

THE BUCKS COUNTY REENTRY COALITION...

...where your community welcomes you back!

A Guide to Successful Reentry in Bucks County, PA



Who is this information for?

YOU!

Reentering your community can be more manageable when you're aware of services and resources available to help. This overview is a synopsis of the complete Reentry Resource Guide which can be found on the Bucks County Reentry [website](#).

The complete guide provides in-depth descriptions of many of the resources mentioned in this overview. The complete guide also includes additional information in specific areas where you may have questions or be looking for tools available to you.

Be sure to review the below checklists and any questions you may have with your Case Manager and your Bucks County Adult Pretrial/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.

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

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – Call or Text 988 Family Service CONTACT Helpline](#): 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. \(BCDAC\)](#): 215-444-2700 or call [Gaudenzia, Inc. Lower Bucks](#) after hours at 267-405-6530.

[Bucks County Mobile Crisis](#): 1-877-435-7709.

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 landline) or visit www.211.org

[Bucks County Adult Probation and Parole Department](#)
215-348-6634

[Bucks County Correctional Facility](#): 215-345-3700

[Bucks Human Services Connect \(The HUB\)](#): 215-348-6201
TheHub@buckscounty.org

CHECKLIST #1: WHILE INCARCERATED

- **Sign up for and complete any court-ordered programs.**
- **If you have a history of abusing alcohol or using drugs:**
 - 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 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.
- **Ask your Case Manager for a brochure about available mentoring programs in jail and continuing after release.** If you decide a mentor would be helpful, obtain an application.
- **If your faith journey and spiritual growth are important to you:** you can attend religious services, Bible Studies, etc. offered in the jail.
- **Consider taking classes offered by Vita** such as **GED preparation, job search and readiness, Decisions for Living, and others.**
- **Interested in college classes?** Ask about the [Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program](#).
- **Check out other self-help programs** offered on topics such as anger management, mental health, etc.
- **Ask your Case Manager about the Wellness, Reentry, and Assessment Program (WRAP).**

CHECKLIST #2: AS YOU APPROACH RELEASE

- **Get your identification documents.** You will need a photo ID, birth certificate, and social security card once you are released.
- **Request your jail medical records be sent to your medical provider.**

- **Housing.** If you will be on parole, you'll need an address approved by the Adult Probation and Parole Department before you get released. If your parole address will be a Recovery House, this must be set up by the DOC's Drug and Alcohol Department. If you are not on parole, a Recovery House may still be the best option while transitioning from jail so speak to your Case Manager. If you don't have a place to stay, your Case Manager may refer you to the [Bucks County Opportunity Council \(BCOC\)](#) to determine if you are eligible for its reentry housing programs or connect you with the [Bucks County Housing Link](#).
- **Find out about any outstanding court financial obligations or warrants.** Your Case Manager can assist with requesting your court financial obligation from the [Bucks County Clerk of Courts](#) and child support info from [Bucks County Domestic Relations](#). It is important to set up a payment plan upon your release, especially if you owe victim restitution.
- **Confirm your first appointment with your Pretrial/Parole Officer.** If this appointment has not been arranged in advance, it is your responsibility to contact [Adult Probation](#) within 24 hours of your release. 215-348-6634.
- **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.

CHECKLIST #3: IN THE FIRST WEEK AFTER RELEASE

- **If you do not yet have a photo ID, go to the [Department of Motor Vehicles](#) to obtain one.** You will need it to get a job, open a bank account and for many other necessities.
- **If you do not yet have your [Social Security Card](#), go to the Social Security Office to apply for a copy.** You will need it for employment.
- **If you had a cell phone prior to your incarceration, and it is still available to you, reactivate your cell account.** Otherwise get a cell phone if you can afford to.
- **If you have abused alcohol or used drugs in the past:** and are not in a Recovery House or treatment program, 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.

CHECKLIST #3 continued on back

- **Find internet access.** Your cell phone plan will likely have internet access. Also, most public libraries offer free internet access (a photo ID and proof of address may be required). [Bucks County Free Library](#)
- **Create an email address.** Many websites (e.g., www.gmail.com) allow you to set up a free email account. Write down your email address and password in a safe place.
- **Open a bank account.** You will need proof of residence and your state photo ID. A letter from your landlord or Recovery House Manager can serve as proof of residence. Otherwise, a utility bill will work. Once employed, you can have your pay direct deposited in your account and you can access your money via an ATM machine and pay bills via the bank’s app or Venmo.
- **Sign up for Health Insurance.** For free or low-cost insurance, go to the [Health Insurance Marketplace](#). You may also qualify for [Medicaid](#). Call 1-800-318-2596 (TTY: 1-855-889-4325) 24/7.
- **Continue court-ordered or voluntary treatment/support programs.** See full handbook for contact information.
- **Confirm your reporting instructions.** To whom (pretrial 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: TO HELP YOU SUCCESSFULLY REENTER YOUR COMMUNITY

- **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 per week at a minimum; 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 recovery. 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; 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. See the Handbook for helpful transportation advice and resources.
- **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, for transportation, for 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. A complete list of free or low cost educational and vocational resources is in the reentry handbook.
- **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. The Credit Counseling Center (see complete guide) can help you create a plan to repay debt and stay current on your expenses, including court-ordered support, fines, costs, and restitution.
- **Navigate Benefit Programs.** There are many resources available to support reentrants with everything they need to be successful (**food, housing, case management, medical, mental health, substance use, anger management, domestic violence, sex offender treatment, transportation, anonymous support meetings, income assistance, education, employment, legal aid, veterans services and more**). Many of these are available at <https://bucksreentry.com/> and [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. 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 and attend services, find some quiet time each day to pray, read the Bible, Koran, or other religious text, join a church 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, 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, 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. For tips on how to adjust, see the full reentry handbook.

If you follow these checklists, use the resources on bucksreentry.com, and work with your assigned parole officer, we know you can be successful!

This guide is provided by

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