

# The Summer Public Interest Job Search

## Part One: Cover Letters & Résumés

January 23, 2014

# Welcome!



# The Summer Public Interest Job Search...

## Two-part Webinar Series:

- Today: Cover Letters & Résumés
- Tomorrow (January 24): Interviewing & Networking

# The Summer Public Interest Job Search...

## Presenters:

- Robin Edwards, Administrator of Legal Hiring, The New York County District Attorney's Office
- Barry Taylor, Legal Advocacy Director, Equip for Equality
- Ashley Matthews, NALP
- Christina Jackson, NALP

# 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

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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?

**When can/should your  
resume be more than 1  
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 regarding eligibility for benefits...
  - 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., 13<sup>th</sup> 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 (*HL*), 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 55<sup>th</sup> 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. Edwards:**
- **No: Dear Robin Edwards:**
- **No: Dear Ms. Robin Edwards:**
- **No: Robin Edwards:**
- **No: “Mrs.” (unless self-identified)**

## Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

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

**If you don't have a contact name:**

- Dear Internship Coordinator:
- Dear Hiring Coordinator:
- Dear Hiring Committee Members:

# Cover Letters: Tips & Best Practices

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

**Rule also applies to email notes.**

Dear Ms. Edwards:

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...

**Don't Restate Your 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](http://www.psjd.org/resource_center)

## The Summer Public Interest Job Search

This webinar recorded and stored at:

[www.nalp.org/webinars](http://www.nalp.org/webinars)

(Look under “Free Webinars”)

## The Summer Public Interest Job Search

# Questions?

(And hopefully answers...)

# The Summer Public Interest Job Search...

Thanks!

