

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To: (Housing Provider, Property Name, Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Re: Requesting an in-person appeal meeting for your denial of my housing application based on criminal screening information**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,  
(Name of Property Manager/Landlord)

I \_\_\_\_\_ am requesting an in-person meeting to appeal  
(Your Name)  
your denial of my application for housing within \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Name or Address of Property)

It appears that my application was denied due to the results of a criminal background screening. In advance, please provide me with a copy of: 1) the tenant selection plan (TSP), admissions & continued occupancy policy (ACOP), administrative plan, or, in the case of private housing, your eligibility requirements; 2) a copy of any documentation used as a basis for your denial; and 3) a copy of my application. If a third party or credit reporting agency provided the criminal screening of my application, please provide a copy of the report you received. Please also provide me with all information I am entitled to receive pursuant to the Fair Credit Reporting Act so that I may obtain such screening information. This information may be sent to me at the mailing address and/or email address provided below my signature. At the appeal meeting, I am prepared to provide: (Check all that apply.)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Character reference(s)     | <input type="checkbox"/> Court document(s) or related records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Former rental reference(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of rehabilitation effort(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employer reference(s)      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                          |

The Fair Housing Act prohibits housing discrimination and housing practices with unjustified discriminatory effects based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status, or disability. On April 4, 2016, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of General Counsel issued guidance on the [“Application of Fair Housing Act Standards to the Use of Criminal Records by Providers of Housing and Real Estate-Related Transactions”](#). HUD’s Guidance notes that extensive racial and ethnic disparities exist within the U.S. criminal justice system; therefore, housing restrictions based on criminal history are likely to disproportionately impact applicants of color, particularly African American or Hispanic applicants and may violate the Fair Housing Act. HUD’s Guidance indicates

housing providers must give an applicant an individualized assessment, a less discriminatory method of tenant screening. Section III of the 2016 HUD guidance states, “a housing provider violates the Fair Housing Act when the provider’s policy or practice has an unjustified discriminatory effect, even when the provider had no intent to discriminate”.

HUD’s 2016 guidance further outlines:

- Housing providers must **demonstrate that their policy or practice(s) is justified and serves to achieve a substantial, legitimate, nondiscriminatory interest**. That interest may not be hypothetical or speculative and must be proven through reliable evidence. Bald assertions based on generalizations or stereotypes will not be accepted.
  
- Housing providers may violate fair housing laws if they exclude applicants based upon prior arrests not resulting in conviction.
  
- Housing providers **cannot impose a “blanket ban”** that denies housing to applicants convicted for criminal activity without considering mitigating information such as:
  - The facts or circumstances surrounding the criminal conduct
  - The age of the individual at the time of conviction
  - How much time has passed since the criminal activity occurred
  - Evidence of maintained good tenant history (prior to or following conviction)
  - Evidence of rehabilitation efforts
  
- Housing providers are prohibited from intentional discrimination. Intentional discrimination results when housing providers treat applicants with similar criminal histories unequally due to their race, national origin, or other protected characteristic.

Your written response to this request for a meeting to appeal your denial of my housing application is appreciated within **ten (10)** days of the date of the letter. If I do not hear back from you, I will assume that you have denied this request. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

(Only provide your email address if you are able to check it daily.)