



# TRANSITIONING OFFENDERS PROGRAM®

PO Box 900 – Shelton, WA 98584 [TOPwa.org](http://TOPwa.org)

## Personal Release Plan Outline and Instructions

### Why write a Personal Release Plan?

A Release Plan details how you plan to successfully reenter the community and satisfy the requirements of your Judgment & Sentence. It is a tool for you to show your family, friends, Counselor and Community Corrections Officer (CCO) what you plan to do after release and how you plan to do it. It can be very helpful to you in accomplishing the goals you've set.

If you have Community Custody upon release, DOC is **required** to have a Release Plan written for you. You can allow your Counselor/CCO to do it all – with no input from you, but you have the option to write a plan of your own and submit it to them. You know your situation better than anyone and can tailor the information and choices to fit your future. Just the process of figuring out what to include can be a beneficial and therapeutic experience. Actually thinking about your life and thoughtfully planning a better future is a positive step toward your success.

Only one in seven people that apply for Work Release get in. Transitional housing can also be competitive and a well written Release Plan can be a valuable tool to include with your application. It shows that you are planning for a future that doesn't include returning to prison. Most CCO's *will* read these plans and may consider your plan when creating your official Offender Release Plan.

### Writing an effective Release Plan

Writing an effective release plan is a process. You cannot write it in an evening or even a weekend, but the time to begin is now. Add to your plan as you do your time, making sure to include any education, self-help classes, volunteering and work experience gained; anything that will help you with your transition into the community. You can do the **final editing** and submit the plan **9-12 months** prior to release.

Write at least **three to five complete sentences** in each section, clearly explaining to the reader your plans regarding that topic. Before you write on this template, take some time to think about your answers and write them out on a scratch pad. As you write them into your plan, put your thoughts into a sensible order. If you have more information than you can fit in the space provided, **use a separate piece of paper**.

### TOP's Release Plan Template

The following is a step-by-step process for writing your Release Plan. Not all of the information contained in this outline will apply to you. If you are omitting any parts that don't apply, write "N/A" (not applicable) so it does not look like you just forgot to fill it in.

#### 1. Introduction:

This should be a brief paragraph explaining **who you are** (not the crime you committed). Include your name, age at ERD, Earned Release Date and release county. Are you married? Do you have children? What are your ties to the community that will keep you from re-offending?

#### 2. Release Address:

If you have Community Custody, you are required to have an **Approved Release Address**. This can be a Transitional House, In-patient Treatment Center, family/friend's residence, your own house or apartment (but not a homeless shelter). **You should include the following information for your release address:**

- Name of the primary person you will reside with and the names, ages, and relationship of others living there, if any.
- The actual "street address" of the residence. **No P.O. Box addresses** are allowed. The home or cell phone number of the main contact at the residence.
- What type of residence is it? What kind of neighborhood is it in? Is it in an area where you might get into trouble again? What is the proximity to resources or your support network?
- Do you have a backup plan? Where will you release to if this address is denied?

#### 3. Contact List:

Reaching your contacts is an important part of your release. Make sure to include their full address and a phone number. Include contacts that can verify the information you are including in your plan. Think about who is going to receive this plan and provide contact information for people who can give references to your character and plans.

#### 4. **Family/Support System:**

What type of support system do you have? Is it Social? Religious? How can they help you and where are they located? How will you use them as a resource? List the people in your support system **by name** (family, friends, mentors, attorney, groups, etc.) and include what type of support they will provide.

#### 5. **Employment History/Experience:**

What jobs you have held in the past? Who have you worked for, where and for how long? Include jobs held prior to prison as well as inside DOC.

#### 6. **Post Release Employment/Income:**

Explain where you will be getting the finances to fund your reentry. Be sure to explain how you will support yourself until you get your first paycheck.

- Do you have a job lined up already? If so, include the name of the business, supervisor, complete address and phone number.
- If not, what type of employment you will be looking for and how do you plan to look for it? (Employment Agencies, Temp Agencies, Newspapers, the Internet)
- Will you apply for DSHS benefits? (Note: You cannot apply for or set an appointment for DSHS before release – you must walk in or call them after you release unless you go through an EME evaluation in the mental health department.)
- Will you be receiving Social Security or Disability benefits?
- If you are retired, what are your monthly pension benefits?
- Do you have savings or trust accounts you will have access to upon release?

#### 7. **Budget/Expenses:**

Fill in the blanks of this possible budget and do the math. Make sure to think about anything that you may need to pay for that isn't on this list. Minimum wage in Washington State is \$9.19/hour. If you work 32-40 hours, you will earn \$300-375 per week. If you do not know how much money you will make, try a statement such as:

**“If I work 40 hours/week at minimum wage, I will earn \$375/week before taxes. This budget is based on bringing home \$1200 per month after taxes.”**

#### 8. **Transportation:**

In this section, include the following information:

- How you plan to get to work/appointments? Will you be driving yourself in your own or a borrowed vehicle? Will you be using public transportation, family, friends, carpools?
- If you are driving yourself, include whether you have a valid driver's license (have you applied for an Occupational Driver's License?) Will you have insurance (do you need SR-22 Insurance?).
- If your license is suspended due to unpaid fines or criminal behavior, have you contacted the Courts to see what you need to do to get it re-instated? You can use TOP's Driver's License Packet for this.

#### 9. **Education:**

Include whether you have done, or plan to do, any of the following:

- Earn your high school diploma or GED? When? What was the name of the school?
- College degrees/certificates or Trade School education?
- Apprenticeship Programs?

#### **Classes/Certificates**

- Classes or certificates you completed while incarcerated (Partners in Parenting, Bible study, Positive Psychology, Job Hunters, etc.).

#### **Post Release**

- Will you continue your education in college or vocational training? Where? How will it be paid for?
- Apprenticeship Programs that you plan to be in?

## 10. Stipulations of Judgment and Sentence & DOC Terms of Release:

This is a very important section for your CCO and **must** be covered. If you don't have them, you can get information on both of these from your counselor. If you prefer, you can write **"I am aware of all requirements placed on me; see attached Stipulations from my J&S and my DOC Terms Of Release"** and attach a copy of your J&S to your plan. If you send your plan to TOP for typing, **DO NOT** send us your J&S. If you do not want to attach a copy to this plan, write down what the Court has stipulated and what DOC will require of you after release. Include the following information:

- How much **Community Custody** you are required to complete.
- Any restrictions that the Courts have placed on you (geographical restrictions, age restrictions, curfews, etc.).
- Any **No-Contact Orders** that have been placed on you.
- Any treatment or evaluations required (just mention it as the details will be in the following section)
- Anything else that the Courts or DOC have stated that you have to abide by.

### Treatment/Counseling:

Include any information concerning evaluations, treatment or counseling (such as those below) that are required or you plan to attend. Where will you be going? State the agency's name, address and phone number, who you will be seeing as your Counselor/Treatment Provider and how you will be paying for your classes/treatment program.

- Chemical Dependency Treatment (CD).
- Mental Health Treatment.
- Domestic Violence Treatment (DV).
- Sex Offender Treatment/Counseling (SOTP).
- Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative classes (DOSAs).
- Whether you will be attending any AA or NA meetings.
- Any other support groups that you will be involved in.

### Legal Financial Obligations (LFOs):

You can get information on your LFOs from your counselor. Be sure to include the following information:

- How much you owe in LFOs and to which counties/municipalities.
- How much your monthly payments will be? If you don't know, state that you will make the minimum monthly payment on time.

## 11. Volunteering/Clubs/Hobbies/Interests:

Have you volunteered or been a part of any clubs? Did you hold an executive board office? (Chapel Volunteer, BKM, Toastmasters, TOP, etc.)

Include any hobby, activity or interest you enjoy doing that will keep you out of trouble. Try to think of things you enjoy that will tie you to the community you are releasing to. Maybe something that shows that you are willing to give back.

## 12. Personal Goals:

Include all the goals you have set for your transition into the community. Be specific about reporting to your CCO, settling into your release address, finding work, completing required evaluations, starting treatment, education, apprenticeships, driver's license restoration, purchase of a vehicle, paying LFOs, connecting with family, church and AA/NA. Show progression in the time frames as you complete or continue activities. You will need to include goals for:

- 24-72 Hours after release.
- One Month after release.
- Six Months after release.
- One Year after release.
- Life Goals.

Be realistic in setting your goals. Put down what you know you will be able to accomplish in the above time frames. You will want to put at least 4-5 goals per time frame. This is an important section that your CCO will look at to see if you really have a plan and are going to put forth an effort to succeed and become a productive member in your community.

### 13. Closing Personal Statement:

Explain how this incarceration has changed you and the new direction you have for your life. This will be a statement summarizing the high points mentioned previously and your plans for a successful reentry into the community. Mention whether you are married and/or have any children (their names personalize you). Briefly (since you have already talked about most of them in this plan) cover what you have accomplished since you have been incarcerated, that points to the positive changes you have made in your life. **Do not use this section to make excuses for your incarceration or try to blame others for your behavior. This is not about what has already happened. It is about what you plan to do** This statement needs to include the following:

- Expressing regret and stating what you have learned from this incarceration.
- Cover how you have re-directed your thinking and priorities to help change old behaviors to keep you from going back.
- Briefly summarize the plans you have for your future. End on a high note expressing your hope to become a positive member of the community.

### 14. Signature and Date Line:

Sign and date your plan.

#### When your plan is complete

Once you have completed writing your Release Plan, think about typing it up. If you do not have a typewriter or access to a computer (authorized by DOC staff, of course), you can have a friend or family member type it up for you. Alternatively, you can send it to TOP at the address below for typing and editing (if you are at WCC just drop it in a kite box attached to a kite). When it is completed, we will mail you back several copies. **Please keep in mind that we are an all-volunteer organization and can not be held responsible for your plan, what you put into it or the timeliness of returning it to you.** Make sure you keep a copy for yourself in the event that it is lost in the mail or you need it sooner than we can complete it. When you receive them, sign and date each copy (this is your confirmation that the information is accurate) and attach a copy of your J&S stipulations, if necessary, before sending them out.

When you have completed your Release Plan – **USE IT.** A successful reentry begins the moment you arrive in prison. If you plan ahead, the people you have asked for help will see that you really mean what you've said in your Release Plan and may be more willing to support you in your efforts.

Use your completed plan as a tool to introduce yourself to the resources you will need upon release. Write a cover letter **with your contact information** in it to send with each copy. Some places you may want to send copies of your Release Plan to are:

- Your home institution counselor (not your classification counselors unless releasing soon)
- Your CCO to review prior to release (your counselor **may** be willing to scan it and e-mail it).
- The Work Release you are trying to get into (6-9 months to release).
- The Transitional House that you are applying for (with a letter/application 2-3 months out).
- The Treatment Center you are trying to get into.
- Any other person, group or agency you are seeking assistance from.

Finally, make sure you have filled out a **TOP Questionnaire** so we can send you a packet of resources for the community you are returning to. We also have three other **Pre-Release Packets** available for you to use if needed: Driver's License Restoration, Credit Report and Child Support. Good luck in preparing for your future and remember:

**If you fail to plan – you plan to fail**

**Transitioning Offenders Program P.O. Box 900, Shelton WA 98584 – info@topwa.org**  
All our forms are available on our website **TOPwa.org** for your counselor or family to print for you.



**TRANSITIONING OFFENDERS PROGRAM<sup>®</sup>**

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# PERSONAL RELEASE PLAN

FOR REENTRY INTO THE  
COMMUNITY

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DOC #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ERD:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Release County:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Institution:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Unit/Cell:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Counselor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date submitted for typing:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction:**

**Release Address:**

**Contact List:**

**Family /Support System**

**Employment History/Experience:**

**Post Release Employment/Income:**

**Budget/Expenses:**

**Total Income** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rent** \_\_\_\_\_

**Food** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Utilities (Total)** \_\_\_\_\_

    Elec. \_\_\_\_\_

Garbage \_\_\_\_\_

    Water \_\_\_\_\_

    Gas \_\_\_\_\_

    Sewage \_\_\_\_\_

    Cable \_\_\_\_\_

    Internet \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Expenses** \_\_\_\_\_

**Child Support** \_\_\_\_\_

**Treatment** \_\_\_\_\_

**Transportation (Total)** \_\_\_\_\_

    Car pmt. \_\_\_\_\_

    Insurance \_\_\_\_\_

        Gas \_\_\_\_\_

    Bus pass \_\_\_\_\_

**LFOs/Fines** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cost of Supervision** \_\_\_\_\_

**Savings** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other ( \_\_\_\_\_ )** \_\_\_\_\_

**Transportation:**

**Education:**

GED     High School Diploma     College Degree    Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Classes/Certificates:

Post Release:

**Stipulations of Judgment and Sentence &DOC Terms of Release:**

Community Supervision? Yes No    Duration \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment/Counseling:

Legal Financial Obligations:

**Volunteering/Clubs/Hobbies/Interests:**

**Personal Goals:**

**24-72 Hours after Release:**

- 
- 
- 
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**One Month after Release:**

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**Six Months after Release:**

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**One Year after Release:**

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**Life Goals:**

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**Closing Personal Statement:**

Thank you for considering my plan. Please forward any questions or comments to me directly. I will be happy to answer them to the best of my ability.

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Signature

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Date

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A successful transition is my ultimate goal, and I intend to do everything possible to ensure that I do not contribute to the recidivism statistics. All information in this *Personal Release Plan* above is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge at the time of printing. As new information becomes available I will update this plan. This plan is subject to change without notice if it becomes necessary for my success. *Typist's initials:*

**TOP - PO Box 900 – Shelton, WA 98584**