



Employment Websites and Job Search

Employment websites and the search for meaningful employment can be frustrating for ex-offenders because of the stigma of a criminal background. There are some basic guidelines that can increase the likelihood of the success of finding a good job by eliminating the time and energy used to seek employment that is out of reach.

- 1. If you have a felony conviction, or even a misdemeanor criminal history the probability that it will surface in the hiring process is very high. Everyone is human and have made mistakes, however a criminal conviction is a publicly recorded violation that, in the modern world, is recorded as bytes of information and stored indefinitely for access by anyone searching under an individual's personally identifiable information. DON'T HIDE OR OMIT CRIMINAL HISTORY WHEN REQUESTED; it will be discovered and then you will appear to be dishonest.**
- 2. There are jobs that will be available to ex-offenders and ones that will not. Obviously, if someone is convicted of fraud, embezzlement or the like, a financial institution or company that deals in escrow of funds, or safeguarding customer's money will not hire you under any circumstances, just as someone convicted of possessing pornography will not be permitted to work with or near children. Use your head to determine where someone would perceive risk from your criminal history, and do not entertain the thought of working in that type of situation.**
- 3. Volunteer your time when you are able, as working at a humane society, tutoring in a literacy program, helping with work at a local church or civic organization will put you in touch with people who will see you as a caring and contributing human being and could become a reference for you or a link in the chain to discovering a good job. If for nothing else the quality of life that you will receive in helping others will enhance your existence as nothing else can.**
- 4. Have a supply of resumes and cover letters available so that you are not forced to go out make copies when needed. You should bring a resume to every interview where one was not sent previously. Computers, copiers and scanning services are available at the local library often free of charge. Some libraries charge a nominal fee for becoming a member and it is a worthy investment. Early morning or just after the lunch hour is a good time to access services without a long wait.**
- 5. We all want a long-term position with good pay and benefits. Most ex-offenders are starting at the beginning again, so that part-time work and temporary employment is a good way to build a resume and rebuild a reputation. Part-time and seasonal employers are generally pressed to fill positions either for a seasonal**

job or an event and often are willing to forgo a formal application process where criminal history would be a front and center subject. A job applicant can distinguish himself as reliable, personable and a valued employee that would fit in full time so that these jobs should be looked at as a stepping stone to full time employment. There are always many part-time and seasonal jobs posted.

6. There are many job and career websites that are available. Something to bear in mind in surfing the Internet is that nothing is without cost for when it appears to be free, the visitors are the product. The employers sometimes pay for posting jobs or the site is littered with advertisements that pay the website for traffic which are the applicants. Most of these websites are a black hole absorbing an applicant's time without any result. Most sites treat applicants, both ex-offenders and those without a criminal background, disrespectfully in that the amount of time required completing deeply invasive questionnaires and applications is enormous and almost never results in a response of any kind, the application simply disappears. The company applications on these sites also are inherently dishonest in that they claim that a criminal history does not preclude extending employment and that it must be disclosed when in fact the disclosure is the basis for rejection. A company may have an ex-offender in its ranks of the employed, but it is the exception to the exception and is usually based upon a special circumstance; a request by senior manager based upon a personal reference or the like. **DO NOT WASTE YOUR TIME OR DIGNITY USING EMPLOYMENT WEBSITES THAT WANT ONLY TO SELL YOUR PRESENCE TO ADVERTISERS OR EMPLOYERS THAT DESIGN APPLICATIONS TO OBJECTIFY YOUR STATUS AS AN EX-OFFENDER.**

7. Admiring the services or products offered by a company or organization is the best endorsement a going concern can hope for. Every recognizable company; international, national or local has a website and on the website (sometimes hidden in a drop down menu) is an employment page that lists openings by position, location or designation. Using an organization's employment page is a great way to search for employment as the postings state the positions available and their description, when they are looking to fill the position and its location. Companies generally will be more accountable and accessible when presented with a question or issue regarding a prospective employee through their website than they will through an employment website.

8. Craig's List, localized forums or job posting boards, local online newspaper jobs sections are a steady source of job openings in local community. Use these postings wisely; be honest and complete when required to disclose criminal history and present yourself as a human being willing to work hard for a good job.

9. Sales positions, customer service and marketing positions are generally available to ex-offenders. Positions in food service, usually restaurants as opposed to hospitals, hotels or corporate canteens are open to ex-offenders, however they offer little advancement and are generally minimum wage positions. Certainly labor-

intensive jobs such as furniture movers, landscaping, factory work are good prospects for ex-offenders.

10. Keep your spirit strong by staying relevant, take part in church and community events, exercise and read the happenings in local newspapers as it is important to keeping a sense of belonging and to maintaining a positive mental attitude when dealing with rejection. You are a valuable human being playing an important role in the lives of your family and friends. You deserve a place in the American society for you have paid the price for your freedom.