



Jersey/Calhoun Counties Expungement Day

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JERSEYVILLE — The Job Center and Land of Lincoln Legal Aid are joining forces later this year to host a free event, the Jersey and Calhoun Counties Fresh Start Expungement Day.

The Expungement Day will take place Friday, June 12, 2020, from 10 am until 3 pm, at The Job Center, 301 W. Exchange Street in Jerseyville, IL. At the event, Land of Lincoln attorneys, volunteer attorneys and paralegals will meet with applicants to help them prepare petitions to expunge and/or seal their Jersey and Calhoun County criminal records. After petitions are prepared, participants must take them to the Jersey or Calhoun County Circuit Court Clerk's Office for filing.

Participants must register to attend. The registration deadline is May 29, 2020

Tony Fuhrmann, Director of the Job Center, said finding employment with a criminal background can be difficult.

“Expungements makes them (applicants) more employable,” Fuhrmann said

An expungement is a legal court order that destroys a criminal record and removes it from public view. Records that cannot be expunged because they resulted in convictions may be eligible to be sealed. Sealing limits who has access to the records. It may be several months from when a petition for expungement and sealing is filed until a decision is made by a judge.

Daniel R. Kuehnert, a senior staff attorney with Land of Lincoln, said that criminal records often prevent people from landing a job or getting a higher paying job.

“The mistake you make at 18 years old shouldn’t prevent you from getting a job when you’re 40,” Kuehnert said. “A criminal record can be a major barrier in seeking employment, housing and education.”

Registration for the event is required and is open to the first 100 people. Visit <http://bit.do/2020freshstart>, email jersey.calhoun.freshstart@gmail.com, or call (618) 462-0029, ext. 3011 to sign up. Throughout the upcoming weeks, Land of Lincoln staff will regularly check the website, email and voicemail, and follow up with interested individuals to see if they qualify for the event and register them.

Kuehnert said it is more beneficial to society to allow citizens the opportunity to work and live productive lives than to be held back by youthful missteps resulting in an arrest or conviction. He said although Illinois law prevents a potential employer from asking someone if they’ve been arrested on a job application, as someone moves further into the process of being hired, a background check may still show the arrest.

“By clearing their criminal histories as much as possible, people are granted freedom to seek better opportunities to improve their lives,” he said.

Fuhrmann said while people are waiting to see an attorney, they will be provided with information from The Job Center and its partners about job opportunities or training. The Job Center is a part of the Southwestern Illinois WorkNet Center, which utilizes partnerships and technology to access workforce development resources aimed at individuals, employers and workforce/education partners.

“Once a person’s record is expunged they have more options,” Fuhrmann said.

This event is part of Land of Lincoln’s Fresh Start Project, which assists people who have been involved with the criminal justice system. In addition to expungement and sealing, the Fresh Start Project also assists recently incarcerated individuals with other types of civil legal issues. The Fresh Start Project is supported by funding from the Westside Justice Center-Access to Justice initiative.