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Your Responsibility When Using the Information Provided Below:

When putting this material together, we did our best to give you useful and accurate information because we know that incarcerated people often have trouble getting legal information and we cannot give specific advice to everyone who asks for it. The laws change often and can be looked at in different ways. We do not always have the resources to make changes to this material every time the law changes. If you use this information, it is your responsibility to make sure that the law has not changed and still applies to your situation. Most of the materials you need should be available in the prison law library.

## **SEEKING ASSISTANCE FROM INNOCENCE PROJECTS**

(revised November 2019)

Innocence Projects investigate cases and represent people who believe they are factually innocent of the crimes for which they were convicted. These projects often are operated as law school clinical programs, in which students work with attorneys. These projects have limited resources; people should have realistic expectations about case acceptance and time lags. Also, because of the high demand, these offices generally will not take phone calls.

Please note: Anyone who wants to challenge their conviction or sentence should pursue a direct appeal and any other available action (such as a habeas corpus petition) in a timely manner, regardless of whether their case might be eligible for assistance from an Innocence Project.

There are three innocence projects in California, which cover cases from different parts of the state. If you are factually innocent of the crime for which you were convicted, and you want to challenge your conviction, you should write to the innocence project that covers the area where you were convicted and sentenced:

<b>Northern California Innocence Project (NCIP)</b> Santa Clara University School of Law 500 El Camino Real Santa Clara, CA 95053 (408) 554-1945 www.ncip.org	NCIP considers cases where the person is actually innocent, there is a significant chance that substantial new evidence (such as DNA or witness testimony) may support a claim of innocence, and the person was convicted of a serious felony in one of the 48 Northern and Central California counties from Monterey, Kings, Tulare and Inyo County up to the Oregon border. To request assistance, you must submit a questionnaire, which is available in Spanish or English, by writing to NCIP or from the NCIP website.
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<b>California Innocence Project (CIP)</b> California Western School of Law 225 Cedar Street San Diego, CA 92101 <a href="http://www.californiainnocenceproject.org">www.californiainnocenceproject.org</a>	The CIP provides legal assistance to people convicted in state courts in Southern California (Counties of Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura). They take only cases in which there is new, strong evidence of innocence. The CIP reviews DNA cases, as well as cases that may involve witness recantations, changes in science, government misconduct, or ineffective assistance of counsel. To submit a case for consideration, you must complete a questionnaire (available in Spanish and English) and send supporting documents. You can obtain the form and instructions by writing to CIP or on the CIP website.
<b>Project for the Innocent</b> Loyola Law School 919 Albany Street Los Angeles, CA 90015 <a href="http://www.lls.edu/academics/experientiallearning/clinics/projectfortheinnocent/">www.lls.edu/academics/experientiallearning/clinics/projectfortheinnocent/</a>	The Project accepts cases for people who claim they are innocent or wrongfully convicted, and who (1) are currently in a California state prison, (2) were convicted in Central or Southern California, (3) have exhausted all appeals, (4) are indigent, and (5) are not currently represented by an attorney. To request assistance, you should submit a screening questionnaire, which is available by writing to the Project or on the Project's website.

In addition, there are innocence projects that will consider cases nationwide. If a California innocence project is unable to assist you, you might contact one of the following organizations:

<b>Centurion, Inc.</b> Attn: Case Development Manager 1000 Herrontown Road Princeton, NJ 08540 <a href="http://www.centurion.org">www.centurion.org</a>	Centurion, Inc. is an advocacy and investigative organization that considers cases of factual innocence primarily in murder and rape cases carrying life or death sentences, but other cases of factual innocence may be considered. They do not take on accidental death, self-defense cases, or cases where the person had any involvement whatsoever in the crime. You may contact them by sending a letter (four pages or less) outlining the facts of your case. Your summary should include the following points: What you were convicted of? Give a brief description of the crime. Why were you arrested and taken to trial? What evidence was used to convict you? What evidence is there that points toward your innocence? Do <i>not</i> send any other materials.
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<p><b>The Innocence Project</b> Intake Department 40 Worth Street, Suite 701 New York, NY 10013 www.innocenceproject.org</p>	<p>The Innocence Project is a national litigation and public policy organization dedicated to exonerating wrongfully convicted people through DNA testing and reforming the criminal justice system to prevent future injustice. It accepts only cases in which the direct appeal is over, in which DNA testing can prove innocence. An intake screening form is available by writing to the Project or on the Project's website. <u>However, the website states that they currently are not accepting new cases from California.</u></p>
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