

August 2026

23 Ways to Free Somebody

as a college student

an everyday guide
to freedom

The work of freeing people has never rested in courts and legislatures alone. It lives in the hands of *everyday people like you*. People building on the long tradition of taking responsibility for one another. This is our special edition for college students, because campuses have always been engines of freedom movements. We've gathered some of the tactics and tools that ordinary people have created to protect one another from incarceration in all its forms (jails, prisons, and detention centers). Below are 23 ways to free somebody, organized by approach. Pick what works for you, check off what you do, and keep going. *Because freedom is an everyday act.*

1 Keep People Out of Reach

Sometimes freedom looks like preventing system contact by removing barriers and reducing people's exposure to law enforcement.

Got 5 minutes?

- ☐ 1. Print "The 4 Steps To Take Before Contacting The Police" at dontcallthepolice.com and share it with your classmates, roommates, and friends.
- ☐ 2. Find and use alternatives to calling the police at dontcallthepolice.com.
- ☐ 3. Buy out a street vendor during an enforcement or policing surge.
- ☐ 4. Cover the cost of a broken tail or brake light for someone who can't afford it.

Got more time?

- ☐ 5. Host a [brake light clinic](#) on your campus.
- ☐ 6. Gather with friends and classmates to read the Cops Off Campus Coalition's [Reclaim Your Campus Toolkit](#) and make a plan to organize to get cops and ICE off your campus.
- ☐ 7. Organize with your sorority/fraternity, club, etc. to pool money and buy out local street vendors for a week.

2 Stand Between

Sometimes freedom looks like running interference: putting yourself between people and the systems looking to incarcerate them.

Got 5 minutes?

- ☐ 8. [Print](#) and share red cards explaining people's rights during policing and immigration enforcement actions.
- ☐ 9. If you see someone detained by ICE, stop and safely observe. Film if comfortable. Ask if they want you to call someone. Visit the [Justice Committee](#) for more tips.
- ☐ 10. If you see ICE on or near campus, let your classmates and campus community know when and where. If you're not already in one, start a group chat to keep each other informed.

Got more time?

- ☐ 11. Attend a Copwatch or ICE watch training.
- ☐ 12. Join NDLO's [Adopt-A-Corner campaign](#).

3 Reach Inside

Sometimes freedom looks like lending your time and talents to support folks inside and their connections to the outside world.

Got 5 minutes?

- ☐ 13. [Donate](#) to the Otay Mesa Detention Collective's effort to put money on detained immigrants' commissary accounts so they can call their families and lawyers.

Got more time?

- ☐ 14. Become a pen pal with an incarcerated individual who wants correspondence. Organizations like [Black and Pink](#) and the [California Coalition for Women Prisoners](#) connect volunteers with incarcerated people who want correspondence, parole applications.
- ☐ 15. Volunteer to teach classes or run programs inside a local jail or prison.
- ☐ 16. Speak a language other than English? [Volunteer](#) for Freedom for Immigrants' national immigration detention hotline that helps connect families with detained loved ones.
- ☐ 17. Make it easier for someone to visit their incarcerated loved one; offer a ride, cover hotel costs, or watch their kids.
- ☐ 18. Find a local organization that works with families of incarcerated and detained people and pull money with friends to sponsor a family to visit their loved one.

4 Bring them Home

Sometimes freedom looks like getting folks out.

Got 5 minutes?

- ☐ 19. Pay someone's bail or donate to a bail fund.
- ☐ 20. [Write a letter](#) on behalf of a political prisoner with Amnesty International's Write for Rights.
- ☐ 21. Write a support letter for someone navigating the criminal legal system.

Got more time?

- ☐ 22. [Host](#) a letter-writing party for Amnesty International's Write for Rights.
- ☐ 23. Volunteer with a group that trains people to help incarcerated people prepare their parole applications.

an everyday guide
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These actions come from An Everyday Guide to Freedom, a series lifting the tactics and technologies that everyday people have used to protect each other from incarceration in all its forms. Visit fwd.us/freedom for the full series or scan the QR code to the right.

