



Cleaning up Your Criminal Record

A New Law Will Expand Clearing of Criminal Records in Pennsylvania

- A new law called "Clean Slate" will automatically seal many criminal cases, starting around July 2020.
- Automatically sealed cases will include all dropped cases (after 60 days), and many non-violent misdemeanors and summary convictions (after 10 years without a new conviction).
- More misdemeanor convictions will also be eligible to be sealed by filing a petition, starting in 2019. They include:
 - Some 1st degree misdemeanors;
 - Simple assault (2nd or 3rd degree).

What Cannot Be Sealed?

- 1st degree misdemeanors involving violent crimes and sexual offenses cannot be sealed.
- You cannot seal misdemeanors if:
 - You have had a conviction in the last 10 years.
 - You ever had a 1st degree felony conviction.
 - You have 2 or more felonies or 1st degree misdemeanors in the last 15 years.
 - You have 4 or more convictions in the last 20 years (excluding 3rd degree misdemeanors).
- **You must pay your court fines and costs first!**

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What Can Be Expunged?

- Non-conviction charges (e.g. dismissed, withdrawn, nolle prossed, not guilty, etc.).
- ARD/Section 17 diversion programs if you complete the program and pay the fine.
- Summary convictions if you have a five-year arrest free period after the conviction.
- Summary convictions if you were under 18 at the time of the offense, you are now over
- 18, AND six months have passed since you completed the sentence and paid the fine.
- Any conviction if you are at least 70 years old and have a ten-year arrest free period since your conviction.
- Some juvenile cases.

What Can Be Pardoned?

- Misdemeanor and felony convictions, if a pardon is approved by the Board of Pardons and the Governor.
- Recommended waiting period of at least five years from the completion of a misdemeanor sentence and ten years from the completion of a felony sentence before applying.
- The pardon process is long (it can take 3+ years) and a lot of work (writing essays, gathering documents) but it can be worth it - if you get a pardon, your convictions can be expunged!
- Effective October 1, 2019, the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons has updated the pardon process to include expedited reviews for non-violent and small-amount marijuana and marijuana paraphernalia possessions convictions. There is a 1 year time period for the pardon expedited review program.

You Must Pay Your Court Costs and Fines for Your Case to be Sealed or Pardoned

- You can find out if you owe fines and costs by checking your cases available at <https://tinyurl.com/pa-record>. Search by name. Put in your name and date of birth, and "criminal" in the case category. Look at the last page of the "docket sheet" for each case.
- Call the courthouse in the county where you were convicted to find out how to make payments.
- Sometimes the Court will waive the court costs and fees but not the fines or restitution.

You can contact NLS for help!

If eligible for our services, we can file expungements and sealing petitions as well as help you figure out if you should apply for a pardon!

You can also apply online at www.nlsa.us – choose “Get Legal Help”.

Or

Call NLS at 1-877-761-6572 or at any of the numbers at the bottom of the front page.