
Employer Benefits

Businesses, communities, families and society as a whole benefit when the nearly 30% of Americans with criminal records are employed. Ex-offenders who are employed are less likely to commit crimes. Instead of society paying on average nearly \$25,000 per year to house an inmate, an employed ex-offender will be contributing to the tax base.

If an individual is under supervision, employers receive the following benefits:

Mandatory Drug Testing: Required for the majority of ex-offenders under the supervision of a probation officer. Although results cannot be disclosed, employers have the assurance of oversight.

Third-Party Risk Notification: The probation officer will ensure that the employer is notified if an ex-offender poses a risk to the employer or community.

Condition to Maintain Employment: An ex-offender under the supervision of a probation officer has a standard condition to be employed or involved in an educational training program.

Probation Officer as a Resource: The probation officer works together with the employer to ensure job retention and success.

~It's important for employers to remember that millions of workers with prior convictions have turned their lives around and become productive members of society.~

Incentives

Work Opportunity Tax Credit:

Available to private employers who employ offenders. Employers can receive up to \$2,400 for each ex-offender employed.

Information about the Work Opportunity Tax Credit is available at:
<http://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/>

Federal Bonding Program:

Provides insurance to employers willing to hire certain high-risk applicants who may otherwise be denied coverage from commercial bond carriers. The bonds protect employers against theft, forgery, larceny and embezzlement.

Information about the Federal Bonding Program is available at:
<http://www.bonds4jobs.com>

Employer Guide to Hiring A Formerly Incarcerated Person



Big Bend AFTER

Reentry Coalition

A Fight To End Recidivism

The Big Bend AFTER Reentry Coalition is a coalition of individuals and groups united to increase public safety and reduce recidivism.

Our Mission:

***Overcoming barriers to achieve
success through meaningful
employment and training***

Strong Correlation Between Employment and Success of Ex-Offenders in the Community

95% of individuals who are incarcerated will be released back into our communities.

An unemployed ex-offender is four times more likely to return to prison than an ex-offender who is employed.

The U. S. Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that in 2012, there were 2,228,400 prisoners held in federal or state prisons or in local jails. 1 in 15 adults will serve a prison term during their lifetime. If current trends continue, 1 in 3 African-American males will be imprisoned (*The Sentencing Project, August 2013*).

The annual cost of housing an inmate in a Florida prison in 2013 was \$18, 064. According to *collegeboard.com*, in 2012-2013 the average annual cost for tuition and fees at a four year in-state public university was \$8,893.

The legal restrictions and social perceptions associated with felony convictions create barriers to employment, which make employment challenging for someone with a criminal conviction.

Providing secure employment with prospects for advancement to the formerly incarcerated will reduce recidivism, reduce the costs of maintaining a huge prison population (thereby lowering taxes or reducing the pressure to raise them), strengthen family ties, and enhance public safety.

Myths About Employing People with Criminal Records

Formerly incarcerated people represent a cross section of the workforce. Many have useful skills and qualifications.

Some **myths** are:

- ◆ Ex-offenders are high risk: *Offenders are not any higher risk than the average employee. If the offender is under supervised release, the probation office notifies parties of any third-party risk.*
- ◆ Ex-offenders are untrustworthy: *In most cases, offenders are average people who made a mistake and are ready to put the past behind them.*
- ◆ Ex-offenders are uneducated: *Nearly one in three have graduated from high school.*
- ◆ Ex-offenders are unreliable: *In general, offenders are as reliable as other employees.*
- ◆ Ex-offenders have to be watched closely: *In most cases, offenders have worked through their punishment and want to make a fresh start.*
- ◆ Ex-offenders are not conscientious workers: *Most feel they have something to prove and are loyal, hard workers.*
- ◆ Other employees will not want to work with ex-offenders: *There is no need for other employees, other than managers, to know of the employee's past. You will be surprised how quickly an ex-offender will fit in, given the chance.*
- ◆ Company policies exclude ex-offenders because of the type of work involved or legal restrictions: *It is a common misunderstanding that certain professions and trade licenses bar people with criminal records. In fact, refusal is determined by type of offense not by the existence of an offense.*

Assessing Whether You Should Hire Someone with a Criminal Conviction

Employers may have concerns about hiring a qualified applicant who has a criminal conviction. Assessing a conviction to make a reasoned judgment about risk is a fairly simple process. It involves checking a person's criminal history against the following criteria:

- Relevance of the offense(s) to the job being applied for.
- How long ago the offense(s) occurred.
- How many times the person has offended.
- The nature and seriousness of the offense(s).
- The background of the offense(s); (circumstances often change, i.e., drug dependency, homelessness).
- Whether the offense(s) was work related.
- The person's attitude regarding the offense(s).
- Whether the person was successfully employed prior to incarceration.
- Whether the applicant used his/her time while incarcerated to gain skills and education to make positive lifestyle changes.

Studies repeatedly show that prompt employment and job retention for formerly incarcerated individuals significantly reduces recidivism rates with further contributes to strengthening of communities.