



**NOLA FOR LIFE**  
**REENTRY**  
**RESOURCE GUIDE**

FOR PEOPLE RETURNING TO ORLEANS PARISH  
AFTER CONTACT WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



# INTRODUCTION

This is a guide for people who have been in contact with the criminal justice system and are trying to get back on their feet as they return home. This guide is intended to be a resource for someone coming out of prison, someone on probation or someone trying to readjust after being arrested. This resource guide will help to ease the transition back into our community with as much knowledge and information as possible about how to address many of the issues facing those returning home.

This guide is not intended to be legal advice and is not a substitute for legal representation.

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## ABOUT THE RE-ORIENTATION SEMINAR/ OBTAINING SERVICES

### 1. WHAT IS THE RE-ORIENTATION SEMINAR?

- a. The Re-Orientation Seminar is a class that gives you a crash course in what you need to know to start your life in reentry. In addition to the information provided in this section, there is information on how to get your birth certificate and other important documents, as well as a section on how to write a resume. To register for the class, please call 1-800-369-0601.

### 2. WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO ME?

- a. A lot of programs for returning citizens are done through the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program offered through the Department of Labor. They require that you were released from a detention facility within the last 6 months to receive assistance. This means that there are a lot of services available for you right after you leave an institution and you should reach out as soon as possible. A full list of resources is available at [www.nolaforlife.org](http://www.nolaforlife.org), including but not limited to housing help, education support, help with finding a job and additional services. In addition, many services and programs are listed within the sections of this guide.

### 3. CAN I ENROLL IN MULTIPLE PROGRAMS AT THE SAME TIME?

- a. You can enroll in multiple programs as long as you are not receiving the same services. If you are enrolling in multiple programs, tell someone at each agency so they can coordinate in helping you reach your goals.

## DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS

### 4. WHAT DO I DO WITH MY PRISON RELEASE PAPERS?

- a. Keep all papers related to your release in a place where you will be able to access them at all times, and that they will be safe. You may be asked to produce them at a later point, and you want to know where they are.

### 5. WHAT DO I DO WITH MY INMATE MEDICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH RECORDS?

- a. Keep your inmate medical and mental health records with you, and in a safe place where you can retrieve them if necessary.

### 6. WHAT DO I DO WITH MY EDUCATION PAPERWORK I COMPLETED WHILE INCARCERATED?

- a. Keep it! Make sure it is available to you and in a safe place.

## HOUSING

### 7. HOW DO I FIND HOUSING?

- a. There are several organizations that help formerly incarcerated persons with housing including Resurrection After Exoneration, 504-943-1902, Bethel Colony South, 504-943-0456, Covenant House, 504-584-1111 and Exodus House, 504-891-7320. Additionally, many landlords post apartment listings on [Craigslist.org](http://Craigslist.org), [NOLA.com](http://NOLA.com), [Realtor.com](http://Realtor.com), and [Apartments.com](http://Apartments.com).

## **8. WHAT DO I DO IF I CAN'T FIND A PLACE TO LIVE?**

- a. There are several organizations that can help with emergency housing. There are several organizations that help returning citizens with housing. You can contact Resurrection After Exoneration 504-943-1902, Bethel Colony South at 504-943-0456, and for individuals under 22, Covenant House 504-584-1111. If you are released at a time where you cannot get in contact with one of those agencies you can contact Travelers Aid at 504-586-0010.

## **9. WHAT TEMPORARY HOUSING IS AVAILABLE TO ME?**

- a. There are several organizations that help returning citizens with housing. You can contact Resurrection After Exoneration 504-943-1902, Bethel Colony South at 504-943-0456, and for individuals under the age of 22 Covenant House 504-584-1111. The New Orleans Mission at 1130 O.C. Haley provides emergency shelter for 21 days arrive b/t 4pm-6pm. Contact Louis Rodriguez. If you are released at a time where you cannot get in contact with one of those agencies you can contact Travelers Aid at 504-586-0010.

## **10. WHAT DO I NEED TO PROVIDE TO A LANDLORD IN ORDER TO SIGN A LEASE?**

- a. Check your credit history, a landlord will run a credit check before allowing you to sign the lease. Be ready to pay an application fee, and a deposit which is usually the same amount as first month's rent. If you have a pet, there is often a pet fee associated with renting as well. Make sure to have rental references ready for any places that you have lived previously.

## **11. WHAT DO I DO IF A LANDLORD REFUSES TO RENT TO ME?**

- a. Landlords can refuse to rent to you after they run a credit check. Make sure that you have looked at your credit report and know how much you can afford before signing a lease. (See question 10.)

## **12. HOW DO I FIND MY CREDIT REPORT AND IMPROVE IT?**

- a. A credit report is a detailed history of how you pay your bills (whether they are on time or late) and how you manage your debt, loans and credit. In addition, public information such as judgments, bankruptcies and delinquent child support payments are included. You should review your credit report periodically to make sure everything is accurate. It is not unusual for mistakes to occur, and you want to take care of those so they don't affect your ability to get a job, rent an apartment, buy a home or get a credit card. Landlords, employers (with your permission) and others with legitimate business purposes can get a copy of your report.
- b. The report may include a "credit score," which is a number used to predict how credit-worthy you are. The higher the score, the better. You may benefit from talking with a credit counseling agency if you think you need help managing your credit. Here are helpful things to know:
- c. There are three companies (TransUnion, Equifax and Experian) that maintain credit reports, and each company may have different information.
  - i. You can get a FREE copy of your credit report once every 12 months (ONLY through the Annual Credit Report Request Service - [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com)). You can request all three reports at once so you can compare them, or you can space them out so you can keep track of changes – as long as you don't request the same report more than once in a 12-month period.
  - ii. You can also get a free copy of a report that was used to take an "adverse action against you" such as denying you employment, credit or insurance, as long as you request it within 60 days of receiving notice of the action.

- iii. If you are unemployed and intend to apply for employment in the next 60 days, are on welfare, or your report is inaccurate because of fraud, including identity theft, you can also get a free copy of your credit report.
- iv. If you find something that is wrong on your credit report, contact BOTH the company that produced the credit report and the company that provided the original information (such as a credit card company) to dispute the information.
- v. Generally, if you dispute something, the credit reporting company must begin to investigate it and make a note in your file or delete the error within 30 days of receiving your original request. They don't have to FIX the error within 30 days, just note that they are working<sup>1</sup>

### **13. WHAT ARE THE RESTRICTIONS ON LIVING IN PUBLIC HOUSING WITH A CRIMINAL RECORD?**

- a. There are only two criminal offenses that would ban a person from living in public housing. The first is if they are a registered sex offender for life. The second is if a person was convicted of manufacturing or producing methamphetamine while living in public housing. The Housing Authority of New Orleans does conduct background checks on applicants. They assess the applicant's criminal conviction to see if they will be allowed to live in public housing to "determine the risk the applicant poses to the safety and wellbeing of the community."<sup>2</sup>

### **14. CAN I MOVE INTO MY FAMILY'S PUBLIC HOUSING?**

- a. Yes, if your family is living in public housing and you were not convicted of making methamphetamines in public housing, you were not convicted or are not a registered sex offender.

### **15. HOW DO I APPLY FOR PUBLIC HOUSING IN NEW ORLEANS?**

- a. Public housing and housing voucher programs are run through the Housing Authority of New Orleans. You can apply for public housing by calling the Public Housing Hotline at 504-670-3446. To apply to the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) contact the main HANO office at 4100 Touro St., New Orleans, LA 70122, or call the main office at 504-708-2800.

### **16. HOW DO I HOOK UP MY POWER?**

- a. Entergy is the power company for New Orleans. You can call them toll free at 1-800-368-3749 to set up power to your house or apartment. You can pay the bill by going online to Entergy.com or by calling 1-800-584-1241. There is a \$2.95 fee to pay your bill over the phone. There is often a deposit required to set up your power ranging from 50-150 dollars.

### **17. HOW DO I SET UP MY WATER AND TRASH?**

- a. The New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board is in charge of servicing water and trash in New Orleans. You can set up service by going to their east bank location at 625 Saint Joseph Street between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday. You can also call them at 504-529-2837.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.211cleveland.org/pdfs/communityreentry.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.hano.org/home/agency\\_plans/HANO%20Criminal%20Background%20Policy%20Statement%20for%20Board%203.22.13.pdf](http://www.hano.org/home/agency_plans/HANO%20Criminal%20Background%20Policy%20Statement%20for%20Board%203.22.13.pdf)

**18. WHERE DO I GET A BUS PASS?**

- a. You can purchase a bus pass at any of the following locations
- Ticket Vending Machine 2817 Canal Street
  - Ticket Vending Machine Canal Streetcar Line Canal at N. Peters in the RTA Shelter
  - Ticket Vending Machine: Canal Streetcar Line Canal at City Park Ave.
  - Ticket Vending Machine: Canal Streetcar Line Canal at Bourbon St. in the RTA Shelter
  - Archit Discount Store 114 Baronne Street
  - Casa Angelo, Inc. 212 Magazine Street
  - Krewe du Brew Coffee House 1610 St. Charles
  - Loyola University Bookstore 6363 St. Charles
  - Price Buster 865 St. Charles
  - Quik Cash #1 2008 St. Claude
  - Quik Cash #2 3034 Gentilly Blvd.
  - Xplore Federal Credit Union 701 Poydras Street
  - Unique General Food Store 127 Royal Street
  - Walgreens 2418 S. Carrollton
  - Walgreens 134 Royal Street
  - Walgreens 718 S. Carrollton
  - Walgreens 1826 North Broad
  - Walgreens 1801 St. Charles
  - Walgreens 7401 Read Blvd.
  - Walgreens 6201 Elysian Fields
  - Walgreens 3216 Gentilly Blvd.
  - Walgreens 619 Decatur
  - Walgreens 1100 Elysian Fields
  - Walgreens 3227 Magazine St.
  - Walgreens 900 Canal St.
  - Walgreens 145 Elks Place
  - Walgreens 4400 S. Claiborne
  - Walgreens 4001 Canal St.
  - Williams Food Store 2139 St. Charles

**19. HOW MUCH ARE BUS PASSES?**

- a. Bus and streetcar rides are \$1.25 each. You can get a single ride token for \$1.25, a 1-Day Jazzy Pass for \$3, a 3-Day Jazzy Pass for \$9, a 5-Day Jazzy Pass for \$15, a 31-Day Jazzy Pass for \$55. You can also get a Stored Value Card for \$10, \$15, or \$20. Some agencies have bus tokens available for use, so ask when you arrive.

**20. WHERE DO I FIND A BUS AND STREETCAR MAP?**

- a. Check out <http://www.norta.com> as well as on streetcars and buses.

**21. HOW DO I LOOK FOR WORK?**

- a. Many employers post their openings online when they are looking for staff. You can look at websites like NOLA FOR LIFE.org, worknola.com, indeed.com, idealist.org, craigslist.org, monster.com, careerbuilder.com, nola.gov, and many other sites. Many newspapers like The Times Picayune and the Advocate will also have job postings listed. Additionally you can contact JOB1, Goodwill, Urban League of Greater New Orleans, Louisiana Green Corps, Café Reconcile, Liberty’s Kitchen for more leads on employment. *[The contact information for these organizations can be found in this guide or at the nolaforlife.org website.]*

**22. WHERE CAN I FIND A COMPUTER TO LOOK FOR JOBS?**

- a. Many service providers have access to computers that you can use in your job search. You can also use the computer at any New Orleans Public Library. There is a one hour limit on computer usage.<sup>3</sup>
- i. Algiers Regional Library  
3014 Holiday Drive | New Orleans, Louisiana, 70131  
10 am - 7 pm, Mon. - Thurs.  
10 am - 5 pm, Sat.  
504-596-2641
- ii. Alvar Library  
913 Alvar Street | New Orleans, Louisiana, 70117  
10 am - 7 pm, Mon. - Thurs.  
10 am - 5 pm, Sat.  
504-596-2667
- iii. Central City Library  
2405 Jackson Avenue, Building C, Room 235 (in the Mahalia Jackson Center)  
10 am - 7 pm, Mon. - Thurs.  
11 am - 4 pm, Fri.  
504-596-3110
- iv. Children’s Resource Center  
913 Napoleon Avenue | New Orleans, Louisiana, 70115  
10 am - 7 pm, Mon. - Thurs.  
10 am - 5 pm, Sat.  
504-596-2628
- v. East New Orleans Regional Library  
5641 Read Blvd | New Orleans, Louisiana, 70127  
10 am - 7 pm, Mon. - Thurs.  
10 am - 5 pm, Sat.  
504-596-0200

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.neworleanspubliclibrary.org/~nopl/generalinfo.htm>



- vi. Cita Dennis Hubbell Library**  
725 Pelican Avenue | New Orleans, Louisiana, 70114  
10 am - 7 pm, Mon. - Thurs.  
10 am - 5 pm, Sat.  
504-596-3113
- vii. Rosa F. Keller Library & Community Center**  
4300 S. Broad | New Orleans, Louisiana, 70125  
10 am - 7 pm, Mon. - Thurs.  
10 am - 5 pm, Sat.  
504-596-2660
- viii. Martin Luther King Library**  
1611 Caffin Avenue | New Orleans, Louisiana, 70117  
9 am - 5 pm, Mon. - Fri.  
504-596-2695
- ix. Milton H. Latter Memorial Library**  
5120 St. Charles Avenue | New Orleans, Louisiana, 70115  
9 am - 8 pm, Mon. & Wed.  
9 am - 6 pm, Tues. & Thurs.  
10 am - 5 pm, Sat.  
12 pm - 5 pm, Sun.  
504-596-2625
- x. Norman Mayer Library**  
3001 Gentilly Blvd. | New Orleans, Louisiana, 70122  
10 am - 7 pm, Mon. - Thurs.  
10 am - 5 pm, Sat.  
504-596-3100
- xi. Mid-City Library**  
3700 Orleans Avenue (in the American Can Building)  
10 am - 7 pm, Mon. - Thurs.  
10 am - 5 pm, Sat.  
504-596-2654
- xii. Nix Library**  
1401 S. Carrollton Avenue | New Orleans, Louisiana, 70118  
10 am - 7 pm, Mon. - Thurs.  
10 am - 5 pm, Sat.  
504-596-2630
- xiii. Smith Library - exterior Robert E. Smith Library**  
6301 Canal Blvd. | New Orleans, Louisiana, 70124  
10 am - 7 pm, Mon. - Thurs.  
10 am - 5 pm, Sat.  
504-596-2638

**23. DO I NEED A RESUME?**

- a. Yes, a resume is important to have for your job search. You can get resume writing help at JOB1 as well as at Goodwill Industries of SELA and Urban League of Greater New Orleans through their re-entry programs.

**24. HOW DO I WRITE A RESUME?**

- a. A resume is a list of all the previous employment that you have had, along with the dates and duties that you performed. You can get resume assistance at JOB1, Goodwill or at the Urban League.

**25. HOW DO I SET UP AN EMAIL ACCOUNT?**

- a. You can set up an email account through various email servers. Go to Gmail.com, Yahoo.com, or Hotmail.com to sign up for an email address. Remember to check your email regularly because that is how many employers will want to set up a job interview.

**26. WHERE CAN I GET A CELL PHONE?**

- a. If you qualify for Medicare or Medicaid you might qualify for a free cell phone through SafeLink Wireless. You can check your eligibility at SafeLinkWireless.com.

**27. WHAT IS THE WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT?**

- a. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit is a credit that gives employers an incentive to hire returning citizens. It is usually 25%-40% of the employee's salary. This means the more that an employer pays a returning citizen, the bigger the tax break they get.

**28. WHERE CAN I FIND CLOTHES TO WEAR TO AN INTERVIEW?**

- a. Goodwill has low cost clothes for sale for interviews. Additionally they will also provide some individuals with interview clothing. You can call them at 1-800-369-0601.

**29. WHAT TRAINING OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ME?**

- a. Many social service organizations have training programs like Vocational Certification Job Training Programs, work readiness programs, computer literacy programs, C-Tech Certification, hospitality training, culinary training and many others. To get involved in these programs contact JOB 1 at 504-658.4500 or Goodwill at 504-456-2622.

**30. WHAT DOCUMENTS WILL I NEED TO HAVE ONCE I DO GET A JOB?**

- a. You will need documents that establish both eligibility to work in the U.S. and your identity. Documents that establish employment eligibility are a social security card or a birth certificate. A US Passport will satisfy both the identity and employment eligibility requirements. A US Passport will satisfy both of those requirements.

**31. I HAVE AN IDEA TO START MY OWN BUSINESS, WHO CAN HELP ME WITH THAT?**

- a. The Louisiana Small Business Development Center has a small business training program. Their New Orleans office is LSBDC Greater New Orleans Region, UNO Jefferson Center 3330 N. Causeway Blvd, Suite 447 Metairie, LA 70002. You can contact them at 504-831-3730, or through their website at lsbdc.org.

**32. DO I HAVE TO DISCLOSE MY STATUS AS A FORMERLY INCARCERATED PERSON?**

- a. Many applications will ask you if you have ever been arrested for or convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor. Generally, the best advice is to be truthful about your time incarcerated. There are a few things that the employer will consider when making the choice to hire a returning citizen including the nature of the job, the nature and seriousness of the offense, and the length of time since it occurred. There are some limitations for returning citizens to work with “vulnerable” populations like children, or the elderly.

**33. HOW CAN A CRIMINAL CONVICTION IMPACT MY JOB SEARCH?**

- a. It’s really up to the employer, and the type of job you are applying for. Many employers are willing to hire individuals with any type of conviction, sometimes it depends on the length of incarceration or type of conviction.

**34. WHAT KINDS OF CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS CAN BE CONSIDERED IF I AM TRYING TO OBTAIN A PROFESSIONAL LICENSE?**

- a. If you have a criminal conviction you will not be able to get a license to be a registered nurse, physician, or a licensed social worker but you can get a CDL, barbering license and cosmetologist license.

**35. WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING BACKGROUND CHECKS WHEN I AM SEEKING EMPLOYMENT?**

- a. Employers have the right to conduct a background check, you must be honest and state on application that you will be willing to explain situation in interview.

**36. HOW DO I GET A TRANSPORTATION WORKER IDENTIFICATION CARD (TWIC CARD)?**

- a. TWIC enrollment goes through UES Enrollment Center at 1881 Rousseau Street, Ste 3 New Orleans, LA 70130-1903. You can call to get further information at 855-347-8371. Initial paperwork for TWIC cards can be found at JOB1 or at Goodwill. Often if you have a conviction or arrest on your record you will initially get denied for your TWIC card. However, these mostly get overturned on appeal.

**37. HOW DO I OPEN A CHECKING OR SAVINGS ACCOUNT?**

- a. There are several banks that you can open both checking and savings accounts with. Many have a mandatory minimum balance requirement that range from 100-500 dollars. Often there will also be maintenance fees for the account.
- b. You will need a driver’s license or state ID card, a Social Security number, proof of your address, proof of your date of birth, and a phone number and email address.
- c. Some banks you can open accounts with are:
  - i. Bank of New Orleans  
5435 Magazine St. | New Orleans, LA 70115  
504-897-9751
  - ii. Iberia Bank - 800 968-0801
  - iii. Chase Bank  
201 St Charles Ave, Ste 110 | New Orleans, LA 70170  
504-623-8413

## MILITARY SERVICE

### **38. AM I STILL ELIGIBLE TO ENLIST IN THE MILITARY?**

- a. Branches of the military will do a background check before allowing anyone to join. Admittance will be determined by the nature of the crime, and how much time had passed.<sup>4</sup>

### **39. DO I HAVE TO BE REGISTERED WITH THE SELECTIVE SERVICE?**

- a. If you are a man over the age of 26 you are no longer eligible to register for the selective service. If you are a man younger than 26 you still have to register for the selective service. You have to be registered for the selective service in order to get a driver's license in Louisiana. If you do not register, you could be prosecuted and fined up to \$250,000 and/or be put in jail for up to five years.

### **40. WHERE CAN I REGISTER FOR THE SELECTIVE SERVICE?**

- a. You can register for the selective service online at SSS.Gov, or at any U.S. Post Offices.

### **41. I'M A VETERAN, WHAT SERVICES AM I ELIGIBLE FOR?**

- a. Eligibility will be determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs upon review of a Veteran's Discharge Paper called the DD-214. VJO (Veterans Justice Outreach) and Health Care for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV). If you don't have your discharge papers coordinators can help you to get them. To get Veterans Administration benefits you need to have an Honorable or General Discharge from service, 24 months of continuous service for those who enlisted in September of 1980, or active duty, non-training time for National Guard or Reserve members.

### **42. HOW DO I GET A COPY OF MY DISCHARGE PAPERS?**

- a. You can get your DD-214 through the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Justice Outreach office. They are located at 1250 Poydras and the Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist will be able to help you get your discharge papers as well as any services for which you qualify. You can call them at 504-412-3700 ext. 3943.

## CIVIL RIGHTS

### **43. CAN MY INVOLVEMENT IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM PRECLUDE MY RIGHT TO VOTE?**

- a. You cannot vote while you are on probation or parole. Further, individuals convicted of a felony are ineligible to vote while incarcerated. Once you have completed your time on Probation or Parole you are eligible to register to vote. The right to vote is automatically restored upon completion of supervised release, but you must still re-register to vote.<sup>5</sup>

### **44. HOW DO I GET REGISTERED TO VOTE?**

- a. You can register online at Sos.la.gov if you have a Louisiana Driver's license or ID card. If you do not, you must submit a paper copy of your registration to the Secretary of State.

### **45. CAN MY VOTING RIGHTS BE RESTORED?**

- a. In Louisiana your voting rights are automatically restored once you complete your incarceration, and probation or parole.

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<sup>4</sup><http://www.goarmy.com/>

<sup>5</sup><http://www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-as-an-ex-offender.html#LA>



**46. IF I HAVE BEEN CONVICTED OF A CRIME, CAN I STILL SERVE ON A JURY?**

- a. If you have been charged with or convicted of a felony or have a pending felony charge in Louisiana you are ineligible to serve on a jury. The only exception to this law is if you have received a pardon from the governor.<sup>6</sup>

**47. IF I HAVE A CRIMINAL RECORD, CAN I RUN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE?**

- a. Yes. There are no limitations on who can run for public office in Louisiana

**PROBATION AND PAROLE**

**48. HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO REPORT TO THE PAROLE OFFICE AFTER BEING RELEASED?**

- a. You have 48 business hours to report to the parole office listed on your certificate. If not you can be revoked.

**49. WILL I BE DRUG TESTED WHILE ON PAROLE EVEN IF I DON'T HAVE A DRUG CONVICTION?**

- a. Yes. Everyone gets drug tested while on parole. Testing can be done randomly or if the officer sees a need to test you.

**50. CAN I LIVE AT A RESIDENCE IF THERE IS ANOTHER CONVICTED RETURNING CITIZEN LIVING THERE?**

- a. You will probably be able to live at the residence if the other person is a direct family member. If that person is your girlfriend or your girlfriend's brother then the answer is no. The best idea is to discuss your living arrangement with your parole officer since each case is different.

**51. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I WANT TO PAROLE OUT TO ANOTHER STATE?**

- a. You should notify Records Office at least 6 months before your release date, and then your Interstate Compact can be processed while you are still incarcerated. You should give them the address where you plan to live and any possible employment that you have lined up. If you release to a local office first, a transfer to another state may take as long as 90 days.

**52. IF I DO REALLY WELL ON PAROLE CAN I GET SOME TIME TAKEN OFF?**

- a. No. At this time there is no law that will allow you to be terminated early on parole.

**53. IS IT TRUE THAT I CAN ONLY BE GIVEN 90 DAYS IN JAIL FOR A TECHNICAL VIOLATION?**

- a. No. There is Act 402 which does allow for a 90 day technical violation to occur. However, there is a checklist and you have to qualify. This is not a blanket policy for all violations. A lot of people do not qualify for Act 402.

**54. HOW MUCH ARE PAROLE FEES AND CAN I PAY THEM ALL AT ONCE WHEN I AM RELEASED?**

- a. Parole fees are \$63.00 a month and have to be paid monthly.

**55. WHAT HAPPENS IF I CAN'T PAY MY PAROLE FEES?**

- a. You will not get revoked for not paying your fees. It usually takes more than not paying fees for revocation. You may be required to work 20 hours community service instead of paying fees. Every 20 hours of community service is equivalent to one month of fees.

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<sup>6</sup><http://www.23rdjdc.org/JuryDuty.aspx>

**56. WILL I BE ABLE TO LEAVE THE STATE AND VISIT SOMEONE IN ANOTHER STATE WHILE ON PAROLE?**

- a. If you are free from any violations most likely you will be able to leave the state. You must obtain a travel permit from your parole officer first. If you do not have a permit you will be considered an absconder and you will be revoked.

**57. CAN I GET A JOB OFFSHORE WHILE ON PAROLE?**

- a. Absolutely, in fact it is encouraged in most cases. There are some people who may not qualify due to their conviction, so your assigned officer should be the one to give permission.

**58. IS IT TRUE THAT PAROLE OFFICERS JUST WANT TO REVOKE YOU AND PUT YOU BACK IN PRISON?**

- a. Definitely not! The violation process is a lot of paperwork and time consuming. Probation and Parole wants you to succeed as much as you do, in fact, sometimes more.

**59. WHAT IS THE FASTEST WAY TO GET REVOKED WHILE ON PAROLE?**

- a. If you lose contact with your parole officer you will most likely be revoked. Most parolees don't seem to live in one spot for very long. You must keep your officer up to date at all times with where you live. Most of the time the parolee knows that they have used illegal drugs and begin "ducking" their officer. Your officer is the one person who can help you the most. Do not hide from them. Call the office or come in and ask for help before it gets too late. It is rare to be revoked for your first positive drug screen.

**60. WHAT CHANGES OCCUR WHILE ON PAROLE?**

- a. While you're on probation or parole, you lose a lot of rights. You cannot vote. Your parole or probation officer can come to your house or your job unannounced and will expect you to be there, and can make you take drug tests.

**61. WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS OF PROBATION OR PAROLE?**

- a. According to the Louisiana Department of Corrections the conditions of parole are (The following specific conditions have also been imposed):<sup>7</sup>
  1. Make a full and truthful report at the end of each month to New Orleans District, 731 St. Charles Avenue, 3rd Floor New Orleans, LA. 70130, 504-568-4956
  2. Meet your specific family responsibilities, including any obligations imposed in a court order of child support.
  3. Report to the probation officer as directed.
  4. Permit the probation officer to visit you at home or elsewhere.
  5. Devote yourself to an approved employment or occupation.
  6. Refrain from owning or possessing firearms or other dangerous weapons.
  7. Make reasonable reparation or restitution to the aggrieved party for damage or loss caused by your offense in an amount to be determined by the court.
  8. Refrain from frequenting unlawful or disreputable places or consorting with disreputable persons.
  9. Remain within the jurisdiction of the Court and get the permission of the probation officer before making any change in your address or your employment.
  10. Devote yourself to an approved reading program at your cost if you are unable to read the English Language.
  11. Perform community service work (This amount can vary as required as a condition of your release).

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<sup>7</sup><http://www.doc.la.gov/pages/probation-parole/supervision-conditions-video/>

12. Submit yourself to available medical, psychiatric, mental health, or substance abuse examination or treatment or both when deemed appropriate and ordered to do so by the Probation and Parole Officer.
13. Agree to searches of your person, your property, your place of residence, your vehicle, or your personal effects, or any or all of them, at any time, by the probation officer or the parole officer assigned to him, with or without a warrant of arrest or with or without a search warrant, when the probation officer or the parole officer has reasonable suspicion to believe that the person who is on probation is engaged in or has been engaged in criminal activity.

**Be aware that there may be additional conditions that were imposed by a judge upon your release.**

## **62. HOW OFTEN DO I HAVE TO CHECK IN WITH MY PAROLE OR PROBATION OFFICER?**

- a. Your check in schedule will be established with your probation or parole officer upon your first visit. You must report to probation and parole located at 731 St Charles Avenue, on the 3rd Floor within the first 48 hours of your release. You can also call them at 504-568-4956 for more information. However, calling in does not take the place of an in person meeting.

## **63. WHAT HAPPENS IF I GET CAUGHT WITH DRUGS OR A WEAPON?**

- a. Your parole or probation officer can search your house without a warrant. If you're in possession of a gun, they can and probably will arrest you – even if the gun belongs to a friend or family member who happens to be in the same car or house as you.

# **CRIMINAL RECORDS**

## **64. HOW DO I GET A CRIMINAL RECORD?**

- a. Every adult who our legal process has determined is guilty of committing a crime has a “criminal record.” A criminal record is kind of like a report card, but instead of keeping track of your grades, it keeps track of crimes our legal process has decided someone committed.

## **65. WHAT IS AN EXPUNGEMENT?**

- a. After being found guilty of a crime, some people try to get that erased, or “expunged,” from their criminal record. They do this because employers can look up your criminal record when you apply for a job, and it is hard to get a job when you have a criminal record. However, not every crime can be erased or expunged from your record. Also, a judge has to agree before a crime is expunged from your record.

## **66. WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR EXPUNGEMENT?**

- a. As a general rule, you can't expunge convictions for crimes of violence, sex offenses involving children under age 17, or distribution of drugs. Convictions that resulted in a state prison sentence also cannot be expunged.

## **67. HOW DO I GET MY RECORD EXPUNGED?**

- a. Whether or not your record can be expunged depends on a lot of factors including the conviction, and plea arrangements. The Justice and Accountability Center operates a free expungement hotline at 504-345-8911. They will be able to tell you if you're eligible for expungement. You can also hire a private attorney to help you get a case expunged, or you can even get an expungement packet from the Clerk of Court (at Criminal District Court at 2700 Tulane Ave) and file yourself.

## **68. HOW MUCH DOES EXPUNGEMENT COST?**

- a. Expungement is expensive – it costs \$450 in Orleans Parish – and you can only get one felony conviction done in your lifetime, or one misdemeanor conviction done every 5 years.

## **69. WHO CAN HELP ME IF I THINK I’M ELIGIBLE FOR EXPUNGEMENT?**

- a. Justice and Accountability Center operates a free expungement hotline at 504-345-8911.

## **70. WHAT IS AN AUTOMATIC PARDON?**

- a. According to Louisiana state law, “A first offender never previously convicted of a felony shall be pardoned automatically upon completion of his sentence without a recommendation of the Board of Pardons and without action by the governor.”<sup>8</sup> Upon your completion of probation or parole for your first felony you will get a certificate from your probation or parole officer. This means all of your voting and other civil rights are automatically restored upon completion of your sentence.

## **71. WHAT DO I DO IF I’M STOPPED BY THE POLICE FOR ANY REASON?**

- a. You have the right to remain silent and not make a statement. **EXERCISE THIS RIGHT!**
  - i. Remember, anything you say or do can be used against you.
  - ii. Think carefully about your words, movement, body language and emotions.
  - iii. Don’t get into an argument with or lie to the police.
  - iv. Keep your hands where the police can see them.
  - v. Don’t run. Don’t touch any police officer. Don’t resist even if you believe you are innocent.
  - vi. Don’t complain on the scene; tell the police they are wrong or that you are going to file a complaint or lawsuit.
  - vii. Don’t make any statements regarding the incident.
  - viii. In order to preserve your right to remain silent, you must clearly tell the police officer that you are invoking your right to remain silent and then be silent.
  - ix. Ask for a lawyer immediately upon your arrest.
  - x. Write down everything you remember ASAP. Remember officers’ badge and patrol car numbers. Try to find witnesses and their names, addresses and phone numbers.
  - xi. If you are injured, take photographs of the injuries as soon as possible, but make sure you seek medical attention first.
  - xii. What you say to the police is always important. What you say can be used against you, and it can give the police an excuse to arrest you, and search you and your car (especially if you bad-mouth a police officer).
  - xiii. You don’t have to answer any questions asked by the police. However, you are required to provide your name, address and date of birth upon request.
  - xiv. You should never consent to any search of yourself, your car or your house.
  - xv. If you DO consent to a search, it can affect your rights later in court. If the police say they have a search warrant, **ASK TO SEE IT.**
  - xvi. Do not interfere with or obstruct the police – you can be arrested if you do.

*This information provided by ACLU.org.<sup>9</sup>*

<sup>8</sup><http://legis.la.gov/lss/lss.asp?doc=79202>

<sup>9</sup>[https://www.aclu.org/files/kyr/kyr\\_english.pdf](https://www.aclu.org/files/kyr/kyr_english.pdf)



**72. DO I STILL HAVE TO PAY CHILD SUPPORT?**

- a. Yes, your child support will be due monthly. During incarceration, a judge will normally suspend or reduce child support payments for the extent of the incarceration. However, upon your return a new child support agreement will be established.

**73. HOW DO I PAY CHILD SUPPORT?**

- a. You can pay your child support by sending a check or money order to the Department of Children and Family Services at Post Office Box 26022, Baton Rouge, LA 70826. Payments should be made payable to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and include the name, address, and social security number of the person paying.

**74. HOW CAN I AMEND MY CUSTODY ARRANGEMENT?**

- a. In order to change a custody agreement you need to file a motion with the court.

**75. HOW DO I GET MY KIDS BACK AFTER I'M RELEASED?**

- a. According to federal law, if a child is in foster care for 15 out of the previous 22 months, a petition may be filed with the court requesting reinstatement of the parent's rights upon their release. However, a petition may not be filed if the state has placed the child with a relative or if the state agency has documented in the case plan a compelling reason for determining that filing such a petition would not be in the best interests of the child. A petition may be filed with the court requesting reinstatement of the parent's rights upon their release.<sup>10</sup>

**76. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILDREN ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH AT THEIR SCHOOL?**

- a. If your family makes less than \$43,568 and includes at least four people then your children will be eligible for free or reduced lunch programs. Your child's school will be able to give you full details.

**77. HOW DO I REGISTER MY CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL?**

- a. New Orleans has one common application. You can fill it out at [Enrollnola.org](http://Enrollnola.org) or go to one of the family resource centers run by the Orleans Parish School Board and the Recovery School District.
- b. The locations of the family resource centers are:
  - i. **RSD Family Resource Center, New Orleans East**  
Mildred Osborne Elementary School  
6701 Curran Blvd. | New Orleans, Louisiana, 70126  
8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
  - ii. **RSD Family Resource Center, Uptown**  
NOCP's Lawrence D. Crocker College Prep: A School for the Arts & Technology  
2300 General Taylor St. | New Orleans, Louisiana, 70115  
Normal Hours: 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
  - iii. **RSD Family Resource Center, Westbank**  
Landry Walker High School  
1201 L.B. Landry Ave. | New Orleans, Louisiana, 70114  
8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
  - iv. **OPSB Family Resource Center**  
3520 General De Gaulle Drive | Suite 1050 | New Orleans, Louisiana, 70114  
8:00 AM – 4:00 PM<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup>[https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/statutes/groundtermin.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/groundtermin.pdf)

<sup>11</sup><http://enrollnola.org/family-resource-centers/>

**78. WHAT IS MEDICARE AND AM I ELIGIBLE FOR IT?**

- a. Medicare is health insurance for people over 65, and who have paid into Social Security. It also includes people who are disabled and under 65. There are four parts to Medicare. Part A covers hospital stays, Part B covers visits to the doctor. Medicare Part D covers prescription drugs, and Medicare Part C (also called Medicare Advantage Plans) is offered by private healthcare companies who deliver parts A and B. If you were on Medicare before you were incarcerated your Part A insurance stays with you. Parts B and D go away if you did not pay for them during your incarceration. You can re-enroll in Medicare Part D (prescription drugs) in the first two months after your release. If you don't, you will be charged a fee for being late, or will have to wait until October for open enrollment. You can re-enroll in Medicare Part B January through March.<sup>12</sup>
- b. Social Security Office Information is available at Suite 500, 400 Poydras Street, New Orleans, LA 70130 Phone: 1-800-772-1213

**79. WHAT IS MEDICAID AND AM I ELIGIBLE FOR IT?**

- a. Medicaid is a health care program for families and individuals who are considered low income. Time served has no impact on your ability to qualify for Medicaid.
- b. You might be eligible for Medicaid if you get Supplemental Security Income (see Question 93 below to see if you qualify) or assistance from the Office of Family Support. You can also qualify if you have been categorized as disabled by the Social Security Administration, have corrected vision no better than 20/200, have an income under a threshold and have children, or under 19 and are pregnant. You can also qualify if you have breast cancer and no health insurance.
- c. New Orleans Regional Office 1450 Poydras St., Benson Tower, 10th Floor, New Orleans, LA 70112 | PH: 1-888-342-6207

**80. WHERE CAN I GO FOR MEDICAL HELP IF I DON'T HAVE INSURANCE?**

- a. If you don't have health insurance you are probably eligible for either the health insurance exchange, or Medicaid. Additionally there are several other organizations that offer low cost health care. These places include Daughters of Charity, Health Care for the Homeless, the St. Thomas Clinic, Tulane Drop in Clinics, and Metropolitan Human Service District.

**81. HOW DO I GET COVERED THROUGH THE HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGES?**

- a. You can register for the health care exchange through the New Orleans Department of Health by going to [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov), calling 1-800-318-2596 or texting "HEALTH" to 504-383-7580. Several service providers are able to help you register for the exchange.

**82. WHERE CAN I GO TO GET MY PRESCRIPTIONS FILLED?**

- a. The Federally Qualified Health Care centers will help with prescriptions. If you have insurance you can get your prescriptions filled at a low cost at most pharmacies. Federally Qualified Health Centers are listed below.
  - i. Excelth, Inc., Health Care Network  
1515 Poydras St, New Orleans, LA 70112-3723  
504-524-1210  
[excelth.com](http://excelth.com)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.medicare.gov/sign-up-change-plans/get-parts-a-and-b/when-sign-up-parts-a-and-b/when-sign-up-parts-a-and-b.html>

- ii. Mahalia Jackson Health Service Center  
2405 Jackson Ave, New Orleans, LA 70113-2400  
504-529-5558
- iii. Tulane Adolescent Drop-In Clinic  
1434 N Rampart St, New Orleans, LA 70116-1912  
504-988-1667
- iv. Health Care For The Homeless  
2222 Simon Bolivar Ave, New Orleans, LA 70113-1460  
504-658-2785
- v. Common Ground Health Clinic  
1400 Teche St., New Orleans, LA 70114-5843  
504-361-9800
- vi. St. Thomas Community Health Center  
1020 Saint Andrew St, New Orleans, LA 70130-5022  
504-529-5558
- vii. Ruth U. Fertel/Tulane Community Health Center  
711 N Broad St, New Orleans, LA 70119-4206  
504-609-3500  
<http://www.accesshealthla.org>
- viii. Excelth, Inc. Dental Clinic - Algiers  
1111 Newton St, New Orleans, LA 70114-2500  
504-658-2550
- ix. MCHC-St. Cecelia  
1030 Lesseps St, New Orleans, LA 70117-4736  
504-941-6041
- x. MCHC-Carrollton  
3201 S Carrollton Ave, New Orleans, LA 70118-4307  
504-207-3060
- xi. EXCELth Family Health Center - Gentilly  
2050 Caton St, New Orleans, LA 70122-3147  
504-620-9868
- xii. EXCELth Family Health Center - Algiers  
4422 General Meyer Ave, Ste 103, New Orleans, LA 70131-4330  
504-526-1179  
<http://www.excelth.com>

**83. WHERE CAN I GET MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE?**

- a. Any of the Federally Qualified Health Centers listed above can connect you to mental health services.

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE

### 84. WHERE CAN I FIND TREATMENT FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE?

- a. There are several places that offer treatment for substance abuse. Odyssey House at 504-821-9211, Bridge House at 504-522-4475 x1027/1043 and Grace House at 504-899-2423.

### 85. WILL GOING FOR TREATMENT AFFECT MY PROBATION OR PAROLE?

- a. Seeking treatment for substance abuse will not affect your probation or parole.

## EDUCATION

### 86. HOW DO I GET MY HISET (FORMERLY GED)?

- a. The GED test has been replaced with a test called the HiSET which will function in a similar way to the GED. You will have to go through a class and take a test. The Urban League has a HiSET class. For more information you can contact them at 1-855-620-9640.

### 87. HOW MUCH WILL TAKING THE HISET TEST COST?

- a. The cost for taking the HiSET is \$90.<sup>13</sup> You can retake any section of the test for six dollars. You must be at least 17, and have a driver's license, valid passport, military ID, or other forms of government-issued (national or foreign) identification that show name, address, date of birth, signature and photograph.

### 88. WHERE CAN I GET SCHOOL OR CAREER COUNSELING?

- a. Educational and career counseling is provided through Goodwill's reentry program. You can contact them at 504-456-2622.

### 89. WHAT ASSISTANCE IS THERE FOR GOING TO COLLEGE?

- a. If you are on probation or parole or living in a halfway house, you may be eligible for federal student aid. But remember, if you were convicted of a drug-related offense or if you are subject to an involuntary civil commitment for a sexual offense, your eligibility may be limited.<sup>14</sup>

## GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

### 90. HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS (SNAP)?

- a. You are eligible for SNAP if you have an income below \$2,552 for a family of 4. You can fill out the application online at [dss.state.la.us](http://dss.state.la.us), or at the DCFS Economic Stability Office at 1630 Iberville St., Ste. 1000 New Orleans, LA 70112. You can also call them at 1-888-LA-HELP-U, or 1-888-524-3578 for more information.

### 91. HOW DO I APPLY FOR WIC?

- a. People who qualify for WIC are pregnant women, women who have just had a baby or families with infants or young children. The total income must be below \$43,568 for a family of four. To apply for WIC, you must:
  1. Choose the clinic you would like to visit. You can choose whichever clinic is most convenient for you.

<sup>13</sup><http://theadvocate.com/news/7091546-123/ged-exam-retiring-after-seven>

<sup>14</sup><http://studentaid.ed.gov/eligibility/criminal-convictions>



2. Call that clinic. Make an appointment to see if you and/or your children are eligible for WIC.
3. Bring proof of income. For each person living in your house, bring one of these items:
  - a. Pay stub showing “gross income”
  - b. Current tax records
  - c. Letter from employer with salary amount
  - d. Proof of Social Security benefits
  - e. Alimony or child support payments
  - f. Other proof (ask clinic)
4. Anyone on Medicaid, food stamps (SNAP), or TANF already has the right income for WIC. Please bring proof of participating in these programs.
  - i. Bring proof of where you live. Bring one of these items:
    - a. Rent receipt
    - b. Utility bill
    - c. Other proof (ask clinic)
  - ii. Bring proof of identification for each person who wants WIC benefits. Bring one of these items:
    - a. Driver’s license
    - b. Birth certificate
    - c. State, school or work ID
    - d. Other proof (ask clinic)<sup>15</sup>

## 92. WHERE ARE THE WIC CLINICS?

- a. All clinics are open 8am - 12pm and 1pm - 4pm, Monday through Friday
  - i. Ida Hymel Health Center (Algiers)
 

1111 Newton St.  
New Orleans, LA 70114  
Phone: 504-658-2795
  - ii. Edna Pilsbury Health Clinic (Central City)
 

2222 Simon Bolivar Ave. | 2nd Floor  
New Orleans, LA 70112  
Phone: 504-658-2895
  - iii. NO East Health Care Center (New Orleans East)
 

5640 Read Blvd. | Suite 540  
New Orleans, LA 70127  
Phone: 504-658-2760

## 93. HOW DO I KNOW IF I’M ELIGIBLE FOR SSI?

- a. Supplemental Security Income is for people who have been designated as disabled, are blind, or are over the age of 65 and make below a certain amount of money. If you were getting SSI previously your payments were stopped during incarceration.
- b. The Social Security office for New Orleans is located at 400 Poydras St. #500, New Orleans, LA 70130. You can get additional information by calling 1-800-772-1213 or at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

<sup>15</sup><http://www.nola.gov/health/programs/wic/>

#### **94. HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M ELIGIBLE FOR SSDI?**

- a. Social Security Disability Insurance is for individuals who have paid into the Social Security system, and who have a mental or physical health issue that meets the requirements set out by Social Security. The best way to determine whether or not you are eligible is to call the Social Security Office and set up an appointment.
- b. The Social Security office for New Orleans is located at 400 Poydras St. #500, New Orleans, LA 70130. You can get additional information by calling 1-800-772-1213 or at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

#### **95. WHAT IS THE LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?**

- a. LIHEAP helps families who make under a certain amount of money with their heat bills. Families of four making less than \$40,138 are eligible for LIHEAP. You can apply by calling 1-888-454-2001. Additionally, Total Community Action assists individuals with their applications. You can contact them at 504-827-2262 or 504-827-2263.

### **GETTING IDENTIFICATION AND OTHER DOCUMENTS**

#### **96. HOW DO I GET A SOCIAL SECURITY CARD?**

- a. In order to get your Social Security Card you will need original documents to show you are a citizen of the United States. These include a passport or an original birth certificate. You will have to prove your age by providing a U.S. hospital record of your birth or a U.S. passport. You will also have to prove your identity with a U.S. driver's license, State-issued nondriver identification card or passport. If you do not have these documents call Social Security to set up an appointment. It may take anywhere from 10 days to several months to process your application depending on your status.
- b. The Social Security office for New Orleans is located at 400 Poydras St. #500, New Orleans, LA 70130. You can get additional information by calling 1-800-772-1213 or at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

#### **97. HOW DO I GET A BIRTH CERTIFICATE?**

- a. Birth certificates are handled through the Department of Health and Human Services' Vital Records office. You can go in person to 1450 Poydras Street, Suite 400 or call 504-593-5100. The cost for getting a short form birth certificate is \$9, and \$15 for long form birth certificates.

#### **98. HOW DO I GET A LOUISIANA DRIVER'S LICENSE OR ID CARD?**

- a. The fee is \$21 for a new application and \$18 for a license renewal and \$13 for a replacement. In order to get a driver's license or an ID card you need a completed application, a document proving identity like a birth certificate, a passport or a permanent resident card. You will also need a second way to prove your identity like a college ID card, or a health insurance card. You will also need your Social Security Number and proof of selective service registration if applicable.

# RESOURCES AT A GLANCE

A full list of reentry resources is available at [www.nolaforlife.org](http://www.nolaforlife.org).

However, the following resources are a great place to start.

## **JOB1 Business and Career Center Solutions**

3400 Tulane Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70119  
504-658-4500

## **Community Service Center, United Way**

4000 Magazine St.  
New Orleans, LA 70115  
504-897-6277

## **Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Louisiana**

3400 Tulane Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70119  
504-456-2622

## **Odyssey House**

2475 Canal St., Suite 211  
New Orleans, LA 70119  
504- 333-6186

## **Total Community Action**

1420 South Jeff Davis Pkwy  
New Orleans, La 70125  
504-872-0334

## **Travelers Aid Society of Greater New Orleans**

1615 Canal St., Suite B  
New Orleans, LA 70112  
504-586-0010

## **Urban League of Greater New Orleans**

Office of Workforce Development  
3232 N. Galvez  
New Orleans, LA 70117  
504-324-4444





**NOLA FOR LIFE**

[www.nolaforlife.org](http://www.nolaforlife.org)