

Mapping Your Future

A Guide to Successful Reentry

2023 Edition



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EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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Welcome Home!



We're glad you picked up *Mapping Your Future: A Guide to Successful Reentry*. Whether you spent many years in prison or just a few, it can help you start your life on the outside. This guide gives you information about employment, housing, education, healthcare, and more. If you are the family member, friend, or service provider for someone who is coming home, this book can help you, too. We hope you will find the information and support you need as well.

There Are Five Main Sections in *Mapping Your Future*:

- **Before You Leave** gives advice about getting ready for release.
- **Once You're Out** helps you set up your life once you're out.
- **Healing and Moving Forward** is about getting used to life after prison.
- **Our Reentry Directory** contains contact information for useful resources. See also reentryillinois.net. We update resources every year.
- **Our Forms** section includes helpful forms, and some you can tear out and use.

Getting used to life on the outside is hard. You may face challenges because of your criminal record. You may have trouble finding a job. People might treat you differently. Your parole may feel unfair.

Mapping Your Future will help you meet these challenges. Maybe it will even make you want to work for change. We believe in YOU and your ability to make a difference in the world. Don't stop believing in yourself.

In this book, you'll find helpful words from people like you who went through reentry. Many of them are alumni of the Education Justice Project, a college-in-prison program at Danville Correctional Center. It was their idea to produce *Mapping Your Future*. They, and so many others, have successfully reentered the outside world. You can, too.

If you have time, we recommend reading the entire guide. You can also skip around to the parts that are most important to you. Are you borrowing this guide from a friend or a counselor? Write to us to request your own copy to take home with you. See the next page for instructions.

Please keep in touch. We'd love to know how you're doing and how we can make *Mapping Your Future* better. Your comments can help those who follow in your footsteps.

Again, welcome home. We're glad you're back.

In solidarity, the Education Justice Project.

About *Mapping Your Future*

Mapping Your Future was made by members of the Education Justice Project (EJP). EJP is part of the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Since 2008, EJP has taught college courses to people incarcerated at Danville Correctional Center in Central Illinois.

We created *Mapping Your Future* because we care about people like you who are being released from prison. The guide is made by a group of committed EJP members called the Reentry Guide Initiative.

This guide is also available in Spanish. To request a copy, write to the address on the next page and ask for *Construyendo tu futuro: Una guía para la reintegración exitosa*.

The world is changing all the time. That means we can't be sure everything in this guide is right. We've tried to use the best, most up-to-date information from trusted sources.

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Facing deportation to another country after release? Please request *A New Path: A Guide to the Challenges and Opportunities after Deportation*, also from the Education Justice Project.

☆ **DISCLAIMER**

We have listed a lot of programs, services, and businesses in this guide as resources for formerly incarcerated people and their families. We don't endorse any of these organizations. We also don't guarantee that these resources will be helpful (although we hope they are).

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Request Our Guides!

Both Mapping Your Future and A New Path are free for incarcerated or detained people. They are available in English and Spanish and can be ordered the following ways:

- Get them online through educationjustice.net. You can download a pdf for free.
- Request one at the reentry resource room in your facility.
- Request by phone at (217) 300-5150, or by email at reentry@educationjustice.net.
- Send a request by mail:
 - EJP
 - 1001 S Wright St
 - Champaign, IL 61820

Paying for Guides

Please help us give Mapping Your Future to every person who wants it. If you can, please send a check to the address above, or donate online at educationjustice.net/donate/. We don't get money from the Illinois Department of Corrections or the State of Illinois. Each copy of *Mapping Your Future* costs \$12 to print and send. Thank you!

Citing Our Guide

Would you like to reference our guide or resource directory in your own publications or share it on your website? Please acknowledge us and use the following citations:

Reentry guide:

Education Justice Project, *Mapping Your Future: A Guide to Successful Reentry*, 2023 Edition. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. <https://reentryillinois.web.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Mapping-Your-Future-2023-Interactive.pdf>

Reentry website:

Education Justice Project, *Illinois Reentry Resources*. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2022. <https://reentryillinois.net/>

Would you like to use portions of our guide or information from our guide to create new reentry resources? Please contact us at reentry@educationjustice.net. We have helped organizations in several states develop their own reentry guides, using our guide as a template.

Acknowledgments

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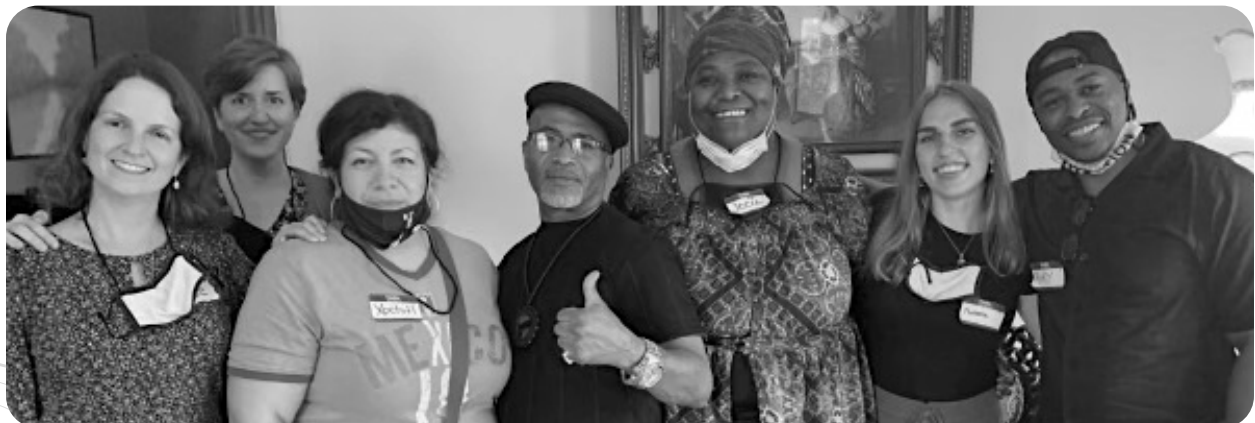


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Myths

What kind of information will you find in this guide? For one thing, it will show you how some common myths you might have heard aren't true. Here are a few:



No one will hire you if you've been incarcerated.

False. You can find a job. Employers in Illinois can choose not to hire you because of your criminal record. But they can't ask to see your record until after they have found you qualified for the job. Learn more in our Employment chapter. The Directory also has employment resources.

You must pay for all your own medicine after you leave prison.

False. It is true that you will have to pay for your medication. Prisons will give you a small amount of medicine when you leave. See the Health Before Release chapter to find out more.

You can't get financial aid for college if you have been incarcerated.

False. If you are on parole or probation, you can get most financial aid. For more information about education options and how to apply for financial aid, see the Education chapter.

You can't get a bank account if you have been incarcerated.

False. You can open a bank account, though you will still have to meet their requirements. For more information about banking, see our Finances, Credit, and Taxes chapter.

You can get Social Security benefits for your time in prison.

False. You cannot get Social Security benefits while you are in prison. But if you were getting Social Security before you went to prison you can start getting it again. See the Resources to Meet Your Basic Needs chapter.

You can't receive VA benefits after being incarcerated.

False. If you are a veteran, you can have your benefits restarted 30 days before your release date. See the Veterans chapter.

Health insurance costs too much. It is easier to pay healthcare costs out of pocket.

False. Health insurance can be expensive, but there are good options. If you don't have insurance, you'll pay much more if you go to the emergency room. See our Health chapter.

People with criminal records can't vote.

False. In Illinois you can vote after release and should. See our Voting chapter.



Part 1: Before You Leave

- Prepare Yourself Mentally
- Gather Your Documents
- Prepare for Your Job Search
- Transitional Housing
- Health Before Release
- Prepare for Reunification
- Parole

Prepare Mentally for Release



It's never too early to get ready to leave prison. Even if you have a very long sentence, keep your eye on life after release. Find ways to learn and grow while you are there.

- Take Adult Basic Education classes or get your GED.
- Take college classes or vocational classes.
- Meditate, play an instrument, draw, join a choir or read a book.
- Start going to religious services.
- Attend substance use programs or anger management classes.
- Get involved in volunteer activities.

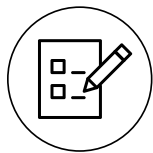
These activities can help you meet other people who can support you. They will help you think about what you have to offer.

You can still make a difference in prison. Education Justice Project students created a program to teach English to others behind bars. They run anti-violence discussion groups in the prison. Many incarcerated people donate to local charities like food pantries and Habitat for Humanity. What can you do?

If you're getting released soon, there is a lot more you can do to prepare. In this chapter, we address how to build your support network and prepare mentally for the challenges of reentry.

Build your Support Network

People often isolate themselves during tough times. But it can help to stay connected to positive friends and family members. Think about the people you know. Contact family members and friends. Be honest about what you need from them, whether it's housing, help with money, or just support and love. Find out what they expect from you.



Reflect

1. What does "support" mean to you?
2. Who are the people you're counting on to be there for you? Do they know what you expect?
3. Who do you know and trust to help you build your support network?
4. Are there people in your life you'd like to reconnect with as you prepare for reentry?
5. Are there people in your life who might make reentry more difficult? If so, how can you set yourself up for success?
6. How can you strengthen relationships to prepare for reentry?

Prepare for Challenges

Before leaving prison, work on practicing patience, both with others and with yourself.

You will need to accept that things may not be perfect or easy. Forgive yourself if you make mistakes. You will probably have some awkward talks with people on the outside. Let yourself laugh them off. People in the outside world have awkward experiences all the time! You may think everyone will know you've just gotten out of prison, but they probably will not.

Patience is important on the outside. Everything may not go the way you want it to. Sometimes you will feel

confused by how much things have changed since you went away. Go slow. Breathe. It is normal to feel stressed sometimes, but you don't want it to get out of hand.

How will you relax once you're out in the world? Life on the outside can feel very rushed. EJP graduates said visiting Lake Michigan, taking long walks, biking, and gardening have helped. How can you include activities like this into your life?

You might join a group that is learning to practice mindfulness, offered through some hospitals, social services, and a few churches. Our chapter on Mindfulness has a lot of advice on getting started and even has a few guided meditations.



"Best thing that can reduce anxiety is to have a plan. You don't have to be rigid with that plan, because you're going to get out and realize that the world isn't what you expected it to be."

—Joe Joe



Reflect

- 1. What skills do you use to manage stress?

- 2. When things go wrong, what can you do to keep yourself on track?

- 3. What have you done in the past to adjust to major life changes?

Issues you may face upon release	Got this covered	Need to address
Substance Use		
Making Ends Meet		
Family Issues		
Housing		
Medical		
Transportation		
Child Care		
Telephone		
Pending Legal Issues		
Child Support Status		



Gather Your Documents



You will need your **birth certificate, Social Security card, and ID** on the outside.

As your release date gets closer, you should start the process of getting them. It is harder to get them on the outside. Try to begin this process at least **one year** before you are released.

Field services (part of clinical services) can help you get your documents. You will need to reach out to them and ask.



“Work with clinical services as much as possible. As early as possible. Find out what programs, classes, or resources are available to prepare for release. Sometimes that stuff is hidden. Make inquiries into what necessary steps you must take to secure documents that would assist you with housing, identification, mental health services, as well as food and clothes shelters in your area.”

—Kilroy

“Take responsibility and look for as much information as you can. Go talk to the law clerks, everybody that you can to get information.”

—Anonymous



Step 1

Verification of Incarceration

To get started, ask clinical services for verification of incarceration. You’ll need this to get your other documents. It’s also a good idea to gather any transcripts or certificates from classes you’ve taken in prison. You can use those documents to get your birth certificate, Social Security card and ID.



Step 2 Birth Certificate

Next, you will need a certified copy of your birth certificate. This means a birth certificate that has a state seal and is signed and dated by the county registrar.

You can request a birth certificate at any time.

You will need to mail in a form to get your birth certificate. See **our Forms section** for Cook County and Illinois Birth Certificate Request forms (for anyone born in Illinois). You can also ask clinical services, your prison library or counselor for a form. Fill out the form and mail it to the address on the form. You will need:

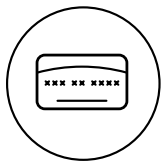
- Your verification of incarceration.
- Another document that shows your name and current address, such as a GED certificate, a transcript from prison education programs, or medical records.
- \$15 fee.

When you get your birth certificate, put it in your master file to keep it safe.

If you cannot get your birth certificate before you get out, you can request it at a county clerk’s office after you are released. If you were born in Illinois, you can find the nearest county clerk’s office in the directory. Call them before you visit to get instructions.

☆ OUTSIDE ILLINOIS

If you were born in another state, ask a friend or family member to help you get a birth certificate from that state.



Step 3 Social Security Card

All US citizens and permanent residents have a Social Security number (SSN). This number is used by the government to keep track of your taxes and Social Security benefits. You will need your Social Security card when you get a job or open a bank account. If you have lost your card, you can apply for a new one. There is no fee for requesting your Social Security card.

To get your Social Security card while you are in prison use the form in the back of this guide to request a card by mail. You can also request a form from field services, your prison library or your counselor. You can also request one by calling the Social Security Administration (SSA) at 1-800-772-1213). They can mail you a form.

To get a Social Security card you will need:

- Your birth certificate.
- Your verification of incarceration.
- Information release: You will need to sign an information release form, giving the Social Security Administration the permission to send your Social

Security card to your facility. Ask field services for this form.



“I needed a second form of identification to get my Social Security card. If you are in this sort of dilemma you can retrieve a copy of your medical record as a second ID. If you do not have your medical record you can go to a free clinic, take an H.I.V. test and request a copy of the record; you can use this document along with your birth certificate to get your Social Security card.”

— Antonio

Make sure your Social Security card stays in your master file until you are released. Be aware that sharing it with another person could put you at risk for fraud.



Step 3 State ID

The Mobile Secretary of State Unit may be able to help you get a state ID or driver’s license before you leave. Ask clinical services if this is an option for you. More information about getting your State ID or driver’s license after release can be found in our Getting your ID chapter. To get a state ID you will need:

- Your birth certificate.
- Your Social Security card.
- Your verification of incarceration or other document that shows your name and current address.
- \$20 fee (you won’t have to pay this if you are in prison or if you get your ID within 30 days of your release).

If you can’t get your ID before you leave, ask for an **Identification Card Verification Form** issued by IDOC. You can use this form to get a State ID. You can

also ask for a **90-day temporary ID card** from field services. You will need to go to a Secretary of State facility during that 90-day period to get a State ID. The temporary ID card doesn’t count as a real ID most of the time, but it can help you get your State ID.

If you are under an alias: If you are locked up under an alias, it is really important that you start gathering your documents early. First, write to the county where you are convicted or the state’s attorney office. Ask them to change the charging document to reflect your real name. The court probably will not change all the court documents to fix this problem. You may need to talk to a lawyer to see if there are any legal steps you can take.

Pulling Together Your Documents

Use this table to keep track of some of the documents and forms of ID you may need after you are released. Start gathering them now.

Item	Taken care of	Need to tackle	Not applicable
Social Security card			
Birth certificate			
Driver’s license			
Temporary identification card			
State ID			
Marriage license			
Divorce decree			
Passport or green card			
Military Discharge			

Prepare for Your Job Search



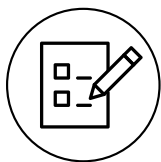
If you are getting ready to leave prison, you're probably thinking about getting a job. This is an area where you are likely to hit many roadblocks and challenges. The good news is that there are employers who are willing to give you a chance. There are ways you can prepare while still in prison to find a good job. Be hopeful. Many people have found good jobs after incarceration. As long as you're prepared, persistent and have the right attitude you can find one too.



Step 1 Build Experience

In the facility where you're locked up, can you earn certificates, learn new skills, or work? Any experience like this can help you find a job on the outside. They can also make you more confident and help you build skills you didn't know you had.

School is another good way to get ready for work on the outside. Enroll in school programs, from Adult Basic Education to college programs. School records can also show employers you are intelligent and dedicated. Try other things too. Arts, parenting classes, and other programs will give you new skills and confidence.



Step 2 Write Your Resume

Another important thing you can do while you're in prison is to write your resume. A resume is a summary of your skills, strengths, and work experience. You will need a resume to search and apply for jobs. Even if you don't have a computer or typewriter, write your resume out while you are still incarcerated. You can type it out after your release. Your resume should have several parts:

1. Your name, address, and contact information. If you are not sure of your address yet, ask a friend or family member if you can use theirs.
2. Education. Your resume should have a list of schools you've attended. You can add any education you had in prison, especially if you earned any degrees or certificates.
3. Work experience. List your jobs, including volunteer work. Include where, when and for how long you held each job.
4. Other professional skills. This includes certifications, technical skills, and languages you speak other than English.
5. Awards (optional). If you've ever received an award for your work, like employee of the month, or a scholarship, list them at the end of your resume.

Are you worried about what people will think when they see school or work you did in prison? You do not have to put those on your resume if it worries you. The sample resumes in our forms section can show you how other formerly incarcerated people have created their resumes. For information about how to find and apply for jobs once you are released, see our Employment chapter.

”

“Be ready to pivot. Be patient with yourself. You’re eager to get out, eager to do all of those things. Be realistic with yourself, what you can really do, what is within your control. You’re going to be facing a lot of things.”

—Roberto

“If you sat at a table playing cards for ten years and now you want to come out and you want to go out and get yourself a job that’s paying \$18-20 an hour – well, be realistic. You’re not gonna do it. You’re not going to have that job because you didn’t do anything to prepare. What are you going to put on your resume, that you played cards for ten years?”

—Anonymous



Find Housing

One of the most important decisions you will make is where to live after release.

Some people choose to live with family or friends after release. You may need to submit the address where you plan to live as part of your parole plans. The people you live with will need to fill out forms. Talk to them to make sure they understand the parole rules that you need to follow. Some of these rules will affect them, too. A parole officer may visit the home and decide if it's OK for you to stay there. See our Parole chapter for more information.

If you are not able to live with family members or friends upon release, you may need to find a halfway house (also called transitional house).

Advantages

Living in a halfway house after release has some advantages.

- Many halfway houses provide support services, such as employment help, case management, life skills training and medical referrals. Having this support can be helpful while you navigate reentry.
- Halfway houses can provide structure and community. They can help set you up for success. They can remove some unknowns and allow you to focus on your priorities.

Challenges

Be aware of possible challenges with halfway houses, too.

- The quality of halfway housing varies a lot, and different halfway houses may specialize in different things. Do your research. Find out about other people's experiences with a halfway house. Ask for information before committing.
- Living in a halfway house can be costly. Some programs may be free or low cost. Other programs might charge very high fees. Be sure to ask about payment and the payment schedule.
- Program rules and expectations vary widely. Many have strict rules. Depending on your needs, these rules may provide helpful structure, or they may feel punitive and strict. Make sure you understand the rules before you commit.



How to Find Halfway Housing

Usually, counselors will call to place you in a halfway house a few days before your release. A lot of people need the spots. It's hard for them to know ahead of time what will be available. This can create a lot of stress. It may be useful to bring a list of transitional housing/halfway houses to your counselor. It's also a good idea to apply to a few halfway houses just in case.

Here are some places you can look:

- Our directory provides a list of different transitional housing programs throughout the state, and a few in St. Louis. You can access it online at reentryillinois.net
- If you live in Chicago, complete an assessment through the Chicago Coordinated Entry System by calling (312) 361-1707. Go to transitionalhousing.org or shelterlistings.org for transitional housing options nationwide.
- Ask around. Do you know people who have had good or bad experiences with these places?

Applying to Halfway Houses

While the application process for each halfway house may be different, here are some general steps you may follow:

1. Fill out an application. Your re-entry counselor can help you, or you can write to a halfway house to request one. You may need to share documents like disciplinary history, convictions, programs, and letters of recommendation.

2. Interview. If you meet the requirements, the halfway house may schedule an interview to see if you are a good fit.

3. Waiting list. If you are accepted, they will give you a letter to show parole. You may have to wait to see if there is a bed available. This is one reason why some people apply to multiple halfway houses.

4. Payment. Another factor impacting your acceptance will be your ability to pay. The program will help you apply for funding to help cover costs, and will need to ensure payments can be made at the time of your release.

5. Transportation. When your release date is confirmed, usually a prison official will talk to the halfway house to make sure they have a space for you. They will help make a plan for your release day transportation.

counselor or the people at the halfway house to see if it is a good fit for you:

- Who do you serve?
- How long can I stay?
- What is the cost?
- What programs and services are offered? What will I be doing when I live there?
- Do you provide mental health or substance use treatment?
- What rules will I have to follow while I am there? What freedoms will I have?
- Is this a faith-based program? Will I be required to attend services?

Unfortunately, almost all transitional houses do not let in people who have been convicted of sex-based offenses, and some do not let in people who have been convicted of violent offenses. Our Housing After Release chapter has some advice about how to find housing if you have a sex-based offense.

Finding the Right Fit

There are a lot of good and bad halfway houses out there. Here are a few questions you can ask your



Health Before Release

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Planning for healthcare before you leave prison saves money and helps you avoid problems. There are a few steps you should take before you are released.



Enroll in Medicaid.

Ask clinical services to help you get started. If you have a loved one with internet access, they may be able to help you apply at healthcare.gov. Otherwise, you will need to get a paper copy to mail in.

Once you submit your form, it takes 30 days to get insurance, so get started early! This is especially important if you have a health problem that requires treatment.



Get Your Health Records.

Fill out a form to get your health records about 90 days before your release. You may have to pay for copies, though the first 50 pages may be free. There are separate forms for medical records and HIV and mental health records. These records can be very useful when connecting with new practitioners.

After release, you can request your health records from the facility where you were held. But if you wait more than a few months, you will need to request your records from the Department of Corrections in Springfield.



Get Your Exams.

Request a dental exam, an eye exam, and a physical exam before you leave prison. Start early (a year before release) in case they find something you will need to address.



Make a Birth Control and Sexual Health Plan.

If you plan to be sexually active after release, discuss birth control and safe sex during your physical exam. This may help you avoid unwanted pregnancy and STDs. Women should request a gynecological exam with a PAP smear and ask for a mammogram if over age 40.

Consider your options carefully. Some forms of birth control like condoms are easy to get and are fairly cheap. They need to be used every time you have sex and may not as effective as other options. Other kinds of birth control

require a prescription from a doctor or a medical procedure. When you have your physical exam, you may be able to request longer-term birth control options, like pills, patches, or intrauterine devices (IUDs). Implants or IUDs can protect you for several years from unwanted pregnancy.

No doctor should pressure you into a permanent or long-term birth control or sterilization procedure. Unfortunately, some doctors at prisons have pressured women to have hysterectomies (sterilization) and men to have vasectomies. While vasectomies are reversible, hysterectomies will prevent you from ever conceiving. Take time to ask questions and decide what is best for you. If you are feeling pressured, remember it's your right to say no.



Make a Medication Plan.

Prisons offer people a 30 to 90-day supply of medication upon release. Generally, you will pick up your medications the day before you are released, but you may want to request these medications ahead of time, just to be safe. The doctor will usually give you a prescription so you can get more. Make a plan to get more medication after you leave. Set up an appointment with a doctor on the outside so that you don't run out. This can help you avoid going to the ER to get medications filled, which can be costly.



Plan for Doctor Visits After Release.

Before you are released, you will likely receive a medical card that has a list of healthcare providers that accept Medicaid. If you have a serious mental or physical health issue, be proactive and set up appointments ahead of time. A counselor or family member may be able to set up the appointment for you. Our directory includes a list of many health clinics throughout the state.

You may have been in a drug or alcohol treatment program while in prison. Continue treatment after release to make sure you don't relapse. Ask your doctor, clinical services, or a family member to help you find a treatment center. Try to schedule the appointment for a few days after your release. Our directory includes a list of many low-cost health clinics and substance use treatment centers.

A warning: The first few hours, days, and weeks after release are often the hardest. People are at greater risk for suicide. Many return to old habits, like drug or alcohol use. People are at greater risk for overdose because their bodies aren't used to drugs anymore. If you can, be proactive and schedule appointments with health care providers ahead of time. You may not need them, but you'll have a plan just in case.

For more information, see our Health chapter, our Trauma and Mental Health chapter, and our Substance Use chapter.



Healthcare Checklist

Action	Taken care of	Need to tackle	Where to get help
Enroll in Medicaid			
Enroll in SNAP			
Get health records			
Physical exam			
Eye exam			
Dental exam			
Contraception plan			
Medication plan			
Set up doctor visits after release			
Set up mental health treatment after release			
Set up substance use treatment after release			

Prepare for Reunification



This chapter covers the following topics:

- Staying Close to Loved Ones While in Prison
 - Preparing for Reunification
 - Preparing to Reunite with Children
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Staying Close to Loved Ones

For many, the hardest part of being locked up is the strain it places on relationships. Separation is hard for both you and your loved ones. While you may feel love, concern, and care, there may also be feelings of guilt, loss, frustration, anger, and grief.

"If you have any emotions at all, you're going to have guilt about making your family suffer the pains that you're going through. Because you're not suffering alone. They suffer with you while you're in there."

— **Tony C.**

Healthy relationships are open, honest, and deep. Try to maintain regular, open lines of communication through letters and phone calls, when possible. Staying in touch with your loved ones will make reunion smoother.

"The complexities of being in prison can startle any relationship. That's why understanding and communication is key. In reality no one wants to be a burden; however, everybody needs someone. The pressure of maintaining a healthy relationship is hard for two people in the free world. When I was doing time, I had to understand the sacrifices I needed to make to maintain a healthy relationship with the people that mattered the most to me. I had to remember what it was like to be free, and I had to educate my family and friends of what it was like to be incarcerated."

— **Antonio**

"A lot of times people get discouraged when family don't take their phone calls. They don't get a response, and they get discouraged. They think, 'To hell with it, they don't want to hear from me.' Even if they don't respond, you still have to try to cultivate those relationships. A lot of times people are super busy out here. It's not that they don't want to talk to you. Keep cultivating those relationships because they are what's going to help you when you get out."

— **Anonymous**

"It's hard, but you have to make your kids understand that you don't want to be away from them... You love them and you're going to do everything you can to make sure you're in their life."

—**Tony C.**

During incarceration, some relationships may end, and all relationships will be challenged. Some find it so difficult that they distance themselves as a form of self-preservation. Be aware that this distance can be very hard to overcome upon release.

"You spend so many years in there and so much time keeping people at an arm's distance. You never let anybody get close... But when you come home, you've gotten so used to keeping people at a distance that you just continue to do it. It's hard to make new friends."

—**Tony C.**

"You don't want to worry your family with those issues. You get on the phone, and you grind your teeth. Regardless of what you're feeling, you're going to tell them that everything is going to be OK. You get in this habit of keeping things bottled up, and you're dealing with some degree of loneliness and emptiness, because you're not sharing it with your family."

—**Roberto**

Explore other ways to maintain relationships. While it's painful to not be physically present in your loved ones' lives, there are other ways to be present. Talk, listen, and provide emotional and mental support when and how you can.

"Try to find ways to make it easier for them to accept you being gone. Because if you just sit and tell them how horrible it is and you bark at them every time they come to visit you or you yell at them in letters or on the phone, then they're gonna get frustrated with dad and say, 'Well hey, you're not even here, so what can you do?'"

—**Tony C.**

Relationships aren't a one-way street. Family members can also do a lot to maintain relationships. They can help those who are incarcerated feel included. Share everyday things to help them feel connected.

"I send him a little bit of money, enough to keep phone calls going, you know, and pictures and stuff and try to set up options for him so he knows he doesn't have to go back to the same stuff. Just let him know that there's help, there's better things in life. I try to talk to him about the good stuff, about working and going to church, when we're playing games with his little sister and stuff like that."

—**Heather B.**



Preparing for Reunification

You might be scared, worried, or excited about reuniting with family and friends. You can prepare by reflecting on your relationships. Be honest about who is likely to be a positive, supportive influence in your life. You and your loved ones can also set realistic expectations. You are all in transition. A period of adjustment will be necessary.

It is hard to be left at home and hard to come home, even if you were only away for a few months. For loved ones, having the person come home can take some getting used to as well.

You might begin by letting your loved ones know what you are hoping for and what you will need from them during your reentry. This could include both emotional and financial support. Never be afraid to ask for patience.

Listen to the needs and concerns of your loved ones, too. Reuniting will be easier if you can talk ahead of time and learn to compromise.

"The key thing is honesty. [If] you come out being honest with yourself and with [your loved ones], you can't go wrong, because you're not feeding them a fairy tale. You're giving them you."

—Keke

"Keep in mind that you are entering somebody else's space. You must be mindful of the relationships around you."

—Pablo

If you were locked up for a long time, you'll need to relearn who you are and who your loved ones are. Children who were young when you left may be teenagers or even grown up with children of their own. You may have different ideas of what the new relationship should look like.

"Don't come in like they're supposed to know you or even respect you a little bit, because you've been gone. You gotta gain that respect and that trust back when you've been gone so long."

—Keke

"Recognize that we haven't been part of that house for years, so I can't come in and put down my dominance, something we're used to doing when we're in the cell. We're used to carving up space and making it our own."

—Joe Joe

Acknowledge the ways you have changed. You and your loved ones have both grown. Allow for this growth. Be open to the person before you and who they are now.

"First you gotta get yourself together, mentally. Because you might think you know them because they're part of you, but you really don't know them and what they've been through. You know what they tell you. Same thing with you."

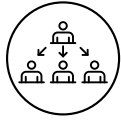
—Keke

"Never expect anyone to evolve at your pace. When you are dealing with people you haven't lived with in a while you have to be analytical, you have to examine the structure of your own character. And the character of those you live with. Once you are fully in tune with the compound presence of your household you should become as flexible as a bamboo stick, but it won't be easy. So, get an evaluation and accept some help from those who can help you with your transition."

—Antonio

“Oftentimes when people are anticipating going home, they have ideals and expectations on how their reunification with family will be. There’s the dream and there’s the reality. It’s good to have these great expectations, but don’t set yourself up for disappointment if people don’t live up to the expectations you have of them. People have lived experience that might color the way they interact.”

—Joe Joe



Preparing to Reunite with Children

You may have young children you are looking forward to being with. You may be excited to see your kids again or you might be nervous and stressed. It’s ok to have mixed feelings. There’s no right way to feel.

There are things you can do to parent from prison and prepare yourself for regaining custody of your kids, if that’s your goal. Show your commitment to your children. This will make it easier to get them back when you are out. Here are some ideas:

Before Your Release	After Your Release
Stay in touch with your kids through regular phone calls and letters. Record the dates and times so that you have evidence of your involvement.	Prioritize getting safe and stable housing.
Attend all hearings about your child. It’s your right!	Follow all parole rules and requirements.
Take parenting classes if offered.	Visit your kids as often as you can. Record details about the visits.
Take job training as well as academic and technical classes.	Continue to attend parenting, job training or other classes. This shows your commitment to providing a stable home for your child.

If you’ve been separated from your children, you may be eager to reunite with them as soon as you can. But don’t rush things. First you need to have a stable job, safe housing, and sobriety. Getting your kids back too soon can cause more harm than good if you are unable to provide a healthy and safe environment for them.

If guardianship for your child was turned over without the court being involved – by signing a “caregiver affidavit” – usually you can get your children back quickly.

If your parental rights have been terminated, you will need the court’s permission to get your children back. Illinois Legal Aid provides information and guidance on this topic: <https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/legal-information/dcfs-cases-and-child-protection-services>

Even if you don’t get your kids back as soon as you would like, you can still make changes and be involved in decisions about them. If getting your kids back is what’s right for your family, don’t give up, even if there are roadblocks!

Parole: Mandatory Supervised Release



IDOC Parolee Assistance Office: (800) 666-6744

When you are released from prison, you will probably be on Mandatory Supervised Release (MSR), commonly called parole. In the state of Illinois, every felony prison sentence has a term of MSR. This means you will be supervised by the Illinois Department of Corrections until your parole period is over.

While on parole, you'll have to follow some rules. We realize that it is frustrating to know that even though you are getting out of prison, you will not be completely free. Hang in there. Parole is difficult, but many people have gotten through it. You can, too.

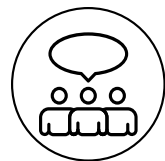
This chapter covers:

- Preparing for Mandatory Supervised Release
- Parole after Release
- Parole Rules and Violations
- Registries



Preparing for Mandatory Supervised Release

The parole process usually begins around six months before your release date.



Step 1

Visit with the Prisoner Review Board.

The board will make plans for your parole conditions. For example, you may have to go to an anger management class, or you may be placed on electronic monitoring for a while.



Step 2

Find a place to live.

In your parole plans, you will have to submit the address where you plan to live. This is called your "host site." The board will have to approve it. If you are doing electronic monitoring, a parole officer will visit the home and decide if it is ok for you to stay at. If you aren't doing electronic monitoring, they may just call the home and make sure you can stay there.

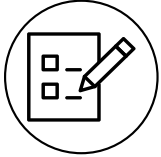


Step 3

Talk to the people you will be living with.

Many of the parole rules you'll follow will affect the people you live with. For instance, parole agents may visit your home regularly to check up on you. They may search the property or residence and make sure there aren't narcotics or other controlled substances.

Talk to the people you live with early and clearly. Let them know what your parole rules will mean for them. They can contact the Illinois Department of Corrections with their questions.



Step 4

Fill out the Host Site Agreement.

The people you are living with will have to complete a Host Site Agreement. It may come in the mail, or the parole officer may bring it when they visit the home.

Transferring parole to another state. If you plan to live in another state, talk to your counselor about transferring your parole. Submit a transfer request within 120 days of your release date. After release, you can apply to transfer your parole to another state at any time. You will need to have a family member who has lived in that state for at least six months. Work with your parole officer to apply for the transfer.

Parole After Release

When you arrive at your host site, **call your parole officer within 24 hours.** You should get your parole officer's name and phone number before you are released. It is your job to get in touch with your parole officer. If you cannot reach your parole officer or do not know who they are, contact a nearby parole office for help.

When you call your parole officer, they may set up a visit with you in the next few days. Do not leave your home until your parole officer visits. This will usually happen within three days.

Electronic Monitoring

Many people are given Electronic Monitoring (EM) with their parole. If you have EM, you will have to follow some extra rules.

Step 1. Sign the form

On the day you are released, you will sign an Illinois Department of Corrections Offender 360 Reporting Instruction document.

Step 2. Go straight home and call the parole control center

When you are released, you have to go straight home and check in at the Parole Control Center by calling (800) 666-6744. You cannot leave. Stay there and wait for more instructions.

Step 3. Get your electronic monitor

A technician will come to your home within three days to set up the electronic monitor. The monitor has an anklet and a box that plugs in the wall. Make sure the monitor stays plugged in.

Step 4. Find out when you will be allowed to leave your home

Once the monitor is set up you and your parole officer will decide what times you will be allowed to leave your home.

Step 5. Check in regularly with your parole officer

Remember, it's very important you answer the phone when the parole agency calls. Not answering could get you in trouble.

Electronic monitoring can be hard for everyone in your house. Until you find a job, you will be home most of the time, which can cause stress. If you need rides during your movement times, you will need to work that out. Talk clearly with the people you will live with. Let them know what you need from them, what they need from you, and how you will address problems.

BI SmartLINK

Your parole officer might ask you to download the BI SmartLINK® app on your smartphone. BI SmartLINK® is a tool that lets parole officers and case managers communicate with you on a phone or tablet.

With the SmartLINK app, parole officers don't have to come visit you in person as much. Fewer in-person visits may be nice for you and the people you live with. But the app also lets parole officers see a lot about you. For example, parole officers can use the app to see where you have traveled. The SmartLINK app has the following features:

- **Check in.** Parole officers can check in with you to make sure you're following the rules.
- **Resources for housing, health and employment.**
- **Messages.** Send messages to your case manager or supervising officer.
- **Supervision terms.** See all the rules of parole you should follow.
- **Calendar.** Get reminders for check-ins and other important dates so you don't forget.
- **Documents.** Send photo documents to your parole officer: court documents, payroll stubs, proof of ID and more.

★ **Don't know how to use a smartphone?** Ask your parole officer to help you use the app. Our Technology chapter can help.

Parole Rules & Violations

Parole officers have the final say for parole rules. These rules are written on a legal document. Make sure you understand all of the rules and instructions before you sign. Ask questions! Some of the most common rules include:

- Do not commit any criminal acts
- Report to your parole officer on a regular basis
- Do not possess firearms

- Allow the parole officer to inspect and search you and your residence
- Refrain from using drugs
- Do not leave the State of Illinois

If you break the rules of parole, you may be sent back to prison. Sadly, this happens a lot. Follow the rules of your parole very carefully so you can stay on the outside. If something happens that makes it look like you broke your parole, call your parole officer right away to explain what happened. If you haven't broken any rules, your parole office can ask that you not be charged.

If you are charged with violating the terms of your parole, the law states that:

1. The Prisoner Review Board (PRB) will appoint a lawyer for you if you need one. You won't have to pay for the lawyer.
2. Your lawyer can show evidence and bring in witnesses to help make your case.
3. You don't have to answer any questions about what happened.

See our Legal Matters chapter for places where you can get help.

Registries

The Illinois State Police keeps several registries, including the Sex Offense Registry and the Murderer & Violent Offense Against Youth Registry. These registries are online databases that anyone can see. They have photos and information about people convicted of sex offenses (name, address, birthday, place of work, sex crime conviction history, age, victim gender).

If you must register, you will likely face many challenges. People will make hurtful comments. It will be very hard to find housing and a job (see our Transitional Housing chapter). Focus on your self-worth. You are more than your conviction. We believe in you.

Ask your counselor before you are released if you need to register. You can also ask someone you trust to contact the Illinois State Police for you. Before you are released, you will get a form that tells you when and how to register.

Make sure you know and understand the rules. It's easy to make a mistake and go back to jail. You may be charged with "failure to register" because you missed a deadline or didn't know you needed to register again.

You don't have to figure it out alone. There are people and organizations who can support you.

- The Chicago 400 Alliance is a group that works to reduce or abolish the use of public conviction registries and residency restrictions. Learn more at chicago400.net

- The Sex Law and Policy Center publishes a reentry guide called Registering with Dignity. Check it out here: <https://narsol.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RegisteringWithDignity-Handbook.pdf>

Where will I register?

You will register at your local police or sheriff's department. This is something you will need to do right away when you get to your host site.

How often will I need to register?

It depends. You may have to register every 90 days or once a year. If you are homeless and don't have a permanent address, you may have to register every week. The registration process can be long. Call ahead to find out when they are open and if you need to make an appointment.

What should I bring when I register?

You will need proof of address (driver's license, rent or utility bill, official document with address) and your state ID. They will take a photo of you and post it on the sex offense registry website. They may also take fingerprints or a DNA swab. You will have to sign registration documents. If you are having trouble understanding the registration documents, ask for help. Be certain you understand what you are signing before you sign.

How can I stay organized so that I don't miss an appointment?

Keep a calendar of all your deadlines and dates to re-register. Call ahead and make appointments if you can. Keep your documents in a safe place so you can get to them easily. Hold onto documents that explain the conditions of probation or parole, your registration documents, and certified receipts.

How long will I have to register?

It depends on your conviction. If you were sentenced to probation, you must register every year for ten years. For more serious convictions, you must register for the rest of your life.

Do I have to register every time I move?

Yes. If you live in a place for more than three days, you will need to register, even if you are just visiting family. You have three days to let law enforcement know that you have moved. You may also have to re-register if you have a change of job or if you change your email address or your online identifiers.

Will I have to pay to register?

Illinois requires a fee of \$100 or 100 hours of community service per year, and failure to pay is a felony.

What are the restrictions for people on the Child Sex Offense Registry?

Common restrictions include not being allowed to go in school buildings or on grounds, or live within 500 feet of a school, playground or childcare facility. You won't be allowed in parks or public park buildings. You can't use social media, like Facebook or Instagram. You won't be allowed to live with children who aren't your own.

Where can I learn more?

Information about the Sex Offense Registry and Murderer & Violent Offender Against Youth Registry can be found at the Illinois State Police website (www.isp.illinois.gov/). You can also call the I-SORT hotline at (888) 414-7678.

It is against the law to harass or threaten people on the sex offense registry or their families. If this is happening to you, call the police. Talk to your probation or parole officer or call the I-SORT hotline at (888) 414-7678.

Transferring to another registry can be confusing and frustrating. Remember, ask for help from your counselor if you are still in prison. If you have already been released, you can ask your parole officer for help.

You can start by getting in touch with the State's Attorney's Office in the county in which you were convicted. If you're having trouble getting them to send the form, get someone to help you. You can:

- Contact Illinois Legal Aid (<https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/>). They can help you get a lawyer who will work for you for free.
- Contact one of the advocacy groups from our directory.
- Politicians like aldermen or state representatives might help you. You can reach out by calling their office, telling your story, and asking for their help.

Learn more here:

- Illinois State Police Murderer and Violent Offender Against Youth Registry FAQ: <https://isp.illinois.gov/MVOAY/FAQs>
- Illinois State Police Sex Offender Registry FAQ: <https://isp.illinois.gov/Sor/FAQs>

Transferring Registries

In some cases, you can transfer from the Sex Offense Registry to the Murderer & Violent Offender Against Youth Registry. This will mean fewer restrictions. It's easiest to do the transfer while still in prison. That is why it's a good idea to ask your counselor about the registries before you are released. If you think you want to transfer, your counselor can help you do it before you get home.

People with these convictions may be able to transfer from the Sex Offender Registry to the Murderer and Violent Offender Against Youth Registry:

- First degree murder of a child
- Kidnapping
- Aggravated kidnapping
- Unlawful restraint
- Aggravated unlawful restraint
- Child abduction
- Forcible detention





Part 2: After You Get Out

- Getting Your ID
- Resources to Meet Your Basic Needs
- Housing
- Employment
- Education
- Health After Release
- Trauma and Mental Health
- Substance Use Disorders
- Transportation
- Technology
- Legal Matters
- Finances, Credit, and Taxes
- Voting
- Veterans

Getting Your ID



Congratulations, you're out! Now that you're free, you'll need an ID. Hopefully, you already have your birth certificate and Social Security card. If not, here's how you can get them:

- If you are able to, go in person to the county clerk's office in the county where you were born to order a birth certificate. You can find addresses and phone numbers of county clerks offices in our directory. If you can't go in person, call them or follow the instructions on their website to request a birth certificate.
- Go to a Social Security Administration Office to get your Social Security card (see our directory). Call before you go to set up an appointment and find out what you need to bring.



State ID or Driver's License

Once you have your birth certificate and Social Security card, you can get a state ID or driver's license. These are the most common forms of ID. To get either a state ID or a driver's license, you'll need to visit Driver Services. To find a Driver Services facility close to you, either call (800) 252-8980 or go to <https://apps.ilsos.gov/facilityfinder/facility>.

Do you plan to get a driver's license? Read the Illinois Rules of the Road first. You can pick up a copy of this booklet at any public library or download it at https://www.ilsos.gov/publications/pdf_publications/dsd_a112.pdf. If you've been incarcerated for a long time, we recommend getting a learner's permit. A learner's permit lets you practice driving until you feel comfortable taking the driver's test. To get a permit, you will need to pass a written test and a vision test. Once you get the permit, you can drive with another driver who has a license.

★ **Note:** You can get a free state ID if you visit the DMV within 30 days of leaving prison. If you have a temporary ID from IDOC you have 90 days. You will need an Identification Card Verification Form from IDOC to get the free ID. This form can be requested from field services before you leave.

Visiting Driver Services can take a long time, so be sure to bring everything you need:

- An original document with your written signature (credit card, court order, or Social Security card)
- An original document with your date of birth (birth certificate, passport, high school transcript, college transcript from classes you have taken at prison)
- An original document with your Social Security number (Social Security card, IL driver's license record, or military service record)
- Original documents proving you live in Illinois (bank statement, credit report, utility bills, medical record, HIV test)
- Payment



"It took me seven months to get my Social Security card and ID; this time would have been cut in half if I would have been given the information shared here."

—Antonio

Suspensions

Is your license suspended? A license can get suspended for many reasons:

- Not paying traffic tickets, parking tickets, or tolls.
- Driving while drunk or using drugs. This is called Driving Under the Influence, or a DUI.
- If you do not make child support payments. See our Legal Matters chapter for instructions on how to change your child support payments so that this doesn't happen.
- If your license was suspended, you can get it back after the suspension is over.

Revocations

Revoked means your driver's license is taken away. Driver's licenses are often revoked for more serious DUIs. For example, if someone was injured or killed because the driver was drunk or using drugs. If your license is revoked, you can get a new one. But you will have to wait for some time. The waiting periods for applying for a new license are:

- 1st DUI offense: one year
- 2nd DUI offense: five years
- 3rd DUI offense: ten years
- 4th DUI offense: life-time ban

If your license was revoked because someone was killed while you were driving, you may not be able to get a new one. But you should still check to be sure.

★ If you choose to drive without a license, you may face more serious penalties (more time without a license, jail time, car seizure).

Getting Your License Back

How do you get your license back if it was suspended? First, contact Driver Services. Ask them how long before you can apply for a new license. Instructions on how to see your driving record can be found on the Illinois DMV website at https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/drivers/drivers_license/purchaseabstract.html.

You can also ask to meet with a hearing officer at a DMV office. Locations and phone numbers can be found here: <https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html> The hearing officer will let you know if you can get your license back. They can also help you get ready for your hearing.



"Make appointments for anything and everything. Don't wait until you have all the requirements in your hand. Just make the appointment. You can always reschedule if you need to."

—Roberto

Informal Hearing Process

You can schedule an informal hearing if you have only one DUI and if that DUI is not a criminal DUI. Contact the Driver Services office nearest you. During the hearing, an officer will tell you what you need to do to get your license back. You will probably need to:

- Pay a fee and any traffic or parking tickets you haven't paid for yet.
- If your license was suspended or revoked because of a DUI, you will need:
 - A Drug/Alcohol Evaluation by a licensed agency.
 - Papers showing that you have completed a DUI Risk Education Course.
 - Papers showing that you have completed substance abuse treatment.
- If your license was suspended because you did not pay child support, you will need papers showing that you have changed your child support payment plan to one you can afford, and that the court agrees to these changes. See our Legal Matters chapter.

Formal Hearing Process

A formal hearing is stricter than an informal hearing. If you have multiple DUIs or a criminal DUI, you will need to schedule a formal hearing. This kind of hearing may include witnesses and evidence. To request a formal hearing:

1. Complete the Form DAH H12 https://www.ilsos.gov/publications/pdf_publications/dah_h12.pdf
2. Mail the form to the nearest Driver Services office.
3. Pay a \$50 fee.

At the hearing, a Driver Services hearing officer will decide about your license. They may say you can get a new license. They may give you a temporary driving permit, or they may deny you a license. It is a good idea to bring documents to show you are a safe driver who won't get another DUI. You can also bring witnesses to talk about how you are safe, trustworthy, and responsible. Some people hire lawyers.

Do you need a license to get to work or school? Bring papers that show that you have a job or take classes. This may help you get a temporary driving permit.



"If you go with the frame of mind that you are going to spend a hell of a lot of time in that place, it helps. Go with the right frame of mind, otherwise you're going to be miserable."

—Anonymous

Chicago CityKey Card

If you live in Chicago, you may be able to get a Chicago CityKey card. This is an ID card for all Chicago residents, including people who are undocumented. It is easier to get than a state ID. The CityKey card is also a library card, transit card, and gets you discounts at some businesses and cultural sites in Chicago. The card also gives you discounts on medications. You can't use the card to open a bank account, but you can use it as an ID for a lot of basic things. For more information visit the City Clerk of Chicago's website at <https://www.chicityclerk.com/about-citykey>



Selective Service

Did you know you may still have to sign up for “the draft”? The draft is called the Selective Service. It is a program that lets the US military call men to serve in the military. You need to register for Selective Service if you are:

- Male
- Between 18-25
- Are a US citizen or an immigrant

Registering with the Selective Service does not mean you are in the military. It means you may be called to the military if there is a crisis.

If you are 18-25 you need to register for the Selective Service right away. If you don't, you could be fined or go to jail. You also cannot get a job with the government or get government training. You can register online at [sss.gov/register/](https://www.sss.gov/register/). You can send the form by mail to:

Selective Service System
Registration Information Office
PO Box 94739
Palatine, IL 60094-4739

You don't have to register if you were incarcerated the entire time you were 18 to 25. You will need to request a status information letter at <https://www.sss.gov/verify/sil/>.

What if you weren't incarcerated but you still didn't register? You can also request a status information letter. The letter should say that you did not “knowingly or willfully” fail to register for Selective Service. You could mention if you were incarcerated shortly after your 18th birthday, left school early, or any other things that might have made it hard to register.

☆ You can get marriage licenses and divorce decrees at the county clerk's office in which you were married or divorced.



Resources to Meet Your Basic Needs



Leaving prison is exciting, but not always easy. Many people have trouble finding a place to live or buying food after they leave prison. Other people struggle with drug or alcohol use or mental health issues. Be patient with yourself. Take your time as you figure things out. There are places you can go to for help.

This chapter has two main sections:

- How to apply for government benefits to meet your basic needs
- Other places to go to meet your basic needs



Apply for Benefits

Did you know the government can help you with some basic needs? One of the first things you should do after release is apply for government assistance programs. If you need help, go to a Department of Human Services (DHS) Family Community Resource Center (see our directory). You can also visit a hospital, non-profit organization, church, or other service provider and ask for help applying for benefits.

To get these benefits, you'll have to meet certain qualifications. For some programs, you must be a certain age. For most, you must meet income requirements (not make a lot of money).

You can apply for these benefit programs by going to abe.illinois.gov or calling (800) 843-6154.

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).** This used to be called food stamps. Each month, money is put onto a special debit card called a LINK card. You can use the card to buy food from most grocery stores.
- **Medicaid and All Kids.** Medicaid is a program for people who make little or no money. It helps people pay for medicine, hospital visits, doctor appointments, and more. All Kids is a similar program that helps pay for health care for children.

- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).** Provides money for families who need it.
- **Aid to the Aged Blind and Disabled Cash Assistance (AABD).** Provides money for people who have disabilities or who are blind.
- **Medicare Savings Program (MSP).** This program helps pay for the costs of Medicare for older people and people with disabilities.

Here are some more programs you may be able to use. People at the Department of Human Services Offices can help you apply.

- **The Illinois Rental Assistance Program** helps people who need help paying their rent each month. Call (866) 454-3571 for more information or visit <https://www.ihda.org/about-ihda/illinois-rental-payment-program/>
- **The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** helps people pay their utilities each month (gas, electricity). Call (877) 411-WARM (9276) or visit www2.illinois.gov/dceo/CommunityServices/UtilityBillAssistance to learn more.
- **Lifeline (Phone and Internet Program)** is a program you can use to help pay for either your phone or the internet. The program will give you up to \$9.25 for your bill. Learn more at lifelinesupport.org/.
- **The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)** helps parents who have a job or who go to school. The program provides money for childcare. Learn more at <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30355>.

Social Security Programs

The Social Security Administration has other benefit programs that you may be able to use now that you are out of prison. These include:

Social Security Retirement Benefits. These payments are for people older than 62. To get the money, you must have to have worked or paid Social Security taxes for at least 10 years before you went to prison. Learn more here:

- The SSA's Retirement Calculator estimates your personal retirement benefits. Visit: <https://www.ssa.gov/prepare/plan-retirement>
- The When To Start Receiving Retirement Benefits fact sheet can help you understand how Social Security fits into your retirement decision: www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10147.pdf
- The SSA Retirement Planner gives information about your Social Security retirement benefits under current law: <https://www.ssa.gov/retirement>

Supplemental Security Income (SSI). This program provides income payments to people over 65 and adults and children who have a disability. You may be eligible if you are over 65, or you are blind or disabled and have little or no income and resources. You must also be a US citizen or national. SSI gives people money every month to help with things like food, clothing, and housing. Unlike Social Security Retirement Benefits, SSI benefits are not based on your prior work or a family member's prior work history.

- For information about eligibility, visit: <https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/>
- For information on SSI benefits after incarceration, visit: <https://www.ssa.gov/reentry/benefits.htm>

Medicare. This program provides health insurance to people older than 65 and people with a disability. See www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare/.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). This program gives money to adults and certain family members with disabilities. To use this program, you need to have worked for many years.

Social Security/SSI While Incarcerated

If you receive Social Security retirement, disability, or survivors benefits, your benefits are suspended if you're convicted of a criminal offense and sent to jail or prison for more than 30 continuous days. Your benefits can start again the month following your release. Although you can't receive Social Security benefits while you're incarcerated, benefits to your spouse or children will continue as long as they remain eligible.

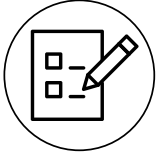
If you're receiving SSI, your payments also stop while you're incarcerated. Your payments can start again the month you're released, but if you are locked up more than 12 months, you are no longer eligible for SSI benefits. You must file a new application.

You are allowed to apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) a few months before your release so that benefits can begin quickly after your release. Speak to a reentry counselor at your facility for help.

- For information about the impact of incarceration on benefits, visit: www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10133.pdf
- For detailed information about eligibility for benefits after incarceration, visit: <https://www.ssa.gov/reentry/benefits.htm>

Note: Disability applications may be rejected at first. If you don't qualify, don't give up. Keep trying.

Learn more and apply at ssa.gov, or call (800) 722-1213 for help. Get in-person help by making an appointment with your local Social Security office. Go to <https://www.ssa.gov/locator/>.



Benefits Checklist

Program	Description	Do I qualify?	Have I applied?
SNAP	Money for food, LINK card		
Medicaid	Healthcare help		
TANF	Money for needy families		
AABD	Money for blind/disabled		
Lifeline	Help with phone and internet payment		
Rental Assistance Program	Provides help with rent		
LIHEAP	Provides help with utility bills		
Medicare	Health insurance for seniors, people with disabilities		
SSI	Monthly payments for those with disabilities		
SSDI	Monthly payments for those with disabilities		
Social Security Retirement Benefits	Monthly payments for those who are retired		

Places to Go For Help

You can go to other places for help too. **You can always call 3-1-1 (Illinois) or 2-1-1 (Chicago). This number will help direct you to a place where you can go for help.** There are many other places you can go for help—we've listed some in our directory.

I need help with...	Where to get help	Website or phone number
Food	Food pantries, soup kitchens	Find one at illinoisfoodbanks.org/sites.asp
Healthcare and dental care	Community health clinics and dental clinics. Go to an emergency room if you have an emergency	Find one at www.freeclinicdirectory.org/illinois_care.html
Substance use treatment	Support group, treatment programs	Call the SAMHSA National Helpline at (800) 662-4357. For a support group, go to aa.org (Alcoholics Anonymous) or na.org (Narcotics Anonymous).
Housing	Emergency housing, transitional housing	Go to https://www.hud.gov/findshelter/ or call 3-1-1 (Illinois) or 2-1-1 (Chicago).
Mental health (emergency)	Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, hospital emergency room	Call 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Call 911 if you are having an emergency.
Mental health (non-emergency)	Mental health clinics that offer free or low-cost services	Go to https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx or call the Illinois Warm Line at (866) 359-7953.



"I came home after ten years, I went to a homeless shelter and three days later I had a job. A week and a half later, I had an apartment. My first paycheck, I got a cheap studio apartment. So you can do it. Don't let your feelings from being incarcerated judge who you are and what you can do. Because you can make it."

— Tony C.

"The advice I would give is to be patient. Things in the outside world move very quickly and I think that you have to be aware and accepting that you don't have to catch up."

— Edmund B.



Housing After Release

Finding a place to live is one of the most important parts of the reentry process. It can also be one of the hardest parts. The challenge is to find housing that is accessible, low cost, and stable.

This chapter covers the following topics:

- Transitional housing (halfway houses)
 - Emergency housing
 - Public & subsidized housing
 - Private housing
 - Help with rent
 - Your legal rights
 - Housing for people on the sex offense registry
-



Transitional Housing

Many people who leave prison go to a halfway house or transitional house. Some transitional houses allow people to stay three months, others up to two years. If you are looking for transitional housing, please see the Prepare for Parole chapter for more information. Our directory also has a list of transitional houses.

- If you live in Chicago, complete an assessment through the Chicago Coordinated Entry System by calling (312) 361-1707. You can call 3-1-1 to ask for a ride to the shelter.
-

Subsidized and Public Housing

There are several different subsidized and public housing options in Illinois. These options are supported by the government and have rent that is cheaper than in the private market. Space is often limited and there may be waitlists.

Emergency Shelters

If you find yourself without a place to stay, there are emergency shelters. Some shelters are safe houses for victims of domestic abuse. Some shelters may have certain restrictions—restrictions on pets, on particular genders, or for people convicted of sex and/or violent offenses. Many shelters offer food, laundry, and support services to help you find more permanent housing. How to find emergency housing:

- Our directory has listed several emergency shelters in Illinois. Access it online at www.reentryillinois.net
- Call 3-1-1 in Chicago or 2-1-1 in the rest of Illinois and ask which shelters are accepting people.
- Go to www.shelterlistings.org to find an emergency shelter in any state.
- Go to www.hud.gov/states/illinois/homeless/shelters/sheltertable to find a list of shelters in Illinois.

- **Public housing** is owned by the government. People who meet income requirements can live there. Contact your local Public Housing Authority (PHA) to find out about public housing in your area. Go to <https://resources.hud.gov/> to find your PHA.
- **Section 8 housing** is a program where the government provides housing vouchers to help cover rent. You can live in a private apartment or house of your choice, and they will give you a voucher to help you pay for it. Section 8 housing is offered through your local Public Housing Authority (PHA).
- **Project-based subsidized housing**, or affordable housing, is housing that is owned by private property owners. They receive subsidies from the government to

make their housing cheaper for low-income people and families. Go to this website to find this type of housing: <https://ilhousingsearch.org/>. Your local PHA may also have a list of project-based subsidized housing.

- **Permanent supportive housing.** If you are a senior, veteran, or if you have a disability, mental illness, or HIV/AIDS diagnosis, or if you have been homeless, you may be able to get permanent supportive housing. Permanent supportive housing includes support services, such as medical care and counseling. There is no limit to how long you can stay there. There are several ways to find this type of housing:
 - The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) funds supportive housing programs and maintains a list of housing providers here: <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30361>.
 - Visit a Continuum of Care agency (CoC) to locate public supportive housing in your area. <https://www.hud.gov/states/illinois/homeless>
 - If you live in Chicago, use the Central Referral System to apply for permanent supportive housing: www.csh.org/chicagoes/

How much does subsidized or public housing cost?

How much you pay for housing depends on how much money you earn. Many places will require you to pay 30% of your income to rent.

Can I stay in public housing if I have a record?

In the past, many people with criminal records could not get into public or subsidized housing. This is changing, however. In Illinois, the recently passed Public Housing Access Bill allows most people released from prison to live in public housing upon reentry. Here are some of the key things you should know about the new law:

- Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) can't consider arrest records and findings of not guilty, juvenile records, expunged records, and sealed records.
- You can apply right after you are released; there is no waiting period.
- The PHAs can look back at your criminal record six months from the date of your application. PHAs can (but don't have to) deny people with recent felony convictions within the six-month look-back period. If you were recently convicted of a violent crime, drug use, or making/selling drugs, you may be denied.
- If you were incarcerated or convicted during those six months, you have an opportunity to present your case.
- Family members can no longer be evicted if you live with them.
- PHAs must keep records of the number of formerly incarcerated people who apply for public housing.

Two groups of people still CANNOT live in public housing under federal law:

- People on the sex offense registry.
- People convicted of producing meth.

Chicago's Just Housing Ordinance also makes it easier to access public housing.

How should I apply?

Public and subsidized housing programs often have long wait lists. You should apply as early as you can. We have listed county and city Public Housing Authorities in our online directory: reentryillinois.net. Call them and ask for instructions or apply online. Once you have applied, they will let you know when there is a place available. You can call and check to see where you are on the waiting list.

Private Housing

Private housing can be easier to find than public housing because there is more of it. However, it also costs more. Private housing can be found online and in the classified section of newspapers. Some websites include:

- www.apartments.com
- www.zillow.com
- www.forrent.com
- www.craigslist.org
- www.trulia.com

You are likely to run into barriers because of your criminal background. It may take a while to find a landlord who will rent to you. Large property management firms almost always conduct background checks, so you may have better luck with units in smaller complexes or in private homes.

Others who have come home from prison before you may be your best source of information. If you are part of a reentry program, use it as a resource. Use your network of friends and family. They may know of places where you can stay.

Renting an Apartment

Once you've found an apartment, call the landlord and set up a time to view it. Arrive on time and dress nicely. You want to give a good first impression. On your visit, you may be asked to fill out an application and pay an

application fee. The application will ask for information such as your employer, rent history, and current address. You may also be asked for references—people who can vouch for you, like employers or church leaders.

The application may also ask about your criminal history. Many landlords conduct background checks. You may worry that if you share your history, you may hurt your chance of getting the apartment. Even though this may be true, we suggest that you be up front if they ask. It may not disqualify you.

Questions you might ask a landlord:

- What is the rent?
- How much is the security deposit?
- Is there an application fee?
- Are utilities included?
- When is the rent due?
- What is the parking like?
- Are tenants able to make changes (e.g., paint the walls)?
- Is there additional cost for pets or other family members?
- Is there a background check? If so, who would be excluded from eligibility?
- What are the terms of the lease?
- What is your timeline?

Warning: If anyone asks you for money before you have even seen the apartment, you are probably being scammed. Do not pay anything before you have seen the apartment.

If a landlord agrees to rent to you, you will sign a lease or a rental agreement.

- A **lease** is usually a year-long commitment, and you agree to pay a certain amount each month for the whole year.
- A **rental agreement** is typically month-by-month. After 30 days, both you or the landlord are free to back out or change the agreement.

Read it carefully before signing or paying any fees. It is legally binding. You won't be able to back out once you have signed. Keep a copy in a safe place.

Security deposits. Many landlords require one to two month's rent as well as a security deposit before you move in. It's a good idea to take pictures of anything that is damaged when you move in so that you can show that you didn't cause it. The security deposit shows that you are serious about renting the apartment. If you choose not to move into the apartment, the landlord keeps this money. Ask for a receipt for the security deposit and any other fees you pay.

When you move out, your security deposit will be used to cover any damage to the apartment that you caused. Your landlord should not use your security deposit to pay for regular wear and tear of living in your apartment, but for items like a broken light fixture or carpet damage. You should receive a receipt for damages when you move out. Any leftover money from the security deposit should be mailed to you within 30 to 45 days.

Breaking a lease. If you need to move out before your lease ends, you can do so, but you may have to pay a fee. The amount that you pay should be listed in the lease, so read it carefully. You may have to keep paying rent until they find someone else to rent the apartment.

Help with Rent

If you need help paying rent or utilities, there are several programs that can help.

- **The Illinois Rental Assistance Program.** Go to an Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) office to apply. You can also call the IDHS Help Line at (866) 454-3571.
- Several cities and counties have rental assistance programs.
 - Chicago Rental Assistance Program. Visit a City of Chicago Community Service Center to apply or visit <https://www.illinoisrentalassistance.com/>
 - Lake County Federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program (FERA). Apply online. For questions or help with your applications, **call 2-1-1 or text your zip code to 899211.** Visit <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4578/Rental-Assistance>, or email EmergencyAssistance@LakeCountyHA.org.
 - Madison County Rent & Mortgage Assistance.
 - McHenry County Emergency Utility and Rental Assistance Program.
- **Community Action Agencies** across the State provide help with rent and other services, like help paying for utilities. Call 2-1-1 to find a Community Action Agency near you or visit <https://www.iacaanet.org/>.
- Call "Help is Here" at (833) 2-FIND-HELP (833) 234-6343) and be connected to the **Homeless Prevention Program.** This program helps with rent and utilities for people who are in danger of eviction, foreclosure or homelessness or are currently homeless.
- **Call 2-1-1** to be connected to local health and human service assistance.



Your Legal Rights

Important Housing Laws

Below we've listed some of the housing laws to be aware of. If a landlord breaks one of these laws, you can file a complaint. These laws apply if you are renting or buying a home, getting a mortgage, or seeking housing assistance.

Federal Fair Housing Act

- Cannot discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), family status, or disability.

Illinois Human Rights Act

- Cannot discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, age, order of protection status, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, disability, source of income, or arrest record.

US Department of Housing and Urban Development Fair Housing Act Guidelines

In 2016, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released guidance for how the Fair Housing Act applies to people who have arrest or conviction records.

- Arrest records and convictions *can* be used to deny people housing, but landlords that automatically refuse someone with a criminal record may violate the law.
- In 2022, HUD released additional guidance for housing providers, encouraging them to not consider criminal history. If they do, they should consider each individual's circumstances instead of excluding all individuals with convictions.

Just Housing Ordinance (Chicago)

- Criminal history cannot be considered if it is more than three years old, unless you were convicted of a sex offense that requires you to register or follow related residency restrictions.
- Arrests that did not result in convictions cannot be considered.
- If your criminal history is less than three years old, a landlord must conduct an individual assessment before denying you housing. They can consider things like the nature of the offense, how severe it was, age, and evidence of rehabilitation.

- Background checks cannot be performed until after the initial screening process to see if you qualify for housing. Screening criteria may include income, rental history, and credit score.
- Housing providers are not required to perform a background check.

Visit <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/content/just-housing-amendment-information-landlords> to learn more.

Some other cities also have housing discrimination laws. For example, the Urbana Human Rights Ordinance forbids discrimination based on arrest or conviction record.

Eviction

Are you worried about getting kicked out of your apartment? Go to <https://www.hud.gov/states/illinois/renting/tenantrights> to find information about landlord issues, your rights, and resources across Illinois. Here are a few programs that may help:

- Eviction Help Illinois: <https://evictionhelpillinois.org/> or (855) 621-0811
- Cook County Legal Aid for Housing and Debt: cookcountylegalaid.org or (855) 956-5763
- Chicago Eviction Resources: Chicago.gov/eviction or (312) 742-7368

Housing Discrimination

If you have been discriminated against, there are several ways you can file a complaint:

- You can file a complaint with the Illinois Department of Human Rights by phone, in person, or in writing. You will have 300 days to file a complaint. The Illinois Legal Aid Organization has instructions, forms, and resources to file a complaint: <https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/legal-information/housing-discrimination>

- You can file a complaint through the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) agency. Submit the complaint as soon as possible. Call them toll-free at (800) 669-9777 or (800) 877-8339, or email ComplaintsOffice05@hud.gov
- You can file a complaint in the city where you live. For instance, if you live in Urbana, you can file a grievance at the city's Human Relations Commission

Legal Assistance

Here are a few resources to help:

- Law Center for Better Housing: (312) 347-7600 or www.lcbh.org
- Center for Conflict Resolution: (312) 922-6464 www.ccrchicago.org
- Metropolitan Tenants Organization: (773) 292-4988 www.tenants-rights.org

Housing for People on the Sex Offense Registry

Sadly, there are many housing restrictions for people on Sex Offense Registries. It can be very difficult to find housing that meets supervision requirements, and has a landlord that will accept people who are on the registry. We wish we had better news, but the reality is it is hard for people on registries in Illinois to find housing.

We know of many people who are required to register who have not been able to get out because they could not find housing. They have stayed past the end of their prison sentence because they don't have a place to stay. Some people on the registry are homeless and are required to register every week because they don't have a permanent address.

Still, there is hope. Have patience, and be in frequent contact with your parole officer as you navigate housing challenges. Here are the few options that you may be able to access:

- Living with family members: If you are on the child sex offense registry and plan to live with family, you

cannot live within 500 feet of a school, playground, or other facility that serves children. If there is a new daycare or school that opens in your neighborhood, you will need to move.

- Transitional housing: We have tried to find out whether the places we list in our housing directory accept people on the sex offender registry but were not able to reach all of them. We have provided a short list of housing that we know accepts people on the registry at the end of this section.
- Private housing: While public housing won't be an option for you, you may be able to find private housing. Keep in mind that the same restrictions apply. If you are on the child sex offense registry, you cannot live within 500 feet of a school, playground, or other facility that serves children. You will have to move if a new facility opens.

Help and advocacy: We encourage you to reach out to the Chicago 400, an organization that helps and advocates for people on the sex offense registry. Check out their website: chicago400.net. You can call them at (978) 414-5373 or email Laurie Jo Reynolds at ljr@uic.edu.

To learn more about sex offense registration, go to <https://isp.illinois.gov/Sor/>



Places that Accept People on the Sex Offense Registry

New Beginnings Recovery Homes
(Multiple locations in the state)
(773) 295-6460
<https://www.nbrhi.org/>

Stairway to Freedom
4849 W Irving Park Rd, Chicago, IL 60641
(866) 993-7333
<https://stairwaysoberliving.com/>

Elite Houses of Sober Living
1236 W 72nd Pl, Chicago, IL, 60636
(312) 515-3092
<https://www.elitehousesofsoberliving.com/>

Henry's Sober Living House
8032 S Ingleside Ave, Chicago, IL 60619
(773) 752-1300
<http://www.henryshouse.org/>

Oxford House Abbey
7759 S Union Ave, Chicago, IL, 60620
(773) 488-2188
<https://www.oxfordhouse.org/>

Gateway Foundation
1706 N Kedzie Ave, Chicago, IL 60647
(773) 231-6236
<https://www.gatewayfoundation.org>

Safe Haven
2750 West Roosevelt Road Chicago, IL 60608
(773) 435-8300
<https://www.asafehaven.org/>

New Day Apartments
Waukegan, IL 60085
(224) 478-9074
<https://www.newdayapartments.com/>



Employment



You will hear a lot of discouraging talk about getting a job with a record. While it is hard, there are companies that are willing to hire people with records. Don't give up.

The good news is that there are lots of job openings right now. Many employers are having a hard time filling jobs. This doesn't mean it will be easy to find work, but you may have more options than you expect.

There is a lot involved with finding a job, so this is one of the longest chapters. It covers these topics:

- Employment resources
 - Make a plan
 - Popular job options
 - Women and employment
 - Apply for jobs
 - Your legal rights
 - Unemployment benefits
-

Employment Resources

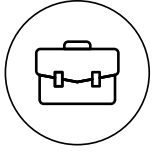
Finding a job and building a career is hard, especially with a criminal record. We strongly suggest that you find people or programs to help you. Here are a few places to start. There are many more listed in our online resource directory: reentryillinois.net

- **American Job Centers** help people search for jobs and find training. Go to careeronestop.org to find a location of an American Job Center near you. This website has many resources to help you with your job search. Call (877) 872-5627 for help.
- **The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership** (a partner of the American Job Center Network) helps people in the Chicago area find a job and build a career. Call (800) 720-2515 or go to their website: chicookworks.org
- **The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)** <https://ides.illinois.gov/> offers many resources for people who are unemployed or who are looking for jobs.
 - <https://illinoisjoblink.illinois.gov>. Search for jobs, download a resume, look for training and other resources.

- <https://ides.illinois.gov/unemployment.html>
Learn about unemployment insurance and how to apply.

- **Reentry programs.** Many of the reentry organizations and transitional housing we've listed in our directory, such as Safer Foundation, St. Leonard's Ministries, Phalanx Family Services, Target, and READI Chicago, offer employment services.
- Your **parole or probation officer** may have ideas about jobs and training you could apply for.





Job Planning Worksheet

Fill out this worksheet alone or with a career counselor.

What am I good at? Knowing your strengths is an important first step.

What are my weaknesses? What kinds of things are hard for you to do? What things don't come naturally to you?

What do I know how to do? Take some time to think about your skills. This could include skills you learned on the job, in prison programs, or by caring for family members.



Check some of the things you like to do.

- I like to work with people.
- I like solving problems.
- I like caring for people who are sick.
- I like working with food.
- I like building things.
- I like being part of a team.
- I like working with animals.
- I like being creative.
- I like being my own boss.
- I like routine.
- I like communicating with others.
- I like being a leader.
- I like using my hands.
- I like making a difference.
- I like variety in the things I do.
- I like working with computers.
- I like helping people.

Jobs that match my skills and interests	Are there lots of openings?	Special training needed?	What is the average hourly wage?

How will my criminal record impact my ability to get a job in these fields?

Based on my interests and skills, what is my short-term career goal?

Based on my interests and skills, what is my long-term career goal?

How can I reach my goal? What do I need to do? List the training or experience you may need.

Where can I go for help to reach my goal? List any family, friends, job centers, training programs, reentry programs, or community colleges that can help.

Make a Plan

For many people who leave prison, the goal is to get any job that pays, even if it isn't ideal. The job may not be something you want to do forever, but it can help you get back on your feet. It can give you experience and lead you to a better job in the future.

Even as you look for jobs to meet your basic needs, it's good to explore different careers. Find out what careers match your interests and skills. Look for careers that are in demand where you can earn good money. Learn about the training that you will need. See our Education chapter about different kinds of training.

Take time to make a plan. Talk to a career counselor about your skills and interests and the kind of job you are looking for. You can use the worksheet on the previous page to explore some of your career interests.

Here are a few of the many websites that can help you explore different careers:

- careeronestop.org Explore careers, find training, check out their toolkit, search for jobs, and more.
- mynextmove.org Explore careers and get information about what you can do to get a job.
- myskillsmyfuture.org Find out how your skills, experience and interests can lead to a new career.

We also recommend reading "Take Charge of Your Future." This guide for formerly incarcerated people will help you take steps to get education and training for a career. It was developed by the US Department of Education. Request a FREE copy by calling (877) 433-7827 or emailing edpubs@edpubs.ed.gov. You can access it online here: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/take-charge-your-future.pdf>

In the next few pages, you will find information about popular career options for people with records. These options are just a few of the many options that are available.



Popular Career Options



Commercial Drivers

Commercial drivers transport goods, people, and materials. They drive buses, delivery trucks, diesel trucks, and more. Many people who have been incarcerated have had success finding jobs as commercial bus or truck drivers.

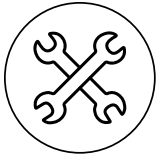
Commercial Driver Job Facts at a Glance	
Wages	Earn \$40,000 to \$60,000 per year
Employment	Very large, with lots of openings
Education needed	High school diploma or GED (usually) Commercial Driver's License (CDL)
Other requirements	Have a good driving record, strong customer service skills for some positions

Prepare in prison: If you don't already have your GED, get it! Safer Foundation offers a program at its Adult Transition Center that prepares you to get your Commercial Driver's License (CDL).

Outside of prison: Here's how you can get started in this field:

- **Apply for a temporary commercial learner's permit.** If you have had a CDL in the past or in a different state, speak with the Vehicle Services Department to find out what you need to do to get a license. Your learner's permit is good for 180 days.
- **Complete CDL training.** If you have not already had training, you may want to take a class at a commercial driver's training facility. Many community colleges (E.g., Olive Harvey) offer this training. If you live in Illinois, you can find a list of Illinois certified training facilities at: https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/drivers/driver_education/home.html
- **Take the road and written tests.** A study guide for the tests can be found here: https://ilsos.gov/publications/pdf_publications/dsd_ds9.pdf. You may be able to find a hard copy in your prison's library or resource room.
- **Get your CDL.** You will need to pay \$60 for the license and it will need to be renewed every four years.





Construction Jobs

There are many different construction careers. People in these careers build and repair homes, buildings, roads and more. They install solar panels. They maintain yards and parks. They install and service heating and cooling (HVAC) systems. Jobs include:

- Road worker
- Painter
- Heating and air conditioning technician
- Welder
- Solar installer
- General laborer
- Landscaper
- Building maintenance worker

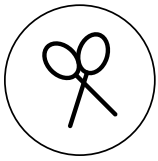
Note: Some construction jobs (such as plumber, electrician, or mason) may require an apprenticeship with a trade union. Some unions have restrictions about hiring people with criminal records. It’s a good idea to check before applying.

Construction Job Facts at a Glance	
Wages	Earn \$40,000 to \$70,000 per year, depending on the job
Employment	Large occupation, lots of openings
Education needed	High school diploma or GED Some jobs require formal training, certificates, or an apprenticeship. Most jobs require on-the-job training.
Other requirements	Driver’s license, OSHA certification

Prepare in prison: If you have the opportunity, take construction, building maintenance, or horticulture training while in prison. Many IDOC facilities have these programs. Several IDOC facilities will soon be offering clean energy jobs training to prepare people for jobs like solar installer or building maintenance worker. This training will help prepare you for well-paying jobs in clean energy that are in high demand.

Outside of prison: There are lots of ways to get started in a construction field. Here are a few options.

- Some jobs require very little formal training. Look for entry level jobs where you can get training on the job.
- Look for **community-based training programs** in the construction trades. For instance, the Clean Energy Network Hub Program will soon offer free training at community locations throughout Illinois for jobs such as solar installer and building maintenance worker. This program is specifically recruiting formerly incarcerated people. Find out more here: <https://dceo.illinois.gov/climateandequitablejobs.html>
- Many **community colleges** offer affordable workforce programs and certifications in the construction trades. The Illinois Workforce Equity Initiative is a community college program that offers short-term workforce training opportunities in construction and other workforce sectors. Find out if your local community college participates in this program. <https://www.illinoiswei.org/>
- Consider a **pre-apprenticeship program** in construction. These programs are offered by community-based organizations and provide basic construction training and wrap-around services. You can find a list of Illinois Works pre-apprenticeship programs here: <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/ApprenticeshipIL/Pages/PreApp.aspx>
- **Chicago Women in Trades** offers opportunities to women who are looking to enter either construction or welding. All opportunities are free of charge, but you need to apply.



Barbering and Cosmetology

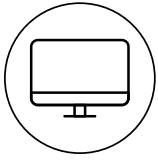
Barbering and Cosmetology Job Facts at a Glance	
Wages	Illinois average: ~\$34,000/year
Employment	Large occupation, lots of openings
Education needed	To work for a company, you will likely need a GED or high school diploma and some training. Some jobs require a license. Others just want experience.
Other requirements	Tools, if you're starting your own business, though you might be able to share these costs with a business partner.

Prepare in prison: If you can, get training while in prison. Stateville, Sheridan and Dixon offer barbering or cosmetology training. Cook County Jail also offers a barbering school, administered by Larry's Barber College.

Outside of prison: There are lots of ways to get started.

- **Training.** Larry's Barber College offers courses in four locations in addition to Cook County Jail. Legacy Barber College is a barber school that places extra focus on the needs of returning citizens. Their barber curriculum includes restorative justice principles and seminars in areas of business, entrepreneurialism, marketing, licensing, and financial literacy.
- **Self-employment.** If you already have the skills and equipment, you can begin working for friends and build up a client base by word of mouth. Think about what you might be able to offer that others won't. Can you work outside of regular business hours? Are you willing to make house calls? Eventually, you may have to incorporate and pay taxes. You can read more about the process of starting your own business later in this section.





Computer or Information Technology Jobs

There are many jobs for people who like to work with computers. Jobs include help desk technicians, computer network support specialists, computer programmers, computer systems analysts and more. This industry is constantly growing and well paid. Many of these jobs require only a small amount of training and are in great demand.

Technology Job Facts at a Glance	
Wages	Wages range widely, from about \$35,000 for entry level jobs to \$80,000+
Employment	Large occupation, lots of openings
Education needed	High school diploma or GED (associate or bachelor's degrees required for some jobs) Formal training program (such as CompTia A+) On-the-job training
Other requirements	Strong computer skills, customer service skills

Prepare in prison: Take advantage of any opportunity to use computers while in prison and learn some basic skills, such as how to use Microsoft Office. There are a few facilities that offer special computer or IT training: Illinois River, DuQuoin, Decatur, and Lincoln.

Outside of prison: There are many different training programs you can take.

- **Libraries, adult education and community centers** often offer basic computer classes. Goodwill career centers offer training in computer and digital skills, and some classes are online.
- Go to **Northstar** at digitalliteracyassessment.org to test your digital literacy skills and build your skills. You can access classes online or find a Northstar location where you can attend classes. They offer certificates for skills you have mastered.
- Most **community colleges** offer IT certificate programs and degree programs. Many are very affordable.
- If you are a good self-learner, try taking computer and IT classes online. **Hackbrite Academy** offers a free online course in Python (a popular programming language). **Skillcrush** teaches other important programming languages like CSS. If this is unfamiliar to you, don't worry, you will have the chance to learn. Programming languages create instructions to tell a website what you want it to look like and do. **Edx** and **Coursera** also have a lot of free courses for learning skills like coding or data entry.
- **Columbia University's Justice Through Code** program is a free semester-long intensive coding program for formerly incarcerated people. There are openings each semester, and you can complete the course online. The program helps people find jobs after they complete their training.



Dining and Hospitality Jobs

There are many good opportunities in the dining and hospitality industry, though entry level wages can be quite low. Right now, the industry is also seeing major shortages, which means that you might be able to move into a more advanced position more quickly.

There are many kinds of hospitality companies, and many different kinds of roles within those companies. For a typical restaurant job, there is front of house, back of house, and bar. There are also positions in fast food chains, bars and clubs, hotels, and catering companies.

Many of these jobs require unconventional hours. This may put a strain on your personal relationships if you are gone most evenings and weekends. These hours can be good if you are available to provide childcare during the regular working day.

Dining and Hospitality Job Facts at a Glance	
Wages	Wages range widely, from about \$22,000 for entry level jobs to \$80,000+
Employment	Large occupation, lots of openings
Education needed	High school diploma or GED (associate or bachelor's degree required for some jobs) For some jobs, formal training program (if you work in an establishment which serves liquor, you must complete Safe Serve Certification, for example) On-the-job training
Other requirements	Customer service skills, ability to be calm under pressure, ability to do several things at once, ability to work well with a team

Prepare in prison: Many facilities have food service programs where you can get experience. Take advantage of those programs if they are available.

Outside of prison: There are many different training programs you can take.

- Many community colleges and other training programs offer food services certificates. See Southwestern Illinois College, for instance.
- **The COLORS Hospitality Opportunities for Workers** operates in Chicago and offers comprehensive free training opportunities for restaurant industry personnel.
- **Hospitality Opportunities for People (re)Entering Society (HOPES)** also “connects adults of all ages with current or previous justice-involvement to career opportunities in the restaurant, foodservice, and hospitality industry.” They provide training and assistance in gaining employment in the industry. In Illinois, they work with IDOC and Safer Foundation.



Human Services and Advocacy

Many of EJP's alumni work in human services to help people who have been incarcerated. They are caseworkers, counselors, educators, social workers, mediators, and program managers. They advocate for change and better policies.

We need people who have been incarcerated to help make our systems better! You have experience and wisdom that others can learn from! People will be able to relate to you because of your experience.

Social service careers can be a meaningful way of moving on and helping others. But they can also be stressful. Be aware that working with others who are struggling may be difficult as you cope with your own challenges and past trauma.

Human Services Job Facts at a Glance	
Wages	Wages range from about \$30,000 for entry level jobs to \$60,000+
Employment	Large occupation, lots of openings
Education needed	High school diploma or GED Some jobs require short-term, on-the-job training. Many positions require an associate's or bachelor's degree or a license.
Other requirements	Strong people skills, ability to work in stressful situations. Most positions require basic computer skills.

Prepare in prison: Find ways to get involved in programs that help others. Can you help lead workshops? Tutor others? Be part of a peer support group? Help teach a reentry class? These opportunities will give you a taste of what it's like to work in human services. They can help you develop leadership skills.

Most jobs require some education. Get your GED and take some college classes if you can. Take some basic computer classes if they are available.

Outside of prison: There are lots of ways to get started.

- **Get involved & volunteer.** We recommend that you get involved in reentry programs or other services that interest you. As you participate in these programs, ask the people who are helping you about their jobs and what they do. Then ask if there are things you can do to help. Volunteering is a great way to get your foot in the door. We know of people who got jobs after volunteering for a while. Even if you don't get a job at that organization, they may be able to help connect you to another similar job.
- **Take advantage of leadership/advocacy training.** There are several organizations that offer advocacy training. The Illinois Alliance for Reentry and Justice, for instance, offers advocacy training for formerly incarcerated individuals. <https://www.ilarj.org/>
- **Go to school.** Depending on what your career goal is, you may need an associate or bachelor's degree or an advanced degree. See our Education chapter for advice.



Self-Employment

Being self-employed has its merits. You can set your own schedule and the money you make is yours (after you pay taxes). You might buy some equipment to do landscaping in your community. You might rent out a small booth to cut people’s hair. You might repair people’s homes. You might offer computer support. We interviewed David, a formerly incarcerated individual who started his own business. He offered the following advice.

To get started, you’ll need:

1. **A good idea.** Jot down a few ideas on paper first. Ask yourself, what am I good at? What services can I provide? Is there a clear need for this in the community?
2. **Training.** Get all the training you can. Take business or computer classes. You will need strong finance skills. You will need math skills, customer service skills, and more.
3. **Equipment**
4. **Space for work and storage.** Depending on your idea, you may be able to work at home or rent a storage shed. Maybe you can rent a small booth.
5. **Financial skills.** It can be challenging to manage finances and taxes.
6. **Feedback on your plan from others.** They might see a challenge or a good idea that you initially overlooked.

Growing Your Idea into a Business

Some people who are self employed decide to grow their idea into a business by hiring a few more people and getting a more permanent location. You might start your own barbershop, a tutoring business, an HVAC business, or a restaurant.

Starting your own business takes a lot of work. Many of them do not succeed. Here are the basic things you’ll need to turn your self-employment venture into a small business:

- **Capital.** You’ll need money to start your business.

- **More space.** Maybe you will rent an office space or garage.
- **Employees and ability** to grow a client base.
- **Marketing plan.**
- **Information.** You’ll want to do lots of research about the industry. What other businesses offer these services? What technologies do they use? How do they get clients?

We recommend that you seek out professional business help. There will be lots of paperwork to manage. You’ll have to do taxes and finances for your business. In Illinois, you need to file with the state to make your business official. Talk with someone who understands the ins and outs of loans and taxes. Lawyers who advertise experience with incorporation can file your paperwork, but they also charge a fee.

Free resources do exist. Here are a few:

- **PERC** is a Chicago-based entrepreneurial training program for both incarcerated and previously incarcerated citizens who want to start or expand a business. See <http://www.percempowers.org/> or call (773) 341-2070. They offer pre-release training and community training.
- Those who complete training may apply for small business loans offered by the **Chicago Neighborhood Initiative Micro Finance Group**
- **Illinois Small Business Development Centers** are a statewide resource that provides planning advice, counseling, training, and access to financing programs. To find one near you, go online to <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/small-business.html>
- **Look for a small business accelerator.** Seek out your local business association or Chamber of Commerce to get help.



“Starting a business can put a strain on your relationships. Talk about your plans with the people you care about. Keep them in loop. Take care to maintain your relationships even when things are busy.”

— **Anonymous**

Women and Employment

It can be especially hard for women to find jobs after release. They are more likely than men to be unemployed. When they do find jobs, they often get paid less or work fewer hours. They are more likely to get hired in temp jobs and entry level jobs, even when they have skills and training for more advanced jobs.

As a woman, here are a few things you may face.

- **Greater discrimination.** People don't expect women to be locked up and often judge them more harshly.
- **Difficulty balancing family and jobs.** Perhaps you have young children, parents, or grandparents you are caring for. It's hard to work a job and care for your family at the same time. It's hard to find childcare.
- **Many of the popular job options for those with criminal records hire mostly men.** You may feel uncomfortable if you are the only woman on the crew.
- **You may feel unsafe at your jobs, or unsafe getting to the job.**

Despite these challenges, we recommend that you approach your job search with patience and hope. There are barriers that you will face, but many women have found jobs after prison. You can, too.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Get as much education and training as you can while in prison.
- Find reentry and job programs that serve women. They can help you access childcare and get the emotional support you need. We have listed a few in our directory.
- Be confident! Sometimes women think that they are not qualified. Don't pass up a chance to apply, even if you don't meet all the requirements.
- Don't be afraid to look for jobs in fields with mostly men, such as construction or IT. In fact, these fields need and want more women! There are free training programs to bring more women into these jobs.

Look for Jobs

Look for jobs that you qualify for. What experience, education, and training do they require? Is the job a good fit for your skills? Even if you don't meet all of the requirements, think about applying anyway. Don't sell yourself short! Be confident in your skills and abilities. Sometimes, you can get the training you need on the job.

It's important to be realistic. You will probably have to apply for several jobs before you get hired. Be confident in your skills. You've already dealt with a lot of difficult things, so try to be patient and open-minded to the opportunities that arise.

Networking. Networking is probably the most important way to find a job. Successful job seekers often talk to many different people. These people may not have a job for you right now, but they could have career advice. Maybe they know someone else with a job lead. They might learn of a job in the future. Mention that you are looking for a job to friends, family, and casual acquaintances. Contact people who do the kind of work that you are interested in.

Online. These days, many people find jobs through websites like monster.com, careerbuilder.com, linkedin.com and snagajob.com. [Indeed.com](http://indeed.com) is one of the largest sources of job postings in the world. It collects job postings from employer websites, job boards, and more. These sites can be good if you want to work for a large employer. Lots of people submit online applications, especially to large companies. It may be hard to stand out.

You may have better luck looking at company websites. Often, you will find a link to "Current Jobs," "Careers" or "Employment" on the home page. The website "Jobs that Hire Felons" has a long list of companies whose hiring policies include people with a background: jobsthathirefelons.org.

When searching for a job online, be careful to avoid scams. Scammers may request money or ask for information like your date of birth, Social Security number, or debit/credit card number. Be careful about giving out this personal information on the internet.

★ Need to use a computer? Visit your public library.

Attend job fairs. Meet employers, recruiters, and schools. You may learn about a new field or opportunity that you didn't think of.

☆ Keep a record of all the places you have applied to: online applications, visits made in person, initial phone calls, follow-up phone calls, interviews. This can be good information to show your parole officer, too.

Job application forms. The purpose of a job application is to get an interview. Most hiring managers will review your application for 15 to 30 seconds. They'll want to see a form that's neat and complete.

Many job applications need to be filled out online. If you don't have access to a home computer, visit a local library or community center.

If you will be filling out a paper job application at a job site, bring notes about previous jobs and training: dates, job titles, former employer contact info. This is better than trying to remember the details and making mistakes.

Tips for filling out the application.

- List your past jobs and describe what you did. What skills did you develop? What were the important things you did during your shift?
- Focus on what you have to offer. Downplay the negatives.
- List relevant work experience from your personal life. Were you a caregiver for your siblings, children, parents, or grandparents? What skills did you develop? Did you learn to communicate, resolve conflicts, manage people's health, take care of finances?
- Consider the skills they are looking for. If they want good customer service skills, explain how you worked with customers in your past jobs.
- Use examples from your personal life to explain your passion for this work. Maybe when you were a young child, you took care of your sick grandmother. This inspired you to become an excellent home health aid.
- Do not list your wages from past employment. Instead, write "will discuss at the interview."
- We suggest you list the jobs you held while incarcerated. You gained relevant experience and skills. For in-prison jobs, you can list your employer as the State of Illinois.
- If they ask you for your "Reason for Leaving" give a positive reason, if possible, even if you were fired or let go. Some examples of positive reasons for leaving

are: You relocated (you left because you went to prison, or you were transferred).

- You wanted a career change.
- You became a full-time student.
- The work was seasonal.
- You wanted to advance or make more money.
- In Illinois, most employers are not allowed to ask about felonies on job applications. Some still do. If they ask, "Have you ever been convicted of a felony?" we recommend that you check "Yes." Write, "Will discuss at interview." If you lie, you may get the job, but you could get fired later if they find out.
- The application may ask you for references, people who can vouch for you. These should not be family members or friends. Be sure to ask people if they are willing to be your reference before writing their names down. Good potential references include:
 - Former or current employers
 - Supervisors
 - Teachers
 - Social workers
 - Religious leaders
 - People you volunteer with

Resumes and cover letters. Many job applications require a resume and cover letter. A resume maps out past jobs, your skills, and your interests. Your cover letter is an actual letter from you to the employer. It tells a short story about who you are—why you want the job, your background, and what's important to you. Keep your letter to one page.

Writing good resumes and cover letters takes time. Examples of a resume and cover letter from someone who has been incarcerated can be found in the forms section. Here are a few online resources that can help you write resumes and cover letters:

- <https://hbr.org/2014/02/how-to-write-a-cover-letter>
- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html



"I thought I'd be prepared because I had my resume in hand. As it turns out, you need several resumes, adjusted to different jobs, and the ability to write cover sheets on the fly."

— Pablo

Interviews. Once you've submitted your job application, wait to be contacted. Hopefully, they will be interested in interviewing you. Most applications do not lead to interviews. Be patient. Continue to apply to other jobs until you have a job offer. Many job seekers are nervous about interviews. They want to say the right things and make a good impression.

- **Practice what you'll say.** [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/top-interview-questions-and-answers) has a list of common interview questions and answers that you can practice with a friend, counselor, or family member. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/top-interview-questions-and-answers>
- **Bring your resume and contact information for your references.** Bring copies of work licenses, your driving record, and your Social Security or immigration cards. Bring a pen and notebook to write down information.
- **Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early.** This shows you are responsible and eager to be there.
- **Wear appropriate clothes.** Wear something a bit more formal than what you would wear for the job.
- **Consider your body language.** Even when you are not speaking, you are sending a message. Make good eye contact, stand and sit tall, and smile.
- **Test your equipment.** If your interview is online, test your video and internet connection beforehand. Make sure you're in a place without disruptions.
- **Come prepared to ask the employer questions.** At the end of a job interview, most hiring managers will ask if you have any questions. Here are some examples:
 - What is the organization's plan for the next five years?
 - How will I be evaluated, and in what timeframes? By whom?
 - What are the day-to-day responsibilities of this job?
 - What computer equipment and software do you use?
 - When will a decision be made about this position?



"Interview tips? Look good, smell good, speak good."

—David T.

Talking about your criminal record. You may have a hard time answering questions about your criminal record. Here are a few tips to increase your chance of getting hired:

- **Own It.** "At that time I was making some bad choices and I was convicted of...(state your offense)." Address any concerns an employer might have.
- **Redirect.** After addressing your background, steer the interview back to your skills and what you bring to the job. "I can see why that might concern you. But that was several years ago. Since then, I have had a solid work record. I come to work on time. I am a hard worker and quick learner."
- **Unrelated to job.** If your felony conviction is not related to the job you are applying for, you might say, "Yes, I was convicted of a felony, but it was not job related."
- **Keep it positive.** "I thought a lot about where my life was going and I decided to make some changes." Talk about your current activities and future career goals. Mention education and job training, community work, and other activities.
- **Encourage the employer.** "I am a good worker and I want to work, I just need an opportunity to prove my skills to an employer." Tell them that you want the job!
- **Make a good first and last impression.** Employers are more likely to remember their first and last impression, so if possible, try to address your criminal background history in the middle of the interview.

Zoom interviews. Since the pandemic, some employers prefer to use Zoom, or other online video conferencing platforms to conduct their interviews. If you are invited for a Zoom interview, you must create an account before your interview.

What you need:

- An active email (Gmail, AOL, Yahoo, etc.)
- A computer or electronic device with wifi

How to create a free Zoom account:

- Sign up through <https://zoom.us/freesignup/>.
- Enter your email and follow the prompts.
- Be sure to use your legal name.
- Create a password that you will remember.

Before your interview, practice using the tools in the call. This will get you familiar with Zoom and allow you to focus on the interview itself rather than the technology.



Zoom controls

Common Zoom Features.

1. **Mute/Unmute:** Used for your microphone. When in an interview, it is best to mute your microphone if there is a group of people or if there is background noise.
2. **Start/Stop Video:** Used for your camera. When joining a call, a good tip is to check your camera and surroundings before entering the call. For interviews, keep your camera on unless told otherwise.
3. **Invite:** This feature is used mostly for people who are hosting calls such as interviewers.
4. **Participants:** This shows you who is in the call with you.
5. **Share screen:** This button allows you to share your computer screen with other participants if needed.
6. **Chat:** Used to talk to others in the call.

Advice From an Employer

We reached out to Tanja, an employer who has hired many people who have been incarcerated. In the interview below, Tanja explains what employers are looking for. She gives advice about how to talk about your criminal history with employers.



"If you're scared to tell an employer, hey, I've been to prison, just tell them. What's the worst thing they can do? Say no, we're not going to hire you. And you go to the next door. Knock on the next door. Say hey, are you hiring?"

— Tony C.



What are the most important qualities you look for in a job candidate?

For me, the most important quality is reliability. I also appreciate it when people are eager to learn and respond well to constructive criticism. The fit between the person and the position is also critical.

How much do you need to say about your criminal background?

I think it really depends on the position. It is a mistake to come in and tell me your whole life. That is too much too soon. But being super vague will make me wonder if you are trying to hide something. For me, honesty is critical. I let people know I am not here to judge and as far as I am concerned, they have done their time. What I care about is the present and the future. Can they do this job now? How much training and supervision will they need? What are their skills and how can these skills aid in the job performance?

What impresses you about candidates?

I am usually impressed when I see someone who has done their homework. They know what the position is, they Googled the company, and they know what we are looking for. It is ideal to tailor your history to the position and capitalize on your skills. Link these skills to the job announcement and tell me how these skills will be used to help me. Also demonstrate enthusiasm for what the company does. If it is the restaurant industry, tell me how much you enjoy the food and why.

What questions should the interviewee ask the employer?

Do your homework about my company, the job description, and ask me questions as if you had the position. Ask for details about logistics: How many hours, what days and times do you need me? What qualities are you looking for in a worker? What would a typical day be like in the job? What are the opportunities for growth? Do you offer training, and if so, how does that work? Who will be my supervisor? What is their management style? These questions will make me believe you are serious about the job.

What questions can they expect in an interview, and how would you handle the tricky ones?

- Why are you applying for this job now?
- What is your availability? Convince me that you will be available and reliable. Make sure you can make the work schedule work.

- What are your best skills? What skills would you like to develop in the future?
- What were you doing before? This question can be tricky if you have a big gap in your resume. If you were just released, be honest, but capitalize on the

skills you have that make you right for this position even though you have been out of the market for a while. Emphasize how the situation has changed, point me to your references and how they will assure me that you are worth taking a chance on.



Your Legal Rights

Equal Employment Laws

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is a federal agency that enforces federal laws that prohibit discrimination in the workplace. These laws apply to job applicants and employees across the country. The EEOC addresses the following issues that may be relevant to you:

Background check. Employers who wish to do a background check must:

- Get the applicant's or employee's written consent ahead of time.
- Tell the applicant if the content of the report will be used for employment decisions.
- Before taking adverse action (like not hiring an applicant or firing an employee) based on background information, give the applicant or employee a copy of the report.
- Inform the applicant or employee of their right to review and dispute the report.

Employment Denial. The EEOC cannot prohibit employers from obtaining or using arrest or conviction records. However, the EEOC does provide guidance to ensure that arrest and conviction records are not used in a way that discriminates against a person because of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information.

EEOC guidance outlines best practices and suggests employers limit their questions about arrest or conviction records to records that are job related. Factors employers could include:

- The nature and gravity of the criminal offense or conduct.
- How much time has passed since the conduct or sentence.
- The nature of the job (where it is performed, supervision & interaction with others).

Employers can still choose candidates with more or better experience, but the EEOC discourages use of irrelevant criminal history when making employment decisions. If you believe you have been discriminated against, you can file a complaint by mail, telephone (800) 669-4000, or in person at an EEOC office: <https://www.eeoc.gov/>

Certificate of Rehabilitation

A criminal record can prevent you from getting a license in certain fields, including education, transit, and childcare. You may be able to get a Certificate of Rehabilitation. This allows you to apply for jobs that require these licenses. It does not remove offenses from your record, but it may allow you to get a license. See the Legal Matters chapter.

Work Opportunity Tax Credits

If employers seem reluctant to hire you, you may want to tell them about the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. Employers who hire people with felony convictions can receive a tax credit equal to 40% of up to \$6,000 of wages paid to eligible individuals with felonies who have left prison within the last year. It is only offered during their first year of employment.

Fidelity Bonding

When interviewing for a job, you may also want to tell the employer about fidelity bonding. Fidelity bonding is an insurance policy that protects employers against employee

dishonesty or theft. The Fidelity Bonding Program provides employers no-cost insurance coverage for employees with past convictions. Coverage is free for 6 months and ranges from \$5,000 to \$25,000.

Ban the Box

By law in Illinois, employers who have more than 15 employees on the payroll cannot access criminal background checks until after an interview is conducted. This law is called “Ban the Box” because it prohibits employers from asking you to check a box on your application if you’ve had a criminal conviction. You may submit a complaint against an employer who violates this rule by visiting: <https://www2.illinois.gov/idol/Laws-Rules/FLS/Pages/Ban-The-Box-Complaint-Form.aspx>

Illinois Human Rights Act

In March 2021, Illinois amended the Illinois Human Rights Act and expanded protections for job applicants with arrest and conviction records. It is illegal for employers in Illinois to disqualify a job applicant or employee with a conviction record unless there is a “substantial relationship” to the job. Employers must consider several factors when making this decision. If you believe an employer has discriminated against you, you can file a charge of discrimination with the Illinois Department of Human Rights by visiting: <https://dhr.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dhr/filingacharge/documents/cis-emp-pa-fc-sh-rev-03-2021-vf.pdf>

Conflicts and Safety

If you are being harassed or discriminated against because of your race, gender identity, or sexual orientation, your civil rights are being violated. If you are comfortable enough where you are working, you can speak to Human Resources about what you have experienced. Sometimes it’s better to seek help elsewhere.

There are resources that can support you. If you have been sexually harassed, you can contact **RAINN**, the

National Sexual Assault Hotline at (800) 656-4673 for personal support. They can help you file a complaint.

It is a good idea to get a lawyer before starting a lawsuit (and there are pro bono lawyers who can help--see our directory). If you are ready to file a complaint on your own, you may do so at the **US Department of Justice Civil Rights Division**.

If you are working in a place that is unsafe, you can file a complaint with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) by calling (800) 321-6742 or online at <https://www.osha.gov/workers/file-complaint>. If you think that something may be unsafe, but don’t have proof, you may notify your employer in writing. If they do not resolve the issue, you may then file a complaint with OSHA. It is illegal for employers to retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

Of course, it is hard to address these problems if you are in an insecure position and need to keep your job. If you can talk to a pro bono lawyer, they might be able to give you advice so that you are not put in a worse situation. See our Legal Matters chapter.

Unemployment Benefits

Most people who leave prison are not eligible for unemployment benefits. To qualify, you must have made at least \$1,600 in the last 12 months before you file your claim and lost your job through no fault of your own. You cannot receive unemployment directly after you return home if you lost your previous job due to your incarceration or if you were in prison for more than 12 months.

If you believe you may qualify, visit your local Illinois Department of Employment Security office or an Illinois WorkNet Center. To find a location near you, use the Illinois Department of Employment Security website: http://www.ides.illinois.gov/Pages/Office_Locator.aspx

You can also file a claim online by visiting <https://benefits.ides.illinois.gov/Benefits/>



Education

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A lot of people think about going back to school after they leave prison. Going to school helps you learn more about the world. It can also help you meet new people and get better jobs.

This chapter has information about:

- ABE and GED Programs
- Vocational Training and Apprenticeships
- College
- Paying for College

It is never too late to learn or go to school or college. Learning can even make you feel happier and more fulfilled. You can go to school part-time or full-time. If you are still in prison, take classes before you leave.

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ABE, GED and High School Equivalency Programs

Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs can help you get better at reading, writing, math, listening, and speaking. Usually, you can find ABE programs at adult schools, career centers, libraries, and community colleges. They are free or cost only a little. For-profit agencies like Kaplan and ELS Language Centers also offer ABE, but they charge more money.

ABE programs can also help you learn English or prepare for the GED. A list of ABE programs in Illinois can be found at www.ilcco.net/AdultEd/index1.cfm.

The General Education Development (GED) test is like a high school diploma. If you did not graduate from high school, you can take this test and it will count on your resume as a diploma. The test will have questions about things you would learn in high school. A GED or high school diploma is a requirement for many jobs. If you don't have your GED, you should try to get one.

You can register online to take the GED test at ged.com. You will probably take the test on a computer at an official GED testing site.

The GED is not an easy test. You will probably need to study. A lot of places have free preparation programs that can help you get ready:

- Community colleges
- Adult learning centers
- Online study programs
- American Job Centers

A lot of programs will let you sign up at any time. They can also give you a study plan to help you get better in harder subjects. For more info see study.com/illinois_ged.html

☆ Do you need help learning how to use new technology? Go to **Northstar** at digitalliteracyassessment.org to get help. They have online classes and in-person ones at different locations. They will give you certificates when you gain new skills.

Vocational Training and Apprenticeships

Vocational programs help you learn how to do a job. They can teach you things like welding, car repair, plumbing and more. You can go to community and technical colleges, as well as trade schools to take vocational classes. Some community-based organizations also offer vocational training.

A lot of prisons have vocational classes. Take them if you can. Vocational classes help you get some experience and see if you like the work. Once you leave, you can get an entry-level position or an apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships help you get training and experience. You'll also get paid through an apprenticeship. Apprenticeships are usually offered through trade unions.

Visit the Illinois WorkNet website to find a vocational program: illinoisworknet.com. The Illinois American Job Center is another good place to look: usa.gov/find-a-job

For more information on apprenticeship programs in Illinois, go to <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/ApprenticeshipIL/Pages/default.aspx>.



“Consider seeking simple certifications, like CDL, sanitation, limo driver, or forklift.”

— Earl W.

Degree Type	Information
Vocational certificates	Certificates that prepare you for specific jobs or tasks. Offered by community colleges, technical schools, or workforce programs.
Associate degree	2-year degree granted by a community college, university, or technical school.
Bachelor’s degree	4-year degree granted by a college or university.
Master’s degree	2+ years, after earning a bachelor’s degree. Typically requires research.
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	4+ years, after earning a bachelor’s or master’s degree. The highest academic degree to earn.
Professional degrees (MD, JD, MBA)	Degrees required to practice in certain professions (doctors, lawyers, business), after earning a bachelor’s degree.



College

Community college

If you haven't been in school for a while, you might want to start at community college. Community colleges are inexpensive and offer many different classes. A lot of them offer programs where you can get a GED and college credit at the same time. Community colleges usually offer associate degrees, certificate programs, and workforce training.

4-year college

Many people who want to earn a 4-year Bachelor's degree start by attending community college for a year. Then they transfer to a 4-year college to finish. You'll save money for the first two years because community college costs less than 4-year schools.

You have to earn a certain number of credits to get a 4-year college degree. Some credits must be in general subjects like science, math, and history. If you finish these credits at a community college and then transfer to a school that offers a 4-year degree, your credits can transfer over too. Make sure to check that your new school will count your transfer credits.

Check out the website of the Illinois Community College Board for information about planning for college, paying for college, and picking a college. Visit it at <http://www2.iccb.org/iccb/>. To learn more, visit the websites of the schools you're interested in, or you can call, email, or visit an admissions counselor or academic advisor at these schools.

Where should you apply?

Deciding where to go may take some time. Think about what kind of degree you want and what kind of college you want to go to. Research colleges online or at the local library. Almost all colleges have websites where you can learn about their price, academic programs, non-academic activities, the town where they are located, and many other things.

Applying for College

Step 1: Get the application

For almost all colleges, you will apply on their websites. If you need help with this a librarian at a public library will likely be able to help you.

Step 2: Gather your information

To apply for college, you will probably need:

- Your Social Security number.
- A state driver's license or identification card.
- The dates of high school and previous college attendance.
- Unopened transcripts from high school, GED, and/or college transcripts, whichever you completed most recently.
- Many four-year colleges will also ask for ACT or SAT test scores.

Some applications may ask about your criminal history. If you tell them you have been convicted of a felony, some schools will ask for more information. Just because they are asking for the information doesn't mean you will be rejected, but different schools have different policies about backgrounds. You can also ask to speak with an admissions counselor about this.

Step 3: Take the SAT or ACT exam

Is this your first time applying for college? Many four-year colleges require you to take the ACT or SAT college entrance exam. An admissions counselor can give you more information. It helps to study. You can buy study guides or get them from your public library. Khan Academy offers online SAT test prep for free at <https://www.khanacademy.org/sat>.

Step 4: Complete the essay

Most four-year colleges require a "statement of purpose" essay. This might be the hardest part of the application, but these essays let you shine. Make sure you put your goals in the essay. Ask a few people you trust to check your statement for mistakes. Ask them to also make sure you sound purposeful and confident.

Step 5: Submit the application

You'll probably hear from a community college within a few weeks. They'll let you know by phone or letter if you've been accepted. Four-year colleges can take longer. If you have questions, contact the school's admissions office.



Paying for Your Education

Paying for your education can be hard. Below we describe how you can get money for college.

Free Tuition Programs

Some colleges offer free tuition if you meet certain income requirements. Many community colleges in Illinois offer free tuition and a stipend through the Workforce Equity Initiative. Learn more at illinoiswei.org. The University of Illinois offers free tuition for in-state students whose family income is less than \$67,100 through the Illinois Commitment program, see admissions.illinois.edu/commitment. Veterans can also get money for college. See studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/military.

Even if you have tuition covered, you'll need to pay for living expenses, books, and fees.

Financial Aid: FAFSA

Do you need financial aid for college? The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the place to start.

How do I apply?

You can find the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.gov, or you can request a paper copy from 800-4-FEDAID (800- 433-3243). Applying for federal student aid is free. But it can be complicated. If you're worried or have questions, ask for help. College financial aid offices can help you over the phone or email or in person.

When is it due?

Check on the form to see when it is due for your state. You should also ask your college when it is due. They might want it much earlier. Look at the school's website or call the financial aid office. Turn in your FAFSA as soon as you can because some financial aid runs out fast. If you can, turn in your FAFSA while you're in prison. That way everything will be ready in time for you to start school.

What kind of aid will I get?

The aid you get will depend on how much money you make and the cost of your school. Your aid package may include the following:

- **Pell Grants** are government grants that are based on financial need. You do not have to pay them back.
- **Scholarships** can come from the college or from other organizations. Ask your financial aid office about scholarships. Scholarship information can also be found at public libraries and online.
- **Loans** are not free. You will have to pay them back. Loans from the government have a lower interest rate than banks, and you won't have to start paying it back until after you graduate. Think carefully how you will repay your loans. Your loans will impact your decisions about money and jobs.
- **Work study positions** allow you to pay for college by working for the school. You can say you are interested in work-study when you fill out the FAFSA. Work-study is a good way to make money and get more work experience. They are often offered first come, first served.

Your financial aid package may include several kinds of aid. You don't have to accept the whole package. You can choose the parts that work for you. For example, you could accept a grant but not a loan. Reach out to the office if you have questions or want help understanding your package.

Can I get federal student aid if I have a criminal record?

In most cases, yes. There are two exceptions. You cannot get federal student aid if you were subject to an involuntary civil commitment after completing a period of incarceration for a forcible or non-forcible sexual offense.

For more information on financial aid for those with a felony conviction, see studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements/criminal-convictions. It would also be helpful to speak with a financial aid officer at the schools you are applying to.

☆ If a grant, loan, or scholarship offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is. There are many for-profit companies that take advantage of people who are looking to go to college. Applying for financial aid should be free, and you should research the agency or company before applying.

Remember to keep copies of all applications and related paperwork in a safe space.



"A full-time, work-study student with Link benefits can bring in \$800 a month plus free transportation. That is a game changer."

— Earl W.

EJP Scholarships

The Education Justice Project (the creator of this guide) has a scholarship program. All our scholarships are need-based, meaning they go to people who need financial help. You can use them for school costs (tuition, books, fees) at accredited postsecondary schools. The deadline for application is usually in November each year.

EJP offers:

- One \$1000 scholarship to a family member of an EJP student.
- One \$1000 scholarship to a family member of an IDOC or IDJJ staff person.
- One \$1000 scholarship to a family member of an incarcerated individual.
- Two \$1000 scholarships to individuals who have been released from an IDOC adult facility.
- One \$1000 scholarship to an individual who has been incarcerated in an IDJJ juvenile facility.

We also offer scholarships to formerly incarcerated individuals who have been deported to Mexico or who were incarcerated in Mexico. Applications for these are due in March of each year. These scholarships provide support for study in Mexico:

- One \$10,000 MXN scholarship to an individual who was formerly incarcerated in Mexico.
- One \$10,000 MXN scholarship to an individual who was incarcerated in the US and deported to Mexico, or to a member of their immediate family.

For more information about how to apply for an EJP scholarship, please contact scholarships@educationjustice.net.

Defaulted student loans

If you have outstanding student loans that are currently in default, this will impact your eligibility for financial aid. Being in bad standing with old loans can be

overwhelming, but you have options! You can even begin exploring these options while you are incarcerated. Your first priority will be to get out of default. You may not need to pay off the entire loan or even make a large payment. You may be able to rehabilitate or consolidate your loans at little to no cost—sometimes \$5/month in order to get back in good standing. You can do this online, by phone, or by mail. See <https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/default/get-out>

Useful Resources: For useful information about how to get your education after incarceration, see Study.com’s guide, “How to Earn Your Degree and Get Hired After Incarceration.” You can access it here: <https://bestaccreditedcolleges.org/resources/formerly-incarcerated-education-career-guide>

The Formerly Incarcerated College Graduates

Network is an amazing resource! Build community, find support from peers, share resources, find job openings, advocate for policy change and share your story. Visit: www.ficgn.org

Other Resources for College Students

Tutoring centers

Do you need extra help with your classes? A lot of people do. Many college campuses offer free tutoring to their students.

Mentoring and student support programs

Some colleges offer mentoring programs to new students. College mentors are other students or people who give support to new students.

Career center

Most colleges have career centers that can help you find a job while you are in school and when you graduate. Career centers also offer help with resumé writing, getting ready for interviews, and more.

Health



When you leave prison, you will need to manage your own health. This can be a welcome change, but it is also stressful. There are many different options for health insurance. There are many different kinds of clinics, hospitals, and doctors to choose from. There are paperwork, applications, and bills to figure out. Don't be afraid to ask for help from family and friends as you explore your options.

In this section, we cover:

- Staying healthy during COVID-19
- Health insurance
- Regular and specialty doctor visits
- Dental and vision insurance
- Paying for medications
- HIV prevention, testing and treatment

See also our Trauma and Mental Health chapter and Substance Use Disorder chapter.

Staying Healthy During COVID-19

At the time of this publication, the COVID-19 pandemic was still disrupting life. US deaths from COVID-19 have reached over one million people. There are now new variants of the virus that spread more easily and quickly, though most are less serious.

Here are the most important things to keep yourself and others healthy:

1. Get a vaccine and booster shots. Even if you aren't at high risk, a vaccine will protect you and those around you. The vaccines have been tested on thousands of people. They are safe and effective at preventing serious COVID-19 infection and hospitalization. You should get a vaccine even if you already have had COVID-19. You can get a free vaccine at most pharmacies. If you are eligible for another dose or a

- booster shot, get them! They will help keep you safe.
2. Wear a mask when you are around large groups of people, especially indoors.
3. Pay attention to infection levels. If a lot of people are getting sick, it's good to be more cautious.
4. Isolate if you are sick or have been around someone who is sick.
5. Wash your hands often.

If you get sick

COVID-19 can look like a lot of different illnesses. The most common symptoms are fever, cough, and shortness of breath. You might feel tired or achy. You might vomit or have diarrhea. Some people show no symptoms while others become very sick and end up in the hospital on a ventilator.

If you have mild symptoms, you can treat the virus at home. Rest, drink plenty of water, take acetaminophen (Tylenol) for fever, drink a warm tea with honey for a cough, and stay away from others as much as possible while contagious.

Emergency Warning Signs

Do you have trouble breathing, pain or pressure in the chest, or confusion? Are you too sleepy for someone to wake you? Go to a hospital emergency room right away or call 9-1-1. If you're not sure if you should go, call your health provider or a health clinic.

COVID testing. You can order free at-home COVID-19 tests at [covidtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov). It's a good idea to have a few tests on hand. If you think you might have COVID, call 2-1-1. No-cost testing is available nationwide at health centers and select pharmacies.



Health Insurance

Getting medical care is costly! Health insurance can help pay for doctor's visits, medications, vaccines, laboratory tests, and emergencies. Health insurance can also be expensive, but medical care can cost hundreds or thousands of dollars if you are not insured.

Getting care if you are uninsured. If you don't have health insurance but need care, there are public and community health programs and clinics all over Illinois that offer free or low-cost services.

These community clinics provide:

- Vaccinations and immunizations.
- Full physicals.
- Nutrition and food stamp programs.
- STD screening, cancer screening, and HIV/AIDS services.
- Dental care.
- Pregnancy and maternity assistance.
- Programs to quit smoking.
- Hearing tests and eye exams.

Find a public health program or clinic at www.illinoisfreeclinics.org. Our directory lists many of these clinics.



"Go to a community medical center. You can get a free full physical when you get out of prison. We have to make sure there are no underlying conditions that we aren't aware of."

—Joe Joe

Ways to Get Health Insurance

There are several different ways to get health insurance. Here is a list of the most common ways:

- **Government health insurance:** Medicare and Medicaid are government health insurance programs for certain populations. For more information, see below.
- **Employer health insurance:** Some employers offer health insurance plans for their employees. The employer might cover some of the cost, and the rest will be taken out of the employee's paycheck.
- **Student health insurance:** If you're a full-time college student, you may be able to purchase health insurance through your college or university.
- **Through a parent:** People who are age 26 or younger and have a parent with health insurance are allowed to be added to their coverage as a dependent.
- **Healthcare Marketplace:** Created by the Affordable Care Act, the Marketplace offers health plans for purchase, and the cost may be discounted depending on your income.
- **Through a private agent:** You might be able to purchase personal health insurance directly from the company or through an insurance agent.

Medicaid and Medicare

Medicaid and Medicare are federal programs that offer assistance with healthcare costs. Most hospitals and health clinics accept Medicaid payments.

- **Medicaid:** Program for people who meet income requirements.
- **Medicare:** Program for those 65 years old or older.

To see if you qualify, visit www.healthcare.gov

You can apply to Medicaid or Medicare one of four ways:

1. You may be able to apply in prison before you leave. Talk to your counselor or clinical services.
2. Apply online at Illinois' Application for Benefits Eligibility (ABE) page: abe.illinois.gov
3. Apply in person at a hospital, health clinic, or DHS Family Community Resource Center. You can find the nearest center by going online to: <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12>
4. Apply by mail or fax. You can call DHS to mail you an application by calling (800) 843-6154 (TTY (800) 447-6404). Complete the application and mail or fax it back to the nearest Family Community Resource Center.

Before applying, you need to have a few documents ready:

- Income verification. This could be pay stubs, a financial aid award letter, a written statement from your employer, or a copy of your check stub showing your total income before taxes. If you haven't been working because you have been incarcerated, you can show your Verification of Incarceration document.
- Your Social Security number.
- Proof of residency—any official document that shows your address and name together will work.

When you fill out your Medicaid application, you can also apply for other benefits, such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). See Resources to Meet your Basic Needs for more information about these and other assistance programs.

If you are receiving Medicaid or benefits from any of these other programs, report any changes to your income or dependent status as soon as possible. If you begin making more money than is allowed, you may no longer qualify for these programs. You will start to lose parts of your tax refund on a monthly basis. You can report changes through the ABE system, by visiting a Department of Human Services Family Community Resource Center, or by calling the Department of Human Services during normal business hours at (800) 720-4166.

Health Insurance Vocabulary

When thinking about getting health insurance, it helps to know the vocabulary. Ask questions and make sure you understand what you are getting.

- **Premiums.** The amount you pay for your health insurance every month.
- **Yearly deductible.** The amount you pay for covered health care services before your insurance plan starts to pay. With a \$2,000 deductible, for example, you pay the first \$2,000 of covered services yourself. Many plans cover the costs for certain services, like a checkup or disease management programs, before you've met your deductible.
- **Copay.** A fixed amount (\$20, for example) you pay for a covered health care service after you've paid your deductible.
- **Coinsurance.** The percentage of costs of a health care service that you pay (20% for example) after you've paid your deductible. In this example the insurance plan would pay the other 80%.
- **Out-of-pocket maximum.** The most you have to pay for covered services in a plan year. After you spend this amount on deductibles, co-payments, and coinsurance for in-network care and services, your health plan pays 100%.
- **Approved network or in-network.** The facilities, providers and suppliers your health insurer has contracted with.
- **Out-of-network.** Health care providers who don't contract with your health insurance or plan. Out-of-network costs are usually higher than in-network.

These definitions and more can be found at: www.healthcare.gov/glossary/



“You have to be in charge of everything yourself. You’re not going to get called in later for a physical. The onus falls on you.”

— Pablo

Dental and Vision Care

Get your teeth cleaned and examined. Oral health is important for your overall health. Teeth problems can lead to bigger health problems in the future.

Get your eyes checked regularly, too. If you have vision problems like glaucoma, cataracts, or retinal tears, it is especially important to take care of your eyes.

Dental Insurance and Vision Insurance

You may be interested in a healthcare plan that covers dental or eye care. Some dentists will accept Medicaid payments—ask them to find out. Dental and vision are not always included in health insurance plans, so think about your needs and check each plan before you enroll. There may be separate dental or vision plans that you can get.

Some health insurance plans offer vision care, which covers yearly eye exams and some of the cost of glasses

and contacts. Check your health insurance plan to see what is covered because you may have to buy a separate plan for eye care. Medicare does cover eye exams, and Medicaid covers vision care for children.

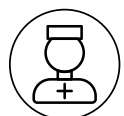
Low Cost Dental and Eye Care

Here are some options for dental care:

- Go to <https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/health-info/finding-dental-care> to find low cost dental care.
- Find a dental school in your area by visiting this website: www.ada.org/en/coda/find-a-program Dental students, under the supervision of professionals, can do dental work for a lower cost while gaining experience.

There are several programs that offer free or low cost eye exams and glasses:

- VISION USA (eye exams) - (800) 766-4466
- Walmart and Target have stores with eye shops where you can get an exam and glasses at a discount.
- Eyecare America (eye exams) - www.aaao.org/eyecare-america
- InfantSEE (free eye exams for babies 6-12 mo.) - www.infantsee.org
- Sight for Students (glasses for children) - (888) 290-4964
- New Eyes (free glasses program) - (973) 376-4903
- Purchasing glasses online for cheap: ZenniOptical.com and www.goggles4u.com offer frames starting at around \$10. However, you will need a prescription.



Doctor Visits

It’s a good idea to establish a regular relationship with your doctor. Most health insurance plans require you to pick a primary care provider. This person will serve as your “medical home” and is usually a family physician, nurse practitioner, physician’s assistant, or internal medicine physician. Having regular visits with a primary care provider is the best way to manage your health. Go see this person instead of going to the emergency room or urgent care. This will save you money and time and keep you healthy.

A primary care physician can give you a full physical exam, perform lab work, and provide prescription renewals. It is recommended that you have a full physical at least once a year and complete routine exams. Below are age and sex-based recommendations for health screenings.



Routine Exams That Can Keep You Healthy

Age	Men	Women
18-39	Blood pressure, cholesterol, flu shot, syphilis screen, TDAP shot, HPV shot, chlamydia/gonorrhea, HIV, skin exam	Blood pressure, cholesterol, flu shot, TDAP shot, HPV shot, breast exam, after 21 PAP test, chlamydia/gonorrhea, HIV, skin exam
40-64	Blood pressure, blood sugar, colonoscopy (over 50), stool test, flu shot, shingles shot (over 60), prostate screen (over 50), lung cancer screen (only if you smoke), skin exam	Blood pressure, blood sugar, colonoscopy (over 50), stool test, flu shot, shingles shot (over 60), breast screen, mammogram (over 40), lung cancer screen (only if you smoke), postmenopausal bone screening, PAP test, pelvic, HPV, skin exam
65+	Blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, colonoscopy until 75, hearing test, aneurysm screen (if smoker), prostate and lung screening (only if you have risk factors), pneumonia shot x2, skin exam	Blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, colonoscopy until 75, hearing test, mammogram until 75, bone screening, PAP test until 65, pneumonia shot x2, skin exam

Your primary care provider can also refer you to specialists for some health concerns. One way to contact your primary care physician is by signing up through your hospital network's online portal. This will allow you to access your medical records, send messages to your doctor, and schedule appointments.

medications. It tells you where you can go for the best price. You can download their app on a smartphone.

- Stores like Target, Walmart, Costco, and Sam's Club often have special programs where you can purchase generic drugs for very cheap (\$4 for 30-day quantity or \$10 for a 90-day quantity).
- Go to www.rxassist.org to find out if the medication you need is offered for free to people who qualify.



"Going to the office of my primary care physician was actually a pleasant experience. It was nothing like it was on the inside."

— Pablo

HIV/AIDS and Other Diseases

Being in prison increases the risk of getting some diseases. After being released from prison, consider getting tested for HIV, Hepatitis C (HCV), Hepatitis B (HBV), and tuberculosis. HIV, HBV, and HCV can be detected by a blood test. Tuberculosis can be tested by blood or by a skin test; if these tests are positive, the disease is confirmed by a chest X-ray. Locations for HIV testing can be found by using the CDC's HIV Test Locator at: <https://www.cdc.gov/std/hiv>

If you test positive for HIV or another serious disease, know that you can still live a long and meaningful life. You should make an appointment to see a healthcare provider to stay healthy and possibly begin treatments.



Pharmacy

Some insurance plans will help you pay for expensive medical prescriptions, while others do not. If you are having trouble paying for your prescriptions, here are a few options:

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist if there is a generic version of the drugs you need. Generic drugs are much less expensive.
- Go to Goodrx.com to compare prices of prescription

You should still be cautious if the test comes back negative. It is possible that the tests cannot yet detect the virus in your body. You can request another test at a later date.



"Make sure that there's not something wrong with you that they didn't test for or detect while you were inside. When I first got home, they ran all these tests. I got called a few days later asking if I could come in again to see the doctor. When I came in, she went over the results, and she said, it doesn't look bad but you have chronic kidney disease. She wrote me a referral to go see a kidney specialist and she gave me some literature to read about the disease and how I could have gotten it."

— Shaun W.

What Does Having HIV Mean?

HIV is a virus that spreads by attacking and killing healthy cells in the body. This happens all over the body, destroying cells or forcing them to create new infected cells.

HIV targets immune system cells, known as T-cells. T-cells fight off infection by killing cells that have been infected by germs. As more T-cells start dying, the immune system is open to attack. If the number of T-cells drops too low, the risk of infection increases and can lead to AIDS. When someone has AIDS, their immune system becomes too weak to fight off other infections. If untreated, people can die of AIDS.

Fortunately, people who have HIV today can live long and productive lives as long as they take steps to stay on top of their infection. HIV can be managed with daily medication, regular testing and doctor visits, and healthy lifestyle changes (exercise, stopping smoking, getting enough sleep, etc.).

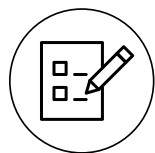
Sometimes HIV testing is offered as part of the prison intake process. We suggest you take advantage of this free testing, as knowing your status is very important to you and our loved ones.

Risk

The most common way for HIV to be transmitted is through sexual contact, but infected and untreated mothers can pass it on to their children. Avoid contact with blood, semen, or vaginal fluid of sexual partners who are HIV-positive. Do not share needles or syringes and make sure to use protection (condoms) for any sexual contact.

Know the risk of spreading HIV to a sexual partner who is not HIV positive. Being treated with antiretroviral medications can reduce your chances of transmitting HIV to a partner. Taking antiretroviral medications regularly lowers the levels of HIV in your blood. This does not mean that the virus is completely gone, so take precautions and use condoms even though the risk of transmission is low. If you do not have HIV but are in a relationship with someone who does, you can take PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis), which reduces the risk of being infected.

There are also certain sexual activities that can increase your chances of transmitting HIV. For more information about HIV transmission and risk factors, visit: www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics



Reflect

1. What are my health insurance options?
2. Who is my health point of contact--the doctor or nurse practitioner who I can call if I need help?
3. What are some ways I can stay healthy?

Trauma and Mental Health



Know that if you are struggling with trauma or mental health issues, you are not alone. Most people who are incarcerated have experienced trauma. Many also have a mental health issue or have had one in the past. Being in prison can cause mental health issues or make existing mental health issues worse. Your time in prison may cause trauma that affects your mental health long after you leave.

If you have mental health issues, seek treatment as soon as you are released. Reentry is hard. Trauma and mental health issues can make reentry much harder. Sadly, people who do not get treatment are more likely to return to prison.

There are mental health professionals who can help you. They can provide talk therapy and medication, if needed. They can help you learn to better handle stress and life problems.

You matter! Make your mental health a priority. When you do, you will experience deep personal growth and be able to better help others. You can learn to become stronger so that you can bounce back from hard things.

This chapter covers the following topics:

- Trauma
- Bouncing back
- Treatment for mental health
- Types of treatment
- Attitudes about mental health
- Common mental health disorders

Trauma

Just about everyone who has been to prison has experienced trauma. Trauma is a mental health issue that many people face.

Trauma is the emotional response you have to a stressful and possibly life-changing event. It can also be the result of toxic stress that builds up over time. Trauma is more common than people think, and its effects can be very serious. Traumatic events in childhood can have effects throughout your life.



"Trauma is something that all of us go through. You have to get to the point that you realize that what you've been going through is trauma. Nothing you went through is normal. It's not normal to be secluded. Even before prison, we were on the streets, experiencing trauma and violence to the point that it became a natural thing. We became desensitized to those things. We didn't think, 'Oh wow, this is abnormal.'"

—Anonymous

"The residue of prison stays with you. Keys rattling means it's a guard coming. You wake up with a heightened sense of alertness. You are late and you worry you have missed your chance. You can't calm down. You have a pattern of sleeplessness. You are easily annoyed. Tense situations escalate into violence."

—Kilroy

Trauma can come from lots of things, such as:

- Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Witnessing violence
- Having a loved one with substance use or mental health issues
- Parent separation or divorce
- Poverty
- Being incarcerated or having a family member who is incarcerated
- Living in unsafe neighborhoods

People in prison, especially women, are more likely to have experienced trauma. There are strong connections between trauma, poor mental health, and incarceration.

Where to get help.

If you have experienced trauma at any point in your life, you may benefit from treatment or counseling. Counselors can help you understand the effects of trauma on your well-being, your emotions, and your behaviors.

Trauma-focused treatments provide you with skills to better understand what happened to you. You can learn to cope with the emotions and memories connected to these scary experiences. The goal is to help you reach a healthier new perspective on what took place in your life.

Here are a few places you can go for help:

- Go to this directory to find a mental health provider: <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=43695>. When calling to set up an appointment, ask if they provide trauma-focused treatment.
- Your primary care provider may be able to connect you to a mental health consultant located in your clinic, so ask if one is available.
- Many reentry programs provide trauma-informed care. Ask what services they provide.

Bouncing Back

When you face trauma or stress and overcome it, you can strengthen your ability to bounce back from hard things. Being able to bounce back instead of getting stuck is called resilience.

Being resilient does not mean that stress is not hard for you. It means you have taught yourself to better cope with hard things. Resilience can be learned. It is not a trait that only some people have. It is something that everyone has the ability to strengthen, like when you build muscle. It takes time and work but it can be done. There is hope!

If you feel stuck or are not making progress, seek help from a mental health professional. Seeking help is an important part of building resilience.

According to the American Psychological Association, there are four main areas of resilience. Work to improve your resilience in these four areas.

1. Build connections

Connect with people you trust and who understand you. Remind yourself that you are not alone. If you have experienced trauma, it is common to want to isolate yourself. Fight that urge. Find a group to join and get active in the community.

2. Foster wellness

Take care of your body. Your body needs food, sleep, water, and exercise to fight off stress. When you take care of your body, you will feel better. There is a big connection between your physical and mental health.

Practice mindfulness. Mindfulness is being in the present moment without judgment. It can be practiced in many ways. See our Mindfulness chapter to learn more about mindfulness.

Avoid negative outlets. When things are stressful, it is tempting to want to turn to drugs, alcohol, or other negative ways of coping. This is like putting a Band-Aid on a large wound. Instead, try to focus on healthy things you can give your body to help you cope.



“In prison I had ways to cope with trauma. I would exercise, draw. This allowed me to escape that mental state for a little while.”

— Anonymous

“Having a support group provides you with a reminder that there are other ways to cope.”

— Kilroy

3. Find purpose

Help others. Find meaning and purpose by helping others. Get involved with a community organization or help a friend who is struggling.

Be proactive. Ask yourself, “What can I do about this problem?” Set achievable goals and break them down into smaller steps. Start working on these steps.

Look for opportunities for self-discovery. Self-awareness can help you grow. Think about how you have grown as a result of a struggle, like being incarcerated. How have you become a better person? You may find that thinking about your growth helps you increase self-worth and appreciate your path in life.

4. Embrace healthy thoughts

Keep things in perspective. You do not always have control of events in your life. But you *do* have control

of how you make sense of things and respond to them. How you think about your situation impacts how you feel. Recognize that negative thoughts are just that, thoughts that can be acknowledged and set aside.

Accept change. Being able to accept change is a part of life. There may be some things that get in the way of your goals. It is ok to accept some things. Focus instead on the things that are in your power to change and control.

Maintain a hopeful outlook. It is not realistic to be positive all the time. Allow yourself to feel upset for a little bit, but then focus on what gives you hope. What do you want and how can you make that happen?

Learn from your past. Look back at what has helped you in the past during hard times. Remind yourself of what has helped you find strength before. What have you learned about yourself from your past experiences?



“Advice for socializing outside? Learning coping skills and anger management. Being less abrasive and open-minded.”

—Earl W.



Reflect

1. What has helped you “bounce back” from hard things in the past?
2. What are some things you would like to try to strengthen your resilience muscles?



Caring for Your Mental Health

Seeking Treatment for Your Mental Health

Everyone can benefit from mental health support during reentry. Reentry is stressful. Even if you do not

have mental health issues, you may benefit from talking to someone for a mental health check-up to help you adjust.

It is a good idea to schedule an appointment with a mental health provider before your release. Many

community mental health centers have long waiting lists, so set up an appointment ahead of time. This will help you have the support you need when things are tough.

There are several different options for care, depending on what your needs are.

Crisis Care

Are you in a crisis? Are you worried about hurting yourself or others? Do you have suicidal thoughts? Are you seeing and hearing things that aren't there? Are your symptoms so bad that you are having trouble functioning? Get help right away.

If you are in crisis, you may need an emergency evaluation to see if you need to be hospitalized. The types of treatments you get during a crisis are very brief. They are meant to keep you safe and get you stable. You'll get connected to on-going treatment for when you leave the hospital. Be sure to follow up with a mental health professional in your community after a crisis.

Here are a few places you can turn to:

- **National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:** Call 988 or go to 988lifeline.org to get help and chat with someone.
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text "HELLO" to 741741, available 24/7
- **Illinois Crisis Respite Directory:** <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=126349>
- **Crisis/emergency mental health partners/providers Illinois directory:** <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30893>
- **Illinois Crisis and Referral Entry Service (CARES) line:** Call (800) 345-9049 (some restrictions apply for adults)
- **Call 911 and ask for a C.I.T. (Crisis Intervention Trained) officer** if you or someone you know is in immediate danger, or go to the nearest emergency room.

Non-Crisis Care

If you need help, but it's not an emergency, find a community provider for treatment. When you call, ask for a mental health assessment or intake with a therapist or counselor (for talk therapy), or psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner (for medication).

These resources will help you find a community provider near you:

- **Director of mental health care providers in Illinois:** <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=43695>
- **Your primary care provider** may be able to connect you to a mental health consultant located in your clinic, so ask if one is available.
- **Treatment Referral Helpline:** Call (800) 662-HELP (4357) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- **Illinois Warm Line:** Call (866) 359-7953 for mental health and substance use support by phone Mon-Fri, 8am-8pm
- **Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator:** <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

Who Provides Services?

There are different mental health professionals who can make a diagnosis and provide treatment.

- **Counselors, Social Workers, and Family Therapists** offer assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health issues through talk therapy or counseling.
- **Clinical Psychologists** diagnose and treat mental health issues through talk therapy. They also can offer testing of behaviors, emotions, and thoughts. This testing can be helpful for making a diagnosis.
- **Psychiatrists or psychiatric nurse practitioners** also assess, diagnose, and treat mental health issues, but they take a medical approach and can prescribe medications.

Most mental health professionals have different specialties. If you are able, find someone who has training and experience working with the problems you face.



Types of Treatment

Mental health professionals offer many types of treatment. Often, it's helpful to combine different types of treatment, like therapy and medication.

The most important part of treatment is not the type of treatment you choose but the relationship you have with your mental health provider. Make

sure that you feel safe and connected to your provider so that you can benefit from treatment. If you do not feel safe and connected seek out alternative care.

Individual therapy or counseling. Talk therapy involves working one-on-one with a mental health professional. Therapy can help you heal, grow, and move toward a more productive and healthy life. A therapist will help you learn to live your best life with mental health issues.

Group therapy or counseling. This is similar to individual treatment, but you will do therapy with other people. These are not self-help groups. A mental health professional will lead the group. You will likely attend weekly sessions. The power of group treatment comes from the group members. It can be really helpful to have a support network of others who have similar challenges. Many groups target a specific problem, but some may be more general.

Family therapy or counseling. The goal of family therapy is to improve relationships and resolve conflicts. It can include your romantic partner, children, and other family members. It is often used with other types of treatments.



"I benefited a lot from [my support group]. Everybody in those meetings had a similar experience. We are at a place now where we can reflect on some of the things we went through. Maturity comes with age. They have been part of my unofficial therapy."

— Anonymous



"Many conflicts arise because your family has no idea what you've gone through in prison. Or they don't understand your diagnosis. Families need a guide for what it's like for those of us who have been through prison, who have experienced trauma."

— Kilroy

Medication. Just as medication can treat heart disease and diabetes, medication can treat mental health issues. Medications are not always needed, but most people with moderate to severe mental health issues benefit from medication.

Some mental health issues are significant enough to require medication. Bipolar disorder and schizophrenia symptoms cannot be managed without the help of medication. If you have these disorders, make sure you take your medication every day. Don't skip doses. If you have severe anxiety or depression, you will also likely benefit from medication. Taking medication can help relieve symptoms so that you feel better. Combined with talk therapy, medication can help you lead a healthy and productive life.

Medications are prescribed by a psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner after an evaluation. The evaluation will last between 30 and 60 minutes. After that, appointments will be brief (about 15 minutes). Your psychiatrist will monitor your medications and side effects. It takes time for your body to adjust to medications. It also takes time for your provider to find what works best for you. Many medications have side effects, especially when you first take them. Don't give up if the first medication isn't for you. It may take a couple of tries to find the right medicine and dosage.

★ **Warning:** Don't quit taking medication once you start feeling better. Feeling good may be a sign that the medication is working, not that you don't need it anymore! Always consult with a psychiatric practitioner before stopping your medications. Stopping medications all at once can be very dangerous. Your psychiatrist can help you decide if it's ok to stop. They can help you stop gradually and safely.

Paying for Treatment. Medicaid will cover mental health treatment. If you need to apply for Medicaid, the Health chapter tells you how you can apply for Medicaid. Not all mental health treatment programs accept Medicaid. Make sure to ask if the program accepts Medicaid when you call to make your first appointment. Some programs will also offer services on a “sliding fee scale” so you can pay what you can afford if you do not have insurance. Keep in mind that most programs that do accept Medicaid may have long waiting lists, so plan ahead. If possible, make your appointments before your release.

If you are enrolling in private insurance, make sure to select a plan that includes mental health treatment. When you make an appointment, ask if they accept your insurance. You may be able to see a mental health professional in private practice. This may decrease your waiting time for an appointment.

Attitudes About Mental Health

Some people feel embarrassed or ashamed of having mental health issues. These attitudes may have come from your family, your community, or from the media. These attitudes can make it hard for you to get better.



“In prison, people tend to mock those who go through a mental health episode. Everyone knows who’s taking pills. You condition yourself to not talk. You don’t want to express your feelings or admit something is wrong.”

—Kilroy

Everyone has a role to fight against these negative attitudes! The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) offers some suggestions about what you can do to help:

- Compare physical and mental illness. Lots of people have mental health issues, just as lots of people have

physical health issues like diabetes and heart disease. Getting treatment is a positive thing.

- Talk openly about mental health. Share your experience with people you trust.
- Educate yourself and others. Respond to negative comments by sharing facts and experiences.
- Be conscious of language. Remind people that words matter. Try to avoid words like *crazy* or *maddening* that are all too common in our daily language.
- Show compassion for those with mental health issues, including yourself.
- Be honest about treatment. Getting mental health treatment is normal, just like other health care treatment.
- Choose empowerment over shame.



“When I first met with the group, guys would just sit there. They wouldn’t open up. So I opened myself up. I’d tell them, this is what’s been bothering me. Break the ice. Then someone else would talk about their experience.”

—Kilroy

“It’s all right to show your emotions. It’s a natural thing to vent, to cry.”

—Anonymous



Reflect

1. What negative attitudes do you have about mental health issues and treatment?
2. Where do these negative attitudes come from?
3. What are some things you can do to fight these negative attitudes?

Common Mental Health Issues

Several mental health issues are common in people who spend time in prison. We describe them here so that you can know what they are and when you may need to get help. If you think you might have one of these health issues, talk to a health professional who can evaluate you and provide a diagnosis.



Major depressive disorder. Everyone feels sad once in a while, but not everyone feels depressed. Symptoms include:

- Feeling sad or uninterested in things most of the time.
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- Having low energy and/or a hard time focusing.
- Feeling tearful, empty, or hopeless.
- Feeling angry and irritable.
- Feeling miserable but not understanding why.
- Having chronic pain, headaches, fatigue, or digestive issues.

Do these symptoms last for at least two weeks? Do they get in the way of your everyday life? You may be depressed. Talk therapy or medicine can help.

If you are severely depressed, you may also have thoughts of wanting to hurt yourself or die (this is a big concern for women who are recently released). Severe depression may also cause you to hear or see things that are not there. If you have these severe symptoms, go to the nearest emergency room right away or call the suicide and crisis lifeline: 988.

Bipolar disorder. Most people have changes in mood at times. If you're stressed, you might feel angry or scared. If you lost someone you love, you might feel sad. Hormone changes can also affect moods.

If you have intense mood swings that last for several days, you may have bipolar disorder. People with bipolar disorder have extreme shifts in mood, energy, and ability to function. These mood shifts include episodes of depression (above) and mania. Signs of mania are:

- Increased self-esteem and feeling like you are on top of the world.

- Less need for sleep.
- Talking a lot and often fast.
- Having so many thoughts that you cannot keep up with them.
- Being distracted easily.
- Feeling restless. You might pace the room or bounce your leg.
- Doing things that are risky and can cause harm: spending a lot of money, having unprotected sex with various partners, and using drugs or alcohol.

For some people, manic and depressive episodes can be very extreme. Symptoms can include seeing and hearing things that are not there. This can really impact your ability to function. If your symptoms are severe, get help right away. Less severe episodes of mania (known as hypomania) and depression may not impact your life as much.

Managing bipolar disorder requires help from medicine and talk therapy. Keep a record of your mood changes so that you know if you need to seek help.

Generalized anxiety disorder. Feeling anxious or stressed once in a while is a normal part of life. If your anxiety feels out of control, you might have an anxiety disorder. Generalized anxiety disorder is when you worry a lot and are nervous about everyday things, even things that you have no control over, for no apparent reason. You might feel like something really bad is going to happen. Anxiety leaves you feeling restless, tired, irritable, and tense. It can impact your ability to focus and sleep.

If these problems do not go away and begin to impact your relationships and responsibilities, get help. Talk therapy can help. Medication can help when symptoms are severe.



Schizophrenia. Some people can have a distorted sense of reality. This is known as schizophrenia. It is a severe mental health condition that requires medication to manage. Talk therapy can help you build life skills to cope. Schizophrenia involves a range of problems with thinking, behavior, and emotions. Signs of schizophrenia can vary, but it usually involves:

- Problems with thinking (having a hard time organizing your thoughts, forgetting things, not being able to focus, struggling to make decisions).
- Delusions (false beliefs that are not based in reality).
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that aren't really there).
- Disorganized speech (not being able to put words or sentences together).
- Lacking skills that people usually have (the ability to express emotion, be part of activities, and engage with others)

These symptoms can have a big impact on your life. If these symptoms are present for at least a month, get help.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Some traumatic events are so shocking, scary, or dangerous that they can change the way we think and feel long after the event has passed. It's natural to feel scared, nervous, or depressed after something bad has happened. If these feelings last for over a month, you may have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Common symptoms of PTSD include:

- Having nightmares or flashbacks.
- Avoiding people or situations that remind you of the event.
- Feeling on edge and anxious a lot.
- Feeling depressed.
- Trouble remembering things.
- Feeling emotionally detached.

Medications and talk therapy can be useful in working through these symptoms.

Personality disorders. Your personality is the combination of characteristics or qualities that form your distinctive character. Sometimes people can develop personality disorders, which are patterns and traits that are harmful to themselves and others. For people in prison, the two most common personality disorders are:

- **Borderline personality disorder:** Having unstable moods, behavior, and relationships. Feeling emotionally unstable, worthless, insecure, or impulsive. These feelings or behaviors can hurt your relationships with others.
- **Antisocial personality disorder:** Acting in ways that show a lack of care about other people. For example, lying, breaking laws, or acting impulsively. Not caring about your own safety or the safety of others.

Since personality traits are pretty stable over our lifetime, these disorders can be hard to treat. Despite that, it is not impossible. Often treatment includes long-term therapy. Medications tend to not work as well for these disorders.

Multiple disorders. Many people who are in prison have more than one mental health disorder. People who have depression are more likely to have anxiety, too. Many people who have a mental health disorder also have a substance use problem. Some people have a mental health disorder, a personality disorder, and a substance use disorder.

If you have more than one of these disorders, let your providers know about everything you are struggling with. If you address one problem and not the other, you may find it difficult to fully recover.



"What I felt was most difficult when I first got out is figuring out how to relate to other people. You have both the lack of 'normal' experiences that most people have as late-teenagers and young adults. Plus you have the negative effects of long-term imprisonment."

— Greg A.

Substance Use Disorders



Do you have difficulty controlling your use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or medications? If so, this is one of the most important chapters you will read. As you know, drug and alcohol problems can make it much harder to get a job, form healthy relationships, find housing, and stay out of prison.

We urge you to get help. Your reentry success depends upon it! As you begin to recover, your mind will clear and you will be better able to rebuild your life.

For many, prison is a time to get clean from drugs or alcohol. But just because you were clean in prison doesn't mean that you are fully recovered. Many people find that problems with drugs or alcohol return when they are released.

Reentry can be a time of stress, anxiety, and fear. You're trying to rebuild your life while also dealing with the trauma of being incarcerated for years. Perhaps you have used drugs and alcohol to cope with difficult feelings in the past. Recognize that this puts you at greater risk of relapse.



"What ends up happening is you get out and you realize your issues don't end. Now you have to deal with other issues. You get hit with all this stuff. You start to get into bad habits again, revert to old coping mechanisms. You have alcohol available, you have drugs. The bottle becomes more available than the gym."

—Anonymous

There is hope. Know that many people recover from substance use disorders, and you can, too. We honor your efforts. Recovery isn't easy, and you may have setbacks. We believe in YOU and your ability to recover.

This chapter covers the following topics:

- Where to get help
- Safer drug use
- Treatment programs
- Peer support groups
- The road to recovery
- New cannabis laws



Where to Get Help

Let's be honest. The first few days, weeks, and months after release are really challenging. This is why it's a good idea to make plans to get help before you are released.

It's best if you can set up a time to meet with a treatment provider within 2-3 days of release. Join a support group, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, right away or make an appointment to see a counselor. Don't wait to get help.

Here are a few places you can start:

- **Call 311 (Chicago) or 211 (rest of Illinois)** to get connected to resources including substance use services and housing.
- **Call 911** if you have overdosed and need immediate help.
- **Call (800) FACT-400 (800-322-8400)** for mental health and substance use emergencies (Chicago and suburbs). Get help from mental health professionals rather than police.
- **Illinois Helpline:** Call (833) 234-6343 or text "HELP" to 833234 if you or a loved one is struggling with opioids or other substances. They can help you find services near you. See also their website: <https://ilhelpline.thesmartice.com/findhelp>
- **National Helpline:** Call (800) 662-4357 for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's national helpline. Get confidential free help from public health agencies to find substance use treatment and information. See their website: <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>
- **Illinois recovery home directory:** <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=101165>
- **National sober house directory:** <https://soberhousedirectory.com/>
- **Peer support groups.** Find an Alcoholics Anonymous support group by calling 855-977-9213 or going to aa.org. Find a Narcotics Anonymous support group by calling 1-818-773-9999 or going to na.org. There are also non-religious support group options, which we describe in this chapter.
- **Safe injection equipment and overdose treatment:** Go to <https://anypositivechange.org> for locations in Chicago.
- **Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator:** <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

Safer Drug Use

Many substance use treatment programs focus on getting clean or sobering up. You may need to pass drug tests as a condition of your parole. Many jobs require drug testing.

Some people find that quitting completely is the only thing that works for them. If they start drinking even a little, this quickly turns back into drinking a lot. Groups like Alcoholics Anonymous encourage quitting completely and provide peer support to reach this goal.

Quitting isn't easy. Many people are able to quit for a while, but then return to drug use on and off. If this is your experience, there are things you can do to reduce the harm of drug use in your life. There are ways to manage your drug use so that it doesn't take over your life. Moderating your use of drugs or alcohol is also a worthy goal. Work with a counselor or program that offers substance use management.

Here are a few safety tips:

- Learn how to inject safely and care for your veins to avoid getting HIV or another disease. <https://anypositivechange.org/better-vein-care/>
- Know where to get safe injecting equipment. The Chicago Recovery Alliance offers supplies and equipment for safe drug injection: sterile syringes, clean cookers, cotton filters, tourniquets, sterile mix water. Look for their silver vans. <https://anypositivechange.org/cra-services/>. They can also help you dispose of used injection equipment safely.
- Learn the signs of overdose and how to respond. Teach your friends and family to recognize these signs, too. The Chicago Recovery Alliance has staff and volunteers who can provide injectable naloxone, a drug that reverses opiate overdose.

★ **Warning:** Did you know that people who have recently returned from prison are at greater risk for overdose? If you stopped using drugs or alcohol while in prison, you may have a reduced tolerance for these drugs. This means that your body can't handle the same amount of drugs that you took before. This can lead to overdose or even death.

Signs of an Overdose:

- Unresponsive or unconscious
- Slow or stopped breathing
- Snoring or gurgling sounds
- Cold, clammy skin
- Blue lips, discolored fingernails

What to do: Try to wake the person up. Call 911 if you can't wake them. Start CPR if their breathing is slow or they have stopped breathing. Provide Naloxone (NARCAN®) if available.

☆ Are you part of an organization that helps people who have substance use disorders? The Chicago Recovery Alliance trains service providers to administer naloxone to those who overdose. This training saves lives!

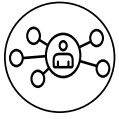


Reflect

Whether your goal is safer drug use or quitting entirely, take time to reflect on your drug or alcohol use. Here are a few things you should think about, either alone or with a counselor:

1. Where do you use and when? Can you find ways to separate drug use from driving or working tasks?
2. Who do you use with? How are your relationships helping or hurting your recovery? How can you navigate these relationships to quit or be safer?
3. What are your personal rituals around drug use? Can you modify those rituals so that you use less or use in safer ways?
4. Think about your attitudes and emotions about drug use, such as shame and guilt. How are these emotions getting in the way of your recovery?
5. What are your emotional triggers? What are some more helpful ways to deal with difficult emotions?





Treatment Programs

There are many different kinds of treatment programs. You may need to enroll in an in-patient intensive treatment program or live in a recovery home. If your disorder is less severe, you may be able to receive outpatient services, therapy, or join a support group. Treatment should last long enough to change behaviors and thought patterns. For those with severe drug problems, at least three months of intensive treatment is recommended. After that, follow-up support can be helpful for months and even years.

There are three main types of treatment. Often, treatment programs combine all three.

- **Cognitive-behavioral therapy.** Meet with a therapist to learn how to manage stress and triggers that have led to drug use in the past. The therapist can help you find ways to motivate yourself.
- **Medication-assisted treatment.** Some medications can reduce your cravings and help you stop using. Doctors can prescribe medications such as methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone to help you overcome an addiction.
- **Peer support.** Many people find that a peer support group can help. Alcoholics Anonymous (aa.org) or Narcotics Anonymous (na.org) are two of the most common.

A good treatment program should also:

- **Empower you.** It should build upon your strengths. It shouldn't shame you. It should help you take an active role in your recovery.
- **Provide mental health treatment.** Many people who have substance use disorders also have mental health problems. It is essential to treat both mental health issues and substance use issues together.
- **Address past trauma.** Many people use drugs to cope with past trauma. A good treatment program will help you develop effective coping strategies and recover from the effects of trauma and violence.
- **Provide support services.** Recovery is about more than just getting clean. Good treatment programs offer services to help you rebuild your life. Such programs may help you find employment and safe housing.

Paying for Treatment

Medicaid covers the cost of many substance use treatment services, such as counseling, therapy, medication management, social work services, and peer support. Our Health chapter explains how to apply for Medicaid. Not all treatment programs accept Medicaid. Before starting services, ask if they accept Medicaid.

If you are enrolling in a private insurance plan, choose a plan that covers substance use treatment. When making an appointment with a service provider or clinic, check that they accept your insurance.

Even if you do not yet have insurance, there are affordable clinics and programs that you can go to for help. Look for "sliding scale" services where you pay reduced fees depending on your income. We have listed a few in our directory.

Are you pregnant? Do you have children you are caring for?

For the sake of you and your children, reach out and get help. Many women are afraid their children will be taken away if their substance use becomes known. But continuing to use drugs or alcohol also puts you and your children at great risk.

As you are surely aware, society is not kind to mothers with substance use problems. You have likely sensed how harshly people judge you. You may have intense feelings of guilt and shame. We recommend that you seek out a treatment program that can help with the unique challenges women and mothers face. We have listed a few recovery programs for women and children in our directory.

Always let your doctor know if you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant before starting medical treatment for a substance use disorder. Some medications are not safe to take while pregnant or nursing.



Finding a Peer Support Group

If you are struggling with drug or alcohol use, join a support group to get help and encouragement from others. These groups are usually free.

In *Becoming Ms. Burton*, Susan Burton describes how her first Alcoholics Anonymous group meeting gave her hope:

People stood up and shared their stories. . . . I rose, took a deep breath. “Look what drugs and alcohol have done to me,” I said, my voice quivering. My hands were shaking so much the styrofoam cup of coffee I held was wasting on me. But no one seemed to judge my piteous condition. The immediate compassion, the empathy, the love that rolled off these strangers was enough to put a sizable dent in my pain, my shame, my guilt, and all that sorrow. In that room, I found hope.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) are the largest peer recovery organizations and have chapters throughout Illinois. Visit aa.org or na.org to find a meeting or online group. AA and NA use a religious approach, though they are not tied to a specific religion. Their 12-step process begins by asking members to admit that they no longer have control over their drug or alcohol use. Members are asked to turn themselves over to a higher power to find the strength to change.

There are non-religious support group options, too. These options focus on helping people find motivation within themselves. People learn to control themselves instead of looking to a higher power for help. Here are a few popular options, with in person and online meetings throughout the US:

- **Self-Management and Recovery Training (SMART)** peer support groups help participants resolve problems with any addiction. Go to smartrecovery.org or call 440-951-5357 to find a meeting or online community.
- **Women for Sobriety** is a peer-support program for women overcoming substance use disorders. Go to womenforsobriety.org or call 215-536-8026 to find an in-person or online meeting.

- **Secular Organizations for Sobriety** is a network of peer groups to help people maintain sobriety/abstinence from alcohol and drug addictions, food addiction, and more. Go to sossobriety.org or call 314-353-3532 to find a meeting.
- **LifeRing Secular Recovery** is an organization of people who share practical experiences and sobriety support. They focus on empowering you to overcome your addiction. Go to <https://lifering.org/> or call 800-811-4142 to find a meeting.

Ask your primary care provider for recommendations. Many community centers and churches also sponsor support groups or can direct you to others.

Approach your first meeting with an open mind and try to find out all you can. You may need to attend several meetings before you feel things are “clicking.” If you don’t feel you have found “your” group, keep trying. Chapters can be very different and members come and go. Look for:

- Regularly scheduled meetings
- Warmth and friendliness
- Some focus and structure to meetings
- Some time to mingle informally





The Road to Recovery

The road to recovery can be a long one. Don't be too discouraged if you relapse. A relapse doesn't always mean that the treatment isn't working. Give it another chance. Recognize that if you stopped using once, you can again. You have developed skills that will help you next time. Ask if there is a different treatment that may work better for you. Sometimes multiple periods of treatment are needed.

Recovery isn't just about stopping using. It's about change. It's about improving your overall health and wellness. It's about living up to your full potential. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) lists four main aspects of recovery:

1. Health

Overcome or manage one's disease or symptoms.

2. Home

Find a stable and safe place to live.

3. Purpose

Take part in meaningful daily activities (job, school, family caretaking, etc).

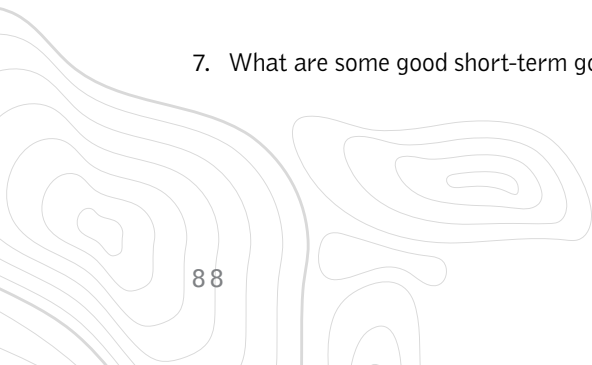
4. Community

Build relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope.



Reflect

-
1. What treatment (medication, therapy, peer support group) have you tried in the past?
 2. How have these treatments helped you? What worked and what didn't work?
 3. What kinds of treatment would you like to try?
 4. Where can you go for help?
 5. What does recovery look like to you?
 6. Where are you on your road towards recovery?
 7. What are some good short-term goals you can work towards?





New Cannabis Laws

The U.S. has a long history of punishing people, especially people of color, for minor drug offenses, such as possession of marijuana. Too often, people with substance use disorders are sent to prison instead of getting the treatment and support they need. The war on drugs has greatly increased the number of people of color locked up in the U.S.

You have likely heard that marijuana is now legal in Illinois. With this change, you may be interested in getting a pardon or record sealing for a marijuana-related offense. You may also be interested in using or selling cannabis. Below we list some things you should know about the new law.

What to do if you have a marijuana-related offense

If you were convicted for a marijuana-related offense (under 30 grams) before marijuana was legal, you are eligible for a pardon, record sealing, or expungement as long as no violent crime was committed. Cases will be reviewed by the Prisoner Review Board. If you have been charged with a marijuana-related offense, reach out to an Illinois drug crimes attorney.

Purchasing and using marijuana/cannabis

- Only adults (21 and over) can purchase cannabis.
- There are limits to the amount you can purchase: Up to one ounce of the flower (dried herb) and up to 5 grams of cannabis concentrate (hashish or tincture).
- Adults can consume cannabis in their homes or at certain approved places. Be careful: some businesses and landlords don't allow it! Companies can still do drug and alcohol testing (including for marijuana) for current or prospective employees.
- You can use medical marijuana with a doctor's recommendation.

Growing, selling, and transporting marijuana

- Only licensed dispensaries can sell marijuana.
- Only people who have transportation licenses can transport and deliver marijuana.
- Individuals can grow up to five cannabis plants at home. They must be in a locked room, with no access to anyone under 21. (Check the conditions of your MSR to confirm if you are eligible to grow.)

Joining the cannabis industry

The war on drugs has had a devastating impact on communities of color and low-income communities. To address this injustice, the Illinois Adult-Use Cannabis Social Equity Program is making it easier for people in impacted communities to join the cannabis industry. If you want to get involved, you may be eligible for these services:

- Technical assistance for getting a cannabis business license.
- Preference for getting a grower, infuser, or transporter license.
- Reduced license and application fees.
- Low-interest loans for starting and operating a cannabis-related business.

Learn more at: <https://dceo.illinois.gov/cannabisequity.html>

Transportation



How are you going to get around? Transportation is important for your job, for spending time with friends and family, and for living a meaningful life.

If you return to a city like Chicago, you'll have many transportation options. In small towns, your choices might be more limited. Below we discuss the options you might have so that you can decide what will work best for you.

This chapter covers:

- Transportation options (buses, trains, taxis, bikes, cars, and more)
- Buying a car
- Driving legally



Transportation Options

Buses and Metro

Save money by using public transportation. If you use the bus or metro often, you can buy a pass for a month or a year. This will make the cost of each ride cheaper. Students, older people, veterans, or persons with disabilities can get discounts. Here are a few ways to get started:

- Do an internet search for "public transportation" with the name of your city.
- Visit the website www.google.com/maps or open a map app on your phone. Enter where you plan to start your trip and where you'll end. The app or website will give step by step instructions of what public transportation you can use. It will tell you how long it will take you to get there and provide directions.
- For information on Chicago buses and metro, go to rtchicago.org. Learn more about discounts at transitchicago.com/reduced-fare-programs/

Trains and Long-Distance Buses

Here are a few good options for longer trips:

- The Metra is a train system that connects to suburbs around Chicago. For information on the Metra, go to metrarail.com.
- Buses are probably your cheapest option. Greyhound, BoltBus, and MegaBus are a few long-distance bus companies. Bus tickets can be purchased online or in person.
- Amtrak (trains) is also a good way to travel long-distance. Go to amtrak.com to book a trip.

- Air travel is more expensive but will get you where you need to go much quicker. If you have never flown before or have questions about how flying has changed, check out FirstTimeFlyerHQ.com.

It is always a good idea to compare prices between buses, trains, and planes, as well as between companies.

Ride-hailing Apps and Taxis

If you have a smartphone and a credit or debit card, you can get a ride-hailing app like Uber or Lyft. They can take you on short trips in your city. Ride-hailing services are just like taxis, but the drivers use their own cars. Before you ride, read these tips on how to be safe at uber.com/us/en/ride/safety/tips

You can use taxis in all major cities. They usually cost more than ride-hailing apps.

Biking

Biking is a good way to save money and exercise while you get to places. In some cities, you can rent bikes. In other places, look for second-hand bike stores. If you bike, make sure you know the rules of the road. Usually, bicycles follow the same rules as cars. They have to stop at stop signs and stop lights. You must use hand signals to turn or switch lanes. And you must yield to pedestrians. Wear a helmet for safety. Below are some resources on biking:

- Rent bikes to use in Chicago at www.divvybikes.com.
- Most map apps, like Google Maps will provide bike routes as well. Just type in your destination and hit the bike icon to get directions for how to travel by bike.

Carpool, Rideshare, and Carshare Programs

Another option for saving money is to carpool. You can look up carpool programs online (see pacerideshare.com) to carpool with strangers. Or you can ask someone you know if you can carpool and share the cost of gas.

If you don't need a car very often, join a carsharing program like Zipcar. Zipcar lets you reserve a car when you need it. You won't have to pay for insurance, repairs, or any of the things that make owning a car so expensive.



Buying a Car

If you do buy a car, buy one you can afford. A few tips:

1. Budget.

If you are taking out a loan to buy a car, make a budget. Decide how much you can spend on monthly payments. See the Finances, Credit, and Taxes chapter for more information on buying with credit and budgeting.

2. Research.

Do some research on the types of cars that will meet your needs. Think about what will be safe and reliable. [Edmunds.com](https://www.edmunds.com) and [Consumerreports.org](https://www.consumerreports.org) are great places to start. You can look at how much the cars are worth by going to Kelley's Blue Book ([kbb.com](https://www.kbb.com)).

3. Buy from a place you can trust.

Don't go to car dealerships that say they sell to people with bad credit. Be suspicious of companies or people who push you into buying a vehicle before you are ready. Buying from a person can be cheaper, but it is also riskier than buying from a trustworthy dealer.

4. Check out the history.

Once you've found a car you like, ask the dealer if you can see its history report. Ask for the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN). You can check a car's history online at websites like [autotrader.com](https://www.autotrader.com).

5. Mechanic.

If you are buying from a dealer, make sure that the car passes a mechanical evaluation. If you are buying

from a person, ask a mechanic to look at it before you buy it.

6. Negotiate the price.

Check prices on cars like yours and go to more than one place to compare cars. This can help you negotiate a good deal.

7. Read the fine print.

Understand the contract before you sign anything. Remember, what counts is what is in the contract, not what the salesperson promised. Make sure that you fill out all of the paperwork you need, especially if you are buying from an individual owner.

8. Title and registration.

Make sure to get the title and registration before you give them any money.



Driving Legally

Car Insurance

You must have car insurance and a driver's license to drive in Illinois. See the Getting your ID chapter for information about how to get a driver's license. If you are pulled over and you don't have insurance, you may have to pay a fine. You can also get charged.

When you have car insurance, you pay a monthly fee, and then the insurance covers some of the costs if you get in an accident. In Illinois, you have to buy an insurance plan that has these two things:

- **Liability insurance:** This covers the costs if you cause an accident.
- **Uninsured and underinsured motorist insurance:** This covers costs for you and your passengers if you get in an accident with someone who doesn't have insurance, or not enough insurance.

Some insurance plans cover most or all of the costs if you are in an accident. Some do not. Some have different costs if you caused the accident or if someone else did. If you get in an accident, you may have to pay more money each month for insurance.

Buying insurance can be confusing. Here are a few tips:

- Talk to an agent by phone or in person. Don't sign up online.
- Find out what the maximum amount of coverage is for the plan. This is the amount they will pay if you hit a car, compared to the amount you have to pay.
- Compare insurance prices on the Illinois DMV website at www.dmv.org/il-illinois/car-insurance.php.

Car Registration

In Illinois you have to register your car. You will have to renew this registration every year, for a fee. If you don't register your car or renew it, you can get a big ticket.

There are a few ways to register:

- Online at www.cyberdriveillinois.com.
- In person. Go to www.dmv.org/dmv-office-finder.php and find your local DMV office. Then go to www.dmv.org/car-registration.php to find what to bring with you to the DMV.
- Car dealers may complete the registration paperwork for you.

Car Inspection

In Illinois your car also may need to get inspected for emissions and safety every two years. Not all cars need to be inspected. To find out if your car needs inspections, go to www.ilsos.gov/regstatus and type in your vehicle VIN (Vehicle Identification Number).

Rules of the Road

Be safe when you drive! We care about you! Don't drink alcohol or drive under the influence of drugs. Don't text or use your phone while driving. Pull over to make a call. Wear your seatbelt; it reduces your chance of death in the event of a serious accident by 50%!



Reflect

1. What transportation options do I have right now?
2. What do I need to do to prepare to get a car?
3. What are some steps I can take to learn more about a transportation option new to me?



Technology



Technology has changed a lot in the last few years. If you have been inside a long time, you might feel stressed by all the new technology. Don't worry! You'll be able to figure it out.

You will need phones and computers for a lot of things after you leave prison. You will use them for work, banking, communicating with family, making appointments, meeting with parole officers, ordering pizza, watching TV shows, paying bills, shopping, applying for jobs, and much more.

Ask your family and friends to help you learn how to use a cellphone, smartphone, or computer. Learning how to use them can be fun! Play around with games, news, sports, or even watch cat videos! Playing can help you learn to use them. Take your time and get used to the technology that you use—soon it will feel like second nature.

This chapter covers the following topics:

- Getting a phone
- Technology basics
- Using the internet
- Email accounts, passwords, and security
- Smartphone apps
- Social media
- Video conferencing



Getting a Phone

We recommend getting a phone when you get out. You will need a phone to keep in contact with family, friends, your employer and your parole officer. There are three types of phones:

- **Basic cell phones** let you call people and send text messages. They are not so costly and easy to use.
- **Smartphones** can make calls and send text messages, and they can also get on the internet (more about the internet below). Smartphones have programs (called "apps") that can do things like play music, give driving directions, check the weather, take pictures, and go on social networks like Twitter and Facebook. A smartphone can help you find jobs, look up services, find your way around, and more.
- **Landline phones** are phones connected to people's homes or businesses. They can't move around. Few people use landline phones these days.

Lifeline and SafeLink

Do you have Medicaid, SNAP, SSI, or Public Housing Assistance? If you do, you should also be able to get a free or discounted phone or internet. SafeLink will provide you with one of these for free:

- Smartphone
- SIM card. If you buy your own phone, they will give you a SIM card to put in it. A SIM card is a memory chip that lets your phone connect to their mobile network.
- Phone plan. A phone plan lets you text, make calls, and use data. Their basic phone plan limits how much you can do, but you can add more for a fee.

Lifeline is a program that works with SafeLink to lower the monthly cost of phone and internet. If you qualify, you can get up to \$9.25 toward your monthly bill. Lifeline can be used for phone or internet, but not both.

How to apply

When you apply for public benefits (such as SNAP or Medicaid), ask if you can apply for SafeLink and Lifeline as well. Ask a friend, family member, case manager, or counselor to help you apply for SafeLink at safelinkwireless.com. You can also get help by calling (800) 723-3546. You can apply for Lifeline at lifelinesupport.org. To apply for these services, you will need your contact info, mailing/home address and Social Security number. You will also need proof that you meet the income requirements. These services are typically limited to one person per household.

You can find SafeLink phones and service plans at many stores around the state, including Walgreens, CVS, Family Dollar, and Schnucks.



Phone Services and Plans

What if you need to buy your own phone? EJP graduates have suggested MetroPCS and Family Mobile (Walmart) as good, cheaper choices. They aren't the best phones, but they won't be too expensive. If you had a cellphone before you were incarcerated, ask your family if they still have the phone. It might still work. You may want to use it again or change the number. Contact the phone service provider for help with this.

Cell phones come with service plans that you have to pay every month. You have two basic options for service plans:

- **Prepaid phone plans or no-contract plans.** You pay at the start of each month. You can stop your service at the end of each month or switch to a different service. Tracfone is a popular no-contract phone option.
- **Post-paid phone plan with a contract.** You enter a contract to pay a monthly fee for service. They add up your costs at the end of each billing cycle and charge you.

Phone plans have different options. Generally, the services will cover the following:

- **Talk:** How many minutes you can talk on the phone each month. Many plans these days have unlimited talk time.
- **Text:** How many text messages you can send each

month. Many plans these days have unlimited text.

- **Data:** Data lets your phone go on the internet when you don't have access to Wi-Fi (see Technology Basics below). If you only need a phone for calls, you may not need to purchase a data plan. You can use the internet on your phone for free at the library and many other public places and restaurants. If you do need data, start with a small amount, like 1 or 2 GB, and use your data carefully. You can always get more if you need it.

Phone service companies like T-Mobile and MetroPCS have different plans and rates. Some offer deals for sharing a cellphone plan with family members. Think about what you will use your phone for and how much you can afford to spend on it. Some phone or internet service providers may also offer discounts.



Technology Basics

Here are some technology basics to help you get started.

- **Internet or world wide web:** A network that connects computers and phones all over the world. Through an internet connection, people can share information, access resources, and communicate. Sometimes people call the internet the world wide web, or they will say, "you need web access," which means you need to be able to connect to the internet.
- **Online:** When you are "online" you are connected to the internet. People might say, "Get online to access this resource." This means that you can access the resource on a computer or smartphone through the internet.
- **Smartphone:** a phone that does a lot of the things a computer can do. It usually has a touchscreen surface, internet access, and you can download applications (apps). Apps have different tools to help with work, entertainment, money and more. Most people these days have a smartphone.
- **Wi-Fi:** To access the internet, you need to be connected to it. One way to do that is through Wi-Fi access. Wi-Fi access allows you to connect to the internet without using wires. You can access Wi-Fi for free at public libraries and some restaurants (McDonalds, Starbucks), or you can buy Wi-Fi access for your home.
- **Data:** Another way to connect to the internet is through a smartphone data plan. Data allows you to connect to the internet on your smartphone if you are

in a place that doesn't have Wi-Fi. Data plans can be expensive, and they usually have limits to how much data you can use every month.

- **Web browser:** A web browser is a program that allows you to access the internet on your phone or computer. Examples of web browsers are Google Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, and Safari.
- **Search engine:** A search engine is what you use when you are trying to find information on the internet. First, you will open a web browser. You should see a bar at the top with a little magnifying glass. This is how you can use the search engine. You can type a question or web address into the bar and it will search for the information you need. Google, Yahoo, and Bing are examples of search engines.
- **Website:** All types of organizations have "websites" where you can find information, resources, entertainment and more. There are millions of websites on the internet.
- **Web address or URL:** This is the "address" or location of the website or resource on the internet. You type this address into the search engine bar to go to the website or resource. We have included many web addresses to websites in this guide and in the directory. Web addresses usually look like this: <http://example.com>. When you type in a web address, you can leave out the http:// or www.



"I need assistance with the most basic things. That does make me somewhat defensive, and I'll end up trying to do things on my own and then I crash and burn."

— Pablo



Using the Internet

Make sure you have a way to get on the internet when you need to. Until you have your own device, you can borrow one from a family member or use a computer at the public library.

Do you have a smartphone, laptop, or tablet? Free wireless internet is available at the library, as well as many restaurants, coffee shops, hotel lobbies, chain technology stores, and even parks! You may have to ask what the password is before you can log on with your device.

Most things on the internet are found using a search engine like Google. Open up a web browser such as Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Firefox, or Safari. The home page will have a search box where you can type in what you are looking for. Here are some tips for good searches:

- Start with the basics. Start with a simple search like "Where's the closest Amtrak?" or "Pizza in Chicago." You can always add more words if you need.
- Don't worry about the little things. Even if you spell words wrong, it should still work.

Getting Help

- Ask a librarian to help you figure out the basics. They are there to help.
- Go to Northstar at digitalliteracyassessment.org to test your skills and learn more. You can access classes online or find a Northstar location where you can attend classes. They offer certificates for skills you have mastered.
- GCF global has a lot of free courses on how to use technology. Type this address in your search engine and click on a topic: <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/>
- Wikihow also has lots of resources to help you figure out how to use technology. Type "wikihow" in your web browser, and then enter your question in the search box at the top of the page.
- Many community colleges, libraries, and adult basic education programs offer lessons on everything from basic word processing to programming code.



Email, Passwords and Security

You will need your own email address. Email is now used more than paper mail. One way to do this is through Gmail, because Gmail accounts are free. Type gmail.com into the web browser and click "Create account."

You will select your own email username. It should be something easy for you to remember, like your own name, or some combination of your name, initials, and numbers. You will probably use your email to apply for jobs, so make sure your email address is professional.

Your password should also be something easy for you to remember, but hard for other people to figure out. The best passwords use capital letters (ABCD), small letters (abcd), numbers (1234), and symbols (#@!%).

You will probably use the internet to set up accounts for things like paying bills or accessing files for school or work. Protect your information by keeping your password secret and changing it every so often. Don't use the same password for every account you have. If you forget a password, you can usually change it by following instructions on the website. If you had email and other online accounts before you were incarcerated, you may want to reactivate them or close them. Change the passwords to keep everything safe.

★ If possible, do not put in sensitive personal information (like your Social Security number or credit card information) at a public computer or over public internet.



Smartphone Apps

Most smartphones come with these basic apps:

- Text messaging
- App to make phone calls
- A camera
- A clock
- A map service
- A browser (for example, Safari or Chrome)
- A calendar
- A calculator
- An address book (sometimes called "contacts")

You can also download more apps. They can be found in your phone's store (the app store or play store). Many useful apps are free. You will need to have either data or a Wi-Fi connection to download apps. You may have to enter your phone's password to buy it. It should show up on your homescreen in just a few minutes. If an app costs money, your phone should give you the option to enter your credit or debit card information and will ask you to confirm the purchase before downloading.

Here are some apps you may want to use:

- Facebook Messenger is a text or video messaging

app where you can communicate with family and friends.

- Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter let you share and view photos and comments.
- Spotify lets you listen to music. It will shuffle the music and also play advertisements, like a radio.
- Banking apps help you manage your money and pay bills.
- Transportation apps, like Citymapper, can help you use public transportation or find your way around.
- Many parole officers use the BI SmartLink App. With this app your Parole Officer can connect with you without having to come to your house. See our Parole chapter for more information.

Be careful with apps. Use careful judgment about what you'd like to keep private. Be aware that apps can use up your phone data.



Social Media

Many people stay in touch with others and get news through social media. Social media are websites that allow people to talk and share photos. Some social media sites are used mostly for friends and family while others are used for jobs. Here are two popular social media platforms:

- **Facebook** is the most popular social media company in the US. People use this site to share photos, updates, and news. It helps people stay in touch with family and friends; others use it for work. You can comment publicly on posts created by others or message users individually. You can also join Facebook groups to meet other people and get support. TASC, for instance, has a Reentry Facebook Group, Winner's Circle, that has weekly meetings. Learn more here: <https://www.facebook.com/TASC.HealthAndJustice>. Signing up for Facebook is free. To sign up, type [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) into the search bar and click "Create Account."
- **LinkedIn** is a social network created for finding jobs. You can use it to talk with employers and share your resume. To create an account, type [linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com) into your web browser and click "Join Now." Search "How to Create a LinkedIn Account Wikihow" to learn more.

Staying Safe on Social Media

Be careful when sharing information on Facebook or other social media apps. You can change the privacy settings so that only your friends see your posts. Public posts can be accessed by parole officers and employers. Social media sites track what you do and they can use that to try to sell you things. Sometimes scam artists use social media to trick people into giving away money. Remember, the information that you see on social media may not be trustworthy. It's a good idea to check with other sources.

Video Conferencing

Many people use video conferencing to talk to family, friends, and co-workers. With video conferencing, you can talk to multiple people at the same time and see people's faces. Video conferencing apps can be a great way to stay connected to family members and friends. Lots of meetings these days aren't in person; instead, they use video conferencing. Many job interviews also use video conferencing.

Here are a few video conferencing options:

- Facetime
- Google Chat
- Skype
- Zoom

If you have a computer or phone you can download an app for these video conferencing services. Some are free. In most cases, you will be a guest in a video

conferencing meeting. This means you will get an invitation to your email with the link that says "Click to Join." When the webpage opens, you may join via the app or your web browser.

There may also be an option to call in with your phone.

Video conferencing etiquette tips:

- If you are in a group, mute yourself when you're not talking so that the whole group doesn't hear any background noise (click on the microphone).
- Be aware of your backdrop. It's nice to turn your camera on so people can see you, but you can also turn your camera off (click on the camera icon) or use a virtual backdrop if you don't want people to see you or your living space.

Digital Literacy Resources

Learning technology is a lot like learning a new language. There are many free resources to help you learn.

- [Techboomers.com](https://www.techboomers.com) is a free website that teaches people basic computer skills to help them improve their quality of life. You can learn about helpful websites, social media, online shopping, and technology basics.
- [netliteracy.org](https://www.netliteracy.org) has a huge amount of digital literacy resources. Visit their site for resources and training on everything from basic email and social media to artificial intelligence.



Reflect

1. What technologies do I know how to use?
2. What do I need help with?
3. Where can I go for help?



Legal Matters

After you are released, there may be times when you need to go to court or get legal help. For example, you might want to get your record sealed so you can get a better job. Maybe you want to get back custody of a child.

This chapter covers the following topics:

- Getting legal help
- Child custody
- Child support
- Fees and fines
- Sealing records
- Certificates of rehabilitation
- Executive clemency
- The Safety, Accountability, Fairness and Equity-Today Act (SAFE-T Act)

☆ Please note that we are not lawyers and do not provide legal advice. This chapter will help you understand your legal options, but it just covers the basics. Ask a lawyer if you need more help.

Getting Legal Help

Pro bono

Figuring out the courts can be frustrating. It is best to get the help of a lawyer. Lawyers understand the rules and know how local judges and courtrooms work. Lawyers are often expensive, but there are lawyers who will work on your case for free (pro bono). These services are available through legal aid programs. See our Legal Resources directory for a list of legal aid programs.

Some cases can be handled without lawyers. These are called pro se cases. Things like sealing criminal records, family law, and small claims matters often don't use lawyers. This is cheaper, but it is almost always better to hire a lawyer or find one who will work for free.

Pro se help desks

If you decide to file pro se, most counties offer pro se help desks. The service is free. There are workers who can help you with pro se forms, courthouse directions, and legal consultations. Call your county's circuit clerk's office for information. For Cook County help desks, see this website: <http://www.cookcountycourt.org>.

[org/FORPEOPLEWITHOUTLAWYERS/HelpDesksintheCourthouse.aspx](http://www.cookcountycourt.org/FORPEOPLEWITHOUTLAWYERS/HelpDesksintheCourthouse.aspx)

Child Custody

Custody in Illinois has two parts:

- **Parental Responsibilities:** If you have Parental Responsibilities, it means you can make choices about your child's future. For example, you can choose where they go to school.
- **Parenting Time:** If you have Parenting Time, it means you can spend time with your child. The court will decide how much time they will spend with you. Even if you don't have Parental Responsibilities, you can still have a good amount of Parenting Time.

Custody can be complicated. Many people hire a lawyer to help them. If you choose not to have a lawyer, you will need to file a petition to modify custody. Petitions can be found online, or by visiting your county's circuit clerk office. There will usually be a fee. Once your petition is filed and read, a hearing should be set to consider changing custody.

Foster Care and Reinstating Parental Rights

What if your child is in foster care or with a relative? What if your parental rights have been terminated? You may still be able to get your rights restored. The first step is understanding how the process works. The second step is understanding where you are in your own case.

After your case has started, your child may be removed from your home. If this happens, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) will try to place your child with family members, or people who act like family members. DCFS may not know of all your family members, so tell them if there is someone they don't know about who might be able to care for your child.

You will need a lawyer if your child is taken by DCFS. Let the judge in your case know you can't afford a lawyer. The judge will assign one to you.

DCFS has to try to help you get your child back. They will give you a list of things you need to do for your child to come home. This list may include:

- Parenting classes
- Counseling
- Continuing education
- Anger management
- Drug or alcohol classes
- Minor changes to your home

For the safety of your child, you will have to show the judge and DCFS that you are making "reasonable efforts" and "reasonable progress" to finish everything on the list.

It is very difficult to show you are making reasonable efforts while incarcerated, but it is not impossible. It is important to try to do the things on your DCFS list as well as you can. Try to keep records of this for your lawyer.

Once you leave prison, you can work to finish your list. DCFS does have to fairly let you complete their list. But the judge is the one who decides whether you get your child back.

If your child is out of your care for 15 months, the judge can terminate your parental rights. This means you would

not legally be your child's parent anymore. The 15 months starts when your case begins. That's why it's important to always keep track of your case and the timeline.

If you no longer have parental rights, it is possible to get them back. But it may be hard. You can file something called a motion to reinstate your rights. You can hire a lawyer to do this or do it yourself. In order to ask for your rights back, a few things have to happen:

1. At least three years must have passed between the termination of your rights and your asking to get them back.
2. Your oldest child must be 13 or older.
3. You must show a "substantial change in circumstances" since you lost your rights. Leaving prison and having a steady job and place to live can show a judge that your child should return home with you. (705 ILCS 405/2-27)

Child Support

If you don't live with your child, you may need to pay child support. Child support is money that you pay to the person who is taking care of your child. Child support lasts until children turn 18, or 19 if they are still in high school. You will pay a certain amount of your income in child support. The amount you pay depends on how many children you have. A judge may order you to pay for other things too, like healthcare, child care, or school costs.

Reducing Payments

It is very important to pay your child support. If you don't pay, your child might suffer, and you might have money taken out of your paycheck. You may be able to get your payments lowered, if you:

- Are suddenly making less money.
- Are incarcerated.
- Have large healthcare costs.

If one of these things happens to you, you need to let the court know as soon as you can. You'll need to file a petition with the court. You can hire a lawyer to do this or do it yourself. Once you file the petition, you'll probably need to go to court to talk about your case.

If a court has ordered a suspension of your driver's license for failure to pay child support, it is important to petition to reduce that payment. Many judges allow you to make payments according to your income. They will remove the suspension as long as you are doing so.

Getting Payments You are Owed

Are you getting child support? If your child care expenses have gone up, you can ask for more child support from your child's other parent. Child care expense changes include things like:

- Medical bills for the child.
- New education expenses.
- A big change in your household's cost of living.
- If the other parent is making a lot more money recently you can also ask for more child support.

If you are not getting the child support payments you believe you are owed, contact the Illinois' Department of Healthcare and Family Services by calling (800) 447-4278, or by visiting their website: www2.illinois.gov/hfs/ChildSupport/Pages/default.aspx

Fees and Fines

There are many different fees and fines you may have to pay. You might have court fees or fines, like:

- Traffic tickets.
- DUI fees.
- Payments to the victims of the crime you were convicted of.
- Other fines related to the crime.
- Fines and debt for failing to pay child support.
- Parole or probation fines, such as fees for anger management or parenting classes, and fees for any required registration.

Even small fees can make it hard to get back on your feet.



"It's hard to make a decision between paying fines and staying out of jail, or paying bills and having somewhere to live."

— Anonymous

Still, it's important to plan for how you will pay these fees or fines. Not paying your fees or fines can get you in more trouble.

- Officials can hold those fees against you if you return to jail.
- Sometimes people are returned to jail for not paying fees, especially if they "willfully" do not pay them.

Sometimes fees have a high interest rate, meaning the amount you owe will get larger and larger the longer you wait to pay. You should pay off fees with a high interest rate as soon as you can.

But there is good news. There are programs that can help you with your fees. Here are a few we are aware of.

Waivers for Court Fees

In Illinois, there is a state waiver program for court costs for people who earn up to 400% of the federal poverty level. You can apply for this waiver to get rid of your fees. Unfortunately, you can't use these for traffic offense fees.

Removal of Past Child Support Debt

In Illinois, the Clean Slate program can help with child support. The program removes your child support debt if you agree to pay regular child support payments moving forward. To apply, you must complete an application. You must also show proof that you could not make your child support payments because you were incarcerated, unemployed, or very sick. You also have to provide proof of your current income or ability to pay. You will need to make regular child support payments for six months. Once you do this, your child support debt will go away. Learn more at Clean Slate Program - A Child Support Debt Reduction Program | HFS (illinois.gov)

Sealing Records

Sealing your record means Illinois employers can't ask about your record. This could make it easier to find a job. You can try to get your record sealed once you have been off parole for two to three years, depending on the charge.

Sometimes it is also possible to get a record expunged. An expunged record is erased. This means nobody can

see it anymore. This usually only happens if your charges were dismissed.

All crimes can be sealed except these:

- DUIs
- Reckless driving
- Crimes involving mistreatment of animals
- Sex offenses (misdemeanor, public indecency, and prostitution can be sealed)
- Domestic battery
- Violations of orders of protection

To begin the process of sealing your criminal record, submit a petition to seal. You can get a petition at your county circuit clerk's office. This form can also be found online at <https://www2.illinois.gov/osad/Expungement/Pages/Expungement-and-Sealing-General-Information.aspx>

Once you have filled out the form, submit it to the circuit clerk's office of the county where you live. There is a fee for filing these petitions.

It is up to the judge whether your record is sealed. It won't happen right away. In Cook County and Champaign County, they hold events called "expungement fairs" at least once every year. Volunteer lawyers at these fairs can help you learn more about expungement and sealing. Check the website of your county's circuit clerk's office to see if they hold fairs like these. Sometimes they ask you to sign up for the fair ahead of time.

Information on Expungement: The Office of the State Appellate Defender provides information about sealing, expungement, and other forms of criminal records relief. Access their website at <https://www.illinois.gov/osador> or call (312) 814-5472 and ask for the Director of Expungement.

To fill out this petition, you will complete a full criminal history. You will need to gather the following information for each arrest on your record:

- The case number.
- The date of your arrest.
- The law enforcement agency that arrested you (city or state).

- The charges that were brought against you.
- The final outcome (disposition) of each case, such as supervision or probation.
- The date each case was completed, such as the date your probation ended.
- The chief legal officer of the unit that arrested you. If you were arrested by state police, you need the state's attorney of the county where you were arrested. If you were arrested by city police, you need the lawyer the city hires to do legal work. This can be found by calling the city hall of the city whose police arrested you.
- The state's attorney that prosecuted your case.

Certificates of Rehabilitation

These are official documents that can restore rights you lost because of your conviction (for example, the right to earn an occupational license or serve on a jury). Certificates of rehabilitation allow you to apply for jobs that require licenses issued by the state. These jobs include ones in child care, education, and transit.

Everyone is eligible for a certificate of rehabilitation except those with:

- Class X felony or murder convictions.
- Aggravated DUI or aggravated domestic battery convictions.
- Sex offenses that require post-release registration.
- Arson offenses that require post-release registration.
- Felony convictions for a crime that caused someone a permanent disability.

Illinois has two kinds of certificates of rehabilitation. The number and type of convictions you've had will determine which you should apply for.

1. A certificate of relief from disabilities (CRD). You can get one of these after some time has passed after your release. There is a waiting period of one year for misdemeanors and three years for felony convictions. This period begins after parole. A CRD will mean you can work in over a dozen jobs that people with convictions usually can't do.
2. A certificate of good conduct (CGC) does the same thing as a certificate of relief from disabilities, and it also allows you to run for public office.

To receive a CRD or a CGC, you must file a petition with the circuit clerk of the county where you were convicted. The petition is free. You can hire a lawyer, or you can do it on your own. Doing it on your own will take more time and energy.

Petitions of rehabilitation are granted if you meet three things:

1. Eligibility

Your conviction is not one of the exceptions listed above.

2. Rehabilitation

Judges will look at a lot of information to decide if you are “rehabilitated.” They look at how many times and how often you have been convicted, your job history, your schooling, if you went to substance abuse counseling (if your conviction is drug related), whether you do community service, and if you have done other positive things after getting out.

3. No risk to public safety

You can convince a judge that you are not a risk to public safety.

As part of your petition, you will need to give the court these items:

Letters of recommendation

Letters of recommendation show that you are “rehabilitated and not a risk to public safety.” These letters should come from people such as family members, counselors, clergy, or employers who can show how you meet the rehabilitation guidelines listed above.

A full criminal history

For details on what needs to be included, revisit the “Sealing Records” section. For more information on certificates of rehabilitation and other forms of relief, see the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County’s website. It may be useful even if you live outside of Cook County. Find information here: cookcountyclerkofcourt.org

If you need help getting a certificate of rehabilitation, contact a legal aid organization. Safer Foundation in Chicago may be able to represent you or at least point you in the right direction.

Executive Clemency

Another way to attempt to remove barriers in your way after incarceration may be to petition the governor for executive clemency. There are different types of executive clemency you can request, including a pardon, expungement, or pardon and expungement. Much of the requirements are the same as outlined above in the “Sealing Records” section including the details of your conviction.

You will need to explain why you are seeking a pardon, including opportunities that were denied to you because of your criminal record. You can also submit character reference letters from friends and family and former teachers and employers. After you submit the petition, you are entitled to a hearing in front of the Prisoner Review Board. These take place four times a year, in Chicago and Springfield.

Many people choose to hire a lawyer to represent them as they file for executive clemency.

Safety, Accountability, Fairness and Equity-Today Act (SAFE-T Act)

You may have heard about a new Illinois law called the Safety, Accountability, Fairness and Equity-Today Act (SAFE-T Act). This is a major criminal justice reform law.

Here’s what you need to know about the major parts of the law.

What the law means for people who are currently incarcerated:

- **More discretionary sentence credit.** The law allows the Director of the Department of Corrections or the Director of Juvenile Justice to award more discretionary credit, based on improvements in disciplinary history, commitment to rehabilitation, and participation in programming. Directors can award up to 180 days for people

serving less than five years and up to 365 days for people serving five or more years. Eligibility requirements for earned sentence credit apply.

- **More earned program sentence credit.** People can earn one day of earned sentence credit for each day they spend in a qualifying program. People participating in self-improvement programs, volunteer work, or other work assignments can earn up to half a day credit for each day they spend participating in those activities. People who earn an Associate Degree can earn 120 days of credit.
- **Removed time limits on restoring earned sentence credit.** The SAFE-T Act eliminated the 30-day limit on how much earned sentence credit can be restored if it is lost.
- **Improved conditions for incarcerated pregnant persons.** The law restricts the use of segregation for pregnant people. It requires education for incarcerated pregnant people and training for prison staff. Infants must be allowed to stay with their parent for 72 hours after birth, and the parent must be given access to items necessary to take care of the newborn baby during that time.

What the law means for people on electronic monitoring:

- **Limits on electronic monitoring.** The law establishes guidelines for when electronic monitoring is used and for how long. Judges are required to determine that electronic monitoring is necessary. They must reconsider at each court date.
- **More electronic home detention.** The law allows the Illinois Department of Corrections to offer more people electronic home detention. People convicted on Class 3 and 4 felony non-violent crimes who have less than four months of their sentence left are eligible.
- **More movement while on electronic monitoring.** The law allows people on electronic monitoring to earn sentence credit and move more freely to meet their needs. People on electronic monitoring must be allowed to participate in essential movement at least two days per week.
- **Limits on penalties for violations.** People on electronic monitoring cannot be charged with felony escape unless they are in violation for more than 48 hours.

What the law means for people awaiting trial:

- **No money bond.** No one will be required to pay money to get out of jail while they await their trial.
- **Fewer arrests.** The law requires police to give some people tickets for certain low-level offenses rather than arresting them.
- **Less pretrial jail time.** The law limits when judges can order pretrial detention. Only people accused of certain crimes may be held in jail pretrial. Those accused of such crimes may be jailed only if a judge finds they pose a flight risk, or that they are a threat to someone else or the community.
- **Release and detention decisions.** When making decisions about release, there are fewer factors to consider. Risk assessment tools can't be the only reason for jailing people before trial. Judges are required to review pretrial conditions or incarceration at each court date and decide if conditions can be made less restrictive.
- **More phone calls.** People in police custody can now make three phone calls within three hours at no cost. Calls with a lawyer cannot be recorded.
- **Reduced penalties for violations.** The law reduces penalties for violations of pretrial release conditions (like missing a court date or a misdemeanor arrest). These violations are now Class A misdemeanors, not felonies. Such violations do not require jail time.
- **Fewer warrants for arrest when people miss court dates.** If someone misses court, judges can issue a notice to voluntarily appear in court within 48 hours, instead of issuing a warrant for arrest that forcefully brings people to court.

What the law means for police:

- **Limits on use of force.** The law puts limits on when officers may use force.
- **Easier complaint process.** The law makes it easier to make anonymous complaints.
- **Better record keeping.** The law requires police misconduct records to be kept.
- **More training.** The law requires more police officer training.
- **Body cameras.** The law requires police to wear body cameras by 2025. Larger cities and counties are required to provide police with body cameras sooner.

Finances, Credit, and Taxes



Thinking about money can be stressful. Take small steps toward managing your money, especially if you're doing it on your own for the first time. Making smart decisions about your money can help you have control over your life. Having control over your finances will help you avoid money troubles in the long run and feel more secure about the future.

In this section, we cover banking basics and how to open a banking account. Then we address budgeting, financial planning, and credit. At the end of this section, we go over filing taxes.



Banking

It's a good idea to open a bank account so that you have a safe place to put your money. A bank account also helps you avoid the fees that come with check cashing and money transfer services.

There are two basic types of bank accounts: checking and savings accounts. A **checking account** keeps your money safe. It also gives you easy access to your money so you can buy things and pay bills. When you open a checking account, you get checks and a debit card. You can use these to buy things, pay bills, or get cash from your account using ATMs. Some checking accounts have monthly fees while others do not, so make sure you ask about fees.

Once you have some money saved, it's a good idea to open a **savings account**. A savings account allows you to earn interest on your money. This means that if you leave the money in your savings account, it grows over time (usually at a very slow pace). You cannot write checks from a savings account, but some savings accounts will allow you to access your money through an ATM.

There are many good reasons to have a bank account:

- Putting your paychecks in a bank account is cheaper than paying fees for check cashing services.
- Some employers put your earnings directly in your account.

- A debit card means you don't have to carry lots of cash. Your money is better protected against being lost or stolen.
- Many banks offer free access to online banking services, which you can use to keep track of your money, pay bills automatically, and transfer money between accounts.
- Apps like Venmo let you transfer and receive money without any fees. You can get Venmo on your phone and use it if you have a bank account.
- You can work with banks to get car or mortgage loans, develop a retirement investment plan, and invest in stocks.

You don't have to be a U.S. citizen or have a Social Security number to open a bank account. You can open an account using the Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) assigned to you by the IRS, regardless of immigration status. Visit [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) for more information about ITINs.

Opening a Bank Account

Banks and credit unions offer different products to choose from, like checking and savings accounts, loans, rewards programs, and credit cards. Before choosing a bank, think about what you need. When you first go to the bank, ask to speak to someone who can help you understand their services and how they can meet your needs.

Here are a few things to consider:

- Will you travel a lot for work, fun, or visiting family? You may want to choose a bank that has many branches and ATM locations. Online banks are also an option.
- What fees does the bank have? Some fees might be an overdraft fee (when you take out more money than you have), fees for closing accounts, fees for foreign transactions, and monthly maintenance fees.
- Has a bank ever shut down your checking account? If so, banks might reject your account application. Don't worry, though, because some banks offer second chance checking accounts. Call and ask smaller local banks and credit unions about their account policies. Smaller companies tend to be more open to people who have had financial trouble.
- Is your bank or credit union backed by the government? If it is, that means that if the bank closes or has other problems, your money is protected. Make sure your bank is a member of the FDIC or NCUA.
- Does your employer, school, or community have a credit union? Credit unions are better in some ways than banks. See the chart on the following page comparing banks and credit unions.
- Are you a veteran? If so, you qualify for a USAA account. USAA members and their families can often get good rates on loans. Visit usaa.com for more information.
- Do you have bad credit? Many banks use a database called ChexSystems to check your bank customer history, but they don't always pull your credit report when you apply. Ask them what their policies are.

	Banks	Credit Unions
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier to open an account. • Many branches and ATM locations. • More options for types of accounts, loans, and credit cards. • Online banking and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit Unions are non-for-profit institutions. They are owned by their members. • Because credit unions are smaller companies, they have better customer service. • Higher interest on savings accounts. • Lower rates for loans. • More flexibility.
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have more restrictions or are less flexible when you make errors. • Higher interest rates on loans and credit cards. • Banks are owned by investors who may not care as much about the bank's customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership is more exclusive in credit unions than banks. • Fewer locations. • Fewer product options. • Poorer online services.

To open a bank account, you will need:

- A valid government ID
- A Social Security number (or Individual Taxpayer ID for non-US citizens)
- Money to make an initial deposit.

Banks may also require a second form of ID and/or proof of address, like a utility bill. Visit the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's detailed Checklist for Opening a Bank or Credit Union Account for more information. [Consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/](https://consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/)

Prior Banking History. When you apply for an account, the bank may pull a checking account report through a screening agency. This report shows history from the bank accounts you've had in the past, up to seven years. If your report shows certain high risk behavior, like unpaid fees or fraud, your application may be denied.

If you are denied, you can take steps to address the problem, or find another bank or credit union that has a more flexible application process. Every bank is required to provide a notice of the reason for a denial. If your checking report is the cause, you can request a free copy.

Every person is also allowed to pull their report for free at least once per year. Request yours by visiting: www.chexsystems.com or downloading and mailing a request form to:

Chex Systems Inc., Attn: Consumer Relations
805 Hudson Road, Suite 100
Woodbury, MN 55125

If you have negative banking history, you may be a candidate for “Second Chance Checking”, which has fewer eligibility requirements. Find a list of banks that offer second chance checking here: <https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/banking/second-chance-checking>

(banking history, credit reports, criminal background checks and more), plus information on how you can request or dispute your reports: https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_consumer-reporting-companies-list_uG9V3yS.pdf

The CFPB shows the pros and cons of various methods to receive paychecks, based on your needs and preferences. It compares prepaid cards, direct deposit, cashing checks, and more.

If you are uncomfortable when it comes to banking or if you have never had an account before, you might appreciate the CFPB’s Guide to Selecting a Low Risk Account: https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201602_cfpb_consumer-guide-to-selecting-a-lower-risk-account.pdf

Consumer Finance Protection Bureau Resources

The Consumer Finance Protection Bureau (CFPB) explains how each type of consumer reporting works

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Using Bank Cards for Purchases

If you’ve been in prison for a long time, buying things at the store may be very different. Perhaps you carried around cash in the past or wrote paper checks. Most people these days use debit cards or credit cards rather than paying with cash.

Here are some card options:

- Debit cards look just like credit cards, but are different. Most debit cards are linked to a checking account, and you can only spend money that you have in your account. Debit cards can be used anywhere that you use a credit card. You can also use your debit card to get money from an ATM.
- With prepaid debit cards, you can load money onto the card when you get it, then use it to make purchases until the money runs out. Prepaid debit cards are often used by people who can’t get a bank account. You might use one if you haven’t been able to get your ID yet. Bluebird by American Express and Chime are prepaid debit cards with no monthly fee.
- The Link Card is Illinois’ electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card for food stamps and/or cash benefits. You can use it just like a debit card at stores that accept EBT. Most grocery stores, dollar stores, pharmacies, and gas stations accept Link Cards. To find out more about applying for a Link Card, see our Meeting your Basic Needs chapter.
- With a credit card, you are borrowing money and will need to pay it back. We talk more about credit cards in the next section.
- There are also gift cards where people can put money on the card and then give it to someone to use like a debit card. Some cards--like a Visa Gift Card--can be used at any store, while other gift cards (like Target or Walmart) only work for specific stores.

For debit cards and Link Cards you will need to make a 4-digit PIN number, which is like a password. Before you use your card, make sure you have your PIN number set up. Usually, there is a number on the back of the card that you can call to set up the PIN number. Illinois's EBT customer service number is (800) 678-5465. When using a debit card or Link Card, make sure you know how much money you have. If you don't have enough money your card may not work.



It can be embarrassing if you don't know how to use a card. Here's a brief guide (summarized from Wikihow) about what to expect when you check out at a store.

1. After the cashier scans your purchases, they will ask you to pay.
2. There will likely be a card reader on the counter. Card readers look a little bit like calculators. They usually have a screen with instructions to follow.
3. The screen on the card reader may ask if you agree to pay the amount on the screen. You may have to press "enter" or "yes" to continue.
4. Next, the screen may ask you to swipe your card. Other times, the cashier will let you know when the machine is ready for you to swipe your card.
5. For some card readers you'll swipe your card on the right side (black stripe facing down and to your right). For others you'll stick the card in the bottom of the machine (stripe facing down) and leave it there until the screen lets you know that you can take it out. Don't worry if you don't get it right the first time. Turn the card around and try again. Lots of people make mistakes and have to swipe their cards a few times or get help from a cashier.
6. The card reader may ask whether you want to pay by "debit" or "credit." Hit the "debit" button if you are using a Link Card. If you hit debit, it may ask you to enter your 4-digit PIN number. Once the screen says "Approved," you should get a receipt. You can take your items and your receipt and leave.
7. Some debit cards allow you to get cashback with your purchase. The card reader screen will ask if you want cash, and you will enter the dollar amount you would like. The cashier will then give you the cash. The amount will come out of your bank account.
8. If you are using a credit card, you may be asked to sign a paper receipt or sign the screen with a special pen that is attached to the card reader. It will ask you to press "enter" or "accept" when you are finished. Once you have finished signing and get your receipt, you should be ready to go.

Remember: It's OK to ask for help! Lots of people have problems using their cards. The cashiers are there to help you.

Learn more about how to use a debit card here: [wikihow.life/Use-a-Debit-Card](https://www.wikihow.com/Use-a-Debit-Card).

Learn about how to use an ATM here: [wikihow.com/Use-an-ATM](https://www.wikihow.com/Use-an-ATM).



“The first time I went to the store by myself, I got up to the front of the line and didn’t know how to pay for my groceries. I saw this contraption for a card that looked real complicated and didn’t know how to use it. A long line of people were behind me and getting restless when I was just standing there looking dumbfounded. I didn’t want to tell anyone I had been locked up and didn’t know how to use a link or debit card. I was embarrassed and panicked!”

—Michael



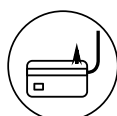
Financial Resources

One of the best things you can do to manage your money is to make a budget. Budgeting can help you know where your money is going so you do not spend more than you make. There are thousands of different budget forms you can download online for free. Or you can make your own. To make your own, add up how much money you make every month. Then, make a list of everything you spend money on in a month and compare the two numbers.

You can find information online about banks, credit unions, account options, and strategies for saving your money. Some financial planning websites have a “chat” where you can ask an advisor a question and get an answer right away. Here are some resources for help with money:

- [Learnvest.com](https://www.learnvest.com) and [Mint.com](https://www.mint.com): financial planning.
- [Thesimpledollar.com](https://www.thesimpledollar.com): understanding money and budgeting.
- [Nerdwallet.com](https://www.nerdwallet.com): budgeting, banking, credit, financial planning, investments, mortgages, car and health insurance.
- [Annuity.org](https://www.annuity.org): budgeting, personal finance, credit and more. Two resources that may be especially helpful are: [annuity.org/financial-literacy](https://www.annuity.org/financial-literacy) and [annuity.org/annuities/types/income](https://www.annuity.org/annuities/types/income).

Business Insider Magazine has a list of some top-rated money advice websites: [businessinsider.com/best-websites-money-advice-2014-12](https://www.businessinsider.com/best-websites-money-advice-2014-12).



Avoid Scams

You don’t want to become a victim of a scam. Visit this website for a list of common scams and their warning signs: [fbi.gov/scams-and-safety/common-scams-and-crimes](https://www.fbi.gov/scams-and-safety/common-scams-and-crimes).

Disclaimer: Please remember that we are not telling you you must use any of these websites or services. The resources listed here are suggestions. It is important to think on your own about any advice you are given.

Here are a few scams to avoid:

- Be suspicious of emails or calls that offer you lots of money or “free gifts” if you pay a small fee. If the reward sounds too good to be true, avoid it.
- Beware of companies that try to push you into signing up for something immediately. Only sign up for services you understand. You can always ask them for more information if you are confused.
- Only give personal information (such as account numbers and Social Security numbers) to companies you know to be trustworthy.
- Never pay for a letter of credit.



Credit

You may be considering getting a credit card so that you can buy things with credit. Buying on credit means that you buy things now and pay for them later. A bank loans you the money, and you agree to repay the bank later. Usually, this means that you buy something with your credit card, and then you make monthly payments to the bank until the loan is repaid.

Keep in mind that when you buy with credit, you have to pay interest. Interest is a fee to the bank for borrowing the money. Interest rates can be very high. Think hard before you get any credit card, and make sure you do not sign up for too many. The more cards you have, the more payments you will have to make. Also, too many credit cards will have a negative effect on your credit score. Credit card companies make money when people get deeper and deeper into debt. You do not want to be that customer!

A credit counselor at a nonprofit organization can give you good advice about getting a credit card. One example is [credit.org](https://www.credit.org), which offers free telephone counseling sessions.

Sometimes, credit cards can lead to a lot of trouble. If you buy too much with credit cards, it can be hard to pay your monthly payments. A service like [credit.org](https://www.credit.org) can help you figure things out if you get overwhelmed. A good practice is to only buy things with your credit card that you can pay back within a month. Be very careful: It is easy to slip into the bad habit of making purchases that you can't afford, which can lead to debt.

For some big purchases, such as buying a car, a house, or paying for college tuition, buying on credit makes a lot of sense. You may be unable to pay for a car all at once, but the cost becomes easier if you can spread it out over many months. Make sure to choose a car that is affordable so that you can manage the monthly payments. Try to get an interest rate that is as low as possible. Again, be cautious and talk to a credit counselor before going into debt.

If you decide to get a credit card or buy something using credit, your bank will look at your credit score first. A credit score is a number that tells them whether they think you will repay a loan. If you have a good credit score, it will be easier to get loans and lower interest rates. If you were in debt before you went to prison, you will need to take steps to improve your credit score. Credit scores range from 300 (bad credit) to 850 (excellent credit).

Here are some guidelines for managing credit:

Get educated.

Being uninformed can lead to costly mistakes. For a good primer on your credit score, check out this website: <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/credit-reports-and-scores/>

Be smart.

Avoid businesses (such as car dealerships and payday loan offices) that advertise directly to people with bad credit. They often have extremely high interest rates. They are counting on you not being able to pay your debts. Do not support any company whose business model depends on your lack of money.

Be cautious.

Read the fine print carefully and understand the rules before you sign anything. Remember, what counts is what is in the contract, not what the salesperson promised.

Pay your debts.

If you've gotten behind on any of your debts—or have had debts fall into collections—pay them, or make a plan for starting to pay them. For information about managing debt, see this website: consumer.ftc.gov/articles/coping-debt.

Pay your bills on time.

Paying on time is a good habit and can improve your credit score. The easiest way to do that is by setting up an automatic payment with your bank on your bills' due dates. Marking the dates on a calendar is fine, too.

Use credit cards wisely.

If you choose to have a credit card, don't charge what you can't pay back at the end of the month. If you must borrow money with a credit card to pay your credit card bills, it's time to talk with a credit counselor.



"If possible I would suggest you have a loved one that you trust and who believes in you to add you to some line of credit much like parents do for their children. Trust me, you will need it."

—Shaun

"Open a bank account. Work on building up your credit. If you get a credit card, use less than 30% of the credit limit, buy things with your credit card, and then use the 30 day grace period to pay the bill in its entirety. That's the slow way to build credit."

—Joe Joe



Tax Basics

Once you start earning money, you will have to pay federal and state taxes. The amount you pay depends on how much you make and who lives with you. Things like childcare, disability, and healthcare costs will also change how much you pay. Taxes are taken out of your paycheck.

Every year, you must file your taxes. When you file taxes, you let the government know how much you have earned and how much you have paid in taxes. You can also tell them things like if you have children, disability, or healthcare costs. The government decides whether you have paid too much or too little in taxes. In many cases, you will find that you have paid too much, and you get a tax refund. If you have paid too little, you have to pay the amount you owe. If you do not file your taxes, you have to pay a fee and you will owe back taxes for the money you didn't pay.

W-4 Form

When you start a new job, you are asked to fill out an IRS Form W-4. This form helps your employer know how much of your paycheck should be withheld in taxes. It is important to fill out this form so that you can arrange to pay taxes month by month. If you don't fill it out you'll have to pay them all at once at the end of the year. To learn how to fill out a W-4 form, visit the following website: wikihow.com/Fill-Out-a-W-4.

Filing taxes

Every year, you will need to file your federal and state taxes by April 15. Many people choose to file their taxes in January so that they can get a tax refund sooner. To file taxes, you will need a W-2 form from your employer(s). Employers will usually give you W-2 forms in January.

Do you work as an independent contractor or freelancer for different businesses or people? You may not be on a business's payroll, but you still do work for them. This is called "non-employment income." Usually, if a business pays you \$600 or more in non-employment income, they should send you a 1099 form. Unlike a W-2 form, which reports the wages you have earned from an employer, the 1099 form records your non-employment income. Keep good track of the 1099 forms you get. If you

haven't received a 1099, contact the employer or payer to request one. Whether you receive all of your 1099 forms or not, you must report any non-employment income when you file your taxes.

Next, you will need to decide which type of tax return to complete. Some of the more common forms are:

- Form 1040 (U.S. Individual Income Tax Return)
- Form 1040A (U.S. Individual Income Tax Return)
- Form 1040EZ (Income Tax Return for Single and Joint Filers With No Dependents)
- Form 1040NR (U.S. Nonresident Alien Income Tax Return)
- Form 1040NR-EZ (U.S. Income Tax Return for Certain Nonresident Aliens With No Dependents).

Because filing taxes can be confusing, many people get help from a tax professional called a certified public accountant, or CPA.

Simply bring your W-2s and any 1099 or other IRS forms to their office. For a fee, they will file your taxes for you. This means you won't have to worry about mistakes or spending a lot of time on your taxes. This is a good idea for people who have multiple jobs or other complicated tax situations. If you are looking for a CPA, ask someone you trust to recommend one.

There are also online websites that can help you file your taxes. These websites cost less than a tax professional. If you have a simple tax situation, you might want to use a website. The website will guide you through your return using a series of questions and automatic calculations. Remember to read all instructions and offers carefully. It should be free to file your federal tax return, but most online services charge to file your state tax return. Some of the most used online tax filing websites are:

- e-file.com
- turbotax.intuit.com
- hrblock.com
- taxact.com
- jacksonhewitt.com

Some places offer free tax help for people. See this website to check if there is a program near you: irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-qualifying-taxpayers.

Voting

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In Illinois, you can vote if you are a US citizen age 18 or older. While you lose your right to vote if you are convicted of a felony and are in prison or jail, you can vote once you are released. You can vote even if you are on parole, probation, mandatory supervised release, or electronic monitoring. You cannot vote if you are released on furlough or living in an IDOC Adult Transition Center (ATC).

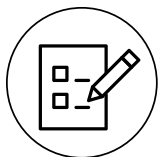
If you lost your right to vote because of a felony conviction, you must re-register to vote after release.

When you are released, IDOC should give you a “Civics in Prison” handout. It explains how to register to vote. If they did not give it to you or if you no longer have it, call the Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights at (312) 630-9744 to get one.

Your vote matters. Less than half of the people in the US vote. This means that only a small number of people choose the leaders who make the laws that apply to all of us. Your vote can make a difference, especially at the local and state levels.

US federal elections (for US President, US Senators, and US House Representatives) happen every 2 or 4 years, on the first Tuesday in November. State and local elections can take place in any year, at any time. During any federal, state, or local elections, you may be voting for state leaders, county state attorneys, local officials, and sometimes judges. There may be other important offices and issues on the ballot as well.

In order to vote, follow these three steps:



Step 1 **Register to Vote.**

This can sometimes be complicated. But please do not let that stop you! Volunteers at the non-partisan Election Protection hotline [(866) 687-8683] can help you for free.

In Illinois, you need to show two forms of ID to register. Pick two:

- Illinois state ID or number
- Illinois driver’s license or number
- Social Security card, or the last four numbers of your Social Security number
- Medicare or Medicaid card
- Birth certificate
- Mail that is addressed to you, at the address you wish to register under
- Credit or debit card in your name
- Military ID card
- Illinois vehicle registration or insurance card
- Illinois college or school ID
- Work ID
- LINK or public aid card
- Lease or mortgage in your name
- U.S. passport or passcard

There are three ways you can register to vote.

- **Online:** <https://ova.elections.il.gov/>
- **Mail:** Go to <https://elections.il.gov/Default.aspx> then go to the tab that says “Information for Voters.” Print out the form, fill it out, and mail it.
- **Same day:** To register on election day, you must show two forms of ID. One of the IDs must show your current home address. People who are homeless or who recently moved can vote this way. Tell the poll workers that you wish to do “election-day registration.”

After registering online or by mail, you should receive a voter card. It will have your name and will tell you where to vote, and when. If you don’t receive this card or if you misplace it, contact the Illinois State Board of Elections online at elections.il.gov/Main/ContactUs.aspx, or via phone at (217) 782-4141, or (312) 814-6440. You can also call [(866) 687-8683].



Step 2

Learn About the Candidates and Issues.

This guide cannot tell you how to vote. But you can learn about candidates and issues by listening to the news, talking with people you trust, and looking up candidates and issues online. You can also find voter guides and ratings for judges online.



Step 3

Vote!

In Illinois, you are not required to show ID to vote. No one should ask you for an ID unless you are registering on election day. But it is a good idea to take your voter registration card and ID with you just in case. Normally, there are three ways that you can vote:

- In person on election day, or during the early voting period.
- By mail-in ballot. Contact your election authority or [(866) 687-8683] if you need help requesting a mail-in ballot.
- By provisional ballot, if there are serious problems at the voting location. Because these ballots are not counted unless voters come in later to verify their identity, this kind of voting is not the best option. Call [(866) 687-8683] if you run into this issue while voting.

You can take notes, voting guides, and this voter information into the voting booth. It’s a good idea to do this, because there can be a lot to remember.

Take your time. Do not let anyone rush you. If you need help, ask a poll worker. They cannot tell you who or what to vote for, but they can answer questions about the process. They can help you mark a ballot if you have difficulty reading or if your English is limited. You can also request a ballot in other languages.

Call [(866) 687-8683] if you run into any problems while voting.

Veterans

This section covers VA benefits and services. For assistance with VA benefits and services, contact a VA representative by calling (800) 393-0865 or going to the website:

www.state.il.us/agebncy/dva



Transferring Benefits to Your Family

In general, you will not be able to receive your VA pension while you are incarcerated. After you go to prison, you will still get your benefits for 60 days. After that time, you may still get the checks, but you have to return the money to the VA.

If you have an injury or disability that is 80 to 100% related to your military service, you can receive 10% of your pension while incarcerated. You cannot receive any of your pension for injuries or disabilities that happened after your service. Veterans who are incarcerated can still get other benefits, including education and training, healthcare, insurance, vocational rehabilitation and employment, and burial services.

While you are incarcerated, you can transfer your pension to your family (spouse, children, or parents who rely on you for money). They must have financial need to get the benefits. This is called apportionment.

You (or an adult you are giving your benefits to) should apply for apportionment within one year of the day you were incarcerated. To apply, mail a letter to the Chicago VA Regional Office (VARO) at 2122 W Taylor St., Chicago, IL 60612. Your letter should say who you are and whom you want to transfer your benefits to. You must also complete and mail VA Form 21-0788. To get the form, ask a counselor or family member to download the form from this website: <https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-0788-ARE.pdf>. You can also tear out and use the form in the back of this book.

Once the VA gets your application, they will review it. They may ask your spouse or children's guardian to fill out the same form. They will let you know if the apportionment is approved, and your family will

retroactively receive your benefits. That means that your benefits will be saved and given to your family, starting 60 days after your incarceration.

Questions? Have someone call the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) at (800) 827-1000.

Reinstating Benefits After Release

You can have your benefits start again 30 days before your scheduled release date. If you are in prison, ask your counselor or someone on the outside to help you contact the IDVA. They can call (800) 393-0865 or go to www.state.il.us/agebncy/dva for help.

The VA has a reentry service called Health Care for Reentry Veterans (HCRV) Program. They offer:

1. Post-release assessments;
2. Referrals to medical, psychiatric, and social services, including employment and housing services;
3. Short-term case management after reentry. All VA Medical Centers have reentry staff. Contact the closest VA Medical Center to begin receiving services.

Female Veterans. VA Medical Centers have program managers who help female veterans. They offer help with VA benefits and healthcare. Contact the closest VA Medical Center to find a program manager who specializes in female veterans.

Filing Disability Claims

Do you have a disability related to your military service? You can file a disability claim online or in-person. You can get disability benefits in prison and once you are released.

To file an online claim, visit the website <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/apply> and create an eBenefits account. You will need your medical records and any other proof of disability for your claim. You can also apply by filling out a paper application at a VA facility, or mailing the claim to a VA facility. You can find VA facilities in Illinois by visiting: <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>. Check out this website to learn how to file a claim: <https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/>

The VA does not accept all claims. In fact, they reject almost all claims the first time. Keep trying. The process can be complicated, so you may wish to get help from a Veterans Service Organization (such help is free). Some veterans hire a claims agent or an attorney. You can search any of these options at this website: www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search

Health

After you leave prison, you can get care at VA medical centers. You can enroll in their system by visiting a VA medical center, or by phone at (877) 222- VETS. You can only receive care if you were honorably (or generally) discharged. You can receive treatment for injuries unconnected to your military service.

Not all VA healthcare is free. Your insurance will be billed for care, and you will have to pay part of your bill for inpatient, outpatient, extended care (nursing home care), and medication costs. Some of these services may be free if your income is below a certain limit or if your illness is connected to your service. For more on eligibility, go to <https://www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility/>

The VA also offers mental health and substance abuse treatment at VA medical centers or at Vet Centers (depending on the treatment). Visit <https://www.va.gov/health/vamc/> for a list of VA Medical Centers.

Housing

The VA's Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) program provides help for veterans who are homeless. This includes benefit help, case management services, and help getting housing. Contact the closest VA Medical Center to get services.

Employment

The VA has employment help and job training for honorably (or generally) discharged people. Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Representatives (DVOP) help veterans find jobs. Call Illinois' employment office at (217) 782-7100. The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Project (HVRP) helps veterans with:

- Searching for jobs
- Vocational counseling
- Occupational skills training
- On-the-job training
- Trade skills certification and licensing
- Job placement assistance
- Referral to supportive services

Contact the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs for more information: (800) 437-9824.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment services help veterans with disabilities related to military service. They offer help finding a job, job training, and advice. To connect with this program, call (800) 437-9824 or visit <https://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/Pages/ServiceOffices.aspx>

Veterans Industries and Compensated Work Therapy programs help homeless and near-homeless veterans with physical, mental health, or addiction problems. The programs contract with businesses to provide paid work for these veterans. They also have therapeutic housing. For more information go to <https://www.va.gov/health/cwt/>



Part 3: **Healing and Moving Forward**

- Beginning to Heal
- Building Healthy Relationships
- Mindfulness
- Connecting With Your Community

Beginning to Heal



Prison hurts in a lot of ways. People who are incarcerated sometimes push others away to protect themselves from that pain. Some people avoid relationships, grieving, and emotional self-care because they don't want to feel helpless. Others may try to protect themselves from being vulnerable by acting distant and indifferent.



"My family thinks that because I'm free, all my problems are over, but really we carry all this baggage with us. The coping mechanisms we had on the inside are still with us, and they create barriers on the outside."

— Pablo

Healing is a part of moving forward and reconnecting the pieces of your life. It is a process, and it requires you to be both vulnerable and strong. It might sound hard to be vulnerable. You need to let yourself feel the pain of incarceration. Opening up to yourself and being open to trusting others are big steps toward getting your life back.

Prison is often traumatic. Recovery will take time. The work towards recovery is a form of healing. Vulnerability is not weakness. It is not weak to ask for help. Getting help from a professional is a good option. Support groups and individual counseling can help you deal with trauma that may have happened while you were in prison. See the Mental Health section for information on finding support.



"Ditch that machismo and ask for help. It's out there. It's not a bad thing. Everybody needs it."

— Pablo

This section addresses a number of aspects of wellness that can help you heal and move forward. It is based on suggestions given to us by EJP alumni.

What is wellness? Wellness is a complicated subject. It means something different for everyone. After you leave prison, wellness is about making meaning out of your experiences. It also means making these experiences part of who you are and who you want to be in the world. It is about forgiveness, healing, caring for yourself, and reconnecting with others.

Emotional wellness means being respectful of yourself and others. It means you are aware of your good or bad feelings and accept them. You express your feelings to others in healthy and constructive ways. It also means you think about other people's feelings and perspectives. People may think differently than you. Knowing how to disagree respectfully is key to healthy relationships. You may have other unresolved issues you're dealing with, such as grief, anger, or depression. Be patient and realize the path to emotional wellness can be a long one.



“Reach out to somebody. One of our coping mechanisms that’s prevalent with individuals who are incarcerated is that we retract ourselves, isolate ourselves to try to deal with it, with the psychological hurdles we’re going through.”

— Pablo

Physical wellness is taking care of your body. It is important to stay active and healthy. Consider finding a gym, jogging, walking, biking, practicing yoga, or looking up free at-home exercise videos online. Eat healthy foods and drink plenty of water. Have a regular and restful sleep routine. Practice safe sex by using condoms. For those with addiction issues, getting help through counseling or recovery programs can be a really positive step. You can read more about healthcare in our Health chapter.

Social wellness means you form healthy relationships with many different kinds of people. As we discuss in the Preparing for Reunification chapter, reentry is a time when you will strengthen old relationships and build new ones. While it can be difficult to put yourself out there, it can also lead to meaningful, healthy relationships. See our Building Healthy Relationships chapter.



“Advice for socializing outside? Learning coping skills and anger management. Being less abrasive and open-minded.”

— Earl W.

Spiritual wellness is thinking about a larger meaning or purpose to life. This might mean religion for you. You may decide to join a church, synagogue, or mosque. You may also decide to join a support group to find community and purpose or volunteer to help others through a nonprofit organization. Set aside some time each day to be open, listen, and think about what’s going on inside of you. Practice mindfulness, meditation, or prayer. See our Mindfulness chapter.



“Take a breath. You’re going to be in for a ride, and you better pack your patience.”

— Pablo

Occupational wellness is contributing meaningfully and respectfully in your job. Your job may not be your perfect job. But how you do it is entirely up to you. What strengths do you bring to the table? Bring those to your work. Invest in yourself by investing in what you do. Find ways to do a little extra at work and try new things if you are able. Take the time to realize the value of the work you do, and honor that. Also, beware of toxic work environments. Some jobs can be unhealthy, physically, emotionally, or otherwise.

Environmental wellness means being aware of the Earth’s resources and trying to create a healthy environment. There are many ways to contribute. You can grow vegetables in a community garden or volunteer to help with community clean up. Spend time in nature, even if it’s at a local park, to help you feel healthy.

Building Healthy Relationships



Prison makes it hard to stay connected with family, friends, and loved ones. Reentry removes some of these barriers, but it can be a hard time for both you and your loved ones. Rebuilding healthy, positive relationships will require time, patience, and openness. You’ve changed while in prison, and so have your loved ones. It’s going to take time to get to know each other again.

Since you’ve been gone a long time, you may struggle to feel like you belong. You and your loved ones may feel uncertain about each other. You may wonder if you can trust each other.

Your relationship with loved ones may go through different stages when you return home. Things might start out great (the “honeymoon” stage) but get harder as you spend more time together. This is a common experience and you’re not alone!

Four common relationship stages during reentry			
<p>Stage 1: Honeymoon. You and your loved ones are excited to be back together. Everyone’s at their best, but anxiety is under the surface.</p>	<p>Stage 2: Uncertainty and suspicion. You and your loved ones might feel uncertain about your relationship and question motives. Are you going to stick around? Do you still want to be close?</p>	<p>Stage 3: Testing and learning to share. You and your loved ones may test each other to see if it’s OK to share feelings and be yourself. Can you trust each other?</p>	<p>Stage 4: Belonging. You may struggle with how to get involved in family routines. What roles will you play? How can you be part of family life again?</p>

You don’t have to face relationship challenges alone! Here are a few places you can go for help:

- **Look for a family-oriented reentry program.** Phalanx Family Services, for instance, offers programs to help people and their families reunite after prison. Learn more at <https://www.phalanxgrp.org/> or call 773-291-1086.
- **Take a class.** Anger management, parenting, communication, or marriage and family classes can help you develop skills that will make your relationships stronger.
- **Get counseling or therapy, either alone or with your partner or family.** See our Trauma and Mental Health chapter.
- **Join a returning resident support group.** Organizations like Precious Blood Ministries and First Followers offer supportive circles where you can share your struggles with others who share a similar background. They can provide advice and support.
- If you are in an abusive relationship, **call the domestic violence hotline: 1-877-863-6338.**

There is no “one-size-fits-all” solution to the challenges people face when reuniting with loved ones. Below, we share advice about common challenges that people face when reuniting with loved ones. We cover the following topics:

- Sharing (self-disclosure)
- Parenting after release
- Dealing with difficult emotions
- Anger management
- Institutionalization
- Domestic violence

Sharing (Self-Disclosure)

Many people survive prison by becoming closed off and guarded. They seldom share their thoughts or feelings with others. But being closed off can hurt your relationships. Family members can also become closed off. They might only share positive things during their visits or visit rarely because it's too painful to come more often.

Tony explains why many people are closed off from their family members in prison:

"You keep [your family] at an arm's length because you know you could lose them. A lot of us watched family members die. Family members get sick. Family members move away. You're watching the world go past you, and to keep that family interested in your life and to keep yourself interested in their life is really hard because you can't experience that life with them."

Isolation helps people cope in prison, but it's not always helpful on the outside.

..... ”

"The coping mechanisms we had on the inside are still with us, and they create barriers on the outside. When you retract and people are not knowing the reason for your isolation, they think it's having to do with them."

— Pablo

.....

So how do you open up when you're used to being closed off? How do you learn to share?

Self-disclosure is sharing information about ourselves that is truthful. It is being honest with your loved ones about your thoughts, feelings, and experiences. It is one of the most important parts of a healthy relationship.

- It builds trust.
- It provides emotional release.
- When you share, your loved ones are more likely to share, too.

There are risks to sharing. You may worry that your

loved ones will reject you if they know how you feel. You may worry that you will hurt others if you share what you have experienced. You may feel embarrassed to admit that you need help. You may feel that your family members won't be able to understand what you have gone through. All of this can make you afraid to share.

Keep in mind that closeness doesn't happen overnight. You can choose what to share and when. When building relationships, most people share slowly. They take small steps and wait to see how people respond. Here are some tips for learning to open up to loved ones again:

- **Start with the easy stuff.** Share what you like to do for fun. Ask them what they like to do. What movies, music, or foods do they love? What do they do to relax?
- **Spend time together.** Take long walks. As you do, share some of your feelings, fears, and goals. Invite them to open up, too. Start small and see how they respond.
- **Learn to text.** Send short, friendly messages about your day to your family and friends. Ask how they are doing.
- **Avoid criticizing or trying to offer advice when your loved ones share things with you.** Just listen. Be positive and supportive.
- **Be willing to talk about your relationship.** How has your relationship changed? How can you perform your share of the work?

Keke describes the small ways he shares his life with his children and invites them to share their lives with him:

"I take time out of my day, even five minutes, to call them and see what's going on. I text them every day, every morning... I talk to them and get their point of view and see what's going on, try to spend time. I tell them I love them, how you are doing, how your day is going, what you got planned. Little simple stuff. I let them talk."

David notes that if you want your children to open up to you, it helps to not be critical. He shares this advice:

"In prison I became more educated, more aware. My relationships with my children became complicated because I had the tendency to correct them in their behavior. I was bombarding them with advice, and the more I did this, the more they were pushing me away. I had to learn to relax, to not be overbearing."

Pablo also notes the importance of listening:

"Be ready to hear some truths. Listen attentively. There is a lot of lived life in your absence. Everybody was in a bad situation. As we were surviving, so were they. Don't approach it with judgment. Try to be understanding with your family and with yourself."

Keke notes the importance of being open and honest with your partner.

"The most challenging thing is [to] be honest with [your partner]. If she's taking time out of her life to stand by you, give her your life. [Don't] feed her a fairy tale. . . Don't come out trying to feed nobody no dream and definitely don't feed yourself a dream."

Sharing Your Past With Others

If you are in the habit of closing yourself off, it can be hard to make new friends. We offer a few methods for doing so below, and you can choose what you think would work best for you. Tony explains:

"You spend so much time keeping people at arm's distance. You never let anybody get close. [When you go into prison] you're so young, you're so vibrant, it's so easy to have friends, to have relationships, to have people that are close to you. But when you come home, you've gotten so used to keeping people at a distance that you just continue to do it. It's hard to make new friends."

When meeting new people, it can be hard to know how much to share about your past. Not everyone will be accepting of who you are. Roberto talks about the challenge of getting to know people and deciding how much to share.

"How do I get to know people? How do you create a personal brand so that all the good things you offer are not eclipsed by the fact that you spent a significant amount of time in prison? How do you open a conversation with someone when you're trying to remain private, and also take into account all of the negative stigma that's attached to being

incarcerated? You're just meeting people and you don't want to share too much about yourself. There's so much negative stigma. You have to break through that wall. On the other hand, if you do, it's still no guarantee that they are going to relate to you and understand what you're going through."

Keke prefers telling people right away about his past. "I tell them in the door," he says.

"I learned from my experience that if you lay your cards out in the open, you get a better understanding. Nowadays, people google so much. Both of you have to be honest with each other. So that's what I do. I let them know right in the door. This is me. I've been to prison twice. I'm doing this, I'm doing that, trying to get myself together."

Tony also prefers being open:

"It's a little weird, a little awkward, to just come out and say, hey, I just spent ten years in prison. But I've never been one to be shy. I've always been real open about what I went through because it lets other people know that, look, just because I was in there doesn't mean I have to keep going back and forth, back and forth."

Heather, on the other hand, is more reserved:

"I don't really mention [that I was in prison] to people. But, I guess it helps to have moved away to a different state, so really not that many people know me. They just know what they see of me now. They don't know... I made mistakes in the past. And I'm kind of comfortable with it. So, if I was to meet a guy or something and start dating, I wouldn't just throw all my dirty laundry out front. I'd get to know him. But if things were working out really good, I'd tell him all about it, and if he didn't accept it, then he probably wouldn't be the guy for me anyway."

Tony concludes,

"When you meet somebody, if it scares them that you've been to prison, then you know what? That's not the person that you need to be with."

When you are deciding how to share your past with people, consider these guidelines:

1. Is the other person important to you? If so, sharing may help you be closer.
2. What are the risks to sharing this information? Could they tell others or make it more difficult for you to get a job? Could they use it against you in other ways?
3. Is it appropriate to share? Sometimes it's wise to not share too much with strangers. What do they need to know about your past?
4. Will the other person be willing to share, too? Good relationships are built on reciprocity (a willingness to share on both sides).
5. Is sharing going to help or hurt? Think about the effect your sharing will have on the other person.

Asking for Help and Setting Boundaries

If you're used to being closed off, it may be especially hard to ask for help from loved ones. Pablo notes:

"My family thinks that because I'm free, all my problems are over, but I need assistance with the most basic things. That does make me somewhat defensive, and I'll end up trying to do things on my own and then I crash and burn."

His advice? *"Ditch that machismo and ask for help. It's not a bad thing."*

It can be embarrassing to have to ask for help. As Joe explains:

"What we're competing with is not feeling like a helpless infant all the time. We're so used to being rejected that we don't reach out much for help."

Lee, whose partner was incarcerated, argues that "healthy adult relationships aren't about putting your needs in the back seat." She explains:

"You want to be considerate and not wear out your

welcome. The effect of that is that maybe you're not expressing the things that you need. It's OK to say, 'Hey, I need you to do this thing for me.' Learn to communicate what you need."

Joe Joe offers this final piece of advice regarding asking for help:

"If you strive to lighten someone's load rather than adding to it, they are going to be more receptive to helping you. This is what really wins people over and will help get you where you need to go."

Some people going through reentry struggle to set boundaries with their loved ones. Your loved ones are happy to have you back. They may pressure you to get involved or do things you aren't ready for yet. They may ask you to do too many things at once.

It's OK to step back and take things slow. It's OK to say no to things and let them know that you aren't ready yet.



"You have to take things slow. All these new experiences, it can be extremely overwhelming. All those people tugging at you – those are extra stressors. Listen, take care of yourself."

— Ricky

"I love a good challenge. I was pulled into a monkey bar contest, into diving off the high board. But these old bones are not the same as they were. You don't want to injure yourself."

— Kilroy

"We're coming out feeling beholden to people for what they've done for us while we're inside, or for our loved ones. That clouds our judgment, our best interest. Realize you can't help anybody if you're not helping yourself. Being selfish is not a bad thing. If love is directed inwards, it can radiate outwards. You can't help anybody if you're not helping yourself."

— Pablo

Parenting After Release

If you are a parent, you may be nervous about reuniting with your kids. You may feel guilty for what your kids have gone through while you were locked up. Some parents need or want time to get their feet on the ground before getting their kids back. These feelings are normal.

You may feel pressure to make up for lost time with your kids or to be a super parent. No matter what, resist the urge to parent out of guilt.

Lots of people have unrealistic expectations of parents, especially mothers. Here are some **myths** about parents:

- They are expected to spend lots of time and money on their kids.
- They should be there emotionally for their kids at all times.
- They should place the needs of their children above their own needs at all times.
- They should have a clean house and money to put their kids in good programs.

Parents who cannot or do not meet this ideal are often seen as bad.

These “super parent” ideals are impossible to

live up to. And that’s OK. Resist the urge to parent out of guilt.

Don’t be too hard on yourself. You are going to make mistakes. We all do. See mistakes as an opportunity to learn. Be willing to learn from your children, too. Building a healthy relationship with your children will take hard work, love, and compassion. It will take time and patience, but it is definitely worth it.

Some relationships may never entirely heal. Accept that your children and loved ones may not want the same kind of relationship you once had.

Here are a few things you can do to make the process easier to reunite with your family:

- **Educate yourself.** Read books and attend classes about parenting. Raising a child is always hard, so get all the tools you can.
- **Get counseling or therapy.** It can help you heal and provide tools for you to be a better parent. See our Mental Health chapter.
- **Do things you enjoy.** Meditate. Take some time to do things for yourself, if you can. See our Mindfulness chapter.
- **Talk to other parents,** especially those who have spent time in prison. Join a mothers group or a parents group. Share your experiences, fears, and dreams.



“You can’t recapture time that has been lost. You have to start fresh. Don’t be too gung-ho. Trust has to be reestablished. If they’re angry, don’t try to invalidate their anger. Talk about it. Don’t pretend that the separation never happened, because it did. Try to seek counseling.”

—Josephine

“When you’re locked up, you have all this time to sit and think. You have ideas of how you want things to go, and then you get out and, of course, those are just ideas. . . . Take care of yourself and everything else will fall into place. . . . You can’t stress out over everything that you have no control over. Don’t give up hope. There’s always hope. And love overcomes a lot of stuff.”

—Heather

“Always remember that reconciliation and restoration are two different things. You may reconcile, but the relationship may never be restored. Just grieve properly. Be OK with that. Don’t walk around forever with the grief on your back. If you’ve done all you can, it will be OK.”

—Josephine

“There will be people in your life who will remain after such a long journey, and there will be some who fall to the wayside. Don’t look back. Keep looking forward, looking inward. Seek inward happiness.”

—Pablo



Reflect

1. What feelings do you have about reuniting with your family?
2. How can you practice self care during this time?
3. Where can you go for help? Who is in your support network?

Dealing with Difficult Emotions

In prison, you may have bottled up difficult emotions instead of working through them. Maybe you pushed aside feelings of fear, guilt, or anger and instead told family members that everything is going to be OK. Your family members may have done the same.

Here are a few of the emotions you might feel as you reunite with your loved ones.

- **Fear** is your body’s reaction to danger or uncertainty. You may fear that nobody will love you because of the things you’ve done. You may be afraid that your children won’t accept you. This fear can cause you to withdraw from them even more.
- **Sadness** is feeling unhappy or discouraged. You might feel discouraged that your children don’t know you or that your sibling doesn’t want to talk to you.
- **Grief** is a profound feeling of loss. You might feel a sense of loss for the years you spent in prison, away from your family.
- **Guilt** is feeling bad about yourself, often for something you’ve done or haven’t done that makes others suffer. You might feel guilt for not being around for your partner or kids.
- **Anger** is something you feel when someone or something has done you wrong. You might feel angry about what prison has done to you, or angry about something a loved one has said.

People experience emotions through their mind and body. For instance, fear can tighten your chest. You might feel sick to your stomach or start sweating. Some

emotions can help you change and grow. Others can keep you from growing and harm your relationships.

Expect some of your repressed emotions to surface. Sounds, tastes, and smells can trigger memories from the past. You may have lost partners, friends, and parents. Expect to feel rage, sorrow, frustration, and grief.



“If you have any emotions at all, you’re going to have guilt about making your family suffer... They suffer with you while you’re in there. To them, you’re kind of dead because you’re not around any longer. There is guilt. And we don’t like to show it because, hey, we’re tough guys.”

— Tony

“I was looking at videos with a friend and a song came on. I found myself crying for no apparent reason. I lost my father when I was locked up. That was one of his favorite songs. I had never had the opportunity to mourn. All of the pain came forward.”

— Pablo

It’s normal to feel these emotions. It’s what you do with these emotions that matters. Pushing aside difficult emotions instead of facing them can harm your relationships. Learning to recognize, express, and manage emotions can help you have healthier relationships.

Here are some tips for managing emotions in healthier ways:

- **Identify your feelings.** Let them wash over you. They won't last forever. Give yourself time to feel them. Don't bury them. Doing so can cause these feelings to build up even more.
- **Express your feelings in helpful ways.** Separate people from actions. Say, "I'm angry about something you have done," not "I am angry with you."
- **Recognize the difference between feeling and acting.** Just because you feel a certain way doesn't mean you have to act on it.
- **Accept responsibility for your feelings.** Try not to blame others for the way you feel. Instead of saying, "You're making me angry," say "I'm feeling angry."
- **Change your perception.** Think about what caused you to feel that way. Are there different ways to think about what happened that are more helpful?

Therapists or counselors can help you work through and manage your emotions. It may help to go to family or couples therapy. Some organizations, such as Phalanx Family Services, offer support for families working through the challenges of reentry.

In prison, you may have walked away from difficult emotions and conflicts. Perhaps you had space to think through difficult issues before facing them. On the outside, you may be expected to directly address issues with your loved ones rather than walking away. You may feel pressure to respond right away when you'd rather take your time.

Pablo explains what happens when you retreat instead of talking about how you are feeling with loved ones:

"When you retreat, it telegraphs to the other person that you don't care. When you remain silent, people may think you're brushing them off."

It's OK to take some time to think before talking through a problem. As Lee explains, "It's OK to say, 'I need time to think about this, I can't give you an answer right away.'"

But too often when people retreat, they never come back to it. If you need some space, commit to talking about it later.

Anger Management

As with other emotions, it's normal to feel and express anger. It gets to be a problem if your anger is out of control, aggressive, or constant. It's a problem if your anger hurts the people around you.

Anger is a secondary emotion. For example, "He embarrassed me, and then I got angry." Getting to the root of why you were embarrassed can help the anger subside.

You may have to take an anger management class as a condition of your parole. These classes can help you learn some basic skills for managing your anger. A therapist or counselor can also help. Anger management classes or therapy may cover topics such as:

- Causes behind your anger and triggers
- Expressing anger in better ways
- Time out and reflection
- Understanding how your anger affects you and others

Need to find an anger management class?

If it's required for parole, you will need to make sure that it offers a certificate. Often there is a small fee for this certificate. Ask questions to make sure. You can take online or in person classes.

To find a low or no-cost class, try the following resources:

- Go to a DHS Family Community Resource Center and ask if they can recommend anger management classes you can take.
- Ask your parole officer or your healthcare provider for some suggestions.
- Local universities and colleges sometimes offer anger management classes for the public.
- Local community centers and nonprofits often offer anger management classes as well.

Here are some anger management tips, modified from experts at the Mayo Clinic:

1. **Think before you speak.** In the heat of the moment, it's easy to say something you'll later regret. Take a few moments to collect your thoughts. Allow others to do the same.
2. **Once you're calm, express your anger.** As soon as

you're thinking clearly, express your anger, concerns and needs clearly and directly. Do so without hurting others or trying to control them.

3. **Get some exercise.** Exercise can help reduce stress that can cause you to become angry. If you feel your anger building, go for a walk or run.
4. **Take a timeout.** Give yourself a short break when things get stressful. A few moments of quiet time might help you handle things better.
5. **Identify possible solutions.** Instead of focusing on what made you mad, work on resolving the issue. Does your child's messy room drive you crazy? Close the door. Is your partner late for dinner every night? Schedule meals later in the evening or agree to eat on your own sometimes.
6. **Stick with 'I' statements.** To avoid placing blame, use "I" statements. Be respectful and specific. For example, say, "I'm upset that you left the table without offering to help with the dishes" instead of "You never do any housework."
7. **Use humor to release tension.** Humor can help you face what's making you angry without getting out of control.
8. **Relax.** When your temper flares, put relaxation skills to work. Take deep breaths. Imagine a calm place or repeat a calming phrase, such as "Take it easy." Listen to music or go for a walk. Practice mindfulness (see our Mindfulness chapter).
9. **Know when to seek help.** Learning to control anger is hard for everyone at times. Seek help if your anger seems out of control, causes you to do things you regret, or hurts those around you.

Reflect

1. Think about a time when you felt angry and it got out of control. What happened? Why did it get out of control?
2. Now think about how you could have managed your anger better. What are some things you can try next time you get angry?

Institutionalization

Many people who have left prison continue to suffer the mental effects of being locked up long after they leave. Institutionalization is how your thoughts, speech, and actions are influenced by being locked up. You and your

loved ones may not be aware of all of the many ways prison has impacted you. This can cause all sorts of conflicts and misunderstandings.

Some people who leave prison suffer from Post-Incarceration Syndrome (PIS), a syndrome similar to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Time in prison can make mental health problems worse. It can make people more isolated and be more violent. It can lead some people to feel that they have no purpose. It can make people fearful and hypervigilant.

Here are just a few of the many ways that time in prison may have impacted you and your relationships.

- "I closed myself off as a way of coping."
- "I have these defense mechanisms. I've learned to telegraph assertiveness and square up when faced with conflict." – Pablo
- "I had hangups about talking to regular, free people. I didn't feel comfortable." – Ricky
- "When I get upset, my posture says I'm ready for a fight." – Pablo
- "In prison, we got up early. I'm up in the middle of the night. Up early in the morning."
- "In prison, you have to watch your back. Now on the outside, I can't sit with my back to people. I have to be at the back of the room so I can see everyone." – Kilroy
- "I'm loud because in jail, people tend to scream. Everyone has to speak over each other if they want to be heard." – Antonio

The tools you used to survive in prison were "blunt tools," as Pablo describes. You may have survived by being closed off, aggressive, and hypervigilant, or by being loud and watching your back. These tools can drive your loved ones away on the outside.

You will need to add new tools to your toolbox — tools that are more delicate. They include listening, communicating, and being patient with yourself and other people. Have honest talks with loved ones. Invite them to help you recognize when you are acting in an aggressive way. Practice adjusting your body language.

It will take time for you and your loved ones to understand just how much your time in prison has impacted you. You may need counseling or help from a support group to work through these issues.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence isn't just an anger problem. It's about control. Domestic violence is when one person exerts power or control over another person in a dating, family, or household relationship.

Domestic violence can take many forms, including:

- Verbal abuse (threats, name-calling, intimidation)
- Physical abuse (pushing, slapping, choking, destroying property)
- Controlling behavior (keeping you from seeing people, going places, or spending money)
- Emotional abuse (making you feel like you are worthless)
- Sexual abuse (unwanted sexual activity, often using force)

In some families or cultures, these behaviors are not seen as wrong. It's hard to break away from domestic violence when the attitudes about relationships around you are not healthy. It may take some time to change your way of thinking. It may take some time to realize that what you are doing or experiencing is wrong.

If you are in an abusive relationship, seek help. Making the decision to leave is hard. It can be risky. It takes courage to leave, especially if you fear for your own safety or the safety of your children. It's hard to leave if you depend on the other person for money.

Begin by calling the Illinois Domestic Violence hotline: 1-877-863-6338 or 1-877-TO-END-DV. This confidential, free 24-hour hotline provides support, information, and referrals. It can put you in touch with resources in your area. Even if you are not ready to leave the relationship, the hotline can help you get through hard times. It can help you take the next step.

The Illinois Department of Human Services website has a list of places where you can go for help: <https://the-network.org/>

If money is keeping you from leaving a partner who is abusing you, there is an Emergency Crisis Fund for survivors of domestic violence. It is managed by The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence. For more information contact Emergency@The-Network.org.

We have listed transitional housing and emergency

shelter options in our Housing Directory. Many of these shelters serve people who are leaving an abusive relationship. Some provide protection if you fear for your safety. In our Health Directory, we have listed a few counseling resources available to people who are facing domestic violence.

If you are the abusive partner

If you have been abusive to a partner or family member, reach out to get help. The first important step is to acknowledge you have a problem. You can change, but it will take work. You may be required to stay away from your partner until you are in a better place, or you may choose to stay away for a while to keep them safe and give them some space.

To get help, consider attending a Partner Abuse Intervention Program (PAIP). You may be required to attend a PAIP program by the court. This program is for people who control their partners with physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, or economic abuse (withholding money). The program can help you:

- See that it is NOT ok to abuse a partner
- Learn to take blame and credit for actions
- Learn nonviolent and non-controlling ways of communicating and behaving

The program typically lasts 24-26 weeks. You'll get training from certified domestic violence professionals about how to stop abusing your partner. A counselor or therapist can also help you work through these issues.

To find a PAIP program, call the State of Illinois Domestic Violence Help Line at 1-877-TO END DV (877-863-6338) or 1-877-863-6339 (TTY) or check out the IDHS Office Locator: <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12>



Reflect

1. What does a healthy relationship look like to you?
2. Think back on your relationships with your family or loved ones. In what ways were those relationships healthy? In what ways were they unhealthy?
3. Where are the places you can go for help if you are in an abusive relationship?

Mindfulness

If you practiced mindfulness while in prison, you no doubt know how helpful it can be. You will find that mindfulness is helpful on the outside, too. If you're new to mindfulness, welcome! This chapter will introduce you to some simple but powerful practices you can begin today.

Mindfulness looks different for all of us. You'll see this in the stories we share from people who have practiced mindfulness in prison. The chapter covers these topics:

- What is mindfulness?
 - What are the benefits?
 - How do I meditate?
 - Meditation scripts
 - Meditation resources
 - Meditation groups
-

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is about paying attention to the present. It is about noticing your thoughts, emotions, and how your body feels. The key is to not judge yourself or give yourself a hard time. When you are aware of your five senses or your mind, you are being mindful!

Mindfulness is not about fixing what is wrong with you. Instead, it is about accepting what is going on inside you. It's about being gentle and kind to yourself. It helps you stay connected to the moment. You can then respond in a non-reactive, caring manner.

Mindfulness has its roots in Buddhism, but mindfulness is not a religion.

Instead, it is a way to explore your mind and body. Some people see mindfulness in every religion. Prayer can be a form of mindfulness.



"If you would have told me a year ago that prison meditation was a survival skill I might have chuckled. After one short year of mindfulness practice, I'm starting to realize it might be just that."

— Prison Mindfulness Program Participant



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“I thought my troubles would be over if I could just get out. Freedom was the answer to all my problems. Little did I know that freedom was just the beginning of a whole host of new challenges. I experienced nausea every time I rode in a car and two months later I still do. . . . After a while, I questioned myself, “what is wrong with me?” I still don’t have the answers to that question. All I can offer is the way in which I coped with the symptoms. I meditated. I simply concentrated on my breath. I followed my breath going in and followed it leaving my body. Each breath unique, each breath a momentary pause to reset myself.”

— Prison Mindfulness Program Participant

“Does your heart race every time you step out of your house or enter a public place? I found that my anxieties overwhelmed me to the point of confusion. Practicing mindfulness helped me be aware of physically overwhelming experiences at the onset. I could feel perspiration on my upper lip. My palms started getting sweaty. My body tenses up. These are the warning signs that remind me to just breathe. During these episodes I found that I was not breathing. Doing nothing else but concentrating on my breathing made this off-putting experience bearable. Soon thereafter, I was more and more in control.”

— Prison Mindfulness Program Participant

How Does Mindfulness Help?

- More growth after trauma
- More self compassion
- Less burnout

”

“The value of mindfulness based meditation in prison is the equivalent of an oasis to a desert-beaten man”

— Prison Mindfulness Program Participant

Mindfulness has many benefits. It can help you manage stress and control your emotions. It even changes how your brain works over time. It can help you not get stuck in unhelpful thought patterns. It can help you be happier. Other benefits include:

- Being better able to fight disease
- Lower blood pressure and heart rate
- Having greater mental focus
- Better handle on emotions
- Lower anxiety and depression





“Have you felt alone, out of place? You are not alone. I experience that regularly. Things have changed since I last experienced freedom. Life has passed me by, and I’m lost among new technology and infinite variety. No one seems to understand what I am experiencing. I can’t help but feel broken. Is something wrong with me? The answer to this question is an emphatic “No.” What I was experiencing was a reaction to the trauma of isolation for so many years. I rely on mindfulness to assist me in channeling my focus. Mindfulness assists me in ignoring the peripheral that excites my anxieties and allows me to center my focus. I do so by simply concentrating on the breath. This simple act is what grounds me and allows me to function normally.”

—Anonymous

How Do I Meditate?

Meditation is the most common way to practice mindfulness.

No formal training is required to meditate

There is no one right way to meditate, no “good” way, and certainly no “bad” way. If you can breathe, you can meditate.

Practice alone or with a group

Find someone who knows how to meditate to get you started. You may also be able to borrow a book about meditation from your library. You can meditate alone or with a group.

When to practice

In the beginning, try to meditate for 5 or 10 minutes. Increase the time bit by bit. Try different times of the day: morning, afternoon, or evening. Try to practice every day, but if something comes up, that’s OK! Let go of what you think should happen.

How to sit

Many people meditate sitting down (with their eyes closed or open) and looking down a few feet in front of them. Sit in a chair or cross-legged on a pillow, floor, or bed. Sit up straight, but be relaxed. Rest your hands in your lap or on your legs.

Common difficulties

It’s common to feel restless, bored, and sleepy during meditation. Your mind may wander. That’s totally okay. You don’t need to get rid of thoughts when you are meditating. Do your best to notice and label your thoughts when they come: “thinking about the past,”

“feeling restless,” or “feeling bored.” Then see if you can return your attention to your breathing. Meditation takes practice. Do your best to be curious and not judge, no matter what happens.

Meditation and trauma

When we practice meditation, sometimes our mind digs up long-hidden memories that are traumatic. This may create anxiety and stress. Meditation can be a tool to process these emotions, but it is not a cure-all. If focusing on the body brings up traumatic memories, try focusing on a safe image or sound. If difficult memories keep coming, talk with a mental health professional. Look for a meditation group for people who have experienced trauma.

Meditation Scripts

Many begin their meditation journey by using meditation scripts, or words they can read or listen to while meditating. Read each script slowly to get used to it. After a while, you can say the words silently to yourself. Give each step about 1 minute, but feel free to go at your own pace.



“I don’t always follow a specific regimen other than just to breathe in times of stress. This sounds simple enough but it can be very difficult, especially when you are not practicing regularly.”

—Anonymous

A Seated Breath and Body Meditation Practice | Abbreviated from Mindful Magazine

- Begin by getting comfortable, sitting up straight but not rigid, in a position of ease. Close your eyes or lower your gaze toward the floor.
- Take a few deep breaths. Get a sense of how you're doing at this moment physically, emotionally, and mentally. Is there tension or tightness anywhere? Is your mind busy or calm?
- As you breathe in, bring a beginner's mind, noticing things for the first time. As you breathe out, bring the same sense. Rest your awareness on the breath.
- Begin to sense your body sitting here. Feel into your whole body. What are your senses telling you? You may feel warm or cold. You may be itchy. Perhaps some areas don't have any feeling at all – a blank.

Spend the next minute feeling these sensations. Allow them to come and go.

- If your mind wanders, where is it wandering to? Are you remembering something? Are you feeling anger or regret? Are you practicing what you will say to someone? Notice your thoughts as if you were sitting in a movie theater, watching images come and go on the screen. Notice the thought or emotion as if it were someone else's thought, not yours. Notice an opening up in yourself as you become more aware, more accepting.
- Come back to the breath. Breathe in and out. Notice how the whole body expands when you inhale, and contracts when you exhale. The whole body is breathing.
- As you end, congratulate yourself for taking time to meditate. Realize that you can take a few minutes to meditate whenever you wish.



"Our thoughts are just thoughts, not the truth of things, and certainly not accurate representations of who we are. In being seen and known, they cannot but self-liberate, and we are, in that moment, liberated from them."

—Jon Kabat-Zinn

"Have you experienced disappointment with freedom? I have, and that is not something to be ashamed of. This is more common than you think. My life after release is nothing like I envisioned it. I romanticized freedom, and for some reason I feel more locked up out here. I constantly ruminate on these disappointments. Rumination occurs naturally when you allow your mind to take control. Mindfulness has taught me how to take control of my thought process. This has allowed me the freedom to take life as it comes and adjust as needed."

—Prison Mindfulness Program Participant

Gratitude Meditation | Mindvalley Academy

Gratitude practice can help us tap into hope. It can help us boost our mood. That said, it's not easy to focus on the positive when you feel stressed. Be patient with yourself as you try this meditation. You can always return to the breath if it feels too stressful.

- Sit in a comfortable position. Take a few deep and

slow breaths.

- Think about something that's troubling you. It's best to start small. Name something that annoys you. Perhaps the room you're in is cold and drafty.
- Now see if you can flip it to something positive. For example, perhaps the room is cold and drafty, but it's raining and you're able to stay dry.
- Continue to think of things or experiences that you don't like. Do your best to find something positive

about each thing or experience. Challenge yourself. Maybe they are helping you learn or grow. Perhaps you notice how you have kept going even when things are hard. Maybe you have found new ideas you didn't have before.

- You can also simply repeat, "I am grateful for _____" and notice what comes up.

Mindful Walking | Adapted from Mindful Walking, Segal, Williams & Teasdale Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression

Mindfulness is about being aware of what we're doing, thinking, and feeling. Mindful walking is simple. You can do it without people knowing what you're doing. Many people walk everyday, but most of us don't focus on the process of walking and how the body feels.

- Standing still, become aware of your feet. How do your feet feel when they touch the ground? Flex your knees a few times to get a sense of how your feet and legs feel.
- When you start walking, notice how you move your weight into each leg. One leg "empties" and the other leg takes over to support your body
- With one leg "empty," allow the other heel to rise slowly. Move it forward, feeling your leg. Place it down to get ready for the next step. Feel your weight

move to this leg.

- Continue walking. Notice how your feet, legs, hips, and upper body feel.
- If you stop, notice how you feel when you stand. Notice how it feels when you start moving again.

Mindfulness in Daily Life: Brushing Your Teeth

Being mindful doesn't mean you have to sit and be still. Think of all the things we do in a day. Most of the time we're not fully aware of what we are doing. Our minds wander off. Mindfulness can be practiced in things we do every day, like washing dishes or brushing our teeth. Brushing your teeth is a great mindfulness activity because we repeat it over and over.

- When you brush your teeth, don't just get lost in thought. Gently bring your attention back to the body each time your mind wanders. What can you see? What can you hear? What's the color of the toothpaste? What's the smell? What flavor is it? You don't have to think too much. Just try to notice things.
- Now, gently focus on how you feel. Notice your arm moving from side-to-side. Notice the sound of the toothbrush against your teeth. Feel the bristles against your gums, against your teeth.



"The ride home from Lawrence was a bit difficult. I was noticing everyone was on their phones, and all I had to do was look out the window. As if I already didn't stand out enough. For Christ's sake I'm carrying a cardboard box for luggage. I don't know if it was the COVID but people were standoffish. This probably was a good thing because I had several panic attacks. I don't know how I would've handled sitting right next to someone when I'm constantly on guard of my personal space for protection. Thank God for mindfulness. Meditation didn't always work but I immediately recognized it when it was needed."

— Prison Mindfulness Program Participant

Meditation Resources

Need more meditations? Check out this website for dozens of more meditation scripts! https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XSgYgKhvpM1uqq3_00Q074nBXIZq4CLo/view?usp=sharing

If you would like to learn about meditation from people of color, check out this resource guide: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s3I700SH5hAXVCDBDMZddhDSMN3ogXpG/view?usp=sharing>

Phone Apps

There are a lot of free mindfulness phone apps. These apps offer guided meditations, timers, calming sounds, soothing voices, tips, and more. Some provide tips on how to sleep better or be less anxious.

These phone apps can be used on the bus or train, at work, or before bed. You can choose long or short meditations. Want to learn how to download a Phone App? See our Technology chapter.



“Remind yourself that the deepest stillness and peace does not arise because the world is still or the mind is quiet. Stillness is nourished when we allow the world, the mind and the body to be just as they are for now, moment by moment, and breath by breath.”

—Williams & Penman, **Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Finding Peace in a Frantic World**

Meditation Groups

Meditation groups are great ways to connect with others and practice. If you are a beginner, they can help you learn. They can provide support to help you keep going when you feel like quitting. These groups come in many forms. Some are face-to-face while others are online. Many groups begin with a few friends meeting in one person’s home. Some groups have met for many years. See our online directory (reentryillinois.net) for a few meditation groups in Illinois.

Some meditation groups may describe themselves as Buddhist, using words like “Sangha” (community), “Zen” (meditative state), or “Vipassana” (insight). Many groups are open to anyone joining their group.

You may be able to find a mental health mindfulness group. These groups are more structured. Here are two mental health mindfulness programs that may be helpful:

- **Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction** helps people with chronic pain. It can help people cope with stress of all kinds.
- **Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy** helps people develop more mindful ways to deal with stress, anxiety, and depression. It explores patterns of thinking and helps people shift to more helpful attitudes.



“It is common to question your purpose. I do so repeatedly. My relationships aren’t exactly as I had envisioned. Mindfulness meditation provided me the space and compassion to accept people as they come. I learned to let the little things go and focus on what makes that person special to me.”

—**Prison Mindfulness Program Participant**



Connecting With Your Community



Connecting with others is hard for many people after release from prison. You were separated from your family and friends. Now you may feel loneliness and isolation, especially if the people you were close to are no longer around.

Getting involved in your community and making new friends may help you begin to heal. This might mean working to make a difference through politics, organizing, and volunteering. This may mean writing letters to elected officials, campaigning, voting, participating in government events, talking to people in your community, serving others who need help, and volunteering your time.

Community Organizing and Advocacy

Community organizing is when community members join together and push for their needs and rights. A community can be people who live in the same area, or people who have something in common. Community organizing can look like:

- Going door-to-door
- Public speeches
- Organizing meetings
- Gathering information about the community needs
- Sharing information to educate the public
- Developing community leadership
- Organizing fundraisers

Community organizing is a tool for making your voice heard and creating positive change. You would be surprised by what you can do when you join together with others to make sure your community's voice is being heard.

There are many organizations that do community organizing online and on the ground. Now that you are out of prison, you can help them in important ways. You can help change the laws that affect people who have been in prison. EJP alumni have volunteered with, coordinated, and been employed by groups including:

- Community Renewal Society, FORCE Project (Fighting To Overcome Records & Create Equality) <https://www.communityrenewalsociety.org/>
- Community Support Advisory Council (regular monthly meetings to support the parole process) <https://idoc.illinois.gov/communityresources/csac.html>
- Edovo (Education Over Obstacles) edovo.com
- Illinois State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform <http://www.icjia.org/>
- Give up the Streets (GUTS) <https://www.facebook.com/GiveUpTheStreets/>
- Ex-Cons for Community and Social Change (ECCSC)- <https://www.eccsc.org/>

You can contact these groups and many others to find out how you can get involved in your community. See the Advocacy Resources in our directory for more ideas.



"Get involved in advocacy work. If we want to change the process, we have to lead the process."

— **Marlon C.**

Getting Involved in Your Community

Religious Organizations

Churches, synagogues, mosques, or other religious communities can help you find meaning, purpose, and fellowship. Many religious organizations have classes, support groups, and volunteer opportunities. Don't worry if it takes a while for you to find the place that feels right for you.

Libraries

Public libraries organize events and classes. They have book clubs, social gatherings, and concerts. Many also have a space where people can post information about community events, group meetings, and even job openings. Visit your local library's website or stop by in-person to find out what your library has to offer.

Reentry Programs

If you live in a town with a reentry program, consider volunteering your time there. Even if you didn't use this program, you could help people who are getting out of prison now. Let them know you are happy to help. With some luck, you may even be able to turn your volunteer work into a paid job.

City & County Park Districts & Forest Preserves

Your town or city probably has a park district, and its website will include information about the parks in your area. Take time to visit these parks and spend time in nature. Many park districts offer sports programs and leagues, as well as other recreational programs.

Events and Activities

In many cities you can get free alternative newspapers weekly. They usually have information on concerts and local events and classes. The same information should also be on the paper's website. A simple Google search can also help you find events in your area.



"You always have to see the silver lining in the clouds, no matter how murky they are. I think that's the main advice that I could give to someone. Just don't give up. Because it's hard. Don't make no mistake about it."

—Marlon C.

"Don't give up. Do what you can to promote change. Take the time out to try to mentor some of these young people that are out here in the hopes that, one day, we can bring about changes. Instead of wondering when somebody else is gonna do something about it, I need to remember that I'm somebody and try to do what I can."

—Anonymous

Serving Your Community

Volunteer work gives you the chance to make friends, solve problems, and do some good for your community. It is also good for your health. Making new friends can prevent feelings of sadness and make you feel less alone. Watching how your work makes your community better can give you a sense of pride and fulfillment.

If you are out of work, volunteering can also help you get new skills to add to your resume. You may also meet new people who can help you network and find new job opportunities. Volunteering expands your life in ways that may surprise you. You may discover new abilities or find new interests.

Some places you can volunteer are:

- Senior living centers and nursing homes
- Humane societies
- Homeless shelters
- Food banks
- Local churches

Call or visit these places to ask how you can help out. You can also do a Google search for volunteer opportunities in your community.



Part 4: **Directories**

- [Housing Resources](#)
- [ID Resources](#)
- [Parole and Reentry Resources](#)
- [Health Resources](#)
- [Resources to Meet your Basic Needs](#)
- [Employment Resources](#)
- [Legal Resources](#)
- [Family and Children Resources](#)



1. Housing Resources



Name	Website	Phone	Description
National and Statewide Housing Directories and Resources			
Homeless Shelter Directory	homelessshelterdirectory.org/		Directory of homeless shelters in US
HUD List of Shelters	https://www.hud.gov/states/illinois/homeless		Directory of emergency shelters in US
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/CommunityServices/HomeWeatherization/CommunityActionAgencies	(866) 674-6327	Government program that helps with home energy bills and minor home repairs
National Coalition for Homeless Veterans	nchv.org		Veteran homelessness, housing, services
Public Housing Authority Directory	https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts		Directory of Public Housing Authorities in the US
Shelter Listing Directory	shelterlistings.org		Directory of homeless shelters, transitional housing, halfway houses in US
Sober Living Homes-- Intervention America	https://soberliving.interventionamerica.org		Directory of sober living homes in US
Substance Abuse Rehab Centers Directory	substancerehabcenter.com/halfway-house/		List of substance abuse half-way houses and outpatient services in US
Transitional Housing Directory	transitionalhousing.org		Directory of transitional housing in US
Illinois Housing Development Authority	https://www.illinoisrentalassistance.com/	(866) 454-3571	Resource for rental assistance in Illinois
Illinois Housing Search	https://ilhousingsearch.org/	(877) 428-8844	Resource to find housing in Illinois
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois	https://www.lssi.org/services/affordable-housing-services/affordable-housing-developments/	(847) 635-4600	Faith-based affordable housing program. Multiple locations in IL
Oxford House	oxfordhouse.org/directory_listing.php	(773) 424-6029	Halfway housing, sober living housing. Multiple locations throughout US
Name	Website	Phone	Description
Chicago Housing Resources			
Chicago City Services Number		3 1 1	Call for city services in Chicago, including homeless shelters, food pantries, health clinics and more



1. Housing Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Description
Chicago Coordinated Entry System	csh.org/chicagoces	(312) 361-1707	Apply for emergency housing, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing in Chicago
Chicago Eviction Resource	https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/doh/provdrs/renters/svcs/eviction-and-lockout-resources.html	(312) 742-7368	Eviction resources for Chicago residents
Chicago Housing Authority	https://www.thecha.org/	(312) 742-8500	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
YMCA of Metro Chicago	ymcachicago.org/programs/housing/	(312) 932-1200	Subsidized housing, rental assistance
Housing Authority of Cook County	https://thehacc.org/	(312) 542-4851	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Mercy Housing	https://www.mercyhousing.org/find-housing/	(303) 830-3300	Housing for low-income families, seniors, individuals, and people with special needs
Catholic Charities of Chicago	catholiccharities.net	(312) 655-7700	Rent and utility assistance, housing, domestic violence counseling and case management, immigration services, food, counseling and financial assistance

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Chicago Housing				
Chicago House	chicagohouse.org	(773) 248-5200	2229 S Michigan Ave Unit 304 Chicago, IL 60616	Transitional housing for those impacted by HIV
Inner Voice Chicago	innervoicechicago.org	(312) 994-5830	567 W Lake St Chicago, IL 60661	Transitional housing, workforce development, veterans services
Breaking Ground, D-House	https://www.facebook.com/breaksomegroundtoday6216/	(773) 265-1370	3501 W Fillmore St Chicago, IL 60624	Faith-based reentry programing and housing
Breakthrough	breakthrough.org/	(773) 722-1144	Multiple locations; Chicago, IL 60647	Trauma-informed employment services, transitional housing for men and women, youth services, violence prevention, health and wellness services, and more
Breakthrough Urban Ministries for Men	breakthrough.org	(773) 346-1785	402 N St Louis Ave Chicago, IL 60624	Faith-based housing, permanent supportive housing
Breakthrough: Women's Center	breakthrough.org	(773) 722-0179	3330 W Carroll Ave Chicago, IL 60624	Faith-based permanent supportive housing for women, legal aid, food stamps, employment help, financial management, family workshops



1. Housing Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Concerned Citizens Inc/ Mothers House		(773) 287-8393	321 N Mason Ave Chicago, IL 60644	Sober living treatment, housing, mental health services
Daughter of Destiny Outreach, Inc	daughterofdestinyoutreach.org	(312) 256-5285	1519 W Warren Blvd Chicago, IL 60607	Case management, anger-management, addiction counseling, domestic violence education/workshops, recovery coaching, emergency shelter & meals
Deborah's Place	deborahsplace.org	(773) 722-5080	2822 W Jackson Blvd Chicago, IL 60612	Permanent supportive and transitional housing
Habilitative Systems Inc.	http://www.habilitative.org/index.php	(773) 261-2252	415 S Kilpatrick St Chicago, IL 60644	Mental health, housing, child welfare, substance abuse
Hand-n-Hand	https://soberhousedirectory.com/property/hand-n-hand-outreach-n-f-p/	(773) 722-1312	4207 W Carroll Ave Chicago, IL 60624	Transitional housing for men that are homeless, indigent, HIV/AIDS impacted, and/or mentally ill
Haymarket Center	hcenter.org	(312) 226-4357	120 N Sangamon St Chicago, IL 60607	Substance abuse and mental health treatment centers
Hope House		(773) 762-6389	3551 W Roosevelt Rd Chicago, IL 60624	Transitional housing for men, reentry resource program, job readiness
Lawndale Community Church	lawndalechurch.org/hope-house.html	(773) 762-6389	3827 W Ogden Ave Chicago, IL 60623	Faith-based, transitional housing
Leslie's Place	http://www.barnabasproject.net/index.html	(773) 565-4603	1014 N Hamlin Chicago, IL 60651	Transitional housing for formally incarcerated women
New Moms	www.newmoms.org	(773) 252-3253	5317 W Chicago Ave Chicago, IL 60651	Housing for young mothers, job training, family support, more
Pacific Garden Mission	pgm.org	(312) 492-9410	1458 S Canal St Chicago, IL 60607	Faith-based emergency and transitional housing programs
Revive Center for Housing and Healing	revivecenter.org/	(312) 997-2222	1668 W Ogden Ave Chicago, IL 60612	Permanent supportive housing for homeless and those with disabilities
Salvation Army- Harbor Light Center of Chicago	safreedom.org/harbor-light-center/	(312) 667-2200	825 N Christiana Chicago, IL 60651	Faith-based recovery housing, supportive housing
Salvation Army--Booth Manor	https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/northcentralillinois/booth-manor-senior-residences/	(312) 243-1271	1500 W Madison St Chicago, IL 60607	Permanent supportive housing, subsidized, for seniors
Willis House of Refuge	https://www.facebook.com/willishouseofrefuge/	(773) 287-3997	942 N Waller Ave Chicago, IL 60651	Transitional housing for men
Women's Treatment Center	https://rehab.com/listings/the-women-s-treatment-center-3375958390/	(312) 850-0050	140 N Ashland Ave Chicago, IL 60607	Treatment center for women. Walk-ins and assessment by appointment welcome, accepts Medicaid



1. Housing Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Access Living	accessliving.org	(800) 613-8549	115 W Chicago Ave Chicago, IL 60654	Housing, advocacy and legal representation for people with disabilities
Alexian Brother's Community Housing	alexianbrothershousing.org	(773) 327-9921	825 W Wellington Ave Chicago, IL 60657	Permanent supportive housing for the homeless, low-income, and living with chronic illnesses, including HIV/AIDS
Bridgehaus	bridgehaus.com	(773) 235-4287	Multiple locations; 516 N Ogden Ave, Ste #156 Chicago, IL 60642	Sober living house
Center for Changing Lives	cclconnect.org	(773) 342-6210	1955 N St Louis Ave Chicago, IL 60647	Free employment services, job readiness, financial literacy (credit & debt assistance), computer classes, job referrals, financial assessment, housing search assistance
Cornerstone Community Outreach	ccolife.org	(773) 271-8163	4628 N Clifton Ave Chicago, IL 60640	Transitional housing, free
Fresh Start Sober Living House	afreshstartsoberliving.com	(312) 238-8647	2310 W Belmont Ave Chicago, IL 60618	Sober living house
Healthcare Alternative Systems Inc	https://www.hascares.org/	(773) 252-3100	2755 W Armitage Ave Chicago, IL 60647	Transitional housing program, employment help, long-term substance abuse recovery
Inspiration Corporation	inspirationcorp.org/	(773) 878-0981	4554 N Broadway Ste 207 Chicago, IL 60640	Housing, social services, job training, and food for people in poverty or homeless
Lincoln Park Community Shelter	https://www.lpcschicago.org	(773) 549-6111	600 W Fullerton Pkwy Chicago, IL 60614	Transitional housing
Salvation Army-Evangeline Booth Lodge	centralusa.salvationarmy.org/metro/boothlodge	(773) 433-5710	800 W Lawrence Ave Chicago, IL 60640	Faith-based emergency housing
Way Back Inn Halfway House	thewaybackinn.org/	(708) 344-3301	3821 N Harlem Ave Chicago, IL 60634; Multiple Locations	Transitional housing program, substance abuse recovery, recovery home for veterans
Brighter, Behavior, Choices Inc.	bbchoicesinc.wixsite.com/women	(773) 434-5526	6525 S Campbell Ave Chicago, IL 60629	Substance abuse recovery home
Claretian Associates	claretianassociates.org	(773) 734-9181	9108 S Brandon Ave. Chicago, IL 60617	Affordable housing services in South Chicago
Elite Houses of Sober Living	elitehousesofsoberliving.com/	(312) 515-3092	1236 W 72nd Pl Chicago, IL 60636	Transitional housing/ substance abuse recovery, parolees welcome



1. Housing Resources

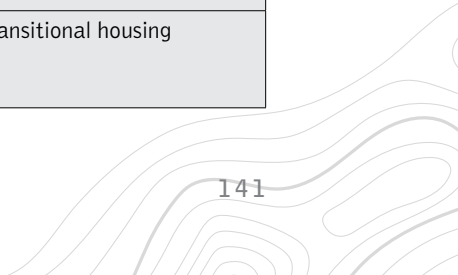
Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Featherfist	featherfist.org	(773) 721-7088	2255 E 75th St Chicago, IL 60649	Outreach, case management, housing programs, contractual services
Franciscan Outreach	https://franoutreach.org	(773) 278-6724	717B W 18th St Chicago, IL 60616	Transitional housing, subsidized housing vouchers, emergency shelter
GEO Reentry Services	georeentry.com	(773) 846-6260	8007 S Cottage Grove Chicago, IL 60619	Job readiness, employment help, transitional housing, case management, educational, clothing, food, transportation, substance abuse counseling, family reintegration
Green Reentry (Inner City Muslim Action Network)	https://www.imacentral.org/chicago/	(773) 434-4626	2744 W 63rd St Chicago, IL 60629	Life skills training, transitional housing, construction training, education
Hardin House	https://hardinhouseinc.org	(773) 874-3774	7249 S St Lawrence Ave Chicago, IL 60619	Reentry services, temporary housing
Henry's Sober Living House	henryshouse.org	(773) 752-1300	8032 S Ingleside Ave Chicago, IL 60619	Sober living home
Matthew House	matthewhousechicago.org	(773) 536-6628	3728 S Indiana Ave Chicago, IL 60653	Employment help, support services, day shelter, veteran services, permanent supportive housing
New Hope Recovery Center	https://www.new-hope-recovery.com/	(773) 737-0401	2559 W 79th St Chicago, IL 60652	Alcohol and drug rehab treatment center, transitional housing, counseling
Olive Branch Mission	obmission.org	(773) 476-6200	6310 S Claremont Ave Chicago, IL 60636	Faith-based emergency housing
Teamwork Englewood Reentry Support Center	www.teamworkenglewood.org	(773) 488-6600	815 W 63rd St, Ste 2 Chicago, IL 60621	Reentry services: education, training, mentoring, support groups, counseling assistance, connection to housing and food assistance, family reunification and child support assistance, information on sealing or expunging criminal records
Northwest Suburbs Housing				
Aurora Housing Authority	http://auroraha.com/	(630) 701-9977	1446 Jericho Cir Aurora, IL 60506	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Bridge to Freedom	bridge2freedom.org	(773) 888-7435	130 N Central Ave Oak Park, IL 60944	Faith-based residential reentry program, no cost
Center of Concern	centerofconcern.org	(847) 823-0453	1665 Elk Blvd Des Plaines, IL 60016	Helps people find housing, housing support



1. Housing Resources



Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Connections for the Homeless	cfthinc.org	(847) 475-7070	2121 Dewey Ave Evanston, IL 60201	Emergency shelter, rent assistance
Constitution House	mercyhousing.org/lakefront/constitution-house	(630) 896-2100	Multiple locations; 401 N Constitution Dr Aurora, IL 60506	Affordable, subsidized housing
DuPage Housing Authority		(630) 690-3555		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
DuPage P.A.D.S.	dupagepads.org	(630) 682-3846	703 W Liberty Dr #4842 Wheaton, IL 60187	Emergency housing, supportive, subsidized housing
Eddie Washington Center	waukegantownship.com/174/Eddie-Washington-Center	(847) 244-0805	424 S Ave Waukegan, IL 600085	Transitional housing
Hesed House	hesedhouse.org	(630) 897-2156	659 S River St Aurora, IL 60506	Emergency shelter, transitional housing, counseling, job guidance, housing help
Home of the Sparrow	hosparrow.org	(815) 271-5444	4209 W Shamrock Ln, Unit B McHenry, IL 60050	Short-term transitional housing and subsidized, affordable housing, rapid rehousing program
Housing Authority of Elgin	https://www.haelgin.org/	(847) 742-3853	130 S State St Elgin, IL 60123	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Lake County	https://www.lakecountyha.org/	(847) 223-1170	33928 US-45 Grayslake, IL 60030	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of North Chicago	https://northchicagohousing.org/	(847) 785-4300	1440 Jackson St N Chicago, IL 60064	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Oak Park		(708) 386-9322		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Waukegan		(847) 244-8500		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Forward	housingforward.org	(888) 338-1744	Multiple locations; 6634 W Roosevelt Rd Oak Park, IL 60304	Emergency housing, supportive housing
Lazarus House	lazarushouse.net	(630) 587-2144	214 Walnut St St. Charles, IL 60174	Shelter, food, support services to help people back on their feet
McHenry County Housing Authority	mchenrycountyhousing.org	(815) 338-7752	1108 N Seminary Ave Woodstock, IL 60098	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Staben House	https://www.waukegantownship.com/176/Staben-House	(847) 244-9944	3000 Grand Ave Waukegan/Lake County, IL 60085	Transitional housing





1. Housing Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Wayside Cross Ministries	waysidecross.org	(630) 892-4239	215 E New York St Aurora, IL 60505	Residential work program (free), daytime shelter for homeless
YWCA--Bridges	https://www.ywca-ens.org/domestic-violence-program/shelter-and-longer-term-housing/	(847) 864-8780	1215 Church St Evanston, IL 60201	Emergency housing, longer term housing
Wings	wingsprogram.com	(847) 221-5680	Multiple locations; IL	Emergency shelter and transitional housing for women experiencing domestic violence and abuse
Southwest Suburbs				
Affordable Recovery Housing	affordablerecovery.org	(708) 299-0758	13811 S Western Ave Blue Island, IL 60406	Intensive recovery program, job training, life skills
Agape, NFP	agapemissionsnfp.org	(815) 723-1548	840 Plainfield Rd (Rt 30) Joliet, IL 60435	Housing, referrals to doctors and lawyers, transportation to appointments, medication management and budgeting
Housing Authority of Joliet	https://www.hajoliet.org/	(815) 727-0611	6 S Broadway St Joliet, IL 60436	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Park Forest		(708) 503-7734		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of the Town of Cicero		(708) 652-0386		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Kendall Housing Authority		(630) 690-3555		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Morning Star Mission	morningstarmission.org	(815) 722-5780	350 E Washington St Joliet, IL 60433	Faith-based residential recovery program, emergency housing, counseling, food pantry
Safe Journeys	http://safejourneysillinois.org/	(800) 892-3375		Counseling, shelter, legal advocacy, medical advocacy, 24 hour crisis line
Northwest Illinois Housing				
Boone County Housing Authority	https://www.publihousing.com/details/boone_county_housing_authority	(815) 544-0084	505 S State St Belvidere, IL 61008	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Carpenter's Place	carpentersplace.org/about/request-information	(815) 964-4105	Multiple locations; Office: 1149 Railroad Ave Rockford, IL 61104	Faith-based transitional housing, recovery housing, permanent supportive housing
Carroll County Housing Authority	https://www.carrollcountyha.com/	(815) 273-7081	525 3rd St Savanna, IL 61074	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Grundy County Housing Authority	gcha.vip	(815) 942-6198	1802 N Division St Morris, IL 60450	Public housing and/or housing vouchers



1. Housing Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Housing Authority of Boone County	https://www.housingchoiceprogram.com/details/boone_county_housing_authority_61008	(815) 544-0084	2036 N State St Belvidere, IL 61008	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of DeKalb County	https://www.dekalbhousing.org/	(815) 758-2692	310 N 6th St DeKalb, IL 60115	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Henry County	https://www.henrycountyhousing.us/	(309) 852-2801	125 N Chestnut St Kewanee, IL 61443	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Jo Daviess County	http://jdcha.org	(815) 777-0782	347 Franklin St Galena, IL 61036	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Ogle County		(815) 732-1301		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of the City of Freeport	https://www.freeporthousing.org/	(815) 232-4171		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Lee County Housing Authority	http://leecountyha.org/web/	(815) 284-2759		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
MELD at Trinity House Shelter	https://www.rockfordmeld.org	(815) 986-1947	620 Kishwaukee St Rockford, IL 61104	Housing for homeless pregnant or parenting young mothers and their children. Education, mental health, health services, and programs
Rock Island Housing Authority		(309) 788-0825		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Rockford Housing Authority	Rockfordha.org	(815) 489-8500	223 S Winnebago St Rockford, IL 61102	Subsidized, affordable government sponsored housing, rent assistance, vouchers
Shelter Care Ministries	shelter-care.org	(815) 964-5520	218 7th St Rockford, IL 61104	Emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing
St. Claire County Housing Authority	http://www.sccha.org/home.html	(618) 277-6988	1790 S 74th St Belleville, IL 62223	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Twin City PADS Homeless Shelter	twincitiespads.org/	(815) 626-2210	111 Wahl Rd Sterling, IL 61081	Emergency shelter
Whiteside County Housing Authority		(815) 625-0581		Public housing and/or housing vouchers



1. Housing Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Winnebago County Housing Authority		(815) 963-2133		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Zion Development Corporation	ziondevelopment.org	(815) 964-8280	910 5th Ave Rockford, IL 61104	Affordable, subsidized housing
West Central Illinois Housing				
Beerlahairoi Womens Ministry	https://beerlahairoi.com/home	(217) 698-4194	3128 Superior Dr Springfield, IL 62707	Shelter, food, clothing, and mentoring for pregnant women
Bureau County Housing Authority		(815) 879-8106	444 S Church St Princeton, IL 61356	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Cass County Housing Authority	https://www.casscountyhousing.org/	(217) 323-2303	Highways 62 & 125 Beardstown, IL 62618	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Contact Ministries	https://www.shelterlistings.org/details/38810	(217) 753-3939	1100 E Adams Springfield, IL 62703	Housing to women with children, food, clothing, and employment assistance
Dream Center Peoria	https://www.dreamcenterpeoria.org	(309) 676-3000	714 Hamilton Blvd Peoria, IL 61603	The Village: supportive housing program for women, children & families. The Shelter: 24/7 emergency shelter for women, children and families. Meals, showers and resources
East Peoria Housing Authority	https://www.eastpeoriahousingauthority.com/	(309) 698-4718		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Esther House	https://www.peoriarescue.org/index.php/residential/emergency-services/women-s-emergency-shelter	(309) 689-0915	6847 N Allen Rd Peoria, IL 61614	Faith-based transitional housing
Fulton County Housing Authority	https://www.fultoncountyhousingauthority.org/	(309) 647-4120	250 S Main St Canton, IL 61520	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Galesburg Rescue Mission	galesburgrescuemission.org	(309) 343-4151	435 E Third St Galesburg, IL 61401	Emergency shelter
Hancock County Housing Authority	https://hancockcountyhousing.org	(217) 852-3482	625 W 3rd St PO Box 472 Dallas City, IL 62330	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Adams County	https://www.adamscha.org	(217) 894-7022	102 N Adams St Clayton, IL 62324	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of LaSalle County	https://halc.org/	(815) 434-0380	526 E Norris Dr Ottawa, IL 61350	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of McDonough County	mcdonoughcountyhousing.org	(309) 837-2363	322 W Piper St Macomb, IL 61455	Public housing and/or housing vouchers

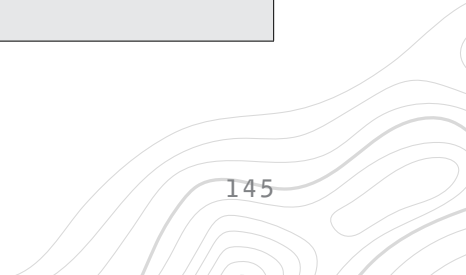


1. Housing Resources



Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Housing Authority of McDonough County		(309) 837-2363	405 N Prairie Ave Macomb, IL 61455	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Pekin		(309) 346-7996		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Inner City Mission	innercitymission.net	(217) 525-3940	714 N 7th St Springfield, IL 62702	Faith-based shelter, education, counseling for homeless population
Knox County Housing Authority	https://knoxcountyhousing.org/	(309) 342-8129		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Logan County Housing Authority		(309) 837-2363		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Mason County Housing Authority		(309) 210-0111		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Menard County Housing Authority		(217) 632-7723		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Mercer County Housing Authority	https://www.mercercountyha.org/	(309) 582-5410	609 NW 4th Ave Aledo, IL 61231	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
MERCY Communities Inc.	https://www.mercycommunities.org	(217) 753-1358	1344 N 5th St Springfield, IL 62702	Transitional housing and supportive services for homeless and at-risk women with children
Moline Housing Authority		(309) 764-1819		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
One Body One Purpose		(309) 242-9785	2524 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr Peoria, IL 61604	Faith-based transitional housing
Peoria Housing Authority	peoriahousing.org	(309) 676-8736	100 S Richard Pryor Place Peoria, IL 61605	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Peoria Rescue Mission for Men	peoriarescue.org	(309) 676-6416	601 SW Adams Peoria, IL 61602	Faith-based emergency shelter
Peoria Salvation Army	https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/peoria/	(309) 655-7272	Multiple locations; Peoria, IL 61603	Housing, veteran services, family services, food and more
Salvation Army Emergency Shelter, Adult Rehab Center For Men	salvationarmyusa.org/usn/housing-and-homeless-services	(217) 429-8050	1600 E Clear Lake Ave Springfield, IL 62703	Faith-based emergency shelter, recovery home, transitional housing

Directory





1. Housing Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Salvation Army Family Shelter	peoriasalvationarmy.org	(309) 655-7272	417 NE Adams St Peoria, IL 61629	Faith-based emergency shelter
Salvation Army Shelter and Transitional Housing	https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/pekin/	(309) 346-3010	243 Derby St Pekin, IL 61554	Faith-based transitional housing and emergency shelter
Samaritan Well Men's Shelter	https://www.facebook.com/samaritanwellincmacomb/	(309) 837-3357	1306 Maple Ave Macomb, IL 61455	Emergency shelter
Samaritan Well Women's Shelter	https://www.facebook.com/samaritanwellincmacomb/	(309) 837-3357	1306 Maple Ave Macomb, IL 61455	Emergency shelter
Sojourn Shelter and Services, Inc.	https://www.facebook.com/soishelter/	(217) 726-5200	1800 Westchester Blvd Springfield, IL 62704	Emergency housing. Not a parole site
South Side Mission Shelter	https://southsidemission.org	(309) 676-4604	1127 S Laramie St Peoria, IL 61605	Emergency shelter
Springfield Housing Authority	http://springfieldhousingauthority.org	(217) 753-5757	200 N 11th St. Springfield, IL 62703	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Warren County Housing Authority		(309) 734-2080		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Woodford County Housing Authority	https://www.woodfordcountyhousingauthority.com/	(309) 467-4623		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
East Central Illinois Housing				
Bloomington Housing Authority	bloomingtonha.com	(309) 829-3360	104 E Wood St Bloomington, IL 61701	Government-sponsored subsidized housing and housing-vouchers
Decatur Housing Authority	http://www.decaturhousing.com	(217) 423-7711	1808 E Locust St Decatur, IL 62521	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
DeWitt County Housing Authority		(217) 935-8804		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Dove Shelter	doveinc.org/programs/domestic-violence-program/	(217) 428-6616	302 S Union Decatur, IL 62522	Emergency shelter for adults and children experiencing domestic abuse
First Followers	firstfollowersreentry.com/	(217) 607-1131	314 Cottage Court Champaign, IL 61820	Peer mentoring, employment services, advocacy, family reunification, service referrals, transitional housing including for people on the sex offense registry
Home Sweet Home Mission	https://hshministries.org/	(309) 828-7356	303 E Oakland Ave Bloomington, IL 61701	Emergency shelter



1. Housing Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Housing Authority of Brown County		(217) 773-2731	400 N Maple St Mt. Sterling, IL 62353	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Champaign County	https://hacc.net/	(217) 378-7100	2008 N Market St Champaign, IL 61822	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Christian County		(217) 774-2167	202 S Poplar St Pana, IL 62557	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Clark County	https://www.clarkcountyil.org/	(217) 826-5541	501 Archer Ave Marshall, IL 62441	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Coles County		(217) 235-4175	109 Prairie Ave Mattoon, IL 61938	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Cumberland County		(217) 849-2071	206 Washington St Toledo, IL 62468	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Edgar County		(217) 465-8458	604 Highland Dr Paris, IL 61944	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Ford County		(217) 784-5488	214 E 7th St Gibson City, IL 60936	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of McLean County and City of Bloomington	http://www.bloomingtonha.com/	(309) 829-3360	104 E Wood St #1 Bloomington, IL 61701	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Piatt County		(217) 262-3231		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Shelby County		(217) 774-2167		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Vermillion County	https://www.vermillionhousing.com/	(217) 444-3101		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Jesus Is the Way Ministries	jesusisthewayprisonministries.org/	(217) 892-4044	602 Liberty Ave Rantoul, IL 61866	Housing, food, clothing, spiritual guidance and counseling, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, job training
Kankakee County Housing Authority		(815) 939-7125		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Livingston County Housing Authority		(815) 844-6013		Public housing and/or housing vouchers



1. Housing Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Rock Island County Housing Authority		(309) 755-4527		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Rosecrance Champaign	https://rosecrance.org/central-illinois/	(217) 373-2430	Multiple locations; Champaign and Rantoul, IL	Subsidized housing, transitional housing
Salvation Army Safe Harbor Shelter	https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/bloomington/contact-us/	(309) 829-9476	611 W Washington St Bloomington, IL 61701	Emergency shelter
WIN Recovery	https://win4recovery.com/	(217) 766-3413	600 N Neil St, Unit 956 Champaign, IL 61824	Wraparound support services, including housing and recovery-based programming for women and LGBTQ2 clients
Southwest Illinois Housing				
Alcohol Rehabilitation Community Home	archhouse.org/4701.html	(618) 877-4987	1313 21st Street Granite City, IL 62040	Residential treatment center, individual and group therapy, recreational activities and aftercare services
City of Alton Housing Authority	http://www.altonhousing.com/	(618) 465-4260	2406 Crawford St Alton, IL 62002	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
East St. Louis Housing Authority	https://www.eslha.org/	(618) 646-7100		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Granite City Housing Authority	https://granitecityha.org	(618) 876-0975		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Bond County	http://www.bondcountyhousing.com/home	(618) 664-2321	220 E Winter Ave Greenville, IL 62246	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Calhoun County		(618) 576-2236	PO Box 426, 102 W Main St Hardin, IL 62047	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Greene County		(217) 374-2128	325 N Carr St White Hall, IL 62092	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Jersey County		(618) 498-2979	505 Horn Dr Jerseyville, IL 62052	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Marion County	https://mchahomes.org/	(618) 532-1894	719 Howard St Centralia, IL 62801	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Wabash County		(618) 262-5869		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Macoupin County Housing Authority	http://teamhousingcenter.com/	(217) 854-8606	PO Box 226, 760 Anderson St Carlinville, IL 62626	Public housing and/or housing vouchers



1. Housing Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Madison County Housing Authority	https://www.mchail.org/	(618) 345-5142		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Montgomery County Housing Authority		(217) 532-3672		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Morgan County Housing Authority		(217) 243-3338		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Perry County Housing Authority	http://www.perrycountyhousing.org/	(618) 542-5409		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Pike County Housing Authority	http://www.pikehousing.com/	(217) 407-0707	838 Mason St Barry, IL 62312	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Quincy Housing Authority		(217) 222-0720		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Randolph County Housing Authority		(618) 826-4314		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Salvation Army Emergency Lodging	https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/decatur/	(217) 428-4672	229 W Main Decatur, IL 62523	Emergency housing, food, resources
Scott County Housing Authority		(217) 742-3174		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Southeast Illinois				
Alexander County Housing Authority	https://acha734.org/default.aspx	(618) 734-1910	1101 Ohio St Cairo, IL 62914	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Clay County Housing Authority		(618) 662-5311	201 S Locust St Flora, IL 62839	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Edwards County Housing Authority		(618) 445-2715	125 West Cherry Albion, IL 62806	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Effingham County Housing Authority		(217) 342-3520		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Good Samaritan Housing	goodsamcarbondale.org	(618) 457-5794	701 S Marion Carbondale, IL 62901	Emergency shelter, transitional housing, soup kitchen, food pantry, emergency assistance



1. Housing Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Hamilton County Housing Authority		(618) 643-3265		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Franklin County	http://fchaonline.org/	(618) 932-2124	302 E Elm St West Frankfort, IL 62896	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Gallatin County		(618) 269-3080		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Hardin County		(618) 287-2786	355 Walnut St Elizabethtown, IL 62931	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Jackson County	http://jacksoncountyhousingauthority.org/	(618) 684-3183	300 N 7th St Murphysboro, IL 62966	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Jefferson County		(618) 244-5910	109 N Shiloh Dr Mount Vernon, IL 62864	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Johnson County		(618) 658-5811	501 N 4th St Vienna, IL 62995	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Marion, IL	https://www.marionhousing.org/	(618) 997-2680	501 N Market St Marion, IL 62959	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Pope County	https://popeco-il.com/	(618) 683-4791		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Pulaski County		(618) 745-6330		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Richland County		(618) 395-2571		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Saline County		(618) 252-6381		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Union County	https://www.myucha.com/	(618) 833-5129	131 Hillside Terrace Anna, IL 62906	Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority Of Wayne County		(618) 842-9008		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
Housing Authority of Williamson County	https://ilwcha.com/	(618) 985-2422		Public housing and/or housing vouchers



1. Housing Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Massac County Housing Authority		(618) 524-8411		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
White County Housing Authority	http://www.whitecountyhousing.com	(618) 966-3868		Public housing and/or housing vouchers
St. Louis Housing				
Catholic Charities of St. Louis	https://www.archstl.org/agencies/catholic-charities-of-st-louis	(314) 367-5500	4445 Lindell Blvd St. Louis, MO, IL 63108	Help finding housing, many other support services
New Life Evangelistic Center	newlifeevangelisticcenter.org/shelters/	(314) 421-3020	Multiple locations; St. Louis and Missouri , IL	Emergency shelters
Peter and Paul Community Services	ppcsinc.org/	(314) 588-7111	Multiple locations; 2612 Wyoming St St. Louis, MO, IL 63118	Emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing
Salvation Army: Greater St. Louis Metropolitan Area	https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/midland/	(314) 646-3000	Multiple locations; Office: 1130 Hampton Ave St. Louis, MO, IL 63139	List of Salvation Army emergency shelters and senior housing options



2. Getting Your ID Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	
National and Statewide Resources				
Social Security Office Locator	https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp	(800) 772-1213		
Illinois Secretary of State Office Locator	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(800) 252-8980		
Selective Service Registration	https://www.sss.gov/register/		P.O. Box 94739 Palatine, IL 60094	
CityKey ID	https://www.chicityclerk.com/chicagocitykey			
Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Chicago Secretary of State Facilities				
Chicago Central	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	100 W Randolph Chicago, IL 60601	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Chicago Public Service	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	17 N State St, Ste 1000 Chicago, IL 60602	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Chicago West	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	5301 W Lexington St Chicago, IL 60644	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Chicago Diversey Express	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	4642 W Diversey St Chicago, IL 60641	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Chicago North	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	5401 N Elston Ave Chicago, IL 60630	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Northwest Suburbs Secretary of State Facilities				
Aurora	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	339 E Indian Trail Aurora, IL 60505	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Chicago Heights	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	Prairie State College, 331 S Coolidge St Chicago Heights, IL 60411	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Deerfield	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	Deerfield Park Plaza, 405 Lake Cook Rd Deerfield, IL 60015	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Des Plaines	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	1470 Lee St Des Plaines, IL 60018	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Elgin	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	595 S State Elgin, IL 60123	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Lake Zurich	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	951 S Rand Rd Lake Zurich, IL 60047	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Lombard	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	837 S Westmore B27 Lombard, IL 60148	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Melrose Park	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	1903 N Mannheim Rd Melrose Park, IL 60160	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Schaumburg	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	1227 E Golf Rd Schaumburg, IL 60173	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Waukegan	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	617 S Green Bay Rd Waukegan, IL 60085	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Woodstock	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	428 S Eastwood Dr Woodstock, IL 60098	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Southwest Suburbs Secretary of State Offices				
Bradley	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 933-1713	111 Village Square Shopping Plaza Bradley, IL 60915	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration



2. Getting Your ID Resources



Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Bridgeview	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	7358 W 87th St Bridgeview, IL 60455	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Joliet	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	201 S Joyce Rd Joliet, IL 60435	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
LaSalle	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 223-4861	536 Third St LaSalle, IL 61301	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Lockport	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	1029 - 31 E 9th St Lockport, IL 60441	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Midlothian	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	14434 S Pulaski Midlothian, IL 60445	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Naperville	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	931 W 75th St, Ste 161 Naperville, IL 60565	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Orland Township	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	14807 S Ravinia Ave Orland Park, IL 60462	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Plano	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(312) 793-1010	236 Mitchell Dr Plano, IL 60545	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Northwest Illinois Secretary of State Offices				
Chadwick	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 684-5156	236 Main St Chadwick, IL 61014	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Dekalb	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 756-7781	1360 Oakwood St Dekalb, IL 60115	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Dixon	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 288-6685	925 S Peoria Dixon, IL 61021	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Freeport	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 235-4164	1054 N Riverside Freeport, IL 61032	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Galena	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 777-2676	987 Galena Square Dr Galena, IL 61036	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Kewanee	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(309) 853-5903	715 Tenney Kewanee, IL 61443	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Lacon	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(309) 246-3395	127 Prairie St Lacon, IL 61540	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
LaSalle	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 777-2676	536 Third St. Galena, IL 61036	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Mendota	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 539-7849	Rt. 34 East Mendota, IL 61342	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Moline/Silvis	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(309) 796-0934	Twin Oaks Shopping Centre, 2001 Fifth St, Ste 10 Silvis, IL 61282	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Morris	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 705-9022	425 E Route 6 Morris, IL 60450	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Oregon, IL	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 732-2492	1302 Pines Rd Oregon, IL 61061	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Rockford Central	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 394-0179	3720 E State St Rockford, IL 61108	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Roscoe Express	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 623-9063	10631 Main St Roscoe, IL 61073	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Sterling	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 626-2825	1224 W 4th St Sterling, IL 61081	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Streator	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 672-1853	201 Dannys Dr, Ste 6 Streator, IL 61364	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration



2. Getting Your ID Resources



Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
West Central Illinois Secretary of State Offices				
Aledo	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(309) 513-6007	706 S E 3rd St Aledo, IL 61231	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Beardstown	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 323-2000	103 W15th St Beardstown, IL 62618	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Canton	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(309) 647-6811	1015 W Locust Canton, IL 61520	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Carthage	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 357-3869	130 Buchanan St. Carthage, IL 62321	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Galesburg	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(309) 342-1154	1066 E Losey Galesburg, IL 61401	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Havana	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(309) 543-4229	210 S Prairie Ridge Dr Havana, IL 62644	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Lincoln	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 732-7617	2200 N.Kickapoo Lincoln, IL 62656	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Macomb	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(309) 833-5661	466 Deer Rd Macomb, IL 61455	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Monmouth	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(309) 734-2211	330 N Main Monmouth, IL 61462	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Ottawa	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 434-4070	4111 Progress Dr Ottawa, IL 61350	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Pekin	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(309) 346-6186	Pekin State Plaza, 200 S 2nd Pekin, IL	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Peoria	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(309) 686-6040	Sterling Bazaar Shopping Plaza, 3311 N Sterling Ave #12 Peoria, IL 61604	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Princeton	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 875-2617	225 Backbone Rd East Princeton, IL 61356	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Roanoke	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(309) 923-6381	102A N 6th St Roanoke, IL 61561	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Sparta	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 443-3834	202 W Jackson Sparta, IL 62286	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Springfield	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 782-6030	2701 S Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62723	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Wyoming, IL	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(309) 695-6163	111 E Williams Wyoming, IL 61491	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
East Central Illinois Secretary of State Offices				
Bloomington	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(309) 827-3531	1510 W Market St Bloomington, IL 61701	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Champaign	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 278-3344	2012 Round Barn Rd, Round Barn West Shopping Center, Space 1 Champaign, IL 61821	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Charleston	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 345-7401	1010 E St. Charleston, IL 61920	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Clinton	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 935-5721	1255 State Rte 54 East Clinton, IL 61727	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Decatur	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 875-1650	3149 N Woodford Decatur, IL 62526	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration



2. Getting Your ID Resources



Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Gibson City	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 784-4351	304 W Second St Gibson City, IL 60936	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Hoopeston	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 283-6750	825 W Elm Hoopeston, IL 60942	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Mattoon	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 234-4040	2020 Charleston Mattoon, IL 61938	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Monticello	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 762-2841	1205 Bear Ln Monticello, IL 61856	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Paris	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 466-5220	714 Grandview Paris, IL 61944	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Pontiac	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 844-5766	507 Crane St Pontiac, IL 61764	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Rantoul	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 278-3344	421 S Murray Rantoul, IL 61866	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Shelbyville	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 774-2941	311 N Cedar Shelbyville, IL 62565	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Tilton	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 442-1564	#5 Southgate Dr Tilton, IL 61833	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Tuscola	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 253-2813	211 S Main Tuscola, IL 61953	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Watseka	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(815) 785-5080	123 W Walnut St Watseka, IL 60970	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Southwest Illinois Secretary of State Offices				
Belleville	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 236-8750	400 W Main Belleville, IL 62220	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Bethalto	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 258-0600	20 Terminal Dr., Ste. 103 East Alton, IL 62024	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Carlinville	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 854-7086		State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Centralia	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 532-1551	418 S Poplar Centralia, IL 62801	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
East St. Louis	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 397-9488	1468 State St Ste. 200- 300 East St. Louis, IL 62203	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Granite City	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 877-2451	1810 Edison Granite City, IL 62040	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Greenville	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 664-0488	321 S Second St Greenville, IL 62246	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Hillsboro	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 532-5823	2010 N School Hillsboro, IL 62049	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Jacksonville	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 243-4327	Lincoln Square Shopping Ct, 901 W Morton, Suite 13 Jacksonville, IL 62650	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Jerseyville	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 498-5751	710 County Rd Jerseyville, IL 62052	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Mascoutah	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 808-7002		State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Mt. Carmel	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 262-5713	219 W Second St Mt. Carmel, IL 62863	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration



2. Getting Your ID Resources



Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Nashville	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 327-4184	480 N Kaskaskia St. Nashville, IL 62263	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Pinckneyville	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 357-8261	404 S First St Pinckneyville, IL 62274	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Pittsfield	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 285-5529	202 W Jefferson Pittsfield, IL 62363	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Quincy	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 222-4550	2512 Locust St Quincy, IL 62301	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Salem	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 548-2381	1375 W Whittaker Salem, IL 62881	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Taylorville	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 824-3006	1400 E Park Taylorville, IL 62568	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Vandalia	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 283-2262	13 Old Capitol Shopping Center Vandalia, IL 62471	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Waterloo	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 939-3663	1335 Jamie Lane Waterloo, IL 62298	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Southeast Illinois Secretary of State Offices				
Anna	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 833-8234	101A Transcraft Dr Anna, IL 62906	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Benton	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 438-4491	812 N Main Street Benton, IL 62812	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Cairo	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 734-7034	216 10th St Cairo, IL 62914	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Carbondale	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 457-0488	2516 W Murphysboro Road Carbondale, IL 62901	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Carmi	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 382-8349	1128 W Oak Carmi, IL 62821	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Effingham	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(217) 347-7728	444 S Willow Effingham, IL 62401	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Fairfield	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 842-9548	307 N Market St Fairfield, IL 62837	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Flora	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 662-4551	39 Greenlaw Blvd Flora, IL 62839	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Harrisburg	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 253-7976	350 Seright, Ste C Harrisburg, IL 62946	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Lawrenceville	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 943-7515	1305 State St Lawrenceville, IL 62439	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Marion	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 993-2587	1905 Rendleman St. Marion, IL 62959	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
McLeansboro	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 643-3768	1105 E Randolph St 101 McLeansboro, IL 62859	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Metropolis	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 524-7451	1112 W 10th Metropolis, IL 62960	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Mt. Vernon	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 244-1183	320 E Main St Mt. Vernon, IL 62864	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Olney	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 395-1702	1302 S West St Olney, IL 62450	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Robinson	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 544-8118	300 W Main Robinson, IL 62454	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration



2. Getting Your ID Resources



Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Vienna	https://www.ilsos.gov/facilities/facilitylist.html	(618) 658-8062	400 E Vine Vienna, IL 62995	State ID, Driver's License, Vehicle registration
Chicago and Suburbs County Clerk Offices				
Cook County Clerk		(312) 603-7790	50 W Washington Concourse Level -25 Chicago, IL 60664	
DuPage County Clerk	dupageco.org/countyclerk/	(630) 407-5500	421 N County Farm Rd Wheaton, IL 60187	
Grundy County Clerk	https://www.grundyco.org/circuit-clerk/	(815) 941-3222	111 E Washington St Rm 30 Morris, IL 60450	
Kankakee County Clerk	https://www.kankakeecountyclerk.gov	(815) 937-2990	189 E Court St Kankakee, IL 60901	
Kendall County Clerk	https://www.co.kendall.il.us/offices/county-clerk-recorder	(630) 553-4104	111 Fox Rd Yorkville, IL 60560	
LaSalle County Clerk	https://lasallecounty.com/online-court-records-3	(815) 434-8271	707 E Etna Rd Ottawa, IL 61350	
Livingston County Clerk	https://www.livingstoncounty-il.org/wordpress/county-services/county-clerk/	(815) 844-2006	12 W Madison St Pontiac, IL 61764	
Will County Clerk		(815) 740-4615	302 N Chicago St Joliet, IL 60432	
Kane County Clerk	https://www.countyofkane.org	(630) 232-5990	719 S Batavia Ave Geneva, IL 60134	
Lake County Clerk	https://www.lakecountyil.gov/161/County-Clerk	(847) 377-2400	18 N County St Waukegan, IL 60085	
McHenry County Clerk	https://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/county-government/departments-a-i/county-clerk	(815) 334-4242	667 Ware Rd, Ste 107 Woodstock, IL 60098	
Northwest IL County Clerk Offices				
Boone County Clerk	https://boonecounty.in.gov/offices/clerk/	(815) 544-3103	1212 Logan Ave Capron, IL 61008	
Bureau County Clerk	bureaucountyclerk.com/vitals.html	(815) 875-2014	700 S Main St, Ste 104 Princeton, IL 61356	
Carroll County Clerk	carroll-county.net/	(815) 244-0221	301 N Main Mt. Carroll, IL 61053	
DeKalb County Clerk	dekalbcounty.org/departments/county-clerk-recorder/	(815) 895-7149	110 E Sycamore St, 2nd Floor Sycamore, IL 60178	
Jo Daviess County Clerk	https://www.jodaviess.org/clerkrecorder	(815) 777-0161	330 N Bench St Galena, IL 61036	
Lee County Clerk	https://www.leecountyil.com/204/County-Clerk-Recorder	(815) 288-3309	112 E Second St Dixon, IL 61021	
Ogle County Clerk	https://www.oglecounty.org/departments/circuit_clerk/index.php	(815) 732-1130	106 S 5th St, Ste 300 Oregon, IL 61061	
Rock Island County Clerk		(309) 558-3569	1504 Third Ave Rock Island, IL 61201	
Stephenson County Clerk	https://stephensoncountyil.gov	(815) 235-8266	15 N Galena Ave Freeport, IL 61032	
Whiteside County Clerk		(815) 772-5189	200 E Knox St Morrison, IL 61270	
Winnebago County Clerk		(815) 319-4250	404 Elm St, Ste 104 Rockford, IL 61101	
East Central IL County Clerk Offices				
Champaign County Clerk		(217) 384-3720	1776 E Washington St Urbana, IL 61802	



2. Getting Your ID Resources



Name	Website	Phone	Description
Clark County Clerk		(217) 826-8311	501 Archer Ave Marshall, IL 62441
DeWitt County Clerk	www.dewittcountyil.com/countyclerk.htm	(217) 935-7780	201 W Washington St Clinton, IL 61727
Douglas County Clerk	https://douglascountyil.gov/clerk-recorder	(217) 253-2411	401 S Center St Tuscola, IL 61953
Edgar County Clerk	edgarcountyillinois.com/offices/clerk-recorder/	(217) 466-7433	115 W Court St Paris, IL 61944
Ford County Clerk	https://fordcounty.illinois.gov/county-clerk-recorder/	(217) 379-9400	200 W State St Paxton, IL 60957
Iroquois County Clerk	https://co.iroquois.il.us/offices/county-clerk-recorder	(815) 432-6960	1001 E Grant St, Room 2 Watseka, IL 60970
Macon County Clerk	https://www.co.macon.il.us	(217) 424-1305	141 S Main St Decatur, IL 62523
McLean County Clerk	https://www.mcleancountyil.gov/84/County-Clerk	(309) 888-5187	115 E Washington St Bloomington, IL 61702
Moultrie County Clerk	https://www.moultriecountyil.com/departments/county-clerk_recorder/index.php	(217) 728-4389	10 S Main St Sullivan, IL 61951
Piatt County Clerk	http://www.piattcounty.org	(217) 762-9487	101 W Washington St Monticello, IL 61856
Shelby County Clerk	http://www.shelbycounty-il.com/coclerk.aspx	(217) 774-4421	301 E Main Shelbyville, IL 62565
Vermillion County Clerk	https://www.vercounty.org/county-clerk/	(815) 334-4242	667 Ware Rd, Ste 107 Woodstock, IL 60098
West Central IL County Clerk Offices			
Brown County Clerk	https://www.browncoil.org/county-clerk/	(217) 773-3421	200 Court St #5 Mt. Sterling, IL 62353
Cass County Clerk		(217) 452-7217	PO Box 167 Virginia, IL 62691
Christian County Clerk		(217) 824-4969	101 S Main St Taylorville, IL 62568
Fulton County Clerk		(309) 547-3041	100 N Main Lewistown, IL 61542
Hancock County Clerk	https://www.hancockcounty-il.gov/county-clerk/	(217) 357-3911	500 Main St Carthage, IL 62321
Henderson County Clerk	https://www.henderson-county.com/departments/county-clerk	(309) 867-3121	307 Warren St Oquawka, IL 61469
Henry County Clerk	https://www.henrycty.com/Departments/County-Clerk	(309) 937-3575	307 W Center St Woodstock, IL 61238
Knox County Clerk	https://www.iaccr.net/knoxcountyclerk.html	(309) 345-3815	200 S Cherry St Galesburg, IL 61401
Logan County Clerk	https://www.logancountyil.gov/index.php?lang=en	(217) 732-4148	601 Broadway St Lincoln, IL 62656
Marshall County Clerk	http://marshallcountyillinois.com	(309) 246-6435	122 N Prairie St Lacon, IL 61540
Mason County Clerk	https://masoncountyil.gov/countyclerk.htm	(309) 543-6619	125 N Plum St Galesburg, IL 62644
McDonough County Clerk	http://mcg.mcdonough.il.us/circuitclerk.html	(309) 837-4889	1 Courthouse Square Macomb, IL 61455
Menard County Clerk	https://menardcountyil.com/elected-officials/county-clerkrecorder/	(217) 632-3201	102 S 7th St St Petersburg, IL 62675



2. Getting Your ID Resources



Name	Website	Phone	Description
Peoria County Clerk	https://www.peoriacounty.org/262/Circuit-Clerk	(309) 672-6059	324 Main St Peoria, IL 61602
Putnam County Clerk	https://putnamil.gov/county-offices/county-clerk-recorder-office/clerk-s-division	(815) 925-7129	120 N Fourth St Granville, IL 61327
Schuyler County Clerk	https://www.schuylercounty.org/officials/county-clerk/	(217) 322-4734	102 S Congress Ste 104 Rushville, IL 62681
Stark County Clerk	https://www.starkco.illinois.gov/departments/county-clerk-and-recorder	(309) 286-5911	130 W Main St Toulon, IL 61483
Tazewell County Clerk	https://www.tazewell-il.gov	(309) 477-2264	McKenzie Building, Ste 203 Pekin, IL 61554
Warren County Clerk		(309) 734-8592	100 W Broadway #3 Monmouth, IL 61462
Woodford County Clerk		(309) 467-2822	115 N Main Eureka, IL 61530
Southwest IL County Clerk Offices			
Adams County Clerk	https://www.co.adams.il.us/home	(217) 277-2150	507 Vermont St, Ste G02 Quincy, IL 62301
Bond County Clerk	https://bondcountyil.gov/	(618) 664-0449	203 W College #3 Greenville, IL 62246
Calhoun County Clerk		(618) 576-2351	106 N County Road, PO Box 187 Hardin, IL 62047
Clinton County Clerk		618-594-2464 (option 3)	850 Fairfax St Carlyle, IL 62231
Fayette County Clerk	https://www.fayettcountyillinois.org/2160/County-Clerk-Recorder	(618) 283-5000	221 S Seventh St Vandalia, IL 62471
Greene County Clerk		(217) 942-5443	519 N Main St Carrollton, IL 62016
Jersey County Clerk	https://jerseycountyclerk-il.gov	(618) 498-5571	200 N Lafayette St Jerseyville, IL 62052
Macoupin County Clerk	http://macoupincountyclerk.com	(217) 854-3214	201 E Main St Carlinville, IL 62626
Madison County Clerk	https://www.co.madison.il.us/departments/county_clerk/index.php	(618) 692-6290	157 N Main St, Ste 109 Edwardsville, IL 62025
Marion County Clerk	http://marioncountycircuitclerk.org	(618) 548-3400	100 E Main St Salem, IL 62881
Monroe County Clerk	https://monroecountyil.gov/departments/circuit-clerk/	(618) 939-8681	100 S Main St Waterloo, IL 62298
Montgomery County Clerk	https://www.montgomeryco.com/countyclerk/	(217) 532-9530	1 Courthouse Square Hillsboro, IL 62049
Morgan County Clerk	http://morgancounty-il.com/departments/circuit-clerk/	(217) 243-8581	300 W State St Jacksonville, IL 62650
Perry County Clerk	https://perryil.com/county-clerk/	(618) 357-5116	3764 State Rte 13/127 Pinckneyville, IL 62274
Pike County Clerk	https://www.pikecountyil.org/county-clerk/	(217) 285-7000	121 E Washington St Pittsfield, IL 62363
Randolph County Clerk	https://randolphcountyclerk.com/	(618) 826-5000 ext 194	1 Taylor St Chester, IL 62233
Sangamon County Clerk	https://countyclerk.sangamonil.gov	(217) 753-6700	200 S 9th St Springfield, IL 62701



2. Getting Your ID Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Description
Scott County Clerk	https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/IRAD/scott.html	(217) 742-3178	35 E Market St Winchester, IL 62694
St Clair County Clerk	https://www.co.st-clair.il.us/departments/county-clerk	(618) 825-2377	10 Public Square Belleville, IL 62220
Wabash County Clerk		(618) 262-4561	401 Market St Mt. Carmel, IL 62863
Washington County Clerk		(618) 327-4800	101 E St Louis St Nashville, IL 62263
Southeast IL County Clerk Offices			
Alexander County Clerk	http://www.firstcircuitil.org/	(618) 734-7000	2000 Washington Ave Cairo, IL 62914
Clay County Clerk		(618) 665-3626	Courthouse, Room 106 Louisville, IL 62858
Crawford County Clerk		(618) 546-1212	100 Douglas Robinson, IL 62454
Cumberland County Clerk		(217) 849-2631	PO Box 146 Toledo, IL 62468
Edwards County Clerk		(618) 445-2115	50 E Main St Albion, IL 62806
Effingham County Clerk	http://www.co.effingham.il.us/clerk-recorder/vital-records	(217) 342-6535	101 N Fourth St Effingham, IL 62401
Franklin County Clerk	http://www.franklincountyil.gov/countyclerk	(618) 435-9800	901 Public Square Benton, IL 62812
Gallatin County Clerk		(618) 269-3025	484 N Lincoln Blvd E Shawneetown, IL 62984
Hamilton County Clerk	https://www.hamiltoncountyillinois.com/departments/county-clerk-recorder/	(618) 643-2721	100 S Jackson St Rm 2 McLeansboro, IL 62859
Hardin County Clerk	http://illinoissecondcircuit.info/hardin-county	(618) 287-2735	102 E Market St Elizabethtown, IL 62931
Jackson County Circuit Clerk	https://circuitclerk.co.jackson.il.us/	(618) 687-7300	1001 Walnut St Murphysboro, IL 62966
Jasper County Clerk	https://www.illinoiscourts.gov/courts-directory/19/Jasper-County-Courthouse/court/	(618) 783-2524	100 W Jourdan St. Newton, IL 62448
Jefferson County Clerk	http://jeffersoncountyillinois.com	(618) 244-8020	100 S 10th St Mt Vernon, IL 62864
Johnson County Clerk	https://www.iaccr.net/johnson.html	(618) 658-4751	117 N 5th St Vienna, IL 62995
Lawrence County Clerk		(618) 943-5126	1100 State St Lawrenceville, IL 62439
Massac County Clerk	https://www.countyoffice.org/il-massac-county-clerk/	(618) 524-9359	1 Superman Square # 2A Metropolis, IL 62960
Mercer County Clerk	https://www.mercercountyil.org	(309) 582-7021	100 SE Third St Aledo, IL 61231
Pope County Clerk	https://www.iaccr.net/pope.html	(618) 683-3941	310 E Main St Golconda, IL 62938
Pulaski County Clerk		(618) 748-9360	500 Illinois Ave Mound City, IL 62963
Richland County Clerk		(618) 392-3111	103 W Main St Olney, IL 62450
Saline County Clerk		(618) 253-8197	10 E Poplar St Harrisburg, IL 62946
Union County Clerk		(618) 833-5913	309 W Market St, Room 145 Jonesboro, IL 62952
Wayne County Clerk		(618) 842-5182	301 E Main Fairfield, IL 62837
White County Clerk		(618) 382-7211	PO Box 339 Carmi, IL 62821
Williamson County Clerk		(618) 998-2110	407 N Monroe St. Marion, IL 62959



3. Parole, Reentry, and Advocacy Resources

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Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Illinois IDOC and Parole Resources				
I-SORT Hotline		(888) 414-7678		Call if you have questions about the Illinois Sex Offense Registry
IDOC Bureau of Field Operations	https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc	(217) 558-2200	1301 Concordia Ct, PO Box 19277 Springfield, IL 62794	Supervision of parolees and people on electronic monitoring, programming for parolees, drug and mental health treatment programs, emergency housing, educational and vocational programs
IDOC Parolee Assistance Office	https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/parole/Pages/OffenderAssistance.aspx	(800) 666-6744		Call if you have questions about parole
Illinois Prison Talk	illinoisprisonstalk.org/index.php			Find criminal records
Illinois State Police Criminal Record Repository	https://isp.illinois.gov/BureauOfIdentification	(815) 740-5160	Fee Processing Unit, 260 N Chicago St Joliet, IL 60432	Can contact to obtain a copy of state rap sheet
Illinois State Police Sex Offender Registry FAQ	https://isp.illinois.gov/Sor/FAQs			Information about registration requirements
Illinois State Police Murderer and Violent Offender Against Youth Registry FAQ	https://isp.illinois.gov/MVOAY/FAQs			Information about registration requirements
Reentry Organizations State Resources				
Education Justice Project	educationjustice.net	(217) 300-5150	1001 S Wright St Champaign, IL 61820	College in prison program, creator of the reentry guide. Write to request reentry guides
Inside Out Network	https://insideoutnetwork.net			A website and mobile app to connect people to reentry services across nine different categories such as shelters and housing, substance abuse treatment, education, employment, and more
Winners' Circles (TASC)	tasc.org	(855) 827-2444	Multiple locations; IL	Support group for reentry, substance abuse, mental health conditions. Some online, some in person
Safer Return (Safer Foundation)	https://mysafer.force.com/saferreturn/s/	(312) 922-2200		State-wide reentry website where people can access resources for employment and mental health services
Reentry Organizations Chicago and Chicago Loop Resources				
ALSO (Alliance of Local Service Organizations)	also-chicago.org	(773) 235-5705	2401 W North Ave Chicago, IL 60647	Works in partnership with people living at risk of violence to promote safer streets and homes
City of Chicago Ex-Offenders Program	https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/ofinterest/res/exoffend.html			Website that connects people to reentry services in Chicago



3. Parole, Reentry, and Advocacy Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Giving Others Dreams	www.givingothersdreams.online	(773) 431-4157	8920 S Commercial Ave 1st floor Chicago, IL 60617	Reentry services include holistic support programming such as training and referrals to career services. Provides a supportive space to promote healing and empowerment of justice impacted women and their families
Heartland Alliance	www.heartlandalliance.org/	(312) 660-1300	845 W Wilson Ave Chicago, IL 60640	Operates three community health centers, employment and training programs, legal assistance for immigrants and asylum seekers, and policy advocacy
IDES Reentry Employment Service Program	https://ides.illinois.gov/jobs-workforce/programs/re-entry.html	(312) 793-1597		Job readiness workshops, employment assistance, workshops offered across the state
Woodlawn Community Re-Entry Project Chicago	https://www.woodlawncommunityreentryproject.chicago.com/	(773) 301-0291		
Roosevelt University Life Skills Re-entry Program	englewoodportal.org/directory/3978	(312) 281-3370	Roosevelt University Gage Building at 18 S Michigan Ave Chicago, IL 60603	Life skills instruction, case management services, employment help, education advice, bus vouchers. (8:30am to 4:30pm)
Reentry Organizations Chicago West Side Resources				
Breakthrough	breakthrough.org/	(773) 722-1144	Multiple locations; Chicago, IL 60647	Trauma-informed employment services, transitional housing for men and women, youth services, violence prevention, health and wellness services, and more
City of Chicago Community Reentry Support Center, Westside Health Authority	https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/provdrs/workforce_development.html	(773) 664-0612	5816 W Division St Chicago, IL 60651	Education, training, mentoring, support groups, counseling assistance, connection to housing and food assistance, family reunification and child support assistance, information on sealing or expunging criminal records
Community Support Advisory Council (CSAC) West (Westside Health Authority)	https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/communityresources/Pages/CSAC.aspx	(773) 786-0226	2954 W Lake St Chicago, IL 60612	IDOC program. "CSACs are community-based partnerships designed to work collaboratively with parole and other existing community resources to develop wraparound services for parolees, while assisting other groups with building community capacity to develop their own resources."
Daughter of Destiny Outreach, Inc	daughterofdestinyoutreach.org	(312) 256-5285	1519 W Warren Blvd Chicago, IL 60607	Case management, anger-management, addiction counseling, domestic violence education/workshops, recovery coaching, emergency shelter & meals
Greencorps Chicago	https://greencorpschicago.org/	(312) 746-9777	455 N Sacramento Blvd Chicago, IL 60612	City of Chicago green industry job training program for individuals with barriers to employment



3. Parole, Reentry, and Advocacy Resources



Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
North Lawndale Employment Network: Sweet Beginnings	https://www.nlen.org/sweetbeginnings	(773) 638-1825	906 S Homan Ave Chicago, IL 60624	Full-time transitional jobs in the production and sales of all-natural skin care products
Safer Foundation	saferfoundation.org/	(312) 922-2200	Multiple locations; Main office: 571 W Jackson Blvd Chicago, IL 60607	Comprehensive service organization, offering employment, education, and support services, job training and job placement support
Sistas of the Hood	sistasofthehood.com	(773) 858-4453	P.O. Box 440044 Chicago, IL 60644	Employment help, case management support, and HIV assistance. Support and advocacy
St. Leonard's Ministries Michael Barlow Center	www.slministries.org	(312) 738-1414	2100 W Warren Blvd Chicago, IL 60612	Reentry services, education, training, job placement services
Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC)	tasc.org	(855) 827-2444	700 S Clinton St Chicago, IL 60607	An IDOC program. You are eligible for service for up to one year post-release, after being connected through your parole officer
Reentry Organizations Chicago North and South Side Resources				
City of Chicago Community Reentry Support Center, Howard Area Community Center	https://howardarea.org/	(773) 332-6772	1623 W Howard St Chicago, IL 60626	Reentry services: education, training, mentoring, support groups, counseling assistance, connection to housing and food assistance, family reunification and child support assistance, information on sealing or expunging criminal records
CSAC North (Howard Area Community Center)	https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/communityresources/Pages/CSAC.aspx	(773) 262-3515	7648 N Paulina St Chicago, IL 60626	IDOC program. "CSACs are community-based partnerships designed to work collaboratively with parole and other existing community resources to develop wraparound services for parolees, while assisting other groups with building community capacity to develop their own resources."
CSAC South (Target Area Development Corp)	https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/communityresources/Pages/CSAC.aspx	(773) 651-6470	1542 W 79th St Chicago, IL 60620	Works to create relationships with reentering prisoners and their families
GEO Reentry Services	georeentry.com	(773) 846-6260	8007 S Cottage Grove Chicago, IL 60619	Job readiness, employment help, transitional housing, case management, educational, clothing, food, transportation, substance abuse counseling, family reintegration
Growing Home	growinghomeinc.org/about-us/	(773) 549-1336	2732 N Clark St Chicago, IL 60614	Community farm business training, help to create stability

Directory



3. Parole, Reentry, and Advocacy Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Phalanx Family Services, Reentry Support Center	https://www.facebook.com/PhalanxFamilyServices/	(773) 291-1086	837 W 119th St Chicago, IL 60643	Education, training, mentoring, support groups, counseling, help with housing and food, family reunification and child support assistance, sealing or expunging records
Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation	pbmr.org	(773) 952-6643	5114 S Elizabeth St Chicago, IL 60609	Serves youth, families, and community members who are impacted by incarceration
Project H.O.O.D.	projecthood.org	(773) 923-8270	6330 S King Drive Chicago, IL 60637	Reentry services, mentorship, training, and community for residents of Woodlawn and Englewood
Teamwork Englewood Reentry Support Center	www.teamworkenglewood.org	(773) 488-6600	815 W 63rd St, Ste 2 Chicago, IL 60621	Reentry services: education, training, mentoring, support groups, counseling assistance, connection to housing and food assistance, family reunification and child support assistance, information on sealing or expunging criminal records
Transforming Reentry Services	https://transformingreentry.org	(312) 328-9610	10 W 35th St Chicago, IL 60616	Case management, support groups, family and parenting support services, telephone counseling, prison advocacy
Reentry Organizations Northwest and Southwest Suburbs Resources				
Hinda Institute	https://www.hindahelps.com/	(847) 296-1770	9401 Margail Ave Des Plaines, IL 60016	Counseling, visitation and support predominantly to Jews who encounter the criminal justice system, formerly incarcerated, spouses, parents and children in order to lower recidivism rates and ensure that those coming out of prison do not return
Legacy Reentry Foundation	https://www.legacyreentryfoundation.org/	(800) 573-8538	420 Clayton St #418 Waukegan, IL 60085	Employment and expungement services, clothing
Northern Illinois Recovery Community Organization	https://www.nircolakecounty.org/	(847) 662-3205	202 S Genesee St Waukegan, IL 60085	RSJII provides services and resources to individuals to help navigate the barriers from engagement with the criminal legal system
7-70 Re-Entry Services, Inc.	770reentryservices.org	(708) 680-7075	9146 Lincoln Ave Brookfield, IL 60513	Faith-based, life and career coaching, counseling, family mediation, and case management
Ink 180	http://ink180.com	(630) 554-1404	27 Stonehill RD, Unit D Oswego, IL 60543	Free tattoo coverups and removals
Reentry Organizations West and East Central Illinois Resources				
Elite Community Outreach	https://eliteoutreach.org/	(309) 248-0211	Dream Center Peoria, Floor 2, 714 Hamilton Blvd Peoria, IL 61603	Offers reentry classes to help prepare people for employment
House of Hope	https://www.houseofhopepeoria.com	(309) 407-7734	514 S Shelley St Peoria, IL 61605	Outreach, mentorship, workforce development, case management, victim support, reentry services, violence prevention training



3. Parole, Reentry, and Advocacy Resources

House of Hope	https://www.houseofhopepeoria.com	(309) 407-7734	514 S Shelley St Peoria, IL 61605	Outreach, mentorship, workforce development, case management, victim support, reentry services, violence prevention training
First Followers	firstfollowersreentry.com/	(217) 607-1131	314 Cottage Court Champaign, IL 61820	Peer mentoring, employment services, advocacy, family reunification, service referrals, transitional housing including for people on the sex offense registry
Jesus Is the Way Ministries	jesusisthewayprisonministries.org/	(217) 892-4044	602 Liberty Ave Rantoul, IL 61866	Housing, food, clothing, spiritual guidance and counseling, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, job training
Reentry Organizations Southwest and Southeast Illinois Resources				
Abundant Life in Christ II, Inc.	https://www.reentryprograms.com/go/abundant-life-in-christ-ii-inc	(217) 552-1177	911 W Bradley Ave Champaign, IL 61821	Women's reentry support group
CSAC Marion (Lutheran Social Services of IL)	https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/communityresources/Pages/CSAC.aspx	(618) 997-9196	102 DeYoung St Marion, IL, 62959	IDOC program. "CSACs are community-based partnerships designed to work collaboratively with parole and other existing community resources to develop wraparound services for parolees, while assisting other groups with building community capacity to develop their own resources."
CSAC East Metro (Lutheran Social Services of IL)	https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/communityresources/Pages/CSAC.aspx	(618) 604-3459	1798 Summit St E St. Louis, IL 62205	IDOC program. "CSACs are community-based partnerships designed to work collaboratively with parole and other existing community resources to develop wraparound services for parolees, while assisting other groups with building community capacity to develop their own resources."
Advocacy Resources National Resources				
Prison Library Project	prisonlibraryproject.org	(909) 626-3066		Mails free books to people in prison, offers gas cards for family visits, family support groups, events
Advocacy Resources State Resources				
CURE IL	cureil.org			Advocacy, research, policy work
Decarcerate Illinois	nationinside.org/campaign/decarcerate-illinois			Advocacy and policy work to challenge mass incarceration
Illinois Alliance for Reentry & Justice	https://www.ilarj.org/		571 W Jackson Blvd Chicago, IL 60661	An alliance of impacted individuals, advocates, and service providers working on reentry in Illinois
Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Illinois Campaign for Phone Justice	nationinside.org/campaign/illinois-for-prison-phone-justice	(312) 590-6129		Advocacy and policy work to challenge mass incarceration
Illinois Institute for Law and Community Affairs	https://www.facebook.com/ILChangingMinds/	(312) 593-6998	3629 S Prairie Ave Chicago, IL 60653	Website for sharing information about improving conditions for those impacted by incarceration
Illinois Online Voter Application	https://ova.elections.il.gov/			Website to register to vote



3. Parole, Reentry, and Advocacy Resources

Illinois State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform	https://icjia.illinois.gov/			A state agency dedicated to improving the administration of criminal justice
Target Area Development Corporation	targetarea.org	(773) 651-6470	1542 W 79th Street Chicago, IL 60620	Advocacy related to social justice reform and systemic change in Illinois
Advocacy Resources Chicago and Chicago Loop Resources				
Chicago 400	chicago400.net			Mentors at-risk youth in Chicago: redirection, trauma counseling, and, community building
Equity and Transformation (E.A.T.)	https://www.eatchicago.org/			Advocacy, policy, and research focused on mobilizing Chicago's informal workforce and survival economy
Give Up the Streets (GUTS)	facebook.com/Give-Up-The-Streets-GUTS-142488223105688/	(312) 545-0044		Campaign on behalf of Chicagoans with past convictions who are listed on public registries and experiencing homelessness and therefore must register weekly with the Chicago Police Department
Heartland Alliance	www.heartlandalliance.org/	(312) 660-1300	845 W Wilson Ave Chicago, IL 60640	Operates three community health centers, employment and training programs, legal assistance for immigrants and asylum seekers, and policy advocacy
INVC (Institute for Nonviolence Chicago)	https://www.nonviolencechicago.org/	(312) 502-0959	819 N Leamington Avenue Chicago, IL 60651	Outreach and conflict mediation, case management, victim services, nonviolence training, community organizing, behavioral health & wellness
Roseland Ceasefire	roselandceasefire.com	(708) 577-4533	12639 S Ashland Ave Calumet, IL 60827	Works to reduce and prevent gun violence, assist domestic abuse victims, mentor youth for employment readiness, and provide marriage counseling
Women's Justice Institute	https://womensjusticeinstitute.org		2150 S Canalport, Suite 4A-1 Chicago, IL 60608	Protects the dignity of all women and girls impacted by our nation's justice system
Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Center for Conflict Resolution	ccrchicago.org	(312) 922-6464	11 E Adams St #500 Chicago, IL 60603	Free mediation services
FORCE (Fighting to Overcome Records and Create Equality)	communityrenewalsociety.org	(312) 427-4830	111 W Jackson St Ste 820 Chicago, IL 60604	Advocates for social and economic justice through training communities and individuals
Advocacy Resources Chicago West Side Resources				
Communities United	communitiesunited.org	(773) 583-1387	4600 W Palmer St Chicago, IL 60639	Advocacy, support for communities around housing, health, education, immigration, police accountability and more



3. Parole, Reentry, and Advocacy Resources

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Enlace Chicago	https://www.enlacechicago.org	(773) 943-7570	2759 S Harding Ave Chicago, IL 60623	Programs, services, and advocacy that address education, health, immigration and violence prevention. Free legal clinic, education, community capacity building
National Alliance for the Empowerment of the Formerly Incarcerated	naefimmentor.wix.com/naefi	(773) 593-2540	5820 W Chicago Ave Chicago, IL 60651	Leadership development, conflict resolution, reentry support groups, reentry coach, community projects, legal support
Westside Justice Center	https://www.westsidejustice.org/	(773) 940-2213	601 S California St Chicago, IL 60612	
Advocacy Resources Chicago North and South Side Resources				
John Howard Association of IL	thejha.org		PO Box 10042 Chicago, IL 60610	Evaluate conditions for incarcerated people and staff
MacArthur Justice Center	macarthurjusticecenter.org	(312) 503-1271	375 E Chicago Ave Chicago, IL 60611	Civil rights law firm
Organizing Neighborhoods for Equality (ONE) Northside	onenorthside.org	(773) 769-3232	4648 N Racine Chicago, IL 60640	Affordable housing, education, economic justice, mental health justice, police accountability, healthcare, violence prevention
Ex-Cons for Social and Community Change	https://www.eccsc.org	(708) 512-4140	610 W Root St Chicago, IL 60609	Food programs for children, mentoring, sex ed., substance abuse, counseling, tutoring, family transportation to prisons
Transforming Reentry Services	https://transformingreentry.org	(312) 328-9610	10 W 35th St Chicago, IL 60616	Case management, support groups, family and parenting support services, telephone counseling, prison advocacy
Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP)	swopchicago.org	(773) 471-8208	2558 W 63rd St Chicago, IL 60629	Advocacy and community building to enable families to determine their own future and connect with each other to improve life in their neighborhoods
Advocacy Resources Northwest Suburbs and West & East Central Illinois Resources				
Juvenile Justice Initiative	jjustice.org	(847) 864-1567	518 Davis St Evanston, IL 60201	Advocacy to reduce reliance on incarceration, enhance fairness for all youth. Offers community-based resources
Peoria County Family Justice Center	https://www.peoriacounty.org/408/Family-Justice-Center	(309) 676-4280	435 Hamilton Blvd Peoria, IL 61602	Response team that provides services and support to victims of Domestic Violence, while simultaneously holding holding the people who have committed the crime accountable
Peoria Friendship House of Christian Service	https://www.friendship.house	(309) 671-5200	800 NE Madison Ave Peoria, IL 61603	Advocacy, coaching, education, and support, providing the resources for families
Build Programs, Not Jails	https://programsnotjails.com/			Advocacy, research to end mass incarceration



4. Health Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Description
Hotlines and Warmlines			
AIDS Info Hotline	https://hab.hrsa.gov/get-care	(800) 448-0440	Confidential answers to questions about HIV/AIDS treatment and clinical trials
Crisis Text Line		Text HELLO to 741741	Receive help for any type of crisis. Trained crisis counselors will respond
CARES Line		(800) 345-9049	24-hour Crisis and Referral Entry Services (CARES) line for children, youth, and families having a mental health crisis
Illinois Helpline for Opioids & Other Substances	https://ilhelpline.thesmartice.com/findhelp	(833) 234-6343 or text "HELP" to 833234	Get immediate help for overdose and other substance use support
WIRC-CAA Victims Services	https://wirpc.org/victim-services/	(309) 837-5555	Domestic violence program, sexual assault program, medical advocacy, 24-hour crisis line
Illinois Warm Line		(866) 359-7953	Receive support by phone for mental health and/or substance use challenges. Staffed by Wellness Support Specialists who have experienced substance use or mental health challenges in their own lives. Open 8am-8pm Monday through Saturday
SAMHSA Alcohol and Drug Referral Helpline	https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline	(800) 662-4357	Referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations
Veteran Crisis Line	https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/	(800) 273-8255	If you're a Veteran in crisis or a service member in crisis or if you are concerned about one, call or text to get help. Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Can also text 838255
Suicide and Crisis Lifeline	https://988lifeline.org/	988	Call if you or someone you know is thinking about suicide or is in crisis. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
City Services Number		3-1-1 in Chicago; 2-1-1 in Illinois	Call for city services, including homeless shelters, food pantries, health clinics and more
Medical Insurance			
ABE: Illinois Application for Benefits Eligibility	https://abe.illinois.gov/	(800) 843-6154	Website to apply for benefits, including health care coverage, SNAP (formerly food stamps), cash assistance, community supports, or Medicare Savings Program
US Healthcare Marketplace	healthcare.gov		National website to sign up for health insurance, including Medicaid and Medicare services
FamilyCare (IHFS)	https://www2.illinois.gov/hfs/MedicalPrograms/AllKids/Pages/FamilyCare.aspx	(866) 255-5437	Healthcare coverage to parents living with children 18 years old or younger. Must meet income requirements
All Kids	https://www2.illinois.gov/hfs/MedicalPrograms/AllKids/Pages/about.aspx		Health insurance for children 18 and under
Illinois Department of Human Services Office Locator	https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12	(833) 234-6343	Directory of Illinois Department of Human Services locations where you can get help applying for benefits such as SNAP, Medicaid, family services, community resources, and more



4. Health Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Description
Health, Mental Health, and Substance Use Directories			
Illinois Free Clinic Directory	https://freeclinicdirectory.org/illinois_care.html		Directory of community health centers and resources
Directory for Low Cost Dental Care (National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research)	https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/health-info/finding-dental-care		Directory of low-cost dental clinics
Illinois Association of Free & Charitable Clinics	https://www.illinoisfreeclinics.org/	(312) 863-1780	Resource to find health resources
Directory of Dental Schools for Low Cost Dental Care (Commission on Dental Accreditation)	https://coda.ada.org/en/find-a-program		Directory of dental schools that offer low-cost dental care
COVID-19 Testing Center Directory	https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/testing.html		Directory of COVID-19 testing centers
Sober House Directory	https://soberhousedirectory.com/		Resources to find sober houses in the local area
Substance Use Rehab Centers Directory	substancerehabcenter.com/halfway-house/		List of substance abuse half-way houses and outpatient services in US
Chicago Mental Health Clinics	https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/cdph/supp_info/behavioral-health/mental_health_centers.html		Services for adults with serious mental health illness, substance abuse issues, PTSD
Planned Parenthood Office Locator	https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-illinois/locations	(800) 230-7526	Directory of offices where you can get birth control counseling, treatment for sexually transmitted infections and more
SAMHSA Alcohol and Drug Referral Helpline	https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline	(800) 662-4357	Referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations
Esperanza Health Centers	www.esperanzachicago.org	(773) 584-6200	Bilingual primary care, behavioral health and wellness services to the community, regardless of immigration status, insurance status, or ability to pay
Medication and Pharmacy Resources			
Illinois RX Card	illinoisrxcard.com	(888) 615-1988	Statewide prescription drug discount program
Partnership for Prescription Assistance	pparx.org	(571) 350-8643	Medicine cost assistance



4. Health Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Description
GoodRx	https://www.goodrx.com/		Sign up to save up to 80% on prescriptions with coupons you can bring to pharmacies
Rx Assist	https://www.rxassist.org/		Free and low cost medication resource
Eye Care Resources			
Goggles 4 U	https://www.goggles4u.com/	(888)-972 9060	Low-cost glasses resource
EyeCare America	aao.org/eyecare-america		Medical eye exams, often at no cost
AIDS/HIV Resources			
HIV.org	https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics	(800) 232-4636	Government resource about HIV and AIDS
Center for Disease Control (CDC), STD, AIDS/HIV Resource	https://www.cdc.gov/std/hiv		Resources for those with STD's, HIV, or AIDS
Resources for People with Disabilities			
Division of Rehabilitation Services (IDHS)	https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29764	(877) 761-9780	Serves individuals with disabilities, working with them and their families to meet employment and housing needs. Apply online
Substance Use Resources			
Narcotics Anonymous	https://na.org/		Find a support group near you
Alcoholics Anonymous	aa.org		Find a support group near you. Online support groups also available
Lifering Secular Recovery	https://lifering.org/	(800) 811-4142	Resource to find places for Lifering sobriety meetings
Chicago Recovery Alliance: Any Positive Change	https://anypositivechange.org/	(312) 953-3797	Services for people who want to reduce drug related harm. Services include injecting equipment, Naloxone (for opioid overdose), overdose training, harm reduction counseling. Check out website for locations of silver vans with services



For more resources, see our online directory at reentryillinois.net



5. Resources to Meet Basic Needs

Name	Website	Phone	Description
Apply for Benefits National and Statewide Resources			
ABE: Illinois Application for Benefits Eligibility	https://abe.illinois.gov/	(800) 843-6154	Website to apply for benefits, including health care coverage, SNAP (formerly food stamps), cash assistance, community supports, or Medicare Savings Program
Illinois DHS Office Locator	https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12	(833) 234-6343	Directory of Illinois Department of Human Services locations where you can get help applying for benefits such as SNAP, Medicaid, family services, community resources, and more
Social Security Office Locator	https://www.ssa.gov/locator/	(800) 772-1213	Directory of Illinois Secretary of State facilities to get State IDs and Drivers Licenses
Food National and Statewide Resources			
Feeding America	https://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank		Directory of food banks throughout the country
Find Food Pantries	https://www.foodpantries.org/		Directory of food pantries or soup kitchens
Illinois Food Distribution Program Sites	http://www.illinoisfoodbanks.org/sites.asp		Directory of food pantries, soup kitchens and homeless shelters
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30357		Apply for SNAP benefits (Illinois Link Card to buy groceries)
Food Chicago South Side Resources			
Greater Chicago Food Depository	www.chicagosfoodbank.org	(773) 247-3663	Supplies food to pantries and soup kitchens in Chicago. Call to find a food pantry
Veteran National and Statewide Resources			
American Legion	legion.org	(800) 433-3318	Health, education, employment, other benefits for veterans
Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs	illinois.gov/veterans	(800) 437-9824	Veteran services
US Department of Veterans Affairs - Benefits	va.gov		Assistance with accessing veteran benefits, medical centers
Veteran Crisis Line	https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/	(800) 273-8255	If you're a Veteran in crisis or a service member in crisis or if you are concerned about one, call or text to get help. Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Can also text 838255
Veteran's Affairs Disability Claims	https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/		Instructions on filing a disability claim for a veteran
Veteran Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services	https://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/Pages/ServiceOffices.aspx	(800) 437-9824	Helps veterans with disabilities related to military service. They offer help finding a job, job training, and advice



6. Employment Resources



Name	Website	Phone	Description
National and State Resources			
American Job Center Finder	https://www.careeronestop.org/	(877) 872-5627	Online job finding tool
Education & Career Guide for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals	https://study.com/resources/formerly-incarcerated-education-career-guide		Helpful information about earning your degree and getting hired after incarceration
EEOC- U.S Employment Opportunity Commission	https://www.eeoc.gov/		Resource to report to the EEOC if there is a violation by an employer
Jails to Jobs Website	jailstojobs.org/		Tattoo removal, job search, vocational training and reentry assistance
Jobs For Felons Hub Website	jobsforfelonshub.com/		Online job finding tool for people with a felony record
Jobs That Hire Felons	https://jobsthathirefelons.org/		Job resource for those who were formerly incarcerated
Justice Through Code	https://centerforjustice.columbia.edu/justicethroughcode		Online, free coding program for formerly incarcerated people. Helps with job placement
My Next Move	https://www.mynextmove.org/		Government sponsored employment resource. Browse careers and industries
Illinois Job Link	illinoisJobLink.com	(877) 342-7533	Online job finding tool
Illinois WorkNet Online Resources	illinoisworknet.com/	(800) 526-0844	Online job finding tool
Small Business Assistance (Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity)	https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/businesshelp/Pages/SmallBusinessAssistance.aspx		Resources for small business owners. Directory of small business development centers in IL
Chicago Resources			
City Colleges of Chicago	ccc.edu	(708) 697-8745	Services to help formerly incarcerated individuals access college education, vocational training, GED, ESL, career services
Entrepreneurs Academy	www.entrepreneursacademy.net	(773) 295-5365	Training, workshops, business development center. Access to resources, tools, and training for aspiring entrepreneurs. Also offers mental health services
IDES Reentry Employment Service Program	https://ides.illinois.gov/jobs-workforce/programs/re-entry.html	(312) 793-1597	Job readiness workshops, employment assistance, workshops offered across the state
New Life Centers	newlifecenters.org	(312) 736-2466	Mentoring, education, sports, peace-making, food distribution
Community Assistance Programs (CAPs)	capsinc.org	(773) 568-1782	Job readiness training, evaluation and temp job placement. IDOC referral needed: talk to parole officer
Safer Foundation	saferfoundation.org/	(312) 922-2200	Comprehensive service organization, offering employment, education, and support services, job training and job placement support
Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership	https://chicookworks.org/	(312) 603-0200	Job search assistance, career planning, customized staffing, coaching
Heartland Alliance	www.heartlandalliance.org/	(312) 660-1300	Operates three community health centers, employment and training programs, legal assistance for immigrants and asylum seekers, and policy advocacy



7. Legal Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
National and State Resources				
EEOC- U.S Employment Opportunity Commission	https://www.eeoc.gov/			Resource to report to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission if there is a violation by an employer
Legal Action Center	https://clearinghouse.lac.org/public			Job and legal resources for people with criminal record
National Immigrant Justice Center	immigrantjustice.org	(312) 660-1370		Immigration legal services to low-income individuals in the Latino community
National Immigration Legal Services Directory	https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory			Directory to search for legal services by state, county, or detention facility
Criminal Record Repository (Illinois State Police)	isp.illinois.gov/	(815) 740-5160	Illinois State Police, Bureau of Identification, Fee Processing Unit, 260 N Chicago St, IL 60432	Contact to obtain a copy of state rap sheet
Illinois Drug Crimes Attorney Finder (FindLaw)	https://lawyers.findlaw.com/lawyer/practicestate/drug-crime/illinois?fli=dcta			Resource to find drug crime lawyers
Illinois Legal Aid	www.illinoislegalaid.org/			Important legal information and referrals on many topics (family law, expungement, immigration, etc.) for residents of Illinois
Illinois State Police Murderer and Violent Offender Against Youth Registry FAQ	https://isp.illinois.gov/MVOAY/FAQs			Information about registration requirements
Office of the State Appellate Defender (Expungement)	https://www.illinois.gov/osad	(217) 782-7203	400 W Monroe, Ste 202 Springfield, IL 62704	Information about sealing, expungement, forms of criminal records relief
Prairie State Legal Services	pslegal.org/#prj5	(815) 965-2134	303 N Main St, Ste 600 Rockford, IL 61101	Free legal services for housing, safety, health, stability
Chicago and Chicago Loop Resources				
Between Friends	https://betweenfriendschicago.org/	(800) 603-4357 (24-hour hotline)	P0 Box 608548 Chicago, IL 60660	Counseling and legal assistance for people who are experiencing domestic violence and seeking orders of protection
Heartland Alliance	www.heartlandalliance.org/	(312) 660-1300	17 N State St, Ste 900 Chicago, IL 60602	Operates three community health centers, employment and training programs, legal assistance for immigrants and asylum seekers, and policy advocacy



7. Legal Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
AIDS Legal Council of Chicago	aidslegal.com	(312) 427-8990	17 N State St #1380 Chicago, IL 60602	Helps victims of HIV/AIDS discrimination, as well as insurance disputes, return-to-work questions, and confidentiality issues
Beyond Legal Aid	beyondlegalaid.org/	(312) 999-0056; Helpline: (872) 267-2252	17 N State St #1380 Chicago, IL 60602	Legal services and activism support, helpline, workshops, and more
Cabrini Green Legal Aid	cgla.net	(312) 738-2452	6 S Clark St, Ste 200 Chicago, IL 60603	Legal services for Chicago residents. Maximum conviction and income restrictions
Center for Disability and Elder Law	cdelaw.org	(312) 376-1880	205 W Randolph, Ste 1610 Chicago, IL 60606	Legal services to low-income older adults and/or persons with disabilities in Cook County
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless	chicagohomeless.org	(800) 940-1119	70 E Lake St, Ste 720 Chicago, IL 60601	Legal representation, bilingual attorneys
Chicago Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights	clccrul.org/community-law-project	(312) 630-9744	100 N La Salle St Chicago, IL 60602	Legal assistance for people buying homes or starting small businesses
Chicago Volunteer Legal Services	cvls.org	(312) 332-1624	33 N Dearborn, Ste 400 Chicago, IL 60602	Free legal representation for a wide range of services
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights	https://www.icirr.org	(312) 332-7360	228 S Wabash, Ste 800 Chicago, IL 60604	Services for immigrants and refugees, healthcare access, family support network, case management, education
Lambda Legal	lambdalegal.org	(312) 663-4413	105 W 65 E Wacker Pl, Ste 2000 Chicago, IL 60601	Legal, education, advocacy work helping lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people, and everyone living with HIV
Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing	lcbh.org	(312) 347-7600	33 N LaSalle, Ste 900 Chicago, IL 60602	Free legal help with housing
Legal Access Fund (LAF)	lafchicago.org	(312) 977-9047	120 S LaSalle St, Ste 900 Chicago, IL 60603	Provides free legal services for non-criminal cases
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law	povertylaw.org	(312) 263-3830	67 E Madison St Ste 2000 Chicago, IL 60603	Works with community organizations, service providers, legislators, and other allies to pursue justice for low-income clients
Metropolitan Family Services, Legal Aid, Main Office	metrofamily.org	(312) 986-4200	One N Dearborn, Ste 1000 Chicago , IL 60602	Legal aid, economic stability, education, emotional wellness, empowerment
Chicago West Side Resources				
Ascend Justice (Domestic Violence Legal Clinic)	https://www.ascendjustice.org/	(312) 325-9155	555 W Harrison, Ste 1900 Chicago, IL 60607	Legal assistance for victims of domestic violence



7. Legal Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
FEDECFMI/Casa Michoacan	https://fedecmiusa.org/	(312) 491-9317	1638 S Blue Island Ave Chicago, IL 60608	Services for Michoacan, Mexican, and immigrant community living in Chicago
First Defense Legal Aid	first-defense.org	(800) 529-7374	601 S California Ave Chicago, IL 60612	24-hour legal representation for people in custody of Chicago PD
Instituto Chicago	https://www.institutochicago.org/	(773) 890-0055	2520 S Western Ave Chicago, IL 60608	Services for Latino immigrants and their families: legal aid, education, training, employment, COVID relief
Latinos Progresando	latinospro.org	(773) 542-7077	3047 W Cermak Rd Chicago, IL 60623	Immigration legal services to families, education, culture, community
Little Village / Enlace Chicago	https://www.enlacechicago.org	(773) 943-7570	2759 S Harding Ave Chicago, IL 60623	Programs, services, and advocacy that address education, health, immigration and violence prevention. Free legal clinic, education, community capacity building
Chicago North and South Side Resources				
Access Living	accessliving.org	(800) 613-8549	115 W Chicago Ave Chicago, IL 60654	Housing, advocacy and legal representation for people with disabilities
Centro Romero	centroromero.org	(773) 508-5300	6216 N Clark St Chicago, IL 60660	Services for immigrants, refugees: family support, adult education, youth programs, legal services
Indo-American Center	indoamerican.org	(773) 973-4444	6328 N California Ave Chicago, IL 60659	Legal services for immigrants, education, culture, community
Uptown People's Law Center	uplcchicago.org	(773) 769-1411	4413 N Sheridan Chicago, IL 60640	Fighting for the rights of prisoners, tenants, & disabled people in Illinois
Chicago Legal Clinic	clclaw.org	(773) 731-1762	2938 E 91st St Chicago, IL 60617	Low cost legal representation
Northwest and Southwest Suburbs Resources				
Hispanic American Community Education and Services (HACES)	https://www.haces.org	(847) 244-0300	820 W Greenwood Ave Waukegan, IL 60087	Immigration legal services, family unification, waiver preparation, resources, health insurance education, citizenship and naturalization
James B Moran Center for Youth Advocacy	www.moran-center.org	(847) 492-1410	1900A Dempster Evanston, IL 60202	Free legal and social work services for youth and families
Willow Creek Care Center	willowcreekcarecenter.org	(224) 512-1240	67 E Algonquin Rd South Barrington, IL 60010	Employment help, a computer lab, food assistance, legal aid, and eye care



7. Legal Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Northern Illinois Justice for our Neighbors-United Methodist	https://nijfon.org	(773) 609-4401		Legal services for immigrants
Cook County, Southwest Suburban Bar Association	southsuburbanbar.org	(708) 371-4930	10220 S 76th Ave Bridgeview, IL 60453	Landlord/tenant disputes, contract problems, small claims, wills, orders of protection, and expungement
Northwest and West Central Illinois Resources				
Safe Passage	safepassagedv.org/	(815) 756-5228		Counseling, legal advocacy, medical advocacy, 24 hour crisis line
Zeke Giorgi Legal Clinic		(815) 962-9980	319 W State St Rockford, IL 61101	NIU clinical program, clinic prioritizes the needs of low-income senior citizens and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking
State Appellate Defender Administrative Office	https://www2.illinois.gov/osad/	(866) 787-1776	400 W Monroe, Ste 202 Springfield, IL 62704	Expungement services. Files criminal appeals for people who cannot afford it
East and Southwest Central Illinois Resources				
Immigration Project Welcoming Center	https://www.immigrationproject.org/	(309) 829-8703	211 Landmark Dr, Ste B3A Normal, IL 61761	Legal consultation, referral, application support services for immigrants and refugees
Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation		(217) 356-1351	302 N 1st St Champaign, IL 61820	Family, bankruptcy, divorce, and estate planning
Sexual Assault Counseling and Information Service	sacis.org	(888) 345-2846	1505 18th St Charleston, IL 61920	Counseling, legal advocacy, medical advocacy, 24 hour crisis line
Stepping Stones Sexual Assault Services	ywcamclean.org	(309) 556-7000	1201 N Hershey Rd Bloomington, IL 61704	Counseling, legal advocacy, medical advocacy, 24 hour crisis line
Vermillion County Rape Crisis Center	vcrapecrisis.org	(866) 617-3224	1630 Georgetown Rd Tilton, IL 61833	Counseling, legal advocacy, medical advocacy, 24 hour crisis line
Jackson County Circuit Clerk	https://circuitclerk.co.jackson.il.us/	(618) 687-7300	1001 Walnut St Murphysboro, IL 62966	"Our goal is to make access to case information more accessible and to make better use of the resources available. We believe in efficiently serving the public; in a timely, professional, and cost-effective manner for all." -Cindy R. Svanda, Clerk of Circuit Court
Sexual Assault and Family Emergencies	safecrisiscenter.org	(800) 625-1414	1410 Sunset Dr Vandalia, IL 62471	Counseling, legal advocacy, medical advocacy, 24 hour crisis line



8. Family and Children Resources

Name	Website	Phone	Description
National and State Resources			
CARES Line		(800) 345-9049	24-hour Crisis and Referral Entry Services (CARES) line for children, youth, and families having a mental health crisis
Child Care Assistance Program (IDHS)	https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30355	(800) 843-6154	Apply for Child Care Assistance. Help finding local child care providers
Child Support Services Portal (IHFS)	https://www2.illinois.gov/hfs/ChildSupport/		Information and resources about child support services. Apply for child support services, make a payment, and more
Domestic Violence Hotline	https://www.thehotline.org/	(800) 799-7233	If you or someone you love is experiencing domestic violence or abuse, Call this hotline or text START to 88788. The website also provides a live chat and resources
Lutheran Social Services of IL: Prisoner and Family Ministry	https://www.lssi.org/services/prisoner-and-family-ministry/	(618) 997-9076	Serves those who are incarcerated and their families, as well as those who have returned home. Family support, foster care, behavioral health services, senior services, affordable housing, more. Free transportation from Chicago to Decatur Correctional Center for children whose mothers are incarcerated
NAMI	namiillinois.org	(217) 522-1403	Mental illness support, resources, advocacy. Find a support group
Statewide Christian Transportation		(773) 440-8737	Provides transportation to all prisons in Illinois for a fee. Call to schedule
WIRC-CAA Victims Services	https://wirpc.org/victim-services/	(309) 837-5555	Domestic violence program, sexual assault program, medical advocacy, 24-hour crisis line

Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Local Resources				
Center for Conflict Resolution	ccrchicago.org	(312) 922-6464	11 E Adams St #500 Chicago, IL 60603	Free mediation services
Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers (CLAIM)		(312) 675-0912	70 E Lake St, Ste 1120 Chicago, IL 60642	Supports incarcerated mother, caregivers of incarcerated children and caregivers of children whose mothers are incarcerated. Provides help for divorce, guardianship, custody, foster care, and adoption
CSAC South (Target Area Development Corp)	https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/communityresources/Pages/CSAC.aspx	(773) 651-6470	1542 W 79th St Chicago, IL 60620	Works to create relationships with reentering prisoners and their families
Fathers, Families in Transition	Fathersfamiliesintransition.org	(312) 658-0166	120 W Madison St Ste 200-2 Chicago, IL 60602	Lifestyle coaching, mentoring, parenting classes, referrals, and more support for families



8. Family and Children Resources



Name	Website	Phone	Address	Description
Hospitality House of Chester	hospitalityhouse.yolasite.com	(618) 826-9810	120 Ferry St Chester, IL 62932	Overnight lodging for families and friends of prisoners in the Chester area
Jail Brakers	https://treeoflifeuu.org/justice/social-justice/jail-brakers/	(815) 322-3223	225 W Calhoun Woodstock, IL 60098	Support for children and families impacted by incarceration, support groups, gas cards for family visits, and community events
Mano a Mano	https://mamfrc.org/	(847) 201-1521	Multiple locations	Family support services, health, workshops for immigrant families
Phalanx Family Services, Reentry Support Center	https://www.facebook.com/PhalanxFamilyServices/	(773) 291-1086	837 W 119th St Chicago, IL 60643	Education, training, mentoring, support groups, counseling, help with housing and food, family reunification and child support assistance, sealing or expunging records
Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation	pbmr.org	(773) 952-6643	5114 S Elizabeth St Chicago, IL 60609	Serves youth, families, and community members who are impacted by incarceration
Prisoner Family Support		(618) 997-1227	PO Box 123 Marion, IL 62959	Overnight lodging at low cost and local transportation for visitors to the federal prison in Marion. Support group for families and children
UCAN	https://ucanchicago.org/	(773) 588-0180	3605 W Fillmore St Chicago, IL 60624	Preventing violence, healing trauma, building strong families, educating and empowering youth
YWCA Metropolitan Chicago	ywcachicago.org	(866) 525-9922	1 North LaSalle St, Ste 1700 Chicago, IL 60602	Child care services, economic empowerment, family support services, sexual violence support services, mental health services, and more



For more resources, see our online directory at reentryillinois.net



Part 5: Forms

- Birth Certificate Form
- Social Security Request Form
- Sample Resumes
- Transferring Veteran Benefits to Beneficiaries Form
- Host Site Agreement



Application for Illinois Birth Record

Birth Certificate - Long Form Accepted for all legal use, passport and other governmental agencies (contains the most available information) \$15.00 first copy \$2.00 each additional copy Amount enclosed \$ _____ for _____ total copies	Birth Certificate - Short Form Basic birth record information, may not be accepted by all governmental agencies \$10.00 first copy \$2.00 each additional copy Amount enclosed \$ _____ for _____ total copies
Foreign Birth / Administrative Foreign Birth Record Birth record of adopted person born outside of the United States who were re-adopted in Illinois \$5.00 each copy Amount enclosed \$ _____ for _____ total copies	Genealogical Uncertified records for a birth 75 years and older (not for legal use) \$10.00 first copy \$2.00 each additional copy Amount enclosed \$ _____ for _____ total copies

DO NOT SEND CASH — Make check or money order payable to **ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (IDPH)**.

For records prior to 1916, contact the County Clerk in the County where the birth took place

BLANK SPACE FOR OFFICE USE		BIRTH CERTIFICATE NUMBER IF KNOWN (Not Required)	
FULL NAME ON BIRTH RECORD (First, Middle, Last) As listed on Birth Record			
DATE OF ILLINOIS BIRTH (Month, Day, Year)	PLACE OF ILLINOIS BIRTH (City and or County)	SEX	
MOTHER / CO-PARENT'S NAME (Maiden Name Before First Marriage Required) As listed on Birth Record			
FATHER / CO-PARENT'S NAME As listed on Birth Record			

NOTE: Birth Certificates are confidential records and copies can only be issued to a person entitled to receive them. The application must indicate the requestor's relationship to the person listed on the record and indicate the intended use of the document. For additional information please see reverse side or visit our website at www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/birth-death-other-records.

NAME OF INDIVIDUAL REQUESTING COPIES:		REQUESTER RELATIONSHIP (Mother, Father, Legal Guardian etc.)		
REQUESTER ADDRESS		CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
INTENDED USE	REQUESTER PHONE NUMBER	REQUESTER EMAIL ADDRESS		
MAIL TO ADDRESS IF DIFFERENT THAN ABOVE		CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
SIGNATURE REQUIRED			DATE	

IF THE BIRTH DID NOT OCCUR IN ILLINOIS YOU MUST CONTACT THE STATE WHERE THE BIRTH TOOK PLACE

MAIL TO: Complete Form IN FULL , Sign, Include Copy of Identification & Proper Fee IDPH Vital Records, 925 E. Ridgely Avenue, Springfield, IL 62702-2737 For additional information - www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/birth-death-other-records
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IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to process your request through this office we require identification to be provided

A photo copy of a NON-EXPIRED, GOVERNMENT ISSUED PHOTO IDENTIFICATION. Such as a Driver's License, Passport, FOID card, Active Duty Military ID, Veterans Administration Issued Photo Medical Card, or a Federally issued Tribal ID card. ALL identification MUST have a photo, identifying information such as name, date of birth and an issue and expiration date. If any information is contained on both sides of the ID, ensure a copy of both sides is made.

If your ID has expired and has an extension sticker, ensure a copy of the sticker is also made.

If your ID has expired LESS THAN 6 MONTHS, please include one additional document showing your name and current address created within the last 6 months. Examples include legal mail such as a bill or financial statement sent to your current legal address.

If your ID has expired MORE THAN 6 MONTHS or you DO NOT HAVE VALID ID, you will be required to submit TWO forms of documentation with your name and current legal address listed. Documentation in lieu of an ID must be dated within the last 6 months.

First Item – You must provide one or more of the following; Medical Card, Auto Insurance Card, Voter's Registration Card, Paycheck Stub with Imprinted FULL information, Bank, Financial, or a Credit Card Statement.

Second Item - You must provide a piece of current mail you have received showing your full name and current legal mailing address. Examples include current utility bill, phone bill or bill for services you have received. You may submit multiple pieces of mail however ensure they are from different Agencies or businesses.

If you are currently incarcerated in a State or Federal facility, you will need to submit a dated copy of your prison intake or offender summary sheet containing your photo, name, date of birth and facility information.

If you have been RELEASED from prison WITHIN THE LAST 6 MONTHS, you may provide a copy of your release papers along with a copy of your prison photo ID. Please note that the release papers MUST show an address that you have been released to that matches the address you are using with this office.

If you are a State, Federal Agency or a Hospital, you may submit a copy of your work photo ID badge. The badge MUST have a photo, name, name of the Agency and an issue and expiration date along with any supportive paperwork required for the request. If your work ID does not meet the requirements, a copy of your government issued photo ID, Drivers License or Passport must also be included.

SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE

ELIGIBILITY TO OBTAIN AN ILLINOIS BIRTH RECORD

Before a request for a copy of a birth record can be considered you must specify your eligibility to obtain it. ILCS410/535/25(4) states that copies of birth records may only be issued upon; The order of a court of competent jurisdiction; The specific written request by the person listed on the record if of legal age (18 or older) or by a parent or other legal representative* of the person to whom the record of birth relates; The specific written request by a Department of State, Municipal Corporation or the Federal Government

*77 Illinois AdmCode 500.10 refers to "Legal Representative" as either an attorney acting on behalf of a person named on the birth record; An agent authorized by power of attorney; A Court-appointed representative; An agent with written, notarized authorization from a person named on the birth record for the purpose of obtaining a copy for that person; Any other agent, approved by the State Registrar as a legal representative.

NOTE: Any person who, willfully and knowingly uses or attempts to use, or furnishes to another for use, for any purpose of deception, any certificate, record, report, certification or certified copy thereof so made, altered, amended, or mutilated; or, Any person who with the intention to deceive, willfully uses or attempts to use any certification or certified copy of a record of birth knowing that such certification or certified copy was issued upon a record that is false in whole or in part or that relates to the birth of another person is guilty of a Class 4 felony in the State of Illinois (ILCS 410/535/27 (f)).

Illinois Law (ILCS 410/535/25 (1)) requires advanced payment for the search of death record files.

Fees are subject to current Illinois Statute and administrative policy and may be non-refundable.



KAREN A. YARBROUGH | COOK COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

VITAL RECORDS DIVISION | P.O. BOX 641070, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60664-1070

Telephone: 312.603.7788 | Web Address: cookcountyclerk.com

BIRTH RECORD REQUEST FORM - A3

A certified copy of a birth record is available at NO COST to persons born in Cook County who are verified as one of the following: A) Homeless; B) Residents of shelters for victims of Domestic Abuse/Violence; C) A person released within the last 90 days from the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) or the Cook County Department of Corrections (CCDOC), and/or D) A current inmate or detainee who will be released within the next 90 days from IDOC or CCDOC. A status certification MUST be completed by an agent or agency to confirm that the requestor is ELIGIBLE for a free birth certificate, and MUST be submitted with the request.

PLEASE SELECT THE REQUESTOR'S STATUS AT THE TIME OF THIS REQUEST

Homeless Resident of Domestic Abuse Shelter Released from IDOC/CCDOC w/n past 90 days Incarcerated

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY TO ENSURE ACCURATE FULFILLMENT OF YOUR REQUEST

First Name (At Birth) Above

Middle Name (At Birth) Above

Last Name (At Birth) Above

Date of Birth (Include Month, Day & Year) Above

Place of Birth (City, Town or Village in Cook County) Above

First Name of Biological/Adopted Mother (At Birth) Above

Last Name (Maiden) of Biological/Adopted Mother (At Birth) Above

First Name of Biological/Adopted Father (At Birth) Above [Optional]

Last Name of Biological/Adopted Father (At Birth) Above [Optional]

SPECIAL NOTICE TO THE SUBMITTER OF THIS BIRTH RECORD REQUEST FORM

Pursuant to §410 ILCS 535/25(4)(b), "a certified copy of a birth record is ONLY available to persons with a direct and tangible interest in the record, such as one's self, parent, guardian or legal representative. Anyone who willfully and knowingly uses or attempts to use any certificate and/or certification for the purposes of deception is guilty of a Class 4 Felony, as outlined in §410 ILCS 535/27(c)(f), which is punishable by up to three years in prison.

First Name of Submitter Above

Last Name of Submitter Above

Mailing Address of the Submitter (Street Number & Name) Above

Mailing City, Town or Village of Submitter Above

Mailing State and Zip Code of Submitter Above

Submitter Phone Number Above

Submitter's Relationship to the Person/Birth Certificate Requested

Please indicate below how you would like to receive the requested Birth Certificate. If requesting the document be mailed please include a photocopy of some form of photo identification, and a self-addressed stamped envelope (to expedite the returned record).

I would like the requested Birth Certificate to be:

Mailed to me at the above address Filled while I wait Filled and ready when I return later

IF REQUESTING BY MAIL, PLEASE DO THE FOLLOWING:

Mail this completed form to: Bureau of Vital Records, P.O. Box 641070, Chicago, Illinois 60664-1070, with 1) A photocopy of your photo id (e.g. driver's license, or state issued) & 2) A self-addressed stamped envelope.

IF REQUESTING IN-PERSON, PLEASE DO THE FOLLOWING

Visit our main office at: 118 N. Clark St., Room 120, Chicago, or visit one of our FIVE suburban offices. For hours/locations call 312.603.7790 or visit cookcountyclerk.com/vitals

Page 1 of 2 (Please Note: BOTH pages MUST be completed and submitted to qualify for and receive a free birth certificate)



KAREN A. YARBROUGH | COOK COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

VITAL RECORDS DIVISION | P.O. BOX 641070, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60664-1070

Telephone: 312.603.7788 | Web Address: cookcountyclerk.com

Forms

STATUS CERTIFICATION - MUST BE COMPLETE BY VERIFYING AGENT

This Status Certification is provided for the listed Agent or Agency to indicate and confirm the named individual's status at the time of the included Birth Record application. This Status Certification MUST accompany the Birth Record application for any Free Birth Records requests. Finally, this Status Certification entitles the requestor to a single Free Birth Record.

Date Certification Submitted Above

First Name of Birth Record Requestor Above

Last Name of Birth Record Requestor Above

To the Honorable Clerk of Cook County, please accept this Status Certification to verify that the above listed individual should qualify for a FREE Birth Certificate because either the individual her or himself, or the child listed on this form currently belongs to one (or more) of the following required categories, as set forth in Illinois & Cook County law: (please select ALL which apply)

Homeless - Must be Verified by an Agent or Agency

Survivor of Domestic Abuse - Currently Living in Shelter

Released from IDOC or CCDOC in past 90 days

Incarcerated in IDOC or CCDOC but released in 90 days

My relationship to the above-listed individual, who is now requesting a Free Birth Record is as follows: (please select ALL which apply)

Homeless Service Agency receiving Federal, State, County, or Municipal funding to provide those or similar services.

Sanctioned by a local continuum of care

Attorney licensed to practice in the State of Illinois (must include Attorney Registration Disciplinary Commission Information below)

Liaison for the Homeless with a Public School system, OR, Social Worker who works with the Homeless

Human Services Provider funded by the State of Illinois to service the Homeless or Runaway youth individuals w/ mental illness or addictions

Staff Member who works with a Domestic Violence Shelter

Staff Member who services a Human Service Agency or Government Office that assists the recently or presently Incarcerated

Other please explain: _____

VERIFYING AGENCY/AGENT INFORMATION BELOW:

Verifying Agency or Agent Name Above

Telephone Number of Verifying Agency/Agent Above

Mailing Address with Street Number, Name, City, State & Zip Code

Federal Tax Identification Number or ARDC Number for Attorney

Email Address of Verifying Agent

I, the below listed verifier, do now swear or affirm that I am a representative of the above-referenced Agency, and that the above-listed applicant is in fact an individual who meets the requirements for this waiver application for a Free Birth Record. I also understand that providing false information on this form could subject me to prosecution for perjury as outlined in Illinois law.

Printed Name of Verifying Agent/Agency Employee

Signature of Verifying Agent/Agency Employee

Date Signed by Agent/Agency Employee

Page 2 of 2 (Please Note: BOTH pages MUST be completed and submitted to qualify for and receive a free birth certificate)

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Application for a Social Security Card

Form Approved
OMB No. 0960-0066

1	NAME TO BE SHOWN ON CARD			First	Full Middle Name	Last
	FULL NAME AT BIRTH IF OTHER THAN ABOVE			First	Full Middle Name	Last
	OTHER NAMES USED					
2	Social Security number previously assigned to the person listed in item 1				<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
3	PLACE OF BIRTH (Do Not Abbreviate) City State or Foreign Country				Office Use Only 4	DATE OF BIRTH MM/DD/YYYY
5	CITIZENSHIP (Check One)		<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Citizen <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Alien Allowed To Work <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Alien Not Allowed To Work (See Instructions On Page 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (See Instructions On Page 3)			
6	ETHNICITY Are You Hispanic or Latino? (Your Response is Voluntary) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		7	RACE Select One or More (Your Response is Voluntary) <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Asian		
8	SEX		<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female			
9	A. PARENT/ MOTHER'S NAME AT HER BIRTH			First	Full Middle Name	Last
	B. PARENT/ MOTHER'S SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (See instructions for 9 B on Page 3)			<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
10	A. PARENT/ FATHER'S NAME			First	Full Middle Name	Last
	B. PARENT/ FATHER'S SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (See instructions for 10B on Page 3)			<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
11	Has the person listed in item 1 or anyone acting on his/her behalf ever filed for or received a Social Security number card before? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (If "yes" answer questions 12-13) <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know (If "don't know," skip to question 14.)					
12	Name shown on the most recent Social Security card issued for the person listed in item 1			First	Full Middle Name	Last
13	Enter any different date of birth if used on an earlier application for a card				MM/DD/YYYY	
14	TODAY'S DATE MM/DD/YYYY		15	DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER () - Area Code Number		
16	MAILING ADDRESS (Do Not Abbreviate)			Street Address, Apt. No., PO Box, Rural Route No.		
		City		State/Foreign Country		ZIP Code
17	YOUR SIGNATURE			18	YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE PERSON IN ITEM 1 IS: <input type="checkbox"/> Self <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Or Adoptive Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE (FOR SSA USE ONLY)						
NPN		DOC		NTI		CAN
PBC		EVI	EVA	EVC	PRA	ITV
NWR		DNR		UNIT		
EVIDENCE SUBMITTED				SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF EMPLOYEE(S) REVIEWING EVIDENCE AND/OR CONDUCTING INTERVIEW		
				DATE		
				DATE		

John Smith

Contact

123 W. Main St. #5
Peoria, IL 60000
John.smith22@gmail.com
300-600-1234

Objective

My goal is to become associated with a company where I can utilize my skills and gain further experience while enhancing the company's productivity and reputation

Education

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
July 2012-March 2014
Upper-division courses in literature, communication, and theater.
GPA: 4.0

Danville Area Community College
Earned over 60 credits in toward an Associate's degree
GPA: 4.0

Experience

Resource Room Worker • Education Justice Project
July 2012-March 2014
Assisted students with library needs, assisted tutors with tech support, conducted library circulation work, kept rooms cleaned and well organized

Teaching Assistant • Adult Basic Education, State of Illinois
Dec 2015-Dec 2016
Tutored students in basic literacy and numeracy for the Test of Adult Basic Education, graded student work, and maintained student records.

Special Diet Cook • State of Illinois
1997-2015
Operated commercial ovens, fryers, steam pots, and other equipment, prepared special diets, served meals in high capacity cafeteria

Key Skills

Kitchen equipment and sanitation
Special diet preparation
Conflict resolution
Creative and academic writing
Mentoring
Inventory, order, and stocking
Leadership in theater troupe

Publications and Awards

"Rhetorical Listening" (essay) Intertext, 2014
"Practicing Openness in Prison Education: A Collaborative Inquiry Into Empathic Pedagogy and the Politics of Compassion in Writing Center Practice." College Composition and Communication Conference, 2014
Prison Writing (essay). College Composition and Communication Conference, 2014
Martha Webber Creative Nonfiction Award, 2013.
Education Justice Project Creative Writing Award in Poetry, 2012

References

Maggie Jones, Associate Professor of Sociology
University of IL-Springfield
j.ones@gmail.com 600-300-4000

Fred Thomas, General Manager
Smith Foundation
1323 Main St., Peoria, IL 60000
f.thomas@email.com 300-400-5000

JOHN ALBERT JOHNSON

500 Main St, Anytown, IL 60606 · (555) 555-0000

JohnJohnson@email.com

EXPERIENCE

2015 TO PRESENT

ENGLISH TEACHER

ADULT LEARNING CENTER, CHICAGO, IL

Coordinate community outreach efforts and administer institutional examinations.

MARCH 2013-DECEMBER 2014

TEMP WORKER

FRIENDLY TEMP AGENCY, CHICAGO, IL

Various assignments involving administrative and clerical roles

AUGUST 2010-JANUARY 2013

TEACHER, PEER TUTOR

ILLINOIS CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE, DECATUR, IL

Developed lesson plans, tutored beginning and advanced students.

EDUCATION

JUNE 2011-2012

ILLINOIS CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE IN GENERAL STUDIES

- Education coursework: Advanced mathematics, Linguistics for language teachers, Political and historical perspectives in Education, Sociology of Education, Philosophy of Education
- CERTIFICATE, PEER COUNSELING

2009

NORTHERN ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

CERTIFICATE IN HORTICULTURE STUDIES

REFERENCES

Sharon Mendez, Coordinator
Adult Learning Center
1010 Center Street
Our Town, IL 60000
sharonmendez@email.com
555.555.5555

William Smith, Director
Friendly Temp Agency
40 North Ave.
Our Town, IL 66666
williamsmith@email.com
555.555.5555

Peter Smith

123 Main St., Chicago, IL 60000 | 312-555-5555 | petersmith@gmail.com

Experience

University of Illinois

ESL INSTRUCTOR

2011-2014

- Served as a volunteer ESL instructor in Danville, IL to provide a much needed ESL class in the community
- Developed and taught lesson plans and activities in a multi-instructor class.
- Shared instructor responsibilities with 7 other instructors in a class of 10-12 students twice a week for a total of six hours with beginner-intermediate students
- Taught reading and writing for communicating effectively in personal and workplace settings.
- Provided corrective language feedback on oral and written production.

University of Illinois

CHICAGO/COMMUNITY ANTI-VIOLENCE EDUCATION (CAVE)

2011-2014

- Helped design and implement a peer driven anti-violence program that empowers incarcerated men through mentoring, education and character building to return to their communities as peace makers.

Danville Correctional Center (Clinical Services)

GUEST SPEAKER/SUBSTANCE ABUSE INSTRUCTOR

2011-2014

- Designed and presented lessons relating to substance abuse prevention to students at Danville Correctional Center

PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS EDUCATOR

2010-2011

- Designed and presented lessons focused on peaceful solutions for conflict resolution

Education

GOVERNOR'S STATE UNIVERSITY

JUNE 2016

- Bachelor's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies

CARL SANDBERG COLLEGE, GALESBURG IL

2000-2001

- Associate's Degree in General Education
- Business Management Certificate
- GPA: 3.38

CERTIFIED ASSOCIATE'S ADDICTION PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

2012

Skills

- Fluent in Spanish and English
- Microsoft Word, Access, Excel, PowerPoint



INFORMATION REGARDING APPORTIONMENT OF BENEFICIARY'S AWARD

(DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE)
 (VA DATE STAMP)

INSTRUCTIONS: All or part of a veteran's disability award may be apportioned (paid) to the veteran's spouse, child, or dependent parent. A surviving spouse's award may also be apportioned for the veteran's child or children. Print all answers clearly. If an answer is "none" or "0," write that or line through the space provided. For additional space, attach a separate sheet, indicating the item number to which the answers apply. Make sure to write the veteran's name and VA claim number on any attachments to the form.

IMPORTANT: If you are certifying that you are married for the purpose of VA benefits, your marriage must be recognized by the place where you and/or your spouse resided at the time of marriage, or where you and/or your spouse resided when you filed your claim (or a later date when you became eligible for benefits) (38 U.S.C. § 103(c)). Additional guidance on when VA recognizes marriages is available at <http://www.va.gov/opa/marriage/>.

1. FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST NAME OF VETERAN		2. VA FILE NUMBER C/CSS-	
3A. FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST NAME OF PERSON COMPLETING THIS FORM (If other than veteran)		3B. MAILING ADDRESS (Number and street or rural route, city or P.O., State and ZIP Code)	
3C. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include Area Code)		3D. E-MAIL ADDRESS (If applicable)	
Daytime	Evening		
4A. WHO ARE YOU REQUESTING AN APPORTIONMENT FOR? (List first, middle, and last names)		4B. WHAT IS HIS/HER RELATIONSHIP TO THE VETERAN?	
5A. HOW MUCH IS THE VETERAN OR VETERAN'S SURVIVING SPOUSE CONTRIBUTING TO THE PERSON(S) FOR WHOM AN APPORTIONMENT IS BEING CLAIMED? \$		5B. HOW OFTEN ARE THE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE?	
6. IF THE SPOUSE IS CLAIMING AN APPORTIONMENT, IS HE/SHE LIVING WITH ANOTHER PERSON AND HOLDING HIMSELF/HERSELF OUT OPENLY TO THE PUBLIC AS THE SPOUSE OF THE OTHER PERSON? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO (If "Yes," provide an explanation) _____		7. HAS THE VETERAN'S CHILD(REN) BEEN LEGALLY ADOPTED BY ANOTHER PERSON? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	

PART I - INCOME AND NET WORTH

Report all income and net worth. Report the gross amounts before you take out deductions for taxes, insurance, etc. If you do not receive income or net worth from a particular source, write "0" or "none" in the space provided. **Do not leave the space blank.** *Note:* If you are the veteran or surviving spouse, report only your income and net worth. If you are the claimant or are filing on behalf of the claimant(s), report all income and net worth for all persons for whom an apportionment is being claimed. If you are claiming an apportionment as the custodian of the veteran's child or children, report your income and net worth and the income and net worth of the child(ren).

MONTHLY INCOME

SOURCE	VETERAN OR SURVIVING SPOUSE	CUSTODIAN	PERSON APPORTIONMENT IS CLAIMED FOR	PERSON APPORTIONMENT IS CLAIMED FOR
1A. GROSS WAGES FROM ALL EMPLOYMENT	\$	\$	\$	\$
1B. SOCIAL SECURITY				
1C. RETIREMENT OR ANNUITIES				
1D. SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) / PUBLIC ASSISTANCE				
1E. OTHER INCOME (Show source)				
1F. OTHER INCOME (Show source)				

NET WORTH

SOURCE	VETERAN OR SURVIVING SPOUSE	CUSTODIAN	PERSON APPORTIONMENT IS CLAIMED FOR	PERSON APPORTIONMENT IS CLAIMED FOR
2A. CASH/NON-INTEREST-BEARING BANK ACCOUNTS	\$	\$	\$	\$
2B. INTEREST-BEARING BANK ACCOUNTS				
2C. IRAS, KEOGH PLANS, ETC.				
2D. STOCKS, BONDS, MUTUAL FUNDS, ETC.				
2E. REAL PROPERTY (Not your home)				
2F. ALL OTHER PROPERTY AND ASSETS				

PART II - MONTHLY LIVING EXPENSES

Show your monthly living expenses, including any monthly installment payments. If you do not have expenses from a particular source, write "0" or "none" in the space provided. Do not leave the space blank.

Note: If you are the veteran or surviving spouse, report only your expenses. If you are the claimant or are filing on behalf of the claimant(s), report expenses for all persons for whom an apportionment is being claimed. If you are claiming an apportionment as the custodian of the veteran's child or children, report your expenses and the expenses of the child(ren).

SOURCE	VETERAN OR SURVIVING SPOUSE	CUSTODIAN	PERSON APPORTIONMENT IS CLAIMED FOR	PERSON APPORTIONMENT IS CLAIMED FOR
1A. RENT OR HOUSE PAYMENT	\$	\$	\$	\$
1B. FOOD				
1C. UTILITIES (Water, gas, electricity)				
1D. TELEPHONE				
1E. CLOTHING				
1F. MEDICAL EXPENSES				
1G. SCHOOL EXPENSES				
1H. OTHER EXPENSES (Show source)				
1I. OTHER EXPENSES (Show source)				

PART III - CERTIFICATION AND SIGNATURE

I CERTIFY THAT the foregoing statements are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

1. SIGNATURE OF VETERAN OR CLAIMANT

2. DATE SIGNED

PENALTY - The law provides severe penalties which include fine or imprisonment or both, for the willful submission of any statement or evidence of a material fact, knowing it is false, or fraudulent acceptance of any payment to which you are not entitled.

PRIVACY ACT INFORMATION - The VA will not disclose information collected on this form to any source other than what has been authorized under the Privacy Act of 1974 or Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations 1.576 for routine uses (i.e., civil or criminal law enforcement, congressional communications, epidemiological or research studies, the collection of money owed to the United States, litigation in which the United States is a party or has an interest, the administration of VA programs and delivery of VA benefits, verification of identity and status, and personnel administration) as identified in the VA system of records, 58VA 21/22/28, Compensation, Pension, Education and Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Records - VA, published in the Federal Register. Your obligation to respond is required to obtain or retain benefits. The requested information is considered relevant and necessary to determine maximum benefits under the law. The responses you submit are considered confidential (38 U.S.C. 5701). Information submitted is subject to verification through computer matching programs with other agencies.

RESPONDENT BURDEN - We need this information to determine whether an apportionment of VA disability or death benefits may be made (38 U.S.C. 5307). Title 38, United States Code, allows us to ask for this information. We estimate that you will need an average of 30 minutes to review the instructions, find the information, and complete this form. VA cannot conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless a valid OMB control number is displayed. You are not required to respond to a collection of information if this number is not displayed. Valid OMB control numbers can be located on the OMB Internet Page at www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain. If desired, you can call 1-800-827-1000 to get information on where to send comments or suggestions about this form.



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