

# Network to Work -

March 2019 – Cover Letters

# STAFF AGENDA & GUIDE

2 ½ hours

## 1. Meeting Set Up

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- **Align tables in the shape of a U** – lets you reach all participants
- **Put materials on a table at the entrance.** Participants should take as they arrive. Include:
  - Meeting Agenda and Resource Materials
  - Blank participant timesheets and Job Search Activity Logs
  - Copies of the meeting norms / rules of behavior
  - Informational materials including A4TD SCSEP one-pagers, DOL workshop schedules, job listings, etc.
- **Project A4TD Portal for arriving participants to see while settling in.**
- **When participants arrive:**
  - Have them sign the “**NTW Meeting Sign-In Sheet- consolidated – rev. 2018 04 26**” – blank one found in each subregion’s training folder (example path below)

(Y:) ▶ VPN ▶ ME - MWRC ▶ ME - East ▶ ME - East 4 ▶ 7 - Training ▶ Network To Work Meeting ▶

**AFTER THE MEETING, REMEMBER TO:**

- **Scan the completed Sign-In Sheet** *back into* the “7 – Training > Network to Work Meeting” folder (see above) in the VPN.
- **Enter the attendance information from the NTW Meeting Sign-In Sheet** into the “**NTW Meeting Attendance & JSAL Summary**” spreadsheet found in each subregion’s Reports folder (example path below):

(Y:) ▶ VPN ▶ ME - MWRC ▶ ME - East ▶ ME - East 4 ▶ 6 - Reports ▶ NTW Meeting Attendance & JSAL Summary ▶

## 2. Welcome, Introductions and Follow up

20 Minutes

- **Be welcoming yet also assertive – take charge as the meeting leader.**

- Greet participants warmly as they arrive.
- As the meeting begins, if necessary, ask them to settle down. (Refer to meeting norms if necessary).
- Remind them to turn off cell phones, respect speakers and refrain from sidebar conversations.



- **SAY** something like:

*“Welcome everyone to our Network to Work meeting. Our goal with these meetings is to provide information and resources to help you with your professional development and job search. We also want to give you a chance to engage, share and collaborate with each other.*

*Today we’ll be covering the topic of Cover Letters (and how it can help in the job search process). We’ve got a lot to cover. So that everyone can get the most from this meeting, please pay attention and raise your hand if you have a question or comment.”*

- **Review the Agenda and All Handouts with the Participants**

- Ask participants to keep their agenda in front of them
- Remind them to keep agendas and handouts in their folder or binder, and bring it to every meeting.
- Throughout the meeting, point out where you are in the agenda.



- **Participant Introductions:**

- **PROVIDE AN EXTRA WELCOME** to anyone new to the meeting.
- **ASK Participants TO INTRODUCE THEMSELVES AND SHARE:**
  - Their host agency
  - Their job goal

- **Brief Group Sharing / Discussion:**

**SAY:**

- *Last month we asked you to:*
  - Use the Resource Activity, “Writing your Elevator Speech”, to come up with a draft message you can use in your networking activities.
  - Attend a career fair and apply the tips you have learned today.
  - Come to today’s meeting prepared to share your speech and your experience at a career fair.



**ASK / SAY:** “Who will share?”

### 3. A Bit about SCSEP

5 Minutes

- **ASK FOR A VOLUNTEER** to explain his or her understanding of what SCSEP is all about.
  - *If you can't get anyone to do this, then proceed with the questions below.*
- **OR CALL ON A PARTICIPANT** to answer each of the following questions (a different participant per question). Focus on newer participants:
  - *"What does "SCSEP" stand for?"*
    - Senior Community Service Employment Program
  - *"Where do program funds come from?"*
    - This is a federal program funded through the U.S. Department of Labor. A4TD is one of 13 organizations nationwide to receive grant funds from USDOL.
  - *"What's the objective of the SCSEP program?"*
    - To help older workers receive **training** that will lead to employment.
    - It's a transitional jobs training program, not an employment program. You are in training, not in a job.
  - *"What's your goal as a SCSEP participant?"*
    - To receive training, develop skills and become job ready.
    - To look for and find a job.



### 4. We Celebrate You! Participant Success

5 Minutes

- **ANNOUNCE & congratulate** any participants who in February 2019:
  - completed an off-site training course / workshop or passed a KLS assessment, OR
  - became "job ready"
- **HAND OUT CERTIFICATES** (Remember, you are to create these certificates.)



### 5. Miscellaneous Matters

15 Minutes

- Use this time to share important news or information with your participants that isn't covered elsewhere in this meeting agenda.

### 6. Employer Guest Speaker

25 Minutes

- **INTRODUCE the Speaker.** (An employer speaker should discuss **Cover Letters** OR **one of our IEP training tracks**, and ideally also be knowledgeable of the job market.)



○ Presentation should be 15 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of questions and answers.)

● **Please send speaker information to:**

- VT: Sean/Wayne                      ○ PA: Jason                      ○ CT: Sean
- ME: Mike or Garret                ○ NY: Joanne / Jason / Katie

<b>7. Job Readiness Topic – Cover Letters:</b>	<b>45 Minutes</b>
--	-------------------

● **PART 1 – INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:** Find the Errors (10 minutes)



- **GIVE participants the “Find the Errors” activity handout.** Give them 5 minutes to review it and circle errors. Then ask participants to share what they found.
  - NOTE: The CMPA version of the activity highlights the mistakes.
- **ASK participants:** “What kind of impression do you think this letter will make?”

● **PART 2 – GROUP Q & A and DISCUSSION** (10 minutes)



- **ASK participants the following questions.** Capture and discuss their answers
  - “Why is a cover letter important?”
  - “What is the most important information to share in a cover letter?”
  - “What challenges have you had with writing a cover letter?”
  - “Can you share an example of a cover letter element that got a great response?”

● **PART 3 –DISCUSSION OF RESOURCE DOCUMENT – Part 1** (20 minutes)



- **CMPA READS the following** to introduce the topic of Cover Letters:

*“A cover letter is an important part of your job application. Sometimes, employers require a cover letter be submitted with your resume. Other times, a cover letter is optional. In either case, a well-crafted cover letter can boost your application for a job. A sloppy or poorly written letter, however, can also cost you an interview.*

*While recruiters often overlook cover letters and do their initial candidate sort by looking at resumes, it is important to remember that the hiring manager is quite likely to read the cover letter. Therefore, it’s worth the effort to write a good one because what a hiring manager sees in a great cover letter is an applicant who is willing to go the extra mile to make a good impression. A well-written cover letter gives you the opportunity to frame your background so that employers draw the right conclusions about you and your qualifications. (continued on next page)*



Many job seekers are challenged by writing a cover letter. Cover letters make demands that are difficult to meet. Many job seekers don't feel comfortable writing about themselves. Others aren't confident writing in general. So today we're going to cover the basics of writing a cover letter with some examples of ways to make yourself stand out."

- **REFER participants to the Resource Document #1**, "The Ins and Outs of Writing a Cover Letter". Specifically, have them TURN to Page 5, to the "example of a good, basic cover letter".



- **Then, the CMPA should REVIEW and DISCUSS** the "basic content for a cover letter", elements #1 – #9, found on Page 3 through Page 5.
  - **POINT OUT:** elements #1 - #7 correspond to the numbered paragraphs of the "example of a good, basic cover letter" found on Page 5.
- When discussing element #3 ("**Write a strong first paragraph**"), **REFER participants** to Page 6 and the section called "**Attention Grabbing Ways to Begin a Cover Letter**".
  - **CMPA SAYS:** "Traditional cover letter wisdom tells you to start a cover letter with something to the effect of: 'Dear Sir or Madam, I am writing to apply for the position of Customer Service Representative with the Thomas Company'. This is an acceptable way to start your cover letter. However, there are other ways to open your cover letter that will truly capture the attention of the reader. Let's look at some examples."



- Have various **PARTICIPANTS READ** the bulleted items on Pages 6 and 7.
- **FOSTER DISCUSSION** as you review all of these items and bulleted examples, and answer any questions.

- **PART 3 –DISCUSSION OF RESOURCE DOCUMENT – Part 2** (5 minutes)
  - *IF TIME ALLOWS*, REVIEW "What Should be Left Out of a Cover Letter" on page 8.

- **Deepen Your Understanding -**

- *During the next month please:*

- Read section "**C. - Cover Letters for Older Workers**" on Pages 9 and 10 of the **Resource Document #1**".
- Review **Resource Document #2, "Additional Cover Letter Guidance"**.
- Write down one or two of your best skills that you would like to promote to prospective employers. Then write down a specific example of how you have used that skill in the past to make a positive impact at work.
- Come to the April meeting prepared to share you chosen skills and examples of those skills in action.



## 8. Workplace Safety Video

5 Minutes

- **Topic:** “Eye Safety – The 20/20/20 Rule – Computer Vision Syndrome” (1:51)

(Note: Hold the CTRL button and then click on the link below to launch the safety video)



Website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hwZv36JMU>

- **SAY:** “Watch this video for important information about eye safety and computer use.”

## 9. Jobs in the Area / Peer to Peer Support & Sharing 10 Minutes

- **Staff - SHARE job contacts /** potential opportunities including contact information.
  - Please bring job listings that match our participants’ training tracks. Remember our participant-focused model.
  - Encourage participants to apply because the opportunity matches a participant’s job goal.



- **INVITE Participants to share:**

- Job contacts and opportunities they are aware of.
- Any wisdom or insight they have gained from their own job search.
- Something learned at their Host Agency or at an off-site training / workshop
- Any experience they had in being contacted or interviewed by an employer



**Use this time as an opportunity for participants to support and encourage one another based on their own experience.**

## 10. Employment Portfolio

10 Minutes

- **SAY:** “While you are becoming “job ready” through your training, we also want you to become “interview ready” by developing your Employment Portfolio. You should gather together in one place:
  - Copies of your resume and general cover letter (you may have different versions)
  - Copies of any letters you have sent out
  - Certificates of completion for trainings you have taken
  - A list of your current references, with their contact information
  - A list of your community service and volunteer activities
  - A letter of reference from your host agency supervisor



*“Each time we meet with you to review your IEP we will also discuss your Employment Portfolio. In the meantime, we expect you to be pulling together its components.”*

- **REMIND Participants:** At an interview, components of your **Employment Portfolio** will:
  - Help you make a good first impression;
  - Present your best self and best work to an employer;
  - Demonstrate your professionalism and seriousness about the job hunt.

## 11. Parting Notes and Housekeeping Items 🎵

5 Minutes



tell

- Associates for Training and Development will follow up with you each quarter for a period of 15 months after you leave the program to check on your status and to help you get or maintain a job.
- If you are asked by your host agency to do any tasks or duties that are not outlined in your IEP or Training Assignment Description, please notify your local Training Center staff immediately.
- Remember, you are not allowed to drive as part of your training. If you are asked to drive, please notify your local Training Center staff immediately.
- **Timesheet** Reminder:
  - When recording the Network to Work meeting information on your timesheet, the “# of Off-site Training Hours” should be 4.
  - In the “Explanation of Offsite Training Hours”, write “Network to Work Meeting”
  - You cannot train more than 8 hours on any single day, even a day with a Network to Work meeting.
  - **Remember to print your name and host agency on the top line of the timesheet.**
- **The April meeting date is \_\_\_\_\_.**
- Do you have a **question or suggestion**?
  - Please email us at “[suggestions@a4td.org](mailto:suggestions@a4td.org)”; we value your feedback!

***How can the Associates for Training and Development staff help you?***

## 12. Conclusion of Meeting

- Ask participants if they have any questions.
- Remind participants again of the date of next month’s meeting.
- Thank everyone for coming and wish them a good week.
- Meet with job ready participants who didn’t turn in a Job Search Activity Log.