

# NEW JERSEY RENEW COURT

## A Guide for People Leaving Prison



**RENEW COURT:** *Committed to Helping You Reach Your New Goals for a New Life*

**RUTGERS**  
THE STATE UNIVERSITY  
OF NEW JERSEY

Center for  
**Behavioral Health Services**  
**Criminal Justice Research.**

## Goals for a New Life

**CONGRATULATIONS!** You are on your way to creating a wonderful new life for yourself and we are thrilled to help.

This guide is designed to help you get your second chance to develop a great life! Successful reentry into society can mean a host of things: reuniting with family, reestablishing relationships with family and friends, and gaining and maintaining a home, employment/education/vocation skills. This guide will lead you through those necessary steps for reintegration into the community. The process may at time be slow or daunting but remember this, we are here to help! The goal is simply to help you increase the odds of winning at community living and we are committed to helping. Now, let's start!

Most prisons have very basic reentry programs that help only a small number of people. Yet almost everyone inside prison eventually returns to the community. Living in the community after prison is **not** easy. Many people fail at living in the community or die trying! The research suggests that most people who leave prison **return** within three years. People who left prison report experiencing depression, disappointment, and frustration after they returned to the community. New evidence also shows that people who left prison are more likely to die in the community during the first few weeks, months, or year after release compared to people their age already living in the community. These deaths were caused by homicide, suicide, drug overdose, and cardiovascular problems. This is a very bleak picture. We share it with you so that you can "get real" with what you are facing as you approach the gate. **Your experience back to the community can be different; it can be successful. It is your choice to make it a priority. We are here to help.**

Please read the entire guide and familiarize yourself with the documentation needed to obtain identification, healthcare, food stamps and so much more. Use this tool as a guide to community outreach services that are available in Newark/Essex County. Also, utilize the **RENEW Team** to assist you with any questions/concerns you may have. You may also have other issues not covered in this guide, reach out and we will work with you – this guide, just a little roadmap to get you started.

The **RENEW Team** is **committed** to ensuring your success!

## Steps to Successful Community Living

### In Prison Steps:

<b>Step One:</b>	Getting the Paper “You” in Order .....	4
<b>Step Two:</b>	Things to Know about Your Identity .....	5
<b>Step Three:</b>	Things to know about Your Conviction .....	6
<b>Step Four:</b>	“Get Real” with Community Living .....	8
<b>Step Five:</b>	Getting “You” Ready for Community Living .....	16
<b>Step Six:</b>	Getting and Staying Healthy .....	18
<b>Step Seven:</b>	Getting Your Family Ready for Your Return .....	20

### Appendices:

- A:** Basics of Internet Searches
- B:** Resources for People Leaving Prison
- C:** How to Apply Public Assistance and Public Benefits
- D:** How to Apply for Medicaid
- E:** Federal Bonding and Tax Credits
- F:** Opportunity to Compete Act
- G:** Your Ideas to Improve the Guide

## Step One: Getting the Paper “You” in Order

### **Question: Do you have identification?**

**YES**

If you already have photo identification, skip to **Step 2**.

**NO**

Continue with this step.

If you are already released, talk to your **RENEW** Probation Officer.

Since 9-11, **photo** identification has become essential but also hard to get.

### **Birth Certificate**

**YES**

**NO**

See your Corrections Counselor to obtain your birth certificate. They will help you apply for your birth certificate no matter which state you were born. **It is usually easier to get your birth certificate through your institution** instead of applying for it after you are released.

If you are already released, talk to your **RENEW** Probation Officer.

**Birth certificates** are requested from the state offices of Vital Records. See your Corrections Counselor to get your birth certificate.

### **Social Security Card**

**YES**

**NO**

See your local Social Security Administration Office to obtain your Social Security card. You will need to fill out an application form and present required proof of identification before your application can be processed.

The form and additional information can be found at:

<https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf>

**RENEW WILL HELP YOU, talk to your **RENEW** Probation Officer!**

**NOTE: The Social Security Administration will not process SS card applications submitted from people inside prison.**

### **Driver’s License or Non-Driver Photo Identification**

**YES**

**NO**

Speak with your Corrections Counselor to know the status of your license and obtain your driver’s license or non-driver photo ID. **It is usually easier and faster to get photo identification through your institution** than after being released.

If you are already released, talk to your **RENEW** Probation Officer.

**RENEW will help you through the entire process of having your license reinstated / restored or even obtaining a license. Ask for help!**

Some types of convictions, such as DWI or drug possession/distribution convictions, place lifetime or time limit suspensions on the ability to get a driver’s license. Check the laws in your state to determine if this affects you.

**Talk to your **RENEW** Probation Officer!**

## Step Two: Things to Know about Your Identity

### **Question: Is your identity clear of trouble?**

- YES** If your identity is clear of trouble, **move to Step 3**. If you are unsure, continue with this step.
- NO**
  - Active warrants or detainers
  - Active fees or charges
  - Possible “identity theft”

Many people reported that they have pending warrants and detainers and that they were unsure whether they would be picked up at the gate by federal or local agencies. Others had fees or charges associated with child support, court rulings to pay damages or restitution, or court/defense costs.

### **Doing a “Background Check” on Yourself**

#### Legal Background Check

- Request information about detainers and warrants from paralegals in the community.
- Request legal aid assistance in the community.
- Arrange for someone on the outside to do a background check on you.

Employers and landlords often perform criminal and civil background checks. What they will find out about you varies by the search site. The most reliable search sites are [NetDetective.com](http://NetDetective.com) and [CourtRecords.org](http://CourtRecords.org). Both charge about \$29.00 for a three-year membership. You need to know what employers and landlords are going to see before they see it!

#### Credit Background Check

The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) requires several nationwide companies to provide you with a **free** copy of your credit report, at your request, **once every 12 months**.

Order your free report:

- 1.) Online – [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com)
- 2.) Phone – 1-877-322-8228
- 3.) Mail – Find the Annual Credit Report Form at <https://www.annualcreditreport.com/manualRequestForm.action>

Send the completed form to:

**Central Source, LLC**  
P.O. Box 105281  
Atlanta, GA 30348-5283

**MYTH BUSTER!**

**MYTH:** Employers have no federal income tax advantage by hiring ex-felons.

**FACT:** Employers can save money on their federal income taxes in the form of tax credits through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program by hiring ex-felons.

**Talk to your RENEW Probation Officer!**

## Step Three: Things to Know about Your Conviction

### **Question: Does your conviction affect reentry?**

- YES - Talk to your RENEW Probation Officer!**
- NO** My conviction does not affect where I live, the jobs I can apply for, my application public benefits, or my ability to obtain a driver's license. **Skip to Step 4.**

Many people report that they cannot find affordable housing, transportation, decent jobs, or treatment services; and that they don't know how to find them.

### **Home Plan Planning**

- Request information on public housing from family members, friends, and community organizations.
  - Have your family member, friend, or community organization begin the search with this HUD website.  
[https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/new\\_jersey](https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/new_jersey)
- The Public Housing Authority will not assist sex offenders find housing. Instead, reach out to family, friends, and organizations in the community to get information on housing.

#### **MYTH BUSTER!**

**MYTH:** Federal law bans all individuals with criminal histories from public housing programs.

**FACT:** HUD requires all PAHs to perform criminal background checks. Permanent ban on public housing for two offenses:

- (1) Conviction of meth production on properties of federally-funded housing.
- (2) Individuals who have a lifetime registration under state sex offender program.

Many states deny public housing to people with a history of violence and those with felony drug convictions.

A main reason for denying a public housing application is "false" information on the application.

Eviction can occur if a person receiving public housing benefits allows a convicted drug offender live with him or her within 2 years of their release.

Private landlords can reject applicants or evict residents for arrests or convictions. **PHAs can set different criminal record policies for each of their housing programs.** Contact your local PHA office to get more information.

### **Public Assistance (including food stamps)**

- Individuals cannot apply for public assistance while incarcerated. Seek outside assistance from family, friends, or organizations to obtain information on public assistance.

Federal law says that individuals with certain drug-related charges are banned from receiving public benefits, including public housing, cash assistance and food stamps.

## Step Three: Things to Know about Your Conviction

### Employment

- Connect** with employment programs in your institution to receive help writing resumes and cover letters, job applications, skill building and course work. See your Counselor to review these programs.
- Your institution may offer vocational courses in auto technician, masonry, construction, and more. Receive a nationally accredited certification when the course is completed. Speak with your Counselor to discuss vocational courses and eligibility requirements.
- Contact the **Department of Labor & Workforce Development** in Trenton, NJ to learn about the state laws that prevent people with criminal records from employment and about programs within the state that help ex-offenders get jobs.

In Newark, the **“Ban the Box”** law became effective November 2012. People with criminal records are no longer required to check off the ‘criminal history’ box on job applications. Those with a criminal record have an equal opportunity to complete a job application and one interview before discussing their criminal past.

**Goodwill Industries International, Inc.** is a nonprofit provider of education, training, and career services for people with disadvantages, such as welfare dependency, homelessness, and lack of education or work experience, as well as those with physical, mental and emotional disabilities. Goodwill Industries leads the way in creating employment opportunities for the approximately 650,000 ex-offenders who return to their communities each year. For more information, please visit <http://www.goodwill.org/>.

### MYTH BUSTER!

**MYTH:** A criminal record automatically bars you from employment.

**FACT: NO!** An arrest or conviction record will **NOT** automatically bar you from employment.

Talk to your **RENEW** Probation Officer!

## Step Four: “Get Real” with Community Living

### **Question 1: Do you have a “recovery” plan?**

- YES**, I have a recovery plan that includes a plan to regain my community living skills, my need to work to pay bills, my parenting responsibilities, my ability to talk with men, women, and children, and my emotions. **Skip to Question 2.**
- NO** If you are unsure or your circumstances change, continue with this step.

People leaving prison report being scared by all they don't know or forgot about living in the community.

Some people were concerned about all the choices that have to be made and about paying for all the choices.

### **Recovery Plan**

- Request books on the internet and searching the internet: *The Internet for Dummies* book is particularly good.
- Enroll in a computer class and practice.
- Request books and materials on how to budget your money, save, use credit, and use checking accounts and ATM cards. Practice budgeting and saving while in prison.
- Get involved in any program or opportunity that brings you into contact with community members. Look into mentoring programs and look for ways to talk with people on the outside to practice talking with people and learning about community life.
- Read the newspaper – learn about what is happening in the outside world.
- Request self-help books on building self-confidence, a positive self-image, and parenting.

**Talk to your RENEW Probation Officer!**

**The RENEW team can help!**

Some express concern about not knowing how to use the internet or ATM cards.

Some employers require job applications to be completed and submitted online.

Many people reported problems managing money, using cashing services that charge high fees, and getting too many credit cards and misusing them, and not knowing how to get or use a checking account.

People report feeling like an “alien” when they return to the community. People, places, and situations have changed since being behind the wall. Nothing looks the same. Bus and train tickets are purchased from machines, not people. People talk on cell phones everywhere. People report feeling like they need a “human upgrade”. They need to get their feelings back.

**“Real men have real feelings.”**

## **Step Four: “Get Real” with Community Living**

### **Question 2: Do you have a “good” reentry plan?**

- YES** I have a reentry plan that includes a self-care plan, a home plan, a career plan, a probation plan, and a social support plan, with a back-up plan in case things change. **Skip to Step 5.**
- NO** If you are unsure or circumstances change, continue with this step.

### **Reentry Plan – You must ask for assistance from family, friends, community organizations, or the Corrections Counselor to complete this section.**

- Complete the Reentry Planning Form on next page and follow the plan.
- Get information on all types of housing options.
- Get information on communities that have public transportation.
- Get information on communities that will help you stay away from trouble.
- Get information about offender-friendly employers.
- Get classified ads on jobs in the community where you will be living and send for information or apply by mail.
- Write a statement about your work ethic and send it with your job application.
- Get at least one job skill while in prison.
- Apply for union membership.
- Apply for apprenticeship programs.
- Apply for admission to state-sponsored transition employment programs.
- Identify agencies that help people leaving prison on the outside.
- Learn about supervision and contact your probation staff before leaving prison.

Some people are concerned about living up to the expectations of their mothers or children, and other people who gave them money or support while in prison.

People leaving prison report that things fall apart as they get close to leaving. Home plans are rejected by probation; family or friends change their minds; and employers don't have a job.

**People feel overwhelmed by what they need to do to get ready for the community.**

People report not knowing the date of their release and can't make plans.

People report not having information about jobs or housing in the communities where they will be living.

Getting a job requires sending lots of job applications.

**Ask, search, ask, search....**

People leaving prison on probation report not knowing the rules for probation, who their probation officer will be, or how they will get to the probation office after release.

**REMEMBER: You need a back-up plan and a back-up for the back-up plan. Things happen!**

**Talk to your RENEW Probation Officer!**

**REMEMBER:** Do not count on the BOP to provide all the information that you will need to prepare for living in the community. Search the *County Resource Directory* at the prison library for agencies that help people leaving prison or that can provide housing and job information. The County Resource Directory has information on housing, parenting, and family reunions. Find the County Resource Directory in the “Reentry” section of the prison library.

Talk to each other about programs available in different communities or about resources that are available to help people with food, clothing, jobs, transportation, and housing. And..... **Talk to your RENEW Probation Officer!**

**MYTH BUSTER!**

**MYTH:** Child welfare agencies are required to terminate parental rights if a parent is incarcerated.

**FACT:** Child welfare agencies and states have the discretion to work with incarcerated parents. The goal – preserve and strengthen family relationships.

**Notes:**

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## Reentry Planning Form

**Do you have proof identification?**

- Birth Certificate
- Social Security Card
- Current driver's license or non-driver photo identification

**Do you have a home plan?**

**Goal: Find a safe and stable place to live.** A place that keeps you away from bad influences and that gives you privacy to deal with the "Stuff" of returning to the community.

**Goal: Know the things and behaviors that get you in trouble.** Know your risk factors and then manage them in smart ways. Trouble doesn't just happen, you let it happen!

**Goal: Have a back-up plan.** Things happen, so plan for it.

**Goal: Living with family can be stressful.** Understand what is expected of you before living with family. Some things don't change, so plan for it.

*Check the **Plan A** option that best describes your housing arrangements and have your Plan B ready!*

- Plan A:** Safe, stable place to live
- Plan B:** Safe, stable place to live
  
- Plan A:** Safe, temporary place
- Plan B:** Safe, temporary place
  
- Plan A:** Risky, temporary place
- Plan B:** Risky, temporary place

**Notes:**

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**Talk to your RENEW Probation Officer!**

## Reentry Planning Form

### **Do you have a career plan?**

**Goal: Find a living wage job.** A job that pays enough to pay your bills, fines, day-to-day living expenses, and savings. **Your first job out of prison is a stepping stone.** Establish your reputation as a good employee and use your reputation and skills to get a better job.

**Goal: Find a career that will provide satisfying work.** Look into employment counseling to identify careers that interest you and what you need, to get that type of job.

**Goal: Think about more education or vocational training.** Getting a better paying job requires schooling and training. Think about night school, online classes, or apprenticeship programs. Invest in your abilities!

**Goal: Have a back-up plan.** Things happen, so plan for it.

**Goal: Get health insurance and other benefits.** Getting sick is expensive. You can lose a job or run up large medical bills. Look for jobs that offer health insurance and sick days, as well as other employee benefits.

**Goal: Build your reputation as an employee.** Identify the characteristics that you want to define you as an employee and then perform your job that way. (Do you want to be known as trustworthy? Reliable? Smart? Skilled?) You are in control of your reputation!

Check the **Plan A** option that best describes your employment arrangements and have your **Plan B** ready!

- Plan A:** Living wage job with benefits
- Plan B:** Living wage job with benefits
  
- Plan A:** Living wage job with no benefits
- Plan B:** Living wage job with no benefits
  
- Plan A:** Minimum wage job with benefits
- Plan B:** Minimum wage job with benefits
  
- Plan A:** Minimum wage job with no benefit
- Plan B:** Minimum wage job with no benefits

### **Notes:**

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## Reentry Planning Form

### **Do you have a supervised release plan?**

If you are going out on federal supervised release upon release, you will receive a green sheet prior to release.

**Goal: Know your stipulations before release.** Find out before you leave what programs you are required to complete as a conditions of supervised release and what you are required to do and not to do to be compliant with supervised release stipulations.

**Goal: Meet your probation staff before release.** Get right with your PO before you leave prison. Introduce yourself to the probation staff and ask questions about what is expected.

**Goal: Prepare for your first meeting with your PO.** Prepare for the fact that your PO will not be prepared for your arrival. You will likely have to wait to see your PO. Just listen and be respectful. Your PO will not be your friend but he/she doesn't need to be your enemy. Just do what needs to be done and get with living!

- Know your general and specific conditions
- Know the name of your PO
- Know the address and phone number of the Probation Office where you will have to report
- Make travel plans to get to the Probation Office on the day of release.
- Option 1:** Have a plan for working with your PO
- Option 2:** Just react to your PO and to the situation at the probation office

### **Do you have a social support plan?**

**Goal: Have people you can count on.** It "takes a village" to return successfully to the community. Look for many sources of support and encouragement.

**Goal: Expect to give and receive help.** Everyone in the community is struggling to make ends meet. Nothing is free and easy. Find ways to give back while you are receiving help. Show appreciation with words and actions.

**Goal: Be patient with others.** Things take time. Getting frustrated and showing it will not make things happen faster or easier. Use your time productively while you wait – look into other opportunities, educate yourself, and work on other goals. Remember, treating others with kindness, respect, and understanding increases their willingness to work with you. You want people to want to help you, hire you, and rent to you and love/like you.

**If you attend drug and alcohol counseling/treatment, speak to a Peer Support Specialist about attending AA/NA meetings in the community.**

**If Peer Support Specialists are not available in your institution, contact the Reentry Office at Central Office.**

- Have at least two people you can count on for help.
- Have a mentor
- Know where you can find other people for support – church, AA/NA, self-help groups.
- Arrange for a temporary AA/NA sponsor before you leave prison
- Know at least two ways that you can give back to others who help you
- Know how to use time constructively and productively while you wait
- Know how to treat people so they will want to help you

## Reentry Planning Form

### Do you have an “idle time” plan?

**Goal: Plan things to do during “idle time”.** Idle time is when you have downtime or waiting time. Identify a list of activities that will keep you busy and focused when you are not working or taking care of responsibilities. **Idle time is one of your biggest risk factors!**

**Goal: Have a list of places where you can go when you get lonely or feel bored.** Some people or places will remind of your old ways and habits that brought you to prison. Engage your mind and think of alternatives for yourself. Don't be a victim of old habits. Choose to be in control of your destiny! Find new places and people that will keep you focused on your goals of living successfully in the community. Remember that you can help others - consider volunteering to use your expertise to help others.

- Have a list of things to do when you have idle time that will keep you out of and away from trouble.
  
- Have a list of places you can go to be with people or around positive influences.

**Talk to your RENEW Probation Officer!**

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#### **MYTH BUSTER!**

**MYTH:** You need a mailing address in order to apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

**FACT: NO!** An individual can get SNAP benefits without a mailing address.

## Reentry Planning Form

### **Do you have a self-care plan?**

**Goal: Be, act, and stay healthy.** Being healthy includes eating healthy foods, exercising to maintain a healthy weight, taking medications for chronic conditions as prescribed, keeping treatment appointments, getting a good night's sleep regularly, and practicing positive (can-do) thinking. Basically, whatever you tell your children to do, follow that advice in taking care of yourself.

**Goal: Cope with stress in positive ways.** Stress is part of life. How you deal with it is what matters. Healthy stress management includes finding ways to talk about it or understand it, calming yourself down through positive self-talk, staying focused on positive things and goals, having someone to call if your thoughts and feelings are in crisis, and remembering stress is about life situations, not about your worth as a person.

**Goal: Feel and manage your emotions.** Real people have real emotions. They have emotions of grief, sadness, hurt, love, excitement, anxiety, loneliness, bravery, envy, kindheartedness, disappointment, plus many more. Feeling emotions requires an ability to manage them. Managing emotions means that you are in control of them, not them in control of you.

**Goal: Practice good decision making.** Good decision making is about thinking before you act and considering alternatives before acting. Good decision making requires being patient, thoughtful, having goals and priorities to consider while making decisions, and learning to be flexible. It is about considering what is best for you today, tomorrow, next year, as well as how what is best for you affects people you love and are responsible for.

- Review Medicaid and other public health programs with the Corrections Counselor before leaving prison.
- A professional in the community can request a copy of your medical records with your signed permission. DOC will not release your medical records to you upon re-entering the community.
- Know where the free clinics are in the community where you will be living so you can fill prescriptions and be seen without insurance.
- Identify a list of healthy foods and plan how to get them into your diet.
- Set a healthy weight goal for yourself and get a plan to reach that weight.
- Develop an exercise plan (walk 30 minutes every day). Focus on exercise that increases your heart rate.
- Develop a stress management plan
- Practice stress management in your daily life
- Learn positive thinking from people - watch and learn from people who stay positive
- Label your emotions when you feel them and choose how to manage them
- Learn emotion management from people who feel and who are successfully managing their emotions
- Think before you act in your daily life. Consider the consequences and ask whether this is the future you want for yourself and for others who care about you and counting on you
- Know when the best action is to let it go without getting involved

## Step Five: Getting “You” Ready for Community Living

### Question 1: Are you ready for community living?

- YES** I am confident that I have done everything I can to get myself ready to live responsibly, healthy, and productively in the community. **Skip to Step 6.**
- NO** Continue with this step.

People report not being able to get themselves ready for the community in days or weeks.

Many people said that getting ready for the community after prison begins on the first day inside prison.

### Get a Plan and Follow It

- Think about the kind of life you want for yourself and your family after prison
- Think about the types of characteristics that you want to describe you as a person, son, daughter, partner, employee, person, friend, neighbor, and citizen
- Think about your legacy and what you want to leave behind at the end of your life
- Think about the people you respect and admire - what is it about them that you respect and admire?
- Think about what gives you hope and encourages the best in who you are
- Imagine the life that you want for yourself and work towards it every day and with every decision
- Plan to be the person who you respect and admire
- Complete the Reentry Planning Form and follow the plan
- Get into a vocational training program that gives you skills that lead to a living wage job in the community
- Invest in your abilities to read, write, and speak effectively
- Learn something new every day
- Think about others and their feelings
- Learn to appreciate what you have and the things that make you feel appreciated
- Learn to give
- Find meaning and opportunity in every experience

People report the characteristics of their “**new selves**” in roles like parent, son, daughter, partner, person, friend, neighbor, and employee are:

<b>Reliable</b>	<b>Trustworthy</b>
<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Mature</b>
<b>Confident</b>	<b>Accountable</b>
<b>Dependable</b>	<b>Understanding</b>
<b>Loving</b>	<b>Thoughtful</b>
<b>Respectful</b>	<b>Trusting</b>
<b>Honest</b>	<b>Independent</b>
<b>Focused</b>	<b>Driven</b>
<b>Industrious</b>	<b>Goal-oriented</b>

People report the characteristics of their “**old selves**” include:

<b>Irresponsible</b>	<b>Bitter</b>
<b>Slacker</b>	<b>Angry</b>
<b>Stupid</b>	<b>Unloving</b>
<b>Unfocused</b>	<b>Depressed</b>
<b>Unfaithful</b>	<b>Liar</b>
<b>Lazy</b>	<b>Selfish</b>
<b>Thief</b>	<b>Uncaring</b>
<b>Drug addict</b>	<b>Impulsive</b>
<b>Worthless</b>	<b>Scary</b>

## Step Five: Getting “You” Ready for Community Living

### Question 2: Do you qualify for public benefits?

**\*\*To be completed AFTER you are released with help from family or friends\*\***

#### Social Security Benefits

- Contact the Social Security Administration Office to request information on the eligibility and ineligibility conditions for these benefits.
- Visit their website at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)
- Call with questions at 1-800-772-1213

Social security benefits are for people 62 years old or older.

#### Social Security Disability Benefits

- Contact the Social Security Administration Office to request information on the eligibility and ineligibility conditions for these benefits.
- Visit their website at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)
- Call with questions at 1-800-772-1213

Social security disability benefits are based on work history and disability.

#### Supplemental Security Income

- Contact the Social Security Administration Office to request information on the eligibility and ineligibility conditions for these benefits.
- Visit their website at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)
- Call with questions at 1-800-772-1213

Supplemental security income is based on financial need and disability age.

Search for a local Social Security Office at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps6z/FOLO/fo001.jsp>

#### Notes:

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## Step Six: Getting and Staying Healthy

### Question: Is your health in order?

- YES** My health, mental health, and teeth are in good shape and I don't have any concerns about needing any services related to medical, mental health, or dental problems or substance abuse services in the community. **Skip to Step 7.**
- NO** Continue with this step.

People leaving prison report that they have some type of chronic medical problem, like hypertension diabetes, asthma, **HIV/AIDS**, that requires follow-up treatment and medication in the community.

Some people leaving prison report needing follow-up treatment for mental health (for example, depression, PTSD, anxiety) and substance abuse problems.

### Getting your health ready for reentry

- Talk with the Facility Health administration at the institution about medical appointments to get chronic and acute medical problems treated while inside prison
- Talk with the Psych department at the institution about mental health appointments to manage problems related to depression, trauma, anxiety, or other types of emotional problems.
- Talk with your Corrections Counselor or Facility Health administration at the institution about dental appointments to get teeth repaired or to request dentures for teeth that have been extracted or lost while inside prison.
- Learn about the prison's policy regarding releasing people with a supply of medications for chronic medical problems. Arrange to qualify for receiving a supply of medications at release for all medications needed to manage health and mental health problems.
- Seek out Free Clinics or obtain information about prescription plans or health insurance plans for people leaving prison.

People inside prison have a constitutional right to receive medical and mental health treatment. This right does NOT follow the person into the community.

Teeth matter! They affect your appearance and your confidence.

Most prisons have a policy to release people with at least a two-week supply of essential medications.

Access to health and mental health services in the community depends in the ability to pay. Seek out Free Clinics until you are able to pay for these services.

Talk to your **RENEW Probation Officer!**

## Step Six: Getting and Staying Healthy

### Getting your medical records in order

- A professional in the community can request a copy of your medical records with your signed permission. DOC will not release your medical records to you upon re-entering the community.

Maintaining health requires having documentation on medical treatments and medications that can be provided to community-based professionals.

Most DOCs will provide medical records upon request, but only for medical professionals in the community.

### Protecting your health on the outside

- Find the location of the nearest AA/NA meeting prior to release.
- Arrange for a temporary AA/NA sponsor before leaving prison.

Seek assistance from your Peer Support Specialist about finding Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous in the area where you will be living. **NA has a toll free number, 1-800-992-0401 which is answered by a 12 Step volunteer who will provide information or a recording machine will answer and give the day, times and locations of area meetings plus the first name and telephone numbers of members that you can call for more information.**

People leaving prison report lots of temptations, especially during the first few hours and days after release.

Getting **support** to stay sober and to control the temptations is critical to staying sober and enjoying your freedom.

### Notes:

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## Step Seven: Getting your Family Ready for Your Return

### **Question: Is your family ready for “you”?**

- YES** I have talked with my family about my plans, their plans for me, and about how I have changed since being in prison and about what I need them to do to help me be who I am now, and not return to who I was before prison. **Skip this step.**
- NO**

People leaving prison report that they rely most on mothers, partners, and adult children for help.

Many people report feeling uncomfortable asking family for help. They feel that their family has already been burdened by their incarceration and they should be helping now.

### **Think “Real” About Living with Family**

- Think about the kind of relationship you’ve had with your family in the past
- How does the family member that you plan to live with support you? Push your buttons?
- Think about what you can reasonably expect from your family.
- Think about what you are comfortable asking them for
- Think about how long you can count on having them support you
- Think about what you need to give them
- Think about what they have already given to you while you were in prison and how your needs will affect their schedule, budget, and privacy.

People report needing their family for everything.

Family is a **“trigger”** for some people.

Some people report feeling overwhelmed by their family’s expectations for them.

One person reported that reality with her mother kicked in on the way home from prison. **Old rules and expectations became the new rules and expectations.**

Some people feel guilty about imposing their needs on their family. Some people see family as the only alternative to a shelter.

### **Help Family Understand You as a Probationer/Ex-Prison Inmate (Have your Probation Officer help you with this)**

- Explain to your family what probation means in terms of staying out of prison
- Explain that violating curfew or doing things that are not allowed can send you back to prison for the rest of your sentence
- Explain that you need time alone to think about and understand how prison has changed you and how the community has changed while you were in prison
- Explain that you need time to feel again

**Family** often doesn’t understand why you are not ready to work on the first day, week, or month after prison.

**Family** often doesn’t understand why you have to be in by curfew or why your PO knocks on the door at 3:00am.

**Family** often doesn’t understand why you want to stay in your room or why you stay by yourself.

**Family** often doesn’t understand why

you seem different.

**Talk to your RENEW Probation Officer!**

**Step Seven: Getting Your Family Ready for Your Return**

**Get a Family Plan**

- Before leaving prison put a family plan together with your family. In the plan, identify what you will need from them and for how long, and how you will contribute to the family. Also, ask them to be clear about “house” rules and their expectations for you. Indicate when you plan to be independent (have a job and your own place) and when you will resume your parenting responsibilities. **Also, get a plan for managing conflict and frustration before it happens!**
- Search the *County Resource Directories* in the prison library for agencies that provide family counseling on a sliding fee scale. Reentry is hard on children. Reconnecting emotionally is difficult and can be painful. Find someone who can help guide the process so that you and your family have the best chance of loving and living together.
- Encourage your family to contact Al-Anon for support. They can call 1-888-4AL-ANON (1-888-425-2666) Monday thru Friday, 8am - 6pm for meeting information, search for information at [www.al-anon.alteen.org](http://www.al-anon.alteen.org), or write to:  
**Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters**  
 1600 Corporate Landing Pkwy  
 Virginia Beach, VA 23454

Family wants to know what your plans are and how long you will be staying with them.

They want to know when you will take over parenting your children, paying rent, buying food, doing chores, moving out ...

**Children have expectations about you and you have expectations about them.** Often these expectations are not the same and cause conflict, disappointment, and hurt. Families can learn to help support your recovery from addiction through Al-Anon. Please visit the NJ Family Groups website at <http://www.nj-al-anon.org/>.

**Get a Mentor**

- Find a mentor who you can talk openly and honestly with about challenges and struggles with life, family, and self.

People leaving prison report that they need a mentor - someone they trust and respect and can talk straight to them.

**Notes:**

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## APPENDIX A – BASIC INTERNET SEARCHES

### Basics on Searching the Internet



Searching the Internet is easy and very fast. There are many search engines. But Google and Yahoo are the most common. The Google site is displayed above.

**Free computer access is available at the public library.** There will be instructions at the library on how to turn the computer on and get to the internet. **Ask the librarian if you have difficulty.**

Once you are on the Google website, type search terms into the box and then move the cursor to Google Search (or "GO" on some sites) and click the mouse.

Topic of Interest	Search Terms
<b>Job Opportunities for Felons</b>	Jobs for Felons Felon-Friendly Employers Employment ex-offenders
<b>Jobs for Felons in New Jersey</b>	Jobs for Felons in New Jersey Employment Ex-Offenders New Jersey

## **APPENDIX B – RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE LEAVING PRISON**

*The internet is the best source of information on resources available to help people leaving prison. Although most people inside prison do not have access to the internet, it is important to know that there are websites you can search when you return to the community. Below are some resources by category.*

### **CLOTHING SERVICES**

**1. Newark Emergency Services for Families**

982 Broad Street  
Newark, NJ 07102  
P: (973) 639-2100 or (973) 639-7620

W: [www.nesfnj.org](http://www.nesfnj.org)

**Monday – Thursday:**

**9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Friday: 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

**Bus Lines:** 13, 24, 39, 41

*Free clothing bank on site, including  
work/professional clothing*

**2. St. Ann’s Church Food Pantry**

103 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Newark, NJ 07103  
P: (973) 642-5553

*Free sneakers and winter coats*

### **EDUCATION/VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

**1. Essex County College**

Enrollment Services  
A. Zachary Yamba Building, Rm. 4124  
303 University Avenue  
Newark, NJ 07102  
P: (973) 877-3336  
W: [www.essex.edu](http://www.essex.edu)

**2. Newark One Stop**

990 Broad Street  
Newark, NJ 07102  
P: (973) 648-3370  
W: [careerconnections.nj.gov/careerconnections/](http://careerconnections.nj.gov/careerconnections/)  
**Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**  
POC: Morris Murray

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

**1. Essex County Division of Training and Employment**

*The Division of Training and Employment* administers a wide range of Welfare-to-Work activities targeting TANF, GA, and ABAWD clients. The Division provides essential services and opportunities to clients to form a coordinated One-Stop System with support from the Division of Welfare, and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.  
<http://www.essex-countynj.org>

**2. City of Newark Office of Re-Entry**

920 Broad Street, Rm. 113  
Newark, NJ 07102  
**P:** (973) 733-3747  
**W:** <http://www.ci.newark.nj.us/government/departments/economic-and-housing-development/office-of-reentry/>  
**POC:** Karen Motley, *Intake Coordinator*  
[motleyk@ci.newark.nj.us](mailto:motleyk@ci.newark.nj.us)

**3. Offender Aid & Restoration of Essex County, Inc.**

303 Washington Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
Newark, NJ 07102  
**P:** (973) 373-0100  
**POC:** Jerome Young

**4. Newark One-Stop**

990 Broad Street  
Newark, NJ 07102  
**P:** (973) 648-3370  
**W:** [careerconnections.nj.gov/careerconnections/](http://careerconnections.nj.gov/careerconnections/)  
Monday and Tuesday @ 11am  
**POC:** Weldon Montague

**5. La Casa De Don Pedro**

39 Broadway  
Newark, NJ 07104  
**P:** (973) 481-4713  
**W:** [www.lacasnwk.org](http://www.lacasnwk.org)

**6. Brickforce Staffing**

183 Ferry Street  
Newark, NJ 07105  
**P:** (973) 491-6114  
**W:** [www.bickforce.com](http://www.bickforce.com)  
*Specializes in Warehouse staffing*

**7. Workonomics Staffing Resource**

24 Commerce Street, Ste. 1834  
Newark, NJ 07102  
**P:** (973) 824-0417  
**W:** [www.workonomics-staf.com](http://www.workonomics-staf.com)

**8. Labor Ready**

186 W. Market Street, Ste. 5  
Newark, NJ 07103  
**P:** (973) 824-1690  
**W:** [www.laborready.com](http://www.laborready.com)

## FINANCIAL SERVICES

**RENEW** Your Finances! **RENEW** offers Financial Literacy Workshops that promote financial freedom through values-based principles and practical approaches to financial management.

**Checking and Correcting Credit Record** *New Jersey residents are allowed (1) free credit report each year. Three companies that provide this service are:*

**1. Equifax Information Services, LLC**  
P.O. Box 74041  
Atlanta, GA 30374  
**P:** (800) 865-1111  
**W:** [www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)

**2. Transunion Personal Credit Report**  
P.O. Box 1000  
Chester, PA 19022  
**P:** (800) 888-4213  
**W:** [www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com)

**3. Experian**  
P.O. Box 2002  
Allen, TX 19022  
**P:** (800) 397-3742  
**W:** [www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)

**4. Small Business Development Counseling**  
New Jersey Small Business Development Center at Rutgers-  
Newark  
25 James Street  
Newark, NJ 07102  
**P:** (973) 535-5950  
**Website:** [www.business.utgers.edu/rnsbdc](http://www.business.utgers.edu/rnsbdc)  
**E-mail:** [rnsbdc@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:rnsbdc@newark.rutgers.edu)  
*Premier provider of strategic, growth focused business training and technical assistance services to established small businesses and start-up entrepreneurs. With the Center's motto to offer **Right Strategy, Smart Growth, Infinite Possibilities** supports our mission to help entrepreneurs and business owners start and grow sustainable, successful small business through the delivery of appropriate training and technical assistance services and programs.*

**5. City National Bank**  
**W:** [citynatbank.com](http://citynatbank.com)  
**P:** (800) 966-8262

**6. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)**  
Seton Hall University School of Law  
Center for Social Justice  
833 McCarter Highway  
Newark, NJ 07102  
**P:** (973) 642-8700  
**W:** <http://law.shu.edu/clinics/volunteer-income-tax-services.cfm>  
*Free Income Tax Return Preparation*  
**2017 VITA SCHEDULE:**  
Friday, March 17, 2-6 p.m.  
Saturday, March 18, 11 – 3 p.m.  
Friday, March 24, 2 – 6 p.m.  
Saturday, March 25, 11 – 3 p.m.  
Friday, March 31, 2 – 6 p.m.  
Saturday, April 1, 11 – 3 p.m.  
Friday, April 7, 2 – 6 p.m.  
Saturday, April 7, 11 – 3 p.m.

## FOOD SERVICES

### Newark Food Pantries

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>3. Missionaries of Charity</b><br/>170 Sussex Avenue<br/>Newark, NJ 07103<br/>P: (973) 481-9056<br/><b>Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday,<br/>Sunday: 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.</b></p>   | <p><b>4. Clinton Avenue Presbyterian Church</b><br/>761 Clinton Avenue<br/>Newark, NJ 07108<br/>P: (973) 372-8408<br/>W: <a href="http://www.clintonavenue.usdirectory.com">http://www.clintonavenue.usdirectory.com</a></p>                                 |
| <p><b>5. St. James Roman Catholic Church</b><br/>143 Madison Street<br/>Newark, NJ 07105<br/>P: (973) 344-8322<br/>W: <a href="http://www.sjameschurchc.com">www.sjameschurchc.com</a><br/><b>Monday 11 – 12:30 p.m.;</b><br/><b>Tuesday 9 – 12:30p.m.</b></p> | <p><b>6. Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church</b><br/>83 Elizabeth Avenue<br/>Newark, NJ 07108<br/>P: (973) 242-6712<br/>W: <a href="http://www.fmbcnewark.com">www.fmbcnewark.com</a><br/><b>Wednesday, Friday: 12 p.m. (September – June)</b></p>          |
| <p><b>7. First Hopewell Baptist Church</b><br/>525 Orange Street<br/>Newark, NJ 07107<br/>P: (973) 485-8100<br/>W: <a href="http://www.1sthopewell.org">www.1sthopewell.org</a><br/><b>Saturday 1 – 2 p.m.</b></p>   | <p><b>8. St. James Social Service Corp.</b><br/>604 MLK Boulevard<br/>Newark, NJ 07102<br/>P: (973) 624-4007<br/>W: <a href="http://www.stjamesssc.org">www.stjamesssc.org</a><br/><b>Monday – Friday: 1 – 2 p.m.</b></p>                                    |
| <p><b>9. Lighthouse Community Services</b><br/>487 Washington Street<br/>Newark, NJ 07102<br/>P: (973) 802-1802<br/><b>Monday - Friday 12 – 1 p.m.</b></p>   | <p><b>10. St. John's Soup Kitchen</b><br/>22 Mulberry Street<br/>Newark, NJ 07102<br/>P: (973) 623-0822<br/>W: <a href="http://www.njsoupkitchen.org">www.njsoupkitchen.org</a><br/><b>Monday – Friday: 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.</b></p>                            |
| <p><b>11. St. Michael's Parish</b><br/>172 Broadway<br/>Newark, NJ 07104<br/>P: (973) 484-7100<br/>W: <a href="http://www.stmichaelsparish.org">www.stmichaelsparish.org</a><br/><b>Tuesday, Thursday: 9:00 – 11 a.m.</b></p>                                  | <p><b>12. Apostles' House</b><br/><b>Location 1:</b> 24 Grant Street, Newark, NJ 07104<br/><b>Location 2:</b> 513-515 Avon Avenue<br/>Newark, NJ 07108<br/>P: (973) 482-0625<br/>W: <a href="http://www.dioceseofnewark.org">www.dioceseofnewark.org</a></p> |
| <p><b>13. The Salvation Army – Newark (Central)</b><br/>45 Central Avenue<br/>Newark, NJ 07102<br/>P: (973) 623-5959<br/>W: <a href="http://www.newjersey.salvaionarmy.org">www.newjersey.salvaionarmy.org</a><br/><b>Note: Call for dates</b></p>             | <p><b>14. St. Ann's Church - Food Pantry</b><br/>103 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue<br/>Newark, NJ 07103<br/>P: (973) 642-5553</p>   |

**15. Renaissance Church of Newark**

441 Orange Street  
Newark, NJ 07107  
P: (973) 481-3431

**16. New Life Missionary Baptist Church**

255 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Newark, NJ 07102  
P: (973) 642-0898  
W: [www.newlightnewark.com](http://www.newlightnewark.com)

**17. North Jersey Community Research Initiative**

393 Central Avenue  
Newark, NJ 07103  
P: (973) 483-3444  
W: [www.njcri.org](http://www.njcri.org)

**18. New Community Family Comfort**

Program - NCC  
220 Bruce Street  
Newark, NJ 07103  
P: (973) 623-6114  
Note: 16<sup>th</sup> of every month

**19. House of Mercy Mission**

573 Springfield Avenue  
Newark, NJ 07103  
P: (973) 642-6226  
W: [www.homm.ws](http://www.homm.ws)  
Note: 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of every month  
10 – 11:45 a.m.

**20. Integrity House, Inc.**

45 Lincoln Street  
Newark, NJ 07103  
P: (973) 273-0001  
W: [www.integrityhouse.org](http://www.integrityhouse.org)

**21. Clear View Baptist Church**

314 Hobson Street, # 320  
Newark, NJ 07112  
P: (973) 926-0471  
W: [www.clearviewnewark.com](http://www.clearviewnewark.com)

**22. Communion Fellowship Ministries**

260 Washington Street  
Newark, NJ 07111  
P: (973) 639-2222

## HEALTH SERVICES

These centers accept Medicaid and some insurance plans, but also provide services on a sliding scale basis, additional fees for x-rays and lab work. **Primary and Preventive Care.** Staff there can help you apply for Medicaid or other benefits if you are eligible.

### Health Centers

**1. Newark Community Health Center**

741 Broadway

Newark, NJ 07104

**P:** (973) 483-1300; **F:** (973) 483-3787

**W:** [www.nchcfqhc.org](http://www.nchcfqhc.org)

**Monday – Friday: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**Bus Lines:** 13, 27

**2. James White Manor**

516 Bergen Street

Newark, NJ 07108

**P:** (973) 273-6814; **F:** (973) 430-2097

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:**

**9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**3. Dayton St. Health Center**

101 Ludlow Street

Newark, NJ 07114

**P:** (973) 483-1300

**Monday – Friday: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**Bus Lines:** 41 - 21

**4. Newark Department of Health and Human Services [Newark residents only]**

The Department of Health and Community Wellness

110 William Street

Newark, NJ 07102

**P:** (973) 733-5310

**W:** [www.newarkha.org](http://www.newarkha.org)

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:**

**9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.**

### Health Insurance

**1. Affordable Care Act**

**P:** 1-800-318-2596

**W:** [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov)

**2. NJ Family Care**

*Affordable Health Coverage. Quality Care.*

**P:** 1-800-701-0710

**W:** [www.njfamilycare.org](http://www.njfamilycare.org)

### MISCELLANEOUS

#### Tattoo Removal

**1. Vein Laser Center**

550 Summit Avenue, Suite 203

Jersey City, NJ 07306

**P:** (201) 795-9007

**W:** [www.vlcnj.com](http://www.vlcnj.com)

**POC:** Abby; Initial Consultation Fee: \$50.00. Center has agreed to provide discounted rates for RENEW Members. (Ex: \$100/session for Tear Drops – average Tear Drop removal takes (3) sessions).

#### Gym Membership

**RENEW** members can apply for a discounted YMCA membership.

## HOUSING

### 1. Newark Emergency Services for Families

982 Broad Street  
Newark, NJ 07102  
P: 973-639-2100

W: [www.nesfnj.org](http://www.nesfnj.org)

POC: Sameerah Anderson

#### Documents needed during Intake:

- Paystubs (2 months)
- Birth Certificate
- Driver's License/State ID
- SSN Card

### 2. New Jersey Housing Resource Center

*Administered by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency*

W: <http://www.nj.gov/njrc/>

### 3. Newark Housing Authority

500 Broad Street  
Newark, NJ 07102 – 3112  
P: 1-877-642-4373

W: <http://www.newarkha.org>

*Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)  
Public Housing*

### Temporary/Emergency Housing (Shelter):

#### 1. United Community Corporation

31 Fulton Street  
Newark, NJ 07102  
P: (973) 642-0181

***Open 7 days a week/5pm – 7am***

*30 day shelter*

***For recently released participants:***

*Bring release papers and/or ID and name  
of probation officer*

## LEGAL SERVICES

**ReLeSe** is a legal program that helps individuals with criminal records by assessing the legal matters that act as barriers to successful community reintegration. ReLeSe matches clients with volunteer attorneys to handle issues most commonly encountered by recently incarcerated individuals but not handled by existing legal services programs.

P: (973) 645-1955.

## **APPENDIX C – PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND PUBLIC BENEFITS**

### **How to Apply for Public Assistance and Public Benefits**

#### **About Social Security Benefits**

Social Security and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits are suspended when individuals are confined to jail or prison.

- For Social Security Beneficiaries, benefits remain suspended until the inmate is released.
- For SSI beneficiaries, benefits are terminated when the individual is incarcerated for a year or more.

Individuals need funds to cover living expenses when they are released from prison. To help make a successful transition back into the community, benefits need to be started as soon as possible.

#### **How soon can benefits be started after release?**

The amount of time it takes to start benefits depends on the individual's specific situation.

- If benefits have only been suspended, Social Security usually can restart them without much delay.
- If benefits have been terminated, it can take a few months before benefits resume.
- If the individual was not previously entitled to benefits and is claiming disability, a new application and disability determination are required. In this situation, it could take from three – five months to make a decision about the person's disability.

#### **Is there a way to rush benefit payments?**

By following a special procedure before release, Social Security can pay benefits much sooner. This process is called the Pre-release Procedure.

#### **How does the prerelease procedure work?**

When an institution has a prerelease agreement with Social Security, the Social Security Administration can:

- Begin processing an inmate's application up to several months before the scheduled release date.
- Make a determination of possible eligibility and payment amount based on the inmate's expected circumstances after release
- Start paying benefits shortly after the inmate is released from the institution.

When notified by the institution, Social Security will follow this procedure if the inmate is likely to be eligible for benefits within 30 days of the scheduled release date.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **How to Apply for Public Assistance and Public Benefits**

#### **About Social Security Benefits**

##### **How can institutions establish a prerelease agreement?**

Either the local Social Security office or the institution may begin a discussion about setting up a prerelease agreement. The prerelease agreement:

- May be an informal verbal agreement, or
- May be a written agreement signed by both parties.

##### **What are the responsibilities of each party?**

###### ***Social Security's responsibilities***

In a typical prerelease agreement, the Social Security office will:

- Provide guidelines about what evidence is need
- Provide a contact person to assist the institution and the inmate in applying the prerelease procedures
- Process claims and reinstatements timely
- Notify the institution promptly when Social Security has made a decision about the inmate's eligibility for benefits.

###### ***Institution's responsibilities***

The institution would agree to:

- Notify Social Security of individuals scheduled for release in the near future who may be eligible for benefits
- Provide current medical evidence for the inmate including a statement about the inmate's ability to handle funds
- Provide Social Security with the anticipated release date
- Notify Social Security as soon as the individual is released.

##### **What are the advantages of a prerelease agreement?**

- Allows both parties to streamline the process for starting/restarting benefits promptly after an inmate is released
- Facilitates the inmate's return to the community by providing him/her with an adequate source of income
- Could serve to deter recidivism.

For more information about setting up a prerelease agreement, contact the local Social Security office. Search for local offices at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

## **APPENDIX C**

### **How to apply for Public Assistance and Public Benefits**

**NOTE: Appendix C can only be completed AFTER your release. BOP is unable to help you with this.**

#### **How to apply for Public Assistance Funds**

Apply for public assistance funds at your local public assistance office. Check the phone book for locations and make sure to bring the required documents with you.

#### ***Instructions***

- **STEP 1:** Understand that public assistance is provided to assist people in becoming financially stable.
- **STEP 2:** Know that there is a “welfare-to-work” policy in effect that requires participants in public assistance programs to undergo job training and to find work.
- **STEP 3:** Realize that in order to qualify for assistance, you cannot exceed certain income and asset limits.
- **STEP 4:** Apply for public assistance funds at your local public assistance office, which is probably located at or run by your local department of human services or social services. If you do not know where to go, look in the phone book for this department and ask them where to apply.
- **STEP 5:** Bring proof of identity, proof of income (including any benefits you or anyone in your household receives), social security numbers for all members of your household, proof of any financial assets such as bank accounts, home ownership, etc.
- **STEP 6:** Fill out the paperwork you are given and ask for help if you cannot complete it on your own.
- **STEP 7:** Recognize that you may be able to get emergency assistance if you have suddenly become homeless.
- **STEP 8:** Ask about applying for food stamps, free school breakfasts and lunches for your children, and Medicaid as well.

**New Jersey Public Assistance Resource Guide:** <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/clients/welfare/>

## **APPENDIX C**

### **How to apply for Public Assistance and Public Benefits**

**NOTE: Appendix C can only be completed AFTER your release. BOP is unable to help you with this.**

#### **How to apply for Social Security Disability Benefits**

When applying for Social Security Disability benefits you will need to bring evidence that you are disabled from doctors and hospitals that have treated you.

#### ***Instructions***

- **STEP 1:** Understand that you are eligible for Social Security Disability (SSD) as soon as you are disabled, but your benefits will not begin until six months after the disability began.
- **STEP 2:** Know that you will not be eligible for SSD if you earn more than \$500 per month on average.
- **STEP 3:** Call the Social Security Administration at (800) 772-1213 or visit your local office for an application.
- **STEP 4:** Bring original or certified copies of your birth certificate, social card, W-2 forms, medical records, and lab reports.
- **STEP 5:** Provide the names and addresses of all doctors, hospitals and clinics that have treated your disability.
- **STEP 6:** Include a history of where you have worked in the past five years.
- **STEP 7:** Consider that you may be able to apply for similar benefits under Supplemental Security Income (SSI) instead of SSD. SSD eligibility is based on your work history and disability, while SSI eligibility is based on financial need.
- **STEP 8:** Realize that benefits are not automatic and are given only after your case is carefully reviewed. Only certain types of disabilities are eligible for benefits.

#### ***Tips & Warnings***

- If your claim is denied, hire an attorney for an appeal.
- Search for a local office at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI) in New Jersey:** <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-11148.pdf>

## **APPENDIX C**

### **How to Apply for Public Assistance and Public Benefits**

**NOTE: This page can only be completed AFTER your release. BOP is unable to help you with this.**

#### **How to Apply for Social Security Benefits**

To apply for Social Security benefits you need to show proof of age, citizenship and identity. The Social Security Administration's website has information online, including a list of offices near you.

#### ***Instructions***

- **STEP 1:** Apply for Social Security Benefits three months before you want to receive them.
- **STEP 2:** Understand that you can begin to receive your benefits at age 62, but they will be paid at a reduced level until age 65.
- **STEP 3:** Call the Social Security Administration at (800) 772-1213 or visit your local office for an application.
- **STEP 4:** Complete the application and ask office personnel for assistance if there is something you don't understand.
- **STEP 5:** Take original or certified copies of your Social Security card, birth certificate, W-2 form or self-employment tax return and proof of citizenship. If you apply by mail, you will need to mail these forms with your applications. Ask for the return of any originals.
- **STEP 6:** Have the name of your bank and account number with you so that your benefits can be directly deposited.

#### **Resource guide for New Jersey Social Security Benefits:**

<http://nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/documents/Documents%20for%20Web/HowtoApplyOnlineForSSDBenefits.pdf>

**Social Security Administration:** <https://www.ssa.gov/>

## **APPENDIX C**

### **How to Apply for Public Assistance and Public Benefits**

**NOTE: This page can only be completed AFTER your release. BOP is unable to help you with this.**

#### **About Supplemental Security Income**

SSI is a federal program that provides monthly cash payments to people in need. SSI is for people who are 65 or older, as well as for blind or disabled people of any age, including children.

To qualify you also must have little or no income and few resources. This means that the value of the things you own must be less than \$2,000 if you are single or less than \$3,000 if you are married. The value of your home does not count if you live in it. Usually, the value of your car does not count. And the value of certain other resources, such as a burial plot, may not count either.

To receive SSI, you also must apply for any other cash benefits you may be able to get.

You must live in the United States to receive SSI. If you are not a U.S. citizen, but you are lawfully residing in the United States, you still may be able to receive SSI. For more information, search [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) for *Supplemental Security Income for Noncitizens* (Publication #05-11051).

The state of New Jersey adds money to the federal SSI payment. A single payment that includes both the federal SSI payment and the supplement from New Jersey is issued to residents of domiciliary care homes and personal care boarding homes.

If you live independently, in someone else's household or in a Medicaid facility, you receive a separate payment from New Jersey in addition to your federal SSI payment.

#### **How to apply for SSI**

You can complete a large part of your application by visiting [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov). You can also call the Social Security Administration toll-free at 1-800-772-1213 to ask for an appointment with a Social Security representative.

If applying in person, bring your social security card; proof of citizenship; birth certificate; information about the home where you live, such as the mortgage or lease and landlord's name; income information, like pay stubs and your bank account; the names, addresses and telephone numbers of doctors, hospitals and clinics that you have been to – if you are applying because you are disabled or blind.

## **APPENDIX D – APPLYING FOR MEDICAID**

### **How to Apply for Medicaid**

**NOTE: Appendix E can only be completed AFTER your release. BOP is unable to help you with this.**

**How to apply for Medicaid:** To apply for Medicaid you need to contact your social services department and show proof of your financial need.

#### ***Instructions***

- **STEP 1:** Understand that Medicaid is a state-run program that provides medical insurance for low-income people. In New Jersey you may be eligible for Medicaid if you are an infant, a child, pregnant, or a parent of a child and your family income meets the Medicaid income standards.
- **STEP 2:** Know that if you receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income) from the Social Security Administration, you will probably qualify for Medicaid.
- **STEP 3:** Recognize that there have been recent limits placed on this program at the federal level, so the benefits are not as wide as they used to be.
- **STEP 4:** Contact your state Department of Public Welfare. This agency provides food stamps and financial assistance.
- **STEP 5:** Ask for a Medicaid application. You will need to complete the application in the office.
- **STEP 6:** Bring your birth certificate, driver's license, pay stubs, Social Security card, proof of address, proof other insurance if you have it, and information about any bank account you have.
- **STEP 7:** Be prepared to answer questions about your finances. Eligibility is based on your income level.
- **STEP 8:** Ask office personnel for assistance if you do not know how to complete the form.
- **STEP 9:** Request assistance at your home if you would like to apply but are unable to leave home.

**For more information, please visit:** <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmahs/clients/medicaid/>

## **APPENDIX E – FEDERAL BONDING AND TAX CREDITS**

### **What is Federal Bonding?**

Are you having difficulty obtaining employment because of something negative in your past? Are you seen as a "risky" job candidate because of a poor credit score or an irregular work history? The Federal Bonding program can help assure employers that you are a safe bet for a position.

The Federal Bonding program helps "at-risk" or hard-to-place jobseekers obtain employment. Talk to a bonding representative at your local One-Stop Career Center today. A bonding representative can provide a potential employer a fidelity bond, which is a special type of insurance that protects employers from employee dishonesty resulting in loss of money or property. Employers are more willing to hire a job applicant who is seen as "at-risk" if he or she has a fidelity bond.

### **Do I qualify?**

If something in your past has lead employers to question your honesty and deny you a job, you may qualify. The Federal Bonding program has helped:

- individuals with poor personal credit.
- individuals dishonorably discharged from the military.
- people lacking work history.
- ex-offenders.
- recovering substance abusers.

The Federal Bonding program is sponsored by the US Department of Labor in partnership with Travelers Property Casualty Insurance Company.

### **For more information**

Talk to a bonding representative today to learn how a fidelity bond can help you secure employment. Visit your local One-Stop Career Center or contact:

James Rimalover, New Jersey State Bonding Coordinator

609-292-5763

[FederalBonding@dol.nj.gov](mailto:FederalBonding@dol.nj.gov)

### **New Jersey Career Connections (Federal Bonding):**

[http://careerconnections.nj.gov/careerconnections/prepare/skills/training/federal\\_bonding\\_information\\_for\\_jobseekers.shtml](http://careerconnections.nj.gov/careerconnections/prepare/skills/training/federal_bonding_information_for_jobseekers.shtml)

## APPENDIX E

### Hiring? Get tax credits for your new employees!

Businesses can save up to \$4,800 the first year when they hire workers who traditionally face significant barriers to employment. Workers who qualify include:

#### Tax credits for eligible employees

##### Ex-felons

- who have been convicted of a felony; and
- who have a hiring date that is not more than one year after the conviction or release from prison.

##### OTHER TARGET GROUPS

Short-term TANF recipient	\$2,400
Long-term TANF recipient	\$9,000 (two years)
Designated Community Resident (RRC or EZ)	\$2,400
Vocational Rehabilitation referral	\$2,400
Ex-felon	\$2,400
SSI recipient	\$2,400
Summer youth	\$1,200
Long-term unemployed (January 1, 2016)	\$2,400
NJ SNAP recipient	\$2,400

#### What is the WOTC?

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (**WOTC**) is a tax credit that functions as an incentive to employers who hire people with certain criminal records. The WOTC can also apply to an individual working part-time or completing summer youth work.

The **WOTC** is available to employers who employ people from one of eight targeted groups, including "qualified ex-felons." A "qualified ex-felon" is defined as an individual who: (1) has been convicted of a felony; and (2) is hired no more than one year after the conviction or release from prison.

#### **New Jersey Career Connections (WOTC):**

[http://careerconnections.nj.gov/careerconnections/hire/hiring/wotc/work opportunity tax credit.shtml](http://careerconnections.nj.gov/careerconnections/hire/hiring/wotc/work%20opportunity%20tax%20credit.shtml)

## **APPENDIX F**

### **The Opportunity to Compete Act**

As of March 1, 2015, The Opportunity to Compete Act has created new hiring rules for employers in New Jersey regarding ex-offenders. In general, the law is designed to help ex-offenders get through the initial interview and employment application processes. Here are a few important mandates of the law:

- The law prohibits an employer from requiring that an applicant complete an application that asks about an applicant's criminal record during the initial application process.
- The law prohibits an employer from making any oral or written inquiry regarding an applicant's criminal record during the initial employment application process.
- The "initial employment application process" identified in the law ends when the employer has conducted a first interview of the job applicant, after which inquiries regarding an applicant's criminal record may be made by the prospective employer.
- The law prohibits employers from producing solicitations for a position that state the employer will not consider anyone who has a criminal record.
- The act sets a statewide standard for criminal history inquiries in the employment context by preempting all local ordinances, thereby making it easier for employers across the State to comply.
- An employer with 15 or more employees who violates the provisions of The Opportunity to Compete Act will be liable for a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 for the first violation, up to \$5,000 for the second violation, and up to \$10,000 for each subsequent violation.
- Exceptions to the law include:
  - when the position sought is in law enforcement, corrections, the judiciary, homeland security or emergency management.
  - where the employment sought or being considered is for a position where a criminal background check is required by law, rule, or regulation.
  - where an arrest or conviction of the person for one or more crimes or offenses would or may preclude the person from holding such employment as required by law, rule, or regulation.
  - where any law rule or regulation restricts an employer's ability to engage in specified business activities based on the criminal records of its employees.
  - where the employment sought or being considered is for a position designated by the employer to be part of a program or systematic effort designed predominantly or exclusively to encourage the employment of persons who have been arrested or convicted of one or more crimes or offenses.

Important to note is nothing in the law prohibits an employer from refusing to hire an applicant with a criminal record, unless the record has been expunged or erased through executive pardon. Also, the law explicitly provides that a violation of the act's provisions may not serve as the basis for a private lawsuit or for the imposition of any other penalties.

#### **New Jersey Career Connections:**

[http://careerconnections.nj.gov/careerconnections/plan/foryou/exoffenders/exoffender\\_hiring\\_rules\\_and\\_regulations.shtml](http://careerconnections.nj.gov/careerconnections/plan/foryou/exoffenders/exoffender_hiring_rules_and_regulations.shtml)

