

Release During COVID-19: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



A PUBLICATION OF THE
EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
MAY 1, 2020



Introduction

Hello, and thank you for opening this booklet. Whether you are being released temporarily on medical furlough or are at the end of your sentence, you are reentering society in a very strange and scary time. The coronavirus pandemic has changed life as we know it. We imagine that it must feel very overwhelming to be leaving prison or jail at this time.

That's why we've written this booklet: to give you the information you need to know now to keep yourself and others in your community safe. Since the situation is changing all the time, it's impossible to ensure that every piece of information in this booklet is current, as of the publication date of May 1, 2020, but we've done our best to include up-to-date, key information from trusted sources to help you get through.

This booklet is written for people who are released on medical leave and will return to incarceration, as well as those who are leaving prison on MSR. Some of you will head home, others to a halfway house or other institution. Some of you may be deported from the United States after you are released. We hope this booklet will also be helpful to service providers, family members, and friends of people who have been incarcerated.

This booklet is written to accompany *Mapping Your Future: A Guide to Successful Reentry*, a longer, more comprehensive guide that can support you as you navigate reentry. It is available in both print and digital forms from the Education Justice Project and can be downloaded on educationjustice.net.

Let's be honest: adjusting to life on the outside isn't easy, even in more normal circumstances. You are not alone in this difficult time. There are resources available to assist you and those you care about. Remember to take each day at a time and to be kind to yourself and others.

We believe in YOU and your ability to successfully navigate reentry, even during a pandemic. Together we can get through this crisis and create a better world after it is over.

In solidarity,
The Education Justice Project

*We have listed a number of different programs, services, and businesses throughout this guide. We don't endorse any of these organizations. We also don't guarantee that these resources will be helpful (although we certainly hope they are).

Acknowledgements

This guide is produced by the Reentry Guide Initiative of the Education Justice Project at the University of Illinois.

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Front cover photo by Diana R. Cover photo of employees at Precious Blood Ministries for Reconciliation, Chicago, loading food supplies for the community.

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The Reentry Guide Initiative also produces two more comprehensive guides for people returning to society, people who have returned, and their families:

- Mapping Your Future: A Guide to Successful Reentry (Illinois)
- Returning Home: A Guide to the Challenges and Opportunities after Deportation

To request additional copies of Reentry During COVID-19 or the other guides, please contact:

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Table of Contents

1. BEFORE YOU LEAVE	5
What You Need to Know About COVID-19	5
Staying Safe	5
Preparing for Release	6
2. AFTER YOU LEAVE	8
The Day of Your Release	8
First Two Weeks: Quarantine	8
The Long Haul: Getting Through the COVID-19 Crisis	12
Support for meeting your basic needs	13
Health Care During the Pandemic	17
Relationships	18
3. PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE	20
Prepare for your job search	20
Prepare by taking advantage of education opportunities	21
Prepare to make the world a better place	22
4. DEPORTATION DURING COVID-19	25
5. DIRECTORY	28



1 Before You Leave

What you need to know about COVID-19

In late 2019, a novel coronavirus, called Sars-CoV2, began causing an outbreak of illness in Wuhan, China. The disease caused by the virus is called COVID-19. Since then it has rapidly spread throughout the world, becoming a global pandemic. The U.S. has more cases of COVID-19 than any other country. As of early May, there were over 58,000 cases in Cook County alone. This is a deadly virus that has already killed over 65,000 people in the United States by May 1, 2020.

The majority of people who get the virus do not have life-threatening symptoms and will recover without medical care. However, people who are older are at greater risk, as are people who have conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and people who are obese. To date there is no vaccine for the virus or cure for the infection, though getting medical treatment can help relieve the symptoms.

The virus is very contagious and you can spread it even if you don't know you have it.

COVID-19 spreads primarily through the air through coughs or sneezes, through close personal contact (including touching

and shaking hands) or through transmitting the virus directly to your nose, mouth or eyes, for example, if you touch your face with contaminated hands. Most people who catch the virus don't start showing symptoms for five days, and some people take as long as 14 days to start showing symptoms. About half the people who have the virus do not have any symptoms at all. People who have the virus are still contagious even if they don't have symptoms!

Staying safe

As you prepare to be released, it's very important to act in a safe manner that reduces the risk that you may contract or spread COVID-19. There have been severe COVID-19 outbreaks in Illinois jails and prisons. In fact, Cook County Jail has had the most cases from any single facility anywhere, with more than 600 people testing positive for the virus so far.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the following precautions to avoid getting and spreading the virus:

Keep your distance from others. Six feet is the recommended distance. We know this may be practically impossible when you are incarcerated. People live in close proximity, sharing showers, toilets, dining spaces, even

sleeping spaces. Do the best you can. No visits are allowed at correctional facilities at this time.

Wash your hands frequently. Use soap and water, and wash for at least 20 seconds. Unfortunately, some prisons in Illinois have been short on soap and cleaning supplies. While organizations are working to make sure that prisons in Illinois have enough cleaning supplies, soap and hand sanitizer at this time, we realize that conditions may be far from ideal.

Clean surfaces. Some facilities are providing cleaning supplies to people so that they can disinfect their cells daily. Do your part to clean other high touch areas as well, if you can.

Do not touch your face. Anything you touch could be contaminated. If you have been given a mask and are allowed to wear it, wear it properly, over your nose and mouth, and avoid adjusting it frequently. When you do adjust it, wash your hands before and after.

Maintain your health. Even though you are leaving soon, don't switch up your routine too much. If you work out regularly and can continue, do it! If you are not in a regular workout routine, consider doing simple stretches and other low-impact exercises. Practice mindfulness and eat a healthy diet as much as possible to keep your immune system strong.

Participate in temperature checks, if they are available. Some facilities are offering regular temperature checks because people with fevers may have the virus.

Preparing for release

Where will you stay? Unfortunately, there is a great deal of uncertainty right now about housing for people who are leaving prison during the COVID-19 crisis. If you can't stay with a family member, there are halfway houses, but most of them are currently at capacity. Government officials are working with reentry organizations and the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) to identify housing options.

Call the people you will be living with and make a plan. If you are able to finalize your housing situation in advance, call the

people you will be living with and make a plan. When you are released, you will need to self quarantine for two weeks to reduce the possibility of passing the virus on to those you will be living with. Prepare your family for that. Let them know that you will not hug or touch them when you are released and will not have physical contact with them until after your quarantine is complete. Ask them to wear a mask when they pick you up and, if possible, have a mask for you, too.

It's important to request that they set up a room in their home with clothing, food, and other necessities for you so that you won't

have to leave and they won't have to enter. Ask them to purchase disinfecting supplies to clean common areas such as the bathroom, as well as high-touch areas like counters and doorknobs.

We realize that this will be difficult. Your loved ones will want to embrace you and spend time in your company after you are released. But it is very important that you and they observe the quarantine period.

Think about what items you can take with you:

- A mask: It is imperative that you wear a mask in public. IDOC may be able to provide a mask to you before you leave. If not, some organizations are providing them free of cost.

Soap and an absorbent cloth: It's a good idea to take a bar of soap and a clean, absorbent cloth with you so that you can wash and thoroughly dry your hands at every opportunity on your journey home, especially if you will be relying on public transportation. Note: Washing without soap may actually be more dangerous since you'll have to touch doorknobs and faucets to get to the sink. Soap is what breaks down and removes the virus.

- Important documents: If possible, take steps to obtain your birth certificate and social security card before you leave. These documents are very important for setting up your life after prison. However, they usually need to be requested months in advance, and may be especially difficult to obtain right now. If you are unable to get a birth certificate or

social security card and do not have an ID, IDOC can issue you a Temporary Identification Card before you leave. Then, once you are out, you can take steps to secure these documents.

- Medications: Prisons offer people a limited medication supply upon release, ranging from a 30- to 90-day supply. Generally, you will pick up your medications the day before you are released as part of your processing. If you can, request these medications ahead of time, just to be safe.
- Medical records: If you are able to do so, collect your medical records before you are released. Ask the healthcare unit at your facility (if possible) what the procedure is for the release of your health records. Generally, you will need to complete a form and pay for printed copies. Again, this is usually something that needs to be done in advance. Do the best you can.





2 After You Leave

The day of your release

Remember: Social distance, social distance, social distance! While the urge to say goodbye to your friends in your facility through hugs or handshakes will be strong, you must avoid this to ensure everyone’s safety. Separate yourself from others with as much distance between you and them as possible. Don’t forget your soap.

If you’ll be traveling on public transportation, sit as far away from others as possible. When boarding the bus or train, do not crowd together, but maintain as much distance as possible.

If you’ll be traveling in a car, sit in the back seat, as far away from the driver as possible. Remind them to use a mask. It may be very difficult, but remember not to hug or shake this person’s hand.

If you are being deported after release from prison, please see pages 27-28.

First two weeks: quarantine

“ Keep safe. There’s always hope. We are living in strange times and we’ll get through this. -Dennis M.

for 14 days after leaving prison or jail, long enough to see if you will become sick.

Being quarantined means that you will need to stay away from family, friends and others. Hoping that “just one hug won’t hurt” is not a risk you can afford to take, given how contagious and deadly COVID-19 is. Find ways to express your love from a safe distance.

Because many prisons and jails are seeing outbreaks of COVID-19 cases, it is important to assume that you have been exposed to the virus. For this reason, the CDC recommends that you self-quarantine

You may also be tempted to go outside and enjoy your freedom. This also puts you and others at risk. We realize that it is discouraging to know that you must

continue to restrict your movements at home, as they were restricted in prison, but keep in mind this will keep you and others safe for the time being. It may be scary to think about the isolation you will feel during quarantine, but understand that a large portion of the world's population is living like this right now. You are not alone.

During your two-week quarantine, you should, if at all possible:

- Sleep in a separate room, away from others in the home. If this isn't possible, sleep as far as possible from others, wear your mask at all times, and maintain your distance.
- Clean and disinfect the bathroom every time you use it to keep those safe who will use it after you.
- Do not pass any items from your room to others in the house. Don't let them borrow or use anything of yours. Only the essentials, such as

dishes and garbage, should leave your room.

- Don't accept unnecessary things into your room. This is why it's so important to ask those you will be living with to set up your room before you get there. They can stock it with clothing, snacks, games, books or magazines – whatever they have access to that will make it a more comfortable place for you.

We realize that conditions at many halfway houses or host sites may be far from ideal. Do the best you can to follow quarantine guidelines and don't be afraid to ask for help.

You may also be concerned about meeting your basic needs while you are in quarantine and afterwards as you navigate the reentry process. Don't hesitate to reach out to others for support.

The following two organizations have been designated by the Governor's office and IDOC as points of contact for people who will be released/furloughed during the coronavirus. You can contact them when you get to your host site:

- For those in Cook County, call Safer Foundation for assessment of immediate needs and available resources at 773-265-0423.
- For those outside of Cook County, call Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC). TASC is a reentry organization that provides a variety of services and resources for people leaving prison during this crisis. Call 855-827-2444 or visit tasc.org.
- You can also call 211 for health and human services (311 for city-specific services in some cities, like Chicago), or text the Department of Human Services "Call 4 Calm" hotline. Text keywords, such as "unemployment," "food" or "shelter" to 552020 to be connected with resources. Text "talk" to be connected with a mental health professional.

Self-care during quarantine

Stay connected with those you love through the internet, if you have access. There are great apps such as Houseparty that allow you to play games online with others. If you don't have internet access, a good old-fashioned phone call can help you stay connected.

Do things you enjoy. Many people find that getting dressed and showered every day helps them feel better, even if they can't go anywhere. Do things you like to do such as reading, watching movies or playing online games. If watching the news makes you feel overwhelmed, take a break and do something else.

Stay active. While you are in quarantine, do not leave the house for exercise or other purposes. But that doesn't mean you can't stay active in your room. If you have the internet, put on a workout video (many are available on YouTube). Any exercise routine that you followed in your prison cell will work as well for you during quarantine. Or just turn up the music and dance!

Practice mindfulness. It is natural to feel stressed, but practicing mindfulness can keep it from getting out of hand. Below are some simple ways you can practice mindfulness. These exercises can be done for short, regular periods.

- Breathing. Tune into your breathing throughout your day, experiencing the slow rise and fall of your stomach. Focus on your thoughts and feelings while you do this. Don't pass judgment on your thoughts and feelings, just reflect on them.

- Sitting. Attempt to be very still, without waiting or seeking out anything. Just embrace whatever comes to your mind while you do this. Simply observe your thoughts as they come to you, while sitting quietly and peacefully.
- Listening. Listen to what is around you, marking the time between sounds in your head. Don't worry about the sounds that are being made. Note gaps of quiet among these sounds. Think about how these sounds feel to you. Let them come to you and depart from you, only to be replaced by a new sound.

Resources for Online Entertainment

- 12 world class museums you can visit online: mentalfloss.com/article/75809/12-world-class-museums-you-can-visit-online
- Chicago Public Library: chipublib.org/get-a-library-card/
You can apply for a library card online and access ebooks, audiobooks, magazines and more all from home. If you're not in the Chicago area, check your local library to see if they offer similar services.

If you get sick

If you or someone you are living with gets sick and you think you might have COVID-19, practice isolation, separating those who are sick from those who are not as much as possible. The isolation should last as long as the disease is contagious (generally two weeks). This will look very similar to quarantine – sleeping in a separate room, disinfecting all surfaces and maintaining distance from others.

How will you know if you have the virus?

COVID-19 can look like a lot of different illnesses. The most common symptoms are fever, cough, and shortness of breath, as well as fatigue and muscle aches. Some with the disease start off with nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Some show no symptoms while others become very sick and require a long time in the hospital on a ventilator.

If you have mild symptoms, you can treat the virus at home, as you would a flu bug: Rest, drink plenty of water, take acetaminophen/Tylenol for the fever and drink a warm beverage with honey for a cough. Do not go to the clinic, urgent care or emergency room unless you have emergency warning signs. (See box.)

Because testing is in short supply, decisions about who should be tested are made by state and local health departments and providers. Talk to a healthcare provider or call the health department and follow their recommendations about whether you should get tested and where.

The State of Illinois is in the process of launching free telemedicine care for residents with COVID-19 symptoms not in need of emergency or in-person medical treatment. If you are deemed “high risk,” you will be connected to a healthcare worker for virtual visits and may be able to receive a wellness kit (thermometer, blood pressure cuff and alcohol wipes) sent to the address where you are staying. You can access this service in the following way:

- Central and Southern Illinois (Carbondale, East St. Louis, Quincy and Springfield): 833-673-5669.
- Northern Central Illinois (Alton, Peoria, Champaign-Urbana, Monmouth, Ottawa, Bloomington, and Pontiac): 218-545-5100.
- Northern Illinois (including Chicago metropolitan area): 866-443-2584.

Emergency Warning Signs

Emergency warning signs that indicate that you need immediate medical help include trouble breathing, pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, and being too sleepy for someone to wake you. If you are experiencing these symptoms, go to a hospital emergency room right away or call 911. Many people with severe cases have to be hospitalized in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and need support from a ventilator.

The long haul: getting through the COVID-19 crisis

The 14-day quarantine is over. Now what? For the time being, it will be important to practice social distancing.

Social distancing is deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness. Though it will be understandably tempting to gather in groups with friends and family after returning home, please consider postponing such events until after the crisis is over.

Things to remember while social distancing:

- Stay physically apart and socially connected. Call, email, text, and connect with friends, family, and others on social media. If you have a

smartphone, talk “face-to-face” with friends and loved ones. Do your best to stay at least six feet away from other people.

- Only essential trips out. Limit shopping and trips inside any stores to essential purchases such as groceries and hygiene products. Avoid high-traffic areas.
- Protect yourself. Wear a mask and gloves when you go out for a walk or to grab groceries.
- Wash up. Wash your hands often! More often than you typically would, for at least 20 seconds each time.

How long will the pandemic and the restrictions last?



Be patient and remain positive.
-Joseph B.

No one is sure how long the pandemic will last. Some countries have been able to control the spread of the virus after a few months by imposing strict stay-at-home measures, while others are still struggling to contain the virus. It will almost certainly be a year or more before a vaccine is developed.

The CDC has suggested that gatherings

such as parties, concerts, and in-person church services be postponed for the time being. Since March 21, Illinois, like many other states, has had a stay-at-home order for all counties. Schools are closed, and only essential services are open, such as grocery stores, gas stations, banks, and pharmacies. Bars and restaurants are closed to dine-in services, but take-out and delivery are still available. Non-essential workers are ordered to stay at home or work from home. We do not know how long the stay-at-home order will last, but it will likely be in place for the remainder of spring and perhaps longer.

You can find the latest updates on Illinois restrictions here: <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/>

Support for meeting your basic needs

If you are having trouble meeting your basic needs, here are a few resources to help. Please note that services are shifting on a daily basis as the situation evolves. Many services are only available via phone or internet, and some have had to shut down entirely. Only the most essential in-person services are still available.

Always call before visiting service providers to find out if their services are available and what guidelines you will need to follow when visiting. Please also note that many of these services are overwhelmed because of the pandemic. You may have longer than normal wait times to get the help you need.

- 211: In addition to getting help from reentry organizations like TASC and Safer Foundation (see page X), you can call 211. This is a 24-hour hotline that can connect you to health and human services throughout Illinois, including food, shelter, counseling,

employment, healthcare, and more. Calls are free and anonymous.

- Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS): Call DHS at 833-234-6343 for help with accessing food, shelter, medical services, recovery and more. You can also text keywords, such as “unemployment,” “food,” “shelter,” or “talk” to 552020 to be connected with resources. For Spanish-speaking services, text “hablar.”
- Application for Benefits Eligibility (ABE): Through ABE you can apply for services such as SNAP (formerly food stamps), health care (Medicaid and Medicare) and the cash assistance program TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). Apply online at abe.illinois.gov or call their hotline at 800-843-6154.
- Social Security: You may be able to receive social security benefits if you are of retirement age or are disabled. You may also qualify for the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program which provides a cash benefit every month to help you meet your basic needs. Apply for these programs online at socialsecurity.gov. Call 800-772-1213 to be connected to a local social security office.

Shelter

If you need emergency shelter, you can text “shelter” to 552020 to be connected with resources through the DHS “Call 4 Calm” hotline, or simply call 211. Contact the Chicago Coordinated entry by phone

at 312-361-1907 or go online to csh.org/chicagoces for a housing assessment to be linked to housing options. For a list of shelters nationwide, see Shelterlistings.org.

State officials are asking landlords to be lenient with rent payments, though there is

currently nothing in place to enforce this. Evictions have been halted at the statewide level for as long as the stay-at-home order is in place.

If you have housing but need help paying rent and utilities, call the Illinois Housing

Assistance Program at 312-386-1009 for more information. Energy companies also have programs to help people pay their utilities. Because of the pandemic, many utilities have suspended disconnections and are waiving late fees.

Food

Many food pantries are providing food and toiletries to people at this time, though they may have limited hours or other restrictions, such as pick-up only. Call first before you visit. To find a food pantry in Cook County, go to chicagosfoodbank.org/find-food. For a list of food pantries nationwide, go to feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank. Again, you can call 211 or text "food" to the number 552020 for help.

If you have children living with you, they likely have access to free meals through the public schools. Visit their school website to find out more. Meal sites for students of Chicago Public Schools can be found here: cps.edu/coronavirus/Pages/mealsites.aspx.

You can sign up for SNAP (formerly food stamps) or WIC (the supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children) at abe.illinois.gov; with the help of a case manager through DHS; or through a reentry organization such as TASC or Safer Foundation.

Grocery stores are still open. We recommend that you go to the store when it is less busy, such as in the early morning. Keep in mind that some stores have special morning hours specifically for older adults. Wear a mask, wash your hands, and maintain at least six feet distance from other shoppers and store employees. Many stores now have curbside services or delivery. This allows you to re-order groceries online to avoid coming into contact with others.

Getting your important documents and ID

Getting a copy of your birth certificate and social security card is crucial to setting up your life after prison. You will need them to get an ID and to access many of the services listed in this guide (such as

Medicaid and Medicare). Unfortunately, gathering these important documents and getting an ID may be very difficult at this time since many offices are closed or have reduced services. We recommend getting help from a service provider or reentry organization and asking if there are temporary ID options available.

- To get a birth certificate, contact the county clerk's office in the county where you were born. There is a form you will need to fill out, and you will need to provide a copy of a photo ID and a payment. Instructions for getting a social security card can be found at ssa.gov/myaccount.
- To get an ID or driver's license, you will need a birth certificate and social security card. IDs and driver's licenses are usually obtained at a Drivers Services Office or Secretary

of State facility. However, because of the pandemic, all of these facilities are closed. Some individuals may be able to renew a license or get an ID online, but it is highly unlikely that you will be able to get one online if you have not had one in a long time. Call the Office of the Secretary of State at 800-252-8980 for more information.

Finances

Because the pandemic has had such a dramatic effect on the economy, the Federal Government is giving out one time payments of \$1,200 to most individuals. Anyone who filed a 2018 or 2019 tax return or who gets social security/disability insurance will automatically get a check. Make sure you update your address using the official form so that the check goes to the right place. The form can be found here: irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8822.pdf.

If you did not file a tax return, you must file a form with the IRS before getting a stimulus check. For more information and a link to the official IRS form, go to irs.gov/newsroom/economic-impact-payments-what-you-need-to-know.

Although many banks have closed their lobbies and offices, they are still available through drive-up services, online banking, and phone customer support. Cashing your stimulus check through a bank, rather than

a check-cashing service, will allow you to avoid fees.

If you do not have an account, you can ask your local bank if they are able to help you open a checking account so that you can have a safe place to put your money. A checking account keeps your money secure and easily accessible so you can make purchases and pay bills. With a checking account, you can get a debit card to make purchases and pay bills, and you can also get cash from your account using an ATM.

Many banks are also offering financial relief programs to help alleviate the economic impacts of the pandemic. These programs include allowing borrowers to defer payments or extending payment due dates. Contact your bank or credit union to find out more.

The City of Chicago is temporarily suspending debt collection, ticketing and towing until May 1, 2020 and perhaps longer.

Transportation

While public transit (buses, trains, subways) in Chicago and other places around Illinois remain open, they may have reduced services. Public transit authorities are asking people to limit travel to essential

trips only (medical appointments, trips to the pharmacy, grocery store or to essential work locations). When you are using public transit, sit as far away from others as possible, avoid touching surfaces and your face, wear a mask, and wash your hands afterwards.

Communications

If you are eligible for services at DHS, you may also be eligible for a free basic cell phone. You may have the option of upgrading this phone to a smartphone for a cost. Smartphones are internet accessible through a wi-fi connection.

Normally, you can get access to a computer or connect to wi-fi at public libraries. Places like Starbucks and McDonald's

also offer free wi-fi. However, because of the pandemic, these places are currently closed to the public. Some companies are offering free or discounted internet services during the pandemic for those who need it, and companies are offering wifi hotspots around town. See, for instance, [Comcast's Internetessentials.com](https://www.internetessentials.com) and [xfinity.com/prepare](https://www.xfinity.com/prepare). Other companies like T-Mobile, Frontier, Mediacom, RCN, Spectrum, US Cellular, and Verizon are also offering free or reduced services and are setting up wi-fi hotspots. See directory for more info.

Avoid getting scammed

Unfortunately, there are a lot of people and organizations out there right now who are trying to take advantage of the pandemic to get to your money and personal information. The Federal Trade Commission recommends several things you can do to avoid a COVID-19 scam:

- Ignore offers for vaccinations and home test kits. Scammers are selling products to treat or prevent COVID-19 without proof that they work.
- Hang up on robocalls. Scammers use illegal sales calls to get your money

and your personal information. These calls pitch everything from low-priced health insurance to work-at-home schemes.

- Don't respond to texts, emails or calls about checks that claim they are from the Treasury Department and can help you get your stimulus check if you provide your financial information or personal information.
- Don't respond to texts, emails or calls that claim they are from other sources like the CDC or World Health Organization (WHO), asking for your financial information or

personal information. Don't click on links or texts you didn't expect. Go to trusted sites instead, like [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov).

Health care during the pandemic

Insurance

People who just get out of prison are often eligible for Medicaid or Medicare. You can submit an application at [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov) or [abe.illinois.gov](https://www.abe.illinois.gov), or call the DHS Customer Helpline at 800-843-6154. Fill out the application as soon as possible, especially if you have health conditions that will require immediate treatment. A case manager at DHS or a reentry organization can help you with the application.

Getting care

We recognize that it may not be easy to get insurance, especially if you don't have an ID or access to critical documents like a birth certificate or social security card. If you can't get health insurance right away but need care, there are public and community health programs all over Illinois that offer free or low-cost services, including vaccinations, nutrition, STD and HIV screening, cancer screening, dental health, quit smoking programs, hearing tests, and mental health services. You can search for clinics that offer free or affordable services at this website: [freeclinics.com](https://www.freeclinics.com).

Note that because of the pandemic, some of these clinics may be closed right now or are only seeing patients by phone or internet. Always call before visiting.

If you need emergency care, go to an emergency room of a nearby hospital. Be aware, though, that emergency rooms are hotspots for COVID-19, so avoid going to an emergency room unless it is a true emergency.

Mental health

Because the pandemic, along with isolation from others, can feel overwhelming, it is essential to remember that none of us are alone. There are a number of resources available to you if you need to speak with a therapist or counselor.

If you are feeling especially bad or feel like you might be a danger to yourself or someone else, get help right away. Call the suicide hotline at 800-273-8255. You can also call 911 or visit an emergency room if you are in crisis.

The Illinois DHS "Call 4 Calm" hotline provides free, anonymous emotional support for Illinois residents experiencing stress or other mental health concerns related to COVID-19. Text "talk" to 552020 to access this service. Once you text, a counselor from a community mental health organization will call you.

You can also call the Crisis and Referral Entry Service (CARES) line at 800-345-9049. The CARES line is available throughout Illinois 24 hours a day, seven

days a week. Another option is to call the Illinois Warm Line at 866-359-7953 to get help with mental health and/or substance abuse challenges from wellness support specialists. We have listed several other mental health care services in our directory.

Relationships



A man is only as successful as the people that he surrounds himself with. I need my support team, my wise council, my family! We all do.
-Austin C.

Not being able to spend time with family members and friends because of social distancing restrictions may feel discouraging, especially after being separated from them during your incarceration. Many people are experiencing fear, loneliness and stress because of the pandemic. Know that you are not alone in feeling this way, but also know that you have options for staying safely connected and finding support from your loved ones.

Staying connected during this time can provide an incredible opportunity to love others, show kindness and save lives from our couches! It can also boost your health – maintaining relationships and connections strengthens your immune system, which

helps keep your defenses up against this virus. There are ways to stay close to people we love through letters, email, phone calls, texts, and messaging apps. Remember that this is only temporary! After the stay-at-home order is lifted, you will be able to physically reconnect with your family and loved ones.

“Even if you cannot be present, be a presence.” –Anonymous

Did you know that laughter is known to improve immunity? It improves our health and boosts happiness. Watch a funny movie with a loved one while on a virtual chat or crack jokes. Laugh! Life is better when we are laughing.

Virtual conferencing. The lovely thing about technology is that in seconds we are able to see our loved ones. Take advantage and use virtual conferencing to connect with several loved ones at once, (see the “Communications” section above for advice about getting phone and internet access). You can participate in virtual video conferencing for free through Zoom, Cisco Webex, Google Hangouts, and Skype. Some of these applications have restrictions for

numbers of participants and amount of time.

Other Messaging Apps. If you can connect to the internet, download a messaging app to text, call, and video chat for free. Some popular and free messaging apps include Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, WeChat, Telegram, Facebook Live, Snapchat, and Google Hangouts.

Domestic violence

Some of you may be social distancing with family members or others. This can be challenging too, especially for people in abusive relationships. Having to be in a confined space under stressful circumstances can bring out the worst in people, as you have probably observed during your incarceration. If you are experiencing abuse or domestic violence of any kind at your host site or home, or witness abuse or violence, contact the Domestic Violence Hotline at 877-863-6338.

Tips for healthy relationships during COVID-19

Safeconversations.com recommends five ways to have healthy relationships in the midst of the pandemic:

- Honor time by asking "Is now a good time to talk about..." So many people are juggling more roles than usual right now. Professional and home life are now blended, and many parents have become homeschool teachers.

- Allow boundaries by letting people say "Now is not good." Ask what time would be better. People need to know it's alright to take some time.
- Show curiosity by asking "Is there more about that?" We're all facing so much uncertainty right now. It's OK to not know things. Ask people for their thoughts and feelings and invite them to tell you as much as they want.
- Express empathy by saying "I can imagine you might be feeling..." COVID-19 has brought up so many feelings some of us didn't even know we had. Expressing empathy helps people connect and feel seen and understood.
- Show appreciation by simply saying, "Something I appreciate about you is..." Keep things positive by telling people the good things you see. Maybe you've noticed in new ways how hard they work to care for the family or how much patience they have with children. Let them know!



3 Preparing for the Future

Perhaps you will be returning to prison after your medical furlough is over, or maybe you have been released or are on parole. No matter your situation, you can take steps during the pandemic to prepare for the future.



I think making connections is important because I'm still looking for a job, and you never know when one of these connections might work out in that respect. You just have to keep your eyes and ears open.
-Shaun W.

Prepare for your job search

Many people are unemployed right now because of the pandemic, and it will be very challenging to find ANY job, especially for people who have been incarcerated.

The few jobs that are available include:

- Grocery store/pharmacy workers
- Warehouse workers
- Delivery workers (Think pizza delivery as well as Amazon drivers.)

- Workers who provide online and phone services
- Some construction/landscaping workers (depending on location)

While you can contact your local grocery store or warehouse to see if there are openings, please keep in mind that these types of jobs will likely put you in frequent contact with those who may be infected. Working online may be an option, but be aware of "work at home" scams and use caution when looking for online or phone service jobs. The job situation will likely improve somewhat when the virus is under control, but the economy will take a long time to fully recover. Be prepared for the strong possibility that it may be very challenging to find a job for a long while.

We recommend that you use this time to prepare for your future job search so you can be ready to begin your job search in earnest when the pandemic is over or when you will be released. Here are some things you can do now to prepare.

- Put together a resume and work history. Include contact information, any education you've received, work experience, professional skills, and awards. There are lots of online resources for putting together a resume.

- Start networking. Talk to your family and friends about job opportunities they may be aware of. Ask for their help. Get information from them about jobs they know about and share your resume.
- Make a list of potential jobs and contacts. What skills or credentials are needed for these jobs? What can you do now to build those skills?
- Connect with reentry organizations. These organizations often have programs to help people find employment.

Prepare by taking advantage of education opportunities



Be flexible. Don't allow yourselves to become fixated on plans you made in the past. Embrace the change. Take advantage of the fact that like you, people in society, are just learning a new way of life.
-Roberto L.

Take advantage of online education opportunities to learn new skills and gain credentials that will make you more competitive in the job market. These may include:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE): These classes are for people who want to improve their skills in reading, writing, math, listening, and speaking. Many of these classes are now being offered online. You can find a database of ABE programs here: ilcco.net/AdultEd/index1.cfm (Many of these same organizations offer English as a

Second Language courses as well.)

- GED: The GED is what you will take if you haven't finished high school. The test is an opportunity to show you have mastered the knowledge and skills associated with a high school diploma. Many jobs will require this.
- College: There are also community college and even university classes you can take online, some of them for free. Those offered by the University of Illinois can be found at online.illinois.edu.

Getting an education is a great way to build the skills you will need to compete in the new job market. If you are returning to prison, take advantage of educational opportunities in prison. Many offer ABE, GED and even associate degree programs, as well as technical programs. The Education Justice Project's higher education program is currently operational in Danville Correctional Center.

Prepare to make the world a better place

At the Education Justice Project, we are thinking about ways we can work together to create a more just world when this crisis is over. Consider how you can get involved and connect with others. If you are returning to prison, think about groups you may be able to join or educational activities you may be able to take advantage of in prison.

If you are staying on the outside, consider ways you can get involved with your community. Civic engagement means exercising your civic rights and duties and becoming involved in your community and the political system. This may include writing letters to elected officials, campaigning, voting, participating in government events and volunteering.

Get involved

Use this time to learn about organizations that advocate for change. There are many organizations that do community organizing online and on the ground, and you can contribute to these efforts in valuable ways. People with a history of

incarceration often do not have a chance to develop or implement the laws that affect them, so it is important for them to become more involved in politics and their communities. A few organizations that EJP alumni have run, volunteered with, coordinated, and been employed by include: CeaseFire IL, Community Renewal Society FORCE Project, READI Chicago, Community Support Advisory Council, and Give up the Streets.

Religious groups, reentry programs, and other community programs also offer opportunities to get involved, find support and fellowship, and serve your community. Many of them are mobilizing now during the pandemic to help those in need. Connecting with your community and volunteering can help you acquire new skills, network with others, make a positive impact, and be better prepared for a successful job search.



Get involved in advocacy work. If we want to change the process, we have to lead the process.
-Marlon C.

Voting

According to Illinois state law you are eligible to vote if you are a U.S. citizen, 18 or older, have completed the custodial portion of your sentence, and have been released from the Illinois Department of

Corrections. You are eligible to vote even if you are on parole, probation, mandatory supervised release, or electronic monitoring. If you previously lost your right to vote because of a felony conviction, you must re-register to vote after release. However, you are not eligible to vote if you are

temporarily released on furlough or living in an IDOC Adult Transition Center (ATC), as you are still considered to be serving your sentence in that situation.

IDOC is required by law to notify election authorities that your eligibility to vote has been restored, and to give you a “Civics in Prison” handout on your release, which has more details on voting. If they did not give it to you or if you no longer have it, call the Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights at (312) 888 4193 to get one.

Less than half of the U.S. population votes. This means that only a small number of people choose the representatives who make the laws that apply to all of us. Your votes can make a difference, especially at the local and state levels.

The next election is Nov. 3, 2020, and is for U.S. President, U.S. Congressional representatives, state representatives, county states attorneys, and in many areas, judges. There will also be other important offices and issues on the ballot, depending on where you live.

In order to vote, follow these three steps:

Step 1: Register to Vote

This can sometimes be complicated. But please do not let that stop you! Legal volunteers at the non-partisan Election Protection hotline 866-OUR-VOTE can help you for free.

In Illinois, you need to show two forms of identification in order to register to vote. Forms of acceptable ID to register to vote include: Illinois state ID or number (NOTE: IDOC is required by law to provide you

with a state ID); Illinois driver’s license or number; Social Security card, or the last four numbers of your social security number; Medicare or Medicaid card; birth certificate; mail that is addressed to you, at the address you wish to register under; credit or debit card in your name; military ID card; Illinois vehicle registration or insurance card; Illinois college or school ID; Work ID; LINK or public aid card; lease or mortgage in your name; U.S. passport or passcard.

There are three different ways you can register to vote.

- Online: to register online go to <https://ova.elections.il.gov/>. The on-line registration deadline is 11:59 p.m. on October 18.
- Mail: to register by mail, go to <https://elections.il.gov/Default.aspx>, then go to the tab that says “Information for Voters.” Print out the form, fill it out, and mail it by October 6, 2020.
- Same day: to register on election day, you must show two forms of ID since you’ll be registering and voting at the same time. One of the IDs must show your current home address. People who are homeless or who recently moved are also eligible to vote this way. Tell the poll workers that you wish to do “election-day registration”.

After registering online or by mail, you should receive a voter card at the address under which you registered. It will have your name and will tell you where to go vote, and when. If you don’t receive this card or if you misplace it, contact the Illinois State Board of Elections online at

elections.il.gov/Main/ContactUs.aspx, or via phone at 217-782-4141, or 312-814-6440. You can also call 866-OUR-VOTE.

Step 2: Learn about the candidates and issues

This guide cannot tell you how to vote. But you can learn about candidates and issues by listening to the news, talking with people you trust, and looking up candidates and issues online. You can also find voter guides and ratings for judges online.

Step 3: VOTE!

In Illinois, you are not required to show ID in order to vote. No one should ask you for ID to vote unless you are doing election-day registration. But it is a good idea to take your voter registration card and ID with you in case there is confusion at the polls. Normally, there are four ways that you can vote:

- In person, on election day (Nov. 3).
In person, during the early voting period (beginning in late September in some parts of Illinois).
- By mail-in ballot, which can be requested beginning in August. Contact your election authority or 866-OUR-VOTE if you need help requesting a mail-in ballot. Mail-in ballots must be postmarked by Nov. 3 at the latest, but given postal delays, they should be mailed earlier to be on the safe side.
- By provisional ballot, if there are serious problems at the voting location. Because these ballots are not counted unless voters come in later to verify their identity, this kind of voting is not the best option. Call 866-OUR-VOTE if you run into this issue while voting.

The early voting period might be shorter this year due to COVID-19, so you are encouraged to vote early or vote by mail if possible. Keep an ear open for news on such changes, or call the numbers above.

You can take notes, voting guides, and this voter information into the voting booth. It's a good idea to do this, because there can be a lot to remember. Take your time when you vote and do not let anyone rush you. If you need help, ask a poll worker. They cannot tell you who or what to vote for, but they can answer questions about the process or help you mark a ballot, for example because of a disability, if you have difficulty reading, or if your English is limited. You can also request a ballot in other languages. Again, call 866-OUR-VOTE if you run into any problems while voting.



While deportations were paused for a week at the end of March as a result of COVID-19, they have resumed as of the publication of this guide.

Conditions surrounding deportation have changed little. You can expect to be transferred to ICE custody and most likely taken to the Jerome Combs Detention Center in Kankakee. You will spend roughly two weeks there until your deportation, which will take place on a Friday. When you arrive at the center you will get a physical. Be sure to disclose any and all symptoms you may have experienced, no matter how minor you think they may be.

Like many correctional facilities, this facility has made some changes as a result of COVID-19, including offering cleaning supplies to disinfect cells daily, disallowing visits, and implementing frequent temperature checks. Please take advantage of the opportunity to clean your cell daily for your own safety, as well as for that of your cellmate. Allow your temperature to be taken as often as it's requested. It's an important way to be able to identify if you are ill and need treatment and isolation. Recently deported people who passed through the Combs center reported that sinks and soap are widely available in cells and common areas.

Unfortunately, social distancing en route to the detention center and during the process of deportation will be difficult to achieve. Whenever you do have control over where you sit, try to maintain as much space as possible between you and other people.

On the day of deportation you will be woken up at 3:30 a.m., allowed to "cash out" whatever money you have on your books, and given a change of clothes. Immigration officials will review your charges with you and offer you a phone call with the consulate of your home country. They can give you information about what to expect during the deportation process and contact family members on your behalf.

As you are processed for deportation, you will have your temperature taken and will join others from other local facilities before boarding the buses to the airport. Your temperature will be checked again before boarding the plane. If you feel unwell at any point, it is important to report your symptoms so that you can be isolated and treated. If you are given a mask, it is extremely important that you wear it and urge others to do the same.

Once on the plane you will be offered a meal and allowed to use the bathroom. It is quite likely that your plane will make one or more additional stops to pick up other

people being deported.

NOTE: People deported from Illinois usually are released at the border with Mexico at Matamoros/Brownsville, but recently at least some people have been dropped at Reynosa/McAllen border crossing.

You'll be put on a bus for the last leg of your journey, from the airport to the border. There, you'll be instructed to cross the bridge where Mexican immigration officials will be waiting on the other side to orient you. The border is dangerous, so go directly to the officials and do not walk off on your own. The Mexican armed forces will be present at the center, providing protection to deported people. Note that if you choose not to receive help here, you are no longer protected.

Here, you will be offered a meal and water, have your temperature checked (yes, again!) and be given a temporary ID. This is a valid ID and will be essential for getting a permanent one as well as applying for government services in Mexico. You'll also be allowed to use a phone, but the line may be long.

Because of limited public transportation and flights, the Mexican government has contracted buses for you to major cities throughout the country such as Mexico City, Veracruz, and others. Mexican officials will ask you where you were born, not where you would like to go, so if you were born in a different city than where you are headed, specify this.

The bus will be escorted by Mexican police out of the border state, usually Nuevo León or Tamaulipas, until you cross the state line. These measures are in place to protect you from potential violence at the border. The journey from the border to Mexico City is around 14 hours. The bus will make limited stops but there is a bathroom on the bus.

A recently deported person reported that the bus he was on to Mexico City transported him to the Terminal Central de Autobuses del Norte, located at Eje Central Lázaro Cárdenas 271, Magdalena de las Salinas, Gustavo A. Madero. If your final destination is not Mexico City, you can purchase a commercial bus ticket here with any major carrier including ADO, Estrella Roja, or Autovías. A one-way ticket from Mexico City to Puebla (roughly two and a half hours away) costs 220 pesos (\$9 USD).

Once you arrive at the place you will be staying, it is important that you shower right away and change into new clothes before greeting your friends and family. Avoid hugging them, as hard as it might be. COVID-19 is highly contagious and there is a high possibility that you have been exposed to it during incarceration or deportation. Please take the proper precautions, including a 14-day quarantine at your place of residence. If you don't follow these steps, the consequences may be catastrophic for those you love. Please continue on to page 9 to read about precautions to take upon arrival and see pages 9-11 for information on how to self-quarantine.

For more information please also see *Returning Home: A Guide to the Challenges and Opportunities After Deportation*, also published by the Education Justice Project. We are about to update this guide and your experience is invaluable in helping us provide information for those facing deportation after you. Please get in touch! returninghome@educationjustice.net.

Resources for recently deported people:

There are a number of organizations in Mexico, often run by deported/returned people. Just a few of them are Caminamos Juntos (www.cjsma.org), located in San Miguel de Allende, and Otros Dreamers en Accion (www.odamexico.org), in Mexico City.



EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT

an initiative of Education at Illinois

College of Education, University of Illinois
1001 S. Wright St., Champaign, IL 61820
217.300.5150

www.educationjustice.net
info@educationjustice.net

5 Directory of Resources

Organization	Website	Phone	Location	Notes
COVID-19 Health Resources				
COVID19Telehealth line		(833) 673-5669	Carbondale, East St. Louis, Quincy, Springfield	Free telemedicine care for COVID-19 treatment
COVID19Telehealth line		(218) 545-5100	Champaign Urbana, Alton, Peoria, Monmouth, Ottawa, Bloomington, Pontiac	Free telemedicine care for COVID-19 treatment
COVID19Telehealth line		(866) 443-2584	Northern Illinois/Chicago/ Suburbs	Free telemedicine care for COVID-19 treatment
AHA Heart Healthy Resources	https://www.heart.org/en/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-resources			Heart health during COVID-19
Chicago COVID webiste	https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home.html			Chicago's coronavirus response center, with resources and the latest updates
Illinois Department of Public Health	http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus/media-publications/daily-press-briefings			
Video: CA prisons, gate pickup in time of Covid	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGpM_pvMJKs#action=share			What to expect at gate pickup from prisons during COVID19
Centers for Disease Control COVID-19 Guide	https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2Findex.html			How to protect yourself, what to do if you are sick, latest updates, etc.

Organization	Website	Phone	Location	Notes
Cook County Dept of Public Health	cookcountypublichealth.org			Resources/info about COVID-19 in Cook County
General Health Resources				
Find a Health Center	https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/			Find local health centers for COVID19 screening, testing, telehealth, and other primary health care services.
DHS Public Health Program Map	http://app.idph.state.il.us/cecweb/			Find a variety of public health programs (e.g., women's health, HIV/AIDS, asthma, etc.)
Application for Benefits Eligibility	abe.illinois.gov	(800) 843-6154		Apply for Medicaid/Medicare
Healthcare Marketplace	healthcare.gov			Apply for insurance through the Healthcare Marketplace
DHS customer helpline		(800) 843-6154		Questions about case status, benefits, services, eligibility
AIDS Info Hotline		(800) 448-0440	Nationwide	Confidential answers to questions about HIV/AIDS treatment
Domestic Violence Hotline		(877) 863-6338	Nationwide	24-hr
NowPow	https://nowpow.com/			List of resources in Chicago related to health, wellness, self-care
Heartland Health Clinics		(773) 375-1680	Chicago	Free/reduced-price health care
Mental Health/Substance Use				
Suicide Prevention Helpline		(800) 273-8255	Nationwide	24 hr
DHS "Call 4 Calm" Hotline		Text TALK to 552020	Illinois	Mental health support related to COVID-19 from counselors
Illinois "Warm Line"		(866) 359-7953	Illinois	Mental health/substance abuse support from wellness support specialists.
Health Alternatives Systems		(773) 252-3100	Chicago	Substance use support

Organization	Website	Phone	Location	Notes
DHS SAMHSA Helpline		(800) 662-4357	Nationwide	Free, confidential, 24/7 treatment referral and information service for mental health/substance use
Alcoholics Anonymous	aa.org		Nationwide	Find a local group or online group
Narcotics Anonymous	na.org		Nationwide	Find a local group or online group
Howard Brown Health	https://howardbrown.org/	(773) 388-1600	Chicago	Mental health, medical, substance use, dental, and/or sexual health services
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois	https://www.lssi.org/	(800) 345-9049 (833) 610-5774	Locations throughout Illinois	Mental health, addiction services, crisis services
Esperanza Health Centers	https://www.esperanzachicago.org/	(773) 584-6200	Chicago area	Spanish-speaking; medical, substance use, psychiatric, and sexual health care
CDC Stress and Coping	https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fmanaging-stress-anxiety.html			Support for coping with stress during pandemic
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention	afsp.org/find-support	(888) 333-2377	Nationwide	Referrals to support groups and mental health professionals, resources
Chicago Department of Public Health Mental Health Centers		(312) 747-1020	Chicago	Connect to free teletherapy services
National Alliance on Mental Illness	nami.org			Mental health resources, information about support groups
National/State Government Resources				
"Call 4 Calm" IL DHS		Text 552020	Statewide	Text "Unemployment, Food, and Shelter" to connect with resources

Organization	Website	Phone	Location	Notes
Health and Human Services Hotline		211	Statewide	Get help with essential services: food, shelter, healthcare, community support
Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS)		(800) 843-6154	Statewide	Get help with questions about case status, benefits, services, or eligibility
Illinois Application for Benefits Eligibility (ABE)	https://abe.illinois.gov	(800) 843-6154	Statewide	Sign up for services like healthcare, community support, help to buy food, cash assistance.
Reentry Organizations & Other Service Providers				
TASC (Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities)	https://www.tasc.org/tascweb/tertiary_page.aspx?id=107&title=Client-Telehealth-Forms-&-Resources	Parole District 4 & 5: (618) 499-6246; Parole District 1-3: (217) 481-6815; Moms & Babies/Pregnant: (217) 819-9461	Statewide	Support and referrals to people leaving prison during this crisis. Call when you get to host site.
Safer Foundation	https://saferfoundation.org/	(773) 265-0423	Chicago area	Support and referrals to people leaving prison during this crisis. Call when you get to host site.
Catholic Charities	https://www.catholiccharities.net/	(312) 655-7700 (847) 782-4000 C	Chicago/Lake County	Wide variety of services, including help with housing
Inside Out Network	https://insideoutnetwork.net/welcome		Mostly Chicago area	Directory of resources to connect people who have been incarcerated with service providers
St. Leonard's Ministries	https://slministries.org/	(312) 894-7989	Chicago	Holistic reentry support, including housing, cognitive behavioral therapy, healthcare, substance use treatment, education, employment training
Inspiration Corporation	http://www.inspirationcorp.org/	(773) 878-0981	Chicago	Jobs, Housing, Food

Organization	Website	Phone	Location	Notes
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois	https://www.lssi.org/	(618) 997-9076	Statewide	Family support services, mental health, substance abuse, affordable housing, etc.
COVID-19 SouthSide Community Resource Guide	https://southsideweekly.com/covid-19-south-side-community-resource-guide/		Chicago south side	Info about health, food, shelter, and more
Housing				
Illinois Housing Assistance program	https://www.thecha.org/residents/services/mobility-counseling-program	(312) 386-1009	Chicago Housing Authority	Offers low-income individuals assistance to pay rent and utilities
Health and human services hotline		211	Statewide	Get help with shelter, food, health, more
Chicago Coordinated Entry	csh.org/chicagoces	(312) 361-1707	Chicago Housing Authority	Housing needs assessments, connection to housing options
Shelter listings	shelterlistings.org		Nationwide	Directory of emergency shelters nationwide
City of Chicago		311	Chicago	Family Support Services and Homelessness services
Garfield Community Service Center	https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp_info/community_servicecenterlocations.html	(312) 746-5400	10 S. Kedzie Ave. Chicago	Help with shelter, food, clothing, job training placement, more
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless	https://www.chicagohomeless.org/covid-19-resources-for-those-experiencing-or-at-risk-of-homelessness/	(312) 641-4140	Chicago	Guide for those experiencing homelessness during pandemic
Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing	https://mailchi.mp/b6de0843373f/lcbh-interprets-the-courts-general-administrative-order-2020-01?e=ea437368e5		Statewide	Information about delays on evictions during COVID-19
Sarah's Circle	https://www.sarahs-circle.org/	773-751-7475	Chicago	Women's emergency shelter
South Suburban Pads	sspads.org	(708) 332-7700	Chicago southern suburbs	Emergency shelter
Chicago shelter listings	shelterlist.com/city/il-chicago		Chicago	Directory of emergency shelters in Chicago

Organization	Website	Phone	Location	Notes
Rentervention	https://rentervention.com/		Chicago	Free resource for renters facing housing issues.
Food				
Greater Chicago Food	https://www.chicagosfoodbank.org/find-food/			Find a food bank in Cook County
Feeding America	https://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank			Directory of foodbanks nationwide
Chicago public schools	https://www.cps.edu/oshw/Pages/HealthyCPS.aspx			Free breakfast and lunch meals
Illinois DHS	abe.illinois.gov			Apply for SNAP, cash or medical assistance through
Chicago Food Banks	chicagosfoodbank.org/find-food/			Find food pantries in Chicago
Cornerstone Community Outreach		(773) 271-8163	North Side	
Care for Real		(773) 769-6182	North Side	
A Just Harvest		(773) 262-2297	North Side	
Circle Urban Ministries		(773) 921-1446	West Side	
Salvation Army Harbor Light		(312) 667-2380	West Side	
Our Lady of the Angels		(773) 486-8431	West Side	
Peoples Church of the Harvest		(773) 533-6877	West Side	
St. James Food Pantry		(312) 842-1919	South Side	
Metropolitan Community Outreach		(773) 536-2046	South Side	
Parkway Garden Christian Church		(773) 956-8723	South Side	
Santa Maria Adolorata		(312) 421-3122	Downtown/Loop	
Chicago Lights		(312) 640-2571	Downtown/Loop	
Salvation Army Chicago Temple		(312) 492-6803	Downtown/Loop	
Southeast Side of Chicago Food Pantry		(773) 649-7612	South Side	

Organization	Website	Phone	Location	Notes
Englewood Satellite Center		(312) 745-3328	South Side	
Catholic Charities ER Asst.		(312) 655-7514	Downtown/Loop	
Shekinah Chapel (Dolton)		(773) 849-5711	Southern Suburbs	
Families Feeding Families (Altgeld Gardens)		(312) 786-3430	Southern Suburbs	
Grace MBC Pantry		(708) 339-2060	Southern Suburbs	
Emmanuel Church		(708) 758-3343	Southern Suburbs	
Maywood Community SDA		(708) 345-6645	Western Suburbs	
Beyond Hunger		(708) 386-1324	Western Suburbs	
Share Food Share Love		(630) 347-5390	Western Suburbs	
Niles Township		(847) 983-0073	Northern Suburbs	
Palatine Township		(847) 358-6700	Northern Suburbs	
Elk Grove Township		(847) 437-0300	Northern Suburbs	
Communications				
Lifeline Telephone Assistance	lifelinesupport.org	(800) 234-9473		Federal program that lowers the monthly cost of phone and internet
Charter Broadband	https://corporate.charter.com/newsroom/charter-to-offer-free-access-to-spectrum-broadband-and-wifi-for-60-days-for-new-K12-and-college-student-households-and-more	(844) 488-8395		Free/discounted services due to COVID-19
Comcast	Internetessentials.com	(855) 846-8376		Service for low-income individuals and families, free/discounted services during COVID-19
AT&T	https://about.att.com/pages/COVID-19.html	(800) 288-2020		Free/discounted services due to COVID-19
Xfinity	https://www.xfinity.com/prepare	(800) 934-6489		Free/discounted services due to COVID-19
Frontier	https://frontier.com/resources/covid-19	(800) 921-8101		Free/discounted services due to COVID-19

Organization	Website	Phone	Location	Notes
Sprint	https://frontier.com/resources/covid-19	(888) 211-4727		Free/discounted services due to COVID-19
T-Mobile	https://www.t-mobile.com/	(800) 937-8997		Free/discounted services due to COVID-19
US Cellular	https://www.uscellular.com/covid-19	(888) 944-9400		Free/discounted services due to COVID-19
Verizon	https://www.verizon.com/support/consumer/announcements/covid-19	(800) 922-0204		Free/discounted services due to COVID-19
Finances				
IRS	https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus-tax-relief-and-economic-impact-payments			Information about getting Economic Impact Payments (Stimulus Payments)
Illinois Department of Employment Services	https://www2.illinois.gov/ides/Pages/default.aspx			Information about how to get unemployment benefits
Social Security	ssa.gov/myaccount/	(800) 772-1213		Information about how to get a social security card
USA.gov	https://www.usa.gov/benefits-grants-loans			Information about affordable rental housing, financial aid for students, unemployment benefits, military benefits and more
Secretary of State	https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/	(800) 252-8980		Information about getting an ID/ Drivers' License
Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs		(800) 393-0865		Call to get veterans benefits restored
Social Security	socialsecurity.gov	(800) 772-1213		Call to receive social security benefits if you are of retirement age or are disabled, or if you qualify for the Supplemental Security Income program.
Education				
Free GED prep materials	www.study.com/academy/popular/free-online-ged-classes.html	(888) 211-4727		Free/discounted services due to COVID-19

Organization	Website	Phone	Location	Notes
Free online classes	https://lifehacker.com/where-to-take-free-online-classes-while-you-re-stuck-at-1842496408	(800) 937-8997		Free/discounted services due to COVID-19
Online short courses from major universities	https://www.edx.org	(888) 944-9400		Free/discounted services due to COVID-19
Free professional development classes	https://www.themuse.com/advice/45-free-online-classes-you-can-take-and-finish-by-the-end-of-this-year	(800) 922-0204		Free/discounted services due to COVID-19
Free online classes at Harvard University	https://online-learning.harvard.edu/catalog/free			Information about getting Economic Impact Payments (Stimulus Payments)
Free online classes	https://www.khanacademy.org			Information about how to get unemployment benefits
Entertainment				
Online Museums	www.mentalfloss.com/article/75809/12-world-class-museums-you-can-visit-online			
Chicago Public Library	www.chipublib.org/get-a-library-card/			You can apply for a library card online and access ebooks, audiobooks, magazines and more all from home. If you're not in the Chicago area, check your local library to see if they offer similar services.
Full free movies on Youtube	www.youtube.com			Simply search for "free full movies" within Youtube, or by title.
Free short film documentaries	www.nytimes.com/2020/04/18/opinion/coronavirus-documentaries-streaming.html			
Employment				
Cara Chicago	https://carachicago.org/	(312) 798-3309	Chicago	Employment, job training help

Organization	Website	Phone	Location	Notes
North Lawndale Employment Network		(773) 584-4588, x4573	North Lawndale, surrounding communities	Employment, job training help for formerly incarcerated people and others
Rat Race Rebellion	www.rateracerebellion.com			This sites screens online job ads to eliminate scams and shares legit jobs daily
Howard Area Community Center	https://howardarea.org/	(773) 262-6622	Chicago	Adult education classes, operates an Employment Resource Center that assists job-seekers
Childcare				
CDC in Spanish	https://espanol.cdc.gov/enes/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Findex-sp.html			
Resources in Spanish/Immigration				
CDC in Spanish	https://espanol.cdc.gov/enes/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Findex-sp.html			
Esperanza Health Centers	www.esperanzachicago.org	(773) 584-6200		Open for Spanish-speaking medical, substance use, psychiatric, and sexual health care (including PrEP)
Heartland Alliance	https://www.heartlandalliance.org			
City of Chicago	chicago.gov			Translation to Spanish option in upper right corner
Emergency services		(312) 655-7700	Cook County	Emergency line--get help now
Emergency services		(847) 782-4000	Lake County	Emergency line--get help now

Organization	Website	Phone	Location	Notes
National Immigrant Justice Center	https://immigrantjustice.org/espanol	(312) 660-1370		General immigration services, asylum, detained immigrants, human trafficking, LGBTQ immigrant, immigration court helpdesk, unaccompanied immigrant children
Mil Mujeres	https://www.milmujeres.org/espanol	(312) 219-2031		Services for victims of domestic violence, provides direct legal services in the area of immigration law for Spanish speakers.
Hispanic American Community Education and Services	https://www.haces.org/what-we-do/programs/immigrant-family-resource-program/	(847) 244-0300		Help with connecting with services such as food programs, health clinics, and more.
Northern Illinois Justice For Our Neighbors	http://nijfon.org			
National Domestic Workers Alliance	https://memberships.domesticworkers.org/recursos-sobre-el-coronavirus-covid-19/?lang=es			Coronavirus information page in spanish
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights	https://www.icirr.org			Free healthcare clinics for Immigrants and Refugees; not in spanish
general directory of resources for immigrants	https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/search?&state=IL&national=0&county=&legalArea=&legalService=&nonLegalService=&interestArea=&population=&legalNetwork=&language=&detentionFacility=&text=&zip=&interpreting=0&map=0&page=2			
Avoiding Covid Scams in Spanish	https://4.files.edl.io/204d/03/25/20/200240-0a1d2103-bf48-40fe-82a5-641f46bf8856.pdf			

Precious Blood Center



EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT
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