City of Lakewood
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COVER LETTER and RÉSUMÉ TIPS

Cover Letter

- The cover letter is your selling point. It should look like it belongs with the résumé. It should bridge the résumé to the job posting.
- Minimize sentences that begin with "I," especially in the first paragraph.
- The cover letter should match the job requirements with your qualifications and experience.
- It should show your human side, in order to connect with the reader.

Résumé

- Keep your résumé to 1 or 2 pages; leave some white space.
- Use key words that relate to the job you're applying for.
- If you've worked for a particular company for a long time, list progressive experience, beginning with the most current job.
- List the last 10 years of relevant experience (from the most current), as it relates to the position you're applying for. If an organization asks for a specific number of years of experience, make sure your résumé reflects that.
- Start each sentence with an active verb, e.g., "Managed group of employees" instead of "I supervised a group of employees."
- If you are a recent graduate, use the date of graduation, if you're lacking experience. If it's been some time since graduation, no need to list the date on the résumé.
- Always be honest in both your cover letter and your résumé.
- Dates of employment should flow so it's clear exactly what your experience is and matches the requirements of the position. Use month and year for dates of employment, unless you've worked for one organization a long time. Then it's acceptable to list just the year.

- **Leave no gaps in employment. If you have been unemployed for a period of time, list those dates and include the statement, "Actively seeking employment."**
- **If you use an Objective at the top of your résumé, tailor your skills to the job you're applying for.**
- **No misspellings or grammar errors.**
- **Your e-mail address and voice mail message should be professional.**
- **Always follow the application instructions, e.g., if the organization asks for a cover letter and salary history, provide it, answer any questions that are part of the application process, attach exercises and documents requested.**
- **Focus on the substance of your jobs; not the paper quality.**
- **Résumé should be clear and easy to read with no "fluff."**
- **Proofread your résumé and have someone else review it too.**
- **Do not include a picture with your résumé.**
- **Customize your résumé to the profession you're seeking.**
- **Do not include any reference to age, religion, familial status, etc.**
- **No need to list hobbies and personal interests, but do list professional organizations and affiliations, certificates, internships, volunteer positions, and leadership roles that are relevant to the position you're applying for.**
- **Be mindful of your social networking presence.**

Follow up

- **Following up on your résumé with the organization's contact person is fine, but if you've been told that you should hear something in the next 2 weeks, wait until the 2 weeks have passed.**
- **Sending a thank you note or an e-mail to the organization's contact person is a nice gesture.**
- **Treat all the staff at the organization with dignity and respect. Rudeness to any staff member usually gets noted by the recruiter and supervisor.**