

THINGS TO DO TO GET A PARDON

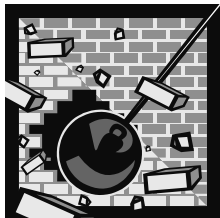
(1) Send a letter to the Board of Pardons, 333 Market Street, 15th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17126, (717) 787-2596, and ask for an application for clemency (clemency is another word for pardon). Include a money order for \$8.00 (payable to Commonwealth of Pennsylvania) and a pre-addressed return business sized envelope with 75 cents postage on it.

(2) Order a Pennsylvania State Police criminal record check. The cost is \$10.00. You can obtain your criminal history if you have a credit card, on-line at epatch.state.pa.us, or you get it by sending a Criminal History Request Form—SP4-164 along with a \$10.00 money order payable to Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

(3) Practice writing out answers to the questions on the pardon application before you actually write them on the application itself.

(4) Go to the Clerk of Court at the Courthouse in the county where you were convicted and ask for a printout of your case file(s). You will need the following information to get the printout:

- Information about your crimes, especially court terms and numbers and dates of any sentences;



- Names of judges;
- Names of your lawyers;
- Information on other arrests.

(5) Get 5 (five) color passport pictures. Try drug stores, copy stores or camera stores. You can also look up “passport photos” in the yellow pages.

THINGS TO DO BEFORE APPLYING FOR A PARDON

- **Tell your children about your crime and jail time.** The Board of Pardons often asks applicants, “have you told your children about what you did?”
- **Keep track of your good deeds.** The Board of Pardons wants to see and hear proof of your “rehabilitation.” The application asks, “How have you contributed to community and what efforts have you made to rehabilitate and improve yourself?” If you are not currently involved in community service activities or active in a community service organization start now! If you are religious you may want to become more involved with your church, synagogue or mosque.
- **Keep a record of your successes.** If you complete a job training program or attend classes, be certain to keep a copy of every certificate you are given.



- **Letters of Reference.** Although it is too early to ask someone to write a letter of recommendation for you, begin to think about people who might be able to write a letter to the Board of Pardons supporting you and your application and who can tell the Board how much you have changed since your conviction.

NINE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT APPLYING FOR A PARDON

(1) Trying for a pardon is worthwhile. It takes a lot of effort and time to get a pardon, but it can be worth it. If you succeed you will no longer have a criminal record that stands in the way of getting a job, an apartment and other things you might need.

(2) Do not file too soon. The Board of Pardons usually will not recommend a pardon until at least five years from the end of your sentence or longer if the crime was a serious one.

(3) Be patient. It can take years from the time you file your application until the Board of Pardons grants you a hearing or the governor signs your pardon.

Toll Free Helpline (877) 429-5994

4) Be thorough. To succeed, you must follow the instructions perfectly. Get all of the information that is requested. Get the passport photos and the correct version of the State Police Report. Answer all the questions on the application using a lot of details. If your application is denied you must wait at least a year to file a second application.

(5) Take responsibility for your crime. If the Board of Pardons believes you are not taking full responsibility for your crime you will not be successful.

(6) Make your case. When you are completing your pardon application do not just write a few lines to answer a question; use lots of details. Describe clearly:

- how the crime occurred;
- why you need a pardon (list any jobs you lost because of your criminal record);
- any evidence of your reform (discuss your good life since your crime including volunteer activities, church activities, raising your children, your jobs, etc.)
- and remember: **take responsibility** for your crime!

(7) Get supporters. Find people who will write letters of support to include with your application. Examples might include a teacher, member of the clergy, a block captain, or even a parent. If you are granted a hearing it is good to bring one or more supporters to the hearing with you, if you can.



(8) Get advice. It is good to have a draft of your pardon application reviewed by someone who knows about the pardon process. Help is available through the X-Offenders for Community Empowerment's "Pardon Me" Clinic, that meets the second Monday of every month from 6:00 to 8:00 pm; call 215-668-8477 for the location of the clinic.

(9) Be consistent. The Board of Pardons will look carefully at your application and compare it to your statements at the hearing and any other statements you have made. Be sure to refresh your memory before your hearing by looking at your application.

Remember

The law often changes. Each case is different. This document is meant to give you general information and not to give you specific legal advice.



Toll Free Helpline: (877) 429-5994

www.lasp.org

Central Administrative Office: 625 Swede Street,
Norristown, PA 19401 (610) 275-5400



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*Serving Bucks, Chester, Delaware and
Montgomery Counties*

Toll Free Helpline: (877) 429-5994
Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

General Information on Getting your Criminal Record Pardoned

If you have a criminal record, it may stop you from getting a job or even a place to live. Certain records may be expunged through a basic legal proceeding. But convictions cannot be expunged. A conviction means you were found guilty of or plead guilty to a crime. The only way to clear a conviction from your criminal record is to ask the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons to grant you a pardon. This brochure is designed to give you information on how and why to get a pardon.

