



# **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

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- 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

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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](http://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

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### 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,

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## LETTER OF SUPPORT INFORMATION PACKET

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This information packet will help you learn how to gather letters of support and know what should be in letters of support.

### **What is a Letter of Support?**

A letter of support is written by someone who knows you to support your request to the court. You may need a letter of support for different reasons. But generally, the letter of support is positive and shows the court that you deserve what you are requesting the court to do.

### **Who Should Write Your Letter of Support?**

Anyone who knows you and can write about you can write a letter of support. It is best to find someone that has known you for some years, or has seen changes in your life, or is well known in the community. Some examples include:

- Members or leaders of your church or faith community
- Former or current employer
- Mentor
- Teacher or Professor
- Close friends and family members
- Community Leader (who knows you personally)



## TEMPLATE FOR LETTER OF SUPPORT

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[LETTERHEAD, IF APPLICABLE]

**FROM:** [Your Name and Address]

**DATE:** [Insert]

**RE:** [Name of Person Seeking Record Cleaning]

**SALUTATION:** Dear Honorable Judge:

**INTRODUCTION:**

Provide a brief explanation of who you are, how you know the person seeking record cleaning and for how long. Explain what you do for a living including your title and the length of employment in that position. Describe in one sentence what kind of person the person seeking record cleaning is.

**SECOND PARAGRAPH:**

Explain the nature of your relationship and why you believe the person you are supporting should be granted record cleaning.

- What is the nature of your interactions? How do you know them and for how long? How often do you work together / see each other?
- Why do you think this person is rehabilitated and changed? Are there particular factors that were present at the time of the offense that are no longer present (e.g., youth, addiction, etc.)? Have you seen them grow, thrive, or lead a different life?
- Consider pointing out their achievements (e.g, education, work experience, community service, advocacy, speaking engagements, awards, commitment to family) since the conviction to demonstrate how they are a benefit to society.

**THIRD PARAGRAPH:**

Provide an example of how you have seen the person seeking record-cleaning be helpful to others or a personal story of how they have touched you in a meaningful way.

**END PARAGRAPH:**

Keep the closing positive. Close with a polite statement of thanks.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

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