

Guide to Writing a Cover Letter for Stanford in Government

1. Header:

- Include your name, phone number, and email at the top of the letter. Skip the traditional address and date if you're sending the cover letter via email, as here.

2. Salutation:

- Address the letter to the hiring manager or relevant department head. If you don't know their name, use a general salutation like "Dear Hiring Manager."

3. Introduction:

- Start with a compelling opening that mentions the specific public service internship position you are applying for. Briefly explain why you are passionate about public service and the organization.

4. Body Paragraphs:

- **Paragraph 1:** Introduce yourself and mention your current academic status and major. Briefly explain your interest in public service and how it aligns with the internship.
- **Paragraph 2:** Express your knowledge of and enthusiasm for the organization. Discuss any research you've conducted on their initiatives, programs, or recent achievements. Show that you understand and support the organization's commitment to public service.
- **Paragraph 3:** Highlight relevant skills and experiences, such as coursework, volunteer work, or relevant projects. Relate these experiences to the specific responsibilities outlined in the internship description.
- **Paragraph 4:** Include something that you hope to learn from the experience and also how this internship could fit into the larger trajectory of their career goals (general career exploration is perfectly acceptable if they are not quite sure).
- **Important Note:** A cover letter is not a personal statement. Some people tend to get very flowery about their own story (which is appropriate for essays/personal statements) – however, when writing a cover letter, you need to dance a fine line between providing personal context and showing alignment/fit for the specific role. Lean on the side of showing alignment/fit for the specific role.

5. Closing Paragraph:

- Summarize your qualifications and reiterate your enthusiasm for contributing to the organization's public service goals. Express your eagerness for the opportunity to further discuss your fit for the internship in an interview.

6. Closing:

Stanford in Government — Fellowships and Stipends Committee

- Use a professional closing such as "Sincerely" or "Best Regards." If sending a physical copy, leave space for your signature.

7. Signature:

- Sign the letter in the space between the closing and your typed name for physical copies. For email applications, type your full name.

8. Additional Tips:

- Emphasize your passion: Public service organizations often look for candidates who are genuinely passionate about making a positive impact. Clearly convey your commitment to public service.
- Showcase relevant experiences: Highlight experiences that demonstrate your skills and commitment to public service, whether through coursework, volunteer work, or extracurricular activities.
- Tailor the letter: Customize your cover letter for the specific public service internship you are applying to. Reference the organization's mission and values in your letter.
- Be concise and focused: Keep your cover letter focused on your most relevant qualifications for the internship. Aim for a one-page document—single spaced with 12-point font.

Note that this guide is not fully comprehensive, and you can adjust it as you see fit! There is no right or wrong for the specific way you structure your cover letter, as long as you convey the material clearly and use the proper formatting.