



FREE HELP FOR CIVIL CASES

The FCMC Self Help Resource Center is a free, walk-in service to help you represent yourself in court without a lawyer.

We cannot offer legal advice, but we can point you to helpful resources.

The Self Help Center Can Help You:

- Learn how to represent yourself
- Get help with court rules, procedures, and forms
- Know what to expect before you go to court
- Be more informed of your legal options

Civil Legal Issues We Can Help You With:

- Sealing of records
- Landlord/tenant issues—including evictions and rent escrow
- General division claims
- Small claims
- Creditor/debtor issues

What You Can Access at the Self Help Center:

- Court forms
- Tools and guides to help with court forms and legal research
- Pro Se (self-representation) aid and guidance
- Answers to general questions about Municipal Court processes or procedures
- Targeted services and aid are available to those who pass a financial screening process*

REMEMBER

Staff cannot provide legal service or representation and cannot assist with any criminal, protection order or traffic matters.

It is up to YOU to make decisions about your legal issues.

READY TO GET STARTED?

WALK IN

375 S. High St., 6th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215
Monday – Friday, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
(last visitors accepted at 2:30 PM)

The Center does not accept appointments and staff cannot provide information over the phone. The Center is closed whenever the Municipal Court is closed. There may be times the Center is closed during normal hours due to staff responsibilities.

OR

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.fcmcselfhelpcenter.org

Includes helpful legal and research resources and materials on various legal issues.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

SEALING CONVICTION CRIMINAL RECORDS & ARRESTS

Am I eligible to seal a criminal conviction record?

See O.R.C. 2953.31

To be able to seal, you must be an “eligible offender.” There are two ways to be an eligible offender.

TRACK 1:

If none of your convictions is:

- a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd degree felony
- an offense of violence, or
- a felony sex offense

TRACK 2:

If you have been convicted of:

- no more than 1 felony + 4 misdemeanors; or,
- no more than 2 felonies + 2 misdemeanors.

This track has three exceptions:

- Minor misdemeanors do not count toward your number of convictions.
- Multiple convictions from the same incident may be counted as one conviction.
- Convictions for related criminal acts committed within three months of each other that were handled by the same court at the same time may count as one conviction.



Franklin County Municipal Court (FCMC)
Self Help Resource Center

What convictions cannot be sealed?

See ORC 2953.36

Convictions for first or second degree felonies cannot be sealed.

Convictions that carried a mandatory prison term cannot be sealed.

Convictions for OVI and Physical Control can never be sealed. Convictions for other traffic offenses (Chapters 4507, 4510, 4511, and 4549) cannot be sealed, except as otherwise provided in O.R.C. 2953.61.

Convictions from the following list cannot be sealed:

- 2907.02: Rape
- 2907.03: Sexual battery
- 2907.04: Unlawful sexual conduct with minor unless qualified by a court under 2950.15
- 2907.05: Gross sexual imposition
- 2907.06: Sexual imposition
- 2907.321: Pandering obscenity involving a minor
- 2907.322: Pandering sexually oriented matter involving a minor
- 2907.323: Illegal use of minor in nudity-oriented material or performance
- 2907.07: Importuning
- 2921.41: Theft in office

Convictions for **felony or first degree misdemeanor** offenses of violence cannot be sealed. “Offense of violence” is defined in 2901.01(9) as follows:

- 2903.01: Aggravated murder
- 2903.02: Murder
- 2903.03: Voluntary manslaughter
- 2903.04: Involuntary manslaughter
- 2903.11: Felonious assault
- 2903.12: Aggravated assault
- 2903.13: Assault*
- 2903.15: Permitting child abuse
- 2903.21: Aggravated menacing
- 2903.211: Menacing by stalking
- 2903.22: Menacing
- 2905.01: Kidnapping
- 2905.02: Abduction
- 2905.11: Extortion
- 2905.32: Trafficking in persons
- 2907.02: Rape
- 2907.03: Sexual battery
- 2907.05: Gross sexual imposition
- 2909.02: Aggravated arson
- 2909.03: Arson
- 2909.24: Terrorism
- 2911.01: Aggravated robbery
- 2911.02: Robbery
- 2911.11: Aggravated burglary
- 2917.01: Inciting to violence*
- 2917.02: Aggravated riot
- 2917.03: Riot*
- 2917.31: Inducing panic*
- 2919.25: Domestic violence
- 2921.03: Intimidation
- 2921.04: Intimidation of attorney, victim or witness in criminal case or delinquent child action proceeding
- 2921.34: Escape
- 2923.161: Improperly discharging firearm at or into a habitation, in a school safety zone or with intent to cause harm or panic to persons in a school building or at a school function
- Division (A)(1) of section 2903.34: F4 Patient abuse or neglect (M ≠ OOV)
- Division (A)(1), (2), or (3) of section 2911.12: F2 + F3 Burglary (F4 ≠ OOV)
- Division (B)(1), (2), (3), or (4) of section 2919.22: some F2 + some F3 Endangering children
- Felonious sexual penetration in violation of former section 2907.12 of the Revised Code

*may be sealable if offender is eligible under 2953.31(A)(1)(b), AND offense is not a felony

Convictions for the following offenses cannot be sealed if the victim was **under 18**:

- 2907.08: Voyeurism
- 2907.09: Public indecency
- 2907.21: Compelling prostitution
- 2907.22: Promoting prostitution
- 2907.23: Enticement or solicitation to patronize a prostitute; procurement of a prostitute for another
- 2907.31: Disseminating matter harmful to juveniles
- 2907.311: Displaying matter harmful to juveniles
- 2907.32: Pandering obscenity
- 2907.33: Deception to obtain matter harmful to juveniles

Convictions for any **felony or first-degree misdemeanor** in which the victim was **under 16** cannot be sealed (except 2919.21 Nonsupport or contribution to nonsupport of juveniles).

When can I apply to seal a conviction record?

See ORC 2953.32(A)

You must wait a certain amount of time after the final discharge from a case before you apply for that record to be sealed. Final discharge means you have finished serving any community service, jail, or prison sentence, and any term of probation or parole, and paid any fines.

- Misdemeanors, 4th-degree felonies, and 5th -degree felonies: 1 year
- 3rd-degree felonies: 3 years
- Any conviction for ORC 2921.43 (soliciting improper compensation): 7 years

What if I have criminal charges pending against me?

See ORC 2953.32(C)(1)(b)

You are not eligible if you have any criminal charges currently pending against you from the time you submit your sealing application through the date of your hearing. This includes things like pending speeding tickets, warrants for your arrest, and being on probation for another case in any court in the U.S.

What about dismissed cases?

Any criminal case can be sealed if all charges were dismissed. Dismissed cases are not considered when determining your eligibility. There is no filing fee for applications containing only dismissed cases, but you cannot have outstanding fines or costs on any traffic or criminal case when you apply.

Where do I go to get a conviction record sealed?

Come to the Self Help Resource Center on the 6th Floor of 375 S. High Street to get help looking up your case(s), determining your eligibility to seal, and filling out the application.

Municipal Court applications should be filed at the Expungement Window on the 2nd Floor of 375 S. High Street. Common Pleas Court applications should be filed with the Common Pleas Clerk’s office on the 1st Floor of 345 S. High Street.

Is there a fee for applying to seal conviction records?

Yes, there is a \$50 fee to submit an application to seal convictions. Each application is \$50, not each case. If you have cases in Common Pleas Court and in Municipal Court, you will have to pay a filing fee in each court. If you cannot afford the filing fee, you can ask a judge to waive it by filing an affidavit of indigency. Visit the Self Help Resource Center to get that form.