



This Lifeline contains general information, and does not constitute individual legal advice about your situation. You should consult with an attorney for individual legal advice about your situation and to find out how this information applies to your situation. To see if you qualify for free legal services, call the Legal Aid office nearest you.

Sealing Your Criminal Record

A criminal record can create many obstacles as you attempt to navigate your everyday life. You may struggle with issues such as finding employment or housing. Criminal Procedure Law 160.59 allows individuals with two (2) or fewer convictions to apply to seal their criminal record. Once sealed, the record will still exist but will be hidden from the public view in the event of a criminal background check.

You may be eligible to seal your record under CPL 160.59 if:

- You have no more than two criminal convictions in your lifetime *or* if you have more than two criminal convictions, your convictions are related to the same one or two incidents
- You have no more than one (1) felony conviction; and
- At least ten (10) years have passed since you were sentenced with your last conviction or since you were incarcerated, whichever is later. (Any time spent on probation or parole counts towards these ten (10) years, but any time spent incarcerated cannot be counted)

You are ineligible to seal your record if:

- You are required to register as a sex offender
- You have an open criminal case
- You are attempting to seal the conviction of a violent felony, Class A felony, homicide felony, sex offense, sexual performance by a child offense, or a felonious attempt or conspiracy to commit any of the ineligible offenses
- The conviction is for an out-of-state or federal offense; or
- You are not a U.S. citizen.

Are any criminal records sealed automatically?

- Yes, any criminal charge that ends in a dismissal, acquittal, or non-criminal outcome, such as a plea to a violation/infraction, should be sealed automatically. Certain Marijuana convictions that occurred prior to March 31, 2021, have been automatically expunged because of the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act. Beginning in November 2024, the Clean Slate Act will automatically seal some felony and misdemeanor convictions.

What is the process for sealing my criminal record?

- You must complete an application and submit it to the court where you were convicted. The application includes directions on how to file and can be found [here](#).

Once sealed, who can still see my conviction?

- You or someone you give permission to
- Employers only when you apply for a job in law enforcement
- Government agencies carrying out court and law enforcement duties
- Government agencies when you apply for a firearm license; and
- The FBI when running a background check related to firearm possession or purchase.

What if I am ineligible for criminal record sealing?

- You can request a [Certificate of Relief from Disabilities](#) or a [Certificate of Good Conduct](#) from the court to lift certain employment and licensing restrictions, although your conviction will remain part of your public record.