



# Fact Sheet

## FACILITY REENTRY PROGRAMMING

### Introduction to Offender Reentry Services

- The Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) offers a range of transitional programming to offenders during confinement and after release. These resources and services are organized through the DOC Community Reentry Unit, in collaboration with facility services, field services, various state and county agencies, faith-based groups, community organizations and private citizens. The combined effort meets the complex needs of offenders as they transition from prison to community.
- Resources have been developed through identifying “best practice” models in preparing offenders to return to their communities

### Staffing

- All correctional facilities have transitions coordinators responsible for the delivery of reentry programming and supervision of resource centers. To provide accurate and efficient child support information, the DOC has established a child support staff position. This staff’s primary focus is newly committed offenders but is available to provide information and assistance to staff and offenders at all DOC facilities and at all stages of confinement. This position is supported by the DOC Community Reentry Unit in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

### Resource Centers and Resource Fairs

- Each DOC facility maintains a transition center that is host to many different resources. These include community resources, job search assistance, housing information, higher education searches, veterans’ resources, etc. Access to these centers is available to all offenders.
- Transition resource fairs are held annually at most facilities. Community resource organizations and agencies from around the state are invited to participate as exhibitors. Exhibitors typically are government agencies, trade unions, faith-based groups, community nonprofits, and volunteer groups. They represent resources in a variety of offender need areas such as housing, employment, family support, personal finance, and mental health. Staff and offenders are invited to attend and meet with exhibitors throughout the day.

### Prerelease Classes

- A comprehensive curriculum of pre-release classes and activities are offered at all DOC facilities. The curriculum covers housing, employment, personal identification documents, health, transportation, family issues, living under supervision, and personal financial management. A prerelease handbook covering these topics is provided to every participating offender. This handbook is also available at <http://www.doc.state.mn.us/pages/files/large-files/Publications/PreReleaseHandbook.pdf>.

### EMPLOY Program

- MINNCOR Industries (correctional industries), created EMPLOY in 2006, a voluntary employment service program. Eligible participants should have either worked in a MINNCOR shop for at least six months, completed career-tech certificate, or have worked on a ICWC/STS crew within their final five years of incarceration. EMPLOY provides employment readiness, job search techniques, and resume enhancement to offenders prior to release. A major focus of EMPLOY is to provide relevant, solid job leads for releasing offenders. In an effort to break through employment barriers, EMPLOY actively seeks relationships with employers willing to hire individuals with criminal records.
- A job retention specialist meets with EMPLOY participants within the first week of release to deliver the participant’s personal portfolio, review the contents, and provide contacts to community resources. Subsequent meetings are scheduled at one month, six months and a final meeting at one year.

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## Families and Friends

- To encourage active, positive support of confined offenders by family and friends, the DOC created a “how to” book, *Staying Connected and Staying Strong*. Copies are mailed to families and are available in the visiting rooms of all adult DOC facilities.

## Personal ID Documents

- Possession of personal ID documents is critical to every newly-released offender. Many offenders do not have these documents when they are admitted to the DOC.
- To assure that as many offenders as possible have IDs at release, DOC staff work with newly-admitted offenders to apply for two critical ID documents – a birth certificate and social security card. Once these documents are obtained, they are retained in the offender’s file until the day of release.
- Initial attempts to obtain a social security card or birth certificate may not be successful. As part of individual release planning and prerelease classes, efforts to obtain these documents are renewed.
- The DOC and the Department of Public Safety (DPS) have partnered to provide photo ID equipment at most DOC facilities, allowing offenders to secure state photo ID cards or driver license renewals close to their release date. Staff from various local DPS driver services offices come to the facilities as needed and provide this service. The ID card or driver’s license is then mailed to the facility for retention until the offender’s release.

## Health Services Discharge Planning

- The DOC Health Services Unit provides specialty release and reintegration services related to medical, mental health, chemical dependency, and sex offender needs.
- Medical staff identify soon-to-be-released offenders with unique medical care needs and refer them to the medical release planner for continuing medical care. Behavioral health staff offer release planning services to severely mentally ill offenders and as a component of the chemical dependency and sex offender treatment programs. Continued clinical services form the foundation for a comprehensive behavioral health reintegration plan. Also included in the plan are placement in specialized housing, work or education involvement, and family/friends participation in the offender’s community reintegration. All planning is in conjunction with the requirements of correctional supervision.

## Health Care Coverage

- Many offenders do not have health care coverage in the community for themselves or their families. Offenders are highly encouraged to apply for health coverage prior to release. Staff assist them in completing the appropriate forms and submitting them to the appropriate entities.

## Introduction to Juvenile Reentry Services

- The DOC provides services for juvenile males and females. Currently, state-committed juvenile females are housed at a contract facility and juvenile males are housed at the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Red Wing. The DOC is vested in juvenile reentry to enhance positive and pro-social transition into adulthood.
- The Red Wing facility provides treatment, education, and transition services for serious and chronic male juvenile youth. Through early assessment, transition risks and needs are identified during the resident’s first 30 days.
- Reentry needs are then addressed with the advancement and progression of the resident’s individualized treatment plan. Residents are assessed through standardized tools such as the Youth Level of Service Inventory and given various evaluations to measure their knowledge of independent life skills. Components of prerelease include support team staffings, furloughs, life skills, employment, and interventions designed to address substance use and mental health issues including exposure to traumatic events. The MCF-Red Wing also provides residents experiencing mental health issues access to a release planner who specializes in accessing supports in the community. Youth who have successfully completed programming will be supervised on a 90-day extended furlough.
- Juvenile Reentry Services staff utilize and establish collaborations with various agencies and community stakeholders to remove barriers to employment, education, health and mental health care.

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