

# Certificates of Relief from Disabilities and Certificates of Good Conduct

---

There are two types of certificates available to lower barriers to employment and licensing for individuals with conviction histories: Certificates of Relief from Disabilities (CRDs) and Certificates of Good Conduct (CGCs). These documents are issued by New York State, and you must apply for them. Your eligibility depends on your conviction history.

CRDs and CGCs have two basic functions:

- They remove any **mandatory** barrier to employment or licensing caused by felony convictions (for example, the barrier that prevents individuals with certain felony convictions from obtaining security guard licenses). In other words, the employer or agency can't just deny you the job or the license if you have a CRD or CGC – they must consider your situation and your record individually.
- They serve as evidence of rehabilitation/positive change for **all** employers. Employers must take them into account when considering whether they think your conviction history disqualifies you from working with them.

**CRD:** You are eligible if you have any number of misdemeanor convictions and/or just one felony conviction. A CRD covers only one case – if you have more than one case, you will need to apply for a CRD separately for each one. If all your convictions were in New York, and you were never incarcerated in a state prison, you go to the clerk's offices of all the courts that sentenced you to apply. If some of your convictions were federal or out-of-state, and/or you have been incarcerated in a state prison, you fill out an application and mail it to the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), which is based in Albany.

**CGC:** you are eligible if you have had two or more felony convictions. However, there are waiting periods. If your most serious felony was Class C, D, or E, you must wait three years from your most recent conviction or release from incarceration – whichever was more recent – before applying. If your most serious felony was Class A or B, you must wait five years. Either way, you fill out an application and mail it to DOCCS. You can include attachments that show you have made positive change since your conviction (e.g., diplomas, education certificates, letters of reference), a letter explaining the strides you have made, or both.

Be careful with the application. It will ask you why you need the certificate. Provide your best answer. If you are applying to lift bars to driving a school bus or be a paratransit driver, the certificate needs to include special language. Consult with CSS or another an advocate or attorney to make sure you cite the specific language.

After you turn in your application, you will be contacted by a probation officer (if you applied through the courts) or a parole officer (if you applied through DOCCS) who will interview you to assess your fitness for a certificate. If your convictions were only in the federal system, federal probation employees handle this evaluation. Usually, the entire process takes anywhere from several months to a year.

You can apply for a CRD or CGC if you are on probation or post-release supervision, but you will need to go through your probation officer to do so.

### **Questions?**

Contact the Community Service Society at **(212) 614-5441**. Leave a message and we will call you back!

# # #