THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN WRITING A COVER LETTER:

1. A cover letter is an opportunity to talk about yourself and tell your story – the résumé also serves this function. Therefore, the more important purpose of your cover letter is to talk about your interest in the position, your understanding of the organization, and how you think your passions, skills, and abilities can be a good fit with the organization.

2. In your address heading, include the organization’s contact information (which is many times listed on the job description/announcement) – also include your personal contact information (which could include your phone number and physical and e-mail addresses).

3. If possible, your formal greeting line should NOT read “to whom it may concern:” That is fairly generic and your goal should be to be as specific as possible given the information the organization provides in their job description/announcement. Don’t be afraid to contact the organization and ask to whom you should address your cover letter.

4. Do your best to engage the reader. Imagine that you are the reviewer and you are reading 50-plus cover letters and applications. What could make your application stand out? Identify any minor mistakes that can cause you to stay in “the pack” (e.g. informal greeting, grammatical and spelling errors, etc.).

5. Do your research on the organization. If they have a website, visit it to learn about the organization. Do everything to enhance your knowledge of the organization.

6. Include experiences (e.g. personal, academic, work, volunteer) that are meaningful and relevant for your reviewer to consider when thinking about your fit with their needs.

7. Highlight any specific skills or abilities that you think are important (e.g. if the organization mentions that they prefer Spanish fluency and you happen to be fluent - mention that).
8. Thank them for their consideration.

9. Include a digital signature if you are sending by e-mail or just sign it if you are sending it by ground mail or fax.

10. Review your DRAFT cover letter and check for grammatical and spelling errors. Ask a friend to review your DRAFT cover letter and provide you with feedback.