Paralyzed Veterans of America

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Paving Access for Veterans Employment

Cover Letter Writing Tips

Highlight Your Relevant Qualifications

In your cover letter, address the top skills and abilities you have that match the job description. Carefully review the job description and try to determine which relevant qualifications seem to add the most value to the position you are applying. Provide a specific example of a time you demonstrated each of these qualifications.

Customize Each Cover Letter

For every job you are applying for, you should always customize each cover letter to fit the specific position. You want your cover letter to illustrate how your experience matches up to the requirements described in the job listing. If you fail to do this, your application can quickly get eliminated from consideration.

Explain Anything

You can use your cover letter to detail something in your resume that might need more explaining. For example, a cover letter is a great opportunity to write about a change in careers, a career break, or to explain a long gap in employment.

Edit Your Cover Letter

Make sure to thoroughly proofread each cover letter before sending it, looking for grammar and spelling mistakes. Consider asking a friend or family member, or even a career counselor, such as your PAVE employment analyst or counselor, to look over your cover letter. You may want to print a copy of your cover letter, read over it, and make any edits as necessary. Reading your cover letter aloud is another great way to catch any errors or awkward wording.

Source: Alison Doyle/The Balance Careers

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Cover Letter Example

September 1, 2018

Jane Smith
Director, Human Resources
Acme Company
123 Business Rd.
Business City, NY 54321

Dear Ms. Smith,

I am interested in the author's assistant position at Acme Company, as advertised on LinkedIn. I am currently employed as legislative director for Assemblywoman Nora Kiel, chairperson of the New York State (NYS) Assembly. I believe that the skills and experiences I have gained at this position make me an ideal candidate for the job of author's assistant.

As legislative director, I have developed strong writing and editing skills. For example, one of my main duties is to prepare Assemblywoman Nora Kiel's personal legislation, which deals with issues related to her position as Senior Member of the NYS Assembly Standing Committee.

This duty requires meticulous writing and editing skills, and an ability to convey complex legal ideas clearly. I have prepared dozens of pieces of legislation and received praise for the clarity of my writing.

I have also gained extensive experience in legal and policy research – fields that you state the author's assistant must be familiar with. My experience in the NYS Assembly has afforded me the opportunity to become familiar with the consolidated and unconsolidated laws of the State of New York. In particular, through my work with Assemblywoman Nora Kiel I have become heavily involved in the current welfare and Medicaid reform movement. I am always eager to learn more about state legislation, reading up on these topics on my own time to become more knowledgeable. I would love to bring this passion for policy and law to your company.

I am confident that my experience in the Legislature and my research and writing skills qualify me for consideration. If you would like, I can provide you with current samples of my work. I have also enclosed my resume. I look forward to meeting with you and discussing my qualifications in more detail.

Sincerely,

Joseph Q. Applicant

Source: Alison Doyle/The Balance Careers