

Cover & Thank You Letters

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Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency
CalWORKs Employment Services Program

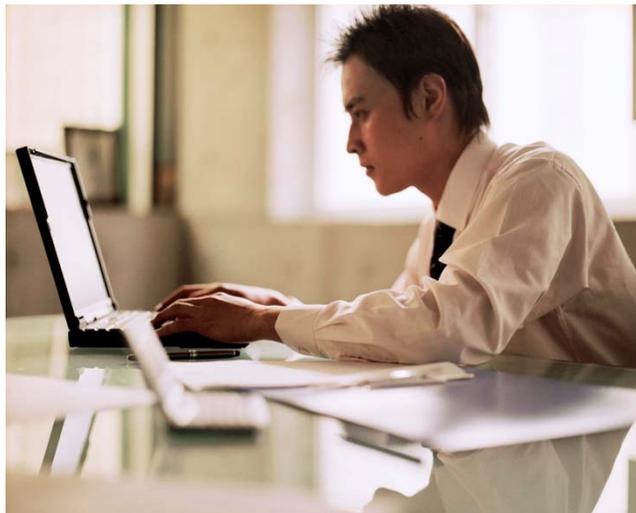


Cover & Thank You Letters

Action Items:

In order to attract the attention of employers, and get the job I want, I need to:

- Learn what a cover letter is, the purpose of sending a cover letter, and much more.
- Learn what basic information to include in a cover letter, and learn the block style cover letter format used commonly in business.
- Learn more about how to write my own block style cover letter and review the five samples provided in this packet.
- Learn about writing and sending an email cover letter and use the two samples to get ideas on writing my own.
- Learn about thank you letters: why it is important to write a thank you letter, when and how a thank you letter may be sent, and much more.
- Learn about the following topics: hand writing a thank you letter, emailing a thank you, how to thank a group of interviewers, and what to do if interviewed during a business lunch or dinner.
- What to say in a thank you letter: What you say and how you say it are even more important than how it is delivered.
- Get ideas for writing my own thank you letter by looking at the four samples provided.



What is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter is your introduction to a possible employer. If the employer requires a resume, you should write a cover letter to provide with your resume. It doesn't matter if the employer didn't ask for a cover letter or you're too busy to write one, it gives you the chance to help sell yourself for the job.

The cover letter and resume together usually provide all the information an employer will use to decide whether you will get an interview.

Your cover letter should show that you can think clearly and write well. Your cover letter should also show a connection between the skills listed on your resume and the needs of the employer.

Last, a cover letter should not just restate what is on your resume, but point out how your skills and background match the needs of the job, and can also show that you have done research and know something about the company and how it operates.

- **Address the letter to a certain person.** If you do not have a name, call the organization and ask for the name and title of the person who should receive your letter.
- **Limit the letter to one page.** Keep it simple and to the point. A cover letter should have three to four paragraphs, with the longest one being the middle one or two and the shortest one being the last paragraph.
- **Spelling and grammar must be perfect.** People have a hard time seeing the mistakes in their own writing, so ask someone else to proofread the cover letter for you. Be careful when using spell checks as mistakes can happen. For example: one cover letter writer wrote that "referees are available on request" instead of writing "references" are available upon request.
- **Research the organization carefully.** Show in your cover letter that you like and understand what the organization does (its purpose). Remember to name the position for which you are applying and why you want to work for that company. Think about the skills needed to do the job you are applying for; then talk about the skills and experience you have that you think would interest the reader.
- **Do not add images or cartoons to a cover letter.** It sets an unprofessional tone that doesn't match the purpose of a cover letter.

Cover letters should be tailored to each company you are applying to. You should do enough research to know the interests, needs, and goals of each company, and your letters should show that knowledge.

Content and Format of a Cover Letter

Your name
Street address
City, state, zip code
Your phone number (optional)
E-mail (optional)

Date

Mr. /Ms. Individual's name
Title
Company name
Street address
City, state, zip code

Dear (Ms. or Mr.) Last Name:

Paragraph 1: State why you are writing, how you learned of the organization or job, and give basic information about yourself. If you are writing at the suggestion of someone who knows the addressee, this is a good place to say so. Draw attention to what you know about the company or organization and to your resume.

Paragraph 2: Give examples of how your experiences, skills, and education fit the job and can benefit the company. Use the position description to give you guidance to focus this paragraph.

Paragraph 3 (optional): This paragraph should be used only to describe further what you can bring to the position. It is an extension of the theme of paragraph two.

Paragraph 4: State that you are enclosing your resume. Restate your interest in the position. State your next course of action (e.g., contacting the employer within 7–10 days to check on the status of your application). Thank the reader for his or her attention and consideration. Say that you are looking forward to hearing from the potential employer and provide a phone number and e-mail address where you can be reached.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

Your name (typed)

Enclosure

Basic Cover Letter: Sample 1

Barbara Brown
34 Second Street
Redding, CA 12345

January 16, 2009

Ms. Gail Roberts
Human Resources Director
Direct Sales Department, XYZ Company
Redding, CA 12345

Dear Ms. Roberts:

Your Redding Record Searchlight advertisement for the position of Sales Clerk caught my attention. I was drawn to the ad by my strong interest in sales, merchandising, and providing excellent customer service.

As detailed on my resume, I have worked in sales for many years, and I also have experience in cashiering, designing floor displays, and stocking shelves. Your company is well known for providing high quality merchandise and service. Because of my experience, I can make a direct and immediate contribution to your department.

I have enclosed a copy of my resume, which lists my qualifications and suggests how I might be of service to the XYZ Company. I would like very much to meet with you to discuss your open position for a sales clerk. If you wish to arrange an interview, please contact me at the above address or by telephone at (530) XXX-XXXX.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Barbara Brown

Basic Cover Letter: Sample 2

Carol Fern
74 East Broadway
Red Bluff, CA 12345
530-XXX-XXXX

January 14, 2009

Harold Jones
Sugar Confections
100 Sixth Avenue
Sacramento, CA 12345

Dear Mr. Jones:

Your January 12, 2009 advertisement in the Sacramento Bee appealed to me for two reasons. You plan to open up a new branch of Sugar Confections, and I seek the opportunity to manage a newly-opened store. I am also interested in building my career in the food industry. Therefore, I am submitting my resume in application for the position of Store Manager.

My relevant experience includes three years as a Candy Chef for Sticky Sweets of San Francisco and my current position as assistant Store Manager of Licorice and Lollipops.

I look forward to discussing opportunities at Sugar Confections with you. I will call you next week to make sure you have received my resume and to set up a mutually agreeable time for us to speak.

Yours truly,

(Signature)

Carol Fern

Unemployed? Make Your Cover Letter Work for You!

Tips from the experts on how to write a good cover letter if you have been unemployed or underemployed for a long period of time.

Keep It Positive

- Job candidates should only provide information that creates value to an employer and makes a compelling case for an interview.
- Emphasize your strongest qualifications. Highlight what you can contribute and how this contribution will benefit the employer. Bring out your skills, abilities, education, and experience that will enable you to provide exemplary work for this company.
- Do not add extraneous information about your unemployment.

Fill the Gaps

- Large gaps of unemployment should be addressed with the productive activities you were engaged in while you were not working.
- If you have been idle, now is the time to take action! Some suggestions: upgrade your skills by taking useful classes, secure freelance or part-time work, volunteer for a charitable organization or your child's school, or become active in a professional organization. By doing these activities you keep your current skills fresh, develop new skills, and offer evidence to an employer that you put your unemployed time to good use.

Be Creative, But Honest

- Because unemployment rates have been high in recent years, employment gaps no longer carry the stigma they once did. It is not necessary to explain a few months of unemployment due to something beyond your control, such as a layoff or a business closure.
- It is, however, beneficial to account for a large gap in employment. It's there in your resume and you should explain it. In your cover letter, you can add a line such as "Returning to part- or full-time employment after being a stay-at-home mom [or caring for an ill family member, or completing an intensive course in bookkeeping, etc]. I am now ready to contribute my 8 years experience in _____ to benefit your company." Or, "Since leaving my last job I have been using my skills to contribute to a charitable organization while seeking a full-time position with a reputable company such as yours."
- Consider how your time off has made you a more valuable employee. If you freelanced, what did it teach you about the value of retaining customers/clients? Did it inspire you to move to a new industry or career? If you had a medical challenge, did you use your time between treatments to further your education or training?
- Do not provide too much information on unemployment. Do focus on what you can contribute to their company and how it will benefit them.

The following 2 cover letters incorporate some of these suggestions.

Basic Cover Letter: Sample 3

Jill Johnson
1115 Willow Way
Redding, CA 96001
530-XXX-XXXX
XXXX@yahoo.com

October 16, 2013

John Rodgers
Rodgers Copy Center
1035 Almond Avenue
Redding, CA 96001

Dear Mr. Rodgers:

Your ad for a receptionist caught my attention. I see this position as a potential next step in my professional development. After working for two years in customer service, I took time off from my career to be a stay-at-home mom. I am seeking to return to the work force to offer my customer service and general office skills.

During my time off, I was able to further develop my clerical skills through the clerical block classes at Shasta College. I believe my previous experience, combined with skills learned from recent classes qualify me for the position Rodgers Copy Center is seeking to fill. In addition, I have knowledge of multi-function printers/copiers and experience in various software programs.

If Rodgers Copy Center wants someone with a positive attitude, a good work ethic, and strong customer service skills to join their team, I'm the one! I look forward to hearing from you. Please contact me at your earliest convenience to discuss this opportunity.

My sincere gratitude for your time and consideration.

Regards,

(Signature)

Jill Johnson

Basic Cover Letter: Sample 4

John Smith
2345 Salmon Street
Redding, CA 96001
530-XXX-XXXX
XXXX@gmail.com

November 1, 2013

Charles Wright
Wright Construction Company
1044 Airport Road
Redding, CA 96001

Dear Mr. Wright:

I am responding to the job opening for Construction Laborer. After viewing the job description I find that my work skills and the job requirements may be a good match. In addition, it offers the opportunity I am looking for.

For the past 5 years I have been actively seeking permanent employment. In the meantime, I have had numerous temp jobs through ABC Employment Services. Therefore, my skills are up to date and I can "hit the ground running!" In addition, I have 10+ years experience, an OSHA certification, a valid driver's license, and the physical stamina to contribute to your construction team.

Furthermore, I have an excellent work ethic and a "can-do attitude!" I have the ability to work effectively as a crew member with the goal of completing the job on schedule. My references will testify that I am dependable and stay on the job site until the completion of the project.

I would be happy if you would call me at any time for an interview to discuss my skills that would benefit your company.

I eagerly await your reply.

Regards,

(Signature)

John Smith

Referral Cover Letter: Sample

You may have been referred to a potential employer by a friend or acquaintance. Be sure to mention this mutual contact, by name, up front since it is likely to encourage your reader to keep reading!

March 18, 2009

Mary Smith
110 First Street
Redding, CA 12345
(530) XXX-XXXX

Mr. Henry Plum
General Hospital, Inc.
P.O. Box 345.
Redding, CA 12345

Dear Mr. Plum,

Nancy Jones of Shasta Pathology suggested I contact you regarding the possible Receptionist opening in your firm. She said she spoke to you last Friday and you indicated that you might have an immediate opening for an experienced Medical Receptionist.

The enclosed resume summarizes my last five years of experience as a Medical Receptionist. I am familiar with all aspects of working in a medical office, have extensive computer skills using Windows-based systems, and am proficient with current Microsoft Office products. I am also familiar with spreadsheet programs, such as Excel.

I would be pleased to review my qualifications in more detail during an interview with you. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me.

Thank you for considering my application.

Cordially,

(Signature)

Mary Smith

Email Cover Letter Information

- It is just as important to write an effective cover letter when emailing your resume as it is when mailing your resume. When you're sending an email cover letter, make sure that it is written as well as any other correspondence you send.
- If the job posting asks you to apply via email, include your resume and cover letter as attachments in the format requested (such as PDF or Word). Use a descriptive file name such as "Smith_John_resume" to make it easily identifiable. Write a short message in the email. Be polite, precise, and professional, listing what position you are applying for and where you heard about it.
- Many employers do not accept attachments. You can copy and paste your resume into your email message. Use a simple font and remove any fancy formatting. Simple is best because the employer may not see a formatted messaging the same way you do. Don't send an HTML document.

The Subject Line of Your Message

Make sure you list the position you are applying for in the Subject Line of your email address, so the employer is clear as to what job you are applying for.

Include Your Signature

Include your name with your contact information, so it's easy for the hiring manager to get in touch with you.

Double Check Your Letter

Make sure you spell check and check your grammar and capitalization. They are just as important in an email cover letter as in paper cover letters.

Send a Test Message

Send the message to yourself first. If everything looks good, resend to the employer.



Email Cover Letter: Sample 1

From: klsmith@isp.com
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2009 12:53 PM
To: jhent@VCI.com
Subject: Regional Sales Manager position

Dear Mr. Hent,

Having broken sales records and exceeded sales quotas in all my previous positions, I am an ideal candidate for the regional sales manager position at Dream Vacation Club International.

As the leading sales representative for Travel Club, I developed key sales material, trained new sales reps, and reinvented the way club memberships are sold. My team's revenue was more than double the average for the entire operation.

The vacation industry is dynamic and growing, and I am convinced I can help Dream Vacation Club International grow its reputation and position in the industry.

We should meet to discuss the position. I will contact you in the next 10 days to arrange an interview. Should you have any questions before that time, please feel free to call me at 904-555-1234 or email me. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cordially,

Kevin Lee Smith

3548 West 2nd Street
Redding, CA XXXXX
(530) XXX-XXXX

Email Cover Letter: Sample 2

Mr. William Jackson
Employment Manager
Acme Maps, Inc.
1234 Jefferson Parkway
Red Bluff, CA XXXXX
jackson@acmemaps.com

Dear Mr. Jackson:

From your company's web site, I learned about your need for a sales representative for Northern California. I am very interested in this position with Acme Maps, and believe that my employment background is appropriate for the position.

I was employed as a sales representative with Food Vend, Inc., a vending machine snack food distribution company that serves California's northern coastal cities. I increased my sales volume and profit margin appreciably while at Food Vend, and I would like to repeat that success in the map distribution industry. I think that I could apply my knowledge and experience to the map marketing industry.

I look forward to talking with you regarding the sales opportunities with Acme Maps. Within the next week I will contact you to confirm that you received my email and resume and to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Lynn A. Johnson
123 Hunt Club Lane, #1
Blacksburg, VA 12345
(540) XXX-XXXX
lajohnson@my.edu

Resume attached as MS Word document (*assuming company web site instructed applicants to do this*).



Thank You Letter (also called a Follow-up Letter)

Thank You: Two important words! Send a thank you letter to each person who interviewed you.

A Thank You Letter:

- Makes a good impression and helps make you stand out in the mind of the interviewer.
- Shows that you are courteous and professional.
- Gives you a chance to restate your good points.
- Lets you say something important you forgot to state during the interview.

Writing a Thank You Letter:

- Thank you letters may be typed on 8 1/2" X 11" paper or handwritten on a note card.
- Be sincere - most people can sense when you aren't being honest.
- Include details from the interview.
- Address your letter to the person who interviewed you, and not to the company or business.
- Write clearly and check for mistakes; remember that spelling and grammar are important.
- Keep the letter short (no more than 3 paragraphs), and don't stress over writing it.
- Close the thank you letter by restating your interest in the job.
- Write and deliver the thank you letter as soon as possible (within 24 hours, but no more than two days after the interview).
- Mailing is the most common method of delivery, but you may also hand-deliver your thank you letter (be sure to put your letter in an envelope and clearly address it to the person or persons who interviewed you.)
- Thank you letters may be emailed under limited circumstances (Thank You Letter – More Information on next page).

Thank You Letter - More Information

Handwriting a Thank You Letter

A thank you letter can be handwritten on a simple note card. Some employers like handwritten thank you notes because they see a sample of your handwriting. If your interview was a fairly informal process and/or you felt comfortable with your interviewer, a handwritten note may be fine.



Emailing a Thank You Letter

When is an email thank you letter appropriate? When an employer tells you they prefer to communicate using email or if you have applied for a job, scheduled an interview, or been interviewed for a job using email. You may send an email thank you letter as soon as you complete the interview. Be sure to follow-up by mailing or personally delivering a typed or handwritten thank you letter. One advantage to sending an email thank you letter is that it will remind the interviewer of your name soon after the interview.

Before sending an email thank you letter, print it out and proofread it for spelling, punctuation, and grammar mistakes. Also, never use ALL CAPITAL letters or acronyms such as "ASAP." Always write the words out, as in, "I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible."

If you write an email late in the day or anytime when you are tired, do not send it. Wait until the next morning when you are rested, and do a final review prior to hitting the "send" button.

Remember, a thank you letter should be limited to three short paragraphs (no longer than one page). Don't send anything via email that you would not print out on personal letterhead and send via regular mail.

Lastly, if you are not certain an employer is email friendly, use traditional mail or hand deliver your thank you letter.

Group Thank You Letters

What if you were interviewed by several people? Are individual thank you letters appropriate or should you write a "group" letter? Take the extra time and send an individual thank you letter to each person who interviewed you.

Lunch or Dinner Interview Thank You Letters

When dining and interviewing, be sure to thank each person you spend time with. Thank them for the meal and for taking the time to discuss the position and the company with you. Follow-up with a thank you letter.

What to Say in a Thank You Letter

What you say and how you say it are even more important than how it is delivered. A standard thank you letter should accomplish several things:

Thank the person for the opportunity to interview with the company.

Talk about some of the details from the interview, such as, "I enjoyed the tour of your company."

In the letter, include any information requested by the interviewer.

Talk about your skills and how they will benefit this employer. This is your chance to say, "The job is a good fit for me because of my excellent *customer service* skills [insert your own skills] and my past experience in *retail sales* [insert your area of past experience]."

End your thank you letter by stating your interest in the job, such as, "I am very interested in working for your company, and look forward to hearing from you."

Interviewers can have short memories. A thank you letter is another chance to make you stand out from all of the others who want the same position.

Address all thank you letters in a professional manner (for example, "Dear Mr. Brown"). Never use the person's first name unless they have asked you to do so. If you aren't sure of the correct names, spellings or titles of your interviewers, call the office to double-check. Your efforts will be worth it!

You may think of your thank you letter as a "sales" letter. In other words, you can sell yourself by restating why you want the job, what your job skills and experience are, how you might make a positive contribution to the company, and so on. The thank you letter is the perfect place to talk about anything of importance that your interviewer didn't ask or that you didn't answer as completely, or as well, as you would have liked.

In addition to thanking the person you talked with, the thank you letter restates the fact that you want the job. **Note: Even if you do not want the job, write a thank you letter respectfully withdrawing your application.** You never know what the future holds so you want to leave a good impression.



SAMPLE 1: Handwritten THANK YOU LETTER

Thank You

January 14, 2009

Dear Mr. Jones:

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to interview for the position of Help Desk Technician. I enjoyed the tour of your company and believe I would fit right in.

The position would be a great opportunity for me to use my skills and experience in computer programming and troubleshooting.

I am very interested in working for your company, and I look forward to hearing from you in the hope that you have reached a favorable decision.

Sincerely

Bob Turner

(530) XXX-XXXX

SAMPLE 2: Typed THANK YOU LETTER

Gary Gray
234 Main Street Apt. A-1
Redding, CA 12345
(530) XXX-XXXX

January 3, 2009

Ms. Grace Green
Best Rest Hotel
12345 East 4th Avenue
Redding, CA 12345

Dear Ms. Green:

Thank you for the time you gave to interview me for the janitorial position. I enjoyed learning more about the housekeeping operation at the hotel.

The interview convinced me that I am well-suited for this position. As I mentioned during my interview, I have janitorial experience, and have been trained to safely handle chemical cleaning products.

I have a strong interest in working for the Best Rest Hotel. I believe we would work well together, and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Gary Gray
(530) XXX-XXXX

SAMPLE 3: Typed THANK YOU LETTER

Brenda Brown
2800 9th Street
Redding, California 12345

January 14, 2009

Walter White
Personnel Department Manager
Healthy Hair Products
150 Lakewood Drive
Redding, California 12345

Dear Mr. White:

Thank you again for the time you gave to interview me for the receptionist position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about your company.

The interview convinced me that my interests and skills fit well with the goals of Healthy Hair Products. As I mentioned during our meeting, I enjoy serving people and giving excellent customer service. My earlier experience as a receptionist and my work as a cosmetologist have prepared me for the position.

I have a strong interest in your company. I believe we would work well together, and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Brenda Brown
(530) XXX-XXXX

SAMPLE 4: Email THANK YOU LETTER

From: Joel.James@isp.com
Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2009 11:36 AM
To: JBrown@insuranceinternational.com
Subject: Thank you for the interview

Jeffery Brown
Insurance International
Redding, CA 12345

Dear Mr. Brown,

Thank you for the time you spent reviewing and discussing my skills for the insurance sales position. I enjoyed learning more about your company and your future plans.

The position sounds very interesting, especially since it would be an opportunity for me to use my retail sales and accounting experience in a new way. As we discussed, my past work experience will fit well with the needs of your insurance company.

I am very interested in the job, and I will call you in a few days in the hope that you have reached a decision favorable to both of us.

Sincerely,

Joel James
Joel.James@isp.com
(530) XXX-XXXX

Sources

What is a Cover Letter?: Information contained on this page was adapted from material found on the following web sites in 2/11: Center for Communication Practices at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (<http://www.ccp.rpi.edu>), The American University Career Center (<http://www.american.edu/careercenter/index.cfm>), Palladian International, LLC (<http://www.palladianinternational.com>), and California State University Chico (<http://www.csuchico.edu/careers/students-alumni/job-search-tools/resumes-letters/cover-letters.shtml>).

Content and Format of a Cover Letter: Information contained on this page was adapted from material found on the following web site in 2/11: The American University Career Center (<http://www.american.edu/careercenter/Cover-Letters.cfm>).

Basic Cover Letter: Sample 1: Information contained on this page was adapted from material found on the following web sites in 2/11: Center for Communication Practices at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (<http://www.ccp.rpi.edu>) and Canada's National Adult Literacy Database (<http://www.nald.ca/clr/flemings/commun/lbs5/cover/page5.htm>).

Basic Cover Letter: Sample 2: Information contained on this page was adapted from material found on the following web sites in 2/11: Center for Communication Practices at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (<http://www.ccp.rpi.edu>) and Canada's National Adult Literacy Database (<http://www.nald.ca/clr/flemings/commun/lbs5/cover/page5.htm>).

Referral Cover Letter: Sample: Information contained on this page was adapted from material found on the following web sites in 2/11: Quintessential Careers (http://www.quintcareers.com/sample_referral_letter.html) and About.Com (<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverletters/a/aa030401b.htm>).

Email Cover Letter Information: Information contained on this page was adapted from material found on the following web sites in 2/11: Quintessential Careers (http://www.quintcareers.com/sample_email_cover_letter.html), eHow (http://www.ehow.com/how_2068852_write-email-cover-letter.html), and About.com (<http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/coverletters/qt/emailcover.htm>).

Information contained on this page was adapted from material found on the following web sites in 2/11: Quintessential Careers (http://www.quintcareers.com/sample_email_cover_letter.html) and eHow (http://www.ehow.com/how_2068852_write-email-cover-letter.html).

Source: Information contained in this section was adapted from material found on the following web site in 2/11: Career Services at Virginia Tech (<http://www.career.vt.edu/JobSearchGuide/CoverLetterSamples.html>).

Thank You Letter (also called a Follow-up Letter): Information contained in this document was adapted from material found on the following web sites: Smart Business Resource Center (<http://thesmartcenter.biz/jobseeker/thankyouletters.htm>), About.com (<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/thankyouletters/a/thankyouletters.htm>), Boston College Career Center (<http://www.bc.edu/offices/careers/skills/letters/thanks.html>), Monster.com (<http://career-advice.monster.com/job-interview/following-up/jobs.aspx>), and WriteExpress.com (<http://www.writeexpress.com/thank-you.htm>).

SAMPLE 1: Handwritten THANK YOU LETTER

SAMPLE 2: Typed THANK YOU LETTER

SAMPLE 3: Typed THANK YOU LETTER

SAMPLE 4: Email THANK YOU LETTER

Source: All sample Thank You letters contained in this packet are based on information from various sources and were compiled by CalWORKs Employment Services staff.

Unemployed, Put Your Cover Letter to Work: Information contained on this page was adapted from material found on the following web site in 11/13: <http://career-advice.monster.com/resumes-cover-letters/cover-letter-tips/cover-letter-tips-unemployed/article.aspx>