



ACCESS TO JUSTICE

NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES

Because Justice is for All



Getting Your Criminal Record Expunged

Why clear my criminal record?

Having a criminal record can severely limit one's access to employment, education, housing, civic engagement, and public assistance. Nearly 9 in 10 employers, 4 in 5 landlords, and 3 in 5 colleges use background checks to screen for applicant's criminal records

In Pennsylvania, all criminal and summary cases filed with a court, including those that don't result in convictions, are posted online for public viewing. These cases may also be reported by consumer reporting agencies.

Criminal Record Clearing for Individuals with Disabilities

Under a grant from the FISA Foundation, NLS has developed a new project focusing on educating individuals with disabilities and service providers about the criminal record clearing process and providing legal assistance to those individuals who qualify for expungements or petition-based sealing.

Because individuals may already face barriers to employment and housing, it is critical to remove any barriers caused by the existence of a criminal record.

There are three types of criminal record clearing:

Expungements

Expungement removes arrests and/or convictions from a person's criminal record entirely, as if they never happened.

Sealing

Sealing removes a person's criminal record from public view but it can still be accessed by law enforcement and state licensing agencies. In Pennsylvania, some criminal cases will be automatically sealed.

Pardons

Pardons are the only way to get some misdemeanors and most felonies cleared from your record.

This happens at the discretion of the Governor.

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- Non-conviction charges (e.g. dismissed, withdrawn, nolle prossed, not guilty, etc.).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 sealed?

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).

Some misdemeanor convictions will also be eligible to be sealed by filing a petition, They include:

Some 1st degree misdemeanors;
Simple assault (2nd or 3rd degree).



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LEGAL SERVICES

How to Get Help

Visit our website and apply online at

www.nlsa.us

and choose "Get Legal Help"
or call

1-866-761-6572

NLS provides interpreters and translation services.
All services are confidential

Allegheny County Office

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Beaver County Office

STONE POINT LANDING, SUITE 204A

500 MARKET STREET | BRIDGEWATER, PA 15009-2998

Butler County Office

HOLLY POINTE BUILDING, SUITE C PLAZA LEVEL
220 S. MAIN STREET | BUTLER, PA 16001

Lawrence County Office

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