

Where to find help in getting a job

Workforce Centers

Workforce Centers are run by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. You can find a Workforce Center in most towns in Colorado.

- Call 303.318.8000 if you can't find the Workforce Center closest to you, or look in your phone book's white pages, usually under Colorado Labor and Employment Department. You can also look online at www.coworkforce.com. Click on *Workforce Center Locations*.

In Denver, the five Workforce Centers are with the Division of Workforce Development (DWD). Their locations are listed below:

- Workforce Center at DIA, 8500 Pena Boulevard (main terminal), 303.342.2590
- Workforce Center at Quigg, 4440 Navajo Street, 303.458.4891
- Workforce Center at Speer, 1391 N. Speer Boulevard, Suite 500, 720.865.5619
- Workforce Center at Stapleton, 3401 Quebec Street, Suite 7700, 720.865.0060
- Workforce Center at Westside, 1200 Federal Boulevard, 720.944.1615

Workforce Centers have a number of different resources that anyone can come and use: computers, fax, copiers, workshops, job fairs, and one-on-one job search assistance.

- Ask about the RENEW workshops designed for people newly released from incarceration. These workshops should be posted on a calendar of classes and include help with résumés, interviewing skills, and talking about your conviction.
- You may also want to ask about the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which is for people who need training, tools, and/or transportation assistance for employment.

You don't have to have identification to use a Workforce Center unless you're going to be enrolled in a specific program. Programs require a state ID and birth certificate or state ID and Social Security card. They also require proof of citizenship with a birth certificate or passport.

Denver Workforce Centers have Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialists to help veterans with their job search. They may also have information about training opportunities for veterans. If you're a veteran, ask about these programs at a Workforce Center.

DOC re-entry specialists

If you're on parole, you can get help with your job search from a DOC re-entry specialist.

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. For more information, dial 2-1-1, check FORGES, and ask your parole officer.

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

777 Grant Street, Suite B-130
Denver, CO 80203
720.946.2901

1510 N. Hancock Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
719.635.3579

www.aarp.org/states/co

AARP sponsors a Senior Foundation Community Service Employment Program that helps low-income people 55 and over with their job search. If you qualify, you may contact this office for help. Office hours at both locations are 9 am to 4 pm. They also have a work search assessment program for people 50 and over.

DenverWorks

2828 Speer Boulevard, Suite #103
Denver, CO 80211
303.433.0300

www.denverworks.org

DenverWorks is a private 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 also may 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 9:00 am. Call for current information.

Empowerment Program

1600 York Street
Denver, CO 80206
303.320.1989

www.empowermentprogram.org

Empowerment Program is primarily for women. Besides employment services, they also help with education, health, housing referrals, and support services for people with a felony conviction. Their job training begins with a full-day workshop that covers things like interviewing techniques, résumés, and leads about “felon-friendly” employers. You would then work one-on-one with the staff as you continue your job search. Contact them for information about their orientation sessions.

Mi Casa Resource Center for Women, Inc.

360 Acoma Street
Denver, CO 80223
303.573.1302

505 W. Abriendo Avenue
Pueblo, CO 81004
719.542.0091

www.micasadenver.org

Mi Casa Resource Center for Women, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that works to help low-income women become self-sufficient. The organization targets Latinas, but you don't have to be Latina 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 women interested in entering the trades. Students completing this six-week program receive OSHA, CPR and flagger certification as well as college credit at Red Rocks Community College.
- Mi Casa’s Pueblo office also serves Colorado Springs. This office primarily helps people who want to start their own business and also offers computer training.

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, bus passes and tokens, life skills training, and substance abuse classes.

- Contact them to make an appointment.

Shelter of Hope Prison Recovery Program

2609 E. Dale Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80909
719.471.9732

The Shelter of Hope is a private nonprofit organization that helps with shelter, employment, and other immediate needs in Colorado Springs. Call or write for current information.

Turnabout, Inc.

915 E. 9th Avenue
Denver, CO 80218
303.813.0005

www.turnabout.us

Turnabout, Inc. is a nonprofit career and education program for people with a felony conviction. Their Employment Search Program includes information about goal setting, résumé writing, interviewing skills, and referrals to potential employers and other helpful agencies. Turnabout has a lot of other re-entry information. They may also be able to help you with a bicycle, bus tokens, or a driver’s test if you have a learner’s permit.

- Turnabout is located inside Our Savior’s Lutheran Church. Contact them about their 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 manufacturing where you can earn an immediate income while you learn the skills you need to get and keep a job. The Bean Project may also be able to arrange support services (professional clothing, help finding housing) and 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 months, and they are intended to teach you the skills you need to move into permanent employment.

- You’re welcome to go the Bean Project and fill out an application for employment, Monday thru Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Apprenticeship programs

Apprenticeship programs are about learning while you earn, which means you're expected to work and attend classes. These 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. Apprenticeship programs usually don't discriminate against people with a felony conviction.

- 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 and algebra.
- You usually need a driver's license and valid transportation to the job site for an apprenticeship program. Sometimes exceptions are made if other people can give you a ride. Talk to your parole officer if you can't be in an apprenticeship program because of a driving restriction.
- Fees and costs for apprenticeship programs vary, depending upon the field. Some may only require \$100 worth of tools, while others may charge over \$1,000 for annual tuition.

Here is an example of how an apprenticeship program works. It's based on the apprenticeship program offered by the Independent Electrical Contractors Association. The program doesn't discriminate if you have a felony conviction, but on some jobs a contractor with a government contract may keep you off a crew due to required security clearances.

- First, you submit an application for their four-year program.
- To apply, you need two forms of ID and a copy of your high school diploma and transcripts or your GED scores. If you're a veteran, you need a copy of your DD-214.
- During your apprenticeship, you work for a local contractor during the day and go to class two nights a week and Saturday mornings.
- At the end of the four years of schooling and 8,000 hours of work, you're expected to apply for a journeyman's license. (Not all apprenticeship programs require four years and 8,000 hours of work. Some fields require less.)

A journeyman's license isn't the same thing as a license from the state licensing board. You can work for a contractor or as an independent contractor with a journeyman's license. If you start your own business, you would need to take and pass the state licensing test.

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

Emily Griffith Opportunity School

1250 Welton Street

Denver, CO 80204

720.423.4775

www.egos-school.com

The Emily Griffith Opportunity School has information about apprenticeship programs throughout Colorado. The school is in Denver and partners with training programs in Pueblo, Colorado Springs, and the Western Slope (Clifton, Glenwood Springs, and Grand Junction). They also partner with all of the union programs and the major nonunion programs in the state.

- They can help you decide upon a field, as well as answer questions about the union.
- If you don't have the skills for a program, the school may offer the classes you need.
- The school can provide educational credits that can be applied toward an associate's degree when you finish your program.

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. Click on *Program Sponsors Database*. Then click on *Colorado* and the *county*. You can then call the organization posting the apprenticeship program.

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 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 *and* earn below a certain amount of money.
- A parole officer or a community corrections case worker must supply a letter to confirm that you have a felony conviction.
- Two forms must be completed: IRS Form 8850 and ETA Form 9061. The forms can be found at www.coworkforce.com/emp/wotcw2w.asp.
- The forms must be mailed within 21 days of your start date.
- Mail the forms to Colorado Department of Labor & Employment, WOTC Unit, 633 17th Street, Suite 700, Denver, CO 80202-3660. If you or the employer has questions, call the unit at 303.318.8829 or 303.318.8823.

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.e-colorado.org. Use the search function on the website to look for *bonding*.

- The \$5,000 bond is free to the employer and you.
- It's good for six months from the date of hire. 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 also needs to be at least 30 hours a week. You can't be self-employed and apply for the bonding program.

To take advantage of the Federal Bonding Program, you or your employer should contact a local Workforce Center once you're hired. The staff at the Workforce Center is then responsible for completing and submitting a bonding certificate to the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. If you or your employer has questions about either of these programs, call 303.318.8829 or 303.318.8823

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