

**\*Note to volunteers:** these email templates should be used to provide follow-up after speaking with clients, or if you are unable to reach clients by phone. Please be sure to review carefully and use only the template parts that apply to your client's situation.

**Eligible → Counties Other than Philadelphia**

Dear XXX,

As we discussed on the phone, your record can be cleaned up through the expungement and/or sealing process.

*Expungement* means that your record is completely erased, so no one (not even the police or the courts) have access to it. *Sealing* means that most employers, landlords, schools, and the general public will not be able to access your record. However, it can be viewed by the following:

- Law enforcement entities (e.g. police, District Attorneys, courts, etc.)
- Employers who are required to consider records under federal law
- Employers who utilize FBI background checks

For more information about the sealing process, visit [MyCleanSlatePA.com](http://MyCleanSlatePA.com). Below is more information about the next steps you can take to seal or expunge your record:

- (AUTOMATIC SEALING ELIGIBLE) The charges on your record are eligible to be sealed automatically, without the need to file a petition. Automatic sealing began in June 2019, though your record may not be sealed until June 2020. You also have the option to file a petition to seal your record before then.
- (PETITION BASED -LOW INCOME) You may be eligible to receive free legal assistance with filing petitions to clear up your record. You should contact [INSERT COUNTY LEGAL AID ORGANIZATION CONTACT INFO] to see if they can help you.
- (PETITION BASED – HIGHER INCOME) You may be able to file petitions on your own using the forms for sealing (called “limited access”) and expungement available here: <http://www.pacourts.us/forms/for-the-public>. Please note that there are filing fees for each petition you file. Before you file, you should call the court clerk's office at [INSERT CONTACT INFO FOR RELEVANT CLERK'S OFFICE] to find out what documentation you will need. If you want to find a private lawyer to help you, you can contact [INSERT COUNTY LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE OR PBA REFERRAL SERVICE IF THERE IS NO COUNTY SERVICE].

Sincerely,

[FIRST NAME], Volunteer with the Clean Slate Record Clearing Project

## Eligible → Philadelphia Cases

Dear XXX,

As we discussed on the phone, your record can be cleaned up through the expungement and/or sealing process.

*Expungement* means that your record is completely erased, so no one (not even the police or the courts) have access to it. *Sealing* means that most employers, landlords, schools, and the general public will not be able to access your record. However, it can be viewed by the following:

- Law enforcement entities (e.g. police, District Attorneys, courts, etc.)
- Employers who are required to consider records under federal law
- Employers who utilize FBI background checks

For more information about the sealing process, visit [MyCleanSlatePA.com](http://MyCleanSlatePA.com). Below is more information about the next steps you can take to seal or expunge your record:

- (AUTOMATIC SEALING ELIGIBLE) The charges on your record are eligible to be sealed automatically, without the need to file a petition. Automatic sealing began in June 2019, though your record may not be sealed until June 2020. You also have the option to file a petition to seal your record before then.
- (PETITION BASED -LOW INCOME) You may be eligible to receive free legal assistance with filing petitions to clear up your record. Below is a list of organizations in Philadelphia that may be able to help you:
  - **Community Legal Services** (two offices)
    - 1424 Chestnut Street: Monday through Friday, 9am-noon
    - 1410 W. Erie Ave. : Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, 9am-noon
  - **Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity (PLSE):** [http://plsephilly.org/get-help/events/cat\\_ids~5/](http://plsephilly.org/get-help/events/cat_ids~5/).
  - **Defender Association:** Monday through Friday, 9am-5pm at 1441 Sansom St. (must be a former client).
- (PETITION BASED – HIGHER INCOME) As we discussed, you are over-income for free legal services, but I have referred your information to a law firm that may be able to help you for free. The firm will contact you directly if they are able to assist you. You can also file petitions on your own using the forms for sealing (called “limited access”) and expungement available here: <http://www.pacourts.us/forms/for-the-public>. Please note that there are filing fees for each petition you file. If the firm that I’ve sent your information to cannot help you, and you still want to find a private lawyer, you can contact the Philadelphia Lawyer Referral & Information Service at 215-238-6333.

Sincerely,

[FIRST NAME], Volunteer with the Clean Slate Record Clearing Project

## **Would Be Eligible For Automatic Sealing Now, but Owes Fees**

Dear XXX,

I am a volunteer working with the Clean Slate Record Clearing Project. I have reviewed your record and concluded that you would be eligible for Clean Slate automated sealing; however, before the convictions on your record can be sealed, you will need to finish paying off the fines and costs you owe.

Sealing means that most employers, landlords, schools, and the general public will not be able to access your record. However, it can be viewed by the following:

- Law enforcement entities (e.g. police, District Attorneys, courts, etc.)
- Employers who are required to consider records under federal law
- Employers who utilize FBI background checks

For more information about the sealing process, visit [this site](#). Below is more information about the next steps you can take to seal or expunge your record:

(COUNTIES OUTSIDE OF PHILADELPHIA) From what I see, you owe \$\_\_\_\_\_ in fines and costs. [**ALT:** \$X of this amount is for supervision fees, which the court may be able to waive.] To request a fee waiver or to make payments, you should contact the courthouse where you were convicted. For some cases, you may also be able to pay online [here](#).

(IN PHILADELPHIA) From what I see, you owe \$\_\_\_\_\_ in fines and costs. [**ALT:** \$X of this amount is for supervision fees, which the court may be able to waive. To request a supervision fee waiver, you should fill out the form found [here](#)]. To file a fee waiver petition or to make payments, you can go to the basement of the Criminal Justice Center, 1301 Filbert Street, Philadelphia, PA. For some cases, you may also be able to pay online [here](#).

Sincerely,

[FIRST NAME], Volunteer with the Clean Slate Record Clearing Project

## **Eligible In The Future + Owes Fees**

Dear XXX,

I am a volunteer working with the Clean Slate Record Clearing Project. I have reviewed your record and, unfortunately, there is not much you can do at this time to clear up the charges on your record.

From what I see, you have one or more convictions on your record that are not eligible for sealing at this time. If you do not have any further convictions, you may be eligible once 10 years have passed from your last conviction. [PROVIDE INFO ON PAYING OFF FINES AND COSTS FROM ABOVE]. If any of the charges on your record were dropped, then those charges will be sealed automatically at some point before June 27, 2020. You could file to expunge the non-convictions from your record, but the convictions would stay on your record, so expungement wouldn't help you very much.

Sealing means that most employers, landlords, schools, and the general public will not be able to access your record. However, it can be viewed by the following:

- Law enforcement entities (e.g. police, District Attorneys, courts, etc.)
- Employers who are required to consider records under federal law
- Employers who utilize FBI background checks

For more information about the sealing process, visit [this site](#).

If you would like to file for expungement on your own, the forms for expungement are available here: <http://www.pacourts.us/forms/for-the-public>. Please note that there are filing fees for each petition you file. Before you file, you should call the court clerk's office to find out what documentation you will need.

(IN PHILADELPHIA) One other piece of information that may be helpful: In Philadelphia, there is a law that says that employers cannot make hiring decisions based on convictions that are over 7 years old. The exception to this is if you are applying to work in a regulated job. For example, if you try to work with children or at a school in general, they can look at your criminal record, regardless of the age. But most jobs will not be able to do this. If you think you have been wrongfully denied employment, you can file a complaint with the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations [here](#).

I'm sorry there's not more you can do at this time. I wish you the best of luck going forward.

Sincerely,

[FIRST NAME], Volunteer with the Clean Slate Record Clearing Project

## **Not Eligible Ever**

Dear XXX,

I am a volunteer working with the Clean Slate Record Clearing Project. I have reviewed your record and, unfortunately, there is not much you can do at this time to clear up the charges on your record.

From what I see, you have one or more convictions on your record that are not eligible for sealing. In order to remove the convictions from your record, you need to seek a pardon.

**[ALT 1 (good pardon candidate):** Based on your record, you seem to be a good candidate for a pardon. A pardon is a much longer process than expungement or sealing, and the likelihood of getting a pardon is much smaller. But if you get a pardon, your rights are fully restored and the convictions can be fully expunged. For more information on the pardon process, and to download the application, you can go to the Board of Pardons' website at <https://www.bop.pa.gov/application-process/Pages/Process.aspx>.]

**[ALT 2 (future pardon/less strong pardon candidate):** A pardon is a much longer process than expungement or sealing, and the likelihood of getting a pardon is much smaller. Generally, people should wait about 10 years after finishing their sentence to request a pardon, and must pay all the court fines and costs they owe on their cases. For more information on the pardon process, you can go to the Board of Pardons' website at <https://www.bop.pa.gov/application-process/Pages/Process.aspx>.]

If any of the charges on your record were dismissed, then those charges will be sealed automatically at some point before June 27, 2020. You could file a motion in court to expunge dismissed charges from your record, but the convictions would stay on your record, so expungement wouldn't help you very much.

If you have dismissed charges and are interested in expunging those charges, find a lawyer by calling the Pennsylvania Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service at (800) 692-7375, M-F 8-4:30. Low-income Pennsylvanians may qualify for free legal assistance. Visit [www.PALawHelp.org](http://www.PALawHelp.org) for more information. You can also file an expungement motion on your own by using the form found here: <http://www.pacourts.us/forms/for-the-public>. There are filing fees for each petition you file. If you are not a citizen of the U.S., you should get advice from an immigration attorney before filing any petitions in court.

(IN PHILADELPHIA) One other piece of information that may be helpful: In Philadelphia, there is a law that says that employers cannot make hiring decisions based on convictions that are over 7 years old. The exception to this is if you are applying to work in a regulated job. For example, if you try to work with children or at a school in general, they can look at your criminal record,

regardless of the age. But most jobs will not be able to do this. If you think you have been wrongfully denied employment, you can file a complaint with the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations [here](#).

I'm sorry there's not more you can do at this time. I wish you the best of luck going forward.

Sincerely,

[FIRST NAME], Volunteer with the Clean Slate Record Clearing Project

### **No Record Found**

Dear XXX,

I am a volunteer with the Clean Slate Record Clearing Project. Unfortunately, I was not able to find your record on the Pennsylvania public court website. This could mean that your Pennsylvania criminal record was sealed, that no record exists, that it is a juvenile record, or that the court just doesn't have the correct identifying information for you (e.g. name, date of birth, etc.).

If you want to be sure about what's on your record, you can request a copy of your criminal history from the Pennsylvania State Police by submitting an "Access and Review" request. You can download the form [here](#), and mail it to the address listed on the form, along with the following:

- A money order or certified check for \$20, payable to "Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."
- A copy of your drivers' license or state ID (or any other government issued photo ID).

It can take up to 6 months to get the results, so make sure to use an address where you'll be able to receive mail for the foreseeable future.

If your "Access and Review" does reveal that you have a record, you may want to contact [INSERT COUNTY LEGAL AID ORGANIZATION CONTACT INFO] for assistance if you are low-income. Otherwise, you can contact [INSERT COUNTY LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE OR PBA REFERRAL SERVICE IF THERE IS NO COUNTY SERVICE].

Another way you can get a record of your sealed cases is to visit the clerk of courts in a Pennsylvania courthouse and ask for your complete record, including sealed cases.

Sincerely,

[FIRST NAME], Volunteer with the Clean Slate Record Clearing Project

