

## Creating & Sending Effective Cover Letters

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### A. **Creating An Effective Cover Letter**

- ▶ You should develop a standard, yet flexible letter.
- ▶ Write with a four paragraph maximum in mind, to hit five key points:
  - ▶ Introduction/The Reason for your contact.
  - ▶ The specific interest you have in this particular employer *and* their practice.
  - ▶ Your interest in and/or ties to their geographical area.
  - ▶ Your strengths, attributes & skills that will contribute to the employer's continued success.
  - ▶ Conclusion/resume reference/availability for an interview.

### B. **Your "Baseline" Cover Letter Broken Down**

- ▶ Paragraph 1
  - Brief personal introduction.
  - Lead with a strength/attention-getter ("As a...with...")
  - Personal connections and/or referrals go here.
  - Apply for the position.
- ▶ Paragraph 2
  - Ties to/Interest in specific legal market.
  - Reasons why you are particularly drawn to *this* employer.
- ▶ Paragraph 3
  - Focus is about you, and what you would bring to the table.
  - Tie experiences to tangible, transferrable skills.
- ▶ Paragraph 4
- ▶ Reference enclosed materials.
- ▶ Tell reader when you will be in their city, or about your availability to interview.
- ▶ Thank reader for his/her consideration.

### C. **To Whom Should You Write?**

- ▶ *If position has been formally posted:*
  - Send your application to the listed individual
  - You may send a separate letter to other individuals with whom you "connect"
  - Reference that you have already applied through proper channels
  - You may state an interest in speaking with them further
- ▶ *If the position has not been posted:*
  - Send your application to the designated recruiting coordinator or member of the hiring committee, if listed
  - You may send a separate letter to other individuals with whom you "connect"
  - Reference that you have already applied through proper channels
  - May state an interest in speaking with them further
- ▶ *If the position has not been posted and there is no clear point of contact:*
  - Send application directly to an attorney, with this suggested order of priority:
    - 1<sup>st</sup> – Fellow Duke Law/undergraduate alumnus or other attorney with whom you have a "connection"
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> – Lead attorney in your practice area of interest
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> – Name partner or other senior person within the organization