The Sponsoring Institution supports the provision of accurate and appropriate letters of recommendation for residents applying to other residencies, fellowships or employment.

Preparing Letters of Recommendation
In general, residents should solicit letters of recommendation from faculty members who have something meaningful to say about them. If you don’t feel that you are able to write a letter for the resident or write a supportive letter, then be frank and discuss with the resident why you feel you cannot write an appropriate letter.

Letters of Recommendation must be:
- accurate,
- completed in a timely manner,
- addressed to a specific individual (for example, “To Whom it may Concern” is NOT acceptable), and
- sent DIRECTLY to the requesting entity by the Program after review and approval by the Program Director.

The original, or copies of the original, cannot be provided to the resident and there must be a notarized consent to release information (HRP form) for each requesting entity prior to sending the letter.

Content of Letters of Recommendation
Letters of Recommendation should include the timeframe and context in which you worked with the individual. For example, “I worked with Resident A for two months from May 2012 to June 2012 as his supervisor for the Emergency Medicine rotation.”

Specific examples to support your assessment of the individual’s quality should be provided.

Refrain from stating “This is the best resident I have worked with” or “I plan to rank this person in the highest tier”.

Hearsay knowledge as well as unrelated personal information regarding the resident should be avoided. Unrelated personal information includes protected class categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation.

Be clear that you are writing the letter from your personal perspective as faculty at JABSOM.

Guidelines specific for Program Directors
According to the ACGME Common Program Requirements V.A.2, the Program Director must provide a summative evaluation for each resident upon completion of the program (see Evaluation of Residents Policy for more information). As such, for residents applying to other residency or fellowship programs, the Program Director could send the summative evaluation rather than a letter of recommendation, and trainees should be advised to seek letters of recommendation from other faculty. A Program Director could send a preliminary summative evaluation to date with a statement that a final summative will be provided upon the resident’s completion of the program. If a Program Director chooses to complete a letter of recommendation in addition to the summative evaluation, the Program Director must ensure that the contents are consistent with each other. For residents not transferring and requiring letters of recommendation to potential employers, see above guidelines for faculty.
Program Directors must review and approve all resident letters of recommendation prior to its release. The Program Director must document this directly on the letter as follows, “I have reviewed this letter of recommendation and concur with its statements” or “I have reviewed this letter and it is consistent with program evaluations to date.” If the Program Director disagrees with the content of the letter of recommendation, the letter should not be sent on Departmental/Program letterhead. The faculty member can be asked to revise the letter and resubmit to the PD for approval. Otherwise, the faculty member can submit the letter as a private citizen on personal letterhead.