



School of Human Ecology
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Career and Leadership Services Sample Cover Letters

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COVER LETTER GUIDELINES & FORMAT

Bucky Badger

1234 N. North Street • Madison, WI 53717 • 608-555-1234 • bbadger@wisc.edu

Date

Individual's Name (*if known*)

Individual's Title (*if known*)

Organization

Address

City, State, Zip

*Use same heading
as resume*

Dear Mr. / Ms. _____: (OR Dear Hiring Manager or Search Committee: (*if name unknown*))

OPENING Paragraph

- Clearly state the particular position for which you are applying
- Include information about how you learned of the particular position or company
- Capture the reader's attention by displaying the knowledge you have gained from your research
- Describe & connect why you are interested in working for the company this type of work
- "Name drop" if someone referred you to the position.

BODY Paragraph(s) – You can have 1-2 body paragraphs

- Describe your educational background including: University name – Degree – Major – Graduation date
- Describe & connect college activities, work experience, skills you have gained relevant to the position
- Illustrate through specific examples how you will be an asset
- Use key words from the job description and focus directly on the skills/qualifications that the company/program is looking for

CLOSING Paragraph

- Express your interest in an opportunity to interview
- State that you also have enclosed your resume with additional information
- Invite the employer to contact you by including your phone number, e-mail address
- Indicate a follow up plan (e.g. "I will follow up in two week to check on the status of my application"); use only if you're willing to make the call).
- Show appreciation by thanking the employer for their time / consideration

It's all about "connecting the dots" between your skillset & what they are looking for

SALUTATION

Sincerely, (NOTE: Leave 3-4 lines blank space for your signature)

Your Signature

*Always sign it!
(Use cursive font or add in a scanned signature)*

Your Typed Name

Enclosure (NOTE: Add if you are including a resume or other document with your cover letter)

Your Guide to Creating a Tailored Cover Letter

When creating your cover letter, it is crucial to relate your background, knowledge, and skills to the position for which you are applying. Therefore, you should have a different cover letter for each position you apply to since it will help set you apart from other candidates. Putting it simply, a successful cover letter requires you to emphasize the connection between your skills and the requirements of the desired position. Think about your letter from an employer's perspective – what information in a cover letter would compel *you* to bring a candidate in for further conversation? The cover letter is your opportunity to sell yourself on paper and to link your skills and qualifications to the requirements of the position. Don't sell yourself short!

The following position was posted on BuckyNet, University of Wisconsin-Madison's online internship and job database.

NOTE: *The highlighted text indicates which elements of the position description the candidate intends to highlight in his/her cover letter.*

Job Title: Coordinator – Tobacco Program Services

Organization: American Lung Association

Location: Eau Claire, WI

Industry: Nonprofit

Job Summary: The coordinator will plan, implement and evaluate interventions focused on working with communities on policies and practices that promote implementation of the smoke-free law in Northwestern Wisconsin, building capacity at the local level including **outreach to key local and state leavers**, media advocacy, compliance checks, Fighting Against Corporate Tobacco (FACT) groups and outreach and education. This position will also coordinate efforts with other activities occurring in a three county region.

Essential Functions and Responsibilities:

- Responsible for planning and implementing interventions identified in the grant: Wisconsin Tobacco Prevention and Control Program Multi-Jurisdictional Coalitions
- **Develops and manages work plans for activities related to the interventions**
- Facilitate the building and development of partners and coalitions
- Tracking and reporting duties for quarterly reports and evaluation purposes
- **Prepares and delivers presentations** to community groups
- **Develop program materials**
- Communicate and coordinate with public health partners in each county
- **Attend and actively participate in local and regional meetings related to the project**

Qualifications:

The ideal candidate will have experience in grassroots organizing as well as an **understanding of tobacco control policy and advocacy**

- **Bachelors Degree** or equivalent experience in community organizing
- **Experience in non-profit organization**
- Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to interact with diverse audiences
- **Ability to manage multiple tasks**
- Strong communication and **organizational skills**, including personal, written and **public speaking**
- Proficient in basic computer skills specifically word processing and use of the internet
- Works effectively as a team leader and coalition member
- Hold valid driver's license and carry and maintain private automobile insurance
- Abstain from use of tobacco in any form
- Necessary to **work evenings and weekends** on an as needed basis

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

NOTE: The highlighted text illustrates the direct connections to the job description the applicant made when writing his/her cover letter. Do not highlight text in your actual cover letter; this is for learning purposes only.

Erin Smith

1234 N. North Street • Madison, WI 53717 • 608-555-1234 • smitherin@wisc.edu

June 2, 2013

Mr. David Schmidt
Director, American Lung Association
424 West Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802-1532

Dear Mr. Schmidt:

Please accept this letter as my application for the Coordinator – Tobacco Program Services position with the American Lung Association (ALA). I learned of this position through Jamie Alexander, the instructor for my Leadership & Management of Nonprofit Organizations course. I admire the American Lung Association's mission and spent six months doing an internship with the local chapter where I focused on tobacco cessation **programming and intervention**. As a recent graduate of the Community & Nonprofit Leadership (CNPL) major at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I believe my education and experiences will allow me to make immediate contributions and further the success of ALA.

For as long as I can remember, I have had a strong interest in working for a nonprofit organization in a capacity that deals with health and wellness. This interest led me to pursue **a Bachelor of Science degree** in CNPL, which I received in May 2013. The coursework I was exposed to provided me with an exceptional foundation and deep understanding of how nonprofit organizations function and thrive. I excelled in my CNPL courses, and beyond my academics, I also served as the Special Events Coordinator for the Community and Nonprofit Leaders UW student organization. In this role, I collaborated with other members to plan, coordinate, and implement a variety of events that benefited the local community. In addition, I was able to **develop promotional materials** for those events and **deliver classroom presentations** to educate my peers on the types of activities that the organization was offering. Being active both inside and outside the classroom during my time at the university has allowed me to develop **exceptional organizational and time management skills**, as evidenced by my 3.72 overall GPA.

As you can see in the enclosed resume, I also have a variety of **work experience in the nonprofit sector**. I spent my sophomore year of college working with the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County where I planned a variety of after-school activities for children and teens. Following my time with Boys and Girls Club, I pursued and completed an Outreach Advocate internship with the American Lung Association. In this role, I developed a thorough **knowledge of tobacco control policy and advocacy** and spent much of my time **performing outreach** to the local community. I worked extensively with the Director of Outreach to **develop programs related to tobacco cessation and intervention**, and thereby significantly increased my interest in working within this specific area of wellness. These experiences will serve me well as they provide a unique combination of knowledge and skills **tailored perfectly for implementing interventions and outreaches**.

I am incredibly excited about the possibility of continuing my work with the American Lung Association and would appreciate an opportunity to further discuss the position and my qualifications with you. Please contact me at 608-555-1234 or smitherin@wisc.edu to arrange an interview. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Erin Smith

Erin Smith

Enclosure: Resume

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Job Title: Administrative Aide

Organization: Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin, Inc. (CAP Office)

Location: Madison, WI

Industry: Nonprofit

Job Summary: Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin, Inc. (YSOSW-CAP Branch) is a dynamic 33-year-old organization that provides employment, restitution and supervision services to youth from throughout Dane County, Wisconsin. YSOSW is currently offering an unpaid Administrative Aide position for an enrolled individual, who **would like to learn the inner workings of a private non-profit social service agency**, which serves delinquent and at-risk youth. This is an excellent opportunity to sharpen **general office and computer skills**, while **exploring the field of business administration, non-profit operations, social work, youth services, juvenile justice and/or youth employment, as a career field or area of special study**. YSOSW offers good working conditions, friendly staff and a convenient location to UW campus area (eastside of Madison).

Hours: Flexible schedule (20-25 hours per week), weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Desired Skills: Typing (25 w.p.m.), general computer/word processing skills, **good people skills, good telephone technique, outgoing personality. Must be responsible, punctual, and organized.**

Responsibilities:

Front Desk Coverage:

- 1. Answer phones and forward to appropriate staff**
- 2. Greet and announce visitors**
3. Manage office supplies
- 4. Must be able to multi-task**

Clerical Duties:

- 1. Create basic computer documents (word processing)**
2. Assist Executive Director
3. Update computer data files
- 4. Proof read and review letters, reports and correspondence**
5. Assist with daily mail, routine phone contacts, and some workflow management
- 6. Perform routine filing and other general clerical duties as assigned**

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

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SALLY STUDENT

9998 S. 1st Street, Apt. 3, Madison, WI 53703
608-555-9292 studentsally@wisc.edu

November 1, 2013

Angie Caldwell
Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin, Inc. (CAP Office)
1955 Atwood Ave.
Madison, WI 53704

Dear Ms. Caldwell:

I am writing to express my interest in the Administrative Aide position with Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin, Inc. (YSOSW). I learned of this position through BuckyNet, University of Wisconsin-Madison's online internship and job database. Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin's mission to provide "innovative services dedicated to strengthening and improving the lives of youth, their families and our community" is one that I find very appealing, and I am very excited about the possibility of joining your team. I am confident that my passion for youth services, combined with my educational background, will allow me to thrive in this role.

I am currently a junior in the Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) major at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and plan to graduate with a Bachelor of Science in May 2015. I recently started taking several courses within my major that have **sparked an even greater interest to enter a field, which provides services and advocacy for children and teens**. Many of my courses have focused on familial relationships and how various circumstances can influence development, behavior, etc., and I see this internship with YSOSW as a prime opportunity for me to learn the **inner workings of a nonprofit agency** that deals specifically with **at-risk youth**.

In my two years as an Office Assistant at ABC Company, I gained many valuable skills that directly relate to the Administrative Aide position. For instance, I am very skilled in providing exceptional customer service, **answering phones in a polite manner, and directing calls** to the appropriate individuals when necessary. I have frequently been complimented on my **good people skills** and my ability to make guests feel comfortable by supervisors and clients. Through this position, I also strengthened my attention to detail and was able to **review and proofread** a variety of documents for publication. Lastly, I **was responsible for many office functions** including filing, making copies, and regularly updating our contact lists. I pride myself on being a very **punctual and organized** person, and I look forward to applying my administrative skills in a nonprofit environment where I can help YSOSW stay organized and accurate with our information and records, while creating a friendly environment for our constituents.

I would appreciate the opportunity to have a conversation with you about how my skills and experience could benefit Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin, Inc. Please feel free to contact me at 608-555-9292 or studentsally@wisc.edu to schedule an interview. Thank you very much for considering me for this opportunity.

Best Regards,

Sally Student

Sally Student

Enclosure: Resume



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Job Title: Executive Intern

Organization: Target Stores

Location: Madison, WI

Industry: Retail

Job Summary: If you can thrive in a fast changing environment, want to offer innovative ideas, focus on results and inspire your team to do the same then Target's Executive Intern Program is for you. You must be authorized to work in the United States to be accepted into this position. As a Store Executive Intern, you will work in all areas of the store: Logistics, Human Resources, Assets Protection, Guest Service, Hardlines, Softlines and Perishables. You will have three major areas of responsibility: team member management, store leadership and community service. Through this comprehensive training program you will gain a significant knowledge base, and have had the opportunity to make an impact in a Target Store as an executive in training and project leader. In addition, you will work closely with team members and members of the senior leadership group. You will return to school having strengthened your leadership and project management skills.

Skills we're looking for.

- Senior class standing or entering into your senior year
- History of academic achievement, a GPA of 3.0 or higher is preferred
- All majors are encouraged to apply, management and business majors are preferred
- Participation in school or extracurricular activities and experience in leadership roles
- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively in all situations
- Problem-solving skills, assertiveness and strong initiative
- Team orientated thinking
- Basic PC skills
- Desire for a career in retail management

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

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Carri Heart

411 S. Badger Street, Madison, WI 53702
608-555-7862 • heartcarri@wisc.edu

September 23, 2013

Amy Capes
Senior Recruiter
Target Stores
1090 73rd Avenue North East
Fridley, MN 55432

Dear Ms. Capes:

I am writing to express my interest in the Executive Intern position with Target Stores for Spring 2014. I learned of this position through my career advisor and am very enthusiastic about expanding my knowledge of the retail environment at a company as well-known and respectable as Target. I have always had a **strong interest in a career in retail**, and I believe my educational background, prior experience, and passion for the industry make me an exceptional candidate for the Executive Intern position.

I am currently a **senior** pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Retail from the School of Human Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Through my coursework, I have learned a lot about general business, but also about theory and practice as it relates to the retail environment. I have developed a greater understanding of the industry through my **involvement with the Student Retail Association**, in which I have had the opportunity to network with peers and professionals in the field. I am currently the **Vice President** of the student organization and have had many opportunities **to provide innovative ideas** and collaborate with the leadership **team** to provide meaningful experiences for others within the organization. I am also an active member of Badger Acts of Kindness, a student organization dedicated to performing acts of kindness on campus and in the community. I have demonstrated my ability to prioritize and multitask by maintaining an active role within these organizations, working 25 hours per week, and maintaining a 3.89 GPA within my major courses and an **overall GPA of 3.61**.

While I have been working in the service industry for six years, my interest in retail truly peaked when I took my current position with Anthropologie. I have been employed as a Sales Associate there for nearly three years and have learned a great deal about retail environments through this role including sales, **human resources, inventory management, and guest services**. My **communication skills** have dramatically improved due to the need for me to provide exceptional customer service to all guests of the store, and I have excelled at **working on a team** through my role in helping train and **oversee other Sales Associates**. The skills and knowledge I have gained have solidified my passion for retail, so I look forward to the possibility of furthering my career with Target. Please view my enclosed resume for additional details on my professional experiences.

I am genuinely excited about the Executive Intern position with Target and hope to discuss my qualification with you. Please contact me at 608-555-7862 or heartcarri@wisc.edu if you need additional information or if you wish to set up an interview. I appreciate you taking the time to review my materials and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Carri Heart

Carri Heart

Enclosure: Resume



Cover Letter Checklist

Name: _____

Reviewed by: _____

School of Human Ecology
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Format & Appearance	Yes	No	Comments
Did I include my name, address, zip code, email and telephone number?			
Is my cover letter an appropriate length? (Maximum 3 or 4 paragraphs; 1 page or less preferred)			
Did I check and correct any spelling, grammar and punctuation errors?			
Does the font, style, and paper quality match my resume?			
Is the letter vertically centered on the page? Did I use a business letter format (full block, modified block or indented format)?			
Content	Yes	No	Comments
Did I address my letter to an individual in a hiring position? If I could not find an individual, did I address it to "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Search Committee"?			
Does the first sentence clearly state why I am writing the letter and the specific position for which I am applying?			
Was I concise and specific when discussing career goals and qualifications?			
Do I describe what I can contribute to an employer and not what I can get out of the organization?			
Will the information in the letter intrigue the employer to read my resume or did I just restate what is on my resume?			
Did I communicate actively by using strong verbs and avoiding contractions (e.g. I'd, didn't, it's)?			
Did I limit the use of sentences starting with "I"? Instead did I use "This experience" or "In this internship, I demonstrated"?			
Is my cover letter tailored to my reader, showing that I have researched the organization? Have I demonstrated knowledge of the industry or organization?			
Do my statements demonstrate enthusiasm and interest for the position?			
Did I refer to specific skills and/or personal qualities that are crucial to success in the field?			
Did I tell the reader why they should hire me and/or differentiate myself from other candidates?			
Is my closing paragraph concise and strongly worded? For example, did I state that I would be calling to request an appointment to discuss the position?			
Did my closing paragraph thank the employer and restate my contact information?			
Did I type my name and sign above it?			