

THE BUCKS COUNTY REENTRY COALITION,
where your community welcomes you
back!

A Guide to Successful Reentry in Bucks County, PA



WHO IS THIS HANDBOOK FOR?

YOU!

Reentering your community can be more manageable when you're aware of services and resources available to help. This handbook provides a description and contact information about helpful resources. It also includes additional information in specific areas where you may have questions or be looking for tools available to you.

Be sure to review these lists and any questions you may have with your Case Manager and your Bucks County Adult Probation/Parole Officer.

Reentry can be a complicated process – others have felt the same way – but many have been able to overcome this and have succeeded in finding work, supporting themselves and their families, and more. We want you to achieve the same.

You are a member of our community, and we want to help you transition home and succeed.

*This book is also for anyone and everyone supporting the needs of reentrants in Bucks County. Reentrant success translates to safer communities with more people contributing to the overall well-being of our society.

"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

– Francis of Assisi

WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDE?

Information to help you in the following areas:

- Crisis and Emergency Resources
- Checklist #1: Things to do while you are incarcerated
- Checklist #2: Things to do as you approach release
- Checklist #3: Things to do in the first week after your release
- Checklist #4: Things to do to successfully reenter your community
- Additional resources
 - Money management
 - Navigating benefit programs
 - Income assistance
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 - Physical and Behavioral Health
 - Mental health and substance use
 - Education and Employment
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 - Resources to Help You Rebuild Your Relationships
 - Additional Community Resources, Sponsors, Mentor Programs, and Advocacy Organizations
 - Resources for Veterans
 - Role of your probation/parole officer
 - Rules and regulations of probation and parole

CRISIS AND EMERGENCY RESOURCES

If you, or someone you know, are experiencing a crisis or want to talk to someone for support: contact the relevant agency listed below:

Bucks County Suicide Prevention Task Force: 1-800-499-7455 to speak to a trained crisis worker 24-hours/7-days/week

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

Need to Talk: 215-355-6000

Bucks County Housing Link: 1-800-810-4434

Bucks County Mental Health Crisis: 1-800-499-7455

Bucks County Drug and Alcohol Commission, Inc. (BCDAC): <https://www.bcdac.org/> or 215-444-2700 or call Gaudenzia, Inc. Lower Bucks after hours at 267-405-6530 or <https://www.gaudenzia.org>.

Bucks County Mobile Crisis: 1-877-435-7709.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): Find free or low-cost mental health services available in your area <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>

National Helpline: Find free or low-cost mental health services available in your area 1-800-662-HELP/4357 (TDD: 1-800-487-4889).

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness): comprehensive list of all crisis hotlines: <https://namibuckspa.org/crisis-info/>

If you need free and confidential help obtaining food, housing, health care, employment, counseling and other critical services 24/7 in your area: **Call 2-1-1** (from either a cell phone or a land line) or visit www.211.org

Bucks County Adult Probation and Parole Department: <https://www.bucks-county.gov/402/Adult-Probation>

Bucks County Correctional Facility: <https://www.buckscounty.gov/216/Correctional-Facility>

Bucks Human Services Connect: 215-348-6201 or visit <https://TheHub@buckscounty.org>

Bucks County Reentry Coalition Resources: <https://bucksreentry.com/>

CHECKLIST #1: THINGS TO DO WHILE YOU ARE INCARCERATED:

Preparing to reenter the community begins on the first day of incarceration. Work with your Case Manager to take advantage of the programs the jail has to offer and be sure to collect your documents before you are released.

- **Sign up for and complete court-ordered programs.** Keep completion certificates for court or your resumé.
 - **Do you have a history of alcohol abuse and/or drug use?** In fact, those struggles may have contributed to your incarceration. Your time in jail is an ideal time to begin or continue on your journey to recovery. The jail offers several opportunities to work on your recovery:
 - In addition to AA/NA meetings, another great way to work on your recovery is to participate in the available Drug and Alcohol education and counseling programming while in the jail. Ask your Case Manager how to apply for this programming.
 - The jail also offers in house Recovery Unit Programming that may be available to you. These Recovery Unit Programs include meetings, counseling, education, one on ones and housing with others in the programming. Ask your Case Manager to learn more about the requirements.
 - **Might you benefit from having your own personal mentor to meet one-on-one with you with you each week?** While in jail, your mentor will help you think through and write down your personal issues, needs, and goals (financial, employment, housing, family, social, spiritual, recovery, education, health, and several others) and then guide you in ways to prioritize and address your issues and achieve your goals. Your mentor will meet with you for several months while you are in jail and continue for six months or more after release if you wish. When you first get out, your mentor will help you navigate through the sometimes-overwhelming obligations during the first few weeks. Your mentor will help guide you to needed services and resources such as those mentioned in this handbook. Then as time goes on, your mentor will continue to provide guidance and support. There are currently two faith-based mentoring programs offering the above services in the jail and continuing after release:
 - Father David's Mentoring and Reentry Program
 - Life Abundant
- There are many more inmates than available mentors, so the programs are looking for those who are serious about wanting to make positive changes to their lives and willing to do the work it takes to make those changes. Ask your Case Manager how you can apply for these programs. Additional information about mentoring programs appears in the ADDITIONAL AVAILABLE RESOURCES section of this handbook.
- **Is your faith journey and your spiritual growth important to you?** If so, volunteer programs in the jail offer many opportunities to continue on your journey and grow closer

to your faith. You can attend religious services, participate in Bible studies, receive communion, etc. Most programs are usually offered on a weekly basis. You can meet with the Bucks County DOC Chaplain who is available to meet with inmates in case of emergency or for any other religious needs. The chaplain advises on all faiths and works with all other groups to meet the spiritual needs of incarcerated men and women in line with one's individual beliefs.

- **Talk to your Case Manager about enrolling in free classes from Vita Education Services or the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program while in jail.** Vita Education Services offers a variety of classes to Bucks County inmates. You can sign up for any of the following classes:
 - Reading, writing, and math, as well as GED preparation classes, are available at Bucks County Correctional Facility (BCCF). GED tests are administered at both the BCCF and Community Corrections Center (CCC).
 - Job search and work readiness workshops are offered in partnership with the PA CareerLink® are held for the HOPE and HEART programs at the CCC. Walk-in workshops on demand are available at CCC.
 - Decisions for Living —a 12-hour course providing critical thinking and decision-making instruction is offered at all BCCF facilities.
 - Job Readiness – an 18-hour career exploration, resume writing, interview practice and soft skills course is given at BCCF.

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program courses bring traditional college students and incarcerated students together in jails and prisons for semester-long learning. The Inside Out Program is in more than 200 jails and prisons with a network of more than 150 colleges and universities. The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program provides semester-long college courses in prisons and jails or virtually with both current college students and incarcerated students. There are over a dozen universities and colleges in the local area that participate. You can apply while in prison or when released. There is no cost and there are a wide variety of classes offered. Contact Inside-Out at insideoutphilly@temple.edu or 215-204-2201 at Temple University for more information on courses available. You can also check the website at www.insideoutcenter.org.

- **You can get your GED, or proof of your GED/high school completion, college credits, or any other classes you took while in jail.** If you earned your high school diploma before you were in jail or prison, you can get a copy by contacting the school district from which you graduated. Look up the district online and contact the Administration Offices.

If you passed the GED or HiSET tests and received your Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma, and you need help getting your diploma, transcripts, or GED test scores, contact the High School Equivalency Administrator ra-edhse@pa.gov.

If you completed your GED while in jail, you receive your high school equivalency diploma in jail or after your release, it is mailed to the address you provide to your Case Manager and GED Proctor. Please provide your correct address.

Talk with your Case Manager about enrolling in other free self-help programs such as anger management, mental health, etc.

TIP: Keep a list of all the classes and programs you take while in jail, such as Job Readiness, Decisions, and substance treatment, to help you write your resumé.

CHECKLIST #2: THINGS TO DO AS YOU APPROACH RELEASE

- **Get your identification documents.** You will need a photo ID, birth certificate, and Social Security card. Speak with your Case Manager about obtaining these documents.

Birth certificates can be ordered from the state where you were born while you are in jail. If you do not get your birth certificate before you leave jail, this website shows you where to write for your vital records for Pennsylvania birth certificate: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/certificates/Pages/Birth-Certificates.aspx>.

To search for your birth certificate from other US states and territories: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w.htm>. A birth certificate costs \$20.

You can get a social security card or a replacement card for free from the Social Security Administration. You will need to send a photo ID with your application. If you do not have a photo ID, you cannot obtain a social security card until after your release. If you do not get a card before you leave jail, the application and other information can be found at: <https://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber>
- **Request your medical records be sent to your medical provider.** Your medical records will not be given directly to you, but can be sent to your medical provider or an authorized person with the proper signed release. Ask BCCF Health Services (or your Case Manager) about getting copies of your medical records sent to your medical provider to help you transition to treatment in the community.
- **Housing.** If you will be on county parole, you will need an address approved by Adult Probation and Parole before you get released. This is straightforward if you are being released to a Recovery House set up by the DOC's Drug and Alcohol Department. If you will not be on parole, a Recovery House may still be your best option to continue your recovery while transitioning from jail so speak to your Case Manager.

If you don't have a place to stay, your Case Manager or Reentry Parole Officer will refer you to the **Bucks County Opportunity Council (BCOC)** to determine if you are eligible for its reentry housing programs. The mission of BCOC is to reduce poverty and partner with the community to promote economic self-sufficiency. BCOC serves low-income Bucks County residents with income less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. <https://www.bcoc.org/who-we-are/who-we-serve/> or 215-345-8175. BCOC's Housing Opportunities for Re-Entry Program (HORP) partners with Family Services Association

of Bucks County, Bucks County Adult Probation and Parole, and the Bucks County Department of Corrections. Eligible referrals are participants under the supervision of Adult Probation and Parole, diagnosed mental health and/or substance use disorder, income below 50% of annual median income (AMI), have no identified housing plan post incarceration or have been released but housing is unstable. HORP serves individuals from Central to Lower Bucks County. <https://www.bcoc.org/who-we-are/who-we-serve/> or 215-345-8175.

If you do not qualify for a housing program with BCOC, your Case Manager will assist you in finding housing or other housing programs and may refer you to the Bucks County Housing Link.

Moving to a new residence after you are released must also be approved by Probation and Parole prior to moving.

Bucks County Housing Link: Through a partnership of public and private organizations, the Bucks County Housing Link offers help to people so that encounters with homelessness are rare, brief, and non-recurring. <https://www.buckshousinglink.org/> or 1-800-810-4434.

- **Find out about any outstanding restitution, fees, or fines and be prepared to discuss a payment plan.** Outstanding court obligations or debts can limit your ability to obtain employment, housing, or even lead to arrest. Your Case Manager can assist you in requesting any DOC fees, court costs and restitution balance from the Bucks County Clerk of Courts, and child support information from Bucks County Domestic Relations. **It is important to set up a payment plan upon your release if you don't have one, especially if you owe victim restitution.**
- **Restitution** is compensation owed to a crime victim. Court ordered restitution is a very important and serious matter and this should be a priority in your reentry journey. Upon release, you should review your payment plan with your parole officer.
- **Confirm your first appointment with your Parole Officer.** Who is your officer? When/Where are you supposed to meet? If this appointment has not been arranged in advance, it is your responsibility to contact Adult Probation within 24 hours of your release. After you are released, your Parole Officer will be your central point of contact for all of the resources you need to remain in compliance. You can contact the main office here: <http://buckscounty.org/Courts/adult-probation>
- **Learn the rules and regulations of probation and parole.** It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the rules of supervision and any court ordered conditions. You can find the general rules here: <https://buckscounty.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2084/2020-Rules-and-Regulations-of-Probation-and-Parole-PDF>

CHECKLIST #3: THINGS TO DO IN THE FIRST WEEK AFTER YOUR RELEASE

TIP: If you are transitioning through a recovery or halfway house, the House Manager may be able to assist you with some of the items on Checklists #3 and #4. If not, speak to your Parole Officer.

- **Get a photo ID if you do not already have one.** You can obtain one through your local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). To find your local DMV and to know what documents to bring, visit <https://www.dmv.pa.gov/Driver-Services/Photo-ID2/Pages/Get%20An%20ID.aspx>. If you are unable to pay for an ID, speak with your Parole Officer, who can direct you to services that can help.
- **Get a Social Security card if you do not already have one.** Go to the Social Security office to apply for a copy. You will need it for employment.
- **Cell phone.** If you had a cell phone prior to your incarceration and it is still available to you, reactivate your account. Otherwise, get a cell phone if you can afford it.
- **AA/NA meetings.** If you have abused alcohol or used drugs in the past and are not in a Recovery House or a rehab facility, it is *critical* to get to AA/NA meetings immediately after release *starting on day one*. Go every day. If you are in a Recovery House, this will be required. In either case, download “The Meeting Guide” (blue app with a white folding chair) to locate the days and times of meetings near you. *Stay away from your old “friends” or relatives who helped you get in trouble or who are actively using.*
- **Find internet access.** Your cell phone will most likely have internet access. In addition, most public libraries offer free internet access (a photo ID and proof of address may be required). Here are some resources:
Bucks County Free Library <https://buckslib.org/>
Free Library of Philadelphia <https://www.freelibrary.org/>
“15 FREE Services & Resources at Your Local Public Library You Should Take Advantage Of” by Marisa Bell-Metereau: <https://www.moneycrashers.com/free-local-public-library-services-resources/>
- **Create an email address.** Many websites (e.g., www.gmail.com or www.gmail.com) allow you to set up a free email account. To make it simple and professional, use your first name and last name or initial, or some combination of your initials (ex. john.doe@gmail.com). Write down your email address and password in a safe place.
- **Open a bank account.** You will need proof of residence, your state photo ID, Social Security card, and money (cash, a check/money order, or funds you can electronically transfer into the new account). A letter from your landlord or Recovery House Manager can serve as proof of residence. Otherwise, a utility bill in your name will work. Once employed, you can have your pay deposited directly into your account and you can access money via an ATM machine and pay bills via the bank’s app or Venmo.

To learn more about how to select a checking account that is right for you, check out the **Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s (CFPB)** resource on this: <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/blog/guides-to-help-you-open-and-manage-your-checking-account/>

- **Sign up for Health Insurance.** The Affordable Care Act has created free or low-cost health care coverage options for improved access to health care services. If you need low-cost health insurance, go to the Health Insurance Marketplace (www.healthcare.gov or pennie.com). Both websites help individuals find and sign up for health care coverage and those who qualify can also sign up for Medicaid. PA residents who are citizens, US nationals, or people who have a qualified immigration status can apply and enroll through pennie.com. Upon release, you have a 60-day special enrollment period to sign up. You can also call 1-800-318-2596 (TTY: 1-855-889-4325) 24/7. The phone line is closed Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day.
- **Confirm your reporting instructions.** To whom (pre-trial services, Adult Probation and Parole, etc.) and when are you supposed to report to remain in compliance with the conditions of your release?

CHECKLIST #4: THINGS TO DO TO HELP YOU SUCCESSFULLY REENTER YOUR COMMUNITY

TIMELINE: Ongoing

- **Get a planner** or track your appointments using a digital app on your phone. IOS and Android offer free calendar software and you can set alerts and reminders of upcoming appointments.
- **If you have a history of abusing alcohol or using drugs,** develop a structured, consistent recovery program – do a 90/90 if possible or attend 3-4 meetings at a minimum per week. Participate in all recommended treatment. Get a sponsor right away and talk to him/her every day. Stick to your program religiously. Be proud of your program. You are working to help yourself on a life-long adventure. Eventually, you will sponsor someone and help them in their recover. The program works, but only if you work it.
- **Explore transportation options.** You’ll need a way to get to job interviews, to your job once employed, to AA/NA meetings, etc. Get a bus schedule; perhaps purchase a bus pass. Walk when possible or get a used bike. If you use Uber or Lyft, do so sparingly. If you have no transportation, raise your hand at an AA meeting. Someone will ALWAYS offer you rides to and from meetings.
- **Secure acceptable, reliable, and verifiable employment or educational/vocational training.** Once you have a photo ID and a Social Security card, you can get a job. You will have bills to pay for your apartment or Recovery House, for food, transportation, additional clothing, etc. The sooner you can find a job, the better. Try finding a job that matches your skills, education, and previous experience. If that doesn’t pan out quickly to start generating some income, consider temporarily taking a lower paying job, e.g., in a factory or at a fast-food establishment while you continue to search for a better

match. Employment assistance is available through the Bucks County Workforce Development Board, CareerLink, and their partners.

- **Manage your money.** To qualify for certain benefits, you will need to understand your current debts, bills, and other payments. Having a bank account and using free tools can help you manage this. See the section ADDITIONAL AVAILABLE RESOURCES for other financial tools and programs.
- **Navigate Benefit Programs.** Benefit programs that are available for Bucks County residents are outlined in the section, ADDITIONAL AVAILABLE RESOURCES. Navigating these one at a time can be complicated. Reach out to Community Organizations that can help you identify and apply for programs that are right for you. The Hub, launched by the Bucks County Human Services Division, provides access to human services resources in person and virtually. Bucks County Administration Building, 1st Floor, Monday-Friday 10 am to 4 pm. TheHub@buckscounty.org or 215-348-6201.
- **Work with your assigned parole officer and report as directed.** Make sure to request permission before moving, changing employment, traveling, or discontinuing a court-ordered condition of treatment or community service. Do not possess weapons or illegal substances. Report any/all police contact immediately. Work with your officer for referrals to treatment and other resources.
- **For spiritual growth.** Find a church, mosque, synagogue, or other congregation in line with your beliefs. Attend weekly services and stop in at other times if possible. Find some quiet time each day to pray and read the Bible or other religious text. Join a faith-based program that assists others.
- **Make time for recreation.** You need some time for yourself to regenerate your body and mind. Work out, run or take long walks, take a bike ride, shoot hoops, or read a novel. Do something that relaxes you. Find an activity that's fun.
- **Meet new people who are good for you.** Staying away from those who helped get you in trouble or who are using is necessary, but it's not enough. It is important to have some healthy people in your life. You may find such people, e.g., at a fitness club, by joining a church group, and at AA meetings. Start with some folks who have long-term sobriety.
- **Rebuild your relationships.** For most people reentering their community, it takes time to get used to life back at home. You may not feel comfortable right away.

ADDITIONAL AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Bucks County has many resources to support individuals and families. It is not possible to create a list with all available programs and agencies, so for more information about what is included in the following pages of this handbook or for other resources, contact the **Bucks Human Services Connect (The Hub)** at 215-348-6201 or visit <https://TheHub@bucks-county.org>

Financial Tools and Aids

Credit Counseling Center: A non-profit organization that specializes in solving financial challenges, and finding peace of mind for our clients. Services include how to pay down your debt, improve your credit score, foreclosure prevention/load modification, Bucks County homeowner mediation program, bankruptcy options, reverse mortgage counseling, budget planning, and student loan options. Contact us at <https://creditcounselingcenter.org> or 215-348-8003 to schedule a FREE financial coaching session. The Credit Counseling Center can help you understand your credit, which can impact your ability to obtain housing and/or employment. Why a Credit Report is Important: <https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-a-credit-report-and-why-is-it-important-960448>. To improve your credit score, see the following resource: <https://creditcounselingcenter.org/credit-improvement-services/>

Bucks County Consumer Protection: The mission of Bucks County Consumer Protection is to create and keep a fair and equitable marketplace for consumers as well as businesses. Consumer Protection conducts mediation of all consumer complaints against businesses, whether in or out of Bucks County. The department also provides online consumer tips for buying a new car, choosing a reliable repair shop, budgeting, avoiding charity fraud, credit, hiring home improvement contractors, scams, funeral planning, landlord-tenant disputes, and how to file in district court. <https://www.buckscounty.org/government/LegalServices/ConsumerProtection> or 215-348-6060 or 1-800-942-2669

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has a frequently-asked questions section, where people can learn important financial information.

Questions like the following are answered at: <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/askcfpb/>

- My employer says I have to have direct deposit. Everywhere I go, the banks and credit unions seem to charge fees. How can I find the right account for me?
- My credit report has information that's not accurate. How can I fix it?
- Should I borrow money from my credit card or take out a small loan to cover my bills until my next paycheck?

MyMoney.gov is a government website that provides tools and guidance to managing your money based on 5 Principles: Make the most of what you earn; Save and Invest in your future; Protect your finances; Spend within your means; and Borrow to buy essential purchases and build credit. www.Mymoney.gov

Taxes and Tax Credits

If you do obtain a job, you may be eligible for a refundable tax credit (the Earned-Income Tax Credit – EITC) that encourages work and makes up for other taxes, such as payroll taxes. Millions of working families and individuals qualify for EITC; however, you must file a tax return.

For free tax preparation assistance: <http://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/> or the BCOC.

Child Support Payments

Child Support: As mentioned in Checklist #2, managing your child support order is incredibly important. If you have a child support order, you may be able to apply for a modification from the court to have your child support order reduced to reflect a lack of earnings or low earnings. You are required to provide your employer information for a wage attachment. You are required to contact Bucks County Domestic Relations if you have an outstanding warrant for non-payment. Call Bucks County Domestic Relations at 215-348-6357 or 215-340-8068 or email CSBucks@PACSES.com. Bucks County Domestic Relations has a website page at <https://buckscounty.org/>. Pennsylvania Child Support website is www.childsupport.state.pa.us

The contact information for Child Support offices in each state, and some tribes, can be found at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/resource/state-and-tribal-child-support-agency-contacts>

Student Loan Debt

Having a student loan in default also prevents the release of a new student loan, harming your ability to continue your education. If you're not sure about your student loans, verify your loan status.

Call the Department of Education at (800) 621-3115 or login to the National Student Loan Data System website to make sure there is no loan for you on file <https://sa.ed.gov/cas/CASWeb/pages/Authentication.faces>

If you have a loan in default, there are several options available to you, including Income-Driven Repayment plans, to help you manage this. You can learn more and connect with someone that can help you think about this at: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans>

Once you understand your finances, apply for benefit programs that can help you get food and other necessities. Community organizations are also ready to help.

Navigate Benefit Programs

Benefit Programs that are available for Bucks County residents are outlined in this section. However, navigating these one at a time can be complicated. Reach out to community organizations that can help you identify and apply for programs that are right for you.

The Hub: The Hub, launched by the Bucks County Human Services Division, is for Bucks County residents, their families, and those who support them, to be aware of and have access to human services resources in person and virtually through a person-centered, supportive, integrated experience. Bucks County Administration Building, 1st Floor, Monday – Friday 10 am to 4 pm. TheHub@buckscounty.org or 215-348-6201.

Bucks County Opportunity Council (BCOC): (see page 4 for a description of some of the services the Council offers) <https://www.bcoc.org/who-we-are/who-we-serve/> or 215-345-8175.

United Way: United Way agencies are non-profit organizations offering services to individuals and families in need. Many United Way agencies give housing assistance or referrals to supportive housing, nursing homes, and other residential programs in your area. In most communities, United Way agencies can be reached by dialing 2-1-1 or by going to: www.unit-edway.org/find-your-united-way/

Salvation Army: The Salvation Army has a network of shelters and programs across the nation. When available, they may be able to give lodging, clothing, food, and a cash grant for the first 90 days after you are released. You can find more information about the Salvation Army on their website at: www.salvationarmy.org

Goodwill Industries International, Inc.: Goodwill helps individuals and families with education, skills training, and job placement services, as well as with supporting services such as transportation, housing, and clothing. You can find out about Goodwill services in your area by going to: www.goodwill.org

YMCA of Bucks County: The Y is a leading nonprofit organization for youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. The Y is a powerful association of men, women, and children committed to bringing about lasting personal and social change. With a focus on nurturing the potential of every child and teen, improving the nation's health and well-being, and providing opportunities to give back and support neighbors, the Y enables youth, adults, families, and communities to be healthy, confident, connected, and secure. There are several locations throughout the county. <https://www.ymcabucks.org/about-us>

YWCA of Bucks County: The YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. Programs offered include Food Pantry, Homework Zone, YW Teen Girls Club, Housing Services, Respite Care, Family Support and Stability, Women and Girls Empowerment, Racial and Social Justice, and many special initiatives. 2425 Trevoise Road, Trevoise, PA <https://www.ywcabucks.org/> or 215-953-7793

Advocates for Homeless & Those in Need (AHTN) Provides shelter for the homeless from December through March during Code Blue; Temporary shelter assistance, food, clothing, and transportation for those in need; Mentoring homeless individuals; Transportation to houses of worship for free shared meals, and other services. Contact: office@ahtn.org, 215-550-3868

Advocates for the Homeless of Upper Bucks (AHUB): Advocates for the Homeless of Upper Bucks is a nonprofit corporation. One of the programs we administer is the Code Blue Emergency Homeless Shelter program whose mission is to provide warm shelter and a hot meal to the homeless of the Quakertown, Perkasio, Ottsville area on any night when temperatures fall below 26 degrees and become life threatening. Contact: <http://www.bucksvoad.org/>

Coalition to Shelter and Support the Homeless (CSSH): CSSH is an alliance of faith-based and community service organizations assisting unsheltered adults in Central Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Our first priority is to provide shelter on Code Blue nights. At the same time, we try to link the homeless and financially distressed to needed resources. Contact: <https://co2ssh.org/contact-us>

Between Friends Outreach (BFO): BFO, a volunteer, faith based, nonprofit 501(c)(3), works with homeless, domestic violence victims, low income, and veterans in Central and Upper Bucks and Montgomery County by providing resources to prevent homelessness and to assist clients transitioning out of homelessness. BFO provides emergency shelter, meals, counseling, drug/alcohol treatment, budgeting skills, medical care, employment assistance, housing assistance resources, assistance with utility bills, sober living, court cases, delivering complete holiday meals, assisting with going to the prom, setting up a child's first bedroom, and supplying hundreds of children with Christmas gifts. Runs "Jerry's Place", a temporary home for men. 100 Mechanics Street, Doylestown, PA Bf outreach@gmail.com or 267-424-2161.

LifePath provides programs and services to individuals of all ages with developmental disabilities throughout the Lehigh Valley and southeastern Pennsylvania. 2 Life Mark Dr, Sellersville, PA 18960 (215) 257-0471 <https://www.lifepath.org/>

Income Assistance Programs

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): The Department of Health and Human Services gives employment services and cash assistance to low-income families. To learn eligibility criteria and how to apply in your state, go to: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/help>

Supplemental Security Income (SSI): Provides money to low-income individuals who are either age 65 or older, blind, or disabled. For more information go to: www.ssa.gov/disabilityssi/ssi.html

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI): Provides income to people with physical or mental problems that are severe enough to prevent them from working. Information can be found at: www.ssa.gov/disabilityssi/

Unemployment Insurance (UI): Unemployment Insurance provides temporary financial help to workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own. Eligibility, as well as the amount and length of benefits, are determined by each state. Usually, you will have to have been employed for some time before you can collect UI. More information can be found at: <http://www.careeronestop.org/ReEmployment/UnemploymentBenefits/am-i-eligible.aspx>

Food Assistance Programs

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): The Department of Agriculture gives nutrition assistance to eligible low-income individuals and families. In order to receive benefits, families must meet certain financial and non-financial criteria. (Note: If you are receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), you are automatically eligible.) To learn eligibility criteria and how to apply in your state, go to: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply>

Tip: A federal law prohibits anyone convicted of a drug felony from receiving SNAP or TANF; however, most states have limited or eliminated that ban. For more information on your eligibility, see: www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/state-line/2015/07/30/states-rethinkrestrictions-on-food-stamps-welfare-for-drug-felons

Bucks County Opportunity Council: (see page 4 for a description of some of the services the Council offers) <https://www.bcoc.org/who-we-are/who-we-serve/> or 215-345-8175.

Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP): Each state sets requirements to determine who is eligible to receive free food. More information, including how to apply, is found at: www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/eligibility-and-how-apply

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP): The U.S. Department of Agriculture also purchases food and makes it available to CSFP agencies in each state for low-income people at least 60 years of age. More information can be found at: www.fns.usda.gov/csfp/eligibility-how-apply

Housing Assistance

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides low-cost housing assistance to those who qualify. These programs generally are managed by local government agencies.

To access available services in Bucks County, contact the **Bucks County Housing Link** at <https://www.buckshousinglink.org/> or 1-800-810-4434.

Tip: Some local housing authorities restrict access to housing for those with a criminal conviction, but many consider any rehabilitative programming you have received and your family support system in their decision.

Transportation Assistance

Getting to medical appointments, job interviews, or other important meetings can be difficult if you don't have a car. Public transportation is usually the most inexpensive option, and each city and state have their own programs to help with the cost of public transportation. Your local community organization can help you navigate this. Additionally, here are some other options:

Rural Transit Assistance Programs: These help the millions of Americans that live in cities of less than 50,000 people. To contact and learn more about transportation support in your state, go to: <http://nationalrtap.org/findanything/Appendices/State-RTAP-5311-Websites> and click on the RTAP and/or 5311 site for your state.

Public Transportation and Mass Transit: Check your city for bus, subway, light railway, or regional railway express options. Public transit schedules are always available for free online. Special assistance such as reduced fares or services for the elderly and disabled exist as well, but you'll need to check locally for details.

Bucks County Transport: Provides services to all Bucks County residents within Bucks County Monday through Friday 6 am to 6 pm (Saturday, Sunday and evenings available through special arrangement). Fares start at \$3 one-way for Bucks County residents. You must register with Bucks County Transport at 1-888-795-0740 and request a ride 2-week-days in advance. Contact 215-794-5554 for general information or visit www.bctransport.org. Programs include the Senior Citizen Shared Ride Program, Medical Assistance Transportation Program, Persons with Disabilities Transportation Program, Doylestown Dart, and Bucks County Court-house Shuttle.

Walking/Bicycling: If you can, plan to live within walking or bicycling distance to work, shopping, and your family. To learn more about biking laws, safety tips, and other best practices about biking, check out: <http://bikeleague.org/ridesmart>

Ride-sharing/Carpools: Carpools can save you money in commuting expenses. Some carpools pick up riders at their homes, meet at a place everyone agrees on, or in a commuter lot. If you want to learn more about options available in your state, a quick search online will help you find sites like: <http://www.rideshare-directory.com/> that have different message boards and ways to connect with others interested.

Private ride services: Ride services such as taxis are a convenient form of transportation; however, they can also be the most expensive. If you have a smartphone and services are available in your area, transportation applications (for example: “LyftLine,” “UberX,” and “UberPool”) offer lower-cost options. You can learn more about these services, and the costs, on their websites.

Physical and Behavioral Health Resources

Don't forget to take care of yourself! You have a lot going on and reentry can be overwhelming but make sure to stay healthy and keep on track with your responsibilities. Do something each and every day to keep yourself on track. Reentry is a marathon not a race.

Your Physical Health Resources

Once you have health insurance, you will be able to go to any health care provider who accepts your health insurance plan. Finding a primary care provider is the best way to manage your health instead of going to the Emergency Room or Urgent Care – it will save you money and time and increase the likelihood of staying healthy.

You may be referred to specialty doctors for specific health concerns. Visit these providers as soon as possible. You should also get your vision checked at least once a year, and your teeth cleaned once every six months to help prevent more serious problems in the future.

Bucks County Community Health Clinics: If you need health care right away, you can find a community clinic here: <http://www.findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov>.

Ann Silverman Community Health Clinic: The mission is to provide free medical care, dental care, and behavioral health services for low-income residents of our community. Appointments are required for ALL clinic visits. There are day and evening medical and behavioral health counseling appointments. Most dental appointments are during the day. Services include: physical exams for work, general medical care, routine gynecological care, referrals to specialist physicians, diagnostic testing, outpatient services, help with prescription medications, dental screenings and referrals, social services and referrals, and short-term behavioral health counseling for depression, anxiety, and coping problems. 595 West State Street, Doylestown, PA 18901 or 215-345-2200.

Your Mental Health Resources

Adjusting to life outside of prison can be difficult at times; you may find yourself feeling discouraged or depressed. Many people – millions of Americans, in fact – experience some kind of mental health challenge, whether it is depression, anxiety, or some form of addiction. You should feel comfortable asking any questions you have about your mental health with your primary care provider – and know that checkups and services for these are covered by most insurance companies as any other health service.

If you forgot to request your medical records for your medical provider before your release, your doctor must send a written request to **Bucks County Corrections, 1730 South Easton Road, Doylestown, PA 18901** to obtain your records. The letter from your medical provider must specifically describe the records you want and provide the following: your full name, your BCP number, your date of birth, and your doctor's mailing address and fax.

Bucks County Department of Behavioral Health/Developmental Programs (BCMHD/DP): BCMHD/DP is responsible for the administration of services to Bucks County residents who have mental illness, intellectual disability, or developmental delay/disability, and their families. The purpose of these services is to help individuals live in the community and participate in community life. <https://buckscounty.org/government/HumanServices/BHDP>. Central and Upper Bucks residents: 215-345-2273. Lower Bucks residents: 215-785-9765. If you are in a crisis situation, call 1-800-499-7455.

Family Service Association of Bucks County (Family Service): Family Service is licensed by the State of Pennsylvania to provide mental health assessment and treatment services as well as drug and alcohol assessment and treatment services. Offices are located in Langhorne, Doylestown, Quakertown, and Bristol. Additional locations include the Bucks County Emergency Homeless Shelter, the Teen Center, and the AACES program site. <https://www.fsabc.org/about/> or 215-757-6916.

Lenape Valley Foundation: For more than 60 years, **Lenape Valley Foundation** has provided assistance, compassion, and hope to thousands of children, adults, and families within its community. We offer services related to mental health, substance use, intellectual disability, and early intervention. LVF is located at 500 N West St, Doylestown, PA 18901. For more information, go to: www.lenapevf.org or call **215-345-5300**

Penn Foundation Founded in 1955, Penn Foundation is a non-profit organization providing innovative services to address the mental health and substance abuse treatment needs of individuals in our community. www.pennfoundation.org or **215-257-6551** 807 Lawn Ave, Sellersville, PA 18960 pennfoundation.org

Penndel Mental Health Center: assists consumers in achieving and sustaining the highest level of independence in their homes and communities, with service options founded upon evidence-based practices and recovery principles. We acknowledge the link between addiction and mental illness and will utilize best-practice models in treating individuals in a coordinated and unified manner that supports recovery from their co-occurring disorders. 1919 Durham Rd, Penndel, PA 19047 www.penndelmhc.org or 267-587-2300.

Substance Use Treatment and Support Services

Many people who are returning to the community have a history of abusing substances like alcohol and illegal or prescription drugs. You may have participated in treatment while incarcerated, and it is important to maintain a drug-free lifestyle after release. Ask your **Drug and Alcohol counselor or Case Manager** if he or she can help you find a treatment or support program before your release. A **Parole Officer** may also be able to help arrange for you to participate in a substance abuse treatment program.

Most communities have self-help support groups. Local **Alcoholics Anonymous** and **Narcotics Anonymous** meetings can be found here: www.aa.org/pages/en_US/find-local-aa www.na.org/meetingsearch/

The following organizations may be able to help you find other support and treatment resources in your local area:

Bucks County Drug and Alcohol Commission, Inc. (BCDAC): The mission of the BCDAC is to promote healthy individuals, families and communities, eliminate the misuse, abuse, and/or addiction to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, and support those in recovery from addiction. Services and programs cover Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery. Free Family Education and Support Groups are available to help family members of individuals with substance use disorder. <https://www.bcdac.org/> or 215-444-2700

The first step in accessing treatment is to have a drug and alcohol assessment to determine the type of treatment and recovery plan needed. Many of the assessments occur via Telehealth. For more information, call the BCDAC Approval of Care Department at 215-444-2730. If treatment is needed after hours, you or a family member can go to or call Gaudenzia, Inc. Lower Bucks at 267-405-6530 or www.gaudenzia.org Lower Bucks Hospital Community Health Center | Bristol 501 Bath Rd, Bristol, PA 19007

To access drug and alcohol treatment if you have Medical Assistance or do not have insurance, please call one of the agencies below for assessment and help. Individuals who are considered a priority population, such as pregnant women who use substances, persons who inject drugs, overdose survivors, Veterans, and adolescents, are exempt from any limitations. Preferential treatment is given to pregnant females.

The Council of Southeast Pennsylvania, Inc (The Council): The Council is a private non-profit prevention, education, advocacy, assessment, intervention, and recovery support organization, serving the counties of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia. The Council provides a wide range of services to reduce the impact of addiction and improve related health issues for the entire community including families, schools, businesses, individuals and the community, regardless of ability to pay, ethnicity, race, gender, age, or sex orientation. <https://www.councilsepa.org/> or 215-345-6644. Information, Intervention, Recovery Support Line 1-800-221-6333

SOAR Corp SOAR is an outpatient substance abuse treatment program specializing in methadone treatment for opiate addiction. Methadone maintenance (long term treatment) or detoxification (short term treatment) combined with a comprehensive therapy program is the

most successful treatment approach for heroin or other opiate addiction. 215-444-0808 or www.soarcorp.org. 7500 Bristol Pike, Levittown, PA 19057

Livengrin Foundation, Inc. Over the past 50 years, Livengrin has become the region's leading addiction recovery center, and has earned a reputation as a respected, compassionate, and ethical alcohol and drug rehab facility in the mid-Atlantic region. Our 119-bed, 44-acre campus in Bucks County houses the region's newest, state-of-the-art addiction detox center. Our medical staff consists of physicians, nurse practitioners, and registered nurses trained and experienced in addiction treatment. 4833 Hulmeville Rd, Bensalem, PA 19020 (215) 638-5200 or www.livengrin.org

For court-ordered driving under the influence (DUI) classes, assessment and treatment services, contact: Family Service Association 4 Cornerstone Dr. Langhorne, PA. 19047 215-494-9090 OR **Livengrin Foundation DUI Program** 4833 Hulmeville Road Bensalem, PA 19020 215-638-5266 OR **The Council of Southeast Pennsylvania Inc.** 252 West Swamp Road Bailiwick Office, Unit #33 Doylestown, PA 18901 215-230-8715

BCARES Family Connect: Bucks County Connect. Assess. Refer. Engage. Support (BCARES) is a warm handoff collaboration between the six Bucks County hospital emergency departments and an assigned Certified Recovery Specialist (CRS) for individuals who have survived an opioid overdose. Through BCARES, opioid overdose survivors are offered a direct connection from the emergency department to treatment and recovery support services. BCARES will also serve any individual with any substance use disorder who is being treated in one of the six Bucks County hospital emergency departments, or who are admitted to other units within those hospitals. The CRS will provide recovery support, education, resources, and treatment options. Families and significant others are also provided with support and resources. BCARESFamilyConnect@gmail.com BCARES is part of the Bucks County Drug and Alcohol Commission, Inc. 215-444-2700 www.bcdac.org.

Recovery Community Centers, Intensive Case Management Services and Recovery Houses

For more information about The Council of Southeast Pennsylvania, Inc. (CSEPA) Recovery Community Centers, Intensive Case Management and Recovery Coaches or family support services, visit www.councilsepa.org/programs/pro-act or 215-788-3738 M-F 9am to 5pm.

For recovery and support questions, call CSEPA's Information Line at 1-800-221-6333 M-F 9am to 9pm. If you are interested in CRS services or Recovery Support Zoom Groups, visit the Recovery Support Chat at <https://zoom.us/j/703846091>.

Recovery Houses are located throughout Bucks County and provide a safe living environment for individuals seeking recovery and support. For more information, visit www.bucksrecoveryhouses.com.

Bucks County Recovery Residence Oversight Committee (BC-ROC) has established the Recovery House Scholarship Program to assist with funding up to 60-days of housing for individuals in need who are enrolled or eligible for Magellan/Health Choices of Bucks County. Visit www.bcdac.org or 215-444-2711.

Tip: If you have a complaint about assessment or treatment services you've received, call BCDAC, Inc., 215-444-2714 or email dnacomplaints@buckscounty.org.

Good Friends: A halfway house in Morrisville, PA that provides comprehensive and quality behavioral health and related services in a continuum of care for the recovering adult male alcoholic/drug addict. **215-736-2861**, <https://goodfriendsinc.org>

Libertae: Seeks to create a healthy community through residential treatment programs and support that empowers recovering women to maintain their sobriety. <https://www.libertae.org/> or 215-639-8681

Bucks County Recovery Residence Oversight Committee Scholarship Program:
https://www.bcdac.org/recovery/bc-roc_recovery_house_scholarship_program.php

Bucks County Recovery House Association <https://www.bucksrecoveryhouses.com/>

Women For Sobriety. P.O. Box 618. Quakertown 18951. <https://womenforsobriety.org/contact@womenforsobriety.org>. Dr. Jean Kirkpatrick. 215-536-8026. Self-help program for women with Substance Abuse

Kingdom (Recovery) House for Men www.kingdomhouerecovery.com. Kingdomhouse27@gmail.com. 267.994.0128

Newfound Freedom Residential Sober Living & Recovery Residences, life guidance on a residential level 2 phase 12 Steps. Multiple Locations. Bristol/Levittown <http://newfoundfreedom.com/> Scott@newfoundfreedom.com (855) 587-2329

Emilie House: 1 Female and 3 Male 12 Step Sober Living & Recovery Homes. P.O. Box 7027. <https://emiliehouse.net/houses>. info@emiliehouse.net. Gary & Micki Kaisinger. 215-702-0308.

Step by Step for Women - Recovery and Sober Living Communities 100 Cedar Ave Croyden. 19021. <http://www.stepbystephouses.com>. info@stepbystephouses.com 855-589-0770. Houses in Levittown and Bensalem

True Light, Inc. Female sober living environment for recovering from addiction, abuse and sexual exploitation. P.O. Box 517. Levittown 19055. <https://www.truelightrecovery.org>. Info@truelightrecovery.org. Tracey Long. 484-469-TRUE.

National Drug Information Treatment and Referral Hotline: 1-(800)-662-HELP

National Mental Health Association: (703) 684-7722 voice, (800) 969-6642 info line

National Health Information Center: (800) 336-4797

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI): 1-(800)-729-6686

National Mental Health Knowledge Exchange Network (KEN): 1-(800)-789-2647

American Council on Alcoholism: (703) 248-9005

Education and Employment Resources

There are many ways to build your skills and qualify for better jobs. Having an education and/or vocational training is important because it increases employment options. There are many ways to further your education and technical skills upon release.

Education Resources

Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs are for individuals who want to improve in reading, writing, math, speaking English as a second language, and understanding spoken English. ABE programs are offered at adult schools, career centers, libraries, or community colleges for free or for a small fee.

If you do not have a high school diploma, you can enroll in a high school equivalency (HSE) program after release. The HSE program prepares you to take the GED or HiSET tests to earn the Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma (CSSD) that shows that adults who have not completed high school have gained the knowledge and skills associated with a high school diploma. Many community colleges offer programs that allow you to earn a CSSD and college credits at the same time.

Vita Education Services provides critical thinking skills classes and adult basic education in many community locations in Bucks County. Vita's community programs are available to individuals upon reentry and are free.

Decisions for Change is a 12-hour course providing critical thinking instruction in decision-making. It is designed for adults on probation and/or parole. Participants who complete the course receive a certificate and can list it on their resumé.

TIP: If you participated in ABE or HSE classes while incarcerated, support from VITA Education Services is available to you upon release. Vita's Educational Transitions Coordinator will assist you in resuming your education in the community. Contact VITA at 215-345-8322 or through our website, <https://www.vitaeducation.org>.

To sign up for free ABE or HSE classes after release, contact **Vita Education Services** (www.vitaeducation.org, 215-345-8322). To sign up for free HSE classes, contact **Bucks County Community College** (<https://www.bucks.edu/businesscareer/pro-dev/adultliteracyhseged/>).

Find an adult basic education or HSE classes anywhere in Pennsylvania at <http://Paadultedresources.org>.

TIP: Keep a list of all the classes and programs you take while in jail, such as Job Readiness, Decisions, and substance treatment, to help you write your resumé.

Youth Workforce Center – Free GED/HSE and Employment Services, including job training and placement assistance, employability skills, paid work experiences, and more. In partnership with PACareerLink. <https://www.bucks.edu/businesscareer/pro-dev/adultliteracyhseged/>

If you have a high school diploma or CCSD and want to further your education, there are resources available to help you with the cost of college. Community colleges are a common option for individuals returning home from prison. The low cost of tuition and the variety of programs offered make these colleges an ideal starting place. By enrolling in a community college, you can earn an Associate's degree and then transfer to a four-year college or university to earn a Bachelor's degree or prepare for a technical career.

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program courses bring traditional college students and incarcerated students together in jails and prisons for semester-long learning. You can apply while in prison or when released. There is no cost and there are a wide variety of classes offered. Contact Inside-Out at insideoutphilly@temple.edu or 215-204-2201 at Temple University for more information on courses available. You can also check the website at www.insideoutcenter.org.

Bucks County Community College offers free workforce training programs to prepare for careers in manufacturing, Microsoft Office Technology, and Bookkeeping with QuickBooks. <https://www.bucks.edu/workforcedevelopment/>

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the starting point for accessing all federal student financial aid. You can find FAFSA online at: <http://www.fafsa.gov> or you can request a paper copy from **1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)**. Federal student aid information can be found at: <http://www.StudentLoans.gov>

Vocational programs provide you with skills required for a particular job. They are also referred to as occupational, vo-tech, or career and technical education programs. Vocational programs are available through community and technical colleges, as well as trade schools, and they take less time to complete than academic college degree programs.

Bucks County Technical High School Adult Education: adult education programs are offered by the school during the day and evening. <https://www.bcths.com/Content2/domain-35>

You can apply at the local employment office, as a "displaced worker," for **Department of Labor Second Chance Act** funds if you want to learn a vocational trade.

Employment Resources

Bucks County Workforce Development Board (BCWDB) works to ensure that the Bucks County workforce system, covering numerous agencies and multiple disciplines meets both employers' needs for skilled workers and workers' career and economic advancement. 1268 Veteran Hwy, Bristol, PA 19007 (215) 874-2800 www.bucksworks.org

PA CareerLink®: A user-friendly, premier job-matching system. Job seekers have the ability to search and apply for job openings. You can create and upload a resume. PA CareerLink® will also recommend jobs for you based on your choices. Other services provided include personalized job search assistance, specialized job seeker workshops, networking groups, career counseling, skills and interest assessments, access to skills and occupational training, extensive job lead resources, and more www.pacareerlink.pa.gov. In addition to all the services

listed, PA CareerLink® staff will help ex-offender job seekers access the job training, skills assessments, and other resources to help overcome some of the barriers to their job search. www.Sc paworks.org

TIP: Being prepared improves your chances of finding a job.

- Make sure your background information is accurate. Many companies do screenings that may include criminal record information.
- In the "Employment Screening" section of the following link, you can find reporting agencies that will give you a **free** report every 12 months: http://files.consum-erfinance.gov/f/201501_cfpb_list-consumer-reporting-agencies.pdf
- **Outline steps for your job hunt** by visiting the Department of Labor's "Career One Stop" at: www.careeronestop.org On this site, you can do everything from find trainings, resume guides, interview tips, to search job databases.
- **Create an "application package"** by putting together a draft resume and use the list of classes and programs you completed while incarcerated (certificates, activities you completed in prison, and letters of recommendation.)
- **Get some feedback on your resume and application package** from someone who is trained to help individuals search, prepare for, and apply to jobs.
- **Call 2-1-1, or connect with other Community Organizations** listed in the "Getting Support" section and ask about employment services.
- **Search for jobs online at:** www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/findjobs/find-jobs.aspx, meet with an employment counselor and also connect with your local job center or employment assistance organization to learn more about tools that they have to find jobs.
- **Prepare for your interview** by following tips at <http://www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/Interview/interview-and-negotiate.aspx>.
Some of the basics include:
 - **Have a list of your strengths and be ready to talk about them.** What are you good at? What type of work do you enjoy? What experience or skills can you offer an employer?
 - **Think** about how you will answer questions about your record.
 - **Look** at common interview questions: www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/Interview/common-interview-questions.aspx.
 - **Make sure you are clean and well-dressed.** A local community organization can help you with this.
 - **Be on time.** Several days before, plan how you will travel to your interview and what time you will need to leave in order to arrive a few minutes early.

- **Do not be discouraged** if it takes a while to get a job. If potential employers express concern about hiring people with a criminal record, you can tell potential employers about programs that offer insurance to employers who hire someone with a record.

Legal Resources

You may qualify for free legal help (called “legal aid”) for civil legal problems that affect your daily life. Getting help in these areas can help you get back on your feet more quickly. Legal Aid of Southeastern PA (LASP) serves residents of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties. <https://www.lasp.org/>

Some of the cases types LASP handles: Bankruptcy, consumer law and debt relief; child custody and dependency; Domestic violence and Protection from Abuse; Elder law; Employment law; Expungement, record-sealing (Clean Slate), and pardons; Family law; Housing, including mortgage foreclosure, landlord/tenant, evictions, public and subsidized housing; Public Benefits, including Unemployment Compensation, SSI, SSDI, TANF (cash assistance), SNAP (food stamps), Medical Assistance (Medicare), and more; Utilities, including LIHEAP (home heating and energy assistance); and Veterans.

Under laws enforced by federal and/or state agencies, employers must not treat anyone, including people with criminal records, differently based on their race, national origin, or another reason protected by law.

Bucks County Office of the Public Defender: You may qualify for assistance with an expungement or pardon to clean up your criminal record <https://www.bucks-county.gov/851/ExpungementPardons>

For a simple overview of your rights as you are applying to jobs, and to better understand what companies are allowed to ask for, read NELP’s guide: <https://www.nelp.org/>

If you believe you may have experienced **illegal discrimination**, you can file a complaint with the EEOC: <http://www.eeoc.gov/employees/howtofile.cfm>

The Native American Rights Fund (NARF) has a list of legal organizations that focus on Indian law or serve Native American communities www.narf.org/nill/resources/lawyer.html

Legal Action Center: National HIRE Network: Works to eliminate unjust barriers to employment, housing, legal benefits, and other life essentials that individuals in reentry and recovery need to support themselves, their families, and our shared communities <https://www.lac.org/>

The National Employment Law Project (NELP) lists the states that have “Banned the Box” or enacted Fair Hiring laws or policies. Go to: www.nelp.org/publication/ban-the-box-fair-chance-hiring-state-and-local-guide/ for more information.

Who should I contact? Project works through the Freedom Network, offering national training and technical assistance on criminal record remedies for trafficking survivors, public defenders, legal service lawyers, pro bono attorneys, victims’ advocates, law students, judges,

and prosecutors. More information can be found at: https://www.americanbar.org/groups/domestic_violence/Initiatives/survivor-reentry-project/

Resources to Help You Rebuild Your Relationships

For most people reentering their community, it will take some time to get used to life back at home. You may not feel comfortable right away. You and your family and friends will have to make some changes.

Your family members will have attempted to adapt to everyday routines without you there, and may have learned to do things around the house (budgeting, grocery shopping, car repair, and other household chores) that you used to do. It is important to talk to your family about how you are feeling and decide how to take care of these things now that you are home. You can build a family and social support network through these organizations: Al-Anon Meetings, Nar-Anon Meetings, Parenting Classes, Family Counseling, Batterer’s Intervention Program (BIP), 12 Step Meetings, Encourage honesty/transparency with parents and social supports, EPICS interventions. Some of these resources can be found at:

<https://al-anon.org/>

<https://www.nar-anon.org/>

<https://www.buckscounty.org/LivingAndWorking/Services/parent-support>

<https://www.fsabc.org/program/parenting-together/>

<https://www.fsabc.org/program/parenting-together/>

Peace Center: Seeks to educate, empower and support individuals and organizations in efforts to prevent violence, promote peaceful resolution of conflict and foster inclusive, equitable and safe communities locally, nationally, and worldwide. <https://www.thepeace-center.org> or 215-750-7220

Voice and Vision, Inc: Conducts face-to-face interviews, focus groups, telephone surveys and mailed surveys for adults and children in order to improve people’s quality of life and the quality of services in Bucks County. They also provide some peer support services for individuals with mental illness who are in school and manage monies for some courses at Bucks County Community College. <https://voiceandvisioninc.org/> or 1-800-734-5665.

Here are some other suggestions that can help you rebuild your relationships:

- **Begin by appreciating the small things** others take for granted – such as privacy, being able to come and go as you please, planning your meals, and more.
- **Avoid talking about life in prison** as your only conversation topic. Practice making “small talk” about daily events instead.
- It will be difficult to catch up on everything that happened while you were away. **Be patient with yourself, and your family and friends.**

- **Understand that things will take time**, for both you and those around you, and that even small steps are important.
- **Trust Takes Time to Rebuild.** As your family learns to trust you, they will do so more and more and you will begin to feel more comfortable within your family again. Since you were in prison, a divorce or child custody proceeding may have happened and changed your family as you once knew it.
- **Show your loved ones** that you understand you may have hurt them, and allow them to share painful memories with you.
- **Children** may have become used to living without their mom or dad. They may not understand everything that has happened, where you were, or why you were away. You can ask them if they have any questions, and be patient with them as they readjust.
- **Your parents and your children** are not the same as when you left - do not try to treat them the way you did. They have aged and changed. Show them you care about their needs, are interested in what they are doing, and you want to spend time with them.
- **If you are asked about your incarceration**, answer questions honestly. You do not need to tell them it was “no big deal” or act “tough.” Let them know being in prison is no way to spend your life.
- Helpful resources about rebuilding relationships with family are available from the National Resource Center for Children and Families of the Incarcerated: <https://nrccfi.campus.rutgers.edu/>. The Resource Center also has a directory of programs specifically designed to help children who have had a parent in prison or jail.

Additional Community Resources, Sponsors, Mentor Programs, and Advocacy Organizations

While incarcerated, please discuss interest in any of the below programs with your Case Manager. Note that Life Abundant and the Father Davids Mentoring and Reentry Program typically begin with mentoring within the jail several months before release and continue post-release. Your Case Manager can help you apply for these mentoring programs. The other mentoring and advocacy programs listed below provide services post-release; however, you can express interest in them with your Case Manager and possibly connect with them before release. If you have not made arrangements with any of these programs prior to release, you can contact them directly after release with the contact information provided by each organization in their descriptions below.

Life Abundant Inc. facilitates religious services and offers 1-on1 mentoring to men and women at the Bucks County Correctional Facilities. Life Abundant also helps to connect returning citizens and family members to various supportive services and resources. Website: <https://www.lifeabundantinc.org>. Phone: 215-489-0200. Email: moreinfo@lifeabundantinc.org

The Father Davids Mentoring and Reentry Program is a faith-based program that provides weekly 1-on-1 mentoring within the facility and continues after release. Mentors

help mentees stay on track with the changes they want to make in their lives and reach their personal goals. Mentors also help mentees connect with needed resources and support services. While incarcerated, contact your Case Manager. Post-release, contact the church office: 215 348-4190, or Patt:215 906-6337, priscillaconnor2@gmail.com, or Tom: 215-876-5783, tspacek@gmail.com.

No More Pain, Inc. is a mentorship based program that assist men and women being released from prisons, institutions, and rehabilitation centers. Our programs offer 1-on-1 mentoring designed to help mentees achieve and reach set goals. Phone: 215:416:5248. Email: nomorepaininc215@gmail.com. Facebook: [No More Pain, Inc. | Facebook](#)

A Woman’s Place A community-based social change organization committed to the empowerment of women and to ending intimate and domestic violence for all. <https://awomansplace.org>

Network of Victim Assistance (NOVA) provides a continuum of programs to meet individual needs including but not limited to: a 24-7 victim hotline, SANE services in area hospitals, forensic interviews for children who have been sexually or physical abused, trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy provided in office, home or schools, legal advocacy and support through the criminal justice system. In addition, NOVA provides prevention education and professional training in schools, the community, and through continuing education conferences. <https://novabucks.org/>

Bucks County Domestic Relations: A court department that establishes and enforces court ordered child or spousal support obligations. <http://www.buckscounty.org/Courts/DomesticRelations>

Veteran’s Services

If you are a Veteran, make sure you have your military discharge papers. You can do this either by mail, or online after your release. Your Case Manager or Probation Officer can assist you in reaching out to the Bucks County Military Affairs for assistance at 267-580-3560 or 215-345-3307. Instructions and forms for both online and by mail can be found at <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>. You may qualify for education, housing, and/or healthcare benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/index.asp> or 1-877-424-3838z

You can find your nearest **VA medical center** here: <https://www.va.gov/>. The Veterans Administration has a list of legal organizations and providers that work with veterans and active-duty service members. You may also qualify for free legal aid. Contact **Bucks County Military Affairs:** A variety of benefits are available to individuals who have served in the United States military 215-345-3307. To access drug and alcohol treatment, please call one of the agencies listed in the **Your Substance Use Resources** section of this handbook. Veterans are exempt from any limitations. Preferential treatment is given to pregnant females.

What else should I be thinking about?

Role of your probation/parole officer. Your officer is not out to get you. Your officer, and the entire Adult Probation and Parole Department, wants individuals and communities to achieve their greatest potential. Your officer will act as a broker of services to help connect you with the appropriate resources. It is ultimately up to you, however, to make the choice whether to take advantage of those resources or not. You will be given every opportunity to be successful, but if you violate your court ordered conditions or the rules of supervision, or your behavior impacts community safety, sanctions including incarceration pending a hearing may be imposed.

Rules and regulations of probation and parole. Remember it is your responsibility to learn what the rules of supervision and court ordered special conditions are. You can find the general rules here: <https://buckscounty.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2084/2020-Rules-and-Regulations-of-Probation-and-Parole-PDF> Speak to your parole officer if you have any questions.

Voting rights. Information about criminal status and voting in Pennsylvania can be found at <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/Convicted-Felon,-Misdemeanant-or-Pre-trial-Detainee.aspx> To find out about voting rights in other states and if there is anything you need to do to restore your right to vote visit: www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-as-an-ex-offender/ If you are able to do so, register to vote: <https://vote.usa.gov>

Remember, reentry can be a complicated process – others have felt the same way – but many have been able to overcome this and have succeeded in finding work, supporting themselves and their families, and more.

We want you to achieve the same.

“The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today.”

– H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

NOTES FOR REENTRY:

WHO IS MY P.O. AND HOW DO I CONTACT HIM/HER?

WHAT ARE MY SPECIAL CONDITIONS?

WHAT RESOURCES WILL I NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

WHAT QUESTIONS DO I HAVE?

This Handbook is provided by
THE BUCKS COUNTY REENTRY COALITION

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