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# Clearing Your Criminal Background

Clearing your criminal record in California can be a complex process, but it is possible under certain circumstances. There are two main avenues to pursue: expungement and sealing/destroying records.

Expungement is available for individuals who have completed their probation or sentence for a misdemeanor or felony offense and have demonstrated good conduct. It involves filing a petition with the court to have your conviction set aside and dismissed. While an expunged conviction will still show up on background checks, it will also show that it has been dismissed, which can improve your chances of employment or housing.

Sealing/destroying records, on the other hand, applies to arrests that did not lead to convictions and to certain juvenile records. This process involves filing a petition with the court to seal or destroy the records, effectively making them inaccessible to the public.

To determine if you are eligible for either expungement or sealing/destroying records, try this [California Courts Self-Help Guide](https://selfhelp.courts.ca.gov/clean-your-record) (<https://selfhelp.courts.ca.gov/clean-your-record>). It will ask you a series of questions, and tell you what method, if any, is available to clean your record. You may also want to consult with an attorney who specializes in criminal record clearing in California. They will be able to evaluate your specific situation and guide you through the process.

It is important to note that not all convictions can be cleared from your record, such as serious offenses like sexual offenses or violent crimes.

Remember, taking steps to clear your criminal record can significantly improve your future opportunities, so it is worth exploring if you meet the necessary criteria.

## **Date Created**

10/26/2023