

COMPELLING COVER LETTERS

Trachtenberg School
of Public Policy
& Public Administration

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

COMPELLING COVER LETTERS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHAT MAKES A COMPELLING COVER LETTER.....	2
GETTING STARTED CHECKLIST	2
ANALYZING THE JOB DESCRIPTION.....	3
COVER LETTER OVERVIEW: STANDARD FORMAT	3
COVER LETTER SECTIONS WITH EXAMPLES.....	4
HOW TO APPROACH THE SALARY QUESTION IN YOUR LETTER.....	8
FINAL CHECKLIST	8
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	9
FROM ANOUNCEMENT TO COVER LETTER	10
SAMPLE COVER LETTERS.....	12

WHAT MAKES A COMPELLING COVER LETTER

- Does NOT simply restate your resume.
- Constructs a narrative that encompasses your relevant experiences to tell your specific story related to this position.
- Is tailored to demonstrate the relevant values that you bring to a specific position as well as the culture and mission of the organization.
- Leaves the reader wanting to know more about you and what you have accomplished that makes you well-qualified for the position.
- Can be viewed as a writing sample.

• *Resume Tells* • *Cover Letter Sells* • *Interview Compels* •

GETTING STARTED CHECKLIST

- Conduct research to better understand the organizational needs, culture, mission and values.
- Tap into your social, academic, and professional networks through social media sites such as LinkedIn to get inside information you can't find on the Internet.
- Learn if the position is the right fit. In some cases, the employer didn't write the job description or is recycling an old version and may be seeking other skills.
- If possible, use an internal connection to put in a good word with the hiring manager on your behalf.
- Identify at least 3-5 reasons why you are a good candidate for the position. Write them down before you begin writing the cover letter.
- List your strengths and accomplishments that are most relevant to the position and the organization.

ANALYZING THE JOB DESCRIPTION

STEP ONE: Review the Announcement

- ✓ Carefully read the job description in its entirety.
- ✓ Note all of the “required” and “preferred” skills.
- ✓ Remember many employers use job posting to create their “wish list,” but often interview candidates who don’t meet all the qualifications.

STEP TWO: Determine your Qualifications

- ✓ Read the tasks. How do your skills make you well-qualified?
- ✓ Note any gaps you may have between your skills and the requirements. Write down how you plan to compensate for these gaps.

STEP THREE: Use keywords

- ✓ Keywords are used by employers and computer-based scanners to assess if you’re qualified. If they aren’t there, you may not make it into the “yes” list!

COVER LETTER OVERVIEW: STANDARD FORMAT

Header & Date

- Align to match your resume header or a standard header in the same font as your resume.
- The header should include your name and contact information.
- Include the date on which you submit the application.

Hiring Manager’s Name and Address of the Organization

- If possible, address the cover letter to a specific person or hiring manager. If not listed, call the agency to obtain this information, unless the job posting states “no calls please.”
- Otherwise:
 - Address the cover letter “To the Hiring Manager” or “To the Hiring Committee.”
 - Do **not** address “To Whom it May Concern” or “Dear Sir or Madam.”
 - If you know the name of the hiring manager use the first and last name.

Employer Descriptor

- NGO/Nonprofit/Civic Society Organization, use the term “organization.”
- Consulting firm/Corporation/Private sector employer, use the term “company.”
- Foundation (Ford Foundation or Rockefeller Foundation), use the term “foundation.”
- Government agency/department, use the term “agency” or “department.”

Body

- Introductory Paragraph:
 - Make a lasting first impression by showing enthusiasm, demonstrating knowledge of the organization, and by sharing a compelling reason(s) why you are well-qualified for the position. Additionally, if you were referred to the vacancy, include the name of your contact in this first paragraph. Refrain from including information about where you found the vacancy announcement.
- Middle Paragraphs (length will vary based on experience/connection to the announcement):
 - Discuss how your background matches the qualifications and requirements of the position. Use specific, detailed, and concise language to demonstrate your value by describing what you’ve accomplished in the past. Use bullets where possible.
 - Use language directly from the job description and company website. This shows that you’ve done your research and would fit well with the company environment.
- Concluding Paragraph:

- Reiterate your interest in the position, highlight the attributes you would bring to the employer if hired, and express your interest in having the opportunity to meet the employer in person to further discuss your qualifications.

Closing:

- Close with “sincerely” (or a similar professional closing line) followed by your name.

COVER LETTER SECTIONS WITH EXAMPLES

THE HEADER

*Your resume and cover letter should look like a **complete package**. The same font/typeface used for your resume should also be used for your cover letter. Following your header, which **highlights your contact information**, include the date of your application submission and the employer’s contact information.*

SAMPLE ONE:

FIRST NAME LAST NAME

Washington, DC 20007 • (202) 555-1234 • First.lastname@gwu.edu • www.linkedin.com/in/name

SAMPLE TWO:

First Name Last Name
202-555-1234
first.lastname@gwu.edu

January 1, 2021

First Name Last Name
Senior Associate
Department of Justice
123 First Street
Washington, DC 20001

Dear First Name Last Name:

THE INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

- Clearly **state the position** to which you are applying.
- If you have a **connection** with someone at the organization, include **his or her name and position** in the first sentence, but you **MUST ask** their permission prior to including this. This immediately grabs the reader’s attention.
- Discuss why you are a match for the position/organization. Identify **key qualifications** you have to make you an asset and include these in your introductory paragraph. These main traits will then be addressed in the middle paragraphs.

Sample One:

After discussing ABC’s summer fellowship position with First Name Last Name at a recent recruiting event, I am eager to express my interest in applying for this opening. My educational background in public administration and foreign policy coupled with federal agency internships have strengthened my technical, communication, and analytical skill sets that I can bring to the ABC Summer Fellowship role.

Sample Two:

With a long history of implementing successful service-learning programs, an extensive background building corporate partnerships and commitment to active student citizenship, I am thrilled to apply for the **International Service-Learning Manager** position. From my first position after college as a Learn and Serve AmeriCorps member to my graduate assistantship at GW's Office of Civic Engagement, this is exactly the type of opportunity for impact and leadership that I am seeking next in my career.

Sample Three:

Capitalizing on my past accomplishments conducting policy analysis and program evaluations, I am writing to express interest in serving the **National Women's Law Center as your next Policy Fellow**. As a recent MPP graduate from the Trachtenberg School at George Washington University, my rigorous education and internship experiences have provided me with needed abilities to lead quantitative and qualitative research projects. Bringing these qualities with me to the Policy Fellow role, I am confident in my ability to contribute to your mission of creating innovative policy solutions that address the challenges faced by women in this country.

Sample Four:

I will never forget being told to evacuate immediately as Hurricane Katrina was going to hit our campus at Tulane University. I will also never forget the grateful faces of working class families when I volunteered the following summer with Habitat for Humanity to rebuild their homes, and lives. This deeply felt personal connection to disaster relief, along with progressive leadership roles in the field and main offices managing emergency situations, would enable me to immediately hit the ground running as the **American Red Cross' next Director of Strategic Initiatives**.

MIDDLE PARAGRAPHS

- Emphasize in each paragraph/bullet point a ***few targeted qualifications*** that demonstrate how you are a good match for the position and the organization.
- ***Highlight specific examples*** from previous positions that showcase how you acquired these attributes and explain how you have utilized your skill sets to achieve results.
- ***Elaborate on your story/experience***. Do not just list your skills.
- Use your resume for inspiration and to make sure it matches the story you tell in your cover letter; however, ***do not just repeat your resume!***

Sample One (Narrative Style):

Over the past six years, I have studied, trained, and worked on the same international globalization issues that are being sought for this consultant position. My understanding of the rapid globalization of political institutions and economies has been sharpened through professional experiences in Asia and Latin America. I have built my quantitative and policy analysis skills to impact positive change within all global sectors through graduate level courses. Most recently, one of my policy papers on the regional human rights impact of China's economic growth was selected for publication in the *Trachtenberg School Policy Perspectives Journal*.

My current position as President of the Public Policy Student Association has given me the experience to fulfill your company's needs for a consultant that is both a leader and community builder. Setting and exceeding a fundraising goal of \$10,000 to help build a playground at a nearby school, I led a team to recruit student donors at George Washington University. To reach this objective, I capitalized on good-natured rivalry between two residence halls to create a competition-based fundraiser with prizes from local vendors. I then supervised the construction, resulting in a playground that a local resident said made her "proud to live in the neighborhood."

In addition, I thoroughly enjoy devising creative paths and strategic thinking to reach and exceed a challenging goal, and I believe working as a consultant at ABC Incorporated would allow me to apply my

rigorous analytical training to generate solutions for international globalization challenges. For example, during my time at Pact, I designed evaluation methodologies for development projects that improved health outcomes for rural women in Colombia. My contribution was recognized by the CEO and board members, leading to a feature on the organization's website and in the annual report.

Sample Two (Bullet Style):

While earning my Master of Public Administration, I balanced a full-time demanding job as a Program Analyst for the Department of Homeland Security. In this position, I was asked by my supervisor to expand my role to lead an inter-departmental team for designing new internal policies and procedures to improve the budget formulation process. As a result of these widely adopted organizational standards and positive feedback from the Deputy Secretary for my adaptive leadership style, as soon as I graduated, I was promoted to manage a larger team with increased responsibilities.

The combination of my pertinent professional experience coupled with rigorous graduate fiscal management training would enable me to bring the following strengths to this position:

- **Quantitative research and statistical analysis** focused on analyzing and interpreting large national data sets using SPSS and Stata;
- **Effective coalition builder** including hands-on experience building relationships with Congressional staff, lobbyists, advocacy organizations, and media outlets;
- **Technical writing skills** that have contributed to award-winning reports and studies.

Utilizing these competencies, I know that I will be effective in planning and implementing ABC's budget formulation and execution programs, and successful in the development of long-range program plans, goals, objectives, and milestones. I am confident that if given the opportunity to serve as your next Financial Analyst, I will bring enthusiasm, fresh perspective, and diligence to the role.

Sample Three (Bullet):

My drive for serving underrepresented groups has been demonstrated through eight years of progressive experience training and working within these communities in DC. This prompted my pursuit of a Master of Public Policy degree from the George Washington University, where my coursework heightened my cultural awareness and commitment to influence positive change within government entities. My focus on social policy, quantitative research, and analytical writing resulted in a publication in the *Trachtenberg School Policy Perspectives Journal*.

The central focus on social injustice and poverty in Latino neighborhoods drew me to the Program Lead position at ABC, INC. I am interested in applying my leadership and analytical skills to help address these challenges through my:

- **Leadership:** I have been recognized by supervisors and colleagues for direct and decisive leadership that galvanizes staff to exceed performance goals while maintaining high positive team morale.
- **Grant Writing:** With my public, foundation and private sector proposal development experience, I have consistently surpassed fundraising goals. Driven by my desire for knowledge sharing, I initiated a proposal writing best practices group with partner organizations to increase collaboration and knowledge sharing. Not only did I foster connections between the nonprofits, but I also cultivated my presentation skills as I was often called upon to lead subject matter trainings.
- **Collaborative Relationship Builder:** At Community Connections, by leveraging my strengths in empathy, active listening, and honest reflection, I brought together two organizations that have historically struggled to work together. This collaboration spurred additional peripheral community organizations to reach out to our organization to develop joint youth programming.

Sample Four (Narrative Style):

With my current graduate focus on urban sustainability, I have researched and written analyses of transportation policy topics such as environmental justice, intelligent subway systems, and budgetary comparisons of alternative public transportation options. My knowledge of these issues is complemented by the econometric and statistical analysis skills gained through my coursework, including managing large data sets using SPSS and Stata software.

In addition to my academic training, I have seven years of professional research and analysis experience. From 2005 to 2010, I collected data, performed quantitative risk assessments, researched and analyzed case law, and authored reports for senior associates for a DC law firm. ***One associate called me her “essential go-to” person for responding to her last-minute needs and staying late when necessary to get the job done.*** This experience also sharpened my investigative, analytic, and writing skills, which I continue to employ today in my position with internal stakeholders and clients through written reports, presentations, and conferences. As a result of my work experience, I am confident in addressing mixed audiences, juggling multiple time-sensitive projects, and performing to best serve client and team needs.

CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH

- Thank the hiring manager and remind them why you are qualified for the position. Express your interest in learning more and meeting to discuss your qualifications.
- If you are conducting a highly confidential search, mention it in this paragraph.
- Address any salary requirements, but only if requested by the hiring manager (see p. 10).

Sample One:

Overall, based on my experiences in public policy, cultural competency and rapid acquisition of foreign languages, along with proven expertise in building high profile partnerships, I am confident in my ability to be successful as your next Director of the Water Equity Initiative. I look forward to speaking with you to learn more about this position. Thank you for your review and consideration.

Sample Two:

I believe that my gender equity research and success leading inter-agency projects will allow me to provide great value to the National Women’s Law Center. As I am eager to work with an organization that is dedicated to promoting and advancing policies that protect women’s health, my salary requirements are negotiable based upon the position and the total compensation package. I welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications for the Health Policy Fellow position.

Sample Three:

I would be proud to help foster systemic progressive change by serving as a Policy Project Manager. My extensive experience with campaigns and nonprofits combined with my ability to thrive in a fast-paced environment will add measurable value to your organization. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

CLOSING

Sample One:

Best regards,
First Name Last Name

Sample Two:

Sincerely,
First Name Last Name

HOW TO APPROACH THE SALARY QUESTION IN YOUR LETTER

Some employers will ask the applicant to share his or her salary requirements in the cover letter. Your goal is to acknowledge the request, but if possible to refrain from giving a salary range unless you are required to as part of the application. A guideline is to **sound flexible** and convey that you are **willing to negotiate**.

If they ask for your salary requirements, but don't require you to include specifics:

- My salary requirements are negotiable based upon the responsibilities of the position as well as the compensation package.
- I am open to negotiation with regard to salary.

If they indicate that you **MUST** include a specific salary requirement:

- *Do Your Research:* Look at comps for current professionals in similar positions based on factors such as title/grade of the position, field, location, and experience level.
- *Give a Range:* Define a salary range based on your experience and research of the average salaries.
 - **Example:** "Per your request of the salary requirement, I am looking for something in the mid-upper \$70s based on my level of experience and research of starting salaries for similar positions."
 - **Example:** "In response to your salary request, my requirements are \$45,000 - \$50,000; however, I am flexible and open to discussions about the overall compensation package."

FINAL CHECKLIST

- Contact Information.** Check that you have the correct name, address, phone number, and email of the hiring manager. Avoid using "To Whom it May Concern."
- Margins.** No more than 1 inch and no smaller than 8/10 of an inch.
- Abbreviations and Jargon.** Only use an abbreviation if you refer to the organization more than once. Avoid jargon and clichés.
- Accomplishment/Results Oriented.** Did you include specific results and quantifiable accomplishments in your experience section? Did you include compelling highlights?
- Key Words.** Does it include some/most of the key words in the job description?
- Demonstrate Your Value.** Avoid talking about what you'll get out of the position and instead highlight your relevant strengths and accomplishments.
- Be Concise.** If your cover letter is too text heavy, it may go unread. Keep it short and relevant to the job description. You can combine it with bullets and bold/italics formatting for emphasis.
- SPELLCHECK!** Check for spelling and grammar errors. Have a friend review it to catch any additional errors. When you're finished, PROOFREAD AGAIN!
- Your Brand.** Does your cover letter "sell" the story you want it to tell?
- PDF it!** Unless specifically asked in the announcement, you always want to PDF your letter.

Your letter should be a cohesive document that tells a story, so to ensure that it has flow and is written in a natural voice, read your cover letter out loud. Try rereading it backwards, sentence by sentence; to make sure each one is well-constructed.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long should a cover letter be?

- The cover letter should be no longer than one page. Other documents could be longer like letters of intent, academic interest letters and writing samples.

Does a cover letter include special formatting?

- Consider **bolding** important words, such as those that match the job description.
- Too much special formatting can make the letter look cluttered and busy. Be conservative with your formatting.

Should my cover letter be sent as the body of an email or as an attachment?

- Look for directions in the job announcement and follow them carefully. Some hiring managers prefer to have the letter copied into the email while others favor attachments.
- If no directions are given, it is suggested that you both paste your cover letter into the body of the email and attach a **PDF copy** with an appropriate title (i.e. First Name Last Name – Cover Letter).

Do I always have to submit a cover letter with my resume?

- Even when an employer does not specifically ask for a cover letter, take the initiative and include a copy. A well-written and compelling cover letter increases your chances of landing the interview. Remember to read the submission instructions carefully. If the instructions explicitly ask candidates to not send a cover letter then do not include it.

When and how should I follow up after submitting my cover letter and resume?

- Unless the position listing discourages phone calls, you may contact the employer via email or phone 7-10 days after your application submission. Your goal is to confirm the receipt of your application materials and to inquire where the employer is in the hiring process.

What size font and type should I use?

- General type should stay between 10-12 pt. The best fonts are easy to read and have clean lines such as sans serif fonts including: Arial, Century Gothic, Lucida Sans, and Calibri.

What are the biggest mistakes cover letter writers make?

- Not addressing the letter to a direct individual. "To Whom It May Concern" shows the employer that you were not concerned enough to find out the name of the person with the hiring power.
- Only explaining how the company will help you grow personally and professionally instead of highlighting the strengths and qualities you would bring to the company.
- Making grammar and spelling errors anywhere in your document.

FROM ANOUNCEMENT TO COVER LETTER

Sample Announcement:

Note how the highlighted key words are integrated into the cover letter on the next page

No child should grow up hungry in America. Since 1984, Share Our Strength® has led the fight against hunger and poverty by inspiring and organizing individuals and businesses to share their strengths. Share Our Strength, a national nonprofit, is ending childhood hunger in America by ensuring all children get the healthy food they need. By connecting kids in need with nutritious food and teaching their families how to cook healthy, affordable meals, the No Kid Hungry Campaign surrounds children in this nation with healthy food where they live, learn and play.

Responsibilities:

The Program Manager will be responsible for providing technical assistance to state and local No Kid Hungry campaigns; and helping to manage a best practices center that will develop resources, foster cross-state learning, and communicate lessons from our No Kid Hungry campaigns.

- Provide technical assistance and consulting to public and private partners working to end childhood hunger;
- Work with state and local partners to collect and analyze programmatic data; assess progress towards annual goals; develop corrective action when necessary; and communicate success of NKH campaigns;
- Analyze and synthesize research, and track policies and practices at the federal, state, and local level that increase access to food and nutrition programs for low-income children;
- Communicate best practices and policies to a wide variety of audiences through written memos, issue briefs, and case studies and through presentations;
- Plan and facilitate conference calls, webinars, and workshops for partners;
- Oversee research projects and evaluation of No Kid Hungry campaign strategies;
- Represent Share Our Strength at conferences, briefings and coalition meetings; and
- Work with the organization's marketing, communication, and development teams to provide information about childhood hunger and support specific projects.

Reports to: Director, No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices

Location: Washington, DC- HQ

Qualifications:

- Master's degree in public policy or related field or equivalent work experience;
- 3-5 years' work experience with a focus on anti-hunger/child nutrition policy, research, advocacy, or program administration;
- Knowledge of SNAP and/or child nutrition programs;
- Experience providing technical assistance, strategic planning, or consulting services to nonprofit organizations;
- Excellent written and verbal communications skills;
- Demonstrated ability to work independently and proactively in a fast-paced environment;
- Highly effective within a fluid, entrepreneurial environment; and
- High energy and a demonstrated passion for our work.

Matching Cover Letter:

First Name Last Name

• Washington, DC 20002 • 202.555.4789 • FIRST.LAST@GMAIL.COM

March 27, 2017

First Name Last Name, Director of No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices

Share Our Strength

1730 M St. NW, Suite 700

Washington, DC 20036

Dear First Name Last Name,

With a background providing technical assistance to local and state groups and collecting and analyzing data to track program goals and outcomes, as well as a deep commitment to food security issues, I am thrilled to apply for the position of Program Manager, No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices. My experiences as an advocate for anti-hunger programs for Oxfam America and as a program manager with Crossroads Campaigns, combined with my graduate project developing a commercial kitchen for a local food hub, would enable me to immediately add value to your organization.

Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices' approach to providing technical assistance to public and private partners on the local and state levels resonates with me, as that has been the crux of my work as a program manager. In addition, my graduate work in public administration has given me additional skills that serve this position. For example:

- I helped set up individual and coalition-wide metrics for an expansive voter contact program, oversaw each group's specific program, managed the data collection process, and provided technical assistance. Not only did I receive warm compliments from colleague for my high-touch, empathetic leadership but we also exceeded all our program goals.
- With Crossroads Campaigns, I developed resources, fostered learning, and communicated lessons learned to all campaign teams, which increasingly improved our metrics. This ability to both do the work while continually looking improvements is something I bring to every position.
- As a graduate student of public administration, I regularly analyzed and synthesized research and policies on the federal, state, and local levels and presented findings through both written and oral presentations. My professors have consistently praised my thorough approach to research and concise writing.
- As an intern for the American Association of University Women (AAUW), I communicated policy nuances to AAUW's members through the organization's weekly newsletter and weekly in-person lobbying briefs. Even though I was the newest member of their team, I was frequently given additional responsibilities as they trusted my communications skills and professionalism.

My ability to oversee projects, motivate high-performing teams, and effectively represent organizations has been demonstrated throughout my career. I bring an entrepreneurial spirit, analytical mind, and zeal for my work to everything I do and would love the opportunity to speak with you further about how I could contribute to the No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

First Name Last Name

SAMPLE COVER LETTERS

First Name Last Name

Washington, DC · 202-555-5456 · first.last@gmail.com

January 1, 2021

First Name Last Name
Senior Associate
ABC Consulting
123 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20000

Dear First Name Last Name,

While partnering with ABC Consulting on the Community Capacity Initiative when I was at Children First, I saw first-hand your cutting-edge approach to organizational capacity building and social ventures. After connecting further with your firm through on-campus recruiting, I am now applying for the **Nonprofit Practice Summer Fellowship**. My experience working within complex organizations to cultivate performance-focused leadership would make me an excellent match for the position.

At Children First, I built the relationships necessary to navigate a multifaceted culture and establish a new program, Outreach Now, to address a gap in services. This program supports over 500 disadvantaged families and has decreased high school recidivism by 10% in one school. To achieve this, I managed each task analytically to identify key issues and articulate step-by-step plans, *earning a reputation as someone who can simultaneously build partnerships and execute programs.*

As your Summer Fellows need to not only work well with clients but also be strategic thinkers, I bring critical experience balancing people, process and programs. During my recent pro bono graduate consulting team project for DC Urban Initiative, an organization experiencing rapid growth during transitional leadership, I took the lead on designing an innovative asset management tool. By thinking about current staff limitations and existing strengths, I created a resource that will help them better invest resources, grow capital, and expand operations. During our presentation to their staff, a senior board member publically thanked me for my *creative approach to developing a strategy for immediate success which would also build long-term sustainability.*

I share ABC's commitment to community and diversity that you demonstrate through pro bono services and global cross-sectoral leadership. The opportunity to be part of a learning organization that emphasizes coaching and training is one I value greatly. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

First Name Last Name

First Name Last Name

Alexandria, VA 22210 | first.last@gmail.com | 555.555.2141 | www.linkedin.com/in/first.lastname

November 10, 2020

First Name Last Name
Training Director
Americans Against Hunger
1234 K Street NW, Suite 100
Washington, DC 20020

Dear First Name Last Name:

With a long history of launching successful training programs, background working with multiple stakeholders, and a deep commitment to food security and nutrition issues, I am thrilled to apply for the Training Development Manager position. From serving as an AmeriCorps*VISTA at a multi-service organization with a food pantry to assessing the impact of “food deserts,” I would be a trainer with a deep understanding of the causes your organization promotes and the ability to translate these issues to a range of audiences.

Americans Against Hunger’s pragmatic, hands-on approach is one that resonates deeply with me as that is my style as a trainer and manager. My success as a collaborative and solutions-oriented manager has been a cornerstone of my career, especially when handling complex, highly detailed projects. In my work designing, collaborating on and delivering trainings, I also apply this practical, interactive style. Highlights of how this approach has consistently contributed to organizational success include:

- I shifted DC Cares’ formerly transactional approach to nonprofit partnerships that resulted in program expansion into three new high-needs neighborhoods. By strengthening the nonprofit relationships, I contributed to sustainable programs that are still in operation today.
- With my eye for identifying areas to improve efficiency, I piloted new organizational systems during my VISTA year that reduced the time to produce quarterly reports by 50%. The staff commented that they were pleasantly surprised by how easily they could adopt this new process.
- By integrating customized coaching and active learning styles into workshops, I have consistently received positive feedback for strengthening team morale and communications. My favorite comment on an evaluation said the *“facilitator led with great energy, humility and expertise.”*

This position merges my training development and program management experience, commitment to food security, and accomplished background in meeting ambitious performance goals. Per your request for salary requirements, I am negotiable and welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about how I could contribute to Americans Against Hunger’s Training Development Manager position.

Best regards,

First Name Last Name

April 1, 2019

First Name Last Name
Executive Director
Battelle
200 M Street NW, Suite 2
Washington, DC 20036

Dear First Name Last Name:

My advocacy on behalf of disconnected communities, coupled with my accomplished history in capacity building, technical assistance, and leadership development, inspired me to apply for the **Organizational Development Specialist** position at Battelle.

My approach to providing technical assistance and building partnerships is always one of respect, trust, and shared vision for success. From advising Charities of Hope's initiative to strengthening nonprofit capacity when I was with the Northwestern Health Education Center, I bring an analytical eye, strategic mind, and collaborative spirit to all of my work. Whether connecting in a community where I have existing relationships or coming in with a fresh perspective to a new area, I can adapt to environments quickly and easily.

One of my proudest accomplishments in capacity building came when I was leading an environmental service-learning project with DC Parks and Recreation focused on conserving state parks and landscapes. ***In just the first two years of my supervising 13 AmeriCorps members, we brought in over \$500,000 in new community funding and engaged over 5,000 volunteers.*** This was achieved through my knowledge of coaching on an individual and organizational level, as well as my understanding of how to provide strategic and pragmatic organizational development guidance. This has always been my method of community and capacity building and has enabled me to be an effective partner, advisor, and leader in social change.

Battelle's Organizational Development Specialist position blends my long-held interest in strengthening the nonprofit sector, extensive background working with underserved communities, and skills in the area of service-learning. I look forward to engaging in further conversations regarding this opportunity!

Sincerely,

First Name Last Name

First Name Last Name

Washington, DC 20052 ▪ (555) 555-8256 ▪ first.last@gmail.com

June 12, 2020

First Name Last Name
CEO
Year Up
22 8th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear First Name Last Name,

As a youth development practitioner, I am drawn to Year Up's vision of educational equity for all urban youth. With academic training in strategic analysis and organizational development, a multidisciplinary focus on education, and demonstrated managerial skills, I am confident that I could be an asset as your next **Program Director**.

My Master of Public Policy degree at the Trachtenberg School at George Washington University has given me outstanding training in strategy, analytical thinking, and organizational management. This built upon my work with YouthBuild, where I applied these skills through a 5-year strategic planning process in collaboration with their executive team. I would bring the following strengths to the Program Director position:

- **PROGRAM MANAGEMENT** – At YouthBuild, I implemented a wrap-around youth development program and launched a service-learning course with the objectives of increasing youth participation in decision-making. Feedback from the youth has indicated that they feel more confident in their leadership, critical thinking, and planning skills. To date, this course has been used with 500 low-income students and there are currently plans to replicate this nationwide.
- **ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT** – As Chair of the Women's Information Network (WIN), I oversaw a 12-member executive board and spearheaded the strategic planning process of a new training program. This was achieved immediately after a two-year gap in leadership and resulting in improved morale among long-time members. Not only did we recruit 250 new members and raise \$30,000 in new revenue but under my leadership, I had many existing members tell me that they felt renewed excitement with the organization.
- **POLICY ANALYSIS** – As an MPP student, I researched and synthesized information on public policy priorities for youth development in urban schools. My professor praised my ability to pull out key findings and present them with fresh language. My analysis was selected as an article for publication in Policy Perspectives.

I look forward to learning more about how I can assist in meeting the immediate needs and long-term goals of Year Up. In response to your request, my salary requirement is in the \$50,000-60,000 range, however, this figure can be negotiable depending upon the compensation package. I welcome the opportunity to schedule an interview and hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

First Name Last Name
She/her/hers

FIRST NAME LAST NAME

Washington, DC 20007 · first.last@gmail.com · 555-222-4789

May 15, 2021

First Name Last Name
Executive Research Assistant
Billings Leadership Partners
1223 K Street NW
Washington, DC 20015

Dear First Name Last Name,

Through my connection with Lauren King, former Program Director in San Francisco, I have known about the impact of Billings Leadership Partners for several years. With my comprehensive background in transformative program development, authentic partnership building, and leadership coaching, I was excited to see the **Program Manager** opening.

Creating a leadership pipeline in the nonprofit and public sectors is an ongoing interest first sparked during my years directing Teach For America (TFA) programs and community initiatives. In these capacities, I have balanced multiple needs while building internal capacity:

- ✓ **Individual coaching/mentoring** that led to over 2,500 engaged volunteers in two communities under the Cities for Children Initiative.
- ✓ **Providing organizational development** that streamlined business development processes and resulted in a successful bid for a \$500,000 grant for youth prevention programs.
- ✓ **Designing innovative programs** that brought in 35 new TFA members and provided much needed technical support.
- ✓ **Teaching** 500 community members about the importance of maintaining a well-balanced lifestyle during a 10- month service-learning project.

I have been involved in both the hands-on and systemic levels of education reform, including working on the impact of failing schools in Las Vegas communities and volunteering at an alternative school in Oklahoma. Through my career and community service experiences, I have developed extensive training/coaching, facilitation, programmatic, and presentation experience. My successes in this area are indicative of my strength in communication and ability to understand the same population that your organization serves.

This position merges my enthusiasm for change through education, programmatic/management experience and love of coaching others to be community leaders. I look forward to speaking with you further regarding this opportunity.

Best regards,

First Name Last Name
he/him/his

January 15, 2019

First Name Last Name
Human Resources Director
JMD
22 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20052

Dear First Name Last Name,

After attending the information session at George Washington University's Trachtenberg School, I was drawn to JMD's innovative approach towards improving public service and am excited to apply for your Public Policy Fellows program. My background in improving the organizational efficiency, and graduate level training in problem-solving and quantitative skills make me an outstanding candidate for your fellowship.

Similar to the goals of JMD, my professional experience has focused on ***taking the lead to improve the strategies and practices of non-profit and government organizations***, ensuring a more effective service to the public. For example, in order to better support decision-makers at DC's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, I developed a new organizational structure for the annual report so they could easily identify the city's homeland security gaps, ***leading to a more efficient use of resources***. I also introduced guidelines for local chapters of the American Red Cross on how to best leverage, coordinate, and organize the use of volunteers from partner organizations. For my graduate studies capstone project, my team will create recommendations to improve the National Preparedness Report.

I look forward to speaking with you in more detail regarding this program, especially in the areas of homeland security or energy and the environment, and how I can assist your member institutions and mission. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

First Name Last Name

first.last@gwu.edu
202-885-1901

First Name Last Name
(555) 123-4567 ▪ first.last@gmail.com

March 28, 2021

First Name Last Name
Policy Director
Advancement Project
123 First Street NW, Suite 100
Washington, DC 20001

Dear First Name Last Name:

As a bilingual (Spanish/English) advocate with both analytical skills and contextual knowledge from years of field-level work, I would like to offer my 10+ years of experience working in neighborhood and political organizations to address school-to-prison pipeline issues as a **Policy Advocate**. My experience ranging from a direct service provider to community organizer to public policy analyst would allow me to offer an in-depth understanding of how policy impacts the lives of at-risk youth and how sustainable change can happen.

The Advancement Project is at the cutting edge of the civil rights movement and uses a comprehensive lens by which to move a national agenda of reform for racial justice – I want to be a part of that progress. A few highlights of my qualifications include:

- ❖ As a community organizer, ***I built and sustained relationships with different levels of decision-making leaders***, which resulted in significant progress concerning living wage, housing, and policing issues in Santa Monica.
- ❖ My studies in public policy and experience with local issues give me insight into both micro and macro level change. ***I analyzed and interpreted data to inform decision making and developing action plans*** that contributed to our successful campaign to reform school discipline policy.
- ❖ ***I completed a cost-benefit analysis of the implementation*** of the Missouri Model of juvenile justice in California that was selected as an article for publication in *Policy Perspectives*.

I believe in the way that the Advancement Project focuses on front-end systemic change in addressing racial justice and transform the juvenile justice system for the entire population. My analytic and field-based experience would contribute to a results-oriented Policy Advocate who knows how to build coalitions and effectively communicate data for change.

I look forward to the opportunity to speak with you about the position and my qualifications. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

First Name Last Name

First Name Last Name

(717) 555-3663 • first.last62@gmail.com

April 17, 2017

First Name Last Name
Program Director
Thompson Institute
2100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear First Name Last Name,

After seeing young children in Nigeria never having a chance to thrive during a weeklong service project during my senior year of college, I returned back to United States determined to study global health policy. As I near completion of my master's degree, I am more than ready to bring my drive and experience in advocacy, logistics, and budgeting to the role of **Program Associate for the Coalition against Malaria**. Not only do I have the political acumen necessary to frame complex issues and communicate a range of audiences, but also the financial and operations savvy required for managing the technical aspects of this project.

This past year, in addition to pursuing my graduate degree and interning at The Department of Treasury, I also dedicated **200+ hours as a volunteer project** co-lead on the public health team for an Engineers without Borders project in Kenya. In this capacity, I gained hands-on experience with project budgeting, work plan development, qualitative and quantitative survey design, and project research. Through my work, I contributed to the following results:

- Distribution of over 1,000 mosquito nets, vaccination campaigns in two remote areas, and the construction of a 50-bed health facility that serves over 2,000 children a year.
- Collaboration with clients and principles to develop communication and advocacy strategies, including white papers and talking points distributed to 50 members of Congress.
- Creation of an evaluation assessment that led to designing a new public health strategy.

Given this experience, I am well-versed in the intricacies of project management and believe that I would be an asset to the Coalition against Malaria. Additionally, I am comfortable managing logistics that require cross-organizational coordination and a tenacious attitude, and ***I can be counted on to carry high-level tasks and projects to the finish line in order to meet tight deadlines.***

I believe that my professional, academic, and volunteer experience in global health will allow me to contribute to your important work at the Thompson Institute. Per your request for salary requirements, I am open to negotiation based on the responsibilities of the position and the compensation package. I would welcome the opportunity to interview for this position. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

First Name Last Name

First Name Last Name
(202) 543-9977
first.last@gmail.com

May 13, 2020

First Name Last Name
Director
Youth Analytics
2300 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear First Name Last Name:

Promoting community empowerment with rigorous, fact-based evidence has motivated me to focus my professional and academic career on qualitative and quantitative research and data analysis. Working in immigration and women's policy, I understand the implications of policies geared toward improving socioeconomic conditions. I am ready to contribute my research expertise to the **Data and Evaluation Specialist** role at Youth Analytics to evaluate youth development programs.

My experience with data collection and analysis is extensive. From creating surveys and leading focus groups for my undergraduate honors thesis to analyzing American Community Survey data in Stata, I can easily manage multiple methodologies and tools. Working at the Institute for Empirical Research has built upon graduate courses in econometrics and public and non-profit program evaluation, increasing my aptitude with SPSS, Stata and statistical modeling. Beyond analysis, I was also responsible for translating output into tables and graphics for publications and presentations. My attention to detail and ability to synthesize output from multiple sources into accessible visual aids led some of my colleagues to dub me the office's "infographic guru."

Along with my appreciation for data analysis and creating Excel graphics, my desire to conduct research and influence evaluations stems from a deeper commitment to social justice. Through my past experiences with women's policy issues in the U.S. to microfinance initiatives in Kenya, promoting community empowerment through empirical evaluation is the common thread linking these roles.

My ability to use evidence-based research to inform public policy and programs makes me an excellent candidate for the Data and Evaluation Specialist position. ***I am conducting a highly confidential job search.*** I look forward to further discussing my qualifications with you.

Sincerely,

First Name Last Name

FIRST NAME LAST NAME

Washington, DC • 555-623-7585 • first.last@gmail.com

May 28, 2016

First Name Last Name
Chief of Staff
Senator Al Franken
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear First Name Last Name:

After discussing the Legislative Correspondent position with Jody Wiggins, I am eager to express my interest in this opening. As a **proud Minnesotan** with a background in legislative research and constituent outreach, I can effectively contribute to Senator xx's team to serve the people of Minnesota.

I thrive in the fast-paced, deadline driven environment on the Hill and am known for my **willingness to go the extra mile** to provide rigorous, accessible research that is immediately able to be used by senior staff. When I was a legislative intern in the United States Senate, our office had two hours to dig into legislative history regarding housing regulations over the past decade. It was an *"all hands on deck"* moment and although I had only been interning there for two weeks, I impressed our team with my ability to locate critical data quickly for inclusion in the briefing memo.

Since the demands of legislative correspondence require systematic mail management, I became an expert with VOICE and know that this experience would transfer easily to Internet Quorum. I am very comfortable with mail, project, and desktop management software and all three of these are vital in my Admissions Coordinator role where I correspond with over 6,000 prospective students a year.

Beyond professional research experience, my academic training in policy analysis prepares me to conduct legislative research on any topic. While pursuing my Master of Public Administration at George Washington University, I made federal policy, politics, and management a primary focus. During the program, I researched and authored analyses of topics including low-income housing, gainful employment regulations, and healthcare reform.

Experience has taught me to thrive under pressure and appreciate teamwork as foundational to success. This calm, consensus orientation along with my demonstrated aptitude for both the macro view of strategic priorities and micro level of detail-orientated work is critical to constituent communication. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

First Name Last Name

First Name Last Name
Arlington, VA • 202.880.1236 • first_last@yahoo.com

March 16, 2017

First Name Last Name
Vice President and Director, Strategic Studies
RNB
1234 Washington Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear First Name Last Name,

After speaking extensively with Kate Frier about her experience working with Strategic Studies and exploring the unrivaled work RNB conducts for the Navy and Marine Corps, I am thrilled to apply for the position of **Senior Research Specialist in the Center for Strategic Studies**. With experience in research and stakeholder engagement at multiple levels and a graduate focus in defense and national security policy, I would be an immediate contributor in this position.

As a Master of Public Policy student in the Trachtenberg School at George Washington University, I bring an aptitude in research methodology, client engagement, and project management. Through my coursework, I am skilled in SPSS, Stata, and Excel, including being very adept managing large datasets. I have consistently received positive feedback from the associate professor for whom I work for my clear, concise analysis for literature reviews.

Currently conducting an evaluation for the United States Coast Guard dealing with a key intelligence directive, I have had the opportunity to advise Coast Guard leadership on methods by which to reliably collect and analyze data from a forthcoming survey. Through my organizational analysis, I have contributed to the development of a new logic model that has fostered a better understanding of the directive's component parts amongst relevant leadership. My experience working directly with high-level military leadership has deepened my knowledge of military structure and priorities – an insight that regularly informs my work with defense policy issues more broadly.

In my role at the Trachtenberg School, I design and carry out strategic communication including overseeing the responsibilities of three graduate students. These efforts include student and faculty collaboration to ensure clarity and consistency in outward-facing messaging. My contributions have directly resulted in the development of a larger recruitment strategy that will be studied for future implementation.

The Senior Research Specialist position would be a role where I could offer my research, evaluation and communications capabilities to promote the larger objectives of our nation's armed forces. I would be delighted for the opportunity to meet in person and discuss my qualifications in greater detail. Thank you for your time and consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

First Name Last Name

FIRST NAME LAST NAME

Washington, DC • www.linkedin.com/in/firstlast•first.last@gmail.com • 516.334.9248

April 21, 2017

First Name Last Name
The ABC Group
1122 Arlington Dr.
Arlington, VA 22209

To First Name Last Name:

With my interest in capacity development and knowledge management, I am thrilled by the opportunity to work with ABC Group as the Research and Learning Advisor on the Learning Contract. While in Cambodia facilitating a women's leadership training, I developed a deeper understanding of their health system and am eager to return.

As a Program Analyst at USAID/Washington, I am recognized for my reliable project management and strategy implementation skills. I work on cross-sectoral projects that use lessons learned to improve development outcomes. By incorporating evidence-based approaches and strategic communication for sustainable project results, I contributed on many positive organizational and project wins:

- **Program Management:** I developed data matrices to track actions and deliverables on projects and trained my team to use these tools, building our overall capacity and efficiency for projects (\$150M budgets). This streamlined process is now used by others to save time and resources.
- **Innovative and Strategic Thinking:** To better organize information about health topics and their connection to the World Bank's Global Finance Facility, I created a Google Microsite that was accessible for all levels of technical expertise. After receiving positive feedback, the team introduced the microsite to field staff to better inform programming decisions.
- **Training in M&E:** Through USAID and my MPA at George Washington University, I have studied and applied the latest monitoring and evaluation techniques - impact evaluation design, data collection instruments, performance management strategies, evaluation assessments and findings and recommendations reports.

I enjoy new challenges and look for opportunities to reach beyond my comfort zone to find solutions to project goals. I am familiar with the new CDCS strategy as well as USAID's new MEL continuum. This position is a natural alignment with my policy and management experience as well as my education experience as an MPA in International Development Management. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

First Name Last Name