

# TIPS FOR FINDING A JOB

By Channie Byrd

For anyone, finding a job is 2% luck and 98% hard work. An ex-prisoner looking for work has to put in an extra effort to overcome the many biases he or she may encounter from employers and to tackle practical issues like a lack of specific skills or education, or gaps in work experience. Listed below are a few strategies to get you started in working to overcome these barriers and succeed in finding and keeping a job:

- \* Evaluate your interests and skills.
- \* Talk to friends who have obtained jobs—How did they do it? Where are they working?
- \* Make a "To Do List" of things you must do everyday to get a job and stick to it!
- \* Create your own responsibilities. Go out looking for a job as if you were actually putting in a full day of work—eight hours a day.
- \* Don't stop looking just because you are waiting to hear from an employer.
- \* Take notes—keep track of all the employers whom you contact and other people you talk to.
- \* Follow up after interviews and follow up with employers who tell you they are not hiring now but may be in the future.
- \* Go door-to-door and store-to-store to find out about opportunities. If they have no opportunities at one site, ask if they are hiring at other locations. Apply at several companies in the same area when possible—this saves time and money.
- \* Always be prepared. Walk around with pens, a master application listing your education and all of your work experience (with dates!), different versions of your resume, and other job information.
- \* Follow up on leads immediately! If you find out about a job late in the day, call right then!
- \* Network—tell everyone you know that you are looking for a job.
- \* Utilize Internet Web sites to search for employment.
- \* Have someone proofread your resume or cover letter—different eyes find different mistakes.
- \* Practice interviewing with friends, family members, someone else who is looking for a job, or in the mirror the night before an interview—make sure you can explain your conviction as a life changing event that set you on the right path and how it will make you a good employee.

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