



Homeward Bound

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**Kentucky
Department Of
Corrections
Offender Newsletter**

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DOC's Release Letter

Full Legal name
Discharge/release date
Signature
Social Security number
Date of birth
Physical Description
Address
Copy of resident record
Photograph

Why Do I Need Identification Upon My Release?

By Cheryl Million

Just imagine...it's finally time for you to go home. You made parole and can leave in just a couple of days or maybe you are serving out and hope to make a fresh start. Your family has been without your financial and emotional support for several years and times have been difficult. Your children have had to grow up without your daily influence. While you were incarcerated your driver's license expired, you **think** your mother has your birth certificate but you're not sure and your social security card was in your wallet, but of course you haven't seen either of those items in years!

Without proper identification you will be denied many benefits that can support you, your family and successful reentry. For example; a drivers license, food stamps, social security benefits, housing, employment, checking account, educational opportunities, loan applications, credit card and in some cases Veteran's benefits. This will cause you and your family unnecessary stress when you need to be organized and ready for new adjustments.

To avoid this pit fall, make sure you have the proper identification upon your release. The first step is to apply for your birth certificate as soon as possible. Kentucky birth certificates are \$10 and other states may be more. The cost can be deducted from your inmate account. Your reentry coordinator can assist in this process. For those of you that are Veterans, request your DD214, and again your Reentry Coordinator can provide the necessary information.

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Identification continued...

Because this has become such an issue, HB 428: "INMATE ID CARDS", provides the necessary information that outlines what items you will need to obtain an identification card at the Circuit Court Clerks office.

The Kentucky Department of Corrections shall issue a release letter containing the following information for each offender upon departure:

- Full legal name
- Your signature
- Date of birth
- Listed address where you will reside
- Parole Certificate
- Your Photograph printed on plastic card
- Discharge/release date
- Social Security number
- Physical Description
- Copy of your resident record card
- Notice of Discharge

The ID letter is created directly from KOMS by institutional staff or the parole officer for your facility and will be issued as part of your release paperwork. Take the ID letter, resident record card, and parole certificate/notice of discharge, along with your **birth certificate** to the Circuit Court Clerks office in the county where you will be living. The personnel in the Circuit Court Clerks office will issue you a personal identification card or an operator's license **after** payment of the application fee. Your Reentry Coordinator can provide assistance in finding out the amount of money you will need for your birth certificate and ID or operator's license.

If you have an active driver's license or personal identification card issued to you by another state, you are not able to claim dual residency and receive Kentucky identification. If going out of state, they'd go directly to that state to secure ID. No need to get a Kentucky ID in the meantime.

Obtaining personal identification is one of the most important steps for a smooth, well organized transition to the outside world and the first step in obtaining your identification is your birth certificate. If you have the funds, see your reentry coordinator and order it today. If you don't have the available funds, start saving your money toward the \$10.00 fee for Kentucky.

**Remember, it's never too early for
your release preparation.**

This Month's Family Information Section

This information is provided by the New Jersey Department of Corrections, Division of Programs and Community Services, Office of Transitional Services. The title "*What About Me?*" is a guide for discussing your incarceration with your children.

Common Stress Points

A parent's involvement in the criminal justice system often results in a series of crises; arrest, trial, incarceration and reentry. Each stress point presents new obstacles for children and families. Children and families experience unexpected emotions and challenges to established coping strategies.

THE ARREST: FEAR, CONFUSION AND PANIC

The trauma experienced by children who have a parent taken from them is extraordinary, perhaps more so if the child witnesses the arrest of the parent. The image of the person you love and respect being chained and dragged away is devastating. Even for children who do not witness the arrest, this image is terrifying.

Fueled by negative media images, children imagine the worst about their parent's condition. Families and children rarely have any information about the arrest, arraignment and detention process. They have no idea how, when and if they will ever see the arrested person again.

PRE-TRIAL AND DURING TRIAL: ANXIETY AND FRUSTRATION

The arrested parent may be detained in jail to await trial or may be released on bail. In either case this is a period of great uncertainty. No plans can be made.

Children whose worlds have been disrupted are often unable to get answers to their questions. They do not know what is expected of them or when the family will be torn apart by outside forces.

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SENTENCING: HOPELESSNESS AND HELPLESSNESS

For the child or other family members, the sentence usually comes as a shock. To many outside the family, this can seem odd. But the sentence makes the fears of separation a reality for the incarcerated parent as well as the children and other family members.

No matter how hopeless a case looks most families continue to hope for a miracle until the very last minute. The sentencing is the very last minute, the time when hope dies.

INITIAL INCARCERATION: ABANDONMENT, STIGMA AND RESENTMENT

For the child and other family members, the set of emotions experienced are often compared to the loss of a family member through death. The metaphor does not take into consideration how shame and humiliation about prison life affects the child along with economic or other challenges.

Children are well aware of the seriousness of the situation and likely to conjure up possible visions of what life in prison is like for their parents. Further complicating problems include the reluctance of many custodial parents to allow children to visit a prison.

PRE AND POST RELEASE: AMBIVALENCE

Interestingly, the times just before and after release are often the most traumatic for children and families. Problems, which were central to a family's culture before incarceration, have rarely been handled during the prison term. Children have changed during the parent's incarceration. They are older and at different stages of development. They have different needs and expectations. Yet imprisoned parents may not have seen the growth. Released prisoners often treat their children as if they were still at the age of initial incarceration.

The custodial parent has also changed. In two parent families, he or she has had to become both mother and father and has gained independence and competence in areas that used to belong entirely to the incarcerated partner. There may be considerable tension about how the relationship between the parents is to go forward.

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Incarceration changed the newly released parent as well. In prison, he or she may have suffered a loss of identity and respect and made few decisions. The environment may have been filled with anger and hostility, kindness was interpreted as weakness, and there was no privacy. Released to freedom carries with it the danger that needs and emotions kept in check will come boiling up or explode. This period is also filled with expectations of a new life and mended ways. Children and adult alike will feel an array of emotions including the doubt that comes with such radical changes and adjustments. Behavioral reactions will vary with each child and the environment.

The troublesome behaviors children exhibit can also be transient—appearing shortly after arrest or after the parent leaves and subsiding temporarily only to reappear at a later point. Some children react immediately to stress, challenging the adults to protect them and prove that they are competent caregivers. Other children seem to sense that the adults are vulnerable and may not be able to manage the distress. These children often act out their feelings at school or with a “protective” adult or they will hold it together until the adult seems okay, and then they will fall apart.

There are children who can even wait until the incarcerated parent is released to really express their rage and others who will not deal with their feelings until years after the parent’s release. While there are many variations in how children and families manage each stage of involvement in the criminal justice system, the emotional impact will always cause some degree of stress and trauma.

Ann Adalist-Estrin. Adapted from How Can I Help? Published by the Osborne Association, Long Island, New York, used with permission.

Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kentuckiana

By Brenda Bankston

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kentuckiana (BBBS) understands the special needs of children with an incarcerated parent. Through our Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program, we successfully matched over 800 children of prisoners with caring adult mentors over the past six years. Second Chance Act (SCA) funding allows us to continue the program by establishing and supporting one-to-one mentoring matches for additional children of prisoners.

One-to-one Activities

Our MCP children and youth range in age from 7 to 18 with an average age of 11. Before SCA funding, there were nearly 100 children with an incarcerated parent on our waiting list. Since October 2011, we have matched 81 of those children with a one-to-one mentor. Our staff has been busy providing needed friendships for Louisville area at-risk children. To ensure the best matches are made, staff follows agency procedures from our national affiliate, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. Children are enrolled, interviewed and assessed to learn about their unique needs and interests. After careful review of the interests, preferences and needs of the enrolled youth, a match is made with a screened and trained mentor. Once the match is made, the pair spend quality time together two to three times each month engaged in activities based on their shared interests. Through our community partnerships and relationships, tickets and passes that are donated to our agency are provided to our matches to attend community events and activities free of charge. These events are often a first time experience for the MCP children and provide both recreational and educational opportunities for matches to participate in during their monthly outings. Since October our MCP matches have: attended plays; made pottery; attended basketball games; visited the zoo; and spent a weekend camping.

Professional Staff Support

The success of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kentuckiana one-to-one mentoring programs is based on on-going professional support and monitoring of each match. Once a match between a child with an incarcerated parent and a volunteer mentor is made, one Match Support Specialist is assigned to the match for its duration. That one staff person develops a close relationship with the child, mentor and family through monthly contact with each. Although we ask for a one year commitment from our volunteer mentors, many matches actually last for years and often beyond age 18 when our support ends.

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Impact of a one-to-one mentor

Children matched with a Big Brother or Big Sister receive substantial benefits through additional attention and support provided through professionally supported one-to-one mentoring relationships. One evaluation tool we use is our Strength of Relationship Survey. Both children and mentors complete the survey twice each year – after three months and twelve months. The tool gauges how well the match relationship is progressing. If either the child or mentor responds with problems or concerns, staff follows up to address any negative issues. The surveys completed by MCP youth after three months of being matched showed progress in the development of long, strong relationships leading to future positive outcomes. Results of the ten-question survey were categorized under five relationship quality dimensions and shown on a rating scale of 1 to 5.

4.2 – Coping – help with problem solving, stress management, emotional support

4.9 – Disappointment – absences of negative situations

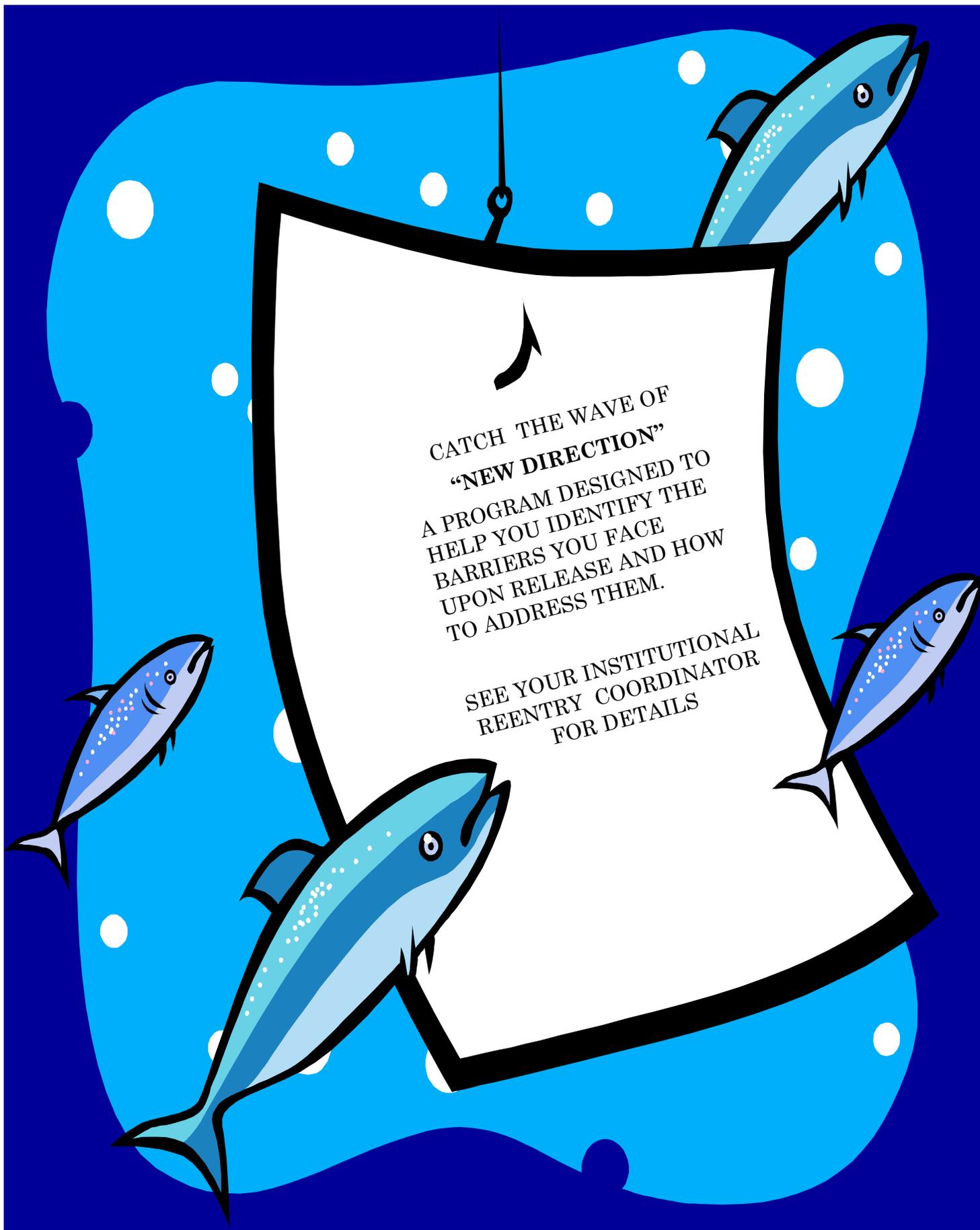
5.0 – Safety – feeling safe when with mentor

4.8 – Importance – significance of relationship with mentor

4.8 – Closeness – emotional bond and attachment to mentor



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Kentuckiana





Frequently Asked Questions

Question:

Is the "New Direction" program mandatory?

Answer:

"New Direction" is not a mandatory program. This is a program designed to address barriers you could possibly face prior, during and after release. It is taught by your institutional reentry coordinator. This program is 6 months in length, meeting once a week for one hour and 90 days sentence credit will be awarded upon completion of all modules.

Question:

What if I'm taking "New Direction" at one prison and I get transferred?

Answer:

"New Direction" is offered at every institution (including MAC) in Kentucky, therefore, if you are transferred to another prison you will be able to finish the program and receive your sentence credit.

Question:

I am a diabetic inmate and will be going home in the next few months. I have no money and don't know where I will be living. I need my insulin and don't know what I'm going to do when I'm on the street. Can you get me some help?

Answer:

Prior to your release you need to talk with your Reentry Coordinator and the medical department to get resources in the community where you will be living. When you leave the institution you will have a 30 day supply of your medications which should last you until you make connections in the community. Check out the Pre-Release Community Resources for information in your area on health clinics, the health department services and medication support.



THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY
INVITES YOU TO A FREE

"ASK-A-LAWYER CLINIC"

Check out the Louisville Free
Public Library website of events

www.lpfl.org

for dates, topics and locations

Please call (502) 584-1254

for more information

Attorneys will be on hand to answer questions about foreclosure defense and criminal record expungement. Expungement clients are encouraged to bring a copy of their criminal record which shows the disposition of each case. A copy of the record may be obtained from court archives located in the basement of the old jail building at 514 West Liberty Street in Louisville. Prospective clients must meet federal poverty guidelines. For a family of four, annual household income must be \$44,700 or less.