



Franklin County, Columbus OH to Launch It's First Safe Surrender Program

Franklin County will launch its first Safe Surrender Program beginning on Tuesday, August 23 and running through Thursday, August 25, 2011. The participating agencies include: The Ohio Attorney General's Office, Franklin County Municipal Court and Clerk's Office, Franklin County Common Pleas Court and Clerk's Office, Probation Department, Columbus City Attorney's Office, Franklin County Public Defender, Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles, the Franklin County Sheriff's Office, Columbus Division of Police and the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation.

Community Partners such Mayor Michael B. Coleman, Central Ohio Crime Stoppers, Columbus City Council, Baptist Pastors Conference of Columbus and Vicinity, Columbus Baptist Ministerial Alliance, Inter Denominational Ministerial Alliance, Civic Betterment Committee of BPC, BMA and IMA, and Eastern Union District Association are supporting the program.

"Some members of our community are fearful of the Judicial System. This is a great tool for the Church, elected officials, agencies, and community to work together to reconnect to clear pending cases. It is a positive step forward and will create a safer environment for everyone," said Pastor Frederick LaMarr member of the Baptist Pastors Conference of Columbus and Vicinity.

The program offers Franklin County residents with outstanding warrants to peacefully turn themselves in. Residents who are wanted on misdemeanors and traffic cases, (non-violent crimes) and do not have a history of violence will be given the opportunity to voluntarily appear before the Court to resolve their court cases. They could also get favorable consideration for surrendering and may not have to go to jail. "The focus of The Franklin County Fugitive Safe Surrender Program is to clear warrants and assist with reinstatement of driver's licenses which may increase employment opportunities once warrants are cleared," said Clerk Tyack. "Our goal is to help individuals take positive steps to clear warrants and move forward with peace of mind. By doing so, it further unburdens our justice system."

The main reasons for receiving a Warrant for Arrest include but are not limited to the following: Not showing up for Court (Failure to Appear), Not paying Fines & Court Costs (Failure to Pay Fines & Court Costs) and Not being in Compliance within Court's Direction (Failure to Comply). Franklin County has more than 120,000 active warrants on traffic and misdemeanor cases.

To take advantage of the safe surrender program, the Clerk's Office has created the Safe Surrender Warrant Search which can be accessed through its website at www.fcmclerk.com. The Safe Surrender Warrant Search will allow you to find cases within the Franklin County Municipal Court that have warrants applied to them. Only qualifying non-violent offenses are eligible for the Franklin County Safe Surrender program. Types of offenses that are excluded from this program include: Assault, Aggravated Menacing, Menacing by Stalking, Menacing, Arson, Inciting to Violence, Riot, Inducing Panic, Domestic Violence, Witness Intimidation, and Violations of substantially similar municipal ordinances, other state's statutes, and/or US law.

If you qualify, please surrender to the Franklin County Courthouse at 373 S. High Street from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. August 23rd, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Aug. 24th, or 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Aug. 25th. If you do not have access to the internet and have questions about the safe surrender program, please call the Franklin County Safe Surrender Hotline at 614-645-6230.