

TIPS & REMINDERS

APPLICANTS WITH JUSTICE HISTORY

• LANGUAGE MATTERS

The way we talk about other people—and the labels we use—are important. Instead of saying “ex-con” or “felon,” say things like “I see you have a justice history,” “I see you’re formerly incarcerated.”

• CRIMINAL RECORDS ARE AN UNRELIABLE PREDICTOR

Research shows that criminal records are an unreliable source of information about tenant behavior. Returning citizens repaid their debt to society, and if they’re going to continue to be successful, they need a place to live. Move past their record and help them.

• AVOID JUDGMENT & FIND THE STRENGTHS

No one wants to be judged by the worst mistakes they made. Focus on strengths – “I see that the conviction was a while ago and there haven’t been any since. What’s going well for you that’s helped keep you out of trouble?” Give credit to the fact that people have successfully stayed out of trouble. This is huge!

• YOU’RE NOT ALONE IN THIS

There are service providers who can help give you peace of mind or act as liaison if you’re unsure about the person you’re renting to.

• CONNECT TO YOUR VALUES

Half of Americans have a relative with a justice history. A person with a justice history could be someone who you know, you love, or is a friend. It takes courage, strength and persistence to get up every day and face possible rejection.

Renting to someone with a justice history could change their life! Housing is a key ingredient to stability and turning our lives around.



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