

Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

COVER LETTERS

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Applying for a job can take many forms but the purpose is the same — landing you an interview! The application process can include both completing the company’s application form as well as submitting your resume and cover letter. Employers will use these documents as screening and selection tools for interviews.

The Cover Letter

Your resume (see UT Extension Publication W 936-C) is intended to give facts about your education and employment history, but your cover letter should convey more of your personality. It is the place to showcase your skills and tell why you are interested in the position. Ideally, it should make you stand out from other job seekers. A good cover letter will convey how you meet the company’s needs and that you know what the company does. Hiring managers are impressed if you can show that you have done your homework about the job and the employer. Visiting the company’s website is a good place to find out information you can use in your letter. You will need to tailor a unique cover letter for each job for which you apply.

Spend time composing your letter — it can make a difference between getting an interview and being rejected. Most employers are more likely to pay attention when a cover letter is included with an application. Some hiring managers won’t interview a job seeker if a cover letter is not included, especially if one is requested with the job posting.

Address your cover letter to a specific person if at all possible. If you do not know the specific individual who will be reviewing the application, address your letter to the job title of the recipient (Office Manager, Human Resources or Hiring Manager).

The first paragraph of your letter should state the position for which you are applying and how you found out about it, why you are interested in the job and the company, and what makes you a good fit.

Applying for a Job

Sell yourself in the next paragraph. Explain why you want to work for the company. Briefly summarize your talents, experience and achievements. Realize that the reader will consider this letter as an example of your writing skills.

Mention that your resume is enclosed and indicate your desire to meet with the employer. Let the reader know of your availability to meet and include your contact information. Thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.

Even if it's not required, a cover letter is an opportunity to show your credentials for the job. Before you send it, check it for typos and grammatical errors. Read your letter out loud. Have someone else proof it for you.

UT Extension Publication W 926-E includes a cover letter template that can be used as a guide to compose your letter.

Want More Information?

For additional information on applying for a job, download a copy of UT Extension Publication "W 936-E Finding Work — Applying for a Job." To learn more, connect with an Extension agent by contacting your county Extension office.



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