

Steps for Re-entry Success

1) Re-Establish Yourself

- **Be truthful – hiding your past will not benefit you.** Be prepared to own up to your past, explain where you are now, and how you have grown and changed.
- **Re-establish relationships with past contacts** including family, friends, and employers. Make new connections as well. Good references are essential to opening doors and character references are vital to your success!
- **Secure ANY employment ASAP!** Even if it is short-term, finding a job and establishing a record of positive work habits is critical to advancing your career.
- **Think in terms of BOTH short and long term goals.** Focus on the importance of achieving short term goals and re-building positive references and experiences that will move you toward completion of your long term aspirations.
- **Find ways to connect with the community in a positive way.** Volunteer with social services agencies and offer to provide education and prevention services by speaking to audiences about your experiences.

2) Assess Your Skills

- ❖ **Reflect on prior employment experiences.** What skills can you speak to that are current or can be brought up to date?
- ❖ **What new skills have you gained or sharpened since your conviction/incarceration?** Did you learn a new skill or trade?
- ❖ **What prior goals did you set?** Are these still obtainable? Will your background prohibit you from pursuing these goals?
- ❖ **If your past goals are no longer an option, now is the time to establish NEW short term, measurable goals.** If you have limited work experience, assess your strengths by talking with others who know you well and recognize your talents.

3) Identify Your Transferable Skills

Use the checklist below to identify the skills you possess and can strengthen to market yourself to employers. Be sure to meet with a career counselor to highlight these on your polished résumé!

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Managing people | <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking to large groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Working independently |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiating | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer/technology use | <input type="checkbox"/> Operating tools/machinery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Analyzing data | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calculating numbers | <input type="checkbox"/> Auditing/checking for accuracy | <input type="checkbox"/> Solving problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Serving customers | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring/helping others | <input type="checkbox"/> Working in a group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instructing others | <input type="checkbox"/> Selling | <input type="checkbox"/> Repairing/building things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supervising | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening | <input type="checkbox"/> Motivating others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Designing | <input type="checkbox"/> Communicating verbally | <input type="checkbox"/> Inventing |

4) Understand Employer Limitations

- **The following industries may be limited in their ability to employ ex-offenders:**

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| - Financial Institutions | - Insurance Industry | - Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice |
| - Health Care Services | - Social Service Agencies | - Government Positions (some agencies) |
| - Teaching and Child Care Services | - Aviation/Positions requiring travel across state lines | |

- **Target employers that are known to hire ex-offenders:** See *Hard2Hire.com*: http://www.hard2hire.com/ex_offenders

Real Statistics

- 3.1% of the U.S. adult population is in prison or on parole.
- More than 4 out of 10 offenders will return to prison within 3 years.
 - In Ohio, 34% of offenders return to prison.
- 92% of employers conduct background checks.
 - 1 in 4 adults in the U.S. have an arrest or conviction that shows up in a background check.

Programs Available to Assist You

- **Federal Bonding Program** - Protects employers from theft (for up to 6 months) and provides incentive for employment of ex-offenders. For more information, visit <http://www.bonds4jobs.com/>
- **Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)** - Federal tax credit encourages private-sector employers with incentives to provide training and employment for nine target groups (including ex-offenders).
- **Second Chance Act** - Authorizes federal grants, government agencies, and non-profit organizations to provide support for services that reduce recidivism, including employment. Visit http://reentrypolicy.org/government_affairs/second_chance_act
- **Ex-Offender Reentry Coalition (Ohio specific)** - Provides additional support to agencies and organizations that are committed to the success of ex-offenders. Visit <http://www.reentrycoalition.ohio.gov/>
- **National H.I.R.E. Network** - Lists local agencies, organizations, and programs that can provide assistance. For more information, visit http://www.hirenetwork.org/admin/clearinghouse.php?state_id=OH#local



Myth Busters

Myth	Truth
Employers can run background checks without your permission.	You must consent to and be informed of any background checks initiated by employers.
Federal Government policies prohibit employment of all ex-offenders.	Some agencies do limit employment to ex-offenders, but this is not true of all federal agencies.
Businesses and employers are not able to be protected from property and monetary losses if an ex-offender proves to be dishonest.	The Federal Bonding Program (FBP) insures employers for loss of property or money due to dishonest actions by an employee. Insurance coverage ranges from \$5,000-\$25,000 in coverage for a six month period. (Any job, from any employer, in any state is eligible).
Sealed records mean that employers will not be able to access your record.	Sealed records are still available for viewing by the public through the courts.
Juvenile records will be automatically sealed and unavailable to employers.	This will vary from state to state, but some states will release juvenile information to an employer during a background check.
A person with a criminal record is not permitted to receive financial aid.	Limitations exist for currently incarcerated individuals, but are removed for ex-offenders. Individuals on probation, parole or residing in a halfway house are eligible for aid.
Expunged records are destroyed and not viewable by employers.	Expunged means that the records never existed, but sometimes these files are not destroyed; they are simply placed in a different filing location and can be accessible by a few individuals – typically requiring a court order.

Additional Resources

- P/PV Crime Reduction & Reentry: <http://www.ppv.org/ppv/CrimeReductionReentry.asp>
- National Reentry Resource Center: <http://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/>
- PRIDE Enterprises: <http://pride-enterprises.org/reentry/reentry.html>

Ohio Resources

- Cleveland Law Library (Expungements): <http://www.clelaw.lib.oh.us/public/misc/faqs/expungement.html>
- Criminal Records in Ohio: http://www.ohiolegalservices.org/public/legal_problem/reentry/expungement/understanding-and-sealing-criminal-records-in-ohio/ojpc-oplc-feb-10.pdf

Portage County Resources

- Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Corrections (Resource Sheet): <http://www.drc.ohio.gov/web/RRC/portage.pdf>