APPENDIX C

Prepare on Paper, Build Your Profile, and File Your Petition

Use these pages to take the next step with a notebook and access to mail. You can begin documenting your progress while you decide whether to apply.

Choose the form that fits what you're asking for

If you're asking to reduce a federal sentence

Look for the Petition for Commutation of Sentence. See Lesson 7 (pages 27–30) and Daniel Rowan's sample in Appendix A (pages 42–66).

If you're asking for presidential forgiveness for a federal offense

Start with the Application for Pardon After Completion of Sentence. If you're considering an early pardon request, confirm which instructions apply. See Lesson 6 (pages 23–26) and Elias Ward's sample in Appendix B (pages 67–100).

For a state conviction, start with that state's clemency process. Military cases can have separate filing instructions. Use the directions that apply to your case.

Get a current paper copy

You could ask whether your facility's library or education staff can get the form and instructions, or ask someone who can print them and mail them to you. You can also write to the Office of the Pardon Attorney and ask for a paper copy. Use the form's name and include your mailing address for a reply.

Sample request for a paper form

Dear Office of the Pardon Attorney,
Please send me a paper copy of the current Petition for Commutation of Sentence and its instructions. My mailing address is at the bottom of this letter. Thank you.
[Your name and mailing address]

Use the Office of the Pardon Attorney's address on page 102. Guidance from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of the Pardon Attorney, "Apply for Clemency" and "Frequently Asked Questions."

Assemble, mail, and follow up

Before you mail

Work through the current form one section at a time. Explain what you're asking for, answer in your own words, and check case details against your records. If you include a journal entry or a letter, identify the question it helps answer.

Commutation

Review the petition's instructions and sign the certification. If a Bureau of Prisons official is submitting it for you, review with that official which materials the form asks them to include. See page 30.

Pardon after completion of sentence

Review the form's checklist, sign the certification and authorization as directed, and mark exactly three signed letters as primary references. The three writers must be unrelated to you by blood or marriage and willing to speak with an investigator. See pages 25–26.

When you mail

Follow the mailing instructions on the current form. Record the date and keep a copy of what you sent so you can refer to it if the office asks a question. The Office of the Pardon Attorney lists this address for federal clemency correspondence.

Clemency mailing address

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of the Pardon Attorney
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

While your petition is pending

When you receive a confirmation, record the case number. If your mailing address changes or you have a relevant update, you can write to the office and include your clemency case number if available. Use the log example on page 40 to track what you sent and the next action you want to take. The Department of Justice reviews the petition and makes a recommendation. The President decides whether to grant clemency.

Sources include the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of the Pardon Attorney, "Contact the Office," "How Clemency Works," and the pardon and commutation forms.

Turn one experience into a record

Daniel Rowan's fictional journal on page 58 shows how an ordinary workday can give someone a concrete example of taking responsibility. Here's how one experience can serve three purposes.

1. Write about what happened

Daniel's April 14, 2026, journal describes entering an inventory count before checking the last shelf. He told his supervisor, recounted the items, and corrected the entry. He planned to check each storage area before signing the next count and review his work at the end of the week.

2. Build your free Prison Professors profile

Daniel could use that dated journal entry to show how he handled the error, then add a follow-up about what happened when he tried the new routine. A biography can explain the kind of work he hopes to do. A book report or release plan can show how he's preparing for those responsibilities.

3. Draw on that record when you prepare your petition

If Daniel chooses to use this example, he can explain the experience in his answer about rehabilitation and submit the relevant journal excerpt with the petition. If a supervisor observed the work, a statement from that person could add a firsthand account. Daniel would use his application log to record what he sent.

A short excerpt Daniel could use

"I entered a count before checking the last shelf. I reported the error, recounted the items, and corrected the entry. In my April 14 journal, I described how I planned to check each storage area before signing the next count."

Choose one experience of your own

Think of a time you learned a skill, corrected a mistake, or followed through on a responsibility. Write the date, the action you took, and what happened. Pick a date to return to the entry. Use that review to describe what you've done since and what you'll try next.

Adapted from Appendix A, "Journal excerpt," page 58. See Lessons 8–10 (pages 31–41) for examples of connecting personal writing and supporting records.

Start your profile from prison

You can begin with one handwritten entry. What were you working toward? What did you do, and what did you learn? Use a question from the workbook or choose one that fits the decision you're facing today.

Choose a way to get help

By mail

Write to the Profiles team at the address below. Include your name and return mailing address. You can enclose a handwritten entry. Give it a date and a type, such as Journal Entry, Biography, Book Report, or Release Plan.

Through your facility's email system, if you have access

Write to Interns@PrisonProfessors.org with "Profile" as the subject. Include your name and ask for help getting started.

Through someone you trust

Ask a family member or friend to visit PrisonProfessors.org/profiles and help open or claim your profile. You can send that person entries to add for you.

A sample letter you can adapt

Dear Prison Professors Profiles Team,
My name is [your name]. I'd like help opening a free profile. I've enclosed a dated journal entry about something I learned. Please write back to the address below and let me know how I can get started.
Thank you,
[Your name and return mailing address]

Where to mail your letter and entry

Prison Professors / Profiles
1205 BMC Drive, Suite #706
Cedar Park, TX 78613

Profile options from Prison Professors, The Playbook, Lesson 29, "Start Your Profile."