

PREPARING PEOPLE FOR REENTRY:

CHECKLIST FOR CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES



Reentry planners and other staff overseeing discharge have multiple challenges and needs to manage as they help prepare people for successful transitions back into the community. Addressing these needs helps to ensure the health and well-being of all who live and work within a facility, particularly people with behavioral health or chronic health conditions. Now, more than ever, as communities work to quickly reduce correctional populations to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, it can be easy for jails and prisons to miss steps that ensure safety of employees and the people who are returning to their communities. The checklist below can be used to guide reentry planning during this critical time. If you check a colored box, see the corresponding guidance on the back for more information. Note: you should continue to monitor the most recent guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and to coordinate with community partners, including the courts, probation, and service providers.

COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS	YES	NO
1. Are you using a CDC-approved method to screen for COVID-19 symptoms and verify vaccination status?		
➤ If Yes, for people who screen positive, do you have the ability to test them for COVID-19?		
2. If the person is symptomatic for COVID-19, have you coordinated with medical personnel to establish a discharge plan for ongoing medical care?		
3. If the person is symptomatic for COVID-19, were they also medically quarantined prior to their discharge (per CDC guidelines)?		
4. If the person is asymptomatic, do you have reason to suspect they might be COVID-19 positive, including that the person has been in contact with someone who has COVID-19 symptoms?		
5. Is a quarantine or medical isolation required (per CDC guidelines)?		
6. Do you have the resources to provide every person upon release with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and guidance from the CDC on social distancing, staying healthy, and accessing COVID-19 vaccinations?		
LEGAL DISCHARGE CONSIDERATIONS	YES	NO
7. If the person is on court-ordered supervision, has the assigned officer been informed and provided with the individual's contact information?		
8. If your jail has access to court-ordered reporting instructions, are they provided to the individual?		
9. Is each person released with their government-issued identification (ID) or some form of temporary ID, such as a photocopied printout of an ID card or instruction? If not, is each person provided instructions on how to obtain an ID?		
10. Is release scheduled during the day to allow for service coordination, if court orders permit?		
BASIC NEEDS	YES	NO
11. Have you asked the person if they have a family member, friend, service provider, or other contact who can be notified of their release?		
➤ If Yes, have you notified that person of their release?		
12. Do they have a cell phone or access to a landline phone upon release? Do they have access to the Internet and a computer?		
13. Do they have a safe home/shelter to return to? Note: your answer should consider any barriers or requirements of their designated family, friend, or shelter prior to accepting the individual (e.g., they cannot accept the person unless they were quarantined prior to release).		
14. Will they have adequate access to food where they are living?		
15. Will they have private transportation that will pick them up upon release and transport them to their home/shelter?		
HEALTH AND TREATMENT NEEDS	YES	NO
16. Has the person screened positive for mental health needs based on a validated screening tool, been diagnosed as having a mental illness, or received treatment or services prior to admission or while in the facility? Have they screened positive for suicide risk or been placed on suicide watch?		
17. Has the person screened positive for a substance use disorder (SUD) based on a validated screening tool or received treatment or services for SUD prior to admission or while in the facility?		
18. Does the person have a history of opioid use or have they been diagnosed with opioid use disorder (OUD)? Is the person receiving medication-assisted treatment (MAT) and supports for OUD?		
19. Is the person in active withdrawal from alcohol or other substances (including benzodiazepines or opioids)?		
20. Does the person require any prescribed medications for any medical or behavioral health-related condition?		
21. Does the person have access to medical coverage (i.e., do they qualify for federal/state benefits such as Medicaid, Medicare, CHIPS, VA, SSI, or do they have their own insurance plan)?		

GUIDANCE TO ADDRESS NEEDS AND CONSIDERATIONS

For someone who may be affected by COVID-19:

Question 1: While many corrections facilities do not have access to tests, [according to the CDC](#), jails and prisons should incorporate screening for COVID-19 symptoms and a temperature check into reentry planning.

- Follow CDC protocols and verbally screen anyone being released for COVID-19 and perform a temperature check.
- If a person does not clear the screening process, follow CDC protocols, including immediately placing them under medical isolation, giving them a face mask, and evaluating them for possible COVID-19 testing. For anyone on a court order for release, coordinate with the courts to determine next steps.

Questions 2, 3, 4, and 5: Communicate with your [local public health department](#) for their assistance in coordinating discharge to the most appropriate venue.

- If you have not done so already, coordinate with medical personnel to establish a discharge plan.
- If you are giving written information regarding COVID-19 to people at discharge, make sure it is easy to read and in concise, clear language.
- If the person does not have a safe home or shelter to return to, see more guidance for Question 13.
- Provide the person with instructions prior to discharge that include guidance from the CDC on social distancing, use of PPE such as a mask, gloves, and hand sanitizer, as well as best practices for handwashing and coughing into your arm.

Question 6: If you do not have guidance already drafted, print out and provide them with [this information](#) from the CDC. Make sure that any information you provide is easy to read and in concise, clear language.

For someone who has basic needs:

Question 11: Notify that person via phone of the release date and time.

Question 12: Provide them with a phone or connect them to resources for emergency phone use. This will be most critical for telehealth services and connection with supervision if ordered.

- Check with your local resource guides, if available, to see where local community hotspots for Internet connection may have been activated.
- If some local programs provide Internet access, including libraries, confirm that the program is open despite the pandemic, and inform the person of the availability.
- If you are able to provide them with a Federal Lifeline Assistance phone (that provides free data, free talk minutes, and unlimited texting), check with the phone provider to ensure they have given emergency access for Internet data (such as [Assurance Wireless](#)).

Question 13: Communicate with your designated [local public health department](#) or [Continuum of Care \(CoC\)](#) that is coordinating housing needs to identify options. This may include providing the individual with hotel or motel room funding through federal assistance, including FEMA, which provides funding to shelter people during times of crisis.

- Proactively check with local shelters and residential programs to determine if they have implemented COVID-19 referral policies, such as proof of prior 14-day quarantine, to streamline the acceptance process. Also see if they have a special schedule or limitations on amount of usage.
- Each CoC has a coordinated entry process to connect people to services and may be able to assess and prioritize a person for housing needs prior to release.

Question 14: Provide the person with a list of food bank and soup kitchen resources in the community.

- Provide them with information about [SNAP benefits and eligibility](#), and the phone number to your local human services office, which can help them determine if they qualify. Note: SNAP currently has work requirements, but there are exceptions, and there may be ways to meet the requirements by participating in workforce programs.

Question 15: Assist with availability of local transportation, but check to make sure these services are open. If available, provide coupon codes for transportation with companies such as UBER and Lyft.

For someone who has health or treatment needs:

If the person needs a referral for any of the below needs, confirm that they have an intake appointment with a treatment provider scheduled as soon as possible and that they are able to participate in it. Note: many appointments may be virtual or conducted over the telephone, so the person should have access to a phone and/or computer and [be instructed in how to use these](#), if necessary. If they do not have access to a phone and/or computer, see more guidance for Question 12.

Question 16: After an appointment is confirmed, provide them with a list of outpatient treatment providers they can use.

- If you have access to a local mobile crisis team, mobile opioid treatment programs, and/or peer mentors, obtain appropriate consent from the person, and inform the team/programs/mentors of the individual's release to the community.

Question 17: After an appointment is confirmed, assist them in developing an informal relapse prevention plan prior to release and connect them with a treatment provider as soon as possible.

- If needed, also provide a list of support group meetings, including virtual options.
- If you have access to a local mobile crisis team, mobile opioid treatment programs, and/or peer mentors, obtain appropriate consent from the person, and inform the team/programs/mentors of the individual's release to the community.

Question 18: After an appointment is confirmed, refer them to an MAT clinic for medication and supports.

Question 19: First, have the person assessed by medical or clinical staff and consider transfer to a medical facility. Then, confirm there is an intake appointment available once they will be released from the medical facility.

Question 20: Work with a nurse to provide them with their prescriptions in hand at the point of release. With safety considerations in mind, ideally provide a 30-, 60-, or 90-day supply or, at minimum, a 2-week supply of medication.

- If medication cannot be given at release, call the medication into a pharmacy ahead of time or provide the person with a paper prescription.
- Give each person a list of their current medications and dosages. If they are prescribed an injectable medication, ensure the date of the last injection is included on the list.
- Provide a list of pharmacies near where they will be residing, including pharmacies that accept discount prescription programs.

Question 21: Look to reinstate their medical insurance if it has been suspended or enroll them for medical insurance if they did not previously have it.

- Here is a [list of resources](#) if benefits cannot be activated before release and the person needs assistance paying for medications.
- If time permits, notify the Social Security Administration that the person is being released to either enroll them in or restart benefits through a [pre-release agreement](#).



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