Public Service Law Cover Letter 101
(rev.1-31-13)

The cover letter should have:
 An eye-catching opening paragraph.
 Describe your specific and relevant skills and experiences.
 Show you know who they really are.
 Demonstrate connection between them and you.

The Framework:
 1 page
 No smaller than 11 point font
 Garamond or Times New Roman
 4-5 paragraphs

Opening Paragraph:
 Identify who you are
 State what you’re applying for and when
 Briefly explain what is it about the organization/agency and its work that you’re specifically interested in a why
 State what you have to offer to help further their work
 No more than 3-4 sentences.

Example of an opening paragraph...
As a first year law student at the University of Washington who previously tutored youth in detention centers, I see a position with Team Child as the perfect opportunity to use my newly acquired legal skills to work with the population most of concern to me – young people at risk. Please accept this letter and the enclosed résumé and writing sample as my application to work with your agency this summer.

The heart of it/ Paragraphs 2 and 3:
 Elaborate on your knowledge of the types of issues the agency/organization works on
 Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence that makes a claim about one of your particular skills set that the employer is likely looking for
 Back up that claim with specific examples of personal and/or professional experiences or anecdotes
 Describe a relevant professional challenge and how you overcame it

Example of 2nd or 3rd paragraph
While raising awareness around civil liberties at the law school, my time at the Pierce County Department of Assigned Counsel (DAC) has given me the skills to do the hands-on work of such legal advocacy. For example, early on in my time at the DAC, one of the municipal court attorneys needed research for a DUI case, something I had not had much exposure to yet. She needed the information within the hour. I was able to quickly and effectively research the issue and organize it into a memo that she could comprehend easily. That work allowed her to succeed in her motion to change the jury instructions in her client’s favor. I think that ability to “work smart” under rigorous demands is important regardless of the setting.

Summary & Contact Info/ Paragraph 4/5:
 Reiterate your interest, passion and commitment and experience in or transferable skills related to their work

I look forward to having an opportunity to meet with you and discuss how I can contribute to your work. I can be reached at smartypantslawstudent@uw.edu or (206) 555-5678. Thank you for your consideration.