



TRANSITIONING OFFENDERS PROGRAM[®]

31811 Pacific Highway S Ste B#472 Federal Way, WA 98003

www.topwashington.org

INSTRUCTION SHEET

Now that you have received your packet of information, here are some helpful tips on how to get started.

1. **Organize:** Sort items by category with a highlighter or numbering system. Due to how the database prints your packet it will not be grouped by services and some vendors offer multiple services. Policy states your counselor will help you get a Valid ID (DOC 380.550, att. 1, pg. 1) and a Social Security Card (pg. 2). It is up to you, however to make sure it gets done.
2. **Release Plan:** If you have not done so, fill out your release plan using the *Release Plan Outline and Instructions*. Go into as much detail as possible; more information is better and the *instructions* give you a lot of tips. Submit your draft plan to TOP right away by mail (or kite box if at WCC) and we will type it for you. Use the plan as a tool to show how serious you are about succeeding and attach one to just about any inquiry or application you send out. It is like a resume on steroids.
3. **Priority Mail Out # 1:** Contact Transitional houses for their application and send along a copy of your Personal Release Plan. It is a positive way to introduce yourself as it covers so much about you.
Important: If you do not include a Release Plan, write a letter describing yourself in a positive light. Tell them about: you, family, support system, education, employment history, finances (how you will pay), transportation, stipulations of J&S, treatment, emergency contacts and personal goals. If you complete a release plan it will have all this and more professionally typed, edited and printed.
4. **Priority Mail Out # 2:** Contact the organizations you want assistance from. Fill out their applications and include a cover letter stating your needs or attach a Release Plan. See your Education Department for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) applications and for applying to vocational schools or colleges.
5. **Pre-Release Packets:** Fill out these Packets to deal with the issues you should handle right now: Child Support, Credit Report, Driver's License Fines, Social Security Card and more.
6. **Website Resources:** All the forms above are on our website **TOPwa.org** for a counselor or family member to print along with these other resources: TOP Questionnaire, DOL for all 50 States, Apprenticeships, Bridge AA/NA, Vital Statistics for all 50 States, WA State Bonding & Tax Credit, Bankruptcy Short Filing to Clear Driver's License, ATSA (Association for the Treatment of Sex Abusers), FASFA Education Funding, Parenting Flyer, Veterans, and more.
7. **DSHS:** Most people cannot apply for DSHS benefits prior to release anymore. Upon release, apply online, by phone or walk-in. If you were on SSI, Medicaid, DSHS Medical\Mental, ADATSA, GAU, GAX, TANF or other forms of aid or disability, **before this incarceration**, you need to go through the mental health department of your institution for an **EME assessment**. This will determine your needs and eligibility for benefits that may start day-one upon release.
8. **2-1-1™:** If your family needs help while you are incarcerated or if upon release you need assistance, dial **211** on any phone. **211** is a United Way funded organization with a huge referral database of resources to help you and your family.

IMPORTANT NOTES: In this packet, you may receive various fliers. If you do not need these fliers, share them with others who might need these resources. **Remember**, if you are in the **R-Units at WCC**, you must wait until transfer to your parent institution before you can receive any brochures, applications or booklets from these resources. If you are in the R-Units and short, you may be able to get help from your classification counselor in dealing with the mail rejection notice to receive these items.

HELP US HELP YOU! Be aware, our database may not have resources for everything you have requested in your county. We work hard to continually add services and remove outdated contacts. If you find **outdated or wrong information or have felon friendly resources we can add, please let us know**. Our goal is to maintain the most comprehensive and accurate database possible to help releasing felons have the best chance for a successful reentry into the community.

Our goal is to help transitioning offenders obtain a place to live, reliable employment, a means of transportation, education and community support, by providing them with the resources available in their communities.

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