



Ex-Offender Re-Entry Services

A Resource Guide
for Ex-Offenders

IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
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**Idaho Department of Labor
Ex-Offender Re-Entry Services
Resources for Ex-Offenders**

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Welcome to the Idaho Department of Labor Ex-Offender Re-Entry Services

Welcome to the Idaho Department of Labor. The Ex-Offender Re-Entry Services guide has been designed to enhance and expand services to the ex-offender in Idaho, and assist you in your re-entry into the state's workforce.

The Idaho Department of Labor is a leader in generating quality services and is focused on assisting you in becoming part of the skilled workforce that serves as a foundation for strong communities with vibrant, diversified and expanding economies. We are committed to providing you access to comprehensive quality services and information. Our goal is to help you overcome any current barriers and provide you with the assistance and resources you need to find a job.

Take time to review this guide including the goals and the available resources to help you with your transition. Also, plan to stay in close contact with your workforce consultant so your job search will be far more productive.

GOALS

- To work with you and our community partners to assist you in effectively assimilating yourself back into the workforce by helping you:
 - Register for work with the Idaho Department of Labor at IdahoWorks.gov.
 - Identify your personality style, workplace skills, workplace values and careers of interest
 - Attend a job search workshop (not available in all offices) that covers all phases of conducting an effective job search
 - Meet one-on-one with a trained Department of Labor workforce consultant who will help guide you through the process of finding a job
 - Locate supportive services through our network of local social service agencies and organizations.

JOB RESOURCES

- Local and statewide job listings
- Job search assistance, including search tips, creating a resume, and much more
- Job market information
- Job search workshops (not available at all offices)
- Career guidance
- Connections to many other community and government resources

Again, we welcome you to the Idaho Department of Labor and look forward to working with you to make your job search more effective.

Idaho Department of Labor
Ex-Offender Re-Entry Services

Idaho Department of Labor

Local Office Employment Services

The local office provides a broad array of employment services for job seekers both electronically and through its staff at all the local and mobile offices across the state.

To find a local office or a mobile location near you, please see our [online office directory](#).

JOB SEEKER SERVICES

WORKFORCE CONSULTANTS AT LOCAL and MOBILE OFFICES FOR PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

- One-on-one job search assistance from qualified staff
- Career information and consulting
- Career assessment inventories
- Personalized application, résumé and cover letter assistance
- Labor market information
- Information on local and regional job fairs

EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE CENTER

- Personal computers and printers
- Telephone, copy machine, and fax services
- Employer directories, business publications, and labor market information
- Résumé paper
- Typing proficiency tests and typing tutor

JOB SEARCH WORKSHOP (not available at all offices)

- Job search workshops help improve your job seeking, résumé writing, and interviewing skills. You will also learn ways to sell yourself to an employer, better understand how to tap into the hidden job market, and effectively complete an application.

VETERANS SERVICES (not available at all offices)

- Veteran representatives trained in services offered specifically to veterans are available to assist on a walk-in basis or by appointment.

JOB SEEKER SERVICES AVAILABLE ONLINE

- Register for work via the internet at <http://www.labor.idaho.gov>
- Access local and statewide job listings 24 hours daily, 7 days a week
- Receive job referrals by calling or emailing your requests to the Department of Labor
- View local and statewide job listings
- Access state and federal job sites
- Identify wage ranges for specific occupations and other labor market information
- Access career assessment tools
- Discover more about the great state of Idaho and the available work opportunities

Helpful Tips for Re-Employment

1. DON'T GO IT ALONE

There is help within the community. The community wants you to be successful. **REACH OUT FOR HELP** at the following places:

- a. Idaho Department of Labor local offices and mobile locations
- b. Community Corrections Adult Probation and Parole Offices (Idaho Department of Correction)
- c. Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- d. Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
- e. Faith and Community-Based Agencies (<https://www.communityresourcesidaho.org/>)

2. BE REALISTIC ABOUT THE TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT YOU CAN OBTAIN

Your first job after your release does not have to be your ideal job. Be prepared to build or rebuild your employment history. Accept that based on the felony conviction certain jobs may not be available to you, at least for now. However, our resources are structured to assist in finding a job that is a good match for you.

Past ex-offenders have had success as:

- a. Retail salespersons
- b. Warehouse workers
- c. Laundry and dry-cleaning workers
- d. Helpers trade assistants
- e. Construction laborers
- f. Wait staff
- g. Food preparation and serving-related persons
- h. Maids and housekeeping cleaners
- i. Janitors

3. 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 in Idaho have different resources, but the following are available statewide:

- a. One-on-one consulting with a workforce consultant
- b. Job search workshops or seminars
- c. Potential training opportunity determined on a case-by-case basis
- d. Federal bonding
- e. Work Opportunity Tax Credit for employers

4. LET THE EMPLOYER KNOW UP FRONT ABOUT YOUR CONVICTION

Don't hesitate to disclose this information. Once it is out in the open, you can focus on telling the employer your strengths and your goals for the future. The employer's role is to pay you for your work, not to discuss your problems. Focus on talking about what you can add to the business. On an interview:

- a. Speak clearly
- b. Cover tattoos and remove body piercings
- c. Don't look at your watch
- d. Dress appropriately. Dress one step above how you would expect others to dress for the interview.

The Job Search Plan

To bring stability back to your life, you must have a plan so you can manage your time and your efforts and gain control of your life. You will need to have choices, be able to analyze those choices, set goals, plan the steps to meet goals and then be prepared to start the process over if needed.

1. CHOICES -- Think about what type of job you would like to do and set priorities.

Stay realistic. Your felony conviction potentially can be a barrier to employment, so do your homework to make sure your conviction will not have a serious impact in the type of job you want to do.

2. ANALYSIS -- Identify all the considerations, job barriers, job restrictions and factors affecting the decision of a job choice. Factors to consider include:

- Pay
- How available you are for the job and any restrictions you have based on your parole or probation
- Personal readiness
- Requirements for the position

3. SET THE GOAL -- Decide on the types of jobs you plan to seek.

You may have two or more goals, but here you develop your *PRIMARY* goal -- the end result you wish to accomplish. Make it clear, specific and measurable. Set a deadline to reach the goal. Examples of a goal include:

- To be employed as a food service worker in a fast food restaurant.
- To be employed as a forklift driver in a warehouse environment.
- To be employed as a janitor for a major janitorial services company.

4. ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL -- Say it! . . . Write it! . . . Post it! . . . Visualize it! . . . Reward it!

Make a list of what you must do to meet your goal. Each task should be considered an objective to be accomplished. Remember to set realistic target dates to accomplish the goals. Here are examples of some job search steps:

- Develop a résumé, master application and reference list
- Contact friends, relatives and acquaintances for networking and job leads
- Develop a telephone script
- Develop a cold-call format
- Develop a list of contacts and schedule to communicate with each
- Allot time for employer research
- Make time for a Department of Labor visit each day
- Review job listings daily
- Contact employers X, Y and Z regarding a position
- Follow-up on contacts and interviews
- Commit to accepting any interview offered
- Take advantage of unexpected opportunities

5. REPEATING THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS -- Do NOT let discouragement convince you to give up! Keep working at your goals until you find a suitable and realistic position. You may need to take an interim job to keep money coming in and to keep up with your skills. If you do not achieve the expected results and need to consider an alternative goal, repeat the process again and define a new goal with a list of objectives to be met with realistic time frames to achieve the goal.

Staying Motivated During Your Job Search

- **KEEP YOUR SELF-IMAGE POSITIVE**

It can be very difficult not to take rejection personally. Layoffs and hiring decisions rest on many factors that may have little to do with you personally. Resist any temptation to get angry at yourself. Try not to dwell on negative past experiences. Treat yourself with respect!

- **BE ORGANIZED**

Organize a daily and weekly job search plan. Keep to your schedule so you do not brush important tasks aside or waste time wondering what you should do next. Looking for a good job is a 40-hour a week commitment.

- **EXERCISE DAILY**

Besides helping you remain physically healthy, exercise can help minimize depression. Depression removes your desire to be active. But activity changes your body chemistry so you actually feel better and desire more activity.

- **KEEP EMOTIONS IN CHECK**

Be aware of how you are handling your emotions. Being responsible means responding appropriately to your emotions. Anger can be difficult to deal with. If you direct anger toward yourself, you risk the possibility of making yourself ill. If you misdirect anger toward innocent people like family, friends, or potential employers, you are not being responsible. If the situation calls for it, remove yourself for a short while so you can regain control.

Filling Out an Employment Application

Because employment applications are legal documents, they must be filled out completely and accurately. If you lie on an employment application, you can be fired for falsifying a document.

Most job applications include questions about your criminal background so you should be prepared to complete this part of the application honestly and completely. Make sure you respond to the specific information requested. Therefore, you must know the important information about your arrest and conviction records on your rap sheet.

A conviction is a guilty plea or a court's finding of guilt for a "crime" or "offense," and it is important to remember that you may have a conviction on your record even though no jail time was served. The sentence for a conviction could include probation, a fine, community service or conditional or unconditional discharge. It is important to know the various types of offenses that may appear on your rap sheet and whether they are considered "convictions" for purposes of completing job applications.

Read questions concerning criminal history carefully. Only answer what is asked. Applications may only ask about felony convictions or they may request information about all convictions, which ordinarily would include felonies and misdemeanors.

Some applications will ask for your conviction history for a specific duration of time. In all cases, you need to be familiar with the following information about your criminal record:

- a. Date of disposition
- b. Disposition -- outcome -- of the case. For example, did it result in a conviction? Was it dismissed?
- c. Specific offense of which you were convicted
- d. Sentence

Leaving questions blank could be construed to be dishonesty by omission so it is not advised to answer the question with "will discuss in interview." You must still check "yes" on the application.

You must be prepared to discuss any conviction during the job interview. Usually you will give a brief summary of the circumstances surrounding the conviction. Highlight any successes and accomplishments you have had since the conviction and present evidence of rehabilitation. For example, if your convictions were drug-related, letters from treatment providers and counselors confirming successful recovery would be of value.

The key to success is preparation and honesty. Be prepared to answer any questions related to your convictions. Never indicate the crime for which you were convicted was not your fault. The employer wants to hear an explanation not an excuse. You must be able to convince the employer you:

- a. Regret what criminal action you committed
- b. Have paid the price for what you did as determined by the court
- c. Have completed programs to help ensure you will never repeat this action
- d. Are committed to getting your life on the right track no matter the effort
- e. Will do whatever it takes to find a good job

If you are able to do this, you are on the right track getting your life headed in the right direction and finding employment for which you are well suited.

Master Employment Application

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name (Last, First, Middle) _____	Telephone Number _____
Address _____	Message Telephone Number _____
City/State/Zip _____	E-mail Address _____

RIGHT TO WORK

Are you legally authorized to work in the United States? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Applying For: <input type="checkbox"/> Full Time <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary	Shift(s) Willing to Work: <input type="checkbox"/> Days <input type="checkbox"/> Evenings <input type="checkbox"/> Nights	May We Contact Your Current Employer? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY (Begin with Most Recent Employment)

Dates From To _____ to _____	Company Name _____	City, State _____
Titles and Duties: _____ _____		
Reason for Leaving: _____ _____		
Dates From To _____ to _____	Company Name _____	City, State _____
Titles and Duties: _____ _____		
Reason for Leaving: _____ _____		
Dates From To _____ to _____	Company Name _____	City, State _____
Titles and Duties: _____ _____		
Reason for Leaving: _____ _____		
Dates From To _____ to _____	Company Name _____	City, State _____
Titles and Duties: _____ _____		
Reason for Leaving: _____ _____		

MILITARY SERVICE

Military (Branch of Service): _____
Describe any military training received relevant to the position for which you are applying: _____

EDUCATION/TRAINING (Include Technical/Academic Achievements/Courses)

Have you obtained a high school diploma or GED certificate? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
School	Name & Location	Diploma/Degree	Subject Of Specialization
College/University	_____	_____	_____
Specialized Courses & Training	_____	_____	_____

CLERICAL SKILLS (To Be Completed for Clerical Positions)

Typing (WPM) _____	Medical Terminology <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Legal Terminology <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
List Specific Computer Skills: _____		

PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION (To Be Completed For Licensed/Registered Positions)

Idaho Registration No. _____	Expiration Date _____	Certificate No. _____	Expiration Date _____
If not licensed in Idaho, have you applied? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		If licensed in another state, list: _____	

SPECIAL SKILLS

List other specific skills you have to offer for this job opening: _____

REFERENCES (Give the Names of Three Persons Not Related to You)

Name	Address	Telephone	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 Letter of Explanation/Cover Letter

Roberto Johnson

1212 Jobsearch Lane

Boise, Idaho 80000

208.555.1212

Roberto.Johnson@gmail.com

January 7, 2020

Bill H. Manager
Best Jobs, Inc.
1234 Great Location Avenue
Boise, Idaho 80001

Dear Mr. Manager:

It's exciting to apply for the Customer Service Representative position you have posted with the Idaho Department of Labor.

I am particularly interested that you are looking for someone who has customer service experience along with the ability to multi-task. With extensive experience working in an office environment that focused strongly on customer service, I am able to multi-task, remain flexible to change and address the various needs of customers. In addition, my goal has been to focus on tracking sales data and understand the importance of maintaining accurate sales records. In addition, my past work experience demonstrates my loyalty and commitment to a team and will translate into a committed relationship with your organization.

It is also important for me to let you know I have a felony conviction. My conviction was for (TITLE/NAME OF OFFENSE) on DATE OF CONVICTION (Month and Year). **(If more than one conviction, only list the most recent conviction in this letter)**. My goal is to be forthright and honest in discussing this matter with you. This experience has helped me to realize the value of a positive lifestyle and become committed to demonstrating that I will be a reliable employee who can contribute to your company's success. Because of the confidentiality of the above information, and my embarrassment over my past mistake, I'd like to meet with you so we can talk about the particular steps my life has taken to better understand what it takes to be on the right track, and explain the specifics of my conviction. I regret the choices I have made and have taken responsibility for my past actions. Since my conviction, I have **(list positive things such as relevant courses completed, new skills obtained, do not abbreviate, use course/class titles)**.

Should you consider me for the position, there are incentives your company may benefit from. The Idaho Department of Labor may, at no cost to you, post a \$5,000 fidelity bond with you on my behalf. In addition, the IRS offers a tax credit of up to \$2,400 to employers who hire ex-offenders. Both of these serve as incentives to employers to hire qualified individuals with criminal backgrounds, like myself.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to meeting with you soon.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Criminal History and Employment Questions Frequently Asked

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

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

- Read and answer the question honestly.
- Questions may relate to misdemeanors, felonies, DUIs, traffic infractions, withheld judgments and charges vs. convictions.

- **How do I answer the question on an application regarding my criminal history?**

Best answer: “Yes. Will explain during the interview.”

Always make sure you disclose and discuss! If you fail to disclose and then are hired, failure to disclose can lead to immediate termination.

- **What if my felony happened before the period of time asked about on a job application such as “Were you convicted of felony within the past seven years?” Do I have to disclose it?**

If you are on probation or parole supervision for the crime, it is best practice to disclose it so it can’t come back to jeopardize your job later! It also helps to establish trust with your new employer.

- **Am I required to disclose both misdemeanor and felony crimes to an employer?**

By signing an application for employment you are allowing an employer to do a background check. It’s far better they hear it from you first rather than finding out after going through all the trouble to conduct a background check. Be honest with the employer up front. That honesty may be the very thing that gets you hired.

- **With my criminal history, will I pass a background check?**

The **Bottom Line** -- **REPORT EVERYTHING** -- charges **AND** convictions!

Disqualification is most often due to inconsistencies in reporting, not that someone has a criminal history. Find out what is in your record. Some possible contacts include:

- County Courthouse of the county where you live – Register of Actions – Cost for service is typically \$1 per page to print
- Idaho Courts Repository
<https://mycourts.idaho.gov/>
- Idaho State Police – Criminal History Information Request
<https://isp.idaho.gov/bci/criminal-history/>

- **How should I disclose my criminal history during an interview?**

- Be honest!
- Start with the facts – Dates of conviction, and briefly, what it was for. Take responsibility/accountability.
- Consequences – Lost freedom by serving time in prison, lost job, now have a criminal record.
- Positive outcomes – Used time to change lifestyle, changed acquaintances, learned from experience, completed classes/programs, got GED, further education, moving forward in a positive manner.
- Practice talking about it so you know what to say and will be comfortable talking about your criminal history; this will make employers more comfortable.
- Employer incentives – Federal Bonding program and Work Opportunity Tax Credit of up to \$2,400 if hired. See pages 13 and 14 for details.

Criminal History and Employment Questions Frequently Asked (cont.)

- **Why do some employers seem to discriminate against people with a felony?**

There may be liability issues you are unaware of related to bonding, insurance regulations related to age/risk or someone more qualified or experienced.

- **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.
- The employer requests bonding for an employee. Information can be found at <http://www.bonds4jobs.com>

- **How will a registered sexual offense affect employment?**

Sexual offenders must gain permission **BEFORE** starting employment. Since your picture is on the Internet, it is even more important to disclose and discuss your crime during an interview. Your parole officer will probably deny employment working around minors and other vulnerable populations, Internet-based employment, and possibly job sites around residential neighborhoods or near schools, daycares, or parks.

- **Do I disclose my withheld judgment to an employer? Do I disclose felonies that have been expunged – removed -- from my record?**

- Until your withheld judgment sentence is completed, you go back to court or your record is expunged, you need to report it since you are currently on supervision for it.
- After your record is expunged, it depends. Again, it's better to be honest up front then be surprised. Read and answer the question honestly and completely.

- **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. See page 14 for more details.
- Federal bonding. See page 13 for more details.
- Workforce Innovative and Opportunity Act (WIOA) – for displaced workers or low-income adults. Talk to your workforce consultant.
- Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Incentives for Businesses to Hire an Ex-Offender

The federal government supports many programs to help you re-enter the workforce. The programs described on the next two pages provide incentives for employers who hire ex-offenders. Although employers must apply for these programs, you should know about them when you are talking to a potential employer about the benefits of hiring you.

FEDERAL BONDING

The Federal Bonding Program offers fidelity bonds to employers who are not eligible for commercial bonding. It is a business insurance policy that protects the employer in case of any loss of money or property due to employee dishonesty. This virtually guarantees the employer that the person hired will be an honest worker. The Department of Labor administers this federal program in Idaho. For additional information on this program see <http://www.bonds4jobs.com> for full details.

1. Eligibility

- a. **EMPLOYER** – Employers are eligible if they are hiring for a full-time job of at least 30 hours a week that should last at least six months. Any job at any employer can be covered by the bond insurance.
- b. **EMPLOYEES** – Employees are eligible if they have the occupational skills needed to fill the job. **Self-employment is not covered.** No candidate may be covered for more than one job at the same time.

2. Amount of Bond

Bonds are either \$5,000 or \$10,000. Bonds automatically are issued for \$5,000, unless the state bonding coordinator or designee approves the local office request for \$10,000.

3. Duration of Bond

The Federal Bonding Program insurance policy is issued free-of-charge to the employer for six months. Should the worker covered by the bond change jobs before the end of the six-month period, a second and final bond covering the same worker can be issued to the new employer. At the end of the six months of free bond coverage, if the worker has not caused a claim to be paid to the employer under the bond, the employer can choose to arrange to purchase continued bond coverage for the same worker at the regular commercial rate.

4. Effective Date of Coverage

The bond is effective on the date the employee starts work, or immediately upon the signature of the local Department of Labor bonding representative if the employee has already started work. The employer's signature is not required. The bond will be mailed directly to the employer by the Travelers Property Casualty Company. Bonds are issued through the insurer's agent, the McLaughlin Co., in Washington, D.C.

5. Costs

Bonds are free of charge to employers.

6. How to Apply

To obtain a bond, the prospective employer or employee applies at any Idaho Department of Labor office and shows that a valid job exists, that the employee meets the job qualifications and that the bond is needed for the employee to keep the job. Further information can be found at <http://www.bonds4jobs.com>.

Incentives for Businesses to Hire an Ex-Offender (cont.)

WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT OR WELFARE-TO-WORK TAX CREDIT

This is an incentive that Congress provides to private-sector employers for hiring economically disadvantaged individuals with significant barriers to employment. Credits are applied toward taxes due the Internal Revenue Service with carry over of unused tax credits into the next year.

1. How Tax Credits Work

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, which includes the Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit, has two purposes:

- To help individuals who qualify as members of a target group get a job, and
- To help employers who hire qualified individuals by giving them a credit on their federal taxes.

2. Use the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program in Your Job Search

If you are a member of one of the groups targeted by the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program, you can inform potential employers that they are eligible for a tax credit if you are hired. Check the list below to see if you are eligible.

3. Who are Members of the Target Groups?

The target groups include:

- A member of a family that is receiving or has received Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children benefits or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families for any nine months during the 18-month period that ends on the hiring date.
- A veteran who is a member of a family that is receiving or has recently received food stamps and certain qualified disabled veterans.
- A recently released ex-felon.
- A person age 18 to 39, who is a member of a family that is receiving or recently has received food stamps.
- A recipient of Supplemental Security Income benefits.
- A long-term family assistance recipient.

4. How Long Must the Individual Remain on the Job to Provide the Employer with a Tax Credit?

The person hired must be employed for at least 120 hours -- three 40-hour weeks.

5. What is the Process for Applying for the Tax Credit?

Step 1: The employer or job seeker must undergo pre-screening to determine eligibility by completing the Individual Characteristics Form, Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit, ETA 9061.

Step 2: The employer and the job seeker must complete the Pre-Screening Notice and Certification Request for the Work Opportunity and Welfare-to-Work Credits, Form 8850.

Step 3: The employer and the job seeker must sign the Form 8850, under penalty of perjury, attesting that the jobseeker is a member of a target group.

Step 4: The employer then sends the forms to the Division of Career Services postmarked no later than the 28th day after the job seeker begins work.



Costs associated with this publication are available by contacting the Idaho Department of Labor, which is funded in part by federal grants from the U.S. Department of Labor. The Idaho Department of Labor is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. Reasonable accommodations are available upon request. Dial 711 for Idaho Relay Service. (Rev. 01/2020)