LEGAL ACTION CENTER

How to Gather Evidence of Rehabilitation

How can you help convince an employer, landlord, government agency, or other decision maker to give you a fair chance when you have an arrest or conviction record?

One way is to show details about your accomplishments and positive experiences since your most recent conviction.

Evidence that you have done any of the below activities can help you show "rehabilitation." Rehabilitation includes positive steps you have taken since the date of your most recent offense.

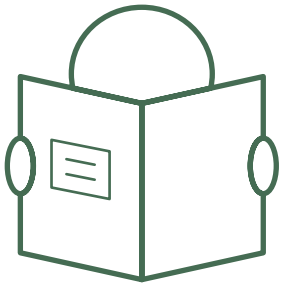
SCHOOL

Have you been in school? If so, try to get:

- a transcript

AND

- a letter from a teacher or school administrator who can truthfully say that you:
  - » were in school, are in school, or completed school and for how long
  - » had great attendance and punctuality
  - » had excellent grades, and/or
  - » are motivated to learn and get ahead in life.



JOB TRAINING

Have you attended a job training program? If so, get proof of your participation. Try to get a letter from a program supervisor or administrator, if that person can truthfully say that you:

- participated or are now participating and for how long you had or have had great attendance and punctuality
- are motivated to learn and get ahead in life
- have learned useful skills to apply to a job, and/or get along well with others.

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EMPLOYMENT

Can you show that you have worked successfully? If so, try to get letters from as many jobs as you can from a supervisor or another person who worked with you and can truthfully say:

- what the job was, how long you worked there and what your job responsibilities were
- how well you performed your job
- whether you were promoted
- that you had an excellent attendance record and came to work on time, and
- that you are motivated, responsible and get along well with others.

LETTERS FROM CLERGY

If you play a leadership role in your community and volunteer, ask your priest, minister, imam, rabbi or spiritual leader to write a letter on your behalf saying so.

CERTIFICATE OF RELIEF FROM DISABILITIES OR CERTIFICATE OF GOOD CONDUCT

For more information, read the Legal Action Center's booklet Lowering Barriers or watch the Certificates of Relief and Good Conduct videos. Both are available on our website at **lac.org/resources**.

LETTER FROM YOUR PAROLE OR PROBATION OFFICER

If your parole or probation officer can say the following things truthfully, ask him/her to write a letter commenting on your:

- negative drug tests (ideally for at least 12 months), compliance with all requirements of parole or probation, and/or
- positive outlook and exceptional motivation.

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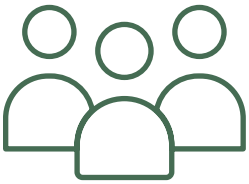
LETTERS FROM YOUR VOLUNTEER WORK

If you have volunteered for a school, nonprofit organization or other group, try to get a letter from a responsible person saying that you:

- are responsible
- have made a good contribution to the work of the program, and/or are dedicated to your volunteer work.

For tips on what makes a great letter of recommendation, read LAC's resource Crafting an Effective Letter of Reference for an Individual with a Conviction Record, available at **lac.org/resources**.

Another way to show rehabilitation is by writing a personal statement. This is an opportunity to describe in your own words your journey since the offense, including your accomplishments and what you are proud of. For information on writing a successful personal statement, read LAC's resource Crafting an Effective Personal Statement, which is available at **lac.org/resources**. You can also call LAC to get individual advice from an LAC staff member.



COUNSELING OR SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAM

You may want to show that you completed or are now in an addiction, mental health or other program to address issues that led to your involvement with the criminal legal system.* Try to get a letter saying that you:

- had or have great attendance
- had negative drug tests (ideally for at least 6-12 months), showed excellent motivation and desire to change
- fully participated in programs
- got along well with others
- understood the causes of your past behavior and were committed to positive growth
- were not a risk to the safety of others, and/or
- no longer associated with the peers/friends who had a negative influence.

If you have a disability (for example, addiction) that prevented you from working while you were in the program, make sure the person writing the letter explains this. You will need to sign a consent form.

*This is sensitive information that may not be appropriate to share in all cases. Call the Legal Action Center to discuss this decision with one of our staff members.

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