



**Mariyana T.
Spyropoulos**

Clerk of the Circuit Court Cook County

Expunge or Seal Your Record

The Expungement Department streamlines the process of expunging or sealing your records. Additionally, you can file your petition in any district, no matter where the conviction occurred.

Expungement Department, Room 526
Leighton Courthouse, 2650 S. California
Chicago, IL
(773) 674-6076

Expungements

Expunging your record means that law enforcement agencies physically destroy the records and remove your name from any official index or public record. The Clerk's Office does not physically destroy records, but impounds expunged records, ensuring they do not appear in background checks.

If a non-conviction sentence is completed satisfactorily, the case is eligible for expungement, EXCEPT for supervision for the following offenses:

- Sex offenses involving a minor (e.g., sexual abuse of a minor)
- DUI
- Reckless driving, unless the Youthful Offender Exception applies

Sealing

To "seal" a record means to make the records unavailable to the public without a court order, meaning your name is unavailable for the sealed record in the Clerk's Office's electronic docket system. Employers required by law to do fingerprint background checks, such as schools and hospitals, can still access sealed felony convictions. Additionally, law enforcement agencies and prosecutors will continue to have access to records.

All misdemeanor and felony convictions are eligible to be sealed EXCEPT these 4 situations:

- Domestic Battery, Violations of Orders of Protection, and Stalking No Contact Orders
- Violations of the Humane Care for Animals Act
 - Class A misdemeanor and above
- Most sex crimes
 - Except prostitution and misdemeanor public indecency
- Driving Under the Influence, Reckless Driving
 - Except youthful offenders

***The Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County is barred by law from providing legal advice.
This document is not legal advice.***

Self Represented Litigant Center: (872) 529-1093
Customer Service: (312) 603-5030
www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org

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Waiting Periods

- Acquittals & dismissals: no waiting period
- Supervision: 2 years from the successful completion of the sentence
- Qualified probations: 5 years from the successful completion of the sentence
- Convictions: require 3 years from completion of most recent sentence of all your conviction cases before the records can be sealed. Convictions for offenses that require a person to be listed on a registry cannot be sealed until the registry requirement has been satisfied.

Even if a petition for expungement or sealing is filed, there can be a significant period of time before the petition is heard by the court. It can take a minimum of 6 months for your record to be expunged or sealed.

Fees

It costs \$152.04 to file a petition to expunge or seal records. This fee can be waived by the court if you file a fee waiver application and appear in court for a hearing on your fee waiver. You can list all of the qualifying cases on each petition for a municipal district within Cook County to expunge or seal.

Rap Sheets

If you are filing your petition in Chicago, you need to get your rap sheet and be finger printed. Rap sheets cost \$16.00 and can be obtained at Chicago Police Headquarters located at 3510 S. Michigan, Chicago (Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 8:30AM-12PM). You can return about one week later to pick up your rap sheet.

Prisoner Review Board (PRB)

- Executive Clemency: The Governor of Illinois has the power under the Illinois Constitution to forgive a crime and grant a pardon. The PRB makes a recommendation as to whether a pardon should be granted, the Governor is not required under Illinois law to follow the PRB's recommendation.
- Certificate of Eligibility of Sealing or Expungement: The PRB may also issue a certificate of eligibility for sealing or for expungement recommending that the court order the sealing or expungement of all official records.

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