

The Path Home Series: Workbook 4

# HOW TO SUCCEED ON COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

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Alameda County



A PUBLICATION OF THE  
**ALAMEDA COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT**



Version 1.1  
Published August 2021

# HOW TO SUCCEED ON COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

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## Alameda County

### *The Path Home Series: Workbook 4*

*How to Succeed on Community Supervision* is Workbook 4 in a four-part series of pre-release workbooks developed by the Alameda County Probation Department as a project of the Pathways Home initiative. The content in this workbook is available for other probation departments and reentry programs to adapt. For permission, please contact the Alameda County Probation Department's Reentry and Community Outreach Unit.

**About the Pathways Home Initiative:** The Pathways Home initiative is a first-of-its-kind partnership between the Alameda County Probation Department and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), which aims to improve the reentry process for clients returning to Alameda County from prison and jail. The initiative was partially funded by a Second Chance Act grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. For more information and to download copies of [Welcome Home: Alameda County Reentry Resource Directory](#), visit the department's website at [www.probation.acgov.org](http://www.probation.acgov.org).

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A large team of ACPD and CDCR staff contributed to the development of the four pre-release workbooks for the Pathways Home initiative.

## **From ACPD:**

- Laura Agnich Chavez, Chief of Research and Evaluation
- Shauna Conner, Director of Reentry and Community Outreach
- Audrey Clubb, Probation Specialist, Research and Evaluation
- Justin Eaglin, Unit Supervisor, PRCS, Adult Field Services
- Alexandria Garcia, Probation Specialist, Research and Evaluation
- Robin Harrington, Consultant
- Christy Henzi, Division Director, Adult Field Services
- Tamiko Martin, Unit Supervisor, PRCS, Adult Field Services
- Joey Mason, Program Worker
- Kelly Mitchell, Deputy Chief Probation Office, Adult Field Services
- Barbara Owen, Consultant
- Charles Pattillo, Consultant
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- Rebecca Wegley, Probation Specialist, Policy and Standards Compliance
- Tyler Zatcoff, Reentry Services Coordinator

## **From CDCR:**

- Brantley Choate, Director, Division of Rehabilitative Programs
- Ronald Davis, Associate Director, Reception Centers, Division of Adult Institutions
- Alicia Legarda, Student Support Services Administrator, Office of Correctional Education
- Patrick O'Neill, Assistant Administrator, Office of Correctional Education
- Rachelle Pennington, Parole Agent 11(A), Oakland 1 Parole Unit
- Shannon Swain, Superintendent, Office of Correctional Education, CDCR

## **We would also like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their contributions to this project:**

- The individuals on parole and probation who provided feedback on the content in the workbooks.
- Our project evaluators from the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley: Dr. Amy Lerman, Associate Dean, Professor of Public Policy and Political Science, and Co-Director of The People Lab; and Dr. Meredith Sadin, Adjunct Assistant Professor and Faculty Affiliate at The People Lab.
- The Minnesota Department of Corrections for permission to adapt content from their Pre-Release Handbook.
- The Prison Phoenix Trust for use of their yoga instructional guides.
- Corrections to College California and the Rising Scholars Network for permission to reproduce their Factsheet for Individuals on Parole in California
- The Department of Nutrition, Harvard University School of Public Health for permission to reproduce their Healthy Eating Plate graphic.
- The U.S. Department of Labor for permission to reproduce the Discover Apprenticeship factsheet.\*
- The National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2020 for use of an adapted version of their Condom Do's and Don'ts graphic.\*

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\*ACPD's use of these graphics and content does not constitute endorsement by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Labor, or the United States Government.

# CONTENTS

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Glossary	6
Introduction	8
PART 1: Understanding community supervision	12
PART 2: Succeeding on probation	26
PART 3: Protecting yourself	38
PART 4: Planning for the first days and weeks after your release	44
PART 5: Release plan worksheets	50

# GLOSSARY

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## **Barrier removal services**

Services that help clients with things like getting an ID, accessing transportation, or paying a phone bill, which are required to achieve goals like getting a job or renting an apartment.

## **Career and technical education (CTE)**

Schools, institutions, and educational programs that specialize in the skilled trades, applied sciences, modern technologies, and career preparation. Many states have regional CTE centers or networks that operate as part of the public school system. Many prisons and jails also have CTE programs.

## **Case plan**

A plan developed by a client and their probation officer or parole agent that outlines and tracks the client's goals in areas like employment, housing, education, substance use, and relationships.

## **COMPAS**

A risk and needs assessment instrument developed by Tyler Technologies that many probation departments in California use.

## **Conditions of Release**

Requirements set by the courts that must be followed during a person's time on probation or their probation may be revoked. This might include avoiding a victim or a specific place. This is also referred to as probation conditions or terms and conditions.

## **Parole**

The release of a person from state prison to community supervision prior to the completion of their sentence. A person on parole is supervised by a parole agent employed by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

## **Probation officer**

A sworn officer working for a probation department whose job it is to supervise the conduct of individuals on probation. Probation officers also connect clients to services and programs in the community and help them achieve their goals. They are also referred to as deputy probation officers or DPOs.

### **Post-release community supervision (PRCS)**

The release of a person convicted of a non-violent, non-serious offense from state prison to community supervision under a county probation department following the completion of their sentence.

### **Probation**

A period of supervision in the community provided by a county probation department for a person convicted of a crime. Probation can be ordered by the court without incarceration or it may follow a period of incarceration in jail or prison.

### **Recidivism**

When a person who has previously been convicted of a crime commits a new crime and is arrested and convicted again.

### **Risk and needs assessment instrument**

A questionnaire that measures a person's: (1) risk of committing a new crime, and (2) specific needs that, if addressed, will reduce the likelihood they will engage in future criminal activity. Responses are used to determine supervision levels and to make service referrals based on the individual's unique needs.

### **Sanction**

A penalty that is imposed when a person does something they weren't supposed to do or fails to do something they were supposed to do as outlined in their Conditions of Release. The type of sanction varies depending on the nature of a person's misdeed.

### **Social media**

Websites and phone applications that enable users to share content and connect with a broad network.

# INTRODUCTION

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Soon you will be released and placed on a period of community supervision in Alameda County. During this time, you will be supervised by a probation officer at the Alameda County Probation Department who will be your main point of contact during your time on probation.

If you finish your probation term without violating your Conditions of Release or committing a new crime, your probation will be successfully completed.

This workbook has been created by the Alameda County Probation Department to help you understand and prepare for the experience of being on probation so you can successfully complete your obligations and begin your life anew.

***Our job is to help you successfully transition back into the community.***

We look forward to working together with you to make a plan and identify supportive resources as you begin your reentry journey.



**Altamont Pass, Alameda County**

## THE GOALS OF THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook will help you understand how the probation process works and what you need to do to successfully complete your period of probation. After completing this workbook you will:

- ✓ Understand the two types of community supervision: parole and probation.
- ✓ Understand the role of a probation officer and learn how to work effectively with your probation officer to access resources, make a case plan, and rebuild your life.
- ✓ Understand what will happen if you violate your Conditions of Release.
- ✓ Learn about and prepare for activities that may put you at risk, such as social media use.
- ✓ Develop strategies for guarding your personal safety that will not lead to probation violations.
- ✓ Begin to develop a plan for reentry so you will be prepared for the days and weeks after you are released.





## GUIDING BELIEFS

Before we begin, we want to share a few beliefs that guide this workbook:

- ▶ We believe that everyone has the ability to change. People are more than their past mistakes.
- ▶ We believe that everyone needs help during the reentry process.
- ▶ We acknowledge that not everyone has access to the same resources and support.
- ▶ We believe that early planning improves your chances for a successful reentry.
- ▶ We believe that the role of the Alameda County Probation Department is to help you reintegrate into the community and rebuild your life without judgement about past deeds.

## THE GOALS OF THIS WORKBOOK

The exercises in this workbook have been developed to help you to think through and plan for your release. They are also a good way for you and your probation officer to get to know each other and develop strategies for your transition out of prison or jail.

You can work on this workbook at your own pace. If you get stuck or find an exercise difficult or unhelpful, take a break. You can come back to it later and try again.



Lake Merritt, Oakland

# PART 1:

## Understanding Community Supervision

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As you get ready to reenter the community, it is important to understand your legal situation and know what is expected of you.

When you are released from prison or jail, you will begin a period of supervision in the community. The two types of community supervision are parole and probation.



### PAROLE

Parole allows a person to serve the final years of their prison sentence in the community while supervised by a parole agent. Each state's parole board decides whether someone will be released from prison and placed on parole. The parole board can also specify restrictions on a person's activities while they are on parole.

## PROBATION

There are different kinds of probation. Probation is ordered by the court as a substitute to incarceration (formal probation or mandatory supervision) or probation can be ordered as an alternative to parole for people getting released from state prison (post-release community supervision).

- ▶ **Formal probation**

Formal probation is a court decision that allows a person convicted of a crime to remain in the community instead of serving a sentence in custody. While on formal probation, the individual is under the supervision of a probation officer.

- ▶ **Mandatory supervision**

Under mandatory supervision, a judge orders a portion of the sentence to be served in the county jail and the remaining portion in the community, under the supervision of the probation department.

- ▶ **Post-release community supervision (PRCS)**

PRCS clients are individuals supervised by the probation department upon release from prison where they were serving a sentence for a non-serious, non-violent, non-sex offense. The maximum term of PRCS is three years, but clients who don't have a violation in the first twelve months must be discharged.

### Probation length and Conditions of Release

At sentencing, the judge chooses the length of time you must serve on probation. The judge also orders you to follow certain Conditions of Release. These Conditions of Release are laid out in your court documents and are available from your probation officer. They are sometimes also referred to as probation conditions or terms and conditions.

Conditions of Release usually include reporting to a probation officer, not having any contact with victims, and not possessing firearms. They may also include participating in educational or employment programs, not using alcohol or drugs, abiding by a curfew, and not leaving the county.

The list of conditions that you have to follow may feel daunting at first, but your probation officer is there to help you stay on track.

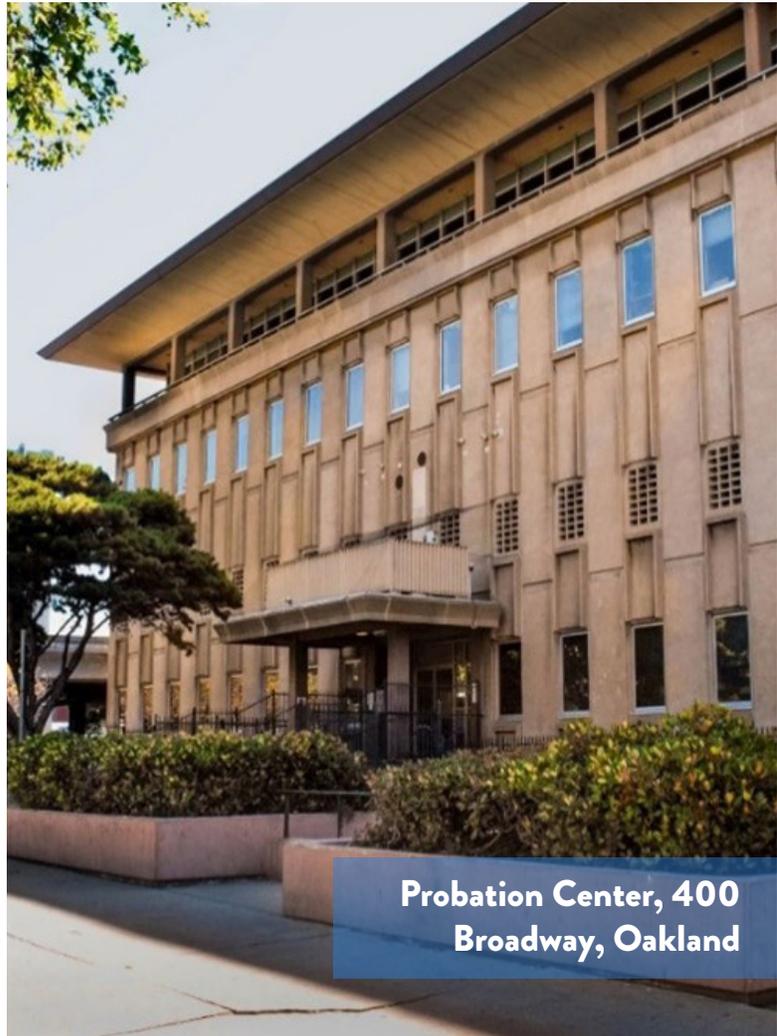
## YOUR PROBATION OFFICER

You will be assigned a probation officer who will be your main point of contact during your time on probation.

If you are on PRCs, you will be given reporting instructions prior to your release that tell you the name of your probation officer and where you're supposed to report within two business days of being released. You may also participate in a pre-release video conference with your probation officer.

If you are on formal probation, you will be assigned to a probation officer as soon as you are sentenced. Supervision starts the day you are sentenced in court, at which point all Conditions of Release go into effect.

If you are on mandatory supervision, you will likely be assigned to a probation officer prior to your release from county jail.



**Probation Center, 400  
Broadway, Oakland**

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### **Why I became a probation officer**

*I was always curious about issues of crime and justice and believe you can better influence a system that you both experience and understand. I appreciate the balanced role I can play in bringing justice and fairness to a complex system through supporting my clients and protecting victims to strengthen our communities.*

– Deputy Probation Officer E. Lett

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## What does a probation officer do?

A probation officer wears several hats. At different times, they can take the role of social worker, advocate, or public safety officer. Their main responsibility is to help you successfully complete probation and move on with your life in a positive direction.

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### What I like most about being a probation officer

*What I like most about being a probation officer is that I have the opportunity to directly impact people's lives. With my training, I can help make a difference in my clients' lives, whether that is helping them find housing or helping them find a job. I enjoy the daily challenges that the job brings me, and I enjoy seeing my clients succeed.*

– Deputy Probation Officer S. Wanser

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A probation officer's main roles and responsibilities include the following:

- ▶ **They enforce your Conditions of Release and help you to understand and follow the directives of the court.**

It is the responsibility of your probation officer to ensure that you are complying with your Conditions of Release as ordered by the court.

- ▶ **They help you make a case plan and stay on track to meet your goals.**

Your probation officer will work with you to identify personal goals in various areas of your life, such as housing, employment, life skills, and drug and alcohol treatment. They will then help you create a case plan to meet those goals and regularly check in with you about your progress.



▶ **They refer you to programs and services that help you meet your case plan goals.**

Your probation officer can help you enroll in job training and education programs, access food assistance, find housing or work, or pay for living expenses. Probation officers can also refer you to drug treatment and counseling. Most of these programs and services are at no cost to you.

▶ **They provide you with support during the reentry process.**

Your probation officer will be your guide through the reentry process. They will meet with you regularly to ensure that you have what you need and are staying on course with your goals. They are there to help if you face challenges.

Many probation officers choose this field because they have family members who were incarcerated and because they want to help people overcome difficult periods of their lives.



**Why I became a probation officer**

*I became a probation officer because my father was on probation and I saw how he struggled with reentry. I wanted to be someone who helped people with the struggles that come with re-entering society. I don't believe in bad people; I think people sometimes make unhealthy decisions. My job is to help people make healthier decisions for themselves and their families. I like that my job gives me an opportunity every day to make a difference, to help people. No two days are the same, and every day is a good day to make a difference.*

– Deputy Probation Officer A. Gomez



## **VISITS WITH YOUR PROBATION OFFICER**

When you are first released, your probation officer is there to help you with immediate practical matters. They will help you find housing, obtain clothing, get a California ID, and enroll in Medi-Cal. They can also help with work or housing-related expenses.

For security purposes, it is important to bring as little as possible with you to your office visits. Please do not bring non-service animals or children to your office appointments.

***If you cannot make your appointment, please contact your probation officer right away.***



In your initial meeting, you and your probation officer will establish your reporting requirements. At this time, your probation officer can refer you to services such as housing and treatment.

If you have the chance to talk to your probation officer in a video conferencing session before your release, tell them about any immediate needs you will have when you are released. They may be able to arrange services for you so they are ready as soon as you get out of prison or jail.

You can use the worksheet at the end of this workbook to help you identify needs you will have.

During subsequent visits with your probation officer, you can expect to review your goals and discuss your progress as well as any challenges you are experiencing. These visits may also be focused on learning and developing new skills to avoid risky situations.

Your probation officer can help with your mental health issues or substance use treatment needs by referring you to a mental health clinician or treatment program.

The next time you meet with your probation officer, find out their name and contact information. Write it down on the next page. Also ask them about your Conditions of Release.

**My probation officer's name is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My Conditions of Release are:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Make a list of questions that come up for you. You can add to it until you get to meet with your probation officer.

**Questions for my probation officer:**

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## HOME VISITS AND SEARCHES

While you are being supervised, your probation officer may visit your home and conduct a search of your residence to check for compliance with your Conditions of Release.

If your probation officer finds items like firearms or drug paraphernalia that should not be in your home, they will be confiscated and you may receive a probation violation.

***Possession of firearms is a violation of your Conditions of Release and may result in revocation of your probation.***

It is very important that you keep your contact information up to date with your probation officer. If you move or are staying in a different place, let your probation officer know immediately.



### Will my P.O. share information about my case with others?

- Adult probation cases are confidential unless you give your probation officer permission to speak with specific persons or entities or if such permission is a requirement of your Conditions of Release.
- Victims have the right to be notified of a defendant's case status, location, and supervision requirements. Under Marsy's Law, victims have the right to be notified regarding changes in a defendant's case and may be present at relevant hearings.
- In domestic violence cases, the victim may contact the probation officer to discuss concerns regarding violations of a criminal protective order or a no-contact order.
- Other law enforcement and criminal justice agencies may access your case information.

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

If you need additional support and guidance, you can reach out to a program worker. Program workers are formerly incarcerated individuals employed as permanent staff at the Alameda County Probation Department. They have been through the reentry process and can help you navigate the system and give you advice.

You can also ask for help from staff at the Center of Reentry Excellence (CORE), located on the second floor of the Oakland probation offices (400 Broadway).

## RISK AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Risk and needs assessment tools are questionnaires that:

- ① measure your risk of recidivating
- ② identify your criminogenic needs

Recidivism is when a person who has served time commits a new crime and is arrested and convicted again. Your risk of recidivating is how vulnerable you are to committing a new crime in the near future.

Your criminogenic needs are needs that, if met, would reduce your likelihood of committing a new crime. Criminogenic needs include things like housing, employment, and substance use treatment. The idea is that once these needs are addressed, your risk of getting in trouble with the law again will be lowered.

Risk and needs assessment tools were developed to make sure that each person is treated the same based on their risk level and needs. The goal is to reduce bias that may result from personal beliefs or judgements of probation staff.

However, the way risk and needs assessment tools calculate risk is based on large sets of criminal justice data. This data reflects the racial disparities in policing and sentencing that have always characterized the criminal justice system in the United States. That is why risk assessment instruments have been criticized by some advocates for perpetuating bias rather than removing it.

Until there is a better system, risk and needs assessment tools are the best methods we have to standardize supervision decisions. For now, they are the only alternative to leaving decisions about your supervision to the discretion of individual probation officers.

## How are the results of a risk and needs assessment used?

Your assessment's risk scores are used by the Alameda County Probation Department to determine how your probation officer should supervise you. Usually, if you have a higher risk score, you meet with your probation officer more often.

By identifying your areas of need, the assessment helps your probation officer connect you to the right programs. If one of your needs is dealing with family issues, your probation officer can refer you to a family therapist, or a family reconciliation program. There are a lot of programs your probation officer can refer you to.

*The better your probation officer understands you and your unique needs, the more likely that you will end up in programs and services that are right for you.*

## When will I complete the risk and needs assessment?

You might complete a risk and needs assessment on a video conference with an intake probation officer while you are still incarcerated. When you report to your assigned probation officer after your release, they will share the results of the assessment with you.

If you don't meet with a probation officer through video conference before you are released, you will complete the risk and needs assessment during your first office visit.

After the initial assessment, risk and needs assessments may be administered periodically to keep up with any changes in your needs and to measure the effectiveness of the services and resources you have received.

## YOUR CASE PLAN

A case plan is a plan that you and your probation officer create to help you achieve your goals. Unlike your Conditions of Release, which are ordered by the court, your case plan is flexible and developed based on your input.

Your case plan goals will be partly based on the results of your risk and needs assessment. When you meet with your probation officer, you will work together to decide which needs you want to tackle first.



## Goals and tasks

Once you've decided which needs you want to address first, your probation officer will guide you in setting short-term and long-term goals. For each of your goals, you and your probation officer will work together to create tasks.

Tasks are things you do to accomplish your goal. For example, if your goal is to improve your health, a task might be to sign up for an exercise class.

To help you accomplish the tasks you set for yourself, your probation officer will refer you to programs and services in the community. If one of your goals is to get a job, they may refer you to a reentry employment program that can help you accomplish tasks like acquiring job skills, writing a resume, and applying for jobs.

If your goal is to reconnect with your kids, your probation officer can refer you to family reconciliation services that can help with tasks like making financial arrangements for child support and enrolling in family counseling.

If you need more support, your probation officer can connect you to people who have gone through the reentry process and who can help you navigate the process.

“  
*Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try.*  
- John F. Kennedy  
”



*The Alameda County Probation Department’s program workers are available to assist you with your transition back to the community. These are permanent probation staff members who have served time in prison.*

## SERVICES AND RESOURCES IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

Your probation officer can link you to a variety of services, programs, and resources to help you accomplish tasks and achieve your goals.

The Alameda County Probation Department contracts with community organizations throughout Alameda County to offer a variety of free services and resources to clients on probation, including:

- ▶ Employment and job readiness programs
- ▶ Career and technical education (CTE) programs
- ▶ Drug and alcohol treatment services
- ▶ Education (High school equivalency exam, high school diploma, college enrollment)
- ▶ Mental health treatment and counseling services
- ▶ Cognitive behavioral treatment (CBT)
- ▶ Public benefit enrollment services
- ▶ Family reunification services
- ▶ Parenting classes
- ▶ Legal advice and counseling
- ▶ Domestic violence courses
- ▶ Barrier removal services (IDs and work documents)
- ▶ Housing assistance
- ▶ Food assistance



Many of the services and resources that are available to you are included in [Welcome Home: Alameda County Reentry Resource Directory](#). If you have not received one, request a copy from your probation officer.

## COMMUNITY SUPERVISION AND THE LAW

In 2011, California passed Assembly Bill (AB) 109, the Public Safety Realignment Act. This law made it possible for people who haven't committed a serious, violent, or sexual crime to be released from California prisons and placed on probation rather than on parole.

This supervision assignment is called post-release community supervision (PRCS). Clients on PCRS are supervised by probation officers instead of parole agents. If they do not violate their Conditions of Release, they typically serve one year on probation instead of three years on parole.

AB109 also applies to individuals sentenced for a non-violent, non-serious, non-sexual felony under penal code 1170(h) who are serving their time in county jail, as well as parole violators adjudicated in local courts.





## PART 2:

# Succeeding on probation

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Succeeding on probation is not hard if you have the right knowledge and support.

The most important thing you can do to succeed on probation is to increase your knowledge — about the probation process, your risks and needs, your Conditions of Release, and resources available to you. Knowledge is power.

The second most important thing is to start planning your reentry process early. If you start thinking about it now, you can anticipate some of the challenges that you will face and find ways to address them.



## UNDERSTAND YOUR CONDITIONS OF RELEASE

To avoid returning to prison or jail, you have to make sure you understand your Conditions of Release. Conditions of Release are requirements set by the court that you must follow during your time on probation.

Go through your Conditions of Release with your probation officer. If there are conditions that you feel might be difficult for you to follow, discuss them with your probation officer. Together you can come up with strategies to help you meet your obligations.

***Make sure that you know your Conditions of Release.***

### Standard Conditions of Release that apply to all individuals on probation

- ▶ No illegal substance use
- ▶ No weapon possession
- ▶ No contact with your victim (if your crime had a victim)

### Conditions of Release that are dependent on a person's specific case

- ▶ Daily reporting to your probation officer
- ▶ Participation in special programming
- ▶ Limitations on activities you can do and places you can go
- ▶ Limitations on contact with specific individuals or groups of individuals
- ▶ Registration as a sex offender

## COMMON PROBATION VIOLATIONS

Know what the common probation violations are so you can avoid them.

The most common probation violations are:

- ▶ **Failure to report within 2 business days of release from custody**

When you are released from prison or jail, you must report to your probation officer within two business days, not including the day you were released. Business days are Monday through Friday. If you are released on a Monday, you have until Wednesday afternoon to report. If you are released on a Saturday, you have until Tuesday afternoon to report.

- ▶ **Failure to participate in scheduled appointments and rehabilitative services**

In order to be successful on probation, you must attend appointments with your probation officer and service providers.

Being on time for your appointments and keeping track of them requires time management skills. It helps to use a calendar, to-do lists, and reminders.

The Alameda County Probation Department has a custom mobile application called Vergil that helps you with tracking your tasks and appointments. Ask your probation officer for more information.

- ▶ **Failure to register as a sex offender**

Many individuals convicted of a sex offense will be required to register for a period of time. Some offenses require lifetime registration. A person who meets the sex offender registration criteria must register as a sex offender in the area where they reside within 5 business days of their release from prison or jail.

Once you are released, your probation officer will help you get registered. After you complete your probation, it is your responsibility to keep your registration current if you move to another state.

- ▶ **Possession of firearms**

The law forbids any person convicted of a felony from carrying a firearm or having a firearm anywhere in their possession – whether in the car, at home, or at a place of work.

- ▶ **New arrests**

If you are arrested for a new offense while on probation, you may receive a probation violation and be held without bond.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU VIOLATE THE TERMS OF YOUR PROBATION?

Probation officers use a system of sanctions and rewards to give their clients a chance to correct their behavior. This gives probation officers some discretion in how they respond to issues that arise.

Rewards are intended to encourage positive, rule-following behavior like showing up for appointments on time and completing programs successfully. A reward could be a gift card or some other incentive to encourage positive behavior.

Sanctions are like penalties. They can range from a warning to a full revocation (withdrawal) of your probation, meaning a judge would decide if you should go back to jail or prison. Sanctions may include putting you on a GPS monitor (ankle bracelet), enrolling you in treatment programs, and requiring you to complete homework.

### There are two types of sanctions that involve jail or prison time: flash incarceration and full revocation.

#### ▶ **Flash incarceration**

Flash incarceration is a short period of detention in county jail ordered by your probation officer (instead of a judge). The length of this type of detention can range from 1 to 10 days. Following a flash incarceration, you return to the community under the supervision of your probation officer. You do not go to a new hearing with a judge.

#### ▶ **Full revocation**

If your probation is fully revoked, you will have to go back to court to have your case reviewed by a judge. The judge could order you to serve the remainder of your probation in jail. PRCS clients have a maximum of 180 days in custody on a revocation. Revocations for individuals on felony probation can lead to various times in custody, which may be spent in state prison.

## AVOIDING ARREST FOR A NEW CRIME

Your risk of being arrested for a new crime is highest in the weeks after you are released. So, the initial period after release is the riskiest time for you.

The best way to avoid getting arrested again is to avoid people who are involved in criminal activities, people who use drugs, areas of gang activity, and situations where you know there may be a high risk of crime and heavy policing.

***If being in certain places at certain times makes you more likely to be arrested, make sure not to put yourself in that position.***

If you have to separate yourself from people who you were close to for a time in order to avoid putting yourself at risk, you can explain to them that you need time to get back on your feet.

During this sensitive time, re-establishing relationships with people who want you to succeed is very important. Doing activities with friends and family who are a positive influence can help you avoid dangerous situations and stay on track with your goals.

### What to do if you are arrested

If you are arrested, cooperate with law enforcement fully. It is best not to answer any questions until you speak to a lawyer. You can also reach out to your probation officer to explain your circumstances and ask for advice.

***If you come into contact with law enforcement – even if you are the victim of a crime – always stay calm and comply with instructions.***

“

*Life is made up of a series of rooms and who I get stuck in those rooms with determines how my life will turn out. The meaning for me is this: if I stay stuck in that old behavior and continue to do the same things I was doing – criminal activity, hurting people, and such – I will be stuck forever in a room with people, things, places, that will not produce anything good, ever. So, I choose to be in rooms with the people who are of a positive nature, who don't do drugs, who don't do criminal activity, who don't make excuses for wrongful behavior, and who don't hurt people – themselves and others. People who stand up against violence and against making excuses.*

- Richard Poma

Served 34 years; paroled in January 2014.

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## FIREARM OFFENSES AND PERSONAL SAFETY

Keep in mind that while you are on probation your probation officer can search your home without a warrant at any time.

If you are found to be in possession of a firearm, you will be charged with a new crime, your probation will be revoked, and you may have to serve the remainder of your probation in jail or prison with additional time added for the new charge.

***Avoid firearms to stay out of jail.***

If you are worried about your personal safety, talk to your probation officer. Dispute resolution services or relocation to another county may be options for you.

### Community-based dispute resolution

There are organizations in your community that create a safe space for community members to resolve conflict in a peaceful manner. The focus is healing and mutual understanding through dialogue. The staff at these organizations are community members who are trained in working out disputes and resolving potentially violent conflicts.

If you have a dispute with someone or feel afraid for your safety, your probation officer can connect you to such organizations.

“  
*We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.*  
- Dr Martin Luther King Jr

***If you have immediate and serious fear for your safety or are the victim of a crime, call 911 for help.***

### Out-of-county or out-of-state transfer

If dispute resolution is not an option, your probation officer can arrange for you to be transferred out of the county, if needed. In some cases, you can transfer your supervision to another state. A travel permit has to be approved through the Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision.



## **YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR PROBATION OFFICER**

Your probation officer will help you get the services and support you need to have the best possible outcomes after your supervision ends. To do that, they need to understand as much as possible about you – your family situation, your strengths, and things that are hard for you. By knowing you well, they can help you make a good plan to get the support you need during your reentry process.

You can get the most out of your relationship with your probation officer by being honest and upfront.

The probation officer's role is first to make sure that you stay in compliance with your Conditions of Release and second to help you achieve your goals.

Not all probation officers are alike, and not all relationships between probation officers and clients are the same. When the probation officer-client relationship is working well, it's a collaboration and partnership. When it's not working well, it can be difficult.

It will serve you well to try to make the most out of your relationship with your probation officer. Keep in mind that this person is trying to help you.

As with any role, there is variation in the approaches of people who serve as probation officers. Your experience will depend on the relationship you build with yours. If you are very unhappy with your relationship with your probation officer, you can ask to speak to your probation officer's supervisor.

The Alameda County Probation Department welcomes valid complaints about departmental employees. When filing a complaint, please be prepared to provide as much detail as possible (e.g. names, dates, times, badge numbers, locations) to assist the department in thoroughly investigating the matter.

In addition to your probation officer, other probation department staff are available to help you. Clerks, supervisors, and program workers are all available to offer support. Program workers have gone through the reentry process and can offer helpful advice.



**You can submit a complaint to the Alameda County Probation Department in the following ways:**

**In person:**

At any Probation Department location within the Alameda County.

**By phone:**

Through the Internal Affairs Office at (510) 667-3121.

**By mail:**

Send a letter describing your complaint to the following address:

Alameda County Probation  
Department Internal Affairs Unit  
2300 Fairmont Drive, Las Vistas I  
San Leandro, CA. 94578



Tear along dashed line



Lake Elizabeth, Fremont



Tear along dashed line

View of Livermore and Pleasanton



# PART 3:

## Protecting Yourself

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Like everyone else, when you are released, you will be vulnerable to scams, financial fraud, and the pitfalls of social media.

You can protect yourself by being a cautious buyer, protecting your identity, and moderating your use of social media.

### BEING A CAUTIOUS BUYER AND AVOIDING SCAMS

Unfortunately, there are a lot of scammers out there. Someone might call you posing as an insurance agent or as your bank representative. They advertise a promotional offer and obtain your personal information. They bill you for services they never deliver.

Especially on the Internet, it can be hard to figure out which sellers are legitimate and which ones are not.

To protect yourself from scammers, be a cautious buyer:

- ▶ Shop around and get advice before making a major purchase. Take your time and do your research.
- ▶ Don't buy from an unfamiliar company. Don't donate to an unfamiliar charity.
- ▶ If you're shopping for a car or buying something used from an individual seller, make sure to check their identification and get their legal name, telephone number, street address, mailing address, and business license (if applicable) before you do a deal with them.
- ▶ Read all contracts and purchasing agreements carefully before signing, making sure that you understand cancelation and refund terms.



## PROTECTING YOUR IDENTITY

Identity theft is also a common problem. That is when someone obtains your personal information – your name, address, bank account or credit card number, password, and social security number – and then either opens credit cards in your name or uses the information to make purchases that you are responsible for.

To avoid identity theft:

- ▶ Never give out personal information to someone you don't know. Don't give out your bank account information, social security number, or other personal information over the phone unless you initiated the call and can be sure of who you are speaking with.
- ▶ Destroy any bills that have your name and address and financial information on them. Monitor your bank and credit card statements.
- ▶ Change your online passwords often and don't share them with anyone.

## THE DANGERS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

If used properly, social media can be a great tool to help you build a professional network, gather information, and reconnect with friends. But social media also has many pitfalls.



- ▶ Spending too much time on social media can lead to anxiety and depression.
- ▶ Using your phone or social media at work can get you in trouble with your employer.
- ▶ Online debates can quickly escalate into public disputes.
- ▶ What you post or who you follow can damage your reputation.
- ▶ You cannot be sure of the age or identity of people you communicate with online.

### *Social media is especially dangerous for someone on probation.*

You have to be extra careful about what you post online because your social media activity can be viewed by your probation officer. If they find photos or posts that indicate you are associating with gang members, drinking, using drugs, or doing anything else that might violate your Conditions of Release, they can revoke your probation.

You can also accidentally damage your professional relationships by posting inappropriate content that gets back to your employer.

Ask yourself: would I want this to be seen by a judge in a courtroom?

### *Guard your privacy.*

Nothing on the Internet is truly private. You have to protect yourself in the digital world just as you do in the physical world.

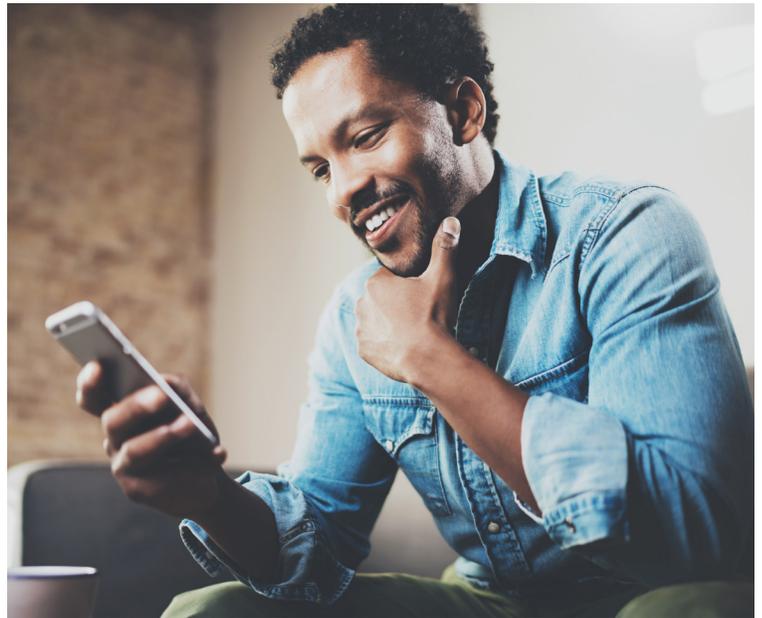
Be careful. Don't share personal information online. Think before you post.



## SOCIAL MEDIA RULES

Just like in-person spaces for discussion and sharing, social media platforms have a certain set of rules for how you should behave.

In person, you may know that it is rude to interrupt, to invade someone's personal space, or to gossip and reveal personal information. Online, many of the same rules hold true, and a lot of new rules exist, too.



These include:

- ▶ **Separate your work and personal life**

Maintain boundaries between your personal and professional life. Don't discuss your work life or coworkers on social media. Assume that your coworkers or people they know can view your account and that information you share may get back to them. Only post what you wouldn't mind your coworkers and boss seeing. Never post anything confidential about your work.

- ▶ **Don't post or tag photos without permission**

Nobody likes to have unflattering or inappropriate photographs of themselves shared publicly. As a rule, it is good to ask permission before posting or 'tagging' photos of your friends, coworkers, or family. They may not want it to be a public image.

Make sure your profile pictures, especially ones on business-focused sites such as LinkedIn, are professional. That means wearing business clothes with a pleasant expression.

If your account is public, avoid images of gang affiliation, participation in illegal activities, and anything else that may turn off a potential employer.

- ▶ **Remember that everyone has a different sense of humor**

What is considered funny in one context may be considered offensive in another. For example, what might be appropriate in a locker room might be offensive in the office. Try to avoid humor that might offend or threaten someone.

▶ **Don't misrepresent yourself or lie**

Dishonesty in your social media profiles can have personal and professional consequences. If you exaggerate even a little, such as inventing a more impressive title at a previous job, you could ruin your professional reputation.

▶ **Don't get into online arguments**

Social media is a place where people argue over politics, share jokes, and discuss a variety of sensitive topics.

When talking with someone on social media, use respectful language and avoid aggressive dialogue. Your words and actions can be saved and brought up to be used against you later. Also, don't get sucked into online arguments. Winning an online argument is not worth endangering your reputation or your job.

▶ **Avoid over-sharing**

People don't need to know everything about your life. Social media is not the place for confessions or detailed information about your every activity. That increases the chance that others may look at you negatively.

▶ **Be very careful about what you send and to whom**

Sexually explicit texting is dangerous because you can't ensure the age of the recipient and you may open yourself up to child pornography charges. You must assume that whatever you send is public and can be viewed by potential employers and your probation officer.

▶ **Don't share information when you are impaired**

If you're impaired in any way – from lack of sleep, alcohol, illness, or anger – you're more likely to break the rules of behavior on social media. Wait until you're clear headed before you share anything online.

▶ **Understand your context**

Each social media platform has its own community guidelines or rules for how you should interact with others and what you can share. Facebook groups, for example, have special rules about what you can post. Take some time to understand these rules so you don't violate them.



## PART 4:

# Planning for the first days and weeks after release

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As you get close to the date of your release, you will need to make a plan for your first days and weeks back in the community.

Take a minute and ask yourself:

- ✓ Do you have all your identification documents together?
- ✓ What's your housing plan for when you are released? Do you want to live in transitional housing?
- ✓ What's your job search plan for the first weeks after you are released?
- ✓ What are some resources you will need to be successful?
- ✓ Who can you rely on for help?
- ✓ What obstacles might affect your plan? How can you prepare for them?

“

*Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.*

*- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

”



## THE FIRST 72 HOURS AFTER YOUR RELEASE

The first 72 hours after release are critical – they are the hardest time for most people leaving prison or jail.

Studies show that what you do in the first 72 hours after you are released often determines whether you will wind up going back to jail or prison. That is why it is important to have a plan before you leave jail or prison – so you know what to expect and are prepared for any challenges that come up.



In the first week after you are released, you should focus on the following things:

- ▶ **Securing housing**

Make sure you have a plan for safe housing before you leave prison or jail.

If you do not have temporary housing with family or friends, there are a number of emergency shelters where you can stay until you meet with your probation officer to discuss housing options.

Housing costs in the Bay Area are high, but there are low-cost options available to people returning from jail and prison. The Alameda County Probation Department contracts with community organizations that offer transitional housing to our clients.

***The Alameda County Probation Department is committed to helping clients avoid homelessness.***

The county has a directory of local resources, including rental housing, emergency shelter, and transitional housing. The directory, known as 211, is available by dialing 2-1-1 from any phone or at [www.211alamedacounty.org](http://www.211alamedacounty.org).

Please also see the section on housing in [Welcome Home: Alameda County Reentry Resource Directory](#) for more information on housing options in Alameda County.

▶ **Reporting to your probation officer**

Once you are released from custody, you must report to your probation officer within 2 business days.

You should receive instructions when you are released with your probation officer's name and the address where you should report. If you do not know who your probation officer is or where their office is located, you can use the following numbers for help:



Adult Field Services Information Line: **(510) 268-7050**  
Juvenile Justice Center Information Line: **(510) 667-4488**

▶ **Asking for help from trusted friends and family**

When families and friends are engaged in helping you during your transition back to the community, it increases your chance of success. Involve them in your housing and job search and invite them to support you in the programs you enroll in.

***Everyone needs help during challenging periods, and people in your life want to help you.***

▶ **Avoiding dangerous situations**

You know what your triggers are. This is a sensitive time. Don't put yourself in a difficult situation.

Avoid people or places that may cause you to have a setback. You may have to make difficult decisions about who you interact with in order to avoid returning to behavior and choices that put you at risk. Try to avoid housing where you will be exposed to drugs or crime. Give yourself the best chance for success.

▶ **Being patient with yourself**

This is a hard time and the first week is the toughest. Be realistic in your expectations and expect to have setbacks. Most importantly, don't give up. You are not alone in your journey and we are here to help you.

## A NEW BEGINNING

After completing the worksheets in this section, you will have an idea of what help you might need when you leave prison or jail. Now you can set out on a new path.

You can build the life you want, and the Alameda County Probation Department is here to help you. Remember, you can reach out to your probation officer at any point if you need help. There are also peer mentors and program workers available to help you.

You are a valued member of the community. Your voice matters, your experiences matter, and your participation in the community will make us stronger.

Stay the course. Don't give up. Change is difficult, but it will be worth it.







**Emeryville Marina**

# PART 5:

## Release plan worksheets

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This worksheet is designed to help you think about and plan your release. It will also help you work with your probation officer to develop your case plan.

Scheduled release date:	Deputy probation officer:

### IDENTIFICATION

One of the first things you will need to do is make sure you have the right identification. Please circle yes or no if you need the following:

Social security card	Yes	No
Birth certificate	Yes	No
California ID	Yes	No
California driver's license	Yes	No

### TRANSPORTATION

Have you made arrangements to be picked up on the day of your release?  Yes  No

If yes, who is picking you up? \_\_\_\_\_

If no, who will you contact to make arrangements? Do you need transportation arranged through the probation department? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you want to go once you are released? (Family member's house, shelter, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

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## HOUSING

There are many things to consider when deciding where you are going to live:

- ✔ Will you be living around positive, supportive people who are not involved in illegal activities or drug/alcohol use?
- ✔ How do you plan to pay or contribute to rent and utilities?
- ✔ Can you look for a job and get to work from where you plan to live?
- ✔ Can you get to your support group or program from where you plan to live?

You have many different housing options in Alameda County:

- ▶ Friends/family
- ▶ Short-term hotel/motel
- ▶ Emergency shelter
- ▶ Transitional housing program
- ▶ Sober-living environment
- ▶ Residential substance abuse treatment
- ▶ Rental apartment

List your preferred housing options in the table below.

Housing option	Description	Location	Possible issues

## SERVICE NEEDS

Fill out the table below to indicate which services you might need. Add a check mark under "I need this service when I'm released" or "I might need this service later" if it's something you want support with. Then, add any notes about your specific needs in the final column.

When you meet with your probation officer, you can share this list and discuss possible options for program and service referrals.

I need help with	I need this service when I'm released	I might need this service later	My specific needs
English classes			
Education			
Financial assistance			
Drug and alcohol treatment			
Dealing with family issues			
Child support			
Fines and fees			
Adjusting to life on the outside			
Personal safety			
Housing			
Clothing			

I need help with	I need this service when I'm released	I might need this service later	My specific needs
Food/nutrition			
Support groups			
Legal assistance			
Identification documents			
Financial management			
Medical appointments/medications			
Transportation			
Finding a job			
Job skills training			
Career planning			
Dental appointments			
Elder care			
Childcare			
Other: _____			

## SUPPORT SYSTEM

How successful you are when you return to the community depends on having a good support system of people who can help you stay safe and on the right path. A support system is not just family and friends – it can include a wide variety of individuals, like a pastor, a mentor, or a former employer.

Use the table below to identify people who you can go to for support and how they can help you. Then, go back and circle the individuals who you think will be the most positive influence.

Person	Relationship to me	How they can help me

## TASKS

It can be hard to stay on top of tasks when you are released. Making lists can help you avoid getting overwhelmed with all the things you have to do. Start now!

PRE-RELEASE TO-DO LIST: Things to do before I'm released		
Priority	Description of task	Completed
High	Get my prescriptions ready	x







Coyote Hills Regional Park, Fremont





A PUBLICATION OF THE  
**ALAMEDA COUNTY**  
**PROBATION DEPARTMENT**