

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 most recent conviction.

Evidence that you have done any of the activities 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).

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
- ▶ 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 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 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, and
- ▶ 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.

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.

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.

