

# Writing & Tailoring Cover Letters

## PURPOSE – What is a cover letter?

The cover letter, or letter of application that accompanies your resume, should be an original one-page statement that introduces you to an employer and is tailored to the job for which you are applying. You want to highlight your interests, skills and experience that most closely match the requirements of the position and the employer. Your cover letter should tell the recipient why they have received your resume. Unlike a resume, a cover letter is written in a narrative style, so employers use it to evaluate your writing and organizational skills, technical knowledge, personality and motivation.

## GETTING STARTED- Creating your Point By Point

Before crafting your cover letter and resume, we strongly recommend that you create a "point-by-point" for yourself that shows the position requirements on one side of the page, and your skills and experience that most closely fill each of these requirements on the other side of the page. This will help you to remember and articulate past experiences, organize your thoughts and highlight your most relevant information for the employer.

## THE COMPLETE PACKAGE

The tailored cover letter and resume form an application package designed to get you to the next stage- the job interview. On the following pages, you'll find a complete package of application sample materials:

- 1) A sample internship description
- 2) A sample point-by-point the student created before crafting her resume and cover letter for this particular internship
- 3) A sample cover letter for the internship
- 4) A sample resume for the internship

In addition, we've included a basic cover letter outline and guidelines. Don't forget, it's up to you to infuse your cover letter with your enthusiasm for the position!

## Job Listing

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### **BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF METROPOLITAN PORTLAND GRANT WRITING INTERN**

Intern/Extern

Number	Date	Type	Wage
102626174	9/13/10	Intern/Extern	small stipend is available
Start	Openings	Location	Hours
N/A	1	Portland, OR	10 hours per week

#### Job Description

BBBS is seeking an intern to help procure long-term funding for agency through grant writing directed to corporations and foundations. Intern duties include: finding prospects for funding, writing/assembling persuasive grant proposals that meet the criteria of the prospects, and collecting data/stories/information to include in proposals. Intern may also edit and write articles for quarterly donor newsletters or other BBBS publications. This is a great opportunity for students looking for nonprofit experience or who are interested in learning more about nonprofit work, and who want to enhance writing ability. Ideal candidate will have excellent writing, editing and research ability and be well organized.

⇒ [Click Here to Apply Online](#)

#### Contact Information

##### How to Apply

Contact:

Jamie Snider

Grant Writer

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF METROPOLITAN PORTLAND

Portland, OR

503-249-4859 ext. 273

[jamiobbbsmp@yahoo.com](mailto:jamiobbbsmp@yahoo.com)

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INTERNSHIP  
DESCRIPTION  
KEYWORDS:

← Note specific  
job requirements

Try to mirror  
keywords and  
phrases in your  
cover letter to  
make it easy for  
employers to spot  
what they are  
looking for

**MAGGIE S. PAMPLIN**  
 0615 SW Palatine Hill Road – MSC 323  
 Portland, Oregon 97219  
 503-236-0487  
 Maggie@lclark.edu

**GRANT WRITING INTERN**

<b>Big Brothers Big Sisters of Portland – Internship Job Requirements</b>	<b>Maggie S. Pamplin Education, Experience, and Skills</b>
Finding prospects for funding, writing/assembling persuasive grant proposals that meet the criteria of the prospects, and collecting data/stories/information to include in proposals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experienced in overseeing grant-giving operations for the Student Academic Affairs Board at Lewis &amp; Clark College.</li> <li>• Knowledgeable of persuasive proposals having reviewed and voted upon grant applications for funding.</li> <li>• Skilled writer as an editorial staff member of the Lewis &amp; Clark <i>Synergia Journal</i> and a Staff Writer of the Lewis &amp; Clark <i>Footnotes</i>.</li> </ul>
Intern may also edit and write articles for quarterly donor newsletters or other BBBS publications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experienced writer and presenter, having presented a paper at the Lewis &amp; Clark College Gender Symposium.</li> <li>• Skilled writer as an editorial staff member of the Lewis &amp; Clark <i>Synergia Journal</i> and a Staff Writer of the Lewis &amp; Clark <i>Footnotes</i>.</li> <li>• Knowledgeable of Microsoft Office Suite and multiple graphic design and publishing software programs.</li> </ul>
This is a great opportunity for students looking for nonprofit experience or who are interested in learning more about nonprofit work, and who want to enhance writing ability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interested in pursuing a career in nonprofit management.</li> <li>• Seeking an internship experience to expand knowledge of and skills in nonprofit operations, fundraising processes, and grant writing.</li> </ul>
Ideal candidate will have excellent writing, editing and research ability and be well organized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skilled writer, editor, and researcher having worked for the <i>Synergia Journal</i> and <i>Footnotes</i>, two well-respected Lewis &amp; Clark publications.</li> <li>• Experienced in research resources, having worked at the Watzek Library at Lewis &amp; Clark College.</li> <li>• Researched and contacted participants for Lewis &amp; Clark events, panels, and roundtables.</li> <li>• Excellent organizational abilities having managed the competing demands of rigorous academics, employment, and campus activities.</li> </ul>

Point by Point:

← Here, the student has matched her experience to each specific job requirement. Note that most of her experience is not paid employment, but academic & extracurricular activities. Now she is ready to showcase these experiences in her cover letter and resume.

September 25, 2010

Maggie S. Pamplin  
0615 SW Palatine Hill Road – MSC 323  
Portland, Oregon 97219  
503-236-0487 Maggie@lclark.edu

James Smith  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Portland  
1478 NE Killingsworth Street  
Portland, OR 97211

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am writing to apply for the Grant Writing Intern position, for the spring 2011 semester, posted on the National Internship Consortium database. I believe my education, skills and experiences as well as my interest in your organization make me a highly qualified candidate for this position. I am considering nonprofit development as a career and am seeking an internship opportunity that would allow me to learn more about nonprofit operations as well as develop my writing abilities. The mission of Big Brothers Big Sisters is in line with my values of community service and a commitment to the development of youth. I am attaching my resume for your consideration.

I am Junior at Lewis & Clark College with a broad range of on-campus work and club experiences. As an Editorial Staff Member for the Synergia Journal and a Staff Writer for Footnotes, I have developed excellent researching, writing, and editing skills. As the Vice Chair for the Student Academic Affairs Board, I have overseen the grant-giving progress for student engagements and activities. This experience has given me exposure to the grants process from the grant-givers perspective. In addition, with a wide range of activity, volunteer, and work commitments, I have developed solid time-management and organizational skills to remain a successful student. I hope to apply these experiences and skills to working with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Portland as a Grant Writing Intern.

Again, I am very interested in learning more about your organization and the world of non-profits. I would like the opportunity to interview for this position and am available throughout the fall to meet with you. My winter and spring schedule will allow me to work a flexible schedule for up to 10 hours per week starting the second week of January. I will contact you in a few days in the hopes of scheduling an interview to talk further. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Maggie S. Pamplin

## Cover letter

← When mailing a hard over of your cover letter or emailing it as an attachment, use the standard business format that includes all the names and addresses at the top

## Content

← Note that the student has written about career interests that match the position and tied her most relevant experiences to the position specifics.

← Remember to ask for the interview.

**MAGGIE S. PAMPLIN**

0615 SW Palatine Hill Road – MSC 323  
Portland, Oregon 97219  
503-236-0487  
Maggie@lclark.edu

**EDUCATION**

**Bachelor of Arts**, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, OR Expected May 2012  
History Major and Gender Studies Minor  
Cumulative GPA: 3.2

**Recipient**, James F. Miller Grant, awarded on financial need and academic achievement

**EXPERIENCE**

**Circulation Desk Worker**, Watzek Library, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, OR Jan 2010 – Present

- Assist patrons with reserve items and multimedia materials
- Locate and process interlibrary loan items
- Research and secure patrons' search requests
- Maintain patron records

**Vice Chair**, Student Academic Affairs Board, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, OR Sept 2010 – Present

- Oversee SAAB's operation as a grant-giving organization comprised of student representatives from each academic department, with an annual budget of approximately \$54,000 from student fees
- Process, distribute, and vote upon students' grant applications for funding research opportunities, attendance at conferences, performance or artistic displays, and visiting scholar engagements
- Address student concerns about academic issues with faculty and administrators
- Manage SAAB's budget operations in conjunction with the Business Office staff

**Student Co-Chair**, Gender Symposium, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, OR May 2009 – March 2010

- Attended planning meetings with co-chairs and faculty coordinator
- Solicited ideas and issues about gender for panels and roundtables
- Contacted participants for various panels and roundtables
- Researched and contacted potential musical and performance artists to negotiate venues, fees, and accommodations
- Maintained email lists/serve to communicate information about meetings and volunteer opportunities with the college community
- Compiled related materials for featured display in Aubrey R. Watzek Library

**Mailroom Clerk**, Mail Services, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, OR Sept 2009 – Jan 2010

- Mailed collection and drop-off at local post office
- Sorted, distributed, and processed incoming and outgoing mail items

**ADDITIONAL CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT**

**Committee Member**, Library Student Advisory Committee Oct 2010 – Present  
**Student Representative**, Faculty Library Committee Sept 2010 – Present  
**Editorial Staff Member**, Synergia Journal Nov 2009 – Present  
**Staff Writer**, Footnotes Sept 2009 – Present  
**Gender Studies Representative**, Student Academic Affairs Board (SAAB) Sept 2009 – Present  
**Volunteer**, Take Back the Night March 2009 – Present

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Presenter**, Gender Symposium, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon March 2010  
"Pleading Eyes & Tightened Testicles: Constructions of Male Violence and Sexuality in Toni Morrison's 'The Bluest Eye'"

Resume:

← Note that this resume has been tailored to the specific position

← Note the bullet points start with strong verbs and highlight key skills and accomplishments

## GENERAL OUTLINE FOR A COVER LETTER

Date of Letter

Applicant's Address  
City, State Zip

Employer's Name (Letter should be addressed to a particular person, if possible)  
Employer's Title  
Company  
Street Address  
City, State Zip

Dear Mr., Ms., Dr.,

Opening Paragraph: State purpose of the letter, name the position or type of work for which you are applying, and mention how you heard of the opening or organization. Elaborate on any connections you have to the organization. Explain why you are interested in working for this employer and specify reasons you desire this type of work.

Middle Paragraph(s): Point out relevant education and experiences, but do not reiterate your entire resume. Highlight those accomplishments and skills that are most pertinent to the employer and do so in a confident manner. Make the addressee want to read your resume by being personable and enthusiastic. Focus on connecting your skills and experiences to the important aspects of the position.

Closing Paragraph: Thank the reader for taking the time to review your cover letter. Indicate that your resume is enclosed or attached, and remember to ask for an opportunity to discuss your qualifications in greater detail (i.e. the interview). End on a positive note, by reiterating your interest in the organization/position and/or highlighting that you would be a strong candidate for the position. Indicate the action or steps you will take to follow up.

Sincerely,

*Signature* (when submitting a hard copy)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure: (when submitting a hard copy, indicate what is enclosed with letter – resume, references, writing sample, etc.)

## BASIC COVER LETTER GUIDELINES:

- While all of the letters you send during your job search may be quite similar, each one should be tailored to the position and organization to which it is sent.
- If you are mailing a hard copy to an employer, print your letters on the same quality stationary paper you use for your resume, and use the same font for both documents. Save a copy of each letter you send out for reference.
- Use the correct name and title of the person who is responsible for reviewing resumes. You can also get information about the organization by looking at their web pages, by asking a receptionist at the organization for the appropriate contact name, or by contacting their Human Resources office directly to request information.
- Always refer to the employer as Dr., Mr. or Ms., but never as Mrs. or Miss.
- Open your letter with a strong sentence that defines the purpose of the letter.
- All letters of application should follow the standard business letter format.
- Proofread and spell-check the letter carefully for any errors. This will be seen as a sample of your writing and communication skills, as well as your ability to pay attention to detail.
- Strive to keep your letter of application interesting, concise and to the point.
- Do not forget to express your strong enthusiasm for the position and outline your top skills.
- When emailing your application materials, it is usually acceptable to add the cover letter as an attachment or use it as the body of your email. Different employers have different preferences. Read the job posting carefully to see if the employer indicates a preference for one way versus the other.