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Goodwill, community partners host expungement clinic

- By JANIE SLAVEN
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Janie Slaven | CJ

Several community agencies, such as AppalRED shown above, were on hand to help 25 individuals learn about the expungement (legal record clearing) process at a clinic held Thursday afternoon at Goodwill in Burnside.

Goodwill Industries of Kentucky partnered with Southeast KY Reentry Taskforce, Department of Corrections and Kentucky Career Center to host a free expungement clinic Thursday for local job seekers with background challenges.

According to Becky Wilson, Goodwill Regional Manager of Program Services, 25 individuals from Pulaski and other counties (ranging from Bourbon to Whitley) participated in the clinic at Goodwill's Burnside location.

The partnering agencies are offering a step-by-step guide to the expungement process, including a review of charges that qualify for expungement and consideration of individuals' income levels to determine the cost, if applicable, of having a record expunged (or cleared). The free review by DOC can help individuals determine if it's worth pursuing the \$40 certified Kentucky State Police copy which is required for an expungement application. Resources are also available to help with that cost.

Most misdemeanors and some felonies (Class D nonviolent offenses) are eligible to be cleared from one's record. The full list can be found at cleanslatekentucky.org. A separate service individuals may want to consider is having their voting rights restored.

Other community resources participating in the clinic included AppalRED, Tarter Inc., Mindsight Behavioral Health, The Job Shop, Somerset Community College, Citizens Bank, Eastern Kentucky University, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, ResCare, the Kentucky Counseling Association and Young People in Recovery.

Wilson also expressed appreciation for several local businesses which also donated door prizes for the event.

Participants of the expungement clinic could also learn more about Goodwill's Soft Skills Academy, a series of free classes teaching critical skills that employers look for as they seek to fill open positions. The next of these will be held Tuesday, November 20, beginning at 9 a.m. at the Burnside store, 5828 S. Hwy. 27. After completing skills classes, participants earn Work Ready Certificates and are paired with career coaches to further prepare for and secure employment, ensuring that the job seekers' skills are matched appropriately with an employer's needs and requirements. After placement, Goodwill career coaches stay engaged with both the employee and employer to assist with any issues that could put the individual's employment at risk.

Jessica Bastin (606-595-8275) and Missie Dye (606-331-6003) are Goodwill's local career coaches. Other free services offered by Goodwill include Work Incentive Planning Assistance (WIPA) and Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).

"Goodwill works hard every day to support people who want to work but need help getting a foot in the door or simply a second chance," Amy Luttrell, president and CEO of Goodwill Industries of Kentucky, stated. "We're proud to have strong partners working by our side so Kentuckians can work towards realizing their potential when given an opportunity."

Goodwill plans to host additional expungement clinics in the future.

"Expungement clinics offer many agencies and groups the opportunity to work together to affect change and make a real impact in the lives of those we serve," Pamela Bentley, Program Administrator for DOC's Division of Reentry Services, stated. "Our events offer access to

community resources, employers, educators, and the opportunity to apply to have voting rights restored."

For more information, contact Goodwill at 561-0359 or visit www.goodwillky.org.

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