

Minimum Requirements for Every Letter

To ensure your letters are effective:

- They must be **original** and personally written by the author.
- Include the writer's **full name, address, and contact information**.
- Clearly explain the writer's **knowledge of your past and current substance use**.
- Confirm the **last time the writer observed alcohol or drug use**.
- Mention your **participation in treatment programs or support groups**, such as Alcoholics Anonymous.
- Be **dated and signed**.
- **Notarized** to verify authenticity (see below).

Consistency across all letters strengthens your case.

Letters should come from people who know you well and can speak to your character and sobriety. Ideal writers include:

- Family members and close friends who have observed your recovery.
- Employers, supervisors, or coworkers familiar with your professional conduct.
- Religious leaders, sponsors, or mentors who can attest to your ethical behavior.
- Healthcare professionals such as counselors or therapists.

A variety of perspectives gives the judge a well-rounded understanding of your recovery journey.

Each letter should clearly describe **how the author knows you, for how long, and how frequently they interact with you**. This information allows the judge to assess the credibility of the letter and the depth of the author's knowledge about your character.

Notarization adds credibility and verifies the authenticity of the signature. Letters can be notarized at banks, credit unions, insurance offices, or local UPS stores. Ensure the letter is signed **in the notary's presence** and that the notary seal is properly affixed.

What Not to Include:

- Avoid **generic statements**; letters should be personal and specific.
- Do not include **negative information**, past violations, or relapses.
- Keep the tone **professional and factual** rather than emotional.

Letters that follow these guidelines present a credible and consistent case.