



## WATCH Project



Building Pathways to a Brighter Future

# Job Search Series



## How to Write a Cover Letter and List Your References

### Career Coordinator Packet

Watch the video:  
[www.csiu.org/watch](http://www.csiu.org/watch)

Select  
Flipped Learning  
from the menu.

**Lois Todd**

WATCH Project Career Coordinator



## **WATCH Core Mission**

The **Work Attributes Toward Careers in Health** Project provides a variety of academic and social support services to income-eligible individuals in a ten-county region to enter or move up in a high-priority health care career. Meeting local health care industry needs, the program increases skills, provides critical services and moves participants toward self-sufficiency.

The WATCH Project assists students in preparing for careers as:

- Direct Care Workers (DCW)**
- Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA)**
- Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN)**
- Registered Nurses (RN)**
- Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT)**
- Paramedics (EMT-P)**
- Pharmacy Technicians**

A five-year Health Profession Opportunity Grant from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, the WATCH Project is administered by the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit.

**[csiu.org/watch](http://csiu.org/watch)**

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Work Attributes Toward Careers in Health (WATCH) is a Health Profession Opportunity Grant and is administered by the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU).

Kathy M. Carney, LPN  
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Pleasant Gap, PA 16823  
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(814) 555-5555

August 25, 2014

Ms. Susan Smith, RN, Nurse Recruiter  
Centre Crest  
502 E. Howard St.  
Bellefonte, PA 16823

Dear Ms. Smith,

Please accept the accompanying resume as my application for the **full time Licensed Practical Nurse Position** listed on the Centre Crest website. As you can see from my resume I have long term care experience as a Certified Nursing Assistant. I completed one of my clinical rotations at Centre Crest so I am familiar with many of the residents, procedures and practices at your organization.

I **graduated with high honors** in July from the Practical Nursing Program at the Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology in Pleasant Gap and I recently passed the Pennsylvania NCLEX-PN. I have current clearances and just completed my CPR/AED re-certification. I have excellent clinical skills and references, and I am very excited to begin my professional nursing career with Centre Crest. I do believe in treating every resident with dignity and respect as stated in the Centre Crest mission statement and I was well-liked by all my residents during my clinical training. Because of my long term care experience, I understand the importance of respecting each resident's individuality, the importance of showing up on time when scheduled to work, and the importance of being dependable and reliable.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you in person to learn more about the position and to answer any questions you may have about my background and qualifications. You may reach me at **(814) 555-5555** any day before 1:00 p.m. or you may contact me through email at [kcarney@gmail.com](mailto:kcarney@gmail.com). I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(your signature here if you are mailing the letter)

Kathy M. Carney, LPN

enclosure



## *Cover Letter Tips*

- Address by name and title of the individual who has the power to hire you. Avoid “Dear Sir” or “Dear Madam”
- Adapt the letter to details of the job
- Capture the employer’s attention in the first paragraph
- Point out things from your resume that make you a good fit for the position
- Use a business letter format and be professional
- Make sure you pay attention to grammar, spelling, and neatness.
- End your letter with a request for an interview
- Ask your Career Coordinator or your Instructor to read over your cover letter before you send it

Your Name, (you may include RN, CNA, LPN, etc.)

Your Current Street Address.

City, State, Zip Code

Your phone number including area code

You may include your email address

Today's Date

Name of Individual, Their Title

Name of the company

Mailing Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. (last name):

**Paragraph 1:** Briefly state the title of the position you are applying for and the source where you found out about the position, for example a website, newspaper, CareerLink, a person. Then Attract the employer's attention by briefly outlining what you can contribute to their organization.

**Paragraph 2:** Talk about your interest in the position, the field of work, or the company. Mention relevant accomplishments to show that you have specific qualifications or skills for the job. You may refer to items from your resume that you want to highlight.. Sell yourself!


**Paragraph 3:** Since your goal is an interview, mention your interest in discussing the job in person. Express appreciation and let the person know you look forward to hearing from them. You may restate your phone number and email address here. You may want to list the days and times you can be reached or indicate that they may leave a message.

Sincerely,

(sign your name in ink if you are mailing the letter)

Type your name beneath your signature

Enclosure/Attachment (use Enclosure if mailing; Attachment if emailing)



# Sample phrases to use in a cover letter

## First Paragraph

- I enjoyed meeting you at the recent Central Pennsylvania Career Fair
- I recently met Ms. Chambers from your organization who attended the WATCH Regional Cohort at Celebration Hall. She recommended that I contact you about my qualifications for the RN position with your hospital

## Second Paragraph

- The following are some of the highlights of my health care experience
- I am eager to make a contribution to your organization

## Third Paragraph

- I look forward to meeting with you Mr. Edwards, and I will give you a call early next week to answer any questions you may have about my qualifications
- I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you to discuss my qualifications and the needs of your organization in more depth.

## ELEMENTS OF A TAILORED COVER LETTER

A tailored cover letter is one that is written in response to a newspaper or magazine advertisement, or as a result of a networking contact. You know that a job opening exists and you have some information on job responsibilities and requirements. This is your golden opportunity to demonstrate to the potential employer that you are perfectly suited for the position.

Before you begin writing a tailored cover letter, first go over all the information you have on the job. Underline the job responsibilities and qualifications and then look at how your experience, education, skills, etc., match the ad. Your goal in writing a tailored cover letter is to show how your qualifications for the position match the employer's requirements. As you review the information, try to match each of the employer's points with relevant details from your background.

Here is the structure of a Tailored Cover Letter:

### ■ PART ONE: Introduction

Indicate your interest in the advertised job. Mention the specific job title and the source of your lead, i.e. the CareerLink, the newspaper, a networking contact, etc.

### ■ PART TWO: Sell Yourself

Using the information you have on the job and knowing your skills, write a paragraph that demonstrates you are the perfect match for the position. Include basic details about your background, training, or experience to show your qualifications for the job. You may include past successes you have had. Refer the reader to your enclosed résumé for more detailed information about your qualifications.

### ■ PART THREE: Request Action

Your goal, of course, is an interview, so you need to request an appointment for an interview. If you are responding to a "blind ad," then end the letter by telling the employer that you look forward to meeting with her/him.

Do not underestimate the cover letter. It is often a more important factor in securing interviews than most people realize. As a result, make sure it is neat, grammatically correct, positive, and informative.

# BETHEL UNIVERSITY

Career Services

## SAMPLE FORMAT FOR NURSING COVER LETTERS

*(Top and bottom margins should be approximately equal)*

Date

Ms. Sandra Jones, Nurse Recruiter  
Human Resources  
ABC Hospital  
1234 American Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55555

*(Be sure to address the letter to the correct person, spelled correctly with their title.)*

Dear Ms. Jones:

**Opening Paragraph:** State why you are writing, identify the position for which you would like to be considered, and indicate how you heard of the position. Mention any individuals who may have referred you to the position. If you are sending an inquiry letter, simply indicate the type of work or position you are seeking. Be specific.

**Middle Paragraph(s):** Your goal here is to show how you can be useful to this particular hospital/organization. Describe what strengths you have to offer this employer. Highlight particular clinical experiences, jobs, internships, achievements, and extracurricular activities as they relate to the position in which you are interested. You might want to use one of the following approaches:

- Identify three reasons for the employer to consider you for the position.
  - Describe your previous accomplishments as they relate to the position.
  - Illustrate the relationship between your skills and experience and the position you are applying for.
  - State why you want to work for their hospital/organization.
- Refer the reader to your enclosed resume for additional information.

**Closing Paragraph:** End your letter by clarifying what will happen next, indicating your desire for an interview, and how they can most easily reach you. If you are applying for a specific job which has been posted, you might say, "I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my qualifications in more detail. I can be reached between (time) on (days) or a message may be left at (phone #)." If you are not applying for an existing opening, indicate that you will call them on a particular date to see when it would be convenient to set up a meeting, and also indicate how they can most easily reach you.

Sincerely,  
*(Always sign your name.)*

Type your name beneath your signature.

Enclosure/Attachment *(to indicate your resume is enclosed or attached in the email)*

KATHY M. SMITH  
50 SOUTH HILLS DR.  
STATE COLLEGE, PA 16801  
(814) 555-5555  
ksmith@yahoo.com

February 20, 2013

Ms. Lisa Hall, RN, Nurse Recruiter  
Brookline Village  
1950 Cliffside Dr.  
State College, PA 16801

Dear Ms. Hall,

I have just graduated from the Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology Nurse Assistant Training where I had the **top grade in my class** of 14 students. At my graduation on February 13, 2013 I was also recognized by our instructor for my compassion during our clinical training at Centre Crest. I am very interested in working at Brookline Village because of the reputation Brookline has and it is my number one choice of places to work as a **Certified Nursing Assistant**. I believe that my caring attitude and ability to learn quickly will be an asset to Brookline Village.

I am scheduled to take my Red Cross CNA exam on March 13, 2013 but I am available to begin as a nurse aide before my exam and I can start immediately. My physical and 2-step PPD are recent (November, 2012) and I have current FBI, PA Criminal, and Child Abuse clearances also from November, 2012. I had excellent training at CPI and at Centre Crest for my clinical. I am outgoing and a people person and I am very excited to continue my skill development at Brookline Village.

Thank you for taking the time to review my enclosed resume and application and I hope that I hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

(your signature goes here)

Kathy M. Smith

Enclosure



**(a sample envelope)**

Kathy M. Carney, LPN  
651 E. Main St.  
Pleasant Gap, PA 16823



Ms. Susan Smith, RN, Nurse Recruiter  
Centre Crest  
502 E. Howard St.  
Bellefonte, PA 16823



# A FEW LAST WORDS ABOUT COVER LETTERS

- Make it personal
- Mention the position advertised
- Make it short, readable and to the point
- Be active
- Follow up
- Proofread



# May I use you as a reference?

Keep in mind ...

- Ask first
- Keep it professional
- Complete and accurate contact information
- Expect a call

# Kathy K. Carny, RN

555 W. Elm St. Bellefonte, PA 16823 ▪ (555) 555-1111 ▪ [kcarney@gmail.com](mailto:kcarney@gmail.com)

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## REFERENCES

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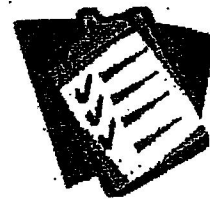
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# List of References

When preparing your separate list of references, use the same heading as on your résumé.

Be sure to ask your references if he/she would be willing to give a reference for you if asked. If the answer is yes, you should ask if they prefer to have you list their home address/phone number or work address/phone number. In addition, you should ask them for their job title and email address.



A minimum of three references is recommended (personal/employment related).

Include:

- Name
- Job Title
- Complete Address
- Telephone/Cell Phone Number (including area code)
- Email Address

Some sample "List of References" are included on the following pages.

## REFERENCE CHECKS

Have you ever wondered what may be asked about you when an employer checks your references? The following are some typical questions that may be asked of a reference.

1. How do you know the applicant?
2. How long have you known him/her?
3. What kind of worker/ person is he/she?
  - Dependable
  - Reliable
  - Accurate
  - Quality of Work
  - Speed of Work
  - Punctual
  - Honest
  - Willing to Learn
4. How did he/she work without supervision?
5. How did he/she get along with others?
  - Co-workers/ classmates
  - Supervisors/ Instructors
6. How often was he/she late for work/school?
7. How often did he/she miss work/school?
8. General impression? Any problems? Any concerns?
9. Would you hire or rehire him/her?



# How to Email Electronic Resumes and Cover Letters

- FOLLOW THE EMPLOYER'S DIRECTIONS!!!  
(UPLOAD OR ATTACH?)
- SAVE ATTACHMENTS AS PDF OR MICROSOFT WORD
- COPY YOUR COVER LETTER INTO THE BODY OF YOUR EMAIL AND ATTACH YOUR RESUME
- OR COPY THE COVER LETTER THEN THE RESUME BOTH INTO THE BODY OF THE EMAIL
- THE SUBJECT LINE IS IMPORTANT
- SEND A TEST EMAIL TO YOURSELF