



Adaptation Notice: This document was adapted from materials originally developed by UnCommon Law. While inspired by their framework, this version has been revised and reworded by (De)serving Life to reflect the needs of justice-involved individuals in New Mexico. This adaptation is not affiliated with or endorsed by UnCommon Law. We are deeply grateful for the foundational work of UnCommon Law. If you would like to learn more about their services, access additional resources, or get in contact with their team, please visit: www.uncommonlaw.org

Please note: This guide does not serve as legal advice. Every individual's situation is unique, and the parole process can vary widely. If you have legal questions, we strongly encourage you to consult a qualified parole attorney.

Writing Your Parole Plan

A Guide to Planning for Life After Prison

A parole plan is more than just a document—it's your chance to show the Parole Board that you've taken the time to think seriously about your future. It shows that you've got real, specific steps in place to succeed. That you're not guessing. You're preparing. You're owning your next chapter.

Even though a parole plan isn't required, it's one of the most powerful tools you can bring with you. A good plan shows the Board that you're not waiting to get out and "figure it out later"—you're already putting in the work to build a life worth coming home to.

Throughout this guide, we'll also help you create goals that are **SMART**:

Specific – Clear and detailed

Measurable – Something you can track or check off

Achievable – Realistic for where you are

Relevant – Connected to your future and your values

Time-bound – Has a deadline or timeframe

SMART goals help make your plan stronger by showing that it's not just based on hope—it's based on action.

Take your time with this. Go one section at a time. Ask for help if you need it. This is your future, your voice, your plan—and we're here to help you build it.

I. Your Roadmap: Building a Life Step by Step

This part of your parole plan is where you break things down: what happens right after release, what happens in the first few months, and what you're working toward long term. You're showing the Parole Board that you've thought about the real-life challenges you'll face—and that you have a game plan for meeting them.

To help you stay focused and intentional, you'll be using SMART goals throughout your timeline. That means setting goals that are:

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

In each stage of your timeline, ask yourself:

- What do I need to do?
- When do I need to do it by?
- How will I know when it's done?
- This turns a vague idea like "I'll try to find work" into a concrete plan like:
- "I will apply to five landscaping jobs within two weeks of release."

A. Immediate Needs (First 1–7 Days After Release)

This first phase is all about getting your basic needs met so you can land on solid ground. The Parole Board wants to know that you're ready to take action right away and have thought through the first steps.

Examples of SMART-aligned Immediate Goals:

- I will check in with my parole officer within 24 hours of release.
- I will get to [transitional housing address] by 6 p.m. on my release date.
- I will apply for a New Mexico state ID within 3 days of release.
- I will attend my first AA meeting within the first week.
- I will schedule a primary care appointment within 7 days to begin managing my health.

B. Short-Term Goals (Weeks 2–24)

This phase builds on your immediate needs and starts to show how you'll create a sustainable, stable lifestyle. It's about forming habits, building a schedule, and staying connected to positive supports.

Examples of SMART-aligned Short-Term Goals:

- I will attend weekly therapy sessions through [provider] starting within the first month.

- I will complete job applications for at least 10 positions within the first 30 days.
- I will open a checking account at [bank name] within the first 2 weeks.
- I will attend GED prep classes every Tuesday and Thursday at [location] for the first 3 months.
- I will reconnect with my children through supervised visits twice a month starting in month two.

C. Long-Term Vision (6 Months and Beyond)

This is where you get to share what you're really working toward—your dreams, your hopes, your purpose. These aren't just "goals for the Board." These are your goals for your life.

Examples of SMART-aligned Long-Term Goals:

- I will enroll in community college by the fall semester following my release.
- I will complete a trade certification through [program] within 12 months.
- I will save \$2000 by the end of my first year home toward my own apartment.
- I will mentor at-risk youth through [organization] at least twice a month.
- I will apply to restore custody of my child within the first year, depending on readiness and support.

Your timeline tells your story—step by step, goal by goal.

Use it to show how you'll move from surviving to thriving, with clarity, purpose, and a support system behind you.

II. Your Concrete Plans: Turning Vision into Action

Now that you've created a timeline of your goals, it's time to get specific. This section is about showing the Parole Board that your plans aren't just ideas—they're grounded, thoughtful, and SMART.

Each plan you write should be:

Specific – Clearly explain what you'll do

Measurable – So it's easy to track

Achievable – Realistic for your situation

Relevant – Connected to your success

Time-bound – With a deadline or schedule

These next sections help break your reentry goals into key life areas. As you go, try to include letters, contacts, or research that support your plan.

1. Housing

Where you live after release is one of the most important pieces of your plan. If possible, secure a spot in transitional housing and include a letter of acceptance. If you plan to live with someone you trust, include a support letter from them.

SMART examples:

- I will check into [Transitional Housing Program] within 24 hours of release.
- I will remain in transitional housing for 6 months while I apply for long-term housing options.
- I will transition to living with my cousin [Name] in [City] after 6 months, and I have a letter from them confirming this.

Tips:

- Have a backup plan or a second housing option, just in case.
- If you are required to register (such as under sex offense statutes), make sure the housing provider is aware and has accepted you.
- Include why your chosen housing is a good fit for you.

2. Employment

The Board wants to know how you'll support yourself financially. Whether you have a job offer, a training opportunity, or a list of job leads, this is your chance to show you're committed to working and earning.

SMART examples:

- I will begin work at [Employer Name] as a [Job Title] within 2 weeks of release, earning \$16/hour, 30 hours per week.
- I will complete applications to 5 reentry-friendly jobs within 10 days of release.
- I will enroll in [Job Training Program] within the first month to build my skills for long-term employment.

Tips:

- If you can't get a job offer while inside, include research showing businesses that have hired justice-involved people before.
- If someone's promised to help you with job connections, mention them and include a letter if possible.
- If you're working a trade inside, ask your supervisor for advice or a referral.

3. Transportation

Let the Board know how you'll get to work, parole meetings, programming, and medical appointments. Transportation shows you've thought about the practical side of reentry.

SMART examples:

- I will get a monthly bus pass from [Transit Provider] within my first 48 hours after release.
- My uncle [Name] has agreed to drive me to work until I get my license—see attached letter.
- I will begin working toward my driver's license by scheduling a DMV appointment within 30 days.

4. Programming & Recovery Support

Programs and services keep you connected and supported. The Board wants to see that you've got tools and structure in place to stay on track—especially if substance use was part of your history.

SMART examples:

- I will attend NA meetings every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at [Location] starting within 7 days of release.
- I will meet with a therapist through [Agency] once a week starting in my second week home.
- I will attend weekly reentry support group sessions at [Organization] for the first 6 months.

Include:

- Program names, addresses, and times if possible
- Group schedules
- Letters from program providers or facilitators

5. Support Network

Your people matter. Show the Board that you're not alone and that you have folks in your life who believe in you and want to help.

SMART examples:

- I will check in by phone with my mentor [Name] every Sunday to talk about my goals.
- I will attend church with my sister and her family weekly as a way to stay grounded.
- I will meet with my sponsor from [Recovery Group] twice a week.

Include:

- Names, relationships, and contact info for each person
- A quick description of how they'll support you (emotionally, spiritually, socially)

6. Optional Sections: Making It Personal

Your plan doesn't have to fit into just one box. Include what's true to you. If there are areas of your life that are important to your stability, growth, or wellness, add them. You might include:

Health Care:

- I will schedule an appointment with [Clinic] to continue managing [Condition] within 14 days of release.
- I will apply for Medicaid the first week after release to cover my medical needs.

Recreation & Positive Activities:

- I will join a local gym or walking group to maintain my mental and physical health.
- I will volunteer twice a month with [Organization] to stay connected and give back.

Possible Challenges & How You'll Handle Them:

- If I feel overwhelmed, I will call [Support Person] or attend an emergency support group.
- I will avoid certain people or places that may trigger me and instead spend time with [Name] or attend [Positive Activity].

Each piece of your plan tells the Board something important about who you are.

This is your life—and your plan proves you're thinking ahead, making smart choices, and preparing to thrive.

III. Back It Up: Support Letters and Research

You've just put serious thought into your future. Now it's time to back that plan up with proof. For every part of your parole plan—whether it's housing, work, programming, or support—it helps to show that someone is standing with you.

Whenever possible, ask for letters.

- A housing provider can write a letter confirming your spot and move-in date.
- An employer can write a letter describing the job offer.
- A support person can write a letter explaining how they'll be part of your journey.

Make sure these letters are clear and specific. The more real and solid your plan looks on paper, the more confidence the Parole Board will have in you.

For things you can't verify yet:

That's okay. If you're still inside and can't get a letter or document, you can show that you've done the research. For example:

- Include the address and phone number of the DMV where you plan to get your ID.
- Write out which documents you'll need to bring and how you'll get them.

- List names of transitional housing programs you've contacted and their requirements.

Even if you don't have every piece locked in, showing that you've thought ahead and gathered information matters.

You're Already Taking the First Step

If you've worked your way through this guide, you've already done something powerful—you've shown that you're serious about your future. You're taking ownership of your reentry, your growth, and your success.

At **(De)serving Life**, we believe no one is the worst thing they've ever done. We believe in second chances, in healing, and in people who are willing to do the work to come home and make an impact.

By writing your parole plan, you've already started walking that path. You've chosen to look forward, to build a vision, and to back it up with action. And no matter how far away your release date feels right now, just know this: you are not alone.

We're proud of you for taking this step.