CLEARING YOUR CRIMINAL RECORD

VACATING CONVICTIONS, EXPUNGEMENT, AND SEALING RECORDS IN WASHINGTON

In the state of Washington, there are laws in place that allow individuals with previous criminal convictions to go through a process to clear misdemeanors, gross misdemeanors and felony convictions from their criminal record. While people will often use the term "expungement" to refer to this process, this clearance of charges is known as an vacating convictions. Certain circumstances must be present to allow for convictions on your criminal record to be removed. If you qualify to vacate your criminal record, you will be able to legally deny that you were convicted of the offense that you were convicted of.

The benefits of getting records expunged are exponential. You can inform future employers, lenders, leasers and educational institutions that you were never convicted of a crime. You can act as though the convictions never happened! If you are interested in clearing your record, you should speak with one of our attorneys to discuss your options. Certain offenses are not eligible and a Seattle criminal defense lawyer from our firm can determine whether or not you qualify.

Juvenile Court Records

Did you know that a person's juvenile court record, including filed motions, memorandums, court findings, and court orders is open to public inspection? If you have a juvenile record that you would like to keep in your past, you may be eligible to file a motion seeking the court to seal your juvenile record. If a motion to seal records is granted, the legal effect is the same as if the prior proceedings in the case had never happened.

Misdemeanor Offenses

Washington State Law authorizes a sentencing court to vacate a conviction for a gross misdemeanor or misdemeanor offense if certain criteria are met. These criteria can include the length of time since the case resolved, what sort of criminal matters remain pending, whether prior convictions have been vacated, and what type of offense or charge is sought to be vacated.

Felony Offenses

Washington State Law authorizes a person convicted of certain types of felonies to vacate their conviction. Upon completing all conditions of a felony sentence, including payment of legal financial obligations (LFOs), a person may be entiled to a certifcate of discharge which relieves them of conditions of their sentence. Certain felony convictions may take away certain rights and privileges, such as the right to vote, the right to own or possess a firearm, and access to certain types of employment.

Hiring an attorney who can help you seek and obtain this certificate of discharge may be the first step in putting this case behind you, potentially removing it from your record and restoring some of these previously lost rights/privileges.

Depending on the type of felony offense, such as level of seriousness and whether the offense is considered violent, a person convicted of a felony may be eligible to vacate this conviction after obtaining their certificate of discharge. A person who has a conviction vacated can state that they have not been previously convicted of that offense.

LIVING WITH A CRIMINAL CONVICTION IN SEATTLE?

It can be embarrassing and upsetting to divulge your criminal convictions to future employers. If you believe a conviction on your record is keeping you from getting the job you deserve, you need an attorney who can best serve your needs. If

conviction is eligible, we can help you vacate that offense from your record and help you move on with your life.