



For Immediate Release

Fresh Start record screening and sealing program returns Saturday, Feb. 1; Online pre-registration launches Monday, Jan. 13 at noon

Jan. 9, 2025 — Launched in 2022, the popular Fresh Start record screening and sealing program has screened nearly 2,000 people and helped almost 800 of them seal their records and get back on track over the past three years.

Organizers hope to build upon that success as the initiative marks the start of its fourth year with a Fresh Start event on Saturday, Feb. 1, 2025, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Harris County Jury Plaza, 1202 Congress St in downtown Houston.

Online pre-registration is required for criminal record screening and sealing and opens at noon on Monday, Jan. 13: www.ccl.hctx.net/comcourt.htm. Spots are limited and fill quickly.

“We’re excited to have been able to help so many people get back on track over the past three years,” said Judge Erika Ramirez, presiding judge for the 16 Harris County Criminal Courts at Law, “and we look forward to helping even more members of our community as we begin our fourth year of this vital and needed program.”

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 February Fresh Start will feature:

- **Know Your Rights Housing Workshop* for Landlords and Tenants:** Attend come-and-go sessions covering topics such as contracts, expectations, landlord and tenant rights, and the eviction process.
- **South Texas College of Law Legal Clinics:** Assistance with civil legal matters, including debt relief and estate planning, for eligible individuals. Learn more about available services and apply for the program on-site.
- **Consulate General of Mexico in Houston:** Support for Mexican citizens in need of legal services or documents. Includes help with criminal, civil, immigration, labor, and administrative matters, as well as passports, birth and death certificates, military records, wills, and other documents.
- **Harris County Voter Registrar:** Meet with the Outreach Team and get registered to vote.
- **Harris County Public Health**
 - **ACCESS Harris County:** Register for wraparound support and resource assistance related to education, food security, job placement, counseling, peer support, healthcare and insurance, housing, and transportation.
 - **Lead Poisoning Prevention Program:** Learn about lead poisoning and get tested to find out if you or your children have been exposed.

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, and Harris County Constable Precinct One.

For more information about Fresh Start or to pre-register, go to www.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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