When you are convicted of driving under the influence (DUI), the judge usually has a bit of discretion when determining your sentence.

For this reason, it’s essential to include evidence of sobriety and character reference letters to try to mitigate the consequences you are facing. A criminal defense lawyer will help you with this - and we recommend consulting an attorney to assist you with your case - but it can also be helpful to have a template so you know where to start.

# How to use these templates:

* Copy and paste each template you want to use into its own, separate page
* Make sure to fill in the blanks and change the pronouns within the template
* When submitting your letter to the court, be sure to attach documentation of the points made in the letter (i.e. community service records, alcohol monitoring test results, etc.)

# Table of contents:

[Template example: Written by a treatment counselor](#_8qr74vktzz2j)

[Template example: Written by a friend or family member](#_2h62ale98gal)

[Evidence to provide to the court](#_8ylw1uv4ps0z)

[Template example: Letter from the defendant](#_rd64kt7tgbrw)

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# Template example: Written by a treatment counselor

Dear Judge \_\_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_ and I have known \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ months/years. I met him/her when he/she began treatment for issues stemming from drug and alcohol use. I am his/her primary therapist at [name of treatment center]. He/she came to treatment voluntarily, and has always shown up on time. He/she has never missed a treatment session.

He/she has been attending [name of organization, i.e. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)] meetings for the past \_\_\_\_ months and has helped organize meetings and support new members. In addition, he/she has completed \_\_\_\_hours of community service at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Attached, you will find documentation regarding [name of support group, i.e. AA] attendance and community service hours. I have provided proof of treatment, which is attached as well.

All of \_\_\_\_\_\_’s drug and alcohol screenings have come back negative. We conduct them [number] times per week and do random tests as well.

In addition to these tests, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has utilized BACtrack View, a device that allows users to track their sobriety at home and provide evidence of their success. Attached, you will find PDF reports of his/her test results.

I have been working with \_\_\_\_\_ now for \_\_\_\_\_ months and have seen significant progress during his/her time in treatment. I truly believe that he/she has learned from this experience and will never drive while impaired again. I have also attached a letter from \_\_\_\_\_, as he/she wanted to address your honor personally.

If the court needs any more information or documentation, please don’t hesitate to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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# Template example: Written by a friend or family member

**NOTE:** While a letter from a friend or family member can be helpful, it’s likely not going to be as impactful as one from a treatment provider who can provide concrete evidence of your sobriety and growth through treatment.

There’s nothing wrong with including both types of letters, though; showing the judge that you have support from friends and family is an important element as well.

Dear Judge \_\_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_ and I have known \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ months/years. He/she is my [explain your relationship].

I’m aware that he/she was arrested for and convicted of driving under the influence. I wanted to address your honor to let you know that this is not indicative of who \_\_\_\_ is a person. He/she absolutely made a mistake, and I have seen evidence of accountability and growth over the last few months.

I have seen him/her attend treatment for drug and alcohol abuse, attend [12-step, AA, or other support group] meetings, and engage in new, healthier hobbies. I see \_\_\_\_ multiple times per week/day and have never seen him/her touch a drug or drop of alcohol since the arrest. We have had many conversations about the incident, and he/she has expressed genuine remorse for the mistake he/she made.

\_\_\_\_ has the support of friends and family members, who will do everything possible to help him/her be successful on this journey to long-term sobriety. I understand the court will determine the most appropriate sentence for \_\_\_\_, and I respect any decision that is made. I hope your honor will consider my words and take \_\_\_\_\_’s accountability and growth into account.

If the court needs any more information from me, please don’t hesitate to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# Evidence to provide to the court

In addition to the letter sent to the court, you can also provide an easy-to-read, bullet-point list explaining what you’ve done to take your charges seriously and work on bettering yourself. Ultimately, the more evidence you provide of your sobriety and treatment steps, the better.

Below are some examples you can use:

**Alcohol Education Classes:** I have completed \_\_\_\_ sessions of alcohol education classes at (program name).

**Counseling/Therapy:** I have been attending therapy sessions with (therapist's name) weekly since (start date) to address my drug/alcohol use and decision-making.

**Substance Abuse Treatment Program:** I successfully completed treatment at (treatment center name) on (date).

**Community Service:** I completed \_\_\_\_ hours of community service at (organization name).

**Ignition Interlock Device (IID):** I installed an ignition interlock device in my vehicle through (provider name) on (date).

**Proof of Sobriety:** I have passed \_\_\_\_ consecutive alcohol/drug tests conducted by (alcohol monitoring service or testing facility).

**Support Group Participation:** I have attended \_\_\_\_ Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings at (start date).

**Employment or Education:** I have maintained regular attendance and performance at (job/school) since (date), as verified by (employer/school representative).

# Template example: Letter from the defendant

You should also write a letter to the court yourself, and attach it to one of the letters from your friend, family member, or treatment professional.

In this letter, it’s important to take accountability and acknowledge the seriousness of the offense. Briefly explain the steps you’ve taken to stay sober and the steps you will take in the future to maintain your sobriety and stay out of trouble. The most important thing about this letter is to be honest and genuine.

Dear Judge \_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I understand how serious it is to be convicted of driving under the influence.

I wish I had never done it, and I am taking the steps to learn from my mistake and move forward and be a more productive member of society.

I have been attending [name of support group] meetings [number] times per week, seeing a therapist once per week, and also enrolled in an intensive outpatient program to get treatment for drug/alcohol abuse. I am also working [number] hours per week and plan to work [increased number] hours per week once I complete my treatment.

I will make better choices in the future to ensure that this behavior never happens again. I respect whatever sentence the court hands down for my wrongdoings.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_