

Housing – Georgia

The Southern Center for Human Rights represents prisoners in class action suits that challenge unconstitutional and other illegal practices and policies in prisons and jails. Due to our extremely limited resources, we are unable to advocate for inmates once they are released. We do, however, have some information on housing that might be helpful to you.

If you are putting together a parole application, or if you've already been granted parole and need an address to parole out to, you can ask your counselor about Alternative Living Facilities (ALFs). ALFs are programs that provide housing and other services to recently released inmates. The Board of Pardons and Paroles maintains an ALF list, and your counselor should have a copy. You should contact the Alternative Living Facilities on that list and find out whether you are eligible for their program, and whether they are able to offer you a place in their program. Keep in mind that the parole board will not approve an overnight shelter as your post-release address.

Finding housing can be very difficult when you have a criminal record. Many landlords will run a criminal background check, and unless they are convinced that you will not re-offend, they will be reluctant to accept your application. Whenever possible, provide them with references, such as employers, pastors, and family members who can vouch for you.

If you have been incarcerated in federal prison, please be aware that additional restrictions may apply limiting where you can live. Inquire with your counselor to find out the details.

If you have not already contacted family, friends and faith-based organizations in your hometown, we encourage you to do so. Even if they are unable to provide you with housing themselves, they may be aware of a place where you can live.

If you are thinking of applying for public housing, there are a number of things you should know. If you have been convicted of a drug-related crime within the last three years, you are ineligible by federal law for public housing. Beyond that, local housing authorities may choose whether or not to accept applicants with certain charges on their criminal records. They may require, for example, that a certain amount of time has passed since your conviction or that you demonstrate that you are not at risk of re-offending. Many housing authorities in Georgia do not have set policies about applicants with criminal records, but make their decisions on a case-by-case basis. You should contact your local housing authority to inquire about their eligibility requirements.

When you call your housing authority, you should also inquire about the application procedure. Many housing authorities require that you apply in person, meaning that you cannot apply before you are released and you will have to find a different post-release address. Some, however, may be willing to send you the forms and allow you to apply by mail.

If you are unable to secure housing through any of the above means, we recommend you contact Carl Route of the National Association of Previous Prisoners. Mr. Route may

be able to work with you to locate housing, although he cannot guarantee that he will find something for you. As with everything else, it depends on the nature of the crime, the amount of time that has elapsed, and the resources available in your locality. You may contact him at:

Carl Route
P.O. Box 450
Atlanta, GA 30301
(770) 855-8675

If you are looking for housing in the Atlanta Metro area, you can contact Brother Shawn Heath at the New Way of Life Ministries. The New Way of Life Ministries assists ex-prisoners with their re-entry into society by making housing and employment referrals.

Brother Shawn Heath
4589 Anderson Livsey Lane
Snellville, GA 30039
(404) 934-3176

United Way is another resource you can turn to. To call the United Way in your area, simply dial 211. Here are the numbers for United Way in some Georgia cities. If you want to contact a United Way in a city that is not on the list, call 211 and ask them for the appropriate number.

Albany: 229-883-6700
Atlanta: 404-527-7200
Augusta: 877-292-5211
Brunswick: 912-265-1850
Columbus: 706-327-3255
Macon: 478-745-4732
Rome: 706-278-9230
Savannah: 912-651-7700
Valdosta: 877-211-2230

We hope this information is helpful to you.