

THE COMPLETE GUIDE

To Self Advocacy

(& Other Important Stuff to Remember)



*This research was funded by the Annie E. Casey foundation.
We thank them for their support but acknowledge that the findings
and conclusions presented in this report are those of the author(s)
alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of
the Foundation.*

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Congratulations on getting yourself this far. You probably have a lot of things you need to sort through and we want to offer this guide as a resource to support you in getting to the next chapter of your life.

This guide was developed through a series of interviews with other young people who have navigated being part of the youth justice system as well as service providers who serve them. All of the sections, advice, and tips are directly from folks who have lived through this and continue to reflect on their own experiences.

There are no rules to using this guide. Take what feels relevant and useful to you and consider passing it along to others who may find themselves in similar situations.

We wish you luck in your journey!

INDEX



PROBATION

The logistics of navigating probation and a checklist of important documents.

REIMAGINE COMMUNITY

Reimagining what you want your immediate community to look like.

SCHOOL

Navigating school through scheduling and planning.

EMPLOYMENT

Some tips on where to look for and how to obtain employment opportunities.

MOVING FORWARD

Identifying your next steps through short term goals and needs.

SELF CARE

Tips on how to prioritize your mental, physical, and spiritual health and wellness.

NOTES & RESOURCES

*“I’m an **OVER-ACHIEVER**,
so how ‘bout I start a
team of **LEADERS...**”*



PROBATION

Make sure you have important documents such as the following:

- ☐ *Identification Card*
- ☐ *Birth Certificate*
- ☐ *Social Security Card*
- ☐ *Social Security Number*
- ☐ *Court/Case Documents*
- ☐ *Work Visa*

Where do I find these documents?

- *Your local Social Security office*
- *DMV*
- *School*



PROBATION

Review your court documents and make sure you understand your terms of probation.

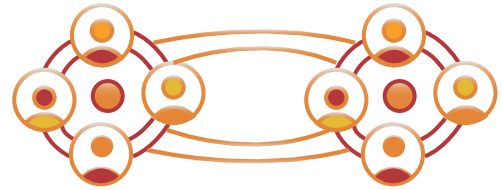
Ask your probation officer or attorney if anything is unclear.

Identify the TOP 5 THINGS you MUST DO or REMEMBER according to your terms of probation and write them here:

1. _____
(Date)
2. _____
(Date)
3. _____
(Date)
4. _____
(Date)
5. _____
(Date)



REIMAGINE COMMUNITY



Identify someone in your life who understands the ins and outs of the youth justice system that you can go to for help as challenges with your probation come up. This should be someone who is not part of the system so you can approach them with your questions without the risk of violating the terms of your probation. We call this a SYSTEM NAVIGATOR.

System Navigator: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Identify your support system (could be a teacher, a coach, a family member or a mentor) and list them here:

Identify community organizations that can offer additional support to you and list them here:

Consider creating community online through a safe support network if there isn't one locally that interests you!

REIMAGINE COMMUNITY

Living with people can be really hard and it's important to have a low stress, safe place to sleep every night. It's always good to have a Plan B, just in case you need it. List out your backup for housing. Remember to communicate this list with your probation officer, case worker, and/or attorney!

Backup Housing Plan

- Make sure to have a CONVERSATION with everyone on this list beforehand!
- Identify transportation options that are SAFE and RELIABLE!



SCHOOL



One of the difficulties of being system-involved is staying connected to your education. There are a number of ways to learn and your success will be determined by finding which way is right for you. Here are a few tips to help you find a way of learning that works best for who you are and what your goals are. This is a great opportunity to talk to your mentor to help you make the best decision for you.

— TIP #1 —

Community colleges offer a variety of educational pathways that can fit your schedule and goals. Look into the community college in your area to either complete a **GED, AA/AS degree, or transfer to a university.**

— TIP #2 —

There are always opportunities for **SCHOLARSHIPS and **FUNDING ASSISTANCE**! Talk to a counselor and ask what opportunities would be right for you!**

— TIP #3 —

If you aren't interested in general education, think about looking into **TRADE SCHOOLS or **PROGRAMS** to develop specific skills toward a job or career path that interests you (e.g., engineer, midwife, E.M.T., electrician). You can often times get connected to these programs through community colleges or a simple google search online.**

SCHOOL

What kind of learner are you? Finding out can help you advocate for your own success in school and at work.



I am a _____ Learner because:

**We did not make this chart, reference <https://helpfulprofessor.com/learning-modalities/>*

Note: You are most likely going to be a combination of these but being aware of them can be important to figuring out how you learn the best!



SCHOOL

Class Schedule

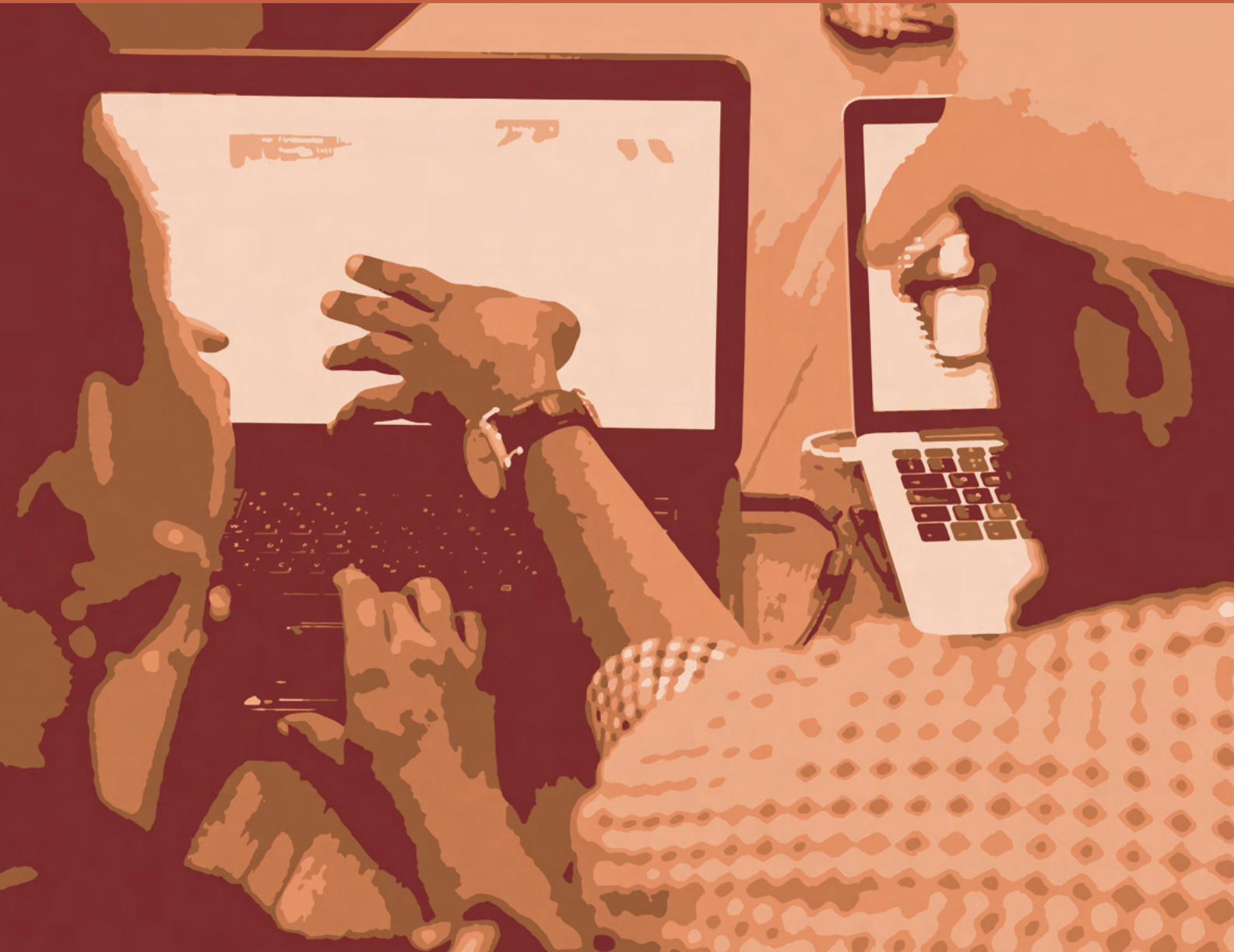
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

SCHOOL


Deadlines

Date	Task

EMPLOYMENT



EMPLOYMENT




**Ask friends where they work and to let you know when they're hiring!
Ask your friend to put in a reference!**

Sign up for job training opportunities!

**Stay connected with organizations you're involved with!
Express interest in employment through them or their networks!**

Volunteer if needed to build connections that may lead to job opportunities!



TO INTRODUCE YOUR CHOSEN NAME AND PRONOUNS, CONSIDER ADDING THEM ACROSS YOUR JOB APPLICATION DOCUMENTS INCLUDING:

- Below your legal name on your resume
- In your cover letter in parentheses
- After your name with your contact information
- Your email signature in all communication with a recruiter or hiring manager

***MORE TIPS IN NEXT SECTION!**



YO SOY

MWEN SE

ਮੈਂ ਹਾਂ

O A'U

ABU M

SONO

اسنم

I AM

KUV YOG

EMI NI

ANIGA

我是

أنا

TÔI LÀ

EU SOU

“SHOWING UP AS YOUR TRUE SELF”

*For folks who are part of the LGBTQ+ community, **SHOWING UP AS YOUR TRUE SELF** can be challenging, but is a key to your growth, healing and success. Remember - you are not defined by anything you’ve done or solely by a single identity. **YOU** get to define who **YOU ARE**.*

You are not obligated to share any part of your story or identity. However, if you decide it’s important for others to know, here are a few tips.

FOR TRANS AND NON BINARY FOLKS...

*When it’s most important to you and when you’re ready, **REINFORCE** your **TRUE NAME** and **PRONOUNS** by adding them across your job applications, school documents or assignments, medical records or other relevant documents when possible.*

If you get misgendered: politely correct the individual immediately after the wrong name or pronoun is used by saying something like,

“Actually, my name is...” or “Actually, I use [insert correct pronouns].”

The individual may be embarrassed, so give them an opportunity to apologize after you’ve corrected them and then move forward with the conversation.

YOU’VE GOT OTHER EXPERIENCES AND IDENTITIES THAT MAY BE JUST AS IMPORTANT TO YOU AS BEING LGBTQ+ AND IT IS OKAY TO REMIND PEOPLE TO NOT FOCUS ONLY ON THAT PART OF YOURSELF.

MOVING FORWARD



Turn your **MESS** into your **MESSAGE!**

Work to reflect on your experience and what you have learned from it. Use this section to identify FIVE GOALS based on what you've learned from your experiences and the skills you will need to meet them! Start with your passions!

Goals

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Skills

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

MOVING FORWARD

The system has many resources and there might be opportunity to have some of your needs provided to you (bus pass, school clothes, or Lyft in case a bus route isn't safe).

Identify FIVE NEEDS that will help you move forward and toward your short term goals.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



- Ask your “System Navigator” for help!
- Remember your MENTAL HEALTH is part of your HEALTHCARE!
- Be PERSISTENT with your NEEDS.

SELF CARE

You've been through a lot and in order to move forward, you'll need to take time to take care of yourself. Ask yourself the following questions and use your identified learning style(s) to try new self care strategies.

Where do I like to go when I need some space and alone time?

What do I like to do when I want to be creative?

In the past, how did I make a difficult decision that I ended up being proud of?

What do I need in order to sleep well?

SELF CARE

Based on the kind of learner you are, try finding activities that correspond with that learning style to incorporate into your life. This may help to relieve stress or reflect on your experiences. Here are some ideas of activities based on the kind of learner you are:

- *Auditory: listen to music or audiobooks, read, sing, rap*
- *Visual: draw, use colors to organize ideas, paint, photography, journal*
- *Tactile: DIY crafts, making art with clay, make jewelry or clothes*
- *Kinesthetic: dance classes, join a sports team, adventures in nature*



**I HOPE NOT TO DEFINE
MYSELF BY SUFFERING**

***Resources like YOUTUBE or TIK TOK
are great for all kinds of learning styles!**

NOTES

Contacts	Phone #	Email	Home Address
-----------------	----------------	--------------	---------------------

NOTES





Any Questions? Here are some great resources!

The Gay and Lesbian National Hotline (GLNH)

National Hotline: 888-843-4564

GLBT National Youth Talkline: 800-246-7743

www.glnh.org

questions@GLBTNationalHelpCenter.org

GLNH provides nationwide toll-free peer counseling, information and referrals to the LGBTQ community. Peer counselors are available Monday–Friday, 4:00 p.m. to midnight, and Saturday, noon to 5:00 p.m. EST.

National Hotline for Gay, Bisexual and Lesbian Youth

800-347-TEEN

Provides comprehensive information about national and local resources for GLBTQ teens.

Trans Lifeline

US: 877-565-8860

Canada: 877-330-6366

Trans Lifeline's Hotline is a peer support service run by trans people, for trans and questioning callers. Operators are located all over the U.S. and Canada, and are all trans-identified.

**National Runaway Switchboard
800-RUNAWAY**

Agency and Information Line:

800-344-2785

773-880-9860

www.1800runaway.org

info@nrscrisisline.org

The National Runaway Switchboard provides crisis intervention and local and national referrals to youth and their families, training materials and resources for communities and schools and is the federally designated national communication system for runaway and homeless youth.

The Safe Schools Coalition

24-Hour Crisis Line:

877-723-3723

206-957-1621

www.safeschoolscoalition.org

The Safe Schools Coalition offers a variety of resources to help youth, educators, administrators, parents and guardians end bullying and create safe school environments for LGBTQ youth. Resources include hotlines for LGBTQ youth experiencing harassment.

The Trevor Project

Toll-free hotline: 866-488-7386

310-271-8845

www.thetrevorproject.org

support@thetrevorproject.org

The Trevor Project provides a national 24-hour toll-free suicide prevention hotline aimed at LGBTQ youth and offers an educational package and other resources to raise tolerance for LGBTQ youth in school and institutional settings.

Black and Pink

531-466-3346

<https://www.blackandpink.org>

admin@blackandpink.org

Black & Pink National is a prison abolitionist organization dedicated to abolishing the criminal punishment system and liberating LGBTQIA2S+ people and people living with HIV/AIDS who are affected by that system through advocacy, support, and organizing.