

Post-Release Checklist

When you get home

Coming home from prison, while a positive move, can be an overwhelming experience. Not only will you be adjusting to your new surroundings and routine, depending on how long you were away you may also have to adjust to changes within your family and social network, advances in technology, and changes in societal norms. It is important to have a support system in place and to rely on them when necessary. Those who love you want to see you succeed in your new life and will help you navigate this transition.

- Resources** – Check out the resources available to returning citizens in your area.
- Health Insurance** – Under the Affordable Care Act, returning citizens can usually qualify for significantly subsidized coverage and may be eligible for a Special Enrollment Period for a limited time after their release. Visit www.healthcare.gov or call 1-800-318-2596 to learn more.
- Driver's License** – If your license expired while you were away, get a new one as soon as possible. If it is still valid, don't forget to update your address if it has changed.
- Credit Card** – Start building your credit immediately by applying for a credit card. If you don't qualify for one, consider a secured credit card instead.
- Résumé** – There are several organizations that can help you prepare your résumé, including Goodwill Career Services. If possible, include letters of reference from one or two former employers, coworkers, or close associates who can write about your positive qualities as a worker, acknowledge your criminal history without going into detail, and assert their belief that you have the ability to move past it.
- Social Security** – SSI benefits are suspended if you are incarcerated for more than 30 consecutive days but less than 12 months, and terminated if you are incarcerated for 12 months or longer. You must request to have your benefits reinstated upon your release and you must provide a copy of your release documents. Visit www.ssa.gov/reentry/ or call 1-800-772-1213 to learn more.
- Some **Federal Defenders** offices employ a social worker to help returning citizens with their reentry needs. If you were represented by a Federal Defender, contact their office to see if they can assist you.
- Ask your **probation officer** if they know of any resources they can point you towards.