

# Press Release

## VENTURA CLEAN SLATE CLINIC

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**Ventura County Residents Clear Criminal Records with Help from Ventura County District Attorney's Office, Ventura County Probation Department, People's Justice Project, California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. ("CRLA"), and The Colleges of Law – Ventura.**

**May 6, 2025: Ventura, Calif.** – Ventura County District Attorney's Office, Ventura County Probation Department, People's Justice Project, California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. ("CRLA"), and The Colleges of Law – Ventura will host a free legal Clean Slate Clinic for Ventura County residents for criminal record expungement, felony reduction, and arrest record sealing on **Friday, May 23, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at The Colleges of Law – Ventura campus located at 4475 Market St, Ventura, CA 93003.**

The purpose of the Clean Slate Clinic is to help eliminate barriers to employment and housing for individuals who have criminal records. A criminal record—no matter how old or how minor—can be a significant barrier to reentry for people when most employers, property managers, and universities use background checks to screen applicants.

"Access to justice includes helping people move forward to rebuild their lives and plan for a better future," said **Erik Nasarenko, Ventura County District Attorney.** "By

supporting expungement clinics, we are reducing barriers to employment and housing, improving public safety, and investing in the long-term success of our community,” he said. “The Clean Slate Clinic empowers individuals to take action and chart a new path. It’s not about erasing accountability; it’s about incentivizing rehabilitation in hopes of restoring opportunity,” said **Andrew Sullivan, Supervising Attorney, Ventura County District Attorney.**

“A criminal record represents a substantial and enduring obstacle standing in the way of individuals who have served their time,” said **Joseph Doherty, Managing Attorney at CRLA, President of People’s Justice Project, and Professor of Law at The Colleges of Law.**

“By expunging criminal records, we are helping our community members become full, productive members of society once again and move past their prior offenses,” he said.

Even a misdemeanor conviction or probation violation disqualifies a person from a wide range of benefits and opportunities. Under federal law, any probation violation for any type of misdemeanor disqualifies an individual from welfare benefits, including Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (“TANF”), food stamps, low-income housing, and Supplemental Security Income for the elderly and disabled. The consequences of a drug misdemeanor conviction are particularly harsh and can include the loss of healthcare coverage, welfare, and student financial aid. Another benefit of this work that we have seen is that community members who get their expungement petitions granted are not returning to the criminal justice system.

Criminal record expungement confers numerous benefits for individuals convicted of certain misdemeanors and felonies. When applying for most jobs, individuals who successfully expunge their criminal record can lawfully answer “No” if asked whether they have been convicted of a crime. Moreover, an employer is not permitted to consider an expunged conviction that is discovered through a background check in making a hiring decision.

An expungement also benefits those seeking state professional licenses. To be sure, even after an expungement in many circumstances, an individual must disclose a conviction in response to a question posed in an application for a state license (e.g., a contractor, or real estate agent, or massage therapist) or in an application for public office. However, many licensing agencies are more likely to look favorably upon

individuals who have successfully completed probation and whose convictions have been expunged. Further, under California law, “a person shall not be denied a license on the basis of any conviction, or on the basis of any acts underlying the conviction” if the conviction has been dismissed.

“Record clearing services allow individuals to obtain equal access to legal representation and justice and our law students are an essential part of that access,” said **Jackie Gardina, Dean of the Colleges of Law-Ventura**. “Through our law school’s Clean Slate Clinics, community members feel heard and seen through the expungement process, a feeling that many have never felt before.”

The California Policy Lab estimates nearly 1 in every 8 Californians with a criminal record is potentially eligible to obtain a full criminal record expungement; 81% of Californians with a criminal record are estimated to be eligible to have at least one prior arrest or conviction expunged. If you are interested in clearing your criminal record at the Ventura Clean Slate Clinic on Friday, May 23, 2025, please make an appointment to receive services **at (805) 902-CRLA or [reentry@crla.org](mailto:reentry@crla.org)**. Walk-ins are welcome but appointments are strongly preferred.