



As individuals who spend extensive time with youth, providers and/or employers may develop a relationship where youth ask you to provide a letter of recommendation for college or scholarships. This quick guide offers some tips to help you in the process.

## Questions to Think About Before Saying Yes:

- Do you have enough time to write a letter? Did the youth give you enough notice?
- Do you have enough experience with the youth? Even though the youth may be in your program or at your worksite, do you have enough interactions with them to feel comfortable writing a letter on their behalf.
- If the answer is yes, verify when they need the letter submitted by, ask if they have a copy of what needs to be included in the recommendation, ask if it is a general recommendation or for something specific, ask if they have a resume or activity list, and if needed ask if they have time for a quick chat so you can learn more about them.
- If the answer is no, let the youth know as soon as possible so they have enough time to find another recommender.

## What should be included in the letter:

- If a hard copy of the recommendation is requested, print it on company letterhead (if available). Online forms may not need or be able to accommodate letterhead.
- Greeting - If the youth provided an actual name address the letter to that individual, otherwise it is okay to say, "To Whom It May Concern."
- Introduction - Introduce yourself and describe your relationship with youth. Be concise. Say something like "I was Jane's supervisor when she worked at the ABC Market during the summer of 2024."
- Body - Provide a summary of your experience with the youth, describing their strengths through examples. Share the qualities and characteristics of the youth that make them a good candidate such as problem-solving skills and ability to work in a team. Feel free to include a brief personal anecdote that highlights their strengths. An example may be "Jane took initiative and grew her leadership skills during the experience. One time I mentioned that we had a shipment coming in but one of the other workers was on vacation and I was worried that we would have to open late with less help. She volunteered to come in early the next day and delegated the work to a few of the other employees. By her doing that we were able to open the store on time." This is where you want to humanize the youth so the reader can get another perspective on them.
- Closing - Write a summary of your recommendation. Provide contact information and let the reader know that it is okay to reach out for follow-up. Sign-off with something like "sincerely" or "best regards."

## Some additional tips for writing the recommendation include:

- Always focus on the positive.
- Be authentic and enthusiastic through your choice of words.



## Writing a Recommendation Letter

- Maintain a formal and professional tone.
- The length should be one page, no more than two.
- Ask the youth if there are any specific instructions you need to follow such as page length, information that needs to be included, etc.
- Proofread before submitting to catch any grammar mistakes or typos.
- It is not recommended to let AI write the letter but may be a good source for proofreading.
- Ask if they have a resume or activity list. This can help you get a better understanding of what they are involved in outside of their connection to you.
- Feel free to schedule a conversation with the youth to get a little more insight into them and their life outside of your experience with them. Use it as an opportunity to ask any questions you may have that will help you write the letter. Questions may include asking them what they do for fun, what has been their greatest accomplishment, or what is something they want others to know about them.