

WHAT DOES “COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES” MEAN?

Some people think after they get out of prison, finish probation, or pay their fines they won't have anything to worry about. That isn't always true. Your criminal record will often follow you much after you finish your sentence. Your record could have a big effect on your future. Collateral consequences come up when people treat you differently because you have a criminal record. Collateral consequences are not a part of your sentence, so you might not know about them. They are laws and policies that allow other people to look at your record before they rent to you, or hire you, for example. Even having an arrest on your record might hurt you, even if you never went to court or the charges were dropped.

DO THESE APPLY TO ME?

If you have a criminal record, you need to know about how it might hurt you. There might be things you can do. You may qualify for a pardon or an expungement.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW MY RECORD MIGHT HURT ME?

Having a record can hurt you in different ways. Your record might:

- Hurt your chances of getting a job;
- Make you ineligible for public housing, SNAP or TANF;
- Make it hard to find a place to live;
- Make you ineligible for student loans or grants;
- Make you lose your driver's license;
- If you are an immigrant, you might be looking at deportation;
- If you are arrested again, you might be looking at a longer sentence;
- Various others...

IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO?

1. Know the law and know your rights.
2. Make sure there are no errors on your criminal record. If you find errors, try to fix them.
3. See if you can get an expungement or pardon.

For more than 30 years, South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center has improved the quality of life for all South Carolinians. We serve a wide range of needs for the low-income community through legal work, economic development, social legislation and educational work. Safe housing, reliable transportation, food, education, and other necessities that should be a right rather than a privilege, are our goals. We seek equality through our laws and the assurance that our legal system is looking out for those most in need. These are the promises that a civil society makes to all its citizens. It is the pursuit of these rights that drives South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center forward.

We are not a legal firm who handles individual cases, so we cannot assist you as counsel if you have legal issues that need addressing. We work to change laws and policies that benefit those in need statewide. We hope that we can solve problems before they affect citizens with the fewest resources. There are many different consequences to having a criminal record. South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center is currently working to change policies and reduce these barriers to opportunity.

Copyright retained by South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center. For permission to reproduce this brochure contact SC Appleseed P.O. Box 7187 Columbia, SC 29202