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From the Desk of Michael Kissinger

Re: Jobs for Felons

Dear Follow Veteran,

Please find our preliminary report on Jobs for Felons! We know getting a job can be difficult.

Here is some of the preliminary information we found that may help you get employed.

- Felons are in Need of Work All Over the U.S.

Today over 1 in 8 people are convicted felons and almost 1/3 of those felons were first time offenders. Our society is made to believe that all felons are bad people and don't have the ability to change for the better and contribute to society in a positive way.

Most felons have families, bills, and the same problems we all face in everyday life. The system, which is made to protect us and teach us to become law abiding citizens, continues to fail us and repress us from living that American Dream.

Most felons learn their lesson usually after their first offense, but some continue to go through the revolving door. Once your classified as a felon, your chances for getting a good paying job are cut completely off. Some felons are people with college degrees or have the skills to run successful businesses, and have to settle for minimum wage, dead end jobs that won't even pay a third of the everyday bills and expenses they have.

Don't get me wrong, there are a lot of felons out there with ulterior motives and no will to change. Child molesters, rapist, murderers, and drug traffickers / dealers are among the worst felons in our communities. I'm referring to the less serious kind of felon who was peer pressured or forced in a way to commit crimes. The real good hearted. There are also some felons who feel doomed, and do all they can to survive - even if it means breaking the law. Although there are also felons out there who want to do right and are never given the chance, even after all their dues are paid to society.

- Felons and Second Chances

The United States Penal System and that of many states claims that part of its mission is to reform and rehabilitate those who are incarcerated and return them to society as productive individuals who contribute to society. The harsh reality is that society does not willingly accept those reformed individuals back into the workforce - most employers will not hire felons, regardless of how much their life has changed.

Felons - or rather, people who have a felony in their past, are punished for the remainder of their life for their mistakes and wrongdoings of the past, no matter how far in the past those mistakes may be. For instance, a young man is charged with possession of a narcotic. He is sentenced to one year in jail. This young man serves his time and prepared to never look back. He has changed his ways and learned from his mistakes. However in the public eye, he is now and forever a felon.

This same young man returns home and prepares to start his life anew. He begins looking for employment. The applications all ask the same thing "have you ever been convicted of a felony"? He has two choices, lie and hope they don't check, which will mean he lives forever in fear of being discovered, or tell the truth and inevitably be turned down for employment.

Hundreds of thousands of people are faced with this every day. There are many crimes which are considered felons which happen one time and are never repeated; crimes committed in a person's youth which are outgrown; crimes committed during periods of mental anguish which are a onetime event that do not recur when the person is treated. Yet, these people are forever doomed to be one of the last ones considered for even the lowest paying of jobs, if they are considered at all.

When sent to prison, felons are put into groups for rehabilitation; they are given the chance for education and even taught a trade - electrical, plumbing, welding, and more. They receive high school diplomas, certificates of achievement and sometimes even degrees. Yet, for the most part, these are worth no more than the paper on which they are printed.

- The Benefits of Employing Convicted Felons

Many Tax Credits Available to Prospective Employers Who Hire Employees with Criminal Records.

With unemployment skyrocketing to proportions not seen since the Great Depression, the ability for even the most impeccably qualified individual to obtain a job can be a daunting task. The United States boasts one of the largest prison populations in the world. Over 12 million citizens in the country are convicted felons, roughly 10% of the current working population. It is almost a certainty that the proportion of early released offenders will increase due to local and state wide budget cut backs across the country, making it even more difficult for these people to find gainful employment within their communities.

Community transition programs have been an effective tool with respect to providing felons after release with the necessary direction and resources such as resume building, trades programs, living placement and food assistance. Unfortunately for the greater percentage of these offenders, participating in these programs can still prove fruitless. Depending on the crime that the applicant had committed, an employer could understandably be justified in not hiring an individual with a criminal conviction for theft to fill a bank teller position over an applicant who does not have any criminal background. Convicted felons more often than not are forced to take unskilled lower paying jobs, regardless of experience and qualifications.

- Convicted Felons Find Work Through Self Employment

Finding work after being charged with a felony conviction can be nearly impossible in the United States. Even without an incarceration experience, individuals who serve out their felony sentence under probation terms find even greater challenges to employment as they lose the social services often given to those who are incarcerated.

Each year, nearly three-quarters of a million people are facing employment complications as a result of their felony conviction - a significant social issue in a distressed economy. It is this same complication that may open the door for a new small business opportunity.

If you are looking for an opportunity to start a new business in this distressed economy, you may want to consider starting a business that will service the employment needs of the individuals who carry a felony conviction in their background.

While many of these individuals will need education and extensive career counseling, there are those who are well educated but simply cannot find gainful employment because of the inability to pass a background check. When not gainfully employed, it is not uncommon for a prior offender to become a repeat offender in an effort to put food on the table and clothes on their back. To stop this vicious cycle, a business that provides career management services to offenders may be a niche that will make for you a very profitable business venture.

Ex-offenders have little to access in terms of career management services. In fact, they are often left to find their own jobs and establish new careers as they start back on a new path of life. The path is a difficult one and often is it just a matter of bridging the communication between these at-risk individuals and the businesses in your local community who are in need of quality employees. In many cases, individuals with a prior felony conviction often make better employees than their counterparts as they often value the employment they have and are more loyal and have far fewer absences from work.

- Jobs for Felons: Tips for Those Who Have a Criminal Record

There are plenty of career opportunities for convicted felons. You might find working for minimum wage a viable option, if you like working long hours with very few rewards. Sure, it would be nice to start off at the bottom and work your way to the top.

But of course you can't do that. No, you have to stay at that same position for ten years. Why ten years? Well that's how long it takes for a felony to not show up in a criminal background check (over 90% of employers do them). So in other words, if you get a job as a cashier at a fast food restaurant, then you have to be a cashier for the next ten years. If you work hard and try to get promoted, you will be fired for lying on your application by checking no when asked have you been convicted of a felony (trust me you have to lie just to get the job). So if this is your choice, be careful not to work too hard. Just remember, strive to be a good employee, not an exceptional one. Good employee gets you ten more years of honest work. Exceptional employee gets you the pink slip.

- Companies that Hire Felons

There are numerous companies that do hire felons. Here are a few job suggestions for felons and anyone with a criminal history.

Company that Hires Felons #1: Cargill

One job idea for felons is to apply at Cargill. Cargill is one of the nation's largest companies and employs more than 159,000 hard workers in 68 countries. It is a well-known producer of food, agricultural and industrial products and services. For example, Plainview, TX, is home to a Cargill meat packaging plant. They offer reasonable pay, great insurance and benefits. Visit the Cargill website [here](#) to learn how to apply.

Company that Hires Felons #2: Small Construction Companies

Many construction companies will hire people with felonies and a criminal background. Look in your phone book (or online at sites such as www.switchboard.com) for construction companies in your area. Give them a call and see if they are hiring.

Company that Hires Felons #3: Local Farmers

Many farmers will hire felons to work at Farm Hands. If you think you'd be up to doing agricultural work, this is one option to consider.

Company that Hires Felons #4: Trucking Companies

Numerous [trucking](#) companies will hire and train ex-felons as truck drivers. One company that will hire felons is Carolina Cargo. You can visit its website [here](#).

Company that Hires Felons #5: US Army

Depending on what type of felony you have, you might be able to enlist in the Army. Read "[Can I Join the Army With a Felony?](#)" for more details.

Company that Hires Felons #6: Fast Food Restaurants

Most [fast food](#) restaurants, such as Whataburger, KFC Chicken, and others, will hire felons. Some other restaurants, such as Olive Garden and Red Lobster might consider you as well.

Company that Hires Felons #7: Locally Owned, "Mom 'n Pop" Businesses

Locally owned businesses, sometimes referred to as small "Mom and Pop" businesses, might be willing to hire you. There are less likely to ask about your criminal history than a nationwide company.

Company that Hires Felons #8: Online Companies with Work-At-Home Jobs

An eighth option is to look for a work-at-home job. While there are scams out there, read "[Are Work-at-Home Jobs a Scam?](#)" you can find a legitimate work at home job if you have access to a computer and the internet. You should also read "[Legitimate and Scam-Free Work at Home Jobs](#)" and "[Legitimate Work at Home Customer Service Jobs](#)." In addition, [this article](#) has links to work-at-home discussion forums.

Company that Hires Felons #9: Campbell's Soup Company

Another idea is to apply to work in one of Campbell's Soup Company's manufacturing plant.

They offer great benefits. You can learn more about careers at Campbell's Soup Company [here](#).

Company that Hires Felons #10: Your Own

Do not forget, you do have the option to start your own business. There are some low-startup cost businesses that might work for you. Read You also might take a look at "[5 Basic Tips for Starting Your Own Business](#)." You might also read "[How to Start a Pet Waste Removal Business](#)" and "[Fantastic Home Based Jobs and Business Ideas](#)."

It can be difficult, but not impossible, to find a job as a felon. It might be helpful to try calling 211 for advice. Read "[How to Get Social Service Help Through 211](#)."

FAQS

Why Should Employers Hire Ex-Felons?

Persons who have served time in jail or prison are faced with challenges when returning to their communities. Persons who are unemployed are more likely to fail and return to prison than those who are employed. When an ex-offender becomes a tax-paying citizen and a partner in the community, we all benefit.

Question: Why would an employer hire an ex-offender when there are so many other unemployed people available?

Many ex-offenders are under supervision of a probation or parole officer who is a contact person and resource for the employer. The officer can assist with job retention and success by addressing obstacles to employment such as transportation or counseling. Many ex-offenders are required to undergo random drug testing. Through referral, ex-offenders can have access to job readiness and skills training. Moreover, because former offenders typically have difficulty finding work, they are often very loyal employees once hired.

The Federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit provides up to \$4000 in credits for hiring felons convicted or released within one year of hire. The Federal Bonding Program provides employers with insurance coverage at no cost to the employer as an incentive to hire hard to place applicants such as ex-offenders.

Question: Is it Legal to Have a Blanket Policy Prohibiting the Employment of People with Criminal Records?

In most cases, no. Because policies prohibiting the employment of people with records have an adverse impact on people of color, such policies may violate anti-discrimination laws. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission recommends that, to ensure compliance with these laws, employers consider the nature and gravity of the offense; the time that has passed; and the nature of the job before disqualifying an individual from employment based on his or her criminal record.

Question: How does an employer assess someone's criminal history?

The definition of a felony offense is a crime that could be punished by more than a year in prison. A misdemeanor is a crime that could be punished by a year or less in prison. In actuality, circumstances surrounding the crime or the offender may lead to sentences that are more severe for some misdemeanors than for some felonies. Many persons serve no imprisonment at all for a first time felony conviction.

Assessing a conviction to make a reasoned judgment about risk is fairly simple. It involves obtaining the criminal history and then checking it against some simple criteria. Asking the applicant about his or her criminal history will provide an employer with information about their attitude and acceptance of responsibility. It would be important to determine circumstances such as alcohol or drug use that may have contributed to the offense and how the applicant has addressed those issues.

Criminal histories of applicants can be retrieved from a probation or parole officer if the applicant will consent to that disclosure. The prospective applicant should be able to provide an employer with the name and phone number of their supervising officer.

Question: Should I be concerned about Negligent Hiring Lawsuits?

If you are hiring an ex-offender for a position that does not involve contact with the public - such as factory or production work - negligent hiring is generally not an issue. Even if the position does involve contact with the public, the courts have made clear that the mere fact that an employee has a criminal record does not establish a claim for negligent hiring.

Question: What Questions Should I ask about a Prospective Employee's criminal history?

The questions to ask with regard to the person's criminal history are simple.

1. What is the relevance of the offense(s) to the job being applied for?
2. How long ago did the offense(s) occur? Note: Research has shown that after seven years of law-abiding behavior, an individual with a criminal record has essentially the same risk of committing a new offense as a person who does not have a criminal record.
3. How many times has the person offended?
4. What is the nature and seriousness of the offense(s)?
5. What is the background to the offenses (circumstances such as drug dependency, homelessness, etc.)?
6. Were the offenses work related?
7. What is the person's attitude regarding the offense?
8. What has the person done since being convicted of the offense (treatment, education, skills training, volunteer work, etc.)?

The employer's assessment of the offense and the applicant can lead to an ex-offender finding the right job that will assist in his or her effort to become a self sufficient law abiding citizen. It is an effort worth making to better our community.

How does a person with a felony find a job after he has served his time?

Answer by Felon

Where you're at: If you are still under a supervised release program, then following the direction and assistance given by a parole officer is most prudent. At this stage, your primary goal is to

complete your probation or parole, after which you may begin your new life. If you absolutely need cash, and cannot market your previous skills, then strongly consider a temp agency that will hire you out, and pay you, on a daily basis as a manual laborer.

If you are already past the supervised release stage, then it's time to rebuild.

Where you're not: Although it's disheartening, there are jobs you can't have pretty much without exception--exclude anything and everything that involves firearms, and explosives. Bonded positions, highly regulated and licensed positions, and most government jobs are off the prospective list as well. Positions working around minors are probably out too.

Where you can go: You will most likely find your new career home in a small to very small company, where you will work closely with the owner. Most small companies struggle to survive, and rely heavily on each employee they have. You will probably be working with or near the owner, because they are down working in the trenches to keep their company afloat on a daily basis.

Where you can't go: Most medium to large companies don't want to be involved with any real or perceived liability in hiring you. If this is the route you really want to pursue, than plan on adding a lot of positive factors to your resume between the time of your conviction and the time you apply. Do not lie on the application since you will be fired if they discover the lie.

What you can do: Unskilled and semi-skilled labor positions are high on a convicts new job list, as most employers need to keep these revolving door type jobs filled. Residential construction labor is a good starter job. You can build your skill level, increase your wages, and maybe find a long-term home with a contractor.

Assume you will have to discuss your conviction, and that a background investigation will be done. Employers want to know that you have moved-on from your experience. A simple statement is all that's needed. "I was convicted of -xxx- , and have fulfilled my obligations to the Court/Society/etc. I know that crime is wrong, and I also know that I have to try harder, and be better than the average person. I am ready to do this." (Don't go into a tirade about how life has done you wrong, or that you're a victim etc. The above statement is clear, concise, and should be accurate.)

What else can you do: You will now need to prove that you are in fact trying harder.

Education is a must: If you need a GED, get one. Enroll in Community College classes (education) and courses (skills). If you have a skill or specific education, consider teaching Adult Education classes. Use counselors to help develop a new career path.

Volunteer for Community Service. It looks good on a resume, it puts you in a networking position, it exposes you to potential employers, it keeps you away from an unsavory crowd, and it should make you feel better about yourself. Two full days (or the equivalent) per month is the norm. Use peer support to explore new career options.

Consider church. It has the same exposure as Volunteering, and can be a source of support for some. Use church leaders for career guidance and support.

Try to expunge your conviction, or apply for a Certificate of Rehabilitation (or the equivalent.) All felony convictions can be made to go away; some are just harder than others (such as Federal convictions requiring a Pardon or Clemency, or Registrant Crimes which may require continued registration.)

Prevent future convictions. This is a no-brainer, but still needs to be said.

You have been given (a sort of) second chance. You have fairly permanent legal handicap. Try to earn what you need to live comfortably, but look for success outside of monetary achievement. This is all I can offer.

Answer by Felon

Many communities have people who work as an Employment Specialist who have connections to employers and job positions that allow felonies/work release. A good place to register and check in with is your local Workforce office, or a city office that helps with employment.

When you call, ask specifically about anyone who works directly with felons, people with backgrounds, or any other barrier you might face (language, Veteran status, etc.).

Goodwill is also normally a good contact, or may be able to give you the name of someone who can help. Other places where I have had luck finding people employment (I am an Employment Specialist working with felons) are temp or temp-to-hire agencies that primarily hire for **production and warehouse work**. This day labor, while not your dream job, will provide money for survival while you find THE job.

Answer by Felon - No one solution

Here are some of the things I have learned:

1. **DO NOT APPLY WITH PLACEMENT AGENCIES!** These people have no mercy with you. You will not bring them any money and as such do not want to deal with you. Some even trade information between themselves and say "this is a bad person". They are under no obligation to remove old data on you after a period of time. Save them for the far future after you get a few years of work under your belt.
2. Apply direct. Use sites such as Careerbuilder.com and others to e-mail your resume to places where they are hiring. But be careful, many of these so call "We have a job open...." are really placement firms wanting to contract you out or sell you to the companies you normally would work for. Always check the name of the company and throw that into a search engine to see if you can get to their own site and avoid the middle man.
- 2.a Apply to state and federal agencies. They have to hire you if you qualify. Your conviction should not count against you unless you are forbidden to work in an area that would violate law, or prevent you from getting a security clearance. (Hit the latter with one company myself)
3. Check the local news papers online. Check the local papers and click the classified sections. Most will allow to you get to them for free, or you can read the paper at the library. Some say you have to pay to read the paper, but the classified section may be free. Check around.

4. Check online state run job sites. Some like careerbuilder.com for their engine. So it does not do you any good there. It is also noted that a number of states are using third party engines. If you use the state entry point that may get you into the engine better than trying to go into the job search site directly.

5. Yellow Pages Baby! - Get the names and addresses of companies that you think would have jobs like the one you do. Send letters to them. "Cold Call" is the term. However, if you are like me, you cannot afford a \$41.00 for 100 stamps, plus paper, plus envelopes, plus \$20 or \$40 ink for your printer (times 3 to 5 depending on your printer)...plus...plus...plus... but it is a good method to get the information directly to the people.

6. NETWORK! Get a hold of your pastor, friend, relative, anyone that could put in a good word for you. Even if you don't know someone, make a flyer and ask if you can put it up in church, or up in a place where you find other fliers. If you have the money, put an ad in the paper.

7. TIME - You did time, now time is something that you have to face. The more jobs you apply for the more likely you will be to find one. Every Monday, try to find five good, likely jobs and apply. Then, keep looking. I hunt over 8 hours a day. I surf the job sites constantly. I visit company web sites and look for "Employment" or "Careers" at the bottom or top of the web pages (most are very small print with colors that are hard to find) and type my butt off in having to deal with all the variety and myriad ways of applying online. (Visit www.walmart.com and try their system - be sure to have a wrist brace and Motrin for when you are done...)

While you are doing all of these things, get your free credit report. Ex-Cons are the targets of identity theft. People figure you won't need your ID for a few years so.... Get the credit report and see what's there. You can be sure that most employers will run a background check on you these days. If you show up as someone else they may not hire you.

Banks will most certainly do one on you. When they see that your last address was prison, then they will be very reluctant to give you an account other than "restricted", or give you an ATM or Debit card. (But that's for another WIKI)

For second ID's get one from the library, or take one (1) class from a college in the area. (Can you say Pell Grants?)

Answer by Felon

Applied only with small businesses that are more open-minded and are willing to hire people despite past mistakes. 2. Become an Independent Contractor in the retail field. Contracted out through various companies (most of which do not do a background check, and seem to not even care about your record as long as you can get the contracts done). There is a lot of money that can be made by someone willing to work, travel, or live in a metro area. 3. Family business, where everyone here knows, supports and doesn't care about my felonies.

Answer by Felon

Going back to school is not the answer either. Started your own home base business it looks to me that may be the only answer for us that have made a mistake in our lives.

Answer by Felon

I am having the same problem. I was released in June and have hit road block after road block. I have talked to 4 temp agencies and none of them will work with felons. I have been on 16 interviews for jobs I was completely qualified for two then be turned down when the felony came up.

So now I have resorted to skipping the question and hoping that the background check comes out clean. My convictions are 9 years old now. I don't know if it will work but...

Answer by Felon

It is very difficult, but with patience and persistence-it is possible.

I am having the same problem. I made a stupid mistake a few years ago and now have two Class 5 felony counts showing. Although I did not have to serve any time in jail (only probation) it is still hard. But not impossible.

Answer by Felon

Starting your own business or working for a small business owner who is willing to take a risk is best. Many, many large companies won't hire someone with a felony.

Answer by Felon

Good Luck. Your best bet is word of mouth or under the table. Even though by law the majority of businesses are not allowed to turn you away because you are an ex-con. They will. Obviously they aren't going to come right out and say that's why they didn't hire you, but it probably is.

Try going to a temp agency that hires day labor. Make sure you don't lie about your criminal background. Let them find a job for you.

Answer by Felon

In Michigan, start with your local CAP agencies... (Community Action Program) They are non-profit and usually have an employment specialist to assist you in finding employment.

There is no straight forward answer to this question. You just have to keep looking and try real hard to find a job here in Florida! Even though a lot of places run background checks, not all of them actually do!

It may not provide the pay that an individual needs to survive, but there are entry level positions available in every state. Proving one's self is a part of the process.

How can convicted felons get hired

The answer is to call employment temporary agencies that have a listing of some employers that do hire some convicted felons depending on their background relation to the felony charge. I wish everyone good luck in trying to contribute to society in a positive way and I pray that your search is a successful one.

Answer by Felon

Sorry, there is not such a list available.

The decision would be that of a prospective employer and in accordance with the convicted felons terms of release or probation.

Answer by Felon

General labor, unless you got some form of real education before becoming a felon or during your felony serving time. I would look into construction, or maybe write a book about your life of crime.

Answer by Felon

I have a family member who is a convicted felon. I have to say that he did a lot of growing up while in jail. This family member, because he was a convicted felon could not work in the health field. What I would do is if you are on probation ask your probation officer what kind of jobs that you can apply for. I would not judge anyone because of their past. You can always start on low of the ladder, but you can always work your way up!:))

Answer by Felon

Hi, I am a 25 year old single father with 2 felonies on my record. It's worse the first felony I was arrested on I was charged with 16 felony's, I was only convicted of 1 but since I was arrested for all those others guess what still shows up on my background check? That's right 4 pages worth of nothing!!!! Anyway, I have worked in pretty much every field imaginable with that background, and the only way to do it is to find the companies that do not inquire about your background and work there without it. Don't mention it, don't glorify it, and obviously don't give them any "reason" to inquire about it!!! Meaning don't screw'em because 99.9% of the company's that require that check (minus government, extremely high money; banks, rocket building plants, you get it.) have been screwed (illegally) in the past.

Conclusion

We hope this gives you a rough idea of how a veteran with criminal issue can find employment. Each case is different. We have only provided a limited solution in this Special Report. With the right attitude this issue can be solve. [If you would like us to provide more information or to take further action on this please let us know. Thank you.](#)