



Criminal records can create barriers to employment, education and housing opportunities. The Moran Center provides FREE assistance for adults looking to expunge and/or seal their Cook County criminal records. The first step? Come to the Moran Center Expungement & Sealing Help Desk.

### OUR LEGAL TEAM WILL:

- SEARCH COOK COUNTY CRIMINAL RECORDS,
- DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY FOR SEALING OR EXPUNGING BASED ON YOUR RECORD,
- ASSIST WITH COMPLETING AND FILING PETITIONS,
- EXPLAIN THE PROCESS AND WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU FILE.

**WHERE:** The Skokie Courthouse  
5600 Old Orchard Road  
Skokie, IL.  
Outside Clerk's Office  
(Room 136)

**WHEN:** Tuesday & Thursday  
10:00 am - 12:00 pm

**WHAT TO BRING:** If you have an arrest record from the Chicago Police Dept., bring it with you.\*

### ADDITIONAL DETAILS:

- \*Chicago rap sheets can be obtained by going to 3510 S. Michigan Avenue between 8-12pm Mon-Fri. You must bring a valid driver's license or ID and \$16.00 (cash, check or money order).
- Individuals must complete the terms of probation or supervision and the required waiting period before filing to expunge or seal.
- If your arrest took place outside of Cook County (including out-of-state arrests), then you must go to the jurisdiction where the arrest took place in order to file for expungement or sealing.

# ***"Frequently Asked Questions" about court records***

## ***What is the difference between expunging and sealing a criminal record?***

Expunged records are destroyed or returned to you and can only be accessed again in very limited circumstances. Sealed records are impounded rather than destroyed, but law enforcement will continue to have access to sealed records. In addition, employers in fields related to "public safety" (hospitals, schools, daycare centers, public transportation agencies) are able to see sealed records when they run a required finger print check.

## ***Who is eligible to expunge their record?***

Only cases that result in non-convictions are eligible to be expunged. This includes:

- dismissed cases,
- cases resulting in a "not guilty" verdict,
- cases in which supervision\* is given, pending the completion of the supervision plus a 2-5 year waiting period,
- cases in which probation is given MAY be considered a non-conviction, depending on the type of probation.

\*NOTE: If you were given supervision for DUI, domestic battery, reckless driving (over the age of 25), or a sex offense against a minor, you cannot expunge that charge, but you may still be able to expunge the rest of your record.

## ***Who is eligible to seal their record?***

If you are convicted of a crime, even though you cannot expunge the record, you may be able to seal the record. Recently, the Illinois legislature passed a law vastly expanding what can be sealed in Illinois.

Now, any conviction, whether misdemeanor or felony can be sealed so long as the waiting period has expired and the individual is not required by law to register for one of Illinois' criminal registries.

## ***Do I have a waiting period before I can seal or expunge my record?***

For expungement, it depends. If you have any supervisions or convictions, you may have a waiting period of 2, 3, or 5 years, depending on the type of case. For sealing, there is a 3 year waiting period beginning at the end of your most recent sentence.

### ***Where do I file a petition to expunge or seal my record?***

Cook County has 6 court districts: Chicago, Skokie, Rolling Meadows, Maywood, Bridgeview and Markham. If your case originated in Chicago, you will have to file your petition in Chicago. If your case was heard in one of the five suburban districts, you need to file your petition at the courthouse for that specific district. If you have cases in multiple courthouses, then you will have to go to multiple courthouses to file your petitions.

### ***Will I be required to make a court appearance in order to petition the court?***

In Chicago, Maywood and Markham every expungement or sealing petition will have a hearing. In Skokie, Rolling Meadows and Bridgeview, you will be notified if you must appear in court. If you are not required to make a court appearance, you will be notified by mail as to whether your petition was granted.

### ***How much does it cost to file a petition for expunging or sealing?***

You need to check with each courthouse at which you are filing a petition since the fee can vary. In addition, if you are filing in Chicago, you will need a rap sheet, which costs \$16.00 and can be obtained at Chicago Police Headquarters located at 3510 S. Michigan, Chicago, IL. If you are filing in Chicago or Markham, you will need a Certified Copy of Disposition for each case, which costs \$9.00 per case.

### ***Can I get the filing fee waived?***

If you have no income, or a very low income, you may qualify for a fee waiver. To waive your fee, you must file a fee waiver form at the Clerk's Office at the courthouse where you are filing your petition. A judge who will determine whether or not to waive your fee. If you are filing your petition in multiple courthouses, you will have to file multiple petitions.

### ***Do I need to get a rap sheet (arrest record)? How do I get my rap sheet?***

You need to get your rap sheet and be finger printed if are filing your petition in Chicago. The rap sheet costs \$16.00 and can be obtained at Chicago Police Headquarters located at 3510 S. Michigan, Chicago (Mon-Fri 8:30am-noon). You will return about one week later to pick up your rap sheet. You don't need a rap sheet if you are filing in one of the suburban districts.

### ***How long does the entire process take to expunge or seal my record?***

From the date you file your petition until your record is actually expunged or sealed usually takes about 4 to 6 months in the suburban districts. In Chicago, it may take more time because of the high volume of cases.

### ***Should I expunge or seal my case if I am not a citizen?***

It depends. If you apply to change your immigration status, you will still have to disclose your criminal record even if it has been expunged or sealed. Therefore, it is advisable to speak with an immigration attorney before expunging or sealing your record, to make sure that it is a good idea in your particular case. In any case, you should get a Certified Copy of Disposition for each of your cases.

### ***What if I want to expunge my juvenile record?***

The Moran Center Help Desk is only able to assist people with adult records. If you are an Evanston resident with a juvenile record, a Moran Center juvenile attorney may be able to help you. You can reach the Moran Center at (847) 492-1410. There is also a Juvenile Expungement Help Desk, at the Juvenile Courthouse at 1100 S. Hamilton, Chicago that may be able to assist you. The Juvenile Help Desk is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. You can get further information by calling (312) 229-6049.

### ***What if my case cannot be expunged or sealed?***

If your case(s) is not eligible for expungement or sealing, you may apply for a pardon from the governor – this process is called clemency. Be advised that the clemency process takes a long time and the governor may not grant your request. Two organizations that may be able to assist you in filing for clemency are Cabrini Green Legal Aid (Call 312-738-2452 – for Chicago residents only) and Chicago Legal Clinic (Call 773-731-1762).