



*For Immediate Release*

## Harris County criminal misdemeanor courts to host final 2022 Fresh Start Resource Fair this Saturday in southeast Houston

*The family-friendly fair will offer several kids' activities, including a Halloween costume contest for 12 and under.*

Oct. 17, 2022 — A misdemeanor charge can haunt you.

Even if you're granted and successfully complete deferred adjudication and your case is dismissed, the charge stays on your record — a bright red flag for potential landlords and employers, college admissions officers, and state licensing agencies.

"It can have a real impact on your life," said Judge Genesis Draper, presiding judge for the Harris County Criminal Courts at Law. "Once people have paid their debt to society, we want them to be able to turn their lives around and be productive citizens. That's why we created Fresh Start — to clear the hurdles."

Launched earlier year, Fresh Start helps eligible non-violent, low-level individuals get back on track after experiences with the criminal justice system by sealing their criminal records and connecting them to vital support services.

The program aims to help people meet their basic needs and stop people from cycling through the system, thus reducing recidivism and making communities safer.

The next fair is set for this **Saturday, Oct. 22, 2022, from 10 a.m. to noon at HCC Southeast College – The Learning Hub, 6815 Rustic St. near Gulfgate in southeast Houston.**

Free and open to the public, the fair features programs for job training and placement, adult education, COVID-19 and flu vaccines, HIV rapid testing and medical support, help applying for state benefits, enhanced library cards that double as photo IDs, physical and mental health resources, and re-entry support for people who were previously incarcerated, among other things.

Attendees also can sign up for screening to see if they're eligible to have their misdemeanor charges sealed. Once sealed, charges don't have to be disclosed publicly — on job or rental applications, for example — but can still be viewed by criminal justice agencies.

**Record screening is limited to the first 25 people who sign up on-site.** Attendees must check in at the welcome table and receive a numbered ticket to be screened. Legal representatives will be on-site to answer general record-sealing questions from those who don't secure one of the 25 slots.



### FRESH START RESOURCE FAIR

**Oct. 22, 2022, 10 a.m. to noon**  
**HCC Southeast—The Learning Hub**  
**6815 Rustic St. in SE Houston**

- **Misdemeanor Record Sealing:** Sign up for eligibility screening. Limited to first **25** who sign up on-site.
- **Jobs:** Access to job training & placement, professional development & resume building programs.
- **Education:** Earn your GED or sign up for adult high school, trade school, career training, or English classes.
- **Health:** Get COVID-19 & flu shots, HIV rapid testing, & mental health support.
- **Re-entry Support:** Help for adults and youth who were previously incarcerated.
- **Enhanced Library Cards:** Doubles as photo ID (*Proof of ID & residency required: [English](#) | [Spanish](#).*)
- **Benefits:** Help applying for CHIP, SNAP, TANF, etc.
- **Family Friendly:** Kids' activities, including a costume contest for 12 & under.

More: [ccl.hctx.net/comcourt.htm](http://ccl.hctx.net/comcourt.htm)

The family-friendly fair also will feature kids' activities, including a coloring station, spin the wheel for prizes, and Halloween costume contest for children 12 and under.

Fresh Start is the inaugural program offered by BAYOU City Community Court, an initiative developed by the Harris County criminal misdemeanor court judges to encompass their community outreach efforts.

Fresh Start partners include Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department, Harris County Public Defender's Office, Harris County Precinct 2, Harris County Sheriff's Office, Harris County Public Health, Harris County Public Library, Harris County Department of Education, Houston Health Department, Houston Food Bank, Houston Community College, Workforce Solutions, Launch Point CDC, The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD, Career and Recovery Resources Inc., South Texas College of Law Hispanic Law Students Association, and the Professional Society of Criminal Justice Students at the University of Houston-Downtown.

For more information about Fresh Start, visit [www.ccl.hctx.net/comcourt.htm](http://www.ccl.hctx.net/comcourt.htm).

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## MEDIA CONTACT

Holly Huffman, Communications Director, Office of Court Management  
Email: [Holly\\_Huffman@ccl.hctx.net](mailto:Holly_Huffman@ccl.hctx.net)

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