

**YOUR RIGHTS TO HOUSING AND PUBLIC BENEFITS AFTER LEAVING
ILLINOIS STATE PRISONS**

HOUSING:

Can I live in public housing or Section 8 if I have a conviction on my record?

It depends. Each public housing authority has its own set of rules about who they admit, so it is best to contact the housing authority directly to understand its rules about past convictions.

Many public housing authorities deny housing for crimes related to drugs, violent crimes, and crimes that would threaten the health and safety of other residents. But even if you have been convicted of these crimes, the public housing authority should give you a chance to explain why it should not use the conviction to deny you housing.

For a few convictions, a public housing authority must deny housing without giving you a chance to explain further:

1. You have been convicted of manufacturing methamphetamine on federally assisted property at any time, or
2. You are required to register because of a past sex offense, and this requirement is for life, or
3. You currently use illegal drugs or abuse alcohol, or
4. Within the last 3 years, you were evicted from federally assisted housing for drug-related criminal activity and you cannot show that you have successfully rehabilitated from drugs.

Can I live in public housing or Section 8 if I'm on electronic monitoring?

Yes, if you are on electronic monitoring, you are not automatically prevented from living in public housing or Section 8.

HEALTHCARE:

Can I apply for medical benefits if I just left prison or have a conviction on my record?

Yes. You are eligible for medical benefits even if you have been convicted of a crime. You can apply for medical benefits before you are released or you can apply as soon as you are released from state prison.

If you need immediate medical coverage after release, the prison can send an email to HFS.IESAccess@illinois.gov with your name, case number and RIN# if you had Medicaid before, and your Medicaid should then be restored. For more information on

the type of medical benefits that you might be eligible for, go to <https://getcareillinois.org/need-health-coverage/>.

Who can help me with the medical benefits process?

Hospitals, health centers, free health clinics, public health departments, and many food banks have staff who can help you with your application. They can also help you apply for food assistance, such as SNAP. You can find free assistance by going to the Get Covered Connector, at <https://widget.getcoveredamerica.org/?original=/IL/>, to find a local Assister who you can talk to by phone.

What if I'm moving home to live with my children or a spouse already receiving benefits?

Your children or spouse should contact DHS through their Manage My Case (MMC) account or the DHS Hotline (1-800-843-6154) to request that you be added to their case. The state is responsible for sending a notice that you have been released to the public benefits office.

Can I get Illinois medical benefits while incarcerated in a federal prison?

No. People in federal prisons, even if they are Illinois residents or were before release, are not eligible for Illinois Healthcare and Family Services medical benefits while they are incarcerated. However, as explained above, you can apply for Medicaid before release so it can start again when you are released.

Can I receive medical benefits after I come home, even if I'm under home sentencing or on electronic monitoring?

Yes. People under home sentencing or electronic monitoring can qualify for medical benefits.

What should I do if I need mental health support during the pandemic?

The state has set up a text and talk line, called Call4Calm. The line is anonymous, available in Spanish and English, 24 hours a day. Counselors can help orient you towards other resources, too. Text TALK to 552020 for English or HABLAR for Spanish support. This [page](#) will be updated with other resources as time goes on.

Should I apply for medical benefits or SNAP first?

Reentry service providers recommend you first apply for medical benefits, and then SNAP, to increase your chances of faster approval times, and to help ensure there's no interruption in medications.

FOOD AND CASH ASSISTANCE

Can I apply for SNAP (food assistance) if I just left prison or have a conviction on my record?

Yes, SNAP benefits are available in Illinois regardless of criminal history. While Illinois cannot currently accept pre-release SNAP applications, a returning citizen can apply at the Illinois Department of Human Services website, <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?> or by calling 1-800-843-6154. While all IDHS

field offices are currently closed, applications can be filed in person at Family Community Resource Centers once they reopen. A list can be found here at <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12>. If you are living with friends or family members, under certain circumstances you may need to become a member of their SNAP household.

Can I apply for TANF (cash assistance) if I just left prison or have a conviction on my record?

To be eligible for TANF in Illinois, you must be a pregnant woman or an adult with a child under age 19 who lives with them. A parent convicted of certain drug related felonies may not be eligible for TANF, but if income and asset tests are met, then any children in the household may obtain benefits through a child-only case. People may apply for TANF in the same ways and through the same application process that is used to apply for SNAP or Medicaid.

Should I apply for medical benefits or SNAP first?

Reentry service providers recommend you first apply for medical benefits, and then SNAP, to increase your chances of faster approval times, and to help ensure there's no interruption in medications.

STATE IDS:

Please note: Illinois residents need to visit Secretary of State facilities in person to get state IDs, including driver's licenses and homeless status certification IDs (i.e. homeless IDs). Many Secretary of State facilities are opening starting on June 2nd. Until July 31st, facilities will be serving only those who need an ID for the first time, individuals with expired ID cards, and people who need vehicle transactions like registration.

I need a state ID. What do I do?

You need to visit an Illinois Secretary of State facility with all required documentation. Before you were released, the prison or detention facility should have given you a piece of paper called the "Identification Card Verification Form." You can use this to get a state ID.

Where is the closest Illinois Secretary of State facility?

You can use this "[Facility Finder](#)" tool from the Secretary of State to find your nearest facility.

I just got out from prison or jail and my ID is expiring soon. What do I do?

Due to the COVID crisis, all state ID expiration dates have been automatically extended by at least 90 days until after the Governor's disaster proclamation ends

I just got out of an Illinois prison. Can someone help me get a state ID?

All people released from Illinois state prisons qualify for a free ID card. You should try to visit a Secretary of State office within 30 days of being released and bring proof of your legal name, date of birth, social security number and signature. Before you were released, the prison or detention facility should have given you a piece of paper called

the “Identification Card Verification Form.” You can use this to get a state ID. If you are coming home to Cook County, Safer Foundation can support (see below).

SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR PEOPLE COMING HOME:

What organizations can help me navigate these resources?

If you are coming home to Cook County, Safer Foundation coordinates services. Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities, also known as TASC, coordinates services throughout the rest of Illinois.

Safer Foundation can assist with obtaining State IDs during COVID if you have a social security card and birth certificate, as well as Medicaid benefit reactivations or new applications.

You can reach TASC through their hotline, 1-855-827-2444.

Will these organizations reach out to me?

If you signed a release form prior to your release from IDOC, an outreach counselor will call you at the number you previously provided. You can still call the hotline(s) above if you want to talk sooner.

THANK YOU

We recognize the people inside prisons and jails, as well as their loved ones and allies on the outside.

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