
PARDON:

Getting your criminal conviction forgiven by the State of South Carolina

What is a pardon?

A pardon is the forgiveness of the state. After a pardon is given, the criminal conviction is marked as pardoned on the record. Pardons are handled by the Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services.

What does a pardon do?

A pardon appears on your criminal record along with your conviction so that everyone can see that the State of South Carolina has decided that you have earned a **second chance**. A pardon also restores any civil rights that were taken away by the criminal conviction. For instance, you could get a professional license.

Who grants a pardon?

The state Board of Pardons and Paroles is in charge of granting pardons. The governor is not involved in the pardon process.

Why get a pardon?

A pardon will give you a better chance of getting a job where a background check is done. A pardon will help in any area where your criminal record is a problem.

What will I need?

A pardon application requires three things: letters of reference, a completed application, and a one hundred dollar fee. The letters cannot be written by family members, related either by blood or marriage. You will also need to attend the hearing.

How long will it take?

It takes about **seven to nine months** to get a result. The Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services will use that time to verify all the information you provide. It may take longer if you live outside of S.C.

Where do I start?

The application with instructions is available here: http://www.dppps.sc.gov/apply_for_a_pardon.html. The application will explain who is eligible. Generally, you must have completed any sentence or probation. If paroled, you must have completed five supervised years, or finished your parole. You must also have paid any fines or restitutions.

Do I need a lawyer?

No, a lawyer is not necessary. A lawyer can be helpful, though. Consider contacting the SC Bar Lawyer Referral Service at <http://www.scbar.org/publicservices/findalawyer.aspx>.

Where do I find more information?

Visit <http://dppps.sc.gov> or download the FAQ sheet posted here: <http://sccourts.org/selfHelp/FAQExpungementPardon.pdf>.



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