



Welcome to *RED Chicago!*

It's hard to believe, but for many years there was no handy and up-to-date directory linking ex-offenders to service providers in the Chicago area. That meant there were thousands of men and women being released from prison with no resource guide to get them connected with the help that's available. We saw this huge unmet need and have created *RED (Re-Entry Directory) Chicago*, and we offer this as a free service to providers and ex-offenders. *You'll also find additional material for ex-offenders on our website www.underthedoar.org*

***RED Chicago* is specifically designed** for use by inmates preparing for release and by ex-offenders. It integrates an unfolding 5-step process to facilitate effective planning with a handy directory to many Chicago-area service providers. The five steps are...

1. Get Hope 2. Get Home 3. Get Organized 4. Get Help 5. Get Going

Copies are made available to parole officers, at Illinois Dept. of Correction-sponsored "Re-Entry Summits" (for current inmates) and "Summits of Hope" (for ex-offenders). The latest edition is always available online at our website (underthedoar.org). It's printer-friendly for normal 8½ X 11 paper – so feel free to make additional copies.

Give us your feedback. If the directory is going to be useful to ex-offenders, it's really important that our information continues to be accurate and up-to-date. Go online to www.redchicago.info and send us your corrections, additions, deletions, suggestions, and recommendations for how to improve the directory. This will always be very much a work-in-progress – we update this directory 3-4 times a year, so check back periodically for the latest edition.

Who we are. We're basically a bunch of church folks with a mission to connect inmates and ex-offenders to God, each other, the local community, and the local church. We've created two ministries that share that same passion – **Under the Door (prison ministry)** and **Inside-Out Connections (ex-offender ministry)**. We want to be a visible, viable, valuable alternative to the current way of doing prison and ex-offender ministry. We want to work and network with others in a way that's sustainable and makes a longer-term impact. And we want to bring something of real value (like this directory) for inmates, ex-offenders, and congregations. Check out our website to order copies of the **Spiritual Survival Guide for Prison and Beyond**, a book we wrote and produced and that is being distributed in prisons across Illinois. Download a pdf version of *RED Chicago*. Check out a variety of volunteer opportunities. Donate or partner with us if you get motivated. We'd love to partner with you.

If you're an ex-offender, check us out in person. Our Inside-Out Connections groups meet on Chicago's west side. Ex-offenders can meet weekly to bond, provide mutual support and encouragement, grow as disciples of Christ, and learn to lead. These small groups are intended to be both a ministry in their own right and a relational bridge into fuller participation in congregational life. Since schedules change, please call our Program Director, Ben Blobaum, if you're interested in checking out a meeting.

We want to give a big shout out to the Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition, for their remarkable publication *The GO Guide: Getting on after getting out* (a reentry guide for Colorado). They've given us permission to borrow liberally from their work and include it (and tweak it) however we wish in *RED Chicago*. And we did!

Contact Us.

General email: office@underthedoar.org

Ben Blobaum, Program Director: ben@underthedoar.org
Cell: 224-392-1834

Fred Nelson, Executive Director: fred@underthedoar.org
Cell: 847-323-3774

Surface mail:
RED Chicago
1006 Gillick St.
Park Ridge, IL 60068
Office: 847-823-3634

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GET HOPE

Getting Started: Using *RED Chicago*

Getting hope is the starting point of a process that unfolds in five related steps. We'll cover each of the steps in the pages that follow.

Get Hope

It's your sure foundation, the steady anchor that'll get you through every difficulty and develop your character.

Get Home

Establish a steady base of operations, gather the bare necessities, surround yourself with a support group, and work with parole.

Get Organized

Find people who can help you organize your affairs and help you come up with a workable plan to find your way around a sometimes very confusing system.

Get Help

Seek out people who can provide help with different aspects of your life (spiritually, psychologically, physically, legally, emotionally, and so on).

Get Going

Find a job, invest in your education, build your finances, get on with your new life, and help others through the same process.

Surviving (spiritually and otherwise) *beyond* prison

They call it "re-entry" these days. It sounds a little cold and clinical at first, but when you think about it, it's actually a pretty good term. It reminds us that returning to the outside after time in prison is like a spacecraft coming back to earth. You may have heard that the re-entry phase is the most dangerous part of the whole process of space flight. Lots of things can go wrong for a spacecraft coming back into the atmosphere. It can come in too fast and burn up. It can miscalculate and crash land. What's needed is a carefully thought-out plan – a safe glide path back home for a safe landing.

It's no different for an inmate re-entering the outside world. After being locked up for a while, we're no longer used to the outside atmosphere. We can foolishly take things too quickly or too impulsively, and simply crash and burn. What we need is a carefully thought-out (and prayed-over) plan to create a safe glide path for ourselves in our first six months after release.

That's what we need, but that's not what we always do. Nearly all of us go through our own case of "short-timer's disease:" unrealistic expectations, a lack of careful planning and communication, the awkward experience to adapting to life on the outside, and the sobering realization that life is wonderful, but hard.

We're convinced that every inmate who's going home needs *both* profound hope *and* realistic expectations. One of them isn't enough. That's because neither one on its own is going to help us thrive (spiritually, or otherwise) after prison. Hope without realistic expectations quickly turns into wishful thinking, followed by bitter disappointment. And even realistic expectations, without deep

and profound hope, can quickly turn into pessimism and perhaps a trip back to prison. We've come to believe that what we need is hope—God's own hope. True hope is God's gift to us. It's based on God's promises to us for a better tomorrow. It's a vision of a brighter future planted by God himself deep in our imaginations. True hope comes from God and is based on his own unshakable promises. It isn't just our own wishful thinking. Those of us who are unsure of what to believe about God can take inspiration from recent research into the importance of mindsets. It turns out that some of us are locked into a closed mindset, and feel that no amount of effort will change us. But some of us have a growth mindset, and have seen that effort and dedication actually do grow all kinds of new capacities inside us.

These ideas sound good, of course, but are they realistic? Do they overlook the challenges and difficulties of surviving, even thriving, after prison? We all know that it's one thing to feel positive and excited when the institutional umbrella keeps temptation and fresh disappointment on the other side of the prison wall. It's another thing when you're outside and the storms come. It's hard to stand tall when the lure of the streets, the pull of old habits you hoped were gone, the unresolved problems with your family, and the disappointments, struggles, injustices and frustrations of daily life hit you in the face day after day. Rainy and stormy days lie ahead, and it's best to do some preparation and planning, now, while you're still inside, or at least in the early days of your release.

Be hopeful, but be prepared for:

Disorientation. It may be easier to take your body out of the prison than to take the prison out of your mind. You'll find that, whether you wanted to or not, you grooved in that prisoner mentality over the years. That means, in your early days out of prison, you'll feel out-of-step with almost everyone—except, perhaps, other ex-convicts (and you may need to stay away from them for legal reasons or for your own good). You'll experience reverse culture shock. You'll probably feel overwhelmed. You may want to go into a shell or go out and medicate yourself. Resist this – feeling disoriented is normal, and it passes. There's very little you'll be able to do to hurry up the process. It's like going outside into bright sunlight after having been in a dark room. Only, it's not your eyes that have to adjust, but your thoughts, emotions, and habits. The more you realize that this is part of a natural process of readjustment to being outside, the more you can keep from freaking out and losing it in the early weeks. Many of us find that we really need to rely on God during this time. Finding reassurance, confidence, and courage to keep things together in prayer will be a major priority. The only problem with that is, just when you really need it, the whole spiritual routine that you've been developing for years behind bars will have been interrupted.

Decisions, decisions, decisions. Unfortunately, prison does a fantastic job at shielding us from the practice of decision making. Choices as simple as what and when to eat are taken out of our hands. Many of us forget about the sheer number of everyday decisions people make, especially when we re-enter society.

If it were only a question of deciding minor things like what to eat, we wouldn't even bother mentioning it. But big-decision overload is a whole different thing. Deciding whether it's better to live with family or in a half-way house, what kind of jobs to apply for, what old friends to re-connect with or disconnect from, who to trust or not, how and when to resume parenting responsibilities, and dozens of other issues, *simultaneously*, can overwhelm even the best of us. We need to find a way to step up and get help at the same time.

Dangerous freedom. Maybe the greatest decision we face is what to do with our new-found freedom. We no longer have people restricting our movement and monitoring where we go. We can walk down the same paths that brought us to prison in the first place. That road is clear, and we often have people encouraging us to join them on it. The spiritual questions are, “Am I free enough to say no to this temptation?” “When I step outside and see my old crew waving me over to go for a ride, does my relationship with God give me the inner strength to tell them that I’m done with that?” “Will God give me the courage to stand tall when they’re making fun of me and pressuring me, and telling me that I’ll be back out in the streets in a week?” “Will they believe that I’ve changed? Do I believe that I’ve changed? Really?”

Everything is spiritual. Everything we do reflects on our character, our values, our priorities, and our basic trust in God. Even looking for a job is a spiritual exercise, because we need *integrity* to tell the truth on our job applications. We need *patience* and *perseverance* to keep going when we’ve been rejected fifty times. We need *hopefulness* and *trust* to continue to look for legitimate work instead of stealing or selling drugs. We need *humility* to start a new job at the bottom of the ladder. We need *trustworthiness* and *discipline* to show up on time every day in order to hang on to it. And we need *gratitude* to thank God for the opportunity to work. It’s *all* spiritual.

We could say the same sort of things about getting along with our family, participating in a twelve-step program, taking care of our health, avoiding pornography, helping out at home, taking the initiative to reach out to help others even though we’re still in need ourselves, and a thousand other things. Everything is spiritual, because nothing exists outside of God’s influence or concern. Everything is spiritual, because everything is connected, because everything matters to God, and because we matter to God.

We’ve come to believe that hope is “a sure and steady anchor” for our souls, and because of that we “boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”

Having a Plan

Hope is foundational. Without it, we’ll just be one of those people who keeps recycling through the criminal justice system. But hope alone is not enough. It needs to be paired with thoughtful, careful planning. It’s no secret that lots of inmates get so fixated on their release day that they don’t think long and hard about what they will do when they get home. They don’t communicate up front with their family to set up the expectations for when they get back. Figuring everything out on the spot only adds to the mess and confusion. Most inmates are notoriously poor planners, but what will really benefit you is the boring, painstaking, *important* work of making practical plans – *and* communicating them with your family.

- Re-entry planning is a lot more than just figuring out where you’re going to live and getting a few job leads. Whether you leave prison on discretionary parole, mandatory parole, or without parole, a release plan is essential. The same is true for people transitioning out of a halfway house.

If you’re still locked up: Create a written release plan

A *written* release plan is key to success. It can just be for your own use, or you can give a copy to your case manager for the parole board to review. (Parole hearings are generally short so you probably won’t discuss the whole plan.) These four areas are probably the most important to the

parole board:

- *Where you'll live.* If you have a parole sponsor, explain why this home provides stability. If you'll be homeless, say which shelter or housing option you hope to live in.
- *Your support system on the outside.* Explain who will help you and how. Include community programs you plan to connect with after release. If you're going back to your old neighborhood, describe your plan to avoid the wrong people, places, or situations.
- *Your treatment plan.* If you've had problems with alcohol or drugs, describe your plan for getting into treatment or how you plan to prevent having a problem in the future.
- *Your job possibilities.* Explain your strategy for finding a job, and how your skills and experience will help you get a job..

These four planning areas line up fairly well with the way we've structured *RED Chicago*. ***We believe that successful reentry is a progressive 5-step process (see the box at the beginning of this section), with each step building on the previous step.*** Jump too far ahead and you'll tend to get ahead of yourself and stumble badly. Skip too many steps, and your odds of staying clean, legal, and productive suffer badly. ***Work the process!***

We're not naïve. We know that leaving prison and reintegrating back into the workplace, your family, and the larger society is not easy. It can be very frustrating and overwhelming at times. The truth is that a lot of people aren't successful and end up back in prison. But we're hopeful that things can, and will, change for the better. If we weren't absolutely convinced of that, we wouldn't even bother with this directory. We want to help be part of that change. We hope you do, too. We hope that *RED Chicago* increases your hope, lays out a helpful process for you to follow, and connects you with some wonderful people and resources to get you to the new life God has waiting for you. We hope this is a useful tool for you to prepare your own personal safe glide path back home, so that as you navigate back home, you have a safe landing.

Get Home

First things first. Some things go a whole lot better when they're done in the right order. For example, when you learn to ride a motorcycle you're taught that you need to start out by being *N.I.C.E.* Each letter stands for a step in a four-step process to take when you start up your motorcycle. "N" comes first and stands for neutral – because you don't want to accidentally start up in gear and take off too quickly. "I" comes next and stands for ignition – because you want to make sure you put the key in and turned it. "C" comes next and stands for choke – because you want to make sure that the engine will get plenty of gas when you first start out. Only then do we come to "E", which is starting up the engine itself so that you can go. Here's the point to doing it N.I.C.E: change the order or skip a step and you'll either lurch and crash, constantly stall out, or never even get started. For us, the parallel to starting up your new life on the outside couldn't be clearer. So be nice to yourself and follow a reentry process (Get Hope, Home, Organized, Help, Going) that works.

So, with hope and a plan, it's time to "get home." and find a place to "settle," at least for a while. Wandering homeless bouncing from couch to couch will absorb all your energy and attention and block you from getting on with the rest of what you need to do. Once you settle in, you can begin to look for other basics, like food and clothing. Being settled allows you to focus your efforts. And, at this stage, focus is good. Part of getting home involves connecting *immediately* with support groups who can help you stay in the positive structured mindset that you can have in prison, before the

crazy, unstructured street mindset clicks back in. Lots of ex-offenders tell us that it only takes about 48 hours for that to happen, so act fast.

We need to think about what “home” even means at this point. Your definition of “home” may have to change a number of times in your first year out. For some of us, immediately moving back in with our partner, spouse, children or parents can be good. However, for many of us, crashing with friends or family may not be the best plan. Think about it: It’s often the place where we still have a lot of unresolved conflict, filled with people you hurt badly (or who led you into trouble in the first place), or where your very presence might threaten their lease. In those cases, and many more, calling sober living facilities, temporary shelters, or halfway houses “home for now” may be a whole lot healthier in the short term. One step at a time.

Places to Stay

A decent, safe and affordable place to stay is a basic human need. Unfortunately, finding appropriate housing can be a challenge for many people after they’re released from prison. Unless you have family or friends you can live with upon your release from prison (and that has its own set of complications), you may need to find an emergency overnight shelter. You can then look into transitional or longer term housing options.

TIP

If you’re coming out of prison homeless and on parole, your parole officer or a community transition specialist should tell you where you must stay. You may be given a voucher to cover the cost of a motel for a few days or longer, but funds aren’t always available. In Chicago, you can simply dial 311 to request shelter information & assistance and information about homelessness prevention. To dial the 311 number from *outside* Chicago, call 312-744-5000.

Shelters and Emergency Housing

Several different types of organizations manage emergency overnight shelters. Meals are usually provided and they may ask you to help with chores around the shelter. Most shelters require that you leave in the morning and return in the evening. Most of the time, people are admitted into a shelter on a first-come, first served basis though a case manager or an intake process.

- At intake you may be asked to submit to a breathalyzer test or urinalysis.
- Most shelters require a tuberculosis card, but they may give you some time to obtain a current tuberculosis test.
- Most shelters require a photo ID, but many will accept your DOC photo inmate ID. Some shelters ask for proof of residence in the county where you are staying.
- When demand is greater than capacity, the shelter may use a lottery system – a drawing to admit people waiting to get in. Some shelters have “overflow” capacity (mats or cots for people who aren’t assigned a bed).
- Most shelters ask that you not request a bed before your release. They rarely have a process to accept people beforehand, and they usually like to conduct intake interviews in person. However, there are some exceptions. Check with a pre-release specialist or your case manager to see if this is possible.
- Most shelters admit people convicted of a *nonviolent* offense. A few will admit people convicted of a violent offense, but on a case-by-case basis. Most shelters don’t admit people convicted of a sex offense. Some shelters don’t ask about criminal records.
- Some emergency overnight shelters offer transitional housing programs. This may be part of a treatment program. Sometimes it’s a housing opportunity that you graduate into after you find a job and establish a stable track record.

TIP 🏠

Remember, once you're assigned to a particular shelter by your parole officer, moving to another location without permission may be a technical violation of parole.

Transitional housing & long-term housing

Transitional housing is temporary housing. It can be a few weeks to several years. It usually includes case management services to help you find employment, apply for benefits (if applicable), and meet other needs.

Many organizations help clients find long-term housing. Some are intentional sober-living facilities with strict rules and mandatory meetings to help residents stay sober. Demand is high, so you may not be able to get this kind of housing right away, and the fees vary. The application process can take time. Once your application is processed, you'll probably be placed on a waiting list. Ask how long the waiting list is so you can plan where to stay in the meantime.

The following organizations help provide housing for ex-offenders. Check with them about the range of services they provide (emergency overnight or day shelter, transitional housing, or long-term housing opportunity). There are other agencies, and organizations, and services available, but this will get you started. As with all of the information in this Directory, the service providers on this list might change over time. **A helpful online resource for re-entry friendly services and housing is www.reentryillinois.net.**

◆ **A Safe Haven** 773-435-8300 www.asafehaven.org

2750 W. Roosevelt Rd., Chicago, IL 60608 (varied housing locations)

- Must be currently homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Free for homeless; others on sliding scale. No violent, arson, or sex offenders.
- Case management, behavioral health, education, job training and placement

◆ **Bonaventure House** www.alexianbrothershousing.org

825 W. Wellington, Chicago, IL 60657 773-327-9921

Call for intake appt. No walk-ins welcome. Sliding Scale cost. Must have HIV or AIDS.

- Housing for Men & Women living with HIV or AIDS – furnished rooms, food service, family-friendly atmosphere. Recovery-based Individual Service/Case Management. Housing for homeless or at risk for homelessness

◆ **Breakthrough Urban Ministries** www.breakthrough.org

402 N St Louis Ave, Chicago, IL 60624 (Men's facility) 773-346-1785

3330 W. Carroll Ave. Chicago, IL 60624 (Women's facility) 773-722-0179

3219 W. Carroll Ave. Chicago, IL 60624 (family (children/youth/daycare center) 872-444-8200

- Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Phone 24/7
- Free transitional housing. No sex offenders.
- Case management, food pantry, day care, support center (showers, computer lab, etc.)

◆ **Bridge to Freedom** www.bridge2freedom.org

P.O. Box 3807, Oak Park, IL 60303 773-888-7435 or 773-287-2627

- No walk-ins. Apply by mail at least 1 year prior to release; Commit to 2-year faith-based residential stay. No initial cost. Later, % of income. 5-6 person max occupancy.
- Employment readiness. Family reunification.

◆ **Broadway Youth Center** www.howardbrown.org

615 W. Wellington, Chicago, IL 60657 773-935-3151

Walk-ins welcome. No cost. Must be 18-24 yrs. old

Drop-In Center for overnight shelter. Referrals.

◆ **Connections** www.cfthinc.org

2121 Dewey Ave., Evanston, IL, 60201 847-475-7070

Entry Point: 1458 Chicago Ave, Evanston, IL (Hilda's Place) 847-424-0945 x221

- Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Most services are free. No sex offenders.
- 90-day transitional housing. Ongoing case management.
- Permanent supportive housing. Employment services. Education & job skills.
- Health and wellness services.

◆ **Cornerstone Community Outreach** www.ccolife.org

5614 N. Clifton, Chicago 60640 773-271-8163 or 312-746-7213 No walk-ins.

- Must call for referral. Need Central Referral System ID verification.
- No sex offenders. Offers housing for men, women, single women w/children
- Free. Offers case management. Food pantry and soup kitchen.

◆ **Deborah's Place** www.deborahsplace.org

Main office at 2822 W. Jackson Blvd. Chicago, IL 60612 773.722.5080

Housing at 1530 N Sedgwick, 1532 N. Sedgwick, and 1456 W. Oakdale, Chicago.

- No walk-ins. Access centralized referral system (www.chicagocrs.org) for appt.
- Female only. Some free programs. Housing is 30% of income
- Case management. Permanent supportive housing, counseling, education and job training, 120-day housing

◆ **Direct2Housing.org**

This is a helpful website that allows you to search for housing on your own, using criteria like housing type, age/gender availability, location in the city or suburbs, and sobriety requirements.

◆ **Featherfist** www.featherfist.org 2255 East 75th Street, Chicago, IL 60649

Varied housing locations – see website for listings or call 773-721-7088

- Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Housing free to homeless.
- Crisis intervention. Stable housing. Permanent housing.
- Case management. Core independent living and self-sufficiency services.

◆ **Heartland Alliance** www.heartlandalliance.org

Main office at 208 S. LaSalle Street, Suite 1300, Chicago, IL 60604 312-660-1300

Varied housing locations – call or see website for listings.

- Homeless services. Supportive housing services. Financial education.

◆ **Hope House** www.hopehouseofchicago.com

3551 W. Roosevelt Rd., Chicago, IL 773-521-8442

Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. M-F 9-5, unless emergency (24/7)

- Variable fees for housing and meals.
- Transitional faith-based housing, ID's, 2 meals a day, drug- & alcohol free

◆ **Leslie's Place** www.lesliesplace.org

1014 N. Hamlin, Chicago IL 773-342-8384 Female only. No walk-ins.

- Housing & meals; employment training and job placement, computer training, parenting and life-skills, spiritual support, substance abuse treatment,

◆ **Olive Branch Mission** www.obmission.org

6310 S. Claremont, Chicago 773-476-6200

Walk-ins: Men (5-11pm) women (4:15-10:30pm)

- No sex offenders. Overnight emergency shelter – 250 beds
 - Interim housing 125 beds
 - Case management, support services, residential addiction recovery, etc.
- ◆ **Pacific Garden Mission** www.pgm.org
 1458 South Canal Street, Chicago IL 60607 312-492-9410
 Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome.
- Free homeless housing (men, women, & children). Bible programs.
 - GED & Career Development
 - food (3 meals/day, 365 days/year); clothing
- ◆ **Revive Center for Housing & Healing** www.revivecenter.org
 1668 W. Ogden Ave., Chicago 60612 312-997-2222
 Housing applicants must call for referral. Walk-ins welcome for substance abuse help only.
- Housing and substance abuse treatment (sliding scale). Need clean TB Test
- ◆ **St. Leonard's House** www.slministries.org
 Men's facility at 2100 W. Warren Blvd. Chicago, IL 312-738-1414 ext. 24 (M-F 9-5)
 Women's facility at **Grace House**, 1801 W. Adams, Chicago
 Please call after 9am for appointment. Walk-ins welcomed.
- Must have been in IDOC or county jail. No sex offenders.
 - Free. Housing, counseling, food & clothing, Substance abuse treatment
 - Educational, vocational, and life skills training programs
- ◆ **St. Martin de Porres House of Hope** www.smdp-hoh.org
 6423 S. Woodlawn Ave, Chicago, IL 60637 773-643-5843
- By referral only from detox and rehab facilities, or substance abuse program in prison
 - Female only. One year residential transitional program. 3 meals a day. Anger management, parenting classes, GED, addiction counseling, exercise classes, job readiness, etc.
- ◆ **The Salvation Army Freedom Center** www.salarmychicago.org/freedomcenter
 825 N. Christiana, Chicago 60651 312-753-0500 (M-F 7-3)
 Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Most services are free.
- Intensive Residential Rehab Unit. Outpatient Transitional Services
 - Minority Alcoholism Treatment (for minority males 21+)
 - Half-Way & Three-Quarter Way Houses (transitional, structured living)
 - Employment services, mental health services, counseling & guidance
- ◆ **Support Advocates for Women/Leslie's Place** www.lesliesplace.org
 1014 N. Hamlin Ave, Chicago, IL 60651 773-342-8384; Email: lesliespl@aol.com
 Call 24/7. Walk-ins welcome.
- Female only. No sex offenders. Must be on parole or have an income to pay \$100 move in fee and \$375 monthly. IDOC pays for 90 days and Non-IDOC \$100 move-in fee. Rent is \$375 monthly. Job and Housing referrals; recovery coaching, NA/AA meeting offer onsite, drug testing, referrals for mental health & substance abuse counseling; assistance with obtaining a state ID, social security card, birth certificate, clothing & other supportive services
- ◆ **Unity Parenting and Counseling** www.unityparenting.org
 600 Cermak Rd, Ste. 300, Chicago, IL 60616 312-455-0007
 M-F 9-5 Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free services.
- Emergency Shelter for single youth ages 18-24. Permanent Supportive Housing for disabled youth. Two-year transitional housing for homeless youth living with HIV/AIDS, ages 18-24. Permanent supportive housing for disabled adults age 18+. Transitional Housing for homeless youth ages 18-22

TIP 🏠

Most shelters admit people on a first-come, first-served basis, and can't save a bed for you, even if they know your date of re-lease. If you contact a shelter before you're released, you may receive a form letter in response. This is not a letter of acceptance. You may not even receive a response.

Renting an apartment

Once you have a job and/or benefits providing a steady source of income, you may be able to rent a home or apartment. Ask around. Your friends and family may know of a place. DOC community re-entry specialists and parole officers may also know of landlords who will rent to someone with a conviction. The organizations listed earlier in this chapter under long-term housing may offer rental counseling. Because of the high cost of renting in Chicago, many people choose to share the cost with another person, but be careful about the reliability of the person you share a lease with.

Large apartment complexes almost always require criminal background checks and credit checks, and most of them also charge an application fee. Always ask if an apartment complex has a policy about not renting to people with a criminal conviction *before* you pay an application fee.

It may be easier to rent from landlords owning just a few properties than a large apartment building, because they may be more flexible. For example, one landlord said he'd rent to someone with a criminal conviction depending upon that person's history, honesty, and attitude about the future. If the landlord felt someone was really trying to turn his or her life around and had the skills necessary to keep a job and pay rent, he was willing to rent to that person.

- Be flexible. A landlord might offer you a month-to-month rental to see how it works out before offering a longer-term lease. The reality is you may need to look at less desirable housing options when you're first starting out. Think of these as stepping stones to something better.
- You could also offer to provide landlords with your parole officer's contact information so they can see how you are doing. This might make a landlord feel more confident about renting to you. The bottom line is that landlords want to know that their property will be taken care of and that the rent will be paid on time.

If you know that a landlord is going to check your background, don't lie or mislead that person, especially if you think that person is willing to take a chance with you. Be prepared to discuss your criminal record as well as your plans for success and the steps you're taking to get there.

A landlord *can* ask you:

- about your job and how long you've worked there
- how much money you earn and how often you are paid
- how many people will live in the apartment or house (although a landlord can't refuse to rent to you because you have children)
- whether you have ever been convicted of a felony
- whether you are a registered sex offender

A landlord *cannot* ask you:

- your race, ethnicity, or national origin
- your religion or religious beliefs
- your sexual orientation or marital status
- whether you have mental or physical disabilities

Adult Transitional Centers/Work-Release Facilities/Halfway Houses

“When I got to the halfway house, I knew I had to have a plan. My friend told me the thing you got to do is be proactive. When you’re in prison, you’re used to everything being done for you. That’s not how it works out here. You have to have a plan and you must be proactive.” Advice from someone who has served 30 years in state and federal prisons.

DOC-administered halfway houses (also known as Adult Transitional Centers) are very structured. Clients must participate in programs and classes, follow rules, submit to required tests (urinalysis, breath analysis, etc.) and take prescribed medication. Different programs also offer different support services that could include help with finding a job, enrolling in education or vocational training, life skills classes, or treatment for substance abuse or mental health issues.

TIP 🏠

You may not get accepted even if you’re a great candidate, have good conduct in prison, and are program compliant. Don’t get discouraged. The legislature simply doesn’t provide enough funding for everyone to transition through community corrections.

Tips from those in the know: How to succeed in a halfway house

Your desire and motivation to succeed is the most important factor behind your success. Because you have a lot more responsibility, some people say that living in a halfway house can be harder than being in prison, in many ways. Here are some helpful tips:

1. Be ready to change your life. Actions speak louder than words.
2. Learn what the rules are and follow them. If you have any questions or don’t understand something, ask your case manager for more information or for clarification.
3. Take initiative and be proactive.
4. Attend treatment if you have a substance abuse problem.
5. Keep busy. You may be able to work more than one job, but don’t get overloaded.
6. Slow down and think about the consequences of any decision. Some people say it’s a long road to get to a halfway house and a short one back to prison.
7. You may want to help your family and friends now that you’re out of prison, but while you’re in community corrections you need to take care of yourself first.
8. Be careful about the people you spend time with. Surround yourself with people who are positive and committed to their own success.
9. Stay focused on your goals and the big picture when you have a bad day. Keep moving forward.
10. If you get a write-up, take responsibility for any mistake but don’t panic.
11. Try to get along with staff and other residents and treat others like you want to be treated. Try to talk through issues or use the halfway house’s procedures for resolving problems or disputes.
12. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Being in a halfway house can be very stressful. Figure out how to manage stress in healthy ways.
13. If you’re not sure if you can do something, ask for permission first. Don’t think you can just apologize after the fact. Otherwise you seem manipulative and it’s important that the staff feel like they can trust you.
14. Bring a notebook and pen to meetings with your case manager or staff. Taking notes can help you remember what was discussed and what you need to do.
15. Try to be patient with staff. Remember you are one of many requesting assistance and attention. Also follow the chain of command for both requests and complaints.

16. If a staff member gives you permission to do something, write it down, including the date, time, and the name of the staff person.
17. Stay organized. You might have a lot of things going on -- work, classes, treatment, appointments, etc. You can use a calendar or day planner to help you keep track of your schedule. You can also use it to set goals and mark accomplishments.
18. Don't forget that you're still on inmate status and still subject to the DOC. It's easy to forget once you've been in the halfway house for a while. Remember, the parole board will see how well you do in community corrections as an indication of how well you might do on parole.

TIP 🏠

Establishing a good working relationship with staff at the halfway house is very important. One person who was successful in community corrections said, "Success essentially boils down to two things: be where you are supposed to be and do what you are supposed to do."

You'll have many financial obligations in community corrections, and they'll start soon. This may be very stressful and feel almost impossible at times. Some halfway houses have an adjustment time, but it's best to be prepared for them to begin right away. It's important to find a job as quickly as you can. If you can't keep up with your financial obligations, you can be kicked out of the halfway house and sent back to prison.

Expect to pay:

- around 20% of your income to help pay for your room and board toward restitution, if owed
- toward your child support responsibilities
- transportation costs (i.e. bus pass or bus tickets) once you start receiving paychecks

Most halfway houses require you to report all income, show receipts for expenses, and keep a budget. Some halfway houses will let you manage your own money, but others will manage the money for you and give you an allowance. The program should give you a monthly statement of any bills or debts to that program. If your program manages your money, that program should give you a signed accounting of your funds each month. Keep a copy of your monthly statements and all receipts for money deposited into your account.

Food & Clothing

Once you've found a place to stay that can serve as your base of operations, you'll want to check out where you can secure food and clothing. Doing this allows you to stretch your often meager financial resources while you're looking for employment. A free meal can help you make your budget, and a nice set of professional clothing can be a huge bonus for your job search and employment.

There are many places where food and clothing are available. For one of the best ways to get started, check out the Greater Chicago Food Depository's website at www.chicagosfoodbank.org and enter the zip code where you're staying. They will connect you to the nearest locations of over 90 different food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters in Chicago. They also offer SNAP assistance and have programs for older adults and veterans.

Support Networks

Chances are, if you don't make finding a support network a priority from the get-go, you'll soon feel overwhelmed by all sorts of decisions and pressures, and you'll never get around to connecting with the kinds of people you need to help you succeed. Playing it solo doesn't work for most people, and without proper support your chances of making a successful reentry will plummet. But it doesn't

have to be that way. Be proactive. Make this one of the very first things that you do. Reach out and be part of a group of folks who understand the road you've been down, who won't judge you, and who will support you every step of the way.

Here's a list of folks who know how to be supportive...

◆ **Chicago House of Peace** www.chicagohouseofpeace.com

401 E. 134th St. Chicago, IL 60633 773-946-8177

Day/Hours are variable. Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. *Must be under 18.* Free.

- Support network, family services, counseling, employment, mental health

◆ **Community Renewal Society** www.communityrenewalsociety.org

111 W. Jackson Ste. 820 Chicago, 60604 312-216-0170 or 312-427-4830

Call for appointment (M-F 9-5). Walk-ins welcome.

- Most services are free. Assistance available.
- Leadership development training, healthy relationship building
- Organizational skills, individual mentoring

◆ **Daughter of Destiny Outreach, Inc.** www.daughterofdestinyoutreach.com

1519 W. Warren Chicago Ill 60607 312-256-5285

Call for appointment (M-F, 9-5). We accept walk-ins, referrals from rehabilitation facilities, or substance abuse program in prison. All services are free.

Females only, 18 and over. We are not medically equipped to assist participants on psychotropic medication, or with a history of psychotic behavior.

- Case-management, anger-management, addiction counseling, domestic violence education/workshops, spiritual support, recovery coaching, referrals, emergency shelter, and meals

◆ **Fathers for the Future** www.fathersforthefuture.org

1809 E. 71st St. Ste. 209, Chicago, IL 60649 773-966-7085

M-F, 9-5 Call or email for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free services. Must be a father.

- Power of Money Management – 5 week curriculum equips fathers to manage emotional and social pressures related to financial decision making; Coaching & Mentoring for Fathers; Classes address household budgeting, creating savings account, retirement planning, and financial goal setting.

◆ **GEO Resource Services** www.georeentry.com

8007 S. Cottage Grove, Ste. A, Chicago, IL (Multiple Office Locations) 773-846-6260

M-F 9-5 Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free services.

- Individually Tailored Programming to change criminal thinking & behavior; Substance Abuse Counseling; Parenting & Family Reintegration; Job Readiness & Employment Assistance; Anger Management; Education Services; Case Management and Support Groups

◆ **Healthy Families Chicago – Family Advocacy Center** www.healthyfamilieschicago.org

2100 S. Marshall Chicago, IL 60623 773-257-0111 x148

M-F, 9-5 Call for appointment or referral. Free. Serves Westside and Southside.

- Counseling, Crisis Intervention, Referral and Linkage Services, Transportation

◆ **Inside-Out Connections Ministry** www.insideoutconnections.org

6740 W. North Ave. Chicago, IL 60707 224-392-1834

- Interactive Tuesday night small group Bible study/support group exclusively for formerly incarcerated men.

◆ **National Alliance For the Empowerment of the Formerly Incarcerated**

5820 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60651 773-593-2540 www.naefimmentor.wix.com/naefi

Call or email for appointment. Walk-ins welcome.

- Mentoring, Restorative Justice, & Recidivism Reduction Training; Conflict Resolution; Leadership Development; Weekly Re-entry Support Groups; One-On-One Re-entry Coach Support; Anger/Trauma Management; Legal Support

◆ **New Path Transformation Foundation** www.newpathtransformation.webs.com

6321 S. Dorchester, Chicago 60637 331-333-2236

Call for appointment. No walk-ins.

- Male only. No mental illness or violent offenders.
- Free Christian education & discipleship, social skills development
- Hub of the whole program: Tuesday evening Bible study class.

◆ **Winners' Circles (sponsored by TASC)**

Safe Haven Circle 2750 W. Roosevelt Rd. Chicago, IL 60608 This site is NOT open to the public.

Contact: Sherise Nicholas (773) 435-8429 Thursdays: 7:30–8:30pm

Haymarket Circle 943 W. Washington Blvd. Chicago, IL 60607

Contact: Geri Cooper (773) 931-0376 or Calvin Brown 708-514-7719 Saturdays: 3:30-4:30pm.

Kedzie House Circle 1706 N. Kedzie Ave. Chicago, IL 60647

Contact: Cliff Cook 773-648-0526 Fridays: 6:00 p.m. –7:30 p.m. Open to the public.

St. Leonard's House Circle 2100 W. Warren Blvd. Chicago, IL 60612

Contact: Victor Gaskins 312-738-1414, ext. 22 Wednesdays: 10-11am.

- In locations across Illinois, TASC facilitates the development of peer-led *Winners' Circles*, which are recovery support groups for adult men and women overcoming the dual hurdles of addiction and past criminal justice involvement. In selected correctional institutions, TASC also convenes *Inner Circles*, which help incarcerated individuals prepare for the opportunities and challenges that will arise once they are released. These peer-led support groups meet regularly (usually weekly) inside facilities such as prisons and adult transition centers, as well as recovery homes or other closed community settings. In the nonjudgmental atmospheres of the *Winners' Circles* and *Inner Circles*, participants are free to express their feelings and receive practical help in overcoming obstacles to full participation in society.

PAROLE Matters

Perhaps the most difficult part is the appearance of freedom conflicting with the reality of the restrictions I have. Many times I want to do the things the rest of society does, but due to parole regulations it's not possible. There's often a strong pull to do it anyway, thinking no one would know. However, I've seen too many go back because of that type of thinking, and nothing is worth going back to prison for. (person on parole)

An immediate and ongoing part of the getting home process involves your parole officer. You'll probably be on parole after you leave prison, and be supervised by the Division of Parole.

Parole basics

The intake interview will be your first opportunity to meet with your parole officer. At this interview you'll sign a lot of paperwork and be told what you may and may not do on parole. You'll also submit a urine sample for urinalysis. By law, if you refuse to submit a sample immediately upon your release, your parole officer must arrest you and initiate revocation proceedings. It's a good idea to treat this interview like you would a job interview. Be on time and be professional.

Remember that first impressions can be lasting impressions. Try to build a working relationship

with your parole officer from the beginning. This is your opportunity to ask any questions. In particular, make sure you ask whether you have any restrictions on the type of job you can get or locations you won't be allowed to work in, etc.

Parole agreement/order

The parole agreement/order is a legal document outlining the conditions of release ordered by the parole board. It's called a *parole agreement* when someone is released on discretionary parole, or a *parole order* when someone is released on their mandatory release date.

There are standard conditions of parole that apply to everyone on parole. The parole board can also set additional conditions for you which will be outlined in the parole agreement/order. At the initial interview, your parole officer will go over the parole agreement/order with you. Always ask questions about anything you don't understand.

Standard conditions of parole

- You must report to your parole officer upon release. Call 800-666-6744 immediately to get instructions on what to do next. *Do not wait until the next day.*
- You must always live at your residence on record. You may only live at a home or shelter approved by your parole officer. You may not move without permission. You may not spend the night anywhere else without permission. You may not leave the state without permission and a travel permit. If you are in the hospital overnight, you or a friend should call your parole officer as soon as possible.
- When you sign your parole agreement/order, you are agreeing to comply with *every* condition of parole. "Honor it. You signed it," said one former parolee. "Your word is your word."
- You must obey every state, federal, and municipal law where you live. You must also obey every legal directive, or order, from a parole officer. Orders may be written or verbal. If you have any contact with the police, you must report the contact to your parole officer.
- You must report to your parole officer as often as directed, allow visits to your residence from your parole officer, be tested for drugs and alcohol, and allow your parole officer to search you, your home, and any car you're driving. Your parole officer may also carry a portable breathalyzer and test you at any time.
- You may not own or have any firearm or "other deadly weapon." You may not carry a knife of any kind without permission from your parole officer. If you use a tool like a box cutter at work, you should leave it at work. You may not possess ammunition.
- You may not associate with anyone with a criminal record without the permission of your parole officer. Not knowing someone has a criminal record is not considered a valid reason for violating this condition.
- You must find a job or be in a full-time educational or vocational program unless your parole officer waives this condition. Your parole can be revoked if you don't find a job, or try to find a job, within a certain amount of time.
- You may not abuse alcohol. You may not possess and/or use illegal drugs. All prescription drugs must be in their original container with your name on the label. You should immediately tell your parole officer when a doctor or dentist prescribes any medication for you.
- You must pay child support if it has been ordered.
- You have to pay for required treatment or classes. Treatment and classes may or may not be on a sliding scale. If you are unable to pay for treatment, ask your parole officer or TASC case manager if you can get a voucher to help pay for treatment.
- Oftentimes, a parole agreement/order will require you to take programs or classes as a condition of parole. This can be frustrating if you already took the class or program when you were in prison.

The only way to change a parole condition is when the parole board makes a modification. Your parole officer does not have the authority to change a parole condition on his/ her own.

TIP 🏠

You must get permission from your parole officer before you enter into any sort of contract such as buying a car or a house, opening a bank account or getting a debit or credit card. You'd be surprised how many things are technically considered to be a contract. Even getting a cell phone may involve a contract.

Tips from those in the know: How to succeed on parole

Your desire and motivation to succeed is the most important factor behind your success. Because you'll have a lot of responsibilities all at once, some people say that adjusting to being on parole is a lot harder than they'd anticipated. Here are some tips from people on parole and parole officers:

1. Be ready to do everything you need to do to be successful on parole.
- 2 Follow all of your conditions of parole. Be sure to ask questions about any condition of your parole that you don't understand.
3. Work on your relationship with your parole officer. One person on parole said, "I had a great parole officer. I was surprised. He was helpful when I relapsed." Another person said he was able to be "open and honest with my feelings of hopelessness and helplessness" with his parole officer.
4. Attend treatment if you have a substance abuse problem. If you feel like you're going to relapse, ask for help.
5. Keep busy. You may be able to work more than one job, but don't overload yourself.
6. Slow down and think about the consequences of any decision before you make it. One bad decision can result in your parole being revoked and going back to prison.
7. Take care of yourself and your responsibilities first. You may feel that you have to help your family and friends now that you're out, but don't jeopardize your freedom by helping them.
8. Be smart about the people you spend time with. Stick with positive and supportive people.
9. Everyone has good days and bad days. Bad days are going to happen. Try to let them go and stay focused on moving forward. Take responsibility for any mistake but don't panic.
10. Try to talk through any problem you have with your parole officer. If you have a difficult relationship with your parole officer, treat it like you would a difficult relationship with a boss. Stay professional and respectful.
11. Ask for help when you need it. There are people who can help you get a job, get your ID, and help you stay sober.
12. Develop a support system. Support can come from a variety of sources, not just your family and friends. Don't forget about community groups, religious counselors, and sponsors.
13. If you're not sure if you can do something, ask for permission first. Many people on parole said it's not smart to think you can do something and apologize later if you get in trouble. This may appear manipulative to your parole officer.
14. It's helpful to take notes at meetings with your parole officer. Your notes can help you remember what was discussed and what you need to do. If your parole officer gives you permission to do something, write it down. Your notes could serve as a written reminder for both of you.
15. Stay organized. You might have a lot of things going on like work, classes, treatment, appointments, etc. You can use a calendar or day planner to help you keep track of your schedule. You can also use it to set goals or mark accomplishments.
16. If you get a write-up, you need to address the behavior immediately. You know what you're doing. Be honest with yourself. If you need more treatment, get it before the hearing. Try to come to

grips with whatever you're doing that's going to send you back. Whatever you need more of, get it!
17. If a parole officer learns that you're using drugs or alcohol from a UA or BA, rather than hearing it from you, you look like you're trying to get away with something. If you try and deny it, you're less likely to get help. If you're honest and are sincere about getting (or going back) to treatment, there's a better chance that your parole officer will be willing to help you. In other words, don't wait until they catch you doing something wrong.

18. Be honest and trustworthy. Don't try to manipulate your parole officer. Don't say one thing and do another. If you do, you'll be under an umbrella of suspicion. In the words of one parole officer, "Discovered dishonesty is lethal."

19. Have endurance. Don't give up. Being on parole is not easy. There are many expectations and many challenges. Almost everyone on parole will at some point feel overwhelmed, discouraged, frustrated, angry, and hopeless. One parolee said being on parole was like running a marathon—not a sprint.

20. Don't let small violations grow into big ones. People make mistakes, and generally small mistakes will not lead to a revocation. If you make a mistake, try to get back on track right away. Don't let a small mistake snowball into a bigger one. For example, if someone uses drugs and knows his UA is going to be positive, he might try to avoid the situation by not going for the UA. Because he doesn't go for the UA, he doesn't go to treatment that week. Then because he doesn't go to treatment, he doesn't report to his parole officer. That's how one problem can snowball.

21. Don't get complacent. People who have been successful on parole for over a year have ended up being revoked. One person whose parole was revoked said that after two years of parole he "forgot" he was on parole and didn't follow the rules like he did in the beginning. He said his big mistake was thinking he was free when he wasn't. No matter how long you've been successful on parole, never forget you're on parole until your discharge date.

TIP 🏠

If you're charged with new criminal charges while on parole, take this matter seriously – even if it's a municipal violation like disorderly conduct or urinating in public. If convicted, your parole will be revoked and you can be sent back to prison for the remainder of your parole period.

Common questions about "Association" and "Contact"

Standard conditions of parole state that you cannot associate with anyone with a criminal conviction (regardless of how long ago it was) unless you have permission from your parole officer. Association is a parole violation. Nevertheless, circumstances may put you into contact with someone with a criminal conviction. It's important to understand the difference between *contact* and *association*.

- If you work with someone else with a criminal conviction, that is contact. (To be on the safe side, you should check this out with your parole officer.) If you go out to lunch with this person without permission from your parole officer, that is association.
- A shelter is considered a group home, so if someone with a criminal conviction is also in the shelter, that is contact. If you leave the shelter to do something with that person without permission from your parole officer, that is association.
- If you go to treatment or classes with someone else with a criminal conviction, that is contact. If you go out for coffee together afterward without permission from your parole officer, that is association. You must ask your parole officer for permission to be with anyone with a criminal record, even a spouse or family member. What you will have to do to receive permission will depend upon your circumstances. For example, you may have to go through required treatment or establish a record of being compliant with your parole conditions before getting permission.

TIP 🏠

If you have to leave your residence due to a crisis (get kicked out) or emergency (medical), call the parole contact number immediately. Do not wait. Explain your situation and leave the address and phone number of your new location with the operator. Your parole officer must know why you had to leave your residence of record.

Sex offender registration

Because of the social stigma that often goes with being labeled a sex offender, it can be very isolating and difficult to be on parole. Finding housing can be a special challenge. Make sure that you seek help from a caseworker to help you find the resources you need. Most inmates will not be able to get help from a field service rep until about two weeks prior to leaving. Also, there are only two contractual sex offender housing facilities in the state that can hold 28 men total between them. Unless you have family members who can house you, the process for over 90% of sex offenders is as follows – you will be walked to the door of the prison on your parole date and they will technically violate you as they have nowhere to register. Then you go back inside the prison to serve half the time of the remaining parole as a prisoner. You will eventually be released without parole supervision.

If you're required to register, you must register with the local law enforcement agency wherever you live, even if it's on a temporary basis (3 days or more in a calendar year). If you live within city limits, register at the police station. If you live outside of city or town limits, register with the county sheriff's department. You may want to call first to confirm the jurisdiction, the time that you can come in to register, and whether there's a fee. You will need identification, and there is an initial registration fee of \$100 to be paid the very first time a registrant registers and an annual registration fee of \$100 to be paid once each year. If you'll be on parole or in community corrections, you must register within five business days of release. If you're discharging without supervision, you must register the next business day. For a list of helpful legal and therapeutic resources in Illinois, check out the Sex Offender Resource website at <http://www.sexoffenderresource.com/illinois/>.

TIP 🏠

Sometimes people on parole become frustrated when they can't get a job, can't afford rent, can't pay for required treatment, etc. Self-revocation and going back to prison may look like the best solution. However, think through this very carefully. There may be places where you can get help that you haven't yet explored. Also, depending on your conviction, even if you self-revoke you may end up in a community corrections program, not prison, anyway. Then you'll still have to find a job, pay for treatment, pay rent at the facility, etc. If you find yourself hitting the wall and you feel like you can't manage any more, talk with a friend, counselor, pastor, mentor, sponsor—anyone who can help you.

GET HOME 🏠 Checklist Have you...

- Arranged for a safe, decent, and affordable place to stay (a) for the near term, and (b) are you looking for a stable place to stay for several months?
- Checked out available local resources for food and clothing?
- Arranged, in advance, to connect with a support group to help you through your reentry?
- Checked in with your parole officer and gotten off to a good start?
- Are you home safely? If so, then it's time to *Get Organized*.

GET ORGANIZED

This sounds like the most boring step of the whole reentry process, doesn't it? Let's face it, most everybody just wants to *get going*, right away. Stopping now, simply to get "organized" seems like an unnecessary waste of time. But it isn't. In fact, every hour you spend *now* getting your records in order, getting the IDs you need, and dealing with your paperwork, will save you ten hours later on. And, the faster and better you get organized now, the more doors will start to open for you. This particular step may feel boring and tedious, but it's vital. You can do this! And the really nice thing is that, if you get help and stick with it, you'll start building momentum and get it done.

TIP

When you ask for help from a community organization, ask if case management services are available. These people can help you find other resources and help you figure out who does what in the community.

Multiservice Reentry Agencies

It's important to not have high expectations (of any one place), but you can get help from a multitude of places. There's help out there, but it takes a lot of footwork and planning and pro-activeness.
(person on parole)

Most of us need help in getting organized. Many people on parole tell us that it's hard to ask for help. Please don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask for any help you need. It's impossible to list every resource in Chicago, but we've tried to include some of the more well-known and well-established places. You may need to do a little research on your own :

- Ask your parole officer and/or a community re-entry specialist if s/he knows of specific places to get help. (See chapter 5 for information about the DOC community re-entry program.)
- If you're on parole and assigned to TASC (see below), let them know the type of services you need. TASC case managers know about resources in their community.
- Call 3-1-1, and be connected to a database of health and social service resources available to you through the Dept. of Family Services.
- If you go to a community organization, ask if they know about other places in the community where you might find help.

The organizations listed below offer a variety of services. Be sure to ask what services they provide. Most ask that you call first to ask about orientation sessions or to make an appointment.

Places to find people who can help you organize and plan

◆ AIDS Foundation of Chicago www.aidschicago.org

200 W. Jackson Blvd #2100, Chicago, IL 60606 312-922-2322

- Free housing/rental assistance, case management (including medical), treatment referrals, HIV Testing, food assistance

◆ Agape Missions, NFP www.agapemissionsnfp.org

840 Plainfield Rd., Joliet, IL 60435 815.723.1548 x21 (8:30-4:30, 7 days a week)

Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free services. Must be formerly incarcerated.

- Case Management – Assess needs and develop action plan.
- Housing Advocacy – Private landlords, community housing agencies, homeless shelters, etc.

- Employment/Entrepreneurship/Education
- I.D.'s – Help obtain birth certificate, S.S. card, photo identification, etc.
- Records Expunge/Seal. Referrals – To a variety of community organizations.
- Transportation – For job interviews, appointments, etc.
- Mental Health Services – Assessments and counseling; HIV Counseling & Testing
- Anger Management. Substance Abuse Services – Evaluations, counseling, and drug testing.

♦ **Asian Human Services** www.ahschicago.org

4753 N Broadway, Suite 700, Chicago, IL 60640

Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcomed, depending on program.

- Emergency fund and housing assistance
- Help apply for benefits programs including SNAP and medical card
- Physical and mental health screenings/education and disease prevention education
- Job search and interview skills training

♦ **Catholic Charities** www.catholiccharities.net

Various locations. Call 312-655-7700 or 312-655-7000

Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome at some locations.

- Many programs are free. All may qualify for cost assistance.
- Overall assistance and support. Child, youth, and family services
- Housing services, senior services

♦ **Chicago Lawndale AMACHI Mentoring Program** www.chicagolamp.org

3508 West Ogden Chicago IL 60623 773-521-9452 (M-F 8:30-5:30)

Call or email for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free.

- Mentoring program ages 4-18. Recidivism reduction program ages 14-21
- Participants are assigned a positive adult role model that will provide mentoring 3 hours a week; tutoring services.

♦ **Circle Urban Ministries** www.circleurban.org

118 N Central Ave. Chicago 60644 773-921-1446

Call or use website for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. No sex offenders.

- Some services have costs, evaluated per individual. After school enrichment program, college-readiness mentoring, legal services, women & children shelter.

♦ **Community Support Advisory Council**

West: c/o Westside Health Authority 5816 W Division St. Chicago, 60651 773-786-0226

North: c/o Howard Area Community Center 7637 W. Paulina, Chicago, 60626 773-262-3515

South: c/o Target Area Development Corp. 1542 W. 79th St. Chicago, IL 60620 (773) 651-6470

CSAC offices are open M-F 9a-5p. Recommended to call before walking in.

♦ **Counseling First** www.counselingfirst.org

1136 S Delano Ct., Suite B201, Chicago, IL 60605 312-620-0896

Call for appointment (M-F 9-5) Walk-ins welcome, but appt. preferred.

- Sliding scale fee, based on income.
- Reentry assistance/counseling, substance abuse treatment (intensive outpatient), and case work (MISA clients welcome)

♦ **Fathers, Families in Transition** www.fathersfamiliesintransition.org

120 W. Madison St. Suite 200-2 Chicago, IL 60602 312-658-0166

15652 Homan Ave. Suite C-17 Markham IL 60428 708-566-1660

M-F: 10-4 or call/email for appointment. Sliding scale cost.

- Anger management; Career Job Readiness camp and assistance with job placement
- Recovery coaching, Life skills, Financial Literacy, Fatherhood/Parenting sessions

♦ **Field of Dreams Visionary Center** www.fieldofdreamsvisionarycenter.com
2954 W. Lake St., Chicago, IL 60612 (Office): 872.444.5899 (FAX): 844.856.1436
MONDAY – THURSDAY; 9:00 AM TO 4:00 PM. Walk-ins welcomed.
Services are free. Must be homeless and/or unemployed.

- Housing support assistance (permanent/emergency/transitional)
- Career success & development/job readiness, life skills, financial literacy certificate program; Employment placement; ID assistance
- Coaching and mentoring program; Entrepreneur training program
- Expungement & sealing records assistance; Clothing vouchers
- Free eye glass assistance; Credit building and repair assistance

♦ **GEO Reentry Service Center** www.georeentry.com
8007 S Cottage Grove, Chicago, IL 60619

M-F: 9a-6p. Must be on parole and have referral. Walk-ins welcome. No cost.

- Behavior change therapy, Anger management, Substance abuse
- Employment/Education/Job Readiness

♦ **Habilitative Systems, Inc.** www.habilitative.org
415 S Kilpatrick Ave., Chicago IL 60644 773-261-2252

Call or email for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free services.

- Residential Services – Halfway house, recovery home, integrated living, emergency housing, etc. Substance Abuse Treatment & Counseling – Residential and outpatient.
- Housing and Service Programs for homeless and the mentally ill, and individuals with developmental disability.

♦ **Illinois Department of Human Services – Open Door Program** www.dhs.state.il.us
743 N. Pulaski, Chicago, IL 60624 773-638-3070

M-F 8:30a-5p. Write/Call/Email for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free. Must be 18+

- Employment Services; I.D.; Educational Services; State Benefits/Services

♦ **Matthew House** www.matthewhousechicago.org
3722 S. Indiana, Chicago, IL 773-536-6628

Walk-ins welcome. Free Case Management. Referrals for homelessness and substance abuse

- Employment Help, Ex-Offender Support Services, Day Shelter.

♦ **Safer Foundation** www.saferfoundation.org
571 W Jackson Blvd. Chicago, IL 60661 (312) 922-2200

Call intake 312-922-2200) Employment hotline 312-913-5796

Walk-ins welcome – 7:30 a.m. & 12:30 p.m. (must have State I.D.)

- Job training and placement, Educational programs, Residential programs

♦ **Target Area Development Corp.** www.targetarea.org

1542 W. 79th St. Chicago, 60620 773-651-6470 Southside Reentry Call Center 773-707-2818

Write, call, or email for appointment. Walk-ins welcome.

- Overall assistance and support for ex-offenders. Community Support Advisory Council (South) – food pantry, mentoring, clothing, transportation (case-by-case), job-readiness training, employment referrals, financial literacy, education and school referrals, substance abuse, anger management assistance.

♦ **Teamwork Englewood** www.teamworkenglewood.org
815 W. 63rd St, 2nd floor, Chicago, IL 60621 773-488-6600
Call for appointment (M-F 9-5) Walk-ins welcome on Wednesdays.

- Clients are connected to service providers and other agencies for counseling on housing, employment, substance abuse and mental health issues, sealing or expunging their criminal records and for other services to help them live productive, drug-free lives.

♦ **TEECH** www.teechfoundation.org 224.406.3798

Bethany Church – 1750 W. 103rd St, Chicago, IL Kenwood Church – 4600 S. Kenwood, Chicago, IL
Call for appointment (M-F, 9-5). Walk-ins welcome. Most services are free to those who qualify.
Must have ID and be 30 days sober. No previous engagement in ATR or Lighthouse.

- Employment Training & Job Referrals. Free CTA & Pace cards for program participants
- Coaching (employment, spiritual, recover, etc.). HIV/Aids Testing. Free cell phones

♦ **True Believers Community Connections**

9449 S. Kedzie #153, Evergreen Park, IL 60805 (mailing address) (773) 797-2008
Days/Hours by appointment only. Services are free.

- Adult education services to assist individuals in acquiring and applying fundamental knowledge and skills to fulfill responsibilities as employees, family members, and citizens.
- Life skills services to assist individuals in responsibly managing personal affairs by acquiring appropriate psychosocial and interpersonal skills in the form of behavior prevention, critical thinking skills, personal care skills, and organization skills.
- Enrichment services to stimulate individuals to become healthier and happier by providing opportunities for social skills development, spiritual development, professional development, workforce development, and leadership development.

♦ **Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC)**

TASC is a statewide community-based case management program with services available in all parole regions. TASC is contracted with the DOC to provide assessment, referral, monitoring and case management to people on parole and focuses on substance use and/or or co-occurring disorders. You can contact TASC at 855-827-2444. Their administrative offices are located at 1500 N Halsted St., Chicago, IL 60642.

I want a TASC referral. How do I get one?

Your parole officer will give you a referral to bring to a TASC office. On your first visit, you'll complete an intake, make an appointment with a case manager for an assessment, and will be assigned to random monitoring.

What can I expect when I participate in TASC?

Your TASC assessment will take about an hour. During this appointment, your case manager will explain what to expect, why you were referred to TASC, and ask questions to see how TASC can help you succeed while on parole. Your case manager will discuss a plan for treatment and help you get the required services. You'll meet with your case manager regularly to review progress and see whether any changes or additional referrals are needed. Generally, TASC provides case management services for up to a year but this depends on a person's progress and needs. TASC assessments, referrals, and case management sessions are provided at no cost to you. Substance abuse and mental health treatment costs vary depending on the type of treatment but TASC may issue vouchers to cover the cost if funding is available.

TIP 

Make a list of the help you need, such as finding housing, a food bank, clothing for job interviews, glasses, parenting classes, etc. Bring this list with you whenever you visit an agency and use it to find out whether and how an agency can help you. Sometimes if you don't ask for a particular type of help, an agency may not think to offer it, even if they can provide it.

RECORDS, IDS, AND PAPERWORK

You may get certain documents in prison that you'll want after you're released. It can be difficult (and sometimes expensive) to try and get documents from DOC after you're released. You can keep a file yourself or mail them to someone you trust to hold for you.

Educational and vocational records

It's very important to keep your own records of all of the classes, programs, and training you completed while you're in prison. It can save you a lot of time after release if you keep a written log or summary with specific details. If you enrolled in a program or class but weren't able to complete it, include this too. It's also useful to keep any certificate or other kind of written document that shows you completed a course or program. If a certificate isn't given out, ask your case manager if s/he can give you something in writing to prove you completed the course or program. If you have good work evaluation reports from a job you had in prison, keep a copy.

Keeping good records can help you:

- be prepared to answer questions at your parole board hearing (e.g. what have you done/learned since you've been in prison?)
- fill out a job application or an application to or enroll in school
- avoid having to complete the same class/program while on parole. You may be able to ask DOC headquarters for a copy of your class transcripts.

TIP 

If you were on SSI, SSDI, or Medicaid before you were incarcerated, tell your case manager at least six months before your projected release date. Your case manager will contact Clinical Services so you can be screened, and for the application to be submitted before you're released.

More important than you think...

Keep in mind that people will want to know what you did with the time you spent in prison, for two basic reasons. One, it tells them facts such as the level of education you have or skills you developed. Almost more important, though, they'll form an opinion about whether you're really serious about moving forward in your life. Lots of people are open to giving someone a "second chance" when they think s/he is really trying and willing to work hard. This can help you make a good impression on potential employers, landlords, school admissions officers, licensing boards, etc.

Medical and mental health information and records

One of the more complicated issues for people released from prison is transitioning from getting medical or mental health treatment in prison to getting it after release. This is often referred to as "continuity of care." If you receive medical or mental health care while you're in prison, especially for a long-term condition, try to get copies of your medical records before you're released. In early 2015, these copies cost \$1.20 per page for the first ten pages and 25¢ per page after that. You must have enough money in your inmate account before you can order these copies. Ask your medical provider or case manager how to order a copy of your medical records.

TIP

Keep your own summary of all the classes, programs, and training you receive in prison: the name of the class, the dates you participated, the facility, and the instructor's name. You'll need this information after release.

Restitution Payment Records

Restitution is an amount of money the court orders some offenders to pay for a victim's loss. If ordered, it is a mandatory part of your sentence. The court may also order you to pay fees, costs, and surcharges. While you're in prison, each DOC facility issues a monthly inmate bank account statement. Save these statements! This is your proof of what you have paid toward your restitution. There is no other receipt issued for this payment while you're incarcerated. After you're released, if you need these statements and don't have them, you may write to the DOC and request a restitution summary.

If you're paying restitution toward several different cases, you'll also need to keep track of which case your restitution payments are being applied to. When you're on parole, your parole officer will tell you how much restitution you must pay and how often. *Failure to make restitution payments is a parole violation.* You will probably make restitution payments using Western Union.

- Keep the receipts from all payments you make, even if a parole officer doesn't ask for them. These receipts are proof of payment if there is a question later on. Once you're off parole, or if you discharge without parole, restitution collection is no longer handled by the DOC. If you still owe restitution after you discharge your sentence, restitution collection will be handled by the courts. Some courts contract with private collection agencies.

Identification Cards

Life will go a whole lot easier for you, and opportunities will open up for you a whole lot faster, when you carry proper forms of identification. *Do your best to apply for your Social Security card and birth certificate while incarcerated*, since these documents are necessary for acquiring a LINK card and other cards when you get out. Some very useful forms of ID and contact information include:

- State ID card/Driver's License Birth certificate Social security card
- SNAP/LINK cards County Care health card Email address, phone contact information
- Veteran's IDs

Below you'll find some basic contact information for getting ID cards. Because this can be confusing and time-consuming, we highly recommend that you take advantage of a professional caseworker, guide or mentor to help you find your way through the maze of regulations. They're used to helping people deal with the system, and their accumulated wisdom can save you days or weeks of frustration and wasted money. Use their services. That's why they're here!

Applying for your Illinois state ID/Driver's License

To apply, you must have the following documents:

- Current ID or drivers license **And/Or**
- An original document proving your written signature(credit card, court order, driver's license)
- An original document proving date of birth(birth certificate, college transcript, U.S. passport)
- Social Security Number (Soc. Sec. card, IL driver's license record, or Military Service Record)

- Current Address (bank statement, credit report, utility bill) other recent mail received
- A separate and original document that proves IL residency if you need to change residency on your ID card.
- Prison release papers

If the staff doesn't accept the documentation you have ask to see a manager and explain your situation to him/her. Your Parole papers will help you register for a State ID. Veterans can qualify for a fee exemption of the \$20 charge.

There are many locations around the Chicago area. Here are some in the city. Call 312-793-1010 with questions or for more locations.

- Chicago West, 5301 W. Lexington St. Chicago IL. 60644
- Chicago Diversey Express, 4642 W. Diversey St. Chicago IL 60641
- Chicago South, 9901 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Dr. Chicago IL 60628
- Bridgeview, 7358 W. 87th St. B Bridgeview, IL 60455
- Chicago Heights, 570 W. 209th St. Chicago IL 60411

Applying for your birth certificate

To get a birth certificate in Cook County there are five different methods.

1. Order Online: there's a printable form to fill out at www.cookcountyclerk.com
2. Order by phone: call toll free 866-252-8974
3. Mail a request to: Cook County Clerk David Orr, Bureau of Vital Records, P.O. Box 641070 Chicago IL. 60664-1070. Include the following items:
 - A completed birth certificate request form available online at www.cookcountyclerk.com
 - A photocopy of your identification and a phone contact
 - A check or money order made out to Cook County Clerk for \$15, \$4 for each additional copy.
 - A self-addressed stamped envelope
4. Go to a local currency exchange.
5. Visit in person: Downtown-Daley Center 50 W. Washington St. Chicago IL. 60602 (312)-603-7790 East concourse lower level. Hours are 8:30-4:30, Monday through Friday.

Birth certificates from other Counties or States:

Most states and U.S. possessions have their own set of regulations and fees required to obtain a birth certificate. Most states have a central address and phone number where birth certificate information can be found. There is a "where to write for vital statistics" web page that is maintained by the CDC. Go to www.cdc.gov and click on the Search tab. Type in Birth Certificates and a list of states will appear. By clicking on the state you were born in you can find the address, fees and other needed info to write for your birth certificate. If you are still incarcerated your counselor may be able to help you find the information you need.

Applying for a Social Security card

Applying before release

To be eligible to apply for a Social Security card before you're released, you must already have had a Social Security card issued in your legal name. Your case manager can help you apply for an uncorrected replacement (meaning, no name change or change of any other information) Social Security card if you meet all of the following criteria:

- You are incarcerated under your legal name as it appears on your birth certificate or Social Security card
- You are a U.S. citizen
- You do not have any extraditable felony detainers, *and*
- You have not used other Social Security number(s) in order to get a job, apply for benefits, credit, or banking, or in an attempt to deceive law enforcement.

You'll need the following information to fill out the forms...

- Your mother's full name, including her maiden name
- Your father's full name
- Your Social Security number, place of birth, and date of birth

If eligible, your case manager can help you apply for your replacement Social Security card when you are within 120 days of your expected release. You can't apply for your Social Security card on your own. If your case manager receives your Social Security card, it will be stored at the new ID Bank at CTCF and you will get it upon release.

Applying *after* release

If you need a replacement card after release, or have never had a Social Security card, you must apply at a Social Security Administration (SSA) office. You can do this online or in person.

- The website for the SSA is www.socialsecurity.gov.
- Click on *Social Security Card* to print an application and to see the list of documents they'll accept to prove your U.S. citizenship, identity, and age. The types of documentation the SSA asks for, and the number of documents they need, will depend upon your situation. A document must be either original or certified by the custodian of the original record. Notarized copies or photocopies which aren't certified by the custodian of the record are not accepted.
- Click on *Find a Social Security Office* to find the office closest to you.
- Take the printed, completed, and signed application, and the required documents to the SSA office.

The SSA office won't accept a DOC ID as proof of your identity. If you have no ID other than your DOC ID, it may take some time to get the documents needed to apply for a Social Security card. Visit your local Social Security office to discuss your situation as soon as you can. The SSA employee will tell you what documents are accepted or how to get them. You may also call 800-772-1213 for help.

TIP

It may be best to go to a Social Security Administration office in person. "An application sent through the mail can't answer questions," explained one supervisor. Also, if you mail the application you need to send in your original documents.

When you apply for your Social Security card, you'll get a letter to use while you wait for your card to come in the mail. This letter indicates that you've filed for a Social Security number. You may also request separate verification of your Social Security number if you provide acceptable proof of your identity. This letter can be used if you apply for benefits such as Medicaid, TANF, or Food Assistance. *If you're going to apply for benefits and assistance, be sure to ask for both letters.* You'll get your Social Security card at the address you put on the application in about seven to ten days.

People on parole, even if living in a community corrections facility, may apply for all state and federal benefits, subject to each program's requirements. People who have had their parole revoked and are placed in community corrections on *inmate status*, may not.

Applying for Food Assistance Programs (SNAP/WIC/LINK)

In Chicago, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can help you get food. Apply for the Food Assistance Program at the Illinois Department of Human Services. You may be seen the same day you fill out the application, you may be given an appointment for a face-to-face or telephone interview later. Almost everyone will qualify for SNAP benefits, but you'll only get WIC (Women, Infant and Children) if you are supporting your infants or children. Get there early and be prepared to wait. If you need food assistance, apply soon after your release because it can take up to a month for your application to be processed. If you're without any money or food after your release from prison, explain this during your first interview. They may be able to process your application in about a week.

- The application for food assistance is long. If you need help filling it out, complete the name, address, and signature portions of the application and ask for an application/interview date. At the interview, you can ask for help to complete the rest of the application.
- You do *not* need a mailing address in order to get food assistance. If you live in a shelter, ask a shelter employee to give you a letter that says you live there.
- If you were convicted of a drug felony, you may have to meet certain requirements, such as the successful completion of a drug and alcohol treatment program, to be eligible for the Food Assistance Program. Outstanding felony warrants or parole violations may make you ineligible.

To get a SNAP benefits, also known as a Link Card, go to one of the following offices and explain that you've just been released from prison and need food.

Remember to bring any IDs (state ID, driver's license, social security card, recent mail) you may have. Make sure to bring your release papers as this can speed the process. The DHS offices handle Link cards. You have to be released before you can apply for a Link card. In our experience it's best to go to the office instead of calling.

- Calumet Park Family Community Resource Center
831 W. 119th St. Chicago IL. 60643 773-660-4700
- Englewood Family Community Resource Center
5323 S. Western Ave. Chicago IL. 60609 773-918-6700
- Humboldt Park Family Community Resource Center
2753 W. North Ave. Chicago IL. 60647 (773)292-7200
- Mid South Family Community Resource Center
1642 West 59th St. 2nd Floor Chicago IL. 60636 (773)863-6100

TIP

It's *NOT true* that you'll qualify for immediate food stamp assistance if you apply within a certain number of hours after you're released from prison. Don't believe it if someone tells you that.

Applying for your County Care health card

To get a medical card in Cook County the CountyCare Health plan seems like a good choice. CountyCare is a new non-cost Illinois managed care health plan just for the people of Cook County and their families. It's accepted at more than 130 health clinics and community hospitals. It also includes some dental and behavioral health benefits. By going to www.countycare.com you can find lots of helpful information. Also by calling 312-864-8200 you will be able to start the process.

Getting an email account & phone

If you don't have access to a computer you can go to any Chicago Public Library to use one. Ask the librarian on duty for help. Tell him/her that you don't have an email address and would like to set one up. You will be directed to www.gmail.com, www.yahoo.com or one of several other sites. Just click on the sign up tab and follow the next prompts. In just a few minutes you'll have your own email address. These days email addresses are needed for job applications, appointments, and general communications. You might also want to check out Life Wireless 888-543-3620 (www.lifewireless.com) for a free government phone with 250 free minutes per month.

TRANSPORTATION

◆ **Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)** www.transitchicago.com

Customer Service 888-968-7282 (weekdays 7:00am - 7:00pm). Call 312-836-7000 and give current location and destination. They will give you the bus numbers and arrival time for the entire route.

◆ **Metra Rail** www.metrarail.com

547 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60661 Customer Service (312) 322-6777

◆ **Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)** www.rtachicago.com

69 W. Washington St., Lower Level Pedway, Chicago Customer Service (312) 913-3110

◆ **Rincon Family Services/Traffic Safety Resource Center** www.rinconfamilyservices.org

5453 W. Diversey Ave. Chicago, IL 60641 888-215-0513

M-F, 9-5 Call for appointment. No walk-ins. Cost depends on services received.

- DUI Services, car seat distribution program for low-cost seats
- Mental health services, Gambling recovery services, anger management

◆ **Uber** uber.com **Lyft** lyft.com

Uber and Lyft are ride-sharing companies that connect riders to drivers through applications on smart phones. A rider can request a ride using the GPS capability on one's smart phone to set up one's pickup location. The rider then chooses the desired car type and Uber or Lyft finds the rider the nearest available driver. You will get matched with a background-checked driver. You have the ability to track the driver's route and ETA in the app. You are able to see a photo of the driver and the car so you know who you are riding with. When the ride is complete the app charges payment to the saved credit card on the app. Rates vary depending on the service requested, weather, high demand, and surge pricing. The base fare is around \$1.70 with \$0.20 added per minute, and \$0.90 added per mile. There is a safe ride fee of \$1.00, a cancellation fee of \$5.00, and transit tax and accessibility fee of \$0.30. Uber and Lyft are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

GET ORGANIZED CHECKLIST

Have you...

- Connected with a caseworker, counselor, or mentor to help you get organized and develop your action plan?
- Organized your educational, vocational, medical, and financial records so you can show them when needed?
- Received (or at least applied for) your photo ID, birth certificate, Social Security card, SNAP/LINK, health cards, etc.?
- Figured out your transportation options, given where you're currently living?
- Set up a personal email account and contact phone number so that others can reach you?
- Developed a workable action plan for the next month so that you don't get overwhelmed, lose momentum, or become depressed?
- Are you pretty well organized? If so, then it's time to *Get Help*.

GET HELP

One really encouraging thing about doing reentry in Chicago is that there is *a lot* of help out there. From local churches and ministries, to city and county services, to private foundations and companies, a whole community of helpers is ready and willing to assist you in taking the next steps, in all sorts of ways.

Now that you've gotten yourself organized, your job at this stage is to drop your pride or cynicism (easier said than done, we know) and start asking for and accepting that help. In fact, the biggest obstacles at this stage of reentry tend to be one of two attitudes we adopt. The first says, "Why bother? I can handle this on my own." The second says, "Why bother? It's never gonna do any good." Both pride and cynicism stop us from asking for help. But ask yourself, "Where has my pride and cynicism gotten me so far?"

There's a better way. When you find yourself starting to think those thoughts (and who doesn't?), regroup yourself in hope, humble yourself, and get on out there. And one day, when you're ready, you can turn around and help the next person on his or her way back home.

CHURCHES & MINISTRIES

Finding a church. With all the churches we have in our neighborhoods, you might think that it would be the easiest and most natural thing in the world for an interested ex-inmate to find one where he feels comfortable and productive. *But you'd be wrong.* For all sorts of reasons, bridging back into a church community can be tough.

It isn't for lack of desire. We asked some current inmates about what they'd look for in a church when they get out. They came up with all sorts of wonderful things to hope for in a new church community. And these things can, in fact, be found in our neighborhood churches. Unfortunately, the picture they paint often looks more like heaven than our local church! That's because our churches are also full of sinners like ourselves! We can thank God that our churches are full of sinners (there's room for us), but that makes the reality of a church considerably less appealing than the ideal picture inmates often conjure up in their heads.

All too often, here's what happens: We show up at a church and the spiritual temperature is less than we were used to in prison, and we feel let down by the worship experience. When we show up and people don't welcome us with open arms, we can feel like they're a bunch of hypocrites. When we show up with our untrusting prison defenses still up, we can be awkward and find it hard to connect with people. When we show up feeling conspicuous and self-conscious, we can isolate ourselves and end up feeling even more like an outsider than when we walked in.

Church is hard because life itself is hard. And yet, with all the things that can (and do) go wrong, finding a church where you can truly worship, contribute, serve, learn, connect, and love and be loved is probably the greatest spiritual gift you can give yourself. And that's because God made us for community. We're never going to thrive spiritually on the outside without being deeply connected to other believers. So whatever else you do, find yourself a church and dig in.

Here are some churches and church ministries that have a heart for connecting with ex-offenders.

◆ **Christian Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church**

445 W. 119th Street, Chicago, IL 60628 773-468-0112 (M-Sat. 9-5) Walk-ins welcome.

Drug rehab program on Saturdays

◆ **Fourth Presbyterian Church** www.fourthchurch.org

126 E. Chestnut St, Chicago, IL 60611 312-787-4570

Call for appointment (M-F, 9-5 - closed from 1-2, daily) Walk-ins welcome.

- Some sex offender restrictions. Free case Management, Food & Clothing Ministry. Work-Force Training. Chicago Lights Social Service Center, Urban Farm

◆ **Inside-Out Connections Ministry** www.insideoutconnections.org

◆ **Lawndale Community Church** www.lawndalechurch.org

3827 W Ogden Ave. Chicago, IL 60623

◆ **Men & Women In Prison Ministries** www.mwipm.com

10 W. 35th St. (9th Floor), Chicago, IL 60616 312-842-1177

M-F, 9-5. Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome.

- Corrections Case Management; State I.D.'s; Individual, family, and parenting support groups; Job Readiness; GED preparation; Individual & Family Social Services; Individual & Family Health and Wellness Services

◆ **Progressive Beulah Pentecostal Church** www.progressivebpc.org

1301 W. 87th Street 773-881-0106

Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are encouraged (M-F 9-5)

- Specializes in helping men and women that are struggling with drugs and alcohol related issues. Also feeds homeless men and women on a weekly basis.

◆ **Redeemer Church (two locations)**

6740 W. North Ave., Chicago, IL 60707 773-417-2399

1006 Gillick St. Park Ridge, IL 60450 847-823-3634

www.Redeemer-changinglives.com

Call or email for an appointment for Inside-Out Connections Ministry.

Walk-ins welcome, but recommend calling first. Everything is free.

- Inside-Out Connection Group – Weekly, Tuesday night (7-9pm) small group Bible study/support group. Male only; not equipped to serve mentally ill; some restrictions for sexual offenses.
- One-on-One discipleship and spiritual mentoring. Leadership development and apprenticing
- Church Life – weekly Sunday worship services; participation in full life of Redeemer Church congregation. Congregation is ex-offender friendly!

◆ **Mission:USA (The BRIDGE)** www.missionusa.com

Office P.O. Box 316, Forest Park, IL 60130 800-DA-BRIDGE

Call for appointment.

Walk-ins only welcome at BRIDGE program, which is held at Bethel Lutheran Church, 130 N. Keeler Ave., Chicago, IL 60624. Everything is free.

- Not equipped to serve the mentally ill.
- The BRIDGE – Weekly, Tuesday night ministry/worship service, with hot meal afterward.
- One-on-one discipleship and spiritual mentoring

◆ **Monument Outreach** www.mocservices.org

2750 W. Columbus Ave, Chicago, IL 60652 773-918-1556 (M-TH 10-4)

Call or email (monumentoutreach@yahoo.com) for appointment.

Walk-ins welcome. Everything is free.

- Assessment done at intake. No sexual offenders
- Placement Referral – Domestic violence, substance abuse, Pastoral Counseling
- Job Placement classes; GED Training/testing; Recovery Program – Spiritual curriculum; Hot meals for homeless every Sunday (breakfast and lunch); Expungement classes

◆ **7-70 Re-entry Services** www.770reentryservices.org

9146 Lincoln Ave., Brookfield, IL 60513 708-680-7075 (M-F, 9-5)

Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free services.

- Mentoring/Group Classes/Employment Assistance
- Spiritual Counseling/Case Management/ Anger Management

◆ **The Ship's Reentry and Recovery Ministries**

445 W. 119th St., Chicago, IL 60628 847.257.2300

Sun: 9:00a-1:30p; Wed: 7-8 p.m.; Fri: 7-8 p.m.

Call or write for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free services.

- Biblical Mentoring; Clothing, Housing, and Employment Resources; Caring Accountability

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT

Know that there is a path to recovery that leads to hope. Hope leads to change. Change is who the real you is. You can lead a safe, sober, and stable lifestyle once you've embraced and incorporated the challenge to change. (addictions and mental health counselor)

Just because you've been locked up and not been using, doesn't mean your problem is gone. The way addiction works, it'll want to come roaring back with a vengeance. So keep getting help *before* you're right back where you started. Use this opportunity to make sobriety stick this time. If you're on parole, your parole officer will need to approve your substance abuse treatment program that you attend. Before you sign up for a treatment program, make sure it's IDOC-approved. You may not receive credit for substance abuse treatment from a program not approved by DOC.

If substance abuse treatment is required as a condition of parole, you probably will be referred to Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC) for assessment or treatment services. TASC is more fully described in the *Get Organized* chapter. If you're not on parole, the DOC is not required to approve the treatment provider.

TIP

When you're looking for a treatment provider, do a little research. Different programs may have different schedules and costs. Call the program and ask about the type of clients they work with. Ask about the cost of treatment and the schedule of services. Don't forget to ask if the program offers a "sliding scale" fee structure, in which the cost is based on your income. Sometimes programs don't advertise that they offer a sliding scale. You must ask for it.

Finding substance abuse treatment and information

Here are some other resources for substance abuse treatment and information.

◆ **Above and Beyond Family Recovery Center**

2942 W. Lake St., Chicago, IL 60612 773-940-2960

Call for appointment. (M-F, 9-5) Free services. Walk-ins welcomed. Age 18+/

- Free individualized outpatient, and intensive outpatient treatment experience, including education, employment readiness, interpersonal relationships, yoga acupuncture, art therapy, AA/Smart recovery, etc.

◆ **Alcoholics Anonymous Chicago hotline: 800-371-1475**, There are many different websites for AA organizations around the state, but you can start with www.chicagoaa.org, which covers the Chicago metro area and has links to other organizations, as well as information about AA.

◆ **Chicago Victory Church**

3445 W. North Ave., Chicago, IL 60647 773-489-0865

Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome (prior to 8am and after 8pm)

- Free. Must be willing to grow/change spiritually. No pedophiles or extreme mental disabilities.
- 9-month residential substance abuse program (men's home and women's home)
- Discipleship, worship, Bible study.

◆ **Family Guidance Centers, Inc.** www.fgcinc.org

310 W Chicago Ave, Chicago, IL 312-943-6545

Call for appointment (M-F, 8:30-5)

Extended hours for Methadone Treatments and other specialized programs)

x281 – Methadone Treatment information

x252 – Mental Health Counseling

- No walk-ins. Cost varies with insurance plan. Will work with you regardless of coverage.
- Methadone Assisted Treatment, Heroin and other Substance Abuse Treatment, Mental Health Counseling Services, Clinical Assessment, Treatment involving medications

◆ **Gateway Foundation** www.recovergateway.org

Varied locations for residential programs (see website)

Email or call for appointment 800-971-4673 or 877-505-4673

- No Walk-ins. Cost is evaluated per individual (accepts most insurance providers). Must have history of substance abuse and desire change
- Inpatient residential drug & alcohol treatment, Outpatient treatment, Aftercare, Individualized counseling, family counseling and education

◆ **Guildhaus** www.guildhaus.net

2413 Canal, Blue Island, IL 708-385-3228

Email or call for appointment. 24-hours (staff: 9:00 – 9:00)

- Walk-ins welcome for support group. Cost is \$160/week. Must have a drug problem and want help. No drugs allowed on property, including psych. meds. No sex-offenders.
- Housing, Counseling, Support Groups

◆ **Halfway to Home** www.halfwaytohome.com

Two living homes on Chicago's North Side (Edgewater)

Email or call 773.405.6600 for appointment. Walk-ins welcome.

- Cost is \$660/month (all inclusive, except for food)
- Must be willing to participate in mandatory 12-step program.
- Alternative housing (sober living environment), drug screening, addiction specialists.

◆ **Haymarket Center** www.hcenter.org

W. Washington St., Chicago 60607

Call 312.226.7984 x480 for appointment

- Walk-ins welcome only for detox. All others must call for assessment appointment.
- Sliding scale cost. Accepts insurance; other funding options.
- Inpatient Treatment (residential; varied levels of programs), Outpatient Treatment, Detox, Recovery Homes, Specialized programs, Self-help Groups

◆ **Healthcare Alternative Systems** www.hascares.org

2755 W. Armitage, Chicago, IL 60647 773-252-3100

Call for appointment (M-F 9-9) for intake assessment and screening. Walk-ins welcome.

- Sliding fee scale; accepts managed care, Medicaid, etc.
- Substance abuse treatment, residential treatment for Spanish-speaking men, transitional male housing, anger management, domestic violence for perpetrators and victims

◆ **Hope House** www.lawndalechurch.org

3759 W. Ogden Ave., Chicago, IL 60623 773-542-5098

Call or mail for appointment. Walk-ins welcome.

- Must have desire to become drug-free.
- No sex-offenders or severe psychiatric patients.
- Free 9-month residential substance abuse recovery program, 3 meals/day, Medical clinic, Clothing, Personal supplies/necessities, Bible study/training, Job Training

◆ **Renewed Hope Community Service, Inc.**

626-628 E. 71st St. Chicago 60619 773-783-3579

M,W,F 6a-8p; T, TH 6a-6p. Walk-ins welcome. Sliding Scale. Medicaid accepted.

- Substance Abuse Treatment, especially heroin; Outpatient Counseling

◆ **Specialized Assistance Services**

Assessment & Admissions – 2630 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago 60616 312-808-3210

M-F 9-5. Walk-ins welcome. Most services are free. Must desire to recover from addiction.

- Residential (Branden House) Inpatient Treatment (30-90 Days, or more); Outpatient Treatment; Case Management; Adjunctive (Mental Health) Services; DCFS Family Recovery; HIV Counseling & Testing; 12-Step Support Groups

◆ **Teen Challenge Center** www.teenchallengeusa.com

3601 West Courtland Chicago Il 773-772-2211

Staffed 24 hours. Call and submit an application. No Walk-ins.

- \$1200.00 intake fee, plus \$65 for medical assessment. Must be 18 and over. Male only
- No sex offenders. No psychotropic medication
- Christian based program.
- 14-month residential program with two phases. The first 4 months are completed at the Hope Center in Chicago. 2nd phase is either completed in Raresburg, PA, or in Cape Girardeau Mo.

◆ **The Vision of Christ Life Center** thevisionlifecenter.vpweb.com

5025 S. Elizabeth St. Chicago 60609 773-759-9021

Call for appointment (M-F 9-6). Walk-ins welcome.

- Cost? is \$350/month (includes of food, amenities, clothing, necessities)
- Must be sober for at least 3 days. No sex offenders. Men only.
- Residential Substance Abuse program., Education, Job Training, Counseling, Financial Assistance

◆ **The Way Back Inn** www.waybackinn.org

104 Oak St., Maywood, IL 60153 708-345-8422

Intake (M-F 9-5). Walk-ins welcome, but scheduling appt. is recommended

- Sliding scale cost for outpatient as well as residential. Insurance accepted. Must want to recover. No sex or violent offenders for residential program.
- Extended Residential Care, group and individual substance abuse counseling, outpatient service, licensed clinicians; therapeutic environment

◆ **The Women's Treatment Center** www.womenstreatmentcenter.org

140 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago, IL 60607 312-850-0050

Treatment Center open 24/7. Call for appointment. No walk-ins.

- Accepts insurance (Medicaid); scale of pay varies.
- Women only (can have kids). No pedophiles.
- Residential rehab program, substance abuse treatment, detox, opiate maintenance therapy treatment, outpatient programs, alternative sentencing program

HEALTH (PHYSICAL, MENTAL, DENTAL) MATTERS

At some point you'll need treatment for medical, dental, and mental health needs. There are many ways you can find a treatment provider. If you were receiving medical, substance abuse, or mental health treatment while in prison, you may already have a good sense of the kind of treatment you need to continue after release. But with all the changes going on in the health care system, you'll want to check about the types of coverage available to you.

- If you're on parole, talk to your parole officer about your treatment needs. The parole officer must approve any provider you want to see for mental health treatment.
- If you're referred to TASC while on parole, the TASC case manager may do a treatment needs assessment with you and help you find an appropriate treatment provider. If you need medical, substance abuse, or mental health treatment after you're released from prison, don't wait until you're in crisis or out of meds. Start looking for help as soon as you can. Remember, asking for help is not a sign of weakness. Getting help can be one of the best ways to solve problems and move forward in your life.

Medical records while incarcerated

Keep your own medical records while you're incarcerated. Ask questions about any diagnosis and medications. Write this information down, and keep it after you're released.

- What is the diagnosis? If a drug is prescribed, what is the name and dosage? A drug usually has a brand name and a generic name. Write down both of these if you can.
- If you're on medication when you're released from prison, you should receive a 10-day supply of prescribed medicines, although some are given in a 30-day supply.

Mental health treatment services This section lists some mental health treatment providers in the Chicago area; however, it's not a complete list. If you're looking for mental health treatment, a good place to start is with the community mental health center serving the county in which you live.

If you need help finding mental health services, you can call the Chicago Department of Public Health (see below for locations and numbers). Many mental health treatment providers also offer substance abuse treatment. It's important that you feel comfortable with your treatment provider. If you need both mental health and substance abuse treatment, you may be able to find a single provider to do both. Or you may have (or prefer) two different providers. If so, make sure they know about each other so they can coordinate your care.

Community mental health centers

- Treatment at mental health centers includes therapy (individual, family, and group), medication management, and case management. For more information about what a center offers, call or visit the center or look on its website.
- Several community mental health centers have criminal justice clinical specialists trained to understand the needs of people in the criminal justice system. Many others have programs specifically for people who are or have been involved in the criminal justice system.
- When you call, ask to make an appointment for an intake interview. During the intake interview, you'll be asked about your financial and personal situation (homeless, indigent, on parole, discharged). Each mental health center decides its own eligibility criteria. The intake receptionist will explain this to you.
- Many community mental health centers have multiple offices in multiple locations, but we've listed only the main locations below. Check the web for information about other locations.

TIP

The location of your treatment provider may become a factor in your success. It's often harder to stay in treatment if the location isn't close and convenient. Keep this in mind if you have input into the decision for your treatment provider.

Other places to find help with health care

♦ **Association House of Chicago** www.associationhouse.org
1116 N. Kedzie Ave, Chicago, IL 60651 773-772-8009 X1020
Call for appointment (M-F 9-5)

- Walk-ins welcome, but prefer appointments.
- Free; Medicaid; Self-Pay; (depends on program).
- Mental Health Services, Vision & Dental, Case Management- participants are evaluated & linked with the right services, Mental Health Counseling, Substance Abuse Counseling

♦ **Chicago Mental Health Clinics**

Englewood: 641 W. 63rd Street, Chicago, IL 60621 312-747-7496

Greater Grand: 4314 S. Cottage Grove, Chicago, IL 60653 312-747-0036

Greater Lawn: 4150 W. 55th Street, Chicago, IL 60632 312-747-1020

Lawndale: 1201 S. Campbell Street, Chicago, IL 60608 312-746-5905

North River: 5801 N. Pulaski Road, Chicago, IL 60646 312-744-1906

Roseland: 200 E. 115th Street, Chicago, IL 60628 312-747-7320

Email or call for appointment (M-F 8:30-4:30) Walk-ins welcome.

- Accepts Medicaid, Medicare, Client/Patient Fees, and Private Health Insurance, Sliding Fee Scale, Facility Payment Assistance. Chicago residents 18 and older
- Adults with Serious Mental Illness, Substance Abuse Disorders, PTSD

♦ **Christian Community Health Center** www.cchc-online.org

9718 S. Halsted, Chicago, IL 60628 773.233.4100

M-W 8a-6p, Th 11a-8p, Fri 8a-5p Call for appointment. No walk-ins.

- Primary Health Care; OB/GYN; Pediatrics; Mobile Health Van; On-Site Pharmacy; Dental & Oral Health Care; HIV/AIDS testing & care; Behavioral/Mental Health; Substance Abuse Treatment; Domestic Violence Intervention; Housing & Shelter Services; Case Management

◆ **Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4)** www.c4chicago.org

2542 W North Ave., 4740 N. Clark Ave., 2525 W. Peterson, 5710 N. Broadway, 12940 S Western
Call 773-769-0205 for appointment or referral. No walk-ins. Must have insurance.

- Crisis service (24 hour line). Case management. Medication monitoring. Counseling, therapy. Parenting classes. Vocational rehabilitation. Spanish services available.

◆ **Cook County Hospital (SBIRT Program)**

1901 W. Harrison Chicago, IL 60612 312-864-6851

Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free services.

- Substance Abuse Help (Pre-Treatment, Referrals, Support Groups, Doctors, & Intervention)
- Psych. Help and Referrals

◆ **Empowerment Center**

2731 South Rockwell Ct. Chicago 60608 312-835-8760, 312-835-8918

M-F: 8:30 – 4:30. Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. No cost.

- Must have past or present involvement in cook county sheriff's women's justice programs
- Gender responsive; trauma informed; Integrated mental and substance abuse treatment
- Intensive case management for women.

◆ **Find Your Resilience** www.findresilience.org

5145 N Broadway, Chicago, IL 60640 312-646-0338

M-F, call for details. No Walk-ins.

Must be male, 16-24. No sex offenders.

- Youth and Young Adult Mental Health and Supportive Services
- Mental Health Assessments ; Life Skills Group for Re-entry population
- Group Therapy; Re-Entry Workshops

◆ **Hartgrove Behavioral Health System** www.hartgrovehospital.com

5730 W. Roosevelt Rd., Chicago, IL 60644 773-413-1700

Open 24/7. Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome.

Most services are free. Insurance accepted.

- Child, Adolescent, & Adult Inpatient Services (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Trauma Informed Care, Substance Abuse Track, etc.); Neuropsychiatric Inpatient Services (Mood/Anxiety Disorders, Traumatic Brain Injuries, ADHD, etc.); Trauma Program – Anxiety Management, Affect Recognition and Regulation, Cognitive Coping, etc.; Emergency Services Department; Adolescent Intensive Outpatient Program; Outpatient Services

◆ **Helping Her Live** www.helpingherlive.org

1500 S. California Avenue, Chicago, IL 60608 877-437-5432

Call for appointment (M-F 9-5). Walk-ins welcome.

- Free for those with no insurance. Those insured will be assisted with getting coverage through their insurance carrier (accepts most insurance providers).
- Must live in the zip codes: 60608, 60612, 60622, 60623, 60624, 60629, 60632, 60639, 60644, 60647, and 60651.
- Female-only. Free or low-cost mammograms.

◆ **Interfaith House** www.interfaithhouse.org

3456 W. Franklin Blvd. Chicago Il 773-533-6013

Call Tiffany (intake coordinator) for appointment 773-533-6013 X242

- No walk-ins. Must be over 18 and physically ill or injured.
- Free holistic care, case management, communal living, 120-day program, housing advocate to help find permanent housing.

◆ **Lawndale Christian Health Center** www.lawndale.org

3219 W. Carroll, Chicago. IL 60624 872-588-3000 Must be homeless

M-F 9-5. Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Sliding Scale, and accepts insurance

- Adult & Children's Health Services; Women's & Prenatal Care; Vision Care; Pharmacy; Dental Care; Specialty Care; HIV Care; Social & Spiritual Care

TIP 

Remember, if you're on parole, you'll need to use a treatment provider approved by the DOC. Always check with your parole officer to see if your provider is approved.

Veterans health care benefits

You are not eligible for VA medical care while you are incarcerated. You are also not eligible for VA medical care if you are in a community corrections facility on inmate status. However, you *are* eligible for medical care once you're placed on parole.

- Call 1.877-222-8387 to find the VA medical center or VA outpatient clinic nearest you.

Healthcare for Re-entry Veterans Program (HCRV)

(HCRV) is designed to provide information and referrals for services for veterans in their first six months of release. These services include referrals to medical, psychiatric, and social services (including employment). HCRV also offers short-term case management for veterans upon their release from prison. The VA has a call center hotline for veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The number is 877-424-3838 . It's answered 24/7 by a trained counselor.

FAMILY MATTERS

Getting ready for release

Part of pre-release planning is to think through and talk with your family and friends about getting out and reconnecting with them. What do you think the issues will be as you reconnect with the people you care about? What are your concerns about coming home? What are your expectations of your partner/spouse and family members? Your children? Friends and society? You need to acknowledge what you're expecting of all of the people on the outside.

And then ask yourself, "What are expecting (or fearing) from me?" The only way to find this out is to ask. Daily life on the outside has a lot of ups and downs, a lot of stress, a lot of daily decisions. If you've been incarcerated for a while, you may have lost touch with how things actually are on the outside. If your relations with your family and friends are strained, you may want to see if any of these relationships can be mended before you're released. One person who was incarcerated suggested that you write letters, apologize if necessary, and "find out where the relationship is."

Life in prison is also very different from life on the outside. As you prepare for release, think about how you'll let go of some of the survival skills you had in prison. You need different survival skills on the outside. The things that may have helped you cope with being in prison can make it difficult to reconnect with people after you are released.

Reconnecting with your spouse or partner You've probably dreamt about coming home for years. However, the reality of homecoming can be the opposite of the dream. Both of you may be disappointed or even shocked. We tend to idealize people when they're absent. We forget about shortcomings and how much work it takes to have a healthy relationship with a spouse or partner.

Another person put it this way: “My wife was perfect while I was incarcerated. When I came home, I met a person I didn’t know.” Every relationship can use some help. People are willing to help. It’s amazing what good can come of a couple of good counseling sessions. Take advantage of that.

Reconnecting with your children

Both you and your children may face challenges when you try to reunite after your release. Talk to the other parent/caregiver ahead of time. How are you going to rejoin your children’s lives? Will it be gradual? Will it be full-time from your first day out? Your children may need time to slowly adjust to your new relationship, even if you’re not going to be living with them full-time. Both you and your children must have realistic expectations about reconnecting. It may be easier on you and your family if you keep your reunion expectations modest.

Another thing to remember is that sometimes it’s hard for caregivers to switch back to you being the parent, especially if they took care of the kids for several years. It can be a hard adjustment for your kids, too. This is normal. Just remember, your children still care about you even if they’re sad or angry during this adjustment period.

You may find yourself trying to make up to your kids for lost time. Sometimes people feel enormous guilt and try to buy the affection of their children instead of realizing, as one woman said, that “the child is going to love you no matter what.” The best thing you can do, she said, is to “let your children see you doing something positive for yourself.” And then, “Be honest. Tell your children what you can do and what you can’t do for them, and why. Let them know your struggles, how you’re taking care of yourself, and what the parole officer or shelter or facility expects of you.”

Reconnecting with your partner and children will take time and patience, especially from you. It won’t happen immediately or magically. The resource section at the end of this chapter includes a number of places where you can seek help. More reconnecting advice:

- Don’t make your partner into your caretaker or teacher.
- Sex rears its head more than lots of things. There is a period of sexual adjustment, which can go on for years.
- Don’t be a nag. Don’t make the other person nag you.
- Take your time. Get to know the person. People, places, and things have changed.
- You may need to be alone more than before. This could be different from what your spouse and family need, but you may need it.
- Your partner was used to doing everything – holidays, kids, bills, having friends. Don’t get your feelings hurt when s/he disagrees with you.

LEGAL MATTERS

Twenty years ago you might have been able to fly under the radar screen, but with today’s technology they’re gonna find you. You know where you’ve been, and you know what mess is out there. Take care of it. (person who resolved several legal matters while incarcerated)

One of the most frustrating experiences is to finally get out, start getting your life together, and then get arrested unexpectedly for an old case, warrants, detainers, traffic tickets and fines. Sometimes these legal issues can be completely resolved while you’re still in prison. Some situations may be more complicated and will have to be dealt with after you’re released.

Old tickets and fines

If you know you have outstanding traffic tickets, municipal tickets, or fines, either in Illinois or another state, you can try to take care of them before you are released. Here are a few reasons to try:

- You may be able to resolve the matter with a letter or two. Several people said they wrote to the court and had traffic tickets dismissed while they were incarcerated.
- Unpaid traffic tickets create a “default judgment” which may prevent you from getting or renewing your driver’s license.
- Some unresolved traffic or municipal tickets, including from other states, may result in a warrant for your arrest. You can start by writing a letter to the court where the traffic or municipal ticket was filed. If the court is in Illinois, you may be able to get the court’s address at the prison library. If the court is in another state, you may need to ask for help from family or your case manager.

Child Custody and Dependency and Neglect Cases

The Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition published a publication called, *Parenting from Prison*, containing information on family law matters such as paternity, child custody and dependency and neglect cases. It also discusses ways to stay involved in your children’s lives even though you’re in prison. Your prison library may have a copy. It is also available for free online at www.ccjrc.org/pdf/ParentingFromPrison.pdf

TIP

DOC pre-release specialists talk about child support orders in their classes. They can provide copies of the necessary paperwork, contact information for the child support enforcement units, and help you navigate the process of asking for a lower child support order.

Child support after your release from prison

You’ll be expected to pay your monthly child support obligation and make payments each month to pay off your child support debt after you’re released.

If your child support order is being handled by a county Child Support Enforcement Unit, contact the unit before or immediately after you’re released from prison. Ask for the name and contact information of the technician assigned to your case.

Explain you want to work with the county. Ask if s/he will work with you on a payment plan that you can afford after you get a job. Tell the technician about any other expenses that you will be expected to pay while you’re on parole: UAs, BAs, treatment, housing, food, restitution, supervision, etc. If the amount of your child support order was lowered while you were incarcerated, the amount will most likely increase once you begin working.

- Your child support order may be terminated if the children live with you after your release if you’re determined to be the residential parent. If a county Child Support Enforcement Unit is involved, ask them to tell you what to do.
- Keep in regular contact with the technician, even when you’re no longer on parole. As with all business dealings, open communication is very important.
- If a county Child Support Enforcement Unit is involved, they’ll tell you where to send your child support payments. Remember to keep a record of all child support payments you make!
- If a county Child Support Enforcement Unit isn’t involved, follow the instructions in your child support order. If you no longer have a copy, you can ask the clerk of the district court (where the order was entered) for a copy of the child support order. You may also find instructions for making child support payments on a county court’s website.

Why you don't want to ignore your child support

First, supporting your children is a good and positive moral thing, and can make a huge impact on their future. Your child will appreciate the help that your financial support gives. This could strengthen your relationship with your child. Second, failure to pay child support is a violation of parole. There are other legal reasons to pay your child support. If you don't, the state can:

- prevent you from getting a driver's license
- suspend your occupational and recreational licenses – even your fishing license
- garnish(take) up to 65% of your after-tax income from your paycheck even before you get it
- report unpaid child support orders to credit reporting agencies
- place a lien on a house, land, car, or boat that you own
- bring you back to court on contempt charges and put you in jail.

Payment records of child support

You should keep all receipts of all child support payments, no matter who entered the child support order. If you pay your child support directly to the child's other parent, you must keep all of your own receipts. There is no other record of payment. Keep these receipts in case of questions later on.

Places to find help with legal matters

♦ **Cabrini Green Legal Aid** www.cgla.net

740 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60642 312-738-2452

Call and leave voicemail, following specific instructions (M-F 9-5) No walk-ins.

- \$20 Intake Fee. But if case is taken, there are no additional fees/costs. Income must be 150% of poverty level, or below. Resident of city of Chicago. No one with more than 3-4 convictions.
- Housing – Cases regarding termination of subsidized housing (eviction, voucher termination, or denial of admission to subsidized housing based on alleged criminal activity/record)
- Family – Cases in parentage court (unmarried parents for establishing/disestablishing paternity, custody, or visitation). So, would not handle case if only for child-support. Minor guardianship cases for biological parents seeking to prevent a guardianship, etc. Cases for order of protection.
- Criminal Records – Sealing and expunging. Criminal records release: health care waivers, clemency for Cook County residents.
- Criminal Defense – NOT accepting new applications for jail intake; DON'T handle DUI's, traffic cases, felony murder, manslaughter, sex crimes, or animal cruelty, or Federal cases, or filing an appeal. Must be resident of city of Chicago.
- CLAIM – Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers – If you are an incarcerated mother, or caregiver of a child whose mother is incarcerated: divorce, guardianship, short-term guardianship, discharge of guardianship, custody, visitation, foster care and adoption. Legal services on family law to incarcerated mothers, formerly incarcerated mothers, caregivers of children whose parents are incarcerated. Does NOT provide representation for criminal cases.

♦ **Child Support Services** www.childsupportillinois.com

6221 S Emerald Dr., Chicago, or 36 S Wabash Ave, Chicago. 800-447-4278

M-F, 9-5 Write or Call for appointment. No Walk-ins. Free services.

- Learn how and where to make child support payments; Establish Paternity; Education about the Modification Review Process; Assistance at all levels of service relating to child support.

◆ **First Defense Legal Aid** www.first-defense.org

Call for appointment 24-hr hotline 800-529-7374 No walk-ins. Free services.

- Must be in police custody (not Cook County Jail, etc.); first 48 hours of arrest.
- Representation during holding in police station. Free know-your-rights training

◆ **James B. Moran Center for Youth Advocacy** www.moran-center.org

1123 Emerson Ave., Ste. 203, Evanston, IL 60201 847-492-1410

Call for appointment (M-F 9-5) Walk-ins welcome, but best to call.

- Free legal representation: Evanston residents only, 21 years or younger, and at 150% of HUD poverty guidelines; Counseling, anger management, family counseling, crisis therapy
- Expungement and sealing services (for anybody); Legal representation for Evanston youth.
- Representation for students and families for expulsion/suspension hearings, etc. at schools (Evanston residents only). Expungement Help Desk at Cook County circuit court in Skokie (10-noon, Tues and Thurs.). Anyone can just show up.

◆ **Uptown People's Law Center** www.uplcchicago.org

4413N. Sheridan, Chicago, IL 60640 773-769-1411

“GET HELP” CHECKLIST ☑

Have you...

- Explored a local church (or other faith community) where you can build healthy relationships and thrive spiritually?
- Been serious about attending 12-step or other recovery programs in order to maintain sobriety?
- Lined up healthcare providers so that you have access to medications and any other mental, physical, or dental care needs that may arise?
- Arranged for individual or family counseling to handle the difficult transition back to resuming (or improving) your relationships with friends and family members, including children?
- Received legal help to figure out any outstanding legal issues (old tickets, fines, debts, restitution, child support, divorce or custody issues, etc.)?
- Are you pretty well connected to get all the help that you need (now and in the coming months), and that's available to you? If so, then it's time to *Get Going*.

GET GOING

Finally. Now that you're grounded in and fueled by hope, settled into a temporary home, gotten organized with your papers, and armed yourself with some solid people who want to help and support you, it's time to get going and start writing a new chapter in the story of your life.

For most of us, that new chapter includes the drama of finding (and holding on to) a new job. For many, getting going can (and perhaps should) include the possibility of getting some additional education as a way of investing in your future. For others, getting going can include how to manage money more wisely, effectively, and responsibly. For all of us, getting going means actually living out the new life that we could only dream of while locked up.

EMPLOYMENT AND JOB TRAINING

Don't set your sights too high. Any job is a place to start. Don't hold out for the dream job.

(employment counselor)

It may be hard to get a job, but it is possible. Many employers will hire a person with a felony conviction. Hiring decisions are based on whether your skills match the job available, whether the

employer thinks you'll be a good employee, and whether you seem like you'll get along well with the other employees, including the boss. The fact that you have a criminal conviction is something an employer will consider, but it may not be the deciding factor in getting a job. Focus on selling yourself as the best person for the job.

Many experts advise that you take any job, even if it's less than ideal, because it's a place to start, and you'll have some income while you look for a better job. Plus, being employed shows you're willing to work, and it can help you build a work history.

TIP

Make a to-do list every day of your job search. Plan your day so that you make the best use of time. Apply for jobs early in the day when managers are more available. You may want to call an employer to ask about the best time to apply. *When you're unemployed, looking for a job should be your full-time job.*

If you need help finding a job, consider making an appointment with one of the organizations described at the end of the chapter. They have a lot of experience helping people with a criminal conviction find a job. Many of them also have personal relationships with employers, so their referrals can help open doors that might otherwise appear closed. You don't have to do this alone. Many people are understandably in a big hurry to get a job. They think it's a waste of time to sit through orientations and learn how to do a cover letter and résumé, or to practice talking about their conviction. This may be a huge mistake. A job coach can be a big help.

This is when your "get organized" checklist will come in handy. Remember, without an ID or Social Security card, you can't get a legit job, and your prospective employer will question your reliability if you don't have your papers in order.

TIP

Your parole officer has to verify your employment, so it's a problem if you get a job that doesn't issue a paycheck or pay stub. If an employer is willing to document the dates and hours you work and your pay, then you might receive permission to work there.

Your boss needs to know that you'll be reliable. If you don't have permission to drive or don't have a car, will public transportation or a bicycle get you to and from work?

Job Applications

You usually have to fill out an application when you apply for a job. Employers use job applications to screen people and to decide which applicants to interview. Your application must make a good impression. We recommend that you fill out an application at home when possible so you can take your time and do a good job. Here are some common sense things to keep in mind...

- Follow all instructions. How well you follow instructions on an application shows how well you follow instructions and complete tasks on the job. Print neatly. Spell everything correctly. Messy or unreadable applications may get thrown away. Fill in every blank and answer every question. If a question doesn't apply to you, write N/A for not applicable instead of leaving it blank.
- If your DOC work history is relevant to the job you're applying for, use it.
- If the application asks for a salary, you can write "negotiable" on the application if you don't know the salary for the position.
- List references who will speak well of you and who have given you permission to list them.
- First impressions count. Dress up when you pick up or fill out an application. People notice.

TIP ▶

Many companies use online applications. You'll need your own e-mail address. You'll also need to know how to attach your cover letter and/or résumé into the online application. If you plan on filling out an application at a business, be prepared. Make sure you have all the information you need with you. If possible, have a sample application with you that you've already filled out. Then you can copy the information from the sample application onto the employer's application.

When you leave a completed application with an employer, ask if it's convenient to speak with the manager at that time. If this is possible, introduce yourself, shake his/her hand, briefly explain why you're interested in working there, and thank them for considering you. This is just a quick introduction – a chance to make an impression – not the job interview. Attach your résumé and cover letter to the application with a paper clip. The organizations listed at the end of this chapter can often help you prepare a professional cover letter and résumé. Call back in a day or two to follow up unless they specifically ask you not to call. Check back often enough to let them know you're interested in the job but not so often that you're bothering them. It's a fine line. Keep your message brief and professional. If you say in your cover letter that you'll call in two days, be sure you follow through.

Application questions about your conviction

If a job application doesn't ask whether you've been arrested or convicted of a crime, you don't have to volunteer it. The "don't ask – don't tell" method is how some people get their foot in the door. However, most applications do ask. Although people have different opinions about how to best handle this, we think it's best to be honest. Not only is it a better and more God-pleasing way to live, most employers run criminal background checks anyway. It's not just about *getting* a job. It's about *keeping* the job, and building on it. You can't build your new life on a lie or a half-truth. If you don't disclose your criminal record and an employer finds out, s/he probably won't hire you. If you don't disclose and the employer finds out after hiring you, you'll probably get fired.

- If you provide this information on the application, read the question carefully so that you answer the specific question. For example, the question may be about felonies only, or about felonies and misdemeanors, or for the last seven years, etc. If you say yes to the question about your criminal history, there are several schools of thought about what to do next.
- Some people believe the best thing to do is to write "Will discuss in interview" next to the box. If you decide to do this, you'll need to be ready to discuss your conviction. Some people find it very helpful to practice this conversation in job preparation workshops or with a friend. Agencies that provide such workshops are listed at the end of this chapter.
- Other people suggest answering this question by noting the type of crime, such as "drug charge – nonviolent" and to write "will discuss in interview" when the crime is more serious.
- Still others advise that you say yes and leave a letter of explanation with the application.
- Some people recommend that you wait until the question about your background is asked by the person interviewing you, while others recommend the opposite. One criminal justice specialist believes people are more successful if they explain their background early in the interview. For example, someone might say, "I can do all that's required of the job, but I need to tell you about this first." The specialist has found that individuals who try this approach are having more success getting and holding jobs because this approach encourages more dialogue between the employer and the applicant. In addition, by taking control of when the question comes up in the interview, applicants appear honest and more at ease.

Your choice for how to respond depends upon the circumstances. Just keep in mind that how you present yourself and your conviction is very important. It is helpful to practice this beforehand.

If (when) you don't get the job

Finding a job can be a long, drawn-out process, and it can be very demoralizing. Most people experience a lot of rejection, a lot of closed doors, and a lot of disappointment before landing a job. It takes guts, perseverance, patience, hard work, and above all, hope, to keep going when you run into one dead end after another. This process will test (and build) your character. Don't give up. Get the support you need. It's very frustrating when you don't hear back at all after applying for a job. This is common, especially when you drop off an application or apply on-line but don't have an interview. Phone calls and email to find out the status of your application will often not be returned either. After a while, you just assume that you aren't going to get the job. Sometimes. Though. it takes companies a long time to make a hiring decision so what seems like an eternity to you is really just their normal hiring timeline. If you do hear back and you didn't get the job, don't burn any bridge. Stay positive. There is a chance you're the next person they'll call if the person hired doesn't work out. Thank the employer for his or her time and see if the company will keep your application on file and whether there might be other job opportunities in the future. Ask if there's anything you could improve on that would make a difference. Ask if the employer knows anywhere else you might apply. Keep trying. Some people say getting a job is like a game of odds. The more you apply, and the more doors you knock on, the better your chances.

Day labor and temporary agencies

Day labor agencies may be a way to make money right after you're released. They agree to pay you a certain wage per hour. There's a list of these agencies in the phone book's yellow pages under employment. Check with your parole officer first before working for a day labor agency. Some community corrections programs won't let people work in day labor. You might consider registering with a temporary work agency. Sometime temporary work assignments turn into permanent jobs. Be careful though. Don't go with a temp agency that charges you any fees.

Places to find help getting a job

◆ Association House of Chicago www.associationhouse.org

1116 N. Kedzie Ave., Chicago, IL 60651 773-772-7170 (M-F 9-5)

Call or email for appointment. Walk-ins welcome, but prefer appointments.

Cost depends on job training program. Must be 18+ years old; No restrictions for classes; but for job placement, depending on the employer, there could be restrictions on type of criminal record and/or time passed since release.

- Education - Job Training, GED, computer classes, literacy classes "Customer Service Training & Job Placement Course" is done every month and runs for 3 weeks (M-Th., 9 am - 12 pm); National Professional Certificate in Customer Service is earned upon completion. \$10 registration fee; waivers available. "Adult Basic Education & GED Preparation" is done in six sessions throughout the year (morning & afternoon). "Open Lab"; M-F 10 am - 4 pm; Free; no appointment necessary; computer lab with help on resumes, computer training, homework.

◆ Bethel New Life www.bethelnewlife.org

4950 W. Thomas Ave. Chicago, 60651 773-473-7870 (M-F 9-5)

Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Cost varies (most free)

- Ages 18-40 (for business and workforce development. Limited capacity for mental illness.
- Business Development – Entrepreneurship Training, Workforce Development – Manufacturing Training, Asset Building – Financial literacy and counseling, etc.

◆ **BUILD (Broader Urban Involvement & Leadership Development)** www.buildchicago.org

5100 W. Harrison St. Chicago, IL 60644 773-227-2880 (M-F 9-5)

Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free services. No sex offenders.

Programs primarily designed for school-age and young adults, though all are welcome.

- Prevention: After-school programs, tutoring
- Intervention: Intensive mentoring, court advocacy, conflict mediation.
- Education and Career: College access & tours, public speaking, career readiness.

◆ **The Cara Program** www.thecaraprogram.org

237 S. Des Plaines, Chicago, IL 60661 312-798-3300 (M-F 8:30-5) Free services.

- No walk-ins. Must be referred and drug-free. No open criminal cases or warrants.
- Must be motivated – this is uncompensated, full-time training. Must be able to attend every day. Transportation and business suit provided. Must be in stable health and in compliance with any prescribed medical regimens. No convictions for violent crimes or violent sexual crimes. Life Skills Classes, Job Readiness Training, Permanent Job Placement, One Year of Post-Employment Support, Transportation provided, business suit provided, resume development, access to computer labs and the internet, financial coaching, and income support screening.
Clean Slate program – provides quality transitional jobs to Cara students

◆ **Center for Changing Lives** www.cclconnect.org

1955 N. St. Louis, Chicago 60647 773-342-6210 (M-TH 10-6)

Call for appointment. No walk-ins.

- Free Employment services, job readiness, financial literacy (credit & debt assistance); computer classes, job referrals, financial assessment, housing search assistance.

◆ **Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership** www.workforceboard.org

69 W. Washington, Ste. 2860, Chicago, IL 60602 (Multiple Office Locations) 312-603-0200

Garfield Workforce Center 10 S. Kedzie (1st floor) Chicago, IL

M-F 9-5 Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free services

- Interview Preparation; Resume Revision; Job Search Assistance; Career Planning; Customized Staffing; One-on-one coaching

◆ **Chicago Urban League** www.theChicagourbanleague.org

4510 South Michigan Ave., Chicago 60653 773-285-5800 (M-F 9-5)

Walk-ins welcome. No cost. No sex offenders and no crimes against women

- Employment services and wrap-around services, counseling, employment training, mentorship

◆ **Chicago Women in Trades** www.chicagowomenintrades.org

2444 W. 16th Street, Suite 3E Chicago 312-942-1444

M-F: 9-5. Call/Email for appointment. No walk-ins. No cost. Female only.

- Eligibility varies by program. Construction program for women interested in union apprenticeship. Welding program with job placement assistance in manufacturing

◆ **Community Assistance Program (CAPs)** www.capsinc.org

South Suburban: 1010 Dixie Hwy., Chicago Heights, IL 60411 (708) 755-5133; (708) 755-5136 fax

Roseland: 11717 S. Halsted, Chicago, IL 60628 (773) 568-1782 main (773) 568-2796 fax

Cottage Grove: 8455 S. Cottage Grove, Chicago, IL 60619 (773) 846-6383 main (773) 846-6270 fax

- Call for appointment. Must have photo ID. Free assistance. Must be 18+ with low or no income. No sex offenders Needs referral from IDOC. Talk to parole officer for referral.
- Job readiness training; evaluation and temporary job placement with possibility for permanent hire

◆ **Goodwill Industries of Metropolitan Chicago** www.goodwillchicago.com

30 N. Racine Ste. 230, Chicago 60607 312-994-1440 (M-F 8-4)

Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free services.

- Conviction must be at least two years old. No sex-offenders.
- Resource Center for Job Search (phone, fax, internet, printer, copier, computer), Employment Skills Training, Retail Services Training

◆ **Howard Area Employment Resource Center** www.howardarea.org

7637 N. Paulina, Chicago, IL 60626 773-262-3515 (M-F 9-5)

Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free services.

- Must be 18+, and resident of Chicago. Resume Assistance, free computer lab 1-4:30, daily, Job Search/Placement, Case Worker Referral

◆ **Illinois Manufacturing Foundation** www.imfjobtraining.org

2101 S. Kedzie, 2nd Floor, Chicago 60623 773-277-2343 Open M-F 8-5, Sat & Sun 9-5.

- Call or email Walk-ins welcome? Orientation 9:30am every Tuesday.
- Tuition of \$7600-\$8200 depending on program. You may pay out of pocket or use a funding source. Acceptable funding sources: Workforce Investment Act (WIA); Trade Adjustment Act (TAA); GI Bill. This organization is a not-for-profit and does not support student loans.
- 8th grade reading/math minimum; interested in subject matter, 18-55 years old
- Violent or sex offenders will limit job availability but not excluded from program
- Technical training for skilled jobs & careers

◆ **Inspiration Corporation** www.inspirationcorp.org

4554 N. Broadway, Chicago, IL 60640, 2nd Floor 773-878-0981 x237

Open M-F, 9-5 Email or call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free services.

- Must be low-income job seeker, and have Photo ID, SS Card, and Birth Certif.
- Employment Preparation Training (4-week workshop)
- Food Service Training Program; Case Management for basic needs, including CTA passes! All graduates receive job placement assistance, including interviews arranged with potential employers!

◆ **Jane Adams Resource Corp.** www.jane-addams.org

4432 N. Ravenswood, Chicago, IL 60640 773-728-9769 ext. 68

Call for appointment. No walk-ins. Free service.

- Employment Training. Manufacturing Training

◆ **JVS Chicago** www.jvschicago.org

Various Locations (see website) 855-463-6587 (M-Th. 8:30-5; F 8:30-4)

Call or email (info@jvschicago.org) for appointment. No walk-ins.

- Most services are free; some have nominal fees.
- Some programs restrictive of criminal record
- Job Training, Direct Job Placement, Disability Programs, Computer Training

◆ **Michael Barlow Center** www.slministries.org

2120 W. Warren Blvd. Chicago, Il 60612 312-226-6270 (M-Th 9-5; F 9-4)

Orientations every Monday at 3:00p. Walk-ins welcome. No cost.

- Must be 21 and have a criminal record
- 10) Restrictions (e.g. sex offenders, violent offenders, female-only, etc.)? No
- 11) How best to list your organization/program (check directory headings)? Employment services, literacy assessment, adult high school, intro college courses; training in food service prep, building maintenance; employment assessment.

◆ **New Moms, Inc.** www.newmomsinc.org

5317 W. Chicago Ave. 60651 773-252-3253 (M-F 9-5)

Call for intake specialist. Walk-ins welcome. Free services.

- Female only. Must be pregnant or parenting, but don't have to have custody. Only up to age 24, must be resident of city of Chicago and reside in 60651 zip code.
- Job Training, Subsidized Housing, Parenting program (moms 13-24), Emergency necessities provided (diapers, formula, etc.) for all

◆ **No Adults Left Behind (NALB)** www.noadultsleftbehind.org

7739 S. Halsted St, Chicago, IL 60620 773-982-7204

M-F 9-5 Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free services.

- Adults 18-45, or any age displaced worker
- Academic Advancement; Attain Valid H.S. Diploma; Employment Readiness Training; Job Placement Assistance (designated list of companies that specifically hire our graduates)

◆ **North Lawndale Employment Network** www.nlen.org

Office and resource center at 906 N. Homan Ave. Chicago, IL 60651

Classes held at 3726 W. Flournoy, Chicago, IL 60624 773-265-7940

M-F, 9a-4p. Walk-ins welcome. No cost. Must have a felony conviction.

- Career Development; Job Placement; Skills Training; Insurance

◆ **Phalanx Family Services** www.phalanxgrpsservices.org

1201 W. 115th St., Chicago, IL 60643

Resource Referral Information Hotline: (773) 992-6943

Open M-F 9-5. Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome. Free services.

- For some programs: must have I.D. and proof of authorization to work in U.S., proof of felony conviction, food stamp recipient, and low-to-moderate income. No sex offenders.
- Employment and Job Training, Employment placement, GED, Basic Computer Training, and Individual Employment Plan; Basic Nursing Assistant Training
- Employment program for individuals with disabilities
- NEXTstep-ONEstop – Re-entry community resource center (773-992-6943)

◆ **Positive Pathways of Chicago** www.facebook.com/PPC.ReEntry

1605 N. Keeler Ave., Chicago Call 773-543-5114 (M-F 10-2)

Email for appointment: positivepathwayschicago@gmail.com No walk-ins.

- Must have criminal record. Free program.
- Employee Relationship/Leadership Development Training
- Re-entry Consultation (needs-assessment and resource matching)

◆ **Roosevelt Univ. Life Skill Reentry Services** www.Roosevelt.edu

18 S. Michigan Ave. Room GB209, Chicago 60603 312-281-3371 (M-F 8:30-4)

- Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome, but call is preferable.
- Free (including transportation). Must have criminal record (IDOC #)
- Employment/Job Training, Degree Programs, Personal Career Development, Computer lab, Work with parole, Job search preparedness, free bus passes until first paycheck.

◆ **Safer Foundation** www.saferfoundation.org

571 W Jackson Blvd. Chicago, IL 60661 (312) 922-2200

Call intake 312-922-2200) Employment hotline 312-913-5796

Walk-ins welcome – 7:30 a.m. & 12:30 p.m. (must have State I.D.)

- Nationally recognized job training and placement, educational programs, residential programs

◆ **St. Sabina Employment Resource Center** www.saintsabina.org

1210 W. 78th Pl, Chicago, IL 773-783-3760 (M-F 9-5)

Call for appointment? Walk-ins welcome (M-Th., 10-11:30a; 1:00 - 3:30)

- Free services. No violent offenses. Employment & job training

◆ **Symbol Training Institute** www.symboltraining.edu

1413 Jeffrey Drive, Addison, IL 60101 Call 847-673-6500

8151 N. Ridgeway Avenue, Skokie, IL 60076

Monday – Saturday; 9:00am – 9:30pm Call or go to website for appointment. Walk-ins welcome.

Some cost, depending on course and duration of training.

Must be 18+, have aptitude for minimum 8th grade math and light physical work.

- Hands-on CNC Training by industry professionals; Small shop and lecture classes
- Nationally recognized certifications; Job placement assistance
- Symbol's 4-month program in the field of CNC and Advanced Manufacturing will guide you into a career with high wages, excellent benefits, job security and professional growth. We use our relationships in the industry developed over 35 years, to get you a job with one of the hundreds of manufacturing companies looking for skilled workers in the area.

◆ **Werner Business Group** www.wernerbusinessgroup.com

708-330-5383 Call or email for appointment. No walk-ins.

- Workshops and classes in the following subjects: a. owning a Business, b. careers in financial Services, c. life skills, d. resume writing, e. career exploration, and more.

◆ **West Side Health Authority** www.healthauthority.org

5417 West Division Street, Chicago, IL 60651 773-378-1878 (M-F 8–8)

Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome.

- Most programs are free; some on sliding scale. Community Re-entry and Employment Services; CSAC West; Computer classes & lab; Customized Case Management; Emergency Food, Clothing, and Transportation Assistance; Distribution of Hygiene Kits; Doctor Office Visits; Financial Literacy; Haircuts; Intake Analysis and Assessment; Overcomer Support Group/Mentoring Meetings; Voicemail Boxes; Job Placement; Readiness Training; Support Services; Voicemail Boxes; Cook County Works WIA Training and Employment Program.

EDUCATION Matters

One of the best ways you can invest in yourself and your future is to get further education. If didn't graduate from high school, try to get your GED certificate as soon as you can, Almost all work or training opportunities require either high school graduation or GED certification. If you already have your diploma or GED, consider enrolling in community college. For example, a basic accounting class could help you open your own business, and writing skills are always useful. If you think college is beyond your dreams, think again. Being focused and motivated – and getting the financial and tutoring help you need – will get you far.

General Education Development (GED)

If you need help preparing for the GED test, or if you need to know where you can take the test, go online and check out **Best GED Classes** at www.bestgedclasses.com/chicago-il They have a comprehensive listing of where you can take preparation classes (by zip code). The GED program has undergone a complete overhaul, and all four tests of the new GED exam will take a little over seven hours to complete, but you have the option to take each of the four tests separately at the time you are ready, there's no need to take everything at one time.

◆ **City Colleges of Chicago** www.ccc.edu

Multiple Colleges and Locations For info call 773-COLLEGE (773-265-5343)

M-F, 9-5 Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome at each campus.

Cost Varies, depending on scholarship, eligibility, etc.

- College certificate and degree programs.; High school students take classes for free. Free GED and ESL Classes!

◆ **Project Success** www.csu.edu/dosa/trio/educationalopp.center

9601 S. Cottage Grove, Chicago, IL 60417 773-437-4020 x221

M-F 8:30a-5p. Call for appointment. Walk-ins welcome on Wednesdays. No cost.

Must be 19+ yrs. old, without Bachelor's degree.

- Assist adults with continuing their education; GED Referrals
- Locate vocational/technical/degree programs; help complete financial aid forms

◆ **Back to School: A Guide to Continuing Your Education after Prison** ED Pubs, P.O. Box 22207, Alexandria, VA 22304 • 1.877.433.7827 *Back to School* is a re-entry guide about education funded by the US Department of Education. It is designed to help people in prison who want to attend college after release. The guide includes information about planning for and accessing education programs, including adult basic, GED, vocational, and higher education. The guide also provides instructions for finding financial assistance and other services. It offers practical advice at each step along the way in the form of testimonials from formerly incarcerated individuals. This publication is free. Write to the address above or call the number and ask for item number ED005088P.

MONEY MATTERS

You need to understand what your credit report is and how it works. Your credit is checked almost as often as your criminal history, and it can cause just as many problems for you. You also need to know how to budget your money and stay on top of everything!

Managing your money can be one of the most difficult things to do once you get out of prison. Not only will almost everything be more expensive than it was before you went to prison, but being on parole can cost a lot of money. Creating and using a budget will be especially important.

Taking care of loose financial ends while in prison

When you went to prison your head was probably spinning with a million things. If you didn't take care of your bills before you went to prison, don't forget that you may still be responsible for them. It may not seem important now, but it certainly will be when you're released. Everybody's situation is different, so we can't offer specific advice here. We just want to remind you to not forget about loose financial ends. Just because you forgot about the Verizon bill doesn't mean Verizon forgot about you. Remember, even if you're in prison, you can still be held legally responsible for the money you owe on your bills. If you ignore them, the accounts can be turned over to a collection agency with additional fees tacked on as well as ongoing interest.

Saving for release

If at all possible, it's a good idea to save as much money as you can while you're incarcerated. Any extra cash over your gate money could make a huge difference during those first few weeks out. Everybody will tell you that \$100 does not go far! If you have a friends or family members who are willing to send you a regular amount for canteen, see if they will set some of the money aside for your re-entry instead. Ask other family and friends who say they are interested in your re-entry success to do the same. Once people see you're willing to sacrifice in order to save for your own re-entry, you may find people are even more willing to help.

- Have them deposit the funds in a savings account on the outside and not into your DOC account. Remember, 20% is deducted for restitution and child support from anything deposited into your DOC account.

GET GOING CHECKLIST

Have you...

- Connected with employment counselors and taken advantage of the training, support, and referrals they can provide?
- Been disciplined, patient, and energetic about applying for work?
- Been willing to take a temp job or be the “low man on the totem pole” in order to establish a healthy work ethic and to use that job as a stepping stone to a better and more stable job?
- Seriously explored (or actually enrolled) in some continuing education for yourself as an important way of investing in your own future?
- Sought out help and been disciplined by handling your money in a responsible way?
- Have you worked through the entire process? If so, then it’s time to congratulate yourself, thank others, thank God, and be there to help the next man or woman through reentry!**

Give us your feedback! If the directory is going to be useful, it’s really important that our information continues to be accurate and up-to-date.

Go to www.redchicago.info and send us your corrections, additions, deletions, suggestions, and recommendations for how to improve the directory. This is very much a work-in-progress – we hope to update this directory 3-4 times a year, so check back periodically for the latest edition.

You can also contact us by surface mail:

RED Chicago 1006 Gillick St., Park Ridge, IL 60068 Phone: 847-823-3634