

## OTHER DOCUMENTS YOU WILL NEED FOR YOUR JOB SEARCH

**Cover Letters:** These are business letters that you write to employers to introduce yourself, briefly explain why you are a good candidate for a particular job, and emphasize anything on your resume that you want to be sure isn't missed. Whenever you give an employer your resume, or complete a printed application form and return it to an employer, it should be attached to a cover letter.

Your job counselor can give you good advice and examples for cover letters. You can also find guidance at [GCF Learn Free - Cover Letters](#).

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- While you might not always need to adapt your resume for each job, you will certainly need to write a separate cover letter for each one.
- Keep it short — never more than one page.
- You may not know the name or title of the person to whom the cover letter should be addressed. But you might be able to find out if you call the employer, introduce yourself, explain that you are planning to apply for a job, and simply ask to whom your cover letter should be addressed. If this is information that they can share with you, be sure to also ask for the person's title. If you cannot find out the person's name and title, just address the letter to "Human Resources Director" or other appropriate position, and in the salutation say, for example, "Dear Mr. or Ms. Director."
- As with any documents you give to employers, keep copies of your cover letters.
- If you are sending an application or resume as an email attachment, include the cover letter as an attachment too. The email itself should be very short. In the email's subject line, include the title and job number of the position for which you are applying. The body of the email should simply point out that you would like to apply for the position, inform the reader which documents you have attached, and invite the reader to contact you if any more information is needed. The email should conclude with "Thank you for your consideration" followed by your name and phone number.

**Reference List:** This is a list that includes the name, title, business address, email address, and phone number of three or four people who are familiar with your character and work habits. If an employer is seriously interested in hiring you, the employer will probably ask you to give them the list, and will then call or email your references to learn more about you. More

information is available from your job counselor, and from GCF Learn Free - Obtaining References.

When thinking about your references, please keep these points in mind:

- Any reference has to have three characteristics: they must be familiar with your work (for example, a former boss, coworker, fellow volunteer, or teacher); they must be willing to say good things about you to any employer to whom you apply; and they must have given you their consent for you to use them as a reference. If your reference is a former boss with whom you have a good relationship, you might also ask them for a letter of recommendation that you can attach to your reference list.
- When you ask someone to be one of your references, make sure that you also get their current job title, phone number, and email address. These may have changed since you worked together.
- Don't include your references on your resume. Most employers will only want to see your reference list if they are getting close to making you a job offer, so only provide it if asked.
- After providing your reference list to an employer, it's a good idea to call your references to let them know they may be getting a call from the employer. Give them some information about the employer, and about the job for which you are being considered.

**Job Search Record:** Many job seekers neglect to keep records of their search. They assume they can remember all the employers to whom they applied, what the different job postings said, and what was included on each application, resume, and cover letter. This seldom works.

Your job search will be easier and probably more effective if you organize it like this:

- If possible, print and keep copies of any job postings that you pursue. Then if you get a call from the employer a few weeks (and maybe many applications) later, you won't need to ask "What job is this, again?"
- Keep copies of the materials you give to each employer. If you get an interview, take enough copies for all of the other people at the meeting. There's a good chance that someone won't have received it or remembered to bring it, which gives you a chance to do them a favor (and show how well prepared you are) at the beginning of the interview.
- After any interview or phone conversation with an employer, make some quick notes to help you remember what was discussed and whether you were asked to provide any additional information.

**Post-Interview Messages:** Most employers only interview applicants who have a good chance of getting hired. So sending a brief written "thank you" to anyone who interviews you is not just good manners: By differentiating you from other candidates who don't bother with this simple courtesy, it increases your chances of landing the job.

Most post-interview messages are now delivered through email, so remember to ask for a business card or email address from each of your interviewers. Keep the email short and professional, and ask the interviewer to get in touch with you if they have any further questions. And as with any written message sent to an employer, be sure to include your name and phone number.

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