



Reentry services



**Resource guide for formerly incarcerated
individuals**

January 2026

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Helpful tips for reemployment

Don't do it alone

There is help within the community. **Reach out to any of the following places:**

- Idaho Department of Labor local offices and mobile locations
- Community Corrections Adult Probation and Parole offices (Idaho Department of Correction)
- Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
- Faith and community-based agencies

Be realistic about the type of employment you can obtain

Remember, your first job after release does not have to be your ideal job. Be prepared to build or rebuild your employment history. Keep in mind that, due to a felony conviction, some jobs may not be available to you immediately. However, our resources are designed to help you find a position that is a good fit for your skills.

Formerly incarcerated individuals have found success in:

- Retail sales associates
- Warehouse workers
- Laundry and dry-cleaning workers
- Trade assistant/helper (electrician, plumber, carpenter)
- Construction/general laborers
- Food preparation and serving-related roles (cook, prep cook, server, fast-food worker)
- Housekeeping/cleaning/sanitation worker
- Janitors
- Landscaping/groundskeeping
- Delivery driver/package handler

Take advantage of resources to market yourself to employers

If you completed a training program while you were incarcerated, make sure you let the employer know. Some areas of Idaho have different resources, but the following are available statewide:

- One-on-one meetings with a workforce consultant
- Job search workshops or seminars
- Potential training opportunities; determined on a case-by-case basis
- Federal bonding
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (incentives for employers)

Complete employment applications

Familiarize yourself with some general guidelines when filling out employment applications.

- Applications are legal documents and should always be completed honestly and accurately.
- False or missing information may be grounds for termination.
- Read each question carefully to understand what is being asked.
- Some applications may only ask about felonies, while others address all convictions (felonies and misdemeanors).
- Often times, applications will limit information to a specific time period (last 7 years).

Let the employer know up front about your conviction

Be prepared to disclose information about your conviction. Once addressed, you can focus on highlighting your strengths, skills and goals for the future. Focus on talking about what you can add to the business, rather than personal issues.

Provide any required, additional information

Recognize that some applications may require more information regarding prior convictions such as:

- Disposition – final outcome or arrangement of a case (conviction, dismissal, other)
- Date of disposition
- Specific offense causing conviction
- Sentence imposed

PRO TIP

Never leave a question blank. If you are unsure of how to answer something, you can always write: "Will discuss in interview."

Prepare for the employment interview

You have received an interview because the employer is interested in learning more about you. Plan to dress appropriately and maintain a positive attitude. Be honest and ready to explain what skills and experience you can bring to the job. Below are helpful tips to prepare for any interview questions about your conviction.

- Give a brief, factual summary of the conviction, but do not go into any details about the crime.
- Focus on successes and accomplishments that show positive changes in your life.
- Provide evidence of rehabilitation (programs, letters, references, achievements).
- Do not make excuses or blame others.

Be yourself throughout the interview

Don't forget, your skills and qualifications led you to this point. Be natural and comfortable presenting yourself.

- Show up with a friendly, direct and confident demeanor.
- When meeting the interviewer, greet them, smile and remain standing until you are invited to sit.
- Make yourself at ease and stay poised and professional.
- Stay professional and tactful. Don't argue or discuss personal issues.
- Avoid jokes or gossip. Speak with proper grammar. Avoid slang like "ok" or "yeah" or "um."
- Maintain eye contact and be aware of body language.
- Be attentive and express genuine enthusiasm.
- Avoid criticizing past employers. Present any difficult situations in a constructive and positive way.

Consider some things employers may want to hear

- You regret past actions and have taken responsibility.
- You are seeking a second chance and ready to start a new chapter.
- You have completed programs/training/counseling to prevent repeating mistakes.
- You are committed to a better future and ready to work hard and succeed.
- If you show accountability, growth and determination, you improve your chances of finding meaningful employment.

Master employment application

A master application keeps your work history, skills and accomplishments in one place, making job applications faster and easier to fill out.

Personal information

Name (last, first, middle)		Phone	
Address		Message phone (yes or no)	
City/state/zip code		Email	

Right to work

Are you legally authorized to work in the United States? Yes No

Applying for: Full time Part time Temporary

Shifts willing to work: Days Evening Nights

May we contact your current employer? Yes No

Employment history (begin with most recent employment)

Dates	
Company	
City, state	
Titles and duties	
Reasons for leaving	

Dates	
Company	
City, state	
Titles and duties	
Reasons for leaving	

Dates	
Company	
City, state	
Titles and duties	
Reasons for leaving	

Military service

Military branch	
Describe any military training relevant to the position	

Education/training (include technical and academic achievements/courses)

Have you obtained a high school diploma or GED certificate? Yes No

College/university/specialized training	Location	Diploma/degree	Specialization

Clerical skills (complete for clerical positions)

Typing (WPM):

Medical terminology? Yes No

Legal terminology? Yes No

List any other computer skills:

Professional and technical information (complete for licensed/registered positions)

If not licensed in Idaho, have you applied? Yes No

If licensed in another state, please list:

Idaho registration no.		Certificate no.	
Expiration date		Expiration date	

Special skills (list any other skills you can offer this job)

--

References (three names of people not related to you)

Name	Address	Phone	Relationship

The information on this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and acknowledge my signature authorizes the prospective employer to complete a background check.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sample cover letter

Roberto Johnson
Boise, ID 80000
208-555-1212
roberto.johnson@gmail.com

January 15, 2026

Bill Howard, manager, Best Jobs Inc.
1234 Great Location Ave. Boise, ID 80001

Dear (Hiring Manager),

I am writing to express my interest in the warehouse/packaging operator position you posted with the Idaho Department of Labor. I have experience working in fast-paced, hands-on environments and am confident in my ability to follow directions, work safely and stay organized while meeting production goals. My experience includes sorting, packing and maintaining clean and efficient work areas, which has strengthened my attention to detail, reliability and ability to work well with others.

My previous work experiences demonstrate that I am dependable, hardworking and ready to make a positive impact. I take pride in doing tasks thoroughly and efficiently and am committed to contributing to the success of the team and organization.

I would welcome the opportunity to bring my skills, dedication and positive attitude to Best Jobs Inc. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to the opportunity to speak with you.

Sincerely,

Your signature

Frequently asked criminal history and employment questions

What crimes am I required to report on a job application?

This depends on the type of job for which you are applying.

- Read and answer the question carefully and honestly.
- Questions may relate to misdemeanors, felonies or offenses involving a minor, DUIs, traffic infractions, withheld judgments and charges vs. convictions.

How should I answer the question: “Do you have a criminal history?” on a job application?

Best answer: “Yes. I will explain during the interview.”

If my crime occurred before the time period specified on the application, do I have to disclose it?

For example, the question says: “Were you convicted of a felony within the past seven years?”

- If you are currently on probation or parole for the offense, it’s best to disclose it. This helps prevent future issues and demonstrates honesty and trustworthiness to your new employer.
- If the offense is outside the stated time period and you are no longer under supervision, you typically do not need to disclose it.

Will I pass a background check with my criminal history?

Bottom line: Always report all charges and convictions.

Most disqualifications happen because of incomplete or inconsistent information, not just having a criminal history. Check your record so you know what employers will see. You can obtain a copy from several sources including the following:

- Local county courthouse: Register of actions (typically printed for about \$1 per page)
- [Idaho courts repository](#)
- Idaho State Police [criminal history information request](#)

How should I disclose my criminal history during an interview?

- Be honest and upfront.
- Start with the facts: include the dates of your conviction and any relevant information.
- Take responsibility and express your commitment to moving forward.
- Highlight any positive changes you have made, like completing education or training, learning from the experience and making better choices.
- Practice talking about your criminal history so you know what to say and will feel more at ease discussing it; this will also make employers feel more comfortable. **Remember you do not need to discuss details concerning the offense.**
 - Example: I want to be upfront that I have a conviction from [year] related to [brief reason]. I take full responsibility for my actions and have worked hard to learn from that experience. Since then, I completed [education/training], changed my lifestyle and remain focused on building a positive future. I’m committed to being a reliable and hardworking employee.

Why are some employers hesitant to hire formally incarcerated individuals?

There may be liability issues you are unaware of related to bonding or insurance regulations related to age and safety issues.

Do I need to be bonded, and how do I get it?

[The Federal Bonding Program](#) provides fidelity bonding for the first six months of employment for hard-to-place job applicants through each state's Department of Labor office. Employers can request bonding for an employee.

How will a registered sexual offense affect employment?

If you have a history of sexual offenses, you must obtain permission from Probation & Parole (P&P) before starting any employment. As this information may be publicly available, it is especially important to disclose and discuss your offense honestly during an interview, without going into details.

Are there any jobs I may not be eligible to work?

- Jobs working with minors or other vulnerable populations
- Internet-based jobs where restrictions apply
- Jobs near residential neighborhoods, schools, daycares or parks

Should I tell an employer about my withheld judgment or expunged (removed) felony?

No, you are not required to report either of these judgements.

Are there work incentives for employers to hire me?

- Work Opportunity Tax Credit – employers may be eligible for up to a \$2,400 tax credit if you were convicted of a felony or released from incarceration within the past year or are enrolled in a work release program at the time of hire.
- Federal bonding
- Workforce Innovative and Opportunity Act programs – designed for displaced workers, low-income adults or youth, ages 16 – 24. For more information, talk to a workforce consultant.
- Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Additional resources

[Career One Stop for Justice-Impacted Job Seekers](#)

Provides assistance through a step-by-step guide, local reentry programs and job search postings.

[Honest Jobs](#)

Offers tools to help current and formerly incarcerated individuals quickly secure employment and access essential support services, providing a foundation for success.

[Jobs That Hire Felons](#)

Specializes in helping individuals with criminal backgrounds find meaningful employment.

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