

# Debit Accounts: A Financial Necessity for Reentry

HB 3559 creates free, fee-less access to the most crucial tool in our financial system

## Executive Summary

House Bill 3559 establishes the Illinois Reentry Account Program, an initiative designed to **eliminate financial barriers for individuals returning to society after incarceration**. This program ensures that every Illinois resident released from a correctional facility within the past 12 months has access to a no-fee, federally insured debit account.

## Banking Bridges Gaps for Reentry

Debit accounts are a critical component of reentry. Illinois provides essential resources like State IDs, reentry guides, and employment services, but without a safe and efficient way to engage with these services, their impact is undermined.

Without a bank account, returning residents face significant financial hurdles. They may not receive wages safely or may have to pay extra fees just to cover their rent. They may also be forced to rely on costly alternatives like check-cashing services, which can [consume up to 10% of their income](#) just to access their own money. HB 3559 directly addresses this gap by ensuring individuals can store and access their funds safely and easily.

## How the Illinois Reentry Account Program Works

The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) will contract with banks to offer no-fee, federally insured debit accounts to returning residents. These accounts will meet **strict consumer protection standards** set by HB 3559. IDOC will partner with banks willing to provide these accounts, ensuring they adhere to key requirements designed to promote financial stability. These accounts must include:

- No monthly maintenance fees, overdraft fees, or minimum balance requirements;
- Access to a network of ATMs for cash withdrawals;
- A secure debit card for account access; and
- Online and mobile banking options.

To ensure compliance, the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (DFPR) will have oversight authority, including the power to audit participating banks and hold them accountable for meeting program standards. This structure ensures returning residents receive fair, accessible financial services — helping them navigate reentry with the financial tools necessary for success.