

# REENTRY PACKET

Your Customized Guide to Support your Successful Transition



National Web-based Reentry Resource Center

[www.fairshake.net](http://www.fairshake.net)

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### **Advocacy - Justice Involved Organizations**

Prisoner Visitation and Support (PVS) is a volunteer visitation program to Federal and Military prisoners throughout the United States.

1501 Cherry St  
Philadelphia PA 19102  
Phone: (215) 241-7117  
PVS@afsc.org

<http://www.prisonervisitation.org/>

### **Advocacy - Justice Involved Organizations**

Are you facing a legal issue, or just looking for more information about a specific legal topic? FindLaw's Learn About the Law section is the perfect starting point. Learn About the Law features informational articles about a wide variety of legal topics, as well as specific information about subjects such as how to hire an attorney and understanding your state's unique laws.  
<http://www.findlaw.com/>

### **Citizenship - Department of Motor Vehicles**

No state address or phone number has been provided.

County addresses are listed on the website.  
<https://www.tennesseedriversservices.org/>

### **Employment - Employment Services**

Office of Reentry  
220 French Landing Drive  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243  
844-224-5818  
<https://www.tn.gov/workforce/reentrytn.html>

### **Employment - Licensing Information**

500 James Robertson Pkwy  
Nashville, TN 37243-0565  
615-741-2241  
Find Information about regulated professions and activities.  
<https://www.tn.gov/commerce/licensing-regulation.s.html>

### **Family - Child Care**

TDHS provides financial assistance with child care costs for families meeting income guideline criteria through several child care assistance programs. Its also called the subsidized child care program.  
<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services/child-care-payment-assistance/child-care-certificate-program.html>

### **Family - Department of Human Services**

All services can be found on the website.  
<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices.html>

### **Family - Parenting**

<http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/>

### **Free - Free Phone**

Assurance Wireless  
P.O. Box 5040  
Charleston, IL 61920-9907  
1-888-321-5880  
Assurance Wireless provides eligible consumers with free monthly data, unlimited texting, free monthly minutes plus a free Smartphone. Lifeline enrollment is available to individuals who qualify

### **Advocacy - Justice Involved Organizations**

122 Commerce Street  
Montgomery, AL 36104  
(334) 269-1803  
EJI is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the U.S., challenging racial and economic injustice, and protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society. EJI is working to end our misguided reliance on over-incarceration.  
<https://eji.org/criminal-justice-reform/>

### **Citizenship - Birth Certificate**

Office of Vital Records  
1st Floor, Andrew Johnson Tower  
710 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, TN 37243  
Remarks: The Vital Records Office maintains birth records for 100 years.  
<https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/vital-records/certificate.html>

### **Citizenship - Voting Rights**

ACLU Voting Rights and Restrictions

<https://www.aclu.org/issues/voting-rights/voter-restoration/felony-disenfranchisement-laws-map?redirect=maps/map-state-criminal-disfranchisement-laws>

### **Employment - Job Training**

Higher Ground Training  
HGTI provides group job readiness training for ex-offenders on a variety of subjects including resume writing, interviewing skills, dressing for success, time management, self-evaluation, goal-setting, honor and respect, building trust, streams of income, business etiquette, effective communication and dealing with difficult people.  
PO BOX 86  
Hendersonville, TN 37077  
615-243-2184  
<http://www.highergroundtraining.com>  
Fee: \$30.00 per person per hour.  
<http://www.highergroundtraining.com/>

### **Employment - Workforce Development**

All services can be found on the website.  
<https://www.tn.gov/residents/workforce-services.html>

### **Family - Childrens Programs**

They provide a lot of information, social services and education in the Middle Tennessee area.  
<https://www.kidcentraltn.com/>

### **Family - Family Services**

All services can be found on the website.  
<https://www.tn.gov/children-and-families.html>

### **Food - Food Pantry**

Find local pantries, soup kitchens, food shelves, food banks and other food help.  
<https://www.foodpantries.org/st/tennessee>

### **Free - Free Stuff**

We are a grassroots and entirely nonprofit movement of people who are giving and getting

based on federal or state-specific eligibility criteria. Residents of homeless shelters, nursing homes and temporary addresses may also be eligible.  
<https://www.assurancewireless.com/lifeline-services/what-lifeline>

### **Health - Alcoholics Anonymous**

Find meetings near you.  
<https://sober.com/aa-meetings/tennessee/>

### **Health - Free/Sliding Scale Clinic with Dental**

There are many types of health clinics nationwide. There are low cost, affordable, sliding scale, medicaid accepted, community health care clinics, emergency clinics and regular medical clinics. Our directory provides not only the clinics listed, but also information, pictures, comments, and reviews on these clinics.

<https://www.clinicdirectory.org/state/tennessee.html>

### **Health - Narcotics Anonymous**

Find Tennessee NA Meetings Near You  
<https://www.narcotics.com/na-meetings/tennessee/>

### **Money - Finances/Budgeting**

800.388.2227  
Free Credit Counseling! Our mission is to help all Americans gain control over their finances. For over 60 years, NFCC and its member agencies have helped people just like you pay off debt and grow in their financial capability. Our services help people overcome financial challenges at nearly every stage of life.  
<https://www.nfcc.org/>

### **Money - Free Credit Report**

Free credit reports authorized by federal law. Federal law allows you to get a free copy of your credit report every 12 months from each credit reporting company.  
<https://www.annualcreditreport.com/index.action>

### **Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available**

Search for benefits in Education, Grants, Loans, Social Security, Housing and Utilities, Employment and Career Development, Financial Assistance and more.  
<https://www.benefits.gov/categories>

### **Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available**

211 connects you with thousands of nonprofit and government services in your area. If you want personal assistance call the three-digit number 211 or 877-947-2211. A friendly voice to talk with you 24/7/365.  
<https://tn211.myresourcedirectory.com/>

### **Shelter - Energy Assistance**

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

<https://thda.org/government-nonprofit-partners/energy-assistance-programs/low-income-home-energy>

stuff for free in their own Towns. It's all about reuse and keeping good stuff out of landfills. Membership is free.  
<https://www.freecycle.org/>

### **Health - Alcoholics Anonymous**

Online meetings! All days and times. Meetings appear as upcoming by time and are shown in your local time zone.  
<https://aa-intergroup.org/meetings/>

### **Health - Health Department**

All services can be found on the website.  
<https://www.tn.gov/health.html>

### **Money - Finances/Budgeting**

GreenPath will work with you to build a personalized plan of action for regaining control of your debt. We assess your household budget, find places for you to save, and help you prioritize your payments to creditors and plan a lifestyle that you can afford. It all works toward helping you achieve your financial goals, better manage debt and avoid problems in the future. Available in Spanish.  
<http://www.greenpath.com/>

### **Money - Finances/Budgeting**

800.388.2227  
Free Credit Counseling! Our mission is to help all Americans gain control over their finances. For over 60 years, NFCC and its member agencies have helped people just like you pay off debt and grow in their financial capability. Our services help people overcome financial challenges at nearly every stage of life.  
<https://www.nfcc.org/>

### **Money - Social Security Benefits after Incarceration**

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income Benefits  
Individuals released from incarceration may be eligible for Social Security retirement, survivors, or disability benefits if you have worked or paid into Social Security enough years or Supplemental Security Income benefits if you are 65 or older, or are blind, or have a disability and have little or no income and resources.  
If you believe you qualify, call our toll-free telephone number, 1-800-772-1213.  
If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call TTY 1-800-325-0778.  
<https://www.ssa.gov/reentry/benefits.htm>

### **Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available**

Our findhelp technology powers Americas leading social care network. Our network features more than 300,000 free and reduced-cost programs in all 50 U.S. states, territories, and Puerto Rico, powering social care systems for hundreds of customers nationwide.  
<https://www.findhelp.org/find-social-services/tennessee>

### **Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available**

Scroll down the page to find your state. Titles in the left column will lead you to resources available

y-assistance-program-liheap-for-administrators

### **Shelter - Low Income Housing**

Find low income apartments in Tennessee along with non profit organizations that help with low income housing along with HUD apartments, public housing apartments, public housing authorities, and housing assistance agencies.

<https://www.lowincomehousing.us/TN.html>

### **Shelter - Transitional Housing**

1-855-860-3119

Transitional, sober housing provides supportive housing along with drug and alcohol treatment for selective locations

<https://www.transitionalhousing.org/state/tennessee>

### **Special Considerations - Disability Support**

Government agencies and disability rights organizations in Tennessee.

[https://www.olmsteadrights.org/self-helptools/advocacy-resources/item.6793-Tennessee\\_Disability\\_Resources\\_and\\_Advocacy\\_Orgainzations](https://www.olmsteadrights.org/self-helptools/advocacy-resources/item.6793-Tennessee_Disability_Resources_and_Advocacy_Orgainzations)

### **Special Considerations - Elders**

Please visit the website to find all of the resources available to you.

<http://www.state.tn.us/comaging/>

### **Volunteer - Volunteer Opportunities**

We make it easy for good people and good causes to connect. We are a community that believes in the power of volunteering to enrich our lives and the world around us. Find locations to volunteer near you!

Virtual volunteer opportunities are also available -

<https://www.volunteermatch.org/virtual-volunteering>

<https://www.volunteermatch.org/>

nationwide.

If you scroll down the page to find your state name, you can click on that for statewide resources.

<https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/index.html>

### **Shelter - Low Income Housing**

Come to TNHousingSearch.org, for a free housing resource to help you find the right home for your needs and budget. It's also free for Tennessee property providers to list all types of rental housing at any price point.

Toll-Free: 1.877.428.8844

Toll-Free Fax: 1.866.265.7811

<http://www.tnhousingsearch.org/index.html>

### **Shelter - Shelters**

We provide an online directory of shelters in Tennessee.

<https://www.shelterlist.com/state/tennessee>

### **Special Considerations - Aging and Disability Resource Center ARDC**

The primary purpose of the Aging and Disability Program is to coordinate the delivery of services and programs which promote an environment conducive to enhancing the quality of life of the regions older population.

<https://www.gnrc.org/163/Aging-and-Disability-Services>

### **Special Considerations - Disability Support**

All types of services can be found on the website.

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/disability-services.html>

### **Special Considerations - Veteran Support**

Veterans in crisis can call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (Press 1) or the Tennessee Statewide Crisis Line at 855-CRISIS-1.

All other services can be found on the website.

<https://www.tn.gov/veteran.html>

## **Employment Tips**

We often have to work our way up to the job we want; either because it is not available when we go to find it or we need more experience, education, preparation or time to get ready. Although we will spend time working at jobs that are not our preference, we can enjoy the interim more when we stay focused on our goals.

### **Start by asking yourself:**

- What kind of job or career do I want?
- What am I willing to do, learn or sacrifice to get that job or career?

Before venturing out into the world of work you will have to obtain necessary documents.

The most frequently requested documents are:

- Birth Certificate
- Driver's license or Basic Identification
- Social Security Card

The birth certificate and driver's license forms offered in our Employment Documents are samples. You can find links to the applications that you need in our Resource Directory!

### **Next, ask yourself the following questions**

- What occupations or industries in your area are in need of employees?
- What are your employment limitations due to your particular crime?
- What is the income you need in order to pay for housing, food, energy, phone, child support, restitution, transportation, etc? (check out our [Build a Budget Worksheet](#))
- Which strategies do you think would be most effective for "selling" your attributes?

### **To prepare to apply for a job you may want to create the following worksheets:**

- Inventory your work history in and out of prison
- List your training, skills, limitations, and health considerations
- Gather all the information you will need to fill out employment applications. Are you ready to fill them out online? (Several companies only accept online applications.)

### **Considerations and Preparation**

What are your employment resources?

- Classified ads (in the paper or locally found on-line)
- Applying for jobs with companies you want to work for
- Job Assistance and Job Training centers
- Craigslist, Monster.com, other job-search websites

### **Skills Assessment and Personal Strengths Evaluation**

Consider taking a free online self-assessment test help us see what careers we are suited for. If you type the phrase 'self-assessment test' into any search engine, several options will be available for you to check out.

### **Do you need clothes for your interview or new job?**

Check out Dress for Success, a global program that may have a location near you!

([www.dressforsuccess.org](http://www.dressforsuccess.org))

**Resume' and Interview tips:**

Two good places where you get the chance to show a company why they cannot afford NOT to hire you. Keep these tips in mind as you write your application or resume', and prepare for job interviews:

- Be cheerful in your in-person or telephone job interviews.
- Talk about the benefits of your experience and the relevant expertise you offer.
- Speak about the value you would bring to the company.
- Share stories in the job interview about success in prior assignments.
- Talk about your ability to work with a diverse group of people.

**Typical Barriers to Employment:**

- Lack of updated resume
- Appropriate clothing for job search
- Transportation
- Stable housing
- Substance abuse
- Poor interview skills
- Poor job search skills
- Not a high school graduate
- No documentation (ID, Social Security card)

**SMART: What is your strategy for overcoming barriers and creating success?**

You can create a clear strategy by following SMART guidelines:

*Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic Timely (or Tangible)*

**Specific** – what is the specific goal you wish to achieve?

Can you answer these questions?

- Who do you need to be involved?
- What do you really want to accomplish?
- When do you want to accomplish it?
- Where do you need to be to accomplish it?
- Why do you want to achieve this goal?
- Which things do you need to get in order and which are the constraints to achieving your goal?

**Measurable** – How will you know when you've achieved your goal? What criteria have you set up to measure your progress and reach your target dates?

**Attainable** – Can you see yourself achieving this goal? Can you see the path to get there and then see yourself in that place of having reached the goal?

**Realistic** – Are you willing and able to achieve the goal?

**Timely** – How long do you need to achieve your goal? Work out your goal date and then the smaller goals that must be met to meet that goal date?

**Tangible** – Imagine: can you taste, touch, smell, see or hear the results of achieving your goal?

## Interview Tips

Before you head to your interview, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you really want this job?
- Are you qualified for the job?
- Do you believe you can get the job?
- What attitude and information must you deliver to the employer to get the job?
- Are you ready for your interview?

If you decide you really want to get this job, consider these tips:

1. Keep your answers short yet full of information, unless you are asked to clarify. Try to put yourself in the interviewer's shoes; asking the same questions of many applicants! Fine tune your answers to the Sample Interview Questions and bring your authenticity and vitality to the interview.
2. Determine what your key strengths and assets are. Be sure to state them confidently a couple of times throughout the interview.
3. Prepare for a variety of interview questions. Consider the challenges you have overcome, the difficult interpersonal situations that you resolved with others, and several success stories.
4. Describe specific situations and accomplishments. Generalities fail to show the interviewer your strengths and assets and how they can benefit the company and the position that is available.
5. Put yourself on their team. Show how you fit in with the existing work environment and company culture. During the interview, align your language with the language of the team.
6. Observe your non-verbal communication. Are you saying what you mean to say? Practice answering some of the Sample Interview Questions in front of a mirror to see if your eyes and your gestures agree with your words.
7. Ask questions. Is this where you want to work? Find out what you need to know to accept the job. Also, the interviewer will see that you are taking interest in the company and work environment. That is an important quality in a team player.
8. Be sure to talk WITH the interviewer and not AT the interviewer. Interviews are stressful enough for both parties. Keep it human.
9. Research the company. Is it a right fit for you? Can you get behind the mission of the company? How much can you know about the work and the work environment before the interview?
10. Apply for jobs that you are skilled for and that you can appreciate...even if only as a stepping stone to your next job. If you truly want the job, you must be able to compete successfully with your competition. Authenticity shines through your words and your non-verbal communication.



## **Sample Interview Questions**

The interview is your chance to show an employer your unique qualities and it is also the time you can ask more about the employer, the company culture and the job you are applying for. Before you interview be sure to find out all you can about the company so you understand who they are, and also so the interviewer knows you care.

Interviews can be stressful; the best way to manage that stress is to be prepared. If you are ready to answer the questions below you will be prepared for most of the questions that might come up.

There are many variables that make finding a job even more complicated if you have a criminal record. How much should you disclose and when should you disclose it? How do you explain your criminal record and still land a job? How do you address it during an interview? We explore these questions and more at the end of this document.

### **Possible Interview Questions: About the Job and the Company**

- Why did you apply for this job?
- What experience, skills and characteristics do you possess to do the job?
- Why do you think you are the best person for this job?
- Why should we hire you?
- What have you learned about our company?
- How do you see your role in joining this or any company?
- Describe good customer service.
- Describe handling a challenge with a co-worker
- Are you willing to travel?
- Do you have any limitations that would inhibit you from doing this job?
- How long do you think you would like to be employed by this company?

### **Possible Interview Questions: About You**

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are you passionate about?
- What is your greatest strength? What is your greatest weakness?
- What do you do when you're angry?
- If you know your supervisor is wrong about something, how would you handle it?
- Describe a difficult work situation and how you dealt with it.
- Describe your work style.
- How would you describe the pace at which you work?
- How do you handle stress and pressure?
- Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.
- What motivates you? Are you self-motivated?
- What are your salary expectations? (if it is not listed with the job posting)
- What types of decisions are difficult for you? What types are easy?
- If you could relive the last 10 years of your life, what would you do differently?
- If the people who know you were asked why you should be hired, what would they say?
- Do you prefer to work independently or with others?
- Tell me about your ideal work environment.
- How do you evaluate success?
- What are your career goals? How do you plan to achieve these goals?
- Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.
- Give an example of a goal you didn't meet and how you handled it.
- Give an example of how you set goals and achieve them.
- How do you handle a challenge?

**Possible Interview Questions: Your Work History**

- Tell me about \_\_\_\_ company listed on your resume.
- What were your duties, responsibilities, expectations...for the position and as an employee?
- What challenges did you face? How did you handle them?
- What did you like about this job? What did you dislike about this job?
- What was your biggest accomplishment at this job? At any job?
- What were your favorite and least favorite aspects about the people you worked with, including supervisors?
- What attributes to you like to see in a supervisor?
- What do you expect from a supervisor?
- Tell me a little about your favorite and least favorite supervisor.
- Why did you leave this job? (why did you quit or why were you fired?)
- Have you been in a position when you did not have enough work to do? What did you do with your time?
- Have you made a mistake? How did you handle it?
- Have you ever dealt with company policy you weren't in agreement with? How?
- Have you gone above and beyond the call of duty? If so, how?
- When you worked on multiple projects how did you prioritize?
- How did you handle meeting a tight deadline?
- What do you do when your schedule is interrupted? Give an example of how you handle it.
- Tell me about a difficult situation with a co-worker? How did you handle it?
- Tell me about your experience working with a team.
- Have you motivated employees or co-workers? Tell me about it.
- Give me an example of when you did and when you didn't listen.
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker? How?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a supervisor? How?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with another department? How?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a client or vendor? How?

**Possible Interview Questions: Incarceration**

- Why were you incarcerated?
- What did you learn from that experience?
- Do you have challenges or limitations that could affect your work schedule?
- What have you been doing to prepare for employment since you came home?
- Were you employed or in school when you were incarcerated? If so, tell me about your work. Tell me about your education.

**Illegal questions:**

- What is your age?
- How many children do you have? Are you pregnant?
- How much do you weigh? How tall are you?
- Do you live with anyone? Who?
- Are you married or in a relationship?

**Legal alternatives:**

- Are you over 18 years old?
- Can you lift 60 pounds?
- Is there anything that might interfere with your work schedule?

## Related to Your Criminal Record

An employer may not ask questions about a previous arrest or conviction. They may ask if you have been convicted of specific crimes if they are relevant to the position being applied for. An employer may not refuse employment to someone just because they have a criminal record.

Lisa Pollan, site coordinator at LIFT-DC, says they encourage formerly incarcerated clients to collect "evidence of rehabilitation." This evidence should prove to employers that the client has changed since their offense and is now a responsible member of society. Evidence of rehabilitation can include:

- letters of recommendation from employers or advocates
- proof of training program completion/certificates (including during incarceration)
- participation in a mentoring or support group

For Job Applications, LIFT-DC counsels clients to do the following:

- **Only answer what is asked:** If a question asks if you have been convicted of a felony, you can say no if you only have misdemeanors. If a question asks if you have been convicted of a felony in the last seven years, and you were convicted 10 years ago, answer no.
- **Answer truthfully:** A company may hire ex-offenders but have a policy of terminating anyone who lies on an application.
- **Demonstrate change:** If you answer a question about your record by writing, "Yes, but I got my GED while I was incarcerated," you show that you are educated, focused and want to make positive changes in your life. You can also attach a written explanation of your situation, and proof of your rehabilitation.

Check out LIFT-DC for more tips on interviewing! <http://www.liftcommunities.org/>

## From the National Reentry Resource Center:

<http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/faqs/employment-and-education#Q8>

### How should job-seekers respond to questions regarding past convictions?

- Acknowledge the previous mistakes in a concise and businesslike way
- mention any relevant skills or interests developed while in prison or prior to entering prison
- reinforce a commitment and an interest in the new job, by stating, for example, "I'm more mature now and my top priority is to work at [company] to use my abilities, focus on the work, and make a fresh start."

Applicants should be familiar with their criminal history to answer accurately specific questions on job applications and in interviews.

## Race/Religion

An employer may not ask you about your religion but it may come up if they ask you what days/times you are available. An employer may not judge you for being a part of any race or religion but may decide not to hire you if you are unavailable for any crucial time for the position you are applying.