



For Immediate Release

## Criminal record sealing, job training, and free school supplies among resources available at Fresh Start Resource Fair on Aug. 12 in Northeast Houston

Online pre-registration is required for criminal record sealing only and begins Monday, July 17 at noon.

July 14, 2023 – Struggling to find a job? Looking for training to make a career change? Need help applying for benefits or paying for childcare and school supplies? Worried a criminal record from your past might be holding you back?

Mark your calendar for the Fresh Start Resource Fair on Saturday, Aug. 12, from 10 a.m. to noon, at Houston Community College's Northeast Campus in Northeast Houston.

Fresh Start helps eligible people course correct after encounters with the criminal justice system by sealing their low-level, non-violent misdemeanor criminal records and connecting them with free community services. The second-chance program aims to help people meet their basic needs, reducing recidivism and making communities safer in the process.

The upcoming August resource fair has an added Back-to-School focus, including free backpacks and school supplies for the first 100 kids, childhood immunizations, public school enrollment information, and access to childcare scholarships.

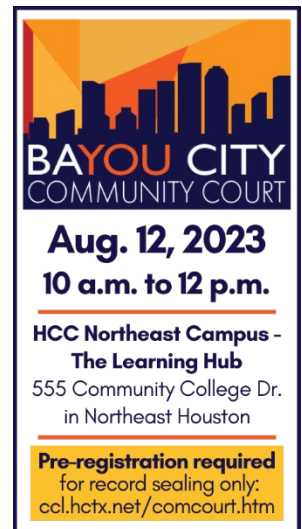
“We believe justice should be restorative, not just punitive,” said Harris County Criminal Courts at Law Presiding Judge Shannon Baldwin. “That doesn’t mean jail is inappropriate. Justice could very much be a year in jail. But how do we also restore people and put them in a position so they’re not repeat offenders? Fresh Start is part of that work.”

Fresh Start was created by the Harris County criminal misdemeanor courts and their community outreach arm, BAYOU City Community Court. It’s offered in partnership with the Harris County Public Defender’s Office and Harris County Community Supervision and Corrections Department.

The fair is free and open to the public. Resources available in August include:

- Misdemeanor criminal record sealing: **Online pre-registration required for criminal record sealing only. Pre-registration opens Monday, July 17 at noon: [www.ccl.hctx.net/comcourt.htm](http://www.ccl.hctx.net/comcourt.htm).**
- Free backpacks and school supplies for the first 100 kids, childhood immunizations, school enrollment information, and access to childcare scholarships
- Job placement, coaching, and connection to second-chance employers
- Training for welding, machining, manufacturing, apartment management, phlebotomy, construction, facility management, global energy & industrial certifications
- Adult education options, workforce scholarships, financial aid, dual credit, and college readiness
- Help applying for benefits (SNAP, CHIP, Harris Health Financial Assistance Program)
- Re-entry support for people who were previously incarcerated
- COVID vaccines and lead testing
- Voter registration and information about court-appointed attorneys

For more information or to pre-register for criminal record sealing, go to [www.ccl.hctx.net/comcourt.htm](http://www.ccl.hctx.net/comcourt.htm).



### MEDIA CONTACT

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