

# State Clemency Resources

## Which form(s) of clemency does the state offer?

- Restoration of citizenship (right to vote and hold public office)
- Special restoration of citizenship (firearm rights)
- Pardons
- Commutations of life sentences

## Decisionmaker

The governor makes all decisions pertaining to restoration of citizenship rights. All other applications for executive clemency are first considered by the Iowa Board of Parole and then sent to the governor for final review.

### Resources:

[bop.iowa.gov/executive-clemency-commutation](http://bop.iowa.gov/executive-clemency-commutation)

## Constitutional and statutory authority

- **Constitutional Authority:**  
Iowa Const. Art. IV § 16
- **Statutory Authority:**  
Iowa Code Title XVI § 914.4

## Eligibility Criteria

- (1) The Governor has the authority to grant a pardon for any conviction in an Iowa court, except treason and cases of impeachment.
  - (2) An individual convicted in Iowa State Court, Federal Court, and a court outside of Iowa may apply to have their right to vote and hold public office restored.
  - (3) The Governor has the authority to restore firearm rights for most non-serious convictions in Iowa courts. Under Iowa law, a person convicted of any of the following offenses cannot have his or her firearm rights restored: (1) A felony violation of chapter 124 (Controlled Substances) that involves a firearm; (2) A felony violation of chapter 724 (Weapons); or (3) A forcible felony, which includes: Felony child endangerment; Most felony assaults; Murder; Most felony sexual abuse offenses; Kidnapping; Robbery; Human trafficking; First-degree arson; or First-degree burglary.
  - (4) It is the general policy of the Governor to require at least ten years to pass from the date a person discharges their sentence before granting a pardon, and at least five years to pass from the date a person discharges their sentence before restoring a person's firearm rights.
  - (5) Pursuant to Iowa law, a person who has been sentenced to life imprisonment may, no more frequently than once every ten years, make an application to the Governor requesting that the person's sentence be commuted to a term of years.
- **Voting Rights Restoration:** Iowa's Constitution currently states that anyone convicted of a felony permanently loses the right to vote or hold public office unless the Governor restores those rights. Governor Reynolds has proposed an amendment to the constitution to fix this issue permanently. But because the process to ratify an amendment will likely take several additional years, the Governor has signed Executive Order 7, restoring the right to vote to nearly all Iowans who have been convicted of a felony and have successfully completed their sentences. Executive Order 7 does not restore voting rights for individuals convicted of a violation of chapter 707 of the Iowa Code (Homicide Related Crimes).

- **Firearm Rights Restoration:** A special restoration of citizenship restores the firearm rights of a person who has been convicted of a non-forcible felony in Iowa or other offenses listed in Iowa Code section 914.7. An individual convicted of a state crime within the State of Iowa may apply five years after they discharge their sentence.
- **Pardon:** An individual convicted of a State crime within the State of Iowa may apply for a pardon ten years after they discharge their sentence.
- **Commutation of Sentence:** Individuals with life sentences may only apply for a commutation once every ten years.

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## Application Process

- Applications for pardons, commutations, restoration of citizenship, and special restoration of citizenship should be filled out and submitted to the appropriate office along with all requested documentation and fees. Each form contains instructions on what documentation is required and where the form should be sent upon completion.

### APPLICATION LINKS

- [governor.iowa.gov/services/pardons-commutations](https://governor.iowa.gov/services/pardons-commutations)
- [governor.iowa.gov/services/voting-rights-restoration](https://governor.iowa.gov/services/voting-rights-restoration)