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Dear Friend,

You are receiving this in response to your inquiry to the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice regarding license restoration resources. We hope that the information contained in this packet is useful to you.

#### Who We Are:

The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice ([www.njisj.org](http://www.njisj.org)), a Newark-based research and advocacy organization, has developed and compiled these materials in order to assist individuals with suspended licenses to understand if and how their licenses can be restored.

The Institute believes license suspension is a social justice issue because having a valid driver's license can be the key to getting and keeping a job, especially for people just entering or returning to the workforce. Many entry-level jobs with career possibilities in growing fields – including the building and construction trades, automobile mechanics, and commercial driving – require a driver's license. Other jobs in this suburban state are simply unreachable by public transportation. The demands of child care and other family responsibilities increase the need for transportation independence among new and returning workers.

**There are over 400 grounds for suspension in New Jersey – many of which have nothing to do with unsafe driving.** In fact, over half of all suspensions are imposed for financial reasons including failure to pay fines, surcharges and other penalties. An individual's license can be suspended for multiple reasons, or on multiple charges, at the same time. Some suspensions are imposed by the courts, and some by the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission. The procedures to address each of these kinds of suspension vary greatly, and navigating more than one at a time can be confusing and logistically challenging. Restoring a license that has been suspended can be costly as well.

An individual who can drive and work can begin to pay back their debt. These programs are about providing an affordable way for safe but suspended drivers to get their licenses back and break the cycle of increasing fines and penalties. It is a solid source of revenue for the courts and State and a pragmatic solution to an intractable problem of uncollected fines.

**Overview of Materials:** Enclosed in this packet, you will find:

**(1) General information on license restoration:**

- a. A **three-page overview** is enclosed and can also be downloaded at <http://www.njisj.org/documents/LicenseReinstatementOverviewandChart2009.pdf>
- b. You can get a detailed **step-by-step manual** on how to find out all of a person's reasons for suspension and how to address each one of them by:
  - i. Downloading the [manual](http://www.njisj.org/documents/GettingBackontheRoadNov2008.pdf) from our website at <http://www.njisj.org/documents/GettingBackontheRoadNov2008.pdf>;
  - ii. Sending a \$4 check or money order to NJISJ at 60 Park Place, Suite 511, Newark NJ 07102, for us to mail you a bound copy; or
  - iii. Bringing \$3 cash, check or money order to the above address during business hours to get a bound copy in person.

**(2) Finding out your reasons for suspension:**

- a. (free) You can **call the New Jersey Motor Vehicles Commission** (MVC) at (609) 292-7500 and use the enclosed worksheet to get a complete list of suspensions and information about how to address them;
- b. (free) You can **request a print-out** of your restoration requirements from MVC:
  - i. Mail the enclosed print-out request form to MVC; or
  - ii. Go to a MVC facility or regional service center that offers "Walk-In Service" (see information sheet enclosed and also see [www.state.nj.us/mvc/Location/index.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/mvc/Location/index.htm)):
    1. Bayonne: 1347 Kennedy Boulevard & Rte. 440 (Family Dollar Plaza)
    2. East Orange: 183 South 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite B (corner of Central Ave.)
    3. Eatontown: 109 Route 36
    4. Newark: 228 Frelinghuysen Ave.
    5. Trenton: 120 S. Stockton & Front Street
    6. Wayne (Rte. 46): 481 Route 46 West
    7. West Deptford: 215 Crown Point Road (I-295 Exit 20)
- c. (\$15) You can **request a copy of your official abstract:**
  - i. See [www.state.nj.us/mvc/Licenses/driver\\_history\\_page.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/mvc/Licenses/driver_history_page.htm)
  - ii. In person at any of the MVC locations listed above; or
  - iii. Mail your request with check or money order to:  
NJ Motor Vehicle Commission, Abstract Unit  
P.O. Box 142  
Trenton, NJ 08666

**(3) Programs and resources that can help with License Restoration:**

- a. TANF and GA recipients – may be eligible for financial assistance with paying off some fines or fees – ask your caseworker for more information. Proof of an offer of employment may be required.
  - i. In Mercer County, contact Mercer County Board of Social Services
  - ii. In Passaic County, contact the Workforce Investment Board of Passaic County
  
- b. **Essex County Resources:**
  - i. Newark Reentry Legal Services ([ReLeSe](#)) – for Essex County residents with criminal history – more information is enclosed.
  - ii. [Essex License Reinstatement Program](#) (LRP) – for residents of any county who have fines or tickets in *multiple* municipalities within Essex County – more information is enclosed.
  
- c. Other programs or services – please let us know!
  - i. If you are aware of other programs or services to help people with license restoration (either assistance with the process, or funding, please share that information with us so that we can share it with others: [info@njjsi.org](mailto:info@njjsi.org) or 973-624-9400.

(4) **Payment Plans:** If your license is suspended for nonpayment of tickets or fines, you should:

- a. Contact the body that suspended your license (could be family court for child support, municipal court for traffic or criminal fines, MVC for state surcharges... see “General Info” above)
  
- b. Ask about whether and how you can make a payment plan arrangement. To negotiate a payment plan with MVC, call the Surcharge Unit (609) 292-6500 or toll free in NJ (888) 486-3339.
  
- c. If a court date is required, make sure you ask whether there is a bench warrant, and if so, how to have it lifted before you appear. Be advised, though, that even if there is no warrant, a judge may order incarceration for failure to pay fines.
  
- d. Explain why you failed to make timely payments before, and why it is important for you to have your license now.
  
- e. Be sure you can afford any payment arrangement you agree to (see budget worksheet enclosed – and even show it to the judge)
  
- f. In most cases, the judge or agency has discretion to lift the suspension order once an initial payment is made and/or dismiss some of the tickets, fines, late fees or interest – so ask for what you feel is reasonable.