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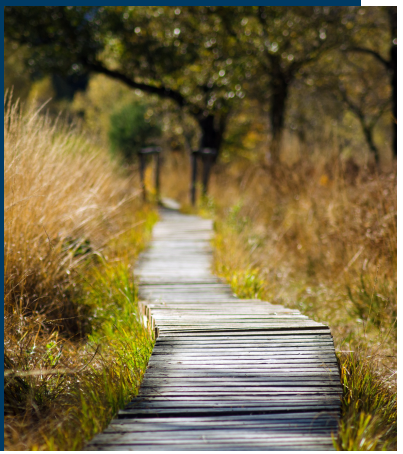
https://labor.delaware.gov



ROADMAP TO REENTRY EMPLOYMENT

A Guide to Successful Reentry

Purpose



The transition process from corrections back into the community can be challenging for returning citizens and their families. There are many things to consider when preparing for your life after incarceration. Reentering the community can be more manageable when you are aware of the services and resources available to help you.

This pamphlet was created to be an ongoing resource to help you achieve employment success as you return to the community. It contains information to help guide you through the process. There are checklists for quick reference, followed by job search information, resources, and details about applying for a pardon or expungement. You are a member of the community, and we want to help you successfully transition home!

Throughout your reentry process, also keep in mind that Delaware **2-1-1** is a free and confidential service that helps people find the local resources they need 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They can be reached by calling 2-1-1 or by visiting **www.211.org**.

Acknowledgement:
This pamphlet was produced by the Delaware Department Labor, with input from the Department of Correction, Department of Education, and Office of Defense Services.

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Checklist #1

THINGS TO DO WHEN BEGINNING YOUR JOB SEARCH



TIMELINE: Complete these tasks in your first week of job seeking.

☐ Obtain a Government ID

You can obtain an official government photo ID at a local Division of Motor Vehicles office. Find the closest location and learn what documents to bring (such as birth certificate, social security card, or proof of residence) by visiting **https://dmv.de.gov**

☐ Contact your local Department of Labor office

Check with your local office to access services. The Delaware Department of Labor can assist with JobLink registration, vocational training options, and more. Some services may require an appointment. See page 13 for more information.

☐ Create or update your Resume

Refer to page 11 for more detailed information about resumes.

☐ Get proof of your GED/high school or higher education completion

If you earned your high school diploma before you were incarcerated, you can get a copy from the Department of Education for the state where you attended high school. Contact information can be found at: **https://education.delaware.gov/about-doe/contact_information/**.
GED certificates can be requested from the state's GED Administrator where you took the test: **https://ged.com/policies/delaware/**

Checklist #2

THINGS TO DO TO REBUILD YOUR LIFE



TIMELINE: Complete these tasks in your first month of job seeking.

- [ ] **Connect with assistance programs and community organizations that can help**

  Apply for benefit programs that can help you get food and other necessities. Community organizations are also ready to help. See the “Reentry Resources” section that starts on page 15.

- [ ] **Begin your job search**

  See the “Job Search” section that starts on page 11.

- [ ] **Take control of your finances**

  To qualify for certain benefits, you will need to understand your current debts, bills, and other payments. Having a bank account and using free online tools can help you manage this.

- [ ] **Continue your education**

  See the “Continuing Education” section that begins on page 9.

- [ ] **Don’t forget to take care of yourself!**

  You have a lot going on, but make sure to stay healthy and prioritize your physical and behavioral health.

SECTION 1

Improving Your Chance of Finding Employment



The world is more connected than ever and employers have staggering amounts of information at their fingertips. Be prepared for employers to find out about your conviction history. Be honest on all your application materials and during interviews. Employees who misrepresent themselves can legally be fired. Many employers are supportive of reentry and hire justice-involved applicants! Here are some helpful tips.

Write A Letter of Explanation

When a job application asks about past convictions, you might be tempted to write, “Will discuss during the interview.” This is not a good option. If you don’t provide the employer with an immediate explanation, chances are, you won’t be getting an interview. Instead, write “Please see attached letter of explanation,” and have one prepared.

Here are some tips for writing a letter of explanation:

- Acknowledge that as an employer he/she may have concerns relating to your past.
- Describe the offense, factually, but be brief.

- Sincerely speak to the feelings you have regarding your behavior – show remorse.
- Demonstrate the positive changes, therapy, or treatment you have gone through to address past behaviors and any work-related skills you gained from this therapy.
- Thoughtfully discuss your goals and the steps you are taking to achieve them.
- Discuss what skills you have that meet the needs of the employer, and focus on your strengths.
- Speak to your future, and why you would be a good fit for the company.

Ask for Letters of Recommendation

Find people in positions of authority who will attest to your skills and character, and ask them to write you a letter of recommendation. Their testimony goes a long way toward convincing an employer that you will be an honest and reliable employee.

Letters of recommendation can be from anyone who is familiar with your workplace behavior or your character. If you can get one or more letters of recommendation, refer to them in your letter of explanation, and attach copies with your application materials.

Know Your Legal Rights

In some cases, Federal or state law may prohibit people with certain convictions from employment in certain jobs. Employers may run background checks as part of the application process.

Several states have laws that limit how and under what circumstances an employer may consider an applicant's criminal record. These laws make it illegal for an employer to discriminate against a person unless his or her conviction record is related to the duties of the job. Factors considered include the seriousness of the offense, how long ago it happened, the person's age at the time of the crime, efforts toward rehabilitation, and the conditions and demands of the workplace.

To find out if there are legal restrictions on an occupation you are interested in pursuing, visit **https://niccc.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org**, or ask a workforce consultant at your local Department of Labor Job Center to help you find the answers.

Work Insurance Program

This program provides fidelity bonding insurance coverage to high-risk job applicants who are qualified for a job but fail to get it because regular commercial bonding is denied due to their backgrounds. This helps hard-to-place job seekers by issuing bonds that insure business owners against monetary and property losses. For more information, contact the Delaware Department of Labor's ***Division of Employment & Training*** at (302) 761-8085.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

This is a federal income tax credit that encourages employers to hire individuals from identified targeted groups that have consistently faced significant barriers to employment in Delaware. The main objective of this program is to enable the targeted employees to gradually move from economic dependency into self-sufficiency, gainful employment, and on-the-job experience. For more details, visit **https://labor.delaware.gov/divisions/employment-training/wotc/**

Continuing Education

Training Services
The Delaware Department of Labor's Division of Employment and Training (DET) can help cover the cost of a degree, license and certificate programs. To review a list of available Training and Education Providers go to **joblink.delaware.gov** and click on *Training/Education*.

Apprenticeship and Training
Registered Apprenticeship is an employer-driven "earn while you learn" process combining on-the-job training with targeted classroom or lab instruction. Sponsored by their employers, Registered Apprentices typically work during the day while attending evening classes. Registered Apprenticeship is a proven approach for preparing individuals for employment while meeting the demands of businesses for a highly-skilled workforce. To learn more, visit: **https://labor.delaware.gov/divisions/employment-training/apprenticeship-and-training/**

Career Services

The American Job Centers offer a variety of workshops, such as Basic Computer Training, Job Search, Interview Strategies, and more. They also offer a Career Planning Workshop which helps individuals recognize interests, aptitudes, and abilities to career pathways. For a complete list of the workshops and their descriptions, visit **https://laborfiles.delaware.gov/main/det/Workshop_Descriptions.pdf**

Adult Basic Education (ABE/GED®)

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) oversees adult basic education (ABE) classes throughout the state. These classes provide adult learners with skills that apply to everyday life. Classes take place in locations that are accessible to adult learners, including libraries, public housing facilities, community service centers, schools, businesses, community colleges and the Internet. For a list of programs, visit: **https://education.delaware.gov/families/college-career-life/adult-education/adult-basic-education-abe-ged/**

High School Diploma (Groves)

Delaware students ages 16 and older who are no longer enrolled in a public, private or home school may attend James H. Groves Adult High School. Groves High School allows students to complete a high school education based on their unique abilities, interests, and aspirations. Graduates receive a State of Delaware high school diploma. For more information or to find the nearest location, visit: **https://education.delaware.gov/families/college-career-life/adult-education/high-school-diploma-groves/**

SECTION 2

Job Search



You've served your sentence and are ready to move on with your life. The job search process can be daunting with a criminal record. Some employers are required to consider certain convictions in their hiring process, however many employers are open to considering you for your experience and the work skills you have to offer.

Creating a Resume

You'll have more success if you take some time to get prepared. A well written resume that highlights your skills and experience can get you in the door! Following these simple steps will pay off in your job search.

- Collect your personal records: driver's license, birth certificate and other vital documents, criminal record, or RAP sheet.
- Write your resume. Find a few good tips to help you complete your resume by visiting: **https://www.careeronestop.org/ExOffender/FindAJob/PrepareYourResume/your-resume.aspx**
- Ask people for references. When you apply for jobs, you will usually be asked for these.
- Learn about job applications. You'll probably fill out more than one during your job search.
- Learn when and how you can expunge a criminal record.

If needed, find free computer access, job search workshops, and more at your local American Job Center, located in the Department of Labor offices statewide.

Preparing For An Interview

The key to any job interview is anticipating likely questions, and knowing how you'll answer them. Here are some tips:

- Acknowledge the employer's concerns about hiring someone with a conviction history.
- Talk about the positive changes you have made since the offense and the lessons you learned from your mistakes.
- Emphasize the hard skills and work history you have to offer as an employee. Speak to your future!
- Take responsibility for your actions.

Writing out your answers is a great way to articulate them clearly and to help commit them to memory. Compose a one-sentence statement for each of the five points listed above, and practice answering them aloud. Emphasize both your qualifications and the skills you will bring to the job.

Career OneStop

Career OneStop's job search can help anyone with a criminal record. You'll find tips, information, and resources to help you search, apply for, and begin a new job. On the site, you'll find state-specific resources, you can explore careers to learn how your skills match up, find out more about training options, read tips for job applications, resumes, and more! Visit:
https://www.careeronestop.org/ExOffender/

Employment Services

- **Department of Labor, Division of Employment & Training**
  Provides services enabling job seekers to make informed employment and training choices leading to employment.
  https://labor.delaware.gov/divisions/employment-training/
  (302) 761-8085

- **Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**
  Provides individualized services to people with disabilities, developing career pathways that link qualified employees to jobs.
  https://labor.delaware.gov/divisions/dvr/
  (302) 761-8275

- **Job Centers at Delaware Libraries -** Offers free one-on-one assistance for Delaware's job seekers and career changers.
  https://guides.lib.de.us/jobs
  (302) 739-4748

- **Goodwill of Delaware -** Provides essential job training and support services to people facing barriers to self-sufficiency!
  https://www.goodwillde.org/job-resource-centers/
  (302) 761-4640

- **Stand By Me -** A joint project of the State of Delaware and United Way of Delaware, providing personal financial coaching free of charge to Delawareans from all walks of life.
  https://standbymede.org/
  (800) 560-3372

Delaware Career Compass

The Delaware Career Compass is a step-by-step guide to career planning. It is geared towards students but has a lot of great resources that can be useful for adults too. Learn about yourself, the world of work, and how you can reach your goals. Find the Career Compass online at **https://lmi.delaware.gov/Publications/** or stop by your local Department of Labor office to pickup a hard copy.

Remember that ***Attitude is Everything!***

As you prepare your application materials and begin to go to interviews, keep in mind that employers want workers with positive energy and attitudes. They want employees who bring enthusiasm and dedication to the job. So project a positive attitude. Even if you're not feeling particularly positive, never let the employer see it.

- Stay positive! Your conviction is in the past and you are working toward your future.
- You applied for the job because you know you have the skills, talents, and abilities to perform the job that the employer needs. This makes you a valuable commodity!
- Stress the positive outcomes of your conviction. Highlight the education, training, or treatment you have completed. You learned valuable skills through this treatment which will make you more appealing to employers.

SECTION 3

Reentry Resources



Recognizing that returning citizens can face many challenges upon reentering society, this section includes resources for getting the help you need with basics such as clothing and food. Also listed are services to help you get additional services and support so you can get back on your feet in a timely manner.

Clothing, Lifeline Phones and Urban Bike Project

Friendship House Clothing Bank
Offers casual and professional clothing for individuals to succeed in their careers. Email **info@friendshiphousede.org**.

Lifeline Phones
A national program that provides free or low-cost cell phones from a variety of service providers. You can apply online to many providers like Assurance Wireless and Life Wireless.

Urban Bike Project
Provides refurbished bikes to adults in Wilmington and surrounding areas. Call (302) 300-4323.

Food Security Resources

For a list of food security resources in each county, view the linked documents:

- New Castle County
  https://laborfiles.delaware.gov/main/dol/reentry/Food_Resources_NCC.pdf

- Kent County
  https://laborfiles.delaware.gov/main/dol/reentry/Food_Resources_Kent.pdf

- Sussex County
  https://laborfiles.delaware.gov/main/dol/reentry/Food_Resources_Sussex.pdf

The **Food Bank of Delaware** distributes emergency food throughout the state. Find a local food pantry by calling 2-1-1 or by visiting **www.211.org**

Health Insurance

Medicaid: Insurance for low income individuals. To apply or get more information, go to **assist.dhss.delaware.gov** or visit your local State Service Center. Find office locations by visiting **https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dssc/**

Support Groups

For information about local mental health/substance abuse support groups in Delaware, click the link below.
https://laborfiles.delaware.gov/main/dol/reentry/Support_Groups.pdf

Obtaining Needed Documents

Upon release, eligible reentrants can present their Department of Corrections (DOC) credential card to the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and/or the Office of Vital Statistics to get a *free* state ID and birth certificate. Additional documents may be required by the DMV.

Friendship House Empowerment Centers offer hands-on support in obtaining these documents and covering financial costs. Locations include:

- **MOT:** 44 W. Main Street - Middletown, DE 19709
- **Newark:** 69 E. Main Street - Newark, DE 19711
- **Boxwood:** 701 S. Maryland Avenue - Wilmington, DE 19804
- **Wilmington:** 720 N. Orange Street - Wilmington, DE 19801

Financial Resources

For information about help managing your finances, click the link below to view the financial resources guide.
https://laborfiles.delaware.gov/main/dol/reentry/Finances.pdf

Delaware Correctional Reentry Commission

The Delaware Correctional Reentry Commission (DCRC) works to increase access to housing supports, training and employment services, education, and a continuum of care and support. To learn more about reentry in Delaware visit:
https://doc.delaware.gov/reentry/

SECTION 4

Pardons and Expungements

What is a Pardon?

A pardon is an official statement of forgiveness of your offenses issued by the Governor. A pardon does NOT remove the conviction from your official records; however, a pardon will generally restore your civil rights, such as the rights to vote and hold public office. A pardon may remove barriers to employment, professional licensing, public housing, social services, education, and other opportunities.



What is an Expungement?

An expungement seals your record, so that your state background check will no longer show a criminal record. If you were charged with a crime but never convicted, or if you successfully completed an alternative program that did not result in a conviction, you may be eligible for an expungement of your adult criminal record. Having your criminal arrest record expunged may open the door for career or education opportunities. Standards for receiving an expungement are high.

For more details about expungement eligibility or to use the portal/chatbot, visit the Office of Defense Services website at **https://ods.delaware.gov/expungements/** or call the Expungement Hotline at (302) 577-5142.

For juvenile expungement eligibility, complete the **Delaware Juvenile Expungement Eligibility Form**.

APEX Program

Program Overview
The APEX program is dedicated to providing opportunities to individuals with criminal histories who wish to obtain gainful employment. The program aims to accomplish this by helping clients through the pardons and expungement process, providing employer education, and advancing legislative reform.

APEX is operated by **The Division of Employment & Training (DET)** and jointly funded by the **Division of Social Services (DSS)** and DET the **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)**. Our offices are located in Wilmington and Dover, and we also provide services in Georgetown and Seaford. The APEX program is open to the general public, and assists individuals with disabilities, **TANF (welfare)** recipients, and foster youth.

How will APEX assist me?
APEX will:

- Provide an overview of pardons and expungements.
- Guide you through the process.
- Assist with obtaining documents and completing paperwork.
- Offer preparation classes for Board of Pardons hearings.

- Connect you to the Job Center's free employment classes and resources.

The APEX staff and volunteers are not attorneys and are not working with an attorney, and therefore cannot give you legal advice. If you are in need of legal advice, you will need to consult with an attorney.

In addition, due to the fact that APEX staff and volunteers are not attorneys, none of the statements that you make are privileged communications. This should not present any issues with regard to pardon and expungement applications, but it can become an issue if you have pending charges. If you make admissions with regard to open charges, the APEX staff member of volunteer could be called into court and forced to testify against you. As such, if you have pending charges, you may notify an APEX staff member or volunteer of that fact, but you must not discuss any details about those charges, other than the fact that you have them.

How do I enroll?
To be eligible to participate in our program, you must meet one of the following requirements:

- You have not been arrested, incarcerated, or on probation or parole in the past 3 years, or
- You have never been found guilty of an adult offense.

You must also meet all of the following requirements:

- You have no pending or unresolved charges.
- Your offenses are in the State of Delaware.

For Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the APEX program, please visit: **https://labor.delaware.gov/apex/faq/**

You may also fill out the online **APEX Eligibility Form** .

Office Hours and Locations
Call the numbers below for more contact information about hours and office locations in New Castle County, Kent, and Sussex Counties. All office visits are by appointment only.

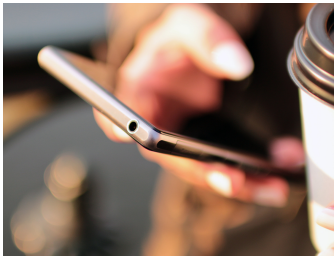
New Castle County APEX Coordinator: (302) 333-7605
Kent/Sussex County APEX Coordinator: (302) 233-6462
https://labor.delaware.gov/apex/contact/

Clean Slate Delaware

In 2021, Delaware became the fifth state to pass laws that meet Clean Slate criteria: automation of record clearance, automated clearance upon eligibility of the record, inclusion of arrest records, inclusion of misdemeanor records, and a strong recommendation for laws to include eligibility of at least one felony record. These laws provide greater equity, consistency, and cost-effectiveness through a streamlined automated process that applies to all Delaware records eligible for mandatory expungement.

Delaware's Clean Slate Law takes effect in August 2024. Visit **https://www.aclu-de.org/csde** for more details.

Additional Reentry Supports



If you need free and confidential help obtaining food, housing, health care, employment, counseling and other critical services 24/7 in your area:

· **2-1-1**

Call 2-1-1 (from either a cell phone or a landline) or visit **www.211.org**

If you are experiencing a crisis or want to talk to someone for support:

• **Suicide Prevention Lifeline Hotline** is **9-8-8**

If you want to find a place to get help navigating services, using a computer, or learn more about services available to you in your community:

• **National Reentry Resource Center (RRC)**

For more information visit:
https://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/

If you are unsure about federal policies that affect people who have been incarcerated, such as not being eligible for certain benefits, not being allowed to live in certain places, or you think you've experienced other discrimination:

• **Reentry Myth Busters**

Visit **www.csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/projects/mythbusters/**

NOTES



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

4225 N. Market Street - Wilmington, DE 19802

https://labor.delaware.gov