

Our Mission



It is the mission of this Probation Department to provide the community with mandated and voluntary criminal and family court services which reduce reliance on incarceration and the courts by attempting to assess factors, monitor behaviors, and facilitate the rehabilitation of individuals, in a manner which promotes personal responsibility, improved family functioning, and public safety.

Tompkins County Department of Probation and Community Justice

**320 West State /Martin Luther King Jr Street
Ithaca, NY 14850
(607)274-5380**

05.13

Name _____

Probation Officer _____

Probation Phone# _____

Adult PROBATIONER HANDBOOK

Key to Your Success



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Making Probation Work for You

Probation is a time you can use to learn how to make good choices. It is your chance to remain in the community with conditions instead of going to jail. You will be assigned a Probation Officer who will help you. If you follow all of the court's conditions, you will successfully complete your probation.

The Department of Probation and Community Justice would like to see you successfully complete your probation and end your involvement with the criminal justice system. This handbook was created to help you achieve this. Many people do well on probation and never find themselves in legal trouble again. When this happens, everyone benefits, including you. If you think of your probation period as an opportunity, rather than a punishment, you will have more success.



You should ask questions, so you can completely understand what you need to do. This handbook will answer some commonly asked questions and explains some probation conditions. If you have difficulty understanding the handbook, please ask your Probation Officer to read or explain the handbook to you.

- ⇒ *Review and understand all of your conditions of probation.*
- ⇒ *Take ownership of your probation by becoming an active participant.*
- ⇒ *The responsibility for making changes in your life is yours.*

Probation Behavioral Agreement

For the safety of all visitors and staff, I agree to cooperate with the following behavioral expectations.

___ I understand that violence, the threat of violence, or threatening or disruptive behavior is prohibited and I agree to conduct myself appropriately.

___ Weapons are prohibited in all Tompkins County buildings and I agree not to bring weapons into the building. That includes, but is not limited to:

- ⇒ **Firearms**
- ⇒ **Knives**
- ⇒ **Blades**
- ⇒ **Box Cutters**
- ⇒ **Sharp Objects**
- ⇒ **Additionally, any item prohibited by the Probation Department or carried with the intent to bring harm to another individual.**

___ Upon arrival at the Probation Department I may be subjected to a search that could include the use of a magnetometer.

___ The Penal Law defines weapons and local law prohibits carrying any weapons into county buildings. I understand that any weapons that fall within the category of "weapons" as defined by either law, whether declared or found, will be confiscated and I may face additional charges.

By my signature below I acknowledge receipt of this information.

_____/_____/_____
Client **Date**

_____/_____/_____
Witness **Date**

Original remains with client,
1 copy to be made for file.

What is a Violation of Probation? (VOP)

- If you fail to follow the conditions of your probation your actions may rise to the level of a violation of probation. (VOP) and your case may be returned to court.
- A VOP is a legal means to return you to court to face the judge who sentenced you.
- There will be a court hearing. If found in violation of your probation, you may be sentenced to alternative programs, or your probation sentence may be revoked and you may be re-sentenced to jail or prison.

What if I have a “No Contact” order?

You must not have or attempt to have any contact with the person or place. If that person tries to contact you, do not agree to make contact and tell your Probation Officer immediately.

Where do I send my restitution payments?

- Your Probation Officer will give you instructions about your restitution and what is required. Payments by mail should be in check or money order.
- Payments may be made in person between 8:30am and 4:30pm on any regular working day by cash, check or money order. Credit cards are not accepted.
- There is a \$15 charge for bounced checks.

What are my rights as a Probationer?

You have the right to be treated in a respectful and professional manner that is free of any form of harassment, bias or discrimination because of your race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, place of birth, disability and political views.

What do I do if I feel my rights have been violated?

- First, talk to your Probation Officer and try to resolve your concerns.
- If you feel that you can’t resolve your concerns with your Probation Officer, ask to speak to their supervisor.
- If you still cannot resolve the problem you can call the Probation Director or Deputy Director.
- Failing that, you may contact the NYS OPCA at Alfred E. Smith Building 80 South Swan Street Albany, NY or call 518-485-7692.

Tips for Success

- Review and understand all of your conditions of probation.
- Think before you act. Slow yourself down and think a few steps ahead.
- Surround yourself with law abiding people who really want to see you do well, such as friends, family, co-workers, and formal support groups.
- Take ownership of your probation by becoming an active participant.
- Be open to the guidance from your Probation Officer.



Common Questions About Probation

What are the rules for reporting to my Probation Officer?

- You must report on the day and time your Probation Officer tells you.
- If you have an emergency or illness that prevents you from keeping your appointment, call and speak directly to your Probation Officer or their Supervisor and get a new appointment. The responsibility for making changes in your life is yours.

What is merit Credit?

Merit Credit is an opportunity during probation supervision to reward and provide incentives to probationers who are demonstrating substantial compliance with both their Order and Conditions of probation and their case plan. Talk to your Probation Officer about how you can earn Merit Credit.

What if the weather is bad?

In the event of a blizzard or other weather emergency that renders the roads unsafe, you are to follow the rules set by the Sheriff's department with respect to road travel. If the roads of the county remain open but the administration of the Probation & Community Justice Department deems them unwise to travel, then an announcement will be made on the radio instructing that clients *not report*. To hear these announcements, please tune into any of the following: **WSQG** 90.9 FM, **WNYX** 1470 AM, **WYXL** 97.3, **WQNY** 103.7 FM, **WHCU** 870 AM. If you have any questions you can and should always call your probation officer.

What should I NOT bring to my appointment with my Probation Officer?

- Drugs and/or Paraphernalia
- Firearms
- Knives
- Box-Cutters
- Multi-Tools
- Aerosol Defense Sprays
- Any item Carried that could potentially bring Harm to Another Individual
- Any Weapons Determined to be Contraband, Dangerous, or Unnecessary
- Recording Devices or Camera Cell Phones (All regular cell phones must be turned off)

Why is it important that I participate in treatment?

Your probation officer may refer you to a treatment program. There are many different types of treatment. These programs will help you improve your situation—they are not a punishment. However, failure to cooperate with treatment may result in a violation of probation.

You may not want to go to treatment. This is normal. Programs require your time and effort. The most important first step for you is to attend. Once there, if you approach treatment as an opportunity, you will get the most out of it—give yourself the best chance for success.

Why do I have to sign a release of information?

It is necessary for you to sign the release of information so that your Probation Officer can verify that you attended and completed the program.

Am I responsible to pay for my treatment services?

You may have to pay for your treatment. In some instances third party funding (private insurance, Medicaid, etc) may be available to you. Also, many services are offered on a sliding scale.

What do I do if I am arrested?

If you are arrested, charged with any offense, or have any police contact, contact your Probation Officer no later than 48 hours of it happening. You may do this in person or by telephone.

Can I go out of state?

You may not travel or move out of state without permission from your Probation Officer. To do so you will need to apply for, obtain and carry with you a travel permit. **PLAN AHEAD**. You will need to give your Probation Officer a minimum of 48 hours notice to approve and prepare your permit.

Is there a fee for probation services?

Yes, there is a sliding fee charged to individuals for supervision fees who are on Probation as a result of a conviction under VTL 1192 and 1193 (DWI, DWAI, DWAI by drugs). You may also be required to pay a fee for urine screens if your conditions of probation mandate testing.

Can I vote?

Yes, but first you must be registered in the town where you live.

Can I carry a firearm?

- No probationer may possess any firearms if on probation for a felony or certain misdemeanors. See your probation officer for further explanation.
- If you are subject to a Protective and/or Restraining Order or other court orders not to possess any weapons, you are not to own, possess or purchase any weapons or items that could be used as a weapon.