

Cover Letters & References

A collaboration of Metropolitan State University
Career Center and CAE Writing Center

Cover Letters

Cover letters focus on qualifications for a position not easily represented in the resume. Be timely; apply promptly and follow up right after interviews with a thank-you letter expressing interest in the job and any future opportunities. If there is not a place to upload a letter online, mail, e-mail, or drop it off in person. The first one is toughest to write, think of it as a template that you can modify for future jobs.

- Try to be concise, employers read dozens. Cover two to three key strengths and summarize accomplishments
- Address it to a specific contact or search committee chair in the organization who is part of the hiring process
- Use the same header and font as the resume
- Highlight qualifications, explain how you meet or exceed key requirements
- Be as interesting as possible – tell your story
- Know your audience and use language from their industry

Introductory Paragraph

A simple, clear opening works nicely: state why you're writing, what you're applying for and where you heard of it. You want to get a reader's attention and state your goal.

Main Paragraphs

This is where you highlight your strongest qualifications and experience. Show the natural fit between you, the organization, the specific job, and the selection criteria. Write one or two paragraphs about three to five sentences long. Consider using a few bullet points. Letters should be one page and only take a minute or so to read.

Closing Paragraph and Signature Line

Indicate your excitement about and availability for the position, when you could start, ask for an interview, and/or mention how best to contact you. If possible, conclude with a statement indicating that you will follow-up with a phone call. Remember to thank them!

For the signature line, keep it very simple, use your full name, and consider repeating your preferred method of contact.

JULIA T. CHAVEZ

1234 Portland Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55444
(612) 872-2233
jchavez@yahoo.com

March 24, 2020

Robert M. Olson
Regional Manager
Target Corporation
829 Nicollet Mall, Suite 454
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Dear Mr. Olson,

I am writing to apply for the systems analyst position that was posted on the Minnesota Works job board. Recently, I completed a degree in business administration and am seeking a challenging opportunity to use my skills and education. With extensive experience in the retail industry and expertise in customer service, I believe I am an excellent fit for your needs.

Some of my accomplishments and qualifications for the position include:

- Software user acceptance testing and troubleshooting
- Proven ability to prioritize urgent tasks to ensure quality
- Implementation of validation and verification systems.

My resume is enclosed. I would enjoy speaking to you further regarding my background and how I could contribute to the continued success of Target Corporation. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Julia Chavez

Enclosure

SAMPLE TWO

ANDREW McGRAW

2400 West 7th Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105

651-630-2222
andrew_mcgraw@yahoo.com

May 15, 2020

Customer Service Specialist Search Committee
Business Development Center
Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Division

RE: 300230—Customer Service Specialist

Dear Search Committee:

I am writing to apply for the customer service specialist position in the Business Development Center of Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Division. My professional history, academic background, and personal values make me an ideal candidate for the position.

In my work as a customer service representative at the Postal Employee Credit Union, I communicated with a wide variety of customers, employees and executives in a collaborative environment. As part of a team serving some 250 customers daily, I successfully resolved 6-8 issues per day while managing long term solutions to challenging problems.

My expertise in working in team-based service, customer satisfaction and developing systems combined with my deep respect for clients' privacy make me a natural fit for this position and would be an asset to the Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Division. I will call soon to introduce myself, and I look forward to discussing the opportunity with you.

Sincerely,

Andrew McGraw
work 651-630-5555

JULIA T. CHAVEZ

1234 Portland Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55444
(612) 872-2233
jchavez@yahoo.com

May 10, 2020

Ms. Jane Smith, Vice President
ABC Printing, Inc.
8010 Boone Avenue North
Brooklyn Park, MN 55434

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am very interested in the position of Administrative Assistant recently posted on *Indeed*. The skills and qualifications you mention closely match my experience in this career field.

Your Needs

- Detail-oriented, experienced Administrative Assistant
- Assist Customer Relations Manager
- Corporate experience with major clients a must
- PC knowledge a plus

My Qualifications

- Four years Administrative Assistant experience with responsibility for numerous detailed reports
- Assisted Customer Relations Manager for two years
- Regularly served purchasing agents at Fortune 500 companies
- Experienced in Microsoft Office 12 in a Windows 10 Professional environment

I have uploaded my resume but also enclose it here for your consideration. I believe I am an exceptional candidate for this position and look forward to meeting with you to discuss it in greater detail. I will plan to call you to determine when an interview might be possible.

Sincerely,
(Signature)
Julia T. Chavez

Enclosure

SAMPLE FOUR

Mary D. Anderson, R.N.

2400 West 7th Street
Saint Paul, MN 55105

651-630-2222
Mdanderson1@gmail.com

May 15, 2019

Janet Williams, MSN
Nurse Recruiter
Fairview University Hospital
812 Oak Street
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Dear Ms. Williams:

I recently graduated from the Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at Metropolitan State University in St. Paul. As a teaching facility with a wide variety of clinical settings, Fairview University Hospital offers the opportunity for me to further develop my knowledge and skills as a professional nurse. I would like to apply for a position as a registered nurse on the Medical/Surgical team.

I have a proven track record of advancing my nursing career alongside my education as demonstrated by my academic honors and accomplished work history. I have experience caring for patients of all ages in home, nursing home and hospital settings.

Thank you for giving my resume consideration. I am eager to meet with you to discuss possible employment at Fairview University Hospital. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Mary D. Anderson

Enclosure

MARY SEVERSON

1974 Ford Parkway, St. Paul, MN 55108
651-699-9059 • mlseverson@gmail.com • www.linkedin.com/in/maryseverson

May 14, 2020

Dr. Lila Johannsen, Superintendent of Schools
Independent School District #286
Brooklyn Center, MN 56430

Dear Ms. Johannsen:

I would like to extend my gratitude for interviewing me for the third-grade teaching post at Earle Brown Elementary School yesterday. It was a pleasure meeting you and discussing the position in detail. I am excited about the opportunity to work at your school.

You will remember that I am a product of the Urban Teacher Program at Metropolitan State University, did my student teaching at Como Park Elementary in St. Paul, and have several years' experience working with diverse populations. With all this, I believe it is clear I am an outstanding fit for your needs at Earle Brown Elementary.

In addition to more traditional classrooms, my Montessori work gives me a broad set of skills in helping young learners develop the proficiencies required to succeed. Finally, I also served as a client advocate for Catholic Charities for five years, training and inspiring staff to make a difference in the lives of people experiencing generational poverty.

I am available to further discuss this position at your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Mary Severson

References

Prospective employers often request a list of references; three or four is a common amount. Additionally, your references can be a good source of advice and networking opportunities. References give your resume deeper credibility. Cultivate faculty members, advisors, co-workers and managers.

Keep in touch with your references to ensure they are aware of your job goals and that you have their current contact information and job titles. When you schedule an interview, be sure to notify your references and provide them with a current resume, description of the job for which you applied, and any skills or qualifications you want them to emphasize should they be contacted. People will be able to help you more if they know which skills and experience to highlight.

Keep in mind that employers who are not your references may only be able to supply dates of employment. Someone who is a reference can provide information about your work ethic, accomplishments and other characteristics that are essential to being hired, along with details about soft skills that will give an emotional appeal to your application.

- Keep your references in a separate document.
- Use the same page header as you used for your resume and cover letter, also keeping the same font and type size.
- Include name, job title and company, phone number, e-mail, and the relationship to you.
- Addresses aren't essential, but you may wish to include city and state.

MOHAMMED CHAU

1234 Portland Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55444
(612) 872-2233
mchau@yahoo.com

References for Mohammed Chau

Maria Astudillo, customer service manager, ACME Corporation
(612) 872-7072 (office)
mastudillo@acme.com
Relationship to applicant: current supervisor

Thomas Olson, Sales, ACME Corporation
(612) 872-8070 (office)
tomolson@acme.com
Relationship to applicant: current colleague

Sarah Siyad, operations director, Minnesota Manufacturing Company
(218) 420-6565 (office)
sarah.siyad@mm.com
Relationship to applicant: former customer

Ger Vang, general manager, Best Brand Electronics
(651) 220-2211 (office)
ger.vang@bbe.com
Relationship to applicant: former manager