

Expungement and Sealing Action Steps

1. What is your why?

Expungement and sealing is a multi-step process that may take several months including a court date.

The more specific you can be about what you hope to accomplish by going through this process, the easier it will be for you to continue when things get complicated.

Expungement and Sealing may not be the best option for everyone or it may be too soon to get your record cleared this way. However, there are other options (see page 4).

2. You are not defined by your past!

Document your “why” in a personal statement. This isn’t required but it helps the judge understand your journey and see you as more than your criminal record.

If your record is an obstacle to a job or volunteering this fact becomes part of your why and can be documented in your personal statement.

If you are active in the community and/or taking steps to improve yourself, that is important information for the judge to consider. For instance, if you attend 12-step meetings, have a sponsor, go to church, taking classes, volunteer, are active in your kids lives, mentor young people or give back to the community in any way, be sure to include that information in your personal statement and/or be prepared to show proof to the judge.

Help Desk

Daley Center

50 W Washington St, Chicago, IL 60602

Monday-Wednesday: 9:00 am – Noon (Room 1006)

Monday-Wednesday: Noon - 4:00 pm (Room CL29)

Thursday & Friday: 8:30 am - 4:00 pm (Room CL29)

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1. Required Action: Get your RAP sheet

If you were arrested by the Chicago Police Department, you are required to obtain a RAP sheet, and you will need to obtain the Illinois State Police RAP sheet if you have been arrested outside Chicago.

2. Required Action: Complete your petition

You are not required to have a lawyer! But, free legal help is available to make sure all eligible arrests and criminal cases and outcomes are listed on your petition.

3. Required Action: Obtain a drug screen (if needed)

A drug screen is required to be included in your petition if you have a felony drug conviction.

4. Required Action: File your petition and pay the filing fee

Depending on your income and family size, you may be eligible to have your fees waived. A legal aid organization, such as CGLA, can help you determine if you will qualify.

Include copies of your RAP sheet and case summaries with your petition.

If you have a felony drug conviction include your drug screen.

Include your personal statement if written.

www.cglA.net/know-your-rights