

Restoring Voting Rights After a Felony Conviction in Tennessee is Complicated: It Requires a Two-Part Process, Both Involving Multiple Steps

Part 1: Pardon or Court Petition



Receive a Pardon

Tennessee's pardon process for forgiving a conviction.*

Restore Full Citizenship Rights

Process for petitioning the court for restoring full rights of citizenship.**

1

STEP 1: Wait for Eligibility

5 years

Wait at least 5 years after sentence completion

1

STEP 1: Wait for Eligibility

Maximum sentence

Wait until the maximum sentence imposed by the court has expired

2

STEP 2: Prepare Application

- Show good citizenship & compelling reason for pardon
- Present 5 letters of support

2

STEP 2: Prepare Petition

- Obtain legal counsel
- Show that petitioner is eligible & merits restoration, using evidence & certified documents

3

STEP 3: Submit Application

Submit application to the Board of Probation & Parole who may:

- Hold a hearing & issue a non-binding recommendation
- Take no further action

Notice will be given to the appropriate district attorneys general, U.S. attorney, & judge before a hearing.

3

STEP 3: File Petition

File petition in the circuit court, which requires:

- Paying a filing fee
- Attaching evidence

30-day notice must be given to the appropriate district attorneys general & U.S. attorney before a hearing/decision.

4

STEP 4: Decision

If the governor receives a recommendation, he/she may:

- Grant the pardon, with or without conditions
- Never consider the board's recommendation

4

STEP 4: Decision

The circuit court may:

- Grant or deny the petition without a hearing
- Hold a hearing, then either grant or deny the petition



Once the applicant has either the granted pardon or court petition, then they may proceed to Part Two.



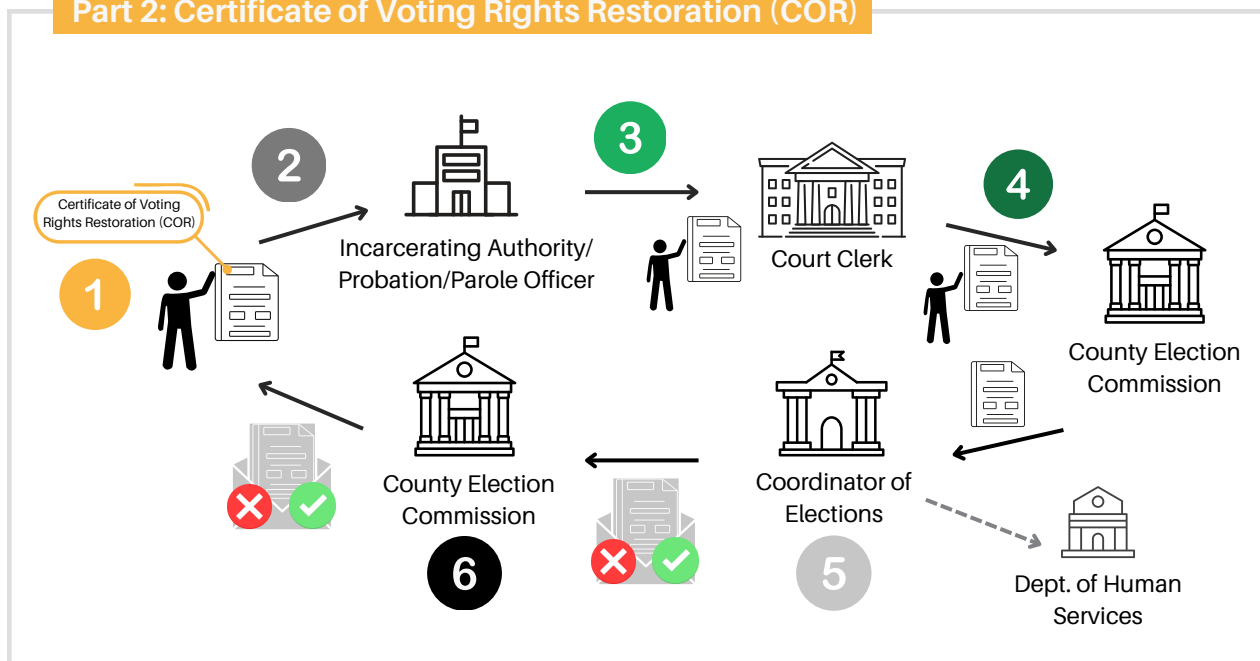
Part 2: Certificate of Voting Rights Restoration

* Pardon processes for federal (U.S. president) and out-of-state (other states' governors) convictions differ.

** Full rights of citizenship include voting, eligibility to hold public office and serve on a jury, and firearm rights. The process differs based on date of conviction. Convictions between July 1, 1986 and July 1, 1996 do not require court petitions.

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Part 2: Certificate of Voting Rights Restoration (COR)



- 1

STEP 1: Obtain a Certificate of Voting Rights Restoration (COR)

Obtain a COR form (one per conviction) from the incarcerating, pardoning, or supervising authority or the secretary of state's website, and:

 1. Fill in personal information (name, address, DOB, and SSN)
 2. Attach proof of pardon or court order (from Part One)
- 2

STEP 2: Take COR to Incarcerating Authority

Take the COR to an agent of the incarcerating, pardoning, or supervisory authority to confirm sentence completion and that no restitution or court costs are owed.
- 3

STEP 3: Take COR to County Court Clerk

Applicants *may* be directed to the county court clerk to confirm no restitution or court costs are owed.
- 4

STEP 4: Submit COR to County Election Commission

Submit the completed COR to the County Election Commission where the applicant resides.
- 5

STEP 5: Coordinator of Elections Verifies COR

The County Election Commission sends the COR to the coordinator of elections (COE) who confirms with the Department of Human Services that child support is current and the COR has otherwise been issued correctly.
- 6

STEP 6: Decision

The COE informs the County Election Commission if the COR is accepted or rejected, and the County Election Commission informs the applicant whether they are eligible to register to vote.