

Record expungement

In Illinois, after a youth arrest, juvenile records kept by the courts and law enforcement agencies. Expungement laws allow for the erasure or destruction of juvenile records once the youth turns 18. Once sealed, juvenile records are removed from review or examination except by court order or by designated officials.

All states have laws allowing expungement or sealing of records for certain youth offenders based on age or types of crime.¹ In August 2004, the Juvenile Court Act was amended to require judges to inform eligible juveniles of their right to record expungement (705 ILCS 405/5-915). Expungement is a valuable tool because the existence of a juvenile record can be a barrier to individuals trying to gain employment, housing, credit, scholarships, and certain licensing. In order to expunge a record, an individual must file the appropriate forms with the circuit court in the county of arrest, show proof of identification, and pay a fee. ISP tallies record expungements but does not separate adult and juvenile expungement data. The number of juvenile expungements annually is unknown.

Notes

¹ National Criminal Justice Association, *Juvenile Justice Reform Initiatives in the States: 1994-1996*, Program Report, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, October 1997, NCJ 165697.