

## 2. Individualized Tenant Assessment

Seattle Office of Housing

DRAFT 10-28-13

*Review admissions procedures governing how applicants who have a criminal record can provide supplemental information to explain or correct a criminal record or provide mitigating information showing rehabilitation or changed circumstances.*

*Supplemental information could be accepted up-front at time of application for housing or wait list, and/or when appealing a denial.*

### Questions to consider during review:

How do current procedures influence how an applicant with a criminal record can access housing?

Examples include:

- Can additional information be provided at time of application?
- Following denial, can an applicant submit corrections to screening report?
- Following denial, can an applicant submit supplemental information about criminal record and/or changed circumstances?
- Does an alternative qualification exist for credit and tenant history, but not for criminal histories?
- Is any flexibility provided in screening criteria?

What are reasonable policy changes to clarify or expand opportunity for individual assessment?

Examples include:

- Adopt policy statement
- Establish standards for review, including guidelines about alternative documentation that will be accepted. See Attachment for examples.
- Establish flexible review to allow for individual circumstances
- Amend application materials to clarify submittal requirements for appeal

### Questions/Next Steps for working group:

- Concerns about administrative time and cost, staff training, fair housing compliance
- Too expensive to hold a unit vacant. If appeal is successful, applicant should be offered next available unit
- Interest in third party assistance for applicants – help in assembling appropriate documentation – and/or third party documentation of rehabilitation
- Interest in tracking outcomes – how many people are we able to house, how many are still ineligible due to other admissions criteria

**Attachment: Assessing Criminal History**

Factor	Possible Documentation
Seriousness of Offense	<p><b>Court Records:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judgment and Sentence</li> <li>• Court docket information that chargers were not filed or were dismissed</li> </ul>
Compliance with or completion of sentencing	<p><b>Court records:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate of discharge</li> <li>• Order discharging applicant from probation</li> <li>• Case docket showing case was closed</li> </ul> <p><b>Letters:</b></p> <p>Letter from probation or parole officer explaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that applicant has complied (or is complying) with probation</li> <li>• that applicant has clean or negative drug tests (if applicable)</li> <li>• applicant’s motivation and positive attitude</li> </ul>
Rehabilitation	<p><b>Court records:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of drug, mental health or veteran’s court</li> <li>• Certificate of rehabilitation</li> </ul> <p><b>Letters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters from health care providers (mental health, substance abuse treatment, community corrections officers, etc. explaining that applicant has completed, complied with or is enrollment in treatment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Certificates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GED</li> <li>• Certificate demonstrating completion of training/education</li> </ul>
Changed Circumstances of Applicant	<p><b>Letters</b></p> <p>Letter from community leader, clergy member, or social worker, etc. indicating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how they know applicant</li> <li>• whether applicant has played a leadership role in your community or volunteered to help others</li> <li>• what steps applicant has taken to turn his or her life around</li> </ul> <p>Letter or transcript from teacher or school official saying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what program applicant was enrolled in and how long</li> <li>• applicant’s attendance</li> </ul> <p>Letter from applicant explaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• applicant’s actions, how they took responsibility and changes he or she made</li> </ul>