



Ex-Offender Re-Entry Services

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labor.idaho.gov

Idaho Department of Labor · C.L. "Butch" Otter, Governor · Roger B. Madsen, Director
An Equal Opportunity Employer and Service Provider

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**Ex-Offender Re-Entry Services
Resources for Ex-Offenders**

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Welcome to the Idaho Department of Labor

Ex-Offender Re-Entry Services

Welcome to the Idaho Department of Labor. The Ex-Offender Re-Entry Services guide has been designed to enhance and expand services to the ex-offender in Idaho, and assist you in your re-entry into the State's work force.

The Idaho Department of Labor is a leader in generating quality services and is focused on assisting you in becoming part of the skilled work force that serves as a foundation for strong communities with vibrant, diversified and expanding economies. We are committed to providing you access to comprehensive quality services and information. Our goal is to help you overcome any current barriers and provide you with the assistance and resources you need to find a job.

Take time to review this guide including the goals and the available resources to help you with your transition. Also, plan to stay in close contact with your Workforce Consultant so your job search will be far more productive.

GOALS

- To work with you and our community partners to assist you in effectively assimilating yourself back into the work force by helping you:
 - Register for work with the Idaho Department of Labor
 - Identify your personality style, workplace skills, workplace values, and careers of interest
 - Attend a job search workshop (not available in all offices) that covers all phases of conducting an effective job search
 - Meet one-on-one with a trained Department of Labor Workforce Consultant who will help guide you through the process of finding a job
 - Locate supportive services through our network of local social service agencies and organizations.

JOB RESOURCES

- Local and statewide job listings
- Job search assistance, including search tips, creating a resume, and much more
- Job market information
- Job search workshops (not available at all offices)
- Career guidance
- Connections to many other community and government resources

Again, we welcome you to the Idaho Department of Labor and look forward to working with you to make your job search more effective!

Idaho Department of Labor
Ex-Offender Re-Entry Services

**Idaho Department of Labor
Local Office Information****NORTHERN IDAHO OFFICES**

• Bonners Ferry	208.267.5581	6541 Main St.	Bonners Ferry, ID.	83805
• Grangeville	208.983.0440	305 N. State St.	Grangeville, ID.	83530
• Kootenai County	208.457.8799	600 N. Thornton St.	Post Falls, ID.	83854
• Lewiston	208.799.5000	1158 Idaho St.	Lewiston, ID.	83501
• Moscow	208.882.7571	1350 Troy Rd., Ste. 1	Moscow, ID.	83843
• Orofino	208.476.5506	410 Johnson Ave.	Orofino, ID.	83544
• Sandpoint	208.263.7544	2101 W. Pine St.	Sandpoint, ID	83864
• St. Maries	208.245.2518	105 N. 8 th St.	St. Maries, ID.	83861
• Silver Valley	208.783.1202	35 Wildcat Way, Ste. A	Kellogg, ID.	83837

SOUTHWESTERN IDAHO OFFICES

• Boise	208.332.3575	219 W. Main St.	Boise, ID.	83735
• Canyon County	208.364.7781	4514 Thomas Jefferson St.	Caldwell, ID	83605
• Emmett	208.364.7780	2030 S. Washington St.	Emmett, ID.	83617
• McCall	208.634.7102	299 S. 3 rd St.	McCall, ID	83638
• Meridian	208.364.7785	1090 E. Watertower Ln.	Meridian, ID.	83642
• Mountain Home	208.364.7788	1150 American Legion Blvd.	Mountain Home, ID.	83647
• Payette	208.642.9361	501 N. 16 th St., Ste.107	Payette, ID.	83661

CENTRAL AND EASTERN IDAHO OFFICES

• Blackfoot	208.236.6713	155 N. Maple St.	Blackfoot, ID.	83221
• Idaho Falls	208.557.2500	1515 E. Lincoln Rd.	Idaho Falls, ID	83401
• Magic Valley	208.735.2500	420 Falls Ave.	Twin Falls, ID.	83301
• Mini-Cassia	208.678.5518	127 W. 5 th St. North	Burley, ID.	83318
• Pocatello	208.236.6710	430 N. 5 th Ave.	Pocatello, ID.	83205
• Rexburg	208.557.2501	1133 Stocks Ave.	Rexburg, ID.	83440
• Salmon	208.756.2234	1301 Main St., Unit 1	Salmon, ID.	83467
• Soda Springs	208.236-6711	95 E. Hooper Ave., Ste. 20	Soda Springs, ID.	83276
• Wood River	208.788.3566	733 N. Main St.	Bellevue, ID.	83313

Idaho Department of Labor
Local Office Employment Services

The local office provides a broad array of employment services for job seekers both electronically and through its staff at all the local offices across the state.

JOB SEEKER SERVICES

WORKFORCE CONSULTANTS AT LOCAL OFFICES FOR PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

- One-on-one job search assistance from qualified staff
- Career information and consulting
- Career assessment inventories
- Personalized application, résumé and cover letter assistance
- Labor market information
- Information on local and regional job fairs

EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE CENTER

- Personal computers and printers
- Telephone, copy machine, and fax services
- Online Career Information System
- Library of job search books and videos
- Employer directories, business publications, and labor market information
- Local newspapers
- Résumé paper and envelopes
- Computer diskettes
- Typing proficiency tests and typing tutor

JOB SEARCH WORKSHOP (not available at all offices)

- Job Search Workshops help improve your job seeking, résumé writing, and interviewing skills. You will also learn ways to sell yourself to an employer, better understand how to tap into the hidden job market, and effectively complete an application.

VETERANS SERVICES (not available at all offices)

- Veteran representatives trained in services offered specifically to veterans are available to assist on a walk-in basis or by appointment.

JOB SEEKER SERVICES AVAILABLE ONLINE

- Register for work via the internet at <http://www.labor.idaho.gov>
- Access local and statewide job listings 24 hours daily, 7 days a week
- Receive job referrals by calling or emailing your requests to the Department of Labor
- View local and statewide job listings
- Access State and Federal job sites
- Identify wage ranges for specific occupations and other labor market information
- Access career assessment tools
- Discover more about the great State of Idaho and the available work opportunities

Helpful Tips for Re-Employment

1. DON'T GO IT ALONE

There is help within the community. The community wants you to be successful. **REACH OUT FOR HELP** at the following places:

- a. Idaho Department of Labor local offices
- b. Community Corrections Adult Probation and Parole Offices (Idaho Department of Corrections)
- c. Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- d. Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
- e. Faith and Community-Based Agencies (like the Boise Rescue Mission)

2. BE REALISTIC ABOUT THE TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT YOU CAN OBTAIN

Your first job after your release does not have to be your ideal job. Be prepared to build or rebuild your employment history. Accept that based on the felony conviction certain jobs may not be available to you, at least for now. However, our resources are structured to assist in finding a job that is a good match for you.

Past ex-offenders have had success as:

- a. Retail salespersons
- b. Warehouse workers
- c. Laundry and dry-cleaning workers
- d. Helpers trade assistants
- e. Construction laborers
- f. Wait staff
- g. Food preparation and serving-related persons
- h. Maids and housekeeping cleaners
- i. Janitors

3. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF RESOURCES TO MARKET YOURSELF TO EMPLOYERS

If you completed a training program while you were incarcerated, make sure you let the employer know. Some areas in Idaho have different resources, but the following are available statewide:

- a. One-on-one consulting with a Workforce Consultant
- b. Job search workshops or seminars
- c. Potential training opportunity determined on a case-by-case basis
- d. Federal bonding
- e. Work Opportunity Tax Credit for employers

4. LET THE EMPLOYER KNOW UP FRONT ABOUT YOUR CONVICTION

Don't hesitate to disclose this information. Once it is out in the open, you can focus on telling the employer your strengths and your goals for the future. The employer's role is to pay you for your work, not to discuss your problems. Focus on talking about what you can add to the business. On an interview:

- a. Speak clearly
- b. Cover tattoos and remove body piercings
- c. Don't look at your watch
- d. Dress appropriately. Dress one step above how you would expect others to dress for the interview.

The Job Search Plan

To bring stability back to your life, you must have a plan so you can manage your time and your efforts, and gain control of your life. You will need to have choices, be able to analyze those choices, set goals, plan the steps to meet goals, and then be prepared to start the process over if needed.

1. CHOICES—Think about what type of job you would like to do and set priorities.

Stay realistic. Your felony conviction potentially can be a barrier to employment, so do your homework to make sure your conviction will not have a serious impact in the type of job you want to do.

2. ANALYSIS—Identify all the considerations, job barriers, job restrictions and factors affecting the decision of a job choice. Factors to consider include:

- Pay
- How available you are for the job and any restrictions you have based on your parole or probation
- Personal readiness
- Requirements for the position

3. SET THE GOAL—Decide on the types of jobs you plan to seek.

You may have two or more goals, but here you develop your *PRIMARY* goal -- the end result you wish to accomplish. Make it clear, specific and measurable. Set a deadline to reach the goal. Examples of a goal include:

- To be employed as a food service worker in a fast food restaurant.
- To be employed as a forklift driver in a warehouse environment.
- To be employed as a janitor for a major janitorial services company.

4. ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL—Say it! . . . Write it! . . . Post it! . . . Visualize it! . . . Reward it!

Make a list of what you must do to meet your goal. Each task should be considered an objective to be accomplished. Remember to set realistic target dates to accomplish the goals. Here are examples of some job search steps:

- Develop a résumé, master application and reference list
- Contact friends, relatives and acquaintances for networking and job leads
- Develop a telephone script
- Develop a cold-call format
- Develop a list of contacts and schedule to communicate with each
- Allot time for employer research
- Make time for a Department of Labor visit each day
- Review job listings daily
- Contact Employers X, Y and Z regarding a position
- Follow-up on contacts and interviews
- Commit to accepting any interview offered
- Take advantage of unexpected opportunities

5. REPEATING THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS—Do **NOT** let discouragement convince you to give up! Keep working at your goals until you find a suitable and realistic position. You may need to take an interim job to keep money coming in and to keep up with your skills. If you do not achieve the expected results and need to consider an alternative goal, repeat the process again and define a new goal with a list of objectives to be met with realistic time frames to achieve the goal.

Staying Motivated During Your Job Search

- **KEEP YOUR SELF-IMAGE POSITIVE**

It can be very difficult not to take rejection personally. Layoffs and hiring decisions rest on many factors that may have little to do with you personally. Resist any temptation to get angry at yourself. Try not to dwell on negative past experiences. Treat yourself with respect!

- **BE ORGANIZED**

Organize a daily and weekly job search plan. Keep to your schedule so you do not brush important tasks aside or waste time wondering what you should do next. Looking for a good job is a 40-hour a week commitment.

- **EXERCISE DAILY**

Besides helping you remain physically healthy, exercise can help minimize depression. Depression removes your desire to be active. But activity changes your body chemistry so you actually feel better and desire more activity.

- **KEEP EMOTIONS IN CHECK**

Be aware of how you are handling your emotions. Being responsible means responding appropriately to your emotions. Anger can be difficult to deal with. If you direct anger toward yourself, you risk the possibility of making yourself ill. If you misdirect anger toward innocent people like family, friends, or potential employers, you are not being responsible. If the situation calls for it, remove yourself for a short while so you can regain control.

Filling Out an Employment Application

Because employment applications are legal documents, they must be filled out completely and accurately. If you lie on an employment application, you can be fired for falsifying a document.

Most job applications include questions about your criminal background so you should be prepared to complete this part of the application honestly and completely. Make sure you respond to the specific information requested. Therefore you must know the important information about your arrest and conviction records on your rap sheet.

A conviction is a guilty plea or a court's finding of guilt for a "crime" or "offense," and it is important to remember that you may have a conviction on your record even though no jail time was served. The sentence for a conviction could include probation, a fine, community service or conditional or unconditional discharge. It is important to know the various types of offenses that may appear on your rap sheet and whether they are considered "convictions" for purposes of completing job applications.

Read questions concerning criminal history carefully. Only answer what is asked. Applications may only ask about felony convictions or they may request information about all convictions, which ordinarily would include felonies and misdemeanors.

Some applications will ask for your conviction history for a specific duration of time. In all cases, you need to be familiar with the following information about your criminal record:

- a. Date of disposition
- b. Disposition -- outcome -- of the case. For example, did it result in a conviction? Was it dismissed?
- c. Specific offense of which you were convicted
- d. Sentence

Leaving questions blank could be construed to be dishonesty by omission so it is not advised to answer the question with "will discuss in interview." You must still check "yes" on the application.

You must be prepared to discuss any conviction during the job interview. Usually you will give a brief summary of the circumstances surrounding the conviction. Highlight any successes and accomplishments you have had since the conviction and present evidence of rehabilitation. For example, if your convictions were drug-related, letters from treatment providers and counselors confirming successful recovery would be of value.

The key to success is preparation and honesty. Be prepared to answer any questions related to your convictions. Never indicate the crime for which you were convicted was not your fault. The employer wants to hear an explanation not an excuse. You must be able to convince the employer you:

- a. Regret what criminal action you committed
- b. Have paid the price for what you did as determined by the court
- c. Have completed programs to help ensure you will never repeat this action
- d. Are committed to getting your life on the right track no matter the effort
- e. Will do whatever it takes to find a good job

If you are able to do this, you are on the right track getting your life headed in the right direction and finding employment for which you are well suited.

Master Employment Application

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name (Last, First, Middle) _____	Telephone Number _____
Address _____	Message Telephone Number _____
City/State/Zip _____	E-mail Address _____

RIGHT TO WORK

Are you legally authorized to work in the United States? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Applying For: <input type="checkbox"/> Full Time <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary	Shift(s) Willing to Work: <input type="checkbox"/> Days <input type="checkbox"/> Evenings <input type="checkbox"/> Nights	May We Contact Your Current Employer? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY (Begin with Most Recent Employment)

Dates From To _____ to _____	Company Name _____	City, State _____
Titles and Duties: _____ _____		
Reason for Leaving: _____ _____		
Dates From To _____ to _____	Company Name _____	City, State _____
Titles and Duties: _____ _____		
Reason for Leaving: _____ _____		
Dates From To _____ to _____	Company Name _____	City, State _____
Titles and Duties: _____ _____		
Reason for Leaving: _____ _____		
Dates From To _____ to _____	Company Name _____	City, State _____
Titles and Duties: _____ _____		
Reason for Leaving: _____ _____		

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR EX-OFFENDERS

MILITARY SERVICE

Military (Branch of Service): _____
Describe any military training received relevant to the position for which you are applying: _____

EDUCATION/TRAINING (Include Technical/Academic Achievements/Courses)

Have you obtained a high school diploma or GED certificate? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
School	Name & Location	Diploma/Degree	Subject Of Specialization
College/University	_____	_____	_____
Specialized Courses & Training	_____	_____	_____

CLERICAL SKILLS (To Be Completed for Clerical Positions)

Typing (WPM)	_____	Medical Terminology <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Legal Terminology <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
List Specific Computer Skills: _____			

PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION (To Be Completed For Licensed/Registered Positions)

Idaho Registration No.	Expiration Date	Certificate No.	Expiration Date
_____	_____	_____	_____
If not licensed in Idaho, have you applied? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		If licensed in another state, list: _____	

SPECIAL SKILLS

List other specific skills you have to offer for this job opening: _____

REFERENCES (Give the Names of Three Persons Not Related to You)

Name	Address	Telephone	Relationship
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

The information on this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and acknowledge my signature authorizes the prospective employer to complete a background check.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Sample Letter of Explanation/Cover Letter

Roberto Johnson

1212 Job Search Lane

Boise, Idaho 80000

208.555.1212

bestjobcandidate@funnymail.com

April 29, 2012

Bill H. Manager
Best Jobs, Inc.
1234 Great Location Avenue
Boise, Idaho 80001

Dear Mr. Manager:

I am excited to apply for your opening for a Customer Service Representative as posted with the Idaho Department of Labor.

I was particularly interested that you were looking for someone who had customer service experience along with the ability to multitask. With extensive experience working in an office environment that focused strongly on customer service, I am able to multi-task, remain flexible to change, and address the various needs of customers. I also enjoy tracking sales data and understand the importance of maintaining accurate sales records. My past work experience demonstrates my loyalty and commitment to a team and will translate into a committed relationship with your organization.

It is also important for me to let you know I am an ex-offender. My felony conviction occurred on _____. However, due to the confidentiality of this information and the embarrassment I feel over my past mistakes, I really would like the opportunity to explain this to you in person.

While you most likely have reservations about hiring an ex-offender, and rightfully so, I am committed to being an excellent employee. I can only hope to explain the specifics of my conviction, how I regret the choices I have made, and how I have taken responsibility for my past actions. I am turning my life around, and firmly believe I will be an outstanding employee for your company.

To provide more assurance of my commitment to being employed, the U.S. Department of Labor is willing to post a \$5,000 fidelity bond on my behalf at no cost to you. Additionally, the Internal Revenue Service offers a one-time tax credit of \$2,400 to employers who hire eligible ex-offenders.

Whatever your decision, I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Jobseeker

Criminal History and Employment Questions Frequently Asked

- **What crimes am I required to report on a job application?**

It depends on the type of job for which you are applying.

- Read and answer the question.
- Questions may relate to misdemeanors, felonies, DUIs, traffic violations, withheld judgments, and charges vs. convictions.

- **How do I answer the question on an application regarding my criminal history?**

Best answer: “Yes. Will explain during the interview.”

Always make sure you disclose and discuss! If you fail to disclose and then are hired, failure to disclose can lead to immediate termination.

- **What if my felony happened before the period of time asked about on a job application such as “Were you convicted of felony within the past 7 years?” Do I have to disclose it?**

If you are on probation or parole supervision for the crime, it is best practice to disclose it so it can’t come back to jeopardize your job later!

- **Am I required to disclose both misdemeanor and felony crimes to an employer?**

By signing an application for employment you are allowing an employer to do a background check. It’s far better they hear it from you first rather than finding out after going through all the trouble to conduct a background check. Be honest with the employer up front. That honesty may be the very thing that gets you hired.

- **With my criminal history will I pass a background check?**

The **Bottom Line -- REPORT EVERYTHING --** charges **AND** convictions!!!

Disqualification is most often due to inconsistencies in reporting so find out what is in your record. Some possible contacts include:

- County Courthouse of the county where you live – Register of Actions – Cost for service is typically \$1 per page to print
- Idaho Courts Repository
<https://www.idcourts.us>
- Idaho State Police – Cost for service
<http://www.isp.state.id.us/identification/index.html>

- **How should I disclose my criminal history during an interview?**

- Be Honest!!!
- Use “Sin -- Suffer -- Repent” model
 - Charges (facts): When / Where / What
 - Consequences: Lost my freedom, now have a criminal record, served appropriate time, and any thing else that is pertinent.
 - Positive outcomes and elaborate such as “I learned from my experience, and have been clean and sober for two years.”
- Practice talking about it: Being comfortable talking about your “choice” makes the employer more comfortable.

Criminal History and Employment Questions Frequently Asked (cont.)

- **Why do some employers seem to discriminate against people with a felony?**

There may be liability issues you are unaware of related to bonding, insurance regulations related to age or someone more qualified or experienced.

- **Do I need to be bonded, and how do I get it?**

- The Federal Bonding Program provides fidelity bonding for the first six months of employment for hard-to-place job applicants through each state's Department of Labor.
- The employer requests bonding for an employee. Information can be found at <http://www.bonds4jobs.com>

- **How will a registered sexual offense affect employment?**

Sexual offenders must gain permission **BEFORE** starting employment. Since your picture is on the Internet, it is even more important to disclose and discuss your crime during an interview. Your parole officer will probably deny employment working around minors and other vulnerable populations, Internet-based employment, and possibly job sites around residential neighborhoods or near schools, daycares, or parks.

- **Do I disclose my withheld judgment to an employer? Do I disclose felonies that have been expunged -- removed from my record?**

- Until your withheld judgment sentence is completed, you go back to court, or your record is expunged, you need to report it since you are currently on supervision for it.
- After your record is expunged, it depends. Again, it's better to be honest up front then be surprised. Read and answer the question honestly and completely.

- **Are there work incentives for employers to hire me?**

- Work Opportunity Tax Credit – employers may be eligible for up to a \$2400 tax credit if you were convicted of a felony or released from incarceration within the past year. See page 15 for more details.
- Federal Bonding. See page 14 for more details.
- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) – for displaced workers or low income adults. Talk to your Workforce Consultant.
- Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Incentives for Businesses to Hire an Ex-Offender

The federal government supports many programs to help you re-enter the work force. The programs described on the next two pages provide incentives for employers who hire ex-offenders. Although employers must apply for these programs, you should know about them when you are talking to a potential employer about the benefits of hiring you.

FEDERAL BONDING

The Federal Bonding Program offers fidelity bonds to employers who are not eligible for commercial bonding. It is a business insurance policy that protects the employer in case of any loss of money or property due to employee dishonesty. This virtually guarantees the employer that the person hired will be an honest worker. The Department of Labor administers this federal program in Idaho. For additional information on this program see <http://www.bonds4jobs.com> for full details.

1. Eligibility

- a. **EMPLOYER** – Employers are eligible if they are hiring for a full-time job of at least 30 hours a week that should last at least six months. Any job at any employer can be covered by the bond insurance.
- b. **EMPLOYEES** – Employees are eligible if they have the occupational skills needed to fill the job. **Self-employment is not covered.** No candidate may be covered for more than one job at the same time.

2. Amount of Bond

Bonds are either \$5,000 or \$10,000. Bonds are automatically issued for \$5,000, unless the State Bonding Coordinator, or designee, approves the local office request for \$10,000.

3. Duration of Bond

The Federal Bonding Program insurance policy is issued free-of-charge to the employer for six-months. Should the worker covered by the bond change jobs before the end of the six-month period, a second and final bond covering the same worker can be issued to the new employer. At the end of the six months of free bond coverage, if the worker has not caused a claim to be paid to the employer under the bond, the employer can choose to arrange to purchase continued bond coverage for the same worker at the regular commercial rate.

4. Effective Date of Coverage

The bond is effective on the date the employee starts work, or immediately upon the signature of the local Department of Labor bonding representative if the employee has already started work. The employer's signature is not required. The bond will be mailed directly to the employer by the Travelers Property Casualty Company. Bonds are issued through the insurer's agent, the McLaughlin Co., in Washington, D.C.

5. Costs

Bonds are free of charge to employers.

6. How to Apply

To obtain a bond, the prospective employer or employee applies at any Idaho Department of Labor office and shows that a valid job exists, that the employee meets the job qualifications, and that the bond is needed for the employee to keep the job. Further information can be found at <http://www.bonds4jobs.com>.

Incentives for Businesses to Hire an Ex-Offender (cont.)

WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT OR WELFARE-TO-WORK TAX CREDIT

This is an incentive that Congress provides to private-sector employers for hiring economically disadvantaged individuals with significant barriers to employment. Credits are applied toward taxes due the Internal Revenue Service with carry over of unused tax credits into the next year.

1. How Tax Credits Work

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, which includes the Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit, has two purposes:

- To help individuals who qualify as members of a target group to get a job, and
- To help employers who hire qualified individuals by giving them a credit on their federal taxes.

2. Use the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program in Your Job Search

If you are a member of one of the groups targeted by the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program, you can inform potential employers that they are eligible for a tax credit if you are hired. Check the list below to see if you are eligible.

3. Who are Members of the Target Groups?

The target groups include:

- A member of a family that is receiving or has received Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children benefits or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families for any nine months during the 18-month period that ends on the hiring date.
- A veteran who is a member of a family that is receiving or has recently received food stamps and certain qualified disabled veterans.
- **A recently released ex-felon.**
- A person 18 to 39 who is a member of a family that is receiving or has recently received food stamps.
- A recipient of Supplemental Security Income benefits.
- A long-term family assistance recipient.

4. How Long Must the Individual Remain on the Job to Provide the Employer with a Tax Credit?

The person hired must be employed for at least 120 hours -- three 40-hour weeks.

5. What is the Process for Applying for the Tax Credit?

Step 1: The employer or jobseeker must undergo pre-screening to determine eligibility by completing the Individual Characteristics Form, Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit, ETA 9061.

Step 2: The employer and the jobseeker must complete the Pre-Screening Notice and Certification Request for the Work Opportunity and Welfare-to-Work Credits, Form 8850.

Step 3: The employer and the jobseeker must sign the Form 8850, under penalty of perjury, attesting that the jobseeker is a member of a target group.

Step 4: The employer then sends the forms to the Division of Career Services postmarked no later than the 28th day after the jobseeker begins work.

Instructions for Form 8850



Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

(Rev. January 2012)

Pre-Screening Notice and Certification Request for the Work Opportunity Credit

General Instructions

Section references are to the Internal Revenue Code unless otherwise noted.

What's New

- For certain veterans who begin work after November 21, 2011, and before 2013, the qualified veteran targeted group has been expanded to cover veterans who were unemployed for at least 4 weeks during the 1-year period ending on the hiring date.
- The Hurricane Katrina employee targeted group expired for individuals hired after August 27, 2009.
- The unemployed veteran and disconnected youth targeted groups expired for individuals hired after 2010.
- The empowerment zone designations were extended until the end of 2011.
- The renewal community designations expired at the end of 2009.
- Some states may be equipped to accept a faxed copy of Form 8850 and additional states are equipped to receive Form 8850 electronically.
- The IRS has created a page on IRS.gov for information about Form 8850 and its instructions at www.irs.gov/form8850. Information about any future developments affecting Form 8850 (such as legislation enacted after we release it) will be posted on that page.

Purpose of Form

Employers use Form 8850 to pre-screen and to make a written request to their state workforce agency (SWA) to certify an individual as a member of a targeted group for purposes of qualifying for the work opportunity credit.

Submitting Form 8850 to the SWA is but one step in the process of qualifying for the work opportunity credit. The state work opportunity tax credit (WOTC) coordinator for the SWA must certify the job applicant is a member of a targeted group. After starting work, the employee must meet the minimum number-of-hours-worked requirement for the work opportunity credit. Generally, an employer elects to take the credit by filing Form 5884, Work Opportunity Credit. However, a tax-exempt organization that hires a qualified veteran should report the work opportunity credit on Form 5884-C, Work Opportunity Credit for Qualified Tax-Exempt Organizations Hiring Qualified Veterans.

Who Should Complete and Sign the Form

The job applicant gives information to the employer on or before the day a job offer is made. This information is entered on Form 8850. Based on the applicant's information, the employer determines whether or not he or she believes the applicant is a member of a targeted group (as defined under *Members of Targeted Groups*). If the employer believes the applicant is a member of a targeted group, the employer completes the rest of the form no later than the day the job offer is made. Both the job applicant and the employer must sign Form 8850 no later than the date for submitting the form to the SWA.

Instructions for Employer

When and Where To File

Do not file Form 8850 with the Internal Revenue Service. Instead, file it with your SWA no later than the 28th day after the job applicant begins work for you (by June 19, 2012, for all qualified veterans who begin work after November 21, 2011, and before May 22, 2012).

Although facsimile filing of Form 8850 is permitted, not all states are equipped to accept a faxed copy of Form 8850. Contact your state WOTC coordinator as discussed below and see Notice 2012-13 for details. Notice 2012-13 is available at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/n-12-13.pdf.

Although electronic filing of Form 8850 is permitted, at the time these instructions were published, only the following states are equipped to receive Form 8850 electronically: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. See Announcement 2002-44 and Notice 2012-13 for details. You can find Announcement 2002-44 on page 809 of Internal Revenue Bulletin 2002-17 at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-irbs/irb02-17.pdf.

To get the name, address, phone and fax numbers, and email address of the WOTC coordinator for your state, visit the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (ETA) website at www.doleta.gov/business/Incentives/opptax.



Never attach Form 8850 to a tax return or otherwise send it to the IRS, regardless of the employee's targeted group. Form 8850 should be filed with the SWA.

Additional Requirements for Certification

In addition to filing Form 8850, you must complete and send to your state WOTC coordinator either:

- ETA Form 9062, Conditional Certification Form, if the job applicant received this form from a participating agency (e.g., the Jobs Corps), or
- ETA Form 9061, Individual Characteristics Form, if the job applicant did not receive a conditional certification.

You can get ETA Form 9061 from your local public employment service office or you can download it from the ETA website at www.doleta.gov/business/Incentives/opptax.

Recordkeeping

Keep copies of Forms 8850, any transmittal letters that you submit to your state WOTC coordinator, and certification letters you receive from your WOTC coordinator as long as they may be needed for the administration of the provisions relating to the work opportunity credit. Records that support the credit usually must be kept for 3 years from the date any income tax return claiming the credit is due or filed, whichever is later.

Members of Targeted Groups

A job applicant may be certified as a member of a targeted group if he or she is described in one of the following groups.

1. **Qualified IV-A recipient.** An individual who is a member of a family receiving assistance under a state plan approved under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act relating to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The assistance must be received for any 9 months during the 18-month period ending on the hiring date.

2. **Qualified veteran.** A veteran who is any of the following.

- A member of a family receiving assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (food stamps) for at least a 3-month period during the 15-month period ending on the hiring date.
- Unemployed for a period or periods totaling at least 4 weeks (whether or not consecutive) but less than 6 months in the 1-year period ending on the hiring date.
- Unemployed for a period or periods totaling at least 6 months (whether or not consecutive) in the 1-year period ending on the hiring date.
- Entitled to compensation for a service-connected disability and is hired not more than 1 year after being discharged or released from active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces.
- Entitled to compensation for a service-connected disability and was unemployed for a period or periods totaling at least 6 months (whether or not consecutive) in the 1-year period ending on the hiring date.

Note. Requesting the information in box 4 or box 5 of Form 8850 is an exception to the Americans with Disabilities Act's prohibition on pre-offer disability-related inquiries. The purpose of this request is to support the hiring of certain disabled veterans, which will entitle the employer to a larger work opportunity credit than the hiring of other targeted group members.

To be considered a veteran, the applicant must:

- Have served on active duty (not including training) in the Armed Forces of the United States for more than 180 days or have been discharged or released from active duty for a service-connected disability, and
- Not have a period of active duty (not including training) of more than 90 days that ended during the 60-day period ending on the hiring date.

3. **Qualified ex-felon.** An ex-felon who has been convicted of a felony under any federal or state law, and is hired not more than 1 year after the conviction or release from prison for that felony.

4. **Designated community resident.** An individual who is at least age 18 but not yet age 40 on the hiring date and lives within an empowerment zone or rural renewal county (defined later).

5. **Vocational rehabilitation referral.** An individual who has a physical or mental disability resulting in a substantial handicap to employment and who was referred to the employer upon completion of (or while receiving) rehabilitation services by a rehabilitation agency approved by the state, an employment network under the Ticket to Work program, or the Department of Veterans Affairs.

6. **Summer youth employee.** An individual who:

- Performs services for the employer between May 1 and September 15,
- Is at least age 16 but not yet age 18 on the hiring date (or if later, on May 1),
- Has never worked for the employer before, and
- Lives within an empowerment zone.

7. **Recipient of SNAP benefits (food stamps).** An individual who:

- Is at least age 18 but not yet age 40 on the hiring date, and
- Is a member of a family that:

a. Has received SNAP benefits for the 6-month period ending on the hiring date, or

b. Is no longer eligible for such assistance under section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, but the family received SNAP benefits for at least 3 months of the 5-month period ending on the hiring date.

8. **SSI recipient.** An individual who is receiving supplemental security income benefits under title XVI of the Social Security Act (including benefits of the type described in section 1616 of the Social Security Act or section 212 of Public Law 93-66) for any month ending during the 60-day period ending on the hiring date.

9. **Long-term family assistance recipient.** An individual who is a member of a family that:

- Has received TANF payments for at least 18 consecutive months ending on the hiring date, or
- Receives TANF payments for any 18 months (whether or not consecutive) beginning after August 5, 1997, and the earliest 18-month period beginning after August 5, 1997, ended during the past 2 years, or
- Stopped being eligible for TANF payments because federal or state law limits the maximum period such assistance is payable and the individual is hired not more than 2 years after such eligibility ended.

Member of a Family

With respect to the qualified IV-A recipient, qualified veteran, recipient of SNAP benefits (food stamps), and long-term family assistance recipient, an individual whose family receives assistance for the requisite period meets the family assistance requirement of the applicable group if the individual is included on the grant (and thus receives assistance) for some portion of the specified period.

Empowerment Zones

The following paragraphs describe current designations of empowerment zones. The designations will generally remain in effect until the end of 2011.

Urban areas. Parts of the following urban areas are empowerment zones. You can find out if your business or an employee's residence is located within an urban empowerment zone by using the EZ/RC Address Locator at www.hud.gov/crlocator or by calling 1-800-998-9999.

- Pulaski County, AR
- Tucson, AZ
- Fresno, CA
- Los Angeles, CA (city and county)
- Santa Ana, CA
- New Haven, CT
- Jacksonville, FL
- Miami/Dade County, FL
- Chicago, IL
- Gary/Hammond/East Chicago, IN
- Boston, MA
- Baltimore, MD
- Detroit, MI
- Minneapolis, MN
- St. Louis, MO/East St. Louis, IL
- Cumberland County, NJ
- New York, NY
- Syracuse, NY
- Yonkers, NY
- Cincinnati, OH
- Cleveland, OH
- Columbus, OH
- Oklahoma City, OK
- Philadelphia, PA/Camden, NJ
- Columbia/Sumter, SC
- Knoxville, TN
- El Paso, TX
- San Antonio, TX
- Norfolk/Portsmouth, VA
- Huntington, WV/Ironton, OH

Washington, DC. Under section 1400, parts of Washington, DC, are treated as an empowerment zone. This treatment will generally remain in effect until the end of 2011. For details, use the EZ/RC Address Locator at www.hud.gov/crlocator or see Notice 98-57 on page 9 of Internal Revenue Bulletin 1998-47 at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-irbs/irb98-47.pdf.

Rural areas. Parts of the following rural areas are empowerment zones. You can find out if your business or an employee's residence is located within a rural empowerment zone by using the EZ/RC Address Locator at www.hud.gov/crlocator or by calling 1-800-998-9999.

- Desert Communities, CA (part of Riverside County)
- Southwest Georgia United, GA (part of Crisp County and all of Dooly County)
- Southernmost Illinois Delta, IL (parts of Alexander and Johnson Counties and all of Pulaski County)
- Kentucky Highlands, KY (part of Wayne County and all of Clinton and Jackson Counties)
- Aroostook County, ME (part of Aroostook County)
- Mid-Delta, MS (parts of Bolivar, Holmes, Humphreys, Leflore, Sunflower, and Washington Counties)
- Griggs-Steele, ND (part of Griggs County and all of Steele County)
- Oglala Sioux Tribe, SD (parts of Jackson and Bennett Counties and all of Shannon County)
- Middle Rio Grande FUTURO Communities, TX (parts of Dimmit, Maverick, Uvalde, and Zavala Counties)
- Rio Grande Valley, TX (parts of Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy Counties)

Rural Renewal Counties

A rural renewal county is a county in a rural area that lost population during the 5-year periods 1990 through 1994 and 1995 through 1999. Rural renewal counties are listed below.

Alabama. The counties of Butler, Dallas, Macon, Perry, Sumter, and Wilcox.

Alaska. The census areas of Aleutians West, Wrangell-Petersburg, and Yukon-Koyukuk.

Arkansas. The counties of Arkansas, Chicot, Clay, Desha, Jackson, Lafayette, Lee, Little River, Monroe, Nevada, Ouachita, Phillips, Union, and Woodruff.

Colorado. The counties of Cheyenne, Kiowa, and San Juan.

Georgia. The counties of Randolph and Stewart.

Illinois. The counties of Alexander, Edwards, Franklin, Gallatin, Greene, Hancock, Hardin, Jasper, Knox, McDonough, Montgomery, Pulaski, Randolph, Richland, Scott, Warren, Wayne, and White.

Indiana. Perry County.

Iowa. The counties of Adair, Adams, Appanoose, Audubon, Butler, Calhoun, Cass, Cherokee, Clay, Clayton, Emmet, Floyd, Franklin, Fremont, Hancock, Humboldt, Ida, Keokuk, Kossuth, Montgomery, Osceola, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, Poweshiek, Sac, Taylor, Union, Wayne, Winnebago, and Worth.

Kansas. The counties of Atchison, Barber, Barton, Brown, Clay, Cloud, Comanche, Decatur, Edwards, Elk, Ellsworth, Gove, Graham, Greeley, Greenwood, Harper, Hodgeman, Jewell, Kiowa, Labette, Lane, Lincoln, Marshall, Mitchell, Montgomery, Ness, Osborne, Phillips, Rawlins, Republic, Rooks, Rush, Russell, Scott, Sheridan, Sherman, Smith, Stafford, Trego, Wallace, Washington, Wichita, and Woodson.

Kentucky. The counties of Bell, Caldwell, Floyd, Harlan, Hickman, Leslie, Letcher, Pike, and Union.

Louisiana. The parishes of Bienville, Claiborne, Franklin, Jackson, Morehouse, St. Mary, Tensas, Vernon, and Webster.

Maine. The counties of Aroostook and Piscataquis.

Michigan. The counties of Gogebic, Marquette, and Ontonagon.

Minnesota. The counties of Big Stone, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, Kittson, Koochiching, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Marshall, Martin, Murray, Norman, Pipestone, Red Lake, Redwood, Renville, Stevens, Traverse, Wilkin, and Yellow Medicine.

Mississippi. The counties of Adams, Coahoma, Humphreys, Montgomery, Quitman, Sharkey, Tallahatchie, and Washington.

Missouri. The counties of Atchison, Carroll, Chariton, Clark, Holt, Knox, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, and Worth.

Montana. The counties of Carter, Daniels, Dawson, Deer Lodge, Fallon, Garfield, Hill, Liberty, McCone, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Valley, and Wibaux.

Nebraska. The counties of Antelope, Banner, Boone, Box Butte, Boyd, Burt, Cedar, Chase, Deuel, Dundy, Fillmore, Franklin, Garden, Garfield, Greeley, Hayes, Hitchcock, Holt, Jefferson, Johnson, Logan, Nance, Nemaha, Nuckolls, Pawnee, Perkins, Red Willow, Richardson, Rock, Sheridan, Sherman, Thayer, Thomas, Valley, Webster, and Wheeler.

Nevada. The counties of Esmeralda, Lander, and Mineral.

New Hampshire. Coos County.

New Mexico. The counties of Harding and Quay.

New York. The counties of Clinton and Montgomery.

North Dakota. The counties of Adams, Barnes, Benson, Billings, Bottineau, Burke, Cavalier, Dickey, Divide, Dunn, Eddy, Emmons, Foster, Golden Valley, Grant, Griggs, Hettinger, Kidder, LaMoure, Logan, McHenry, McIntosh, McKenzie, McLean, Mercer, Mountrail, Nelson, Oliver, Pembina, Pierce, Ramsey, Ransom, Renville, Sargent, Sheridan, Slope, Stark, Steele, Stutsman, Towner, Traill, Walsh, Wells, and Williams.

Ohio. The counties of Crawford, Monroe, Paulding, Seneca, and Van Wert.

Oklahoma. The counties of Alfalfa, Beaver, Cimarron, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Grant, Greer, Harmon, Harper, Kiowa, Major, Roger Mills, Seminole, Tillman, and Woodward.

Pennsylvania. The counties of Venango and Warren.

South Carolina. Marlboro County.

South Dakota. The counties of Aurora, Campbell, Clark, Day, Deuel, Douglas, Faulk, Grant, Gregory, Haakon, Hand, Harding, Hutchinson, Jones, Kingsbury, Marshall, McPherson, Miner, Perkins, Potter, Sanborn, Spink, Tripp, and Walworth.

Texas. The counties of Andrews, Bailey, Baylor, Borden, Briscoe, Brooks, Castro, Cochran, Coleman, Collingsworth, Cottle, Crane, Culberson, Deaf Smith, Dimmit, Eastland, Fisher, Floyd, Foard, Gray, Hall, Hardeman, Haskell, Hemphill, Hockley, Hutchinson, Kenedy, Kent, Knox, Lamb, Martin, McCulloch, Morris, Nolan, Oldham, Reagan, Reeves, Refugio, Roberts, Scurry, Stonewall, Terrell, Terry, Upton, Ward, Wheeler, Wilbarger, Winkler, Yoakum, and Zavala.

Virginia. The counties of Buchanan, Dickenson, Highland, and Lee and the independent cities of Clifton Forge, Covington, Norton, and Staunton.

West Virginia. The counties of Calhoun, Gilmer, Logan, McDowell, Mercer, Mingo, Summers, Tucker, Webster, Wetzel, and Wyoming.

Wyoming. The counties of Carbon and Niobrara.

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