

A **Petition to Seal Juvenile Records** is a formal request submitted to the court asking for juvenile criminal records to be sealed. Meaning, they are hidden from public view and treated as though they never occurred for most legal purposes. Sealing is not automatic and usually requires showing rehabilitation and the absence of new offenses.

A key part of this process is a personal statement or declaration in support of the petition, written by the petitioner or their legal representative. This statement explains why the petitioner deserves to have their juvenile record sealed and outlines their progress since the offense(s).

Sealing records can help with employment, housing, education, and personal reputation. While laws vary by state, most jurisdictions allow eligible individuals to petition for sealing once they reach a certain age or have completed probation.

Who Can File and When?

Eligibility Criteria

While exact rules vary by jurisdiction, you may generally file a petition to seal your juvenile records if:

- You are over the age threshold (often 18 or 21 depending on the state)
- You have completed probation or your case was dismissed
- You have no new arrests or convictions as an adult
- You are not currently on probation or facing new charges

Some states also offer automatic sealing for minor offenses, while others require a full petition process for all cases.

When to File

You can typically file a petition:

- Immediately upon completing probation or diversion in some jurisdictions
- After a mandatory waiting period (e.g., 5 years with no further offenses)
- Upon turning 18 or 21, depending on state law

It's important to check with your local juvenile court or legal aid provider for state-specific timelines.

What to Include in the Statement

Core Elements

A strong supporting statement to seal juvenile records should include:

1. **Introduction:** Your name, age, and reason for writing the statement
2. **Case background:** A brief, factual reference to the juvenile offense(s)
3. **Rehabilitation:** What you've done since the offense to improve your life
4. **Current status:** Education, employment, community involvement, etc.
5. **Why sealing matters:** Explain how having the record sealed would help you move forward
6. **Respectful request:** Ask the court to grant the petition to seal your records

Tone and Style

- **Be honest but positive:** Acknowledge your past, but focus on growth and responsibility
- **Use professional language:** Avoid slang or emotional appeals; keep it respectful and concise
- **Stay focused:** Limit the letter to 1 page if possible

Templates for a Statement to Support Petition to Seal Juvenile Records

Template 1: Sealing After Successful Completion of Probation

[Your Full Name]
[Street Address]
[City, State, ZIP Code]
[Phone Number or Email Address – Optional]
[Date]

To the Honorable Judge [Last Name],
[Juvenile Court Name]
[Court Address]

Subject: Statement in Support of Petition to Seal Juvenile Records

Dear Judge [Last Name],

I am writing this statement in support of my petition to seal

the juvenile records associated with my case from [year/case number, if known]. I completed all terms of my probation successfully and have not had any further contact with the justice system since then.

During and after my probation, I took significant steps to turn my life around. I graduated from high school, enrolled in community college, and now work part-time while continuing my education. I have also been volunteering at a local youth mentoring program.

Sealing my record will allow me to apply for scholarships, internships, and jobs without fear that a past mistake will define my future. I take full responsibility for my past actions and am committed to continuing on a positive path.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,
[Your Full Name]

Template 2: Sealing to Support Employment Opportunities

[Your Full Name]
[City, State]
[Email Address – Optional]
[Phone Number – Optional]
[Date]

To the Honorable Judge [Last Name],
[Name of Juvenile Court]
[Address of the Court]

Subject: Petition to Seal Juvenile Records – Supporting Statement

Dear Judge [Last Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am submitting this statement as part of my petition to seal my juvenile records. I am currently seeking long-term employment and have encountered several situations where my past record has prevented me from moving forward professionally.

The case on my record occurred when I was [age], and since that time, I have made significant changes in my life. I have completed [education, training programs, or probation], and I have stayed out of any legal trouble. I now work part-time while actively applying for full-time opportunities in [industry/field].

I respectfully request that my juvenile record be sealed so I may have a fair chance to pursue my career without being limited by past mistakes made as a minor. I am committed to contributing positively to society.

Thank you for your time and for considering this request.

Sincerely,
[Your Full Name]

Template 3: Sealing Based on Educational Progress

[Your Full Name]
[Street Address]
[City, State, ZIP Code]
[Phone Number or Email Address – Optional]
[Date]

To the Honorable Judge [Last Name],
[Juvenile Court Name]
[Court Address]

Subject: Statement in Support of Record Sealing Petition

Dear Judge [Last Name],

I respectfully submit this statement in support of my request to seal my juvenile record. Since my involvement with the court system, I have made education my top priority and am proud to share that I am now attending [Name of School or University] pursuing a degree in [Field of Study].

The mistakes I made as a minor do not reflect who I am today. I have completed all court-ordered programs and have focused on improving myself academically and personally. I've maintained a clean record and have worked hard to build a better future.

Having this record sealed would allow me to apply for internships, scholarships, and academic leadership roles without fear of judgment based on a past that I've worked to overcome.

Thank you for considering my petition and for giving young people like me a second chance.

Sincerely,
[Your Full Name]

Additional Tips and Considerations

Supporting Documents

You may want to attach the following with your petition:

- Proof of employment or school enrollment
- Letters of recommendation from employers, mentors, or counselors
- Certificates from programs completed (e.g., rehabilitation, job training)

Legal Help

If you're unsure how to file or write your statement:

- Contact a juvenile public defender or legal aid clinic
- Use your state's official forms – often found on the court's website
- Inquire with your probation officer or court clerk for guidance

Know the Limitations

Sealed records are generally hidden from public view, but:

- They may still be visible to law enforcement or courts in future cases
- Certain careers (e.g., law enforcement, military, government) may still ask for disclosure

Final Thoughts

Why This Letter Matters

A well-written statement shows the court that you've taken responsibility for your past and are focused on your future. It's a chance to demonstrate maturity, growth, and commitment to a better path.

Having juvenile records sealed can significantly improve your ability to access education, housing, and employment. With a thoughtful statement and proper documentation, you can give

yourself a fresh start.