



Returning Home

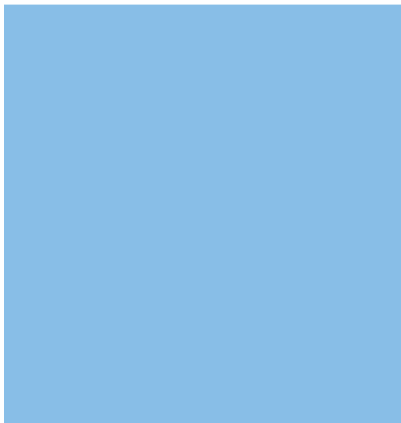
A Guide to the Challenges and Opportunities After Deportation



2020 Edition



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Returning Home: A Guide to the Challenges and Opportunities After Deportation, 2020 Edition.

Please help us to distribute Returning Home to every person who requests a copy. Most people facing release and deportation have very limited funds. If you are in a position to make a donation, please send a check to the Education Justice Project, 1001 S. Wright Street, Champaign, IL 61820, or donate securely online at educationjustice.net.

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welcome home

We're glad you've picked up *Returning Home: A Guide to the Challenges and Opportunities After Deportation*. For many of you, the country you are returning to really is home. Its customs and people are familiar. Maybe you are even returning to loved ones and a home you remember well. For others, deportation after release means being sent to what feels like a foreign country where customs seem strange and integrating into the society may be challenging. This booklet can help you no matter which group you fall into. It can help you to transition successfully from prison to life on the outside, providing information about what to expect during the process of deportation, finding a job, and making the most of your skills, as well as about government and nonprofit organizations that provide support.

Let's be honest: adjusting successfully to life on the outside isn't easy, especially if you have been locked up for a long time. This is made even more difficult by deportation. You may be returned to your home country against your will, which can lead to feelings of anger. Some recently deported people are so concerned with returning to the US at any cost that they fail to focus their efforts on achieving success in their new country of residence. And of course, the adjustment to life after incarceration adds another level of difficulty.

It may seem like the odds are insurmountable in a new country where you are living, perhaps not by choice. Be encouraged! You have some very real advantages that you might not be aware of as compared to someone returning home to Illinois, or another US state. Firstly, depending on where you apply for work, your employer may or may not know about your record, so it is your decision to share it with them or not. This can be seen as a "freedom" that those returning to life in the US won't have as they may face house arrest, parole, and a potentially hostile job market. With this freedom, however, comes a responsibility to be honest about jobs and social environments that may present challenges to you. It's important to do a self-evaluation and to make wise decisions that allow you to make the kind of changes in your life you want to make since there will be no government entity checking in on you.

Another very valuable skill you likely possess is your English. Even if you are not an advanced speaker, any knowledge of English will be an asset for you. Employers in a wide variety of industries are looking for English-speaking employees and may even pay for you to attend additional classes.

Returning Home will help you meet the challenges as well as take advantage of the opportunities available to you. We wouldn't have written it if we didn't believe in YOU—yes, you!—and your ability to make a positive difference in the world. Don't stop believing in yourself.

Throughout this book, you'll find words of encouragement and inspiration from people who traveled the same journey that you're about to begin. Some of them are alumni of the Education Justice Project, a college-in-prison program that has operated at Danville Correctional Center since 2008. We're grateful for their important contributions to the guide and hope you find their words and advice helpful.

Let this guide serve as a reminder that others have successfully navigated reentry and deportation, and you can, too. Take the time to read it, make plans, and seek help from others. And don't give up! Please keep in touch. We'd love to know how you're doing and how we can update this guide. Your feedback can help others who will follow in your footsteps. To share your comments, especially suggestions for improvement, please write to us at returninghome@educationjustice.net.

We wish you luck on this new journey in your life.

Please note: This guide was originally written for people incarcerated in the state of Illinois, so some details may not apply to you. We update the guide annually and aim to include information that is relevant to people living in various situations. Please feel free to share any information that you found helpful on your journey.

making this guide work for you

Adjusting to life after incarceration and deportation can be challenging. This guide provides information and resources to help you succeed. It is organized into three main sections:

1. Before You Leave

If you are considering how to prepare for your release and deportation, read this section. It covers topics such as preparing mentally for your deportation, what to expect at the border, and how to prepare for adjusting to life in Mexico or in your home country.

2. After Your Return

If you need guidance after deportation, turn to this section. It is organized by topic and has advice about many of the challenges you will face, from requesting basic documents to finding employment and signing up for health care.

3. Directory

Maybe you are simply looking for the address of a shelter on the border or need a form to request your birth certificate. Turn to the directory. This section is also organized by topic (employment, housing, healthcare, etc.) with tabs so that you can easily find what you need. Lists of organizations and resources are provided with addresses, phone numbers, websites, and brief descriptions.

In this guide, you will find worksheets to help you think about release and copies of forms for applying for different programs for your convenience. Forms in the guide are subject to change.

We are aware that everyone's situation is unique. Some of you are leaving after a short time in prison, while others have spent decades there. Some of you may have a large support network of family and friends to return to, while others may be alone. Some of you may know a lot about the reentry and deportation process, while others may know very little. We've tried to provide information that will be useful to everyone, but feel free to skip around to the sections that are most relevant to your situation and needs.

We have listed a number of different programs, services, and businesses throughout this guide as resources for people returning to their home country. We can't endorse any of these organizations, or the usefulness of their services to every individual but we believe that they stand to offer useful information and services.

what you need to know about COVID-19

COVID-19 is an extremely contagious virus that has infected 7.5 million people all over the world. The US has the largest number of cases of any country, and more than 114,000 deaths as of mid-June.

The virus spreads mostly through person-to-person contact, via respiratory droplets in the air and on skin and other surfaces. You can spread it by touching those surfaces or by shaking contaminated hands and then touching your nose, mouth or eyes. Most people who catch the virus don't start showing symptoms for five days, and some people take as long as 14 days to start showing symptoms. About half the people who have the virus do not have any symptoms at all. People who have the virus may still be contagious even if they don't have symptoms!

Most people recover without medical care. However, people who are older are at greater risk, as are people who have conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and people who are obese. This does not mean the young are immune, and younger, healthy people should still take precautions to protect themselves and at-risk individuals around them.

To date there is no vaccine for the virus or cure for the infection, though getting medical treatment can help relieve the symptoms. Many states and countries have started gradually reopening their economies, but this does not mean that the danger has passed. We all must continue to take precautions to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Staying Safe from COVID-19

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend the following:

- Avoid close contact. Maintain 6 feet of distance from other people. Avoid large groups and crowded places. If you or someone in your home experiences symptoms, maintain 6 feet of distance between the sick person and other household members, if possible.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Wear a face mask when around others, even if you do not feel ill.

- Cover your coughs and sneezes and wash your hands afterwards.
- Clean and disinfect frequently used surfaces.
- Maintain healthy eating, exercise and sleeping habits.
- Take your temperature regularly if possible.

Staying Safe During Deportation

While it will be difficult to take precautions during deportation, try to follow these guidelines to the best of your ability:

- Wash your hands as often as possible.
- When possible, attempt to maintain a distance of at least 6 feet between yourself and others.

During transportation, try to sit with at least one seat between you and the next person.

- Wear a mask at all times.
- Comply with all temperature checks.

Self-Quarantining

Because many prisons and jails are seeing outbreaks of COVID-19 cases, it is important to assume that you have been exposed to the virus. For this reason, the CDC recommends that you self-quarantine for 14 days on release. If possible, call the people you will be living with and make a plan. Request that they set up a room in their home with clothing, food, and other necessities for you so that you won't have to leave and they won't have to enter. Ask them to wear masks and remind them you cannot hug or touch until the 14-day quarantine is complete, though this will be difficult.

COVID-19 in Mexico

Unfortunately, while cases have begun to drop in early hotspots such as Europe, the USA, and Asia, in Central and South America the pandemic is growing rapidly, with the highest increases of both new cases and deaths in Mexico. In early June, Mexico surpassed the US in total number of daily deaths from COVID-19.

As of mid-June, Mexico has seen more than 134,000 cases and 16,000 deaths. Because of low testing rates, officials believe the true figures are significantly higher than those officially reported. The pandemic has led to overcrowding at hospitals. As of mid-June, the places seeing the highest infection rates are Mexico City, Tabasco, Sinaloa, Aguascalientes, and Yucatán.

At the same time, the country has started to reopen parts of its economy. President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has been criticized for both a slow initial response to the pandemic and the hasty reopening of the economy.

Staying Safe in Mexico

In order to stay safe in Mexico follow this list of precautions as much as possible:

- Self-quarantine for 14 days. Follow the guidelines above for advice on how to safely and effectively self-quarantine in your home.
- Stay home as much as possible. Local and state governments may have different restrictions in place at any given time, but, regardless of the current government instructions, staying home as much as you can, and continuing to take precautions when going out for essential matters, is the safest option.
- Adhere to social distancing measures, wash your hands frequently, and cough or sneeze inside your elbow rather than into your hands.
- If you experience mild symptoms of COVID-19 call a healthcare provider or the governmental hotline at (800) 0044-800 or (55) 5658-1111. Medical professionals can help you determine whether you should remain at home or seek medical attention. Mild symptoms include fever, cough, headaches, throat pain and constant sneezing. If you or a family member have trouble breathing, go to an emergency room or call 911.
- If you have been in contact with someone who has symptoms, follow the guidelines above and self-quarantine for 14 days. Testing may be available in your area. Check with local health authorities.
- If you have mild symptoms do not self-medicate. Eat healthy foods and drink eight glasses of water daily. Wash all dishes with water, soap and bleach.
- If you are experiencing fear, anxiety, or emotional isolation, call the governmental hotline at (800) 911-2000 for advice and support.

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What sort of information will you find in this guide? For one thing, it challenges some common myths about reentry and deportation and provides you with the information you need to move forward. Here are a few examples:

Myth: You will be able to get a job without a background check in Mexico.

False. This varies a great deal by region and company. A Mexican company in the south of the country, for example, will not likely conduct a background check, but a US factory near the border likely will.

For more information about searching for jobs and what to do when you have a criminal record, turn to the Employment section located on page 45. The Directory also has employment resources, with lists of places you can go for help. See page 103.

Myth: You will have fewer opportunities in Mexico than you did in the US.

False. While it is true that many Mexicans choose to live in the US due to opportunities there are distinct advantages to living in Mexico. Opening a small business is much easier and cheaper, for example, and if you speak English you will have an advantage in the job market.

See Employment on page 45 to find out more.

Myth: You can't transfer your academic credits to universities in Mexico.

False. While this has historically been quite difficult, the Mexican congress has made changes that allow credits from US universities and colleges to transfer more easily to Mexican institutes of higher learning.

See Education on page 65.

Myth: There are little to no social services in Mexico.

False. While it's true that there are considerably fewer government and non-profit resources available to those in need in Mexico than in the US, there are resources. One huge benefit that Mexicans enjoy that is not available to those living in the US is universal health care. In addition, residents of Mexico City can qualify for six months of unemployment insurance and free classes to become an English teacher. Churches throughout the country provide clothing and food assistance as well.

For more information see Resources to Meet Basic Needs on page 36.

Myth: Mexico is a dangerous country and my life will be at risk living there.

False. While it's true that some parts of Mexico have very high crime rates, other cities are relatively safer. Keep in mind that cities like Chicago have problems with violent crime as well, but residents learn how to conduct themselves to maximize their safety. The US State Department issues travel warnings to Americans traveling to Mexico. This resource may be worth consulting so as to be more informed. Many Mexican states have a Level 2 travel warning meaning "Exercise Increased Caution" (The same as France!) such as: Mexico City, Aguascalientes, Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Chiapas, Guanajuato, Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro, Tabasco, Tlaxcala, Veracruz, and Yucatán. Other Mexican states are labeled either as "Reconsider Travel" (Level 3) or "Do Not Travel" (Level 4). Remember that the goal of this warning system is to keep US travelers safe. The US government does not want to encourage them to take risks. A warning does not necessarily mean that a particular place will be dangerous for you since there are so many complex factors at play.

Myth: If I haven't lived in Mexico since I was a child, I won't fit in and will have a very difficult time.

False. While it is true that you may be identifiable as someone who has lived in the US for an extended period of time, making an effort to learn the culture and customs of your community will help you integrate.

For more information about culture see on page 85.

Section 1:
before you leave





prepare yourself mentally

It's never too early to prepare for leaving prison and returning to your home country. Even if you have a very long sentence, keep your eye on life after release. If your out date is many years away, you can prepare by getting an education (Adult Basic Education, GED, vocational certificates, and college), working in prison so that you build your skills and your resume, taking advantage of programs like anger management and parenting classes, and developing hobbies.

Write a book, keep a journal, learn how to draw, join a choir, or read. Consider attending religious services, Alcoholics Anonymous, or Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Improve your English or Spanish by chatting with native speakers. All of this will surround you with positive people and help prevent you from thinking of yourself solely as a prisoner who has nothing to contribute to the world.

Even while in prison, you can still make a difference. Education Justice Project (EJP) students developed an English as a second language program to teach English to others behind bars. They also run anti-violence discussion groups in the prison. Many incarcerated people donate produce grown in prison gardens to local food banks. What can you do?

The more you stay connected to the outside during your time in prison, the easier it will be to re-enter society.

If your time is short, you can take additional steps to prepare for the outside world. This includes preparing yourself mentally. Reentry and deportation are difficult, so set realistic expectations. Give yourself permission to accept

Make sure you have a good relationship with the people you're going to stay with when you leave prison.

– **Shaun W.**



that things may not be ideal or easy.

We suggest that you promise to forgive yourself if you make mistakes. It is likely that you will have some awkward social encounters, especially if you have been in prison for a long time and the culture of your home country is foreign to you.



Get yourself in the right frame of mind so that you can laugh them off. People in the outside world have awkward social encounters all the time! You may think that it will be obvious to everyone that you've just gotten out of prison, but people on the outside have busy lives. They will not be analyzing you.

Think now about how you can find breathing room once you're out in the world. Life on the outside can feel very rushed. Think about hobbies that you enjoy: biking, taking long walks, and gardening, for example. How can you build such activities into your life?

It will be useful to practice patience. Everything may not go as you would wish. There will be disappointments. Sometimes you will be confused by how much things have changed since you went away. Go slow. Breathe. It is natural to feel stressed sometimes, but you can keep it from getting out of hand. You might join a group that is focused on practicing mindfulness or meditation.

Advice for socializing outside? Learning coping skills and anger management. Being open-minded and less abrasive.

– **Earl W.**

The mindfulness suggestions on page 18 are taken from Jon Kabat-Zinn's book, *Full Catastrophe Living*. You can start applying these techniques, even while you're still in prison.

Use the "Getting Ready for Release" checklist on page 19 to help you plan the logistics around your transition. Ideally, you'll want to start doing this around 18 months before your release.

Go slow, breathe. Make a 3-5 year plan on paper.

– **Darrell W.**



PREPARE FOR CHALLENGES

Before leaving prison, work on practicing patience, both with others and with yourself.

1. What skills do you use to manage stress?

2. When things go wrong or when you're disappointed, what can you do to keep yourself on track and focused?

KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS

1. What have you done in the past to successfully adjust to major life changes?

2. What skills, habits, or traits helped you stay motivated, build positive relationships, and maintain self-respect?

Ways of Practicing Mindfulness

“Mindfulness is defined as a mental state achieved by focusing one’s awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one’s feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations (Oxford Dictionary).” Practicing mindfulness has many benefits including greater well-being such as reduced anxiety, stress, and expression of emotion, reducing distractions, and increasing cognition, among others.

Below are some mindfulness suggestions. You can start applying the suggestions below even while you’re still in prison.

Breathing. Tune into your breathing throughout your day, experiencing the slow rise and fall of your stomach. Focus on your thoughts and feelings while you do this. Don’t pass judgment on your thoughts and feelings, just reflect on them.

Sitting. Attempt to be very still, without waiting or seeking out anything. Just embrace whatever comes to your mind while you do this. Simply observe your thoughts as they come to you while sitting quietly and peacefully. You may want to do this exercise for short, regular periods.

Listening. Listen to what is around you, marking the time between sounds in your head. Don’t worry about the sounds that are being made. Note gaps of quiet among these sounds. Think about how these sounds feel to you. Let them come to you and depart from you, only to be

replaced by new sounds. You may want to do this exercise for short, regular periods as well.

Walking. Stand up while being very still. Focus on your feet and legs, but don’t move just yet. Take some slow, deliberate steps and reflect on this movement. Don’t worry about what is around you. Simply look ahead of you and feel the motion of your body. You may want to do this exercise in a predetermined number of steps or in a circle.

Meditation resources for when you are out: Tergar.org

Tergar is an international meditation community founded by Yongey Mingur Rinpoche that offers a program for beginning and sustaining a personal meditation practice. The program is called “The Joy of Living” and is based on the book by the same name. Tergar is a network of meditation communities worldwide (as in Puebla, Mexico) and also offers a wealth of online resources such as online classes, meditation practice materials, and more. There is also a website in Spanish: espanol.tergar.org

Learn as Much as You Can About the Culture of Your Home Country

You will learn a great deal about living in your home country again after you arrive, but you can start the process while you are still incarcerated. Talk to other people from your country. Read and watch news about current events happening in your country. Pick up a history book or even a novel from your culture. All this will help you acclimate better once you get there.

Expect culture shock. Even if you have been in your country relatively recently, you may be surprised how fast things change and how differently people do things than in the United States. Recently deported people have expressed frustration with the enormous bureaucracy that is common in developing countries. Seemingly endless forms are requested at government agencies and many hours are needed to finally

complete the task you set out to do. See the an idea of what else to expect.
 section on Cultural Encounters on page 85 to get

Build Your Support Network

People often isolate themselves during tough times, but it can help to keep in touch with positive friends and family members. Try to put your support system in place before you leave. Contact family members and friends, and be honest about what you need from them, whether it's housing, financial support, advice, or emotional support. Find out exactly what they expect from you. Who are the people you're counting on to be there for you?

When I got here I couldn't get a job because I wasn't fluent in Spanish, I wasn't up to date with current events, with the culture. Study up on the history, culture, politics. You need to know all that to move around and not stick out like a sore thumb.



– Israel G.

GETTING READY FOR RELEASE CHECKLIST			
Use the checklist to figure out which areas may be a problem for you. Then plan to address them.			
Issues to face upon release	Got this covered	Need to address	Needing help
Chemical Abuse			
Lack of Money			
Transportation			
Day Care			
Family Problems			
Housing			
Clothing			
Medical			
Telephone			



preparing for deportation

As you think about your upcoming deportation, you may experience feelings of dread, nervousness, or anxiety. It may be bittersweet since you look forward to your out date, but it's tainted with the thought that you will be removed from the country you call home and from family and friends.

Part of that anxiety may be based in the fact that you are not sure what to expect with the deportation process. Although everyone's experience is different, we will do our best to give you an idea of what to expect during your time in ICE custody, at the border, and immediately after deportation. Keep in mind that this information is based on the experience of those who have traveled this road before you as well as information gathered from ICE websites and from talking to immigration attorneys. As such, it's impossible to say exactly what you personally can expect, but we've done our best to compile as much information as is relevant to you as someone facing deportation after release.

Before Deportation

There are a few things you can do to prepare logistically for your deportation. Firstly, confirm your out date. If you've been able to participate in a "good time" program you may be set to be released earlier than your original date. Locate your Alien Registration Number or "A-Number." It is an eight- or nine-digit number that your family and friends can use to locate you during the deportation process. They can do so by using the Online Detainee Locator System at <https://locator.ice.gov/odls/>. If they are unable to access this system, they can contact the ICE Office of Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) in Chicago, located at 101 West Congress Parkway, 4th Floor, Chicago, IL, 60605, Phone: (312) 347-2400.

Assess your finances. If you have income from a job while incarcerated, try to save as much as you can. Alternatively, identify family or friends who can send you money either while still incarcerated or while awaiting deportation in Kankakee, Illinois.

On the day of your release from state custody, likely in the morning, you will be transferred into ICE custody. ICE maintains multiple facilities in the state of Illinois and in neighboring states, and you may be transferred to any of them over the course of the next two weeks, approximately, until your actual deportation. Here, you can expect much less movement than you may be used to. You will be incarcerated with people from all over the world, not only those returning to Mexico. Many have been picked up directly off the streets.

ICE Custody

After being transferred among the various ICE facilities for approximately two weeks, you will be processed at the Jerome Combs Detention Center in Kankakee, Illinois. This final departure point used to be in Chicago at Broadview, but that is no longer the case. The plane leaves Friday morning. On the day that you are in Kankakee, a family member or friend can bring you a small bag of clothes (up to 40 pounds), toiletries (but no liquids), and money (dollars or pesos), which will make your deportation much more comfortable. At the time of publication drop-off times for these items were Thursday 8am-2pm or Friday 4am-8am the week before you leave. It is always a good idea to double check the times in case of changes. If you know anyone who will gather these items this for you, it is strongly encouraged for several reasons:

1. You will not appear as a deportee at the border since you will have street clothes.
2. You will have sufficient money for transportation, food and other necessities at the border.

3. You may even be able to help others who are being deported alongside you who don't have access to these things. It's a good idea to cash in your money card when you leave Kankakee. ATMs at the border will reject it.

When in Kankakee you will be offered a "court date" with an immigration agent who will tell you the charges against you and his opinion of it, if you have a chance to beat it or not. I recommend you go through the process but be aware your answers could be used against you. Do the interview but remain quiet.

– Alex A.



Advice from Erick, a recently deported person:

Even though it is a very stressful situation being moved around from town to town at all hours of the night, once you get to your destination at an ICE facility, which usually is a county jail, things will get better. You will still be in custody but you will be with many of your compatriots from all parts of Mexico. You will surely meet people from your own state and will develop a friendship which will allow you to plan and execute your trip from the border to your hometown so you won't travel through Mexico on your own. When you get to ICE you will not have anything, but your countrymen will gladly share what they have until you can get your hands on some things yourself. The mood in the ICE facility for the most part is light and fun as everyone gets to know each other. Once a week, Friday, they ship off groups of guys heading to the border. You will probably wait 2 weeks till you are deported, but in the meantime you will have a chance to use the phone and go to commissary if you get your family or friends to send you money. Again, the guys have no trouble making calls for you or having their people relay messages for you so don't worry. The staff at these places for the most part was cordial and respectful. They seemed to mostly be county officers and not ICE.

– Erick N.

At the Border

After leaving Kankakee, you will be flown to the border. Your plane may or may not make other stops in the country. (Two recently deported men report that their planes made stops in Louisiana and Alabama.) Once the plane lands, you will be put on a bus and taken to the border where officers will open a large gate and direct you to cross the bridge. On the other side, you will likely find Mexican immigration officials to orient you.

The Mexican government offers services to recently expatriated Mexicans called the Beta Program (Grupos Beta). They will offer you water and a small meal as well as a temporary ID, access to a phone and/or computer, transportation information, and sometimes a ride to the bus station, with a discounted ticket or to a place to change money. They also offer a grave warning. They often tell newly deported people not to stay in the border area, especially after dark. They will tell you that crime is high there and, for your safety, you should plan on taking the next bus south. Alternatively, they may offer to take you directly to a nearby shelter.

At the border stick together, help each other.

– **Ramon C.**



The address of the Jerome Combs Detention Center is

3050 South Justice Way,
Kankakee, IL 60901

It is located approximately 90 minutes away from Chicago, Illinois.

As a result of COVID-19, the Mexican government has hired buses to take you out of the border states, directly to your destination. Follow government officials' instructions at the border to insure your safety.

Be super patient during the deportation process.

There's a lot of waiting, sitting around, and you won't know what's happening next. Prepare yourself mentally for this. There is a lot of uncertainty.

– **Ramon C.**



Stay hydrated. I

remember being really thirsty once we hit the road so manage your water intake and go to the bathroom every chance you get because you don't know when you will get the chance again.

– **Ramon C.**



After Crossing the Border

It is crucial that you put some thought into what you will do after arriving at the border. Will you stay in a shelter in the area? Will you take a bus directly to your destination? Will someone be meeting you? It is important to understand that this will be difficult to arrange. You will not know your drop-off location until you are essentially there. ICE withholds this information to discourage reentry. That said, many recent deportees from Illinois have been released in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, at the border with Brownsville, but recently at least some people have been dropped at Reynosa/McAllen border crossing. The Mexican Immigration Beta Group will allow you to make phone calls and use the internet wherever you arrive.



Treat the guys from ICE with respect. When we did that, they gave it back. That was a great experience. We heard a lot of things about ICE but in reality they're not your enemy. They are just doing their jobs.

– Ramon C.

Be patient. Stay positive. eventually they will take you to a safe place.

– Alex A.



More advice from Erick:

Once at the border, Mexican immigration will give you food and a temporary ID and will urge you to get to the bus terminal as soon as possible. They also give rides to the terminal so just wait until they take you. Once at the terminal, you will need to buy a ticket. If you live deep in Mexico, like Michoacán as I did, there will NOT be direct buses there. You will have to take a bus to other nearby cities to pick other people up or to get a different bus altogether so calculate enough money to take multiple buses depending on how far south you are going. Bus tickets range from around \$10 USD (225 pesos) to around \$100 USD (2,200 pesos) depending, of course, on where you are going.

– Erick N.

Deportation to Mexico City

According to ICE, residents of the capital and non-border states can expect to be flown directly to Mexico City. Through talking to recently deported people, it appears that this is not always the case. More often than not, people find themselves deported to the border, even if they live in southern states. This may be a new protocol that has just recently been implemented but be prepared for either eventuality.

If you are deported to Mexico City, you won't find members of the Beta Group to help, but there are information modules for recently deported people in the airport in addition to other locations such as subway stations. The program is called "Operativo Migrante" and aims to assist returning citizens with registration for unemployment insurance, job training, and health care, among other programs. This program was developed in 2017, and it aims to connect workers with jobs appropriate to their skills, including jobs using English in the tourist industry. These include occupations in hotels and restaurants. They offer assistance in starting your own business as well.

For more information on these individual programs, whether you will be living in Mexico City or elsewhere, see the next sections on Employment and Resources to Meet Basic Needs on page 36.

Operativo Migrante locations:

- Mexico City International Airport
- The Metropolitan Cathedral
- Alameda Central
- Identity Plaza
- Dr. Jose María Rodríguez Health Center
- Angel of Independence
- National Institute of Immigration
- Subway stations: Balderas, Chabacano, Pantitlán, Terminal Aérea
- Bus terminals: North, South, Observatory, and East
- Neighborhood centers: Iztapalapa, Gustavo A. Madero, Xochimilco

You've got to have people to help you. Make contact with people in your home country and try to have someone waiting for you when you get there.

– Israel G.



Additional Insights

I was desperate to go back. I never wanted to live here. And the whole first year I was resisting the idea of making a life here. That attitude made it harder for me to adjust. But once I accepted living here, I put all my efforts into getting ahead here. Learning the language, making contacts and getting focused on living here. If you give it your all, if you are committed to living here you can actually make a good living and have a happy life here. I'm here, I'm working, I'm living and I'm happy.

– **Israel G.**



In case you are deported to an area where there is no Beta Group, stick together. Stay in well-lit areas and be aware that people will pick up on the fact that you are not from here and may try to take advantage of you. Don't talk to anyone you don't need to and keep an eye on your bag.

– **Ramon C.**



Planning on returning to the US?

Many recently deported people state that they planned to return illegally immediately. They failed to plan for life in Mexico because their intention was to cross back illegally right away. They caution you NOT to do this. Here's why:

Firstly, spending time in the border region while planning your reentry is extremely dangerous. There have been reports of people being forcibly recruited by organized crime organizations. Similarly, the border patrol is another barrier to reentry, not to mention legal consequences. Those who enter illegally who have been removed and do not have any criminal record can be fined and/or imprisoned for up to two years. Individuals caught reentering who have a felony conviction can be imprisoned for up to 20 years in a federal prison (Reentry of removed aliens 8 U.S.C.A. 1326).



prepare for your job search

If you are getting ready to leave prison and return to your home country, employment is probably very much on your mind. You may have a family member who owns a small business and is willing to offer you a job, or you may be setting out on your own. If you are near the border and applying to US companies, expect background checks.

If you are making your home in the south of the country, you are likely able to get work without your employer running a background check. It's also important to know what is considered fair pay in different parts of the country. At the border in Ciudad Juárez, for example, you can find work in a factory for roughly 160 pesos a day. (At the time of printing, this is equivalent to \$7.25 USD). In other parts of the country and in other industries, you will be paid by the hour. For example, an English teacher in Morelia, Michoacán may make 75-90 pesos (\$3-4 USD) an hour working in a public school. In larger cities, such as Mexico City and Puebla, you can expect to make closer to 100 or 120 pesos an hour, depending on the industry. No matter where you will land or what industry you want to work in, there is a lot you can do to prepare for your job before your release.

Build Experience

Take advantage of opportunities to earn certificates, gain job experience, and acquire skills while in prison. Work while you are incarcerated. It provides a track record of what you're capable of, boosts your confidence, and can help you identify skills you didn't know you had.

Enroll in education programs such as Adult Basic Education or college programs. This can prepare you for work on the outside and also demonstrate your intelligence and dedication to prospective employers. Take advantage of other types of programs too such as parenting classes or art programs. Engage in volunteer work in prison. This helps to develop your skills and is

something you can add to your resume. Examples of non-paid work that can prepare you for paid employment on the outside include being active in programs such as band or choir, a community garden and peer counselor programs.

If you are not a native or near-native speaker of English, learn! Enroll in English as a second language class if it is offered. If not, take any classes in English since exposure to the language will help you progress. If self-study is your only option, talk to native speakers and read as much as you can in the language! The same goes for Spanish. If yours is rusty, do all you can to improve it while still incarcerated.

Write Your Resume

Another important thing you can do while you're still in prison is to write your resume. This is a written summary of your skills, strengths, and work experience. You will need a resume to search and apply for jobs. Even if you do not have access to a computer or typewriter, write your resume out while you are still incarcerated. You can type it after your release.

Please note that it is not necessary to indicate on your resume that you gained education or work experience while incarcerated if you are worried that employers might view this unfavorably. The sample resume on page 128 can show you various ways that other formerly incarcerated people have handled this situation. Of course, if a prospective employer asks you if you have been incarcerated, you should provide a straightforward and honest answer.

RESUME CHECKLIST #1

Your resume should have several parts:

- Your name, basic data (date of birth), and contact information (phone and email) but typically NOT street address.** Mexican employers also expect that your resume will include a small photo, "infantil," in Spanish. You can have this done in a pharmacy or small photo studio.
- An objective (optional).** This tells potential employers what you are looking for and provides a brief summary of what you have to offer. At this point, your objective might be very broad, like, "energetic and dependable individual seeks opportunity to bring growth to your company," or "hard-working, college-educated individual with excellent writing skills seeks position."
- Education. Your resume should have a list of schools you've attended.** Consider including your educational experiences in prison, especially if you have earned any degrees or certificates (high school level and beyond). Your resume is also a place to list any scholarships, awards, or distinctions you earned during your education.
- Work experience.** List your jobs. Some resumes include volunteer work. However, it might be worthwhile to have a separate section for volunteer work if you have done so much that it will favorably attract a prospective employer's attention. Include where, when, and for how long you had each position. A short description of your responsibilities in each position is a good idea as well.
- Other professional skills.** This includes certifications, technical skills, language abilities, and awards and recognitions. If you have published any writing while in prison, e.g., in a prison newsletter or outside publication, you can list that on your resume.

Please note that the information expected on a resume in Mexico varies slightly from that included in resumes in the US. You may need to make small changes if you've already written one.

RESUME CHECKLIST #2

Your resume should be a one-to-two-page document. Review it many times, and try to have another person review it as well. Things to look out for include:

- Are all details correct?**
- Are there any typos or misspellings?** You want your resume to reflect your attention to detail and professionalism.
- Is there anything on your resume that is untrue?** Do not claim experiences that you have not had. This could land you in serious trouble.
- Is the formatting consistent?** For example, if the first section title is in bold, all of them should be in bold.
- Is your resume attractive to look at?** Employers have to review many resumes. Make yours stand out by being nicely designed and easy to read. Resist the temptation to use "fancy" type or a lot of underlining. These features make reading difficult.

Please see our forms section on page 124 for a sample resume used in Mexico.

Search for Employment Opportunities

Getting a job requires networking – talk with other people to get information, develop contacts, and find job opportunities. Talk with career counselors at the prison, if available. They can help you plan.

Talk to your family and friends about job opportunities they may be aware of. Ask for their help. Let them know you are serious about finding work and supporting yourself. Most people on the outside network heavily to find work.

If you have computer access, make a few copies of your resume, and mail them to friends and family members. Ask them to share your resume with prospective employers. For example, they might have family friends who own their own businesses, a neighbor who has a restaurant, or know someone whose company is looking to hire. At this point, you are not looking for an ideal job. You simply want a position from which you can continue to build a good employment history and, eventually, land that dream job.

Put some thought into what skills you have to offer as someone who has lived in the United States and is returning to their home country. English ability will take you far, as will cultural understanding of the United States. The Mexican government has recently established a program to fill thousands of vacant English teaching positions which are made more attractive through a competitive salary and benefits.

For information about how to find and apply for jobs once you are released, see the Employment section on page 36. Be hopeful. Many people have found jobs after incarceration, and, with the right preparation and attitude, you can too.



collect important documents

Official Documents from the U.S.

Any official document generated in the US, such as your high school or college diplomas, your children’s birth certificates, and your marriage or divorce certificate, will need to be **notarized** and then go through a process of getting what’s called an **“apostille”** before it will be recognized in Mexico and other countries. It may be difficult to handle this process while incarcerated, but, if you have a family member who is willing to help with this, it will facilitate things once you get to Mexico. For example, in order to work in a job that requires a bachelor’s degree, a notarized copy of the diploma is required. (Transcripts are not accepted as proof of a degree the way they are in the US.) The notarized diploma must then be taken to the Secretary of State to request the apostille. There is a \$2 fee, and the processing time is five to seven days. See the appendix for a brochure outlining the steps for requesting an apostille as well as the Forms section of this guide for the form that should accompany your request. Alternatively, you could hire an attorney to submit the request for you.

More information on the apostille process can be found at www.apostille.net/state-of-illinois-apostille.html#/. For more information on requesting an apostille for your documents, including a form, see pages 126.

Health Records

Planning for health care before you leave prison saves money and helps you avoid problems like running out of medication or getting sick and having to go to the emergency room. There are a few steps you should take before you are released.

Other documents that you may want to collect before you leave include: marriage or divorce decrees, green card, US passport, military discharge and US bank account information.

Documents that you will gather after deportation include your ID (called INE in Mexico), CURP, RFC, and optionally your passport and driver’s license. Information about these processes can be found on pages 33-34.



Important Addresses for Documents (walk-ins also accepted):

The address of the Illinois Secretary of State in Chicago:

Illinois Secretary of State's Index
Department
17 N. State St. Suite 1030,
Chicago, IL 60602
Phone: (312) 814-2067

Address in Springfield where documents can be mailed:

Illinois Secretary of State
Index Department
111 E. Monroe St.
Springfield, IL 62756
Phone (217) 782-7017

HEALTHCARE CHECKLIST

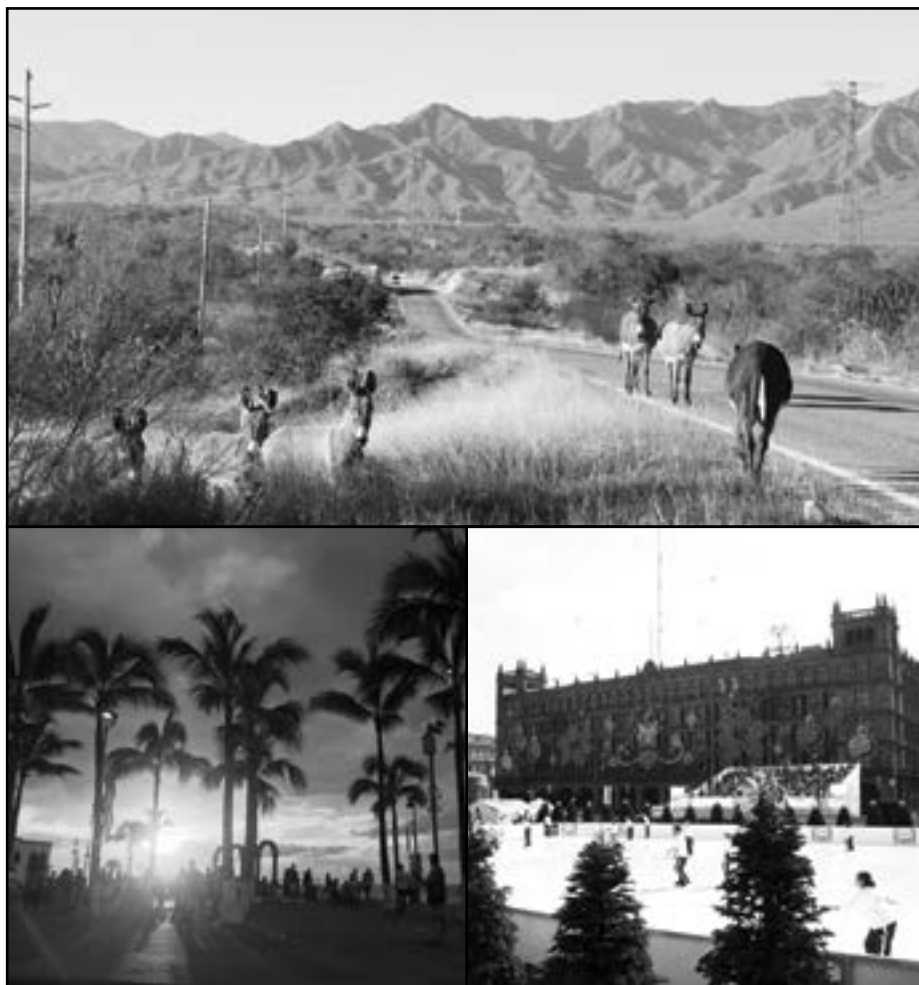
Start this early (within a year of your release) in case your doctor or dentist finds something you will need to address.

- Ask the healthcare unit at your facility what the procedure is for the release of your health records.** In most instances, you will be able to complete forms to acquire those records. Request them about 90 days before your release. You will likely have to pay for any copies. There are separate forms for medical records and HIV and mental health records. Be specific when requesting records. For example, be clear when requesting eye and dental exams less than 2-5 years ago, special procedures, and immunizations.

You especially want copies of your prison medical records if you had any particular medical issues. You can receive the records after your release, but, if you wait more than a few months post-release to request them, you must send the request to the Department of Corrections in Springfield rather than to the facility where you were held. Getting documents to Mexico or your home country can be expensive and time-consuming as well. In anticipation of your deportation it may be a good idea to send copies to a family member or friend in the US. The Mexican postal service can be unreliable when it comes to international shipping, so, if you have to send something important there, choose a private courier service like FedEx, DHL, or UPS. Alternatively, documents can be scanned and stored electronically. Family members can email them to you.

- Request a dental exam, an eye exam, and a physical exam so you can address any health concerns you may have before you leave prison.** Prisons can even offer glasses, if needed. Women are encouraged to request a gynecological exam with a PAP smear and ask for a mammogram if they're over the age of 40. Start early (within the year of your release) in case your dentist or doctor finds something you will need to address.
- Get your medications ready.** Prisons offer people a limited amount of medication supply upon release, ranging from a 30 to 90-day supply. Make sure you discuss your medication needs with the prison doctor.
- Plan to apply for government or private health insurance in your home country.** For more information about health care and how to apply, see the health section of the guide on page 87.

Section 2:
after your return





getting your IDs and documents

Congratulations! You're out and are now facing the challenges of navigating bureaucracy! Upon deportation you were given a temporary identification. This ID is official, and when you show it, the receiver is legally obligated to honor it. But this ID is temporary, so your next step will be to secure your permanent identification.

A current, official ID is necessary for opening a bank account, getting housing, submitting employment applications, and applying for health care and educational programs. If your family saved your documents for you, such as the INE (previously known as IFE) or your birth certificate, take them with you to renew them. It will facilitate the process.

Birth Certificate

If you do not have a copy of your birth certificate, this is where you will want to start. You will need it to request the INE, which is the most common official ID in Mexico. If you have an old copy of your birth certificate, you can use this to request your INE, but for other processes, such as getting married, a certified birth certificate (recently requested) will be required.

How to Request your Birth Certificate— In-person or Online

Aguascalientes, Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Ciudad de México, Coahuila, Colima, Durango, Estado de México, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Nayarit, Nuevo León, Morelos, Michoacán de Ocampo, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosí, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala, Veracruz, Yucatán and

Zacatecas.

If you do not live in these states, don't have your CURP, or prefer to request the document in person, you must go to your local Civil Registry (Registro Civil). See the directory at the back of this guide for the one closest to you, or consult their website for the most up-to-date information: <https://embamex.sre.gob.mx/argentina/images/consular/ofregcivilenrepubmexic>. The Civil Registry also issues marriage, divorce, and death certificates.

In order to request your birth certificate, you will be asked for your complete name as well as the complete names of your parents and the date and place where your birth was originally registered.

A small fee will be required, which varies by state. For example, at the time of publication,

the fee was 45 pesos in Nuevo Leon, 65 pesos in Mexico City, and 250 pesos in Michoacán.

INE

Once at your destination within Mexico, you will need to get your “INE,” pronounced “Eee-Nay.” This is your official identification that takes the place of a state ID or driver’s license in the US, but it functions differently. INE stands for “Institución Nacional Electoral” or “National Electoral Institute.” This means that by having an official ID you are registered to vote. It’s not a separate process like in the US. It’s also a national document, unlike how the US has it as state-specific. The INE is the most commonly accepted form of ID in Mexico. There is no charge for getting an INE.

HOW TO REQUEST YOUR INE

❑ **Identify whether you will be requesting the INE for the first time or a replacement, or simply a change of address or of other information.**

❑ **Collect your documents and/or ask a witness to accompany you.** In order to request your INE, you need a photo ID, proof of residence, and your birth certificate. The photo ID can be a military, state, or professional ID, but, in most cases, you won’t arrive in Mexico with one of these, and they do not accept your temporary ID. In place of a photo ID, the National Electoral Institute will accept two witnesses who live in the same town as you do and are willing to accompany you with their original, current INEs.

If you have no proof of residence in your own name, you can ask your witnesses to bring one of theirs. This can be an electricity (CFE) or telephone bill no more than three months old or a water or property tax bill (pago de predial) no more than a year old in the name of one of your witnesses. (It’s a good idea to bring copies of all these documents as well.)

❑ **Either make an appointment or go to the nearest “Módulo de atención ciudadana” (citizen attention module).** For a complete list, see the directory in the back of this guide or search the most current information on www.ubicatumodulo.ine.org.mx. Making an appointment may mean you have to wait a few days before you can go, but it will save you time instead of standing in line and waiting. You can do this here:

https://app-inter.ife.org.mx/siac2011/citas_initCapturaCitas.siac

❑ **Wait for your INE to be issued.** When you turn in your request and the accompanying documentation, they will let you know in what time frame you can expect to receive your identification. They also give you a document that proves you requested the INE as well as the date of pick up. You must pick up the ID at the same module where you requested it, bring the document they gave you, sign your name, and be fingerprinted to receive your INE.

See page 34 for your INE document checklist.

Getting your INE can take a long time, so be sure to bring everything you need:

- Your temporary ID.
Proof of residence (even if not in your name), such as an electricity or water bill.
- Your birth certificate.
- In the case that you don't have a photo ID, you can bring two witnesses who will present their own INE.

CURP (La Clave única de Registro de Población or Unique Population Registry Code)

The CURP is essentially the equivalent of a social security number that uniquely identifies you as you. It is required to do many things in Mexico, such as getting married, purchasing insurance, and getting a job.

If you already have a CURP but simply don't know the number, you can search for this information online. You will be asked for basic details such as your name, sex, and place of birth. You can do so here: www.consultas.curp.gob.mx

How to Request Your CURP

If you've never had a CURP, you must go in-person to a CURP office. To facilitate the process, you can print a certificate of non-existence by searching for yourself on the above link. When the system tells you that you are not in the system, it offers you the option of printing the certificate, called, in Spanish, "Certificado de no existencia."

In order to request your CURP, you will need your birth certificate and an official ID. There is no cost.

You can find the closest government office where you request your CURP on this site: www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/39942/DirectoriodeModulosCURP.pdf

Driver's License and Passport

If you plan on driving in Mexico, you will need to apply for a driver's license. In the US most everyone uses this as their official ID but in Mexico the INE is the primary identification and you only need a driver's license if you truly plan to drive. A passport is an optional document that allows you to travel outside of the country. When you are first getting settled in Mexico this is likely not a priority but if you plan to travel internationally you will eventually want to get yours.

How to Get Your Driver's License

Each state issues its own driver's licenses, so it's a good idea to check with the particular agency in your state that issues it. The name differs slightly in each state. In some states it's called the Secretary of Infrastructure, Mobility and Transport. In other states the name is Secretary of Mobility, and in others it's the Secretary of Communication and Transport.

Since the process is run by different authorities in each state, the requirements may vary, but these generally include passing a written test and paying a fee. You may need to provide official identification (such as your INE), proof of residence (such as a recent electricity or water bill), a receipt for payment of corresponding fees, your CURP, and a certified birth certificate.

Other states have more extensive requirements, such as a driving test and a medical examination. Many states allow you to make an appointment as well by calling or using their website. It's also

a good idea to study any materials available on rules of the road that your state may provide. Three types of licenses are offered: regular or “automovilistica”, driver up to three tons, and commercial.

Fees will vary depending on the state. As an example, the state of Puebla charges 2,130 pesos for a permanent license, 710 pesos for one that lasts three years, and 1,055 pesos for five years.

How to Get Your Passport

If it’s not urgent, it is recommended that you make an appointment ahead of time by calling 01-800-801-0773. You will need to bring a certified copy of your birth certificate (original), INE (original and copy), a passport photo, and proof of payment. Payment can be made at any local bank after printing the payment form from the website below.

For more information on applying for a passport visit: www.gob.mx/tramites/fichapasaporte-ordinario-para-personas-mayores-de-edad/

Passport Costs

Valid for	Cost (in pesos)
One Year	MXN\$ 625
Three Years	MXN\$ 1,300
Six Years	MXN\$ 1,790
Ten Years	MXN\$ 2,750

Note: If you are over 60 years old you are eligible for a 50% discount on the costs. Passports for one year are only issued to children under three years of age.

“Somos Mexicanos” Program

The “Somos Mexicanos” program (We are Mexicans) aids returning citizens in the following ways:

- Collecting identity documents
- Registering for medical insurance
- Offering free phone calls to communicate with family members
- Assisting with transportation
- Providing information about job opportunities, including grants to start businesses
- Offering cultural workshops
- Individual case manager support

If you arrive at the Mexico City airport, you can sign up through Operativo Migrante modules. Otherwise, you can sign up for Somos Mexicanos through The National Immigration Institute (INM) office in your state. For a list of offices visit: www.gob.mx/inm/acciones-y-programas/estrategia-somos-mexicanos

This program also publishes a lengthy and quite useful document (in Spanish) to orient returning citizens. You can see the full guide here: www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/45147/GUIA_SOMOS_MEXICANOS_PRIM.pdf



For more information on this program see Forms on page 124.



Whenever completing any “tramite” (bureaucratic process or procedure), bring all original documents as well as two copies.

This will keep you from losing your place in line by having to leave to make copies. An even better idea is to compile a portable, accordion-style file with all important documents that you take with you to official government offices, “por si las dudas” (just in case)!



resources to meet basic needs

We expect that you have plans and dreams for your future life. This guide will help you map out the steps you can take to reach them and provide information to ensure that you're informed about the choices you have to make along the way. Even as you look ahead to a bright future, you may struggle with day-to-day life. Many people struggle with housing, food, healthcare, utilities, and other basic living expenses in the weeks and months after they get out of prison. Others find themselves challenged by drug and alcohol addictions and mental health issues. This is normal. Be patient as you figure things out and know that there are programs and people who can help.

While it's true that there are a limited number of government and non-profit organizations that provide assistance as compared to the US, one thing to keep in mind is that many goods and services are much cheaper in Mexico. You can see a doctor for free if you are enrolled in Mexico's universal health care program or for 30 pesos or \$1.40 USD if you're not! Still, we've attempted to compile a comprehensive resource of organizations that provide assistance. It's also worth mentioning that the CFE (Federal Electricity Commission) who provides electric services is run by the government and provides a government subsidy, keeping costs low. The more electricity you use, the lower the government support you receive, so practice energy-saving tips like using low-energy light bulbs, turning off lights, and unplugging appliances when not in use.

While most expenses are cheaper in Mexico, one exception is gasoline. Mexico has a national petroleum company, Pemex, that sets prices

and oversees distribution. Prices of gas vary depending on where you live in the country, and the government tends to raise them nationally each year in January. At the time of writing, the current price of gas in Puebla, Mexico is 16.40 pesos per liter. Converting to gallons and dollars, one gallon of gas in Puebla costs you \$3.00 USD. Clothing also tends to be more expensive and of lower quality than what is found in the US. Keep this in mind while shopping. You may want to consider buying less clothing of higher quality, understanding that what is available at many common chain stores (Suburbia, for example) won't last you long.

Cell phones are available, both as pre-paid and as plans, which are both much cheaper than in the US. While you will likely prefer to have a cell phone, use landlines whenever you can to make local calls since the rates are cheaper.

NEED ASSISTANCE?

If you are having trouble meeting your basic needs, here are a few places to go to help you get started.

- ❑ Food assistance. Most major cities in Mexico have at least one soup kitchen or “comedor.” See the directory on page 103.
- ❑ Health care. The government provides a health care program for Mexican citizens called “Seguro Popular.” Get information on this benefit and how to apply on page 63 and page 89.
- ❑ Visit a hospital, non-profit organization, church, or state agency and ask for help. Churches often offer soup kitchen and clothes closet services. For contact information see our directory on page 103.
- ❑ Addictions. There are organizations such as Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous that can assist you with addiction recovery. For a list of offices, go to www.aamexico.org.mx or www.narcoticosanonimos.org.mx

Food

Soup Kitchens

Both government and religious organizations offer hot meals daily through soup kitchens called “comedores.” In Mexico City, the government distinguishes between “comedores comunitarios” and “comedores públicos.” The “community soup kitchens” are open to anyone living in high-poverty areas as well as people over 65, children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, the unemployed, and homeless. These charge 10 pesos (about 50 cents) for meals while “public soup kitchens” aim to serve the same population but are free of charge. They do require recipients to enroll to access benefits.

For more information on soup kitchens in Mexico City see: www.sds.cdmx.gob.mx/programas/programa/comedoreassociales

Soup Kitchens Outside of Mexico City

For more information about the requirements to utilize government soup kitchens run by the organizations known as SEDESOL (The Secretary of Social Development) and INDESOL (The National Institute for Social Development) visit www.gob.mx/sedesol/acciones-y-programas/comedores-comunitarios

Many churches offer regular community meals as well. For example, the Cathedral of Mexico City offers meals each Saturday between 8 am and 10:30am. Check with your local Catholic archdiocese or other religious organization to see if they provide support. For a list of archdioceses see <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dmexo.html>. An online search for “comedores” in your local area may yield some results as well.

Food Stamps

Mexico offers a food stamp program to 500,000 citizens living in poverty through its Social Inclusion Program, PROSPERA. Benefits are given bimonthly through a card and includes access to food pantries as well. They are not very transparent about their eligibility criteria, but

there is a survey you can fill out and submit. If you are eligible, they will contact you.

See the directory on page 103 for a list of food assistance centers (Centros de Atención a Beneficiarios [Cabe]).

Healthcare

Seguro Popular

Seguro Popular is a nation-wide healthcare program that is designed as a safety net to cover citizens, regardless of their socio-economic status, who do not have access to other health care. Seguro Popular is most often used by Mexicans who are not formally employed or who cannot afford to enroll in other government or private health insurance programs. Seguro Popular covers 57 million Mexicans.

The program provides access to medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and hospital services, including catastrophic coverage which aims to support people suffering from high-cost illnesses or life-threatening accidents. There is no fee to register.

How to sign up:

The following documents are required in original and in copy: Official identification, CURP, and proof of residence (electricity, water or phone bill, for example).

For the location nearest you see the directory, or visit www.cnps-dgao.gob.mx/georeferencia/ For more information on Seguro Popular, see the Health section on page 87.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

(See Health on page 87 or Mental Health and Substance Abuse on page 93 for more in depth information.)

If you have mental health or substance abuse challenges, make it a priority to get support in these areas. Consider joining a support group such as Alcoholics Anonymous (www.aamexico.org.mx) or Narcotics Anonymous (www.narcoticosanonimos.org.mx) right away to get connected to a supportive community. It will be hard to take care of the other areas of your life if you're consumed by addiction challenges. In Mexico, Seguro Popular unfortunately does not cover mental health and substance abuse, but there are organizations that offer services (some low-cost) and referrals. Most pharmacies have lists of service providers.

Mental health/addiction services can also be accessed through the Secretary of Health website for each state in Mexico or the state's specific website. For example, in Chiapas, www.chiapas.gob.mx/servicios/2808, lists all mental health centers throughout the state. In Veracruz, visit www.ssaver.gob.mx/

For a general list of mental health services by state, visit www.inprf-cd.gob.mx/sitios/hospitales.html

Housing

If you have family in Mexico, even distant relatives, it will likely benefit you to stay with them immediately after deportation, at least for the short run. If you have a good relationship with them, perhaps you are comfortable staying longer. As Mexico is a very family-oriented society, it's not uncommon to find multiple generations living in one house. It's natural, however, that you may want to establish your independence by getting your own place. There's no rush, especially if you were incarcerated for a long time. There are many advantages to living in a stable, somewhat controlled environment. You don't want to find yourself in a position where you can't pay the rent and risk eviction. In the section that follows, we'll talk about things to consider when living on your own.

If you don't have a relative or friend in Mexico that you can stay with, there are options such as renting a room in a shared house. Keep reading to learn about your options.

How to Choose Where to Live

Perhaps you have multiple options as to where to live, or maybe you find yourself at the border with limited opportunities. If you have multiple options, consider them carefully. Where will you have family support or friends to help you get settled? Do you prefer a big city or a small town? Which areas are safer and provide the type of employment you are looking for?

Safety

While much of Mexico is less developed than what you might be used to in the US, it's important to feel comfortable in the neighborhood you chose to live in. Is it well-lit? Does your building offer security? Some neighborhoods have 24-hour security and guests must register to enter. No matter where you

live, always be aware of your surroundings and take precautions to keep yourself safe. Don't display your wealth, wear flashy jewelry, or use electronics while walking down the street. Another good tip is to change the lock on the place you rent as soon as you move in since you don't know who might have had a key prior to you.

Renting a Place

The cost of housing varies drastically from city to city and depends on the type of housing. If you are short on funds, renting a room in a shared house is a good option. You will likely see signs posted on telephone poles or at small businesses advertising this service. This will generally cost you between \$50 and \$100 USD (1,000-2,000 pesos). If you are ready to rent your own apartment, you can expect to pay more than that, up to 5,000 or 7,000 pesos, depending on location, size, and condition, although housing prices, much like the in the US, can vary widely by region.

While much apartment searching is done by word of mouth or by responding to ads in local areas, there are some websites that can help you with your housing search. These include www.trovit.com.mx, www.vivanuncios.com.mx and <https://www.inmuebles24.com/>

Once you've found a listing you like, call the landlord and set up an appointment so that you can view the apartment. Make sure you arrive on time to that appointment, and dress for the



A note about public housing in Mexico:

The Mexican government has stepped away from providing much housing support to its citizens due to failed initiatives. Many housing developments in Mexico City have been abandoned due to high crime rates. Non-profit organizations exist to help families build low-cost housing, such as: Habitat for Humanity (www.habitatmexico.org) and Échale México (www.echale.com.mx)

occasion. You want to give a good first impression. It might be a good idea to cover any tattoos you may have that are generally visible. Tattoos carry a stigma even more in Mexico than they do in the States.

It may take some time before you find an apartment that you like. Fortunately, new units are always coming on the market. Don't be discouraged! Once you find an apartment that you'd like to rent, let the owner or property manager know of your interest, and he or she will arrange for a contract to be drawn up. No matter where you choose to rent, insist on signing a rental contract to protect yourself and clarify the agreement. Simple rental contract forms are available at neighborhood stationary stores.

Take your time. Get a plan together to achieve short-term goals and long-term goals. Ask questions. Everything changes so ask and learn.

– Brian N.

Security deposits. A security deposit is money that you pay to a landlord before moving into an apartment. If you choose not to move into the apartment, the landlord keeps this money. There is no limit to how much a landlord can charge for a security deposit.

Typically, landlords charge one month's rent. It is important to secure a lease in writing before paying a landlord and to also get a receipt after paying.

Security deposits are also used to cover damages caused to apartments after tenants move out. Your landlord generally will not use your security deposit to pay for regular wear and tear of living in your apartment but for exceptional items—for example, a light fixture that is broken or carpet damage. Some landlords will take the cost of a new coat of paint out of your deposit when you

leave, however. When you move in, take photos of any damages you notice, and let the owner or manager know that you are documenting these so that their repair is not passed on to you at the end of your lease. You should receive a receipt for specific damages at the end of your tenancy and will be returned the remaining security deposit the day you move out. While the intent of a security deposit is to cover damages, in practice it is very common for it to be used to cover the last month's rent. When you plan to move out, before paying the last month's rent it's a good idea to ask your landlord if they expect you to pay it or not.

Breaking a Lease. If you find that you need to move out before your lease has expired, you can do so. However, you will be expected to pay a fee for breaking the lease. The amount that you will pay will normally be listed in the lease. It is a good idea to know in advance what that is, just in case.

Some examples of questions you could ask the landlord during your visit:

- What is the monthly rent?
- Are utilities included?
- When is the rent due?
- What is the parking situation?
- Are tenants able to make minor modifications? (e.g., paint the walls)

The advice I would give is to be patient. Things in the outside world move very quickly and I think that you have to be aware and accepting that you don't have to catch up.

– Oscar S.

Transportation

How are you going to get around? Transportation is important for employment, connecting with friends and family, and generally building a meaningful life. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to navigate, depending on whether you live in a major city or in a rural area. Fortunately, if you return to Mexico City, you'll have many transportation options. This includes a very efficient and inexpensive metro system that charges just 6 pesos per ride (about 30 cents) as well as metro buses, regular buses, taxis, bikes and Uber or Lyft.

Below we discuss the various transportation options that might exist in a community so that you can think about what will work best for you. Please keep in mind that you may choose to handle your transportation needs one way when you first return home and another way once you are more settled and have a higher-paying job.

Buses and Metro

You can save money by using public transportation. It's also environmentally friendly, but it's safer in some Mexican cities than others. Ask around if you are concerned about safety, and try to avoid traveling late at night by yourself. In some cities, buses have been the target of robberies.

In Mexico City as well as in other major urban cities, there are also "metro buses," buses that operate in designated lanes and are therefore faster and more efficient. In Mexico City, riders purchase a card and recharge it periodically. Rides are 6 pesos.

Mexico City's subway is the cheapest in the world at just 30 cents, or 6 pesos. It is a very efficient system but crowded. Be aware of your surroundings and carry your valuables in a secure place on you. Avoid keeping your wallet in your back pocket, for example, while riding the subway. For a map of Mexico City's subway system please see page 42.

Carpool and Rideshare Programs

Another option for saving money on transportation is carpool and rideshare programs. You can talk to family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors about scheduling carpool days and sharing the cost of gas, or look up carpool programs online. This site provides information on ride sharing in Mexico: https://www.carpoolworld.com/carpool_list_cities.html?country_code=MEX,MX&state_code=&start

[at=0&page_no=1](#)

Taxi and Ride-Hailing Apps

Taxis are available in cities and towns across Mexico, but there is widespread concern about their safety. Always take a taxi from an authorized taxi stand or booth. Avoid hailing taxis or going with someone trying to solicit your business. Often outside of train stations and metro stops you will hear individuals calling "taxi? taxi?" Their service is often overpriced and could be a scam.

Ride-hailing apps are a fairly new form of transportation. If you have a smartphone and a credit or debit card, you can download ride-hailing apps like Uber or Lyft to take short trips in your city, where services are available. Ride-hailing services are just like taxis, but the drivers are self-employed, and, just like taxis, they are not without risk. There have been instances of kidnapping and murder taking place through these services as well. Still, clear benefits over taxis exist. For example, the app tracks your trip so that others with the app can see where you are. You also have the option of waiting inside a building rather than outside on the street. The app tells you when the ride arrives. There is also no need for money to change hands. The payment of the fare and tip are handled on the app. Before you ride, read these tips on how to use the app safely. www.uber.com/us/en/ride/safety/tips/

Biking

Biking is a good way to save money, explore your community, and get fit, but in many big cities in Mexico, biking is downright dangerous. If you choose to bike in your community, always wear a helmet, and be alert to avoid serious injury. Make sure your bike has reflectors and lights if you choose to ride at night, and wear light, easy-to-see clothing.

In some cities, it seems that most drivers are not following the rules, but as a bicyclist you put yourself in serious danger if you don't. If you bike, make sure you understand the rules of the road. In general, bicycles should follow the same rules as cars: they should stop at stop signs and traffic lights, use hand signals to switch lanes or make a turn, and yield to pedestrians. In some cities, you can rent bikes, often through local government programs. In other places, you can look for second-hand bike stores.

You can rent bikes to use in Mexico City at www.ecobici.cdmx.gob.mx and this site helps you plan your bike route in Mexico City: www.bbbike.org/MexicoCity

Be patient and remain positive.

– Joseph B.



Cars

If you find it necessary to buy a car to meet your basic needs and get to work or school, then proceed carefully. We recommend not buying a fancy, expensive car until you can afford it. Typical car payments in Mexico range from 3,500 to more than 7,000 pesos per month, even for a used car. If you do decide to buy one, make sure it's from a reputable dealer.

A few tips:

- 1.If you are taking out a loan to buy a car, make sure you can afford the monthly payment.** Make a budget and decide before you begin your search how much you are able to spend each month. See the Finances, Credit, and Taxes section for more information on page 75 about buying with credit and budgeting.
- 2.Before going to a dealership, do some research on the types of cars that will meet your needs and will be safe and reliable.** Edmunds.com and www.consumerreports.org are great places to start. It's also not a bad idea to consult the Kelley Blue Book to know the value of the cars you are interested in, but use this information only as a baseline as prices in Mexico may not be the same as what's provided on their site: www.kbb.com
- 3.Avoid car dealerships that advertise directly to people with bad credit.** Be wary of companies or people who push you into purchasing a vehicle before you are ready.
- 4.Once you've found a vehicle you are interested in, check the vehicle history report.** Ask the seller lots of questions, and test drive the car to make sure that you are getting a reliable vehicle. You should also ask a mechanic to look at it before you purchase it.
- 5.Check prices on similar vehicles.** Go to more than one place to compare vehicles. This can help you negotiate a good deal.
- 6.Read the fine print carefully and understand the rules before you sign anything.** Remember, what counts is what

is in the contract, not what the salesperson promised. Make sure that you fill out all of the appropriate paperwork, especially if you are buying from an individual owner. You should get the title and registration before you give them any money.

7. Make sure that you fill out all of the appropriate paperwork, especially if you are buying from an individual owner. You should get the title and registration card, along with proof of annual payments, before you give them any money.

8. Consider buying car insurance right away. While it is not required in Mexico it is advisable and tends to be very economical. At least consider getting liability insurance in case you cause harm to another's vehicle or injury to another person.

9. Finally, be safe! Don't drink alcohol, text, or talk on your cell phone while driving, and wear your seat belt. It reduces your chance of death in the case of a serious accident by 50%.

This information can be found on <https://www.hoy-no-circula.com.mx>



A note about buying from individuals:

Many purchases of automobiles in Mexico take place between individuals. It is important to know and trust anyone you plan to purchase a car from. Always take the car to an independent mechanic so you know what issues the car might have. Be sure to get copies of the seller's ID and proof of residence as well as a letter of sale filled out according to the laws of your state (available in neighborhood stationary shops). If you do not know the person you are buying from, it is advisable to check with local police to ensure the car is not stolen.



A note about keeping your car legal in Mexico:

Not only do you need current plates, but many states also require an annual sticker with its own tax as well as an additional annual fee. That's apart from the fee most states charge for the mandatory smog check. If you plan on driving in Mexico City, you must be aware of what day your car is allowed to circulate. Due to extreme air pollution, license plates that end in certain numbers are not allowed to circulate on certain days of the week. There are additional limits on out-of-state vehicles in Mexico City as well. When smog is particularly bad, this restriction is expanded to include additional days. This information can be found on www.hoy-no-circula.com.mx



employment

There is a lot involved with finding employment! Accordingly, this is one of the longest and most important chapters in this guide. It contains information that can help you plan your job search and be successful in it. You will hear a lot of discouraging talk about getting a job with a record, and you may be discouraged by the wages paid in your home country. However, if you are persistent with your job search, you will find work, even if it takes longer than you expected. In many parts of Mexico, background checks are rare, and the cost of living is quite low. Keep at it, and don't give up.

This chapter includes information to help you begin thinking about your job search, resources for identifying possible jobs, as well as information on the application process. It also contains a section regarding how to access unemployment insurance and job training, especially for residents of Mexico City or certain rural areas. The last section addresses building a long-term career. This is something that you can start planning for even now.

Thinking About Your Job Search

When you return to your home country, you will not only have the task of looking for a job, you'll be finding a place to stay, and possibly reestablishing relationships with family and friends, all while getting used to the culture and learning about the job market. This is a tall order, so, for this reason, we propose that you think of your first few jobs after your return as transition jobs. These jobs will help you become financially stable and eventually move you into a career that you enjoy. They might have low pay or not relate to your long-term career goals. However, they will help you get where you want to go.

In addition to a paycheck, there are lots of

benefits to working a transition job. Such jobs give you a chance to prove you are dependable and self-reliant. They help you develop an employment history and offer opportunities to learn different ways of thinking and doing things. Oftentimes, taking any job is better than not working. However, this does not mean that you have to keep working in a job you strongly dislike or where you are being mistreated.

Remember, building a fulfilling career takes place over many years, and over many different jobs. Don't be discouraged. Keep your eye on the big picture. For long-term career advice see Building a Career on page 59.

Background Checks

If you are planning on working for a US company in Mexico or will be working in a border town, there is a likelihood that the company will run a background check. It is important to keep this in mind and consider which jobs may be a good fit for you, given this barrier.

In other parts of Mexico, namely away from the border, or in Mexican or other international companies, background checks are not common. This fact may seem, at first glance, to be

liberating. Many more fields are open to you. But be honest about what types of environments are best suited to you and your personality. There could be work environments that may not be a good fit or where you might be at risk of re-offending.

If this is your situation, you will not have anyone looking over your shoulder to make sure you are on the right track. This will be your responsibility, and it's important to take it seriously.

The Job Market in Mexico

Mexican wages are quite low by US standards. The daily minimum wage is 123.22 pesos or about \$5.64 USD. Many people choose not to work for this amount, and you will find that entrepreneurship is thriving. People make a living by selling things in the street, opening small shops (often in the front room of their house), as well as performing services such as cleaning and auto detailing.

In fact, you may be surprised to learn that opening a business is much easier and much less expensive than in the US. Renting a commercial space is very inexpensive, and the government even allows you the first year tax-free.

One concern that is the same in both countries is business success. You will notice that a salon, restaurant, or car wash is here one month and gone the next. Just like in the US, it's important to have a business plan and ensure that you have adequate funding so as to maximize your chances at success.

Over just the last two years, public support for programs for returning citizens has increased in Mexico. With the often aggressive rhetoric in the US concerning the deportation of Mexican citizens, a kind of civic pride has grown up in Mexico, and changes are being made to offer more opportunities to returning citizens as well

as to facilitate their return to society. One incredible opportunity is offered for those living in Mexico City who have strong English skills and are interested in teaching. The training program is completely free and lasts four to six weeks. It culminates in a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) exam after which the participant is qualified to teach in Mexican schools. According to the president of the Mexican Citizen's Council, Luis Wertman, there is a deficit of 80,000 English teachers across the country. You could be in a great position to help fill this need. The Mexican public school system has recently announced they will hire qualified English teachers at the very competitive salary of 21,000 pesos a month. For more information on this program see page 48.

Expect to have mixed feelings about your situation. Right now I have everything but at the same time I don't have anything (car, TV, house)

– Alex A.



Working for a Mexican or International Company

If you prefer to work for an established company, you can expect wages to vary significantly by industry and location. US factories near the border, known as “maquiladoras”, are the same places that are referred to as “sweatshops” in English. As you can imagine, wages are low, often no more than \$10 USD a day for a 10-12-hour shift.

Further south, other international companies have opened factories, such as Volkswagen and Audi in Puebla, who pay higher wages, perhaps \$4 USD an hour, depending on the particular job. There are opportunities working for Mexican-owned companies, of course, and the top 10 largest are listed for your reference.

10 Largest Employers in Mexico	
1. FEMSA	The largest beverage business in Mexico and Latin America
2. Walmart	Supermarket chain
3. América Móvil	Mexican telecommunications company
4. Bimbo	Mexican baking company
5. Pemex	State owned oil company
6. Coppel	Largest chain of department stores
7. Soriana	Supermarket chain
8. Grupo Salinas	Media, telecommunications, financial services and retail company
9. Alfa	Petrochemicals, aluminum automotive components and refrigerated food company
10. Alsea	Global restaurant chain management company

If at first you can't find a job, keep looking, keep asking, keep knocking. In Mexico there's work; you just have to have a positive attitude, and don't give up.

– **Ramon C.**

Inform yourself before you invest any money in a business. Think about the type of business you want to start and be sure there is really a need. Consider location. If you want to start a laundry or a restaurant choose an area where there will not be much competition.

– **Oscar S.**

Employment Opportunities: Jobs for Bilinguals

In most major cities in Mexico, there are opportunities for bilingual people at rates of pay that are generally higher than those offered to monolinguals, depending on the industry, of course. Opportunities exist teaching English to adults or children through public or private schools, working in the telemarketing industry in various call centers throughout Mexico, or employment in the tourist industry, particularly in popular beach towns.

Call Centers

Bilingual call centers offer customer service, technical support, and even debt collection for many companies in the United States. This is a large industry in Mexico staffed in large part by Mexicans who have lived in the United States and have good English pronunciation. An intermediate level of English is generally required.

Call centers are located in major cities in Mexico including Puebla, Mexico City, Tijuana, and Nuevo Laredo.

Teaching English

If your English is strong, teaching English may be another opportunity for you. There is a demand for this throughout Mexico. If you have knowledge of English grammar or even experience as a teaching assistant or tutor, this will help you get a job as a teacher. Even without this knowledge, you may be hired in areas where there are few English speakers. In major cities where the competition is higher, you could work as a tutor or conversation partner. In this role, you would likely be freelance, promoting yourself.

Major English schools in Mexico include:

- Interlingua
- Harmon Hall
- Berlitz
- Quicklearning

Working in the Tourist Industry

There is a need for bilingual individuals to work in hotels and resorts as restaurant servers, cab and tour bus drivers, and tourist guides in major tourist sites in Mexico. Additional opportunities may be available as club promoters, housekeepers, and museum and tourist attraction personnel, among others.

Major tourist areas in Mexico include:

- The Cancun/Cozumel/Riviera Maya area, Quintana Roo
- Tijuana, Rosarita, and Ensenada, Baja California Norte
- Los Cabos, Baja California Sur
- Mazatlán, Sinaloa
- Huatulco and Puerto Escondido, Oaxaca
- Acapulco, Guerrero
- Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco and Riviera Nayarit areas

Airport and Airline Personnel

Airports and airlines are in need of bilingual employees to direct travelers and assist with ticket sales.

Other Professionals

Businesses are also looking for bilinguals to work in human resources, as administrative assistants, and in logistics. Some of these positions require a degree.

Working Online

Working online can be a particularly lucrative option, especially if you can find a position that pays in dollars. With the exchange rate at close to 23 pesos to the dollar, you can see why!

While in theory any company can offer online work, and many do, one area that might be more open to you as someone living in Mexico is working for international companies who do such things as evaluate the effectiveness of advertisements, online searches, and social media posts.

Companies that hire you to do online evaluation work include www.appen.com, www.lionbridge.com and www.issworld.isoftstone.com, to name a few.

Teaching English Online

If your English is strong, even if you don't have any teaching experience, consider teaching English online. This is a rapidly-growing market, especially in China, which is currently the #4 English-speaking country. Many Chinese families enroll their children in after school and weekend online English classes. Most do not run background checks. Two models exist:

1. Freelance

Sites like www.italki.com allow you to set your own hours, rate (\$4 - \$80 USD/hour) and use your own materials. Market yourself either as a "community tutor" offering conversation practice or a "professional English teacher." Italki takes 15%.

2. Get hired by a company

Required qualifications vary greatly. Some prefer teaching experience, but others do not. Some don't require a degree. Others require a masters. Some require TEFL or CELTA certificates whose requirements also vary widely. You can get a certificate for about \$40 USD at www.groupon.com/deals/n-learn-tefl-120-hour-tefl-course. The most respected certificate is from Cambridge University and costs about \$1,000 USD. For more information visit www.cambridgeenglish.org/find-a-centre/find-an-exam-centre/

Companies provide all the materials. You don't have to do any planning or grading. You need a smartphone or computer, depending on the company. A few companies (all in China) to get you started are VIP kid, UStalk, Palfish, and Boxfish.

You don't have to be an expert in English grammar or ESL to make this a successful career. Charisma and ability to keep students engaged are more important than English grammar knowledge. In most cases, the emphasis is on vocabulary and pronunciation. Most companies require that you be a native English speaker, but not all. Here is a list of companies that hire advanced non-native speakers: www.goodairlanguage.com/non-native

Jobs for Monolingual Spanish Speakers

While monolingual Spanish speakers can expect to qualify for jobs in a variety of fields, those interested in jobs in the manufacturing sector are aided by partnerships like the one described below.

Manufacturing Jobs

In November of 2016, an agreement was signed between the National Council of the Maquiladora and Export Industry (INDEX) and the National Institute of Migration to promote the hiring of people who have been deported for manufacturing jobs throughout the country. The pilot program has begun in the Tijuana area with

20 individuals hired. There is currently a labor deficit in the country, particularly in the sectors of automotive, aerospace, metal-mechanic, and medical devices. Source: www.sandiegored.com/en/news/132636/New-Tijuana-Manufacturing-Industry-Program-Offers-Jobs-to-Deportees



A note about working in call centers and factories at the border:

Many recently-deported people choose to work in low-paid jobs at factories or at call centers. Both industries generally start workers out at about \$100 USD a week for full-time work. Job seekers desperate for work may see these as attractive offers. Be aware of the possibility of getting “stuck” in these exploitative jobs. It may be best to treat them as transition jobs and keep searching for better-paid employment for the long term.

Identifying Possible Jobs

Networking

There are many ways to find jobs. Networking is probably the most important. Successful job seekers often talk to many, many different people. The contacts in your network may not have a job for you right now. However, they could have career advice or might know someone who knows someone else with a job lead. They might learn of a job in the future. We suggest that you mention your interest in employment to friends, family, and casual acquaintances. Talk to people in the grocery line about your job search, and let people at your place of worship know about your interest in finding work.

One good strategy is to contact people who perform the sort of work that you are interested in. Ask them for ideas, suggestions, and information that can help you find job leads. The power of face-to-face interaction is huge, especially if you’re friendly.

Online Searches

If you have been in prison a long time, you might not be familiar with online job searches. These days, many people rely on websites like www.monster.com, www.careerbuilder.com, and www.snagajob.com. You should not ignore these sites, particularly if you want to work for a large employer. However, they are much less important than they used to be, so do not invest a lot of time in them. Instead, focus on visiting your target employers’ websites and finding the jobs posted

there. Often, you will find a link to “Current Jobs” on the home page. Sometimes, the link to job postings is labeled “Careers” or “Employment.” In Spanish this information is often signaled by “Bolsa de Trabajo.”

Keep in mind that in the US it is standard practice for a company to list a vacancy on their website. This is not the case in Mexico. Just because a particular company doesn’t have any jobs listed on their site or none that you are interested in doesn’t mean they are not hiring. Contact the company directly to ask.

Job aggregators (websites that gather information and provide links to many different jobs) are also powerful and very useful, including sites like www.indeed.com, which is the largest source of job postings in the world, collected from employer websites, job boards, association websites, publications, and more.

Other common websites that publish jobs in Mexico include the following:

- Occmundial (www.occ.com.mx)
- Trovit (<https://empleo.trovit.com.mx>)
- Computrabajo (www.computrabajo.com.mx)
- Bumeran (www.bumeran.com.mx)

LinkedIn is currently the most effective professional social network. Head to www.linkedin.com to make a profile and review job

postings (see the “jobs” link below the search bar at the top of every page). LinkedIn is one of the best online sites for connecting with people who work where you would like to work (and who worked there in the past).

When searching for a job online, be careful to avoid becoming the target of a scam. Scammers may request money or identity information like date of birth, ID number, or debit/credit card

number. Never give out your personal information on the internet.

Keep Records

It is a good idea to keep a record of all the places you have applied to, including visits made in person, initial phone calls, and follow-up phone calls. On page 45 is an example of a log you can use.

The Application Process

Job Application Forms

The purpose of a job application is to get you a job interview. Employers use written job applications to narrow the applicant pool for a particular job, deciding who is worth talking to in person. To maximize your chances of getting an interview, focus on what you have to offer an employer. Downplay the negatives (poor work history, felony convictions, lack of experience, minimal education). Most employers do not have a lot of time to review a stack of applications. In fact, most hiring managers will review your application for approximately 15 to 30 seconds, looking for a form that’s neat and complete. In many businesses in Mexico, they expect you to submit a complete, generic job application form that can be found in “papelerías” or small stationary stores found throughout Mexico. See Forms “Solicitud de Empleo” on page 130 for an example.

The “Employment” section or “Previous Employment” section is usually the most detailed section of a job application.

Here are some tips on filling it out effectively:

When filling in the “work performed” or “job duties” section, use the entire space to list your skills, accomplishments, and contributions you made in your past positions. We suggest you list the jobs you held while incarcerated. The experience and skills you gained through these

jobs are real and relevant. For in-prison jobs, you can list your employer as the State of Illinois on job applications. Think about and list everything of significance that you did in past jobs, from the beginning of your shift to the end of your shift. Do not list your wages from past employment, especially since they will not be comparable to the wages in your home country. Give a positive reason for leaving all previous jobs, even if you quit or were let go. Think about what happened after you quit or were let go. Did you get a new job? Did you start a training program or pursue education?

The Job Application Will Also Typically Ask for the Following:

References. On average, employers ask for three references for each candidate. Be thoughtful about whom you list as references. These should not be family members. Good sources of references include: previous and current employers, supervisors, teachers, social workers, people you have engaged in volunteer work with, and people from your religious institution. It’s ok to list references from the US if that is all that you have. It’s best to select ones that have some knowledge of Spanish.

Criminal History. When answering the question “Have you ever been convicted of a felony?” you may want to check “yes” and write, “will discuss at interview.” Disclosing your history on the application is a quick way to get screened out.

Wait until the interview so you can share how you have taken responsibility for your actions, what you have learned from the situation, and how you are different today.

Resumes and Cover Letters

Many employers require a resume and cover letter in addition to a completed application form. Your resume maps out your employment history, giving details about your past jobs, your skills, and your interests. You will submit the same resume to each employer.

Your cover letter is an actual letter from you to each prospective employer. It tells a short story about who you are—why you are seeking employment, your background, and what’s important to you. Keep your letter to a single page.

Writing effective resumes and cover letters takes time, so begin working on these documents long before you apply for your first job. As discussed on page 27, you can even begin working on them while in prison.

Pages 27-28 of this guide provides help on preparing your resume, and page 128 includes a sample resume.

Interviews

Once you’ve submitted an application to a prospective employer, wait to be contacted. Hopefully, they will be interested in scheduling an interview with you. However, please be advised that most applications do not lead to interviews. This is an area where it will be helpful to be patient. You should continue to send out applications until you have an actual job offer.

Many job seekers are nervous about interviews. They want to say the right things and make a good impression. Practice what you’ll say, and consider the following guidelines:

Bring the right materials. Carry extra copies of your resume, contact information for your references, and any papers you need to complete your application, including copies of work

licenses, your driving record (if required), and INE and CURP. Bring a pen and notebook to write down information. It shows that you are truly interested in the job.

Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early for your interview. You might need to fill out paperwork before the interview, and locating the right person or room could take longer than you think. Arriving early shows you are responsible and eager to be there.

Wear appropriate clothes. It will serve you best to look as formal as possible. Consider your body language. Even when you are not speaking, you are sending a message. Make good eye contact, stand and sit tall, smile, and shake hands firmly.

Ask questions. At the end of a job interview, most hiring managers will ask something like “Do you have any questions for me?” Strong job candidates always have a few questions prepared—this makes you seem interested in the job, rather than desperate. If you brought a pen and notebook with you, you could prepare a list of questions in the back of the notebook.

Once you are out, you may wish to look at online resources that can help you with these documents. Two great ones are:

- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/about_the_owl/owl_information/index.html
- www.extension.harvard.edu/inside-extension/how-write-great-resume-cover-letter

A Google search for “how to write a resume” or “writing great cover letters” will also yield helpful websites. Be sure to search websites for examples of resumes as well. Examples of a resume and cover letter from someone who has been incarcerated can be found in the Forms section on page 121.

Some examples of questions you could ask:

- What is the organization's plan for the next five years?
- How will I be evaluated, and in what time frames? By whom?
- What are the day-to-day responsibilities of this job?
- What computer equipment and software do you use?
- When will a decision be made about this position?



Some examples of positive reasons for leaving:

- You relocated (you left your job because you went to prison).
- You desired a career change.
- You became a full-time student.
- The work was seasonal.
- You had the opportunity to advance.

Addressing Your Criminal Background

Job seekers with less-than-perfect work histories or criminal records may have a hard time answering some interview questions. Here are a few tips to increase your chance of getting hired:

Comfort the Employer. Let them know that your offense did not happen on the job, if it did not. For example, "Yes, I was convicted of a felony, but it was not job related." If your felony was job related, find a counselor to help you develop a specific job interview strategy.

Own It. "There was a time in my life when I was making some bad choices and I was convicted of... (state your offense)." Address any concerns an employer might have about your past. Then steer the interview back to your skills and the positive traits that you bring to the job. "I can see why that gap in my work history might concern you. But that was several years ago and, since then, I have maintained a solid work record. I come to work on time and don't call in sick. I am a very hard worker and quick learner."

Keep it positive. "I thought a lot about where my life was going and I decided to make some changes." Talk about your current activities and future plans. Emphasize education and job training, community work, and other activities you have done since your release and in prison if they are relevant. Talk about your career goals, how you chose them, and how the job you are

applying for fits those goals. Employers are more likely to remember their first and last impression, so if possible, try to address your criminal background history in the middle of the interview.

Encourage the employer. "I am a good worker and I want to work, I just need an opportunity to prove my skills to an employer." Tell them you want the job!

A list of employment resources can be found in the directory. A sample job application can be found on page 130.



EXAMPLE JOB APPLICATION LOG

Name of position	Company name and contact info	Application date	Response date	Interview date	Name(s) and contact info of interviewers	Thank you letter date	Notes

Programs to Assist the Unemployed in Mexico

Unlike in the United States, unemployment insurance is not universally available to citizens in Mexico. There are programs that cover workers in Mexico City and those who have formerly worked in the public sector in Mexico long-term. Information on grant programs for returning citizens and people living in rural zones or economically depressed urban zones are opportunities worth checking into. Read on for more information on each.

Mexico City Unemployment Benefit

(Programa seguro de desempleo de la Ciudad de México) While programs are in the works in a few states such as Jalisco, currently unemployment insurance is only available to residents of Mexico City and only for a period of up to six months. The benefit includes a monthly payment at the minimum wage for full time work, 2,207 pesos, roughly \$120 USD.

To qualify for the benefit, you must be over 18 and living in Mexico City without a job but actively looking for one. You must also not receive other income transfers, such as a pension. The program ultimately aims to promote the incorporation of workers into the formal economy, and to promote training in order to increase the skills of the capital's workforce.

Requirements for Deported People:

- Must apply in person.
- Benefit is non-transferable.
- Must have returned to live in Mexico City after January 1, 2014.
- Must be 18 years of age or older.
- Must receive no other income such as retirement benefits, pension, subsidy neither in Mexico nor abroad.
- Must be actively looking for work.
- Must register for the benefit from the National Employment Service.
- Must complete training opportunities.
- This is a one-time benefit.

For more information, including documents required and where to apply:
www.segurodedesempleo.cdmx.gob.mx

Main office in Mexico City:
Calle Xocongo 58, Tránsito, 06820 Ciudad de México, CDMX, Mexico
segurodedesempleo@cdmx.gob.mx | (57) 09-32-33 Exts. 2010-2014.

Unemployment Benefits for Formerly-employed Private Sector Workers, Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS)

If you were formerly-employed in a position in which you were eligible for IMSS benefits and have a pension with them, you may be eligible to access the pension earlier than the normal time of 60 years of age and 500 weeks of work. You can withdraw a maximum of 30 days' worth of savings from their account once every 5 years but keep in mind this results in fewer savings upon retirement.

To apply, visit your local IMSS office: www.imss.gob.mx/directorio

Temporary Employment Program (Ministry of Social Development)

The Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL) runs a temporary employment program (Programa de empleo temporal, PET) for workers who are unemployed and live in rural areas affected by low employment or hit by a natural disaster or another type of emergency. In 2009, PET was renamed Programa de Empleo Temporal Ampliado (PETA), which now extends to cover urban areas, in which unemployment rates have risen due to the financial crisis.

The program covers the salaries of workers (99% of the local minimum wage). Workers can work on these projects for a maximum of 132 days a year (and are given the necessary tools for projects).

This program funds projects with the following characteristics:

- Employs local workers in rural areas (some urban where financial crisis hit) where unemployment rates are high.
- Workers live in an area where a financial crisis or natural disaster has struck.
- Workers are age 16 or older.
- Are engaged in activities related to health promotion, preserving cultural heritage sites, building local infrastructure, alleviating natural disasters, conserving nature and promoting local development.

For more information, including documents required for application visit: www.gob.mx/sedesol/acciones-y-programas/programa-de-empleo-temporal

To find your local office see: www.gob.mx/sedesol/acciones-y-programas/delegaciones-de-sedesol-en-los-estados

Income Generating Options Program (Programa de fomento a la economía social)

This program provides funding for income-generating projects initiated by low-income individuals, and supports them throughout the project. These projects arise from individual applicants' ideas and needs. It is open to residents of localities with 15,000 or fewer inhabitants. The participating localities must be classified as having a high or very high rate of "exclusion," that is, from economic opportunities.

Benefits include a grant set at 25,000 pesos per person employed, with the maximum value of the grant depending on the type of project, but ranging between 300,000 and 5 million pesos.

Networks of professionals can also receive payment for mentoring services provided for the income-generating projects. Also, civil society organizations that run these income-generating projects may receive grants from this program.

For more information, download:

Application: www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/30101/Anexo_2.pdf
Requirements: www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/44576/ROP2016.pdf

Migrant Support Program, Secretary of Rural Development and Equity for Women (Secretaría de Desarrollo Rural y Equidad para las Mujeres [SEDEREC])

This is a government program which offers funding to returning citizens who are living in Mexico City. The program's goals are to assist people in returning to their place of origin, help them find work in the formal sector, as well as increase opportunities for self-employment.

The fund will support individual projects with grants of 25,000 pesos as well as family projects with at least three family members classified as returning citizens. Non-related returning citizens can apply as well by submitting their ideas for group projects. Lastly, the fund helps individuals purchase land in their places of origin with grants of up to 1.5 million pesos.

For more information, visit:

www.sedrec.cdmx.gob.mx/storage/app/media/CONVOCATORIA%202016%20FAM.pdf

Job Training in Mexico

National Employment Service

The National Employment Service (Servicio Nacional de Empleo, or SNE) offers a wide range of services aimed at better connecting workers and employers around the country. Services provided include:

- Job postings
- Occupational orientation
- Financial support and training
- Internal and external labor mobility
- Emergency response services

SNE offers information about vacancies through different media (webpage, SNE offices, newspapers), and organizes job fairs and workshops on how to find a job.

In addition, the program offers scholarships for under or unemployed persons above 16 years of age (Becas a la capacitación para el trabajo or Bécate). These enable job seekers to develop occupational skills that improve the chances of finding employment or creating self-employment. The program consists of occupational training organized in cooperation with public educational institutions and private sector employers, and a cash grant to cover the materials, transport, and other costs of the training.

Somos Mexicanos (We are Mexicans) Program

This program primarily aids returning citizens with immediate needs, but they also offer information on job opportunities, including grants to start up businesses, and individual case manager support.

Contact your local National Immigration Institute (INM) at: www.gob.mx/inm/articulos/somos-mexicanos-44642?idiom=es

English Teacher Training Program in Mexico City

Mexico City offers a 4-6-week teacher training course with an official TEFL certification and successful candidates will be qualified to teach in Mexican public schools. Mexico City Citizen's Council (Consejo Cuidando) offers this program in collaboration with the National Immigration Institute, the public school system (SEP), Mexico City's local government and various NGOs.

You can sign up through the Office of Labor in Mexico City:

Calle José Antonio Torres Xcoongo 58,
Colonia Tránsito, Delegación Cuauhtémoc CP,
06820, Ciudad de México,
Phone: (57) 09-32-33
Hours of operation: Monday–Thursday 9am–
6pm, Fridays 9am–3pm

For more information visit: www.trabajo.cdmx.gob.mx/

Job Fairs

City governments often coordinate with local employers to offer job fairs to those looking for employment. In Mexico City the branch that deals with employment is called, in Spanish, "La Secretaría del Trabajo y Fomento al Empleo de la CDMX" (or STyFE) and information about upcoming job fairs can be found at: www.trabajo.cdmx.gob.mx

If you don't live in Mexico City, be sure and check your city's webpage for job fair and job training information.



Employment discrimination in Mexico

Employment discrimination is a serious problem in Mexico. Even though it's illegal for businesses to base hiring on factors like age and gender, many often do, and you'll even see help wanted signs advertising positions only for people of a particular gender or age. If you are concerned about not getting a job due to your age, your fears are not unfounded. But keep in mind that Mexico is a country of micro-entrepreneurs, much more so than the US. With a daily minimum wage of just \$6.62 USD in most of the country, it has to be. You'll see people offering services out of the front rooms of their houses, from dentists to mechanics. We encourage you to think of this as an opportunity. What skills do you possess from your years of life experience or which ones can you develop once in Mexico? What physical space will you have access to in Mexico where you could start a small business? Do you know anyone self-employed in Mexico? They may be able to help you get started. And once you get that business started, you may even be able to offer a job to someone in the position you find yourself in today! That said, there is a government agency where you can report employment discrimination if you do face it. In Spanish it's called Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social.

www.gob.mx/stps/prensa/atiende-stps-quejas-laborales-a-traves-del-centro-de-mando

Building A Career

Some people aspire to have a career, a particular line of work that they can grow within and enjoy, which provides plenty of opportunities for advancement. Building a career takes time and planning, but the result is that you get to do work you are interested in.

What am I good at?

Knowing your strengths and weaknesses is an important first step toward a career. Start by listing these on paper. This exercise will take some time and concentration. Feel free to ask people who know you well for help with identifying your abilities and shortfalls.

What do I know how to do?

Take some time to think about your work experience. This includes volunteering, mentoring, and especially participation in prison programs. Anything that had an impact on you or that you learned something from is fair game here.

What is out there?

Which sectors of the economy are growing, and which are shrinking? Where are the greatest opportunities and the greatest needs? How do your skills align with the priorities of your community and the larger society?

To start your own business in Mexico you need drive and you need patience. It's also important to invest in good security for your place of business.

– Oscar S.

What do I want to do?

Once you have written down what you are good at and the work you have done in the past, and assessed the current and medium-term employment landscape, you are ready to weigh actual careers. Consider the following questions:

- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What is your dream job?

- What kind of work would you be satisfied doing for the next 10 years?
- Do you want to work with people, food, or animals?
- Or do you seek factory work, a desk job, or work done entirely on a computer?
- Are you drawn to building things, the service sector, or creative pursuits?

Build Experience

Aligning your skills and interests with the actual job market will help you realize your career goals. You may not currently have a lot of experience in the field you want to work in or the career you wish to pursue. That does not have to be an obstacle to your plans. You have some options.

1. Volunteer or intern with an organization part time. Volunteer positions and internships are a good way to build experience and contacts. Search online, talk to people you know, and look on bulletin boards in libraries and other community venues to identify organizations that use volunteers or interns. Be proactive and contact them to learn how you can apply to intern or volunteer. This can be both professionally and personally rewarding. See our Community Engagement section and Directory (Pg. 83 and 103).

2. Seek higher education. Some fields and jobs require college degrees. Job listings almost always say if a certain degree is required or preferred. Being a student can be rewarding. It can be a change of pace from full-time employment. In Mexico, college is much more accessible and less expensive than in the US.

3. Start your own organization or business. If you have the time and resources, starting your own organization or business can help you build a meaningful career. This is a challenging career choice, but it can be satisfying. It takes perseverance and imagination, but you will be proud one day to be able to say you started your own after-school program, fitness coaching

business, graphic design service, or house cleaning business! If you are committed to this route, spend some time identifying what your community needs and wants. Talk to others who have started their own non-profit, or who have experience running a small business, for guidance. EJP alumni started all of these kinds of businesses. Maybe this is the route for you too!

For a more detailed plan, you can print off and complete the Illinois Small Business Development Center's workbook: <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/10-steps-start-your-business/>

Be Realistic

Not everyone gets their dream job, but many people end up doing things they enjoy. You can increase your chances by planning and by being realistic. Some careers take more time and money than others to achieve, and some take many tries to break into. Don't be afraid to fail a few times.

After starting my laundry in Puebla, Mexico, it was a year before I saw any profits. You have to be prepared for that.

– Oscar S.



children and family

If you have a spouse and children that are considering moving to Mexico with you, this section is for you. Moving with a family presents unique challenges that being deported solo does not. We'll explore some of them in the pages that follow.

The Decision to Move

For some families, the decision to move is a given. For others it requires serious consideration. You may be worried about the effects the change will have on your family, such as your children changing schools or your spouse finding friends and work. Our advice is to not underestimate culture shock. It can have serious effects. Many deported families report depression and unease after arriving in the new country.

For many, therapy can help a great deal. There are also support groups, such as the Facebook group *Deportee Wives Club*, where spouses of deported men can share their feelings about upcoming deportation, their experiences in their new country, as well as family and relationship concerns. The decision to move your family or not is a deeply personal one and there is no right answer. It depends a lot on your situation. If you expect to be able to return to the US within a relatively short period of time, it may not be worth a temporary move but if you will be calling Mexico (or another country) your home, a move may be in everyone's best interest.

Preparing for the Move

Documents

Documents to request include children's birth certificates, vaccination and school records along with marriage (or divorce) records.

Request (or have your spouse request) your children's birth certificates, and make copies. Request any necessary name changes and have the documents ready to go when your family moves. This will facilitate enrolling your children in school. If this isn't done before your family moves, your spouse, if documented, may have to return to the US to request it, or give a relative power of attorney, which will complicate things.

Once you move to Mexico, be realistic. 100 pesos is like \$5 dollars, in the US that's cheap! In Mexico that's the minimum wage!

– Julia B.

Get the birth certificates apostilled in the state they were issued. (See p. 29 for more information on this procedure.) It essentially makes the documents valid in Mexico. If this isn't done before the move it will be necessary to send them back to the Secretary of State where your child or children were born, making the process longer and resulting in unnecessary shipping costs.

The same goes for marriage (or divorce) certificates, or any other important documents. Request them all before you go. Request (or have your spouse request) your children's school records, if possible. At a minimum try to bring their last report card and vaccination records. While Mexican law dictates that children's identity documents are not required to enroll in school, many local schools are unaware of this and request them. Having this information will make things easier for your family. If a school denies your child entry, the Institute for Women in Migration (IMUMI) can help. Their website is www.imumi.org. See p. 67 for more information on this group.

You choose how you want to live, stay positive & ACCEPT the deportation happened so you can move on.

– Julia B.



Preparing your Family

Many families who have made the move to Mexico with their families report wishing they had spoken more Spanish at home to better prepare their children for success in school. Suggest your spouse enroll your children in any Spanish class that may be available in school or in an after-school program if their native language is not Spanish. Make speaking Spanish at home fun. Ask your spouse to play games with the kids in Spanish, label items in the house with their Spanish name, or even offer an incentive or special treat for spending a set period of time speaking only Spanish!

After Your Move

Changing Relationships

Families affected by deportation have also dealt with the effects of changing relationships with family in Mexico in particular. If you were used to sending money home to support relatives, becoming the one who needs help may be a tough pill to swallow. Some deported families have reported that after sending money home for years, even paying for the house that relatives have been living in, they have felt less than welcome when returning to join them in that house. Think ahead about this and how it will affect your family in your particular situation. Within your own immediate family be prepared for shifting roles. Perhaps your wife hasn't worked but has taken care of the kids in the US but now is in a position where two incomes are necessary. If she's a US citizen she may even be able to make considerably more money than you by working online and being paid in dollars. Be open to change and recognize that not everything may be the way you've been used to. That can be an opportunity for growth and reflection.

Search for Support

Reach out to family, friends, neighbors and community members. You are not in this alone, although exile can be an extremely lonely thing to face, know that others are going through this too. If you happen to be in the San Miguel de Allende area, Caminamos Juntos is an excellent organization that provides support for recently deported people and their families. This includes job search help, and language learning, legal and educational resources.

Residents of Mexico City have several organizations they can connect with including Otros Dreams in Accion (www.odamexico.org). See the directory for the contact information of organizations that can help.



A note on name changes:

In the US, a woman often takes her husband's last name and drops her own maiden name. That is not done in Mexico and not accepted for official documents. They only accept the exact name on someone's birth certificate. Even a marriage license from the US showing that the name is different is not accepted. The same applies for children. The birth certificate has to match exactly the name of the parent through whom the child is applying for Mexican citizenship. It is best to visit the Mexican Consulate in the US and ask for guidance on name-changing procedures. Doing this from Mexico is impossible and the Mexican government refuses to work with families on this issue. If this isn't done before moving it may require an expensive trip back to the US (on the part of the documented spouse) to clear things up before children can receive their identity documents. These documents are needed to gain Mexican citizenship for children, and allow them to access important services such as health care.

Throughout this whole experience, (which includes everything mentioned in the family section) after residing in San Miguel de Allende for two years I can fully vouch for the section on Search for Support. Without Caminamos Juntos, I sincerely do not think I would have lasted through these tough times here in Mexico. Without a doubt, this guide will be a tremendous help to prepare you for the move & everything that comes with it. I personally knew maybe 1% of all these things mentioned. Enjoy this awesome advice, amazing tips and know that at the end of the day everything will be okay!



– Missy L.

Moving is not easy but if it's what's best for your family, it's worth it to rebuild a life together that's yours.



– Katerina B.

Caminamos Juntos

We assist those who have been deported from the United States to settle in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico

What we do

The mission of Caminamos Juntos is to provide services for the integration and settlement of recently deported Mexicans and their families in the San Miguel de Allende area that facilitates their transition and contributes to a better quality of life.



Caminamos Juntos is the only civil organization in San Miguel de Allende, serving in a comprehensive fashion Mexicans deported from the US. We are aware of the challenges in the constantly changing area of deportation and we are committed to growing and adapting our organization to meet emerging needs.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Initial Support:

- Provide local orientation within the local community.
- Refer to outside resources.

Counseling:

- Provide individual therapy if requested.

Legal Assistance:

- Offer legal consultations.
- Provide accompaniment to navigate legal processes.
- Facilitate legal clinics.

Employment and Education:

- Offer an assessment of work experience and recognition of transferable skills to obtain employment.
- Refer participants to employment opportunities.
- Facilitate workshops related to employment.
- Offer continuing education opportunities.

Language and Cultural Assimilation:

- Provide Spanish lessons to children of returning Mexican families.
- Conduct field trips to understand San Miguel culture.

1

CALL US

Mex: (415) 169 0030
US: +01152 415 169 0030
CaminamosJuntos@cjsma.org

2

SPEAK TO US

What are your needs and how can we connect you with resources.

3

SHARE



@SMACAMINAMOJUNTOS



CJSMA.ORG



education

Consider furthering your education after your release. Education stimulates the mind, opens doors, and helps a person better understand the world they live in. It is a way of meeting new and interesting people and supporting yourself upon release.

This guide is produced by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, so of course we are strong supporters of higher education! Higher education is education beyond the high school level. This chapter also contains information about other kinds of education, such as getting your basic education, your high school diploma, as well as job training. The first part of this chapter deals with those kinds of education. The second part of this chapter deals with higher education and includes sections on applying for college, paying for it, and resources for college students. It concludes with some tips from formerly incarcerated people about going to college on the outside.

We encourage you to think of yourself as a lifetime learner. Enroll in courses and educational programs throughout your working life and after you retire. Sometimes you will take a class to advance at your job; another time you'll take a class for fun. You may take a class or enroll in a program in order to explore a potential new area of employment. You can be in school part-time or full-time. Explore the options in your community.

Life is richer when you feed your mind. If you have been involved in educational opportunities while incarcerated, you probably already have a sense of this. And if you have not taken advantage of education programs in prison, we encourage you to do so now. Employers will almost certainly look upon this favorably.

English Courses

After living in the United States, you likely have some knowledge of English, if only the basics. If you don't have full command of the language, why not improve on what you do have? Enroll in an English course to increase your skills and employability. All major cities have numerous language schools to choose from (Harmon Hall, Interlingua, and QuickLearning, to name a few), and most small towns have at least one or two. Prices and time commitments vary, so shop around. While government-sponsored English courses are quite limited, there is one offered through Punto México Conectado which primarily offers computer literacy courses (See below).

Adult Education

If you are interested in finishing your elementary or high school education (primaria, secundaria o prepa), you will want to contact your local INEA office. INEA stands for "National Institute for Adult Education" or "Instituto Nacional para la Educación de los Adultos." This organization

will recognize your past studies as well as offer you a placement exam in order to help you sign up for the right course. INEA also offers literacy courses for teenagers and adults. For more information on finishing your elementary or high English courses are quite limited, there is one school studies visit: <https://www.gob.mx/inea/>

Computer Courses

Punto México Conectado is a federal government program that offers computer courses through community centers across the country. Various courses are offered, including basic computer skills, Microsoft Office, personal finance, robotics, and classes for children. Basic English courses are also offered. For more information, including a list of locations, visit: www.gob.mx/mexicodigital/articulos/punto-mexico-conectado-142554

The Secretary of Public Education oversees educational programs from preschool to university. You can contact them by calling 1-866-572-9836 or online at www.mexterior.sep.gob.mx



Did you know that there are small government grants to help you pay for your own education and training while you look for a job?

It's through a scholarship program called Bécate, of the National Employment Service (SNE). This benefit lasts between one and three months and includes the equivalent minimum wage for that time period in addition to transportation assistance to your place of learning. You can find more information at: www.empleo.gob.mx/sne/becas-capacitacion-trabajo-becate



Many adult education programs are offered by state or local governments, so be sure to look into local options once you arrive.

For example, in the state of Michoacán, this organization is called "ICATMI," which stands for "Instituto de Capacitación para el Trabajo del Estado de Michoacán" or the Institute for Job Training of the State of Michoacán. They offer classes such as auto mechanics, plumbing, furniture-making, and English, among others. You can find more information at: <http://www.icatmi.michoacan.gob.mx>

Vocational Training

CONALEP stands for the Colegio Nacional de Educación Profesional Técnica (National Professional Technical Educational College), which offers courses to high school-age students interested in technical careers on 308 campuses operated by 30 state colleges. For more information, visit: <http://www.conalep.edu.mx/ingles/Paginas/default.aspx>

While this is the only national program focused on vocational education, state, local governments may offer additional opportunities. Similarly, the National Employment Service scholarship program may reimburse you for vocational courses you choose to take. Be sure and check out the requirements before you begin. See the details of the Bécate program on the previous page.



If you completed elementary, high school, or have higher education credits that you want to transfer to Mexico, you are in luck. Only recently has Mexico's senate approved a reform to the country's education law that recognizes studies completed outside the country, making it easier for newly arrived students without official documentation or transcripts to enroll in school and transfer academic credits.

It used to be that students had to retake courses and exams through the National Institute for Adult Education (INEA). For more information on how to transfer your credits see the following link: www.controlescolar.sep.gob.mx/en/controlescolar/Documento_de_Transferencia_Migrantes

If you have problems transferring credits, need assistance with university programs, or if Mexican schools are denying entry with American credits, contact the following organizations for help.

Institute for Women in Migration, AC (IMUMI)

Tel. (52 55) 5211 4153 and 5658 7384 • Legal Clinic Tel. (52 55) 91317512 & 9154 8990
Tel. USA (208) 753-7041
Email: contacto@imumi.org • Facebook: IMUMI, AC • Twitter: @imumidf
Contact: Gretchen Kuhner

Otros Dreams en Acción

www.odamexico.org/about-us
Facebook: Otro Dreams en Acción • Contact: Jill Anderson

The organizations listed above are just a few of those that exist that provide support and advocacy to returning citizens. We suggest you contact them to see about current programs and what kind of support they can offer. Also, if you find other organizations that have helped you in your process of returning to your home country, please let us know so that we can include them in the next edition of the guide.

Higher Education Programs

If you already have a high school diploma or have passed the equivalent course and exam, a next step on your educational path could be to enroll in a college program. You have likely heard of the crisis of access to higher education in the US due to dramatically rising tuition costs. Living in Mexico offers a huge advantage as far as tuition is concerned. In public universities, it's almost free. Even the most expensive private university in Mexico costs about what the least expensive university in the US does.

For most Mexicans interested in attending college, their local public college is a good option. Contact one near you for their program offerings and admission requirements.

For a list of technical schools and universities in Mexico visit: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_universities_in_Mexico

Where Should You Apply?

Not all colleges are the same. Your experience will be different depending on where the college is, how big it is, and whether it is public or private. The type of college will affect the tuition price. Put some time into thinking about what kind of college you want to attend, then research colleges online or talk to friends and family. Shopping for a college is similar to shopping at a store. You make the best choice by reading up about the different options. Almost all colleges have websites where you can learn about their price, academic programs, non-academic activities, the town where they are located, and many other things.

Applying for College

Step 1: Get the Application. Most colleges have online applications on their websites. You can also call the school's admissions office and ask them to send an application to you, or you can go to the admissions office and pick one up. If you are submitting a paper application, get two copies. Use one as a practice copy and the other for the one you submit to the admissions office.

Step 2: Gather Your Information. Not all schools will ask for the same information, but you will probably need your CURP, your INE or other official ID, dates of high school and previous college attendance, and unopened high school, GED, and/or college transcripts. Some applications may ask about your criminal history. If you indicate that you have been convicted of a felony, some schools will ask for additional information, which may be discouraging. But just because they are asking for the information doesn't mean your application will be rejected. If you have decided that you want to attend college, don't be discouraged at this step.

Step 3: Submit the Application. After submitting the application, you can expect to hear back from colleges from within a few weeks to a few months. If you have questions, contact the school's admissions office.

Step 4: Take the admissions exam. Most institutes of higher education have an entrance exam that is scheduled on a specific day each semester. Be sure to find out the date, sign up, and mark your calendar.





One option you may not have considered is finishing your degree online at a US institution. You don't have to finish at the one you started as many colleges and universities have online degree completion programs.

The University of Illinois offers 17 online bachelor's degrees.

www.online.uillinois.edu/catalog/OnlineDegrees.asp?DegreeType=bachelors

Keep in mind that you will not only be paying in dollars, you may have to pay out-of-state or international tuition dollars. Still, depending on your future plans, a degree from a US university may be in your best interest.

Paying for your Education

While paying for college in Mexico is much easier than in the US, it's still important to put some thought into it. Check to see if you are eligible for scholarships. Compare prices of universities near you. Consider location. Will it take you an hour to get there each day (which could represent an additional expense), or is there a university just down the street?

Financial Aid/Scholarships

Financial aid can be accessed through each specific university and department. For example, The University of Chiapas, through SEP, offers scholarships for students who cannot pay the semester fee (around 600 pesos per semester). The scholarship is about 1,000-2,000 pesos per semester per month, which covers transportation and food. Private schools are more expensive but also offer scholarships. For example, Tec de Monterrey in Mexico City offers some 100% scholarships for students. Otros Dreams en Acción in Mexico City offers assistance to returnees who are looking into college and wanting to transfer their credits to Mexican institutions.

Resources for College Students

Tutoring Centers

Many college campuses offer free tutoring to their students. Some cover all subjects, while others focus on specific subjects like writing or math. If you are on a campus that does have a tutoring center, take advantage of it. If not, ask your professors if they can recommend a private or volunteer tutor.





communications

The world of personal and professional communication has changed rapidly in recent years. If you have been inside a long time, you might feel overwhelmed by all the technology and devices. It's possible that you've never even used the internet before. Don't worry! You'll be able to figure it out, and this section will help. It addresses a range of topics, from the basics of using the internet to finding a cheap cell phone quickly. Even if you had access to computers and cell phones before you went to prison, this section still contains some useful information. The world of digital communications is changing all the time!

Calling in Mexico

To call from the US to Mexico, first dial 011, then 52. To call from Mexico to the US, the code is 001. Once in Mexico you will dial the area code of the number you are dialing (two or three digits), for example 55 for Mexico City, 443 for Morelia. To call a local cell phone from a landline, first dial 044. To call a long distance cell phone from a landline, first dial 045. For more information on the somewhat complicated dialing system in Mexico, including a list of area codes see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telephone_numbers_in_Mexico

Becoming Acquainted With the Technology

Computer technology is necessary to do much of what you need to do after leaving prison. If you have been locked up since before the internet became popular, it might be overwhelming at first. Don't get discouraged. A lot of the technology we use now was invented to help make things easier for people. Ask your family and friends to help you learn how to use a computer and a cell phone. Embrace the opportunity to learn something new and you will be comfortable with it in no time! For a simple internet tutorial visit <https://edu.qcglobal.org/en/internetbasics/>

Accessing the Internet

If you have a laptop, tablet, or smartphone, free wireless internet access is available in many

public places including restaurants, coffee shops, hotel lobbies, chain stores and even parks! You may have to ask what the free Wi-Fi password is before you can log on with your device.

“Internet,” “Online,” and “The Web” all refer to the same thing: the world-wide computer network called the internet.

Getting an Email Account

You need your own email address, since email is now much more common for informal and professional written communication than paper mail. The best way to do this is through Gmail, because Gmail accounts are free and have unlimited storage for emails. You also do not need a cell phone number or a current email address to create a Gmail account.

- **Type mail.google.com into the web browser.**
- **Click “Create account.”**

You will select your own email username. It should be something easy for you to remember, like your own name, or some combination of your name, initials, or a number. Bear in mind that you will likely use your email to communicate with prospective employers, so ensure that your email address is not too “cute” or unprofessional. Your password should also be something easy for you to remember, but hard for other people to figure out.

Passwords and Online Security

Eventually, you are likely to use the internet to set up other accounts in addition to your email account. Those accounts may do things like pay bills or access files for school or work. The easiest way to keep your personal information safe is to keep your password secret and to change it periodically. Also, don’t use the same password for every online account you have. If you forget a password, you can usually change it securely by following instructions on the website.

If you had email and other online accounts before you were incarcerated, you may want to reactivate them or close them. Change the passwords for security purposes. It is a good idea to write down your passwords and keep them in a secure place.

Searching Online

Most resources on the internet are found using the Google search engine. Go to www.google.com. You will type your search terms into the long “search box” on the screen.

Purchasing Your Own Devices

Cell Phones

We recommend that you purchase a cell phone when you get out. It does not have to be an expensive, cutting-edge model, but you will need a phone to keep in contact with your employer, family, and friends. Most people these days have cell phones.

An affordable option for cell phone coverage in Mexico is Movistar. For 200 pesos a month (about \$10 USD) you have 200 minutes that you can use to call the US or Mexico as well as 100 text messages a month. Other cell companies include Telcel and AT&T. While these carriers

offer monthly plans many people opt for “pre-paid” to avoid the error of going over your limit of allotted minutes which can carry heavy fees. In Mexico some plans come with phones or you can purchase a phone and a pre-paid balance (saldo). Note that phones brought from the US must be “unlocked” in Mexico at an electronics shop. Prices vary depending on the model of the phone and the current rate of the peso.

If you had a cell phone before you were incarcerated, ask your family if they still have the phone. It might still work, but you may want to reactivate service or change the number. Contact

the phone service provider for help with this. It takes a lot of practice to learn how to use a cell phone.

Smartphones

Smartphones are basically phones that are also miniature computers. They can make calls and send text messages, and they can also access the internet through wireless services or network data. Smartphones have programs (called “apps”) that can do things like play music, give driving directions, check the weather, take pictures, and access social networks (Twitter, Facebook, etc).

However, smartphones can be expensive and could have steep monthly charges, depending on how you use them. Smartphone plans come with network data, which is internet service that goes to your phone, even when you are not using wireless internet. Apps can use up your data. There is usually a limited amount of data in a smartphone plan, and some plans charge you for going over the monthly amount.

Carriers offer different plans and rates. If you only need a phone for calls, you won’t need to purchase a data plan. Some carriers offer deals for sharing a cell phone plan with family members. Think about what you will use your phone for and how much you can budget for cell phone service and data.

Computers

There are four main types of computer devices. Desktop computers have a screen and a terminal that are plugged in and stay on a desk. Laptops are computers that fold up and have a battery

so you can take them with you. Tablets are like laptops, but they’re smaller and do not have keyboards—you type on the screen. Smartphones are a cross between a cell phone and a tablet.



Some tips from Google on searching effectively:

Start with the basics.

No matter what you’re looking for, start with a simple search like “Where’s the closest metro stop?” You can always add a few descriptive words if necessary. If you’re looking for a place or product in a specific location, add the location. For example, “pizza in Guadalajara.”

Choose words carefully.

When deciding what words to put in the search box, choose words that are likely to appear on the site you’re looking for. For example, instead of saying “my head hurts,” say “headache,” because that’s the word a medical site would use.

Don’t worry about the little things.

Google’s spell checker automatically uses the most common spelling of a given word, whether or not you spell it correctly. A search for “New York Times” is the same as a search for “new york times.”



legal matters

After you are released, there may be circumstances that require you to go to court or request legal assistance. Although your criminal record will not likely follow you to Mexico you may still need the assistance of an attorney, perhaps for a divorce, or to regain custody of a child.

Navigating the legal system can be challenging. Fortunately, there are resources to help you. This section includes information on finding lawyers who offer free services (pro bono).

Please note that we are not providing legal advice. We have done our best to provide information that will save you time and help you understand the legal options that you have. Hopefully, this will set you out on the right foot. However, we are not lawyers. Please seek the assistance of a lawyer if you have any questions or need clarification.

Pro Bono Assistance

Navigating the legal system can be frustrating. Because of this, it is almost always better to get the help of a lawyer rather than trying to do your own legal work. Lawyers have a firm grasp on the rules and how local judges and courtrooms work.

Lawyers are often expensive, but there are lawyers who work pro bono, for free. Many law schools in Mexico offer these services.

The most well-known sources of free legal services include the Asociación de Servicios Legales, A.C. (“ASL”) handled through the Mexican Bar Association, and the independent legal aid programs in two of the country’s top law schools, the Universidad Panamericana and the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM). The ASL enlists the support of lawyers

in some of the country’s most prominent law firms. The law school programs are staffed with law students and law professors, all providing their services free of charge. For more information, visit www.internationalprobono.com/resources/attachment.133022

ITAM runs a “Justice Access Center” (Centro de Acceso a la Justicia), founded in 1994. It is staffed primarily by law students, professors, and honorary members (practicing attorneys who wish to join the initiative). They provide counseling and legal support in many fields, including domestic relations actions (divorce, custody, child support), adoption, civil contracts, intellectual property, property rights, and wills and estates. UP recently opened a new clinic at its Bonaterra campus in Aguascalientes, the



finances, credit, and taxes

Take small steps toward managing your money, especially if you are going to be financially independent for the first time. Thinking about money can be stressful. Making smart decisions about your money can help you gain control over your financial life. Having control over your finances will help you to avoid money troubles in the long run and feel more secure about the future.

In this section, we cover banking basics and how to open a banking account. Then we address budgeting, financial planning, and credit. At the end of this section, we go over filing taxes.

Banking

It's a good idea to open a bank account so that you have a safe place to put your earnings. There are many good reasons for having a bank account.

Advantages of Banking

- Your money is safer and easier to keep track of if you deposit it in a bank. While in the US credit unions are common, in Mexico the equivalent, called "caja popular" are not well-respected. It is recommended that you only do business with officially recognized banks.
- If you put money into a savings account, you can accumulate interest on your total deposit. That means that the bank will pay you a small amount of money every month (very small, in the current economy) based on the amount of money in your bank account.
- Depositing your paychecks in a bank account is cheaper than paying fees for check-cashing services. In fact, most employers in Mexico require you to have an account where you receive your monthly earnings directly.
- You can use a debit card tied to your checking account so you don't have to carry large amounts of cash.
- Many banks offer online services that allow you to do things like pay bills automatically, keep records of what you earn and what you spend, and transfer money between accounts. These services are convenient and make it easier for you to stay organized.
- You can work with banks to get car or mortgage loans, develop a retirement investment plan, and invest in stocks and bonds.

Bank Accounts

There are two basic types of bank accounts: “checking” and “savings” accounts.

A **checking account** keeps your money secure while giving you easy access to your money so that you can make purchases and pay bills. You can use a debit card or checks to make purchases and pay bills from your account. You can also get cash from your account at any time using an ATM. Some checking accounts have monthly maintenance fees while others do not, so make sure you ask about fees.

Once you have a little money saved, it’s a good idea to open a **savings account**. A savings account allows you to earn a small amount of interest on your money. This means that if you leave the money in your savings account, it grows over time. You cannot write checks from a savings account, but some savings accounts will allow you to access your money through an ATM.

Things to Consider When Choosing a Bank

There are lots of banks to choose from, and they all offer different products, like checking and savings accounts, consumer and mortgage loans, rewards programs, and credit cards. Before choosing a bank, it’s important to think about your unique needs.

Sit down and talk to a bank representative to make sure that you understand their services and how they can meet your needs. You can also learn about banks’ services on their websites. Some large banks in Mexico include Bancomer, Banorte, and Santander.



Will you travel a lot for work, fun, or visiting family? You may want to choose a bank that has many branch and ATM locations.

- **What fees does the bank have?** Some possible fees might be an overdraft fee (when you take out more money than you have in the account), fees for closing accounts, fees for foreign transactions, and monthly maintenance fees.
- **Is your bank backed by the government?** If it is, that means that if the bank closes or has other problems, your funds are protected. Most major banks offer this protection.

OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

You will need the following items to open a checking or savings account:

- Official ID (INE or passport)
- Proof of address (utility, water, or phone bill)
- A check or cash to make an initial deposit (check with the bank about minimum deposit amounts)

Budgeting

One of the simplest steps you can take to manage your finances is to make a budget. Budgeting can help you understand where your money is going so that you do not spend more than you earn. There are thousands of different budget forms you can download online for free, or you can make your own. All you need to do is add up how much money you make every month, then make a list of everything you spend money on in a month and compare the two numbers. Some of the resources listed on the next page in "Financial Resources" can help you budget. They provide examples and templates you can use to get started.

A note about the peso-dollar exchange rate: The peso is currently very weak; in fact, in March 2020 it hit a record low of 24.86. At the time of publication, the peso is 21.60 to one dollar. What does this mean for you? It means if you are making pesos your purchasing power is lower. The prices of many things in Mexico are based on the dollar since much is imported. The Mexican government recently raised the price of gas as well and it is currently higher than gas in the US. The good news is many products and services are much cheaper than in the US so while making \$500 USD a month may sound very low, it will likely cover your expenses if you budget well.

The US dollar sign (\$) is often used for pesos. MXN is another abbreviation for pesos.

EXAMPLE BUDGET

Monthly income: \$10,000 pesos

Rent.....	4,000
Electric Bill	200
Water Bill	200
Public Transport.....	1000
Cell Phone Bill	250
Groceries.....	1000
Clothes.....	500
Savings Deposit Goal	1000

Total expenses per month 8,150

Leftover for other expenses: (10,000-8,150) = 1,850

Financial Resources

You can find a lot of information online about banks, account options, and strategies for saving your money. Some financial planning websites have chat features so you can ask an advisor a question and get an answer right away. Here are just a few to get you started.

NerdWallet is a tool to help you understand banking, credit, and financial planning. It even has information about car insurance, investments, mortgages, health insurance, and more. (www.nerdwallet.com)

The Simple Dollar is another website with helpful articles about understanding money and tips on frugal living. (www.thesimpledollar.com)

Mint is the TurboTax online financial planning site that has tools for budgeting and financial management. (www.mint.com)

LearnVest is an online financial planning service. Your account and some simple services are free, and you have the option to pay for additional services. (www.learnvest.com)

There are many more websites with good advice. You can find them with a simple Google search. Business Insider Magazine has a list of some top-rated money advice websites. Please remember that we are not advocating any particular websites or services.

Disclaimer: The resources listed here are suggestions. It is important to weigh any advice you are given. It may be free, but it may not always solve a problem.

Avoiding Scams

You don't want to become a victim of fraud. Visit this website for a list of common financial scams and their warning signs: www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/fraud



Here are a few scams to avoid:

- Be wary of emails or calls that offer large sums of money or "free gifts" in exchange for a small fee. If the reward sounds too good to be true, avoid it.
- Beware of companies that try to push you into signing up for something immediately. Only sign up for services you understand. You can always ask them for more information if you are confused.
- Only give personal information (such as account numbers and social security numbers) to companies you know to be trustworthy.
- Never pay for a letter of credit.

If possible, I would suggest you have a loved one that you trust and who believes in you to add you to some line of credit much like parents do for their children. Trust me, you will need it.

– **Joseph B.**



Credit

You may be considering getting a credit card so that you can buy things with credit. Buying on credit means that you buy things now and pay for them later. A bank loans you the money to make the purchase, and then you agree to repay the bank at a later date. Usually, this means you make a purchase with your credit card and then you make monthly payments to the bank until the loan is repaid.

Keep in mind that when you buy with credit, you have to pay interest—an extra fee to the bank for the privilege of using their credit services. Interest rates can be very high. Think hard before you get any credit card, and make sure you do not sign up for too many. Credit card companies make money through customers who are not able to pay off their purchases and end up getting deeper and deeper into debt. You do not want to be that customer!

A credit counselor affiliated with a non-profit organization that has no interest in selling you a credit card can give you unbiased advice about getting a credit card. One example is www.credit.org, which offers free telephone counseling sessions.

Sometimes, credit cards can lead to a lot of financial trouble. If you buy too much with credit cards, it can quickly become difficult to pay your monthly payments. A service like www.credit.org can help you manage your accounts if you become overwhelmed by your credit card payments. A good practice is to only buy things with your credit card that you can pay back within a month.

For some major purchases, such as buying a car or a house, buying on credit makes a lot of sense. You may be unable to pay for a car all at once, but the cost becomes more manageable if you can spread it out over many months. Make sure to choose a car that is affordable so that you can manage the monthly payments, and try to get an interest rate that is as low as possible. Again, it is important to be cautious and to talk to a credit

counselor before going into debt for a purchase. If you decide to get a credit card or make a major purchase using credit, your bank will look at your credit score before deciding to loan you money. You may be familiar with the concept of a credit score in the US which is a number that indicates your likely ability to repay a loan. If you have a good credit score, it will be easier to obtain loans and qualify for lower interest rates. While there is no credit score system in Mexico like in the US, there is a Credit Bureau (Buro de Crédito) that informs lenders whether you have good or bad credit, so you will want to make sure your credit remains good. Always pay your bills on time and be aware of services such as TV and internet that come with contracts, often 18 months. Failing to pay the contract will hurt your credit.

Getting a credit card and using it responsibly are a good way to build your credit. Be careful; not making your payments will hurt your credit as well.





Here are some guidelines for managing credit:

Get educated.

Being uninformed can lead to costly mistakes. The website consumerfinance.gov offers practical information about credit in the US which will vary only slightly from the way things are done in Mexico.

Be prudent.

Avoid businesses (such as car dealerships and payday loan offices) that advertise directly to people with bad credit. They often have extremely high interest rates that only benefit the business. They are counting on your not being able to pay your debts. Do not support any company whose business model depends on your lack of financial success.

Be cautious.

Read the fine print carefully and understand the rules before you sign anything. Remember, what counts is what is in the contract, not what the salesperson promised.

Pay your debts.

If you've gotten behind on any of your debts — or have had debts fall into collections — pay them, or make a plan for beginning to pay them. For information about managing debt, see this website: www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0150-coping-debt

Pay your bills on time.

Make it a priority to pay all of your bills on time. Paying on time is a good habit and can improve your credit score. The easiest way to do that is by setting up an automatic payment with your bank on your bills' due dates. Marking the dates on a calendar is fine, too.

Use credit cards wisely.

If you choose to have a credit card, don't charge what you can't pay back at the end of the month. If you must borrow money with a credit card to pay your credit card bills, it's time to talk with a credit counselor.

Don't cosign loans without reading them. Make payments on time or it may hurt your credit.

Tax Basics

Once you start earning money you will be required to start paying taxes. The amount you pay in taxes will depend on how much you earn, your health care costs and work-related expenses.

Depending on your type of employment, in Mexico, unlike in the US, you are responsible for paying your taxes every month. Some employers will handle this for you but in other positions (for example, part-time teaching positions), you must make an appointment with the tax office to file your taxes. There is

also an annual tax return that you are responsible for filing. This date is in April annually.

When you file taxes, you let the government know how much you have earned and how much you have paid in taxes, and some information about your situation (children, disability, health care costs, etc.). The government decides whether you have paid too much or too little in taxes. In many cases, you will find that you have paid too much, and you get a tax refund. If you have paid too little, you have to pay the amount you owe. If you do not file your taxes, you have to pay a fee and you will owe back taxes for the money you didn't pay.

When you take a job it's important to understand if the employer will handle your tax filings for you or whether you will be responsible for them. In the former case you will likely be a full-time, formal employee of the company. In the latter

you will be functioning more like a freelancer, what's called working for "honorarios" in Mexico. In some cases you will have to provide an official receipt, called a "factura," to your employer or client stating that you have reported the income to the government. When you work in this capacity you are required to present your taxes monthly at the Mexican equivalent of the IRS, called the "Servicio de Administración Tributaria," or SAT.

Because the process is so time-consuming and complex that many taxpayers chose to hire an accountant. A reasonable rate for one is about 500 pesos per month and you are likely to find a good one by word of mouth. Alternatively, you can present your declaration in person each month. It's a good idea to make an appointment online before arriving to cut down wait time.

To do so visit www.sat.gob.mx/contacto/citas/Paginas/default.aspx

Property

Transfer of property can be a fairly complex matter in Mexico, best done with the help of a notary public. Note that a notary public in the US is very different from one in Mexico. In the US, you may be familiar with notary publics for the seal and signature they provide to notarize important documents. In Mexico, they function almost like attorneys, helping their clients with policies and procedures. If you need to transfer property that has been gifted to you by a family member, consult with a notary public. They will let you know exactly what documents are needed, and, for a fee, will take care of the transaction, including helping you deal with any back taxes owed.





voting & engaging with your community

Voting

You can vote as a repatriated citizen, and you should! We need your voice. In Mexico, you have the right to vote after release and deportation, regardless of the circumstances surrounding your incarceration and deportation.

And the best news is you don't have to register to vote! Your national ID card, known as the INE, doubles as an automatic voter registration.

Educating Yourself

Take time to understand the issues and the candidates before you vote. Newspapers and candidate websites can help you be informed. Local and state elections are just as important, if not more important, than national presidential elections because your local and state leaders impact your community more directly.

For more information on political parties in Mexico see: www.mexicoinstituteonelections.wordpress.com/the-parties/



Quick facts about presidential elections in Mexico:

- The Mexican president serves a term of six years and cannot be reelected.
- The presidential election takes place on the first Sunday of July.
- Inauguration day is December 1.

Community Engagement

Now that you are out of prison and have returned to Mexico, you can contribute to your community in valuable ways. Educating yourself about the political process and voting is important. Contributing your skills through community organizing and volunteer work is another option.

Community Organizing and Advocacy

Community organizing is about community

Get involved in advocacy work. If we want to change the process, we have to lead the process.

– Marlon C.



members joining together and engaging in organized activities to advocate for their needs and rights. Communities can be defined through geographical boundaries or shared characteristics. Community organizing can take many forms including door to door interactions, public speeches, organizing community meetings, gathering systematic information about the community needs, sharing information to educate the public, developing community leadership, and organizing fundraisers. Community organizing is an effective tool for making your voice heard and creating significant positive change. You would be surprised by what you can do when you join together with others to create mutual-aid organizations and hold your representatives accountable and to make sure your community's voice is being heard. There are many organizations that do community organizing online and on the ground. Now that you are out of prison, you can contribute to these efforts in valuable ways. Find an organization in your community and attend a meeting, or start one yourself. Here you can discuss problems that the community is facing and work to develop solutions.

Volunteer

Volunteer work gives you the chance to make social connections, focus on solving problems, and see your community as a living whole in which you are a vital participant. Volunteering helps you build fulfilling relationships and has proven health benefits. Creating new social connections can prevent depression and reduce feelings of

isolation. Watching how your efforts make your community better can give you a sense of pride and fulfillment.



Here's a list of community organizations in Mexico whose members advocate for recently deported people. Get involved!

- Otros Dreams en Acción (www.odamexico.org) (Mexico City)
- Caminamos Juntos (www.cjsma.org) (San Miguel de Allende)
- New Comienzos (www.newcomienzos.org) (Mexico City)
- Dreamers Moms (www.dreamer-moms.org) (Tijuana)



For more information about volunteer opportunities in Mexico see the following sites:

- www.ong.consumer.es/alfabeticamente/
- www.conexionejecutiva.com/Gobierno/ONGs_Categoria16.aspx
- www.catedraunescodh.unam.mx/catedra/pronaledh/index70ed.html?option=com

Otros Dreams en Acción (ODA) is a community of and for those that were born in Mexico, grew up in the United States, and are now back in Mexico because of deportation, the deportation of a family member or because of the threat of deportation. At ODA we are dedicated to mutually supporting and accompanying each other through the different processes of returning. Some of the areas are connecting people with emotional support, potential jobs, legal help, and assistance with getting their documents. Most importantly, ODA is a community that is here to support and accompany YOU. Poch@ House is our cultural and artistic space where we have various workshops and events throughout the year. We are people that have gone through similar situations as you and we are here to make your process a little easier than it was for many of us. Please remember you are not alone and can reach out to us.

If you are currently out of work, volunteering can also help you acquire new skills to add to your resume so that you can have a more successful job search. You may also meet new people who can help you network and find new job opportunities. Volunteering expands your life experience in ways that may surprise you. You may discover new abilities or find new interests by offering your time and energy.

Schools, churches, and shelters (especially at the border) are a great place to start. Other options include community centers, nursing homes, and animal shelters. Call or visit them to ask how you

can help out. You can also do a Google search for volunteer opportunities in your community.

Do a self-assessment. What skills do you possess that could help others? Do you speak English fluently? Do you have computer skills? Approach a local church or community center and offer to teach a weekly class or coach a sport at a local elementary school. Organize with other activists concerned about the environment to plant trees and pick up trash in your community. If you live near the border you can assist deported individuals that come after you by volunteering at shelters or soup kitchens.

New Comienzos is a non-profit organization committed to supporting dreamers, migrants and returnees and their families both to integrate into Mexican society, and during personal emergency situations. They offer psychological support, shelter, job search assistance for bilinguals, English certification and mentoring. New Comienzos offers a youth program to help prepare young people for jobs. The organization has supported over 20,000 people in it's first four years. It strongly believes in the dreams of Mexicans and that the American dream can be achieved in Mexico as well.

Plaza de la República #9, Tabacalera, Cuauhtémoc, 06030
(55) 77-33-14-36
<https://www.newcomienzos.org/>

The mission of Dreamers' Moms is family reunification in the US and Mexico. We work mainly with deported and migrant women and children in the Tijuana area. When a woman is deported to Tijuana (San Isidro gate) we meet them there to offer orientation, food, personal hygiene kits and emotional support. We'll accompany them to a shelter and help with job placement in call centers if they are bilingual. We also provide legal services through our firm Unión Law where we support only women who have a viable migration case for reunification with their families. In addition, we refer people to mental health care in the area.

We are a community of deported people, many of us the mothers of American citizens, dreamers and undocumented children. We gather regularly to support each other. We act collectively to influence local and US laws, raising awareness of the trauma of deportation, especially for children born in the US. We actively take part in interviews with local and international media speaking out against family separation.

Madres Soñadoras Internacional/ Dreamers Moms USA/ Tijuana A.C
(664) 130-6144
www.Dreamer-Moms.org



cultural encounters

Greetings

In Mexico, greetings are often warmer and more physical than in the US. In casual encounters, men often shake hands and women kiss on the cheek or hug. Men often kiss women on the cheek as well to greet them. It is important to note that this is an “air kiss” which consists of touching right cheeks and making a kissing sound into the air. If you are not used to this it will feel very strange at first but it’s important to use this greeting as avoiding it will make others think you are cold or rude.

It is also essential to greet everyone in attendance at small gatherings, for example, a family barbecue. This is especially true in small towns and rural areas. You are expected to greet everyone: men by handshakes and women by kisses. Older women may extend their hand for a handshake rather than a kiss. When you leave the party you are expected to say goodbye in the same way to all who remain.

As in the US, hugs are the norm between close friends and family members.

Courtesy is expected in daily encounters as well in stores, banks, or government offices, and other public places. Most people greet each other with “good morning” or “good afternoon” before getting down to business. This is due to the fact that communities are still quite tight-knit. Most people know their local grocer or store-owner and want to maintain that relationship through

greetings and practicing courtesy.

In the corporate world handshakes are the norm and this custom doesn’t vary much from that in the US.

Formality

Mexicans are generally more formal with people they don’t know, referring to them as ma’am or sir (señora or señorita for younger women, and señor for men). They will refer to strangers as “usted” rather than the informal “tú.” If an older person, or someone you don’t know well tells you to talk to them using “tú” they are trying to reduce the formality in the conversation and you should follow their lead.

Punctuality

Mexican society moves a bit slower than it does in the US. Arriving on time for social events is unheard of as most invitees to a party will show up an hour late or more. In business meetings and other types of appointments (i.e., a doctor’s visit), punctuality is expected although you will notice that it is not always delivered.

Body Language

In social and informal business interactions eye contact is not as common as it is in the US and varies among social classes. Don’t be surprised if people tend to look down and avoid eye contact

with you. For some people in Mexico it is considered a sign of respect. When talking in small groups people will generally stand closer to you than you might be used to in the US. You'll get used to it. Showing your discomfort with this custom might offend.

Bureaucracy

As indicated, Mexico runs on a slower clock than in the US and getting things done seems to take much longer. You may wait in line at the bank for half an hour or more before you are attended and when you are, the representative attending you may pause to answer a phone call or to greet a colleague.

Government processes such as applying for your ID or getting a passport often take a great deal of time and effort on your part. It is not uncommon to have to return to a government agency multiple times and wait several hours to accomplish what you've set out to do. Many agencies allow you to make online appointments which will cut your time drastically. Always visit the particular government office's webpage to check the list of required documents to bring with you.

Religion

You will notice that religion, especially Catholicism, plays more of a role in daily life in Mexico than it does in the US. After all, 85% of the population is Catholic so many community events, even secular ones like high school graduations, are celebrated with a mass. Evangelical Christian denominations constitute the next largest group, but still make up less than 2% of the population.

Family

As you may know, families in Mexico are extremely tight-knit, much more so than in most cultures of the US. Mexicans tend to settle down near family members and even live at home for a much longer period of time than is common in

the US. For many, family comes before anything else. Multiple generations can often be found spending great amounts of time together and respect for the elderly is a common value. Sunday is often set aside for "family day" and socializing with people outside the family is often not done on this day.

Friends

Friendships are highly valued and a lot of effort is generally put into maintaining them. In fact, in Mexican culture there is an elaborate system of "godparenting" in place that elevates close friends almost to the role of family. If you are close to someone they may ask you to be godparents of not only their child's baptism but their first communion, confirmation or even of their wedding! This is an honor and a serious obligation in Mexican society. It usually means covering at least part of the expenses associated with celebration.

Communication

It may surprise you to know that What's App is an extremely common form of communication in Mexico. Your employer may use it to send you important work-related information. Your doctor may send your test results this way. What's App groups are also a common way to organize groups of people with common interests, such as sports team members, or parents at a particular school.





health

When you leave prison, you will be responsible for managing your own physical health. This can be a welcome change. Those returning to life in the States face a dauntingly complex health care system. Fortunately, in Mexico, health care is much more accessible. In fact, not only is it accessible, it's universal, making private health insurance plans virtually unnecessary.

You will likely ask friends and family for recommendations of good doctors and health services. That's a great place to start. You are also eligible for one of Mexico's three public health systems. Signing up is your responsibility and of course staying on top of appointments and keeping yourself healthy is as well.

In this section, we cover:

- Medical care
- Health care plan options
- Private health care
- Dental and vision care
- Staying healthy
- Paying for medications
- Mental health and substance abuse
- HIV/ AIDS

Medical Care

The quality and price of medical care in Mexico varies wildly. Although the requirements for becoming a doctor in Mexico are not as rigorous as in the United States there are many fine doctors throughout Mexico. Hospitals are generally modern and well-equipped. And state-of-the-art specialist hospitals can be found in Mexico City and other large urban centers. You'll also be pleasantly surprised that seeing a doctor is quite affordable as compared to the US. If you are enrolled in Mexico's universal health care system, Seguro Popular, you can be seen for free (although waiting periods may apply). But even if you chose to pay out of pocket you won't be hit with a bill for hundreds or even thousands of dollars like in the US. You can see a general practitioner affiliated with your local pharmacy for just 30 pesos or \$1.50 USD! To see a specialist, you can expect to pay between \$30-\$50 USD for an hour consult.

Public Health Care

If you enroll in one of the three government-sponsored health care systems your medical expenses are free or minimal, depending on which program you are eligible for. Quality of care can vary and depends also on whether you are in a major city or rural area. Waiting periods are common unless the condition is life-threatening.

Emergency numbers in Mexico:

- Emergency: 911
- Non emergency police: 060
- Red Cross: 065
- City hotline: 070 (in some cities)
- Information: 040
- Fire department: 068
- Anonymous report (abuse or corruption by a government official): 089
- Highway emergency: 074

Private Practice

As in the US many doctors have their own private practices. You can call and make an appointment with them as you would in the US. The fee varies but is generally around \$500-1,000 pesos for an hour consultation. Some doctors work at a clinic during the day and hold private hours during the evenings.

Clinics/Labs

There are many small clinics or labs throughout Mexico. Chopo (www.chopo.com.mx) is one well-respected lab. These institutions function differently than you might expect coming from the US. You can walk into most of these clinics and "order up" what you would like, such as a colonoscopy or blood tests and a physician on staff will perform them. You might also have a private doctor who sends you to one of these labs for testing since most small doctor's operations don't have that capability. They may ask for an order (orden médico) from your doctor.

Pharmacies

One of the most economical ways to see a doctor is through a local pharmacy. Most pharmacies (Guadalajara, Similar, Ahorro) have a mini-clinic attached to the building, sometimes with a separate entrance. These pharmacies sometimes have no charge to see the doctor or charge very little, 30 or 50 pesos. These rates are so low because the doctor will most likely prescribe medicine that you will purchase directly from the sponsoring pharmacy. Being aware of this relationship is important as overprescribing often takes place.

Hospitals

As mentioned, Mexico has many modern hospitals, both public and private. If you are enrolled in public health care you will go to your assigned hospital. Be aware, however, if you show up at a private hospital and don't have private insurance you will be expected to pay out of pocket and the fees can be very steep.

Health Care Plan Options

Seguro Popular

Seguro Popular is a nation-wide health care program that is designed as a safety net to cover citizens, regardless of their socio-economic status, who do not have access to other health care. Seguro Popular is most often used by Mexicans who are not formally employed or who cannot afford to enroll in other government or private health insurance programs. Seguro Popular covers 57 million Mexicans.

The program provides access to medical, surgical, pharmaceutical and hospital services including catastrophic coverage which aims to support people suffering from high-cost illnesses or life-threatening accidents.

How to sign up:

The following documents are required in original and copy: Official identification, CURP, and proof of residence (electricity, water or phone bill, for example).

For the location nearest you, see the directory or visit: www.cnpss-dgao.gob.mx/georeferencia/

There is no fee to register for Seguro Popular.

For questions visit:

www.seguro-popular.gob.mx/index.php/como-me-atiendo/gestores-medicos

For a list of diseases covered by

Seguro Popular: www.gob.mx/salud/seguropopular#6157

IMSS (Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social / Mexican Social Security Institute)

IMSS covers full-time employees of Mexican companies (including foreign employees with residency status) who pay a percentage of their salary each month for the benefit which entitles them to access the health care system and also provides insurance coverage for their salary in case accident or illness prevents them from working.

IMSS is also available to those not employed by Mexican companies who wish to sign up voluntarily and pay a monthly fee.

IMSS benefits are available to those who also choose to enroll in private insurance.

How to sign up:

If you are formally employed full-time, by a Mexican company you will be automatically enrolled and your employer will take deductions from your pay to cover the premiums as well as pay part of your IMSS coverage.

If you are not formally employed you can begin the application online at www.serviciosdigitales.imss.gob.mx/portal-ciudadano-web-externo/home or in person at your local IMSS office (between 8am and 3:30pm). But you'll still need to submit paperwork at your local IMSS office (original and copies) which includes:

- Application form and health questionnaire provided by IMSS
- Official ID
- Proof of address, e.g. your latest electricity bill
- CURP
- Marriage certificate (if applicable)
- Birth certificate
- Two photographs, same format and rules as those for your ID or residency permit
- Bank payment receipt for the first-year's premium (made on the day you visit the local IMSS office)

Price for Voluntary Enrollment

The price for annual enrollment varies depending on your age and ranges from 4,650 to 12,750 pesos annually. For the specific charge visit: www.imss.gob.mx/derechoH/segurososalud-familia

Preexisting Conditions

Some preexisting conditions are not covered. These include malignant tumors, congenital diseases, chronic degenerative diseases,

addictions, mental illness, and HIV—among others. If you have any preexisting “excluded” conditions, you cannot enroll into the IMSS insurance program. Other specific preexisting conditions are covered on deferment, and these don’t preclude you from joining the program, but are subject to specific waiting periods before you can seek health care services related to them.

To see if your preexisting condition is covered visit: www.imss.gob.mx/derechoH/enfermedad-seguros-familia

ISSSTE Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado (Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers)

ISSSTE is a health care and social security system for state and federal government workers and currently covers 12 million people. It includes not only health care but assistance in case of worker disability or death as well as workplace accidents.

If you are employed by the federal government you will automatically be enrolled.

For a more information on ISSSTE visit: www.gob.mx/issste



A note about public health care in Mexico:

As Seguro Popular, IMSS and ISSSTE are government-run public health care programs that cover millions of people, reports of quality and speed of care vary. Generally, for non-life threatening conditions and procedures you may be put on a waiting list. The experience you have will likely depend on where you are in Mexico and what the wider local demand is on health services when you’re seeking treatment. Some patients report good care from these organizations while others report disappointments and shortcomings. As with all large, publicly funded health care systems world-wide, the demand for services usually exceeds the resources available so care may not always meet expectations.

Private Health Care

Another option for medical coverage in Mexico is private health insurance. Plans vary by price and conditions covered but generally differ from coverage in the US in key ways.

Checkups and prescriptions are generally not covered. Doctors charge far less than in the US, however, and prescription medication is considerably more economical. Most affordable plans cover only serious illness and accidents and are called “seguros de gastos mayores.”

Deductibles are generally higher than in the US (depending on your particular plan).

You may be excluded for preexisting conditions and there are waiting periods for serious illnesses. For example, if you are diagnosed with cancer and you’ve only had the insurance for one year, you have to wait two additional years (3-year waiting period) for treatment to be covered. Note that the actual waiting period varies by condition.

The price of private health insurance varies enormously based on age, health, and the deductibles and co-pays that you choose. As just one example, a middle of the road plan for a 37-year-old man in good health with a \$1,500 USD deductible, covering serious illness and accidents costs around \$70 USD a month. (1,200 pesos).

If you are interested in private insurance two of the largest providers are GNP (www.gnp.com.mx) and Metlife (www.metlife.com.mx). They also provide auto, life and homeowner's insurance.

Once You Have Insurance

Your job isn't over! If you opted for private insurance, make sure that you know the costs of the services you want to receive before you go to your appointments or schedule surgery. Don't wait for the insurance company to send you a bill. Health insurance companies provide booklets and websites to help you understand how much a hospital stay or specialist visit will cost, and you can always call your insurance company if you have questions.

When you receive bills, look over them carefully and ask questions so that you understand them. Health insurance companies and organizations make mistakes, so it's important to make sure you understand your bills before you pay them.

It's also a good idea to make sure that the doctor you want to see is your insurance network. If not, you may have to pay the full cost of the visit.

It's important to get an insurance policy that includes access to an "assessor" that can provide assistance should your insurance company deny an expense that should be covered by your policy. This assessor can assist you in the appeals process since it can be difficult to go through this process by yourself. One way to purchase health insurance with this benefit is through a broker such as Integraliss (integraliss.com), who has a good reputation and offers health insurance policies throughout Mexico.

Dental and Vision Care

If you are enrolled in one of Mexico's public health programs (Seguro Popular, IMSS or ISSSTE) dental and vision procedures will likely be covered with the exception of preventative care (teeth cleanings and eye checkups). In other words, you can get a cavity filled or a cataract removed, paid for by the government.

The lack of preventative care is a big hole in the government's health care plan, one that you are responsible for filling so that your own minor conditions don't get out of hand. It is strongly recommended that you schedule regular checkups.

Like with medical care, you will find that dental and vision care are much more economical in Mexico but vary greatly by state and level of

quality. For example, you will be able to find a dentist to clean your teeth for \$150 pesos in some parts where in others you will be charged \$800 pesos. It's worth taking into account quality of care as well. Perhaps you feel comfortable going to a low-cost clinic for a cleaning but you may want to seek out the more experienced dentist (who also charges more) for a root canal, provided you don't want to use Seguro Popular.

If you need basic vision care, such as a prescription for eyeglasses, you can find it with small local ophthalmologists who have their own practice or, like in the US, large chains such as Costco which often charge more.

Staying Healthy

By and large health insurance plans, private and public, deal with health problems after they've happened. Many only treat life-threatening emergencies and accidents. This means you are responsible for your own checkups. It is strongly recommended that you find a general practitioner in your community to see you for annual checkups.

A general practitioner can also give you a full physical examination, order lab work, and provide prescription renewals. It is recommended that you have a full physical at least once a year. Being in prison increases the risk of acquiring many infectious diseases, so after release from prison, you should be screened for HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C (HCV), Hepatitis B (HBV) and tuberculosis. HIV, HBV and HCV can be detected by a blood test. Tuberculosis can be tested by blood or by a skin test; if these tests are positive, the disease is confirmed by a chest X-ray.

Paying for Medications

Most pharmacies offer low-cost medicines so paying for your meds is not as much of a concern as it might be in the States. Often there is a generic option available as well so be sure to ask. Generic drugs have the same active ingredients but are much less expensive.

In Mexico, there is even an extra low cost pharmacy called Farmacias Similares for the cheapest option.

Routine Exams That Can Keep You Healthy

Age	Men	Women
18-39	Blood pressure, cholesterol, flu shot, syphilis screen, TDAP shot, HPV shot, chlamydia/gonorrhea, HIV, skin exam	Blood pressure, cholesterol, flu shot, TDAP shot, HPV shot, breast exam, PAP smear (over 21), chlamydia/gonorrhea, HIV, skin exam
40-64	Blood pressure, blood sugar, colonoscopy (over 50), stool test, flu shot, shingles shot (over 60), prostate screen (over 50), lung cancer screen (only if you smoke), skin exam	Blood pressure, blood sugar, colonoscopy (over 50), stool test, flu shot, shingles shot (over 60), breast screen, mammogram (over 40), lung cancer screen (only if you smoke), postmenopausal bone screening, PAP smear (over 21), pelvic, HPV, skin exam
65+	Blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, colonoscopy (until 75), hearing test, aneurysm screen (only if you smoke), prostate and lung screening (only if you have risk factors), pneumonia shot (x2), skin exam	Blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, colonoscopy (until 75), hearing test, mammogram (until 75), bone screening, PAP smear (until 65), pneumonia shot (x2), skin exam

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

If mental health challenges or substance abuse are preventing you from functioning well or feeling good, get help from a mental health professional. If you are feeling especially bad or feel like you might be a danger to yourself or someone else, get help right away. Call the suicide hotline at (525) 510-2550. You can also call 911 or visit an emergency room if you are in crisis.

Even if you are not in crisis, don't delay getting help if you are feeling depressed, anxious, angry, or if you struggle with other mental health challenges. If you aren't feeling well mentally and emotionally, it makes it so much harder to move forward in positive and productive ways. When you are feeling mentally healthy, you will find that things will seem more manageable and you'll feel more hopeful.

A mental health professional can help you:

- Work through changing harmful behaviors or cycles
- Feel stronger as you face your challenges.
- Help you come up with goals and plans to solve your problems.
- Identify how your ways of thinking are influencing how you feel.

Mental health professionals can help you decide if it would be a good idea to take medicine to treat your mental disorder, and they can offer treatment for drug and alcohol addictions.

Unfortunately, mental health services are generally not covered by health plans in Mexico. Pharmacies and hospitals can refer you to a professional but you will have to pay out of pocket.

If you are struggling with drug or alcohol addiction, there are support groups you can go to for free, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (www.aa.org/) or Narcotics Anonymous (www.na.org/).

There may also be support groups in your area for reentry, grief, mental health, disabilities, parenting, divorce, sexuality, and other issues you may be struggling with.

To find a support group in your area, you can do a web search ("grupo de apoyo Ciudad Juárez"). Community centers, libraries, and churches can also help you find the counseling and support you need. See our Community and Health Resources directory and the Wellness and Recreation section for more information.

You take a pill for your heart, you can take a pill for your head too. It's normal.

– Grant A. (Medicaid Specialist)



HIV/AIDS

What does having HIV mean?

HIV is a virus that spreads by attacking and killing healthy cells in the body. This happens all over the body, destroying cells or forcing them to create new infected cells. HIV targets immune system cells, known as T-cells. T-cells fight off infection by killing cells that have been infected by germs. As more T-cells start dying, the immune system is open to attack. If the number of T-cells drops too low, the risk of infection increases and can lead to AIDS. When someone has AIDS, their immune system becomes too weak to fight off other infections. If untreated, people can die of AIDS.

Fortunately, people who have HIV today can go on to live long and productive lives as long as they take steps to stay on top of their infection. HIV is a chronic illness that can be managed with daily medication, regular laboratory testing and physician visits, and healthy lifestyle changes (exercise, stopping smoking, getting enough sleep, etc.).

Risk

The most common way for HIV to be transmitted is through sexual contact, but infected and untreated mothers are able to pass it on to their children. Avoid contact with blood, semen or vaginal fluid of sexual partners who are HIV-positive. Do not share needles or syringes and make sure to use protection (condoms) for any sexual contact.

Know the risk of spreading HIV to a sexual partner who is not HIV positive. Being treated with antiretroviral medications can reduce your chances of transmitting HIV to a partner. Taking antiretroviral medications regularly lowers the levels of HIV in your blood. This does not mean that the virus is completely gone, so take precautions and use condoms even though the risk of transmission is low. If you do not have HIV but are in a relationship with someone who does, you can take PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis), which reduces the risk of being infected, if you take it as you are supposed to.

There are also certain sexual activities that can increase your chances of transmitting HIV.

For more information about HIV transmission and risk factors, visit www.aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/prevention/reduce-your-risk/sexual-risk-factors/

HIV Testing

Testing for HIV is done through a blood, urine, or oral sample. A blood test is the most common and the most accurate. Local commercial labs offer HIV testing. Linfolab is one option and they charge 345 pesos for the test. (www.linfolabmexico.com.mx/combate-las-ets/)

Sometimes HIV testing is offered as part of the prison outtake process. We suggest you take advantage of this free testing, as knowing your status is very important.

If you test positive, know that you can still live a long and meaningful life. A follow-up test will be done to verify the diagnosis. You should make an appointment to see a health care provider to stay healthy and possibly begin treatments.

You should still be cautious if the test comes back negative. If you have recently engaged in high-risk behaviors with someone who has HIV, it is possible that the tests cannot yet detect HIV in your body. You should request another test at a later date. Check the US CDC website for recommendations. (www.cdc.gov/)

It is also a good idea to get tested for other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and take measures to prevent them.



healing and wellness

Reentry and deportation are often traumatic and the process of recovery will take time. In this section we'll briefly discuss the possible effects of incarceration and deportation on you and those you love, and we'll look at different types of wellness as well as ways to work towards them.

Beginning to Heal

Incarceration and deportation hurt in a lot of ways, and those who are incarcerated sometimes push others away to protect themselves from that pain. Some people avoid relationships, grieving, and emotional self-care to avoid feeling helpless, or armor themselves with distance and indifference to keep from being vulnerable.

Healing is a part of moving forward and reconnecting pieces of one's life. It is a process, and requires equal parts vulnerability and strength. For those who've had to protect themselves with emotional armor, shedding that protective layer can be a daunting prospect. While it may be difficult to acknowledge the pain of incarceration, it is necessary in order to heal.

For years, decades, we become so focused on getting out and preparing ourselves for when the time comes that when it actually happens we tend to have difficulty finding our footing because that clearly specified goal is no longer in our lives. We have a purpose, but now it is no longer as clear cut as it once was. Moreover, rather than dealing with the trauma, we tend to ignore it or downplay it as if it is completely normal what we just went through. We went from being focus driven to being in a state of flux. Before anything, we must deal with our trauma. It is not going away magically. We can do it by asking for help, venting, or riding a bicycle for hours, as I love to do. But we have to address it.

– Roberto L.



Opening up to yourself and to trusted others is a vital step in reclaiming your life.

Prison is often traumatic, and the process of recovery will take time. However, the work itself is a form of healing. Vulnerability is not weakness. Neither is asking for help. Seeking the assistance of a professional is a legitimate option. Support groups can help people deal with unresolved traumatic experiences that may have occurred during incarceration, such as the loss of a loved one. No one has to suffer alone. See the Mental Health section on page 90 for information on finding a support group.

This section addresses a number of aspects of wellness that can help you heal and move forward. It is based on suggestions given to us by EJP students. Wellness can be a complex concept and it is different for different people. In the context of reentry, wellness is about making meaning out of your past experiences and having them inform the development of who you are and want to be in the world. It is about forgiveness, healing, caring for yourself, and reconnecting with others.

Relationships

Family

Incarceration creates barriers for maintaining relationships with family, friends, and other loved ones. The high financial and emotional cost of keeping in touch can put strains on these relationships. And of course, deportation complicates things even more. You likely left some family behind in the US and are reunited with others in Mexico or your home country. Wherever your loved ones are located, the process of reconnecting with them and rebuilding healthy, positive relationships will likely require thoughtfulness and care. This transition is difficult, not just for you, but for the ones you love too.

People whose loved ones are incarcerated or deported can feel isolated. Often, their feelings of loss and the pain of separation do not seem socially acceptable. Both incarcerated and deported people and their loved ones may feel guilt in relation to each other. Open and honest communication about these feelings is made more difficult if you're trying to keep things positive. Also, some people may pick up social

My approach is to be aware that I have a lot to offer to a friendship as well. I realize that I don't possess a strong network here in my new city but conversely I also understand my strengths which are a willingness to learn and to work. Moreover, my past is the past. I choose not to allow that to define me as an individual nor my future. If people are too narrow-minded, where they can't understand that everyone makes mistakes in their lives, then I am sure I can do without that acquaintance. Plus, at the end of the day, no matter what, people respect hustle. They may question your past decisions but if they can see you are willing to work and do everything within your means to improve your situation then they are going to either get on board or put you on board. Of course, with the exception of the occasional hater but again we cannot control the actions of others; we can only control how we choose to react.

– **Roberto L.**



habits, such as being closed off and guarded, as a way of surviving prison. These habits may strain relationships.

Even under the best of circumstances, being away from family, friends, and loved ones for an extended period of time means that you will all need time, patience, and openness as you work to get to know each other again.

We acknowledge that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to the relationship challenges people face when leaving prison. Rather than offering more advice, we share the wisdom of formerly incarcerated, and deported individuals who have generously described the challenges they faced and how they have worked to form healthy relationships after incarceration and deportation.

“ The best way to reconnect with family in the US if you are being deported is to foster a healthy relationship with them during your incarceration. Sometimes individuals think that since they’re getting deported then they can burn bridges or simply neglect their relationship with their loved ones in the US. In other words, the thought process is: I am not going to see or be around my family so who cares if I call home or take the time to write a letter while I am in prison. Well, the reality is that who better to help you or just lend you an ear than those who have actually been there—to some degree—from the very beginning? People can make friends or find acquaintances anywhere in the world; they can also find a job and accomplish many other things that we tend to superficially associate with freedom. But to truly attain the emotional stability and freedom that I believe we all seek, then they are going to need people in their lives who are aware of their circumstances and who are willing to offer that emotional support. I believe this is something a family can provide and thus the imperative to foster and nourish healthy relationships with your family while incarcerated, even if you are getting deported. ”

- Roberto L.

“ Get up to date on the newest apps that let you stay in touch with your loved ones in the US, such as Skype, WhatsApp, Facetime, and Messenger. Through these apps you can message, have phone calls or video chats and see their faces. ”

- Erick N.

“ I take time out of my day, even five minutes, to call them and see what’s going on. I text them every day, every morning... I talk to them and get their point of view and see what’s going on, try to spend time. I tell them I love them, how you doing, how your day going, what you got planned. Little simple stuff. I let them talk. You gotta try to be involved, no matter how old they are, they still children, they still want that relationship with you. ”

- Tony C.

You spend so much time keeping people at arm’s distance. You never let anybody get close. [When you go into prison] you’re so young, you’re so vibrant, it’s so easy to have friends, to have relationships, to have people that are close to you. But when you come home, you’ve gotten so used to keeping people at a distance that you just continue to do it. It’s hard to make new friends.

- Tony C.

Domestic Abuse

Relationships are complicated. They can be great in some ways, challenging in others. No relationship is perfect, but with patience and care, many can become more supportive and loving. Sometimes, however, it's best to get out of a relationship, especially if there is abuse involved. Abuse comes in many different forms, including:

- Verbal abuse (threats, name-calling, intimidation)
- Physical abuse (pushing, slapping, choking, destroying property)
- Controlling behavior (preventing you from seeing people, going places, or spending money)
- Emotional abuse (making you feel like you are worthless)
- Sexual abuse (unwanted sexual activity, often using force)

If you are in an abusive relationship, seek help. Making the decision to leave is difficult and may involve some risk. It takes courage to leave, especially if you fear for your own safety or the safety of your children, or if you depend on the other person for financial support.

You may want to begin this process by calling a domestic violence hotline like the one offered by the organization "Origen" at (800) 015-1617 or through WhatsApp: (55) 3234-8244. This confidential hotline provides support, information, and referrals. This free service can put you in touch with resources in your area. Even if you are not ready to leave the relationship, the hotline can help you get through challenging times and help you take the next step.

For additional resources for people facing violence at home visit the website www.origenac.org

For a list of domestic violence shelters across Mexico visit <https://www.facebook.com/RedNacionaldeRefugiosAC/>

Types of Wellness

Emotional wellness involves being respectful of yourself and others. It means being aware and accepting of your feelings, whether they are positive or negative, and expressing your feelings to others in a way that is healthy and constructive. It also means taking the time to consider others' feelings and perspectives. Much conflict comes from misunderstanding, and it's important to take the time to listen and to talk things out. No two people always agree on everything, but knowing how to disagree respectfully is key to a healthy relationship. There may be other unresolved issues you're dealing with, such as grief, anger, or depression. Be patient with yourself and realize the path to emotional wellness can be a long one. It is okay to seek help dealing with these issues. Counseling is an acceptable option and can be an important part of learning how to be emotionally well.

Physical wellness is taking care of your body. There are many ways to stay active and healthy, and it's important to do so. You can consider shopping around for a gym, or jogging, walking, or biking. Many returning citizens find enjoyment in access to fresh fruits and vegetables and it's good to eat healthy and drink plenty of water. Practicing safe sex by using condoms is important as well. For those with addiction issues, reaching out for assistance through counselling or recovery programs can be a really positive step. You can read more about health care in our Health section on page 87.

Social wellness involves seeking out healthy relationships with many different kinds of people. This will be a time of strengthening old relationships and building new ones. There are many different ways to do this, and many different ways to meet new people. While it can be difficult to put yourself out there, it can also lead to meaningful, healthy relationships.

Spiritual wellness is pondering a larger meaning or purpose to life. This can, but does not necessarily have to, involve religion. You may decide to join a church, synagogue, or mosque to practice your faith in the company and support of others. You may also decide to join a support group to find community and purpose. Set aside some time each day to be open, to listen, and to reflect upon what's going on inside. Practice mindfulness or meditation. A description of some ways of doing so can be found on page 18.

Occupational wellness is about contributing meaningfully and respectfully in your job. Your job may not be ideal; however, how you go about doing it is entirely up to you. Recognize what it is you bring to the table and make yourself an asset to your workplace. Invest in yourself by investing in what it is you do. Find ways to do a little extra and try new things if you are able. Take the time to realize the value of the work you do, and honor that. Also, beware of toxic work environments. Some jobs can be unhealthy physically, emotionally, or otherwise.

Environmental wellness means being aware of Earth's resources and trying to create a clean, healthy, and beautiful environment. Respecting the Earth and becoming aware both of your place in it and your responsibility to take care of it is important. There are many ways to contribute. You can grow vegetables in a community garden or volunteer to help with community clean up. If possible, spend time in nature, even if it's at a local park. Being in nature can help you be physically and mentally healthy.

Join Support Groups

It can be helpful to connect with others who are going through the same things you are. Consider joining a support group—a group where people who share your experiences can come together and talk about challenges as you try to move forward.

If you are struggling with drug or alcohol addiction, there are many excellent support groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (www.aa.org.mx) or Narcotics Anonymous (www.namexico.org.mx). Drug rehabilitation programs are also available if you need them.

You can also find support groups for grief, mental health, disabilities, parenting, divorce, sexuality, weight loss, and other issues that you may be struggling with. Unfortunately, there are relatively few resources and supports for individuals who were convicted of violent crimes. Some programs explicitly exclude them. This is a significant problem, and we hope more programs will open up in the future.

Approach your first meeting with an open mind and try to find out all you can. You may need to attend several meetings before you feel things are “clicking.” If you don't feel you have found “your” group, and you are still interested in finding the right one, keep trying. Even within the same organization, chapters can be very different and members come and go.

When you're locked up, you have all this time to sit and think. You have ideas of how you want things to go, and then you get out and, of course, those are just ideas... Take care of yourself and everything else will fall into place... You can't stress out over everything that you have no control over. Don't give up hope. There's always hope. And love overcomes a lot of stuff.

– Heather B.



Support groups can be tricky to find, especially if you live in a rural area. The easiest way to find one is through an internet search. Terms like “formerly incarcerated women,” “substance abuse support groups,” and “community support group + name of your community” will help you find local communities of support. You can also ask your health care provider for information about a support group. Community centers and churches are also good sources of information.

Get Involved

Connecting with others can be challenging for people coming home from prison. Separation from family and friends may result in feelings of loneliness and isolation, especially if the people you were close to before you went to prison are no longer around. Consider getting involved in your community and forming new friendships. Here are a few ideas:

Community Organizing, Advocacy, and Volunteering

Your skills and experience are valuable and you can put them to good use by engaging with our community through volunteer work or advocacy. See “Voting and Engaging with Your Community” on page 82.

Join or Create a Shared Interest Group

Join a sports team, a book club, or a hobby group. You might join or form a single parents’ support group or become involved with local politics. You can even organize your own group and tailor it to your beliefs and values or something you feel strongly about. Your local public library is a good place to find notices for such groups.

Join a Community Organization

Community associations organize events like block parties, pot luck meals, and musical events. These associations can be a great way to meet people in your community and feel connected. You can locate groups by searching online for “community organization + name of your community” or “advocacy group + name of your community.”

Join a Religious Organization

Churches, synagogues, and other faith communities can help you find meaning, purpose, and fellowship. Many religious organizations have classes, support groups, and volunteer opportunities. Don’t be discouraged: it may take a while for you to find the place that feels right for you. It’s okay to go slow. If you don’t like an organization it’s okay to move on. Take it easy and give yourself time.

Working out and staying into sports was a way for me to stay healthy and motivated. It gave me physical health but also mental stability. It helped me cope with the anxiety of starting all over again. I say all the time, going to the gym and working out is much more than just doing exercise. Being fit gives you confidence and builds self-esteem. Being able to endure difficult things like lifting your max or running to the limit of your capacity builds courage and helps prepare you mentally for those difficult experiences you’ll have in life, to keep pushing forward. And eating healthy and staying within your weight limits is also important for living a long productive life. Guys like me have lost many years to the system and to bad decisions. You can’t make up for lost time, but you can try to make the most of the time you have left. So be healthy and stay strong!

– Israel P.



Section 3:
directory



MigrantApp, a great tool for your return.

The MigrantApp, developed by the International Organization for Migrants (IOM), a UN Migration Agency, includes a number of features that may be of use to you:

- **Protection and Assistance Information:** Simplified access to information on health centers, consulates and embassies, migration offices, human rights protection centers, and shelters. The App also includes information on training and employment, and on assistance for particularly vulnerable groups, including victims of human trafficking.
- **Migration Information:** Information on the requirements for entering Mexico and Central American countries for 27 nationalities.
- **Remittances:** Allows you to compare the costs of available options for sending money.
- **My Route:** Allows you to privately share your location in real-time.
- **News:** Up-to-date, country-specific migration news and alerts in case of emergencies such as hurricanes and epidemics.

Your personal information is confidential, but you can also deactivate the GPS feature on your mobile device.

You can download the MigrantApp for Apple (iOS) or Samsung (Android). Additional information on the MigrantApp is available on IOM's Mesoamerica Programme website: www.programamesoamerica.iom.int/es/MigrantApp-IOM.

National Resources			
Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number
Non-Profit Organization	Origen	Juan O'Donojú 221, Col. Lomas Virreyes, México City	(800) 015 1617 (55) 5520 4427 (55) 5520 0155
			Hours: 8am–10pm www.origenac.org lineadeayudaorigen@origenac.org Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube: Fundación Origen
Mexico City			
Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number
Migrant Shelter	Casa de los Amigos	Ignacio Mariscal #132, Delegación Cuauhtémoc, 06030 Mexico City	(55) 7095 8094
			Hours: 8am–9pm www.casadelosamigos.org
Migrant Shelter	Casa Tochán	Pavorreal s/n. Delegación Álvaro Obregón, 01141 Mexico City	(55) 5515 8600
			Hours: 8am–9pm Facebook: Albergue Tochan
Non-Profit Organization	Deportados Unidos en la Lucha	Valle de Arriba 66-2 Valle de Aragon 1era seccion., Estado de México	(55) 7828 3480
			Hours: 10am–5pm Facebook: Deportados Unidos en la Lucha
Non-Profit Organization	Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración, AC (IMUMI)		(55) 5211 4153
			Hours: 8am–7pm www.imumi.org/ Facebook: IMUMI, AC.
Non-Profit Organization	Otros Dreams en Acción, ODA	Currently all services are offered virtually.	(55) 6875 1027 (55) 1495 5620
			www.odamexico.org Email: info@odamexico.org Facebook: OtrosDreams Instagram: otros_dreams_en_accion

Mexico City (Continued)			
Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number
Non-Profit Organization	Red Cross	Av. Ejército Nacional #1032, Polanco I Sección, Miguel Hidalgo, Cd. México	(55) 5395 1111 Hours: 24 hrs www.cruzrojamexicana.org.mx
Non-Profit Organization	Red Cross	Anillo Periférico (Boulevard Adolfo Ruíz Cortines) 7666, Hueso Periférico, Cd. México	(55) 1084 4593 Hours: 24 hrs www.cruzrojamexicana.org.mx
Government Institute	National Electoral Institute (INE)	Everyone is assigned to a local office dependent on their address.	(55) 5488 1550 01 800 433 2000 www.ine.mx Required documents: birth certificate, proof of address, photo ID (driver's license, passport)
Government Institute	Secretary of Public Health (SEDESA)	Calle Altadena #23 , Colonia Nápoles, C.P. 03810, Alcaldía Benito Juárez. Ciudad de México	Hours: 8am–6pm www.salud.cdmx.gob.mx
Government Institute	Popular Healthcare Insurance	Gustavo E. Campa #54, Col. Guadalupe Inn, 01020 Mexico City	Hours: Monday–Thursday, 9am–6pm www.gob.mx/salud/ seguropopular#6157
Government Institute	Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS)	Paseo de la Reforma 476, Delegación Cuauhtémoc, 06600 Mexico City	 www.gob.mx/issste
Government Institute	Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers (ISSSTE)	Jesús García Corona #140, colonia Buenavista, 06350 CDMX.	Hours: 9am–7pm www.gob.mx/issste
Government Institute	Secretary of Inclusion and Social Welfare	Plaza de la Constitución #1, colonia Centro, delegación Cuauhtémoc, 06000 CDMX.	Hours: Monday - Thursday 9am–6pm Friday 9am–3pm www.sibiso.cdmx.gob.mx

Mexico City (Continued)

Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.

Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number	Additional Information
Government Institute	Social Development Ministry (SEDESOL)	Plaza de la Constitución #1, Col. Centro, Delegación Cuauhtémoc, 06000 Mexico City	(55) 5345 8265	Hours: Monday–Thursday, 9am–6pm Friday, 9am–3pm
Government Institute	Public Education Ministry (SEP)	Chapultepec #49, Centro, Delegación Cuauhtémoc, 06010 Mexico City	(55) 5134 0770	Hours: 8am–4pm www.educacion.cdmx.gob.mx
Government Institute	Secretary of Labor and Employment (STPS)	José Antonio Torres Xcoongo #58, Col. Tránsito, Delegación Cuauhtémoc, 06820 Mexico City	(55) 5709 3233	Hours: Monday - Thursday, 9am–6pm Friday, 9am–3pm www.trabajo.cdmx.gob.mx
Government Institute	Office for Unemployment Services (STPS)	José Antonio Torres Xcoongo #58, Col. Tránsito, Delegación Cuauhtémoc, 06820 Mexico City	(55) 5709 3233	Hours: Monday - Thursday, 9am–6pm Friday, 9am–3pm www.trabajo.cdmx.gob.mx
* Specific programs for returning citizens * Requirements: www.segurodedesempleo.cdmx.gob.mx/requisitos_migrantes.php				
Government Institute	"Comedores Comunitarios" Soup Kitchens			Hours: 11am–4pm http://www.sds.cdmx.gob.mx/programas/programa/comedorespublicos
Soup kitchens are listed by neighborhood. * Program through Social Development Ministry (SEDESOL) and Direction of Equality and Social Diversity (sedesocdmx)				

Mexico City (Continued)			
Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number
Government Institute	"Direction of Social Equality and Social Diversity" (SEDESOCDMX)	Lucas Alamán #122, 2° piso, Col. Obrera, Delegación Cuauhtémoc, 06800 Mexico City	(55) 5718 3467 (55) 5518 6035
<i>*Programs for soup kitchens, social development, and women or men who are victims of sexual violence. Also have resources for families who have experienced violence.</i>			
Government Institute	Link to All Cabinet Offices in Mexico City		www.ciudadanos.cdmx.gob.mx/gobierno/gabinete/secretarias
Government Institute	PROSPERA Offices	Av. Insurgentes Sur #1480, Col. Actipan, 03230 Mexico City	(55) 5482 0700
<i>Where low-cost food is provided for people on food stamp program and how to sign up for food stamp program.</i>			
Non-Profit Organization	Red Cross	Ejército Nacional #1032, Col. Polanco I Sección, Delegación Miguel Hidalgo, Mexico City	(55) 5395 1111
Non-profit Organization	New Comienzos	Plaza de la República #9, Col. Tabacalera, Ciudad de México	(55) 7733 1436 www.newcomienzos.org
Matamoros, Tamaulipas			
Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number
Government Institute	Tamulipas Institute for Migrants	Calle Sexta 214, Zona Centro, 87300 Heroica Matamoros, Tamps.	(868) 812 7976
Migrant Shelter	San Juan Diego and Francisco de Asis Shelter	Av. del Golfo de México 49. Col. Ampliación Solidaridad, Matamoros, Tamps.	(868) 822 2213 (868) 822 4689
Government Institute	Municipal Institute for Women	Av. Constitución s/n. Matamoros, Tamps.	(868) 812 5140

Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua

Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.

Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number	Additional Information
Government Institute	National Electoral Institute (INE)	Hacienda del Portal 10120, Puerta 4, Hacienda las Torres II, 32695 Ciudad Juárez	(656) 690 7730 01 800 433 2000	Hours: 9am–6pm www.ieechihuahua.org.mx
Migrant Shelter	Casa del Migrante en Juárez, A.C.	Neptuno #1855, Col. Satélite, 32540 Ciudad Juárez	(656) 687 0676 (656) 687 0677	Hours: 24 hrs Facebook: Casa del Migrante en Juárez A.C. Email: casamijuarez@yahoo.com Email: rivers_blanca@hotmail.com
Migrant Shelter	México Mi Hogar	Abraham Lincoln s/n. Col. Margaritas, Ciudad Juárez	(656) 616 6966 (656) 614 3645	Hours: 9am–6pm Facebook: Albergue México Mi Hogar www.juarezdlif.gob.mx/_assets/programas/albergue_mexico_mi_hogar/
Government Institute	Health Secretary (SESA)	Calle Tercera 601, Zona Centro, 31000 Ciudad Juárez	(614) 227 0039	Hours: 9am–6pm www.chihuahua.gob.mx/secretariadesalud
Government Institute	Seguro Popular (SP)	Paseo Triunfo de la República s/n. Col. Partido Romero, 32330 Ciudad Juárez	(656) 613 0477 Ext. 17975 For more info, call toll free: 800 71 72 583	Hours: Monday–Friday, 8am–4pm www.seguro-popular.gob.mx
Government Institute	Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS)	Soto y Gama #4408, Col. Francisco I, Madero, 32170 Ciudad Juárez	(656) 611 0237	
Government Institute	Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers (ISSSTE)	Yepomera #10160, Hacienda de las Torres Universidad, 32576 Ciudad Juárez	(656) 232 8584	Hours: 7am–8pm

Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua (Continued)

Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.

Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number	Additional Information
Government Institute	Social Development Ministry (SEDESOL)	Tecnológico #4450, Col. Partido Iglesias, Ciudad Juárez	(656) 616 5360 (656) 148 6688	www.chihuahua.gob.mx/desarrollosocial
Government Institute	Public Education Ministry (SEP)	Del Mar 7632, Fuentes del Valle, 32500 Ciudad Juárez	(656) 629 3300	
Government Institute	Secretary of Labor and Employment (STPS)	Paraguay #115, Partido Romero, Ciudad Juárez	(656) 616 6478	www.stpschihuahua.com/servicios
Government Institute	Public Health	Paseo Triunfo de la República s/n, colonia Partido Romero, 32330 Ciudad Juárez	(656) 613 0477 Ext. 17975 For more info, call toll free: 800 71 72 583	Hours: Monday–Friday 8am–4pm www.gob.mx/salud/seguropopular#6157
Government Institute	Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS)	Soto y Gama #4408, colonia Francisco I. Madero, 32170 Ciudad Juárez	(656) 612 5248	Hours: 9am–6pm
Government Institute	Ministry of Social Development	Monte Mayor 4435, El Roble, 32020 Cd Juárez, Chihuahua	(656) 616 5360 (656) 148 6688	Hours: 9am–5pm www.chihuahua.gob.mx/desarrollosocial
Government Institute	Secretary of Public Education	Del Mar #7632, Fuentes del Valle, 32500 Ciudad Juárez	(656) 629 3300	Hours: 8am–5pm
Government Institute	Secretary of Labor and Social Welfare	Paraguay #115, Partido Romero, Ciudad Juárez	(656) 616 6478	Hours: 8am–5pm www.stpschihuahua.com/
Government Institute	PROSPERA offices	Adolfo López Mateos #2050-A40, Col. Jardines de San José, 32390 Ciudad Juárez	(656) 613 9389 (656) 613 9578	Hours: 9am–5pm

Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua (Continued)

Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.

Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number	Additional Information
Non-Profit Organization	Red Cross	Henry Dunant #4324, Zona Pronaf, Condominio La Plata, Ciudad Juárez	(656) 616 5089	Hours: 24 hrs
Government Institute	Soup Kitchen	Garambullo #7130, Héroes de la Revolución, 32696 Ciudad Juárez	(656) 667 7184	Hours: 11am–4pm

**Soup kitchen and food stamp services are through the PROSPERA program of the Mexican government. The link takes you to a directory that provides PROSPERA office locations.
Information about the PROSPERA program: www.prospera.gob.mx*

Reynosa, Tamaulipas

Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.

Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number	Additional Information
Government Institute	National Electoral Institute (INE)	San Jacinto s/n. Lomas del Real de Jarachinas, 88730 Reynosa	(899) 929 2774 01 800 433 2000	Hours: 8am–8pm www.ine.mx
Government Institute	Secretary of Health (SESA)	Boulevard Morelos y Toluca, S/N, Colonia Rodríguez, 88630, Reynosa, Tamaulipas	(899) 925 0560	Hours: 9am–6pm www.tamaulipas.gob.mx/salud/infraestructura-en-salud/jurisdicciones-sanitarias/jurisdiccion-4-reynosa/
Government Institute	Seguro Popular (SP)	Praxedis Balboa #177, Col. Ampliación Rodríguez, Reynosa	(899) 923 8596	Hours: Monday–Friday 8am–4pm
Government Institute	Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers (ISSSTE)	Hidalgo #10, Col. Las Fuentes, Reynosa	(899) 922 2690	Hours: 9am–6pm
Government Institute	Social Development Ministry (SEDESOL)	Morelos #645, Centro, Reynosa	(899) 932-3200 Ext. 3250	Hours: 9am–5pm
Government Institute	Public Education Ministry (SEP)	Honduras s/n. Col. Andalsua, 88780 Reynosa	(899) 922 3220	Hours: 8am–5pm

Reynosa, Tamaulipas (Continued)			
Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number
Government Institute	Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) (Locations where IMSS medical services are provided to the right)	Bldv. Hidalgo #2000, Col. Del Valle, 88620 Reynosa Los Virreyes #100, Col. Del Valle, 88620 Reynosa Las Lomas s/n. Col. Lomas del Real, Reynosa	(899) 293 0360 Hours: 8am–4pm
Government Institute	Secretary of Labor and Employment (STPS)	Allende #160, 88500 Reynosa	(899) 922 9569 Hours: 9am–4pm www.tamaulipas.gob.mx/trabajo
Government Institute	“Comedores Comunitarios” Soup Kitchens	Loma Clara #408, Col. Loma Blanca, Reynosa	(899) 455 1867 Hours: 6am–3pm
Government Institute	PROSPERA	Hidalgo s/n. Col. Vista Hermosa, 88715 Reynosa	(899) 922 8420 (899) 922 5038 www.reynosa.gob.mx/directorio/ www.gob.mx/becasbenitojuarez
Non-Profit Organization	Red Cross	Morelos y Argentina s/n. Reynosa	(899) 922 1314 Hours: 24 hrs
Nogales, Sonora			
Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number
Migrant Shelter	KINO Border Initiative	Luis Donaldo Colosio #55, Col. del Rosario, 84020 Nogales.	(631) 316 2086 Receiving Hours for Migrants: 9am–12pm; 4pm–6pm www.kinoborderinitiative.org/es/
<i>Services available at KINO Border Initiative: Food, clothing, medical attention, phone calls, legal assistance (US and Mexico), abuse documentation, pastoral services, assistance in obtaining Mexican ID. Capacity: 100 Email of the Shelter: info@kinoborderinitiative.org</i>			
Government Institute	Seguro Popular (SP)	Dr. Francisco Arreola #1277, Moderna, 84055 Nogales.	(631) 316 2086 Hours: 8am–4pm
Government Institute	Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS)	Obregón #756, Centro, 84000 Nogales.	(631) 313 0671 Hours: 24 hrs

Nogales, Sonora (Continued)

Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.

Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number	Additional Information
Government Institute	Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers (ISSSTE)	Ensueño, Lomas de Fátima, 84020 Nogales.	(613) 299 9888	Hours: 24 hrs
Government Institute	Public Education Ministry (SEP)	Chula Vista s/n. Nogales.	(631) 316 0400	Hours: 9am–5pm
Government Institute	PROSPERA Sonora offices			https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/317023/Delegacion_Estatal_PROSPERA_en_Sonora.pdf
Non-Profit Organization	Red Cross	Plutarco Elías Calles s/n. Nogales.	(631) 313 5800 (631) 313 5801	Hours: 24 hrs

Hermosillo, Sonora

Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.

Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number	Additional Information
Government Institute	National Electoral Institute (INE)	Luis Donaldo Colosio #35, Centro, Hermosillo, Sonora	(662) 259 4900 01 800 433 2000	Hours: 9am–5pm www.ieesonora.org.mx/
Government Institute	Secretary of Public Health (SEDESA)	Proyecto Río Sonora Hermosillo XXI, 83270 Hermosillo, Sonora	(662) 108 4500	Hours: 9am–6pm www.saludsonora.gob.mx
Government Institute	Social Development Ministry (SEDESOL)	Paseo del Río y Comonfort, 83280 Hermosillo, Sonora	(662) 212 2821	Hours: 9am–6pm
Government Institute	Secretary of Labor and Employment (STPS)	Paseo Río Sonora, Col. Villa de Seris, 83280 Hermosillo, Sonora	(662) 213 4170 (662) 213 4644 (662) 212 6337	Hours: 9am–5pm www.st.sonora.gob.mx
Non-Profit Organization	Red Cross	Boulevard Luis Encinos y 14 de Abril, Hermosillo, Sonora	(662) 214 0010 (662) 214 0823	Hours: 24 hrs

Tijuana, Baja California

Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.

Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number	Additional Information
Migrant Shelter	Casa del Migrante en Tijuana	Galileo #239, Col. Postal Tijuana, 22416 Baja California	(664) 682 5180	Hours: 7am–10pm www.migrante.com.mx
Migrant Shelter	Salvation Army	Aquiles Serdán #11585, Libertad, 22400 Tijuana	(664) 683 2694	Hours: 9am–8pm Facebook: Salvationarmytijuana
Migrant Shelter	Casa Madre Assunta	Galileo #2305, Postal, Tijuana	(664) 683 0575	assunta_tj@yahoo.com
Government Institute	National Electoral Institute (INE)	Gustavo Díaz Ordaz #15655, Maurilio Magallón, 22116 Tijuana	(664) 660 7680 01 800 433 2000	www.ieebc.mx/
Government Institute	Secretary of Public Health (SEDESA)	Cuauhtémoc Sur Ote. #2, Revolución, 22015 Tijuana	(664) 608 0075	
Government Institute	Centro de Salud (Health Center)	Constitución, Centro, 22000 Tijuana	01 800 254 6426	www.saludbc.gob.mx
Government Institute	Seguro Popular (SP)	Dinamarca #9130, Col. Madero, 22040 Tijuana	(664) 682 8199	
Government Institute	Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS)	Salinas #4596, Aviación, 22014 Tijuana		www.imss.gob.mx
Government Institute	Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers (ISSSTE)	Las Palmas, Tijuana	(664) 681 4386	www.gob.mx
Government Institute	Social Development Ministry (SEDESOL)	José Clemente Orozco #2393, Zona Urbana Río Tijuana, 22010 Tijuana	(664) 634 3795	www.sedesol.gob.mx
Government Institute	Public Education Ministry (SEP)	Independencia #1350, Zona Urbana Río Tijuana, 22010 Tijuana	(664) 973 7258	
Government Institute	Secretary of Labor and Employment (STPS)	Negrete #8449, Zona Norte, 22106 Tijuana	(714) 471 7420	www.stps.gob.mx
Government Institute	Office for Unemployment Services (STPS)	Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, El Paraíso, 22000 Tijuana	(664) 681 9149	

Tijuana, Baja California (Continued)			
Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number
Government Institute	PROSPERA Baja California		www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/317000/Delegacion_Estatal_PROSPERA_en_Baja_California.pdf
Social Service Organization	Deported Veterans Support House	Juan Álvarez 1821. Fracc. Tomás Aquino. Tijuana, Baja California	Facebook: Deported Veterans Support House
Non-Profit Organization	Red Cross	Alfonso Gamboa, Los Santos, Tijuana	(664) 608 6700
Non-profit Organization	DREAMers' Moms	Juan Álvarez 1821. Fracc. Tomás Aquino. Tijuana, Baja California	(626) 569 5491 www.dreamer-moms.org Facebook: DREAMers' Moms
Non-profit Organization	Enclave Caracol (The Snail Collective)	Across from the wax museum between Revolución and Madero, Downtown, Tijuana, Baja California	(626) 379 1818 www.enclavetaracol.wordpress.com
Non-profit Organization	Espacio Migrante (Migrant Space)	Av. Miguel Negrete 8350, Zona Urbana Río Tijuana	(664) 607 3458 www.espaciomigrante.org
Cancún, Quintana Roo			
Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number
Government Institute	National Electoral Institute (INE)	Lombardo Toledano #37, Benito Juárez, Cancún.	01 800 433 2000 www.ine.mx/
Government Institute	Secretary of Public Health (SEDESA)	Calle 89 #92, 77516 Cancún	
Government Institute	Seguro Popular (SP)	Calle 36, Manzana 10, 77538 Benito Juárez	(998) 289 2060
Government Institute	Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS)	Coba #20, Centro, 77500 Cancún	(998) 884 9096 www.imss.gob.mx

Cancún, Quintana Roo (Continued)			
Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number
Government Institute	Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers (ISSSTE)	Calle 93 #1, Región 93, 77500 Cancún	(998) 888 7261
Government Institute	Social Development Ministry (SEDESOL)	Yaxchilán #22, Benito Juárez, Cancún	(998) 843 6340 www.sedesol.gob.mx
Government Institute	Public Education Ministry (SEP)	Bonampak #31, 77500 Cancún	(983) 832 7925 www.seyc.gob.mx
Government Institute	Secretary of Labor and Employment (STPS)	Carlos J. Nader #36, 77500 Cancún	www.stps.gob.mx
Government Institute	PROSPERA	Calle 16, Súper Manzana #96, Benito Juárez, 77535 Cancún	(998) 892 8517 www.prospera.gob.mx
San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato			
Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number
Non-Profit Organization	Caminamos Juntos		(415) 169 0030 cjsma@gmail.com
<i>*Caminamos Juntos offers guidance to recently deported Mexicans about starting a new life in San Miguel de Allende.</i>			
Cabo San Lucas, Baja California			
Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number
Government Institute	National Electoral Institute (INE)	San Antonio #149, Col. Arcos del Sol, Cabo San Lucas	(664) 352 6943 01 800 433 2000
Government Institute	Secretary of Public Health (SEDESA)	12 de Octubre s/n. La Cruz Centro, 23468 Cabo San Lucas	(624) 105 2100 www.saludbcs.gob.mx
Government Institute	Seguro Popular (SP)	12 de Octubre #1218, Ildefonso Green, 23470 Cabo San Lucas	(612) 125 6734

Cabo San Lucas, Baja California (Continued)

Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.

Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number	Additional Information
Government Institute	Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS)	Todos Los Santos-Cabo San Lucas, Ejidal, 23475 Cabo San Lucas	(624) 105 1048	www.imss.gob.mx
Government Institute	Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers (ISSSTE)	12 de Octubre #12, Central, 23000 Cabo San Lucas	(624) 143 0200	
Government Institute	Public Education Ministry (SEP)	Francisco Villa, Centro, 23469 Cabo San Lucas		
Government Institute	Secretary of Labor and Employment (STPS)	Ignacio Allende #1486, 23040 La Paz, Baja California Sur.	(686) 904 5500	Job portal: www.empleo.gob.mx/

Puebla, Puebla

Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.

Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number	Additional Information
Government Institute	National Electoral Institute (INE)	5 de Mayo #3126, Plaza Dorada, 72570 Puebla Vía Atlixcáyotl #1101, Geovillas Atlixcáyotl, Puebla	(222) 264 6729 01 800 433 2000	www.ine.mx
Government Institute	Secretary of Public Health (SEDESA)	Privada 5B Sur #4302, 72424 Puebla	(222) 551 0440	
Government Institute	Seguro Popular (SP)	43 Poniente #43302, Huexotitla, 72530 Puebla	(222) 551 0440	www.gob.mx/salud/seguropopular#6157
Government Institute	Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS)	4 Norte #2005, Centro, 72000 Puebla	(222) 246 3931	www.imss.gob.mx
Government Institute	Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers (ISSSTE)	3 Poniente #1906, Amor, 72140 Puebla	(222) 232 7994	www.issste.gob.mx
Government Institute	Social Development Ministry (SEDESOL)	2 Sur #3906, Huexotitla, 72534 Puebla	(222) 211 3894	www.sedesol.gob.mx

Puebla, Puebla (Continued)			
Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number Additional Information
Government Institute	Public Education Ministry (SEP)	15 Poniente #1112, Santiago, 72000 Puebla	(222) 243 3643 www.sep.gob.mx
Government Institute	Secretary of Labor and Employment (STPS)	31 Poniente #2904, El Vergel, 72400 Puebla	(222) 230 1670 www.stps.gob.mx
Non-Profit Organization	Red Cross	20 Oriente #1002, San Francisco, Puebla	(222) 236 5102
Monterrey, Nuevo Leon			
Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number Additional Information
Government Institute	National Electoral Institute (INE)	Miguel Hidalgo #542, Centro, 64000 Monterrey	(81) 8345 8711 01 800 433 2000 www.ine.mx/
Government Institute	Secretary of Public Health (SEDESA)	Priv. Agustín Lara #106, Buenos Aires, 64800 Monterrey	(81) 8190 9234
Government Institute	Seguro Popular (SP)	Luis Donaldo Colosio Murrieta #259, Barrio San Luis, 64100 Monterrey	(81) 1772 2080 www.gob.mx/salud/seguropopular#6157
Government Institute	Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS)	Manuel L. Barragán #4850, Hogares Ferrocarrileros, 64260 Monterrey	(81) 8351 5194
Government Institute	Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers (ISSSTE)	Degollado Sur #734, Obisnado, 64060 Monterrey	01 800 400 1000
Government Institute	Social Development Ministry (SEDESOL)	Washington #2000, Oriente Obrera, Monterrey	(81) 8343 9956 070 option 3 www.nl.gob.mx/desarrollosocial
Government Institute	Public Education Ministry (SEP)	José Benítez #2531, Obisnado, 64060 Monterrey	(81) 8347 9432

Monterrey, Nuevo Leon (Continued)			
Reminder: If you are calling from the US, dial 011 52 before dialing your number within Mexico.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number
Government Institute	Secretary of Labor and Employment (STPS)	General Lázaro Cárdenas #500, Mirador de La Silla, 67170 Guadalupe	(81) 2020 2907
Government Institute	"Comedor de Los Pobres" Soup Kitchens	Jalisco s/n. Tanques de Guadalupe, Monterrey	(81) 1365 5146 (81) 8375 1163
Non-Profit Organization	Red Cross	Alfonso Reyes Norte #2503, Norte del Prado, Monterrey	(81) 1477 1477
			www.comedorde lospobres.org/

 **Emergency numbers in Mexico:**

- Emergency: 911
- Non emergency police: 060
- Red Cross: 065
- City hotline: 070 (in some cities)
- Information: 040
- Fire department: 068
- Anonymous report (abuse or corruption by a government official): 089
- Highway emergency: 074

 **GUIDE for social organizations and nonprofits in Central America that helps migrants:**

www.cmmv.org/documentos/medidacion/Directorio%20de%20ONGs%20en%20DHA.pdf

Guatemala City, Guatemala			
Reminder: If you are calling Guatemala from the US dial 011 502.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number Additional Information
Migrant Shelter	Casa del Migrante, Guatemala	15 Ave. 1-94"A" Zona 1, Guatemala	(502) 2230 2781 Email: camcs@itelgua.com
<i>When migrants are deported from the US, they arrive to Guatemala City by plane. They can connect to the Pastoral of Human Mobility at the airport. A representative from the Pastoral group will offer transportation to those who wish to stay at Casa del Migrante in the capital headed by Father Francisco Pellizzari or Father Mauro Verzeletti. There is another shelter that deportees may use if they are not dropped off at the capital (this is for people who are deported from Mexico).</i>			
Migrant Shelter	Casa del Migrante en Tecún Umán	0 Ave. "C" del Migrante 0-22, Col. Olguita de León, Tecún Umán, San Marcos	(502) 7776 8416 Fax: (502) 7776 8417 Email: migranttecun@yahoo.com.mx
Social Services/ Job Training for Deportees	Organización Internacional para las Migraciones	3ra Calle 4-44 Zona 10, FLACSO, Guatemala	(502) 2414 7401 /10 Email: iomguatemala@iom.int www.triangulonorteca.iom.int/
<i>The Guatemalan Repatriates Program has assisted in the reintegration of more than 2,000 Guatemalans, providing psychological assistance, job training and referral to candidates from private sector partners. In addition to call centers, many have found stable employment in the construction and hospitality sectors. Source: www.iom.int/countries/guatemala</i>			
Government Institute	Secretary of Health of Guatemala (MSPAS)	6ta Ave. 3-45, Zona 11, Guatemala	(502) 2444 7474 Email: consultas@mspaspas.gob.gt www.mspaspas.gob.gt
<i>The Secretary of Health assists with health insurance paperwork, medical forms, and how to connect to health providers and hospitals near you. Source: www.mspaspas.gob.gt/</i>			
Government Institute	Ministry of Labor and Job Placement	7 Ave. 3-33, Zona 9, Edificio Torre Empresarial, Guatemala	Private Branch Exchange (PBX): (502) 2422 2500 Workplace complaint hotline: 1511 Business Hours: Central offices 9am–5pm Department offices 8am–4pm
Government Institute	Migration Office	6ta Ave. 3-11, Zona 4, Guatemala	(502) 2411 2411 www.igm.gob.gt/
<i>Source: www.mintrabajo.gob.gt</i>			

San Salvador, El Salvador

Reminder: If you are calling El Salvador from the US dial 011 503.

Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number	Additional Information
Migrant Shelter	Migrant Assistant Center (CAIM)	9na Calle Poniente, Centro de Gobierno, San Salvador	(503) 2133 7902 (503) 2213 7700	Hours: Monday–Friday 8am–5pm www.migracion.gob.sv/
<i>Such shelters provide attention toward foreigners without an irregular migrant status. They serve up to 200 people with physical care and assist with the unification to family members in El Salvador.</i>				
Non-Profit Organization	National Council for the Protection and Development of Migrants (CONMIGRANTES)	El Pedregal, Ciudad Merliot, Antiguo Cuscatlán, El Salvador	(503) 2207 2331 (503) 2231 1001	Email: proyectos.insami@gmail.com www.rreee.gob.sv/
Instituto Salvadoreño del Migrante created a social entrepreneurship group (Red Nacional de Emprendedores Retornados de El Salvador) that provides assistance for returnees to start businesses and that provides community support (Retornados El Savador). Sources: www.insami.wixsite.com/retornados • www.insami.wixsite.com/eisalvador				
Non-Profit Organization	IOM El Salvador (Organización Internacional para las Migraciones) International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Las Azaleas #183, Maquiliishuat, San Salvador	(503) 2521 0500 Fax: (503) 2521 0534	Email: iomsansalv@iom.int
IOM provides services for the reintegration of returnees and migrants and assists with job training, family reunification, and victims of trafficking. Source: http://www.migracion.gob.sv/noticias/direccion-de-atencion-al-migrante-recibe-importante-donacion-en-beneficio-de-la-poblacion-migrante-retornada/				
Government Institute	Migrant Attention and Protection Office	9 Poniente y 15 Av. Norte, San Salvador	(503) 2213 7700	Hours: Monday–Friday 8am–5pm Receives and attends to returning Salvadorians
Government Institute	Retornos Terrestres (Land Return)	Bldv. Arturo Castellanos, Quiñonez, San Salvador	(503) 2133 7900	Hours: Monday–Friday 8am–5pm
Land Return receives and assists deportees. Sources: http://www.migracion.gob.sv/temas/direccion-de-atencion-al-migrante/ http://www.migracion.gob.sv/sucursales/				

San Salvador, El Salvador (Continued) Reminder: If you are calling El Salvador from the US dial 011 503.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number Additional Information
Government Institute	Health Ministry	Arce #827, San Salvador	(503) 2591 7000 Fax: (503) 2221 0991 www.salud.gob.sv/
<i>Source: http://www.salud.gob.sv/</i>			
Non-Profit Organization	Red Cross	Calle 2, Santa Lucía, San Salvador	(503) 2294 0969
Tegucigalpa, Honduras Reminder: If you are calling Honduras from the US dial 011 504.			
Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number Additional Information
Migrant Shelter	Casa del Migrante de Ocoatepeque	Basilica Nuestra Señora de Suyapa	(504) 2257 1651 Sister Lidia Mara Silva 2213-42-56, o 2257-1649. Email: liflores@unicah.edu
<i>Source: www.fidesdiariodigital.com/2016/06/28/un-refugio-de-amor/</i>			
Non-Profit Organization	Returning Migrant Attention Center (CAMR)	Juan Ramón Molina, Antiguo Edificio del Banco Central, Tegucigalpa	(504) 2668 0264 (504) 2236 0200 (504) 2236 0300 Email: asesoriacamr@hotmail.com www.commigho.hn/sub-secretaria/camr-sps/
Non-Profit Organization	National Forum for Migration in Honduras	3ra Avenida #305, Col. Palmita, Tegucigalpa	(504) 2205 8396 www.fonamihh.org/
<i>Source: www.fonamihh.org/</i>			
Non-Profit Organization	IOM Office in Tegucigalpa	3ra Ave #3, Palmira, Tegucigalpa	(504) 2237 7460 Email: iomtegucigalpa@iom.int
<i>IOM assists returnees with reintegration (social programs, job training). It's the same program in Guatemala and El Salvador.</i>			
Non-Profit Organization	Red Cross	Ave 2, Barrio Concepción, Tegucigalpa	(504) 2237 1800

Tegucigalpa, Honduras (Continued)

Reminder: If you are calling Honduras from the US dial 011 504.

Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number	Additional Information
Government Institute	Secretary of Public Health	Barrio El Centro Avenida Cervantes, Calle El Telegrafo, Contiguo Avenida Miguel Cervantes, Tegucigalpa, Honduras	(504) 2222 5771	www.salud.gob.hn/

Managua, Nicaragua

Reminder: If you are calling Nicaragua from the US dial 011 505.

Organization Type	Name	Address	Phone Number	Additional Information
Migrant Shelter	Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes (SJM)	Central American University (UCA) Building C, Ground Floor 1181 Chinandega del Pali 4C South	Phone number in Managua: 22783923 Ext. 1039 y 1181 Phone number in Chinandega: 23417245	
Migrant Shelter	Caritas Nicaragua		(505) 2266 1714 Fax: (505) 2266 1253	Email: caritas1@turbonett.com.ni Facebook: caritas.nicaragua

Source: www.caritasnicaragua.org

Government Institute	Secretary of Health	Costado Oeste, Primero de Mayo, Managua	(505) 2264 7730 (505) 2289 4700	
Reintegration Programs/Job Training	OIM Nicaragua	Ofplaza El Retiro, Edificio 5, Suite 522, Managua.	(505) 2278 9569 (505) 2278 9613	www.nicaragua.iom.int/
Hospital	Hospital Alemán Nicaragüense	Carretera Norte, Managua.	(505) 2249 0611	

Certifying Official Documents for Foreign Use



Jesse White
Secretary of State

The Secretary of State's Index Department is authorized to certify and process documents for foreign use.



The department certifies that the official who signs a particular document is authorized to do so. As an authorizing agent, my office will affix the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to your documents, which allows them to be recognized and accepted by foreign countries.

This brochure describes the types of certificates available and explains the certification process. By familiarizing yourself with this process, the Index Department can better expedite your documents.

I look forward to serving you.

Jesse White

Jesse White
Secretary of State

Types of Certificates issued

Certificate of Authority — Certifies the validity of an Illinois notary public.

Certificate of Incumbency — Certifies the validity of an Illinois county clerk, circuit clerk or local registrar.

Apostille — Certifies the validity of an Illinois notary public, county clerk, circuit clerk or local registrar.

Documents needed to obtain one of these Certificates

Any document that has been notarized or certified must be submitted to the Secretary of State Index Department. Some documents require certification by the official who has custody of the original document or by the office that officially filed the document. Documents other than those listed below must be notarized by an Illinois notary public.

Birth certificate — Must be a certified copy from the county clerk, local registrar or Illinois Department of Public Health.

Marriage license — Must be a certified copy from the county clerk.

Divorce decree — Must be a certified copy from the circuit clerk.

Requesting a Certificate

Submit a written request by mail to the Index Department in Springfield, along with the following:

- Original document(s) to be certified, signed by the appropriate official.
- Name of country where the document(s) will be used.
- \$2 fee per document payable to Secretary of State.
- Self-addressed, stamped envelope. Prepaid Express Mail, Priority Mail, Federal Express, UPS or Airborne Express envelopes also are accepted. The envelope may be addressed to a third party.

Submitting documents

Documents to be certified for foreign use may be submitted via Express Mail, Priority Mail, Federal Express, UPS or Airborne Express. Documents also may be submitted in person at the Index Department in Springfield. Address and hours are listed on the back of this brochure.

Normal processing time of documents received by mail in the Springfield office is 5-7 business days.

Common reasons documents do not receive certification

- Incorrect fees.
- Lack of notarization or certification by the proper official.
- Name of country where the document will be used not specified.
- Problem with notarization (i.e., notary did not sign the document or did not affix rubber stamp seal).
- Rubber stamp seal has incorrect commission date of the notary.
- Notary signature or stamp does not match the way the notary has been appointed.
- School diplomas and transcripts not originally signed and notarized.

Please note:

- A notary cannot certify copies of documents or signatures.
- All documents must be originals.
- The Index Department cannot certify out-of-state officials.

For more information, please contact:

Secretary of State Index Department

111 E. Monroe St.
Springfield, IL 62756
217-782-7017 • 217-782-7018

Monday — Friday

8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (walk-in services)
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (drop-off services)

or

17 N. State St., Rm. 1030
Chicago, IL 60602
312-814-2067 • 312-793-2556

Monday — Friday

8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (walk-in services)
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (drop-off services)

**Application for Authentication or Apostille
Certifying Documents for Foreign Use
Secretary of State Index Department**



111 E. Monroe, Springfield, IL 62756
217-782-7017 • 217-524-0930 (fax)
www.cyberdriveillinois.com

Date Stamp

For Office Use Only
\$ _____ Submitted
 CA CK MO CC

Prior to submitting documents to be certified for foreign use, please ensure they have been notarized by an Illinois Notary Public or certified by the proper official.

- **Birth Certificates, Death Certificates, Marriage Certificates** — Must be certified by the County Clerk or local registrar where the birth, death or marriage occurred.
- **Divorce Decree** — Must be certified by the Circuit Clerk of the Court that filed the decree.
- **Diplomas and Transcripts** — Must contain an original signature of a school official and be notarized by an Illinois Notary Public. (Include a statement of acknowledgement.)

FEE: \$2 per document payable to Secretary of State.

Customer's Name (please print): _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Telephone Number: _____ E-mail: _____

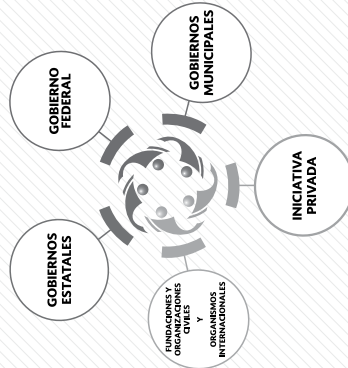
Country or Countries the document(s) will be sent to: _____

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE *OFFICE USE ONLY

¿QUÉ ES SOMOS MEXICANOS?

Es una estrategia del Instituto Nacional de Migración que tiene como objetivo facilitar servicios y oportunidades de desarrollo a las y los mexicanos que son repatriados desde Estados Unidos.

CON EL APOYO DE

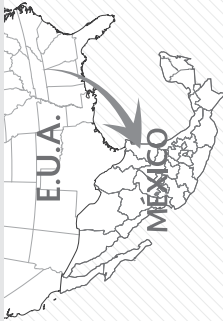
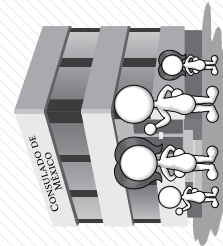


A CONTINUACIÓN TE DECIMOS LOS DIFERENTES APOYOS QUE PUEDES OBTENER...

1 SI QUIERES RETORNAR VOLUNTARIAMENTE, ACUDE A TU CONSULADO

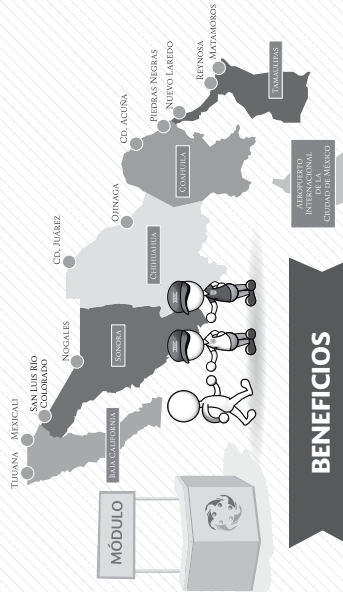
- ¿Te encuentras de manera irregular?
- ¿Tienes familiares, amigos o conocidos que no cuentan con papeles?
- ¿Deseas volver a México?

Si respondiste **SÍ** a alguna de estas preguntas es importante que visites tu Consulado o Embajada de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, donde te darán información preventiva que facilitará tu regreso seguro a México. Además de orientarte sobre apoyos que puedes recibir al regresar a tu comunidad.



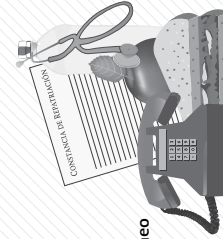
2 SI ERES RETORNADO POR LAS AUTORIDADES DE EE.UU., A TU LLEGADA A MÉXICO

Serás recibido por personal del Instituto Nacional de Migración ubicado en la frontera norte y en el Aeropuerto Internacional de la Ciudad de México, quienes te darán la bienvenida y asesorarán sobre los beneficios que SOMOS MEXICANOS te ofrece.



BENEFICIOS

1. Servicios básicos de alimentación y salud
2. Documentos de Identidad (se te otorgará la Constancia de Repatriación, así como tu Clave Única de Registro de Población CURP).
3. Comunicación (podrás hablar vía telefónica con tus familiares).
4. Traslado local y apoyo para transporte foráneo
5. Albergue (en caso de requerirlo).
6. Opciones laborales

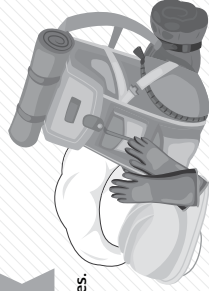


3 EN TU COMUNIDAD

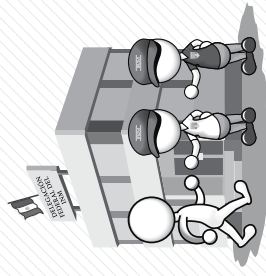
Una vez que llegues a tu lugar de destino, ponte en contacto con las oficinas del Instituto Nacional de Migración, donde se te orientará para obtener distintos apoyos.

EJEMPLO DE APOYOS

- Recuperación de pertenencias y valores.
- Bolsa de trabajo.
- Servicios de salud.
- Programas de autoempleo.
- Opciones para continuar con tus estudios.



¡Por fin de regreso en Casa!



¡Llámanos, con gusto te atenderemos!

Centro de Atención Telefónica (CAT)
SEGOB - INM

Desde Estados Unidos: 1 877 210 9469
Desde México: 01 800 00 INAMI (462664)



Currículum Vitae

Nacido en los Estados Unidos Mexicanos el 14 de mayo de 1981
Avenida Hermanos Serdan 2390, Col. Centro
Puebla, Puebla, C.P. 72139
222-544-0928
RaulNavarro3@gmail.com

RAUL NAVARRO

RESUMEN DE EXPERIENCIA PROFESIONAL

Hablante nativo de inglés y español. Tengo cuatro años de experiencia enseñando inglés y un año de experiencia de asistente voluntario de enseñanza de matemáticas. Tengo experiencia aplicando diversas estrategias educativas en todos niveles.

EDUCACIÓN

Diplomado en ciencias, el arte y la educación general
Carl Sandburg Community College Galesburg, IL
Año: 2009

EXPERIENCIA PROFESIONAL DOCENTE

Universidad de Illinois Urbana-Champaign , Programa de socios de lengua
Funciones: Maestro de inglés como segundo idioma (ESL), tutor de estudiantes
Año: Agosto de 2014- Abril de 2016

VOLUNTARIADO

Danville Area Community College Danville, IL
Funciones: Asistente voluntario de enseñanza de matemáticas, tutor de estudiantes
Año: Julio de 2016- abril de 2018

IDIOMAS

Inglés lengua materna
Español lengua materna

HONORES

Premio de liderazgo de John Dewey, Universidad de Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Año: 2014

CONOCIMIENTOS TECNOLÓGICOS

Microsoft Office: Word, PowerPoint, Excel

MARY GREEN

123 First Street
City, ST 20202
100.200.3000
MaryGreen@gmail.com

September 10, 2018

Sally Jenkins
ABC Company
123 Main St.
City, ST 20202

Dear Ms. Jenkins,

I am writing to inquire about possible openings at ABC Company for a research assistant. I am interested in a senior level position offering the opportunity for travel and advanced research assignments.

As a professional administrative assistant with excellent research skills, I am eager to contribute my abilities and experience to ABC Company. Given my extensive training and background, I believe I can help ABC Company meet its goal of providing only the most accurate and timely information to its clients.

Please find enclosed my resume and a list of my references. Feel free to call me at 100.200.3000 to arrange a time to meet. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Mary Green

<h1>Solicitud de Empleo</h1> <p>Puesto que Solicita</p> <p>Toda información aquí proporcionada debe ser tratada confidencialmente.</p>	Fecha	
	Sueldo Mensual Deseado	
	Sueldo Mensual Aprobado	
	Fecha de Contratación	

Datos Personales						
Apellido Paterno	Apellido Materno	Nombre(s)			Edad	Años
Domicilio	Colonia	Código Postal	Telefono	Sexo		
Ciudad, Estado			Lugar de Nacimiento		<input type="checkbox"/> Masculino	<input type="checkbox"/> Femenino
Vive con			Fecha de Nacimiento	Nacionalidad		
<input type="checkbox"/> Sus Padres	<input type="checkbox"/> Su Familia	<input type="checkbox"/> Parientes	<input type="checkbox"/> Solo	Estatura		Peso
Personas que dependen de usted			Estado Civil			
<input type="checkbox"/> Hijos	<input type="checkbox"/> Cónyuge	<input type="checkbox"/> Padres	<input type="checkbox"/> Otros	<input type="checkbox"/> Soltero	<input type="checkbox"/> Casado	<input type="checkbox"/> Otro

Documentación			
Clave Única de Registro de Población		Afore	
Reg. Fed. De Contribuyentes	Numero de Seguridad Social	Cartilla de Servicio Militar No.	Pasaporte No.
Tiene licencia de manejo	Clase y Número de Licencia	Siendo extranjero que documentos le permiten trabajar en el país	
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Si		

Estado de Salud y Hábitos Personales		
¿Como considera su estado de salud actual?		¿Padece alguna enfermedad crónica?
<input type="checkbox"/> Bueno	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular	<input type="checkbox"/> Malo
		<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Si (Explique)
¿Práctica Ud. Algún Deporte?	¿Pertenece a un Club Social o Deportivo?	¿Cuál es su pasatiempo favorito?
¿Cuál es su meta en la vida?		

Datos Familiares			
Nombre	Vive	Fin	Ocupación
Padre			
Madre			
Esposa (o)			
Nombre y Edades de los hijos			

Escolaridad					
Nombre	Dirección	De	A	Años	Título Recibido
Primaria					
Secundaria o Prevocacional					
Preparatoria o Vocacional					
Profesional					
Comercial u Otras					
Estudios que esta cursando en la actualidad					
Escuela:	Horario:	Curso o Carrera:		Grado:	

ClubEmpleos. La forma más fácil de buscar y ofrecer empleos. www.clubempleos.com

Conocimientos Generales	
¿Que idiomas habla?	(Nivel 50%, 75%, 100%)
Funciones de oficina que domina	

Maquina de Oficina o taller que sepa manejar	Software que conoce
Otros trabajos o funciones que domina	

Empleo Actual y Anteriores				
Concepto	Actual o último	Anterior	Anterior	Anterior
Tiempo que presto sus servicios	De a	De a	De a	De a
Nombre de la Compañía				
Dirección				
Teléfono				
Puesto desempeñado				
Sueldos Mensual				
Motivo de separación				
Nombre de su jefe directo				
Puesto de de jefe directo				
Podemos solicitar informes de usted	Comentarios de sus jefes			
<input type="checkbox"/> Si				
<input type="checkbox"/> No (Razones)				

Referencias Personales (Favor de no incluir a jefes anteriores)				
Nombre	Domicilio	Telefono	Ocupación	Tiempo de conocerlo

Datos Generales		Datos Económicos		
¿Como supo de este empleo? <input type="checkbox"/> Anuncio <input type="checkbox"/> Otro medio (anótelo)		¿Tiene usted otros ingresos? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sí (describalos)	Importe mensual	
¿Tiene parientes trabajando en esta Empresa? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sí (nómbrelos)		¿Su cónyuge trabaja? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sí (¿dónde?)	Salario mensual	
¿Ha estado afianzado? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sí (nombre de la Cia.)		¿Vive en casa propia? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sí	Valor aproximado	
¿Ha estado afiliado a algún sindicato? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sí (¿a Cuál?)		¿Paga renta? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sí	Renta mensual	
¿Tiene seguro de vida? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sí (nombre de la Cia.)		¿Tiene automóvil propio? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sí	Marca	Modelo
¿Puede viajar? <input type="checkbox"/> Si <input type="checkbox"/> No (razones)		¿Tiene deudas? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sí (¿con quién?)	Importe	
¿Esta dispuesto a cambia de lugar de residencia? <input type="checkbox"/> Si <input type="checkbox"/> No (razones)		¿Cuanto abona mensualmente?		
Fecha en que podría presentarse a trabajar		¿A cuánto ascienden sus gastos mensuales?		

Comentarios del Entrevistador y Firma	Hago constar que mis respuestas son verdaderas
	Firma _____



FOTOGRAFIA

REGISTRO FEDERAL DE ELECTORES SOLICITUD DE EXPEDICIÓN DE CREDENCIAL PARA VOTAR



PARA USO EXCLUSIVO DEL RFE

FECHA DE TRÁMITE	No. DE SOLICITUD INDIVIDUAL	MOVIMIENTO SOLICITADO 1 2 3 4 10 11 12
CLAVE DE ELECTOR		FOLIO NACIONAL
NOMBRE DEL FUNCIONARIO ELECTORAL		

NOMBRE COMPLETO

APELLIDO PATERNO

APELLIDO MATERNO

NOMBRE(S)

DATOS GENERALES

LUGAR DE NACIMIENTO	CLAVE	FECHA DE NACIMIENTO	EDAD	ESCOLARIDAD	OCUPACIÓN	SEXO	No. DE CERTIFICADO DE NATURALIZACIÓN Y FECHA	CURP	GEMELO
---------------------	-------	---------------------	------	-------------	-----------	------	--	------	--------

Por mi propio derecho ciudadano(a) mexicano(a) en pleno goce de mis derechos políticos, con domicilio que manifesté al hacer mi última solicitud de actualización al Padrón Electoral y que es el mismo para oír y recibir notificaciones en:

DOMICILIO

CALLE	No. EXT.	No. INT.
COLONIA	C.P.	TIEMPO DE RESIDENCIA

IDENTIFICACIÓN ELECTORAL

ENTIDAD	MEDIO DE IDENTIFICACIÓN	DOCUMENTO DE IDENTIDAD CON FOTOGRAFIA	COMPROBANTE DE DOMICILIO
DISTRITO	() _____	() _____	() _____
MUNICIPIO	INSTITUCIÓN		
LOCALIDAD	NOMBRE DE ACTA O FOLIO		
SECCIÓN	LIBRO, TOMO Y FOJA		
MANZANA	ENTIDAD FEDERATIVA		
	MUNICIPIO O DELEGACIÓN		
	FUNCIONARIO AUTORIZADO		
	FECHA DE EXPEDICIÓN		

About *Returning Home*

Returning Home was produced by members of the Education Justice Project (EJP). EJP is a unit of the College of Education at the University of Illinois. Since 2008, EJP has offered academic programs to individuals incarcerated at Danville Correctional Center in central Illinois. Our mission is to build a model college-in-prison program that demonstrates the benefits of higher education for incarcerated students, their families, their communities, the host institution, and society as a whole. We believe that a comprehensive college-in-prison program must engage with broad issues of criminal justice and incarceration. We believe it must also include assistance to students transitioning out of prison, to better ensure their continued success in college and life.

Returning Home is a natural outgrowth of the work we do at the prison, and of our concern for the well-being of our students and others like them who must try to make it on the outside after release and deportation. The core writing was completed by Lee Ragsdale and approximately 30% of the text was borrowed from *Mapping your Future* and revised where appropriate.

This project is ongoing. We plan to continue to issue a revised version of *Returning Home* every year. Please help us to correct errors and to add more resources and useful information. Direct feedback to: returninghome@educationjustice.net

We welcome financial donations that will allow us to distribute it for free to individuals throughout the state. Each copy of *Returning Home* costs about \$10.50 to produce. Please direct your contributions to:

Education Justice Project
1001 S. Wright St., Champaign, IL 61820

Thank you from The *Returning Home* team,

Lee Ragsdale, Author
Alli Gattari, Anya de la Vega, Lauren Rodriguez-Goldstein, Liliana Burciaga, Karolina Kalata, Research Assistants
Jamarri Nix, Designer
Beth Pearl, Editor
Rebecca Ginsburg, EJP Director

Thank you to EJP alumni and other returned citizens for contributing to *Returning Home*: Israel G., Ramon C., Erick N., Oscar S., Brian N., Darrell W., Edmund B., Johnny P., Marlon C., Heather P., Katerina B., Julia B., Missy L., Tony C., Roberto L., and Shaun W.



EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT
an initiative of Education at Illinois