



**A Guidebook  
for  
Incarcerated  
Veterans in Indiana**

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## **Forward**

*This handbook can be an important tool. Review all of the programs thoroughly to understand the opportunities available. When these programs are used properly, the benefits will be a minimization of the outside pressures you may be confronted if released; social acceptance, economics, and re-establishment as a productive member of society.*

*Agency staff names and addresses, phone numbers and website addresses change. If you attempt to contact one of the resources in this guidebook and it is not current, do your best to obtain the current information through phone information or a Google web search. To perpetuate the value of this document, we respectfully request that if you discover any incorrect, conflicting, or out-of-date information in this Guidebook please send the discrepancies, and updated information if you have it, to:*

***Philip E. Thomas,***

***3602 East Michigan Street,***

***Indianapolis, Indiana, 46201***

***(317) 554-0000 x4756***

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*We would like to recognize: 1) the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans which provided basic concepts and core information for this guide through its "Planning for Your Release" guide funded by the U.S. Department of Labor; 2) the Veterans Incarcerated Workgroup of Walla Walla, Washington, for the concept of state-specific information in its "Guidebook for Incarcerated Veterans" and for allowing the use of its guide as a template for this publication; 3) Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. for developing the first incarcerated veterans guidebook, which has inspired and informed subsequent efforts; and 4) any public domain and agency resources included in the guidebook.*

## SECTION I

### USING THIS GUIDE AND SEEKING HELP

This guide is for you to use to plan for your release and to keep as a reference after your release. It includes addresses, phone numbers, and web sites that you can use to find out about programs and other help available after your release. You may want to ask a friend or family member to help you find the information you need if you don't have phone or internet access. Keep in mind that **this guide does not include all of the services available**. What is available in one area may be different from what is available in another, so be sure to check with local resources to learn about services in your area.

While you are in prison, find out which unit in your facility can help you plan for your release (often the education or transfer unit). Classes may be offered so you can work on skills development and prepare for life after release. **You don't want to risk homelessness once you are released, so take advantage of the opportunities available to you.**

Begin thinking about what specifically you will need upon release. Ask yourself these kinds of questions: Will I need housing? Will I need medical, substance abuse, or mental health care? Do I need to learn a job skill? Do I have any other legal issues, such as child support? How do I restart my VA checks or Supplemental Security Income (SSI)?

Make a list of your needs. Remember that this is just a tool to help you get organized. A sample list might look like this:

- I need a place to live.
- I need a job.
- I need clothing to wear to work.
- I need to find out what benefits I can get as a veteran.
- I want to get addictions treatment.
- I owe child support.

Think about your list as you read through this guide. Who do you think can help you with each of your needs? Is there one organization that may be able to work with you, on many different things, or do you need to contact several agencies? Keep track of the steps you take,

including the dates and names of people you contact for information or assistance. Although this guide provides *national and state* addresses for many organizations, we recommend you **check your phone book for local, county, and state agencies that know what help is available in your area.**

When writing a letter to request information, **be clear.** Keep your letter short, to the point, and write legibly. Include the following information:

- Your name and contact information.
- A brief statement about your current situation.
- Your specific request.
- What you have done so far (Example: I have written to \_\_\_\_\_ organization and they suggested I contact you).
- Any restrictions for mailings (Example: Mail with staples or paper clips will not be accepted by my prison facility).

When contacting an agency for help by mail, email or phone, **be persistent and polite** in order to get results. Ask questions if information is not clear to you. Remember that many organizations are staffed by volunteers who are eager to help, but may not have the answers you are looking for. If **someone cannot help you, ask about who can.**

The Internet can also be helpful to find information about VA benefits and community resources in your area. This guide includes web addresses, when available. If computer access is not available at your facility, you can visit the public library after release. Computer access may also be provided at WorkSource and WorkSource Affiliate sites, WorkForce Development Council member locations, and Employment Security Department offices (referred to as Job Service Centers or Unemployment Offices).

**Section II** of this guide provides information about assistance for specific needs. **Section III** covers basic information about seeking VA benefits. The last page contains a **Checklist** that summarizes each section of this guide.

## SECTION II

### HELP FOR VETERANS

This section includes resources that can help you get back on your feet. Remember to check the phone book for local, county, and state agencies that know what services are available in the area to assist you. Some organizations may have waiting lists, require an interview, or have specific rules about whom they serve. It is best if you **start asking about services and requirements now**, so that you will be prepared when you are released. You may even ask if your name can be put on a waiting list when you get closer to your release date.

### TOLL-FREE NUMBERS

Crisis and other toll-free numbers are often listed in the front cover or first few pages of the phone book. You may also want to check under "Social Services" in the blue or yellow pages for hotlines and local numbers.

- **US Department of Veterans Affairs** — [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)
  - ✓ Benefits: 1-800-827-1000,
  - ✓ Medical Centers: 1-877-222-8387, or  
<http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/region.asp?ID=11>
  - ✓ Persian Gulf War Helpline: 1-800-749-8387
- **Focus On Recovery Helpline** - A 24-hour national alcohol and drug abuse addiction and treatment hotline: 1-800-888-9383
- **National AIDS Hotline** - Talk to someone who knows about HIV / AIDS and can tell you about AIDS services in your city or state: 1-800-822-7422
- **National Coalition for Homeless Veterans** — [www.nchv.org](http://www.nchv.org), 1-800-838-4357
- **National Suicide Support Number** - 1-888- 784-2433 (1-888-SUICIDE)

### WHERE TO START

Check the local phone book yellow pages under "Homeless" or "Social Service Organizations" for a list of many local organizations that offer different services, which may include clothing, public transportation tokens, emergency shelter, and more. You may need to contact several agencies to find all the services you need. Services provided by *government* agencies are

listed in the blue pages found near the front of the phone book. Check with your local Public Assistance Office to find out what programs are available and what their guidelines are. We have included some guidance below, but your local organizations are your best resources.

**Remember, it never hurts to ask!**

Every **VA Medical Center** has a **Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Coordinator** who is responsible for helping homeless veterans access VA and community-based care to end homelessness among veterans. The HCHV program provides outreach, clinical assessments and referrals for medical and mental health care, long-term transitional residential assistance, case management and employment assistance with linkage to permanent housing. To locate your nearest HCHV Coordinator call 1-877-222-8387 or go to <http://www1.va.gov/homeless/page.cfm?pg=21>

- **Indiana Department of Veteran Affairs** assists Hoosier Veterans, service personnel, their dependents and/or survivors in obtaining every benefit and advantage due them under the laws of the State of Indiana and the United States. The Department works with a network of certified County Veteran Service Officers who are there to assist veterans with information and preparation of paper work at no cost. Call 1-800-400-4520 or go to [www.in.gov/veteran](http://www.in.gov/veteran).
- **National Coalition for the Homeless** has a directory of homeless advocacy and service organizations. This does not list every program in the country, so be sure to check your phone book for local programs. The following are those listed for the State of Indiana

**Center for the Homeless**

The Center for the Homeless is a non-profit corporation that houses over 140 guests each night. It provides 80 beds for single men, 25 beds for single women, and 15 apartments for families. The Center also offers comprehensive services, including classes on personal development and work placement.

813 S. Michigan  
South Bend, IN 46601  
Phone: 219-282-8700  
Fax: 219-287-5023  
Email: [cfh@skynet.net](mailto:cfh@skynet.net)

**Coalition for Homelessness Intervention & Prevention of Greater Indianapolis (CHIP)**

The goal of CHIP is to develop a sustainable, integrated homeless service system that addresses both prevention and intervention needs and is coordinated with other programs and providers such as community centers and employment programs. CHIP is not a direct service provider. It acts as a community planner, convener, broker, advocate, trainer and resource developer to help build a stronger, more coordinated system of homeless services in Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana.

960 East Washington Street, Suite 200B  
Indianapolis, IN 46202  
Phone: 317-630-0853  
Fax: 317-630-0856

<http://www.chipindy.org/>  
Dan Shepley, Executive Director

### **Partners in Housing Development Corporation**

Partners in Housing works to develop affordable supportive housing.

630 North College Avenue, Suite 302  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
Phone: 317-633-1861  
Fax: 317-633-1862  
Frank Hagaman, President  
<http://www.pihdc.org/>

### **Stepping Stones for Veterans, Inc.**

Advocacy Organization 332 W. 11<sup>th</sup> Street Anderson, IN 46016-1329 (765) 648-1101

### **Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless Issues**

324 W. Morris Street, Suite 202 Indianapolis, Indiana 46225

1-800-939-1617      [www.ichhi.org](http://www.ichhi.org)

- **Salvation Army** - provides services, including shelter and transitional housing, for homeless individuals and families. For local services and information contact: The Salvation Army, 2400 North Tibbs Avenue 317-937-7000.  
<http://www.usc.salvationarmy.org/ind>
- **United Way** - provides a variety of services through local organizations. Check the phone book for a local post or locate local organizations online at [www.unitedway.org](http://www.unitedway.org).
- **Local churches and faith-based organizations**, such as Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, and Volunteers of America, may have a variety of programs to assist you. Find these organizations by calling your county or city Department of Social Services. Check the blue pages of the phone book for the number.

## **HOUSING**

It is important to know that you have a place to go when released. The first step in returning to the community is finding a place to stay. This section includes ways to locate emergency shelter, transitional programs, and permanent housing assistance. Transitional or temporary housing can serve as a step toward full independence upon your release. However, there are often waiting lists for housing assistance programs, so you should ask about applying as soon as possible. If you are released and find yourself homeless, emergency assistance is available.



## **Dismas House of Michiana**

Dismas House of Michiana provides transitional housing and support services to recently released men and women. Services provided include room and board, transportation, job referrals, life skills counseling and drug/alcohol counseling referrals. All residents pay program fees and are expected to gain employment within two weeks of arrival at Dismas House.

**Contact:**

Maria Kaczmarek, Director  
Dismas of Michiana  
521 S. St. Joseph St.  
P.O. Box 4571  
South Bend, IN 46634  
574-233-8522  
Web Site: [www.dismas.org](http://www.dismas.org)

## **Companions on the Journey**

Companions on the Journey is an interfaith network providing practical, spiritual and emotional support to individuals returning to St. Joseph County, Indiana from incarceration. Volunteer faith teams are matched with a prisoner four to six months before release to develop an action plan for release. Volunteers are required to make a one to two year commitment to assist recently released prisoners reenter society.

**Contact:**

Rob Sambosky, Director  
Companions on the Journey  
Central United Methodist Church  
1920 S. Michigan St.  
South Bend, IN 46613  
574-289-9130  
E-Mail: [companions@kconline.com](mailto:companions@kconline.com)  
Web Site: [www.centralnow.org/Companions.htm](http://www.centralnow.org/Companions.htm)

## **Emergency and Transitional Housing (Indianapolis)**

Good News Ministries	Dan Evans 2716 East Washington Street 638-2862
Harbor Light Salvation Army	Major Larry Manzella 2400 North Tibbs Avenue 937-7000
Lighthouse Mission	Bob Goodrum 520 East Market Street

	636-0209
Wheeler Mission	David Cockrell 245 North Delaware Street 687-6795

Look in the phone book **yellow pages** under "Social Service Organizations" for local shelters or organizations that may be able to help.

Look in the phone book **blue pages** under local, city, or county government Department of Social Services or "Human Services" or call the County Commissioner's Office for information about local low-income housing coalitions or homeless advocacy groups who may know what is available.

- To find a list of emergency shelters for men, women and families in every state, check the **Department of Housing and Urban Development** online at [www.hud.gov/homeless/hmlsagen.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/homeless/hmlsagen.cfm).

### **Long-term or Permanent Housing**

Public housing waiting lists can be long, but the length of time can vary from place to place. Even if you are not sure where you want to live yet, apply to get on the waiting list so that you have as many options as possible. To learn how to apply, contact the local housing authority listed in the phone book blue pages under "Local Government, Public Housing Authority".

## **FINDING & KEEPING A JOB**

Finding a job may be hard and can seem overwhelming, but it is possible and very important! When released you may find that you are completely starting over. You should ask for job counseling and training while incarcerated so you are prepared to work when released. **Don't wait** until you get out to start thinking about what you will do. **Start planning now!**

## **EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

### **WorkOne Centers**

WorkOne Centers offer a wide range of employment and training services through the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. Other specific services are also available at the WorkOne Express offices. The locations of both types of centers are available at the web site listed below.

**Contact:** Craig Hartzler, Commissioner  
Indiana Department of Workforce Development  
Indiana Government Center South  
10 N. Senate Ave.  
Indianapolis, IN 45204  
317-232-7670  
317-233-4793 fax  
Web Site: [www.in.gov/dwd/aboutdwd.htm](http://www.in.gov/dwd/aboutdwd.htm)

**Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER)** and **Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist** assigned by the **State Labor Department** to help veterans find and keep jobs. LVERs are located with the local Workforce One site or affiliate Job Service Centers (JSC). DVOP Specialists work under the supervision of the LVER to develop job and training opportunities for veterans with service-connected disabilities, linking veterans with employers and making sure follow-up services are provided. To find a LVER or DVOP near you, visit your state employment service office listed in the phone book blue pages under "State Government, Employment Security Department," or go to:

[http://www.in.gov/dwd/job\\_seekers/veteran\\_reps.html](http://www.in.gov/dwd/job_seekers/veteran_reps.html)

- The Veterans Employment and Training Service, Department of Labor, provide employment and training services to homeless veterans to help them get back into the workforce through DOL-VETS funded **Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Projects (HVRP)**. HVRP assists veterans with job search preparation, vocational counseling, occupational skills training, on-the-job training, trade skills certification and licensing, and job placement assistance and referral to supportive services. To find out if you may be eligible and how to access HVRP contact the DOL at (317) 232-6804
- The VA's **Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment** services help veterans with service-connected disabilities by providing job training and counseling to those who have an employment handicap. Services include help finding a job, on-the-job training, job development, and vocational training. If you are not eligible for these services, a VA counselor may help you find other options, goals, or programs. Contact your VA Regional Office (VARO) at 1-800-827-1000, or go to <http://www.vba.va.gov/>
- Through its' **Veterans Industries and Compensated Work Therapy programs**, the VA offers structured work opportunities and supervised therapeutic housing for at-risk and homeless veterans with physical, mental health and addictions problems. VA contracts with private industry and the public sector for work by these veterans, who learn job skills, re-learn successful work habits, and regain a sense of self-esteem. Veterans are paid for

their work and given assistance with employment in the community. In Indiana, the VA currently has Veterans Industries Programs located at the following medical centers, Roudebush VA Medical Center and VA Northern Indiana Health Care System. For further information go to <http://www1.va.gov/vetind/>

- The State of Indiana has a **Vocational Rehabilitation** program that helps people with disabilities find and keep jobs. Apply for these services immediately after your release. Look in the phone book blue pages under "Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA)" then "Vocational Rehabilitation," or search the internet for "Vocational Rehabilitation" in your state. <http://www.in.gov/fssa/servicedisabl/vr/>

### **Federal Bonding Program**

The Federal Bonding Program provides fidelity bonding insurance coverage to individuals with criminal histories and other high-risk job applicants who are qualified, but fail to get jobs because regular commercial bonding is denied due to their backgrounds.

#### **Contact:**

Linda Hendricks, Bonding Services Coordinator  
Indiana Department of Workforce Development  
10 N. Senate Ave., Rm 307  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-233-4910  
317-233-2679 fax  
E-Mail: [Lhendricks@dwd.state.in.us](mailto:Lhendricks@dwd.state.in.us)

### **Tax Credits**

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit to reduce the federal tax liability of private for profit employers to be used as an incentive for employers to hire individuals from eight different targeted groups: TANF recipients, veterans, ex-felons, high risk youth, summer youth, Food Stamp recipients, SSI recipients, and vocational rehabilitation referrals.

#### **Contact:**

Sean Blancaneaux, Work Opportunity Tax Credit Coordinator  
Indiana Department of Workforce Development  
10 N. Senate Ave.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-232-7186  
317-233-2679 fax

### **Unemployment Insurance Office**

Unemployment compensation is a social insurance program designed to provide benefits to most individuals out of work, generally through no fault of their own, for periods between jobs. In order to be eligible for benefits, jobless workers must demonstrate that they have worked, usually measured by amount of wages and/or weeks of work, and must be able and available

for work.

The unemployment compensation program is based upon federal law, but administered by states under state law.

To file an initial claim for unemployment insurance, one must go to the nearest Indiana Workforce Development Unemployment Insurance office. Indiana law requires one to register for work at an Indiana Workforce Development office. Locations of local WorkOne offices are available on the web site or through the toll-free number listed below.

**Contact:**

888-967-5663

E-Mail: [workone@dwd.state.in.us](mailto:workone@dwd.state.in.us)

Web Site: [www.in.gov/dwd](http://www.in.gov/dwd)

**Criminal Record Repository**

This is the agency individuals may contact to obtain a copy of their state rap sheet and learn about the process of sealing, expunging or cleaning it up. The criminal record repository can also tell the individual who else is legally entitled to have access to his or her record.

To request a copy of a criminal history report, one must submit Indiana state form #8053 or a letter requesting full criminal history information, a fingerprint card completed by a law enforcement agency and a \$10 certified check or money order made payable to the "Indiana State Police."

**Contact:**

Indiana State Police

Central Repository

100 N. Senate Ave.

Indianapolis, IN 46204

371-232-8262

Web Site: [www.in.gov/isp/lch](http://www.in.gov/isp/lch)

**State Attorney General**

Employers and service providers may obtain information from the state attorney general regarding occupational bars, the licensing of individuals with criminal records in certain jobs, and whether the state has laws that limit what employers may ask job applicants or protections against employment discrimination based on a criminal record.

**Contact:**

Steve Carter, Attorney General

Indiana Government Center South, 5th Floor

302 W. Washington St.

Indianapolis, IN 46204

317-232-6201

Web Site: [www.ai.org/hoosieradvocate](http://www.ai.org/hoosieradvocate)

## State Department of Correction

### Prison Industry Program

More than 2, 000 inmates are employed in various enterprises within Prison Enterprises Network (PEN Products). Industries include: remanufacture automotive parts; food processing including frozen meat/poultry products and dairy products; metal furniture and shelving; institutional clothing; janitorial and laundry products; computer aided drafting (CAD); data conversion-GIS; printing; engraving; signage; park furniture; office and wood furniture; commercial laundry services; data entry; coil assembly; and electronic component assembly. Indiana also participates in the Prison Industries Enterprises (PIE) federal program. Offenders in this program are paid the prevailing wage for the job, but are also responsible for paying room and board to the state, paying federal and state taxes, victim's restitution, and family/child support.

Contact:

Michael Herron, Division Director  
PEN Products  
Indiana Department of Correction  
6075 Lakeside Blvd.  
Indianapolis, IN 46278  
317-388-8580  
Email: [mherron@@doc.in.gov](mailto:mherron@@doc.in.gov)  
Website: [www.in.gov/indcorrection/penproducts.htm](http://www.in.gov/indcorrection/penproducts.htm)

### Pre-Release Program

Participation in the Pre-Release Program is mandatory for all Indiana prisoners. In addition to obtaining documents such as birth certificates, social security cards and disability information. Prisoners engage in 80 hours of curriculum that includes anger management, cognitive thinking, budget and financial management. Housing, education and vocational training needs are also addressed.

Contact:

Elizabeth "Liz" Johnson, Program Manager  
Indiana Department of Correction  
Pre-Release Re-Entry Program  
302 W. Washington Street, IGCS, Room E334  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-232-1590  
Email: [ejohnson@doc.in.gov](mailto:ejohnson@doc.in.gov)  
Website: [www.in.gov/indcorrection/](http://www.in.gov/indcorrection/)

### Post-Release Program

The Post-Release Program in Indiana is known as the "Community Transition Program" (CTP). Most offenders are eligible for CTP with few expectations. Programs available may include work release, home detention, electronic monitoring, day reporting, substance abuse treatment and regular reporting to probation officer. Offenders are transferred to their home county for CTP participation anywhere from 60 to 180 days prior to the earliest projected release date.

The purpose of this program is to allow an offender time to re-enter the community while still being subject to criminal justice supervision.

Contact:

Khadijah Muhammad, Program Manager  
Indiana Department of Correction  
Community Transition Program  
302 W. Washington Street, IGCS, Room E334  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-232-5763  
Email: [kmhammad@doc.in.gov](mailto:kmhammad@doc.in.gov)  
Website: [www.in.gov/indcorrection.com](http://www.in.gov/indcorrection.com)

### **Parole Division**

Parole supervision is under the direction of the Indiana Department of Correction. The parole board only determines the release date of those offenders still in custody who were sentenced prior to 1977. Under current sentencing structures, offenders may reduce their sentence by one day for each day served by earning “credit time” via participation in educational programs or obtaining vocational training and substance abuse treatment. Time spent on parole supervision depends on the date of sentencing. Offenders sentenced prior to July 1991 serve one year on parole supervision; offenders sentenced after June 20, 1991 serve two years on parole supervision.

Contact:

Randy Focken, Director of Parole  
Indiana Department of Correction  
Parole Division  
302 W. Washington Street, IGCS, Room E334  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-232-5764  
Email: [rfocken@doc.in.gov](mailto:rfocken@doc.in.gov)  
Website: [www.in.gov/indcorrection.com](http://www.in.gov/indcorrection.com)

### **Legal Assistance**

Free or low-cost legal resources, both in civil and criminal law, are helpful to individuals with criminal histories in learning about relevant state laws governing the expungement or sealing of criminal histories or addressing other legal issues resulting from having a criminal history.

### **State Public Defender**

Contact:

Susan Carpenter  
Office of the State Public Defender  
One N. Capitol Ave., #800  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-232-2475  
317-232-2307 fax

## **Legal Services**

### **Contact:**

Colleen Cotter, Director  
Indiana Justice Center  
Curry Building, 2nd Floor  
276 W. 7th St.  
Bloomington, IN 47404  
812-339-7668  
812-339-2081 fax  
Web Site: [www.indianajustice.org](http://www.indianajustice.org)

## **State Bar Association**

### **Contact:**

Thomas A. Pyrz, Executive Director  
Indiana State Bar Association  
230 E. Ohio St., 4th Floor  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2199  
317-639-5465  
317-266-2588 fax  
E-Mail: [isbaadmin@inbar.org](mailto:isbaadmin@inbar.org)  
Web Site: [www.inbar.org](http://www.inbar.org)

## **Local Service Providers**

Community agencies are available to assist individuals with criminal records find employment. This information will inform individuals with criminal records about government agencies and community-based organizations that assist with employment, education or vocational training. Researchers and policy makers may find this information useful in identifying agencies and service providers in order to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs.

## **Next Step Programs**

Next Step Programs is a division of the Fletcher Place Ministry. The first program, Survival Skills, is a ten-week series of seminars that teach basic day-to-day life skills. Upon graduation from Survival Skills, computer training, writing workshops and job placement assistance are available. Each series of seminars can accommodate a total of 15 participants.

### **Contact:**

Theresa Wood Hoyt, Director  
The Adult Center for Education, a Fletcher Place Ministry  
1831 E. Prospect Ave.  
Indianapolis, IN 46203  
317-916-1427  
317-916-0892 fax

## **Public Action in Correctional Effort**

Public Action in Correctional Effort (PACE) offers case management and counseling to individuals with criminal histories seeking assistance with employment, housing, food, clothing



and personal problems. Job seeking skills are taught, and job referrals are maintained for client use. PACE works with state-level offenders.

**Contact:**

J.T. Ferguson, Executive Director  
Public Action in Correctional Effort  
1426 W. 29th St., Suite 101  
Indianapolis, IN 46208  
317-612-6800  
317-612-6811 fax  
Web Site: [http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/sp\\_family\\_pace.htm](http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/sp_family_pace.htm)

**Prison Ministries of Indiana**

Prison Ministries of Indiana provides assistance to recently released inmates in the form of information and referral to needed services, placement in job training programs, as well as providing assistance in obtaining housing, food and clothing.

**Contact:**

Prison Ministries of Indiana  
1205 E. New York St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46202  
317-964-1622  
317-964-1612 fax  
E-Mail: [mail@prisonministries.info](mailto:mail@prisonministries.info)  
Web Site: [www.prisonministries.info](http://www.prisonministries.info)

**Offender Aid and Restoration**

Offender Aid and Restoration (OAR) provides a GED program, substance abuse therapy information and referral to needed services and placement in job training programs. It also offers pre-release planning and follow-up to ensure successful re-entry into the community. This program is merging with the PACE program (see entry above) and will serve the Marion County jail population only.

**Contact:**

J.T. Ferguson, Executive Director  
Offender Aid and Restoration  
1426 W. 29th St., Suite 101  
Indianapolis, IN 46208  
317-612-6804  
317-612-6811 fax  
Web Site: [http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/sp\\_family\\_pace.htm](http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/sp_family_pace.htm)

**Community Action Program**

The Community Action Program (CAP) is a collaborative effort of Public Action in Correctional Effort (PACE) and Offender Aid Restoration (OAR). CAP works within neighborhoods to identify resources for individuals with criminal records. Their goal is to coordinate efforts and maximize resources of community and faith-based organizations, as well as to identify businesses that are willing to employ individuals with criminal records. In addition to direct job

placement, CAP assists clients in obtaining clothing, enrolling in training programs, obtaining housing and securing transportation.

**Contact:**

Michelle Williams, CAP Program Coordinator  
PACE/OAR  
3214 Hovey Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46218  
317-283-5979  
E-Mail: [prov31mdw@yahoo.com](mailto:prov31mdw@yahoo.com)

## VA HEALTH CARE

### *If eligible for veteran's benefits:*

- We encourage you to enroll in the VA Health Benefits System as soon as you are released. Every **VA Medical Center** has a **Health Care for Homeless Veterans Coordinator** who helps veterans and their families find resources inside and outside the VA Health Care system. Call 1 (888) 878-6889 or go to <http://www1.va.gov/> to find the medical center nearest you.

### Veterans Health Administration

#### VA Medical Center

Fort Wayne:

[VA Northern Indiana Health Care System-Fort Wayne Campus](#)  
2121 Lake Ave.  
Fort Wayne , IN 46805  
Phone: (260) 426-5431  
Fax: (260) 460-1336

Indianapolis:

[Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center](#)  
1481 W. Tenth Street  
Indianapolis , IN 46202  
Phone: (317) 554-0000

Marion:

[VA Northern Indiana Health Care System - Marion Campus](#)  
1700 East 38th Street  
Marion , IN 46953-4589  
Phone: (765) 674-3321  
Fax: (765) 677-3124

#### Outpatient Clinic

Crown Point:

[Adam Benjamin, Jr. OPC](#)  
9330 S. Broadway  
Crown Point , IN 46307  
Phone: (219) 662-5000

Evansville:

[Evansville Outpatient Clinic](#)  
926 Veterans Drive  
Hanson , KY 42413  
Phone: 270-322-8019  
Fax: 270-322-8957

**Community Based Outpatient Clinic**

- Bloomington: [Bloomington VA Outpatient Clinic](#)  
455 South Landmark Avenue  
Bloomington , IN 47403  
Phone: (812) 335-2400 (Toll Free 877-683-0865)  
Fax: (812) 353-2405
- Evansville: [Evansville Clinic](#)  
500 E Walnut St  
Evansville , IN 47713  
Phone: 812-465-6202
- Hagerstown: [Richmond VA Outpatient Clinic](#)  
State Route 1  
Hagerstown , IN 47346  
Phone: (765) 489-3950
- Lawrenceburg: [Dearborn County Community Based Outpatient Clinic](#)  
355 Eads Parkway Suite 203  
Lawrenceburg , IN 47025  
Phone: (812) 539-2313
- Muncie: [Muncie/Anderson VA Outpatient Clinic](#)  
3500 W. Purdue Avenue  
Muncie , IN 47304-6357  
Phone: (765) 284-6822  
Fax: (765) 284-6855
- Richmond: [Richmond Community Based Outpatient Clinic](#)  
4351 South A Street  
Richmond , IN 47374  
Phone: 765-973-6915  
Fax: 765-965-693
- South Bend: [South Bend VA Outpatient Clinic](#)  
5735 S. Ironwood Road  
South Bend , IN 46614-9668  
Phone: (574) 299-4847  
Fax: (574) 299-9073
- Terre Haute: [Terre Haute VA Outpatient Clinic](#)  
1632 North Third Street  
Terre Haute , IN 47804  
Phone: (812) 232-2890  
Fax: (812) 232-3506
- West Lafayette: [Lafayette VA Outpatient Clinic](#)  
3851 N. River Road  
West Lafayette , IN 47906  
Phone: (765) 464-2280  
Fax: (765) 464-2279

**Vet Center**

- Fort Wayne: [Fort Wayne Vet Center](#)  
528 West Berry St.  
Fort Wayne , IN 46802  
Phone: 574-460-145
- Indianapolis: [Indianapolis Vet Center](#)  
3833 Meridian  
Indianapolis , IN 46208  
Phone: 317-927-6440
- Merrillville: [Merrillville Vet Center](#)  
6505 Broadway  
Merrillville , IN 46410-3009  
Phone: 219-736-5633  
Fax: 219-736-5936

■

***If ineligible for veteran's benefits, free or low-cost health care may be available from the following sources:***

- Indiana Family Social Services Administration (FSSA) can tell you where to find health care facilities for the homeless. Check the phone book blue pages under local, city, or county government for the number.
- **National Health Care for the Homeless Council** has a list of health care providers working with homeless people across the nation. For a list of providers in your state, go to [www.nhchc.org](http://www.nhchc.org).
- **Free clinics** are run by many local organizations and communities. Look in the phone book blue pages under "Public Health" to contact local government office for clinics in your area.

**Special Health Information for Veterans:**

- If you think you may be at risk for AIDS and HIV infection after your release, contact the nearest VA Medical Center to get tested, and seek counseling. Those at highest risk for AIDS and HIV infection are:
  - people who share needles or syringes to inject drugs or steroids;
  - men who have sex with other men;
  - those born to mothers who have HIV
  - people who received blood transfusions before 1985;
  - anyone who has sex with anyone who is at risk for HIV / AIDS.
- Veterans, homeless, and incarcerated people are at high risk for **Hepatitis C** (HCV), a serious disease that can cause cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) and liver cancer. If you think you are at risk after your release, contact the nearest VA Medical Center to get tested and seek HCV counseling. You are at risk if:
  - you ever used a needle to inject drugs;
  - you had a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992;
  - you were a health care worker and had contact with blood;
  - you were on long-term kidney dialysis;

- your mother had hepatitis C when she gave birth to you.
- The Veterans Health Administration also recommends testing if:
  - you are a Vietnam-era veteran;
  - you have had exposure to blood on your skin;
  - you have had multiple sex partners;
  - you have tattoos or body piercing;
  - you have ever snorted cocaine;
  - you have liver disease;
  - you have a history of drinking a lot of alcohol;
  - you have had an abnormal liver function test.

## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

### *If eligible for veterans' benefits:*

- Contact the Homeless Veteran Services Coordinator at the local **VA Medical Center** or **Vet Center**. Call 1-877-222-8387 to or go to <http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1> to find the medical center nearest you.

*If not eligible for veterans' benefits, the following sources may be able to tell you where you can go to get help:*

- **National Alliance for the Mentally Ill** lists community mental health services providers at: [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org), or call 1-800-950-6264.
- **National Mental Health Association** offers support groups, rehabilitation, socialization, and housing services through 340 community organizations located across the country. Call 1-800-969-NMHA, or find a local office online at [www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org).

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT

### *If eligible for veterans' benefits:*

- Contact the Substance Abuse Treatment Section at the local **VA Medical Center**. Call 1-877-222-8387 to or go to. <http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1> to find the medical center nearest you.

*If not eligible for veterans' benefits, the following sources may be able to tell you where you can go to get help:*

- <http://theagapecenter.com/Treatment-Centers/Indiana.htm> Treatment facility locator.
- **Focus On Recovery Helpline** - A 24-hour national alcohol and drug abuse addiction and treatment hotline: 1-800-888-9383.

## FINANCIAL HELP

- The American Legion provides **Temporary Financial Assistance**, (TFA) from its national headquarters to help maintain a stable environment for children of veterans. To obtain an application, look in the phone book to contact a local post, or contact the National Headquarters to find the post nearest you.
- If you are unemployed with little or no income, you may be able to get **food stamps**. A person may normally qualify for \$85 to \$100 worth of food stamps per month. Call the toll-free information number at 1-800-221-5689, or find a list of food stamp hotlines for each state at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/default.htm> You can also contact the local Department of Human Services, many drop-in shelters, or legal aid services to ask for an application.
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** benefits can be applied for before your release, even though you won't receive the benefits until after you are released. Food Stamps can be applied for together with SSI. Normally, it takes about three months to review an application, so apply well before your release date. It is best to get help filling out the application. For detailed information or assistance, call 1-800- 772-1213, or your local social security administration office listed in the phone book blue pages, or go to: <http://www.ssa.gov/notices/supplemental-security-income/>

- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** has a program called Emergency Food and Shelter Program to help prevent homelessness. Contact the local Office of the Mayor or United Way to ask who awards this money in your area and what the rules are.

## **WOMEN VETERANS**

- Most VA **Medical Centers** and readjustment offices have a designated Women Veterans Coordinator to assist women veterans in accessing VA benefit programs and healthcare services. Call 1-877-222-8387 or go to [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov), to find the medical center nearest you.

## **SECTION III**

### **SEEKING FEDERAL BENEFITS**

The Department of Veterans Affairs publishes a booklet called "**Federal Benefits for Veterans and Their Dependents**" that describes the types of benefits available and lists the addresses and phone numbers for VA facilities nationwide. Write the VA Regional Office (VARO) to request a copy or obtain a copy (pdf) on line at [http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/current\\_benefits.htm](http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/current_benefits.htm)

#### **U.S. Dept Of Veterans Affairs - Regional Office Indianapolis**

- **VA Benefits** - 1-800-827-1000
- **Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)** - 1-800-829-4833
- **Postal Address:** VA Regional Office, 575 North Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204
- [www.vba.va.gov/](http://www.vba.va.gov/).

### **ELIGIBILITY FOR VA BENEFITS DURING INCARCERATION**

Veterans incarcerated and incarcerated dependents may apply for the same compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) – service connected death benefits – and pension benefits as veterans who are not incarcerated. However, Congress has greatly restricted the amount of benefits that may be paid to a veteran or dependent while he or she is incarcerated. These benefits are institutionalized as part of law: *38 U.S.C Sec 5313 (a)*, *38 C.F.R., Sec. 3.665 (a), (d)*, which reads as follows:

*If a veteran is incarcerated as the result of a "felony" conviction as defined by law: "Any offense punishable by death or imprisonment for a term exceeding one year, unless specifically categorized as a misdemeanor under the law of the prosecuting jurisdiction,"*

*Then, the amount paid to a veteran incarcerated for a service-connected disability is generally limited by law to the 10 percent disability rate, or half the amount of the ten percent rate if the veteran's disability rating is 10 percent. (If the veteran is rated before incarceration as 20 percent disabled or higher, he will receive only the amount payable to a 10 percent disabled veteran.) Incarcerated DIC recipients will receive one-half the amount paid to a veteran receiving compensation payments for a 10 percent-rated disability.*

*A veteran may not receive non-service connected VA pension benefits, or any portion of these benefits, while incarcerated for a felony. However, his family may receive an apportionment of such benefits under the procedure described above. (See 38 C.F.R. Sec.3.666)*

One important requirement for eligibility for VA benefits is that the veteran has to have been issued either an honorable or general discharge, or would have received one if not for re-enlisting. If a veteran had two periods of service, one honorable and the other less than honorable, he may still be eligible for VA benefits based on the honorable period of service.

**VA Medical Care** is not provided to veterans in prison, but VA health facilities may provide care to you after your release.

## **BENEFITS PAYMENTS WHILE INCARCERATED**

There is a 60-day "**grace period**" following a conviction when you may still receive full benefits. **To avoid an overpayment**, it is important that you notify the VARO immediately when you go to prison if you are receiving payments. If you do not notify the VA and receive overpayment, you and your family will lose all financial payments until the debt is paid.

*For example, Joe is a veteran who receives a VA pension of \$807 per month. He commits a crime and is incarcerated, but doesn't tell the VA right away and keeps getting paid for 6 months. **Joe is overpaid a total of \$4,872.** After serving his sentence of 18 months, he is released and applies to the VA to have his pension restarted. The new pension rate is \$830 per month, but the VA will use that amount to start repaying the \$4,872 debt. **Joe's first real check will start 5 months after he is released and will be for \$30!** Joe has to go at least 5 months without that income.*

Your award for compensation or pension benefits should resume from the date you are released, as long as the VA receives notice of release within one year. This includes placement in a community treatment center or halfway house. **Remember, you must notify the VA when you are released to restart your payments.**



## APPORTIONMENT

Although legally, the veteran can only receive a portion of the full amount payable for his or her disability rating, the remaining balance may be “apportioned to the individual’s dependent family”. To apply for apportionment, send a letter to the VA Regional Office (VARO) that has jurisdiction over the veteran’s case. VA regulations clearly specify this apportionment amount will only go to family members if they can show financial need for such amount. This applies to the spouse, children, or dependent parents who are involved in the application.

In deciding whether any apportionment is appropriate, the amount of the apportionment, and to whom it will go, the following factors are considered:

- The family member’s income and living expenses;
- The amount of compensation available to be apportioned;
- The needs and living expenses of other family members; and
- Special needs of any of the family members.

For example: a veteran incarcerated rated as 80 percent disability can only receive the amount he or she would get if he or she were 10 percent disabled. However, his or her family may be apportioned up to 70 percent, the difference of the 80 percent rating. (DIC may also be apportioned with similar restrictions.)

There is a 60-day “**grace period**” following conviction where the veteran, or DIC recipient, may still receive full benefits. If the veteran continues to receive benefits after the 60-day period, it will result in an “over-payment”. The VA considers it to be the recipient’s responsibility and fault if this occurs because the recipient failed to notify the VA of his or her incarceration. Attempts to obtain a waiver in these situations of overpayment are often unsuccessful. As a rule, the veteran loses most, if not all, financial benefits until the entire overpayment is recovered by the VA. It has also been a standard procedure that the family will not be entitled to receive an apportionment until the debt is completely recovered.

For more information concerning VA debt collection rules that may affect the veteran incarcerated, telephone: 1-800-827-1000 and request a Veterans Service Organization representative or, write to a Veterans Service Organization (attention SR list) at the address listed on page twenty-six in this document.

It is important that each disabled veteran receiving compensation or DIC payments promptly notify the VARO. Regular full benefit payments should begin upon release, providing the VA is notified of the veteran's release, including placement within a community treatment center or halfway house in the community, within one year of release.

One other relevant restriction on veteran's incarcerated eligibility for service connected disability compensation is that: "No total disability rating based on un-employability, may be assigned to an incarcerated veteran".

It is important to remember that most VA decisions, including those on apportionment, can be appealed to the Board of Veterans Appeals and, if need be, to the Court of Appeal for Veterans Affairs.

## HELP SEEKING BENEFITS

If you would like to get benefits or think you have a pending claim before the VA, it is best to get professional help to assist you.

- Many Veterans **Service Organizations** have trained staff who can help you with your VA claim, and can legally represent your claim before the VA. Some also help homeless and at-risk veterans find the support services they need. You can contact any VSO listed below to see if there is a service representative near you.

### **Service organizations accredited to represent veterans and their dependents in the filing of claims**

The service organizations listed below are accredited to represent veterans and their dependents in the filing of claims. All are co-located at the VA Regional Office located at 575 North Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-1581.

American Legion, Room 325	317-226-7918
AMVETS, Room 377	317-226-7919
Disabled American Veterans, Room 399	317-226-7928
Military Order of the Purple Heart, Room 330	317-226-7865
Marine Corps League (Tues - Thurs)	317-554-0000 EXT 2517
(located Indianapolis VA Medical Center, Rm C-2067)	
Paralyzed Veterans, Room 328	317-226-6835
Veterans of Foreign Wars, Room 374	317-226-7932
Vietnam Veterans of America	317-226-5209 ext. 3127

### **Indiana Veterans' Organizations Website Links**

- [American Legion](http://www.indlegion.org/) http://www.indlegion.org/
- [AMVETS](http://www.amvets.org/) http://www.amvets.org/
- [Disabled American Veterans](http://capwiz.com/dav/home/) http://capwiz.com/dav/home/
- [Hoosier Veterans Assistance Foundation](http://www.hvaf.org/) http://www.hvaf.org/

- Although we encourage you to seek the aid of a service representative, you may choose to apply for VA benefits on your own. Write the VARO or find the forms online at: <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/> .

Below are brief descriptions of forms needed to file for certain VA benefits. Be sure you use a return address where mail will get to you as quickly as possible. Make photocopies of all forms for your records before sending your packet to the VARO nearest you.

- **Standard Form-180 – Request Pertaining to Military Records** - is used to get copies of your Record of Discharge (DD-214), military personnel and medical records. You will need a copy of your DD-214 when applying for any benefits. Requests may also complete online at <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>.
- **VA Form 21-526 - Application for Compensation or Pension**- must be filed to apply for compensation -or pension. This form, along with your DD-214 and the following forms should be mailed directly to the VARO nearest your release destination 30 to 45 days before release.
- **VA Form 21-4138 - Statement in Support of Claim** - lets you explain why you deserve the benefits you are asking for because of your disability or disorder. It is best to have an experienced service representative help you complete the form.
- **VA Form 21-4142 - Authorization for Release of Information** - If you have received medical or mental health care, that may be relevant to your claim, from anyone other than a VA Medical Facility, you need to fill out a **VAF 21-4142** giving permission for release of medical records to the VA.
- **VA Form 10-10EZ - Enrollment for Medical Benefits** - is used by the VA to determine if you can receive medical benefits. Complete the form and bring it with you to the VA medical facility where you will seek evaluation for treatment.
- **VA Form 28-1900 - Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Veterans** - is needed to apply for the vocational rehabilitation program to help veterans who were disabled during their service reach maximum independence in daily living, to learn the skills needed to get a job, and to find and keep a job. Send Form 28-1900 to the VARO in your area 10 to 15 days before your release.

- **VA Form 70-3288 - Request for and Consent to Release of Information from Claimant's Records** - is used to get records relevant to your claim from VA facilities (regional offices, medical centers, outpatient clinics, and vet centers). Request a fee waiver under section 38 C.F.R. Sec.1.526 (h), which requires the VARO to provide a veteran with one set of his or her records free of charge.

## CHECKLIST

### Using This Guide

- Ask about classes or resources to help you plan for your release.
- Make a list of your needs.
- Make a list of who may be able to help you.
- Write letters and/or contact organizations by phone or email.
- Write down the steps you take so that you do not repeat them.

### Just for Veterans

- Know where to call toll-free for help.
- Contact organizations about what services they have to offer.
- Think about your housing needs and gather information about what is available locally.
- Learn about job resources and create a plan to find a job.
- Learn about health issues, and what services are available.
- Learn about the resources available for substance abuse and mental health treatment in your area.
- Learn about your options to get financial help.
- Begin to take care of other legal issues.
- Learn about homeless veterans services.
- Learn about resources for women veterans
- If you are not currently receiving benefits, find out if you can or should be.
- If you are receiving benefits, notify the VA when you go to prison to avoid an overpayment.
- Contact a veteran service representative to represent you and help you file a claim.
- Apply for apportionment so that some of the money withheld may be given to eligible family members.