



For Immediate Release

## New Year, New Beginning: Fresh Start kicking off first record screening and sealing event of 2026

*Program to partner with Harris County District Attorney's Office to offer expanded resources for crime victims*

Jan. 30, 2026 — The new year can be a time for second chances. Next month, Fresh Start will help make that possible as it kicks off its first record screening and sealing program of 2026.

The popular second chance program helps people move forward after criminal justice encounters by sealing their eligible criminal records and connecting them with community resources designed to help them meet their basic needs and get back on track.

New this February, Fresh Start is expanding resources for crime victims through a partnership with the Harris County District Attorney's Office.

The District Attorney's Victim Services Division will be available to provide information and answer questions about victims' rights, court proceedings, compensation resources, support services, and ongoing assistance. The Domestic Violence Bureau will also be on hand to offer guidance on protective orders, legal protections for survivors, and other resources that promote safety, stability, and accountability in domestic violence cases.

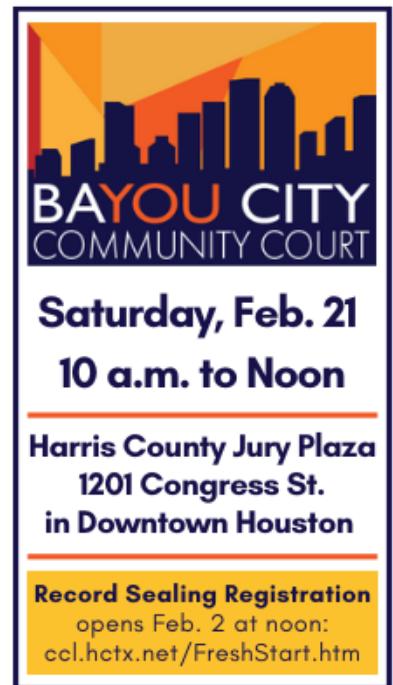
"We see the real-world impact this program makes. When we help people get back on track and become more productive members of the community, everyone benefits," Harris County Criminal Courts at Law Presiding Judge Ashley Mayes Guice said. "We're excited to be able to offer expanded resources to the community through our new partnership."

Fresh Start is scheduled for **Feb. 21, 2026, from 10 a.m. to noon**, at the Harris County Jury Plaza, 1201 Congress St. in downtown Houston. [Online registration](#) for record sealing starts at **noon on Feb. 2, 2026**.

Demand for the program continues to surge with thousands of people competing for just a few hundred slots. Registration often fills within minutes. Participants are encouraged to review the updated [Registration Tutorial](#) to prepare for the process.

Other resources available in February include:

- **Know Your Rights Criminal Law Workshop:** Learn about the rights you do — and don't — have when interacting with police or facing criminal charges.\*
- **South Texas College of Law Legal Clinics:** Apply to determine your eligibility for assistance with civil legal matters.



- **Consulate General of Mexico in Houston:** Access support for Mexican citizens in need of legal documents or services.
- **Harris County Public Health ACCESS Harris County:** Register for assistance related to education, food security, job placement, counseling, peer support, healthcare and insurance, housing, and transportation.
- **Harris County Voter Registration**

For more information or to register, visit: [www.ccl.hctx.net/FreshStart.htm](http://www.ccl.hctx.net/FreshStart.htm).

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, and Harris County Constable Precinct One.

*\*The information provided during the Know Your Rights Criminal Law Workshop 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 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 the information provided as a source of legal advice.*

---

## MEDIA CONTACT

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

HARRIS COUNTY COURTS | [WWW.CCL.HCTX.NET](http://WWW.CCL.HCTX.NET)