



# Getting Ready for Release and Staying Street Smart

A HELPFUL GUIDE TO ISSUES BEFORE AND AFTER YOUR RELEASE

Office of Children and Family Services, Office of the Ombudsman

52 Washington Street, 230N

Rensselaer, NY 12144

888.219.9818 or 844.696.6283 (*Helpline*) | 518.486.7082 (*Office*)

**The information in this guide is a general reference tool.  
Any person facing criminal charges should seek the advice of an attorney.  
Neither OCFS, OOTO, nor an ombudsperson is your attorney.**

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## What Is the Office of the Ombudsman?

The Office of the Ombudsman (OOTO) in the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is comprised of attorneys and individuals who help protect the legal rights of youth. A “youth” is any person under 21 held at a county detention center or placed in a county-run or OCFS-run residential facility as a juvenile delinquent, youthful offender, juvenile offender, or adolescent offender.

While you are in an Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) facility, or after you leave a facility and are in a step-down facility or aftercare, you have access to the Office of the Ombudsman (OOTO). You can communicate with an ombudsperson almost any time.

### How Can OOTO Help?

OOTO can help get you answers to questions you may have as your release date approaches or while you are back in the community. OOTO can also connect you to other individuals who can help you with issues.

### How Do You Contact OOTO?

- You can call the OOTO Helpline at **1.888.219.9818**.
- OOTO’s office hours are from **9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday**. An ombudsperson can address most of your issues then.
- If you call the Helpline after 5 p.m. and on weekends, **press 1** to leave a message for OOTO, **press 2** if your call is about police contact. An ombudsperson will check the Helpline regularly.
- You can email OOTO at **myallies@ocfs.ny.gov**.
- If you like to write, send a letter to:

**OCFS Office of the Ombudsman  
52 Washington Street, 230 North  
Rensselaer, NY 12144**

**If you are not in placement, make sure to include information about where/how to reach you.**

# GETTING READY TO LEAVE

As your release date approaches, you may feel many things — excitement, anticipation, nervousness, or uncertainty. This part of the guide will help you remember important things and give you helpful reminders. **You got this!**

## A. What Is Your Status (Adjudication)?

Your status is important. It determines your release options and what your responsibilities are when you are back in the community. If you do not know your status, ask a staff person or call OOTO.

### *Juvenile Delinquent (JD) and Restrictive Juvenile Delinquent (RJD)*

A JD is a person, age 7 to 15, who did an act that would be a crime if he or she was an adult, **and** a court has determined he/she needs supervision, treatment, or placement with OCFS. The act a JD committed is called a “delinquent act” instead of a “crime.” A RJD is a JD who did a more serious delinquent act than a JD.

If you are a JD or RJD, Family Court heard your case and gave you a placement. Family Court places RJDs in secure placements, but an RJD can move to a less secure setting after a specific period. If you are a JD or RJD, your record is sealed—*although* police and prosecutors can see it.

### *Juvenile Offender (JO)*

A JO is a person, age 13, 14, or 15, who committed a felony or other violent act. If you are a JO, Supreme or County Court may have heard your case, or your case may have been sent to Family Court. After October 1, 2018, the Youth Part of Criminal Court may have heard your case. JO records are **not** sealed, **unless** the case was sent to Family Court.



### *Youthful Offender (YO)*

A YO is a person, usually age 16, 17, or 18, who committed a crime. If you are a YO, Supreme or County Court heard your case, **but** when the court sentenced you, you received a YO status. Being a YO means that your criminal record was sealed when the court gave you the YO status.

### *Adolescent Offender (AO)*

An AO is a person, age 16, who committed a certain class of felony on or after October 1, 2018, **OR** a person, age 17, who committed a certain class of felony on or after October 1, 2019. If you are an AO, either the Youth Part of Criminal Court heard your case **or** Family Court heard your case. If your case meets certain requirements, you can apply to a court to have your record sealed after 10 years.



**Look out!**

**In the following pages, some headings will indicate certain statuses (JD, JO, YO, or AO).**

**These sections are specific to those statuses, and important to know.**

## B. Types of Release from an OCFS Facility



### **Aftercare (JD/RJD/JO/YO)**

Aftercare is a period after you leave placement. During aftercare, various people and organizations in your community provide you with assistance, support, counseling, and supervision. While on aftercare there are certain expectations of your behavior (such as curfew, school attendance, and participation in counseling or support programs).

Know how to get in contact with your aftercare worker. Put his/her number in your phone if you have one after you leave placement, or, write it on a piece of paper and keep it in your pocket or wallet. If you ever have an issue during your release, be sure to contact your aftercare worker.

### **Conditional Release (JO/YO)**

Conditional release is when you can leave the facility **before** the end of your maximum term because you have good time credit.

Your original conditional release date is the date you may be released if you have all your good time.

### **Parole (JO/YO/AO)**

If you have a sentence with a minimum and maximum time, including one with a maximum time of life in prison, you are eligible for parole after finishing the minimum time. The Parole Board will only grant parole if it finds that you are **likely** to be successful in the community and likely that you will not commit another crime.

### **Day Placement (JD)**

Day placement is a type of release with certain behavior requirements (such as curfew, school attendance, and participation in counseling or support programs). Most often, day placement means that you have agreed to wear an electronic monitor for a time before you move to aftercare.

## C. Important People After Your Release

### **Your Aftercare Worker (JD/JO/YO)**

An aftercare worker is a caseworker who works with you and your family during placement and after you are released. Their job is to make sure that your move from the facility to life outside the facility (called “aftercare”) goes smoothly. They can get you back into school, help you find a job, and set you up with programs in your local community. If you do not have a place to stay upon release, your aftercare worker will work to find a place. An aftercare worker can also help you when you are at home, when you have questions or problems about services you are getting or think you should be getting.



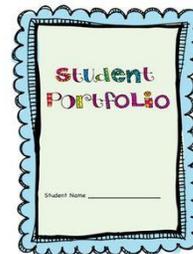
### **Your Offender Rehabilitation Counselor—aka Parole Officer (JO/YO/AO)**

If you are a JO, YO, or AO, you will be supervised by an offender rehabilitation counselor (ORC) upon your release from placement. The ORC’s job is to help you live up to parole rules and regulations. You can also go to your ORC for help finding a job or getting back into school.

## D. Important Things to Remember Before You Leave

### *Your Student Portfolio*

Your student portfolio will include any awards you have received and recommendations from teachers. It also includes your resume. Be sure to take a copy of your portfolio when you leave, and **keep it in a safe place**. **Do not** throw your portfolio out. Items in your portfolio will be helpful when you are looking for a job, applying to college, or trying to get a scholarship.



### *Your School Record (Transcript)*



A school record is called a “transcript.” Request a copy of your transcript **a few weeks** before your release date. You will need a copy of your transcript to enroll in school after release.

If you took college courses while at the facility, request a copy of your college transcript. You need this transcript to apply to colleges and get credit for the courses you took.

### *Medication*

At release, you, a parent, guardian, or staff person at a new facility will receive a supply of your medication(s). This supply will last until a pharmacy can refill your prescription. Be sure to keep any doctor appointments that the OCFS has scheduled for you out in the community.

### *If You Are an Immigrant*

It is important to know your immigration status if you are not a United States citizen. The easiest way to know if you are a citizen is if you were born in the United States. **If you are a lawful permanent resident or undocumented immigrant**, you are **not** a citizen.



If you are not a citizen, **do not wait** until you are about to be released to let an ombudsperson know about your immigration status. What you tell an ombudsperson about your immigration status is confidential. **An ombudsperson will not inform Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) about your immigration status.**

**If you are not a citizen, do not discuss** this with anyone but your youth counselor (YC) or clinician. These people can make appropriate release plan options for you. Do not share your immigration status with anyone else.

### *Register to Vote*

Make your voice heard in your community! You can register to vote if you are 18 by December 31 of this year **AND**:

1. Are in placement and have been placed by Family Court, **OR**
2. Have completed your time in placement, **OR**
3. Are on probation, **OR**
4. Are released on parole as of April 2018.

Contact OOTO to get a voter registration form, information on registering to vote, and help completing the form.

# ISSUES YOU MAY FACE AFTER RELEASE

Release comes with a lot of responsibility. This part of the guide will help you understand certain issues that may come up after you have left a facility and will help you face certain challenges.

## A. Applying for a Job After Release (JO/YO/AO)

When you apply for a job, be sure to take your student portfolio and show employers the things you have accomplished. If you are a JD or YO, your record is sealed. For most job and other applications, if the question does not come up, you **do not** have to tell them about your placement. However, if you are a JO **without** a YO designation, your record is **not** sealed.



If you are a JO or AO, you may find it more difficult to find a job if a potential employer asks about or investigates your criminal record. Even so, **do not** lie on a job application if it asks about convictions. It is better to be honest and explain your ability to work hard and be responsible, than to be caught in a lie and fired for it.

JOs and AOs should **apply for a Certificate of Relief from Disabilities (COR)**. To be eligible, a court **cannot** have convicted you of more than one felony. If you are eligible for a COR, it can help remove barriers to employment because of a crime. It tells employers that your past should not be held against you. Know that having a COR from the court does not automatically mean that you will get the job.

If you were convicted of more than one crime, once you have been released for 1-5 years (depending on your crime), you should apply for a **Certificate of Good Conduct (COG)**. A COG is similar to the COR.

For more information on a COR or COG, call OOTO.

## B. Violating the Release Rules

When you are released from a facility, there are certain rules that you **must** follow. If you do not and behave in a way that questions your ability to be in the community, you may face release revocation.

### *Revocation Hearing (JD)*

If you are a JD, it is your aftercare worker's job to recommend a revocation hearing if you do not meet the conditions of your release. You have a right to a release revocation hearing before your release can be revoked. Before the hearing, you must get a notice giving you the reasons why your release is in danger of being taken away. Your aftercare worker will determine if you can stay in the community until the hearing or if you need to be held in detention. If you need help understanding the revocation hearing, contact OOTO. At the hearing either your Family Court attorney will represent you or another assigned attorney.



If you are on day placement (electronic monitoring), **you have no right to a revocation hearing.**

### *Violation Hearing (JO/YO/AO)*

If you do not meet the rules of parole, or do not report to your parole officer, you risk losing your ability to be out in the community. If your parole is revoked, you will be arrested and sent back to an OCFS facility. Depending on the circumstances and your age, you may also go to a county jail or a Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) prison.

# STAYING STREET SMART

## What Does It Mean to Be “Street Smart”?

Street smart is when you have the experience and knowledge to deal with your environment or community. This part of the guide is to educate you and to help you deal with contact with law enforcement.

When you are released from an OCFS facility, it is important to know your rights and responsibilities so you can **protect yourself and stay out of trouble**.



If you have a question about anything in the next few pages or find yourself in trouble, **contact an attorney!**

## Knowing Your Rights



Whenever you see this picture, this section highlights a constitutional right that you have in the United States (US). A constitutional right comes from the US Constitution. Have you ever heard of the right to freedom of speech? The right to remain silent? These are just two examples.

In the US, many people think of the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights contains ten Amendments (changes) which add more information to the US Constitution. The Amendments protect individuals from the federal government. The important Amendments to this guide are:

- **The First Amendment.** This Amendment protects the freedom of speech, religion, and the press. It also protects the right to organize and socialize with others, peaceful protest, and to make requests of the government.
- **The Fourth Amendment.** This Amendment protects privacy. It states that police cannot search a person or a person’s property without a reason. It also states that police cannot arrest a person or take a person’s property without a reason.
- **The Fifth Amendment.** This Amendment protects rights related to trial. You may be familiar with the “right to remain silent,” the “right to due process,” or the “right to a fair trial.” This Amendment is where these rights come from.
- **The Fourteenth Amendment.** The Fourteenth Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause prevents state governments (like New York’s) from violating individuals’ constitutional or statutory (law-given) rights. This Amendment also protects legal **and** illegal immigrants.

## Special Symbols



Whenever you see this symbol, pay close attention to what you should do in the situation described.



Whenever you see this symbol, the guide will explain important words that apply to a certain situation.

# CONTACT WITH POLICE

## A. Why It's Important to Stay Calm

Many people feel anxious, defensive, or upset during interactions with police. **You are already ahead** because you have learned many ways to stay focused and calm. Use them if you have police contact.

Often, police only need your help to find out information. But police are trained to respond to what **they** see, so it is best if you keep your cool.



Be cooperative, stay cool, keep your hands visible, and **never** run.



## B. The "Come Up and Question"

The police can come up and question you on the street if they have a valid reason to do so. If the police suspect that criminal activity is happening or has happened, they can ask you for more information. In a "come up and question" situation, **do not** assume you have done something wrong.



"Reasonable suspicion" is a belief based on facts and circumstances connected to a police officer's training or experience.

## C. The Stop

The police can stop you on the street if:

- they have a "reasonable suspicion" that you are armed; that their safety is in danger; or that you have committed a crime, are committing a crime, or are about to commit a crime.
- they are investigating a crime, and they are looking for witnesses and/or suspects.
- they have a valid warrant for your arrest.

**If the police have stopped you, you do NOT have the right to leave.** If you are unsure, ask an officer if you are being stopped or if you are free to go.

### *Other ways to know if you've been stopped*

- If a police officer tells you to "stop";
- If a police officer blocks you with his or her car;
- If a police officer physically restrains you; or
- If a police officer draws his/her weapon on you.

## D. What About Your Right to Remain Silent?



The right to remain silent involves the **Fifth Amendment**. The police have the right to ask for your name and address to identify you. Give this information, and know that **giving a fake name or address could get you into serious trouble**.

 Other than this information, you do **not** have to tell police anything else. You can say, **“I want to remain silent”** or **“I don’t want to talk without an attorney.”** If you do not want to talk and police pressure you into talking, repeat either of these sentences firmly.

If you do choose to say something, **no matter what you say, do not lie**. Lying to police has serious consequences.

## E. What is a Warrant?



Warrants involve the **Fourth Amendment** protection against the police making illegal searches or illegal arrests. A warrant is a court order that allows police to legally do a search or make an arrest.

 If the police say they have a warrant, **ask to see it**. If police give you a warrant, **read it**. You should make sure the warrant is valid, which means it has certain things on it. If you have trouble reading or do not speak English, ask the police to read the warrant to you.

 In New York, an **arrest warrant** must have: **1.** The name or description of the person to be arrested; **2.** the crime(s); and **3.** a judge’s signature

 In New York, a **search warrant** must have: **1.** A description of the place to be searched or an address; **2.** the item the police are searching for; and **3.** a judge’s signature

 If a warrant is invalid, **for your own safety, do not physically resist an arrest or search**. You will be able to use this invalid warrant if you file an incident report with the police department or start a lawsuit.

# SITUATIONS ON THE STREET

## A. What Is a Frisk?



If the police stop you, they may also frisk you. A frisk is when an officer pats down the **outside** of your clothing because they have a “reasonable suspicion” that you are armed or that their safety is in danger **OR** if you give them permission to frisk you.

If the police feel something during the frisk that they believe could be a weapon, they can reach into your clothing to find out what it is.



## B. What Is a Search?

A search involves the **Fourth Amendment**. A search is more personal than a frisk. The police may conduct a search if:

- you give permission;
- the police, during a frisk, feel something on you that leads them to believe their safety is in danger;
- the police have a “reasonable suspicion” that a crime has been committed and that you have evidence of the crime on you;
- you are arrested; or
- the police have a valid search warrant that names the specific person/place they are to search. The warrant **must** be signed by a judge.



If you **do not** give police permission to search, say **loudly, clearly, and repeatedly**, “**I do not consent to a search.**” An officer may search you anyway, but it is important that the officer knows that you are not okay with this.

### *Exceptions and FYIs*

The police may also search you if there are “exigent circumstances” (i.e., an emergency, someone’s life is in danger, or they believe that you are about to destroy evidence.)

⚙️ “Exigent circumstances” are situations that appear to be emergencies and require quick action to stop someone from being harmed or something from being destroyed.

Some police departments have a rule that only male police officers may only frisk/search males, and only female officers may frisk/search females. **You can always ask for someone of the same gender if you are uncomfortable.** In certain circumstances, the police may not be able to bring someone of the same gender to do the frisk/search. They are still allowed to do the frisk/search.

## *If You Are an Immigrant*

If you are undocumented, do not carry papers or documents from your home country with you in case police search you. **Most importantly, do not carry false documents on you.** If you have valid immigration documents, show them to law enforcement immediately.

## **C. Recording the Police**

Two sets of laws deal with recording the police. Laws covering photography apply to images that are taken by a video recording device. A separate set of laws that cover audio (sound) recording apply to the sounds taken by an audio or video recording device.



If you choose to record a police interaction, **use your judgement.** Always **stay out of the way** to avoid putting yourself in danger.



### **Image Capture**

Images taken by a video recording are treated like photographs. The **First Amendment** allows anyone in a public space to take a picture of anything that can be seen from that public space *or* that is happening in that public space. This includes police officers doing their jobs duties in public view. **Public spaces include the street, parks, and beaches, and often, malls and shops.**

- You can record the police from your home. If you are on someone else's private property without permission, you must get the property owner's permission to record.

### **Sound (Audio) Capture**

The sound captured by a video recording is different; it is subject to audio recording and wiretap laws. These laws are different from state to state.

- **In New York**, only **one** person in a conversation needs to give permission to record the conversation. This means you can record your own conversations with the police, since you are one of the people.
- **In New York**, if you are **not** part of a conversation but overhear it, you can record a conversation between other people. **The Rules:** the conversation must be happening in public, **and** it must be easy to see and/or hear the conversation.

# HOUSE AND CAR SEARCHES

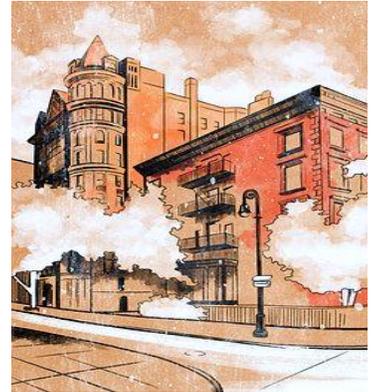
## A. Can the Police Come in My Home Anytime?

Home searches involve the **Fourth Amendment**. Generally, police can enter and search your house **only if** they have a valid search or arrest warrant **OR** if you give them permission.

### Exceptions

The police may enter and search your home without a warrant under “exigent circumstances.” This means they believe:

- someone in your home is in danger;
- someone in your home is about to commit a crime;
- someone in your home is about to destroy evidence; and/or
- there is a criminal suspect in your home who could escape.



Unless a warrant names a person or a place in your home, the search will cover your entire home and everything in it. **BUT**, the police are limited in searching for certain things in certain places.

- So, if the police have a valid search warrant to search for a stolen bicycle, they can only search for the bicycle in places where a bicycle could be. The police could search for the bicycle in your garage or your closet, but not your refrigerator.
- But if the police have a valid search warrant to search for drugs or a stolen ring, the police could search just about anywhere in your home.

### If You Are an Immigrant

Even if a person is undocumented, police or immigration must have a valid warrant to enter someone’s home or workplace (unless the employer gives permission), or to make an arrest.

## B. When Can the Police Search My Car?

Car searches also involve the Fourth Amendment. Generally, the police may stop your car and question you and anyone in your car if they have a “reasonable suspicion” that someone in your car has either broken the law or broken a traffic rule.



### If the police signal for you to stop and pull over

- slow down **immediately**, pull to the side of the road, and turn on your interior lights;
- roll down the windows (yes, even if it’s cold out!);
- place your hands on the steering wheel;
- follow the officer’s instructions and stay calm and polite;
- **Do not try to drive away.**



The police may also stop your car during traffic checks, such as DWI roadblocks, seat belt checks, etc.

### **The “Plain View” Rule**

If the police stop a car, they may question the driver and do an eyeball search of the car. This search is limited to only what they can see through the windows in “plain view.” **The “plain view” rule does not allow the police to open the glove compartment or trunk unless** they have your permission, a warrant, or there are exigent circumstances.

 “Probable cause” is a reasonable belief, supported by facts and circumstances, that a crime has happened, is happening, or will happen.

 “Contraband” are illegal drugs, weapons, items, or other substances.

The police may not open any containers **or** do a more thorough search of the car unless you give permission **OR** they have “probable cause” to believe that there is contraband in the car.



In New York, almost any contraband found in a car during a lawful search is assumed to belong to **EVERYONE** in the car. In other words, everyone in a car could face charges for possession, **even if** they did not know the contraband was in the car.

# ARREST



## A. Arrest

Arrest involves both the **Fourth** and the **Fifth Amendments**. The police may arrest you with a warrant. The police may also arrest you without a warrant if they have “probable cause” to believe that you are, or have been, involved in criminal activity or if there are “exigent circumstances.” Once you are in custody, if the police try to talk to you, they should tell you your Miranda rights:



### *Your Miranda Rights are:*

- You have the right to remain silent. (You don’t have to answer any questions.)
- Anything you say can/will be used against you. (If you do answer any questions, whatever you say can be used to convict you of a crime.)
- You have the right to an attorney and to have one present during questioning. (Even if you have answered questions, you have the right to stop speaking at any time. You have the right to ask for an attorney at **any time** during the questioning.)
- If you cannot afford an attorney, the state will appoint one for you. (If you or your family cannot afford an attorney, a court will assign a public defender to you.)



If you are under 18 years old, the police must call your parent or guardian. **Make sure they do.**

### *Searches During Arrest*

If police arrest you, they can search you without a warrant. The reason for a search during arrest is to make sure you do not have a weapon, evidence, or contraband.

### *Use of Force in an Arrest*

The police may use only the amount of force necessary to make an arrest. The more you resist being arrested, the more force the police can use. What seems necessary for arrest to you may **not** be what seems necessary to police.

### *If You Are an Immigrant*

If you are undocumented, you also have the right to speak to a lawyer if you are arrested. If law enforcement asks you to sign or agree to something **do not**. Ask to speak with an attorney, and preferably one who speaks your language if you do not speak English well.

## B. Conducting Yourself During an Arrest



If you are arrested, tell the arresting officer(s) your name and address. You do not have to say anything else. You can say, “**I want to remain silent**” or “**I don’t want to talk without a lawyer.**” If you do not want to talk and police appear to pressure you into talking, repeat either of these sentences **firmly**.

**Use your brain, not your fists.** If you believe the police are acting unreasonably, stay calm, and make a note of the officer’s name and/or badge number for later use.



# POLICE ISSUES

## If You Believe You Have Been the Victim of Police Misconduct: Write. Take. Keep. Fill.

- **Write** the incident down **as soon as possible**. If you can do so **safely**, get the officer's name and/or badge number, or later, write down a detailed description of the police officer(s) involved.
- **Take** photographs as soon as possible. If you are hurt or have property damage, if you repair property damaged by police or visit a doctor because of an incident, keep all receipts and bills.
- **Keep** a list of the names, addresses, and phone numbers of anyone who was at the incident and saw what happened.
- **Fill out** a civilian complaint form. Be sure to keep a copy of your complaint for your own records. Forms are available at police stations. They are also available online if you do an online search and type: "civilian complaint form," the word "police," and the "county or town where the incident occurred."
- If you need help, consult a lawyer, or contact the local bar association or Legal Aid.



# SCHOOL SMART

This section will discuss street smarts at school. For example, did you know that your school owns your locker and a school official can search it—even without your permission?

## A. School Resource Officers (SROs):



Your school may have police officers or SROs. These officers' job is to protect your school and help students, teachers, and other staff feel safe. SROs often build positive and supportive relationships with school officials and students. **But**, if they are active duty police officers, they can still question students, do frisks and searches, and make arrests.

If you are speaking to an SRO, be careful about what you say to her or him—especially if your conversation might reveal that you are engaging in behavior that violates school rules or the rules of aftercare, release, or parole. Check out “What about Your Right to Remain Silent?” on page 10.

## B. Social Media

Apps like Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter are great ways to communicate, share information, and stay connected to others. Remember that if any thing you share on these apps is public, police officers, school officials, your aftercare worker, and strangers can use this information in a way you might not intend or want.



## C. Locker Searches

School lockers are the school's property—not a student's. A school official may conduct a search of your locker without your permission if the school official has a “reasonable suspicion” that the search will turn up evidence that you are violating or have violated, either the law or school rules.

To stay safe and out of trouble, **do not** bring items that are contraband (illegal drugs, weapons, guns, substances, etc.) to school with you.

## D. Metal Detectors

Schools must maintain discipline, order, and protect all students. Because of this, schools may do searches with metal detectors **only if** the searches do not discriminate or single out students based on race, sex, gender, national origin, etc. In other words, if the school runs *all* students through a metal detector, the search is legal.

## E. Strip Searches

Under certain circumstances, a school official may make a student strip search—for example, if the official believes that a student has weapons or illegal drugs.

## F. Police on School Grounds

Police may bring in trained dogs to detect the odor of drugs or explosives in school lockers without having to get a search warrant. If a dog picks up the smell of drugs or explosives, the police have probable cause to search.

# LEGAL SERVICE PROVIDERS NEAR YOU

When you are back in the community you, your family, or someone you know may need legal help on matters like housing, immigration, public assistance, or child custody or support. Below, you can find a provider near you and a list of areas they serve.

**Region 1 (Buffalo Area):** *Counties of Niagara, Orleans, Erie, Genesee, Wyoming, Cattaraugus, Allegany*

Organization	Phone	Website/Email	Service Areas
<b>SUNY Buffalo School of Law</b>	716.645.2167	<a href="mailto:law-clinic@buffalo.edu">law-clinic@buffalo.edu</a>	Community justice, family violence, healthcare, disability, public assistance benefits
<b>Neighborhood Legal Services</b>	<i>Buffalo:</i> 716.847.0650  <i>Niagara Falls:</i> 716.284.8831  <i>Batavia:</i> 585.343.5450	<a href="http://www.nls.org">http://www.nls.org/</a>	Housing, family law  *Only accepts 5 callers per service, per day beginning at <b>9am</b> .
<b>Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo, Inc.</b>	716.853.9555	<a href="https://legalaidbuffalo.org">https://legalaidbuffalo.org</a>  <a href="mailto:info@legalaidbuffalo.com">info@legalaidbuffalo.com</a>	Education, housing, immigration, criminal issues, parole, appeals
<b>Center for Elder Law and Justice</b>	716.853.3087	<a href="https://elderjusticenyc.org/">https://elderjusticenyc.org/</a>	Healthcare, elder abuse, housing, consumer protection, kinship/guardianship

**Region 2 (Rochester Area):** *Counties of Monroe, Wayne, Livingston, Ontario, Seneca, Yates, Steuben, Schuyler, Chemung*

Organization	Phone	Website/Email	Service Areas
<b>Legal Aid Society of Rochester</b>	585.232.4090	<a href="https://www.lasroc.org">https://www.lasroc.org</a>	Attorney for the child, education, housing, immigration, child support, custody, visitation. etc.
<b>Volunteer Legal Service Project</b>	585.232.3051	<a href="https://www.vlsprochester.org">https://www.vlsprochester.org</a>	Child custody, visitation, child support

Continued



**Region 3 (Syracuse Area):** Counties of St. Lawrence, Jefferson, Lewis, Herkimer, Oswego, Oneida, Onondaga, Madison, Cayuga, Cortland, Tompkins, Chenango, Tioga, Broome

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Website/Email</b>	<b>Service Areas</b>
<b>Syracuse University School of Law (Clinic)</b>	315.443.4582	<a href="https://law.syr.edu/academics/clinical-experiential/legal-assistance">https://law.syr.edu/academics/clinical-experiential/legal-assistance</a>	Youth rights, child custody, visitation, child support, disability rights
<b>Hiscock Legal Aid Society</b>	315.422.8191	<a href="https://hlalaw.org/">https://hlalaw.org/</a> <a href="mailto:mail@hlalaw.org">mail@hlalaw.org</a>	Civil issues, child custody, visitation, child support, appeals, parole
<b>Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York (Canton Office)</b>	315.386.4586	<a href="https://www.lasnny.org/location/canton-office/">https://www.lasnny.org/location/canton-office/</a>	Civil issues, juvenile community reentry, immigration, housing Immigration, healthcare, disability, public assistance benefits
<b>American Civic Association</b>	607.723.9419	<a href="mailto:americancivic@stny.rr.com">americancivic@stny.rr.com</a>	Immigration, human trafficking services
<b>Volunteer Lawyers Project of Onondaga</b>	315.471.3409	<a href="https://www.onvlp.org/get-help/">https://www.onvlp.org/get-help/</a>	Family Court and matrimonial (marriage) issues, housing and homelessness, elder law, disability, veterans, LGBTQ/SOGIE issues, immigration, unemployment

Continued 

**Region 4 (Capital District Area):** Counties of Clinton, Franklin, Essex, Hamilton, Warren, Washington, Fulton, Saratoga, Montgomery, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Albany, Schenectady, Otsego, Schoharie, Delaware, Greene, Columbia

Organization	Phone	Website/Email	Service Areas
<b>Albany Law School (Clinic)</b>	518.445.2328	<a href="https://www.albanylaw.edu/centers/clinic-and-justice-center">https://www.albanylaw.edu/centers/clinic-and-justice-center</a>	Civil issues, domestic and family violence immigration, healthcare, disability, public assistance benefits
<b>The Legal Project</b>	518.435.1770	<a href="http://www.legalproject.org">http://www.legalproject.org</a> <a href="mailto:info@legalproject.org">info@legalproject.org</a>	Appeals, child support, custody, visitation, education, healthcare, housing, personal safety, public assistance benefits
<b>Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York</b>	<i>Albany:</i> 518.462.6765 <i>Amsterdam:</i> 518.842.9466 <i>Plattsburgh:</i> 518.563.4022 <i>Saratoga:</i> 518.587.5188	<a href="https://www.lasny.org/get-help/">https://www.lasny.org/get-help/</a>	Civil issues, juvenile community reentry, immigration, housing Immigration, healthcare, disability, public assistance benefits
<b>Albany County Bar Association</b>	518.445.7691 ext. 110	<a href="https://www.albanycountybar.org/page/lrs">https://www.albanycountybar.org/page/lrs</a>  LRS@albanycountybar.com	Various issues  <b>Call 9:30a – 1:30p, M - F</b>
<b>Schenectady County Bar Association</b>		<a href="http://www.schenectadycountybar.org/attorneys/modest-means/">http://www.schenectadycountybar.org/attorneys/modest-means/</a>  info@schenectadycountybar.org	Family Court and matrimonial (marriage) issues

Continued 

**Region 5 (Hudson Valley/Long Island Area):** *Sullivan, Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Westchester, Nassau, Suffolk*

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Website/Email</b>	<b>Services Areas</b>
<b>Legal Services of Hudson Valley</b>	877.574.8529	<a href="mailto:info@lshv.org">info@lshv.org</a> <a href="https://www.lshv.org">https://www.lshv.org</a>	Civil issues
<b>Hofstra Law School</b>	516.463.5934	<a href="mailto:lawclinic@hofstra.edu">lawclinic@hofstra.edu</a> <a href="https://law.hofstra.edu/clinics/index.html">https://law.hofstra.edu/clinics/index.html</a>	Immigration/asylum, youth advocacy, juvenile justice, criminal defense
<b>Pace Law School (Clinic)</b>	914.422.4333		Criminal issues, child support, custody, visitation, healthcare, disability, immigration, unemployment decision appeals
<b>My Sisters' Place</b>	914.683.1333 1.800.298.7233	<a href="http://mspny.org/">http://mspny.org/</a>	Domestic/family violence, child support, custody, visitation, immigration, public assistance benefits
<b>The Legal Aid Society of Nassau County</b>	516.560.6400	<a href="http://nclas.org/contact.html">http://nclas.org/contact.html</a>	Criminal issues, certain family issues
<b>Legal Aid Society of Suffolk County, Inc</b>	631.630.3300 631.853.5212	<a href="http://sclas.org/">http://sclas.org/</a>	Child support, custody, visitation, criminal issues, children's law
<b>Nassau Suffolk Law Services</b>	<i>Hempstead:</i> 516.292.8100  <i>Islandia:</i> 631.232.2400  <i>Riverhead:</i> 631.369.1112	<a href="https://www.nslawservices.org/self-help-legal-info">https://www.nslawservices.org/self-help-legal-info</a>	Consumer protection, public assistance, disability, housing, immigration, veterans' issues, Medicaid/care, Social Security

**Region 6 (New York City):**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Website/Email</b>	<b>Service Areas</b>
<b>Brooklyn Law School (Clinic)</b>	718.780.7994	clinics@brooklaw.edu	Safe harbor, asylum, clemency and pardons disability, civil rights, employment/unemployment issues, insurance, discrimination, LGBTQ/SOGIE
<b>CUNY Law (Clinic)</b>	718.340.4300	mssl@law.cuny.edu	Criminal defense, financially disadvantaged college students, discrimination, child support, custody, visitation, healthcare, LGBTQ/SOGIE issues, immigration/asylum
<b>Brooklyn Law School (Clinic)</b>	718.780.7994	clinics@brooklaw.edu	Safe harbor/ asylum, clemency and pardons, disability, civil rights, employment/unemployment issues, insurance, discrimination, LGBTQ/SOGIE
<b>Columbia University School of Law (Clinic)</b>	212.854.4291	<a href="https://www.law.columbia.edu/experiential/clinics">https://www.law.columbia.edu/experiential/clinics</a> clinicstaff@law.columbia.edu	Adolescent (age 16-24) issues, housing, parenting, identity theft, immigration, LGBTQ/SOGIE issues
<b>The Legal Aid Society of NYC</b>	212.577.3300	<a href="https://www.legalaidnyc.org/">https://www.legalaidnyc.org/</a>	Various issues
<b>Youth Represent</b>	646.759.8080	<a href="http://youthrepresent.org/contact">http://youthrepresent.org/contact</a>	Legal services for youth under age 25
<b>New York County Lawyers Association</b>	212.267.6646 ext. 217	<a href="https://bit.ly/2NYGkxA">https://bit.ly/2NYGkxA</a> iKats@nycla.org	Domestic violence, disability, LGBTQ/SOGIE issues, tax, unemployment, child abuse, post-incarceration issues, veteran and military family assistance
<b>Mobilization for Justice</b>	212.417.3700	<a href="http://mobilizationforjustice.org/about/contact-us/">http://mobilizationforjustice.org/about/contact-us/</a>	Housing, employment, public assistance benefits, immigration, kinship care
<b>Urban Justice Center / Peter Cicchino Youth Project</b>	877.542.8529	<a href="https://pcyp.urbanjustice.org/pcyp-gethelp1">https://pcyp.urbanjustice.org/pcyp-gethelp1</a> <a href="mailto:pcyp@urbanjustice.org">pcyp@urbanjustice.org</a>	Services for homeless and/or street-involved LGBTQ/SOGIE youth: name and gender marker changes, immigration, public assistance, Criminal history reviews, incarceration advocacy
<b>Sylvia Rivera Law Project</b>	212.337.8550 ext. 308	<a href="https://srlp.org/about/legal-services/info@srlp.org">https://srlp.org/about/legal-services/info@srlp.org</a>	LGBT/SOGIE issues
<b>Immigration Law Project</b>	718.943.8632	<a href="https://www.safehorizon.org/our-services/legal-and-court-help/immigration-law-project/">https://www.safehorizon.org/our-services/legal-and-court-help/immigration-law-project/</a>	Various immigration issues
<b>Legal Services NYC</b>	917.661.4500	<a href="http://www.legalservicesnyc.org/our-program">http://www.legalservicesnyc.org/our-program</a>	Various issues