

The Importance of Strong Support Letters When Seeking Immigration Benefits or Relief

By Carolyn Mason, Contributor

Support letters can be very helpful in immigration, particularly when seeking naturalization (citizenship), a waiver of something that prevents you from obtaining a visa to enter the country, or when fighting removal (deportation). Strong support letters are critical if there is anything in your background that may lead to discretionary denial of the benefit or relief you are seeking. A number of solid support letters may favorably influence the [consular](#) or immigration officer or judge, and are well worth your time to arrange.

Consider asking your current and any past employers, family members who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, the elected officers of any organizations to which you belong, friends and neighbors -- in short, anyone who can provide a good character reference for you.

What makes a good support letter?

The letter should include the following:

1. The citizenship status of the author or writer
2. The nature of the relationship with you (Example: friend, co-worker, supervisor, etc)
3. The length of time the author has known you (10 years, 2 months, etc)

For example,

I am a U.S. citizen and I have been Mr. X's employer for the past five years.

The purpose of the letter is to provide a good character reference for you, and may include details concerning your involvement with charitable causes, [anecdotes](#) concerning the subject's deeds to help friends and neighbors, or stories showing your dependability and care of family members. Alternatively, a letter may present a specific economic, emotional, or other hardship the author of the letter will face if you are denied the specific immigration relief or benefit being sought.

Where to get a good letter?

Letters from employers should be on company letterhead, and letters from organizations should be on the organization's letterhead, if one is available. All letters should be originals, if possible, and signed by the author in blue or black ink.

The few minutes it takes to request a support letter from a friend, employer, or colleague may mean the difference between achieving your immigration goal and missing it, and you may be surprised how many people are willing to help you.

For advice on preparing strong support letters for visa or green card interviews or when fighting removal (deportation), contact [The Law Office of Tanya M. Lee, PLLC](#) at info@aboutusvisas.com or 1-888-628-0644 and 480-559-9LAW (529).