Legal services providers are frequently presented with the challenge of communicating complicated and evolving legal advice to large numbers of constituents. The Clean Slate Screening Project (CSSP), developed by Philadelphia-based Community Legal Services (CLS) in partnership with the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA), was conceived as a solution to that predicament when in 2018, the state became the first in the nation to pass the innovative “Clean Slate” law and tremendously expand record clearing opportunities for millions.

Under this new law, Pennsylvania began “sealing” eligible dropped charges and minor convictions through an automated process without the need to file expensive or time-consuming petitions in court. Given recent research proving the existence of the “second chance gap”, or the disparity between Americans eligible for record clearing and those who are actually able to access that relief, it would be difficult to overestimate the positive impact of this new law. As of the writing of this report, more than 37 million cases - or more than 50 million charges - have been processed for sealing. In practical terms, that’s millions of criminal records no longer able to be viewed or considered by the vast majority of prospective employers, schools and training programs, licensing boards, landlords, and the general public.

However, the sealing of a record is not accompanied by a notification system, meaning that an individual may have no idea that they may be eligible for sealing or that their record may have in fact already been hidden from view. To that end, the organizers of CSSP needed to think creatively about how to share information about this with the broader public, and in some cases, give individualized information. With that goal in mind, CSSP took advantage of technology to reach out to more than 8,000 individuals with personalized advice over the course of a year and a half.

The benefits of the CSSP were broader than the impressive scope of individual contacts. In conjunction with a targeted online campaign, the project built up awareness about record clearing rights across the state. It was instrumental in developing communications with tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians through an e-mail list that continues to provide real-time updates about changes in the law and has been instrumental in recruiting advocates for further expansion of criminal record clearing opportunities. The CSSP laid the groundwork for the creation of an automated tool to pull individuals’ criminal record and give boilerplate advice. Still in development, this evolution of the CSSP has the potential to help an infinite number of Pennsylvanians.

Much of what made CSSP a success could easily be transferred to other locations or issue areas. With that in mind, this report describes the CSSP project in detail and shares lessons learned that may be useful to other programs needing to quickly disseminate complex legal information.

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Clean Slate 101

The idea behind Pennsylvania’s innovative Clean Slate law was first posited in a 2014 paper drafted by Community Legal Services’ (CLS) Sharon Dietrich and the Center for American Progress’ (CAP) Rebecca Vallas. The paper suggested a mechanism to automatically seal minor records after 10 years to provide these individuals with a “clean slate” to help them access better employment, housing, and schooling opportunities. A multifaceted bipartisan campaign followed, and on June 28, 2018, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf signed Clean Slate (HB 1419) into law.

As a result, Pennsylvania became the first state in the nation to employ technology to automatically and retroactively seal criminal records, marking a breakthrough in the expansive of record clearing options for Pennsylvanians. The system uses computer queries run by courts and law enforcement repositories to find the records and seal them without the need to file a petition in court.

Under the current rules of Clean Slate, the most minor records are eligible for automatic sealing if all costs and fines other than restitution have been paid on the case. This includes all non-convictions, and all summary and some misdemeanor convictions after a prescribed period of time without other arrests has elapsed, usually 10 years. Some more serious misdemeanor convictions are ineligible for automatic sealing but may be sealed by filing a petition in court.

When a record is sealed, it cannot be accessed or considered by the general public, landlords, schools, licensing boards, and most employers, if an FBI background check is not required. In these instances, an individual with a sealed record can deny it exists. Police departments and courts do retain the rights to sealed records.

Mission Critical: Get the Word Out

However, the scope of Clean Slate presented unique challenges. In part due to the sheer volume of records eligible for sealing, there was no mechanism to give individual notice of a sealed record. CLS and partner organizations recognized early on that getting information out about this new law was critical, because it may be the only way that eligible Pennsylvanians would know that they can apply for jobs, promotions, housing, or to school without needing to worry about their record.

Additionally, it became apparent that providing individualized advice would be necessary due to the nature of Clean Slate’s complicated rules. Some records, especially those that were many years old, were missing information such as the grading or outcome of a charge. Because the computer queries rely on this data to determine eligibility, it was important to advise individuals what steps to take to complete the record so that it would be picked up by the system for sealing. In other instances, individuals needed to be advised that they needed to pay off some money owed on their case, given a date for when a record would be eligible, or provided a referral to a legal aid organization or private attorney should a petition be required to seal a record.

With this in mind, CLS and PBA jointly created a Google Form where Pennsylvanians unsure about their eligibility for record clearing relief under the new law could sign-up to have their record screened by a legal volunteer. The demand for this service greatly exceeded any expectations. When Governor Wolf shared the link to the form in an early 2020 press conference, more than 3,000 had signed up by the following day. Eventually, the list grew to more than 8,500 individuals.
To attempt to meet this growing demand, the Clean Slate Screening Project (CSSP) was born. Over the next year and a half, the CSSP would continue to evolve into a multi-faceted project that harnessed systems and technology to provide legal advice to an ever-growing number of individuals across the state.

CSSP: An Overview

The CSSP began as a pro bono project to connect volunteer lawyers to Pennsylvanians with records who needed advice about their eligibility for Clean Slate. CLS partnered with the Pennsylvania and Philadelphia Bar Associations on the project and hosted trainings about the Clean Slate law for more than 500 lawyers across the state. Lawyers who volunteer for CSSP agreed to take on these advice cases in exchange for certification credits.

Due to the volume of the demand, CLS added capacity by building direct partnerships with law firms around the state and hiring internal staff, including a Project Coordinator to oversee the daily administration of the project. CLS was able to increase the number of cases handled externally, while simultaneously developing internal automated systems to expand output within the organization. This report will provide an overview of the steps and a consideration of lessons learned throughout the process.

**Step 1: Build up CLS’ Internal Capacity**

With new staff on board, CLS was able to devote more staff time to the CSSP and think creatively about how to meet the demand for Clean Slate advice. A crucial first step was to minimize the amount of time
spent screening and contacting each individual while balancing the need for personalized information to make sure that the advice given was useful. CLS staff realized that those working on the project were spending a lot of time “recreating the wheel” by viewing each sign-up as an individual consultation, when many individuals in fact required nearly identical advice. Additionally, a lot of time was wasted trying to reach people on the phone, when realistically individuals are not likely to pick up a call from an unrecognized number and tend to respond better to emails and texts.

Therefore, CLS decided to categorize individuals into groups, and then created a set of template responses with comprehensive advice for each category. For example, individuals that are eligible should be counseled about how to confirm their record has sealed and advised about their rights. Records that are ineligible for sealing needed information about the pardon process. Using this template, CLS created an intuitive screening tool that included these categories as drop-down options.

Within these broader categories some personalized advice is still required. For instance, records not yet able to be sealed require an eligibility date, and a county of record was needed in case a referral was necessary to help file a petition. The screening tool provided space to include these personalized details in a user-friendly way. It applied conditional formatting to “highlight” the information needed, as demonstrated in the below example.

A volunteer screening the above record for “John Doe” would move left to right across the tool. In the example, the screener has analyzed Mr. Doe’s record and decided that he will be eligible for sealing at a future date, but a petition will need to be filed in court. Based on this information, the tool has automatically highlighted in yellow the individualized information that must be input into the sheet, so the analyzer knows to add total court fines and costs owed, the month and year of eligibility, and the county of record.

CLS’ IT department then used coding language to automatically generate personalized emails based on the information input into the screening tool. The e-mails used the template advice as a base but added in the necessary additional details. In the below example email, John Doe was advised that his record would be eligible at a specified later date. He was also provided with a referral to his local legal aid organization.
To be sure, some records required advice that was too complex to be handled by the template. In those cases, individualized advice was provided over the phone or by email. However, the screening tool and automated emails allowed CLS to reach a much greater volume of Pennsylvanians, with time left over to spend focusing on those complex cases. Using this formula, CLS itself was able to screen and contact about 5,000 individuals.

**Step 2: Develop Volunteer Materials**

When it came to outsourcing cases, CLS’ goal was to use lessons and strategies learned from our internal procedure to simplify the process for volunteers. This was especially necessary because the Clean Slate law is complex and can be difficult to understand, especially for lawyers or legal professionals who do not work on criminal record clearing. A procedure that was too complicated may be intimidating and discourage potential volunteers. Therefore, CLS focused on developing exhaustive materials and streamlining the volunteer process as much as possible.

As a first step, CLS attorneys filmed a comprehensive training course and made the video available to prospective volunteers. CLS also created several practice materials, including exhaustive flow charts and redacted sample records. A “Volunteer Tool-Kit” contained a detailed step-by-step guide for volunteers and many other useful materials. See the included appendix for excerpts from this document.

While external volunteers did not have access to the auto-generating email system, CLS provided the screening tool and the template emails so that the system could be recreated if desired.

**Step 3: Outreach**

Equipped with training and reference materials, the next step was to build up a CSSP volunteer base. CLS’ partnership with the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA) provided a strong foundation for the program, and many initial volunteers were funneled through PBA’s outreach. To expand the project, CLS staff looked for other avenues to recruit volunteers. Periodic trainings requested by law firms about criminal records issues became an opportunity to plug the program and draw in volunteers. CLS and PBA also partnered with law schools around the state, allowing law students to learn to screen records in a supervised setting.

While the CSSP project was ongoing, CLS contracted with a communications firm to develop MyCleanSlatePA.com, a comprehensive resource with up-to-date information and resources about the law. The website was also leveraged to support the CSSP volunteer program. In addition to a sign-up form for prospective volunteers, current CSSP members could use personalized log-in credentials to access all materials and a link to their personalized assignments. The Volunteer Portal helped to centralize all CSSP materials in one place, creating a streamlined process for volunteers.

**Volunteer Management Lessons Learned**
Experienced showed that one of the most fruitful methods for gaining and retaining volunteers was finding a firm expressing a strong interest in the project and investing a lot of time in training key volunteers at the outset. Dubbed the “Dechert Model” due to the CSSP’s successful relationship with Dechert LLP, this strategy proved that some firms could successfully replicate and run a miniature CSSP project internally, over time building up their own experts to guide the program. Later success was had using this same system with other firms, including Morgan Lewis & Blockius LLP. Volunteers from both of these firms also volunteered their time and expertise at in-person clinic events.

Another particularly useful tactic for volunteer retention was a system of triaging records before assigning to volunteers. Newer volunteers would be assigned easier cases to build up their confidence before slowly moving onto more complex records. CLS’ CSSP team was sure to make themselves available to review volunteer work and provide feedback.

One of the greatest benefits for CSSP’s volunteer recruitment was that the project was designed to be remote and completed on a volunteer’s own time. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit Pennsylvania in late March and shut down much of the state, interest in the CSSP project soared. Volunteers were eager to donate time to help others in a project that could be safely administered from their homes.

Over the course of the project, CLS worked with more than 50 volunteers across Pennsylvania. Working closely with pro-bono volunteers was a great experience for CLS staff. Some volunteers became exceptionally knowledgeable about record clearing laws and went above and beyond the initial scope of the project, helping individuals file expungement or sealing petitions and volunteering at CLS events in-person to screen records for Philadelphians and advise them of their clearing options.

**Long Lasting Impacts**

“Finally, I wanted to thank you for the opportunity to help out with this project. The highlight of my (albeit short) legal career thus far was speaking with a mother who, because her record was being sealed, would be able to chaperone her child’s field trips for the first time. She cried when I gave her the news. Moments like that gave me an even greater appreciation for the work that y’all do at CLS and the impact it has in our community.”— CSSP Volunteer

Beyond building up a pro-bono army of volunteers, the CSSP had other unintended but positive outcomes. The systematized process of analyzing records created a robust set of easily sortable data that could be used to find trends within Pennsylvania records, such as whether certain counties are more likely to produce incomplete records. CLS was also left with a list of individuals with records and their contact information. This e-mail list has been instrumental in connecting with Pennsylvanians with records to communicate important information and strengthen advocacy campaigns.

The collected contact information has been developed into an optional “Clean Slate” e-mail list, which currently hosts more than 10,000 individuals and continues to grow as more Pennsylvanians sign up for help on the MyCleanSlatePA.com website. Through carefully crafted e-mail blasts, CLS has been able to provide advice about a variety of topics spanning from how to find and read your record, accessing free
legal help, and the pardon process. In addition, the list is a resource of the most important and powerful advocates – those who would be directly impacted by expansion of record clearing law.

For example, CLS used the Clean Slate e-mail list to collect stories of individuals who would benefit for sealing but for costs and fines owed. These Pennsylvanians were trapped in a cycle of being unable to pay court fees to hide their record because their past convictions negatively impacted their ability to find gainful employment. Through sharing their stories and in some cases, speaking to the media, these advocates were an invaluable component of the campaign which successfully ended in the passage of Act 83. This new law which allows eligible records to be sealed in Pennsylvania even if fines and costs are still owed (other than restitution). The work previously completed on the CSSP then helped to amplify the benefits of this new law by not only providing a vehicle to immediately notify the entire e-mail list, but to review the data to quickly locate and contact individuals who still owed fines and costs but would now be eligible for sealing.

The criminal justice reform movement in Pennsylvania continues to benefit from the groundwork laid by the CSSP, as organizers are currently pushing for a “Clean Slate 3.0” to expand the benefits of auto-sealing to felony drug convictions.

“Thanks for getting back to me. I was able to do a public record search and it looks like the record was sealed - thank god - was a misdemeanor but still. I am very happy that you got in touch with me.” — CSSP Listserv Member

Future of CSSP

The growth of the CSSP campaign has shed light on just how big the demand is for information about opportunities for record clearing. It’s no surprise that it’s difficult for everyday Pennsylvanians to understand complicated record clearing laws that require multiple hours of training for volunteer legal professionals. As it became clear that it would be impossible to grow the CSSP enough to provide personalized advice to every individual who needed it, CLS has instead focused on develop technology to expand opportunities for record screening and self-help.

One such development is an automated tool that pulls up an individual’s criminal record with some simple identifying information and provides side-by-side resources to help the person read and screen their own record for eligibility. A project is currently in development to use coding to automatically screen the record, completely automating the process. There remain many challenges in moving towards automation for this complex process, but it’s hard to imagine that CLS staff would be able to execute these technological solutions nearly as successfully without the benefit from the lessons learned during the evolution of the CSSP.
Though the CSSP project is technically complete now that each of the more than 8,000 Pennsylvanians who signed up for help have been reached, it continues to pay dividends. CLS is armed with the experience and tools necessary to create a complex technological tool to assist more Pennsylvanians than ever before. The organization now has the benefit of reaching tens of thousands of constituents at a moment’s notice and has been able to give a voice to many individuals interested in advocating for changes in the law that would help them access better jobs, housing, and schooling.

While so many Pennsylvanians have benefitted from Clean Slate, in the scheme of things the scope of the CSSP was relatively small. The project focused on one specific and complex law with jurisdiction in one state. However, Pennsylvania’s Clean Slate law has provided inspiration for the development of similar laws across the country. States such as Michigan, Virginia, Connecticut, and Utah have already passed Clean Slate-type laws, while campaigners in many others are actively working to gather support for and eventually pass similar legislation. And while the lessons learned from the CSSP have particular relevance for the growing number of Clean Slate campaigns across the country, it’s easy to see how the project and lessons outlined in this report could present a useful case study even for projects in other issue areas needing to meet the ever-increasing demand for constituent education and communication.
APPENDIX: EXCERPTS FROM VOLUNTEER TOOL-KIT

**CLEAN SLATE SCREENING PROJECT**

**VOLUNTEER TOOL-KIT**

Thank you for interest in the Clean Slate Screening Project! In this Tool-kit you will find all of the materials you need to screen records for Clean Slate. Before beginning screenings, please make sure that you have watched the Training Video and reviewed the Practice Materials.

For more information, please visit [MyCleanSlatePA.com Volunteer Portal](http://MyCleanSlatePA.com).  

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STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR VOLUNTEERS

STEP 1: RECEIVE CLIENT REFERRALS

You will receive your assignments as a Google spreadsheet on the My Assignments page:

The spreadsheet will include all of the information necessary to locate and analyze each client’s record. Columns A – H will be filled in. When analyzing your client’s record to determine eligibility, you will complete columns I – N.

STEP 2: PULL CLIENT’S RECORD

Pull client’s record from the court website: https://ujportal.pacourts.us.

Please note that court records often get names and dates of birth wrong, or individuals may have used different names at different points in time. If you cannot immediately find the record, try different variations of names or try searching without a birth date. Review court summary first to get an overall view of the record. If the court summary says that the case is “archived,” you will need to open the individual docket to see what happened in that case. (Click here for a helpful video on pulling court records.)

STEP 3: ANALYZE RECORD

Refer to your client’s record and the Analysis Flowchart to do an eligibility screening. Then fill in the blank columns with the relevant information as follows:

Column H: Court Summary
If empty, copy and paste link to court summary.

Column I: Missing grade/disposition
If any charges on the record are missing a grade or disposition, indicate here. If grade or disposition information is missing, client will either fit into the “Likely Eligible – Missing Info” category, or require a personal call or e-mail.

Column J: Analysis
Using the flowchart, analyze your client’s record. Then, click on the arrow to place your client into one of the following categories:

No Record Found: After multiple searches, no record was found using the given information.

Eligible for Sealing – Auto: Client is eligible now for auto-sealing (even if costs and fines remain outstanding).
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Column K: Fees Owed</th>
<th>Total all client’s outstanding fines and costs from each case. “This box will automatically turn yellow if information needed to advise client, and gray if no information needed.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Column L: Month &amp; Year, Future Eligible Only</td>
<td>If the analysis is Eligible Later – Disposition Date (Auto) or Eligible Later – Disposition Date (Sealing), indicate future eligibility date by month and year. “This box will automatically turn yellow if information needed to advise client, and gray if no information needed.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column M: Referral County Sealing – Petition Only</td>
<td>If the analysis is Eligible by Sealing – Petition, type the name of the referral count(ies). “This box will automatically turn yellow if information needed to advise client, and gray if no information needed.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column N: Next Step</td>
<td>Indicate the appropriate next step to contact the client. If the client fits clearly into an analysis categories, it is appropriate to choose the corresponding email template. If the analysis is Mixed Record, Complicated Advice, or Other, or the client would otherwise benefit from personalized advice, please choose Call or Email (Other).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column O: Notes</td>
<td>This is a space to type any notes or important information that does not fit any other columns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column P: Client Contacted?</td>
<td>When you have sent the client an email or spoken by phone, change this column from “No” to “Yes” to indicate completion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP 4: CONTACT CLIENT USING TEMPLATE GUIDE

Use the Template Guide to determine the necessary follow-up to your client.

When calling or sending a personal email, introduce yourself as a volunteer with the Clean Slate Screening Project. You may use the call script to guide you, but also be sure to:

- Explain that if individual is not a citizen, they should consult with an immigration attorney before proceeding with any record clearing.
- If court fines and costs are owed, provide information about what is owed and how person can resolve debt by contacting court or paying online.
- If the client may benefit from legal help, explain that if they are low-income or a veteran and a good candidate for expungement/sealing, they might want to seek help from their local legal aid program. If the individual is not low-income, they should call the Lawyer Referral Service. Refer to the Referral Guide.
- If you are unable to reach by phone after two attempts, send an email.

When using email templates, copy and paste the entire email, and be sure to include personalized information where indicated (text that should be personalized appears in red).

STEP 5: REPORT COMPLETION

Report that the screening is complete by changing Column P: Client Contacted? from “Yes” to “No”.
ANALYSIS FLOWCHART

Expungement
(§ 9122)

What are you trying to expunge?

Is the charge a non-conviction (withdrawn, nolle prossed, dismissed, not guilty)?

Is it a summary conviction?

Yes

Is there a subsequent 5-year arrest-free period?

No

No

Did the individual complete a diversion program (e.g. ARD, Section 17) for the charge?

Yes

Have all outstanding fines and costs been paid off?

No

Is the individual over 70 years old?

Yes

Is there a subsequent 10-year arrest-free period since the conviction?

No

NOT ELIGIBLE (check for sealing)

ELIGIBLE FOR EXPUNGEMENT!
Clean Slate - Automatic Sealing
(§§ 9122.2 & 9122.3)

What convictions are you trying to seal?

F    M1

You aren’t eligible for any sealing.

M2    M3    Ungraded

Summary

Offense

Non-

Conviction

(.2a1) Since conviction, have you had a 10 year period free of any M or F conviction?

No

Yes

(.2a1) Do you have any outstanding court fees or fines?

No

Yes

(.2a1) Is the offense a summary offense that is at least 10 years old?

No

Yes

(.2a2) Are you trying to seal a non-conviction charge?

No

Yes

(.3a1) Is the conviction you’re trying to seal

• Pt. II Art. B offense – danger to person
• Pt. II Art. D offense – offense against family
• Ch. 61 offense – firearms/other dangerous articles
• 42 Pa. C.S. § 9799.14/.55 offense – sexual offense/tier system
• § 5533 – cruelty to animal
• § 6501 – corruption of minors

You aren’t eligible for automatic sealing, but other offenses may be

Yes

No

(.3a2) Have you ever been convicted of

• A felony
• 2 or more M1s or higher
• 4 or more Ms
• § 3127 – indecent exposure
• § 3129 – sexual intercourse w/ animal
• § 4915.1/2 – failure to comply w/ registration req’ts
• § 5122 – weapons/implements to escape
• § 5510 – abuse of corpse
• § 5515 – prohibiting paramilitary training

You aren’t eligible for automatic sealing, but it may be eligible for a petition

Yes

No

(.3b) Did conviction of an M1 or higher or any of the above listed offenses arise out of the same case?

No

Yes

(.3b) Did conviction of an M1 or higher or any of the above listed offenses arise out of the same case?

No

Yes

Eligible

After Sealing

If you were convicted of a M or F after your record was sealed, the court may unseal your previously sealed convictions [9122.4(b)].
Clean Slate – Petition Based Sealing
(§ 9122.1)

What conviction are you trying to seal?

- **F**
  - You aren't eligible for any sealing.
- **M1**
  - You aren't eligible for any sealing.
  - This offense isn't punishable but other offenses may be.
  - You aren't eligible for any sealing.
- **M2**
  - You aren't eligible for any sealing.
- **M3**
  - You aren't eligible for any sealing.
  - Ungraded offense, not eligible.
- **Summary Offense**
  - You aren't eligible for any sealing.
- **Non-Conviction**
  - You aren't eligible for any sealing.

- **Eligible for Clean Slate, See Automatic Sealing**

(b2i) Have you ever been convicted of murder, F1, or offense punishable by more than 20 yrs?
- Yes
- No

(ba) Since conviction, have you had a 10-year period free of any M or F conviction?
- Yes
- No

(ba) Do you have any outstanding court fees or fines?
- Yes
- No

(b) Is the offense you're trying to seal an M1 of any of the following?
- Pt. II Art. B offense – danger to person
- Pt. II Art. D offense – offense against family
- Ch. 61 offense – firearms/other dangerous articles
- § 9799.14./.55 – sexual offense/tier system/reg.
- § 6301 – corruption of minors
- No

(b2i) Within the past 15 years, have you been convicted of?
- 2 or more M1s or higher or
- Any of the following: indecent exposure; sexual intercourse w/ animal; failure to comply w/registration req'ts; weapons/implments for escape; abuse of corpse; prohibiting paramilitary training
- Yes
- No

(b2ii) Within the past 20 years, have you been convicted of either?
- Felony for any of the following:
  - Pt. II Art. B offense – danger to person
  - Pt. II Art. D offense – offense against family
  - Ch. 61 offense – firearms/other dangerous articles
  - § 9799.14./.55 – sexual offense/tier system/registration
  - 4 or more M2s or higher
- Yes
- No

NOT ELIGIBLE

ELIGIBLE
SITUATIONS REQUIRING NON-TEMPLATE EMAIL OR CALL

The following situations are not adequately addressed by the template emails. In each instance, please call client or send a personal email with personalized advice.

- **Mixed records that do not fit satisfactorily into any category:** Combine our existing templates to create a personalized email for clients who have mixed records that don’t fit into one of our categories. Primary examples include:
  - Clients who have conviction(s) that qualify for automated sealing, along with misdemeanor conviction(s) that do not qualify for automated sealing. *E.g.*, Client A has a M3 disorderly conduct conviction from 2004 and a M2 simple assault conviction from 2007. The 2004 case will be sealed by automation, but the 2007 case requires a petition.
  - Clients who have a felony conviction, but would significantly benefit from sealing the misdemeanor(s) on their record. *E.g.*, Client B has a 1999 drug sale felony and a 2008 misdemeanor theft. Client B would benefit from sealing the theft case, so he should not get the standard pardon email. He needs information about petition sealing and pardons.

- **Missing disposition or grading information on their record, and unclear if they would qualify for sealing:** If a record is missing grade or disposition data, you should read the narrative of the Docket and/or look up the charge here. You may be able to determine the grade and/or disposition. If the client could possibly qualify for sealing, then you should send a personalized email advising client to 1) visit to the courthouse in the county of their record, 2) ask the clerk/records custodian to pull his or her paper file, and 3) request that the information be entered into the computer database. If you can determine that the client does not qualify for sealing, you should send the standardized email about the pardon process instead.

- **Completed a diversion program (such as ARD) where fees are paid, but record does not clearly show that ARD was completed:** If there is no indication on the court summary that the ARD was completed, but fees were paid, the client will need to file an expungement petition. The client should be told that his/her record is missing information and given referral information to help with the expungement petition. If the expungement would clear the client’s record, the situation may warrant a phone call rather than an email.

- **Eligible for automated sealing within one year:** Use the template email for people who are eligible for automatic sealing now, but add in the information about when they will be eligible. This email will give them full instructions about how to check if their record is sealed.

- **Client’s primary record is a summary conviction that is not eligible for sealing (less than 10 years old):** Clients with summary convictions will be eligible for expungement after 5 arrest-free years. If the most damaging part of the client’s record is a summary offense, and that summary offense is not yet eligible for sealing, then you should write a personalized email with information about expunging the summary conviction(s). Summary convictions are eligible for expungement after 5 years arrest free if fees are paid. A petition must be filed, so provide referral information. If the client has summary
1. Introduction
   • Verify their identity, introduce yourself, and explain why you’re calling.
     ○ Example: “Hi, is this ______? My name is ______. I’m a volunteer with the Clean Slate
       Screening Project. I’m calling because you provided your information to see if you’re eligible for
       Clean Slate sealing. Is this a good time to talk?”
   • Explain nature of representation
     ○ Example: “First, I just want to make clear that my relationship with you is very limited. I
       analyzed your record and I’m giving you some advice about your record now, but I won’t
       represent you in any way after this phone call. Okay?”
   • Immigration warning
     ○ Example: “I also wanted to mention that, if you are not a citizen of US, you should speak to an
       immigration attorney before doing anything about your criminal record, like filing a motion in
       court. I can’t give you any immigration advice.”

2. Review the Record
   • Start by reviewing the record itself. “I’m seeing that you had a conviction in 2005 to theft and a
     conviction in 1995 to drug possession. Is that right?”
   • Tell the person what relief he/she is eligible for. Remember to start with the basics! If the person is
     eligible for automated and/or petition-based sealing, make sure you explain:
       ○ What sealing is
       ○ What automated sealing is
       ○ What petition sealing is, and how to find an attorney
   • If the person’s record is missing information, explain what’s missing. You may need to explain what a
     “Grade” or “Disposition” is. Then advise the person to go to the courthouse in the county where they
     were convicted, ask for the paper file relating to that conviction, and ask the clerk to input the missing
     information in the computer database. If you are unable to determine whether the person will qualify
     for automated sealing based on the information available to you, you should provide the person with
     lawyer referral information.
   • If the person owes fees, explain how much is owed. Advise the person to contact the courthouse in the
     county where he/she was convicted to ask about a payment plan.

3. Referrals – Check the Resource Guide to See Where You Can Refer Them
   • You don’t have to provide specific referral information over the phone, but make sure you confirm
     their email so you can send it in a follow-up email.
• If client is low-income: “You may be eligible to receive free legal assistance with filing petitions to clear up your record. You should contact [LEGAL AID ORGANIZATION IN COUNTY WHERE THEY WERE CONVICTED] to see if they can help you.
• If they are not low-income: “You may be able to file petitions on your own using the forms for sealing that are available online. But there are filing fees for each petition you file. Before you file, you should call the clerk’s office in the county where you were convicted to find out what documentation you will need. If you want to find a private lawyer to help, you can contact [COUNTY LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE OR PPA REFERRAL SERVICE IF THERE IS NO COUNTY SERVICE].
• If the client has records in multiple counties, make sure you provider the referral information for each county.

6. Confirm their email
   • Pull up the client’s email from the spreadsheet and double-check that it’s correct.

7. Send a follow-up email
   • Use an email template, a combination of templates, and/or your own language to send a follow-up email with all of the advice and referral information.

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**EMAIL (NO RECORD)**

Dear <<Name (A)>>,

I am contacting you because you signed up to have your criminal record screened by the volunteers at the Clean Slate Record Clearing Project.

Your Results

A Clean Slate Record Clearing Project volunteer tried to locate and analyze your record. We were not able to find your record on the Pennsylvania public court website. This could mean that your Pennsylvania criminal record was already sealed automatically, 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.).

How to Find Your Criminal Record

If you believe that this is an error, please watch our video tutorial to learn how to find and read your record.

If you do find your criminal record, you should visit MyCleanSlatePA.com for more information about how to read your record. Watch our explainer videos or sign up for our step-by-step guide. You can also contact a lawyer to help with your criminal record. You may qualify for a legal aid organization for assistance if you are low-income. You can find a legal aid organization in your county by visiting https://palegalaid.net/legal-aid-providers-in-pa. Others can call the Pennsylvania Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service at (800) 692-7375, Monday through Friday, from 8 AM to 4:30 PM.

“No Cases Found” Search Result
Dear <<(A) Name>>, 

I am contacting you because you signed up to have your criminal record screened by the volunteers at the Clean Slate Record Clearing Project.

Your Results

Our team was able to locate and analyze your record. <<If (H) Court Summary is not empty, then "Here is the record we found for you: <<(H)>>." If (H) Court Summary is empty, omit.>>

Unfortunately, the conviction(s) on your record cannot be sealed or expunged right now. However, your record may be eligible for sealing in <<(K) Month & Year>> if you are not convicted of any other misdemeanor or felony before then. If you stay conviction-free, your record may be eligible for sealing in <<(K) Month & Year>> through an automated process. That means the charges on your record can be sealed without the need to file a petition in court.

Dropped Charges
Your convictions cannot be sealed until <<(K) Month & Year>>, but any dropped charges on your record can be sealed by automation before then. The charges that did not result in convictions (not guilty, withdrawn, dismissed, nolle prossed) are eligible to be sealed.

<< If column (J) Fees Owed is not 0.00, then:

"IMPORTANT: You Owe Court Fees

However, before your record can be sealed, you will need to finish paying off the fines and costs you owe. Our team found that you owe $<<(J)>> in fines and costs. 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. These fees must be paid before your record can be sealed. (Due to Covid-19 (Coronavirus) some courts in the Commonwealth have closed. Please call the courthouse first to see if they are open.)">>

If column Fees Owed is 0.00, omit.>>

What does “sealed” mean?

When a criminal record is “sealed,” that means that most people cannot see it. A sealed record cannot be seen or considered by:

- The general public
- Landlords
- Schools
- Licensing boards
EMAIL (LIKELY ELIGIBLE – MISSING INFO)

Dear << (A) Name>>, 

I am contacting you because you signed up to have your criminal record screened by the volunteers at the Clean Slate Record Clearing Project.

Your Results

Our team was able to locate and analyze your record. <<If (H) Court Summary is not empty, then "Here is the record we found for you: <<(H) Court Summary>>." If (H) Court Summary is empty, omit.>>

IMPORTANT: Your Record is Missing Information

Based on the information currently available on your record, your record may be eligible for automatic or petition sealing under Pennsylvania’s Clean Slate law. However, your record is missing information, such as the grade of the offense or the outcome of the charges. We cannot tell you whether your record is eligible for sealing because important information is missing.

Your record will not be sealed until the missing information is added to your record or until you file a petition with the court in the county where you had your case. You may want to seek help from an attorney to find the missing information and file a sealing petition in court if appropriate. You can also contact the court yourself to find the missing information. If the court is willing to enter the information into your electronic case record, then your case might be sealed automatically if it is eligible. Otherwise, you will need to file a petition to seal your record. (Due to Covid-19 (Coronavirus) some courts in the Commonwealth have closed. Please call the courthouse first to see if they are open.)

If you are a lower income individual, you may be eligible to receive free legal assistance. You should contact the organization(s) listed below to seek help:

<<Check Referral Guide (pg. 29)>>

If you do not qualify for free legal services, you can contact a lawyer referral service to find a private lawyer. To find a lawyer in your area, call:

<<Check Referral Guide (pg. 29)>>

<< If (J) Fees Owed is not 0.00, then:

"IMPORTANT: You Owe Court Fees

However, before your record can be sealed, you will need to finish paying off the fines and costs you owe. Our team found that you owe $<< (J) Fees Owed>> in fines and costs. 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. These fees must be paid before your record can be sealed. (Due to Covid-19 (Coronavirus) some courts in the Commonwealth have closed. Please call the courthouse first to see if they are open.)"

If column Fees Owed is 0.00, omit.>>
REFERRAL GUIDE

Pennsylvania Criminal Record Assistance Resource Guide

Philadelphia County

- Free legal services
  - Community Legal Services:
    - Services provided: expungement, sealing, pardon, court debt, employment advocacy
    - Eligibility: Must be a Philadelphia resident with Philadelphia court cases, must be low income (under 187.5% of the federal poverty guidelines).
  - Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity
    - Services provided: expungement, sealing
    - Eligibility: Must have court cases in Philadelphia (can live outside of Philadelphia). Must be low income (under 200% of federal poverty guidelines).
  - Defender Association of Philadelphia
    - Services provided: expungement, sealing
    - Intake: Walk-in M-F from 9-5 at 1441 Sansom St.
    - Eligibility: Must be a former client of the Defender Association.
    - Note: for juvenile expungement assistance, refer people to the Juvenile Expungement Hotline operated by the Defender Association: (267) 765-6770.
  - Pro-bono assistance from Duane Morris: for people with Philadelphia records who are under 300% of the federal poverty guidelines, Duane Morris may be able to take a direct referral. Send the client's contact information to Katherine McGee kichristianmcgee@duanemorris.com and KC Obenschain KCObenschain@duanemorris.com.

- Other assistance
  - Philadelphia Bar's Lawyer Referral & Information Services (LRIS): Call (215) 238-6333; M-F from 9-5.
  - Pro se: Petitions can be filed on the second floor motions desk of the Criminal Justice Center at 1301 Filbert St.

Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, and Lawrence Counties

- Free legal services
  - Neighborhood Legal Services
    - Services: expungement, sealing, pardon, court debt
    - Intake: Walk-in M-F from 9-3; Call (866) 761-6572 M-F from 9-12; online intake: www.nlsa.us.
    - Eligibility: Must be ow-income (125% of federal poverty guidelines), person can live out of county if record is in county, person must be a US citizen or eligible documented immigrant.
  - Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership Criminal Records Project
    - Services: Expungement, sealing
    - Intake: Cases go through Neighborhood Legal Services
    - Eligibility: can take people up to 200% of federal poverty guidelines
  - Duquesne University School of Law Civil Rights Clinic
    - Services: expungement, sealing, pardon, employment advocacy