

Step 3: How to Write Good Cover Letters



COVER LETTER WRITING TIPS

WAYS TO CRAFT A BETTER COVER LETTER:

- Make your cover letter **work** for you - think of it as an **extension of your resume** not just another piece of paper required in the application packet.
- **Tailor each cover letter to the position and job description** so that you don't have to write a completely new resume every time you apply for a new job.
- **Be sure to cite the CORRECT position title and job number. HR Reps report this common error: Applicants are NOT EDITING A PREVIOUS COVER LETTER and therefore submitting the wrong cover letter.**
- State how you meet/beat the position requirements in the 1st or 2nd paragraph.



ONLINE COVER LETTERS:

- Tailor your letter to the position and use **topic headings** & **bulleted sections**.
- Use wording directly from the job ad or bulletin as **topic headings** in your letter.
- **Under each topic heading**, cite by bulleted section the number of years of specific experience, skills, duties and accomplishments.
- Because you're using language from the bulletin, you are giving the raters **exactly the information** they're looking for.
- **This format works well for ONLINE applications.**

ACTION VERBS / ACTIVE VOICE & OTHER TIPS:

- Use **action verbs** to start each bullet and write in **active voice**, not passive voice.
 - ✓ Example -- **Active Voice**: "I edit out-going letters."
 - ✓ Example -- **Passive Voice**: "My job is to edit out-going letters."
- Avoid trite phrases such as "...enclosed please find..."
- Don't forget to provide your phone number, even though it's on your resume.
- In the closing paragraph, briefly summarize qualifications and experience.

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MORE TIPS:

- Avoid the temptation to provide extra information about your professional qualifications -- the raters are looking **only for the skills outlined in the bulletin.** **THEY DON'T WANT YOUR LIFE STORY.**
- Raters can spend as little as **60 – 90 seconds per resume and cover letter!!** Think of the best way to make your case in one minute total.
- Make your letter user-friendly & succinct. Raters have **very little time** to spend on each resume & cover letter. Too many words and unrelated detail work against you!
- Make sure you state how you meet or beat the minimum qualifications as stated in the job ad in your first or second paragraph.
- **Pay special attention to the application instructions** as specified in the bulletin and **follow the instructions to the letter.**

August 22, 2009

I. Wanda Reyes
City of San Gabriel
Department of Public Works
123 Sea Breeze Drive
San Gabriel, California 90503

Re: Job Number 243546

Ms. Reyes:

I am writing in reference to the Senior Grounds Maintenance Crew Chief position, Job #243546, with the Department of Public Works. I believe my qualifications; skills and experience would complement and strengthen the position as described in the Employment bulletin.

As my resume demonstrates, I have over fifteen years of experience in maintenance and facilities work ranging from Energy Conservation Representative to Maintenance Crew Chief. Two positions required me to perform grounds, parks, or landscape maintenance work and one position required expertise in energy conservation:

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE:

- * Ten years experience performing grounds maintenance responsibilities; six years experience in a Crew Chief capacity.
- * Ten years experience maintaining records and writing reports.

SUPERVISING CREWS:

- * Ten years experience supervising maintenance crews; six years experience in a Crew Chief capacity.
- * Six years supervising the safe usage and storage of toxic materials.

PLANNING, DEVELOPING AND ADMINISTERING DISTRICT WORK PLANS AND BUDGETS:

- * Six years experience drafting and implementing district work plans in collaboration with staff and management.
- * Six years experience developing and monitoring annual budgets that include salaries, supplies, services, utilities, and equipment.

In closing, I offer over fifteen years of maintenance-related experience. I am interested in continuing my career as a Senior Grounds Maintenance Crew Chief. Should you have questions or need further information, please call me at 999-9999.

Sincerely,

Moe D'Lawn

Re: Job Number 354657

I am writing in reference to the Administrative Specialist II #354657 position. I believe my technical expertise and interpersonal skills position me to be a strong candidate for the position.

As my resume demonstrates, I have over 15 years experience that includes supervisory responsibility. I am proficient in Office 2007 Applications such as, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, and Publisher. Throughout my 15-year career, I have consistently demonstrated:

ORGANIZATIONAL AND WRITING SKILLS, such as:

- * Drafting and producing letters, memos, reports, and resource guides.
- * Creating and maintaining organized file system for massive amounts of hard copy data.
- * Scheduling multiple meetings and maintaining appointment calendars for three people
- * Maintaining and producing statistical and narrative reports for management on a quarterly basis.
- * Organizing workload for subordinate staff.

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS such as:

- * Serving as front-line reception staff to provide service and information to citizens.
- * Assisting and calming irate citizens who have problems or complaints.
- * Responding quickly to assist agitated accounting clients with tax information for IRS audit.
- * Supporting staff and management under extreme deadline pressure by producing all required work ahead of schedule and in an accurate manner.

From my 4 years as Executive Secretary to Lou Pole, Chief Accountant at Dewey, Cheetham & Howe, to my current position as Administrative Specialist I for Ella Fynoe, Manager of Technical Training, I offer 15 years proven experience. I look forward to the opportunity to meet you to further discuss my qualifications for this position.

Sincerely,
Marge Inovera

Sammy Conductor

Home Phone Work Phone E-Mail Address

Online Cover Letter Sample

June 25, 2006

Re: Job Number 896745

Dear Ms. Reyes:

This letter is in application for the position of Working Crew Chief for Cascade City Utility #896745. I have enclosed a resume for your consideration. I believe I am well positioned to provide the right balance of working experience and leadership skills to best serve the crews, the Utility, and our customers.

I have been working "out of class" as a Working Crew Chief in the North Power Stations Unit of Cascade City Utility for 23 months. I have gained experience and skills in the area of supervision, material procurement, workload forecasting, budget, and knowledge about working with a diverse work force.

I have completed a Washington State Certified Apprentice Program in the Electrical Trades and have been a Union 77 Electrician Constructor for the past five years. As an Electrician Constructor, I have specialized in installation, maintaining and operating power station equipment and circuitry.

EXPERIENCE IN PLANNING, ASSIGNING AND MONITORING WORK OF SUBORDINATE STAFF:

- * Maintained, repaired or rebuilt equipment and electrical wiring.
- * Tested and rebuilt transformers for distribution use.
- * Ensured equipment and parts were available to complete scheduled projects.
- * Laid out, performed work, and supervised maintenance and test procedures of generators, motor generator sets, electric motors, and transformers.

My goal as a Crew Chief is to keep an open line of communication with employees and to build a safer, more productive customer service oriented work team. I believe the experience I have gained in my out-of-class position has given me the practical experience I need to achieve this goal.

I look forward to meeting you for an interview to discuss my qualifications. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Sammy Conductor
Employee # 9848445