

EXPUNGEMENTS

Are you encountering a barrier in finding a job due to a record? Are you unable to secure housing? Seeking an **expungement** may help unlock a new path of freedom. "Expungement" is the process of removing a record from public access. An expungement does not destroy the record; it only conceals the record from public view by employers. However, law enforcement, state licensing boards, and other state agencies will continue to see that record.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW:

After receiving an expungement, you legally can choose not to disclose your past arrests or convictions, thus helping your job application or your ability to rent an apartment or housing.

Eligibility plays a significant role in whether you can seek expungement or a clear record.

The expungement process begins after you have completed your sentence, including probation or parole.

Each expungement claim requires a comprehensive review of your sentencing and court documents.

If your felony conviction is your first, you may be eligible for a First Offender Pardon from the Louisiana Department of Corrections. The pardon is generally only given to non-violent, first-time, felony offenders.

ELIGIBILITY

In Louisiana, eligibility depends on the specific details of the arrest or conviction record. You may be eligible to get your record expunged if:

- ✓ You've completed your sentence, including probation or parole.
- ✓ You haven't been convicted or arrested again for a set time:
 - 5 years for misdemeanors
 - 10 years for feloniesThese times may be shorter if you got a deferred sentence (check your court papers).

- ✓ All fines, fees, and restitution are paid.
- ✓ The charge is eligible. Violent crimes, sex offenses, and other serious felonies usually can't be expunged. See the complete list of crimes that can't be expunged at <https://legis.la.gov/legis/law.aspx?d=78337> under R.S. 14:2.

FEES AND COSTS

Filing fees can range from \$550 - \$600 per charge or arrest. There are potential ways to avoid paying filing fees, like requesting a fee waiver or an in forma pauperis (IFP) motion. If you served probation or parole, or had a pretrial intervention, you are not eligible for a waiver.

HOW CAN YOU START THE PROCESS WITH ACADIANA LEGAL SERVICE CORPORATION (ALSC)?

1. Apply for free civil legal services online at www.la-law.org/get-help, or call 1-866-ASK-ALSC (275-2572) to place an application over the phone.
2. If approved for services, please have the following documents with you.

- ✓ Letter of completion from the Department of Corrections
- ✓ First Offender Pardon letter from the Department of Corrections (if you received one)
- ✓ Minutes of your plea or conviction
- ✓ Once your expungement eligibility is determined, a criminal background check or history will be needed. Most parishes require a criminal background check from the Louisiana State Police
- ✓ If you need to expunge multiple convictions/arrests, we will need a Louisiana State Police (LSP) criminal background check to determine eligibility. **Please be advised that you may need to obtain a more recent (LSP) background check if you are eligible, as these checks are only good for 60 days.**