



# Tips & Resources for Re-housing Clients with a Criminal Record of Sexual Offences

## **Discrimination is Illegal**

Discrimination (not treating all people the same) because of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, age, lawful source of income, familial status, learning disability, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation is illegal.

Discrimination against families with children is also illegal except in certain situations. Landlords are allowed to discriminate against families with children when renting the following:

- buildings with four units or less if the landlord lives in one of the apartments,
- and some federal and state housing projects.

When a tenant feels as though they have been discriminated against, they should file a complaint immediately with the [Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities](#). (1)

## **Tenant Screening Background Checks ARE Legal**

- Landlords reserve the right to refuse tenancy to any potential tenant they see fit.
- Landlords must notify the tenants ahead of time what types of information may keep them from being accepted into a rental agreement.
- Some of the most common things that the screening will check for are:
  - A criminal background check—most landlords do not want anything illegal on their property.
  - A credit check—to make sure that the tenant is going to pay their rent in a responsible and timely manner.
  - A previous rental check—to make sure the tenant does not have a bad background in renting.
- If a landlord refuses to offer tenancy to a potential tenant for reasons regarding the screening, they must give written reasoning for why the tenant has been rejected. (2)

## **Tips on Re-Housing**

- If possible, work to reunify them with family or friends.
- Work with the Parole Officer. They can help identify any probation or restraining order limitations (ie. person can't be certain distance from school). They also may have connections or suggestions on landlords who would be open to renting. They may be willing to write a character reference letter for potential landlords.
- Be creative with housing solutions. Consider transitional or shared housing as options.
- Keep a list of your landlord contacts and make note of those who do not require background checks of tenants.
- Build a relationship with the local Community Reentry Program and see if they have ideas for housing locations.
- Identify credible sources of character reference letters to share with landlords.

- Assist person with applying for their [record to be expunged](#) (3) if their criminal record is dated (ie. Convictions were over 10 years ago). Note, this isn't an immediate solution. It takes time and may not get approved.
- Use the CT [sex offender registry](#) (4) to identify where other with people with sexual offenses/on registry live. They may be more likely to rent in those areas.
- If their criminal record has links to a person having a disability, a reasonable accommodation could be to request the landlord doesn't consider their criminal record.

### **CCEH Resource Page**

The Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness has a "Criminal Justice Involvement and Homelessness" resource page with trainings, articles, and other resources that can be helpful for providers working to house those with criminal records.

## **References**

- (1) Rights and Responsibilities of Landlords and Tenants in Connecticut - State of Connecticut Judicial Branch Superior Court - 8/2017: <http://www.cceh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Rights-and-Responsibilities-of-Landlord-Tenants-in-Connecticut.pdf>
- (2) Tenant Screening Background Checks Connecticut - American Apartment Owners Association: <https://www.american-apartment-owners-association.org/tenant-screening-background-checks/connecticut/>
- (3) How to Clear Your Criminal Record – CT Law Help: <https://ctlawhelp.org/en/criminal-record-expungement-pardon>
- (4) Connecticut Sex Offender Registry - Connecticut Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection: [http://sheriffalerts.com/cap\\_office\\_disclaimer.php?office=54567&fwd=aHR0cDovL3NoZXJpZmZhbGVydHMuY29tL2NhcF9tYWluLnBocD9vZmZpY2U9NTQ1Njc=](http://sheriffalerts.com/cap_office_disclaimer.php?office=54567&fwd=aHR0cDovL3NoZXJpZmZhbGVydHMuY29tL2NhcF9tYWluLnBocD9vZmZpY2U9NTQ1Njc=)