Entering expungements on the CSP Matrix

Some individuals have their cases ordered sealed or destroyed as a result of expungements, pardons, exonerations, or because they were juveniles when the case occurred. Your court's data governance policy should address how to handle these cases.

For reporting to the **Court Statistics Project**, the following is considered best practice:

- Report any expunged case as a filed case even if it was later expunged. Whether expunged or not, these cases were processed through the courts and have court activity associated with them. Since CSP looks at caseloads in the aggregate, it is more accurate to include the expunged cases and aggregate reports do not reveal any defendant information.
- If expungements are automatic (all misdemeanor marijuana cases, for example, or all juvenile records after a certain period of time), they would not count as reopened cases as they do not require any action by a judicial officer.
- If expungements require the defendant to file a petition or other pleading with the court, it counts as a reopened case of the same case type as the original case. The disposition of that reopened case should also be reported.

Hard vs. soft delete

If the court's data governance policy requires that an expunged case be completely deleted from the case management system (a "hard" delete), it will typically not be reportable as the data are not available. If the court's data governance policy treats expunged cases as "soft" deletes, personally identifiable information (PII) is removed from the record, but there is still a record that the case occurred.

Questions to consider for your data governance policy

- Does expungement require a complete purge (hard deletion) or does it mean removing or masking PII (soft deletion)?
- If it means a hard deletion in the case management system, is a de-identified record maintained in a data warehouse?
- Do records refer to data elements, documents, or both?

Useful resources:

- [Data governance policy guide](#)
- [JTC Resource Bulletin: Developing an Electronic Records Preservation and Disposition Plan](#)