

# Critical Documents for Reentry

## Issue

Many poor people, particularly those experiencing homelessness, are released from county and municipal jails without identification or the means to acquire ID. Critical documents may have been missing before arrest or be lost during the criminal justice process.

## Recommendation

Every correctional agency in Washington State should ensure that individuals have a state issued identification card upon release or should provide them with an identification card or documentation that can be **easily exchanged** for a state issued identification card upon release.

## Why?

- Without photo ID, and lacking the resources needed to recover photo ID, successful reentry is almost impossible.
- Government issued identification is usually needed to acquire housing, employment, a bank account and health benefits.
- Lack of the identification needed to access basic services may contribute to recidivism as alternative means are used in an effort to meet those basic needs

## How?

Advocate for Useful Local and Statewide Policies

1. Take every opportunity to promote this recommendation at community forums and in meetings with local decision makers
2. Identify & support elected officials who are smart on crime
3. Learn about policy recommendations currently being considered
4. Contact New Connections for more information
5. Advocate, rest, advocate some more, etc.



## Please Help

There are complex social problems and structural inequities that create obstacles to successful reentry. This is neither complex nor structural. This is easy and small. Let's fix this.

Includes information from:

La Vigne, N., Davies, E., Palmer, T., & Halberstadt, R. (2008). Release planning for successful reentry. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. Retrieved from [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org)