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#### Laws change. Individual cases differ.



We expect to post an updated version of this information at https://www.sjsu.edu/rcp/communityresources.php

This is general information and may not apply to your individual, specific situation.

> Adapted from a slideshow by the Stanford Community Law Clinic by Shaun Naidu, Jr. and Margaret Stevenson. An earlier version was developed from materials prepared by the East Bay Community Law Center

## Getting started: Get a RAP sheet

<u>RAP</u> = <u>Record of Arrests and Prosecutions</u>

State Department of Justice ("LiveScan")

- Includes all counties
- Arrives in ~ one week

#### RCP LiveScan appointments: expunge@sjsu.edu

Find LiveScan offices at https://oag.ca.gov/fingerprints/ record-review

#### <u>County</u>

- Usually more complete than state RAP
- Arrives in ~ one month
- Get from Sheriff's office

Important: Make sure that there are no warrants pending before going to the Sheriff's Office

## **Record Reviews**

Students (under attorney supervision) review clients' RAP sheets and advise them about next steps toward expungement





Contact the RCP for details regarding Record Review appointments at <u>expunge@sjsu.edu</u>

Meetings are online or by phone

#### RCP provides: Court petition preparation

#### In Santa Clara County:

RCP can assist with cases that require court hearings for dismissal.

Meetings are online or by phone.



The Santa Clara County Public Defender's office assists with expungement petition preparation at the Reentry Resource Center.

#### (408) 535-4290

More information about the court hearing process is available at RCP Record Review Appointments.

# **Record Clearing Options**



#### **Record cleaning options**

The following information applies to California state adult convictions only

- Expungements = dismissals of convictions (jail, AB 109, prison)
- Reducing felonies to misdemeanors ("wobblers," Prop 47, Prop 64)

#### □ Sealing and Vacatur

(diversion, juvenile offenses, offenses resulting from being trafficked)

#### □ Other record clearing laws

(automatic dismissals, Certificates of Rehabilitation (CORs), relief from 290 registration)

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#### **Expungements**

"Expungement" = dismissal of a conviction

What does an expungement do?

withdraws a plea bargain or dismisses a conviction

Expungements are either:

- required ("mandatory"), orup to a judge ("discretionary")

Whether expungement must be dismissed ("mandatory") or can be dismissed ("discretionary") depends on:

- The sentence, and
- What happened *after* the sentence









#### **Expungements**

When probation was not part of the sentence

□ If the Petitioner had <u>another conviction</u> within <u>one year following</u> the conviction,



→ then the dismissal of the first conviction is up to a judge (discretionary)

A judge will decide in court whether it is "in the interests of justice" to dismiss the conviction



# Expungements E AB 109 = Realignment = PC section 1170(h) Ef October 2011 law moved many cases that were served in state prison to be served in county jail. Sentences for these AB 109 cases include "PC 1170(h)." A All AB 109 convictions are eligible to be dismissed. It is up to a judge to decide whether it is "in the interests of justice" to dismiss AB 109 convictions. A When to apply: People with a split sentence (released with a "tail") can apply for expungement <u>one year</u> after completing supervision. PC 1170(h)(B)(5) A PC 120341 People with straight time (no "tail") can apply two years following release from custody. PC 1170(h)(A)(5) 15



#### Also:

Many people who worked at **fire camps while in custody** are eligible to have their sentence shortened and their conviction dismissed.

SB 731, effective 1.1.2023 re prison convictions, amending PC 1203.41; PC 1203.42 permits dismissal of prison cases prior to October 2011 where 1170(h) is in the sentencing info; Firefighters: PC 1203.4b

		Can / Must	
Law	Applies to	be dismissed	
1203.4	sentences w/ probation	<b>must</b> if successfully complete probation <b>can</b> if in "interest of justice" to dismiss	
1203.4a	sentences w/out probation	<b>must</b> if go one year w/ no new convictions <b>can</b> if in "interest of justice" to dismiss	
1203.41	all AB 109 / <b>can</b> if in "interest of justice" to dismiss 1170(h) sentences (all are <i>after</i> Oct 2011) + almost all prison cases		

Exception: most serious sex offenses are ineligible for dismissal

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#### **Expungements**

When can a person file for expungement?

- ☑ Not serving time
- ☑ Not on probation, parole or supervision Can ask court to release from probation, supervision early
- ☑ No criminal charges pending

Even if not eligible to apply now, a person can start *preparing* to file today

Owing money to the County does NOT bar expungements

Expungements: balance due to County

California recently eliminated many **administrative fees** (such as probation) and related debt.

The court can waive debt for fines or other fees at a record clearance hearing.

Restitution owed a victim cannot be waived. A judge can dismiss a conviction when restitution is due, leaving the balance in place.

AB 177 (2022); AB 1869 (2021); SB 1106 (owing restitution is not a basis for denying dismissal, 2023)

#### Immigration status

There is no immigration status requirement to be eligible to petition for expungement.

However, criminal histories can affect immigration cases. The Record Clearance Project suggests clients who have immigration issues consult an attorney who specializes in immigration law before beginning the expungement process.

Courts can set aside convictions for failure to explain immigration consequences at the time of the conviction

AB 1259 (effective 2022, amending PC 1473.7)



# Summary of felony reduction rules Law Applies to Type of case 17(b) jail convictions only wobbler = sentence listed has \* jail OR prison \* jail OR 1170(h)

P 47	all convictions	2 parts: * drug possession * theft-related \$950 or less
P 64	all convictions	marijuana-related (including sales)

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# Why reduce a felony if the conviction is dismissed?

Even when a conviction is dismissed, reducing a felony to a misdemeanor can help with:

- Regaining firearm privileges
- Immigration
- Occupational licensing
- Family reunification / guardianship
- Visiting people in custody



# Example: wobblers



Cal. Penal Code section 487 grand theft, section 489(c)(1): Grand theft is punishable ... by imprisonment in a county jail not exceeding one year, or pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 1170.

Cal. Vehicle Code section 10851(a) auto theft:

Any person who drives or takes a vehicle not his or her own, without the consent of the owner ... shall be punished by imprisonment in a **county jail** for not more than one year or pursuant to subdivision **(h) of Section 1170** ...

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#### Example: wobblers

#### Cal. Penal Code section 245(a)(1) assault with a deadly weapon:

Any person who commits an assault upon the person of another with a deadly weapon or instrument other than a firearm shall be punished by imprisonment in the **state prison** for two, three, or four years, **or** in a **county jail** for not exceeding one year...

#### Cal. Penal Code section 273.5(a) domestic violence:

A person who willfully inflicts corporal injury resulting in a traumatic condition upon a [domestic partner] is guilty of a felony, and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by imprisonment in the **state prison** for two, three, or four years, or in a **county jail** for not more than one year...

## Reducing felonies to misdemeanors



When a felony jail sentence is a wobbler, a judge can reduce it to a misdemeanor at any time.

- The judge can reduce and dismiss a felony in the same petition
- The judge considers whether reducing a wobbler felony to a misdemeanor is in the interests of justice (discretionary)



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#### Reducing felonies to misdemeanors

Currently, Proposition 47 requires\* reducing a felony to a misdemeanor when the conviction is for:



(1) These three drug possession offenses: Healt	h &
Safety Code sections:	* Exception:
11350: possession of cocaine and other narcotics	Proposition 36 on the November 2024 ballot increased penalties if a
11357: possession of concentrated cannabis (also look at Prop 64)	person has two prior drug or theft
11377: possession of methamphetamines and other controlled substances	convictions, making them possible felonies as well as other
PC 1170.18 and other sections	changes.
Prop 47 allows sentences for the above offenses to remain as the person has a previous conviction for crimes such as rape, a child molestation, or is required to register as a sex offender p	murder, or



Prop 47 allows sentences for the above offenses to remain as felonies if the person has a previous conviction for crimes such as rape, murder, or child molestation, or is required to register as a sex offender per PC 290(c).

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# Prop 64: marijuana-related expungement and reduction of felonies

Prop 64 can improve records for many marijuana-related offenses (reduce some felonies, seal some convictions) if the conviction was for violation of Health and Safety code section:

- o 11357 (possession)
- o 11358 (cultivation)
- $\circ$  11359 (possession with intent to sell) or
- 11360 (transportation, sales)

	Different rules apply if people under age 21 are involved present, if offense occurred on school or daycare.	or
	Most of these should already be dismissed by the DA. However, people may not be aware of this since notification was by mail and many people have moved.	
HS 11361.8(e)-(f), effective 1.2017		30

			Can / Must
Law	Applies to	Type of case	be reduced
17(h)	jail felonies	wobbler =	can
17(5)	only	current sentencing language	
	0	jail OR prison or to	
		jail OR 1170(h)	
P 47	all	drug possession	must*
		theft-related \$950 or less	muse
	controctorio		
P 64	all	marijuana-related	must
	convictions	(including sales)	

## Voting with a conviction history

Past convictions do not keep people from voting in California.

The only thing that keeps an otherwise eligible person from voting is if they are currently in state or federal prison.

People who have moved need to register at their current address: https://registertovote.ca.gov/



For more information about voting with a conviction history, visit <a href="https://www.letmevoteca.org/">https://www.letmevoteca.org/</a>





#### **Sealing**

Once a case is sealed, no conviction exists and there is nothing to dismiss.

Upon successful completion of a deferred entry of judgment [drug diversion] program, the arrest upon which the judgment was deferred shall be **deemed to have never occurred**.

The defendant may indicate in response to any question concerning his or her prior criminal record that he or she was **not arrested or granted deferred entry of judgment** for the offense, except [in employment applications for peace officer].

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There is similar language for other types of cases where record sealing is allowed.

PC 1000.4(a)

**Sealing** 

Limited types of records may be sealed:

- successful drug diversions
  - Prop 36 or Deferred Entry of Judgment ("DEJ")

PC 1210.1 PC 1000.4

- successful mental health diversions

   PC 1001.35-.36
- many juvenile offenses Welf. & Inst. C 781, 786
- arrests not leading to conviction or factual innocence
   PC 851.87-.92, 1000.4, 1001.9, 1005
   PC 851.8

# Vacatur of most offenses committed as a result of trafficking / DV / sexual violence

A person subject to human trafficking or intimate partner violence or sexual violence can have conviction records destroyed if:

- Crime was direct result of being trafficked, DV, sexual violence
- · Destroying records is "in the interests of justice"

Exceptions: among convictions that cannot be dismissed are robbery, first degree burglary, carjacking and more serious offenses such as rape, murder, arson, kidnapping and other felonies listed in PC 667.5(c)

PC 236.14; 236.15 - AB 124 (effective 2022; adding intimate partner / sexual violence) AB 262 (effective 2022; adding provisions disregarding fees and fines in holding hearing; no time limit)



## Automatic dismissals

#### Automatic dismissal of convictions for

- convictions (including felonies) with probation when person has no probation violations or new convictions, and
- misdemeanor and infraction convictions without probation where the person went for one year with no new convictions

Will automatically be expunged – no application needed

Person must not be serving time; not under supervision, probation, or parole; not charged with any offense and not required to register per 290.

SB 731 (effective 7.1.23); AB 145 (2022) made retroactive AB 1076 – creating PC 1203.425 (effective 1.1.21) (see 1203.425(a)(1)(B)(iv)(II)

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## Automatic dismissals

#### Automatic dismissal of convictions for

 Starting July 1, 2024, if four years pass after a person completes their sentence for a felony and the person is not convicted of a new felony in those four years, DOJ must dismiss the conviction

Excluded are convictions under PC 1192.7(c) ("serious") or PC 667.5(c) ("violent") or registerable sex offenses

Will automatically be expunged – no application needed

Person must not be serving time; not under supervision, probation, or parole; not charged with any offense and not required to register per 290.

SB 731 (effective 7.1.23); AB 145 (2022) made retroactive AB 1076 – creating PC 1203.425 (effective 1.1.21) (see 1203.425(a)(1)(B)(iv)(II)

# Automatic removal of arrests

**Automatic removal of arrests** if found not guilty or DA does not prosecute after:

- one year for misdemeanors,
- three years for felonies, or
- successful completion of diversion.

#### No application needed.

*Exception:* felony arrests where sentencing information includes state prison are not automatically removed.

Removing the arrest is like sealing = deemed not to have occurred

*Exceptions*: applications for peace officer, law enforcement agency or court records, firearms, holding office, some Health & Safety code sections

AB 145 (2022) made retroactive AB 1076 – creating PC 851.93 (effective 1.1.21)

## Automatic dismissals

Disclosure prohibited of removed arrests and dismissed convictions neither courts nor the state Dept of Justice can report dismissed convictions or removed arrests Applies both to automatic dismissals and petitions *Exceptions*: The following can see dismissed cases: courts and criminal justice agencies In-Home Supportive Services and Waiver Personal Care Services K-12 educational institutions and Commission on Teacher Credentialing (licensing board) firearms, holding office, some Health & Safety code sections

plus other sections

SB 731 (effective 1.1.23); AB 1076 – amending PC 11105(p)(2)(A) (effective 1.1.21)

## Certificates of Rehabilitation

**Certificates of Rehabilitation (COR)** are a judge's "certification" (determination) that a person has been rehabilitated.

A COR provides the evidence of the rehabilitation helpful in applying for many professional licenses

Dismiss eligible cases first

Time requirements:

5 years California residence immediately before filing + 2 years (for most offenses) since last release from custody (though judge can reduce the time "in the interests of justice")

PC 4852.01, .15, Govt Code 12952(a)(3)(C)

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# Change in registration requirements for most sex offenses

Starting in July 2021, most people who had to register as sex offenders could ask the court to end their registration.

Three levels ("tiers") of registrants:

- Tier 1: can ask to be removed after registering for 10 years\*
- Tier 2: can ask to be removed after registering for 20 years\*
- Tier 3: continues lifetime registration requirement
- \* Time spent incarcerated does not count for the required years; time is added for convictions for failure to register

For most people who meet the time requirements, "the petition for termination [of registration] shall be granted..."

SB 384 (2017) created PC 290(d)(e), 290.5; apply first birthday after July 1, 2021



#### Procedure: How to apply

Apply in the county where the conviction took place

File a separate petition for each case number

One case may have several "counts" ("charges"); once the one case is dismissed, all the counts are dismissed

Two ways to apply for expungement:

filing a form

no court appearance fill out application form

 going to court court appearance required prepare a petition

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## Procedure: How to apply



*Filing a form (no court appearance)* 

Useful for mandatory dismissals (court must dismiss a conviction)

- When person successfully completed probation
- If didn't get probation, when person did not have a new conviction in the following year

In Santa Clara County, you can use an easy form from the Probation Department. (There is no fee.) https://probation.sccgov.org/adult-services/record-clearance 

 Proceedure: How to apply

 Other counties (not Santa Clara):

 California has "Judicial Council", forms to file for expungements: forms CR-180 and CR-181

 www.courts.ca.gov/forms.htm-drop down menu: "criminal"

 There is no fee in any county.

 AB 134, effective 7.10.23

 Send to the court clerk's office in the county where the

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Keep a copy.

conviction took place.



Preparing a petition for a court hearing:

#### For discretionary dismissals when:

- Did not successfully complete probation
- Had new conviction within one year of non-probation case



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- Seek to reduce a wobbler felony to a misdemeanor
- Seek to dismiss a AB 109 (realignment) or 1203.41 prison case
- Seek to terminate probation early







They must wait until after "a conditional offer of employment" before asking about criminal history

*Exceptions*: Employers can ask on the application form about conviction history if

- the agency is required to do a background check
- the position is with a criminal justice agencyfarm labor contractors

Gov't Code 12952(a)

# "Ban the Box" on most job applications in California

If an employer withdraws a job offer based on conviction history, they must

- do so in writing
- state what disgualifies the applicant
- provide a copy of criminal history report
- give applicant five days to respond
- consider any response
- provide notice of final decision and
- advise of right to file a complaint with:

California Civil Rights Department (formerly Department of Fair Employment and Housing) https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/fair-chance-act/

Gov't Code 12952(a)

**BAN THE BOX!** 

# "Ban the Box" on most job applications in California

Applicants have three years from the violation to file a complaint

In their response to an employer's proposed withdrawal of a job offer, applicants can explain

- circumstances of conviction history, and
- why individual is good fit for position

# Employers must make an individualized assessment of each applicant, considering:

- The nature and gravity of the offense or conduct;
- The **time that has passed** since the offense, conduct and/or completion of the sentence; and
- The nature of the job held or sought.

Arrests that did not lead to a conviction and diversion programs cannot be considered as reasons to deny employment for almost any job.

Gov't Code 12952(b) (effective January 1, 2018) 2 Cal. Code Reg. 11017.1; EEOC Guidance p. 11

# Different employers can see different information: private employers

**BAN THE BOX!** 

Gov't Code 12952(a)

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<u>Private employers</u> do <u>not</u> have access to state computer files *Examples:* Target, Cisco, Safeway cannot see rap sheets

Private employers usually buy background check reports

In California, background check companies are not *supposed to* report:

- past arrests, or
- convictions that are older than 7 years

Cal. Civil Code 1786.18(a)(7)



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#### Expunged convictions shielded

Most California employers cannot <u>ask about</u> or <u>consider</u> expunged convictions in employment decisions

No employer, whether a public agency or private individual or corporation, shall ask an applicant for employment to disclose, through any written form or verbally, information . . . concerning a conviction that has been judicially dismissed or ordered sealed...

... nor shall any employer seek from any source whatsoever, or utilize, as a factor in determining any condition of employment including hiring, promotion, termination, or any apprenticeship training program or any other training program leading to employment, any record ... concerning a conviction that has been judicially dismissed or ordered sealed ...

Referring to PC sections 1203.4, 1203.4a, 1203.45 and 1210.1.

Labor Code 432.7(a); Govt. Code 12952(a)(3)(C) (AB 2845)

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# When California employers can consider expunged convictions

Exceptions to Labor Code section 432.7: employers can consider dismissed convictions in the following circumstances:

- peace officers §§ (b), (e)
- health facilities § (f)
- PC § 290-related arrests for positions with regular access to patients
- HS § 11590-related arrests for positions with access to medication
- concessionaires [selling or contracting] with government § § (k), (l) though keep in mind new § 432.9 – Ban the Box – re government employment
- employer required by law to obtain conviction information § (m)
- position requires possession/use of firearm in employment § (m)
- conviction bars applicant from holding position, notwithstanding dismissal  $\S \left( m \right)$
- employer is prohibited from employing applicant with conviction § (m)

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# Different employers can see <u>different information</u>

Once a conviction is dismissed ("expunged"), it remains on a rap sheet, with a notation that the conviction was dismissed.

Rap sheets are highly private documents. The law limits who is permitted to see them.

<u>Government employers, law enforcement and the</u> <u>courts</u> can see full record, including expunged convictions

<u>Banking</u> and <u>hospitals / medical facilities</u> have greater access than private employers

#### Different employers can see different information: Licensing boards

#### Different licensing boards can see different things

*Examples:* Real estate agents, Security guards, Accountants

People with convictions can present evidence to persuade licensing boards to give permission to work by showing rehabilitation, including

- Time passed since last conviction
- Expungement of conviction(s)
- Letters of support
- Whether convictions are "substantially related" to license desired

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#### Different employers can see different information: Licensing boards

Most boards regulated by the Dept of Consumer Affairs cannot deny a license to someone based on:

- Convictions that have been dismissed (expunged)
- Most criminal convictions older than 7 years
  - Exceptions: "serious" felony, many sex offenses, some felony financial crimes
- Arrests, diversions, sealed records

If the conviction is within the last 7 years, or is "serious" older felony, the board cannot deny someone a license unless the conviction is "substantially related" to license desired

Most boards are not supposed to ask people applying for a professional license about criminal history. The boards can run a LiveScan check; the Dept of Justice will report results.

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AB 2138, passed in 2018, eff 7.1.2020

# Different employers can see different information: Licensing boards

Expungement and Certificates of Rehabilitation can be useful. Current law still protects people with convictions and rehabilitation.

[A] person shall not be denied a license **on the basis of a conviction** ... **that has been dismissed**...

Business & Professions Code 480(c), revised language from AB 2138 effective 2020

[A] person shall not be denied a license **on the basis** that he or she has been convicted of a crime ... if he or she has obtained a **certificate of rehabilitation** ... or has made a showing **of rehabilitation** ...

Business & Professions Code 480(b), revised language from AB 2138 effective 2020

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# Different employers can see different information: Caregivers

Employers in the care-giving fields must request criminal history reports of job applicants

Examples: Child care workers Disabled people's assistants Elder care workers

- the California Department of Social Services will notify the employer if applicant has a conviction
- caregivers with a criminal record can ask the Department of Social Services for an 'exemption' to be eligible to work

PC §11105.3; Exemption process outlined at California Department of Social Services <u>http://ccld.ca.gov/PG404.htm</u>. New legislation speeds approval of exemptions. AB 1720 (effective 1.1.23)

# Answering questions on a job application

Keep in mind: An employer can use an employee's false statements on a job application as a legal reason to not hire or to fire someone, even after years of work

#### Learn what is actually on a record:

many people are unaware of what is on their record

#### Read the application question carefully

Does it ask about current convictions only?

Does it ask about felonies only?

Does it ask about recent convictions only?

Does it ask about ever having been convicted of a crime?

# Some additional resources:



- (in San José) Alexander Community Law Center workers' rights clinic: 0 http://law.scu.edu/kgaclc/#services (408) 288-7030
- Legal Aid at Work: https://legalaidatwork.org/self-help-library/ 0
- National Employment Law Project: www.nelp.org 0
- National H.I.R.E. network: www.reentry.net 0

#### Government agencies for complaints regarding employment violations:

- Calif. Civil Rights Department: calcivilrights.ca.gov 0 https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/fair-chance-act/
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: eeoc.gov 0 https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/enforcement-guidance-consideration-arrestand-conviction-records-employment-decisions

#### General:

- 0 All of Us or None: www.allofusornone.org
- Collateral Consequences Resource Center; www.ccresourcecenter.org 0
- Clean Slate Clearinghouse: www.cleanslate.csgiusticecenter.org 0
- Californians for Safety and Justice: www.safeandiust.org/resources 0
  - TimeDone: https://timedone.org
- Root and Rebound: www.rootandrebound.org 0



www.sjsu.edu/rcp

The Record Clearance Project can provide peer mentors to assist with working toward self-sufficiency.

For those in custody: request a referral to SJSU from your RO.

For those released: request a referral to SJSU from the Reentry Resource Center.



 Release date within 45 days Released from custody in the la centry Resource Center (RRC) On-Site Hours: 151 W Mission St. San Jose, CA 9511 Thursdays: 1 PM - 3 PM Soursonys (1 POL - 5 PM)
 8425 Murray Ave, Gilroy CA 95020
 > Mondays: 1 PM - 5 PM
 > Fridays: 830 AM - 5 PM vicios disponibles en Español My dreams, my hope, and my goals are coming true. I tell everybody about this program... let them know that it's never too late to ask for help. You guys are my angels. 5

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#### Other Record Clearance Project assistance: Computers and the Internet classes

People who are formerly incarcerated and interested in learning computer skills, free classes are available.

Classes focus on enhancing employment, though can help with other computer needs as well.

People who successfully complete the classes receive a free laptop.



SISU SAN KOSÉ STATE WWW.sjsu.edu/rcp

the generous support of Ellenberg & the Santa Clara C of Supervisors



RCP website: www.sjsu.edu/rcp

expunge@sjsu.edu