

GET THE JOB

Asking for a Recommendation Letter

Who to Ask, What to Say and How to Follow Up

A well-written recommendation letter can give your job application a valuable edge — especially in competitive fields or when you're trying to change industries. But for many job seekers, the hardest part isn't writing the résumé. It's asking someone else to vouch for them.

The good news? Most people are happy to help if they're asked the right way. With a little planning and a respectful approach, you can request a strong letter without feeling awkward.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PERSON

Start by identifying someone who knows your work well and can speak positively about your skills, reliability and character. This could be a former supervisor, professor, coworker or even a client — anyone who's seen you in action and can provide specific examples.

Ideally, the person should be familiar with the type of job you're applying for or at least understand your professional strengths. A generic letter from someone with an impressive title isn't as helpful as a thoughtful one from someone who knows you well.

MAKE IT EASY FOR THEM

When you reach out, explain why you're requesting the letter and what kind of opportunity you're pursuing. Be clear about the deadline and offer to provide helpful materials, like your résumé, job description or a few key

accomplishments they might mention.

For example, you could say: "I'm applying for a role in nonprofit communications and would really value a recommendation from you. I've attached a copy of the job posting and my updated résumé in case it's helpful."

Give them plenty of time—at

least a week or two if possible — and be gracious, even if they're unable to help.

SAY THANK YOU — AND STAY IN TOUCH

Once the letter is submitted, be sure to send a sincere thank-you. A short note or email can go a long way toward showing your appreci-

ation. If you get the job (or even an interview), it's a nice gesture to share the update.

Recommendation letters are a favor, not a requirement. When you make the request thoughtfully and follow through with gratitude, you'll leave a strong impression — before the employer even reads a word.



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