Collateral consequences of criminal convictions are legion and present significant and often insurmountable barriers to housing, public benefits, employment, and even certain civil rights (e.g., voting rights) for people with criminal histories well after sentence completion. Lessening the burden of post-punishment penalties has become a matter of significant bipartisan state-level legislative activity in recent years. In this report, Vera’s Center on Sentencing and Corrections provides (1) concise summaries of representative legislation, (2) an analysis of the limitations of current reforms, and (3) recommendations for making future efforts sustainable and comprehensive.

NEW APPROACHES
Since 2009, forty-one states and the District of Columbia enacted 155 pieces of legislation to mitigate collateral consequences for people with certain criminal convictions. In reviewing this legislative activity, Vera found that states have pursued one or a combination of seven broad approaches to reform. They created or expanded expungement and sealing remedies; issued certificates of recovery; allowed for offense downgrades; built relief into the criminal justice process; ameliorated employment-related collateral consequences; improved access to information; and addressed discrete collateral consequences.

LIMITATIONS OF REFORM
While efforts to remove or alleviate the impact of collateral consequences may indicate a broader shift in how the criminal justice system views law-breakers, vast numbers of post-punishment penalties remain in place and a closer look at recent legislation suggests that efforts do not go far enough. In particular:

- Reforms are narrow in scope;
- Relief mechanisms are not easily accessible;
- Waiting periods are long in many cases; and
- New rules restricting third-party use of criminal history are difficult to enforce.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Policymakers interested in promoting safer communities and better outcomes for justice-involved people and their families would do well to pursue sustainable and comprehensive reforms that:

- Promote the full restoration of rights and status as close as possible to sentence completion;
- Apply remedies to more people;
- Make remedies easier to access; and
- Establish clear standards for, and offer incentives to, third-party decision makers (e.g. landlords, employers, college admissions officers, etc.).

Read the complete report: www.vera.org/states-rethink-collateral-consequences
MAPPING RELIEF: COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES REFORM, 2009-2014

Expungement or Sealing Remedies
- Alabama
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- Washington
- Wyoming

Ameliorating Employment-Related Collateral Consequences
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas

Certificates of Recovery
- Arkansas
- Connecticut
- District of Columbia
- Georgia
- Illinois

Offense Downgrades
- California
- Colorado
- Idaho
- Indiana
- New York

Access to Information
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Louisiana
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New York
- Ohio
- South Carolina
- Texas
- Utah
- Vermont
- Washington
- Wyoming

Certificates of Recovery
- Arkansas
- Connecticut
- District of Columbia
- Georgia
- Illinois

Building Relief into the Criminal Justice Process
- Alabama
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- Washington
- Wyoming

Discrete Collateral Consequences
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- Vermont
- Washington
- West Virginia