



PREPARING FOR PAROLE

For Inmates Appearing Before the Parole Board

Many inmates don't take the time to learn about parole until after the initial shock of incarceration has really set in. The truth is, you should begin preparing for parole the moment you begin your sentence. Here we'll address some of the steps you should be taking to ready yourself for parole. The great thing about getting ready for parole is that it's all of the things you should be doing anyway. These steps can only help you better yourself and your situation!

STEP 1 Learn your first available parole hearing date and start building toward it. Get your application as soon as possible. It will contain specifics that you will need to prepare for.

STEP 2 Begin furthering your education. Parole boards want to see that your time in prison was used constructively. Furthering your education is also one step that has been proven to reduce your likelihood of returning to prison. Therefore, furthering your education during incarceration makes you a better candidate for parole.

STEP 3 Don't fight, gamble, steal, abuse drugs, or do anything else that will get you in trouble. This is often easier said than done, but you must work your absolute hardest to avoid disciplinary issues. If you come before the parole board without incidents during incarceration, it will demonstrate to them your improved status. Actions speak louder than words, and avoiding disciplinary problems during incarceration speaks volumes.

Adult correctional systems supervised an estimated 6,851,000 persons at yearend 2014, about 52,200 fewer offenders than at yearend 2013.

Source:
<http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5519>

STEP 4 Attend any support groups in prison that aid in your rehabilitation, such as substance abuse or anger management. Try to focus on groups related to the crime for which you are incarcerated.

STEP 5 Consider hiring an attorney. A good attorney can help you prepare the best possible presentation for a successful parole. Research your attorney before hiring him or her. Read reviews online, check with the Better Business Bureau, ask how they will approach your parole hearing. You want competent representation, and not every attorney

will deliver that. Do your homework before hiring anyone.

STEP 6 Find a home. This is easier said than done. However, this is an important condition of release. The parole board will look very favorably upon you having a home lined up. Ideally, this should be with a law abiding family member. If that's not an option, make sure it's a law abiding citizen. If you would like to place a Reintegration Profile for Housing at no cost on our website, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

Reintegration Profile Department
P.O. Box 10
Edgewater, FL 32132

STEP 7 Have a job lined up. Having employment upon release is again a statistical reassurance to the parole board that you will succeed upon release. If you would to place a Reintegration Profile for Employment at no cost on our website, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

Reintegration Profile Department
P.O. Box 10
Edgewater, FL 32132

Additional Resource! Our Back to Work Self-help is filled with information to help you find employment upon release.

Get your
FREE COPY

SEND A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE TO*:

WriteAPrisoner.com
Back to Work Self-help
P.O. Box 10
Edgewater, FL 32132 USA

* Prison staff or pen-pals can also print this guide at
<http://www.writeprisoner.com/self-help>

STEP 8 Have a support group ready to transition into. Have the organization's name, address, meeting times, etc. Show the parole board that this isn't about appeasing them, but rather ensuring your continued success once released. Doing this not only helps you to get parole, it helps ensure you won't violate parole.

STEP 9 Secure letters of support from DOC staff, pillars of the community, family, and anyone else who may have an impact on your parole to include with your parole application. Write letters of request in a professional format. When submitting materials to the parole board, write a cover letter in a professional format. Start each letter with "Dear Honorable Members of the Parole Board:" using a colon instead of a comma. Close each letter with "Sincerely," and use your complete name. Check for errors several times before submitting letters.

The content of your letter should be about your regrets of your previous lifestyle that led to incarceration, your newfound hope, and your current and future endeavors that will keep you out of prison. Your letter should be sincere.

Supporting letters from others should describe what you have done to improve, reassure they are willing to be a supportive network for you upon release, and give the parole board a sense that you are ready to reintegrate back into society. These letters can also come from future employers on company letterheads that show you have lined worked

up prior to release. Start working on the content of letters early. You don't want to miss any opportunities to show yourself in the best possible light, and it may take some time to collect these letters. If you have a positive relationship with a staff member at the prison, a letter of support from this person could also be very helpful.

STEP 10 Be sure that any family and friends know the exact date, time, and location of your parole hearing if they plan on attending. They represent you. It is important that they are punctual, well dressed, and polite.

STEP 11 Fill your application out completely and neatly, preferably typed. Check it multiple times for errors. Store the application in a safe place where it is not subject to ruin. Submit it early. Remember, no step is insignificant in this process.

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*Time heals griefs and quarrels,
for we change and are no longer
the same persons. Neither the
offender nor the offended are
any more themselves.*

-Blaise Pascal

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STEP 12 If at all possible, seek out a private area in your institution and rehearse speaking to the board out loud - addressing your crime, describing what you have done with your time in prison, telling what your future holds, and addressing any other questions you think may come up.

STEP 13 Arrive to your parole hearing looking clean and neat. Your appearance and demeanor matter. Address everyone on the parole board respectfully. Never interrupt. Don't get upset when they interrupt you. A decision is often quick; however, a release if parole is granted could still take a few weeks. Decisions can take time. Be patient, and don't press for an answer.

STEP 14 Bring copies of everything you submit with your application. If something gets misplaced or lost, you want to be sure you can produce a copy during your parole hearing. Bring any other supporting documentation you think may be vital.

STEP 15 Do not minimize your offense or refer to systematic injustices. Take full responsibility for your incarceration and stay focused on showing the parole board how you have improved and that you are ready for release. There are many injustices in our justice system. This is not the place to address them. The parole board's function is to determine if you are ready for release, not weigh your innocence or guilt.

STEP 16 Prepare to face your victim. The victim may have a right to be present. Never be disrespectful to them or their families. Be sure your supporters follow suit. If an appropriate opportunity is present, consider offering a sincere apology. Even if they fight to keep you incarcerated this time, perhaps your behavior at the parole hearing will soften their position next time. Great deference is given to victims at parole hearings.

STEP 17 If you are denied parole, don't lose hope or be disrespectful to the parole board and run the risk of jeopardizing your parole the next time around. In fact, if given the opportunity, thank the parole board for their time and tell them you intend to keep bettering yourself. If you are unable to do this in person, do so in a letter. You may see them again. When you do this, you are just giving them another reason to grant your parole next time. If you are denied and wish to appeal, know that most appeals are unsuccessful. That being said, make sure you appeal in a timely fashion, as there will be a limited period in which you can file an appeal. Also, be sure to save any paperwork involving your initial parole hearing. You may need it during the appeals process.

That's all we have to offer on this subject. We wish you all the luck in the world at your parole hearing! We hope to see you home and doing well for yourself and others soon!

Success story or suggestion? We want to know what worked for you so we can share it with other inmates.

If you have a suggestion to make about this resource, please do so at:

Self-help Suggestion - P.O. Box 10 - Edgewater, FL 32132 USA

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