

Your Letter of Support to Immigration

Letters of support from family, friends and community members are important for an applicant with an immigration case pending. The purpose of the letter is to show the immigration officer why the person deserves to be in the U.S. and what the hardship would be on the applicant and to the spouse, children or parents, along with the community, if that person was removed from the U.S.

Letter writers can be anyone, including non-abusive spouse/partner, adult child, parent, coworker, employer, community member, teacher or any person who can explain their support for the applicant.

Below are the general areas you want to include in your letter:

- Introduction:** Address the letter to “Dear Adjudicating Officer” or “Honorable Immigration Judge.”
- Background:** What is your full name, age, occupation and relationship to the immigrant applicant?
- Contact information:** What is your current address or phone number for contact?
- Immigration status:** Are you a United States citizen or lawful permanent resident?
if you are undocumented, **DO NOT submit a letter and make authorities aware of your presence
- Connection to applicant:** How long have you known and how did you come to know the applicant?
- Knowledge of abuse:** Did the applicant tell you about any past experiences of abuse or violence they suffered? How have you seen them survive? Were you acquainted with the applicant’s abuser?
- Hardship:** How would the applicant and applicant’s family be affected if the applicant is removed from the U.S.? Is the applicant primarily responsible for the family’s rent, food, bills, care or other support?
- Home country experience:** If you are from the applicant’s home country, how would the applicant be treated if removed from the U.S.? What would their life be like back in their home country?
- Rehabilitation:** If the applicant has any negative history (arrest, substance abuse, etc.), do you know how they have changed since then? Do you think they will be able to keep out of trouble in the U.S.?
- Good moral character:** Has the applicant given back to the community (volunteer, church, school)?
- Future in the U.S.:** Do you know of the applicant’s goals/aspirations? How would their removal from the U.S. affect you and your community? Any other reasons you know the applicant should stay?
- Signature:** Sign and date in **blue ink** with perjury language at the end of letter: ***I declare under penalty of perjury, that the information contained in this document is true to the best of my knowledge.***
**if you are writing outside the U.S., please have your signature notarized/verified

Provide details in your letter, specific examples about the applicant, that gives the immigration officer/judge a fuller picture of the kind of person the applicant is and why they are deserving of being granted their application to remain in the U.S. The more detailed, the better. Use your own words.

Type or print your letter, but typing makes it easier to read. It can be any length though most letters are between 1-2 pages. Do not forget to include the perjury language and your signature at the end.

Limited English writers can write in your own preferred language. Be sure that either you or the applicant gets someone to translate the letter into English and sign a certificate of translation:

Certificate of Translation

I, (name of translator), certify that I am competent to translate this document and the translation is true and accurate to the best of my abilities.

Translator’s signature, Date

Both your original letter and English translation should be submitted.

For detained applicants: Make 3 copies of the original and the translated letter (if translated) and mail them to the person detained. When mailing, include the person’s first name and last name, their nine digit A-number (alien registration # or immigration file #) and the address of the detention center.



**Sexual Violence
LAW CENTER**

**844-991-SVLC (7852)
www.svlawcenter.org**

February 1, 2013

RE: Letter of Support for **Maria Doe (A 099 888 777)**

To the Adjudicating Officer:


My name is Jane John. I am U.S. citizen and currently live at 4200 SE 6th Avenue, Portland, OR 97211. I work as a middle school teacher and have known Maria Doe for almost a year from when she was my neighbor. At the time, I lived in Seattle, WA. Maria and her children lived in the apartment across the hallway from me.

When Maria and her family moved into my building, she seemed very nice and friendly. But she spoke almost no English. I speak limited Spanish so we had very simple conversations. Overtime I learned a little bit about her. I knew she had experienced a traumatic loss back in Mexico. She was also very afraid of going back because of some violence she had experienced. It was clear she was very proud of her children and they were the center of her universe. I invited Maria to attend church with me.

At two o'clock one morning, in November 2012, I woke up to Maria knocking at my door. She was crying and disheveled looking. I thought she had been in an accident. I didn't understand exactly what she was saying, something like she had been robbed or attacked. I helped her call the police and checked on the children while she talked to the police once they came. I later understood that someone Maria knew had raped her. The next few nights, Maria and the children slept at my place instead of at their apartment. Though she tried to act like everything was fine for the sake of her children, it was clear that she was not ok. She jumped at every sound and would break into tears constantly. I didn't know how to make her feel better so I watched the children so she had some time to herself. Within the month, Maria moved out of the apartment, I believe with the help of some of the people at her church. Though I do not live across from her anymore, I do see her once a month. I know Maria has moved to a new confidential place. She is doing so much better. Every time I see Maria, she is a little stronger, a little more confident, a little less afraid and a little less unsure of herself.

I know Maria wants to be a teacher and work with special needs children. She has been taking classes and her English is getting better. Maria is a loving mother and will be a wonderful teacher. I support her efforts to stay and I hope she will be given the chance to stay in the U.S. with her children. I cannot imagine the devastation if this family was torn apart or forced to return to Mexico where she has no support or resources to achieve her dreams.

I declare under penalty of perjury, that the information contained in this document is true to the best of my knowledge.

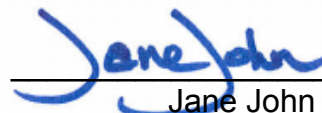

Jane John

February 1, 2013

To the Adjudicating Officer:

1. My name is Jane John. I am a citizen of Mexico and reside in Mexico City. I have known Maria Doe since childhood. She is my cousin and two years younger than me.
2. When I was about 12 or 13 years old, Maria lost her father. He was a college professor and was killed for organizing and protesting the government. Losing her father deeply affected Maria. I remember she would study very hard so she could be a professor like him. Maria's mother is a good woman but she did not think a girl should be studying as much as Maria did. After her father died, Maria stopped liking school.
3. In Mexico, machismo culture is very strong. For women who have no father, husband or man of the house, they can be treated very badly. Maria is a very pretty girl and a lot of men paid attention to her. There was a local gang leader Robert who became obsessed with Maria. I remember he would wait for her outside of school and would always be around her. Maria like the attention but she told me she would also get scared sometimes but didn't know how to tell Robert to leave her.
4. Once I got married, I moved away. I did not speak to Maria for many years. My family told me she was with Robert and that they had children together. In my culture, if you have children and a man to take care of you, you are a lucky woman.
5. At the end of 2011, I moved back to my family in Mexico City. I wanted to see Maria but people told me to leave her alone. They said she spent all of her time with Robert and the children and that it was better if I did not bother her.
6. I saw Maria at church. I was shocked. My younger cousin looked tired and almost 20 years older. I asked her where she lived. She was almost afraid to give me her address but I didn't pay attention at the time and forced her to tell me her address. A few weeks later, when I went to see her, I was horrified. Maria could barely walk. The side of her face was swollen. The smallest movement gave her pain. She told me that Robert had beat her and that he hurt her like this often.
7. I told Maria I would help her go to the police. She didn't want to because she didn't trust the police. Our local police are not always helpful but I told her something had to be done. She could not live like this. I went with Maria to the police. They took a report and arrested Robert. I was very happy for her.
8. The next day I heard that Robert was out. I was terrified for Maria but too afraid to check on her. Our family hadn't seen or heard from her since the police report. Everyone knew that Robert had killed her. I was overjoyed when Maria contacted me, safe in the U.S. I know if she was still in Mexico, she would be dead. Maria and her children deserve a good life. I pray that the judge will give her the chance to stay.

I declare under penalty of perjury, that the information contained in this document is true to the best of my knowledge.


Jane John



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