

State of California
Office of Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.

How to Apply for a Pardon

Individuals who have been convicted of a crime in California may apply to the Governor for a pardon. A gubernatorial pardon is an honor that may be granted to people who have demonstrated exemplary behavior following their conviction. A pardon will not be granted unless it has been earned. Obtaining a pardon is a distinct achievement based upon proof of a productive and law-abiding life following conviction. Historically, governors have granted very few pardons.

Applications generally will not be considered unless the applicant has been discharged from probation or parole for at least 10 years without further criminal activity during that period. There is no fee for applying for a pardon.

The Governor of California cannot grant a pardon for a conviction from another jurisdiction, such as another state or a federal proceeding. A person convicted in another state must apply for a pardon in that state. Federal pardon information may be obtained from the Pardon Attorney, U.S. Department of Justice, 500 First Street Northwest, Washington, D.C. 20530.

The Application Process

For most people, the first step in applying for a pardon is to obtain a Certificate of Rehabilitation from the Superior Court in the county where the applicant currently lives. People who live outside of California and people who are ineligible for a Certificate of Rehabilitation must use a direct pardon application. The procedure utilized will depend on the circumstances of each applicant.

1. Certificate of Rehabilitation

A Certificate of Rehabilitation is a court order declaring that a person convicted of a crime is now rehabilitated. Generally, any person convicted of a felony who still resides in California may apply to the Superior Court in the county where he or she lives for a Certificate of Rehabilitation, provided that the applicant meets the legal requirements of demonstrated rehabilitation. There are special rules that apply to individuals convicted of sex offenses.

An application for a Certificate of Rehabilitation can usually be obtained from the court clerk, probation department, or public defender's office. Once a petition is filed, the court may require an investigation by the district attorney and will schedule a hearing.

If the Court issues a Certificate of Rehabilitation, the certificate is forwarded to the Governor's Office where it automatically becomes an application for a pardon. The Governor's receipt of a Certificate of Rehabilitation does not guarantee that a pardon will be granted.

2. Direct Pardon

The direct pardon procedure is available to people who are ineligible for a Certificate of Rehabilitation. This procedure is used primarily by people who were convicted of a crime in California and now reside outside the state. The direct pardon procedure is also available to people who are not eligible for a Certificate of Rehabilitation because they have been convicted of specified sex offenses or misdemeanor offenses.

Applicants for a direct pardon may obtain the application either by accessing the Governor's website at www.gov.ca.gov, or by requesting an application in writing at the following address:

**Governor's Office
State Capitol
Attention: Legal Affairs
Sacramento, CA 95814**

The applicant should first complete the Application for Executive Clemency. Then the applicant must send the Notice of Intent to Apply for Executive Clemency to the District Attorney of each county in which the applicant was convicted so that each District Attorney receives the legally-required notice. The District Attorney acknowledges receipt of the Notice of Intent and returns the notice to the Governor's Office. Finally, the applicant should return the completed application to the Governor's Office at the address listed above.

The Review Process

There is no requirement that the Governor take any action on an application for a pardon. Once a Certificate of Rehabilitation or a completed direct pardon application is received by the Governor's Office, the Office typically forwards the application to the Board of Parole Hearings (Board). The Board may conduct a background investigation and make a recommendation on whether a pardon should be granted. The Board may contact the District Attorney, investigating law enforcement agency, and other persons with relevant information on the applicant.

If the applicant has been convicted of more than one felony, the California Supreme Court must recommend granting a pardon before the Governor may do so. However, there is no obligation that the Governor seek a recommendation from the Supreme Court, in the first instance.

The length of time needed to complete the pardon process cannot be predicted. **Once a completed application has been received by the Governor's Office, it is not necessary to contact the Governor's Office to check on the status of an application.** If the Governor takes action on an application, the applicant will be notified. Applicants should notify the Governor's Office in writing if their mailing address changes.

Effect of a Pardon

A pardon does not seal the individual's criminal record or expunge the record of conviction, and the pardon is itself a public record. When a pardon is granted, the California Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation are notified so that they may update their records on the applicant. The pardon is filed with the Secretary of State, reported to the Legislature, and is a public record. If a pardon is granted, the Certificate of Rehabilitation or the application for a direct pardon will be reported to the Legislature in an annual report and will become a public record. However, specific personal information will be redacted (hidden) before the Certificate of Rehabilitation or the application is made available to the public.

Please see the attached "Quick Reference for Restoration of Rights" for a detailed description of the effects of obtaining a Certificate of Rehabilitation and a pardon.

CERTIFICATE OF REHABILITATION AND PARDON

QUICK REFERENCE FOR RESTORATION OF RIGHTS

In California, the granting of a Certificate of Rehabilitation or a Governor’s pardon restores to the applicant some rights of citizenship that were forfeited as a result of a conviction.

| CERTIFICATE OF REHABILITATION | GOVERNOR’S PARDON |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>DOES:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relieve <u>some</u> sex offenders, as specified, of further duty to register. (Pen. Code, § 290.5.) • Enhance a felon’s potential for licensing consideration by a State board. (Pen. Code, § 4853.) • Serve as an official document to demonstrate a felon’s rehabilitation, which could enhance employment possibilities. • Serve as an automatic application for a gubernatorial pardon. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>DOES NOT:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erase the felony conviction or seal the criminal record. (Pen. Code, § 4852.17.) • Prevent the offense from being considered as a prior conviction if the person is later convicted of a new offense. • Allow a felon to answer on employment applications that he/she has no record of conviction. • Give a felon the right to vote, because this right is automatically restored after discharge from parole. • Restore the right to own or possess firearms. | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>DOES:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow a felon to serve on a jury trial. (Code Civ. Proc., § 203 subd. (a)(5).) • Allow restoration of firearms rights, upon federal approval, to specified offenders who have obtained a certificate of rehabilitation if granted a full and unconditional pardon, <i>unless</i> the conviction was for a felony involving the use of a dangerous weapon. (Pen. Code, §4852.17.) • Allow a felon to be considered for appointment as a county probation officer or a state parole agent, but not to any other peace officer positions. (Gov. Code, § 1029, subd. (c).) • Allow specified sex offenders still required to register after obtaining a Certificate of Rehabilitation to be relieved of their duty to register if granted a full and unconditional pardon. (Pen. Code, § 290.5.) <p style="text-align: center;"><i>DOES NOT:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seal or erase the record of conviction. (Pen. Code, § 4852.17.) • Prevent the pardoned offense from being considered as a prior conviction if the person is later convicted of a new offense. • Allow a pardoned person to answer on employment applications that he/she has no record of conviction. • Restore ability to own a firearm to felons convicted of any offense involving the use of a dangerous weapon. (Pen. Code, § 4854.) • Pardon convictions from another state, or federal convictions. • Necessarily prevent deportation. |

FORM 1 INSTRUCTIONS

1. Obtain Your Criminal Records

To complete this form, you will need information regarding each of your felony convictions, including the date of each conviction, the specific charge or charges for which you were convicted, the county of the conviction, and the sentence that was given. In addition, you will need to know the date that you were released from prison or jail and/or discharged from parole or probation.

This information may be obtained through the court in which the conviction(s) took place, or you may obtain a copy of your state criminal record through the California Department of Justice. You may only obtain your own records from the Department of Justice. Information regarding this request may be obtained through the Office of the Attorney General website at <https://oag.ca.gov/fingerprints/record-review>. Regardless of the number of convictions, you will be filing only a single petition.

2. Confirm Your Eligibility

You are *ineligible* for a certificate of rehabilitation if any of the following are true:

- You were convicted only of misdemeanors (other than sex offenses defined in Penal Code section 290, which were subsequently expunged) (Pen. Code, §4852.01, (b).)
- You were convicted of specific sex crimes involving minor children as enumerated under Penal Code sections 286, subdivision (c), 288, 288a, subdivision (c), 288.5, and 289, subdivision (j). (Pen. Code, § 4852.01, (c).)
- You are serving mandatory life parole. (Pen. Code, § 4852.01, (c).)
- You were sent to state prison under a death sentence. (Pen. Code, § 4852.01, (c).)
- You are currently in military service. (Pen. Code, § 4852.01, (c).)

Minimum Period of Rehabilitation

In order to be granted a certificate of rehabilitation you must satisfy a minimum period of rehabilitation. In every case, you must have resided continuously for **five** years in this state prior to filing the petition. (Pen. Code, § 4852.06) The period of rehabilitation begins to run upon your discharge from custody or upon release on parole or probation, whichever is sooner. (Pen. Code, § 4852.03, (a).) The period of rehabilitation shall constitute **five** years residence in this state, **plus** a period of time determined by the following rules:

- An additional **four** years in the case of any person convicted of violating Section 187 (murder), 209 (aggravated kidnapping), 219 (derailing or wrecking a train), 4500 (assault with force likely to cause great bodily injury), or 12310 (use of explosives or destructive devices causing death, mayhem, or great bodily injury) of the Penal Code, or subdivision (a) of Section 1672 of the Military and Veterans Code (acting or failing to act so as to cause another person's death), or any other offense which carries a life sentence. (Pen. Code, § 4852.03, (a)(1).)
- An additional **five** years in the case of any person convicted of any offense or attempted offense for which sex offender registration is required pursuant to Penal Code 290, except for convictions for violations of subdivision (b), (c), or (d) of Section 311.2 (possession or distribution of media depicting a minor engaging in sexual conduct), or of Section 311.3 (sexual exploitation of a child), 311.10 (advertising obscene matter depicting a minor engaging in sexual conduct), or 314 (indecent exposure). For those convictions, two years shall be added to the five years imposed by this section. (Pen. Code, § 4852.03, (a)(2).)

- An additional **two** years in the case of any person convicted of committing any offense not listed above and which does not carry a life sentence. (Pen. Code, §4852.03, (a)(3).)
- Additionally, the trial court hearing your application for a certificate of rehabilitation may add additional years if you served consecutive sentences. The amount of additional time will not exceed the sum of the maximum penalties for all your crimes. (Pen. Code, § 4852.03, (a)(4).)

Felony Probation

If you were released on felony probation and successfully completed probation, you must obtain relief under Penal Code Section 1203.4 before applying for a Certificate of Rehabilitation.

3. File Your Documents

- After completing the ***Petition for Certificate of Rehabilitation and Pardon***, you must file it with the superior court in the county in which you reside. (Pen. Code, § 4852.06.)
- You are entitled to be represented by an attorney of your own selection, or by the public defender. (Pen. Code, § 4852.08.)
- You are entitled to receive assistance from all rehabilitative agencies including officers from adult probation and parole, and for persons under the age of 30 years, from the Division of Juvenile Facilities. (Pen. Code, § 4852.04)
- It is unlawful for anyone, other than an attorney, to accept any fee, money or anything of value for their services in representing you in this proceeding. (Pen. Code, § 4852.2.)
- You are not required to pay filing fees of any kind in connection with this proceeding. (Pen. Code, § 4852.09.)

4. Notice of Filing

When the court sets a hearing date on your petition, you are required to give notice of that date at least 30 days before the hearing. You must formally notify the District Attorney for each county in which you have been convicted, the county in which the petition is filed, and the Governor's Office. (Pen. Code, § 4852.07.) For more information on the notice requirements, please reference the ***Notice of Filing of Petition for Certificate of Rehabilitation and Pardon***.

5. After a Certificate of Rehabilitation is Issued

A certificate of rehabilitation is not an automatic pardon; it is only an automatic application for a pardon. In the event that a certificate of rehabilitation is issued by a court, the certificate of rehabilitation shall be reviewed by the Board of Parole Hearings within one year. Thereafter, the Board shall issue a recommendation as to whether the Governor should pardon that individual. (Pen. Code, § 4852.16, (b).)

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF _____**

Applicant's County of Residence

In the Matter of the Application of

Court use only

Type Applicant's Full Name – First, Middle, Last, and Suffix

Date of Birth _____
Month Day, Year

CII Number _____

Criminal Case Number _____
List all applicable Criminal Numbers

PETITION FOR CERTIFICATE OF REHABILITATION AND PARDON

Pursuant to Penal Code Sections 4852.01 and 4852.06

The above-named applicant hereby respectfully represents and shows that:

FELONY HISTORY

[All felony convictions must be listed. If you have suffered more than three (3) felony convictions, attach additional sheets following the same format.]

Most Recent Felony Convictions

On or about _____, I was convicted of the crime of _____,
Month Day, Year Indicate crime and Penal Code Section

In the county of _____, California. My sentence for this offense was

[Check all that apply]

Commitment to state prison or other state institution at _____
Name of institution or city where located

Probation with suspended sentence to state prison or other state institution;

Probation, after the sentencing proceedings were suspended.

Thereafter, on or about _____, I was;
Date released from custody

Discharged from state prison or other state institution after completing my sentence;

Released on parole, from which I was finally discharged on _____;
Discharge date

Released from custody on probation after serving a jail sentence;

As a condition of my probation, I was released from custody after serving time in jail, and successfully complete my probation on _____, and obtained relief under Penal Code section 1203.4 on _____.
Date probation ended Date 1203.4 granted by the court

Felony conviction was reduced to a misdemeanor (Provide court information): _____;

Second Most Recent Felony Convictions

On or about _____, I was convicted of the crime of _____,
Month Day, Year Indicate crime and Penal Code Section

In the county of _____, California. My sentence for this offense was

[*Check all that apply*]

Commitment to state prison or other state institution at _____
Name of institution or city where located

Probation with suspended sentence to state prison or other state institution;

Probation, after the sentencing proceedings were suspended.

Thereafter, on or about _____, I was;
Date released from custody

Discharged from state prison or other state institution after completing my sentence;

Released on parole, from which I was finally discharged on _____;
Discharge date

Released from custody on probation after serving a jail sentence;

As a condition of my probation, I was released from custody after serving time in jail, and successfully
Complete my probation on _____, and obtained relief under Penal Code
Date probation ended
Section 1203.4 on _____.
Date 1203.4 granted by the court

Felony conviction was reduced to a misdemeanor (Provide court information): _____;

Third Most Recent Felony Conviction

On or about _____, I was convicted of the crime of _____,
Month Day, Year Indicate crime and Penal Code Section

In the county of _____, California. My sentence for this offense was:

[*Check all that apply*]

Commitment to state prison or other state institution at _____
Name of institution or city where located

Probation with suspended sentence to state prison or other state institution;

Probation, after the sentencing proceedings were suspended.

Thereafter, on or about _____, I was;
Date released from custody

Discharged from state prison or other state institution after completing my sentence;

Released on parole, from which I was finally discharged on _____;
Discharge date

Released from custody on probation after serving a jail sentence;

As a condition of my probation, I was released from custody after serving time in jail, and successfully
complete my probation on _____, and obtained relief under Penal Code
Date probation ended
section 1203.4 on _____.
Date 1203.4 granted by the court

Felony conviction was reduced to a misdemeanor (Provide court information): _____;

RESIDENCY HISTORY

I am now a resident of the State of California, and I have continuously resided in the State of California from _____, to the present date.
Month Day, Year

APPLICANT'S DECLARATION

During the period of my rehabilitation, I have lived an honest and upright life, conducted myself with sobriety and industry, and exhibited good moral character. I have conformed to and obeyed all the laws of the land. (Pen. Code, § 4852.05.)

WHEREFORE, Your petitioner prays that the Court make its order and decree declaring that the petitioner has been rehabilitated; and for a certificate of rehabilitation recommending that the Governor of the State of California grant petitioner a full pardon; and that for such purpose, a time be appointed for the hearing of the foregoing petition; and that other and necessary proper orders may be made in the premises.

Applicant's Signature

Month Day, Year

Applicant's Street Address

Applicant's City, State and ZIP Code

Applicant's Driver License Number

Applicant's Email Address

Applicant's Home Phone Number

Applicant's Work Phone Number

Applicant's Cell Phone Number

FORM 2 INSTRUCTIONS

1. After completing this **Notice of Filing for Certificate of Rehabilitation and Pardon**, Penal Code section 4852.07 requires that you distribute one (1) copy to:
 - the Governor of California;
 - the District Attorney in your county of residence where you filed your **Petition for Certificate of Rehabilitation and Pardon**, and;
 - the District Attorney of each county in which you were convicted of a felony.

2. This **Notice of Filing for Certificate of Rehabilitation and Pardon** must be served to all of these individuals **at least thirty days prior** to the date set for your hearing. (Pen. Code, § 4852.07.) You may do so by using one or both of the following forms:
 - **Affidavit of Service by Mail (Form 2A)** - If you intend to have a Notary Public mail a copy of the **Notice of Filing for Certificate of Rehabilitation and Pardon**, you may do so by having the Notary Public complete and sign the **Affidavit of Service by Mail**. Mailing procedures are outlined in the Affidavit.

 - **Notice of Service in Person (Form 2B)** - If you intend to hand-deliver a copy, you may do so by using this form and having each individual sign in the appropriate space indicating that a copy of the **Notice of Filing for Certificate of Rehabilitation and Pardon** was received.

3. After you have served each individual, personally or by mail, file this completed **Notice of Filing for Certificate of Rehabilitation and Pardon** and the **Affidavit of Service by Mail** or **Notice of Service in Person**, or both, with the Superior Court in the county in which you reside.

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF _____**

Applicant's County of Residence

In the Matter of the Application of

Court use only

Type Applicant's Full Name – First, Middle, Last, and Suffix

Date of Birth _____
Month Day, Year

CII Number _____

Criminal Case Number _____
List all applicable Criminal Numbers

**NOTICE OF FILING OF PETITION FOR CERTIFICATE OF
REHABILITATION PARDON**

Pursuant to Penal Code Sections 4852.01 and 4852.06

To the Governor of the State of California:

District Attorney, County of _____ ;
County of Residence

District Attorney, County of _____ ;
Most recent felony in county of conviction, if different from *County of Residence*

District Attorney, County of _____ ;
2nd most recent felony in county of conviction, if applicable

District Attorney, County of _____ ;
3rd most recent felony in county of conviction, if applicable

You and Each of You Will Please Take Notice That On the _____ day of _____ ;
Date you filed your *Petition for Certificate of Rehabilitation and Pardon*

The undersigned has filed a petition in the above-mentioned court or courts for a Certificate of Rehabilitation and Pardon in accordance with the provision of Chapter 3.5, Title 6, Part 3 of the penal code of the state of California, and that said petition has, by said court, been set for a hearing on the _____ day of the _____ to commence
Day of Hearing Month, Year

at _____ a.m. p.m., of said day, or as soon as the matter can be heard, in
Time of hearing

its courtroom, department _____ at the courthouse in the city of
Department

_____, county of _____, state of California.
City where hearing will be held County where hearing will be held

Applicant's Signature

Month, day, Year

Applicant's Street Address

Applicant's City, State and ZIP Code

AFFIDAVIT OF SERVICE BY MAIL

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

City of _____, County of _____

I, _____ being first duly sworn, deposes and says:

I am a citizen of the United States, am over the age of 18 years, and am not a party to the above-entitled proceedings. I am a resident of the County of _____, State of California.
County of Residence

My residence business address is: _____
Street Address

City, State and ZIP Code

On the _____ day of _____, I served the attached Notice to
Day of the Month Month, Year
each person listed below:

| | | |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------|
| _____ Full Name-First Middle and Suffix | _____ Street Address | _____ County |
| _____ Full Name-First Middle and Suffix | _____ Street Address | _____ County |
| _____ Full Name-First Middle and Suffix | _____ Street Address | _____ County |
| _____ Full Name-First Middle and Suffix | _____ Street Address | _____ County |

By placing a copy of this Notice in a sealed envelope and mailing it first class, postage pre-paid to each person listed above. There is a delivery service by United States mail at each of the places so addressed, or there is a regular communication by mail between the place of mailing and each of the places so addressed.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ *day of* _____
Day of the Month Month, Year

Full Name of Notary Public – TYPED or PRINTED

Notary Public - Signature

In and for the City of _____, *County of* _____, *California.*

NOTICE OF SERVICE IN PERSON

Receipt of copy of this Notice is hereby admitted this _____ day of _____.
Day of the Month Month, Year

**Governor's Office
State Capitol
Legal Affairs Division**

Full Name of Governor's staff - TYPED or PRINTED

Governor's staff - SIGNATURE

Governor's staff - TITLE

Month Day, Year

Receipt of copy of this Notice is hereby admitted this _____ day of _____.
Day of the Month Month, Year

Full Name of District Attorney staff - TYPED or PRINTED

District Attorney staff - SIGNATURE

County District Attorney

Month Day, Year

Receipt of copy of this Notice is hereby admitted this _____ day of _____.
Day of the Month Month, Year

Full Name of District Attorney staff - TYPED or PRINTED

District Attorney staff - SIGNATURE

County District Attorney

Month Day, Year

Receipt of copy of this Notice is hereby admitted this _____ day of _____.
Day of the Month Month, Year

Full Name of District Attorney staff - TYPED or PRINTED

District Attorney staff - SIGNATURE

County District Attorney

Month Day, Year

Receipt of copy of this Notice is hereby admitted this _____ day of _____.
Day of the Month Month, Year

Full Name of District Attorney staff - TYPED or PRINTED

District Attorney staff - SIGNATURE

County District Attorney

Month Day, Year

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF _____

Applicant's County of Residence

In the Matter of the Application of

Type Applicant's Full Name – First, Middle, Last, and Suffix
Certificate Number _____
Date of Birth _____
Month Day, Year
CII Number _____
Criminal Case
Number _____
List all applicable Criminal Numbers

Court use only

CERTIFICATE OF REHABILITATION

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 4852.13

The petition of _____, presently residing
Type Applicant's Full Name – First, Middle, Last, and Suffix

at _____, heretofore filed, praying for
Type Applicant's Street Address, City, State, and Zip Code

a Certificate of Rehabilitation pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 3.5, Title 6 of Part 3 of the Penal Code
of the State of California, came on regularly for hearing on this _____ day
Day of the Month
of _____ and proof having been made to the
Month, Year

satisfaction of the Court that notice of the time of hearing has been regularly given as required by law; and from
satisfactory proof taken at said hearing the Court finds that all allegations of said petition are true, and that the
required period of rehabilitation has elapsed since petitioner's date of discharge from custody due to completion
of the term to which the petitioner was sentenced, or upon the release on parole or probation on
_____, that, where appropriate, petitioner has obtained relief pursuant to
Month, Day, Year

Penal Code Section 1203.4, and that petitioner has demonstrated by the course of conduct his/her rehabilitation
and fitness to exercise all the civil and political rights of citizenship (except as provided in Penal Code
Section 485.15); and that petitioner has been _____, time convicted of a felony;
Total Number of Felony Convictions

*WHEREFORE, It Is Ordered, Adjudged, and Decreed, And this court does hereby order, adjudge, and
decree the petitioner has been rehabilitated and is fit to exercise all the civil and political rights of citizenship
(except as provided in Penal Code Section 4852.15), and by virtue thereof, this court recommends that the
Governor of the State of California grant a full pardon to said petitioner.*

Done in open court this _____ day of _____
Day of the Month Month, Year

Judge of said Superior Court – TYPED or PRINTED

Judge of said Superior Court – SIGNATURE