

# COVER LETTER GUIDE outline

## Your Contact Information:

Name  
Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Phone Number  
Email Address

## Date (Month, Day, Year)

## Employer Contact Information:

Hiring Manager's Name (if known) or "Hiring Manager"  
Hiring Manager's Job Title (if known)  
Company Name  
Company Address  
City, State, Zip Code

## Dear (Mr. / Ms. Last Name or "Hiring Manager"),

**Opening paragraph:** This is your opportunity to get the hiring manager's attention, introduce yourself, and enthusiastically tell the employer **why you're applying for the job**. Make sure to list the position (job title), the job reference number, or a description of the job for which you are applying. Tell how you heard of the opening or organization (mention who referred you, if applicable). Write a sentence with 2-3 skills you possess that make you **a great candidate** for the position.

**Middle paragraph(s):** In one or two paragraphs, make the connection between your previous accomplishments and your readiness for the new role. Start with a statement that summarizes, in a sentence, the **experience and skills** you have related to the specific job description. Then, mention one or two of your best and most appropriate **examples** of how you have used skills directly related to this particular position. Remember that you always want to mention **positive results** as part of your examples.

**Closing paragraph:** There are 3 options for the closing. (1) Talk about your **personal connection** to the organization or to the mission of the organization and then confidently restate your interest in the company. (2) Talk about your **knowledge of the company** and then confidently restate your interest in the company. (3) Restate your interest in the company and remind them **why YOU are the best fit** for this position.

**Complimentary close and signature:** This brief paragraph or sentence is a polite formality to wrap up your letter neatly with the appropriate tone and **gratitude**. It is appropriate to tell the reader that they may reach out to you.



# COVER LETTER GUIDE sample



Diego Serrano  
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Berkeley, CA 94702  
415-555-5555  
diego.serrano@email.com

August 15, 2018

Ms. Janet Camargo  
Outreach Director  
The Community Financial Center  
6932 Mission Street  
San Francisco, CA 94101

Dear Ms. Camargo,

I am writing to apply for the Financial Counseling Manager position with The Community Financial Center that I learned through Craigslist.org. My strong skills in program design, outstanding bilingual communication in English and Spanish, and 10 years of experience working with nonprofits in low and moderate income communities make me an excellent candidate for this role.

I am very familiar with loan and grant programs as I have trained municipal staff, local entrepreneurs, and business leaders in the creation of business plans, financial projections, and loan application processes. While at CHF-Ecuador, I was responsible for the disbursement of loan and grant funds for local economic development projects. In the most successful case, around \$100,000 USD were disbursed to 400 bean producers in a small impoverished rural community, which allowed them to create a cooperative producers' organization.

I have also developed years of experience as a facilitator, and been trained in "Advanced Participatory Methods," a specialized participatory planning tool. Using this method, I have facilitated more than 50 community workshops in Latino communities to resolve conflicts and gain consensus on different topics related to community and economic development.

I am looking for an opportunity to expand my commitment to economic development in a vibrant, innovative, people-centered organization. I believe that my background and experience with training and facilitation, program management, and fluency in Spanish and English will allow me to contribute to the Community Financial Center from the first day on the job.

I would very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss this position with you, and I would be happy to provide any further information. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Diego Serrano

*Experience Statement*  
*Project or Problem*  
*Action(s) taken*  
*Result(s)*

# COVER LETTER GUIDE

## practice



[Header: Include your contact information, date, and employer contact information]

### First Paragraph: Introduce your professional self

I am writing to apply for the (*job title*) position (*requisition #*) with (*name of company*) that I learned about through (*website or personal contact*). My strong skills in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and (*total number of years*) of experience in the field make me an excellent candidate for this role.

### Middle Paragraph(s): Match your skills and experience to the job description

What will you bring to the position? Use a combination of the following: (a) overview of relevant experience, (b) overview of outstanding skills, (c) relevant positions, (d) relevant projects, (e) brief PAR examples. Start the paragraph(s) with an experience statement. Focus on 2-3 main ideas.

### Closing Paragraph: Wrap it up

Choose one of the following: (a) show your personal interest or personal connection to the mission of the organization, (b) show that you've done your research on the company/organization, or (c) restate your interest and remind them why YOU are the best fit for the job.

[Close and Signature]

# COVER LETTER GUIDE checklist

Proofread Your Cover Letter. Check for the following:

- Included **requisition number** in the first paragraph (*if one was listed on the job description*)
- Addressed reader as **“Mr.”** or **“Ms.”** (*not “Mrs.” or “Miss”*) or **“Dr.”** (*if they are a Doctor or PhD*) or **“Hiring Manager”** (*if name is unknown*)
- Reviewed **punctuation**, especially commas and capitalization. (*Note that some U.S. English writing rules are different from British English*)
- Checked **spelling** and **grammar**
- Set **font size and type** consistently from top to bottom with a basic font such as Arial, Calibri, or Verdana and size 10 or 12 point for easy reading
- Set **margins** the same all around
- Limited cover letter to a **single page** made up of three to four paragraphs
- Verified that the name of the company, job title, and other identifying information accurately matches the **job description**
- Described experience, positions, projects and/or examples relevant to the **job description**
- Saved cover letter as a **PDF** with a **clear title** including my name and the job position; for example: *“Diego Serrano\_Cover Letter\_Program Manager”*.

