



ORANGE COUNTY, NC
**RESTORATION
 LEGAL
 COUNSEL**

The **Orange County Restoration Legal Counsel** is a position within the Orange County Criminal Justice Resource Department. The Restoration Legal Counsel exists to provide restoration services to residents of Orange County, including criminal record relief such as expungements and certificates of relief and debt relief such as driver's license restoration.

The program seeks to assist justice-involved individuals who are unable to pay for court fines and fees or who are otherwise affected by the impacts of poverty. The program also aims to help alleviate the civil collateral consequences of having a criminal record.

The Restoration Legal Counsel works with the Court, the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, and local community partners to provide these services to Orange County.

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RESTORATION RELIEF



Driver's License Restoration

The Restoration Legal Counsel (RLC) may be able to help someone with a revoked driver's license clear their record so they can get their license back. If someone has a revoked license due to a failure to pay fines or fees in Orange County, the RLC will work with the District Attorney's Office and the Court to remit the fines and fees. In some situations, the RLC may also be able to help address failures to appear that are causing someone's license to be revoked. The RLC can also assist eligible clients in trying to obtain a limited driving privilege if their license has been permanently revoked.

If someone has a revocation in another county, the RLC may be able to refer that client to an organization able to assist in that county.

Criminal Record Relief

Whether someone has a conviction on their record, dismissed charges, or both, they may be eligible for an expunction. An expunction wipes the charge from the person's record to better enable them to find a job, housing, or continue their education.

However, an expunction is not an available form of relief for every criminal record. For some convictions, a certificate of relief is an alternate approach that may be pursued, even though the conviction will remain on the record. A certificate of relief can still help with some of the collateral consequences a conviction carries.

THE PROCESS

Referral

Potential clients may be referred by county agencies, non-profit organizations, or individuals. To find a referral form go to the CJRD website at www.orangecountync.gov/CJRD and locate the Restoration Legal Counsel page. Community members who have questions or want to know if they are eligible for relief are also welcome to contact the office directly.

Intake

Intake for both driver's license restoration and criminal record relief includes a detailed interview with clients about their driving and/or criminal record and how their record or lack of a driver's license impacts their lives. In order to best make a case for relief to the Court, intake may also include questions about a client's financial and family situation.

Assessment

After intake, the RLC will obtain a copy of the client's DMV and/or criminal record and review it for eligibility for relief. The client will be contacted once an eligibility determination has been made. Not everyone will be eligible for the relief they seek, but every effort will be made to help each client.

Relief

If the client is eligible for driver's license or criminal record relief, the RLC will compile and draft the necessary documents and submit them to the Court. For driver's license restoration and some types of criminal record relief, the ultimate determination will be at the Court's discretion. The RLC will keep clients updated at each step of the process.

