

## *Getting Around Town: Finding Transportation to Work, Training, Education and Reconnecting with Family and Friends*



### Preparing to Go Home

There are many things to think about as you return home. One important thing is to find a way to get around that you can count on. You will need transportation to report to your parole officer. You will need it to get to school or training. You will need it to get to work. You will need it to get to reentry programs. And, you will need it just to visit with family and positive friends.

#### Questions to think about:

- What transportation choices do I have near where I will live?
- What will it cost each day? Each week? Each month?
- How will I pay for it?
- How do I find out where it goes? If it goes where I need to go?
- Is a car in my long term plans? If so, how will I buy it and pay the expenses?
- Where can I find bus passes or other ways of getting around?
- Should I count on friends and family to drive me where I need to go?
- Will my convictions matter in what transportation I can use?

### Before Your Release

- Make a list of options you have that are public or personal transportation.
- Map out where you will need to go. Include how far it is. Also how long it will take to get there. Figure out how much it will cost. (See the chart below.) Some places you may need to go are:
  - Parole and Probation Office
  - American Job Center (used to be called the One-Stop Career Center)
  - Doctors offices or to get medication
  - Health Center, local clinic, or Health Care “Navigator”
  - Work
  - School or training program
  - Family members
  - Your child’s school (for teacher meetings and being involved)
- List transportation costs in your monthly budget (Read the Financial Literacy Tipsheet to learn more)
- List the other ways can you get to work or where you need to go

## “ Things I wished they had told me before I got released... ”

“I wish I had not asked my boyfriend to take me to work...He was late and they fired ME!”

“I had to take two busses and walk blocks to get to my job. It took me hours each way to get across town. Maybe I should have moved closer to work.”

“When I got home, my uncle gave me an old car. I was so excited until it kept breaking down and I did not have the money to fix it. I ended up taking the bus to work after all.”

“I got a job at the food court at the airport, outside security. They helped me with vouchers to take the light rail for a few months. I got a few months extra since I always got to work on time. It was quieter than the bus.”

## What to Expect When Looking for Transportation You Can Afford

- Transportation is a big problem in many cities and suburbs. This is true for everyone.
- It will take time to find the bus or metro schedule that works best for you.
- Check if there is a dependable car pool option with family or coworkers.
- Think about what transportation is nearby when you look for places to live and work.
- Transportation costs will be a big part of your monthly budget. But, if you don't get to work, you won't get paid. So you must get there somehow!
- If you can't count on your transportation you risk losing your job! Your employer only cares that you are at work on time everyday. There is no excuse. Asking to leave early "to catch a ride" is not good either!!
- Look at transportation schedules and find options in case you need to work late or come in early. Do this before you need them.
- Given weather and other things out of your control, what is your Plan B?



## Getting on Track: What Do I Need to Know?

- Is there a reentry program I can sign up for that has transportation help?
- Can I get bus tokens at the American Job Center? Social services office? Other programs?
- Does my employer offer any transportation support? Some employers may offer bus tokens or money during your first months of work to help you.
- Relying on family or a boyfriend is usually not a good choice. They may have too many other issues that you can get caught up in.
- If I use public transportation, how long does it REALLY take to get to work so I will be there on time? Take a practice ride to test how long it really takes. Do this test at about the time you will head to work. That way you see what traffic or other delays will be like. Figure out if you need an earlier bus or subway. If you are late you may miss your transportation. What can you do then?



## Make your own solid plan!

Finding transportation and being able to pay for it is a reentry challenge. Planning ahead and setting it up will really help you. Do not just family and friends to give you rides, especially if they are sometimes unreliable. Think about your own car, carpools or public transportation. Please use the chart on the next page to plan how you will get where you need to go. Now, let's get ready to "Get Around Town."

## Resources

- **American Job Centers** – This website has information for people getting out of jail. They also have information on other services and limited transportation options for each state. <http://jobcenter.usa.gov/>
- **National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Criminal Conviction** – Developed by the American Bar Association, this website gives information for each state about if and how your convictions may affect getting a motor vehicle registration, license or other topics related to transportation choices. <http://www.abacollateralconsequences.org>
- **The National HIRE Network** – This site lists many reentry and job support services for each state. Some state programs also offer transportation as a service. <http://www.hirenetwork.org/search/node/transportation?page=1>
- **Public Library or City Visitor Center** – These places often have paper maps that are free to take and use.
- **Your Local Bus Company** – The local bus companies (or subways and other public transit) will have schedules posted online and on the bus route where and when you can catch the bus. Ask for help if you are not sure how to read them.

Transportation Planning Chart

Type of Transportation	Where do I get it?	How much does it cost?	Does it go where I need to go?	Can I count on it?
Bus				
Taxi				
Walking				
Car/van pool				
Bus with passes				
My own car				
Bike or motor bike				
Reverse Commute:** (Employer provides this)				
Metro/train				
Friend/family member				
Other				

(\*\*\* A reverse commute is transportation provided out of the city to a location that needs more employees – like employees going from inside the city out to the airport.)