



Elements of an Effective Cover Letter & Resume

What Employers Should Look For
& What Applicants Should Consider

March 23, 2023

A Little Bit About Us

Diana Bishop, Retired Police Chief

- Worked for 2 cities
- Began career as a Police Officer and rose through the ranks to Police Captain. Was hired as the Police Chief in her second city.

Tara Schultz, Retired City Manager

- Worked for 3 cities
- Started as an Intern
- Held the positions of Assistant to the City Manager, Deputy City Manager, Interim Library Director, Administrative Services Director, Assistant City Manager, Development Services Director, Human Resources Director, City Manager

Cover Letter Basics

- Are they important?
- Use a professional letter format.
- Who do I address my letter to?
- Explain gaps in service or short tenure.
- One page really is enough. It's supposed to be a page turner. Leave them wanting them to learn more about you.

Composing the Perfect Cover Letter



Your cover letter is a peek at your personality, experience and writing skills

- What you're applying for and where
 - Example: Please accept my resume for the
 - Or I am pleased to submit my resume for
- Who are you?
- Where are you?
- What are you?
- Connect your skills to the brochure/job flyer
 - Pick some key words
 - Relate your skills/experience to the flyer
- Wrap up well
 - Tell them what you value about this opportunity or what you value in your career path
 - Tell them what you bring to the table

Sample Cover Letter

Job Hunting Handbook for Local Government Professionals

October 3, 2005

Mayor Carver E. Richardson and Members of the City Council
City of Bellewood
419 Jackson Avenue
Bellewood, TX 76010

Dear Mayor Richardson and Council Members:

Please consider this letter and résumé as an application for the position of City Manager with the City of Bellewood. I have reviewed the position profile and have conducted research on the community and believe this to be a fit.

For the past eight years, I have served as the City Manager of Sunnytown, California, a community of approximately 50,000 residents. During this period of time, I have implemented a successful budget retrenchment program, initiated a comprehensive economic development program, and put in place the most aggressive capital improvement program in the history of the community. I understand a number of these skills are applicable to the Bellewood City Manager position.

While working for a fiscally conservative City Council, I have also had the opportunity to improve employee productivity, reduce per capita service costs, develop a staff evaluation program, and implement a performance budget. In addition, I have served in a variety of functional areas, including human resources, finance, and economic development.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to call me. I sincerely look forward to hearing from you and am most interested in this position.

Sincerely,

Joanne Parks

Sample Cover Letter

TARA L. SCHULTZ
PASADENA, CA
CELL: (626) 644-1398

March 23, 2023

The Honorable Mayor Grey
City of Bergamot
123 Main St.
Bergamot, CA

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

I want to thank you for the opportunity to be considered for the City Manager of the City of Bergamot and to share with you some of the accomplishments that I am most proud of in my 24 year career in local government. I am currently the Assistant City Manager for the City of Alhambra, with daily operational oversight of the Human Resources Department and administrative oversight of the Finance, Utilities and Community Services Departments. I recently completed Labor Negotiations with 5 of the City's 7 represented labor groups and the Executive and Confidential employees, and I am preparing for a full update of the Personnel Rules and Regulations, as well as the creation of new training programs. I am nearing completion of the wind down of the former Redevelopment Agency, now Successor Agency, which is scheduled to be completed early next year.

Prior to this role I was the Assistant City Manager/Development Services Director, responsible for overseeing the Planning, Building, Housing and Economic Development divisions of the City. As the Director, I worked with the City Manager and my team to review proposed projects and new businesses and work with the community to address their concerns and needs. Previously, as the Administrative Services Director, I revamped the City's contract procedures and completed an in depth review of the City's fees and developed a new fee schedule. My responsibilities have included overseeing multiple city programs/projects including strategic planning, administration of HUD funds, facilities management and improvements, departmental budget oversight and various capital projects. I am a highly motivated, creative manager, with exceptional professional skills and leadership abilities. My communication and management skills have earned me the respect and trust of my peers and staff as well as the residents and members of the business community and local organizations.

I have extensive experience and knowledge of the workings of the local government. I have a great appreciation and understanding of the subtle balance between maintaining and preserving the integrity of a classic American city, such as Bergamot, while maximizing the resources necessary to provide the level of services and programs this community has become accustomed to and is deserving of. I am well prepared to assume the leadership responsibilities of the City Manager for the City of Bergamot. I believe my experience, knowledge and skills will prove to be a valuable asset to you and the community.

If you should need any additional information, please call me at (626) 644-1398.

Sincerely,
Tara Schultz

Before you hit send...

1

Check the grammar
& spelling

2

Check the address &
your salutation

3

Check the name of
the City and the title
for the position

Building Your Resume

Consider Your Audience

- Initial Review – Recruiter or Human Resources
- Second Review – Department or City Manager
- Third Review – The Oral Board Panel

The Basics

- Format & Style
- No photo
- Don't include references
- Make it easy to read
- Keep it to 2 to 4 pages
- Month & Year for experience

Building Your Resume

Do

- Self-assess – Is this the position for you?
- Put the pieces together for them
- Make it easy to read
- Include specifics: # supervised & \$ amounts for budgets
- Chronological Order

Don't

- Don't make them search for the information they need to include you as a candidate
- Don't add attachments
- Don't list course work
- Don't recycle the same resume over and over – Customize it!

Things to Keep in Mind

- Include your contact information – Where are you and How do I reach you?
- Consider bullets to highlight the things you want them to see
- Use action words to describe your experience: Managed, Administered, Oversaw, Created
- Place relevant information at the top of your list of experience
- List your certificates & licenses relevant to the position

Joanne Parks

6112 Friendly Court
Sunnytown, CA 96058
(499) 555-2745 (work); (449) 555-5472 (home); (449) 555-5382 (mobile)
jparks@sunnytown.com

SUMMARY

Management professional with strategic planning and operational expertise; proven leadership qualities in the areas of human resources, budgeting, communications, project management, capital improvement planning, intergovernmental relations, and economic development.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

City Manager

September 1997–Present
City of Sunnytown, CA

A suburb of Pleasantville, Sunnytown has a diverse population of 50,000. A full-service city, the organization has 320 employees and a \$70 million budget. Issues relate to growth, economic development, transportation, and aging infrastructure. Appointed by a five-member city council, oversee day-to-day operations and serve as executive director for the Sunnytown Redevelopment Agency.

Key Accomplishments:

- Initiated first personnel department, including citywide training, employee assistance, tuition reimbursement, and pay-for-performance programs.
- Expanded the use of technology through geographic information systems, and computer technology for police, fire, and emergency vehicles.
- Negotiated with three separate bargaining units for two-year memorandums of understanding.
- Enhanced relationships with regional agencies and chamber of commerce.
- Completed construction of \$1.8 million equestrian center, generating substantial revenue annually for the general fund.

Assistant City Manager

August 1991–August 1997
City of Pleasantville, CA

With a population of over 80,000, Pleasantville employed 450 staff and had an operating budget of \$110 million. Reporting to the city manager, oversaw the general administration of human resources, information technology, budget, and finance divisions with four direct reports.

Joanne Parks

Page Two

Key Accomplishments:

- Improved customer service and promoted more accessible government by establishing citywide newsletter. Oversaw installation of voice mail, audio agenda, and Internet information systems.
- Prepared and managed four consecutive municipal budgets. Facilitated goal-setting and zero-base budget review.

Economic Development Manager

June 1988–July 1991
City of Lone Tree, NV

Lone Tree is a suburb of Las Vegas with a growing population of 12,000. Reporting to the city manager, oversaw department budget of \$1.3 million and two staff members in the attraction and retention of industrial businesses to bedroom community.

Key Accomplishments:

- Development of local legislation establishing the city's economic development policy and financial incentive program designed to assist basic industrial businesses.
- Development and implementation of economic revitalization strategies in cooperation with various city department and outside organizations.

Management Analyst I and II, Economic Development

September 1985–May 1988
City of Golden Leaves, CO

A suburb of Denver, Golden Leaves has a population of 20,000. Reporting to the economic development manager, held progressively responsible positions overseeing analysis and documentation of economic development policy and incentive programs.

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration, May 1985
University of Denver, CO

Bachelor of Arts, Police Science, May 1983
Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

International City/County Management Association
National Council for Urban Economic Development
City Managers Department of League of California Cities

DON'T FORGET

PROOFREAD

PROOFREAD

PROOFREAD



KEPE
CLAM
AND

PROOF
READ

[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

—YOU—
NEVER
get a second
CHANCE
TO MAKE A
Great
—**FIRST**—
IMPRESSION

What you present is the
first impression you
make.

Remember

- Only one person can get the job
- Be persistent
- Be honest
- Hone your skills
- Never stop updating your resume
- Elevate your resume & cover letter
- Practice interviewing



Tara Schultz

626-644-1398

tara@peckhamandmckenney.com

Diana Bishop

408-800-7653

diana@peckhamandmckenney.com

www.peckhamandmckenney.com

QUESTIONS?