

REENTRY

**Renters:
Know Your Rights!**

If you're denied housing because of a criminal offense that comes up in a background check, you have the right to a copy of the background check that they used. Ask the landlord for a copy so you can find out exactly what's on your record.

Am I eligible for MDHA public housing or a Section 8 voucher if I have a criminal record?

There are only **two criminal offenses** that make you **permanently ineligible** for MDHA public housing or Section 8:

1. **making methamphetamine** in subsidized housing
2. any conviction resulting in a **lifetime sex offender registration**

If you were denied MDHA public housing or Section 8 because of something on your criminal record other than these two offenses, **you might be able to appeal the decision** depending on your specific circumstances.

- Ask for your denial letter **in writing** - it will have instructions on how to request an informal **meeting with the housing authority** where you can explain your situation.
- If you have any, **bring proof** that the issue has been resolved - see the next section for examples.

What about private housing?

Private landlords don't have the same rules as public housing or Section 8 - they can reject your application because of **any criminal offense** on your record. When you apply for private housing, **be prepared to explain** your situation and **bring any proof** you have that the issue has been resolved. Some types of proof could be:



Letters of reference from your employer or another person that's supporting you



Proof that you're **working with support services**, like reentry programs or churches



Any **details** that explain your conviction and changes you've made since, like going back to school or volunteering

Some offenses can be removed from your criminal record.

You can apply to have certain offenses **expunged**, or removed, from your criminal record. These include charges that **didn't result in convictions**, cases that were **never prosecuted**, and convictions that were **reversed**.

Go to www.las.org and click on the **Reentry Screening Tool** to find out if you might be eligible for an expungement.