

How to get a Pardon

A pardon in Georgia is “an order of official forgiveness granted to those individuals who have maintained a good reputation in their community following the completion of their sentence(s).” Pardons in Georgia are granted for felony convictions by the State Board of Pardons & Paroles and may be helpful for advancement in employment, housing, or education.

ELIGIBILITY:

1. You were convicted of a felony offense in Georgia;
2. You completed all sentences at least five (5) years before applying (this means that you have been off parole or probation for five years);
3. You have lived a law-abiding life in the last five (5) years;
4. You do not have any pending charges; and
5. All of your fines and/or restitution are paid.

PROCESS:

1. Complete a pardon application. (NOTE: You can submit one application for multiple felony convictions.)
2. Get your official GCIC criminal history record from a law enforcement agency for a fee.
3. Review your GCIC criminal history record and see if any final dispositions are missing. (NOTE: A final disposition is the result of your charges.)
4. Get certified copies of any missing dispositions for felony arrests occurring in the last fifteen (15) years. (NOTE: a certified copy is available for a small fee at the office of the clerk of the court that handled the case, and it will have a raised seal on it.)
5. Provide current employment information and sign a waiver for the Board to access your employment history.
6. Mail your application and the required materials to the State Board at the address provided on the application.
7. Wait approximately nine (9) months for a response.
8. If approved, wait six (6) weeks and obtain a new GCIC criminal history record to make sure your record shows you have been pardoned of the offense(s).
9. If you are denied, you may want to wait a couple of years and try again. There is no appeal process.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION:

1. Application can be found on the website for the State Board of Pardon & Paroles at <http://pap.georgia.gov/pardons-restoration-rights>. (Please note that page 2 of the application must be notarized.)
2. Certified copies of required missing dispositions.
3. A copy of your GCIC criminal history record that is less than ten (10) days old.
4. A self-addressed, stamped envelope.

OPTIONAL DOCUMENTATION:

You don't want to overwhelm the Board with too much information, but may want to send one or more of the following to show that you have been rehabilitated and how important a pardon will be in your life.

1. Personal letter - Explain briefly why a pardon is important to you and why you think you deserve one.
2. Letter(s) of recommendation from people who know you (such as community leaders, employers, or counselors who can vouch for your good character).
3. Resume, transcripts, certificates, awards and any other documentation of educational, training, drug treatment or other programs you have completed that have helped you to improve yourself.