

THE DOLLAR BAIL BRIGADE



presents

HOW TO PAY BAIL IN NEW YORK CITY

A Step-By-Step Guide

Hi there! We're so happy that you've decided to join the Dollar Bail Brigade, and help fight mass incarceration by bailing out your fellow New Yorkers!

If we've just contacted you to bail someone out, then this is the document you need. That person is now your client, and this is a step-by-step guide containing all the information you need to bail them out. It includes: what you need to bring, where you need to go, and how to strategically maneuver through any and all bureaucratic red tape you encounter.

Remember: the system thinks it can derail you and distract you. They think they can unjustly keep people in jail, **but they don't know who they're up against.**

Thank you, and much love,
The Dollar Bail Brigade

ROBERT F.
KENNEDY
HUMAN
RIGHTS

YOUNG LEADERS

**THE BRONX
FREEDOM FUND**

STEP 1: BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Welcome aboard! You are a determined, unstoppable undercover operative of the Dollar Bail Brigade. Here are the things you'll need for your mission.

1. Find your client on [Department of Corrections Lookup](#). Print out their “profile,” or copy down all the information from it. You’re going to need this information when you get to the bail window, and you may not be allowed to use your phone once you’re there, so it’s good to have a hard copy to bring along.
2. Print out this document as well! It will be a helpful reference.
3. Block out some time, and (if possible) bring a friend! You don’t know how long you’re going to have to wait to pay your client’s bail, so it’s good to maintain a mindset like: “My friend and I are going to hang out in Chelsea/Chinatown this afternoon, stopping in periodically to check on our errand at the Manhattan Detention Complex!”
4. Pack a bag, including:
 - your state ID
 - the bail amount (in exact change)
 - a pen
 - a phone charger
 - a snack
 - a water bottle
 - a book
5. Make sure to use the bathroom before you leave!
6. Call ahead. This one is big. You can save a ton of time by calling the jail where your client is being held and asking “If I come over now, will I be able to pay [client]’s bail?” (All the jails’ phone numbers are listed on the next page.)

TIP: When we call on you to pay someone’s bail, we will most likely put you in an email thread with that person’s legal representation (because it’s helpful for their lawyers to be in touch with the volunteer who is paying their client’s bail). In these communications, as well as in conversations with staff at the jails, it’s best to refer to your client as Mx. _____ (e.g. “Mr. Smith” or “Ms. Johnson”). This sets a tone of professionalism and respect for your client.

STEP 2: WHERE TO GO

There are four different jails in NYC, located in every borough except Staten Island. You can pay your client's bail at any of these jails, no matter where they're being held.

It is always fastest to go directly to the jail where your client is being held, but we recommend that you use whichever jail is the most convenient commute for you, since you may be there for a while, and (on super rare occasions) you may have to make more than one visit for one client. The four jails are:

MANHATTAN



**Manhattan
Detention
Complex
(a.k.a. The Tombs)**

115 Centre St
New York, NY
10013

6/N/Q/R/J/Z
to Canal Street

(718)-546-1500

BROOKLYN



**Brooklyn
Detention
Complex**

275 Atlantic Avenue
Brooklyn, NY
11201

2/3/4/5
to Borough Hall

(718) 546-0700

THE BRONX



**Vernon C. Bain
Center
(a.k.a. the Boat)**

1 Halleck Street
Bronx, NY
10474

**Bx6 bus
Bx46 bus**

(718) 579-8315

QUEENS



Rikers Island

Rikers Island Bridge
Queens, NY
11105

Q100 bus

Phone number
varies by jail within
Rikers. Consult [this
website](#) for the list.

TIP: If, for whatever reason, you have to leave the jail before you've been able to successfully pay your client's bail, let us know by emailing an update to dollarbailbrigade@gmail.com. We'll dispatch a different volunteer ASAP to pick up where you left off.

STEP 2a: LOCATION-SPECIFIC TIPS

MANHATTAN DETENTION COMPLEX (a.k.a. The Tombs)

- The Tombs are a 6 minute walk from Broome Street (on Centre and White).
- The bail window is in the south building (further from Broome), through the door that faces the parking lot and to your right.
- There's no intercom button at the window, so just knock or say "excuse me" to get someone's attention (be prepared to wait a while every time you do this).
- When you're given the Surety Form, fill and sign it even if the staff doesn't give you an identifying photo-- they'll accept it anyway.
- If you have to wait a few hours for the paperwork to be processed, ask for a phone number directly to the bail office so you can call and check on progress without having to stay/come back frequently.
- There are no bathrooms or vending machines in the waiting room.

BROOKLYN DETENTION COMPLEX

- The jail is on Atlantic, across from the Michael's. There are two doors under the main entrance. The bail window is through the right-hand door.
- There are two windows in the waiting room. The **left window** is for bail pay.
- There's an intercom buzzer to alert the staff that you're waiting. The buzzer sounds very loud on their end, so don't press it for too long. They get annoyed.
- There are no bathrooms or vending machines in waiting room.

VERNON C. BAIN CENTER (a.k.a. The Boat)

- If you're traveling by car: you cannot park in the parking lot, so you have to park on the street and then walk.
- If you're traveling by public transportation: Take the Bx6 bus from 161st and Melrose Avenue, towards Hunts Point. Get off at Ryawa Avenue and Halleck Street. (You can ask the bus driver to make an announcement when you are there.) Walk straight, 0.2 miles, to 1 Halleck Street.
- When you approach the security post, walk to your right where you will see a pedestrian walkway. Follow the path and signs to the entrance.
- After you walk through what looks like a short tunnel, make a sharp left where you will find a small room with two service windows. The window on the right is for property retrieval. You are going to the **window on the left**, which is the bail window.
- There are no bathrooms or vending machines in the waiting room.

STEP 2a, CONT'D: LOCATION-SPECIFIC TIPS

RIKERS ISLAND

- There are bathrooms and vending machines in the waiting area! You should bring singles if you want to use the vending machine -- but don't spend your bail money!
- Bring quarters with you so you can put your stuff in a locker while you pay.
- Print out (or copy down relevant info from) the "Department of Corrections Lookup" page in advance because you cannot bring your phone into the payment area.
- No matter how you travel: When you get to the entrance at Rikers Island, you will have to take the Q100 bus to travel over the Rikers Island Bridge to the Rikers Island Visit Center. Pedestrian cars cannot go over the bridge.
- If traveling by car: Parking is very limited during peak visiting hours (usually weekends). From the Bronx or Manhattan, take the Triboro Bridge to Queens eastbound along the Grand Central Parkway. Exit at Astoria Boulevard, bear left and go straight on 23rd Avenue (just after Grand Central Parkway entrance ramp) to 82nd Street. Left on 82nd Street to 81st Street. Right on 81st Street (name changes to 19th Avenue) to the first traffic light. This is Hazen Street. Right on Hazen to Rikers Island parking lot. Be prepared to pay a toll of \$8 each way (\$5.54 w/ E-ZPass).
- If traveling by public transportation: When you get to the entrance at Rikers Island, you will have to take the Q100 bus to travel over the Rikers Island Bridge to the Rikers Island Visit Center.
- Once you get off of the bus, walk to your right (where the majority of riders will be walking) to the visiting area, where the lockers are located. You need to have a quarter to lock all of your valuables and metal objects in the locker before entering the visiting area.
- Get on the visiting line as instructed by officers.
- Tell the officers inside that you are there to pay a bail. They will direct you to the bail window.
- Once at the bail window, give the officer your completed surety form. They will instruct you to go back to the main building and wait to be alerted that the bail is ready to actually be paid. (After the first hour of waiting, you should periodically check with the officer at the desk in the main building, maybe every 45 mins or so, to remind them that you are waiting to pay a bail - a friendly nudge can go a long way in this process.)
- Once the officer at the window alerts you, by calling out your name, go back to the bail window and give the officer the exact change.

STEP 3: ONCE YOU'RE THERE

Now that you're at the jail, here's how to actually pay your client's bail!

1. Go to the jail bail window (see addresses above).
2. Wait at the bail window until a correctional officer shows up.
3. Tell them you're there to pay a bail. They will give you a Surety Information Form.
4. Fill out and return the Surety Information Form. It has areas to fill out information about your client, and areas to fill out information about you. For the former, refer to your printed copy of your client's DOC Lookup search results. For the latter, use your own information. When it asks for your relationship to your client, put "friend."

(At some point, the officer will show you a photo and ask you to verify that it is the client, so that you can sign the receipt.)

5. Wait. This is the real killer. It can take anywhere from 30 minutes to several hours. Some correctional officers may advise that you leave and check back in via phone to see when they're ready to accept payment, so keep this in mind when selecting which location you will use for payment.
6. Pay the bail in exact change.
7. Wait for receipt. Don't leave without it!
8. Take receipt and go! Take a picture of the receipt and email it to us at dollarbailbrigade@gmail.com so that we know you've successfully bailed out your client.
9. Fill out the follow-up survey, available at thebronxfreedomfund.org/dollarbailbrigade

Thank you! You have just helped your client access their freedom!

