

## SUGGESTIONS FOR RELEASE PLANNING

1. Release date & location (*city or town*).
2. Community contacts: (*Note these need to be responsible people, not people who will just land you back in trouble*).
  - a. Hopefully, you have stayed in touch with people in the community who are responsible and can and will provide some help and support in your transition. If you haven't already done so, contact these people to see if there are things they are able or willing to do to help (*such as provide transportation or a place to live, give job leads, look up addresses and phone numbers for resources, or just provide some moral support*).
  - b. If you don't have anyone, maybe you can find a mentor through AA, NA, or Prison Fellowship, who would give the same kind of assistance, and be a contact and support (*besides your PO*) when you are released.
3. Transportation to location.
  - a. First option.
  - b. Backup transportation plan.
4. Residence
  - a. First option.
    - Address
    - With whom (*person and relationship*).
  - b. Second option (*backup*).
    - Address
    - With whom (*person and relationship*).
5. Community Corrections (*Parole*) Office
  - a. Address, phone number.
  - b. Date and time you need to report by.
  - c. Parole Officer (*if known*).
6. "Official" Business
  - a. Obtain Social Security card (*institution has forms and can help*).
  - b. Check on driving status (*institution has forms*).
  - c. What money will you have: how much and how will you access it? (*EBT card as of March, 2001*).
  - d. What will your immediate expenses be (*rent, food, transportation, ...*)? Have a budget prepared.
  - e. Oregon Health Plan and other benefits (*Food Stamps*): apply before release if possible, or be sure you have everything you will need to apply immediately after release.
  - f. Are you a veteran? If so, check with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for benefits and services.
  - g. If eligible, contact Vocational Rehabilitation Division (VRD) to find out about services and how to apply.
  - h. "Dress-out" clothes: sent in? Need to get through institution?
7. Medical Issues
  - a. Will you need medication continued when you are released?
  - b. If yes, plan for obtaining it (*prescription issued at release? When will it need to be filled? How will it be filled, how paid for?*)
  - c. If you have a need for ongoing medical or psychiatric treatment, try to locate a provider (*doctor or clinic*) prior to your release. Before you are released, contact the "provider" and schedule an intake appointment for as soon after your release as possible. If you can't do it before, do it as soon after your release as you can. If you are eligible for a program that provides case management services (*Mental Health, Development Disabilities*), contact that program to set up an intake appointment as soon after your release as possible.

8. Program Issues
  - a. Any treatment or programming that needs to be arranged (*A/D, sex offender, etc.?*).
  - b. Write to Community Corrections (P & P) office and request list of approved community resources for such programming.
  - c. Write to programs to request information about accessing program upon release (*i.e., can you schedule something ahead, what are referral and payment procedures, etc.*)
9. Work and Education
  - a. What is your immediate plan: to get a job or attend school?
    - Work: do some research into jobs and employers in the area: get leads from people you know, if possible; contact the Employment Division or the local newspaper, If possible, have a job lined up and confirmed in writing.
    - Education: contact the education program (*community college, training school, etc.*) for entry requirements. If possible, apply and get acceptance prior to release, with acceptance confirmed in writing. Also apply for financial assistance ahead of time, if that is possible. Know how you will be supporting yourself while attending school.
10. Free Time! This is a big stumbling block for a lot of folks: too much spare time with nothing to do and no one to do it with. It's when people who are lonely and bored (*and maybe scared of being out and alone*) that they fall back into old habits, even if they don't want to, and wind up back in trouble and then back in prison.
  - a. Take some time now to think about things you like to do (*hobbies, activities*) or things you have thought about trying that you might like doing. Do you like doing artwork or crafts? Have you wanted to try photography or dancing or woodworking? Is church important? Do you want to learn to use a computer? Do you like animals? Model trains or planes? Construction?
  - b. Do some thinking and researching into what might be available in your (*new*) community that you might like to get involved in or try out. Activities or groups that will bring you into contact with other people who have some similar interests is one possibility. You may feel uncomfortable for a while (*lots of us do in new situations, even if we've never been in prison*), but it could be enough to keep you from getting back into trouble because you are lonely, bored, and depressed.
  - c. Be reasonable. Give yourself some time to adjust, and balance "doing" with "breathing room". Be careful not to overload yourself – don't set yourself up with so much to do that you get so overwhelmed and stressed you can't handle your new life. That's another "trigger" for old (*familiar*) behavior to surface – with the familiar, predictable results!

A thought: **"History keeps repeating itself, but each time the price goes up."** *Anonymous*  
Hopefully, your history of incarceration *won't* keep repeating itself: that's primarily up to you.  
Take care.