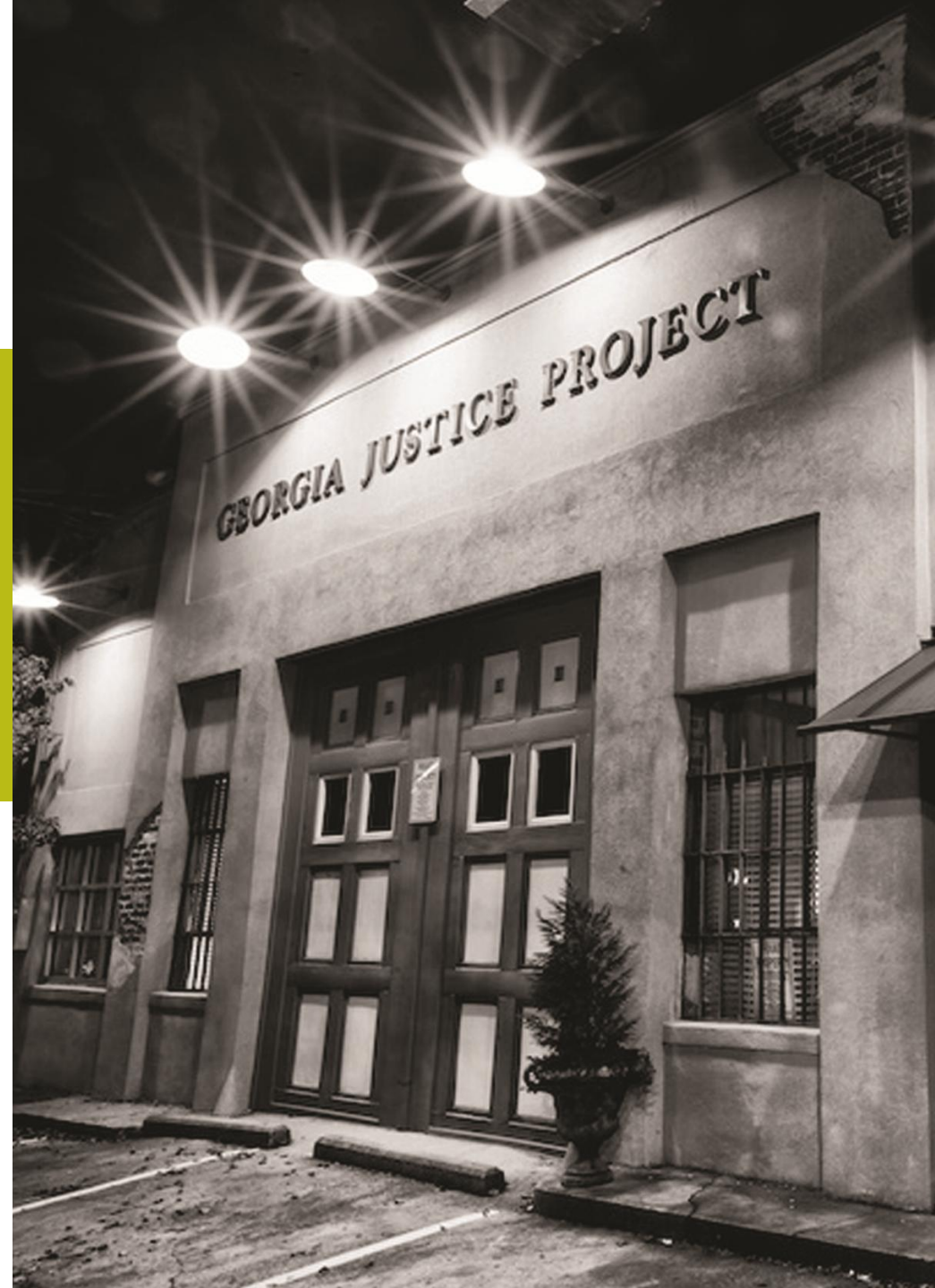


Getting a Pardon in Georgia: A Path to Opportunity & Record Clearing

Part Two

Erin Donohue-Koehler and Sarah Aufdenkampe

10/22/2025



Getting a Pardon in Georgia

Part One

- The power of a pardon
- Eligibility
- Process
- Information/docs to gather
- Preparing to tell your story

Part Two

- Brief recap
- A closer look at the application
- Submitting a strong application
- What happens after submission & decision
- Using the Toolkit
- Hear from the State Board of Pardons & Paroles

Georgia Justice Project

GEORGIA
JUSTICE
PROJECT

Reduce the number of Georgians
under correctional control

Reduce reentry barriers for the formerly
incarcerated & justice involved



1 INDIVIDUAL

Legal representation and social services

2 POLICY & SYSTEMIC

Working toward system change

3 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Building community awareness and
creating partnerships

A Brief Recap - Pardons

- An order of forgiveness from the State of Georgia for a conviction (usually a Georgia felony conviction)
- Granted by the State Board of Pardons & Paroles
- Establishes the person pardoned is a law-abiding citizen and is fully rehabilitated
- Getting a pardon puts you on the pathway to restriction and sealing
- Not needed for voting!

Eligibility criteria:

- Georgia felony conviction
- Completed all sentences at least 5 years ago
- Lived a law-abiding life in the last 5 years
- Fines & restitution paid
- No pending charges/open cases

GJP's Top 10 Pardon Tips

- 1. Tap into your patience**
- 2. Ensure you are eligible**
- 3. Do your homework**
- 4. Recruit your supporters**
- 5. Stay organized (create folders, make checklists)**
- 6. Get comfortable with the technology**
- 7. Take accountability**
- 8. Think outside the box and don't be afraid to brag about your accomplishments and successes**
- 9. Writing is a Process (drafting, revising, editing, rewriting, proofreading)**
- 10. Practice for your interview**

The Application

A Closer Look

Application Website



Pardons and Restoration of Rights

Login with the Email address and password that you used to create your application.

Email Address*

Email is **required**.

Password*

Password is **required**.

[Forgot Password?](#)

Please confirm that you are not a robot by clicking the box below.

☐ I'm not a robot

reCAPTCHA
[Privacy](#) · [Terms](#)

Login

If you don't have an existing account, you will need to create a new account.

Application Sections



Pardons and Restoration of Rights

Georgia Justice Project Pardon... Last Login: 09/24/2025 12:05 pm Logout

Application #:
10284
Type(s): Pardon

Name of the Applicant: John Doe

Start Date:
01/17/2024

Status: In Progress

Please complete each section. If you haven't started working on a section, the status will show as "Not Started". Once you start a section, the status of that section will change to "In Progress". Once you complete the section, the status of that section will show as "Completed".

Application Section	Status
Instructions/FAQ	
Registered Sex Offender	
Instructions/FAQ	
Applicant Demographic Information	In Progress
Education Information ✓	Completed
Military Service	In Progress
Employment Information	In Progress
Substance Abuse and Mental Health History	In Progress
Civil and Financial Information	In Progress
Charitable and Community Activities	In Progress
Offense Details	In Progress
Justification for Consideration	In Progress
Attach Documents	Not Started

Submit Application

Add or Remove Application Types

View Completed Application

Close

Applicant Demographic Information

This section has four pages: Contact Information, Marriage Information, Child Custody Information, and Address History.

For Marriage Information section, only list legal marriages.

For Child Custody Information section, if your child support payments are behind (in “arrears”), explain why in the text box. Also explain any attempts to make payments.

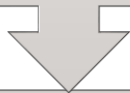
Children under 18- not just your children, but any minor child that lives in the same household.

Relationship to child = who is this child to you (son, step-daughter, etc.)

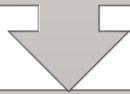
For Address History section, list your addresses for the past 10 years.

Applicant Demographic Information: Tips

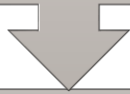
Fields marked with a red asterisk are required.



To go to the next page, either click the tab at the top of the page or select “next page” button at bottom of screen.



The application auto-saves, and you can also hit the save button when you are finished with a page.



When you have finished the section, click “Complete Demographic Section.” If you are missing any information, you will get a pop up.

Education Information and Military Service

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Education

Include college,
vocational programs,
and training
programs

Include partial
credit/completion

Military Service

If dishonorably
discharged, keep your
answer brief and do
not re-argue the case

Employment Information



List all periods of employment and unemployment since you finished the last sentence that you're asking to be pardoned.



If you can't remember exact dates, use January 1st.



If you were fired for misconduct, briefly and honestly explain.



Note that this section has two pages.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health History

There are three pages in this section.

Illegal drug use vs. prescription drugs and alcohol

Timing is only since you finished your last felony sentence, not before that.

For Substance Abuse Treatment History subsection, include inpatient and outpatient treatment programs. Also include participation in programs like AA, NA, etc.

Civil and Financial Information

There are three pages in this section:

- Financial Information
 - Only include debt that has gone into default (collections).
 - Explain your plan to pay off the debt.
- Civil Lawsuit Information
 - Include any case you were in, either for a claim you brought or something you defended against.
 - If you can't remember the details, check online records.
- Pending Proceedings
 - Common examples: bankruptcy, eviction, license hearings, EEOC claims.

Charitable/Community Activities Section



Charitable Organizations



Participation in activities like food drives, clothing drives, feeding the community, etc.



Volunteering at school functions or religious organizations



Think outside the box:

Mentoring

Tutoring

Helping neighbors

A Closer Look:

Offense Details and Justification for Consideration

Offense Details: Do's

Goal: short statement about the facts of the case

Take responsibility where you can

Explain all convictions you want to be pardoned, including any probation violations. Look at court documents for additional facts.

This should be pretty short and stick to the facts.

For serious offenses or those involving a victim, provide more detail.

Offense Details Section: Don'ts

**Disagree with
the facts of
the case**



**Blame other
things or
people**



**Explain why
the case
happened.**

Justification for Consideration

**Goal 1: show how you've changed
and the good you've done in your community**

Ask yourself:

- What's changed in your life for the better? How did this impact others?
- How were you able to make those positive changes?
- What personal and community roles do you have now?
- What additional responsibilities do you have?

Justification for Consideration

Goal 2: show that even with your hard work, you've faced barriers

Where have you faced barriers?

- Employment
- Housing
- Occupational/professional license
- Volunteer or community involvement
- Other harm?

Tips for Longer Sections



Write the big sections in a Word Document or Google Docs.



Have someone who knows you read over these sections.



Start early and save your progress on the application often.

Required and Recommended Documents



Required Documents

Picture of ID

Proof of Income (paystub, disability award letter, pension statement)

Proof of Residence (utility bill, bank statement, lease or mortgage coupon)

Certified dispositions for all felony convictions plus any TER'ed cycles

If military, DD-214

Purpose code "E" GCIC, no older than 30 days

If asking for FA restoration- 3 letters of recommendation (notarized)

- Template letter in Toolkit

Oath and waiver(s)

Additional document requirements for Sex Offender pardons

Recommended Docs



Diplomas, certificates, honors that you have obtained or been awarded.



A picture or two of you.



Letters of Recommendation*

Letters of Recommendation

3 letters

From non-family
members

Must have the name,
address, and
telephone number of
the person writing the
letter

Pardon Application Submitted

Next steps

I Submitted My Pardon, Now What?

A Pardon Board employee will review it. Then:

You will get an email saying that your application is being forwarded to an investigator.

OR

You receive an email stating that additional information is needed.

The Interview

Can take several months to receive a call, but scheduled quickly after that

Interviewer will likely ask for interview to be conducted at your home*

Review your application beforehand

Prepare to talk about your family and upbringing

Investigator often comes in uniform

Received a Pardon Decision

What next?

Possible Pardon Outcomes

- **Granted** – CONGRATS!
 - Make sure GCIC says “pardon”
 - Have ready during your job & housing search
 - Most Pardoned Offenses are eligible for record clearing - not automatic
- **Denied** - No appeal, but you can apply again in 2 years
- **Unsure** - you do not remember the result or don't have the decision.
 - Email Pardon.Inquiries@pap.ga.gov for a copy of your Pardon certificate or decision letter

Granted - Next Steps

Request a GCIC, purpose code U...

----- Cycle 1 of 1-----

Court Agency GA060025G GEORGIA PARDONS AND PAROLE

Subject's Name Jane Doe

Charge 1

Charge Number 00130210603001

Charge Tracking Number 00130210603

Charge Literal AGGRAVATED ASSAULT

Statute AGGRAVATED ASSAULT (16-5-21; GA)

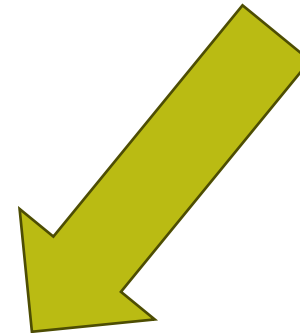
NCIC Offense Code 1315

State Offense Code 1318

Severity Felony

Disposition (Other 2024-05-30; PARDONED WITHOUT RESTORATION
OF FIREARMS RIGHTS)

Check for
Pardon language



POP QUIZ

QUESTION

If I'm granted a pardon, do I have to tell a potential employer about my felony conviction(s) if I'm asked about it?

ANSWER

Yes, you must disclose the conviction, but you will also be able to explain that the conviction has been pardoned and officially forgiven by the State of Georgia.

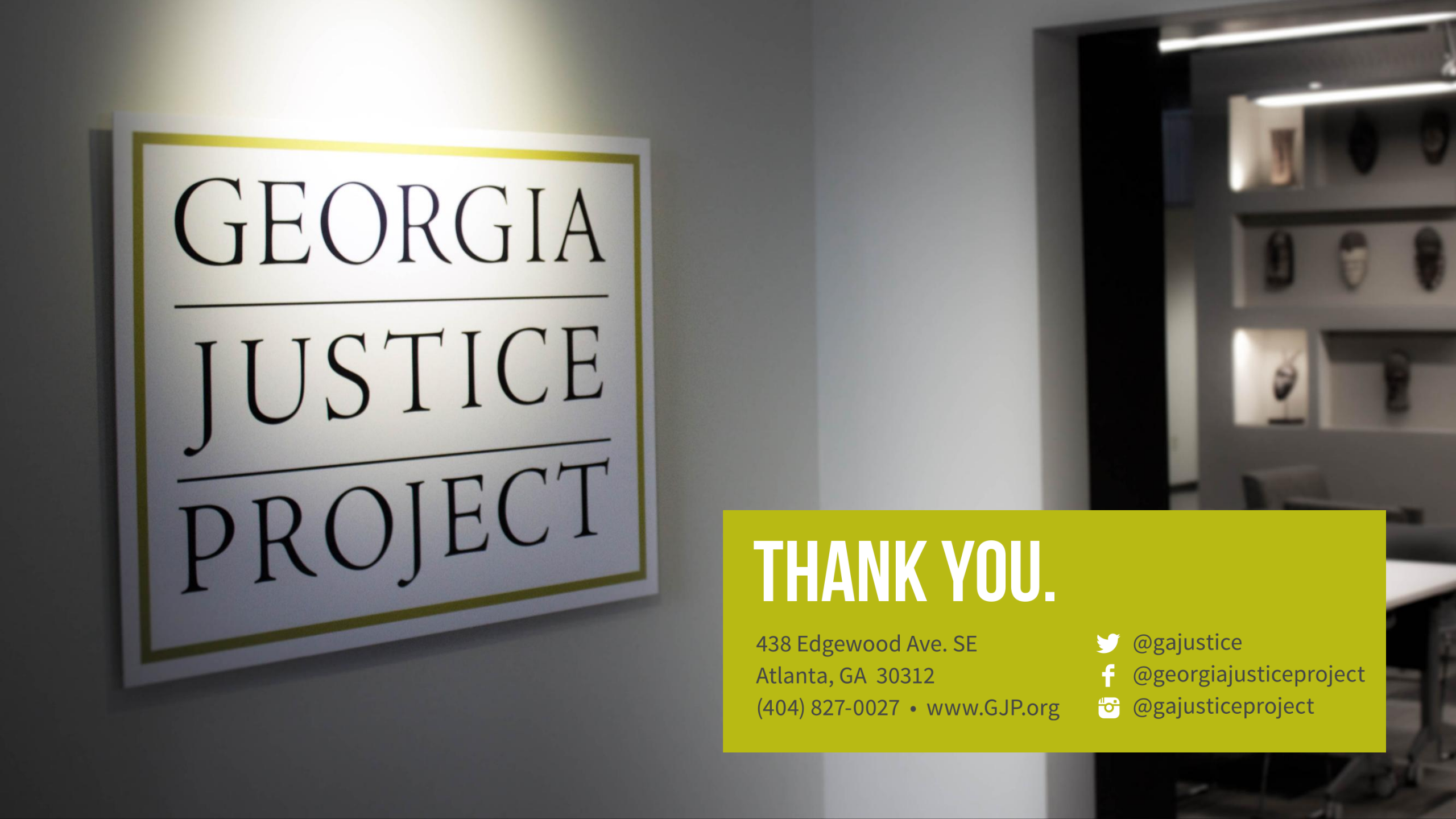
Remember you can restrict & seal some pardoned felonies!

Highlights

You **MUST** file a petition in **court where case was originally prosecuted**

May require a hearing

Court will issue order restricting and sealing pardoned felony conviction, or deny petition

A photograph of a museum interior. On the left, a large white sign with a gold border reads "GEORGIA JUSTICE PROJECT" in a serif font, with horizontal lines separating the words. The sign is mounted on a grey wall. In the background, a glass display case contains various artifacts, including a bust and several masks. The lighting is soft and focused on the sign and the display case.

GEORGIA JUSTICE PROJECT

THANK YOU.

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 @georgiajusticeproject
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