



MARYLAND
LEGAL AID

Advancing
Human Rights and
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For Immediate Release

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Maryland Legal Aid Develops Free Criminal Record Expungement Website

ExpungeltMD.org represents next generation of apps for processing expungements

BALTIMORE, Md., (September 12, 2016) – Maryland Legal Aid has developed a new app for expunging criminal records. ExpungeltMD.org is a free, user-friendly app that enables legal professionals to easily search Maryland criminal records and generate documents to file expungement petitions with the Maryland Courts on behalf of low-income citizens.

Changes in Maryland law in October 2015 resulted in a dramatic increase in the types of criminal cases that could be expunged. Consequently, the demand for assistance in expunging criminal records has soared. To address this need, Maryland Legal Aid joined with other legal services organizations to develop legal clinics with community partners throughout the state. As part of its *Lawyer in the Library* program, Maryland Legal Aid hosts monthly expungement clinics at the Enoch Pratt Free Library Pennsylvania Avenue branch. At a recent Maryland Legal Aid expungement clinic, more than 600 people came for record expungement help. “Because having a criminal record can present significant barriers to obtaining housing, employment, and even custody of children, the need for record expungements is enormous,” said Amy Petkovsek, Director of Advocacy for Training and Pro Bono at Maryland Legal Aid.

To meet the increasing demand for help with expungements, Maryland Legal Aid leveraged internal resources and talents to design, develop, and test the app. “We are fortunate to have professionals with diverse experience and knowledge who were able to make this new app possible,” said Gustava Taler, Maryland Legal Aid’s Chief Operating Officer. “Central to the app’s development is Program Manager & Senior Full Stack Developer, Russ Bloomquist, who created ExpungeltMD.org in just five weeks.”

ExpungeltMD.org includes:

- Editable fields to update client information (e.g., current phone number and address);
- Easy PDF generation of all documents needed to file expungements; and
- An expert system that “learns” what cases are expungable based on previous cases filed for expungement.

As part of the final stage of development for ExpungeltMD.org, Maryland Legal Aid will host an open house on September 15, from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM at its Baltimore City office (500 E. Lexington Street, Baltimore, MD, 21202) for legal services partners and organizations as well as the media to give demonstrations and answer questions about the app. “A critical part of the creative process involves getting feedback from legal professionals from outside of our organization, such as pro bono attorneys who volunteer at expungement clinics, as many of them will be using the app to search and file expungement petitions,” said Amy Petkovsek.

Maryland Legal Aid will showcase the new app and discuss the expansion of the *Lawyer in the Library* program during a presentation called, “*Leveraging Talents and Technology to Further your Mission*,” on September 29 as part of [Baltimore Innovation Week](http://BaltimoreInnovationWeek.org).

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About Maryland Legal Aid

Maryland Legal Aid is a private, non-profit law firm that provides free, civil legal services to low-income people in Baltimore City and Maryland's 23 counties from 12 offices and four District Court Self-Help Resource Centers. The firm handles cases involving a wide range of issues, including family, housing, government benefits, healthcare, education, employment, and consumer law. Maryland Legal Aid also represents children in CINA (Child in Need of Assistance) proceedings in 12 Maryland jurisdictions. Other vulnerable populations, such as homeowners facing foreclosure, migrant and seasonal farm workers, nursing home and assisted living residents, and veterans seeking benefits and assistance with related legal issues also receive representation through special projects. In addition, Maryland Legal Aid assists with expunging criminal records to remove barriers to obtaining housing, employment, and child custody.

For more information, visit www.mdlab.org and follow Maryland Legal Aid on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).