Clean Slate: Smart Policy
For Safer Communities

An estimated 70 to 100 million adults in the U.S. have a past arrest or conviction record, with **30 million being currently eligible for record sealing for low-level offenses committed years ago** under existing state laws.

Despite eligibility, **many do not receive relief due to the slow, complex, and costly nature of petition-based record sealing processes,** which can involve court costs, attorney fees, and navigating red tape. Clean Slate policies expand opportunities for individuals with past arrest and conviction records who have demonstrated accountability and remained crime-free.

Evidence shows that **Clean Slate policies increase workforce participation and significantly reduce recidivism, contributing to safer communities.**

Reduced Recidivism

Research consistently shows that Clean Slate legislation poses no risk to public safety. Studies indicate that individuals whose records are expunged are significantly less likely to reoffend.

In California, only 2% of people who receive automated record sealing are expected to have a new disqualifying offense within five years

(California Policy Lab, University of California, 2024)

Research in Michigan found that individuals with sealed records are less likely than anyone else to commit another offense after five years:

99% of expungement recipients were **not convicted of a felony within five years.**

99.4% were **not convicted of a violent crime.**

95.8% were **not convicted of any crime.**

(Harvard Law Review, 2020)

CSI | THE CLEAN SLATE INITIATIVE

Clean Slate laws aim to **create safer communities for everyone** by balancing the need for second chances with robust public safety measures and protections for vulnerable populations.

By streamlining the record sealing process, law enforcement and courts can devote needed resources to current public safety concerns, freeing up resources that would otherwise be spent on unnecessary hearings for individuals who have already proven their rehabilitation.

Support for Law Enforcement

Automating record sealing is a solution, not a problem, for the legal system. Automated record sealing laws **reduce the administrative burden on courts and prosecutors,** freeing up resources that would otherwise be spent on unnecessary hearings for individuals who have already proven their rehabilitation.

This allows prosecutors' offices to focus on prosecuting current crime concerns and addressing present threats to public safety.

Exclusion of Serious Crimes

Clean Slate legislation is not a blanket policy and explicitly excludes the most serious offenses from being sealed. States tailor legislation to include specific exclusions and may flag hiring for caregiving positions involving vulnerable populations.

Earned Second Chances

Clean Slate applies to people who have served their time and proven change through law-abiding behavior; **it is not a "free pass."**

CSI's recommended eligibility criteria, including waiting periods, are supported by research and national standards to ensure the most significant impact without compromising public safety.

Guardrails to Protect Vulnerable Populations

Clean Slate laws incorporate essential safeguards to ensure public safety and protect vulnerable populations. **Record sealing is not erasure;** sealed records are not deleted but remain accessible to specific entities for crucial purposes.