



This information is excerpted from CCJRC's publication, *Getting On After Getting Out: A ReEntry Guide for Colorado, 2nd Edition*. To order this guide, go to www.ccjrc.org.

CHAPTER 15

Employment

"You can't set your sights too high. Any job is a place to start. Don't hold out for the dream job."
(employment counselor)

While it may be hard to get a job, it *is* possible. Many employers will hire a person with a felony conviction. They say their hiring decision is based on how your skills match the job available, the kind of employee you appear you will be, and the way you present yourself. Your crime, or the fact that you have a criminal conviction, is important, but it may not be the deciding factor in whether or not you get a job.

- *Focus on selling yourself as the best person for the job.*

Many experts advise that you take any job, even if it's less than ideal, because it's a place to start. You will have some income while you look for a better job. Plus, being employed shows you're willing to work, and it can help you build a work history.

This chapter is to help you best present yourself to an employer who's willing to give you a chance. Think about how you look to an employer from his/her perspective. Would *you* hire you?

Make an appointment with one of the organizations described at the end of the chapter. They have experience helping people with a criminal conviction. You don't have to do this alone. Many people are understandably in a big hurry to get a job. They think it's a waste of time to sit through orientations and learn how to do a cover letter and résumé, or to practice talking about their conviction. This may be a mistake. A job coach can be a big help for someone looking for a job.

If you don't have identification documents, you need to start this process right away. Without an ID or Social Security card, you can't get a job.

TIP: Get a small notebook and carry it with you. Keep information about your job search in this notebook, including a record of where and when you dropped off an application, any job leads you hear from your network, etc.

Networking and other job search strategies

Some employment openings are advertised in want ads in the newspaper, with online websites (monster.com, careerbuilder.com, and craigslist.com, etc.), or through employment offices and temporary services. This is called the visible employment market.

Most employment openings are harder to find. This is known as the hidden, or invisible, employment market. It takes work to find hidden market jobs. It could be talking to the stranger on the bus wearing a uniform for the place you want to work, or walking door to door dressed for a possible interview with your résumé and cover letter in hand.

You should be aware of several different ways to find the hidden employment market.

- Networking is probably the best way. Your network includes everyone you know, even casually. Before and after your release, ask friends, family members, former co-workers, former employers, and neighbors if they know of any job possibilities. Networking is how a lot of people say they found a job. Some organizations, such as parenting support programs, provide group settings for networking. Chapter 8 has information about some of these groups.
- Use the yellow pages to target industries that you want to work in. Find out as much as you can about the company or companies where you want to work. Then prepare your résumé and cover letter and make a cold call, much as you would if you were a sales person. Ask for the hiring manager and have two or three things ready that describe your experience. "Ms. Smith, I have five years experience in telephone sales, I was acknowledged for meeting and exceeding my monthly goals, and I created a call tracking form that is still in use at ABC Sales. Do you have time to meet me sometime this week?" In person or on the phone, be able to describe your skills and experience with confidence *and* in about thirty seconds.
- You have a better chance of getting an interview by seeking out employers in person. This is easier to do with smaller companies than with large corporations.
- Contact one or more of the organizations listed at the end of this chapter. They have experience and contacts throughout your community.

TIP: Make a to-do list every day of your job search. Plan your day so that you make the best use of time. Apply for jobs early in the day when managers are more available. You may want to call an employer to ask about the best time to apply. When you're unemployed, looking for a job should be your full-time job.

Employment and parole: working together

During your first meeting with your parole officer, talk about your job search. Your job has to meet the approval of your parole officer. It's better to ask questions up front, before you start looking.

- Are there jobs you will not be allowed to do?
- Are there parts of town where you can't work?
- Can you drive to and from a job if you have a valid license and a licensed, insured car?
- Are you going to have to find a job that's on a bus line?
- Are there any other restrictions?

TIP: Your parole officer has to verify your employment, so it's a problem if you get a job that doesn't issue a paycheck or pay stub. If an employer is willing to document the dates and hours you work and your pay, then you might receive permission. Other jobs may be a problem for someone on parole.

- You probably can't work in a bar or nightclub unless you have no history of alcohol abuse and can give a good reason to work there. Very few people receive permission to work in a bar or club. You *might* be allowed to serve alcohol as a waiter or waitress in a restaurant.
- A truck driving job that involves crossing state lines probably will not be allowed. If you could find a job driving within the state, you might receive permission.

Some employers may not know what parole is or how it works. Your boss needs to know what to expect from your parole officer. Your parole officer needs to know what your boss is going to expect from you. Your role is to help those two communicate.

Since your parole officer is going to have to verify your employment, prepare your boss for these visits and phone calls. Make sure you take pay stubs to every meeting with your parole officer. This may reduce visits from the parole officer to the job site. It may be helpful if your boss lets your parole officer know about your job responsibilities and work hours. You may need to explain the conditions of your parole to your boss.

- Urinalysis (UA) and breath analysis (BA) tests are a condition of parole. Explain this system to your employer and do everything you can do minimize the impact on your job schedule. It's a good idea to promise to make up for any lost time.

Your boss needs to know that you will be reliable. If you don't have permission to drive or don't have a car, will public transportation or a bicycle get you to and from the job?

The DOC developed a new policy for driving privileges that went into effect March 2010. This policy is described in Administrative Regulation 250-67. During your first office visit with your parole officer, you will have the option of filling out an application for driving privileges. Your parole office will send the application along with your driving history to a supervisor. You should be given a decision within 15 working days from the date of your application. Your record, conviction(s), and whether you need to drive for employment will be considered.

- If your application is denied, you may request a reconsideration of the decision in 90 days.
- If you violate a condition of your supervision, your driving privileges may be suspended. The parole officer may not confiscate your driver's license.

TIP: If you find a great job and your parole officer will not approve it for a reason that seems arbitrary or unreasonable, you have the option to appeal the decision to your PO's supervisor, just as you would for any other decision.

Applications

You usually have to fill out an application when you apply for a job. Employers use job applications to screen people out and to decide which applicants they will interview. Your application must make a good impression. We recommend that you fill out an application at home when possible so you can take your time and do a good job.

- Completely read the application before you begin filling it out.
- Follow all instructions. How well you follow instructions on an application shows how well you follow instructions and complete tasks.
- Print neatly. Spell everything correctly. Messy or unreadable applications may get tossed in the trash.
- Fill in every blank and answer every question. If a question doesn't apply to you, write N/A for not applicable instead of leaving it blank.
- If your DOC work history is relevant to the job you're applying for, use it.
- If the application asks for a salary, you can write "negotiable" on the application if you don't know the salary for the position.
- List references who will speak well of you and who have given you permission to list them.
- First impressions count. Dress up when you pick up or fill out an application. People notice.

If you plan on filling out an application at a business, be prepared. Make sure you have all of the information you will need with you. If possible, have a sample application with you that you've already filled out. Then you can copy the information from the sample application onto the employer's application.

- When you leave an application with an employer, ask if it's convenient to speak with the manager. If this is possible, introduce yourself, shake his/her hand, and briefly explain why you're interested in working there.

Attach your résumé and cover letter to the application with a paper clip. The organizations listed at the end of this chapter can help you prepare a professional cover letter and résumé.

After you leave an application, call back in a day or two to follow up unless they ask you not to call. Check back often enough to let them know you're interested in the job but not so often that you're bothering them. It's a fine line. Keep any message brief and professional. If you say in your cover letter that you will call in two days, be sure you follow through.

TIP: Many companies use online applications. You will need your own e-mail address for this application. (Workforce Centers and the community agencies listed in this chapter can help you set up a free e-mail account.) You will also need to know how to attach or cut-and-paste your cover letter and/or résumé into the online application.

Application questions about your conviction

If you apply for a job and the application doesn't ask whether you've been arrested or convicted of a crime, you don't have to volunteer it. The "don't ask—don't tell" method is how some people get their foot in the door.

Most job applications ask whether you've ever been convicted or arrested. Although people have different opinions about how to best handle this, we think it's best to be honest. Most employers run criminal background checks. If you don't disclose your criminal record and an employer finds out, s/he probably won't hire you. If you don't disclose and the employer finds out after hiring you, you'll probably get fired.

- If you provide this information on the application, read the question carefully so that you answer the specific question. For example, the question may be about felonies only, or about felonies and misdemeanors, or for the last seven years, etc.

If you say yes to the question about your criminal history, there are several schools of thought about what to do next.

- Some people believe the best thing to do is to write "Will discuss in interview" next to the box. If you decide to do this, you will need to be ready to discuss your conviction. Some people find it very helpful to practice this conversation in job preparation workshops or with a friend. Agencies that provide such workshops are listed at the end of this chapter.
- Another consideration is to answer this question by noting the type of crime, such as "drug charge—nonviolent," and to write "will discuss in interview" when the crime is more serious.
- Some people advise that you say yes and leave a letter of explanation with the application.

Whether you choose to use a letter or write on the application that you would like to discuss your conviction in an interview depends upon the circumstances. It's your decision. Just keep in mind that how you present yourself and your conviction is very important. It is helpful to practice this beforehand.

Letter of explanation

A letter of explanation should be honest and positive. It should *not* argue that you were wrongfully convicted and innocent of the crime or go into a lot of details about the crime. The letter should list your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address at the top.

The following description and example of a letter of explanation also includes some of the information that people include in a cover letter.

- The first paragraph expresses your interest in the position and describes how your skills qualify you for the job.
- In the second paragraph, you could share your criminal history. Some people advise that you choose your language carefully. For example, you might want to write “facility” instead of “prison” and say that you “violated” a state or federal statute instead of saying you “committed a crime.” How you word your letter is up to you and what works best for your situation. Complete the paragraph by sharing all that you have done to become a better individual while you were incarcerated.
- The third paragraph reemphasizes your skills and explains why you are a great candidate for the job. If applicable, you may explain that you’re seeking a career, not just looking for a job.
- The last paragraph is where you state that you will call in one or two days with the goal of arranging an interview.

Example letter of explanation

Hello:

I am exploring the possibility of employment with your company. I have more than five years of experience working as a mechanic on heavy and light trucks as well as general construction experience. I am determined and dependable, and can work effectively both on my own or as part of a team.

You will note on the application that my personal background requires explanation. Six years ago I violated nonviolent state drug statutes and as a result spent some time in a state facility. While incarcerated, I participated in an intensive therapeutic drug treatment program and learned to take responsibility for my actions. I am proud to let you know that I successfully completed additional classes including my General Educational Development (GED) degree.

I understand the importance of building and maintaining long-term client relationships. I enjoy new challenges and am committed to doing quality work to achieve company goals. I am interested in building a career and believe my work experience and training will benefit your company.

I have included a copy of my résumé outlining my capabilities. My plan is to contact you within the week with the goal of scheduling an interview. I am looking forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Résumés

A résumé is a brief summary of your work experience, education, and skills. Résumés are fairly formal and there are several different styles to use, depending upon your experience and the job you are applying for. The functional form of a résumé is probably best for people who have been incarcerated because it makes the gaps in an employment history less obvious.

Résumés are about selling *you* as if you were a product. Usually only one page in length, a résumé briefly merchandises your skills, work history, education, training, and technical abilities. If you have experience in more than one field, you will need more than one résumé. An employer who is seeking a telemarketer is not interested in your experience as a cook. Likewise, a restaurant owner needs to know your skills in the kitchen, not that you’re certified to drive a forklift.

- You can find help writing a résumé with many of the community agencies listed at the end of this chapter, as well as with DOC re-entry specialists.
- Your résumé must be perfect with no mistakes, misspelled words, smudges, etc.

Cover letters

A cover letter is a brief letter that is also about one page in length. It tells the employer why you are a good match for the job and is included with your résumé. A great cover letter can help you stand out over other applicants. It should not be all about you, though, as in “I did this, I did that.” Instead, the letter should tell how your experience will be of help to the company or organization.

- You can take a workshop that will help you write a cover letter from many of the organizations listed in this chapter.
- There are several different styles for cover letters such as the traditional use of paragraphs or the use of bullets to set off information. This is why a class can be helpful.
- A cover letter usually doesn't include information about your conviction, like a letter of explanation does. Whether you choose to write a cover letter or a letter of explanation as described earlier in this chapter is up to you and what you think is best for the circumstances. You may want to talk to a job coach/counselor, as well.

References

A reference is someone who can talk about your work habits, skills, and character. Employers usually ask for two to three references. Professional references are preferred over personal references.

A professional reference is someone from work, such as a former boss or supervisor. A former boss is a good professional reference because employers like to hear another employer's opinion. If you have experience as a volunteer or with community service, a supervisor might be willing to be a professional reference for you.

A personal reference is someone who knows you from outside of work. This person should not be a close relative such as your parent or family member. A personal reference is usually a friend, teacher, church official, etc.

Always ask someone first if you may use him or her as a reference. Make sure that s/he will give you a good reference. If a reference writes a letter on your behalf, photocopy the letter and offer it to an employer when you apply for a job.

TIP: The DOC recently changed its policy to allow supervisors to write letters of recommendation concerning job performance. If you have done well at a DOC job, ask the supervisor if s/he will write you a letter of recommendation to show prospective employers.

The interview

Most people are nervous before an interview. That's normal. One thing you can do is practice answering some of the possible interview questions beforehand. Another thing you can do is research the company so you know more about it.

Make sure you know where the company is located and how to get there. Give yourself plenty of time to travel if you're using the bus. Try to arrive 10-15 minutes early. Look professional and ready to work.

Bring copies of any paperwork--references, résumé, etc.—and keep them neat and clean in a folder or envelope. Don't bring anyone with you to an interview.

First impressions

Greet the person interviewing you with a smile and a firm (not weak, not forceful) handshake. Make eye contact. Listen carefully to the questions and give yourself time to think before you answer. Speak clearly and use good grammar. Don't swear, even if you think the interview feels informal. Sit up straight.

Dressing for an interview

Generally speaking, people dress up for interviews even if they don't have to dress up on the job. It is best to dress conservatively and to present in an understated manner. Minimize your jewelry. Cover up tattoos if possible and leave out the piercings. Go easy on perfume or aftershave, or don't wear any. Don't wear a hat or sunglasses, chew gum, or smoke. Turn off your cell phone.

Use this check list to make sure you have everything you need to fill out an application or be ready for an interview:

- e-mail address with your name
- telephone number and voicemail account
- résumé
- sample application with work history, dates, addresses, phone numbers, and references
- letter of explanation and/or your “conviction speech” (described in next section)

TIP: Dressing up for an interview is not the same as dressing up to go out on a date. Men should wear dark slacks and a long-sleeve dress shirt with a button-down collar. Polish up a pair of street shoes if you have them. Athletic shoes, work boots and cowboy boots aren't really appropriate for an interview. Jeans and T-shirts aren't either. Women should wear slacks/skirt and a blouse or a dress. Don't show a lot of leg or cleavage. If you wear earrings, keep them small, and if you usually wear a lot of jewelry, leave it at home when you go to an interview.

General interview questions

During an interview, focus on what the employer needs and how you are the best person to meet those needs. Practice answering interview questions. Don't rely on speaking off the cuff. A few interview questions are listed below, along with information about how to answer them.

Why should I hire you?

“I need a job,” and “I'm a hard worker” are what everyone says. Think about this question. What are three good reasons for an employer to hire you? Name them. Do you have the skills they are looking for? Are you a reliable worker who will be on time? Are you ambitious with a desire to learn? Have you heard good things about the company? An employee represents an investment of time and money for the employer. Your answer should demonstrate why you are a good investment.

Tell me about yourself.

This question can get tricky because it sounds so simple. Don't try to answer this without practicing. Don't ramble with your life story. Provide information about relevant experience and academic degrees, certification, training, etc. Describe how you are of value to the employer.

You don't have much of a work history or experience in this work. Why not?

If you have relevant work experience from your DOC time, describe it. You could also talk about your skills and strengths and how you can apply them to the job. For example, if you learned you needed to be dependable or reliable with a DOC job, describe this. Let the employer know you will work very hard to learn the skills that are needed for the job.

How did you handle a conflict with a boss?

Since getting along with people is a skill, if you had a conflict with a boss, your response should demonstrate that you understood both sides of the conflict, as well as what you learned from it. If you have never had a boss, you could talk about how you handled conflicts with an authority figure such as a case manager or teacher.

Tell me your greatest weakness.

Think carefully before you answer. You're not being asked to confess. Discuss a weakness related to work and describe how you plan on working on this weakness. For example, perhaps the job entails using a machine that you're not familiar with. This is an example of a weakness, but you could then explain how enthusiastic you are to learn this new skill.

What did you dislike most about your last job? Why did you quit that job?

Don't let feelings or bias creep into your answer if it was a bad experience. Keep your answer brief and without emotion. Don't talk negatively about a former boss or co-workers. If the job didn't let you advance and you want to work where you can learn more, explain this.

How do I know you're not going to do it again?

How you answer this question will reveal a lot about how you feel about succeeding, your remorse about the past, and your plans for success.

TIP: Don't forget about relevant skills and experience that you have that would be useful to the job you are applying for, regardless of whether you were paid. For example, perhaps you have housekeeping, landscaping, and cooking skills. Or perhaps you have skills from volunteer experiences.

Questions about your conviction

It's legal in Colorado for an employer to ask about an arrest record or convictions. You need to be prepared for these questions.

Here is some general advice:

- Do not make excuses or justify the crime.
- Show remorse but not excessively. Don't get emotional either. You want this interview to focus on why you're right for the job.
- Answer any questions asked of you, but don't offer a lot of details unless you're asked. Employers are concerned about risk. If you were convicted of a nonviolent offense, let them know.
- Describe your efforts to improve yourself since the arrest/conviction. Tell about vocational training, education, community service, successful alcohol and/or substance abuse treatment, etc.
- Talk about what you have learned and how you have changed since the arrest/conviction. If you did the crime when you were younger, explain how maturity has changed you.
- Explain in a positive manner how you have moved forward with your life. There is no better advocate for you than *you*.
- Finally, don't talk on and on about any one of these questions. Be brief and professional.

A criminal conviction is a red flag to an employer, but an employer is still looking for a good employee. Your conviction may be less important than your work habits and skills. Keep this in mind. Now practice answering these questions:

- Tell me about your conviction.
- What have you done to improve yourself while you were in prison and since you have been released?
- Why should I trust you now?
- Why should I give you a chance?
- Will your parole conditions keep you from doing the job?

Some people recommend that you wait until the question comes up from the person interviewing you, while others recommend the opposite. One criminal justice specialist believes people are more successful if they explain their background early in the interview. For example, someone might say, "I can do all that's required of the job, but I need to tell you about this first." The specialist has found that individuals who try this approach are having more success getting and holding jobs because this approach encourages more dialogue between the employer and the new employee. In addition, by taking control of when the question comes up in the interview, applicants appear honest and more at ease.

TIP: Someone on ISP-I who lost his job offered this advice: "The most important factor when looking for a job is that you are completely honest about your past. If you get the job and you

choose to keep your criminal history a secret it will eventually come back to haunt you and you will lose your job regardless of your job performance. Trust me. I learned the hard way because it appears to your employer you were hiding something and that only makes your past appear to be worse than what it was."

Questions to ask the employer

Toward the end of the interview the interviewer may ask if you have any questions. If you don't, you may appear uninterested in the position or the company. It may be helpful to have a few questions prepared ahead of time, just in case your mind goes blank. The following questions are to give you an idea.

- Can you describe a typical day for someone in this position?
- What are the day-to-day expectations and responsibilities of this job?
- Will there be opportunities for training and professional development?
- What do you (the interviewer) like about working for this company?
- What are the company's long- and short-term goals?

After the interview

At the end of the interview, thank the person interviewing you for his/her time. While you're shaking hands, take a few seconds to blow your horn one last time. For example, it would be appropriate to say, "I'm really excited about this job and want to work for you. I think my qualifications are a good match for the job. I can promise I won't disappoint you."

Keep it friendly, even if you think the interview didn't go as well as you hoped. You never know.

You may also ask when you can expect to hear from the employer. Make sure s/he has your e-mail address or phone number.

Send a thank you note the following day. Follow through on any question you could not answer or thought you didn't answer well. It's the little things like thank you notes that help people see you for who you are, not for your record.

If you don't get the job

Don't burn any bridge. There is a chance you're the next person they will call if the person hired doesn't work out.

- Thank the employer for the interview.
- Ask if there's anything you could improve on that would make a difference.
- Ask if the employer knows anywhere else you might apply.
- Keep trying. Some people say getting a job is like a game of odds. The more you apply, and the more doors you knock on, the better your odds.

TIP: Random drug tests are permissible under Colorado law. Many applications ask whether you will agree to a random drug test. You have the right to say no, but passing a drug test is often a condition of being hired.

Background checks

Almost all employers do a background check these days. Many of these reports are purchased from the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI). These reports include arrests made by Colorado law enforcement agencies. Warrant information, sealed records, and juvenile records are not available to the public. A background report can be confusing to read. You should order your own CBI report and learn how to read it so you can explain it to an employer if necessary.

You can order a copy of your CBI report off the internet at www.cbirecordscheck.com. This costs around \$7 with a credit card. You can also go to the address below and order a background

check at the customer service window, or call 303.239.4208 and ask for the form. The cost is \$13, cashier's check, money order, or credit card.

TIP: It is a myth that records of arrests or convictions may not be released after seven years.

If the entries in a CBI report aren't the final court disposition, you may want to update the record yourself, especially if you were arrested for one charge and convicted of a lesser charge. If you completed a sentence of deferred judgment, you may want to verify that the report has the court's final disposition.

To update your report, you must ask the appropriate court for a copy of your final disposition and then mail or fax this report to CBI. You don't need to pay for a certified copy of the report because CBI will contact the court if they have any questions.

- The address is Colorado Bureau of Investigation, 690 Kipling Street, Suite 3000, Denver, CO 80215. You may also fax paperwork to CBI at 303.239.5858, attn: Dispositions. If you include a return address, CBI will notify you when the record has been updated.

If the information in your background record is not correct, contact the Colorado Bureau of Investigation Identification Unit at 303.239.4208. In almost all instances you will have to contact the arresting agency or the court where you appeared. CBI will need written documentation of any corrections from the arresting agency or the court of record.

TIP: An employer may run a credit check on a prospective employee as part of their employment background check. However, a consumer reporting company may not provide information about you to your prospective employer without your written consent. If an employer uses information in your credit file to not hire you, the employer must tell you this and give you the name, address and phone number of the agency that provided the information. You should know what's in your credit report and whether it's accurate. See chapter 19 for information about ordering your credit report.

Day labor and temporary agencies

Day labor agencies may be a way to make money right after you're released. They agree to pay you a certain wage per hour. There's a list of these agencies in the phone book's yellow pages under employment. Check with your parole officer first before applying for a job with a day labor agency. You should be aware that some community corrections programs don't allow people to work in day labor. Check with your case manager.

You might consider registering with a temporary work agency. Sometime temporary work assignments turn into permanent jobs. Be careful though. Don't go with a temp agency that charges you.

Apprenticeship programs

Apprenticeship programs usually don't discriminate against people with a felony conviction. These programs are about learning while you earn, which means you're expected to work and attend classes. Depending upon the program, classes may be at the end of the work day, part of the work day, or during the weekend.

Most apprenticeships in Colorado are in the construction industry, such as pipefitting, carpentry, electrical, or sheet metal. You can earn a decent starting salary while you learn more about a trade.

Most programs require a GED or high school diploma and a strong work ethic. Some training (such as electrical and plumbing) requires a strong foundation in math.

Depending on the trade, a driver's license may be required. Talk to your parole officer if you can't be in an apprenticeship program because of a driving restriction.

- You usually need to have transportation to the job site for an apprenticeship program. If you can't drive and public transportation won't get you there, see if you can carpool with another employee.

Fees and costs for apprenticeship programs vary, depending upon the trade.

Here are a couple of places to contact for more information about apprenticeship programs:

Colorado Laborers and Contractors Education and Training Fund

Training School
10505 Havana, Brighton, CO 80601
303.281.3116

Colorado Laborers and Contractors Education and Training Fund provides an opportunity for people who are interested in enrolling as an apprentice. Call or walk in to pick up an application for testing. If you pass the test, you will receive orientation and be placed on their list to work as an apprentice on the job.

Emily Griffith Opportunity School

1250 Welton Street, Denver, CO 80204
720.423.4700 www.egos-school.com

The Emily Griffith Opportunity School partners with union programs throughout the state and has information about apprenticeship programs throughout Colorado. The school can answer questions and help you decide upon a field based on interest, skill, or previous experience.

Labor's Community Agency

Attn: Community Services Department
7510 W. Mississippi Avenue, Lakewood, CO 80226
303.744.6169 www.laborcommunityagency.org

Labor's Community Agency is a nonprofit organization that serves as the Community Services Arm of the AFL-CIO. They have current statewide information about the trades and apprenticeship programs for organized labor.

Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training

The Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training is a federal agency under the U.S. Department of Labor. Their website at <http://oa.doleta.gov/> has a list of apprentice positions currently available.

Professions that require a license

Colorado law specifically says that a criminal conviction "shall not, in and of itself, prevent the person from applying for and obtaining public employment or for applying for and receiving a license, certification, permit, or registration required by the laws of this state to follow any business, occupation, or profession" (Colorado Revised Statute § 24-5-101).

There are, however, some jobs that you may be prevented from doing because of a state law. If you want a job that requires a license, check with the specific licensing board first. Don't rely on rumors.

Colorado's licensing boards are listed online at www.dora.state.co.us. Click on *Professional Regulation*. You may also call the Division of Registrations at 303.894.7800 for information. Always talk to a board before you go to school for any job that requires a license.

- Because applications for licensing take time to be processed and reviewed, it's important to plan accordingly. Don't wait until the last moment to talk to the board.

Talk to a licensing board yourself because most boards look at applications on a case-by-case basis. Just because they denied a license to someone else doesn't mean they will deny one to you. A board usually looks at the following aspects of your history:

- number of offenses
- seriousness of an offense
- if you take responsibility for your conviction
- your attitude about your restitution and your payment history
- length of time since your release from prison
- compliance with the requirements of your parole

For example, you may have heard that you could not work in the nursing field, but a representative with the Board of Nursing said nursing could still be a possibility. "When a person applies for licensure, we look at every case based on its own merits," she wrote. "We look at history, number of offenses and the seriousness of the offense."

The Board of Nursing said they will not license people who are on parole or probation, or who can't demonstrate a "significant period of rehabilitation following incarceration." Sometimes, however, another board in a different field may issue a conditional license to a person still on parole.

If you're interested in working in the field of education, Colorado Revised Statute § 22-60.5-107 has information you need to know. If you were convicted for a crime that is on the list of disqualifying offenses, you will not be able to apply for a license. For other offenses, the board reviews each application on a case-by-case basis. If your actions demonstrate evidence of rehabilitation, you may have a chance. Call the licensing unit at the Colorado Department of Education at 303.866.6628 for more information.

By statute, certain jobs are off limits if you have a criminal record. These include:

- correctional facility employees
- juvenile facility employees
- peace officers
- state employees in direct contact with vulnerable persons

Work Opportunity Tax Credit and the Federal Bonding Program

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Federal Bonding Program were created to encourage the employment of people with an employment barrier such as a felony conviction. If an employer is interested in hiring you, tell him/her about these programs.

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a \$2,400 federal income tax credit for employers. Your employer must apply for certification from the Colorado WOTC unit before claiming the WOTC on a federal tax return.

To qualify for the WOTC, you must have a felony conviction and be hired within one year of your release. A parole officer or a community corrections caseworker might need to supply a letter to confirm that you have a felony conviction if the state office cannot get the information from the Department of Corrections. You should do the legwork to make sure your employer gets that letter.

Two forms must be completed: IRS Form 8850 and ETA Form 9061. The forms can be found at www.colorado.gov/cdle/taxcredits.

- Mail the forms to Colorado Department of Labor & Employment, WOTC Unit, 633 17th Street, Suite 700, Denver, CO 80202-3660.
- The forms must be mailed by your employer within 28 days of your start date.
- If you or your employer has a question about this program, call 303.318.8829.

TIP: Be aware of the deadline for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit! Your employer must mail the forms within 28 days of your start date. Make sure your employer is aware of this deadline.

The Federal Bonding Program is a \$5,000 bond that acts like a guarantee for any employer concerned about hiring someone due to his/her background. For more information about the bonding program, look online at www.colorado.gov/cdle/federalbonding or www.bonds4jobs.com.

The \$5,000 bond is free to the employer and you. It's good for six months from the start date. Continued coverage can be purchased after that date. The bond insures the employer for theft, forgery, larceny, or embezzlement. The bond doesn't cover any liability from poor workmanship or job injuries. With special consideration and approval, an employer could request a larger bond amount.

To be eligible, your job's wages must have federal taxes automatically deducted from the pay. The job can be full time, part time, seasonal, or temporary. However, you cannot be self-employed and apply for the bonding program.

To take advantage of the Federal Bonding Program, your employer should contact the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment at 303.318.8828.

Small business rumors and information

You may hear business funding rumors that sound too good to be true. They probably are. Here are a couple of examples:

- Rumor: You can get money every week from the Economic Development Office or the Department of Economic Development because having been in prison is an emotional disability.
- Fact: There is no such thing as an incarceration benefit.
- Rumor: The American Bankers Association will give you a free savings certificate through their "local ABA office." They also have a program to give minority former prisoners small business loans.
- Fact: The American Bankers Association doesn't hand out free savings certificates. They also don't have a small business loan program. Their spokesperson called this rumor an urban myth and wrote, "There is no such program at ABA, and indeed there are no 'local ABA offices.'"

TIP: As far as we know, there is no organization (including the Small Business Administration) that will give someone a small business loan just because s/he was incarcerated. If you're interested in starting a small business, you will find counseling and workshops (some free and some for a fee) through the Small Business Administration.

- Their website is www.sba.gov. Click on Colorado to find information and the Denver office's address. Their phone number is 303.844.2607.
- If you need a loan, you will have to apply for a small business loan with a bank, where your character, credit application, and collateral, along with your business plan, will all be taken into account.

Where to find help

We have tried to list a number of different places where you may find help getting a job. The first section lists all of the Workforce Centers throughout Colorado. These are state agencies where the services are free. Be sure to check them out.

The list of Workforce Centers is followed by a brief list of other agencies funded by state and federal dollars. Following that, you'll find a number of community agencies. Many of these agencies are in the Denver metro area but not all. Be sure you read through the list carefully.

Workforce Centers

Workforce Centers are run by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and located throughout Colorado. The services are free and can help you get a job. The services include job placement assistance, labor market information, current job listings, referrals to employers, and education and training information.

- The resource rooms have free computers with internet access, printers, fax, copy machines, and telephones. The Centers can also with the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Federal Bonding program paperwork.
- For more information, see www.colorado.gov/CDLE. You may also call 303.318.8000 for general information.

Alamosa (719.589.5118), 1016 West Avenue #6, Alamosa, CO 81101

Aurora (303.363.9380), 3538 Peoria Street, Suite 511, Aurora, CO 80010

Black Hawk (303.582.6003), 2960 Dory Hill Road, Suite 100, Black Hawk, CO 80403

Boulder

- Longmont (303.651.1510), 1500 Kansas Avenue, Suite 4D, Boulder, CO 80501
- Workforce Boulder County (303.301.2900) 2520 55th Street, Suite 100, Boulder, CO 80301

Brighton (303.659.4250), 18 N. Main Street, Brighton, CO 80601

Broomfield (303.464.5855), 6650 W. 120th Avenue, Unit A1, Broomfield, CO 80020

Burlington (719.346-5331), 1490-A Martin Avenue, (PO Box 115) Burlington, CO 80807

Cañon City (719.275.7408), 3224 Independence Road, Cañon City, CO 81212

Castle Rock (303.688.4825 x5037), 4400 Castleton Court, Suite 197, Castle Rock, CO 80108

Colorado Springs

- Pikes Peak (719.667.3700), 2306 E. Pikes Peak Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80909
- Pikes Peak Community College (719.579.3080), 5675 S. Academy Blvd., Suite A115, Colorado Springs, CO 80906

Cortez (970.565.3759), 2208 E. Main Street, Cortez, CO 81321

Craig (970.824.3246), 480 Barclay, Craig, CO 81625

Cripple Creek (719.689.3584 x13), Aspen Mine Community Center, 166 E. Bennett Avenue (PO Box 129), Cripple Creek, CO 80813

Delta (970.874.5781), 206 Ute Street, Delta, CO 81416

Denver

- Speer (720.865.5619), 1391 N. Speer Boulevard, Suite 500, Denver, CO 80204
- Stapleton, 4685 S. Peoria Street, Denver, CO 80239
- Westside (720.944.1615), 1200 Federal Boulevard, Denver, CO 80204
- DIA (303.342.2590), 8500 Pena Boulevard (5th level, main terminal, west side), Denver, CO 80249
- Workforce Center for Youth (720.865.5700), 1391 N. Speer Blvd, Suite 520, Denver, CO 80204.

Durango (970.247.0308), 331 South Camino Del Rio, Suite C, Durango, CO 81303

Edwards (970.926.4440), 0069 Edwards Access Road #9 (PO Box 1389), Edwards, CO 81632

Elizabeth (303.646.2783), 240 Elizabeth Street Suite A-1, Elizabeth, CO 80107

Fort Collins (970.498.6600), 200 W. Oak Street (PO Box 2367), Suite 5000, Fort Collins, CO 80521

Fort Lupton (970.353.3800 x5890), 2950 9th Street, Fort Lupton, CO 80621

Fort Morgan (970.867.9401), 411 Main Street #200, Fort Morgan, CO 80701

Frisco (970.668.5360), 602 Galena Street (PO Box 679), Frisco, CO 80443
Glenwood Springs (970.945.8638), 51027 Hwy 6 & 24, Glenwood Springs Mall, Suite 173, Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

TIP: The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment maintains the website www.connectingcolorado.com, which lists jobs available throughout Colorado. Create an account as a new job seeker and you will have access to a statewide database. Some employers will indicate if they're "felon friendly."

Golden (303.271.4700), Laramie Building, 3500 Illinois Street, Golden, CO 80401
Granby (970.887.1857), 469 East Topaz (PO Box 1985), Granby, CO 80446
Grand Junction (970.248.7560), 2897 North Avenue, Grand Junction, CO 81501
Greeley (970.353.3800), 1551 N. 17th Avenue (PO Box 1805), Greeley, CO 80632
Greenwood Village (303.636.1160), Arapahoe/Douglas Works! 5500 S. Quebec Street, Suite 175, Greenwood Village, CO 80111
Gunnison (970.641.0031), 109 East Georgia, Gunnison, CO 81230
Idaho Springs (303.567.3135), 1531 Colorado Blvd. (PO Box 3669), Idaho Springs, CO 80452
La Junta (719.383.3191), 215 Raton Avenue, La Junta, CO 81050
Lamar (719.336.2256), 405 East Olive Street, Lamar, CO 81052
Leadville (719.486.2428), 115 W. 6th Street (PO Box 1263), Leadville, CO 80461
Limon (719.775.2387), 285 D Avenue (PO Box 875), Limon, CO 80828
Longmont (720.652.4209), 4209 WCR 24 ½, Longmont, CO 80501
Loveland (970.667.4261), 418 E. 4th Street, Loveland, CO 80537
Meeker (970.878.4211), 345 Market Street (PO Box 68), Meeker, CO 81641
Monte Vista (719.852.5171), 2079 Sherman Avenue, Monte Vista, CO 81144
Montrose (970.249.7783), 504 N. 1st Street, Montrose, CO 81401
Pagosa Springs (970.264.5627), 527 San Juan St., Suite D, Pagosa Springs, CO 81147
Pueblo (719.562.3720), 212 West 3rd Street, Pueblo, CO 81003
Rangely (970.675.5072), 500 Kennedy Drive, Johnson Building, Rangely, CO 81648
Rifle (970.625.5627), 310 West 3rd Street, Rifle, CO 81650
Rocky Ford (719.254.3397), 801 Chestnut Avenue, Rocky Ford, CO 81067
Salida (719.539.6523), 141 East 3rd Street, Salida, CO 81201
Steamboat Springs (970.879.3075) 425 Anglers Drive (PO Box 880816, ZIP 80488), Steamboat Springs, CO 80487
Sterling (970.522.9340), 100 College Drive, Sterling, CO 80751
Thornton (303.452.2304), 550 Thornton Parkway, Thornton, CO 80229
Trinidad (719.846.9221), 140 North Commercial, Trinidad, CO 81082
Walsenburg (719.738.2372), 400 Main Street, Walsenburg, CO 81089
Westminster (303.453.8600), Adams County Workforce and Business Center, 12200 Pecos Street, Westminster, CO 80234
Woodland Park
Yuma (970.848.3760), 529 N. Albany St., Suite 1210, Yuma, CO 80759

TIP: Do you want to own your own business but don't know where to start? The Rocky Mountain MicroFinance Institute (RMMFI) helps community entrepreneurs learn the skills they need to run a business. RMMFI is a nonprofit organization. They offer free weekly "Exploring Business Ownership" classes across the Denver metro area. Contact RMMFI for more information.

- PO Box 48138, Denver, CO 80204.
- 720.941.5037 www.rmmfi.org info@rmmfi.org

Denver's Road Home

Ex-Offender Employment Specialist
Office of Economic Development
Division of Workforce Development
1200 Federal Boulevard, Denver, CO 80204
720.944.2786

The employment specialist for Denver's Road Home can help you with your job search if you are homeless, in a halfway house or transition housing, or at risk of becoming homeless. You can also get a voicemail account, bus tokens for work, haircut vouchers, and clothing vouchers. Call for the orientation schedule and to make an appointment.

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

The Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) helps people with disabilities (physical, mental, social, etc.) prepare for, obtain, keep or regain suitable jobs. To be eligible for DVR services, you must have a disability that causes difficulties in getting or keeping a job. If eligible and you intend to work, DVR will work closely with you to plan, coordinate and provide the services you need to be employed.

If you believe you're eligible, call and schedule an appointment with the nearest DVR office. You can find office locations by going to the website at www.dvrcolorado.com or you can call the state office at 303.866.4150 or 1.866.870.4595.

Alamosa: 305 Murphy Drive, Unit B, Alamosa, CO 81101 (719.589.5158 or TTY 719.589.5150)

Aurora: 12510 E. Iliff Avenue, Suite 303, Aurora, CO 80014 (303.337.4610 or 303.337.4612)

Boulder: 4875 Pearl E. Circle, Suite 301, Boulder, CO 80301 (303.444.2816 or TTY 303.444.8136)

Cañon City: Rehabilitation Office, 172 Justice Center Road, Cañon City, CO 81212 (719.275.2318 ext. 3076)

Colorado Springs: 110 Parkside Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80910 (719.635.3585 or TTY: 719.635.0529)

Colorado Springs: Pikes Peak Workforce Center, 2306 E. Pikes Peak Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80909 (719.667.3796)

Commerce City: Adams County Dept. of Human Services, 7190 Colorado Blvd., Commerce City, CO 80022 (303.227.2677)

Craig: 480 Barclay, Craig, CO 81625 (970.824.3246 ext. 20)

Denver: Business Enterprise Program (BEP), 2211 West Evans Ave., Building B, Denver, CO 80223 (303-866-3484 or TTY: 303.866.3484)

Denver: Denver Metro, 2211 West Evans Avenue, Denver, CO 80223 (Bldg A, 303.866.2500 or TTY: 303.866.3984) and (Bldg. B, 303.866.3100 or TTY: 303.866.3980)

Durango: 425 West Building, 835 Second Avenue, Durango, CO 81301 (970.247.3161 or TTY: 970.247.7940)

Edwards: 0069 Edwards Access Rd. Suite 9, Edwards, Colorado 81632 (970.926.1515)

Fort Collins: 2850 McClelland Drive, #2000, Fort Collins, CO 80525 (970.223.9823 or TTY: 970.223.4265)

Fort Morgan: Workforce Center, 411 Main Street #200, Fort Morgan, CO 80701 (970.542.9376)

Frisco: 602 Galena, Frisco, Colorado 80443 (970.668.0234)

Glenwood Springs: Glenwood Springs Mall, 51027 Highway 6 & 24, #173, Glenwood Springs, CO 81601 (970.945.9174, 888.681.9152 or TTY: 970.945.9174)

Golden: 3500 Illinois Street, Golden, CO 80401 (303.866.4121 or TTY: 303.866.4125)

Grand Junction: 222 South 6th Street, Room #215, Grand Junction, CO 81501 (970.248.7103 or TTY: 970.248.7103)

Greeley: 822 7th Street, Suite 350, Greeley, CO 80631 (970.353.5409)

Greenwood Village: 6000 Greenwood Plaza Blvd., Suite 105, Greenwood Village, Colorado 80111 (303.221.2089)

Lamar: 1006 South Main Street, Lamar, CO 81052 (719.336.7712 or TTY: 719.336.7712)

Limon: P.O. Box 99, 825 Second Street, Limon, CO 80828 (719.775.8819 or TTY: 719.775.8819)

Longmont: 825 Delaware Avenue, #306, Longmont, Colorado 80501 (303.776.6878 or TTY: 303.485.6438)

Montrose: 1010 South Cascade Avenue, Suite C, Montrose, CO 81401 (970.249.4468 or TTY:

970.249.4468)

Montrose: Delta Workforce Center, 206 Ute Street, Montrose, CO 81416 (970.874.5781 ext. 12)

Northglenn: 11990 Grant Street, #201, Northglenn, CO 80233 (303.866.2110 or TTY: 303.866.2120)

Pueblo: 720 North Main, #320, Pueblo, CO 81003 (719.544.1406 or TTY: 719.546.0968)

Rocky Ford: Workforce Center, 801 Chestnut Avenue, Rocky Ford, CO 81067 (719.254.3358)

Salida: 141 East 3rd Street, Salida, CO 81201 (719.539.9670 or TTY: 719.539.9670)

Steamboat Springs: P.O. Box 883284, Sundance @ Fishcreek, 345 Anglers Drive, Suite C - Building E, Steamboat Springs, CO 80477 (970.871.4853)

Sterling: Northeastern Junior College, Walker Hall, Room 1, 100 College Avenue, Sterling, CO 80751 (970.522.3737 or TTY: 970.522.3737)

Trinidad: Workforce Center, 140 North Commercial, Trinidad, CO 81082 (888.734.2211)

TIP: If you're applying for assistance because of a disability, you may need to be able to discuss and document your disability. This documentation might include medical records, hospitalizations, diagnoses, contact information of clinics and doctors, etc. Chapter 12 has information about how you can obtain your medical records from the DOC.

Goodwill Industries

7190 Colorado Boulevard, Commerce City, CO 80022

Adams County residents: 303.227.2637

Arapahoe County residents: 303.636.1745 or 303.636.1746

Goodwill helps ex-offenders with workforce training programs. These programs include short term training for a specific job, such as green jobs, computer classes and commercial driver's license, or medical certification. Participants receive resource information for families, including childcare, housing options, health insurance, financial planning and tax preparation. To be eligible, you must live in Adams or Arapahoe County, have children, and have a household income less than \$75,000.

Job Corps

924 W Colfax Avenue, Suite #104D, Denver, CO 80204

303.623.0420

Job Corps is a federally funded program through the Department of Labor where young people between the ages of 16 and 24 can complete their GED or high school diploma and receive a wide choice of vocational training. For further information, contact the admission counselor at Job Corps.

Stop the Revolving Door

Stop the Revolving Door is an employment training program that is administered by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. The only requirement for eligibility is a criminal background that makes it hard for someone to find and/or keep a job. The program can accept people on parole, probation, or those who discharged their sentence. It also doesn't matter how long it has been since release.

- A service coordinator is located in the Denver metro area. Call the hotline at 303.453 8674 for current information.
- [The Motherhood Program](#) is for women with one or more children under the age of 18. You must make under \$75,000 a year and have had a brush with the law.

TIP: If you're not sure which career best suits your interests and personality, College in Colorado has several online tests and tools to help you. Go to www.collegeincolorado.org and click on the Career Planning tab at the top of the page to learn more about yourself and explore careers.

Community agencies

A number of community organizations help people with their job search. We list only a few in this guide, mostly from the Denver metro area. You may be able to find other resources in the Denver metro area by calling 211.

- If you live outside of the Denver metro area, 211 operators have information about many communities throughout Colorado.

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

777 Grant Street, Suite B-130, Denver, CO 80203
720.946.2901 www.aarp.org/states/co

AARP administers the Senior Foundation Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), a grant that helps low-income people 55 and over with their job search. You must be a resident of Adams, Arapahoe, or Denver County. Office hours are 8-3 pm. They also have a work search assessment program for people 40 and over. Call the office to make an appointment.

DenverWorks

2828 Speer Boulevard, Suite #201, Denver, CO 80211
303.433.0300 www.denverworks.org

DenverWorks is a faith-based nonprofit organization. Their 2nd Chance program helps people with a criminal conviction with their job search. The workshop includes job search techniques, identifying employers likely to hire people with a criminal conviction, and interviewing skills. You must take a Former Offender Workshop to enter the 2nd Chance program. These workshops are usually held on the first and third Thursday of every month. Call the number above for current information and to register for a workshop.

Denver Urban Ministries (DenUM)

1717 E. Colfax Avenue, Denver, CO 80218
303.355.4896 x100 www.denum.org

DenUM has a Job Services Center that may help you with your job search. They may also help with bus tokens for transportation to interviews and with uniforms for some jobs. To use the Job Services Center, you must attend an orientation session at DenUM, currently offered every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 9 am. Call for current information.

Empowerment Program

1600 York Street, Denver, CO 80206
303.320.1989 www.empowermentprogram.org

Empowerment Program offers a Job Readiness Training program that focuses on work readiness, applications, mock interviews, accessing the hidden job market, career exploration, résumés, cover letters, marketing yourself, and job leads/referrals. People who complete the Job Readiness Training program are referred to training programs and other jobs. A Job Search Lab is open for all “survival” job referrals and for job search assistance.

- Women should contact Empowerment at the number above to set up an appointment for an orientation. Their Fast Track training program offers opportunities to gain employment in a number of different vocations, such as medical billing, floral arrangement, new green jobs, forklift operator, culinary arts, etc.
- Men should contact Empowerment at 303.339.7117 to get started with services. The program for men is located at 1733 York Street.

Matthews Center LLC

3030 Downing Street, Denver, CO 80205
303.295.0376 www.matthewscenters.com

The Matthews Center is close to Denver's Whittier, Five Points, Cole, and Curtis Park neighborhoods. The Center offers services and programs to help you get a job. In collaboration with their partners, the Matthews Center LLC currently offers training in all terrain forklift certification, backhoe certification, bobcat (skidster) certification, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) & first aid certification, CDL licensing, construction basics, highway flagging certification, life skills, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Certification Training. Walk-ins are welcome. Operating hours are Monday thru Friday 8 am to 5 pm.

Mi Casa Resource Center

360 Acoma Street, Denver, CO 80223
303.573.1302 www.micasaresourcecenter.org

1249 E. Routt, Pueblo, CO 81004
719.542.0091 www.micasaresourcecenter.org

Mi Casa Resource Center is a nonprofit organization that helps Latino families be more economically successful. The organization targets Latinos, but you don't have to be Latino to qualify for their help. Mi Casa offers job training, placement services, career counseling, GED, English as a second language classes, entrepreneurial training, and small business planning.

Mi Casa's Denver office has a construction program for people interested in entering the trades. Students completing this ten-week program receive Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification. Mi Casa's Pueblo office also serves Colorado Springs. This office helps people who want to start their own business.

Mission Wear

2323 Emerson Street, Denver, CO 80205
303.808.7538 www.themissionwear.org

Mission Wear is a nonprofit organization that provides employment for women who are in recovery. Since employees sew reusable bags out of different fabrics, sewing ability is a requirement. Call for additional information. The nonprofit regards itself as a safe place for women to re-enter the work place.

Project Renew

Denver Inner City Parish
1212 Mariposa Street, Denver, CO 80204
303.629.0636 www.dicp.org

Project Renew is inside the Denver Inner City Parish, which is across the street from Lincoln Park on the corner of 12th and Mariposa. Project Renew offers help finding employment and preparing résumés. A job coach is available as well as a computer lab. Hours are Tuesday-Thursday, 10:30-4. Walk-ins are welcome.

Restoring Hope Prison Recovery Program (formerly known as Shelter of Hope)

2625 E. Saint Vrain, Colorado Springs, CO 80909
719.473.3703 www.restoringhopeonline.com

Restoring Hope Prison Recovery Program is a private nonprofit organization that helps people re-entering the Colorado Springs community find shelter, employment, and other immediate needs. Call or write for current information.

Rocky Mountain SER (Service, Employment, Redevelopment)

Administrative offices: 3555 Pecos Street, Denver, CO 80211
Mailing address: PO Box 11148, Denver, CO 80211

303.480.9394 or 1.800.748.2074

www.rmser.org

Rocky Mountain SER works with local Workforce Centers in southcentral Colorado (includes Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Huerfano, Las Animas, Mineral, Saquache and Rio Grande counties) and southeastern Colorado (Otero, Prowers, Baca, Bent, Crowley and Kiowa counties). People are usually referred to Rocky Mountain SER by a local Workforce Center in one of these counties. If you are not and would like to know more, ask your local Workforce Center for the number of the local Rocky Mountain SER office. (The telephone number for every Workforce Center is listed earlier in this chapter.)

- Rocky Mountain SER provides on-the-job training, work experience opportunities, tuition assistance for post-secondary schools or private training, and supportive services such as assistance with transportation, clothing, and tools and equipment.

St. Francis Employment Services

2323 Curtis Street, Denver, CO 80205

303.298.8686 www.sfcdenver.org

Well-known as a day shelter, St. Francis Center also has an employment services program next door to the shelter. The mailing address is listed above, but the street address is 1001 Park Avenue West in the Cornerstone Building.

The program offers a permanent job referral service as well as a day labor program. Hours are Monday-Friday, 7-11:30 am. You will need to bring a Social Security card and a state-issued photo ID, complete their application, and attend an orientation session.

The Road Called STRATE

1532 Galena Street, Suite 395, Aurora, CO 80010

303.360.9176 www.theroadcalledstrate.com

The Road Called STRATE (Society True Rehabilitative Attitude Towards Ex-Offenders) is a private nonprofit program for people with a felony conviction. The staff offers help with job preparation and retention classes, "felon-friendly" employer listings, and job search classes. They also offer computer classes, food and clothing banks, GED preparation, mentoring, counseling, life skills training, and substance abuse classes. Bus tokens are available for job search purposes. Case managers are available who specialize in helping women with their specific needs. Contact The Road Called STRATE to make an appointment.

Turnabout, Inc.

1630 East 14th Avenue, Denver, CO 80218

303.813.0005 www.turnaboutprogram.org

Turnabout, Inc. is a nonprofit career and education program for people with a criminal history. Twice weekly orientation is offered for anyone seeking employment. Various services are available for applicants who qualify based on the time since release, age, and/or type of conviction. A monthly 14-hour Employment Search Program begins intensive services and includes goal setting, résumé writing, interviewing skills, and work maturity.

Turnabout can refer you to potential employers, college programming, long-term mentoring and support services, and other helpful agencies. Turnabout has expertise in jobs in the new energy economy and a lot of re-entry information. The office is one block south of Colfax at Gilpin Street inside the Warren United Methodist Church. Contact them for orientation times.

Women's Bean Project, Inc.

3201 Curtis Street, Denver, CO 80205

303.292.1919 www.womensbeanproject.org

The Women's Bean Project offers a transitional job in gourmet food and handmade jewelry manufacturing where you can earn an immediate income while you learn the skills you need to get and keep a job. The Bean Project helps to arrange support services (professional clothing, housing search) and can refer you to other organizations for GED tutoring, counseling, and other services. These jobs are not long-term. They are transitional jobs that typically last six to twelve months, and they are intended to teach you the skills you need to move into permanent employment. You can go to the Bean Project and fill out an application for employment, Monday-Friday, 8:30-4:30.

Women's Resource Agency

750 Citadel Drive East, Ste. 3116 (in the Citadel Mall, upper level, by JC Penney's) Colorado Springs, CO 80909
719.471.3170 www.wrainc.org

The Women's Resource Agency offers services to help women with career-related short and long term goals. They can help with résumé and interview coaching, workshops on topics like job readiness and networking, computer assistance, and job listings.

Work Options for Women

Denver Human Services Building
1200 Federal Boulevard, Denver, CO 80204
720.944.1920 www.workoptions.org

Students train and work with professional chefs at the cafeteria location in the Denver Human Services building as well as their downtown location, Cafe Options. The WOW support services team works with students to address barriers to employment such as homelessness, unreliable childcare, and health issues. While in the program, students participate in life skills training and classes on decision making, budgeting, work readiness, and more.

- At the end of training, WOW's staff guides each student until they find employment; working relationships are maintained with a growing number of food service businesses that hire WOW graduates.
- Upon a student's employment, all graduates receive support for one to three years to ensure stability at work and home.
- If interested in becoming a student, please call the intake line at 720.944.3393 to be put on the orientation schedule. Orientations are held every Monday at 10 am at WOW.

Professional clothing

Many community resource organizations have clothing banks. To find other clothing banks, or to find a clothing bank closer to where you live, dial 211 or look up Mile High United Way's database online www.unitedwaydenver.org. Click on *United Way's 2-1-1*, then click on *Food/Clothing banks*.

- Many communities have a Salvation Army or Goodwill store where you might find inexpensive casual and professional clothing.

The following clothing banks offer professional clothing for your job search and employment, but you can't use them like you would most clothing banks. They require a referral from another agency, such as your parole officer or Workforce Center. They work on an appointment basis only.

DenverWorks

2828 N. Speer Boulevard, Suite #201, Denver CO 80211
303.433.0300 www.denverworks.org

DenverWorks has a clothing bank where men and women may pick out professional and casual clothing. You have to be set up for an appointment by a referring agency (DOC re-entry

specialist, parole officer, Workforce counselor, etc.). You may also be referred through a DenverWorks Former Offender Workshop. The clothing bank will try to supply you with several outfits, but you may only use the bank once a year.

Dress for Success, Denver

1510 N. High Street, Denver, CO 80218
303.832.1889 www.dressforsuccess.org/denver
Monday- Friday 9:30-4:30

Dress for Success, Colorado Springs

Women's Resource Agency
750 Citadel Drive East #3116, Colorado Springs, CO 80909
719.471.3170 www.dressforsuccess.org/coloradospings
Monday-Thursday 9-5, Friday 9-4

Dress for Success is a nonprofit organization with the goal of helping low-income women dress appropriately for job interviews and employment. If you have a job interview, or if you already have a job, Dress for Success may be able to help you with several professional outfits.

Dress for Success works on an appointment basis, and you must be referred to them by a shelter, job-training program, DOC re-entry specialist, parole officer, etc. Dress for Success has only professional clothing, not casual.

Sealing an arrest or conviction record

The following is general information about petitioning the court to seal an arrest or conviction record. We cannot and are not giving you legal advice about your specific case. As explained below, there are only a few situations where you can seal records of convictions. Arrest records where there wasn't a conviction are generally easier to seal.

What does it mean to seal a criminal record?

When the court seals a criminal record, the public cannot see it. You are legally allowed to say that it doesn't exist. Employers, schools, landlords, and state and local government agencies cannot see it or force you to disclose information from a sealed record. However, the courts, law enforcement, and criminal justice agencies will always have access to a sealed criminal conviction record. In addition, you should be aware that sealing a record is not fail proof. This information is available through a number of different private vendors, so even if you get your record sealed, the information may still become available.

A criminal record includes all arrests and convictions (for a petty offense, misdemeanor, or felony). It's important to understand that there is a difference between sealing your record if you've been convicted of a crime and sealing your arrest records if you weren't convicted of a crime.

TIP: A record of an arrest can be alarming to an employer, even if you were not charged or found guilty. If an arrest did not result in a charge, you were acquitted or found not guilty of the charge or the case or charge was dismissed, you may want to investigate sealing the record of this arrest.

What records can the court seal?

The court can seal police contact records, arrest records, indictments, summons and complaint, court files, or any other record held by a criminal justice agency about an incident at any time if:

- you were arrested but not charged with a crime, or
- you were acquitted or found not guilty on all charges, or
- you successfully completed a deferred judgment, or
- the case or *all* charges against you were dismissed.

Sometimes, people can have two separate criminal cases that get resolved in one plea agreement. Under those circumstances, if charges were dismissed or not filed due to a plea agreement in a separate case, you may petition the court to seal the record of the dismissed/un-filed case if:

- ten years or more have passed since the disposition of the proceeding, *and*
- you have not been charged with a criminal offense during that ten year period, *and*
- you don't owe any fees/fines/restitution ordered by the court.

Generally speaking, the only criminal conviction records that can be sealed by the court in Colorado involve controlled substances.

For convictions occurring on or after July 1, 2008, for a misdemeanor or a class 5 or class 6 felony involving possession or use of a controlled substance or illegal drugs (without intent to manufacture, dispense, or sell), you may petition the court to seal the record if you meet all of the following conditions:

- ten or more years have passed since the date of the final disposition of all criminal proceedings or release from supervision (including any period of parole), and
- you have not been charged with another crime during that time, and
- you owe no fees/fines/restitution ordered by the court.

For convictions occurring before July 1, 2008, for a misdemeanor or a class 5 or class 6 felony involving possession or use of a controlled substance or illegal drugs (without intent to manufacture, dispense, or sell), you may petition the court to seal the record if you meet all of the conditions listed above *and* the prosecuting attorney does not object to the sealing.

You are responsible for costs and fees associated with the record sealing process. The current fee is \$224 to seal an arrest record and \$424 to seal a conviction record. People with low income may qualify for a waiver of the filing fee.

Sometimes people are offered a "split plea" in a criminal case. This generally refers to a situation where someone pleads guilty to a misdemeanor charge and is given a deferred judgment on a felony. Upon successful completion of the terms of the deferred judgment, the felony is dismissed. Even though the felony charge was dismissed, a person can not seal this record because of the misdemeanor conviction. In order to be sealed, *all* charges in a case must be dismissed. The only exception to this is if the misdemeanor conviction is for a drug offense that is eligible to be sealed, which was discussed above.

Note, if you are convicted of a new criminal offense *after* an order sealing a prior record of conviction is entered, the court, either on its own motion or the motion of the prosecuting attorney, *shall* order the conviction record to be unsealed.

See Colorado Revised Statute § 24-72-308 for information about sealing of arrest and criminal records other than convictions. See Colorado Revised Statute § 24-72-308.5 for information about sealing criminal conviction records for offenses involving controlled substances.

TIP: If you are successful with sealing your criminal case, you may also want to ask the court to seal the civil case. In other words, your civil case to seal your criminal case needs to also be sealed. Otherwise, your name could come up if someone does a name search by court records.

Where to get help

The Colorado State Judicial Branch website has the forms you will need to petition the court to seal an arrest or conviction record. The address is www.courts.state.co.us. Use the *Court Forms* link and click on *Criminal*. These forms included detailed instructions.

You may also want to contact a Colorado Legal Services office for current information. They have 14 offices throughout the state which are listed on their website at www.coloradolegalservices.org. The phone numbers for the Denver office are 303.837.1321 and 303.837.1313. CLS can't give you individual help, but they have current information available.

If you need specific help, you may want to consult a private attorney.

Expungement

Colorado also has several statutes regarding the limited situations where other types of records may be expunged:

- Colorado Revised Statute § 19-1-306 regards expungement of juvenile delinquent records.
- Colorado Revised Statute § 42-2-121 regards records kept by the Department of Revenue's Division of Motor Vehicles and which convictions may be expunged.
- Colorado Revised Statute § 16-23-105 regards when a biological substance sample (DNA) submitted to a law enforcement agency and which may be expunged.

The Colorado State Judicial Branch website has the forms you will need to petition the court to expunge a juvenile record. The address is www.courts.state.co.us. Use the *Court Forms* link and click on *Juvenile*. These forms included detailed instructions.

Expunging records can be complicated. If you need specific help, you may want to consult a private attorney.

Executive clemency

A request for executive clemency requires an application to the Governor of the State of Colorado. The process can take from six months to one year or even longer.

Commutation of sentence is one type of executive clemency in Colorado. This is when a sentence is shortened before it is fully served. An inmate initiates the process for commutation of a sentence with the help of his or her case manager who can explain the eligibility criteria and provide the application forms. If you're eligible for a commutation of your sentence and your case manager will not help you apply, ask the Director of Offender Services or the Coordinator for Executive Clemency for help.

- People who were juveniles but convicted as an adult of a crime in Colorado apply for clemency to the Juvenile Clemency Board.
- All other applications go through the Executive Clemency Advisory Board.
- The governor makes the final decision to grant, deny, table or take no action with any request for commutation.

A pardon is another type of executive clemency in Colorado. This is considered forgiveness for a crime after the sentence is fully served. Pardon applications are not accepted until ten years have passed since the sentence was completed.

All applications for executive clemency go through the Governor's Coordinator for Executive Clemency. This person can advise you with the process if you have any questions. You may write the coordinator at Governor's Coordinator for Executive Clemency, c/o Professional Development at RECLA, Division of Adult Parole and YOS, 940 Broadway Street, Denver, CO 80203. The phone number is 303.763.2472. The e-mail address is mark.noel@doc.state.co.us.