

# How to Write a Cover Letter & Provide References

A collaboration between the Career Center and Writing Center

Updated as of July 2024

## **Cover Letters**

Cover letters highlight qualifications for a position that might not be easily represented in your resume. If there is no option to upload a letter online, consider emailing it. The first cover letter can be the most challenging to write, so think of it as a template you can modify for future job applications.

* Be concise; employers read dozens of applications. Cover two or three key strengths and summarize your accomplishments.
* Address the letter to a specific contact or the search committee chair involved in the hiring process.
* Use the same header and font as your resume.
* Highlight your qualifications and explain how you meet or exceed key requirements.
* Make the letter engaging—tell your story.
* Understand your audience and use industry-specific language.

### Main Paragraphs

A simple, clear opening works best: state why you’re writing, what position you’re applying for, and where you found the job listing. Your goal is to capture the reader’s attention and outline your intent.

### Introductory Paragraph

Highlight your strongest qualifications and experience in these paragraphs. Demonstrate how you are a natural fit for the organization, the specific job, and the selection criteria. Write one or two paragraphs, each three to five sentences long. Consider using a few bullet points. The letter should be one page and concise enough to read in about a minute.

### Closing Paragraph and Signature Line

Express your enthusiasm for the position, your availability to start, and your interest in an interview. Mention the best way to contact you and, if possible, indicate that you will follow up with a phone call. Remember to thank the reader.

For the signature line, keep it simple. Use your full name and repeat your preferred contact method if necessary.

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(651) 793-1549.

# Antonia Pantoja

(123) 456-7890 | antonia.pantoja@gmail.com

July 1, 2024

Allina Health
2925 Chicago Avenue

Minneapolis, MN 55407

Dear Hiring Committee,

I am writing to express my enthusiasm for the Social Worker position at Allina Health. With my background in social work and hands-on experience in case management, healthcare support, and bilingual communication, I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to your team.

As an international student, I have had the unique opportunity to work with diverse communities, which has expanded my cultural awareness and adaptability — qualities I believe are essential for delivering patient-centered care in a multicultural environment. During my time as a Case Management Intern at Daily Work, I managed a caseload of 6-10 clients, utilizing strong interpersonal communication skills to provide support and guidance throughout their employment journey. This role strengthened my ability to develop individualized action plans and collaborate effectively with a diverse team. Additionally, my participation in the Overcoming Racism Conference provided me with valuable insights into addressing systemic issues and advocating for social justice, which I believe aligns well with Allina Health's commitment to patient-centered care.

In my role as an Intern at Mano a Mano, I coordinated volunteer recruitment, organized events, and provided essential translation services. This experience improved my technical writing skills and ability to promote cross-cultural communication, a critical advantage for the diverse patient population served by Allina Health. Also, my current position as a Personal Care Assistant at Minn Care Home Health has provided me with direct healthcare experience. I’ve gained a solid understanding of patient needs through daily progress reports and reinforced positive client behaviors to ensure their safety and well-being. This role has further prepared me to deliver the high-quality psychosocial support required in a hospital setting.

I am looking forward to the opportunity to discuss how my skills and experiences align with the needs of your team. Thank you for considering my application. I am eager to contribute to Allina Health and support your mission of delivering compassionate and comprehensive care.

Sincerely,

Antonia Pantoja

# Julia T. Chavez

(612) 729-1999 | jtchavez@gmail.com | www.linkedin.com/in/j.chavez

September 30, 2022

U.S. Bank

Saint Paul, MN

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am excited to apply for the Custody Operations Specialist position at U.S. Bank. I recently had the opportunity to connect with Desiree Snow at the Diversity Networking and Job Fair, where I learned more about this role and U.S. Bank’s commitment to empowering customers and communities. Combining hands-on experience in data management and customer service with a strong academic foundation, I am eager to contribute to your team and support U.S. Bank’s mission.

My academic background and internship experience have equipped me with a solid foundation in financial principles and data analysis. During my time as a Marketing and Communications Intern with the State of Minnesota’s Department of Natural Resources, I conducted statistical analysis to derive actionable insights from customer feedback and utilized various analytics tools such as Google Analytics and Salesforce. This experience has strengthened my ability to manage data effectively and generate insightful reports, which aligns well with the responsibilities of document review and report generation for the role.

In addition to my technical skills, my role as a Service Cashier at Maplewood Toyota provided me with extensive experience in client support and account maintenance. I managed payment collections, handled customer inquiries, and ensured seamless communication between departments, all of which developed my ability to multitask and meet deadlines in a fast pace environment. My strong interpersonal skills and proficiency with Microsoft Office applications further support my capability to deliver effective customer relations and handle various operational tasks.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the possibility of discussing how my skills and experiences can contribute to the continued success of U.S. Bank.

Sincerely,

Julia Chavez

# Faduma Hassan

(612) 123-4567 | faduma.hassan@my.metrostate.edu | www.linkedin.com/in/fhassan/

Date

Company Name

Company Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Hiring Committee,

I am writing to express my interest in the Marketing Intern position at [Company Name]. With a strong academic background in marketing principles and hands-on experience in customer service, I am eager to apply my skills and contribute to your organization's success.

During my academics, I led the True Friends Marketing Campaign as part of my Marketing Principles course. This project allowed me to develop and implement strategic marketing initiatives aimed at enhancing organizational visibility and community engagement. Utilizing Adobe Illustrator, I designed captivating promotional materials for community events, effectively raising awareness and participation. Additionally, I created a social media marketing campaign, employing a variety of marketing strategies to amplify our outreach and foster community connections.

My employment history further demonstrates my commitment to delivering exceptional service. As a Team Member at Target, I strengthened my ability to prioritize tasks in a fast-paced environment while maintaining a customer-centric approach. I also took on a leadership role by training team members, utilizing coaching techniques to enhance their skills and uphold company standards. Similarly, my experience as a Server at Applebee’s equipped me with strong interpersonal and problem-solving skills, enabling me to navigate challenging situations with efficiency.

Thank you for considering my application. I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to [Company Name] and look forward to the possibility of discussing how my experiences align with your internship program.

Sincerely,

Faduma Hassan

# James Johnston

(612) 729-1999 • j.johnston@outlook.com • https://github.com/j-johnston

August 30, 2024

SPS Commerce

333 S 7th Street, Unit 1000

Minneapolis, MN 55402

Hiring Team,

I am excited to apply for the Technology Internship with SPS Commerce. As a Computer Science student with hands-on experience in IT support, software development, and problem-solving, I am confident in my ability to contribute to your team. Below are the key reasons why I believe I would be an excellent fit for this opportunity:

Strong Technical Background:

* Proficient in multiple programming languages, including Python, C++, and JavaScript.
* Hands-on experience with operating systems like UNIX, Linux, and Server 2016/2019.
* Familiarity with various software and hardware, including MS SQL Server, EnCase, routers, and cloud backups.

Relevant Academic Experience:

* Completed a comprehensive Traffic Management System project using Python and machine learning algorithms.
* Extensive coursework in Algorithms, Object-Oriented Design, Networks, and Security, all of which align with the requirements of SPS Commerce.

Practical IT Help Desk Experience:

* Currently configuring 100 new accounts monthly and troubleshooting software and network issues at Metropolitan State University.
* Played a key role in a large-scale migration project involving 10,000 user accounts.

Adaptability and Problem-Solving:

* Recognized for quickly adapting to new challenges, such as the conversion from Windows 7 to Windows 10.
* Developed solutions to improve efficiency and user experiences, demonstrating strong problem-solving skills.

Team Collaboration:

* Collaborated with peers on academic projects and contributed to a team-oriented environment at U.S. Bank.
* Eager to bring this collaborative spirit to SPS Commerce, where teamwork and communication are highly valued.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to your team and to learn from the innovative professionals at SPS Commerce.

Sincerely,

James Johnston

## **References**

Prospective employers often request a list of references, with three or four being a typical number. In addition to supporting your application, your references can also be valuable sources of advice and networking opportunities, adding credibility to your resume. It's important to build strong relationships with faculty members, advisors, co-workers, and managers.

Stay in touch with your references to ensure they are informed about your job goals and that you have their current contact information and job titles. Before you schedule an interview, notify your references and provide them with an updated resume, a description of the job you’ve applied for, and any specific skills or qualifications you’d like them to emphasize if contacted. The more they know about the skills and experience you want to highlight, the better they can support your application.

Remember that employers who are not your references may only be able to confirm your dates of employment. In contrast, a reference can speak to your work ethic, accomplishments, and other key characteristics, as well as offer insights into your soft skills, which can add a personal touch to your application.

* Maintain your references in a separate document.
* Use the same header as your resume and cover letter, ensuring consistency in font and size.
* Include the name, job title, company, phone number, email, and your relationship to the reference.
* Including addresses is optional, but consider adding the city and state.

# Antonia Pantoja

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**REFERENCES**

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**Eliza Winterfield**, Associate Professor and Field Director

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Metropolitan State University

700 East Seventh Street
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