

The Letter of Explanation

What it is

- Explanation of criminal history
- Accepting responsibility for choices
- Discusses lessons learned from past choices
- An opportunity for you to present yourself in a positive light and to not be defined by your past

Why to use it

- HR perspective – they want to find “an out” if they know you have a record
- Try to prevent the application from being tossed out
- Take control of your job search
- Increase chances of interviewing or hiring
- A way for employers to get to know you

When to use it

- Filling out a job application- do not put “will discuss in interview” on a job application
- Prepare for how you will verbally explain your history in an interview
- Give to a potential employer in an interview after you’ve talked about it

What to say in it

- The complete truth
- Use soft, positive words
- Use your own voice
- Give employer respect and honesty
- Tell them that when they do a background check they will find things
- Tell them what they will find
- Accept responsibility for choices
- Explain any lessons learned, classes taken, new insights, etc.
- Talk about what makes you special – why should they hire you?
- Tell them you are excited about an opportunity to work with them and you look forward to meeting with them

In the letter of explanation do not:

- Say too much about the offense
- Take up more than one page
- Make excuses for choices
- Pass blame
- Create/show a victim mentality