EXPUNGEMENT & SECOND CHANCES

A Guide to Clearing Your Record and Finding Fair-Chance Work

Expungement eligibility · Step-by-step filing · Second-chance employers · Getting your ID back

A free resource from the Bulletproof Grace Foundation

From Survival to Purpose

Why This Guide Exists

A record can follow you into every job application, every apartment search, every background check. It doesn't have to be permanent. New Mexico's Criminal Record Expungement Act lets many people clear eligible records — and even while you wait on that process, real employers exist who will hire you today.

39.2%	647	$350M+
NM 3-year recidivism rate, FY2024	per 100,000 — NM incarceration rate	recidivism costs NM each year

1. Do You Qualify for Expungement?

New Mexico's Criminal Record Expungement Act (2019) allows courts to seal certain records. Generally eligible:

- Arrests that did not lead to a conviction
- Charges that were dismissed or resulted in acquittal
- Certain non-violent misdemeanor and felony convictions after a waiting period (typically 2–10 years depending on the offense)
- Some juvenile records

Generally NOT Eligible

Most violent felonies — including offenses causing great bodily harm

Sex offenses requiring registration — these remain on the record

DWI convictions — typically excluded from expungement

Eligibility rules are specific — always confirm your exact case with Legal Aid or the courts, don't assume based on this list alone.

2. How to File — Step by Step

The Process

- Get your full criminal history from NM DPS (Department of Public Safety) records bureau
- Identify which specific charges qualify using the waiting-period rules
- Complete the Petition for Expungement form (available free from NM Courts self-help)
- File the petition in the county where the case was originally charged
- Serve notice to the District Attorney's office (they can object within 30 days)
- Attend a hearing if the DA objects, or receive an order if unopposed
- Once granted, the record is sealed from most background checks

Get Free Help Filing

New Mexico Legal Aid — 1-833-LGL-HELP (1-833-545-4357) — free help determining eligibility and filing

NM Courts Self-Help Center — nmcourts.gov — free forms and step-by-step instructions

NM Corrections Reentry Division — case managers can help confirm eligibility before you file anything

3. Second-Chance Employers

While your record clears, these paths don't wait on paperwork:

Industries Known to Hire Regardless of Record

- CDL / trucking — high demand, many companies train and hire directly
- Construction & skilled trades — often value hands-on skill over background
- Warehouse & distribution — Amazon, FedEx, and regional warehouses regularly hire fair-chance
- Restaurant & food service — one of the most accessible industries to re-enter
- Staffing agencies — Labor Ready/PeopleReady place workers same-day, often without strict background screens

Where to Look

NM Workforce Connection — state job center with a dedicated reentry employment track — ask for the fair-chance employer list

Indeed — Second Chance Employer search — filter listings in Albuquerque that explicitly welcome applicants with a record

NM Reentry Center — keeps direct relationships with local employers who hire returning citizens

4. Getting Your ID & Documents Back

Almost everything — housing, jobs, benefits — starts with having valid ID.

Where to Go

NM Motor Vehicle Division — replace a lost/expired NM ID or license — bring whatever documents you have, even partial paperwork helps

NM Vital Records — order a replacement birth certificate — needed for almost everything else

Social Security Administration — free replacement Social Security card at your local SSA office

NM Corrections Reentry Division — can help start this paperwork before release so it's ready when you come home

A Note From BGF

We are the shield that stands between you and the obstacles. Clearing your record and finding real work isn't something you have to figure out alone — we walk that road with you.

Contact Bulletproof Grace Foundation

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