

DEVELOPING REHABILITATION EVIDENCE INFORMATION PACKET

This information packet will help you learn what should be included in your portfolio demonstrating rehabilitation, how to gather evidence of support, and how to ask for a recommendation letter/letter of support.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR PORTFOLIO

- 1 - 2 page Resume
- List of accomplishments while inside prison
- List of accomplishments since you were released from prison
- Educational achievements
 - Proof of enrollment
 - Transcripts
 - Schooling attendance
- Certificates (work related, volunteer services, trainings completed)
- Program Attendance/Progress Report (e.g. Substance Abuse Program)
- Speaking Engagements
- Community Service work
- Projects you are working on/have completed
- Church Involvement
- Offer for Hire(s) of employment
- Hobbies (e.g. recreational sports league)
- Involvement with children's class/school (e.g. volunteer activities, teacher/parent meetings, participation in school events)
- Family support (photos)
- Therapy Attendance/Letter of Progress
- Military Records
- Letters of Support & Character + Fitness References
 - Family Members
 - Employers
 - Community members (church, public service)
 - Parole Officer
 - Sponsor Letters

HOW TO GATHER EVIDENCE OF REHABILITATION

How can you convince an employer, landlord, government agency, or other authority to give you a fair chance when you have a criminal record?

One way is to show details about the positive changes you have made since your post recent conviction.

Evidence that you have done any of the activities listed below will help you prove “rehabilitation” you may need. Rehabilitation includes positive steps you have taken since the date of your last conviction (or the date you were arrested).

Activities demonstrating Rehabilitation

● **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 the program supervisor or administrator, if that person can truthfully say that you:

- Participated or are now participating and for how long
- Had or have 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.

- **Employment**

Can you show that you have worked successfully? If so, try to get letter 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 and how long you worked there
- 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
- That you are motivated, responsible, and get along well with others

- **Certificate of Relief from Disabilities or Certificate of Good Conduct**

These certificates help show your rehabilitation. If you have no more than one felony conviction and any number of misdemeanors, you might be eligible for a Certificate of Relief from Disabilities. If you have more than one felony, you might be eligible for a Certificate of Good Conduct. For more information, read the Legal Action Center's booklet, Lowering Criminal Record Barriers, which you can download at lac.org/resources/criminal-justice-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

- **Letter 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.

- **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

- **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 deal with the problem that led to your involvement with the criminal justice system. Try to get a letter from your counselor, therapist, or doctor to truthfully say 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.

RECOMMENDATION LETTER/ LETTER OF SUPPORT

Tips

- Select people who will give you a great endorsement and who know you well (people who like you, know your work, and can speak highly of you).
- Ask early: give the individual around **one month** to write the letter
- After you have received the letter, make sure to reach out and write a brief thank you note to the individual for taking the time to write you a letter.

What to include in a Reference Request Letter (after initial yes)

- An introduction to the individual explaining why you need the reference letter (e.g. information about the position you are applying for)
- Why you think that person is in a good position to give you a great reference letter
- The deadline to which you need the recommendation (tip: set the deadline a week in advance in case of delays)
- Short bio of yourself

Sample Support Request Email

Dear _____,

I am applying for _____ position. Since I have been working in this position as a _____ for one year now, I believe you have a solid understanding of my abilities and work ethic. If you are available and feel confident about writing a strong recommendation letter on my behalf commenting on my capabilities and character, I would greatly appreciate it. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable writing a letter of recommendation on my behalf, I completely understand.

I'd like to make this as easy as possible for you. I've attached a list of many different projects we have worked on together in 2021 and 2022. Thank you so much for your time and efforts. I will make myself available to answer any questions you may have.

Best regards,

Accomplishments While Inside	Evidence
Example: Got GED	Diploma

Educational Achievements	Evidence
Example: Enrolled in school	Letter from Teacher

Work Experience	Evidence
Example: ARC Intern, job training program	Letter from supervisor

Community Service	Evidence
Example: ARC Beach Cleaning Days	Letters/ Pictures

Speaking Engagements	Evidence
Example: County Board of Supervisors	Letters/ Pictures

Community Involvement	Evidence
Example: Church Group, Recreational Sports League	Letters/Pictures

Other	Evidence
Example: Family relationships	Letters Pictures

