

Employment Tips

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

You may want to ask yourself:

- After considering my limitations, what kind of job do I *want*?
- What am I willing to do, learn and/or sacrifice to get that job or career?

Now let's look at getting ready to find a job!

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

The most frequently requested documents are:

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

The birth certificate and driver's license forms offered above are general and most likely not appropriate for your state. You can find the link to the applications you need in the Resource Center. The Social Security form is for everyone; it is a federal form.

Next, ask yourself the following questions

1. What occupations or industries in your area are in need of employees?
2. What are your employment limitations due to your particular crime?
3. What is the income you need to pay for housing, food, energy, phone, child support, restitution, a vehicle, etc? (Write out your budget or use the budget worksheet from fairshake.net)
4. Which strategies do you think would be most effective at "selling" your attributes? To prepare to apply for a job and interview, you may want to create the following worksheets:
 - Inventory your work history in and out of prison
 - List your training, skills, limitations, and health issues
 - Gather the information you will need to fill out employment applications (a sample application is available at fairshake.net or is already in your packet), including references and education information.

Considerations and Preparation

What are your employment resources?

Classified Ads (in the paper or locally found on-line)
Cold Calls to Employers you want to work for
Job Assistance and Job Training centers
Craigslist, Monster.com, other websites

Skills Assessment and Personal Strengths Evaluation

- Free On-line Self-Assessment Tests
 1. Self Perception test <http://personal.ansir.com/test.htm>
 2. Personality Test <http://www.outofservice.com/bigfive/>
 3. Career Suitability, Interest and Values: 3 Surveys <http://quintcareers.testingroom.com>
 4. Career Interest Inventory <http://www.iccweb.com/careerfocus/index.asp>
 5. Quick and Easy Meyer's Briggs Personality Test <http://www.kisa.ca/personality/>
- Dress for Success http://www.quintcareers.com/dress_for_success.html
- Check job search attitude: positive?

Skills Assessment and Personal Strengths Evaluation (continued)

- Try a Sample Job Application
- Practice Interviewing
- Check out the *Interview Tips* from the fairshake.net Tool Kit.
- Check out the *Interview questions* from the fairshake.net Tool Kit
- How will you explain any gaps in employment history?
- Check out our guides that help you
 - Write a follow-up: thank you letter
 - Write a Resume
 - Create a Cover Letter

Resume' and Interview tips:

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

1. Be cheerful in your in-person or telephone job interviews.
2. Talk about the benefits of your experience and the relevant expertise you offer.
3. Speak to the value you can bring to the company.
4. Share stories in the job interview about outstanding outcomes in prior assignments.
5. Talk about your ability to work with diverse people.

Typical Barriers to Employment:

- Lack of updated resume
- Appropriate clothing for job search
- Transportation
- Stable housing
- Substance abuse
- Poor interview skills
- Poor job search skills
- Non high school graduate
- No documentation (ID, Social Security card)

What is your strategy for overcoming barriers and creating success?

When you create a clear strategy using the S.M.A.R.T. guidelines, including short term *and* long term personal and employment goals, you will meet challenges head on and increase your chances for success.

Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic Timely

Specific - A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you must answer the six "W" questions:

- **Who:** Who is involved?
- **What:** What do I want to accomplish? **Where:** Identify a location.
- **When:** Establish a time frame.
- **Which:** Identify requirements and constraints.
- **Why:** Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

Example: A general goal would be, "Get in shape." But a specific goal would say, "Run in the park after work on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. "

Measurable - Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs you on to continued effort required to reach your goal. To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as.....How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?

Attainable - When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals.

You can attain most any realistic goal you set when you plan your steps wisely and establish a time frame that allows you to carry out those steps. Goals that may have seemed far away and out of reach eventually move closer and become attainable, not because your goals shrink, but because you grow and expand to match them. When you list your goals you build your self-image. You see yourself as worthy of these goals, and develop the traits and personality that allow you to possess them.

Realistic - To be realistic, a goal must represent an objective toward which you are both *willing* and *able* to work. A goal can be both high and realistic; you are the only one who can decide just how high your goal should be. But be sure that every goal represents substantial progress. Some of the hardest jobs you ever accomplished actually seem easy simply because they were a labor of love. Your goal is probably realistic if you truly *believe* that it can be accomplished. Additional ways to know if your goal is realistic is to determine if you have accomplished anything similar in the past or ask yourself what conditions would have to exist to accomplish this goal.

Timely - A goal should be grounded within a time frame. With no time frame tied to it there's no sense of urgency. If you want to lose 10 lbs, when do you want to lose it by? "Someday" won't work. But if you anchor it within a time-frame, "by May 1st", then you've set your unconscious mind into motion to begin working on the goal.

T can also stand for **Tangible** - A goal is tangible when you can experience it with one of the senses, that is, taste, touch, smell, sight, or hearing. When your goal is tangible you have a better chance of making it specific and measurable and thus attainable.