

THE SUMMER PUBLIC INTEREST JOB SEARCH

PART ONE: COVER LETTERS & RÉSUMÉS

January 15, 2013

Welcome!



The Summer Public Interest Job Search...



Two-part Webinar Series:

- Today: Cover Letters & Résumés
- Tuesday, 1/22: Interviewing & Networking

The Summer Public Interest Job Search...



Presenters:

- **Paul Chavez, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, Bay Area**
- **Steve Grumm, NALP**
- **Ashley Matthews, NALP**
- **Jennifer Thomas, Public Defender Service for DC**

The Summer Public Interest Job Search...



Webinar Overview:

- **Résumés: tips & best practices**
- **Cover letters: tips & best practices**
- **Electronic application tips**

Questions welcomed! Submit during webinar.

Résumés

(ooh, look at our fancy French)

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Résumés: Tips & Best Practices...

Tip 1: Format

- Header
 - Name, Address, Email, Phone (permanent/temporary)
- Education (J.D. Expected...)
- Experience
 - Detailed descriptions, driven by action verbs
- Languages
- Honors (if not directly academic)
- Interests

Résumés: Tips & Best Practices...



Tip 2

One page?

Résumés: Tips & Best Practices...



Tip 3

“~~My objective...~~”

Résumés: Tips & Best Practices...



Tip 4

Embrace numbers!

Résumés: Tips & Best Practices...



Tip 5

Weaving in...

Résumés: Tips & Best Practices...

Tip 5 (cont'd.)

- Job Responsibility: “...interns will do outreach at migrant camps, interview farmworker clients, and educate farmworkers about their rights.”
- Résumé:
 - ▣ Conducted outreach for 2010 U.S. Census...
 - ▣ Assisted in client interviews as a legal intern...
 - ▣ Tutored ESL students...
 - ▣ Taught a know-your-rights course to high-school students

Cover Letters

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Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices



Tip 1

Understand the employer.

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

Tip 2: Format

Paragraph One

- ▣ Who You Are
- ▣ What You Want
- ▣ If Applicable, Mention Connection (referral)
- ▣ If Applicable, Mention Geographic Ties

Paragraph Two

- ▣ Why Interested in THIS Employer
- ▣ Why THIS EMPLOYER Should Hire YOU

Paragraph Three

- ▣ Conclusion

Good Cover Letter

ASHLEY M. BELZZUMPER

666 Death Row Rd., 13th Floor | Death Valley, AZ 07043
(555)123-5555 | ashley.blz@law.wul.edu

January 15, 2012

Mr. Stuart D. Smith, Esq.
Office of Legal Recruitment
New York City Law Department
100 Church Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mr. Smith:

Please accept my application for an internship with New York City Law Department for the Fall 2012 semester. I am a second year law student at Washington University Law School whose interest in working for the Law Department grew after meeting with a member of the Law Department's recruitment staff regarding the Summer Honors Program.

My interest in the New York City Law Department stems from my strong desire to pursue a career in public service, particularly in tort law and litigation. I am highly drawn to your Tort Division because of its dedication to protecting New York City and its various important departments from liability. To prepare for work in this area, I sought out a judicial internship this year under New York State Supreme Court Civil Branch judge, Honorable Edward H. Lehner (*ret.*), where I was exposed to insurance litigation, personal liability and corporate liability disputes and trials.

I have gained knowledge about and an appreciation for public service, particularly in the area of tort law, which is why I would be excited about the opportunity to interview for an internship with the Law Department. An internship at the Law Department would mean being a part of a department whose various divisions are working for the same common goal, which is the protection and betterment of New York City.

Very truly yours,

Ashley M. Belzzumper

Not-so-good Cover Letter

Diana H. Lewis
555 East 55th Street #4F
New York, NY USA
10022

January 05, 2012

Dear NYC Law Department,

I've always believed what Ralph Waldo Emerson once said: "Law is the highest professional calling." I'm a hard-working, motivated 2L, who would be a great addition to your team. I'm seeking a summer associate position with your firm for 2012. I am most interested in your international law division. My uncle, Joe Blow, suggested that I would be a perfect match for your [organization]. I have the most unique work experiences and law school achievements that make me the most strongest candidate for Bronx DA's office.

Having just completed an internship with the New Jersey Office of the Public Defender where, among other responsibilities, I drafted motions, interviewed clients and engaged in intensive research and writing, I learned that exceptional legal representation requires unwavering dedication and a creative legal mind. My being selected from among the other summer interns to conduct research for the Bergen County Deputy Public Defender in connection with a first-degree sexual assault trial and invited to continue interning with the Public Defender's Office beyond the summer internship program are testaments to my dedication and work ethic.

I am confident that, if given the opportunity, I will apply these collective attributes to the fullest in order to make just as valuable a contribution to the New York State Attorney Generals office. My resume, references, transcript and writing samples are enclosed for your review, so please contact me.

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices



Tip 3

One Page

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

Tip 4

Greetings...

- ❑ **Yes: Dear Ms. Thomas:**
- ❑ **No: Dear Jennifer Thomas:**
- ❑ **No: Dear Ms. Jennifer Thomas:**
- ❑ **No: Jennifer Thomas:**
- ❑ **No: “Mrs.” (unless self-identified)**

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

...Tip 4 (cont'd.)...

If you don't have a contact name:

- ▣ **Dear Sir or Madam:**
- ▣ **To Whom it May Concern:**
- ▣ **Dear Hiring Coordinator:**
- ▣ **Dear Hiring Committee Members:**

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

...Tip 4 (cont'd.)

Rule also applies to email notes.

Dear Ms. Thomas:

Attached please find my application materials for the staff attorney position. Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jeff Tweedy

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices



Tip 5

Avoid overly casual language.

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

Tip 6...

The opening lines matter. Try to be:

- Clear**
- Concise**
- Conservative**

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

..Tip 6 (cont'd.)...

- Do: I am a second-year student at [X] and am writing to apply for a summer clerkship. I am in law school solely to pursue a career in....
- Do: I am writing to apply for the [X] position at the Public Defender Service. After working in your office last summer...

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

...Tip 6 (cont'd.)...

- Don't: When I was three years old I decided that I would become Attorney General...
- Don't: I am the best candidate for this position. Let me tell you why...

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices



Tip 7...

***A Complement
to the Résumé***

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

...Tip 7 (cont'd)...

- **Highlight:**
 - **Concrete experiences**
 - **Credentials**
 - **Passions**
- **Weave in job-posting keywords**

Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

Tip 8

Cover Letter Drafting Tips...

- ▣ Read job listing carefully & address key qualifications
- ▣ Draft letter in outline form
- ▣ Rewrite or carefully adapt for each job posting

Electronic Application Tips

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Bonus Application Tips



Tip 1

PDF 'em!

Bonus Application Tips



Tip 2

Learn mail merge.

Bonus Application Tips



Tip 3

**Cover Letter Attached.
Short note in email body.***

*** Exception: total cold-call**

Bonus Application Tips



Tip 4

Always, always, always follow directions.

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Tip 5

Follow-up

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Online Resource

http://www.psjd.org/resource_center

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This webinar recorded and stored at:

www.nalp.org/webinars

(Look under “Free Webinars”)

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Questions?

(And hopefully answers...)

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Thanks!

