

# Crafting Your Cover Letter

TLA Annual Conference  
Placement Center  
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1:45 – 2:15



1. **Gather organizational and staff data**
2. **Identify primary and secondary position elements**
3. **List key words from data, website, position description**
4. **Address specific match points to you**
5. **Avoid generic content**
6. **Avoid personal references**
7. **Avoid unreasonable hyperbole**

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## 1. **Gather organizational and staff data**

Use the data you gather in a unique cover letter  
Speak to organizational, location and job ad specifics  
Don't use ALL data and info/if not sure, save for questions in the interview  
Don't make people search for why they should consider you

## 2. **Identify primary and secondary position elements**

Match YOU to the primary elements identified by the employer  
Identify additional/typical primary areas  
Match you to the secondary elements employer  
Identify additional/typical secondary areas

## 3. **List key words from data, website, position description**

Use their language in your cover letter  
Don't use initials or acronyms unique to YOU or the profession, no matter who you think is "getting" the application  
Refer to any needed job or position numbers and use specific job title language to identify what you are applying for

## 4. **Address specific match points to you**

Lead with why you match what they need (don't bury the headline)  
Address your secondary match elements next  
If the location is mentioned in the job ad or is unique address at the close of the letter/introductory piece  
Don't attempt to "engage" the recipient with other personal thoughts  
Don't attempt to elicit support or general interest with other personal needs/don't reveal personal problems

**5. Avoid generic content**

Unless asked as part of the process, don't wax eloquent about the "state of libraries" or "21<sup>st</sup> century anything"

Keep the cover letter under two pages, 1.5 pages

If necessary, refer to other parts of your packet in the cover letter (resume, their application)...but never for primary only secondary or related....primary should always go in the cover letter/no matter the recipient

**6. Avoid personal references**

I have always wanted to live in x. (Austin, because I am a musician., etc)

I need to move back to the area because x. (parents are ill, divorced now, I hate my job.... etc.)

I have x. (allergies, etc.)

Avoid stating needs you may have....if I get the job I can't start until....

**7. Avoid unreasonable hyperbole**

Everyone needs to have a x type of librarian.

I absolutely can't do without .....professional development money...vacation days.

I can only work on these days....

I hear your library is....(not working well, in need of some changes...)

Other?