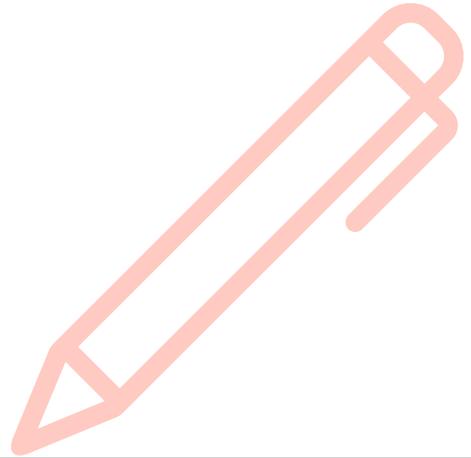


WRITING A LETTER OF EXPLANATION



A letter of explanation can contextualize the barriers to access that may come up as you apply for housing. This strengthens your application by helping a potential landlord see the all of the progress you have made.

BRAINSTORMING

Before you begin writing your letter, reflect on what your goals are. If one of your goals is to secure stable permanent housing, think about what type of housing you need. For example, do you need multiple bedrooms for family?

How will you achieve these goals? How do you get someone to care about your story and give you a chance to secure the housing you need?



WRITING YOUR LETTER

Be transparent and honest about what has happened in the past, but also recognize the positive choices you have made recently as well as what you are doing to maintain your progress in the present. Honor your growth and point to concrete steps you have taken to make changes.

Ex: "I want to be upfront and honest with you, when you run my background check you will find that I have made some poor choices in my past. I have been involved in the criminal justice system, however I am currently making strides to fix my mistakes. I am currently enrolled in Motivational Enhancement Therapy..."

Discuss the strides you are making now to continue sustaining your progress.

Ex:

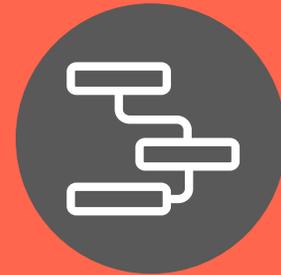
- Befriending people who have a positive impact on your life
- Dedication to sobriety
- Sustainable employment
- Your current support system that's helping you succeed

LETTER STRUCTURE

Paragraph 1: Acknowledge barriers

Paragraph 2: Clarify your financial stability

Paragraph 3: Describe the changes you have made as a person and how you will sustain your progress



REASONABLE ACCOMODATION

If you have been diagnosed with a disability, including Addiction/Substance Abuse Illness, you can request that a landlord make an exception to their screening criteria because the disability has caused a rental barrier that may disqualify the applicant (like poor credit history or a past conviction).

In your letter, be sure to state that you have a documented disability, and acknowledge how your disability contributed to any relevant rental barriers. If applicable, discuss steps you are taking to manage/treat your disability, such as seeking therapy, support groups, etc.

REFERENCE LETTERS OF SUPPORT

In addition to your own letter of explanation, it's a good idea to include additional letters of support from people in your life you can attest to the positive choices you have been making (ex: your parole officer, case manager, and/or any program that support you--Emergence, Lane County Behavioral Health, etc.)



ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

In addition to your own letter of explanation, it's a good idea to include additional letters of support from people in your life you can attest to the positive choices you have been making (ex: your parole officer, case manager, and/or any program that support you--Emergence, Lane County Behavioral Health, etc.)