



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

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DIRECTOR

**DIRECTOR'S OFFICE MEMORANDUM 2021 - 12**

**EFFECTIVE:** January 1, 2021

**DATE:** December 16, 2020

**TO:** Executive Policy Team  
Administrative Management Team  
Wardens

**FROM:** Heidi E. Washington, Director

**SUBJECT:** Offender Identification Documents

**SUPERSEDES: DOM 2020 - 15 (effective 01/01/2020)**

One of the difficulties prisoners face on parole or after discharge is finding employment due to a lack of proper identification. Offender identification documents include, but are not limited to, a birth certificate, Social Security card and state I.D. This Director's Office Memorandum sets forth how to obtain offender identification documents.

The process for obtaining offender identification documents starts at the reception facility. Whenever a prisoner is received at a reception facility with a birth certificate, Social Security card, driver's license, or Secretary of State personal identification card, Visa or foreign passport, the documents shall be retained in the prisoner's facility Record Office file until the prisoner paroled or discharges. The receipt of these documents shall be documented in writing and entered under the "Essential Documents" tab in OMNI. A Prisoner Receipt (CAJ-291) shall be provided to the prisoner for these items.

As part of reception processing at a reception facility, the Employment Counselor shall meet with each prisoner and answer questions regarding the need for having offender identification documents in their legal name upon release from incarceration. If the prisoner knows where their birth certificate, Social Security card, driver's license, Secretary of State personal identification card, or other documents are located, and the document is not already being stored by the Department for the prisoner, the prisoner shall be informed that the Department will store the document(s) for them if the documents are mailed directly to the facility where the prisoner is located. Upon receipt, facility staff will provide a receipt to the prisoner and make a record in OMNI under the "Essential Documents" tab. The Records Administrator, Central Records Section in the Operations Division, Correctional Facilities Administration (CFA), shall ensure that documents received for storage are promptly forwarded to the appropriate facility, where they shall be stored in the prisoner's Record Office file for delivery to the prisoner when they parole or discharge.

The following describes the process for obtaining offender identification documents if the offender is not in possession of or does not know where the documents are upon admission to a reception facility.

## BIRTH CERTIFICATES:

Without a birth certificate, prisoners are unable to obtain a Social Security card, driver's license or Secretary of State personal identification card. The issuance of approved identification cards that parolees and discharged prisoners may use as one form of identification necessary to obtain a driver's license or personal identification card addresses this problem in part. Additional documentation, however, is needed to show permanent legal presence in the United States in order to obtain a driver's license or personal identification card.

This section will set forth a formalized process at various stages of a prisoner's incarceration by which they may obtain a birth certificate and have it stored by the Department until their release. This assistance shall be available to prisoners as needed throughout their incarceration.

Specific instructions for obtaining birth certificate applications and processing issued applications are available to staff in the Document Access System (DAS).

### Reception Processing:

If a prisoner indicates that they do not have a birth certificate or does not know where it is located, the Employment Counselor shall assist the prisoner in obtaining a copy of the birth certificate. For prisoners born in Michigan, copies shall be obtained by the Vital Documents Specialist in Central Office through the Vital Records Division of the Department of Health and Human Services. Copies from other states and other countries shall be obtained at the receiving facility through the Vital Documents Specialist in Central Office. If the prisoner does not have a copy of their Michigan birth certificate, the Employment Counselor shall obtain the required Michigan application and complete it for the prisoner's signature, obtaining input from the prisoner as necessary. Offender Success Services will provide funding through the General Fund to cover the birth certificate application fees.

The Employment Counselor shall submit the completed Michigan application to the Vital Documents Specialist in Central Office, who shall be responsible for processing the application. At the time the application is submitted to the Vital Document Specialist, the Employment Counselor shall make a record in OMNI under the Essential Documents tab. The record shall include the following information:

1. Document Type (birth certificate)
2. Document Location (pending)
3. Note: "Birth certificate application sent to COF on (date) by (initials)."

The Vital Documents Specialist in Central Office shall be responsible for coordinating the receipt of any additional information or documentation required for processing the application. Once the application is sent to the correct Vital Record's Office, the Vital Documents Specialist shall record the following information in OMNI under the Essential Documents tab:

1. Requested Date (date the application was sent to Vital Records)
2. Requesting Location (Ingham/Lansing/Central Office).

When the birth certificate is received by the Vital Documents Specialist in Central Office, the Vital Documents Specialist will forward a receipt and the document to the facility Record Office and make a note under the Notes section in the “Essential Documents” tab in OMNI indicating “BC received and sent to (facility) Records Office on (date) by (name).” When the birth certificate is received by the facility Record Office, Record Office staff shall advise the prisoner in writing with a Prisoner Receipt (CAJ-291). Record Office staff shall record the following information in the “Essential Documents” tab in OMNI:

1. Verification Date (date birth certificate was received)
2. Verifying Employee (name of employee who received the birth certificate).

If the prisoner has been released on parole prior to Central Office obtaining the birth certificate, the document shall be forwarded to the supervising agent and the document securely stored in the offender’s parole file until it can be delivered to the parolee. The supervising agent shall record the following in the “Essential Documents” tab in OMNI:

1. Verification Date (date birth certificate was received)
2. Verifying Employee (name of employee who received the birth certificate)
3. Date the document was delivered to the parolee and by whom under the Notes section.

If the prisoner/parolee has discharged, the birth certificate shall be forwarded to the prisoner’s/parolee’s discharge address. In cases where no discharge address was left, the birth certificate shall be sent to Record’s Retention for storage in the prisoner’s file.

#### Receiving Facility:

Once an offender is transferred to the receiving facility, an out-of-state or foreign birth certificate application can be completed at any time. However, this process is typically triggered by the prisoner’s Parole Board interview. When it is time for a prisoner to be interviewed by the Parole Board, the Departmental Technicians in the Parole Board shall notify the Vital Documents Specialist of those prisoners who are to be interviewed by the Parole Board. The Vital Documents Specialist shall review the lists to see which prisoners are still in need of a birth certificate. If it is determined that a prisoner is still in need of a birth certificate, the Vital Documents Specialist will send a list to the Employment Counselor at the prisoner’s designated facility. At that time, the Employment Counselor shall complete an application in the same manner as required during reception processing. The completed application shall be processed in the same manner as required during reception processing.

#### **SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS:**

The Michigan Department of Corrections and the Social Security Administration entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which expires November 30, 2023, to facilitate the process for prisoners to obtain replacement Social Security cards. This section sets forth the Department’s responsibilities with respect to the MOU.

The process addressed by the MOU only applies to prisoners who are U.S. citizens who need a replacement Social Security card. The Departmental Technician(s) in the Parole Board shall send a

45-day Parole Board interview list to the Vital Documents Specialist indicating who is to be scheduled for a Parole Board interview. The Vital Documents Specialist shall determine who is in need of a replacement Social Security card. Once a list has been generated of prisoners in need of a replacement Social Security card, the list will be sent by the Vital Documents Specialist to the Employment Counselor at each facility to begin the application process. There is no application fee.

To apply for a replacement Social Security card, the prisoner must complete Social Security Administration form SS-5 "Application for a Social Security Card" and SSA-3288 "Consent for Release of Information." (The forms shall be completed using the prisoner's legal name; additional instructions for completion of the application are included as part of the SS-5 form). The original completed forms shall be mailed to the Vital Documents Specialist in Central Office by the Employment Counselor. At the time the application is submitted to the Vital Documents Specialist, the Employment Counselor shall make a record in OMNI under the Essential Documents tab. The record shall include the following information:

1. Document Type (Social Security card)
2. Document Location (pending)
3. Note: "Social Security card application sent to COF on (date) by (initials)."

\*Note: OMNI will not allow staff to save the record without entering a document location.

The Vital Documents Specialist in Central Office is responsible for review and certification of prison records necessary to process the application and for the processing of the application itself. If a LEIN check reveals multiple Social Security numbers, the application must be denied. Thereafter, a note shall be entered into OMNI under the "Essential Documents" tab indicating "SSC application cannot be processed due to multiple SSNs per MOU with SSA (employee name-date)." If the LEIN check reveals only one Social Security number and because the application cannot be processed until the prisoner is within 120 days of release, the application shall be stored by the Vital Documents Specialist until they are notified of the day the offender is to be paroled/discharged. Once the Vital Documents Specialist has been notified of a parole/discharge, the Specialist shall complete the process for obtaining a replacement Social Security card by sending the application to the designated Social Security Administration Office. The Vital Documents Specialist shall record the following information in OMNI under the "Essential Documents" tab:

1. Requested Date (date the application was sent to the SSA)
2. Requesting Location (Ingham/Lansing/Central Office).

When the replacement Social Security card is received by the Vital Documents Specialist in Central Office, the Social Security card shall be forwarded to the appropriate facility for retention in the prisoner's Record Office file for delivery to the prisoner upon release. The Vital Documents Specialist will forward a receipt and the document to the facility Record Office and make a note under the Notes section in the "Essential Documents" tab indicating "SSC received and sent to (facility) Records Office on (date) by (name)." When the Social Security card is received by the facility Record Office, Record Office staff shall record the following in the Essential Documents in OMNI:

1. Verification Date (date Social Security card was received)

2. Verifying Employee (name of employee who received the Social Security card).

The prisoner shall be advised in writing with a Prisoner Receipt (CAJ-291) by the facility Record Office when the replacement card has been received at the facility. If the prisoner has been released on parole prior to Central Office obtaining the Social Security card, the card shall be forwarded via to the supervising agent and the card securely stored in the Parole Office file until it can be delivered to the parolee. The supervising agent shall record the following in the Essential Documents tab in OMNI:

1. Verification Date (date Social Security card was received)
2. Verifying Employee (name of employee who received the Social Security card)
3. Date documentation was delivered to the parolee and by whom.

If the Parole Agent is unable to deliver the Social Security card to the parolee, the Social Security card shall be returned to the Vital Documents Specialist in Central Office. If the prisoner/parolee has discharged without a forwarding address, the card shall be returned to the Social Security Administration via the Vital Documents Specialist in Central Office.

Detailed instructions addressing how to obtain required Social Security Administration forms and other processing issues as needed to implement this Director's Office Memorandum are available to staff on DAS.

#### SECRETARY OF STATE IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS:

The reentry success fund has been created within the State Treasury. The Department of Corrections shall expend money from the reentry success fund, upon appropriation, only for the expenses of assisting prisoners to obtain an operator's license or state personal identification document from the Michigan Secretary of State.

In accordance with MCL 791.234c, the Department will assist prisoners with obtaining personal identification documents. Notification to prisoners of the information required to obtain a driver's license or state personal identification card can be found in form SOS-428. Form SOS-428 identifies the required Secretary of State identification documents (sections 1, 2, and 3) and documents to show proof of Michigan residency (section 4). The form is available in DAS. The Records Administrator in the Central Records Section, Operations Division, shall ensure that any subsequent versions of the form are provided to the Office of Legal Affairs, Budget and Operations Administration, for placement in DAS. The form must then be posted in each housing unit and delivered to prisoners in segregation within five business days.

Additional statutory requirements are as follows:

#### Pre-Sentence Investigation Report:

The Pre-Sentence Investigation Report must include a statement as to whether the defendant has provided Secretary of State personal identification documents to the agent. This shall be included in the Evaluation and Plan section of the Pre-Sentence Investigation Report. The Deputy Director of Field Operations Administration (FOA) shall issue any instructions necessary to implement this

requirement.

### Mobile Unit

In 2016, the Michigan Department of Corrections entered into a partnership with the Michigan Department of State to assist prisoners in obtaining their State ID and/or Driver's License. Designated the "mobile unit," this unit will travel to the assigned facilities each year, assisting a maximum of one hundred offenders each day in obtaining their State ID or Driver's License. Qualifications for a State ID or Driver's License are determined by the Michigan Department of State (MDOS).

To participate in the mobile unit, prisoners must be within two years of their Earliest Release Date, paroling within the state of Michigan, cannot be paroling into custody and must have a valid residence within the Department's system. Once a list is established by the Vital Documents Specialist, a packet is put together for prescreening by MDOS. Each packet shall contain the following:

1. Copy of the prisoner's birth certificate
2. ID application
3. Basic Information Sheet
4. Copy of the prisoner's ID
5. Verification of Social Security Number (if prisoner has multiple SSNs in system).

### Maintaining Vital Documents While on Parole

When an offender is released on parole, their agent shall inform them of the continued importance of possessing vital documents for the sake of securing housing and employment and shall offer to store the offender's birth certificate and social security card within the offender's file. The agent shall provide reasonable access to these documents during the term of parole and shall return these documents to the offender upon their request or prior to discharge from parole, whichever occurs first.