



YOUR GUIDE TO PARDONS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

If you have convictions on your South Carolina criminal record that are not eligible for expungement, your other record cleaning option is a pardon. A pardon is forgiveness from the State for all convictions listed on your pardon application. In South Carolina, the decision to grant or deny a pardon application belongs solely to the Pardon Board (part of the South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services).

If you receive a pardon, all civil rights that you lost as a result of that conviction will be restored. Your criminal record will still reflect the conviction, but it will be marked as “pardoned.” Some civil rights can only be restored through a pardon – like the right to own and possess a firearm. Expungement will not restore this right. If you have questions about full restoration of your civil rights following a criminal conviction, you should speak with a lawyer.

HEARING TIPS

- You are not required to attend the hearing, but it is strongly encouraged.
- You can appear virtually! You just need to ask in advance.
- At the hearing, be prepared to show the Board evidence of your growth and rehabilitation. **This might include:**
 - Proof of completing rehabilitation programs;
 - Completion of any court-ordered therapy or counseling (like anger management);
 - A personal statement explaining how you have changed since your last offense and why a pardon would help you;
 - Resume;
 - Volunteer work; and more!
- The hearings are very short – this is normal for pardon hearings in South Carolina.

AM I ELIGIBLE FOR A PARDON?

Yes, if you have:

1. finished serving your sentence, including any term of supervision under probation or parole, and
2. not had new convictions for a significant amount of time (we recommend 5 years), and
3. paid all fines, fees, and restitution in full.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR A PARDON?

1. Get a copy of your South Carolina SLED Criminal History (online or by mail).
2. Complete the pardon application on SCDPPPS’ website.
 - Application Tips:
 - List ALL convictions listed on your SLED report.
 - The 3 letters of support that accompany your application must come from people who are not related to you by blood or marriage. We recommend getting letters from people who can talk about your change and rehabilitation, like mentors, counselors, church leaders, etc.
 - If you need additional room on your application to list convictions, employers, or residences, you may attach additional pages.
3. Submit your application, all accompanying documents, and a \$100 money order or cashier’s check to SCDPPPS.



TIME SERVED

FREEDOM REENTRY EMPOWERMENT

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I APPLY

1. Wait. It can take anywhere from 7-9 months for your hearing to be scheduled.
2. 30 days before your hearing, you will receive a letter from SCDPPPS with a date and time for your pardon hearing. Read this letter carefully for additional instructions!
3. After your hearing, SCDPPPS will post the results of your hearing on their website within 48 hours*. You will also receive official notice of the decision in the mail.

*If your pardon is denied, there is no appeal process. You must wait 1 year before re-applying for a pardon.

HOW SHOULD MY LETTERS OF SUPPORT BE FORMATTED?

Date (must be dated within 6 months of the application submission)

Reference Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Phone Number

Dear Board of Pardons and Paroles,

My name is _____ and I am writing in support of a pardon for _____'s entire South Carolina record. (After that sentence, they can introduce themselves and state how they know you).

Second paragraph – Persuasion

- State specific examples of the applicant's good will, rehabilitation, work ethic, community service, responsibilities, employment, or anything else that will reflect upon the applicant's good character.
- Describe applicant's change from past to present (if you knew them at the time of the charges)

Third paragraph – Conclusion

- State why the applicant wants a pardon and why you think they should get a pardon.
- State how a pardon will positively affect the applicant, their family, and their community.

Sincerely,

*Signature is REQUIRED

Reference Name

If you have questions or would like to apply for legal assistance from a Time Served attorney, contact us at:

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