

Tenant Screening Criteria Policy

The screening criteria and considerations outlined below encourage providers to “screen in” rather than “screen out” applicants. These requirements are also designed to satisfy the requirements of San Francisco Police Code Article 49, Sections 4901-4920 or the Fair Chance Ordinance. This policy describes a minimum level of leniency; providers are encouraged to adopt less restrictive policies and processes whenever appropriate. For example, providers may opt not to review or consider applicant criminal records at all.

Screening Criteria

- Housing providers shall not automatically bar applicants who have a criminal record² in recognition of the fact that past offenses do not necessarily predict future behavior, and many applicants with a criminal record are unlikely to re-offend.
- Housing providers shall not consider:
 - arrests that did not result in convictions, except for an open arrest warrant;
 - convictions that have been expunged or dismissed under Cal. Penal Code § 1203.4 or 1203.4a;³
 - juvenile adjudications.
- Housing providers shall consider:
 - the individual circumstances of each applicant; and
 - the relationship between the offense, and
 - (1) the safety and security of other tenants, staff and/or the property; and
 - (2) mitigating circumstances such as those listed below.
 - only those offenses that occurred in the prior 7 years, except in exceptional situations, which must be documented and justified, such as where the housing provider staff is aware that the applicant engaged in violent criminal activity against staff, residents or community members and/or that the applicant intentionally submitted an application with materially false information regarding criminal activity.
 - mitigating factors, including, but not limited to:
 - (1) the seriousness of the offense;
 - (2) the age and/or circumstances of the applicant at the time of the offense;
 - (3) evidence of rehabilitation, such as employment, participation in a job training program, continuing education, participation in a drug or alcohol treatment program, or letters of support from a parole or probation officer, employer, teacher, social worker, medical professional, or community leader;
 - (4) if the offense is related to acts of domestic violence committed against the applicant;
 - (5) if the offense was related to a person’s disability.

² The policy recognizes that some housing may be subject to mandatory laws that require the exclusion of an applicant based upon certain types of criminal activity.

³ The purpose of the statute is allow a petitioner to request a dismissal of the criminal accusations, a change in plea or setting aside of a verdict and to seek to have certain criminal records sealed or expunged and a release “from all penalties and disabilities resulting from the offense.”