Services.

While attending school I have been a dedicated and reliable volunteer at the local homeless shelter. As a volunteer I check people into the shelter with a warm and welcoming attitude, connect people with resources and meals and offer support with basic hygiene supplies. This opportunity has provided me many skills that are necessary to be an valuable human service assistant such as being friendly, welcoming, organized and resourceful.

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I am excited about the Human Service Assistant position, and I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about how I could join the Department of Human Services team. Please take a look at my enclosed resume for a closer review of my strengths and qualifications.

Thank you very much for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Awesome Me

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