

'Second Chance Saturday' offers those with minor criminal infractions opportunity for better life

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GRANITE CITY – People with past criminal charges often have difficulty re-entering the workforce and building a better life for their families. Expunging or sealing a record can give people a second chance by removing that employment and housing barrier. Eligible individuals will get that second chance on Saturday, Aug. 25, in Granite City, Ill.

Simmons Hanly Conroy and county agencies will join forces with county agencies will join forces from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. that Saturday to host “Second Chance Saturday” at the Granite City Township Building, all at no cost to participants. Eligible individuals will be able to expunge or seal criminal records and resolve outstanding traffic warrants, criminal warrants and ordinance violations that occurred in Madison County without concern for arrest. The Madison County State’s Attorney’s Office, Madison County Circuit Clerk, Madison County Third Judicial Circuit Court and lawyers from Simmons Hanly Conroy and the Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation will be onsite that day to assist individuals. Activities for children, employment assistance and voter registration services will also be available.

Pre-registration for the event is strongly encouraged. The necessary paperwork is available at www.simmonsfirm.com/2ndchance and should be returned no later than Aug. 10. Those who do not pre-register will be served on a first come, first served basis. Photo identification is required the day of the event.

Participants will also need to submit a fingerprint criminal history transcript prior to the event. To fulfill this requirement:

Visit one of two special paperwork sign-up sessions at the Six Mile Regional Library in Granite City. You can choose between these dates and times:

5-7 p.m. July 25

4-6 p.m. July 31

If you cannot attend one of the special sign-up sessions, you can instead visit a partnering agency to have this requirement completed. The dates, times and locations are located at www.simmonsfirm.com/2ndchance.

No one will be considered pre-registered until the fingerprint transcript has been submitted.

Please remember to bring your photo ID to the event.

Second Chance Saturday will also give individuals the opportunity to resolve outstanding traffic warrants, criminal warrants or ordinance violations that occurred in Madison County without fear of arrest. The event is not for offenses that occurred after July 15, 2018 or any of the following warrant types: domestic violence, child support, violations of orders of protection, civil contempt, or federal, felony or juvenile warrants.

What to Expect during Second Chance Saturday

Participants can expect to meet with an attorney on a pro-bono basis when they arrive. The attorney will review their paperwork, ensure they are eligible to participate, and answer any questions they may have. He/she will then work with the participant to complete the petition for expungement/sealing.

The county agencies in attendance will assist in expediting the processes of expungement/sealing by allowing participants to file all necessary paperwork at once. After meeting with an attorney, they will go to the Circuit Clerk booth on-site to file their paperwork.

Once the petition is filed, the regular court process begins. Copies of the petitions will be sent to relevant agencies that will have up to 60 days to respond or object. If no agency objects, the judge may grant the petition. If there is an objection, a hearing will be scheduled, at which time the participant will be able to state his/her claim in front of a judge. Once a petition is granted, judicial orders will be sent to all parties, who will be directed to either deploy or seal the record. It takes approximately 3-4 months following the event for the record to be expunged/sealed.

A similar expungement event was hosted in 2016 at Simmons Hanly Conroy's office in Alton and again in 2017 in Venice, Illinois. Last year, attorneys and organizers were able to help start the expungement process for more than 553 cases. Additional organizations on-site for the event will include the Madison County Sheriff's Department, Madison County Probation Department, Illinois Secretary of State, and employment experts.

For more information regarding Second Chance Saturday, call 618-259-6559 or to register online visit www.simmonsfirm.com/2ndchance.

To learn more about the expungement and sealing processes in Illinois, click [here](#).