

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Delaware Courts to hold “Safe Surrender” Event on May 12, 2023
at Leonard L. Williams Justice Center in Wilmington

The event is designed to give those with outstanding warrants a “safe” time and place to resolve their issues and receive favorable consideration for coming forward

The Delaware Judiciary will be hosting a “safe surrender” event from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Friday May 12, 2023 at the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center in Wilmington to give individuals who have outstanding warrants or capias a chance to clear their records in a one-stop, day-long event with help from the entire justice system.

“The last time Delaware did an event like this, I met a man who had not had a license for 25 years due to an outstanding failure to appear capias,” said Justice of the Peace Court Chief Magistrate Alan Davis. “He lived that long with this issue hanging over his head. When I asked why he didn’t just come in to try to fix the issue, he said he was afraid he would go to jail. Events like this are intended to show the public that sometimes a court is just a place to go take care of business. Judges don’t spend their time looking for reasons to put the hammer down on someone before them; they are looking for solutions. Safe surrender events like these give people a chance to reclaim a small part of their lives and give judges and the rest of the criminal justice system partners a chance to show that they really are interested in solutions and justice.”

More than a dozen judges and courtrooms will be set aside in the justice center and public defenders, police, probation and prosecutors will all be on hand to help people clear any pending failure to appear, failure to pay or other outstanding warrants quickly and efficiently.

“All too often, a working parent or someone that is juggling multiple jobs may be so busy and overwhelmed with their daily responsibilities that they forget to pay a traffic fine. It can happen to anyone,” said State Senator Darius Brown. “We should be doing everything in our power to give people an opportunity to come forward and settle their matters with the court without fear of further consequences. Events like the Safe Surrender program are an important step toward making our judiciary more accessible to the people of Delaware.”

Judges will be giving special consideration to those who proactively come forward to clear their names. This is not an amnesty event, but it is expected that the vast majority of those who participate will leave the courthouse with their warrants cleared. For example, all those facing a failure to pay warrant will be directed to a payment center to either pay their debt in full or set up a payment plan to resolve the warrant. And those wanted for failure to appear will be sent to appear before a judge and in many cases will then leave the courthouse with new date and time to appear. However, cases will still be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and if a person is facing a warrant for a violent felony, like homicide, they may be taken into custody. But even in such a

case, this event gives that individual a chance to address their case in a collaborative environment, not just with the Courts, but with the entire justice system.

The last time the Delaware Judiciary participated in a safe surrender event was in 2009, held jointly with the U.S. Marshal Service over three days, where more than 1,000 warrants were cleared.

As part of this event, there will be a number of service providers with tables on the plaza of the courthouse to provide assistance to participants including local civic organizations, churches and state agencies.

Individuals who are participating will be allowed to bring a friend to accompany them during the process, but due to the volume of people that are expected, and security concerns, participants will be limited to just one individual with them inside the courthouse.

For more information please visit the [Judiciary's Safe Surrender web page](#).