

Record Clearing Vocabulary Guide

Criminal records come with a lot of confusing language that no one ever explains. This guide helps you better understand the most common terms you'll see.

Court Summary: A document found on the Pennsylvania UJS Portal that lists a summary of most or all criminal charges associated with a person.

Criminal Docket Sheet: A detailed court document from the UJS Portal that shows the full history of a single case tied to one OTN, including charges, court actions, sentencing, etc.

Full Access Review (FAR): A Pennsylvania State Police record that shows a complete criminal history, including charges that may be hidden under Clean Slate.

Expungement: The complete removal of a charge or case from your criminal record and the Pennsylvania State Criminal Repository.

Clean Slate: The automatic or petition-based sealing of eligible charges so they no longer appear on public court searches like the UJS Portal, but may still appear on deeper background checks. This may help hide charges from some employers, landlords, etc., but not all.

Pardon: Official forgiveness of a crime granted by the Governor, which allows the charge or conviction to be fully and automatically expunged.

OTN (Offense Tracking Number): A unique number assigned to a specific criminal incident or charge so the court system can track it.

ARD (Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition): A pre-trial program for first-time or low-level offenses that allows charges to be dismissed and later expunged after successful completion.

Nolo Contendere: A plea where you do not contest the charge, but it is still treated as a conviction for criminal record purposes.

Non Prossed / Nolle Prose: A non-conviction where the prosecution chose not to move forward with the charge; it may still appear on a record but is often eligible for expungement.

Withdrawn: A non-conviction where the charge was formally withdrawn by the prosecution and is typically eligible for expungement.

Dismissed: A non-conviction where the court dismissed the charge, often due to lack of evidence or proof.

Remanded to Lower Court: A non-conviction status where a higher court sends the case back to a lower court, which may still appear on your record.

Held for Court: A status meaning the case was sent from the Magisterial District Judge (MDJ) to the Court of Common Pleas for further proceedings.

Disposed at Lower Court: A case that was resolved at the Magisterial District Court level without being sent to the Court of Common Pleas.