

Pro Bono at Legal Aid DC



TAKING A CRIMINAL RECORD SEALING CASE

What is Involved in a Criminal Records Sealing Case?

Pro bono attorneys **represent clients with eligible criminal records that have created barriers to housing and employment.** These attorneys file motions in the Criminal Division of DC Superior Court to **seal eligible arrests and convictions.** This support can remove legal barriers and open new opportunities for low-income individuals.

What Can I Expect From a Pro Bono Record Sealing Case Referral from Legal Aid DC?

- **Training, sample motions, and expert mentorship**
- Cases have been **screened as eligible** for record sealing
- Motions should be filed **within two months** of referral
- Multiple **interviews** of the client
- Most cases will last about **9 months to one year**
- **No court appearance**; hearings are very rare

What Opportunities do Record Sealing Cases Present?

- Persuasive Writing
- Client Counseling
- Drafting Declarations
- Fact Development
- Client Interviewing

"As a corporate attorney, I have found these cases to be accessible and fulfilling because of the direct impact. After you listen to your clients, you understand why it's so important to help — whether it's because these records are hindering employment or housing opportunities. To know how big of a burden it has been on their life, it motivates you to move forward and push for change."

SAMANTHA SERGENT

1 in 14

DC residents has a recorded conviction

Individuals who have had interactions with the criminal legal system are **disproportionately people of color** and live in **concentrated poverty**



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