

# EXPUNGEMENT

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is expungement?

In California, expungement (legally called “dismissal”) is a way to set aside a criminal conviction and reduce its impact. **Expungement can help when applying for jobs, housing, and occupational licenses.**

### Does an expungement erase a conviction?

No, but it limits who can see your record. Usually, after an expungement, the court records are restricted from public access and most background checks. In state records, such as RAP sheets and fingerprint (Live Scan) background checks, the conviction will show as “dismissed.” Expungement doesn’t change sex offender registration requirements or restore the right to own a firearm. And even dismissed convictions can have consequences for immigration, so talk to an immigration attorney if you have concerns.

### Can jobs and landlords ask about or consider expunged convictions?

For most job and housing applications in California, expunged convictions cannot be considered, and you do not have to report them if asked. However, there are exceptions, such as many government and healthcare jobs, jobs requiring security clearances or work with vulnerable groups, certain licensing agencies, and public housing programs. **If you have specific questions, the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles may be able to help.**

### Who can still ask about or see an expunged conviction?

Most government agencies and certain types of private organizations, including:

- Law enforcement, courts, and immigration officials
- Child and family services and foster care agencies
- Licensing boards (such as for medical professions and teachers)
- Many jobs in healthcare, schools, or working with sensitive populations

### How can I expunge my conviction?

You will need to file a Petition for Dismissal in superior court. You can do this without a lawyer, but it may be easier if you have one. Although most convictions are eligible for expungement, there are certain requirements, and the outcome is not guaranteed. **The Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles offers free help with expungements and other types of record-clearing.**

**Apply for legal aid at [www.lafla.org](http://www.lafla.org) or 1-800-399-4529.**