



For Immediate Release

Fresh Start increasing capacity by 50 percent with addition of 100 screening slots for upcoming record screening and sealing event

Pre-registration for next criminal record screening and sealing event launches at noon on Monday, April 22.

April 19, 2024 — Pre-registration for Fresh Start criminal record screening and sealing will launch next week with expanded capacity to better meet the increasing demand for services.

Program organizers have added 100 additional criminal record screening slots ahead of the May event, bringing the total capacity up to 300 for the first time since the program's inception two years ago.

The next event is scheduled for Saturday, May 11, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Harris County Jury Plaza, 1201 Congress St. in downtown Houston. Online pre-registration is required for record screening and sealing and opens at noon on Monday, April 22.

Participants who pre-register and are deemed eligible for criminal record sealing services will be emailed additional information about parking prior to the event. Additional information is available at ccl.hctx.net/comcourt.htm.

“Fresh Start is such an impactful program for our community. These are individuals who completed their deferred adjudication, did what they were supposed to do, and now want to move on with their lives and be productive,” said Judge Shannon Baldwin, presiding judge for the 16 Harris County Criminal Courts at Law. “We’re excited to be able to work with our partners to expand the program’s reach and help more people get back on track.”

Launched in 2022, Fresh Start helps eligible people course correct after encounters with the criminal justice system by sealing their eligible criminal records and connecting them with community resources. The program aims to help people meet their basic needs — reducing recidivism and making communities safer in the process.

In addition to record sealing, the Know Your Rights Housing Workshop for Landlords and Tenants* will return for the May event. The workshop will offer 30-minute, come-and-go sessions covering topics such as contracts, expectations, landlord and tenant rights, and the eviction process. Registration isn’t needed to attend the housing rights workshop.

The May Fresh Start is offered by Harris County Criminal Courts at Law and their community outreach arm, BAYOU City Community Court, in partnership with Harris County Public Defender’s Office, Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department, Harris County State District Criminal Courts, Harris County Civil Courts at Law, Neighborhood Defender Service of Texas, Houston Apartment Association, Harris County Constable Precinct One, Harris County Sheriff’s Office, and the City of Houston.

For more information about Fresh Start, event parking, or to pre-register, go to ccl.hctx.net/comcourt.htm.

*The information provided during the free Know Your Rights Housing Workshop for Landlords and Tenants is not legal advice. Legal information is not the same as legal advice. The information provided during the workshop is not a substitute for and does not replace the advice or representation of a licensed attorney. You should consult a licensed attorney of your selection to ensure that the information provided during the workshop and your interpretation of it are appropriate for your particular situation. You should not and are not authorized to rely on information provided as a source of legal advice.



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