

## SAMPLE LETTER WITH INSTRUCTIONS

To the City Hall,

*Q: Who are you writing for? If you are formerly-incarcerated or convicted, write about yourself. But you can write about someone you know. (State your relationship to them, e.g. "I have a close friend, who was last convicted of a DUI about 10 years ago.") What's in your (their) criminal record? And when was your (their) last conviction?*

I have been convicted of multiple offenses in the past. But my last conviction was in 2005. It was a felony drug possession.

*Q: What have you been doing since the last conviction to find a job or housing?*

Since my last conviction, I got my high school diploma and went to college. I also went to school to become a CNA. I submitted my resume with a number of Worksource centers and temporary staffing agencies. I was homeless for a while, but I found a small studio where I now stay with my family.

*Q: How has your criminal record been a barrier to finding a job or housing?*

I was denied a CNA license because of my criminal history. And all employers ask me if I have a conviction. They tell me that they will background check me when I apply for a job. I rarely get past the initial employment application. So the only jobs I've been able to find didn't ask me about my conviction. I don't get a chance to explain to them that I've changed in the last 9 years. Last week, I was denied employment from Acme Co. because of my old records. Just last month, I was turned away from a warehouse job when I told them that I have a felony conviction. And I can't get housing because of my records too.

*Q: What responsibilities do you have now? And why is it difficult for you to meet those responsibilities?*

I have a young daughter that I'm taking care. She's only 9 years old. I don't get food stamp or welfare because of my record. So I don't have money to buy her new clothes or good food. I try my best to give her the best upbringing I can. But it's difficult to do that without stable job or housing.

*Q: What kinds of changes will help them find a job or housing?*

I'd like to have a fair shot at a job and housing. If employers and landlords can't look at my old records, I'd be able to get hired.

Sincerely,

John D.

March 19, 2014



## LOS ANGELES/LONG BEACH

### Letter-Writing Drive

All of Us or None-Los Angeles/Long Beach is collecting letters to share with policy makers in Los Angeles City Hall and Long Beach City Hall, as they consider our proposal for Fair Employment & Housing Policy.

The City Hall may be aware that there are barriers to reentry. But they are *not* aware of what it really means to struggle to make ends meet because of a criminal history record. They don't know that all a father of 3 kids want is to do right by them, struggling day in and day out to put food on the table and a roof over their head—but that his kids suffer because of an old conviction in his background.

And they will *never* know how you and your loved suffer—*unless you tell them*. Now is the time to share your story. Here is how.

1. We strongly encourage you to grab a pen and paper. A hand-written letter has more impact!
2. Look on the other side of this sheet and follow the instructions. The instructions are in a question format. Write each paragraph as if you're answering the question posed for that section. (But don't copy the questions themselves on your letter as you write it.)
3. We encourage you to write your full name at the bottom of the letter. However, you should know that the letter will be publicly shared. If you want to keep your privacy, either write your first name and the first letter of your last name (e.g. John D.) or the first letter of your first name and your last name (e.g. J. Doe). Don't forget to date it.
4. And mail the letter to us. If you can't mail it, fax it. Or scan and email. We'll collect the letters and present them to the City Hall and the Media.

All of Us or None  
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