WASHINGTON STATE EMPLOYMENT RE-ENTRY GUIDE

New Directions

Employment and Career Development Division
Offender Employment Services

2010 Revision

Employment Security Department
WASHINGTON STATE

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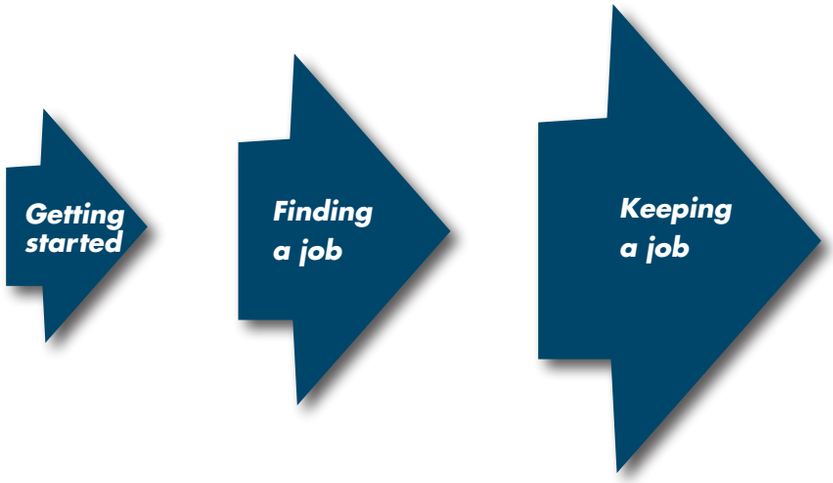
This guide is for you

It's no secret that one of the most important things for you to do after getting out of prison is to secure employment - and to do it right away. Without a job, you are three times more likely to return to jail.

- Prison Living Magazine

We developed this guide with you in mind. This guide provides tools and information to take you through the process of finding a job. While this is a Washington State Employment Re-Entry Guide, we included information in the Resources section on how to get help or information from other states.

This guide is also about finding a new direction. You can use it as your compass to point you to your destination. In order to find work and stay employed, you will need to make new connections, re-connect with family and friends, and perhaps disconnect from some people and some old habits.



Looking for work is a journey, with the goal of finding an employer who is looking for someone like you. People who are successful take re-entry seriously. They do whatever it takes, they stay focused, they ask for help when they need it, and they have realistic expectations.

Use this guide to manage your life, take control of your future, and feel good about yourself. You can read the guide at your own pace, come back to different chapters, take notes, and develop concrete tools such as applications, résumés and action plans.

Many people were involved in developing this guide, including people who have been released from prison. Everyone who leaves incarceration has different needs, plans and problems. Even though everyone is different, there are some things that work to help people find meaningful employment and a career.

To successfully re-enter society:

1. Take your re-entry seriously (think, prepare).
2. Do whatever it takes.
3. Work hard and stay focused.
4. Have realistic expectations.
5. Stay flexible and be patient.
6. Ask for help.

Notes

Some myths to watch out for

You may hear a lot of information about "Benefits for Ex-Cons." Consider the source when you assess these so-called benefits. If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is. If you base your release plan on these false hopes, you'll find yourself with nothing once you're back in the community.

- You are **not** entitled to Social Security benefits based on your conviction history.
- You are **not** a disadvantaged minority just because you were incarcerated.
- There are currently **no** student or business loans solely for people with convictions.
- You are **not** eligible for unemployment benefits based on your job in prison or for the job you lost due to being incarcerated.

However, there are programs, resources, people, tools, tips and much more that are available to help you along the way.

The key to getting help is knowing what you want and preparing yourself to get it.

Notes

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CHAPTER ONE

Getting started

I have learned that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.

- Henry David Thoreau

Does this sound familiar?

"I want to stay out when I'm released, but everywhere I go I hit roadblocks. Who's going to hire me anyway? Why should I even try if I'm just gonna wind up back here again?"

You don't have to come back, but you have to commit to work at staying out. Do you:

- Have a specific re-entry plan?
- Have a firm commitment from somebody for a job?
- Have financial aid or other help for education or training?
- Have a little money, clothes or a place to stay?
- Have friends or family to give you support?
- Know which programs or community agencies can help you?

If you don't have answers to these questions, you have more work to do. Don't worry, by the time you finish this guide, you should be able to answer yes to these questions or have the tools you need to get to yes.

The difference between success and failure is a choice

While some accept what they get, others will try to earn what they want. It's much easier to give up than to do what it takes to achieve success.Taking the time, energy and effort to accomplish what you want can make your life more meaningful.

There are many successful people in the world, and there are many people who are not. The main difference between the two is that successful people pick themselves up after failure again and again until they finally make it. Successful people learn from their failures.

TIP

Get right with yourself. You are the most important person for your success. Decide what success means to you and go for it!

Successful people:

- Expect success.
- Think they can.
- Try whole-heartedly.
- Fake it until they make it.
- Understand failing is the normal to learn how to succeed.
- Believe problems are temporary challenges.
- Take responsibility for their success and mistakes.

Take time to think about yourself. What do you want your success to look like?

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."
-Thomas A. Edison

Things to do while you are inside

All of the areas listed below can interfere with your success once you are released. Use the checklist to help you **think** and **plan** ahead of time.

When you have completed the exercise, start on a plan to deal with the problem areas. Doing this before release helps make them less overwhelming.

Issues to face upon release	Possible problem for me	I can take care of this	I need help with this
Chemical abuse			
Lack of money			
Transportation/Driver license			
Day care			
Housing			
Clothing			
Medical			
Telephone or e-mail			
Job skills			
Education			
Food			
Other			

To look for work, you will need your identification. You can start on the following while you are inside:

- Birth certificate
- Driver license or State ID Card
- Social Security card
- Military records or DD-214

You also may want to think about the following:

- Child support
- Unpaid traffic tickets or relicensing fees
- Car insurance
- Contacting DSHS for food-stamp eligibility
- Health care or medications
- Copies of educational certificates or degrees (including GED)
- Letters of recommendation
- Criminal history records (vacate or expunge records)

See the Resources section to find out more on how to contact agencies and programs to help you with these areas. Talk with your counselor to help you get started.

"The past doesn't equal the future."
- Anthony Robbins

Notes

Do as much as you can while you are inside. Take advantage of everything that can help you when you re-enter society

Get organized

In this section, we will talk about getting organized, which includes setting goals, keeping calendars, making a plan, and managing your personal records.

Records

Keep copies of all your documents that you collect while incarcerated. This includes certificates of classes and programs you completed, inmate banking statements, medical and health records, and so on. Put everything given to you in folders or envelopes.

Calendars

Get a calendar (lots of places hand them out for free) or create one. Write down every appointment or obligation. It could look something like this.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Get plenty of rest	8:00 - 12:00 work on résumé	1:30 Dentist	Go to WorkSource to set up e-mail account	Online job search	10:30 Interview	7:00 pm AA

Notes

Why I am better off working

Look below at the seven reasons why you are better off employed than unemployed. They all may mean something to you. Think about each reason, and decide which two are the most important for you.

Put a check mark in the box next to your choice for the top two reasons why you are better off working.

- ☐ Employment helps me develop a greater sense of self-worth, self-respect and self-esteem.
- ☐ Having a job means I will make a positive contribution to the community and my family.
- ☐ I am a better role model for my family and children by being employed.
- ☐ I become more independent and in control of my life by being employed.
- ☐ Employment helps me develop my natural abilities and discover my talents.
- ☐ A job gives my family and me a greater sense of security and well being.
- ☐ I have a better chance for financial prosperity and success if I have a job.

Notes

Setting goals

Setting goals is the most important thing you can do to be successful. Goal setting helps us visualize where we want to go and the best way to get there. We can reach large goals by succeeding at a series of small goals.

Get a business card from everyone you talk to. This makes it easier to follow up.

"Your goals are the road maps that guide you and show you what is possible for your life."
-Les Brown

Goals may be either short (reachable in one to three years) or long term (reachable in three to five years). We actually set goals regularly when we plan what we want to get done that day, that week, or even that month.

In order to succeed, your goals should follow the SMART guidelines.

Specific – Have enough detail so that there is no doubt about what you need to do.

Measurable – When you are through you have some proof of completion.

Attainable – Something you can reach.

Realistic – Start small with what you can do, experience the joy of meeting your goals, and then gradually increase the amount of work that you ask of yourself.

Time limited – Give yourself a deadline. This will make it easier to achieve the small steps that add to the larger goals.

"What keeps me going is goals."
-Muhammad Ali

Visualize your goals and fill in the timeline on the next page. Think about these questions:

1. What are your ambitions for the future?
2. What is your current goal?
3. Where do you see yourself a month from now or a year from now?
4. Where do you see yourself five years from now?

You can draw, doodle, write, glue in pictures from magazines or whatever you want to help make your goals real. Don't forget the SMART guidelines.

Notes

1 month ***1 year*** ***3 years*** ***5 years***

Make an action plan to reach your goals

Here is one way to write a plan for reaching your goals. Row one is a sample of how you might make a plan for a short-term goal. Fill in the rest of the rows for your own goals.

Goal(s)	Benefits & advantages	Key steps necessary	Deadlines to meet	Support & resources	Outcomes & reflection
1. Make a generic application.	I'll have all information in one place. I can quickly apply for jobs. Less stress on me once it's done.	Find a blank application form. Get names and addresses of old employers. Check dates of GED.	2 weeks today.	WorkSource office. Call old supervisor. Talk to sponsor.	Wow, that wasn't as hard as I thought it would be.
2.					
3.					

This diagram digs even deeper into the details to write the whole action plan.

Who	What	Where	When	How
Who will I ask for help?	What do I want the outcome to be?	Where should I start?	When should I begin?	How should I begin?
Who will benefit from my goal?	What will I do to get started?	Where will my goal put me in three years?	When do I want to reach these goals?	How will these goals affect my future?
Who will I work with to accomplish my goals?	What will really make me happy?	Where will I apply my resources?	When will I apply my knowledge to begin attaining my goals?	How do I really feel about the goals that I have chosen?

Thinking about these questions will help you make a work plan that works.

Confront your fears and hopes right away as you go along.

Connecting, reconnecting and disconnecting

"Many a live wire would be a dead one except for his connections."

-Wilson Mizner

Just as you had to adjust to life in prison, you will have to adjust as you return to life on the outside. The time just after incarceration can be lonely.

- How do you make new friends?
- How do you reconnect with family and friends?
- If you need to, how do you disconnect from some people from your past who aren't a positive support?

Family relationships

You will need to reconnect to your family. Partners will have learned how to do things without you. Children and parents will have grown up or grown older.

If asked about your incarceration, answer questions honestly.

Allow your family members to share painful memories with you.
Admit you were wrong.
Ask for forgiveness, and then work to earn it.

Notes

Connect to new support systems

New support systems – these can be community programs, friends (old and new), or family. Make new friends wisely. Do they pull you forward or push you back?

Go slowly. Give yourself time.
It takes a while to make new friends.

Look in the **Resources** section in the back of this guide for information on community resources. Also:

- Look in the blue pages of your local phone book.
- Go to the public library.
- Use an online search engine.
- Go to your local WorkSource office for help with finding a job and a connection to resources. In Washington state, you can find WorkSource online at www.go2worksource.com or look in the blue pages of your local phone book. To find a WorkSource center or similar career centers in any state, call 877-872-JOBS.

List the resources you plan to use to get started in the right direction.

Notes

If people help and support you, then they're probably good people to have in your life. If they don't care, or worse, if they drag you back into crime or addiction, stay away from them. They don't care about you. Don't be fooled into thinking they do. To stay free you have to be willing to do whatever it takes. If that means letting go of old neighborhoods or friends, then that is what you must do.

Develop a personal stress management plan

1. Recognize the stresses surrounding your job search and personal life. Try to identify the feelings you have and different ways you can adjust.

2. Develop a plan.
   - Review the results weekly and make changes if you need to.
   - Don't take minor rejections too seriously.

3. Practice time management.
   - Begin your day by organizing your tasks.
   - Focus on one task at a time.
   - Don't let other people waste your time.

4. Start and keep an exercise and healthy eating lifestyle.

5. Maintain your religious beliefs and family customs.

6. Learn and use relaxation techniques.

7. Develop and maintain support systems.
   - Surround yourself with positive people.
   - Help others. Volunteer your time.
   - Join a support group.

8. Schedule time for yourself.

9. Include humor and laughter in your life. Just smiling relieves stress levels.

In this chapter, we've covered many of the things you need to do to get pointed in the right direction for a successful re-entry and a successful job search.

Take some time to reflect on what you've learned and how you will use the information to get started. In the next chapters, we will cover all the steps to take in finding and keeping a job.

Take time to reflect

Write your answers to these questions before you go on.

1. What are some myths you should watch out for?

2. What are some things you can do before release?

3. Why are you better off working?

4. What are some things you can do to get organized?

5. Have you set goals? If so, what are they?

6. What is your action plan?

7. What is your support system? How can you find resources?

8. What will you do to manage your stress?

CHAPTER TWO

Your values, skills and abilities

Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction.
- John F. Kennedy

Before you begin to look for work, you must understand yourself. What are your values? What skills do you have? Knowing these things will help you decide where to look and the direction to take.

Get a job you want to do and you'll like showing up every day.

TIP

To be satisfied with your work, you should choose a job that matches your work values as closely as possible. Being clear on your values, skills and abilities will help you market yourself effectively to employers.

After you complete the following exercises, you will have a clear idea of how to talk to potential employers about yourself and what you can do for them.

Look at the following list of work values.

1. Rate each item on a scale of "not important" to "very important" by putting a check mark in the box.

2. Review your list to see which items you feel strongly about.

3. Write your top three or four values in the space provided. Pay close attention to the list as you set your goals.

How important are these work-related values to you?

Rate each item by putting a check mark in the box that fits for you.

	Not important	Somewhat important	Moderately important	Very important
Salary				
Status & prestige				
Travel opportunities				
Leisure time				
Power & influence				
Competition				
Being around people				
Blending family & career				
Variety & change				
Involvement in decision-making				
Security				
Public contact				
Recognition				
Flexible work schedule				
Regular 40-hour work week				
Mental challenge				
Independence				
Benefits				
Quality of products/services				
Freedom from pressure/stress				
Clear expectations				
Clear rules				

Write your top work-related values below.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Identify your strengths

This section addresses the specific strengths and limitations of your work experience. As you go through this section, think about all of your life experiences and what you can do to make the most of your strengths and overcome your limitations. What has worked well for you and what hasn't?

Here are the personal strengths employers look for. Put a check next to the items you think you are good at. When you are done, list your top strengths.

- ☐ Strong work ethic, conscientious, does best work
- ☐ Positive attitude, upbeat, generate good will
- ☐ Good communication skills, speaks clearly, good listener
- ☐ Time management, prioritizes and multi tasks, uses time wisely
- ☐ Problem-solver makes decisions
- ☐ Team player, cooperates with others, accepts responsibility
- ☐ Self-confidence, self-motivated, asks questions, contributes ideas
- ☐ Personal growth, interested in learning
- ☐ Flexible and adaptable, open to new ideas
- ☐ Work under pressure, comes through in a pinch
- ☐ Follow rules and fit into the structure
- ☐ Get along with people from all backgrounds

Write your top strengths below.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Identify your transferrable skills

"Transferrable skills" are skills that you can use in several types of jobs. Most adults have more than 500 specific skills. Job seekers usually have time to discuss only a few during an interview. Successful workers can transfer skills from one work setting to another.

Think about your work experience, volunteer experience, military experience, educational experience and total life experience.

Look at the list of transferrable skills.

1. Put a check mark next to the skills that you have.

2. Next circle your strongest transferrable skills.

3. If you don't see a skill listed, add it under other at the bottom of the last column.

Effective communication
Writing clearly
Listening attentively
Expressing ideas
Facilitating group discussion
Providing appropriate feedback
Negotiating
Recognizing nonverbal messages
Persuading
Reporting information
Describing feelings
Interviewing
Editing
Using computer software

Research & planning
Forecasting, predicting
Creating ideas
Identifying problems
Imagining alternatives
Identifying resources
Gathering information
Solving problems
Setting goals
Extracting important information
Defining needs
Analyzing
Keeping records
Developing evaluation strategies

Human relations
Developing rapport
Being sensitive
Listening
Conveying feelings
Providing support for others
Motivating
Sharing credit
Counseling
Cooperating
Delegating with respect
Representing others
Perceiving feelings, situations

Organization, management & leadership
Initiating new ideas
Handling details
Coordinating tasks
Managing groups
Delegating responsibility
Teaching
Coaching
Counseling
Promoting change
Selling ideas or products
Decision making with others
Managing conflict

Work survival
Implementing decisions
Cooperating
Enforcing policies
Being on time
Managing time
Multi-tasking
Attending to detail
Meeting goals
Accepting responsibility
Setting and meeting deadlines
Organizing
Making decisions
Dealing with obstacles and crisis

Other

Write your top transferrable skills below.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Identify your job skills and abilities

Job skills are specific to a certain occupation or field of work. You gain these skills through paid or volunteer work, on-the-job training or technical classes. Employers look for information about job skills to find out if you have done the technical parts of the job. The list below provides a starting point for you to think about your skills and abilities.

Look at the list of job occupations on the next pages. There is a list of examples of the specific technical skills related to those jobs.

1. Put a check mark next to the skill you have.

2. Add any more skills you have related to that job below each occupation. Skip the areas that don't apply to you.

3. If you have more skills that don't fit in any area, add them in the blank space under other.

4. Circle your strongest job skills and abilities.

Be thorough. You want to be ready to talk to an employer about all of your job skills.

Job Skills and abilities

Accounting/ bookkeeping
Accounts receivable
Auditing
Budgets & forecasting
Contract administration
Insurance records
Loan applications
Purchase orders
Vendor contact

Administrative
Appointment scheduling
Correspondence
Executive support
Internet
MS Office
Project management
Supply purchasing

Cashier/customer service
Approve checks
Balance tills
Cold calling
Front counter sales
Inventory control
Pricing
Shift management

Gardening/ horticulture
Chemical applications
Customer service
Grafting
Integrated pest management
Landscaping
Pruning
Tilling

Homemaker
Answer telephone
Budget
Decorate
Equipment operation
Food preparation
Meal planning
Purchasing

Janitorial
Clean rooms, windows & glass
Disinfect/sterilize
Drive vehicles
Gather & empty trash
Move furniture
Requisition supplies

Shipping/receiving /warehouse
Billing
Document control
Forklift operation
Postal requirements
Stocking

Teaching
Assessment
Coaching
Design lesson plans
Facilitation
Use games/art
Recording keeping

Truck driving
Fasten chains/binders
Inventory/inspect
Load/unload
Record keeping
Repair/maintenance

Computer programs/ equipment
Analyze needs
Design software
Maintain programs
Set-up Intranets
Test systems
Use C, C++, JAVA & Python
Write programs

Construction
Bids/estimates
Contract negotiation
Crew foreman
Electrical
Finish work
General labor
Heavy equipment
On-site inspections
Underground utilities

Counseling
Crisis work
Group counseling
Interviewing
Public speaking
Record keeping

Job Skills and abilities con't.

Management
Advertising
Benefits
EEO knowledge
Employee training
Hiring/firing
Payroll
Public relations
Supervision

Mechanical
Body work
Computer diagnostics
Customer service
Estimates
Inspections
Oil & fluid changes
Repair parts

Medical/nursing
Administer medications
Appointment scheduling
Charting
Lab testing
Patient records
Sterilization
X-Ray Equipment

Day care
Arts & crafts
Discipline
Food preparation
Planning
Safety
Supervision
Teaching

Deck hand/fishing
Clean decks
Gaff
Haul nets
Load supplies & equipment
Measure catch
Operate skiffs
Place gill nets

Forestry/logging
Appraise trees
Chock setter
Clear brush
Load trucks
Prune trees
Survey trees
Trim limbs
Use chain saw

Production/ assembly
Assemble items
Clean containers
Examine products
Operate forklift, conveyor belt
Pack products
Weigh containers

Restaurant/food
Balance tills
Employee training
Customer service
Inventory control
Purchasing
Safety
Work delegation

Sales
Bidding/estimating
Contract negotiation
Group presentations
Order processing
Profit margin analysis

Other
List any other specific job skills that you have.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

Write your top job skills and abilities below.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Don't under-sell your skills, but also be honest. You don't want to get hired and then not have the skill the employer counted on.

You have identified your values, skills and abilities. Now you want to get ready to use this information to help you with your résumé, filling out applications, and interviewing. Employers want concrete examples to help them understand how you are the best fit for the job.

1. On the next page, list each of your values, transferrable skills, work skills and abilities from the lists you just completed.

2. Next to each, write a short, clear example from your experience that describes that item.

3. Keep your work. You will come back to this later.

Fill in the boxes

My work-related values	**Example** (when & where I used this skill)
SAMPLE: Being around people	SAMPLE: One of my favorite experiences was volunteering at my kid's school. I enjoyed interacting with teachers and students.

My strengths	**Example** (when & where I used this skill)
SAMPLE: Flexible and adaptable	SAMPLE: I am eager to try something different. My supervisor often asks me to lead a new project and develop it for the rest of the team.

My transferrable skills	**Example** (when & where I used this skill)
SAMPLE: Selling ideas or products	SAMPLE: When I worked the Dept. of Natural Resources, I sold tree seedlings in three counties. I was rated a top performer in number of sales.

My job skills	**Example** (when & where I used this skill)
SAMPLE: Janitorial	SAMPLE: I disinfected and sterilized restrooms in large institutional buildings.

Get help from your local WorkSource office

Visit your local WorkSource. WorkSource has a variety of free employment services that can help you assess your skills, abilities and interests. Many offices have an Offender Employment Specialist to work with individuals who have a conviction history. See WorkSource in the Resources section to find out more. If you go to www.go2worksource.com, you also can link to online programs where you can do your own self-assessment.

You also can use an online search engine by typing words like:

- Career planning
- Work related values
- Work place skills
- Transferrable skills
- Career planning

There are many online or pencil and paper assessment tools. None of them can answer the question, "what is the perfect job for me?" They can, however, give you clues to the types of jobs or careers that fit you best.

TIP

Skills and abilities are the building blocks of job success. Identify, demonstrate and package the skills and personal qualities that today's employers want.

Notes

Take time to reflect

1. Are you clear about your work-related values, strengths, transferrable skills and job skills? If not, where can you go for assistance?

2. Do you have concrete examples for all of your skills? If not, who can help you (old boss, co-worker, WorkSource counselor)?

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CHAPTER TWO

Plan your career

If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading.
- Lao Tzu

Finding a job can be difficult. Many people advise that you take any job, even if it is less than ideal, because it is a place to start. You can (and should) keep looking for a better job. Being employed shows you're willing to work and it can help you build a work history.

This chapter focuses on helping you see the steps toward your long-term work goal. It may seem hopeless to accept just any job. If you can see how one job leads to a better job that takes you in the direction you want to go, you will be more likely to keep going.

The real difference between a job and a career is your attitude. People who want a career are always thinking about their long-term goals. For example, one person we know took a job sorting the mail in the mail room. This led to a job in the copy center, which led to a higher-paying job as a copy-machine repair technician.

The diagram on the next page is one example of a career-planning model. Having a career plan will help you answer the common interview question, "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

Notes

Career Planning

Manage your career

- Continue to evaluate plans & goals
- Deal with transition
- Learn throughout your life
- Network
- Balance work & life

Find a job

- Apply for jobs (résumés, cover letters, applications)
- Interview
- Set job search goals & timelines
- Use job search resources & assistance
- Target your job search (occupation, industry, company)

Gain skills

- Apprenticeships
- Internships & volunteer work
- Military experience
- Community college, vocational education, certifications
- Short-term training
- Temporary employment

Explore career options

- Informational interviews
- Occupation, industry & salary research
- Company research
- School & education requirement research

Assess yourself

- Career & education goals
- Lifestyle choices (preferred work setting, location, budget)
- Personal assessment (skills, values, needs, personality traits)

Look at your local labor market

Labor market means:

- What types of jobs are available?
- What kind of work is performed by people who have these jobs?
- How many jobs are available in your area?
- Who are the employers?
- What is the typical pay for these jobs?

You don't want to spend time looking for types of work with few job openings or with no opportunity for advancement. Some people even move to locate nearer to employers that are hiring.

If you don't have much work experience, don't forget that prison jobs count. Think about how these jobs relate to employment on the outside.

Successful job seekers take a focused approach to finding work. This involves:

- Knowing your skills (you've already figured this out.)
- Knowing what kinds of businesses use those skills.
- Studying employers.
- Using networking to find out about businesses and employers.
- Showing your skills to that employer, so that they know you can meet their needs.

Useful resources:

- The local WorkSource office is your best bet for learning about your local labor market.
- On the Internet, go to www.workforceexplorer.com
- Local phone books – especially yellow pages
- Newspapers, business magazines

"For some people, success means money or prestige, for others it is simply…a new path, however humble…to fulfillment and pride at working an honest job and being a contributing member of society."

- Offender Employment Specialist

Explore careers with informational interviews

Informational interviews can help you learn about a job or career by talking with the person who is doing the work right now. The interview may cover some of the same information as you can get from printed material or the company Web site, but it also offers the "inside scoop" on the company. Plus, since you are not interviewing for a job, it is less stressful. Here are some things to talk about.

- What is done on a day-to-day basis?
- Salary, benefits, vacations.
- How the work fits with your interests and feelings.

Some tips for conducting an informational interview:

- Conduct yourself as if you are in a professional business appointment (you are). Arrive on time and end on time.
- Let the person know in advance what you want to talk about.
- Dress like you would for an interview.
- Prepare your questions ahead of time.
- Focus on your accomplishments.
- Follow up with a thank you note and stay in touch.

The informational interview is a powerful way to learn about jobs, make connections, and feel like you are making progress in the right direction.

Informational interviews are a great job search tool. Potential employers may be more willing to meet with you if you are only asking for information. Once you have made the connection, they may find they could use your talents or they may refer you to someone else who may say,"When can you start?"

Notes

What are disqualifying crimes?

Assume employers will hire you if you are a good match for their needs. One survey of more than 1,200 employers reports that only 8 percent said they would not hire an ex-offender. Since 92 percent of employers will consider hiring you, feel free to look for work from any legitimate source. Limiting yourself to employers that you believe hire ex-offenders can limit your wages and job prospects. You should try to find employers who are a good match for your skills, experience and career goals. (*From the 2008 Department of Justice, Employment Information Handbook*.)

That being said, Washington state law lists certain crimes that disqualify any job applicant from working for any employer where the job has unsupervised access to children, individuals with developmental disabilities or mental illness, or other vulnerable adults.

DSHS list of disqualifying crimes and negative actions

Crimes:
A person who has a crime listed below is denied unsupervised access to vulnerable adults, juveniles, and children.

If "(5 or more years)" appears after a crime, the person is automatically denied unsupervised access unless 5 or more years has passed since the date of conviction.

After 5 years, an overall assessment of the person's character, competence, and suitability to have unsupervised access will determine denial.

Abandonment of a child
Abandonment of a dependent person not against child (5 or more years)
Abuse or neglect of a child
Arson
Assault 1
Assault 2
Assault 3 Domestic Violence
Assault 3 not Domestic Violence (5 or more years)
Assault 4/simple assault (5 or more years)
Assault of a child
Bail jumping
Burglary (5 or more years)
Carnal knowledge
Child buying or selling
Child molestation
Coercion (5 or more years)
Commercial sexual abuse of a minor/ Patronizing a juvenile prostitute
Communication with a minor for immoral purposes
Controlled substance homicide
Criminal mistreatment
Custodial assault (5 or more years)
Custodial interference
Custodial sexual misconduct (5 or more years)
Dealing in depictions of minor engaged in sexual explicit conduct

Domestic Violence (felonies only)
Drive-by shooting
Extortion 1
Extortion 2 (5 or more years)
Forgery (5 or more years)
Harassment (5 or more years)
Harassment Domestic Violence
Homicide by abuse
Homicide by watercraft
Identity theft (5 or more years)
Incendiary devices (possess, manufacture, dispose)
Incest
Indecent exposure/Public indecency (Felony)
Indecent liberties
Kidnapping
Leading organized crime (5 or more years)
Luring
Malicious explosion 1
Malicious explosion 2
Malicious explosion 3 (5 or more years)
Malicious harassment
Malicious mischief (5 or more years)
Malicious mischief Domestic Violence
Malicious placement of an explosive 1
Malicious placement of an explosive 2 (5 or more years)
Malicious placement of an explosive 3 (5 or more years)
Malicious placement of imitation device 1 (5 or more years)
Manslaughter
Murder/Aggravated murder
Patronizing a prostitute (5 or more years)
Possess depictions minor engaged in sexual conduct
Possess explosive device (5 or more years)
Promoting pornography (5 or more years)
Promoting prostitution 1 (5 or more years)
Promoting prostitution 2 (5 or more years)
Promoting suicide attempt (5 or more years)
Prostitution (5 or more years)
Rape
Rape of child
Reckless endangerment (5 or more years)
Registered sex offender
Residential burglary (5 or more years)
Robbery
Selling or distributing erotic material to a minor
Sending or bringing into the state depictions of a minor
Sexual exploitation of minors
Sexual misconduct with a minor
Sexually violating human remains
Stalking (5 or more years)
Theft (5 or more years)
Unlawful imprisonment (5 or more years)
Unlawful use of bldg for drug purposes (5 or more years)
Use of machine gun in a felony
Vehicular assault
Vehicular homicide (negligent homicide)
Violation of child abuse restraining order
Violation of civil anti-harassment protection order
Violation of protection/contact/restraining order
Violation of the Imitation Controlled Substance Act (manufacture/deliver/intent - 5 or more years)
Violation of Uniform Controlled Substance Act(manufacture/deliver/intent - 5 or more years)
Violation of the Uniform Legend Drug Act (manufacture/deliver/intent - 5 or more years)
Violation of the Uniform Precursor Drug Act (manufacture/deliver/intent - 5 or more years)
Voyeurism

Pending Crime

A person who has a pending crime on the DSHS list is denied unsupervised access while awaiting a decision by a court, administrative entity, or governmental entity. Upon conviction or acquittal by the court, the DSHS list is applied.

Attempt or Conspiracy or Solicitation

These crimes may appear with a listed crime, such as Burglary. When the crime of attempt, conspiracy, or

solicitation appears in conjunction with a crime on this list, it is treated the same as the listed crime.
Example: Unsupervised access is denied for Attempted Burglary for 5 years after the conviction.

Sexual Motivation –A person who has a court finding of sexual motivation is denied unsupervised access to vulnerable adults, juveniles, or children.

Bail Jumping – A person who has the crime of bail jumping is denied unsupervised access until a court decision is issued for the original crime that required bail. Upon conviction or acquittal by the court, the DSHS List is applied.

Negative Actions are considered under individual program law and rule and may lead to denial of unsupervised access to vulnerable adults.
A negative action is an administrative or civil action taken against an individual and may include:

- A finding that an individual abused, neglected, exploited, or abandoned a vulnerable adult, juvenile or child issued by an agency, an Administrative Law Judge, or a court of law. A finding by an agency is not a negative action if the individual was not given the opportunity to request an administrative hearing to contest the finding
- Termination, revocation, suspension, or denial of a license, certification, and/or State or Federal contract
- Relinquishment of a license, certification, or contract in lieu of an agency negative action
- Revocation, suspension, denial or restriction placed on a professional license
- Department of Health disciplining authority finding

Updated 01/26/09. For more information go to:
www.dshs.wa.gov/msa/bccu/BCCU-crimesList.htm

How do employers use background checks?

Many employers do a background check these days. Background reports can range from verification of an applicant's Social Security number to a detailed account of a potential (or current) employee's history. In fact, we are hearing that some employers are searching popular social networking Web sites such as MySpace and Facebook.

The Washington State Patrol provides Washington Access to Criminal History (WATCH) background checks to any individual who requests one. Private companies also provide background checks to employers for a fee. You can find out more at www.wsp.gov or www.privacyrights.org.

What's included in an employee background check?

The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) sets the standards for screening for employment. The FCRA defines a background check as a consumer report. Before an employer can get a consumer report for employment purposes, they must notify you in writing and get your written permission. If the employer is simply conducting inquiries (rather than
running reports) they should also ask for your consent. That way you could withdraw your application if you want to.

If an employer decides not to hire because of this report, they must tell you and give you a copy of the report and a copy of your rights. They should let you know the name and address of the Consumer Reporting Agency they used. They should also let you know about your right to dispute the report.

At a minimum, a background check will verify your Social Security number.
At most, it can include:

- Your work history and the people you know.
- A full credit report.
- Your credit payment records, driving records, or criminal history.

The inquiries should be related to the job. For example, if you are hired to work in a bank, it would be reasonable to find out if you have a history of embezzlement or theft.

Be prepared

The best way to prepare for a background check is to know the information that an employer might find.

- Get a copy of your credit report. (See Annual Credit Report in Resources.)
- Check your motor vehicle record by requesting a copy of your record from your state Department of Licensing.

- Ask your previous employers for copies of your personnel files.
- Make sure you know what your references are going to say about you.

Most importantly, make sure your résumé and job applications are **accurate** and **truthful**. If you lie, you might not get caught right away, but you will probably get caught at some point. It's not worth getting fired and ruining your employment history.

Commit to lifelong learning for success

"Through learning we re-create ourselves. Through learning we become able to do something we were never able to do."
- Peter Senge

The amount of education and training you have, whether academic or skill-based, will help you when you re-enter society. Today's workers can no longer expect to work their whole lives for one employer. Experts say that, in the 21st-century work force, change is the norm. Currently, people change jobs an average of nine times during their careers.

Many jobs of the future will be in services that require a high degree of training, pay well and offer you the chance to move up the career ladder.

Some people report that they didn't do well in school. There are lots of reasons for this: for example, learning styles that may not fit well with the traditional educational system, life circumstances, physical problems, and so on. However, these same people find that when they return to education as adults, that learning is fun and fulfilling.

TIP

Capitalize on everything you can learn while in prison or on the job.

To keep earning, keep learning. You can do this many ways:

- On-the-job training
- Apprenticeships

- Online courses
- GED, ABE and High School Diploma classes
- Post-secondary education and training (community college, vocational training, technical education)
- College degree

On-the-job training and job-shadowing

Many businesses have on-the-job training programs. These occur when an experienced employee teaches a new person how to perform job tasks. The new employee earns a wage while he or she is learning. For example, a new construction assistant works with an experienced employee who shows her how to install tile. To learn more about on-the-job training that may be subsidized by state government, contact your local WorkSource office.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is a combination of on-the-job training and related classroom training. Apprenticeships generally are found in trades that require a high level of manual, mechanical or technical skills. You can find out more from the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries at www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Apprenticeship/default.asp.

Online courses

If you have access to a computer (at home, the library, the WorkSource office), you can learn from online courses. For instance, you can open up any Microsoft program and take the online tutorial. Many trade schools, colleges and universities have online courses.

General Equivalency Diploma (GED), Adult Basic Education (ABE), High School diploma

If you don't have your high school diploma or GED, it's never too late to get one! You can take classes while incarcerated or after you are released. All of the community or technical colleges in Washington have GED preparation classes. If you are just a few credits short and want a high school diploma, you can take classes for that.

If you need to brush up on basic skills (math, English, reading), you also can take adult basic education classes. These classes and the GED classes are offered in a variety of times and locations to meet the needs of busy adults. Contact the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges at www.sbctc.ctc.edu to find out more. WorkSource offices sometimes have classes onsite or can help you find a local resource.

"Earning my GED has left me thirsty for higher learning."
"Now that I have a certificate, I feel better about myself and more complete."
"Now that I've graduated, I know anything is possible."
- Graduates from the county jail ABE/GED class

Post-secondary training and education (community college, vocational training, technical education)

Washington's two-year colleges offer a range of programs for students to:

1. Take continuing-education classes.
2. Get job training.
3. Gain basic education skills.
4. Prepare to transfer to a university.

Students who complete their courses receive certificates or associate degrees. Sometimes students begin college at a two-year college and transfer their credits to a four-year college if they want to work toward a bachelor's degree.

All states have a system for post-secondary training and education. In Washington, this system is managed by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Check out the Web site at www.sbctc.edu to find a community or technical college near you.

College degree

Colleges and universities offer four-year degrees. These include bachelor's degrees (B.A. or B.S.) or graduate degrees such as master's degrees (M.A. or M.S) or even doctoral degrees (Ph.D.). Many professions require an advanced

degree. Lawyers, teachers, doctors and college professors all have graduate degrees.

The amount of education you have can take you in the direction of self-sufficiency, financial security and fulfilling work. It's a big investment.

If you are interested in college, contact the admissions office as early as you can. Keep careful notes of the process. Keep all of your admission paperwork. Pay attention to admission and registration deadlines.

Getting into college takes time and planning

People who succeed at college say it took them about a year of preparation to start taking classes. You may need to provide proof of prior education or have to take an admissions test. Community colleges do not require a high school diploma or a GED, but you will probably have to take brush up classes before you can start on your degree or certificate.

Most college applications have a question about felony convictions. If you're asked this question, be prepared to discuss your conviction. This may be as simple as a brief description for the files. You will learn about discussing felony convictions with employers in Chapter Six. That information also would apply to college admissions.

Financial aid

Figuring out how to pay for a college education may seem overwhelming. Make an appointment to talk with a financial-aid officer at the school you hope to attend. Ask about loans, grants and scholarships. It takes time and patience to fill out financial aid forms, but it is worth it.

- Loans – money loaned to you for tuition and books. You must repay loans after you graduate.
- Grants and scholarships – funds for student expenses that you usually don't have to pay back.

Find out about loans and grants at www.studentaid.ed.gov.

Be wary of places that charge a fee to submit your application or to find you money for school. Generally, any help that you pay for you can get free from your school financial-aid office.

How much aid you receive from each of the various programs depends on your financial need, on the amount of other aid you receive, and on the availability of funds at your college or career school. So, make sure you apply for student aid as early as you can.

Maybe you think college is not for you, that only young, smart high school graduates go to college. The truth is that colleges are full of people of all ages and backgrounds who are learning for lots of reasons. The average age of community college students is about 35, and many have jobs and families. You will fit in! It just takes hard work and your commitment.

Take time to reflect

1. Have you decided on a career goal? If not, list some things you want to do next to help you do so.

2. Do you know anything about the labor market in the area you plan to live in? Can you relocate if necessary? What can you do right away to get more information?

3. What is your current education level? Is it enough for you to get the kind of work you want? If you want to go to school, what do you need to do first to get going?

CHAPTER FOUR

Looking for a job

The great thing in the world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving.
- Oliver Wendell Holmes

Finding a job is the cornerstone to your success. Gainful employment will let you pay for your rent and the basic necessities, such as food and clothing. Employment will give you a sense of purpose and build your self-confidence. Putting in a full day's work is honorable and will help keep you on the "straight and narrow." Having a job and building a good work history goes a long way in restoring the community's faith in you as a trustworthy person deserving of a second chance in life.

So far in this guide you have:

1. Figured out your first steps in a new direction and learned how to get help.
2. Developed a plan to get to your goal.
3. Listed your values, skills, interests, and abilities.
4. Learned how to plan a career and to find out jobs in your local area.
5. Learned how to get more education and skills to help you reach your goals.

Searching for a job

Successful job seekers take a focused approach to finding work – centered, narrow and strong. It's a job to get a job.

Treat your job search like a full-time job and like a project that has a long-term goal.

TIP

Let's look at some methods for finding jobs using both the traditional and hidden means of job searching.

- WorkSource – Your local WorkSource lists jobs and posts your application online at www.go2worksource.com. This site also links to other regional job banks (for example, SeattleJobs.org) and national job banks (for example, Job Central, Career Builder). Some WorkSource offices also offer job clubs.

- Help-wanted ads in the newspaper – Employers are going back to help-wanted ads to avoid massive responses from the big online job boards.

- Sending out résumés – Almost all job-search books recommend sending out résumés, but doing that alone does not work very well.

- Job fairs – Job fairs are sponsored by WorkSource offices, schools, and business organizations like the Chamber of Commerce. Come prepared just as if you are at a job interview.

- Telephone book yellow pages – Lists all the employers in the area.

- Private employment agencies – Private employment agencies charge fees fo finding you a job. The fees range from 10 to 15 percent of your annual income. Look in the yellow pages of the phone book.

- Personal networking – Tell your friends, relatives, neighbors, former employers, former co-workers, church members and everyone you know that you're are looking for a job.

- Cold contact – Cold contact means going directly to possible employers. This requires time and traveling around town. Cold contacts may not be easy for most. At worst, they will say no – but they also might hire you!

- Public library – The public library is a great resource for job seekers. It has directories for local, state and national organizations, as well as businesses and corporations.

- School-based job-placement offices – There are job-placement offices at private, trade, technical and vocational schools. Some prospective employers notify these schools of openings.

- Trade magazines and journals – Trade magazines and journals often list jobs available in their field.

- Temporary help agencies – Temporary-help agencies are a fast source of income and helpful job experience. The pay may be lower and fewer benefits may be offered. But many times, the temporary job can turn into a full–time job. Look in he yellow pages of your local phone book.

- Volunteer work – Volunteer work shows employers a positive work ethic and may serve as a foot in the door to a potential employer. It is also an excellent chance to network. If you are volunteering for an organization, ask your volunteer coordinator to be a job reference for you.

- Internet – The Internet is fast becoming the most powerful job-search tool. In addition to the links mentioned above under WorkSource, think about the following:
  - Google yourself (or anything else you need to know)
  - Twitter
  - Facebook
  - Craigslist
  - LinkedIn

Don't put anything on the Internet you don't want a potential employer to see.

Networking stands out

One of the most effective ways to find a job is through networking. It also provides the bonus of support and encouragement when you spend time with others who have similar goals and frustrations. We talked about informational interviewing earlier as a type of networking because it opens the door to meeting new people. And just like the informational interview, you want to be prepared, have your questions ready, and respect the time set for your meeting.

Much networking happens informally. You may chat with someone after a class or church. Be prepared at all times to market yourself.

The hidden job market

More than 80 percent of today's jobs aren't advertised, according to experts. Companies are relying more heavily on their current employee networks, or on local or specialized job pools.

Networking helps you build relationships that will stay with you. You will learn more about your career, industry and community. It will put you in front of people who have leads on jobs that haven't been published yet.

Each networking meeting is a chance to tell your story about what you do and who would benefit from your talents. Tell yourself that you are networking not to land a job, but to meet people who can introduce you to others.

Pay it back. You may be out of work, but you can still use your resources to help others. Always thank your network contacts and let them know what happened as a result of their leads.

There are four levels of networking

- Personal network – Family members, friends and neighbors
- Colleague network – Co-workers (past and present) and fellow job seekers
- Professional network – Consultants executives, case managers, professors or people who you contact through your informational interview
- Outer network – People with whom you do not have a personal link, such as sales people, personnel managers, college career counselors or WorkSource staff

Notes

Think of at least two people you can network with from each of the four types above. List them by name in the space below. Include their contact information if you have it.

Personal network (example, sister)	Name & contact Staci works at Starbucks, cell 206-111-5555
Colleague network (example, co-worker at day labor)	Name & contact Marvin, home 206-222-4444
Professional network (example, parole officer)	Name & contact Alfredo, work # 509-333-7777
Outer network (example, WorkSource representative)	Name & contact Ming, work # 509-111-2222

Remember, your network is the best way to find out about hidden jobs. These are jobs that aren't posted or that may not even exist until you talk to the right person.

Back to organization

As you can see, the many ways to look for work vary widely in effectiveness. You should use a combination of strategies to find what works for you. With so many ways to look for work, you must get organized, manage your time, and have a plan for action.

You might want to go back to Chapter 1 and review. Once you start meeting people, setting appointments, sending out applications, and getting back to your contacts, you will need ***to write everything down***. You also will want to keep copies of applications, responses to your questions, information about employers, and so on.

You don't want the one meeting you miss because you didn't write it down to be the "job that got away."

Stay positive

While there may be times when the job search will leave you feeling frustrated, don't ever give in to negative feelings or let them derail you from your goals! The key is to find someone to reinforce your efforts and give you encouragement and suggestions. This is not the time to be around people who complain or who have a negative outlook.

"Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results."
- Willie Nelson

Develop a personal stress management plan

Looking for work can be frustrating and stressful. To stay positive and energized you will want to take care of yourself and deal with your stress.

- Procrastination is stressful. Don't put off for tomorrow what you can do today.
- Begin your day by organizing your tasks.
- Don't rely on memory, make lists, and write everything down.

- Don't take minor rejections too seriously.
- Become more flexible. Laugh at yourself.
- Be prepared to wait. Take reading material and stay occupied.
- Do one thing at a time and focus your attention.
- Count to 10 or 100 or 1,000!
- Know the difference between needs and wants. We need food, water, shelter. Everything else is what we want.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Relax every day and take time to do something you enjoy.

Time to reflect

1. List some places you can begin to look for work.

2. List people you can network with.

3. How will you get organized?

4. When I get stressed, I will call:

   Name _____ Number _____

5. When I get stressed, I will:
   Action: (example: organize my day and write down everything I need to do)

   Action: _____

   Action: _____

   Action: _____

CHAPTER FIVE

Applying for a job

When you find that job you want, how do you apply for it? Generally, you:

- Fill out an application.
- Submit your résumé with a cover letter.
- Follow up with a thank-you note.

Whether you need all three, or one, or a combination depends on the situation and the employer.

Filling out an application

Your first step is to create a generic job application. It will take some time and work on your part to find the information, but do it now. You don't want to end up at an informational interview where the interviewer asks you to fill out an application on the spot – and not have your employment dates or other required information.

Most applications ask for basic information about your job experience and education. This work sheet will help you prepare.

Make sure you follow these rules for completing an application:

- Read all instructions before you start.
- Print neatly with blue or black ink.
- Check your spelling.
- Use key words from the job announcement if you have one. Key words are industry-specific words or action words that you see in job announcements and job descriptions. See page 74 for more information about key words.
- Don't use, "see attached résumé" or "same as above." This shows that you are taking the lazy way out.

Fill out the information below (personal, work, education).

Personal:

Name: _____ Phone #:_____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Work History #1:

Company: _____

Supervisor: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Employment dates: _____ Position: _____

Duties: _____

_____

Work History #2:

Company: _____

Supervisor: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Employment dates: _____ Position: _____

Duties: _____

_____

Work History #3:

Company: _____

Supervisor: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Employment dates: _____ Position: _____

Duties: _____

_____

Work History #4:

Company: _____

Supervisor: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip:_____

Employment dates: _____ Position:_____

Duties: _____

_____

Don't forget other types of training than school. You may have a certificate to drive a forklift or have taken special training, including specialized training, while incarcerated.

Education History #1:

School/Class: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip:_____

Degree/certificate/dates: _____

Education History #2:

School/Class: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip:_____

Degree/certificate/dates: _____

Education History #3:

School/Class: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip:_____

Degree/certificate/dates: _____

The application screens you into an interview. Most employers spend about 15 to 30 seconds on the first screening. That means if it isn't neat or they can't read it or it's not complete, they will screen it out.

Never leave anything blank on your application. If a question does not pertain to you, write NA (not applicable).

Next, employers (or their reviewers) will look at the employment section. They will look at your employment history, dates and relevant experience.

- Make sure your dates are complete and correct. Employers will check the dates and call former employers.
- If you worked while incarcerated, include it. Make sure you include any promotions or advancements.
- List skills that match the skills needed for the job you are applying for.
- List all your skill accomplishments and the contributions you made in your past jobs.
- Use action words (see page 75).

Other items in the employment section:

Salary

Do not list your wages from past employment. Use "will discuss at interview" or "prevailing wage."

Reason for leaving

Some examples of positive reasons for leaving:

- Relocated (can use if you left your job because you went to prison or if your last job listed was your prison job and you are now in the community)
- Desired a career change

- Became a full time student
- Seasonal work
- Advanced to new position
- Job ended
- Laid off or reduction-in-force

Disclosing a felony conviction: Honesty is the best policy

People with felony convictions should be truthful when filling out an application. Employers often do background checks; if you are not truthful, they will find out anyway. Upfront honesty lets you control what people know about a specific conviction. However, there are ways to answer questions about convictions that get you invited back for an interview.

Consider the following.

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? If yes, please explain:

Write: Will explain at interview. I can be bonded.

Background information

Have you been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony within the past ten- (10) years that might unfavorably affect your fitness for this job?
Yes X No If yes, please explain.
Will explain at interview. I can be bonded.

Have you been convicted of a crime within the past 10 years that directly relates to the position for which you are applying?

If the crime you have been convicted of has no direct relationship to the position for which you are applying, you may answer "no." If the answer is yes, you should mark "yes."

For example, you were convicted of forgery and you are applying for a job as a bank teller. You would answer "yes" because your conviction has a direct relationship to the bank teller position.

Please explain your conviction.

Always write "will explain at interview." This keeps your information more private. It's easier to talk about details than to write explanations.

How do I cover time while incarcerated on the Work Experience portion of the application?

List two or three of the jobs that are in line with the job you are applying for. For example, if you worked both in the kitchen and as a janitor, you should list both jobs and list only the year for the dates of employment. Do this even if you moved from facility to facility and from job to job. Highlight any promotions or advancements.

How do I complete the Business Name?

Use the abbreviated name of the corrections facility.

Airway Heights Corrections Center	AHCC
Clallam Bay Corrections Center	CBCC
Cedar Creek Corrections Center	CCCC
Coyote Ridge Corrections Center	CRCC
Larch Corrections Center	LCC
Mission Creek Corrections Center	MCCCW
McNeil Island Corrections Center	MICC
Monroe Correctional Complex	MCC
Olympic Corrections Center	OCC
Pine Lodge Corrections Center for Women	PLCCW
Stafford Creek Corrections Center	SCCC
Washington Corrections Center	WCC
Washington Corrections Center for Women	WCCW
Washington State Penitentiary	WSP

Some typical jobs:

Food Service
Janitorial Service
Maintenance Service
Grounds Maintenance (Community Work Crew/ Laborer)
Clerk (Chapel, Library, Law Library, Food Service, and OES)
Warehouse
Laundry

Greenhouse
Recreation
Forestry Worker

For example, list the business name and your job title: WCC, Food Service.

What about the address?

Do not use P.O. Boxes. Use the street, city, and state for the institution.

What about phone numbers for previous employers?

Get permission to list your last work supervisor's direct phone number. If you don't know it, try to find it. If you can't, list the main number for the facility.

Don't advertise your incarceration. Be truthful in your work history, but your incarceration information is between you and the interviewer, not everyone who sees your application.

References are people who know you and who can tell employers about you and what you can do. On the average, employers check three references for each candidate.

- Select references who you know will speak positively about you.
- Always ask their permission.
- Keep current, accurate contact information for your references.
- Let your references know that they may get a call from an interviewer.
- Give them a copy of your master application or résumés so they are familiar with your job goal.
- Thank them for their help.

Find your references. (Don't use relatives.)

- Previous bosses and supervisors
- People you supervised
- Former co-workers
- Members or leaders of groups you belong to

Employment reference worksheet

Complete the information for at least three references. Have the information ready to give it to employers when they ask.

Name of reference: _____

Job title: _____

Company name: _____

Work address: _____

City, state, zip code: _____

Phone number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Fax number (optional): _____

Title or relationship: _____

Name of reference: _____

Job title: _____

Company name: _____

Work address: _____

City, state, zip code: _____

Phone number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Fax number (optional): _____

Title or relationship: _____

Name of reference: _____

Job title: _____

Company name: _____

Work address: _____

City, state, zip code: _____

Phone number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Fax number (optional): _____

Title or relationship: _____

Create a master application

Your fully completed master application has everything you need to prepare any application completely and quickly. An employer may ask you to fill out an application on the spot. You could be in the reception area or standing at a construction site.

Employers often use online applications, or you may be directed to a computer kiosk. You may run across a Web site while at the WorkSource office or the library. Your master application will save you time and frustration.

Online applications

- Proofread your online application before submitting. Typos aren't any more acceptable online than they are on paper.
- Save your completed online application for your files or print out a copy before submitting. You may need to re-enter data or resubmit.
- Complete all fields.
- Information provided in the online application must match any other information provided. Any data inconsistencies, inaccuracies or misrepresentations may be used to decline an interview in the first place. If you do get hired, they could be used as legal grounds for a disciplinary action.
- Keep track of your online applications. You may want to delete them after you find a job.

Find out more about applications at www.go2worksource.com.

When you pick up an application, dress as if you are going for an interview. You may get an interview right then.

TIP

Sample application

Good

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

This generic application is provided by WorkSource Washington. This form complies with federal and state laws against discrimination; however, employers using this form should check local ordinances. WorkSource Washington and Washington State Employment Security are not responsible for the misuse of information provided on this form. Provide all information requested by printing in ink or typing. Use the 'TAB' key to move through the document.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name (Last)	(First)		(Middle Initial)	Home Telephone
Harrison	Lisa		M	(360) 555 - 4912
Address (Mailing Address)	**(City)**	**(State)**	**(Zip)**	**Other Telephone**
45103 Trimble Street	Olympia	WA	98513	(360) 555 - 4411
E-Mail Address	Are you legally entitled to work in the U.S.? ☒ Yes ☐ No			
lharrison@loa.com				

POSITION

Position Or Type Of Employment Desired	Will Accept:	Shift:
Receptionist	☒ Part-Time ☒ Full-Time ☒ Temporary	☒ Day ☒ Swing ☐ Graveyard ☒ Rotating
Are you able to perform the essential functions of the job you are applying for, with or without reasonable accommodation? ☒ Yes ☐ No		
Salary Desired	**Date Available**	
Prevailing Wage	10/19/2006	

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

High School Graduate Or General Education (GED) Test Passed? ☒ Yes ☐ No
If no, list the highest grade completed

College, Business School, Military (Most recent first)

Name and Location	Dates Attended Month/Year	Credits Earned: Quarterly or Semester Hours	Credits Earned: Other (Specify)	Graduate	Degree & Year	Major or Subject
ABC Business School 9212 Bay Ave Olympia, WA 98506	From 09/96 To 06/97		Certificate	☒ Yes ☐ No	Office Admin 1997	Cert. Office Administration
	From To			☐ Yes ☐ No		
	From To			☐ Yes ☐ No		
	From To			☐ Yes ☐ No		

Occupational License, Certificate or Registration	Number	Where Issued	Expiration Date
Not Applicable (N/A)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Languages Read, Written or Spoken Fluently Other Than English
None

VETERAN INFORMATION (Most recent)

Branch of Service	Date of Entry	Date of Discharge
None		

SPECIAL SKILLS (List all pertinent skills and equipment that you can operate)

(Maximum 300 characters) Multi-line phones, photocopiers, adding machine; very proficient with PC computer software: Windows, MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Publisher, Corel Ventura, Photo Shop, Word Perfect, HMTL web design. Excellent research skills using Internet and search engines such as Google and Map Quest.

WORK EXPERIENCE (Most Recent First) (Include voluntary work and military experience)

Employer Ralsten's Lumber	**Telephone Number** (360) 555 - 1694	**From (Month/Year)** 10/97
Address 2900 Pacific Avenue, Olympia, WA 98503		
Job Title Receptionist/Office staff	**Number Employees Supervised** 0	**To (Month/Year)** 10/2006
Specific Duties (Maximum 350 characters) Answer multi-line phone system, forward calls. Provide excellent customer service. Compile billing records (accounts payable and receivable) into spread sheets. Prepare weekly progress reports for sales representatives. Prepare bank deposits and cash receipts. Assist in monthly inventory. Responsible for opening office on alternate Saturdays.		**Hours Per Week** 40
		Last Salary $11.00 hour
		Supervisor Doris Conley
Reason For Leaving Laid off due to lack of work	**May We Contact This Employer?** ☒ Yes ☐ No	

Employer St. Peter's Church	**Telephone Number** (360) 555 - 2401	**From (Month/Year)** 05/96
Address 1176 Waverly Drive, Olympia, WA 98502		
Job Title Office worker	**Number Employees Supervised** 0	**To (Month/Year)** 10/97
Specific Duties (Maximum 350 characters) Assist the Church secretary to prepare bulletins for distribution at services. Gather information from the Pastor and church members, prioritize information by date, type of announcements using Excel software. Create bulletins using Corel Ventura software. Print and fold bulletins. Deliver for distribution. Answer phones. Other duties as assigned.		**Hours Per Week** 20
		Last Salary $6.00 hour
		Supervisor Evelyn Mller
Reason For Leaving advancement opportunity	**May We Contact This Employer?** ☒ Yes ☐ No	

Employer	**Telephone Number** ( ) -	**From (Month/Year)**
Address		
Job Title	**Number Employees Supervised**	**To (Month/Year)**
Specific Duties (Maximum 350 characters)		**Hours Per Week**
		Last Salary
		Supervisor
Reason For Leaving	**May We Contact This Employer?** ☐ Yes ☐ No	

Employer	**Telephone Number** ( ) -	**From (Month/Year)**
Address		
Job Title	**Number Employees Supervised**	**To (Month/Year)**
Specific Duties (Maximum 350 characters)		**Hours Per Week**
		Last Salary
		Supervisor
Reason For Leaving	**May We Contact This Employer?** ☐ Yes ☐ No	

I certify the information contained in this application is true, correct, and complete. I understand that, if employed, false statements reported on this application may be considered sufficient cause for dismissal.

Signature of Applicant Lisa Harrison **Date** 10-20-10

Interviewer's Comments:

WorkSource Washington and Washington State Employment Security are equal opportunity employers and providers of employment and training services. Auxiliary aids and services are available to persons with disabilities upon request.

Résumés that make a good impression

A résumé contains a summary of your relevant abilities, skills, education, experience and characteristics. An effective résumé will encourage an employer to learn more about you. It may lead to an interview or a request for a complete application. It is typically the first item potential employers come across about you. Remember what they say: the first impression is the most important impression.

Everyone looking for employment should have a résumé.

> *"Equipped with an impressive résumé and a positive attitude, you'll be prepared to face the challenges that lie ahead.*
>
> *- Minnesota Department of Corrections, Adult Pre-Release Handbook*

We can't overstate how important it is that your résumé be top-notch.

Basic guidelines for writing a résumé

- Make sure your résumé is easy to read.
- Be brief. One page is best, but you can use two in order to explain the breadth of your experience. Every word should sell you.
- List relevant information. Do not include your interests unless they relate to the job.
- Stress your accomplishments. Talk about specific results.
- Use key words (see below).
- Your résumé should look professional. Use quality paper, typewritten on a computer, with no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Have a friend or someone at your local WorkSource office read it over.
- Stay away from pictures and odd fonts (like this, *odd font* or like this ODD FONT).
- Don't use colored paper or odd-sized paper.

- Don't include your references. Have those ready on a separate sheet of paper when the employer asks for them.

- Don't include salary information.

Your résumé should answer these questions:

1. Contact information – What is your name and how can an employer reach you?

2. Job objective – What do you want to do?

3. Summary of qualifications – What can you do?

4. Employment history – What have you done?

5. Education – What have you learned?

Experts say to leave off "references available upon request." Hiring managers understand this and writing it on your résumé is a waste of space.

Contact information

List your name, address, phone and e-mail. Make sure the employer can reach you easily.

Job objective

You don't have to list a job objective, but your résumé must include a clear career goal and target a specific job. The job objective lets employers immediately see the kind of position you want. If you are applying for a particular position, include the objective statement and reference the job opening. The hiring manager will see you took the time to tailor your résumé.

Stay away from vague statements like "seeking challenging position where I can grow."

Instead focus on what you can do for the organization. For example, "seeking position in food service where I can use my excellent communication and organizational skills."

Summary of qualifications

List your major qualifications that fit the job announcement. Add anything important that doesn't fit anywhere else. For example, list computer knowledge, foreign language or writing skills.

Employment history

The usual way to write this section is to list your jobs in date order (most recent first). List names, locations, dates employed, duties, skills and achievements. Write clearly and to the point. Use key words and action words. Look in the next section to learn about key words. Don't forget to include volunteer work, especially if it pertains to your career goals.

Education

Include your degrees, including when and where you graduated, your major, your minor, and any certificates, academic awards or honors you achieved. Make sure you use the official name for schools and degrees. Also include industry accreditations and certifications.

Using key words in writing your résumé

There are two kinds of keywords:

- Industry or recruiting keywords for scannable résumés
- Action words that you use to write an effective résumé or application

Many companies use résumé-scanning software. This software scans the résumé and looks for certain key words. It then ranks the résumé based on a match to the key words. This helps employers decide who is a good match for an open position.

How do you figure out which key words to use?

1. Look at the job posting you're applying for as well as other jobs listed by the company. Which words keep popping up?

2. Go to the company Web site and look at its mission and values statements.
3. Look at trade journals or newspaper articles about that industry.

For example, we looked at job descriptions for **auto mechanic** and found these key words: inspect, repair, maintain, service, diagnose problems, and high-technology tools.

Besides job-related key words, use action words in your résumé and application. These words help provide a clear, concise picture of your skills, abilities and experience.

Use the following **action words** in your résumé to describe your skills and accomplishments.

Accomplished	Demonstrated	Identified	Numbered	Repaired
Achieved	Deposited	Implemented	Observed	Replaced
Advanced	Described	Improved	Obtained	Reported
Administered	Designed	Improvised	Opened	Researched
Advised	Developed	Increased	Operated	Retrieved
Analyzed	Directed	Installed	Ordered	Revised
Applied Arranged	Distributed	Instructed	Organized	Routed
Assembled	Documented	Integrated	Outlined	Saved
Assisted Audited	Earned	Interpreted	Packaged Packed	Scheduled
Authorized	Educated	Interviewed	Paid	Secured
Automated	Employed	Introduced	Patrolled	Selected
Balanced	Encouraged	Inventories	Perfected	Served
Billed	Engineered	Investigated	Performed	Serviced
Budgeted	Entertained	Invoiced	Planed	Set up
Built	Established	Issued	Posted	Sold
Calculated	Estimated	Judged	Prepared	Solicited
Cataloged	Evaluated	Justified	Priced	Sorted
Classified	Examined	Kept	Processed	Stocked
Collected	Exchanged	Lectured	Produced	Summarized
Coached	Expanded	Led	Programmed	Supervised
Communicated	Fabricated	Licensed	Proposed	Supplied
Complied	Facilitated	Lifted	Provided	Taught
Completed	Filed	Listed	Purchased	Terminated
Composed	Filled	Loaded	Ran	Tested
Conducted	Fitted	Logged	Rated	Tracked
Constructed	Focused	Mailed	Received	Trained
Consulted	Formulated	Maintained	Recommended	Transferred
Contracted	Founded	Managed	Reconciled	Trimmed
Contributed	Gathered	Manufactured	Recorded	Uncovered
Controlled	Generated	Marketed	Reduced	Used
Converted	Governed	Measured	Referred	Upgraded
Coordinated	Graded	Met	Registered	Utilized
Counseled	Greeted	Modified	Regulated	Verified
Counted	Handled	Monitored	Relayed	Won
Created	Headed	Motivated	Reorganized	Worked
Debated	Helped	Negotiated	Reported	
Delivered	Hired	Notified		

Go back to page 28. You listed your values, strengths, transferrable skills and job skills. You can now use this information to write your objective, your summary of qualifications and your employment history.

Do you want to re-write some of your statements using key words or action words?

Use the space below to practice writing your job objectives or your skills. Look at the sample résumé on the next page for ideas. If you need help writing, you can go to your local WorkSource office. You can also find résumé writing help and ideas on the Internet.

Objective

Skills (summary of qualifications):

Sample Résumé

Your name
123 Main St.
Bellingham, WA 55555
(555) 555-5555
123email@anyprovider.com

Objective

Landscaper position bringing strong experience, credentials and technical skills.

Summary of qualifications

- Knowledgeable of annual color plantings, trees, shrubs, grasses and soil conditions.
- Safely and expertly operate light/heavy duty machinery, lawn maintenance equipment and hand/power tools.
- Use LAN-based handheld terminals for data uploads/downloads.

Professional experience

ABC Company, Yakima, WA May 2010 to present

Landscaper, Grounds and Maintenance Department

- Manage grounds and maintenance operations for large institution.
- Coordinate daily and seasonal requirements and special projects.
- Oversee the design and labor of property-enhancing landscapes and retaining walls.
- Perform repair and preventative maintenance work.
- Supervise vehicle maintenance and DMV requirements.
- Provide on-the-job training of maintenance crews.
- Communicate with co-workers and project managers.
- Maintain light plumbing and electrical work.

Licenses & certifications

State Class B Commercial Driver's License

Getting your résumé out

- Send your résumé to a person. Make the extra effort to find out the name and title of the right person.
- Always send your résumé with a cover letter.
- Have a copy of your résumé with you when you go to an interview.
- When applying for a job with an employment application, you may want to attach your résumé. But, always take time to fill out the application. Never say "see résumé."
- Give a copy of your résumé to your references. It helps them when they talk to an employer about your qualifications.
- Follow up! It's no use sending out your résumé if you do not take the time to follow up.

Writing the cover letter

Job seekers often ask: Do I really need to send a cover letter with my résumé? Not all hiring managers read cover letters, but if you take time to write a good cover letter, you stand a good chance of setting yourself apart. Cover letters are especially effective for people with red flags such as an employment gap.

Hiring managers don't spend a lot time reading cover letters. Follow these tips …to make sure yours gets read.

- Short and easy to read
- No more than one page and three or four paragraphs
- Briefly highlight your skills and experience
- Positive and upbeat
- Free of spelling, typing and grammatical errors
- Specific for each employer or application

The parts of a cover letter

1. Your name, address, phone and e-mail
2. Current date
3. Employer or hiring manager's name, title, company, address
4. The greeting: Dear___:
5. The body, how you heard about the opening, what you have to offer, how you will follow up.
6. Closing: Sincerely,
7. Your signature
8. Your name (typewritten)
9. Enclosure (to let them know your résumé is enclosed)

Sample Cover Letter

#1

Your name
123 Main St.
Bellingham, WA 55555
(555) 555-5555
123email@anyprovider.com

#2

June 1, 2010

#3

Maria Jones
Alliance Services
123 Central Ave.
Seattle, WA 55555

#4

Dear Ms. Jones:

#5

I am writing to apply for the customer service specialist position advertised in the Bellingham News. My professional history and personal values make me an ideal candidate for the position.

In my work with [describe some relevant work accomplishment, education, and strengths in one or two paragraphs.]

With my expertise in working with customers at ABC, I would fit right in with the mission and environment at Alliance Services. I will call you next week to introduce myself. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my qualifications.

#6

Sincerely,

Xavier Rios

#7

Xavier Rios

#8

Enclosure

#9

Writing a thank you note

Just like the cover letter, a well-written thank-you note helps you stand out from the crowd. The thank-you note puts your name in front of the employer again.

Use the same basic method for the thank-you note that you did for the cover letter. See numbers 1-9 on page 79. Follow these tips:

- Send the thank-you note right away.
- Say the specific reason for the thank you.
- Be brief and friendly.
- No spelling, typing or grammatical errors

No matter what, if you plan to provide employers with résumés, cover letters and thank-you notes, they must be high quality. There are many resources to help you.

1. Your local WorkSource office has classes, coaches, computers, copiers, faxes and other resources for job seekers.

2. Your local library has computers, reference materials and copiers.

3. Use the Internet. Search for: résumés, cover letters and so on.

Nothing worthwhile comes easily. Work – continuous work and hard work – is the only way to accomplish results that last.

- Hamilton Holt

Notes

Time to reflect:

1. Do you have a master application? If not, what do you need to do?

2. Do you have at least three references? If not, what do you need to do?

3. Do you have a résumé? If not, where can you get help?

4. Do you have a basic cover letter ready to go?

5. Can you write a thank-you note?

CHAPTER SIX

Interview well and get the job

One important key to success is self confidence. An important key to self confidence is preparation.

- Arthur Ashe

How do you "ace" the interview? ***Prepare, prepare, prepare***! The interview breaks down this way.

Packaging – first impressions	45%

- How you dress
- How you look and act
- How neat and complete your application or résumé is

Responses – how you sell yourself	35%

- What you say to sell yourself
- Your interest in the job or the company
- Your facial expression and verbal answers

Experience – skills and history	10%

- Do you have the basics or more?
- What do you have to offer?
- How you match what the employer is looking for

Miscellaneous – mood and tone	10%

- You don't have control over the interviewer's mood and tone, but you can stay positive and maintain a pleasant tone.

Sell yourself with a good first impression

At some point, you will talk to a hiring manager or employer on the phone. You will conduct research, make cold calls, make network contacts, and schedule meetings and interviews. The phone call often can make the difference between getting an interview or not.

- Always be courteous to whoever answers the phone.
- Wear a smile on the phone – it will come through in your voice
- If you were referred by a mutual contact, give that person's name to the receptionist.
- Be prepared. Know who you want to talk to and what you want to say.
- Make sure there are not distracting noises like crying children, barking dogs or televisions.
- Plan ahead so that if you have to leave a voice mail, you're ready with a clear, concise message – and be sure to include your phone number.

The 60-second commercial

As a job seeker, the more you understand what an employer wants, the better you will be able to highlight your best skills and abilities.

The 60-second commercial is YOU! It is your chance to tell an employer who you are and what you have to offer in a fast and effective way. It answers the two most often-asked interview questions.

1. "Why should I hire you?"
2. "Tell me about yourself."

You can use the commercial at a job fair, on the telephone, at an interview or as a networking pitch.

Your commercial should highlight the five most important things you want an employer to know. You should base your statements on what you know about the employer. You might use your work history, your skills or your education. Here's an example.

Hello,

My name is Chris Smith. I am looking for a position as a forklift operator in a warehouse. I have operated forklifts as part of my regular job for six years. I have successfully completed a safety course for forklift operators and have been certified as a safety instructor. I can maneuver large equipment safely and effectively in tight spaces and have never had an accident.

I am skilled in warehouse cataloging, packaging requirements, and standard weight requirements for palletizing boxes and other materials. I can correctly and accurately complete and maintain shipping and receiving records and other standard warehouse documents.

My last employer awarded me "Most Reliable Employee" for perfect attendance

Write and practice your own 60-second commercial. Review your values, strengths and skills on page 31 and 32. Refer to your master application and your résumé, if you have them. If not, use your commercial to help you get started. Most important – practice giving your commercial in front of a mirror or to a friend or family member.

60-second commercial:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How to look your best

Dress conservatively. Make sure you look neat and clean. Try to find out how people who work there dress. Dress slightly nicer for the interview than you would to work. So if blue jeans are the standard, wear black jeans or khakis to the interview.

- Focus on neat and clean – clothes pressed and fit well, shoes shined, hair combed, teeth brushed, freshly showered.
- Women avoid – flip-flops; showy jewelry; low-cut, tight or short apparel; very high heels; exposed undergarments; showing tattoos or body piercings.
- Men avoid – earrings or bracelets, unbuttoned shirts, novelty ties, showing tattoos or body piercings.
- Avoid – too much perfume or aftershave, smelling of cigarettes or alcohol.

Arrive at the interview early and prepared

- Plan your schedule and route so you arrive at the interview 10 to 15 minutes early. You might even drive by or take the bus the day before to make sure you have the right location. Stop by the restroom for one last look at yourself.
- Go to the interview alone.
- Turn off your cell phone.
- Have a back-up plan for transportation or child care, if necessary.
- Bring a black pen, extra copies of your résumé and your reference list. Also bring a pad of paper to take down the name of the interviewer so you know who to send your thank-you letter to.
- Introduce yourself politely using your first and last name and the first and last name of the person you are to see. (Remember, employers often ask the receptionist their opinion of the applicants).
- Stand up straight, shake hands, make eye contact, smile.

Practice shaking hands. A weak or too firm handshake makes a negative impression. Your handshake should last about two seconds.

Non-verbal messages

Eye contact – Looking the person in the eye shows sureness, openness and honesty. Keep your head up. Make occasional eye contact during the interview.

Voice – Make your voice clear and loud enough to hear across the room. Practice speaking clearly. Use good grammar (no prison or jail slang). Breathing deeply helps you feel and sound more relaxed.

Facial expression – A slight smile and open eyes make you look smart, alert and friendly. Practice the look in front of the mirror.

Posture – Walk tall, sit forward in your chair, keep your back and shoulders straight.

Mannerisms – Notice nervous behaviors that you fall into. Avoid tapping your fingers, playing with your hair, wriggling your feet, or tapping your toes. Use your hands to emphasize what you are saying, but don't be too wild.

Here are some reasons employers give for not hiring an applicant.

- Sarcastic or defensive responses.
- Boastful or "know it all" attitude.
- Over-aggressive or high-pressure type.
- Makes excuses or lies about unfavorable facts in record.
- Seem unprepared for interview – late, cannot answer questions.
- Poor grooming or personal appearance.
- Immature or ill-mannered behavior.
- Speaks negatively of former co-workers or others.
- Lazy or low energy.

- Talks about personal problems.
- Radical ideas – politics, religion, dress, lifestyle.
- Seems overly concerned about salary and benefits.
- Shows no interest in the company or the job.
- Doesn't ask any questions about the job.
- Poor work history – a "job hopper."
- Fails to make eye contact.
- Limp handshake.

During the interview

- Let the interviewer start. Listen carefully.
- Avoid interrupting, even if the interviewer does most of the talking.
- Ask questions if you don't understand something.
- Be positive and upbeat in your remarks.
- Avoid complaining about a previous job or employer.
- Tell the employer about your skills. If you don't, no one else will. Don't make the employer work harder than you.
- Welcome all questions and give direct, honest answers. Take your time.

  Develop the answer in your head before you speak.
- Plan ahead for tough questions and practice your answers before the interview.
- Practice the middle way. Describe enough detail so the employer gets a clear picture of your skills or how you handled a situation. Do NOT run on and on.

Interview phases

Many (but not all) interviews follow natural stages. Knowing these stages helps you feel comfortable and ready as each step comes up.

Introductory stage: the interviewer has the lead.

- A brief hello and handshake.
- Interviewer attempts to help you feel at ease.
- Interviewer gives general history and explains the job.

Inquiry stage (the longest): the interviewer has the lead.

- The interviewer asks questions to find out who you are and what you are looking for.
- The interviewer is looking for what you can do for the company.
- Refer to your past job successes, personal abilities and give examples.
- Watch for clues that reveal problems you can help solve.

Marketing stage: the applicant takes the lead

- This is a good time to use your 60-second commercial.
- Show how your abilities and past work can help the company.
- Deliver your incarceration speech. See the next page.
- Show interest in the job - why you would like to work for this company.
- Ask the questions you have planned ahead of time.

Closure:

- Ask how the company will choose the person to be hired.
- Discuss the salary range of the job (if it is brought up).
- Plan your follow-up (arrange to call at a certain time and day).
- Let the interviewer know again - briefly and strongly - why you want the job.
- Thank the interviewer for his or her time and courtesy.
- Be aware of the time (don't stretch it out) and leave politely.

It is critical that you disclose your incarceration during the marketing stage of the interview, even if the interviewer does not bring it up.

Talk about your criminal history with the employer

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and bonding

When you talk about your incarceration, it's important to tell employers about some possible **benefits** that they might not know about.

> *"It is the set of the sails, not the direction of the wind that determines which way we will go."*
> *- Jim Rohn*

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

The WOTC offers a federal tax credit to employers as an incentive to hire people in specific target groups. This group includes ex-felons hired within one year of release date. Employers may lower their federal tax liabilities by up to $2,400 on the first year per eligible new hire. The Washington State Employment Security Department handles the WOTC. See the **Resources** section for more information.

Washington State Bonding Program

This program provides a fidelity bond for anyone with a criminal record or other barriers that prevent a commercial bonding company from covering them. There are no forms to fill out. The bond insurance applies to any job and covers any employee dishonesty that occurs on or away from the employer's facility. See the Resources section for more information.

Use the blanks in the sample below to write out how you can talk about your criminal history.

There is something that you have the right to know:

In (year)_____, I made a poor choice and was convicted

of_____.

At the time my judgment was clouded by_____
But I am putting that behind me now!

I admit that this was a serious error in my judgment and **I want to assure you that I have changed.**

(Say how, use key words): _____

_____

I worked while I was incarcerated as a _____
and learned how to: (say what, use key wods)_____

_____

There are some advantages you are eligible for if you decide to hire me.

1. I can be bonded for up to $25,000.

2. As an employer, you may receive up to a $2,400 federal tax credit for the first $6,000 in wages you pay me.

I am aware that my past actions may cause you to question my judgment, but I am prepared to do whatever it takes to prove that I am a reliable and capable employee.

What can an employer ask about my incarceration?
Prospective employers may inquire about arrests – whether charges are still pending, have been dismissed or led to conviction. If the crimes relate reasonably to the job duties, and the convictions (or release from prison or jail) occurred within the last 10 years, these questions need a response.

CAUTION: Don't let the employer drag you into talking at length about what goes on in an institution or the crime. That is not the purpose of your interview session.

- Keep your answers simple and clear (vague answers sound like you're hiding things). Simply state, "I had to wake up at 5:30 each morning. Then I prepared for work. After that, it was pretty much like any other job. I met and sometimes exceeded production quotas and followed the directions of the supervisors."

- Keep your answers brief.

Notes

_____

_____

Conviction Response

How will you respond when asked the question……..
"Have you ever been convicted of a felony?"

When you find this question on a job application, you might wonder how to answer.

If you put "yes," you might get screened out of a job interview.

If you put "no," you might get the job, but when the background check comes back you will find yourself out of a job because you have misrepresented yourself.

We suggest that you put "will discuss in interview." If nothing else, you may get the employer thinking about what it is you have to say, and at least you will get your foot in the door and have the opportunity to "sell yourself."

COPE

Comfort the employer. Let the employer know that your offense did not happen on the job. For example, "Yes, I was convicted of a felony, but it was not job-related." If your felony was job-related, you may need to get individual assistance to address this.

Own it. There was a time in my life when I was making some bad choices and I was convicted of (state your offense). Do not add what degree it was and do not go into detail regarding your offense. If you have more than one offense, you may want to address that by saying something like…"I have more than one felony conviction, but my most recent offense is _____."

Positives. "I thought a lot about where my life was going and I decided to make some changes." Now is the time to talk about what you have accomplished since your conviction, such as education, treatment, previous employment, and so on.

Encourage the employer. "I am a good worker and I want to work, I just need an opportunity to prove my skills to an employer." Tell them that you want the job!!

Developed by the Wilder Foundation JobsFirst program (2006)

Questions job candidates can expect

Prepare yourself with answers to the standard questions interviewers ask. Here are some sample questions for you to think about.

1) Tell me about yourself.
   a) Go straight to a discussion of how your skills and abilities match the job. Have at least three clear examples.

2) What kind of work are you looking for?
   a) Answer as specifically as you can for this employer.

3) What did you like least about your previous job (or boss)?
   a) Answer honestly, but in a positive manner.

4) What did you like most about your previous job (or boss)?
   a) Answer specifically, for example, "I love reorganizing the company's filing system."

5) What one area of your performance do you struggle with?
   a) Try to make your struggle sound like a strength without "bluffing" the employer. For example, "I get upset with myself when my work turns out to be not totally up to my standards."

Your answers to interview questions must be: positive, to the point, and highlight what you bring to the job. Tell them what you can do for them.

Fill in your own answers to these questions.

6) What is the most useful criticism you've received?
   a) _____

7) What processes did you improve at your last job?
   a) _____

8) What frustrates you at work and what do you do about it?
   a) _____

10) Tell me about a time when you had to adapt to change quickly.

a) _____

11) What are your key qualities for this position?

a) _____

12) How has your current position prepared you for this job?

a) _____

13) Have you ever been fired? Why?

a) _____

14) What are your three most effective accomplishments at work?

a) _____

15) Tell me about a time when your communication skills had an impact.

a) _____

Answering personal questions

A lot of people report that they were asked personal questions that don't pertain to the job or may be illegal to ask. How do you answer these? You could just answer the question.

You could tell the interviewer that the question is illegal or off limits, but this will likely annoy him or her. If you refuse to answer, you may lose out on the job. Don't be afraid to say, "I've never been asked a question like that before. Can I think about it for a minute?" The interviewer will respect your honesty and your habit of thinking before you speak.

As an alternative, you may say with a smile that you don't believe that question would have any effect on your ability to do a good job.

If possible, try to have your answer relate back to some aspect of the job.

Questions you may ask the employer

Most interviews end with the employer asking you if you have any questions.

- Could you tell me a little more about the job? What is the average day like?
- Could you describe the ideal candidate for this job?
- Where would I be working? What are the hours?
- Is this a permanent position?
- When do you plan to make your decision?
- Who would be my direct supervisor?
- What is the five- to 10-year plan for the company, and how does this position fit into those plans?
- What is the hiring process? Will you have a second interview?
- Never ask about salary or benefits unless the interviewer brings up the subject or until you are offered the job. Do have an idea of what salary you would accept if it comes up.

Close the interview by asking for the job – close the deal – or a time when you can call back to check on your application.

Some interviews require a test

Usually, the job announcement will say if you have to take a test. Employers use several kinds of selection and job fitness tests.

- Aptitude tests predict your ability to learn and perform job tasks.
- Skills test measure your knowledge of and ability to perform a job (like a typing test).
- Literacy tests measure your math and reading levels.
- Physical tests measure strength, flexibility, stamina, and speed for jobs that require physical performance.

- Drug tests indicate the presence of drugs that could impair job performance or threaten the safety of others.

Do your best to prepare for the test. If you are taking a construction test, review construction books and blueprints.

- Make a list of everything you need for the test (pencil, calculator, glasses). Check that you have everything before you leave.
- Get a good night's sleep before the test.
- If you have any physical difficulties, tell the test administrator.
- If you don't understand the test instructions, ask for help before the test begins.
- Don't linger over difficult questions. Work as fast as you can.
- You may be able to retake the test. Ask about the retesting policy.

After the interview

Send a thank-you note right after the interview to the people or person who interviewed you. This note may get you the job. Use the thank-you note to include information from the interview that you want to add. Go back to page 81 to see how to write a thank-you note.

If the employer gave you a time to check back, ***do so***.

Notes

Time to Reflect:

1. Do you have a 60-second commercial?

2. Do you have interview clothes?

3. Are you confident and ready to speak to an interviewer about your skills and experience?

4. Can you answer questions about your conviction history? Do you know about bonding and the WOTC?

5. Do you know what questions you may ask an employer?

6. Can you "close the deal?"

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120
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CHAPTER 7

Keep working and moving ahead

"The person who goes farthest is generally the one who is willing to do and dare. The sure-thing boat never gets far from the shore"
- Dale Carnegie

How to keep a job

You will work hard to get a job. You can do things to increase your chances of success on that new job. If you want to do well, you may need to change the way you act and some of your attitudes. Employers say more people lose their job because they do not use good work habits rather than because they can't do the job.

Good work habits are vital to holding your new job and moving ahead. Keep in mind the two A's: Attendance & Attitude.

Employers consistently mention attendance and attitude as the most important work habits.

1. Show up every day on time. Set an alarm clock, leave early. Reliability and dependability gain the trust and respect of your employers and co-workers.

2. Have a positive "can do" attitude. Do not carry negative feelings into your new workplace. Put a smile on your face and you will feel better.

3. Follow all employee rules, policies and procedures. If there is an employee handbook, read it. Make a commitment to be the best you can be.

4. Follow directions and get along with your supervisor. In a battle with your supervisor, you will always lose. This is one of the top reasons people get fired.

5. **Learn the job inside and out.** Become an expert. Be open to new ways of doing things, even if you were taught differently in school or on a different job.

6. **Show interest** in your work by doing everything to the best of your ability. Try coming up with solutions before asking for help.

7. **Work efficiently.** Working too slowly or making too many mistakes is another major reason for job failure.

8. **Treat co-workers with respect, courtesy and dignity.** Know your employer's harassment policy. Monitor your own behavior and act early if you feel you have been placed in an uncomfortable position.

Communication

1. Ask for help. If you make a mistake, admit it and work to correct it. Ask questions if you don't understand instructions and listen carefully to the answers.

2. Before making any changes to the way you do your work, discuss it with your supervisor.

3. When you need to talk to your supervisor, ask when would be a good time to meet.

4. Follow the chain of command. Discuss items with your immediate supervisor first.

Getting along with others

1. Treat everyone with courtesy and respect.

2. Be a team player. Offer to help. Try to fit in with the team.

3. Always be friendly to everyone. Go the extra mile.

4. Do not express your opinion, biases, or prejudices about others while at work. Respect differences.

5. Accept criticism as constructive. Do not become defensive or take criticism personally.

6. Find a mentor, someone who knows the company and the job well enough to show you the ropes.

7. Show appreciation. Let your supervisor and co-workers know you appreciate their training, support and feedback.

8. Be willing to do more than you are asked to do.

Personal

1. Be clean and well groomed. Wear clean and job-appropriate clothes. Avoid strong perfumes or colognes.

2. Find positive, upbeat co-workers as new friends. Avoid negative, critical and gossiping people.

3. Keep your personal life and problems at home. If you are having trouble working out personal problems, use counseling, support groups or employee assistance programs.

4. Before starting the job, try to have all appointments with doctors, dentists, and so on out of the way. Have your transportation and child care lined up so you do not immediately have to take time off. Have an emergency plan for child care and transportation.

5. Be patient with yourself and your employer. It takes time to get used to a new job and to like it.

Notes

Handling mistakes

"Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new."
- Albert Einstein

We all make mistakes, large and small. Remember the following when the inevitable mistake occurs.

- First, take a deep breath. Do not run, hide, get angry or blame others. Move from "stewing" about what you can't undo to figuring out what needs to be done next.
- Figure out what went wrong, how it went wrong, and what to do about it. Think clearly and gather information so that you can solve the problem and make amends.
- Be a problem-solver. Whether it was a minor embarrassment or a major disaster, think of yourself as a problem-solver and explain to your supervisor how you will avoid a repeat.
- Apologize and accept responsibility. Grace under fire can win you new respect.
- Deal with it right away. The longer you wait to deal with a mistake, the harder it will be to correct it.

Handling frustration

1. Realize and be aware that you will run into things that frustrate you. Keep in mind what you want to achieve and why it is important to you.
2. Look at big and little failures as feedback. See them as chances to learn what doesn't work.
3. Develop a positive attitude. Find something that keeps you going.
4. Break down the hassles of normal life into smaller more manageable problems. Handle the first things first.

Handling conflict

Conflict is a normal part of life. Everyone runs into problems at some point.

- Don't fight to win. Work to solve the problem. Negotiate a solution.
- Make sure you understand what the conflict is about.
- Don't blame others for problems you are having with someone else. Talk directly to the person about what is bothering you.
- Think before you speak. Talk in a way to be helpful, not harmful.
- Listen to what the other person has to say. Just because you listen does not mean that you agree. It means you want to understand.
- When the conflict ends, drop it. Forgive, forget and move on.

What would you do if the following happened to you?

Your family has expectations of you that you are not certain you can meet, but you want to please them. You want to prove that you have made positive changes. What do you do?

_____

_____

A bunch of co-workers go out drinking after work. You want to stay sober and don't want to go along. When you try to say you don't want to go, they give you a hard time. What do you do?

_____

_____

Your supervisor criticizes you for something, but you don't agree that you did anything wrong and you're not really sure what the problem is. What do you do?

One way to stay on course is to make up a "stay free" talk to remind you of your goals. Write your talk in any form (prose, poetry, rap song, native language) and in any length. Use powerful words that mean something to you. Read it over and over until you memorize it.

Say the talk:

1. When you wake up in the morning.
2. Several times during the work day.
3. When criminal or relapse thinking occurs.
4. When you feeling frustrated or angry.
5. When you go to bed.

Notes

My Stay Free Talk

by Michael Redtree

I want to be like the wind
Free with nothing that can hold me back
I want to be like my ancestors
  that I feel beside me
Running Horse and True Man
Honest and trusted by everyone
I want to be on the path of success
By keeping this job and doing it well
This job that will make my children proud of me
David, Elisa and River
Proud of their free and honest working father

Today I may be tempted many times
To betray these words
But I will not go down the path of destruction
I have been there too many times
I will not lose this job
I will not betray my children, my ancestors
And my dreams
I will not let the wind of my spirit go behind bars again
where there is no job and no future

I am too strong now to take that path again
I am filled with the strength of my progress
I have held this job longer
 than I have ever held any job
I will hold it even longer
 with the strength I get
 from the power of my ancestors
 and from the love of my children
I am too strong to do wrong!

I stand here holding their pictures
Looking into their eyes
I will make my ancestors and children proud
I will end this day with a job, with pride, with peace and with my freedom!
Like the wind this will touch all of us!!

Managing your money

The most important rule of money management involves deciding what you want and what you need. What do you have to buy right now? What can you put off?

"You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, you might find that you get what you NEED!"
- The Rolling Stones

Use these money management tips to stay in control of your money.

- Set a goal. Start small. Maybe you want to just pay your bills at the end of the month. Do you want to save for a deposit on an apartment? It doesn't hurt to have a long-term goal like saving for retirement. Give yourself time.

- Know exactly what you have. Before you can live within your means, you need to know exactly what you have. Count the cash in your pocket or purse, piggy bank, bank account and so on.

- Track your income. Keep pay stubs and add them up. Write down your income for each month.

- Track your spending. Once you know what money you have and what your income is, you need to find out where your money goes.

Record everything. Get a notebook and record every bill payment and everything on which you spend money (include the amount, who you paid, or the name of the store). No item is too small. Write down the expenses you know you have every month (rent, phone and so on). Once you have recorded everything for a month or two, you can make a spending and savings plan.

Stretch your paycheck with these money-saving tips:

- Plan ahead and shop around.
- Compare prices before you buy. Check ads, clip coupons, use thrift stores.
- Make a list before you shop. Don't shop for food when you are hungry.
- Take care of material possessions so they last longer.
- Pay all bills on time to avoid late fees and finance charges.

Use the sample monthly budget on the next two pages to start managing your money.

Notes

Income

Wages & tips	
Bonuses	
Other income	
Other income	
Total Income	

Expenses

Housing	Projected cost	Actual cost	Difference
Rent or mortgage			
Phone			
Electricity			
Gas			
Cable/computer			
Garbage/recycle			
Maintenance/repairs			
Supplies			
Other			
Total			
Food			
Groceries			
Restaurants			
Other			
Total			
Transportation			
Vehicle payment			
Bus/taxi			
Insurance			
Licensing			
Fuel			
Maintenance			
Other			
Other			
Total			
Pets			
Food			
Medical			
Other			
Total			

Personal care	Projected cost	Actual cost	Difference
Hair			
Health club			
Clothing purchases			
Dry cleaning/repairs			
Toiletries & cosmetics			
Other			
Total			
Medical			
Insurance			
Medicine			
Hospital, doctor, dentist			
Other			
Total			
Recreation & entertainment			
Admissions			
Sporting goods			
Games & hobbies			
Vacations			
Other			
Total			
Personal			
Books, magazines, papers			
Tuition & course fees			
Charity, church			
Gifts			
Day care			
Other			
Total			
Savings & legal			
Long term savings			
Emergency funds			
Taxes			
Union dues			
Legal services			
Loan repayment			
Life insurance			
Other			
Total			
Total Expenses			

Credit reports

A credit report shows how much debt you have, whether you have made payments on time, or if you have not paid back some loans. By law, U.S. residents are entitled to one free copy of their credit report once every 12 months. This information is available at the only government-sanctioned credit reporting Web site, www.annualcreditreport.com, or by calling 877-322-8228.

Lenders use this information to decide if you can borrow money. Some employers also check your credit rating before making a hiring decision. See Resources for more information.

Trouble paying your debts? Call your creditors to discuss your problem. Or consider going to a nonprofit credit counseling organization to help with a re-payment plan.

Create a healthy lifestyle

Your physical health can have a major effect on your re-entry into the community. If you are tired, run down or don't feel well, it's harder to take all the steps necessary to keep your life on track.

Exercise three to five times per week.

- Walk everywhere you can. Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Cut down on watching TV.
- Play a recreational sport (soccer, basketball)
- Take a yoga class for stretching and strength

Reduce your risk of disease.

- Quit smoking or chewing tobacco.
- Get a physical and follow your doctor's recommendations on diet or medication.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Practice moderate or no consumption of alcohol. If you have had problems with alcohol or drugs in the past, join AA or NA or work with a qualified counselor.

Eat right. Go to www.mypyramid.gov to learn more.

"If you have health, you probably will be happy,
and if you have health and happiness,
you have all the wealth you need, even if it is not all you want."
- Elbert Hubbard

USDA's **MyPyramid** symbolizes a simple, personalized approach to making healthy food choices and being physically active every day.

Activity: Activity is represented by the steps and the person climbibg them, as a reminder of the importance of daily physcial activity

Moderation: Now all the food group bands run from the top of the pyramid to the base. The wider base stands for foods with little or no solid fats or added sugars, these should be selected more often. The narrower top represents foods with more sugars and solid fats. The more active you are, the more of these foods you can fit into your diet.

Proportionality: The different widths of the bands show how much food you should eat from each food group. The widths are just a general guide, not exact proportions. Check the Web site for how much is right for you.

Variety: Variety is symbolized by the six bands representing the five food groups and oils. This illustrates that foods from all groups are needed each day for good health.

Grain
Make half your grains whole. Eat at least 3 oz. of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta everyday.

Vegetable
Vary your veggies. Eat more dark green veggies like broccoli, spinach,and other dark l eafy greens. Eat more orange vegetables like carrots and sweet potatoes. Eat more dry beans and peas like pinto beans, kidney beans, and lentils.

Fruit
Focus on fruits. Eat a variety of fruit. Choose fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruit. Go easy on fruit juices.

Milk
Get your calcium-rich foods. Go low-fat or fat-free when you choose milk, yogurt, and other milk products. Ifyou don't or can't consume milk, choose lactose-free products or other calcium sources such as fortified foods and beverages.

Meat &Beans
Go lean with protein. Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry. Bake it, broil it, or grill it. Vary your protein routine — choose more fish, beans,peas, nuts, and seeds.

Time to reflect

1. Do you know what it takes to be successful in the workplace?

2. Do you have a plan to handle conflict and frustration at work?

3. Will you write "My Stay Free Talk" and use it every day?

4. Can you put together a simple budget and stick to it?

5. Do you know what steps to take for getting and staying healthy?

Resources

2-1-1 – Washington Information Network (WIN). The site contains more than 5,000 health and human-service providers. Use the Web site or dial 2-1-1 from anywhere to find services in your community. www.win211.org/

4people – 4people provides online resources for those in need in every community in Washington state. www.4people.org/

Annual credit report – This central site allows you to request a free credit report once every 12 months from each of the nationwide consumer credit reporting companies. www.annualcreditreport.com/cra/index.jsp

You also can call 877-322-8228 and request a free credit report.
You can contact the three major credit agencies directly at
http://www.creditinfocenter.com/creditreports/CreditBureauContactInfohtm.shtml

Apprenticeships – In Washington state, contact the Department of Labor & Industries for information.
www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Apprenticeship/default.asp.

You can get information from your local WorkSource office listed in the blue pages of your phone book, from union locals listed in the white pages of the phone book, or from the Internet site: http://www.doleta.gov/jobseekers/apprent.cfm

Bonding program – Information on the Washington state bonding program that helps ex-offenders get and keep a job. www.bonds4jobs.com/index.html. Find information about the Washington state bonding program at:
www.wa.gov/esd/oes/bond/default.htm.

Certificates of birth, death, marriage, or divorce – Contact information is listed on the Department of Health's "Center for Health Statistics" Web site.
www.doh.wa.gov/EHSPHL/CHS/issuing_co.htm

Community Action Council – Find the Community Action Council for your area. The site includes programs such as energy assistance, affordable housing and more.
www.wapartnership.org/index.html

Child support – Contact the Department of Social & Health Services' Division of Child Support for child-support information. www.dshs.wa.gov/dcs/

Clear criminal record (record expungement) – Find information about clearing criminal records and other self-help legal information. www.Washingtonlawhelp.org

Criminal history/criminal records – A Guide on When and How to Challenge, Seal, Vacate or Expunge.
www.courts.wa.gov/newsinfo/resources/?fa=newsinfo_jury.criminal&altMenu=crim

Criminal history/records - A Guide on When and How to Seal/Vacate Non-Violent Class B or C Felony Convictions Occurring On or After July 1, 1984
www.lawhelp.org/documents/1988619910EN.pdf?stateabbrev=/WA/

Driver license - The Department of Licensing has information on how to obtain or renew your driver's license (360-902-3900) www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/

Domestic violence – Call the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV) hotline at 800-562-6025. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233.The Web site has information on services and shelters for victims of domestic violence. http://www.wscadv.org/getHelpNow.cfm

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) – The EITC is a tax credit for people who work and have low wages. A tax credit usually means more money in your pocket and reduces the amount of tax you owe.Call 888-434-8248 for English or 866-942-3890 for Spanish.
www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=96466,00.html

Education – There are a variety of resources listed below. Look in the blue pages of your local phone book for more information.

State Board for Community & Technical Colleges – find the community or technical college for your area. Learn about career training, short term training and financial aid. www.sbctc.ctc.edu/general/c_index.aspx

Post-Prison Education Program, Inc. – Provides advocacy and support for people who want to go to college after prison. www.postprisonedu.org

Seattle Education Access (SEA) – Provides low-income people with academic advising, career counseling, mentoring and tutoring. www.seattleeducationaccess.org

NELA Center for Student Success – Provides free academic advising and college planning. www.nela.net/Centers/Pages/CenterHome.aspx

Employment Security Department – The Washington State Employment Security Department maintains the Offender Employment Services (OES) program. OES supports offender re-entry by delivering employment services statewide through local WorkSource offices. Within Department of Correction facilities, OES staff provide pre-employment skills training and connections to re-entry services in the community. Call 800-339-3981 or online at www.wa.gov/esd/oes.

Food stamp program – To learn how to apply for food stamps, visit www.fns.usda.gov/fsp or call 800-221-5689.

Immigration – Contact the US Immigration Support at www.usimmigrationsupport.org/contact.html

JOBLINE – JOBLINE is a free public service provided by state agencies. Go online at www.jobline.net or call 800-414-5748.

Medical assistance – For information on medical assistance, contact the public health department at the location where you are released. You can find its number in the blue pages of the local phone book under county health or public health. For a statewide map of local health departments, go to www.doh.wa.gov/lhjmap/lhjmap.htm

Military discharge (DD214) - Most veterans and their next-of-kin can obtain free copies of their DD214 and medical records. www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/get-service-records.html

National Hire Network – One of the best sources of information on employment and re-entry. www.hirenetwork.org. Click on Resources & Assistance to find resources for every state.

Occupational licenses – Find information on occupational licenses in Washington state. www.dol.wa.gov/listoflicenses.html

One-stop career centers – Learn the location of the one-stop career center closest to where you live by going online to www.servicelocator.org or by calling 877-348-0502. In Washington state, the one-stop career centers are called WorkSource. Find one online at www.Go2WorkSource.com

Passport denial – For information on denial of a passport. www.acf.hh.gov/programs/cse/newhire/fop/passport.htm www.vippassports.com/reasons_for_passport_denial.htm

Records self request – Use this form to request your employment records from the Washington State Employment Security Department. The form is available at your local WorkSource office or go to www.esd.wa.gov/newsandinformation/formsandpubs/request-records-self.pdf.

Salvation Army – Help with basic needs, domestic violence, youth programs and more. Look in the white pages of your local phone book.

Selective Service – Find information and register for Selective Service (military draft) online at www.sss.gov

Social and Health Services - Community Service Offices are located throughout Washington State. They offer help with food, cash assistance, medical needs, mental health, treatment for addictions and more. Look in the blue pages of the phone book or online www.dshs.wa.gov.

Social Security Administration – Information about retirement, survivors and disability benefits and the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. Also has information on how to get a new or replacement social security card. Call 800-772-1213 or go to www.ssa.gov

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) – SSI benefits are for people who are 65 or older, blind, or disabled, and who have low income and few resources. No SSI benefits are payable for any month that you are in a jail, prison or certain other public institutions. See Social Security Administration above.

Veterans programs – Veterans should contact their local veterans' affairs office (listed in the blue pages of the phone book). Go to www.va.gov or call 800-827-1000. Note: Veterans must have an honorable or general discharge to receive services. More resources at www.esd.wa.gov/findajob/specialprograms/veterans-services.php and www.dva.wa.gov/incarcerated_project.html

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) – This is a federal tax credit that encourages employers to hire targeted groups of job seekers by reducing the employer's federal income tax. Contact your local WorkSource office for more information (see below). You can call 800-339-3981 or 360-438-4151. Go online www.wa.gov/esd/oes.

WorkSource – Washington state's WorkSource career centers provide a wide variety of programs and help for job seekers and employers. Look in the blue pages of your local phone book for the office nearest you. Go online www.Go2WorkSource.com.

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