APPLICANT INFORMATION SHEET

WHAT IS GEORGIA INNOCENCE PROJECT?

Georgia Innocence Project (GIP) is an independent nonprofit organization that provides free legal representation to people who have been convicted in Georgia of serious crimes they did not commit. Georgia Innocence Project corrects and prevents wrongful convictions by investigating and litigating innocence claims, raising awareness about wrongful convictions, and advocating for reform.

WHAT KINDS OF CASES DOES GEORGIA INNOCENCE PROJECT ACCEPT?

Georgia Innocence Project investigates post-conviction criminal cases where there is a compelling innocence claim. Though we receive hundreds of requests for help each year, we have limited resources and can only accept a very small number of cases. We have strict acceptance criteria, all of which must be met before we can accept a case:

- You were convicted of a crime in Georgia.
- You have completed your direct appeal.
- You do not have an attorney working on your case right now.
- You are currently incarcerated, or you are on the Georgia Sex Offender Registry.
- You must have a claim of actual innocence that can be proven through modern DNA testing or other newly available evidence.

We cannot accept your case if any of the following apply:

- You were convicted of a sex crime for a sexual encounter that was actually consensual.
- You were convicted of a sex crime that:
    - Involved an alleged victim that was under age 16;
    - You knew the alleged victim before the alleged crime occurred;
    - The State said that the alleged crime occurred on more than one occasion, and
    - There is no evidence that the alleged victim has changed their story after your trial or plea agreement.
- You feel you should have been convicted of a different crime or should have received a shorter sentence.

HOW DO I APPLY TO GEORGIA INNOCENCE PROJECT?

The person convicted of the crime must send us a letter in the mail, and ask for a questionnaire. At this time, Georgia Innocence Project cannot accept requests for help via email. For confidentiality reasons, we will not accept questionnaire requests from friends or family members. The letter should not include any details or facts of your case at this point. You should include your name, mailing address, and GDC number. When we receive your letter, we will send you a questionnaire to complete.

Due to our limited resources, we are only able to review and consider your responses in the questionnaire. We are not able to review or consider additional information or documents at the application stage. If we need additional information or documentation from you, we will ask you for the specific materials we need.

WHAT IS GEORGIA INNOCENCE PROJECT'S CONTACT INFORMATION?

104 Marietta Street NW, Suite 440 / Atlanta, GA 30303 / 404-373-4433

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WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I APPLY TO GEORGIA INNOCENCE PROJECT?

We read and respond to every written request for help that we receive. Our goal is to determine whether your case meets our acceptance criteria, and whether we can prove your innocence. Given our strict case acceptance criteria, we reject approximately 95% of the initial requests for help that we receive. We also reject cases at later stages of review if we determine that we cannot prove your innocence. Given the complexity of innocence claims, and our current caseload, even if we accept a case, it takes at least 4-5 years for us to thoroughly investigate and litigate an innocence claim. It often takes longer.

Application Stage – When you write to us for the first time, you are given a unique Georgia Innocence Project file number that stays with you permanently. We will either send you a questionnaire or explain why we are not able to move forward with your case. After reviewing your questionnaire, if you meet our basic acceptance criteria, we will send you an Application for Assistance.

After you receive and return the Application for Assistance, we will gather preliminary information and assess your case, which can take a year or longer to complete. At the end of the Application stage, we determine whether your case should advance to the Screening stage.

Screening Stage – During the Screening stage, we assess how we might prove your innocence. We conduct the Screening stage in two phases. First, we collect publicly available documents from prosecutors, police, crime labs, and courts. Then we review and summarize the documents to assess whether we can proceed. In the second phase, we may need to conduct our own preliminary investigation. This process generally takes at least 1.5 years. At the end of the Screening stage, we determine whether your case will advance to the Representation stage.

Representation Stage – During the Representation stage, we become your attorneys and represent you in relation to your innocence claim. We will conduct a thorough investigation. Our representation could include drafting and filing motions on your behalf, appearing in court, or working collaboratively with prosecutors to encourage them to re-examine your conviction. We may work with the media or government officials to advocate on your behalf. We may also educate the public about your case within the broader context of systemic criminal legal reform and innocence-related issues. This stage takes at least 2 years, often longer.

WHO CAN GEORGIA INNOCENCE PROJECT TALK TO ABOUT MY CASE?

We will always communicate with *you* about your case. We prefer to correspond with you in writing so that we have a record for your file, but we may also accept and/or make approved legal phone calls. We do not accept collect calls from prison, and it is our policy to not knowingly accept calls made from cell phones within prison.

We will give non-confidential status updates about your case to one person you name as your designated contact if: (1) your case is in the Representation stage and (2) you give us written permission to speak with that person. You can revoke or change your designated contact in writing at any time.