



Clean Slate Replay 2025

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campaigns."**



A Message From Our CEO

In 2025, The Clean Slate Initiative (CSI) supported partners across the country and showed what it looks like when bipartisan policies deliver on their promises. 2025's replay includes:

18m In the 13 states, plus Washington D.C., that have passed Clean Slate policies, **more than 18 million adults are on a path to full or partial automated record sealing.**

1.74m **Illinois became the 13th state**, plus Washington D.C., to pass Clean Slate legislation, putting 1.74 million Illinoisans on a path to full or partial record sealing.

340 We hosted 340 members of the Clean Slate community for our 2025 Convening in Chicago, IL. Just before the event, we hosted a **Lived Experience Leadership Summit** that brought together **150 directly impacted leaders** and invested in the people who are closest to this work.

44 CSI **funded 44 state partners to pass and implement Clean Slate policies** across the country.

8 Our Research & Data team **supported the release of 8 Clean Slate research publications** to inform policy design and implementation and strengthen the evidence behind Clean Slate.

5 2025 was a milestone year for CSI: **We celebrated five years** of learning, growth, coalition-building, and impact. We met the moment with a rooftop reception during our 2025 Convening in Chicago, IL.

1 We finished one **multi-year narrative research project that will lay the foundation for our "Second Chance Narrative Campaign,"** an effort meant to grow support for Clean Slate through shared values, understanding, and shifted perspectives.

These wins didn't happen by accident. They reflect **years of investment in people with lived experience, diverse coalitions, research, and state and federal campaigns.** This report is a snapshot of a pivotal year. It's also a reminder that progress is collective. **Every record sealed, every system improved, and every second chance delivered happened because of partners, advocates, funders, and leaders who believe in the importance of our work.**

Thank you for believing in us.

Sheena Meade
CEO, The Clean Slate Initiative

“Clean Slate is about giving a second chance to the one in three Americans with criminal records, many of which are low-level, so they can work, support their families, and contribute to their communities. JPMorganChase is proud to work with CSI on Second Chance initiatives that expand opportunity, strengthen our workforce, and grow our economy.”

Nan Gibson, Executive Director,
JPMorganChase PolicyCenter



“CSI is a trusted partner in our work to connect business leaders who want smart, scalable policy. They support bridging the gap between justice reform and economic competitiveness, and help show how Clean Slate policies benefit employers.”

Maha Jeweid, CEO, Responsible
Business Initiative for Justice (RBIJ)



Our Mission. Our Model. Our Impact.

Our Mission

The Clean Slate Initiative passes and implements laws that automatically seal eligible records for people who have completed their sentence and remained crime-free, and expands who is eligible for sealing.

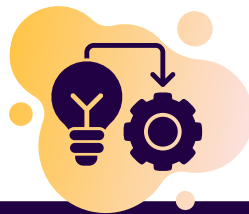
Our Vision

People will no longer be defined by their records and will have the opportunity to contribute to their community, have a fair opportunity to work, get an education, and achieve their full potential.

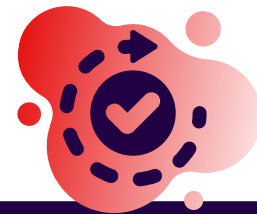
Our Model



ADVOCATE
for Clean Slate Legislation

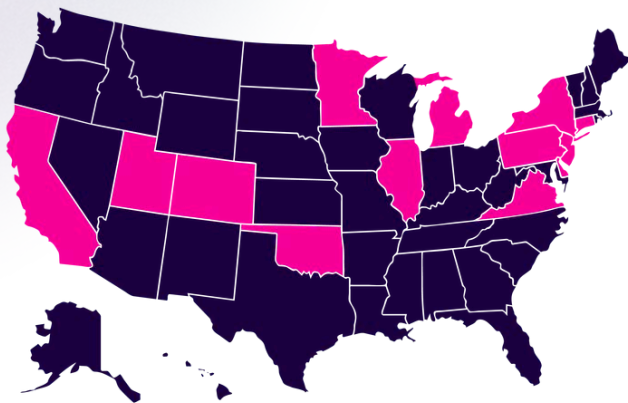


IMPLEMENT
Clean Slate Legislation



**REDEFINE
THE NARRATIVE**
Around People with Records

Our Impact



13+ STATES
have passed Clean Slate laws that meet
CSI's policy minimums

18 MILLION+
people in America are eligible for full or partial
record sealing across 13 states, and
Washington, D.C., that have passed legislation
that meets CSI's policy minimums

2025 at a Glance

Illinois Crossed the Finish Line in the Race to Become the 13th Clean Slate State

In October, Illinois passed the Clean Slate Act (HB 1836), becoming the 13th state to pass an automated record sealing law and marking a major milestone for the national Clean Slate effort. Now 1.74 million people across Illinois are on a path to full or partial record sealing.

Partners in Illinois fought for years to make Clean Slate possible: Live Free Illinois, the Illinois Coalition to End Permanent Punishments, the Workers Center for Racial Justice, Impact for Equity, Code for America, and others.

The leadership of **State Representative Jehan Gordon-Booth and State Senator Elgie Sims** helped turn sustained advocacy into lasting change. Governor Pritzker signed the bill into law in early 2026.



“Passing Clean Slate in Illinois took years of advocacy, strategy, and collaboration — and CSI was there every step of the way. Their support helped turn a bold idea into a victory that will change millions of lives.”

Marlon Chamberlain, Founding Executive Director, IL Coalition to End Permanent Punishments

Policy Progress From State Capitols to Congress

BIPARTISAN SUPPORT SHOWED UP IN FORCE

In April, members of Congress, advocates, and directly impacted leaders — from across the political spectrum — gathered on Capitol Hill to mark the reintroduction of the Clean Slate Act and Fresh Start Act. These bills would help people move beyond old arrest and conviction records and access real opportunity. We heard powerful remarks from federal Clean Slate and Fresh Start champions: Senator Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE) and Reps. Laurel Lee (R-FL), Lucy McBath (D-GA), and Sydney Kamlager-Dove (D-CA).



CLEAN SLATE = WORKFORCE POLICY

At the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference, CSI hosted a policy panel that spotlighted Clean Slate as a workforce and economic solution. The panel opened with Sheena Meade, and had a guest appearance from Rep. Lucy McBath (D-GA). That evening, partners and allies came together to celebrate progress and honor Rep. McBath's leadership on second chances, with powerful remarks from Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth (D-IL) during the reception.



MARYLAND CLEARED A PATH FORWARD

SB 432, the Expungement Reform Act of 2025, removed restrictive eligibility barriers tied to probation, which overturned limits reinforced by the state's Abhishek case. Signed by Governor Moore, the law expands opportunity for families and moves Maryland closer to Clean Slate.

MOMENTUM BUILT IN HAWAII

Hawai'i took another step toward streamlining the state's record-expungement process by passing HB 132, a bill that expands access to state-initiated expungement. The Clean Slate Task Force also began developing recommendations for broader state-initiated record-expungement laws, recognizing the power second chances can bring to Hawai'i.

Shifting the Narrative

Narrative change isn't optional. It's essential.

In 2025, CSI completed a two-year narrative research project with Goodwin Simon Strategic Research, using their Heartwired approach. The research confirmed a critical insight: people engage through values, emotion, and trust before policy details or data.

That learning reshaped how we talk about Clean Slate — shifting from explaining laws to building human understanding. In 2026, we'll begin rolling out our narrative research with the [Second Chance Narrative Campaign](#).

Messengers like Richard and Lucinda are research-backed voices proven to move hearts, not just minds. Their lived experience and credibility help translate Clean Slate from a policy concept into something people can feel, understand, and support.

“I’ve been able to have two of my records sealed by Clean Slate in the last year. Recently, I applied for an apartment... I was able to pass the background check and not have to answer questions or try to prove that I’m worth renting to.”

— Richard, PA



"I finally had to sit back, not blame everybody else, not blame the system, not blame my parents, not blame the school, not blame the fact that we were in poverty. I had to really take a look at myself and say, this is a decision you made. What's the comeback gonna look like? You know, how do you remove this number and become your name?"

— Lucinda, NY

Implementation: Where Clean Slate Becomes Real

Passing a Clean slate law is only the beginning. Implementation is what turns policy into potential.

In 2025, CSI expanded our implementation team, deepened partnerships in implementation states, and worked alongside stakeholders to make sure Clean Slate laws deliver what their promise: real opportunities.

WHAT MAKES CLEAN SLATE WORK

- **Automated Sealing:** Eligible records are sealed through automated, government-initiated processes.
- **Barrier Removal:** Sealed records no longer appear on background checks, opening opportunities to access jobs, housing and education.
- **Notification & Awareness:** People know their records are sealed and what that means for their lives.

IMPLEMENTATION HIGHLIGHTS




CONNECTICUT
142,000+
people who have benefited from Clean Slate.

After years of advocacy and collaboration led by Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut (CONNECT), Connecticut launched a comprehensive automated record sealing process. Hundreds of thousands now have a clearer path forward because the state is showing what's possible when government, advocates, and communities work together.

"CSI's partnership was critical to making Connecticut's Clean Slate law work in practice. Their implementation expertise and collaborative approach helped ensure the law was executed thoughtfully, effectively, and at scale."

— **Commissioner Ronnell Higgins, Connecticut**
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP)



MINNESOTA
700,000 (approx.)
now eligible for full or partial automated record sealing

Clean Slate went into effect on January 1, 2025, putting hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans on a path to full record sealing. Organizations like Until We Are All Free and T.O.N.E. U.P. Inc. are committed to ensuring Minnesotans understand the benefits of the Clean Slate law and have access to the opportunities it creates.



UTAH
500,000 (approx.)
records sealed

When it comes to making sure Clean Slate delivers on its promise, Clean Slate Utah partners don't quit. Advocates continue to help as many people as possible through expungement events, sharing resources and information, and collaborating with CSI and stakeholders to ensure implementation moves forward. By the end of 2025, Utah's courts and repository had sealed approximately 500,000 records through the Clean Slate process.



Scan to learn more about Clean Slate implementation.

Building Power Together

Community Coming Together

CSI'S 2025 CONVENING

350 members of the Clean Slate community came together in a space built by and for them: **the only national platform for strategic learning, storytelling, and action on Clean Slate.**

Over two days in Chicago, IL, attendees gathered across panel sessions, breakouts, workshops, and storytelling activations. This wasn't just a gathering. It was **a launchpad for the next chapter of Clean Slate and a reminder of what change looks like when directly impacted people lead the way.**



59% of attendees were directly impacted



Programming prioritized power-building and peer learning.



Designed to scale leadership across campaigns and communities.

CELEBRATING 5 YEARS OF CSI WITH A ROOFTOP RECEPTION

The Convening doubled as a moment to reflect on CSI's five-year milestone. The 5-year anniversary reception was a vibrant, joy-filled celebration featuring special remarks from Nan Gibson, JPMorganChase PolicyCenter, and Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth (IL).

Leadership Centered

CSI'S 2025 LIVED EXPERIENCE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Powered by **THE JUST TRUST**

Anchored by the theme "Investing in Your Own Leadership," **the full-day summit focused on skill-building, collective care, and community-powered strategy** — recognizing that sustainable change is led by people who are supported, resourced, and seen.



150

directly impacted leaders participated.



\$60,000+

invested in travel scholarships (63 recipients) to attend.



85+

professional headshots by Lakesha Miner Photography, provided at no cost to attendees.

"I've never been in a space where so many people shared my experience, not just in the struggle, but in the leadership. I felt seen, valued, and reminded that I belong here."

Scan to see our
Convening Impact Report



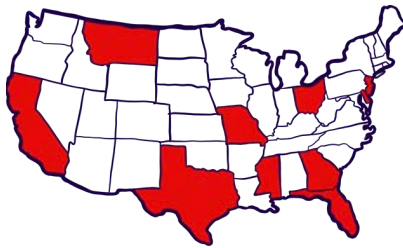
Nationwide Action

CLEAN SLATE WEEK OF ACTION

Constituents met directly with Members of Congress and district staff in 10 different states to urge support for the Clean Slate Act (S.1580 & H.R. 3114) and the Fresh Start Act (S. 3049 & H.R. 3111). They shared firsthand experiences and made clear what's at stake when opportunity is delayed.

20
Meetings

10
States



Listening & Responding

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR PARTNERS

In 2025, CSI launched a formalized Technical Assistance program that was directly shaped by what we heard through the Manzil Report, a partner survey assessing what's working and where deeper support is needed. **The message was clear: partners wanted more practical, campaign-ready tools. So we built them.**

The Technical Assistance program delivers training and education through in-person sessions and targeted webinars designed to strengthen Clean Slate campaigns nationwide. One example: Target Analysis Training, a hands-on session that taught attendees how to identify key decision-makers and uncover what moves them to action.

"Today I met with Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith to talk about Clean Slate in my community – how record sealing changes lives for people like me."

Pauline, Mississippi | Met with the Offices of Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS) and Representative Bennie Thompson (D-MS)]



"It's such an honor to advocate for the culture and the people who all have state and federal felonies on their records!"

Nyene, New Jersey | Met with the Offices of Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ) and Senator Andy Kim (D-NJ)

Strategy Informed by Research

Clean Slate isn't guesswork and CSI's approach isn't accidental. Every policy we advance is shaped by research that asks hard questions about equity, access, and real-world impact.

Research led or funded by CSI in 2025 shows that systems relying on discretion, paperwork, or individual navigation consistently leave people behind — especially those facing racial, economic, or technological barriers. Automated, state-initiated processes dramatically expand access, while still allowing room for individualized, equitable review in more complex cases. Independent researchers studying Clean Slate laws have found that well-designed automation:

- ➔ Expands access to employment, housing, and education;
- ➔ Does not reduce public safety;
- ➔ Strengthens economic stability; and
- ➔ Removes barriers for people with records —including people who were never convicted in the first place.

Just as important, CSI-funded research centers the lived realities of people with records — documenting how burdensome petition-based systems remain, even with legal help, and how old records ripple through families and entire communities. Additionally, we fund research teams that include people with lived experience.



Building a Research-Backed Notification Strategy

Record sealing only reaches its full potential if people know they've received it.

Research examining state-initiated record sealing shows a critical gap: while millions may be eligible for Clean Slate, many people don't know when – or if – their record has been sealed. Surveys of people with records in states like Pennsylvania, Utah, and Michigan reveal that awareness consistently lags behind eligibility.

CSI is using these findings to develop a notification strategy grounded in evidence so record sealing doesn't just happen quietly in a database, but translates into real-world confidence, access, and opportunity.

Creating Stronger, Evidence-Based Clean Slate Policies

This year, we translated everything we've learned about effective "Clean Slate" policies into our first official Policy Manual – a powerful resource for groups working with us to pass new Clean Slate laws, guiding them to design bills that are strong, fair, and based on evidence.

It clearly explains best practices for critical details like determining appropriate eligibility and using research-backed waiting periods. Just as importantly, it helps groups understand and incorporate how these policies will actually work after they are passed, ensuring they are efficient and easy to implement.

This manual will help coalitions create high-quality, sustainable policies that deliver on the promise of Clean Slate.

Scan to see our full library of research.



From Our Partners



"CSI brings a practical, data-driven approach to Clean Slate that resonates across the political spectrum. Their focus on efficiency, accountability, fairness, and lasting change makes Clean Slate a commonsense solution that resonates with our audiences."

Jillian Snider, Resident Senior Fellow, Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties, R Street

"Democracy thrives when people are given the freedom and support to engage fully in their communities. CSI's unique ability to unite leaders across the ideological spectrum and drive meaningful policy change nationwide makes them an essential partner in expanding opportunity and strengthening communities across the country."

Akua Amaning, Director of Public Safety, Center for American Progress



"The two surest ways to reduce recidivism are employment and supporting those with a record who are working to reform their lives. Government systems that create permanent barriers to work and self-sufficiency do not promote public safety. CSI's work to advance Clean Slate at the federal level reflects a principled commitment to expanding opportunity in a way that aligns with individual responsibility and economic freedom."

Patrick Purtill, Executive Vice President, Unify.US

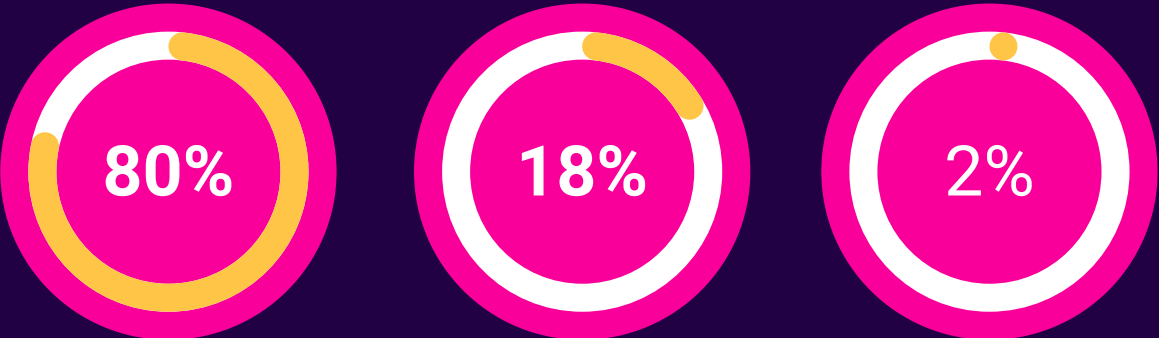


Financial Overview

In 2025, CSI directed the majority of resources toward advancing record sealing nationwide.

How We Invested Overall

Functional expenses breakdown

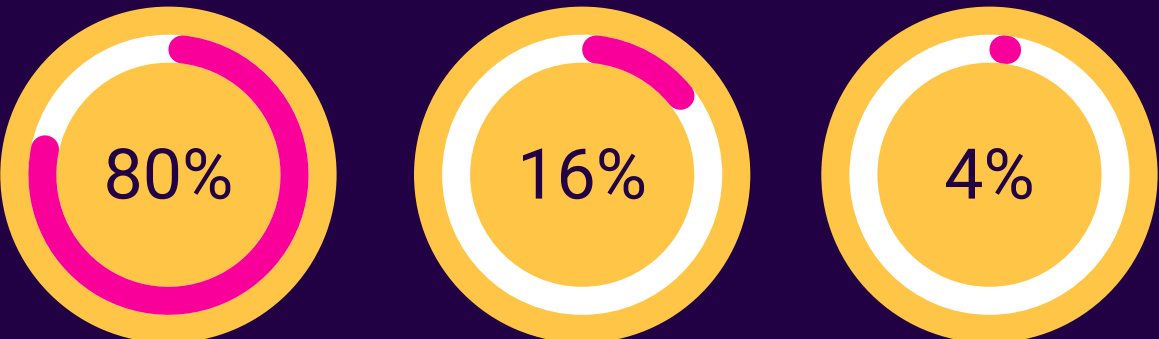


PROGRAMMATIC WORK ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The majority of CSI's expenditures directly supported policy advancement, implementation, and research.

How We Deployed Grant Funding

31% of our total budget (\$5.5 million) was awarded as grants



STATE & NATIONAL PARTNERS RESEARCH FEDERAL PARTNERS

Together, these investments power policy change, generate proof of impact, and sustain national momentum.

Unaudited financial information

Thank you

for being in this
work with us.



cleanslateinitiative.org

