CRLA

RURAL REENTRY PROJECT PRO BONO PROSPECTUS

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CRLA presents the Rural Re-entry Project

The mission of CRLA is to fight for justice and individual rights alongside the most exploited communities of our society.

This is a five-county mass record clearing campaign,
including Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties.

CRLA's Rural Re-entry Project's purpose and vision is to stabilize rural communities by removing barriers to employment and housing by providing direct representation and legal education pertaining to criminal record clearing to under-represented, indigent individuals and families along the Central Coast of California who face disparities in the criminal justice system due to their race and/or economic status.

The California Policy Lab estimates nearly 1 in every 8 Californians with a criminal record is potentially eligible to obtain a full criminal record expungement; 81% of Californians with a criminal record are estimated to be eligible to have at least one prior arrest or conviction expunged.

Following America's failed War on Drugs and decades of overcriminalization, an estimated 70 million Americans now have some type of criminal record with 85% of convictions being for low-level misdemeanor offenses. But even very low-level conduct can trigger widespread employment disqualifications that can devastate one's chances of achieving economic stability and full participation in society.

By launching our mass record clearing campaign along the Central Coast, we are working to ensure that conviction and arrest records are no longer a life sentence to poverty, and past mistakes will no longer define our futures.

"By partnering with CRLA to assist individuals eligible for criminal record expungement, our law firm demonstrates its commitment to economic opportunity across diverse communities," – Pro Bono Attorney, Los Angeles.

"The vital expungement services we provided at the clinic not only facilitated reentry for individuals with a criminal arrest or conviction but also improved access to equal justice for all," – Pro Bono Attorney, Century City.

We invite you to join our campaign by volunteering at one of our clinic events or by directly representing one of our clients.

We have opportunities that include every step of the post-conviction petition process including:

1. The client's letter to the court
2. A written petition
3. In court advocacy

Client's letter to the court

As a volunteer, you have a unique opportunity to help a client tell their story to the court. This is the most persuasive piece of evidence for a judge when determining whether to grant a petition. It is the client's best chance to communicate directly to the judge and contextualize their criminal record. Time commitment: 1-2 hours per client. CRLA will provide samples, guidelines, and instructional presentations, if needed.

Written Petition

This is an opportunity to put your legal skills to use for the good of the community. This process involves a case history, statement of facts, a memorandum of points and authorities, and a conclusion. The petition is filed in court with exhibits including the client's letter to the court and supportive documents demonstrating the client's rehabilitation. Time commitment: 4-8 hours per client. CRLA will provide samples, guidelines, and instructional presentations, if needed.

In Court Representation

You can use your advocacy skills to represent the client. Drafting a written petition is not required to provide in court representation. Appearances by Zoom are available in Ventura, Santa Barbara, Monterey, and Santa Cruz Counties. Time commitment: 1-2 hours per client (including hearing preparation). CRLA will provide assistance as co-counsel.



"The best part of the clinic experience for me was getting to know the clients and their stories, and being able to help them tell their stories to the court."- law student, Santa Barbara