Ohio Governor’s Expedited Pardon Project: Program Update

ohioexpeditedpardon.org

Reflects data as of January 20, 2021.

The project is a collaboration between Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, Drug Enforcement and Policy Center at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, the Reentry Clinic at The Akron University College of Law, and the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

I. OVERVIEW

As of January 20, 2021, 78 individuals have submitted applications to the expedited pardon project. Of the 78, the Project Team formally accepted 35 clients. Another 16 are under review, 5 have been asked to reapply after meeting certain conditions. The remaining 22 applicants did not meet the existing requirements. Applicants not accepted into the program were informed that they can still seek a pardon via the standard pardon procedure.

Of the 35 clients that were formally accepted, 9 have received pardons. The other 26 clients accepted into the program are in various stages of completing their pardon application.

II. APPLICANTS AND ACCEPTED CLIENTS

- The Project Team has participated in more than 10 information sessions with supporting organizations across the state.
- More than 7,900 people have visited the program’s website.
- Program training videos on Facebook received over seven hundred views.
- The program has received applications from 25 of Ohio’s counties.
  - Ashland – 1
  - Ashtabula – 1
  - Butler – 1
  - Clark – 2
  - Clermont – 1
  - Cuyahoga – 20
  - Erie – 1
  - Fairfield – 1
  - Franklin – 6
  - Hamilton – 4
  - Hardin – 1
  - Jefferson – 1
  - Lake – 1
  - Licking – 1
  - Lorain – 2
  - Madison – 1
  - Mahoning – 1
  - Medina – 1
• Montgomery – 5
• Portage – 1
• Ross – 2
• Scioto – 1
• Stark – 1
• Summit – 12
• Wayne – 1

The top 3 reasons applicants cited for seeking a pardon were: 1) employment and career opportunities, 2) removal of stigma and service barriers, and 3) educational and political aspirations.

• "I would like to be granted a pardon so that I will be free of the stigma attached with a felony conviction. Receiving a pardon would increase my career and employment opportunities." – accepted client
• "I am hopeful that I will be able to return to a university and complete a PhD in neuropsychology, doing research to help identify how trauma impacts behavior. I want to have positive impact on the world around me and I do not want my record to get in the way of that." – accepted client

• Accepted clients to this program had between 1 and 8 convictions on their record. Eight accepted clients had 1 conviction. Fifteen clients had 2 convictions. Five clients had 3 or 4 convictions. And another 6 clients had 5 or more convictions.
• 47 applicants were male, and 21 of them were accepted into the program as clients; 27 applicants were female, and 14 of them were accepted into the program as clients.*
• 31 applicants were white and 16 were accepted into the program as clients. 40 applicants were Black and 12 were accepted into the program as clients. 2 applicants were Hispanic and 1 was accepted into the program as a client.*
• 40 applicants had a family income of between $0-$50,000 and 12 of those applicants were accepted into the program as clients. 22 applicants had a family income of between $50-$100,000 and 12 of those applicants were accepted into the program as clients. 11 applicants had a family income of $100,000 or more and 9 of those applicants were accepted into the program as clients.*

*Please note: detailed demographic information was not provided by all applicants. Additionally, the data for accepted clients will change as cases currently under review are accepted into the project.

III. 2020 EXPEDITED PARDON TIMELINE

Accepted applicants that were granted pardons received them in about half or less time than the traditional pardon process. The typical expedited pardon issued in 2020 took between 6 and 12 months from initial application submission through final decision. This compares to the traditional pardon application window which can be anywhere from 18-36 months for processing.

Initial Application Review

After receiving the application, the university Project Team reviews it for initial eligibility determination and contacts the clients to begin verification of their record.

Initial Application Work-Up

In this stage, the university Project Team works directly with accepted clients to verify, assemble, and forward application materials to the Parole Board for initial investigation.
**Full Application Work-Up**

After initial application is submitted to the Parole Board, the Project Team works with clients to develop a full pardon application.

This step involves locating and accessing police and court records and can often be difficult due to COVID-19 restrictions on in-person visits.

**Parole Board Hearing and Notice Period**

Once a full pardon application is completed, it is sent to the Parole Board for processing. The Parole Board will then schedule a hearing.

This step includes a mandatory 60-day notice period during which the Parole Board notifies the court and victims about the case and gives them the opportunity to respond.

**Parole Board Recommendation**

After a Parole Board hearing, the board has 30 business days to submit their pardon recommendation to the Governor.

**Governor’s Decision**

Once the Parole Board issues their recommendation, the Governor makes a decision on whether to grant a pardon.