

**New York City Department of Correction
Implementation of Administrative Code
Discharge Planning Provisions
December 2020**

Mandate	Implementation
<p>9-127-a The Department of Correction and the Department of Homeless Services shall develop a process for identifying individuals who repeatedly are admitted to city correctional institutions and who, in addition, either immediately before their admission to or after their release from such institutions, are housed in shelters provided by the Department of Homeless Services.</p>	<p>The Department of Correction (DOC) and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) have developed a data match process by which DOC sends to DHS monthly its discharge files; then DHS computes the percentage of shelter entrants with DOC stays in the six months preceding shelter entry. This data match is conducted monthly and used to help identify individuals who might qualify for homeless prevention services.</p>
<p>9-127-b The Department of Correction shall collect, from any sentenced inmate who will serve, after sentencing, ten days or more in any correctional institution, information relating to the inmate's housing, employment, and sobriety needs. The Department of Correction shall, with the consent of the inmate, provide such information to any social service organization that is providing discharge planning services to such inmate under contract with the Department of Correction.</p>	<p>DOC contracts with social service organizations to assist sentenced individuals with discharge planning and post-release assistance. These organizations meet with interested individuals to complete a discharge plan that identifies each person's housing, employment, and sobriety needs. Based on the information provided in the discharge plans, the social service organizations assist individuals in addressing their unique needs. This includes housing support, vocational training, job readiness workshops, job placement and case management, among other services. In 2018, we significantly expanded our reentry program and established partnerships with 5 additional providers, enabling us to assist more individuals with discharge planning.</p> <p>When the pandemic began in March 2020, contracted organizations were unable to have a presence inside the facilities. For continued assistance, they established hotlines to enable people to contact them to discuss their discharge planning needs. They also provided individuals with self-guided materials, including reentry services information, and assisted people upon their release to the community.</p>

<p>9-128-a The Department of Correction shall make applications for government benefits available to inmates by providing such applications in areas accessible to inmates in city correctional institutions.</p>	<p>DOC utilizes benefit boards, also known as Resource Centers, to make applications for government benefits for accessible and attractive to the inmate population. These Resource Centers are located in areas that are readily accessible to persons in custody, including law libraries, counseling offices and discharge planning areas. There are a total of 22 Resource Centers throughout the facilities and 2 in the Central Visit House.</p> <p>Each Resource Center contains applications or descriptions of benefits available through the NYC Human Resources Administration, the Social Security Administration, the Veterans Administration, and the Office of Children and Family Services.</p> <p>The Resource Centers also include information provided by the Departments of Motor Vehicles, Health and Mental Hygiene, and Education, tips on obtaining employment, as well as 311 Jail Release Services.</p>
<p>9-128-b The Department of Correction shall provide assistance with the preparation of applications for government benefits and identification to sentenced inmates who will serve, after sentencing, thirty days or more in any city correctional institution and who receive discharge planning services from the Department of Correction or any social services organization under contract with the Department of Correction, and in its discretion, to any other inmate who may benefit from such assistance.</p>	<p>DOC partners with Single Stops, funded by the Robin Hood Foundation, run by the Center for Urban Community Services, and implemented in October 2007, to assist with public benefits, RAP Sheet education, and civil legal assistance to city-sentenced individuals. Single Stop staff works with individuals to determine their eligibility and complete applications during incarceration enabling activation/reactivation as soon as possible after release. Single Stops also assist persons in custody with Medicaid applications. The DOC, HRA and the Rikers Island Single Stops developed a process to complete Food Stamp applications in jails so that newly released individuals will have food stamps as soon as possible after discharge from DOC custody.</p> <p>DOC Counselors also assist interested individuals in completing Birth Certificate applications. However, it can take 10+ weeks for the Birth Certificates to be returned, which makes it difficult for the individuals to receive them prior to their release. When the pandemic began in March 2020, Single Stop was unable to have a presence inside the facilities. To assist, they established hotlines to enable people to contact them to discuss their needs. They also remained available to support people upon their release to the community.</p>

<p>9-128c Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any person born in the City of New York and sentenced to 90 days or more in a NYC correctional facility who will serve, after sentencing, 30 days or more in a NYC correctional facility, shall be provided by the Department before or at release, or within 2 weeks thereafter if extenuating circumstances exist, at no cost to such person, a certified copy of his or her birth certificate to be used for any lawful purpose; provided that such person has requested a copy of his or her birth certificate from the Department at least 2 weeks prior to release. Upon such request, the Department shall request such certificate from the DOHMH in a form and manner approved by the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The Department shall inform such person of his/her ability to receive such certificate pursuant to the provisions of this subdivision within 3 days of his or her admission to a sentencing facility. No person shall receive more than one birth certificate without charge pursuant to this subdivision.</p>	<p>With the passage of this section, the NYC Department of Correction, and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Bureau of Vital Statistics adopted a Procedure, effective April 1, 2008, by which sentenced incarcerated individuals can request a copy of their birth certificates. However, it can take 10+ weeks for the Birth Certificates to be returned, which makes it difficult for the individuals to receive them prior to their release. During the height of the pandemic, as on-site staffing was limited, DOC staff assisted as much as possible with this area of need.</p>
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9-129 Reporting. The Commissioner of Correction shall submit a report to the Mayor and the Council by October first of each year regarding implementation of sections 9-127 and 9-128 of this title and other discharge planning efforts, and, beginning October first, two thousand eight and annually thereafter, regarding recidivism among inmates receiving discharge planning services from the Department of Correction or any social services organization under contract with the Department of Correction.

Throughout most of 2020, on-site reentry provider programming was modified due to the pandemic. DOC staff worked closely with providers to continue to address individuals' critical reentry needs in modified fashion, while maintaining COVID-19 protocols during a time of significant uncertainty. When on-site services resume, we will evaluate recidivism rates.