

Coronavirus (COVID-19): The person who harmed you might be released from prison

What will I learn?

The state of Washington is releasing some people from prison. This will help stop the spread of COVID-19 in prisons.

If you are a survivor of violent crimes, you should take safety steps now. If the person who hurt you is let out of prison, you should have plans in place.

Will they let out someone who committed a violent offense?

Maybe. If they pled guilty to a non-violent offense, they could be released now.

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- ❖ Right now (May 2020), prisons are only letting people out with convictions for non-violent crimes within seven months of their estimated release date. This could change. Check back for updates.
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Can I find out if the prison is going to let the person out?

Yes. If you can, you should sign up for the Advance Notification Program of the state Department of Corrections (DOC). It will tell you when a prison is going to let someone out. Sign up at www.doc.wa.gov/victims/notification.htm.

Who can sign up for Advance Notification?

- Any victim of or witness to a violent, sex, or felony harassment offence crime, where the person who did this to you was convicted, can sign up.
- Any next of kin to a murder victim can sign up.
- You can sign up if the prosecutor writes you to tell you that you can.

I cannot sign up for Advance Notification. Do I have other options?

Yes. You can sign up for automatic notification through the [Victim Information & Notification Everyday \(VINE\) system](https://vinelink.vineapps.com/search/WA) at vinelink.vineapps.com/search/WA. See How-to below.

If someone becomes eligible for release due to COVID-19, the DOC will send you more information if you signed up for notification.

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- ❖ If you think you may need safety planning, start now. Victim advocates across the state with training can help survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and violent crime. They can help with safety planning and getting protection orders to help protect you and your family.
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The person I am concerned about is in jail, not prison.

The county where a jail is located decides releases from jail. Call the prosecutor's office handling the person's criminal case. Ask if they will let you know if that person is going to be let out of jail.

Where can I get help?

Domestic Violence Information and Referral

- Visit www.domesticviolenceinforeferral.org for an advocate near you
- Washington State Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-562-6025
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 or TTY 1-800-787-3244

Washington State Coalition against Domestic Violence (WSCADV)

Visit wscadv.org/washington-domestic-violence-programs. It lists domestic violence programs across the state.

Washington State Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs

Visit www.wcsap.org/help/csap-by-city. It lists sexual assault programs across the state.

Washington State Office of Crime Victims Advocacy

This Office supports survivors of all types of crime. They have a list of local agencies who support survivors. Visit www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/crime-

[victims-public-safety/office-of-crime-victims-advocacy/](#) to find help near you. You can also call OCVA at 800-822-1067 or email ocva@commerce.wa.gov to get help with safety planning.

Northwest Justice Project (NJP)

NJP provides legal services and referrals for domestic violence and Victim of Crime Act help.

- **Outside King County:** Call the **CLEAR Hotline 1-888-201-1014** weekdays 9:15 am - 12:15 pm
- **In King County:** Call **2-1-1**, open weekdays 8:00 am - 6:00 pm
- **Seniors** (age 60 and over) can also call CLEAR*Sr at 1-888-387-7111, statewide

Visit **WashingtonLawHelp.org**. It has free "know your rights" fact sheets, videos, court forms and do-it-yourself packets covering many legal issues. These include protections for domestic violence and family law. LawHelp also has a directory of legal aid programs in the state of Washington. You can find free packets for protection orders and instructions for using them in the "Family and Safety" section. See www.washingtonlawhelp.org/issues/family-law.

❖ You do not have to pay to file for or have served a civil domestic violence or sexual assault protection order in the state of Washington.

How to sign up for notifications from VINE

- 1.** Click on the arrow next to the blank next to **I am searching for**. Pick an **offender/defendant**. A set of search options will appear.
- 2.** Make sure the space next to **located in** reads "Washington."
- 3.** Click on the arrow next to **whose**. Choose **Name** to search for an offender by name. If you know the offender's ID number with DOC, you can search that by choosing **ID number**.
- 4.** Type the offender's or defendant's first and last name in the boxes that appear after you choose **name**. If you do not know both names, or are not sure how to spell them, type what you know and check the box next to **partial name**.
- 5.** Check **I am not a robot**. Click the search button. VINE will take you to a new page. It will have a list of offenders and defendants whose names match what

you searched for or are close to what you searched for if you checked **partial name**.

- 6.** Pick the offender or defendant for whom you want notifications. Click **Get Notified** under their name. Click **add**.
- 7.** VINE sends notifications by email, automated phone call, text message, or teletypewriter. Pick how you want to be notified. Check the box next to the option. You can set up more than one notification by different options.
- 8.** Follow the onscreen instructions to set up your notification. VINE will try to contact you by the option you chose. This is to make sure the notification system is working. If you do not get a confirmation, contact VINE Help.
- 9.** Repeat these instructions to set up other notifications.

❖ VINE might lose touch with a prison or jail. If you sign up to get notice about someone in a prison in the VINE system, you should also get notice about when notifications are not happening. If you get one of those notifications, it will say how to follow up about the status of that offender or defendant.

❖ Washington VINE: (877) 846-3492; TTY: 1-866-847-1298

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