

OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY
STATE OF ILLINOIS - FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

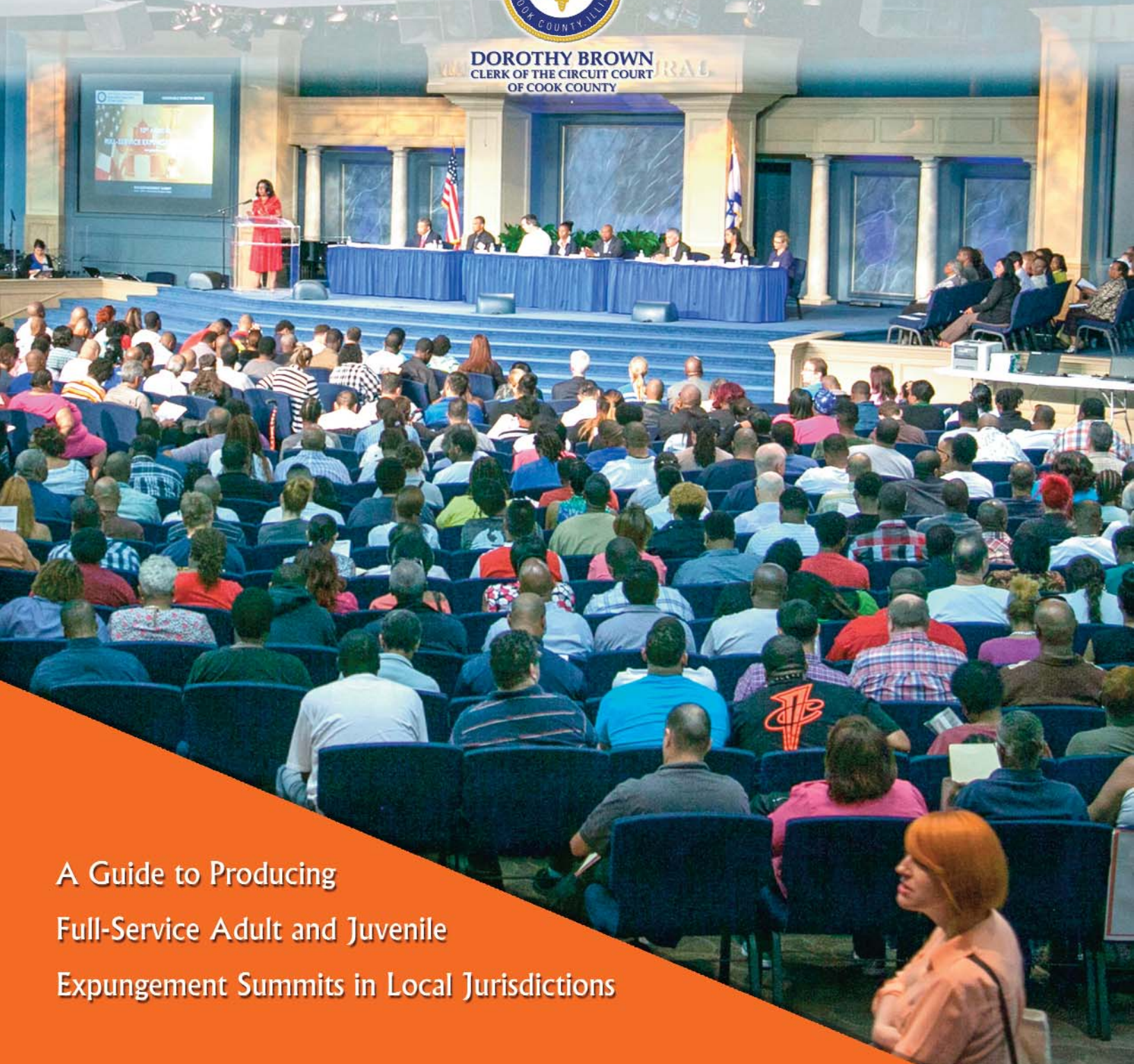
EXPUNGEMENT SUMMIT GUIDE

Helping Counties to Bring Second Chance Opportunities

Created by:



DOROTHY BROWN
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
OF COOK COUNTY



A Guide to Producing
Full-Service Adult and Juvenile
Expungement Summits in Local Jurisdictions

“This year, some 600,000 inmates will be released from prison back into society. We know from long experience that if they can’t find work, or a home, or help, they are much more likely to commit more crimes and return to prison. . . America is the land of the **second chance**, and when the gates of the prison open, the path ahead should lead to a better life.”

--President George W. Bush, 2004 State of the Union Address

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Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, First Judicial District, Illinois

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you to the NACo Justice and Public Safety Committee for highlighting the importance of counties bringing expungement/sealing services to their citizens.

Special recognition is extended to my supporting cast in the writing and design of this guide: Ms. Dawn I. Porter, Esq., Expungement Summit Project Manager, 2013-2014; and Ms. Jalyne Strong-Shaw, Public Relations Officer; both of whom work in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

2014 Expungement Summit photos by Antonio Dickey



EXPUNGEMENT SUMMIT GUIDE

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Introduction



Hon. Dorothy Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, greets attendees as they enter the 2014 Full-Service Adult & Juvenile Expungement Summit, held at Living Word Christian Center in Forest Park, IL, on June 7, 2014. Clerk Brown has presented Expungement Summits in various communities throughout Cook County, IL, since 2005.

Realizing that many citizens who have made mistakes would be able to live more productive lives if only they were given a second chance, the Honorable Dorothy Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, elected to office in 2000, created a Full Service Adult and Juvenile Expungement Summit in 2005. This revelation has turned lives around for many individuals, and the cost savings to society are immeasurable.

In 2005, Clerk Brown, in an unprecedented effort, organized Cook County's first Full Service Adult & Juvenile Expungement Summit within the Chicagoland area. The Summit is designed to be convenient "One-Stop Shopping" for individuals who attend. The Summit includes stakeholders identified in Illinois' Expungement Statute, 20 ILCS 2630 Criminal Identification Act, and is designed to replicate the substantive parts of the expungement/sealing process. Thereby, the Summit brings "the Clerk's Office to the Community," providing immediate access and information to individuals who may not be so inclined to visit a courthouse.

Some of the components of a Full Service Adult & Juvenile Expungement Summit are: providing disposition information; volunteer attorneys preparing expungement/sealing petitions and providing information on how to prepare pardon/clemency petitions; providing drug testing when results must be filed with petitions; providing information about alternative forms of relief from criminal records; and providing jobs, housing and other helpful information for ex-offenders.

Since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, extensive background checks have become commonplace when people are applying for jobs, seeking housing, applying

for some schools, certification programs, and certain services. Too often the hopes and dreams of many people are derailed because they have something derogatory that appears within their public criminal court records. Oftentimes, they are not aware or have forgotten the existence of this information.

Once an individual has an arrest record or any type of criminal record on file, no matter the disposition or outcome of his or her particular case, this individual's opportunities are greatly undermined. The fact is, in our society a criminal record, whether it is an arrest, finding of innocence or a conviction, follows a person everywhere. The social and economic consequences of a criminal history can result in the denial of a person's rights to basic liberties and opportunities.

Alternatively, a clear criminal record can make a difference in whether or not a person gains employment or qualifies for a loan to purchase a house, car or even a student loan. Interestingly, there are at least 15 states that make it illegal for someone with a criminal history to adopt a child. Expungement and sealing laws vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, however, the vast majority of states have statutes that address expungement and/or sealing in one form or another.

Specifically, this guide is designed to provide a comprehensive, step-by-step guide for organizing and planning a full service Adult & Juvenile Expungement Summit for the purpose of assisting customers who have criminal histories and want a second chance. This guide is modeled from the annual Full Service, Adult & Juvenile Expungement Summits created and produced by the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County since 2005, under Clerk Brown's administration.

What is Expungement and Sealing?

In general, the act of expunging refers to when a criminal record is deleted from all official electronic databases of the criminal justice agencies and the Clerks of Court, as if it never existed, and can be physically destroyed by the arresting agency, state police and prosecutor. However, the Clerk of Court retains the official court record, which can only be viewed pursuant to a court order.

The act of sealing refers to the act or practice of officially preventing access to particular criminal records in the absence of a court order; except that the law allows police agencies and prosecutors certain access to sealed records. However, when a criminal record is sealed, it is also deleted from the official electronic databases of the criminal justice agencies and the Clerks of Court, as if it never existed.

Most states have statutes addressing expungement. In particular:

- Forty-five states and the District of Columbia provide for expungement for some ex-offenders or other similar relief.
- A majority of states provide expungement for arrests not resulting in convictions.
- Most states provide expungement for misdemeanor convictions.
- Some states provide expungement for felony convictions, after a waiting period.

In Illinois, expungement is a statutory remedy, which comes from the Criminal Identification Act (20 ILCS 2630/5.2). It requires an affirmative act such as a court filing by a person to remove eligible records from public view. Upon entry of a judicial order to expunge, disposition information is removed from the Clerk of the Circuit Court's electronic docket system and the physical file is not destroyed, but is impounded and sealed away. However, the records are expunged or destroyed by the arresting agency and any other agency as ordered by the court. Additionally, the petitioner is provided protection from employment discrimination under the Illinois Human Rights Act, as individuals are not required to disclose prior existence of a criminal record.

Definitions of Expungement and Sealing in the State of Illinois

(Excerpted from the *Criminal & Traffic Expungement & Sealing Procedural Guide*, by the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County - State of Illinois, First Judicial District)

If the judge grants your expungement petition and orders the Illinois State Police to “expunge” your records, both the Illinois State Police and the arresting agency will destroy your records or return them to you. If the judge grants your expungement petition and orders the Illinois State Police to “impound” your records, only the arresting agency will destroy your records or return them to you, while the Illinois State Police will impound, or seal, your records. The Department of Corrections can access your impounded records if you are convicted of a subsequent offense.

Sealed records are maintained by the agencies. Most of the general public will not have access to sealed records. However, law enforcement and prosecutors will still have access to your sealed records to carry out the duties of their offices. Also, the following entities have access to sealed convictions: Department of Children and Family Services if it determines the information is necessary to perform its duties under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, the Child Care Act of 1969, or the Children and Family Services Act (20 ILCS 2605/2605-315); school boards/regional school superintendents (20 ILCS 2605/2605-325); fire departments (20 ILCS 2605/2605-330); private child services organizations that devote a major portion of their time to the provision of recreational, social, educational, or child safety services to children (20 ILCS 2605/2605-335); private carrier companies that provide public transportation to ascertain whether a job applicant for a driving position has been convicted of a criminal or drug offense listed in the Metropolitan Transit Authority Act (20 ILCS 2605/2605-340); the Department of Corrections upon conviction for any offense; healthcare organizations/hospitals.

Why Is Expungement Important To Counties?

The positive effect of the expungement/sealing process is that in certain instances, it results in “Second Chance” opportunities for individuals who have criminal case histories. The existence of expungement/sealing laws provide a legal avenue for those individuals who have served time in prison, been placed on electronic monitoring, or released from custody with an arrest and conviction record.

If and when the individual successfully navigates through the expungement/sealing process, his or her chances for successfully reintegrating into the workforce increase, enabling the individual to take care of him or herself and children and family members. Employed and law-abiding individuals also contribute to local economies.

It is in the best interest of counties to ensure that there are effective and comprehensive expungement/sealing laws within their states as a means to improving employment opportunities for their citizens who have nonviolent criminal records. With extremely limited options for making a legitimate living, ex-offenders are at very high risk to resort to repeat offenses either out of the need to make money or due to idleness.

Data from a Bureau of Justice Statistics report in 2012 shows that over 10,000 ex-prisoners are re-

leased from America’s state and federal prisons every week and arrive on the doorsteps of our nation’s communities. More than 650,000 ex-offenders are released from prison every year.

Once released, these ex-offenders return to our most impoverished communities, creating a cycle of “in and out” of prison, causing costly social and economic impacts on the residents in those communities that can least afford them. Invariably, these impacted individuals are caught in a seemingly unbreakable cycle of jail---unemployment---jail. If this vicious cycle is not broken, taxpayers within the state pay the ultimate cost. For society, the costs are innumerable: there is the price of imprisonment, the price of crime against property and people, public safety costs, and the costs of social services.

It is a win-win situation when counties help ex-offenders and/or individuals with criminal histories become employable, self-supporting, stable citizens within communities. When an individual is granted an expungement and/or sealing, legally that person is able to indicate on an employment, loan or rental application that he or she has never been convicted of a crime.



Economic Impact To Counties

If an individual does not handle his or her past criminal records through expungement, sealing or other legal remedies, that person can expect to be confronted with some challenging consequences.

Most likely he or she will experience a lifetime of low employment or no employment, resulting in a lifetime of lost opportunities, and living on the fringe of economic viability. When a major portion of the citizens of a county are unemployed then that county is negatively impacted when: abandoned and blighted properties from mortgage foreclosures result in unpaid property taxes and reduced property values; higher taxes are needed to care for indigent citizens; recurring crime brings social, emotional and financial costs; and the economic price of incarcerating individuals must be paid.

Simply put, there are several collateral consequences of criminal arrests/convictions; civil disabilities imposed on defendants that produce barriers to long-term self-sufficiency, which results in the government having to pick up the cost of living expenses for the ex-offender, and his or her children and family members.

These collateral consequences may be the inability to obtain:

- **Student Loans and grants**
- **Mortgages**
- **Voting privileges**
- **Employment**
- **Admission to the Armed Services**
- **Housing**
- **An order to adopt a child**

Having criminal records can affect people's lives in many ways. They carry a negative social stigma, as well as create barriers to needed resources. Criminal records are often permanent (including juvenile records) and therefore can have consequences for the individual's entire life. The ramifications of this stigma are evident by the various system and service level barriers facing people with criminal histories.

Having a criminal record can exclude many people from several resources and opportunities needed to effectively function within a community.

If an individual has a criminal record he or she may be restricted from becoming licensed for several professions and occupations; thus, limiting their ability



to care for themselves, placing that burden on the government. In addition, employers can legally ask a person if he or she has ever been convicted of an offense and consider that person's conviction(s) when making hiring decisions. Also, public housing agencies can deny access to people with certain convictions, and landlords can completely deny access to individuals with criminal records. Moreover, under federal law, people with certain drug-related felonies can be barred from receiving cash assistance and food stamps. Even an individual's ability to get an education can be adversely affected by having a criminal record. Barriers have been imposed on obtaining academic grants and student loans, even though research shows that the more education received the less likely an individual is to be arrested or re-incarcerated.

For the communities to which most former prisoners return (communities which are often impoverished and disenfranchised neighborhoods with few social supports and persistently high crime rates), the release of ex-offenders represents a variety of challenges, which places additional strain on the limited resources of county and other governments.

What To Do Before Planning An Expungement Summit

Before planning an Expungement Summit, it is imperative to review the laws/statutes within your State. If your State has comprehensive expungement/sealing laws, then you must understand how the laws work in order to determine the required functions of your Expungement Summit. From the analysis of the law, identify the agencies that are involved in the expungement/sealing process(es) within your state. These are the key stakeholders in the legal process and should be the partners in producing an Expungement Summit.

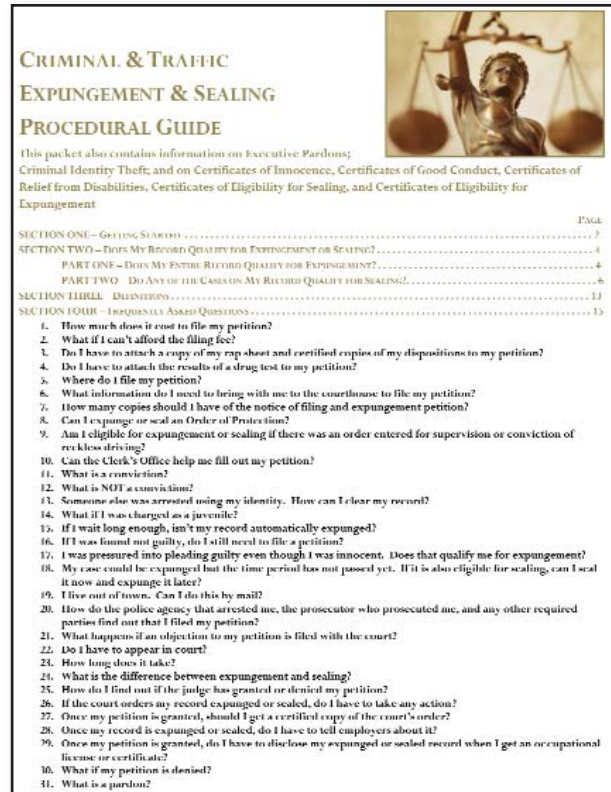
For example, in Cook County, Illinois, key stakeholders are: Cook County State's Attorney, Chicago Police Department, Illinois State Police, local (suburban) arresting agencies, the Chief Legal Officer of local governments, and the judiciary.

Additionally, it is important to identify all available resource information within your county. For example, the "Expungement & Sealing Procedural Guide," created by the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, is an important reference tool for petitioners and the general public, and is accessible via the Internet at www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org. Furthermore, the Guide is available within the Cook County courthouse locations and public information forums. Clerk Dorothy Brown had this guide created in plain-language style to help individuals navigate the expungement process year round.

After the key stakeholders are identified, and as a continuation of the organizational efforts, it is important to perform outreach within the community to identify organizations that potentially have a vested interest in planning a Full Service Adult & Juvenile Expungement Summit. If your State does not have expungement/sealing laws, then identify advocates/agencies within the community that can work with you to help pass expungement/sealing legislation, and educate them on the social, emotional and financial cost benefits to the county.

Potential people and entities to contact to help plan the Summit or advocate for expungement legislation include:

- State Representatives
- State Senators
- Lobbyists



The Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County publishes an extensive "Criminal & Traffic Expungement & Sealing Procedural Guide," which is available online and for pick up in the Criminal Bureau.

- Legal Service Providers
- Social Service organizations
- Community-Based organizations
- Ex-Offender Service organizations
- Prison Ministries
- Church-based Organizations
- Educational Institutions (pre-, secondary and post- educational institutions)

Interested individuals in states that do not have expungement/sealing laws, should review existing laws from other jurisdictions to use as models to draft legislation, such as:

- Illinois' Criminal Identification Act 20 ILCS 2630/5.2
- Utah Expungement Act 77 Chapter 40 Sec. 101-113
- Louisiana Criminal Code 44.9

As indicated earlier, 45 states have expungement/sealing laws.

Alternative Forms of Relief

In addition to the Expungement and Sealing of criminal records, in many states, there are also alternative

forms of relief. In those instances where a criminal record does not qualify for expungement or sealing through the court system, the following certificates are available from the Illinois Prisoner Review Board. If these laws do not exist in your State, you should work with advocates to help pass these kinds of laws, as these other legal remedies are also great tools for helping individuals get second chances.

- **Certificate of Eligibility for Expungement** may be available if the individual was convicted of a Class 3 or Class 4 felony and enlisted in, or received an honorable discharge from the United States Armed Forces or National Guard, and the individual served at least one tour of duty. 730 ILCS 5/3-3-2(a)(11)

- **Certificate of Eligibility for Sealing** is available for individuals who have been convicted of a Class 3 or Class 4 felony. 730 ILCS 5/3-3-2(a)(10)

Ultimately, it is at the sole decision of the Prisoner Review Board as to the eligibility of the individual for these two types of certificates.

If an individual's record does not qualify for expungement or sealing through the court system, and the eligibility criteria for one of the above certificates from the Prisoner Review Board has not been met, then one of the following certificates from the court may be available for persons seeking employment or professional licenses.

- **Certificate Of Good Conduct** is available for individuals who are seeking employment. There is a requirement that there be two years since the successful completion of a sentence and that there be no conviction for a Class X felony, aggravated DUI, aggravated domestic battery, or a forcible felony resulting in bodily harm.

- **Certificate Of Relief From Disabilities** is available for individuals who are seeking to obtain a professional license for jobs in the category of barber, therapist, real estate agent, roofer, engineer, accountant and more. Part of the eligibility criteria provides that there be no conviction for a Class X felony, aggravated DUI, aggravated domestic battery, or a forcible felony resulting in bodily harm.

- **Certificate Of Innocence** may assist individuals in obtaining compensation from the Court of

Claims for wrongful convictions. The onus is upon the petitioner to prove the improper conviction.

- **Health Care Waiver** is available to assist individuals in obtaining health care positions if they are not professionally licensed (e.g., registered nurse, licensed practical nurse), and would like to be employed with a health care organization (hospital, medical center, nursing home, etc.).

Expungement Summit organizers must determine all alternative forms of relief to ensure that the information is made available at the Summit.

Petition for Executive Clemency

As part of the pre-planning process, the Summit organizer must determine the State's Executive Clemency/Pardon Relief process. This is the ultimate form of relief from a conviction and is considered extraordinary.

Specifically, a pardon is a type of executive clemency granted by the governor. It only applies to cases that have resulted in a conviction. 730 ILCS 5/3-3-13.

In Illinois, the clemency process is administered by the Prisoner Review Board and is requested by means of a typewritten petition, which details the individual's criminal record and life history unrelated to criminal occurrences.

While there is no specific timeframe within which to file a Petition for Executive Clemency, it is best to wait a minimum of five years from the conviction with no further criminal activity in order to have the greatest opportunity for success. According to the Illinois Prisoner Review Board, statistics show that the vast majority of pardons are granted in those instances where the convictions are more than ten years old.

In an effort to create a comprehensive service-oriented Summit, consider having members of your State's Prisoner Review Board available at the Expungement Summit to meet with citizens who have criminal convictions that do not qualify for either expungement or sealing via the court system.

If your state does not offer this extraordinary remedy, then work with legislators, lobbyists and other ex-offender service organizations to have this alternative relief available within your jurisdiction.

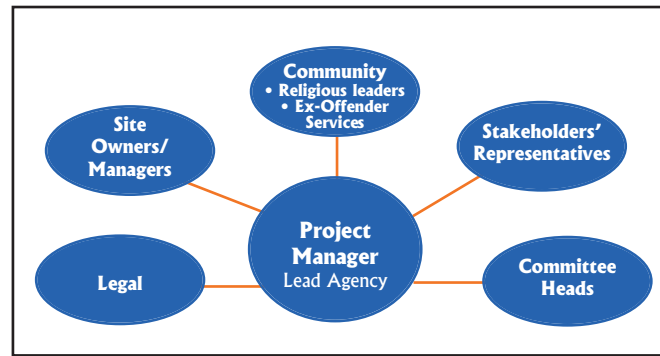


Planning An Expungement Summit

The planning process should start at least six months before the date of the Summit. Early in the planning stages, the Lead Agency should identify the partners/key stakeholders. These entities must share in the vision and advocacy of the Summit. In most cases, these agencies are identified from the State's expungement/sealing laws. It is important to contact these entities early in the planning stages via phone calls, letters, face-to-face meetings, etc., to obtain buy-in and committed participation. The partners/key stakeholders should participate in planning meetings throughout the process.

For example, the partners for the Expungement Summit produced by the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, include representatives from the Cook County State's Attorney, Cook County Public Defender, Illinois Attorney General, Illinois Prisoner Review Board, Illinois State Appellate Defender, Illinois State Police, Cook County Sheriff's Department, Chicago Police Department, local police departments, ministerial groups, Chicago Public Schools, and ex-offender organizations.

With the partners/key stakeholders identified, the Lead Agency will assemble the Project Team, first assigning the Project Manager (PM). The PM should have a thorough understanding of the expungement/sealing laws, court operations, project planning processes, and summit logistics, generally. The PM organizes the Project Team that consists of individuals representing the various pertinent components of the Expungement Summit. The PM is also responsible for overseeing all components of the Expungement Summit, including but not limited to: planning, critical decision making, training etc. The PM is responsible for establishing a project meeting schedule, determining team assignments, coordinating site visits, assisting



The various roles included on an Expungement Summit Project Team.

with community outreach/marketing efforts, etc.

Site Selection:

After assembling the Project Team, the search for an appropriate site should commence as soon as feasible. The site selection is critical to the success of an Expungement Summit. The facility should be large enough to accommodate the anticipated number of customers, volunteers and required services. When selecting a site, the facility's layout should accommodate the logistical flow of the Expungement Summit. Additional factors to consider when selecting a site are: accessibility to major highways and the availability of public transportation. Some general

Create a Project Plan

Once the pre-planning activities are accomplished, the project transitions into a structuring phase whereby the critical core components are identified and organized into a Project Plan to be used by the planning team inclusive of the key stakeholders, partners and exhibitors.

Action items within the Project Plan should include but not be limited to:

- Engage Key Stakeholders/Partners
- Select the Project Manager for Project Team
- Make Project Team assignments
- Establish meeting schedule
- Identify site and establish site visit schedule
- Create a Site Checklist
- Assess technology requirements
- Create a budget
- Develop a "Marketing and Community Engagement" plan
- Recruit attorney volunteers and legal aid services
- Organize training sessions for attorney volunteers
- Identify judicial volunteers
- Request approvals from Chief Judge, re: official court day and volunteer judges
- Solicit event sponsors
- Solicit exhibitors
- Solicit organizations to plan the Ex-Offender Job Information Seminar
- Expungement Summit Day Execution
- Debrief After Summit: "Perfecting the Summit"



The Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, created a site map for the 2014 Expungement Summit, using the floor plan of the selected site, Living Word Christian Center in Forest Park, Illinois, and adapting it to the space needs of the summit.

Planning An Expungement Summit (Continued)

questions to ask:

- What is the technology infrastructure?
- How much parking is available?
- Is there an auditorium? How many people may be accommodated?
- Is there space for overflow seating?
- Is there enough space to accommodate the necessary services?
- Is there a space large enough for a criminal disposition look-up room?
- Is there a space large enough for attorney volunteers to meet with customers?
- Is there a space large enough to showcase exhibitors and their services?
- Can the space accommodate the judiciary (mock courtrooms)?
- Are there any security concerns?

In an effort to keep track of site requirements, the creation and utilization of a Site Checklist is extremely beneficial.



(Below) The lines may be long, but Expungement Summit participants proceed in an orderly fashion through the Customer Screening Area. (Above) Clerk's Office staff provide each summit attendee with an informational packet that helps the customer better navigate the Summit's services and have valuable information for future reference.



Planning An Expungement Summit (Continued)

Technology

A critical factor to consider when selecting a Summit site is what type of technology infrastructure is in place and whether the facility has a dedicated and knowledgeable technology team. The presence of technology allows the Clerk's Office to replicate the entire Expungement/Sealing application process at a site within the community. The Lead Agency must have a knowledgeable Network/Hardware/ Software Services Specialist as part of the Project Team. The Technology Specialist must have a technology support team. The Tech Team is responsible for handling issues related to: network access, hard wiring versus wireless connectivity, monitoring the main server, and determining technical equipment needs. During the Summit, the Tech Team oversees cash registers and credit card acceptance transactions, printers, copiers and the computer terminals used to look up criminal histories from the Clerk's Office information system.

Specifically on the day of the Summit, technological equipment is used during the Opening Presentation, and in the Criminal Disposition Look-Up Room, Attorney Interview Room, Prisoner Review Board Room, State Appellate Defender Room, and Information Kiosks.

Preparation of a Budget

Financing is always a key consideration in planning a major event. In most instances, the Lead Agency planning an Expungement Summit will be a public sector entity, thus having limited available resources. To that end, efforts should be made to obtain sponsors to assist with costs. Budget items to consider:

- Site Location: attempt to negotiate as gratis
- Food & drinks for dignitaries, attorneys, judges, employees and volunteers
- Rental of tables, chairs and other equipment
- Transportation to/from closest public transportation (if needed)
- 2-Way Radios
- Event insurance
- Printing of marketing materials and registration packets



A technology team ensures that the community-based Expungement Summit is equipped to handle the Clerk of Court's electronic processing procedures, remotely.

- Miscellaneous Expenses

Marketing and Community Engagement

A Media Relations and Promotions Plan is extremely critical to the success of the Summit. The mission of the event must be communicated prior to and up to the date of the event.

Once the summit site is selected, the marketing activities should commence with the creation and dissemination of a "Save the Date" flyer. Also, a detailed informational flyer should be created and widely distributed. The flyer should advise the target audience about what documentation is required on the day of the Summit, applicable filing fees and the services that will be available at the Summit.

Marketing activities may include: creating an Expungement Summit web page, posting on social media, designing informational flyers/posters for dissemination, creating public service announcements, targeting schools and youth organizations, soliciting print and radio outlets to become media partners, and requesting elected officials and social service organizations to publicize the summit. If necessary, street-level marketing strategies should be utilized to ensure that the targeted area receives the message.

Juvenile Expungement Services

As part of the planning for the full service Expungement Summit, information and services should be made available for those individuals needing to ex-

punge juvenile criminal records. It is important to focus on individuals with juveniles offenses and educate them about their specific legal remedies.

In 2013, 15,890 minors were arrested and referred to the Cook County, Illinois, State's Attorney for consideration of prosecution. The Clerk's Office's records reflect that 5,994 of the arrests were actually prosecuted in the Cook County Juvenile Court in 2013. However, more disturbing is the fact that only 661 juvenile expungement petitions were filed in 2013 (all but one was granted). An important distinction in Illinois is that juvenile criminal records can *only be expunged*. There is no sealing of juvenile criminal records. The governing law in Illinois for Juvenile Expungement is 705 Illinois Compiled Statute 405/5-915, which applies to all felony records, all misdemeanor records, and all station adjustments.

For juvenile petitioners the following convictions can never be expunged: Adjudication in a case involving first degree murder or criminal sexual assault; or, any offense (such as, Driving Under the Influence (DUI)) where the case did not proceed in juvenile court.

Unfortunately, many young people and even adults who committed juvenile offenses and were arrested and/or charged, believe that these cases are automatically deleted after so many years, but they are not. The individual must take action to have the case(s) expunged or this history will follow him or her into adulthood, barring that person from several opportunities.

The following should be available at the Summit for individuals seeking to expunge juvenile criminal records:

- A designated room set apart from those individuals filing as adults.
- Resources for educating people about the expungement process.
- Attorneys specifically trained to prepare juvenile Expungement petitions.

Legal Partners

To have participation from the legal community is vital to the success of an Expungement Summit. Participating volunteer attorneys must be knowledgeable about applicable ex-

The Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, IL, distributes bilingual two-sided flyers: English/Spanish and English/Polish to promote the Expungement Summit.

pungement/sealing laws, and be able to review criminal histories and make determinations regarding expungement/sealing eligibility. Volunteer attorneys may also assist in the review of juvenile criminal histories, clemency petitions and other remedies.

Summit organizers should partner with a legal clinic that provides legal services to low-income persons, if possible. Representatives from legal partner agencies should participate in planning meetings.

For the Cook County Clerk of the Circuit Court's annual Expungement/Sealing Summits, Cabrini Green Legal Clinic (CGLC) has been a major legal

partner. CGLC organizes and provides expungement/ sealing training to volunteer attorneys, and manages the legal advice provided to customers on the day of the Summit.

Volunteer attorneys are given Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits for participating in the Expungement Summit training course.

Summit organizers should solicit volunteer attorneys from law firms, bar associations, corporate legal departments, legal clinics and local law schools.

Flyer announces training dates for volunteer attorneys.

Request “Official Court Day” Approval

When hosting an Expungement/Sealing Summit on a day that is not an official court day, approval must be obtained from the Chief Judge of the jurisdiction for the day to be a court day, and the site to be designated as a “Place of Holding Court.” This approval allows the Clerk’s Office to accept the filing of the expungement petitions and permits volunteer judges to rule on indigency petitions.

Identify Judicial Volunteers

If the Expungement Summit is organized to provide on site review of fee waivers for parties, then judges are needed to conduct hearings and to enter judicial orders on indigency rulings. While planning the Summit, identify how many judges are needed and request volunteers from your judiciary. Factors that should be included in the planning if judges will be on site:

- Obtain approval from the Chief Judge allowing the judges to rule on fee waiver petitions.
- Ensure that judges are in a secured location.
- Identify court clerks and relevant staff to assist in the hearing room(s).
- If there are several volunteer judges, create a schedule for the hearing room(s).

Obtain Sponsors and Media Partners

Solicit companies who have a vested interest in giving back to the community in any capacity. Sponsorships may take the form of monetary donations, services, food/water and volunteers. Create a sponsor solicitation letter for distribution.

For the 2014 Cook County Expungement/Sealing Summit, sponsors included: Living Word Christian Center, Verizon Wireless, Walmart, Walgreens, Sam’s Club, Starbucks, Entenmanns, Ultra Foods, Dunkin Donuts and private donations.

Participating media included: Progress Illinois, WVON radio, *Chicago Defender Newspaper*, WGCI 105.5 FM, North Town Newsmagazine, *Chicago Citizen Newspaper*, Radio Polonii, Polvision, Univision



Clerk Brown poses with a few of the circuit court judges who volunteered to conduct fee waiver hearings at the 2014 Expungement Summit.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

SPECIAL ORDER No. 2014- 04

SUBJECT: Clerk of the Circuit Court, office location and hours

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:


On Saturday, June 7, 2014, from 8:30 a.m. until 6:00 pm., at Living Word Christian Center, 7600 Roosevelt Road, Forest Park, Illinois 60130, the clerk of the circuit court of Cook County is authorized to accept the filing and requisite fees for petitions or motions asking the circuit court of Cook County for any of the following relief:

1. expungement of criminal records
2. sealing of criminal records
3. expungement of juvenile court records
4. expungement of juvenile law enforcement records
5. certificate of good conduct
6. certificate of innocence
7. certificate of relief from disabilities

Dated this 1st day of February, 2014. This order shall be spread upon the records of this court and published.

ENTER:

ENTERED
JUDGE TIMOTHY EVANS-1592
FEB 07 2014
DOROTHY BROWN
CLERK OF THE CLERK OF COURT
SEALY, COOK COUNTY, IL


 Timothy C. Evans
 Chief Judge
 Circuit Court of Cook County

A Special Order from the Chief Judge is required to allow court activities to be conducted on an unofficial court day.

Chicago, the *Chicago Crusader Newspaper*, The UJAMAA Network, *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin*, Global News forum and many other media outlets.

Exhibitors/Agency Services

There is an unlimited number of services that may be provided by exhibitors and service organizations during an Expungement Summit. Consider your audience base

and then decide what types of services (short- and long-term) best meet their needs. Depending upon the nature of services provided, certain exhibitors should attend planning meetings.

Some of the exhibitors on site at the 2014 Cook County Adult & Juvenile Expungement Summit were: Illinois Secretary of State, Illinois Department of Healthcare Services, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois State Police, Illinois State Appellate Defender, Illinois Prisoner Review Board; Safer Foundation, Chicago Public Schools, NAACP (Chicago Westside Branch), Living Word Christian Center’s Prison Ministry, Legal Assistance Founda-



Attendees receive free legal counseling and assistance with the preparation of applications from volunteer attorneys in the designated Attorney Room at the 2014 Expungement Summit in Cook County, IL.

tion, Puerto Rican Cultural Center, The Joseph Business School, Chicago Westside Minister’s Coalition, Northwest Suburban College, LineaR Laboratory Drug Testing, Humana, Hines Veterans Hospital, Computer Training Institute of Chicago, Illinois Legal Aid Online, and the Illinois Paralegal Association.

Ex-Offender Job Information Seminar

There are individuals attending the Expungement Summit who are uncertain about the next steps to take to increase their employability. They require basic job training skills, such as, how to compose a resume or prepare for a job interview. In response to this service need, in 2013, Clerk Brown added an Ex-Offender Job Information Seminar as a component of the Expungement Summit.

The Job Seminar may be designed to educate not only ex-offenders but any attendees who need employment related assistance. Summit organizers should solicit job training agencies, both governmental and private, to participate in the seminar, and institutions of higher learning and social service organizations should be represented on site.

For the 2014 Expungement Summit & Ex-Offender Job Information Seminar, the following seminars were conducted:

- Living Word Christian Center’s Joseph Business School: professional development, general education enhancement, small business development, personal computer and Microsoft Office training.

- The City of Chicago Department of Family and Support Services: job-readiness training.

- Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES): guidelines for overcoming barriers to employment for ex-offenders.

- Jesse Brown Veterans’ Affairs Medical Center: information on the psychological counseling and housing and health services available to veterans.

- Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) Career Development Program: ex-offender job apprenticeship information at the

Regional Transit Authority (RTA).

Additionally, the Cook County Clerk of the Circuit Court’s Office distributed an extensive list of national companies that hire ex-offenders.



The Expungement Summit Program Agenda lists special guests, panelists, sponsors, and participating media. Additional pages list the partnering agencies and on site exhibitors.

Executing An Expungement Summit

Week-Before Activities:

1. The opening assembly's Power-Point presentation is finalized and provided to the facility for rehearsal, when applicable;
2. All panel participants are confirmed;
3. Special guests are confirmed;
4. Work assignments are finalized and distributed to internal team;
5. The Program Agenda is finalized;
6. The Registration Packets are completed;
7. The PM facilitates the final Project Team Meeting and coordinates the final site visit for Leads and Team Members; and
8. The delivery team coordinates pick-up and drop-off of equipment and supplies to the site.

Day-Before Activities:

1. Delivery Team arrives at the designated time to deliver equipment and supplies (e.g. copiers, printers, Expungement/Sealing packets, signage, tables, chairs, stanchions, water, etc.);
2. The Project Lead and team members perform the final walk-thru of the facility;
3. Tech Team sets up technological equipment in designated rooms and conducts testing;
4. Designated Team Leads set up and organize breakout rooms;



One of the Clerk of Court's staff attorneys helps an Expungement Summit customer determine what category his case information places him.



Expungement Summit attendees are guided to one of the breakout rooms following the morning assembly and presentation.

5. Information signage is posted throughout the facility; and
6. Any additional testing is performed (audio/visual equipment).

Expungement Summit Day Action Plan

1. The Project Team, volunteers, exhibitors, partners, attorneys, and judges arrive at assigned times, check in at check-in desks, and report to assigned areas.
2. Customers arrive and the Registration Team organizes them into categories based upon their criminal history information.
3. The Registration Team reviews customers' rap sheets or criminal dispositions (if available), and makes a determination as to which category the customer belongs (i.e., juvenile cases, felony conviction or non-conviction cases, misdemeanor conviction or non-conviction cases, out-of-county cases, etc.) (Note: some customers come prepared with paperwork, which results in quicker processing.)
4. Upon review of available information, the customer is given a color-coded designation card.
5. As customers enter the facility, they are given an informational Registration Packet, and seated in the

COLOR-CODED CARDS KEY:

- Orange:** Disposition Room
- White:** State Appellate Defender Room for out-of-county cases
- Yellow:** Juvenile Petition Review Room
- Blue:** Prisoner Review Room
- Red:** Illinois Legal Aid Online Express Attorney Room for non-convictions, two cases or less



(Above) The 2014 Cook County Clerk of Court Expungement Summit began with a morning assembly and panel presentation featuring representatives from the offices of key stakeholders. Pictured (left to right) are: two attorneys from the Office of the State Appellate Defender; the Chairman of the Illinois Prisoner Review Board; and the Executive Director of Cabrini Green Legal Aid. Additionally, remarks were made by the host Pastor, Dr. Bill Winston, Forest Park Mayor Anthony Calderone, and several other local elected officials.



Clerk of Court staff members give directions to summit attendees.

assembly room according to color-coded designations.

6. Opening remarks are made by the Clerk of the Court followed by a brief panel presentation of specific Summit partners.

7. After the presentation, customers are guided to required service areas: Prisoner Review Board for clemency petition consultation; Disposition Room; Juvenile Expungement Petition Preparation Room; Adult Expungement/Sealing Preparation Room; State Appellate Defender room; Ex-Offender Job Information Seminar, etc.

8. Customers who do not have any type of paperwork with them when they arrive at the Summit, go

through the following process: Obtain criminal history information from the Disposition Room; Pay for disposition information within the same room; Meet with a volunteer attorney who reviews the entire criminal history and makes a determination as to whether the customer qualifies for expungement or sealing. If eligible, the attorney prepares the petition, and the customer is escorted to the Cashier Room where the petition is filed and filing fees are paid. Customers who have all required documents upon arrival are sent directly to see volunteer attorneys, then go through the remainder of the process.

9. In instances when the petition has been prepared but the customer states that he or she does not have the means to pay the filing fees, the customer is escorted to the Indigent Petition Review Hearing Room to explain his or her circumstances to an available judge. If the judge determines that the filer is indigent, then the applicable filing fees are waived and an order is entered. (See Illinois Supreme Court Rule 298). After the hearing, the customer is escorted back to the Cashier Room and the Petition is filed.

10. The filing customer is given a file-stamped copy and then advised of “next steps” in the process. (Note: the Clerk’s Office is responsible for serving notice of the filing to the designated agencies.)

Perfecting An Expungement Summit



Clerk Brown leads a panel of representatives from the offices of justice system stakeholders as they address the attendees of the 2014 Expungement Summit in Cook County, IL.

Debrief After the Summit

The PM should schedule a debriefing meeting with Project Team members (internal and external) to discuss the successes as well as areas for improvement. This meeting should be scheduled at least a month after the Expungement Summit.

At the Debrief Meeting, the Summit PM is responsible for reporting on final statistics (i.e, number of attendees, number of filings, and revenue generated) customer service issues, logistical issues, unforeseen circumstances, etc. Additionally each Team Lead is responsible for reporting on his or her respective assignment and identifying any issues.

In preparation for the Debrief Meeting, the following survey questions are sent to the Team Leads to assist them in organizing issues, comments, etc.

- *Identify to what area(s) you were assigned: (e.g., Attorney Room-Large, Interpreter Desk, Screening, etc.)*

- *Identify what went well in your area(s)*
- *Identify issues needing improvement*
- *Within your area(s): overall comments, suggestions, re: 2014 Expungement Summit*

Upon receiving the submissions from Project Team Leads, the PM reviews and organizes the information into a summary document, which is used for discussion purposes during the Debrief Meeting. This summary document is also used as a reference document for the following year's kick-off planning meeting.

During the Debrief Meeting, the PM should ensure that the final statistics have been compiled and verified. Also, the PM should verify that "Thank You" letters have been prepared and sent to the host of the site, volunteer attorneys, volunteer judges, partners/key stakeholders, and exhibitors.

Resources

Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois	www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org
Cabrini Green Legal Clinic, Chicago, Illinois	www.cgla.net
Illinois State Appellate Defender	www.illinois.gov/osad
Illinois State Police, Division of Administration	www.isp.state.il.us
State of Illinois Prisoner Review Board	www2.illinois.gov/prb
Illinois Department of Employment Security, Re-Entry Employment Service Program	www.ides.state.il.us

“Special recognition goes to the entire staff of the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, past and present, for working diligently over the years to make this great service possible. Many lives have been changed because of these Expungement Summits.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dorothy Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Clerk of the Circuit Court
of Cook County, Illinois



DOROTHY BROWN
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
OF COOK COUNTY

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Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County,
First Judicial District, Illinois