



For Immediate Release

Fresh Start to increase record screening opportunities, debut ‘know your rights’ criminal law workshop at November event

Organizers expect surge in demand when online registration opens at noon on Monday, Oct. 13.

Oct. 9, 2025 — The final Fresh Start of the year will feature expanded record screening capacity and a new workshop designed to help people better understand their rights when interacting with police.

The popular record screening and sealing program is adding 100 screening slots to the November event, bringing the total capacity up to 400 — a response to the surging demand for services.

The second-chance program is also partnering with the University of Houston Law Center Criminal Justice Clinic to offer a new workshop that aims to help people understand their rights when interacting with police or facing criminal charges.

The Know Your Rights Criminal Law Workshop* covers the rights to remain silent, refuse consent, and walk away, as well as situations when those rights are restricted or don't apply. It also includes time for Q&A.

“Fresh Start is making a tangible impact on people’s lives, and that creates a ripple effect throughout our community,” Harris County Criminal Courts at Law Presiding Judge Erika Ramirez said. “We’re excited to continue to expand the program and add new partners that share in our mission.”

Launched in 2022, Fresh Start helps people change course after experiences with the criminal justice system by sealing their eligible criminal records and connecting them to resources. The program aims to help people meet their basic needs, reduce recidivism, and make communities safer.

The next Fresh Start is scheduled for Nov. 1, 2025, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Harris County Jury Plaza, 1201 Congress St. in downtown Houston. [Online registration](#) is required. It starts at noon on Oct. 13, 2025.

Demand for the program surged in its fourth year, with more than 2,000 people competing for just 300 available slots for the August event. Registration hit capacity in less than two minutes, and officials expect it to fill even faster for the November event. Participants are encouraged to watch the [Registration Tutorial](#) to familiarize themselves with the process.

Other resources available in November include:

- **South Texas College of Law Legal Clinics:** Apply to determine your eligibility for assistance with civil legal matters, including debt relief and estate planning.
- **Consulate General of Mexico in Houston:** Access support for Mexican citizens in need of legal documents or legal services, including criminal, civil, immigration, labor, and administrative matters.



- **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.

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 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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