

Someone I Know Was Arrested . . .

When a friend, family member, or neighbor is arrested, it can feel like they've been taken away to another world where you don't know the rules. You urgently want to help them get free—but you're navigating a system that's bureaucratic, confusing, and often frustratingly slow.

We created this zine to help.





NOTES:

The content in this zine does not qualify as legal advice. If you have specific legal questions, you need to get in contact with an attorney.

While we cannot pay immigration bonds, the National Bail Fund Network keeps a list of groups that do.

People in power have always used incarceration as a tool to control others and silence dissent.

The criminal punishment system was built to harm marginalized communities, particularly Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) and transgender people. Community bail funds like ours are dedicated to fighting the harms it brings, and we know many of you are too. As those in power further their reach and attempt to divide us, we hope this guide will be useful to everyone.

While a lot of the information in these pages is true wherever you are in the U.S., some details are specific to King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties in WA state. If you aren't located in these areas, we'd recommend looking into the National Bail Fund Network, The Bail Project, mutual aid groups, faith-based groups, and/or legal nonprofits to find support.

In solidarity,

Northwest Community Bail Fund (NCBF)

On the ancestral territories of the Coast Salish peoples, specifically the Duwamish Tribe (dxʷdəwʔabš)

Seattle, Washington, 2026



Someone I know was arrested... what's next?

Helpful Terms

ARRAIGNMENT: A court hearing, also called First Appearance Hearing, which is typically 24–48 hours after being booked into jail. This hearing is where:

- the prosecutor brings charges;
- the judge decides if there is probable cause;
- conditions of release are set;
- a pre-trial hearing date is set.

BAIL: The amount of money, set by the judge, that must be paid to the court in order for the person to be released.

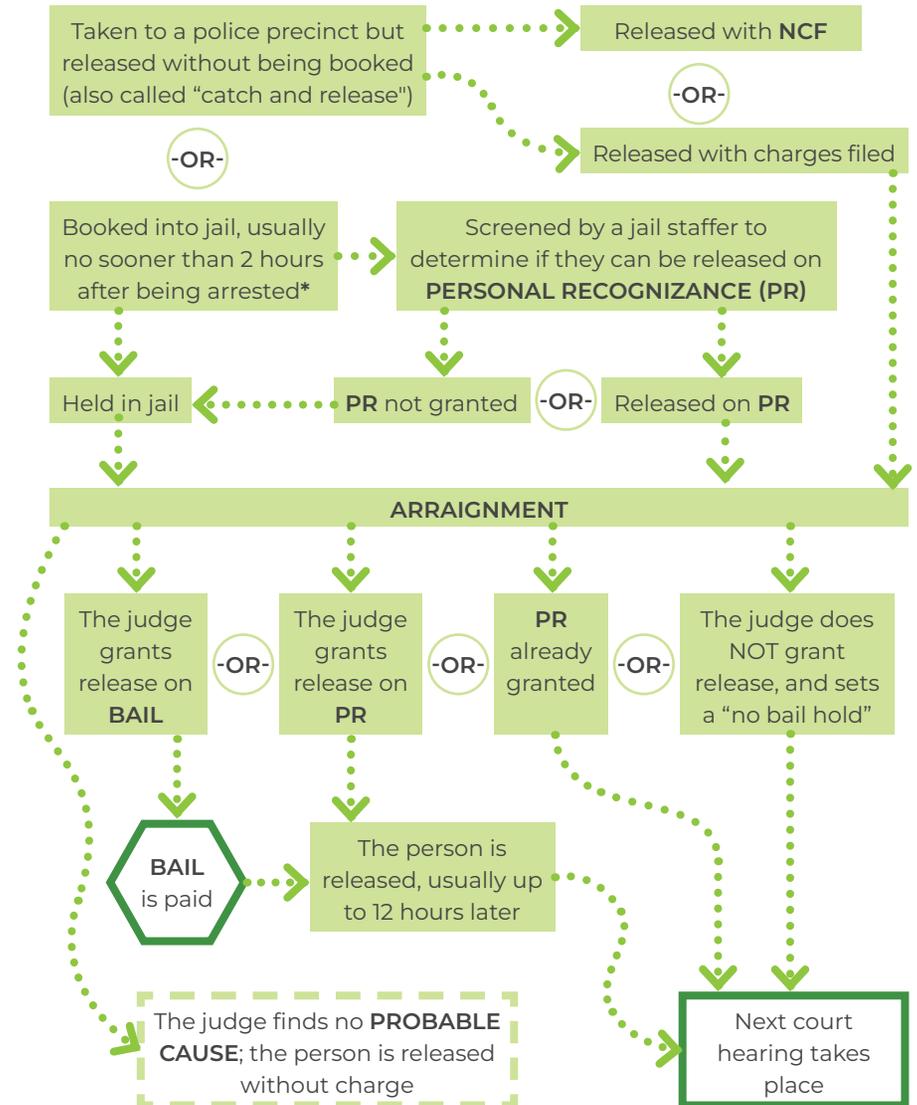
CONDITIONS OF RELEASE: At the arraignment, the judge will have set specific conditions they must keep (e.g. avoiding contact with a specific place or person, no drinking/drugs/firearms). If these conditions aren't met, they can be re-arrested.

NO CHARGES FILED (NCF): Charges might be filed later, but at this stage there's no arraignment.

PERSONAL RECOGNIZANCE (PR): Grants release from jail with a written promise to attend future court dates.

PROBABLE CAUSE: The legal standard that must be met for someone to be charged with a crime. Prosecutors need to show enough evidence to lead a reasonable person to believe the crime was committed by the person in question.

After being arrested, someone might be:



*Tips on finding booking info are on page 6!

How do I find out more about their case?

Searching Rosters

First, you'll need to know where the person is. Jail rosters are lists of people who are currently incarcerated in jail, along with those who have been recently released. Rosters are public, searchable websites. Every roster is a little different.

Navigating these rosters can be overwhelming. You don't need to understand everything you see, but here are some key facts that you can find:

- Bail amount (If no amount is listed, they may have a 'no bail hold')
- Where someone is being held
- Which court is presiding

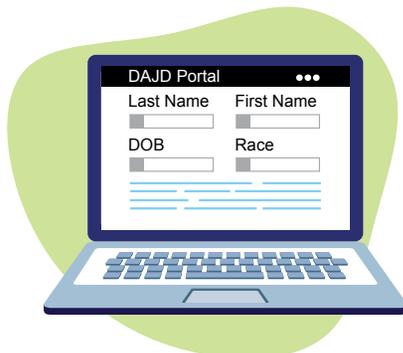


The [Department of Adult & Juvenile Detention](#) (DAJD) portal, shows people held at KCCF and MRJC (see page 7). Here are some of details that you can search and filter:

- First Name
- Last Name
- DOB

Keep in mind that typos can happen when jail staff enter information. If you can't find your person, try searching by one detail at a time.

After looking up the phone number of the court where charges were filed, you can call and ask for the assigned attorney's name. Note that there will be a delay between when someone is arrested and when they're appointed an attorney. If whoever you speak with is reluctant to answer, you can remind them that everything that happens in court is public information.



Where We Pay Bail

NCBF pays bail in many jails in western Washington. Here is a list of jails in the area:

- Issaquah City Jail
- Kent City Jail
- King County Correctional Facility (KCCF) in Seattle
- King County Jail, Maleng Regional Justice Center (MRJC) in Kent
- Kirkland City Jail
- Lynnwood City Jail
- Marysville City Jail
- Pierce County Correctional Facility
- Puyallup City Jail
- Snohomish County Jail in Everett
- South Correctional Facility (SCORE) in Des Moines

Rights While in Custody

Although they may not always be honored, a person in custody in WA state has certain rights. Some (not all) are listed below.

In custody, you have the right to:

- legal counsel, including a public defender if their income is 125% or less of the federal poverty level
- appear before a judge within 48 hours for an arraignment
- receive medical and mental health treatment (prescriptions must be verified first, and may not always be provided in a timely manner. In particular, a person might not be allowed access to medications they had with them on arrest)
- practice their faith, including requesting a diet that is consistent with their religious practices
- file a grievance (formal complaint) about the treatments or conditions they experience

What can I do to support them?

Being in jail strips people of control. If you're able, it's best to ask them what they need and want from you.

But here are some things you can offer to do.



VISIT

Check their jail's website for information about visitation. You can visit people in person at King County Correctional Facility (KCCF) in Seattle, or at Maleng Regional Justice Center (MRJC) in Kent, but only during specific times each week. Remember to bring a photo ID!

Unfortunately, many other jails have moved to online video visits only, and you must pay per visit (typically \$3–5 for 30 minutes). Jail websites will have information about scheduling a video visitation.



FUND

Add money to their account so they're able to contact you, other loved ones, and/or their attorney. You can find more information about how to add funds on the jail's website.



SHOW UP

Attend their first appearance/arraignment hearing—and let the court know who you are there for! Judges want to see that people have a good support network.



TALK

If you talk to someone on the phone or by video while they're in jail, your conversation will be recorded. These recordings can be used as evidence.

People in custody in WA receive a limited number of free phone calls per week. Additional calls must be paid for (see "FUND" on the next page).



SPEAK OUT

If your loved one gives permission, you can speak with their attorney. You can provide information about why being in jail may harm them or their family (e.g. medical needs, job or care-taking responsibilities), or why they can be trusted to go to future hearings (e.g. stable living situation, ability to get transport to court). This can help the attorney argue for release/less restrictive conditions of release.

What are my options to get help paying bail?

(AND WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?)

You have a few options besides raising the entire bail amount on your own. NCBF (that's us!) is an example of a community bail fund. Remember, people have been getting together to get their community members free as long as bail has existed. **You are not alone!**

OPTIONS FOR PAYMENT	HOW MUCH WILL YOU PAY?	WHAT HAPPENS TO THE \$?	WHAT'S THE MOTIVATION FOR PAYING BAIL?
SELF-PAY	YOU PAY 100% of the bail amount to the court.	If the person attended their hearings, the court returns the bail money to the payer once the case is resolved. You'll need to call the court or fill out a form. <i>Keep your receipt after paying bail!</i>	You want to provide bail support for someone who's stuck in jail.
COMMUNITY BAIL FUNDS	If approved, YOU PAY NOTHING —the bail fund pays 100% of the bail amount to the court.	If the person attended their hearings, the court returns the bail money to the payer once the case is resolved. Bail funds may have staff/volunteers to help recover bail money.	Bail funds are non-profit organizations that rely on donated funds and are motivated by a belief that pretrial detention is unjust.
BAIL BOND AGENTS	YOU PAY 10% of the bail amount to the agent and must show you have collateral that's worth as much as the rest. The agent pays \$0 to the court.	The agent keeps your 10% fee. They usually pay nothing to the court, even if the person misses hearings. Instead they employ bounty hunters to track people down/collect collateral.	Bail bond agencies are private companies motivated by profit, not compassion. But they are often the fastest and sometimes the only option available for people to get their loved ones out of jail.

How can I get help paying bail?

START HERE

Log on to our website at nwcombailfund.org/request

or

Call (877) 622-6223



HOW DO I GET MY MONEY BACK?

Keep your receipt after paying bail! You will need to contact the court directly or your attorney. The courts, not the jail, are responsible for returning cash bail once a case is resolved.

GET HELP



NCBF provides bail assistance for those facing pre-trial detention due to the inability to pay.

nwcombailfund.org/request

The Northwest Community Bail Fund (NCBF) aims to abolish cash bail and pretrial detention.

We reduce the harm caused by the cash bail system by posting bail, at no cost, for community members who cannot otherwise afford it, providing them with the opportunity to defend themselves from a position of freedom. NCBF prioritizes bail assistance for our Black, Indigenous, people of color, and LGBTQIA+, particularly transgender, community members: those at greatest risk in our current criminal punishment system.

GET INVOLVED

We're always looking to build our community. Here are a few ways you can join us:

- Share this zine
- Volunteer with Us
- Learn about Court Watch
- Share Your Concerns with Elected Officials
- Donate

Learn more at nwcombailfund.org/ways-to-get-involved

