

What's On Your Criminal Record

What is a Criminal Record?

In Wisconsin, an official criminal record shows if someone has been arrested or convicted of a crime. It includes:

- What the person was charged with
- What the court decided
- Any punishment (like jail, probation, or fines)

This record can include felonies, misdemeanors, and other offenses.

Parts of a criminal record often are contained in files of multiple organizations. For example, law enforcement agencies and courts maintain different records about the same case. In addition, agencies such as prosecutors' offices, probation departments, and jails may have related records.

In addition to official records, unofficial sources such as media reports and posts on social media can provide information about criminal cases.

What's in a Criminal Record?

- **Arrest information:** When and why someone was arrested
- **Prosecutor information:** What charges were officially filed
- **Court information:** What the judge decided and what sentence was given
- **Juvenile records:** These are kept in a separate system for people under 18
- **Diversion programs:** If someone completed a program instead of going to court, it should be listed

Wisconsin's Computerized Court Records (CCAP)

CCAP (Consolidated Court Automation Programs) is an online searchable database of court records, including records of criminal cases. Members of the public can search CCAP to find an individual's criminal charges and convictions.

CCAP has retention times for different categories of cases. Most felony records are kept for 50 years from the end of the case, and misdemeanors are ordinarily kept for 20 years.

How Can I See My Criminal Record?

You can check your record in a few ways:

- Request it from the [Wisconsin Department of Justice \(DOJ\)](#)
- Fill out a form and mail it with a fee to the DOJ's Crime Information Bureau
- Use the [Wisconsin Circuit Court Access \(CCAP\) website](#)
- Go to wcca.wicourts.gov to search public court records

Important Things to Know

- **Arrest vs. Conviction:** Being arrested doesn't mean you were found guilty. A conviction means the court said you were guilty.
- **Record Keeping:** Criminal records are kept for a certain time before they're removed or archived.
- **Expunged Records:** Some records, like certain misdemeanors and lower-level felonies for crimes committed before 25, can be expunged (sealed). The request for expungement must be made at the time of sentencing, and the person needs to complete their sentence or probation period successfully.

Expunged cases won't show up on CCAP unless a judge says they can. Arrest records from the same case may still be available, unless the person follows the process of the Wisconsin Department of Justice for removal of the records.

Expungement of the court record does not result in removal of an arrest record by any law enforcement agency.

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Table of Contents

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