

INSIDE EDITION

**A Job Hunting Guide
for Montanans with
Criminal Records**



Montana Department of
LABOR & INDUSTRY

APRIL 2011



Montana Department of
LABOR & INDUSTRY
Career Resources

INSIDE EDITION

A Job Hunting Guide for Montanans with Criminal Records

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State of Montana

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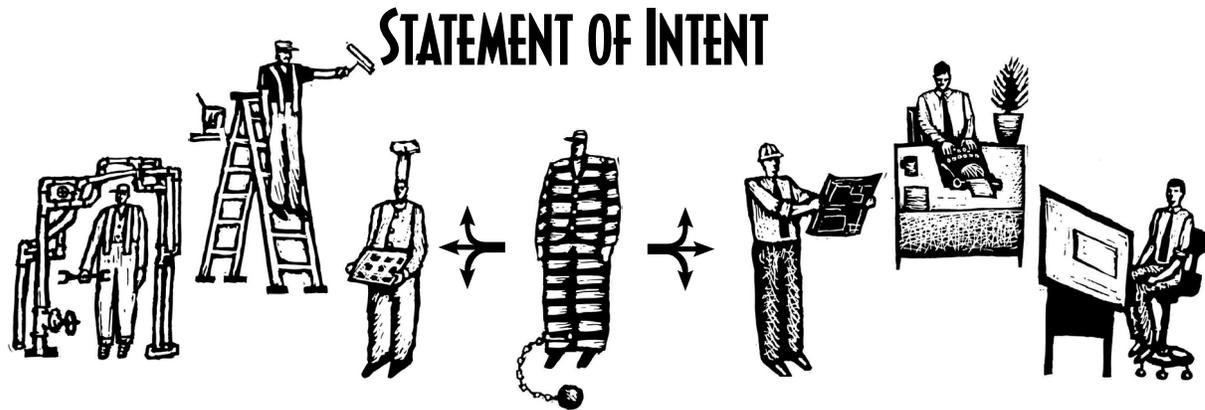
www.careers.mt.gov

Information about State Department of Labor resources may be of interest to:

- Potential employers looking for incentives to hire individuals with criminal histories
- Individuals with criminal histories who are looking for assistance in finding employment
- Researchers and policy makers looking at current programs to ascertain what programs are effective and serve their intended purpose

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This booklet is designed to help people who have been convicted of a crime or who have spent time in prison to find and keep a job. This document was prepared by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry to answer some of your questions and to help you find supporting agencies, people, and publications that can aid you in your search. While we don't expect you'll find the answers to all of your questions, we hope this is a good starting point. Please keep in mind that information changes quickly, so for the most current information, please contact the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, Job Service Workforce Centers listed on pages 13-14.

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR CRIMINAL RECORD

What types of barriers do you face in getting a job?

Ex-offenders face many barriers to getting a job, including a lack of job history and work skills, physical and mental health issues, low education levels, histories of physical and sexual abuse, alcohol and drug dependence, and child welfare or child support issues. These barriers include employment laws that allow, or even mandate, employers to consider a person's criminal record in certain occupations. The most serious barriers to employment are the bias and stigma arising from having a criminal record. Many employers hesitate to hire applicants with conviction histories. Any one of these barriers can get in the way of an ex-offender's ability to become employed, and taken together, they create difficult obstacles to getting, maintaining, and advancing on a job.

Getting a job can reduce the chances of your being rearrested, reconvicted, and re-incarcerated. Employed ex-offenders are less likely to commit other crimes. Most experts, academics, and practitioners, as well as people with criminal records themselves, believe obtaining employment is absolutely crucial to the successful reintegration of offenders into society and the improvement of public safety.

What types of criminal records do most ex-offenders have?

It may surprise you that most ex-offenders have convictions for drug related or property crimes as opposed to violent ones, and a majority of people with criminal records do not have long conviction records. Among female offenders, the most common types of property crimes are forgery, fraud, and embezzlement.

In some states, certain crimes can make someone ineligible to become employed in certain occupations. Many employers are more willing to hire an applicant with a nonviolent criminal background than someone who has committed a violent crime.

Can an employer consider an applicant's criminal record?

Employers may consider an applicant's conviction record and, in some cases, a person's arrest record. Generally, employers are permitted to ask job applicants if they have ever been convicted of an offense, and employers may legally consider an applicant's conviction(s) in making hiring decisions. If an applicant fails to disclose or misrepresents such information, the individual can be legally fired.

What occupations may exclude people with criminal records?

Some federal statutes prohibit ex-offenders with certain felony convictions from being employed in certain jobs. Depending upon the type of conviction, some prohibited occupations include:

- Airport Security Screeners
- Armored Car Crew Members
- Insurance Industry Jobs
- Any Position Managing an Employee Benefit Plan
- Generic Drug Industry Jobs
- Childcare
- Prisoner Transportation
- Jobs in FDIC Insured Institutions (Banks, for example)
- Certain Healthcare Services

While there are a few federal prohibitions, state statutes more commonly restrict the employment of ex-offenders in certain occupations. In Montana, Title 37, Chapter 1, Part 2, MCA, **Licensure of Criminal Offenders**, provides that the public policy of the Montana legislature is "to encourage and contribute to the rehabilitation of criminal offenders and to assist them in the assumption of the responsibilities of citizenship." Section 37-1-203 prohibits the professional and occupational licensing boards from using criminal convictions as the sole basis for denial of professional or occupational licensure.

Despite this prohibition, ex-offenders often have difficulty gaining professional licenses on the grounds of "unprofessional conduct." According to Section 37-1-316 MCA, "unprofessional conduct" includes any conviction for a crime involving violence, use or sale of drugs, fraud, deceit, or theft, as well as any conviction relating to or committed during the course of the person's practice. A licensing board may also deny licensure based on a criminal conviction that suggests a possible threat to public safety. Many boards, especially those related to health care, will deny a license to applicants convicted of violent, sexual, or drug crimes on the basis that denial is the best way to protect the public. Should the board deny licensure, the applicant has the right to a hearing, following the contested case procedures under the Montana Administrative Procedures Act (MAPA).

Each application is considered on a case-by-case basis, so there are no hard and fast rules dictating which types of convictions bar licensure in certain occupations. Before pursuing a career in a licensed occupation, you should research the policies and procedures of the licensing board for that occupation. After all, you don't want to complete a training and certification program only to find you can't get licensed for your chosen occupation. For more information on occupational licensing, use the contact information to the right.

MT Department of Labor and Industry

Business Standards Division

301 South Park, Room 430

P.O. Box 200513

Helena, MT 59620-0517

Receptionist: (406) 841-2333

<http://bsd.dli.mt.gov/>

Business and Occupational Licensing Bureau

http://bsd.dli.mt.gov/license/bus_index.asp

Healthcare Licensing Bureau

http://bsd.dli.mt.gov/license/hc_index.asp

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How do employers learn about a person's criminal record?

The easiest way for employers to find out whether an applicant has a conviction history is to ask about it on a job application or during an interview. Although many employers are not required to conduct background checks on job applicants, many do perform checks and have easy access to applicants' criminal histories through credit reporting agencies and other investigative services.

Ex-offenders...know your legal rights.

Ex-offenders need to know they have the right to be employed in spite of their criminal records. 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 an ex-offender unless his or her conviction record is related to the duties of the job. Factors that are generally considered include the time that has elapsed since the offense, the person's age at the time of the crime, the seriousness of the offense, the person's efforts toward rehabilitation, and the employer's interest in protecting the property and welfare of the workplace or the general public.



Some states have tried to mitigate the stigma, as well as some of the legal barriers, associated with criminal histories by allowing ex-offenders to seal or expunge their criminal records, or by offering certificates of rehabilitation to ex-offenders who either have minimal criminal histories or have remained out of the criminal justice system for specified periods of time. Depending on your state's law, certain criminal information may be sealed or expunged, restricting who has access to the information. In addition, certificates of rehabilitation are helpful, if not crucial, to securing employment with public agencies and removing bars to obtaining licenses. It may be useful to note that the Workforce Investment Act and, in certain situations, TANF funds can be used to cover the costs of sealing or expunging records or of obtaining certificates of rehabilitation. To find out how to seal or expunge your criminal record or obtain a certificate of rehabilitation contact the Criminal Records and Identification Services Section.

Employers cannot use arrest records to exclude persons from employment unless there is a business justification. If it can be demonstrated that the applicant actually engaged in the conduct for which he or she was arrested and that the conduct is job-related and relatively recent, the exclusion would be justified.

An increasing number of employers rely on background checks and employment questionnaires to probe an applicant's criminal history. Yet many criminal record reports contain inaccuracies and mistakes, ranging from missing to inaccurately recorded disposition information. Inaccurate information may give an unnecessarily negative profile of an individual. Therefore, one of the most beneficial things an ex-offender can do is to obtain and make sure the "rap sheet" is correct. (A "rap sheet" is the official record of an individual's arrest and conviction history in a particular state that is maintained by the state's repository of criminal records.)

Criminal Record Repository

This is the agency individuals may contact to obtain a copy of their state rap sheet and learn about the process of sealing, expunging, or cleaning it up. The criminal record repository can also tell the individual who else is legally entitled to access his or her record.

The requestor must send an \$8 check or money order, payable to “Montana Criminal Record,” along with a self-addressed envelope. The request should include the person’s full name, aliases or maiden name, date of birth, and social security number. No release authorization is required.

Contact: Criminal Records and Identification Services Section	303 North Roberts,
Eleanor Cooperider, Business Operations Supervisor	P.O. Box 201403
Department of Justice, Scott Hart Building, 4th Floor	Helena, MT 59620-1403
	Phone: (406) 444-3481

HOW CAN YOU IMPROVE YOUR CHANCES OF FINDING EMPLOYMENT?

Become familiar with the laws that affect the employment of people with criminal records.

This includes knowing which jobs have legal bars to people with criminal records and what can be done to lift those bars. It also means knowing whether employers are permitted to ask job applicants about their arrest and conviction history.

Recognize and respond to the legitimate concerns of employers.

Employers who won’t hire people with criminal records often fear they will incur liability if the ex-offender commits a new crime. This is known as negligent hiring. The important thing to know is that in most cases an employer will not face legal liability if he or she hires an ex-offender. Generally, an employer’s reasonable efforts to check and consider an applicant’s background will satisfy the legal requirements and eliminate the risk of liability on the employer’s part.

You should consult a lawyer about the state standards for negligent hiring and find out what an employer can do to protect against liability. Then you can present this information to prospective employers to minimize their fears of hiring an ex-offender.

Identify employers that will hire ex-offenders.

You may not realize that many employers, including major corporations, hire people with criminal records. These businesses realize that employing qualified ex-offenders makes good economic sense and can provide many opportunities for growth.

First, identify employers who hire people who have minimum skills or work experience, as well as employers who hire without doing a criminal background check. Also, identify jobs that do not pose public safety considerations. These jobs tend to be in industries such as construction, assembly work, manufacturing, and food services.

Emphasize financial incentives available to employers for those who hire ex-offenders.

Remind employers of the range of financial incentives for those who hire ex-offenders. There are various tax credits available, as well as Workforce Investment Act (WIA) assistance. Refer the employer to the “Special Programs for Employers of Ex-offenders” section below, or to their local Job Service Workforce Center for more information.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR EMPLOYERS OF EX-OFFENDERS

Employers who hire ex-offenders may qualify for incentives offered by the federal government known as **Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)** program. They join other initiatives and targeted tax credits that help American workers gain economic self-sufficiency and increase American productivity and economic growth.

Employers must apply for and receive certification from their state employment agency that their new hire belongs to one of the nine groups of job seekers eligible for the WOTC/WTW before claiming it on their federal income tax return. **One of the targeted groups is - Low income ex-felons.** For more information, you can **visit the WOTC web site at <http://mtjoblinc.com/wotc.htm>** OR, call (800) 726-0615.

In addition to welfare tax credits that are available to employers who hire welfare recipients, employers who are willing to train and provide work experience to ex-offenders may be eligible to receive WIA assistance.



Federal Bonding Program

The Federal Bonding Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, provides individual fidelity bonds to employers for job applicants who are (or may be) denied coverage by commercial carriers because of their criminal history. While the bond does not cover liability due to poor workmanship, job injuries, or work accidents, it does insure the employer against theft, forgery, larceny, and embezzlement. For more information on the program, please visit: www.bonds4job.com.

Contact:

Chris Wilhelm, Bonding Services Coordinator
Montana Department of Labor & Industry
Workforce Services Division
P.O. Box 1728
Helena, MT 59624
406-444-3351
406-444-3037 fax
e-mail: ChrisWilhelm@mt.gov

Tax Credits

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit is a federal tax credit that reduces the federal tax liability of private for profit employers, providing an incentive for employers to hire individuals from nine different targeted groups: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients, veterans, ex-felons, high risk youth, summer youth employees, Food Stamp recipients, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients, vocational rehabilitation referrals, and New York Liberty Zone Business Employees.

Contact:

Christy Robbins, WOTC Coordinator
Montana Department of Labor & Industry
Workforce Services Division
P.O. Box 1728
Helena, MT 59624
406-444-9046
or 1-800-726-0615
406-444-3037 fax
e-mail: crobbs@mt.gov

YOUR JOB SEARCH

Treat the Search as a Job

Job hunting is a full-time job, and you should try to spend at least six hours a day actively looking for work. If you work at your job search as hard as you would work at a job, you will eventually see positive results.

Identify Your Skills

Think about all the jobs you've had before and decide what skills you used and learned there. Do the same with any hobbies or special training you may have. Ask yourself who can use those skills (See below for more information on how to identify your skills).

Do Your Research

The more you know about an employer, the better you can match your skills to their needs. Learn about the products they make or sell, and most importantly – who makes hiring decisions. Don't be afraid to call them with questions; it will show them you are interested in what they do. Research every company you plan to interview with.

Use All Your Resources

Your family, relatives, friends and neighbors are an excellent source for job leads. They often know about job vacancies long before anyone else, so it is possible to be hired without having to compete with other job applicants. Friends and family can also give you good inside information about the wants, needs, likes, and dislikes of potential employers.

REMEMBER, TO BE A SUCCESSFUL JOB HUNTER, ALL YOU REALLY NEED IS JUST ONE PERSON TO SAY YES.

IDENTIFYING YOUR SKILLS

Many people believe that employers only consider an applicant's work history in making hiring decisions. While work experience is certainly important, you may have acquired valuable job skills without even knowing it. Have you ever run a household? Worked on a car? Fixed something around the house? All of these tasks involve skills you can include on your resume. If you've had limited work experience, it is especially important to identify these kinds of skills.

How Can I Identify My Skills?

Begin by writing a list. Include the following:

- Previous employment
- Volunteer work
- Education
- Hobbies
- Day-to-day tasks
- Other skills/experience



Previous Employment

Start by listing all the jobs you've ever had. List all the tasks you performed in each job, and the skills required to perform them. What machinery did you operate? Did you have to deal with the public? What physical skills were required (strength, stamina, manual dexterity, etc.)? List these skills and consider which other jobs need employees with these skills.

Volunteer Work

Include both formal and informal volunteer work. You might have learned carpentry skills by volunteering to build houses with Habitat for humanity, but you could also have learned them by helping your friend build his new deck.

Education

List all the subjects you studied in school. In what classes did you do well? Vocational classes are especially relevant, but all subjects should be considered.

Hobbies

You may not think fly-fishing, sewing, snowboarding, or building model airplanes could help your career, but all these activities involve skills you could include on a resume. For instance, snowboarding helps you de-

velop a sense of balance which would be ideal for a structural steelworker who must work on high beams. Building models requires attention to detail and finger dexterity valuable in a great number of jobs including computer manufacturing and electronics repair, not to mention building architectural models.

Day-to-day Tasks

List all the things you do in the course of an average week. A great number of skills are required just to manage a household. If you've ever had to coordinate taking kids to school, cleaning, cooking, and doing the hundred other things you do in an average day, you've had experience with scheduling. If you've ever had to keep track of your family or personal expenses, you've had experience with budgeting. If you've peacefully settled a dispute between friends or family members, you've done some negotiating, exhibited stress tolerance, and used interpersonal skills.

Other Skills/Experience

This is where you list anything that didn't fit into the other categories. List anything you've done that required a skill that you might use in a job. Perhaps you speak another language or have had to care for a disabled family member. These skills are valuable—list them.

Skills List: If you've never thought about your interests and experiences in terms of the skills you've learned, it may be difficult to begin. Use the list of skills on the following page to get you started, but don't limit yourself to those skills listed—they are general categories, and you've probably learned skills that are very specific to certain jobs.

Finger Dexterity	Hazards Tolerance	Using Computers	Evaluating	Managing Resources
Manual Dexterity	Discomfort Tolerance	Programming	Advising	Responsibility
Motor Coordination	Repetition Tolerance	Technology Design	Synthesizing	Dependability
Stamina	Following Procedures	Calculating	Analyzing	Flexibility
Strength	Categorizing	Estimating	Planning	Persistence
Rapid Response	Record Keeping	Budgeting	Active Learning	Integrity
Sound Discrimination	Attention to Detail	Math Reasoning	Using Knowledge	Efficiency
Shape Discrimination	Verifying Information	Science Reasoning	Safety of Others	Competitiveness
Color Discrimination	Installing	Reading	Persuading	People Skills
Depth Perception	Inspecting	Writing	Negotiating	Independent Work
Visualizing	Repairing	Speaking	Confronting	Team Work
Creativity	Troubleshooting	Listening	Initiating	Working with the Public
Aesthetic Judgment	Controlling Machines	Concentrating	Coordinating	Assisting/Caring
Stress Tolerance	Operating Vehicles	Information Gathering	Directing/Leading	Performing
			Decision Making	Instructing

What do I do with these skills once I've listed them?

Keep your list to refer back to every time you need to fill out an application or write a resume. If possible, keep the list on a computer disk so you can add to it as you learn new skills. Remember, on a resume, the more specific you can be about your experiences, the better. Instead of saying that you have had experience working on cars, explain that you completely refurbished a 1972 Ford Mustang, and list the tasks involved from rebuilding the engine to detailing the hood. Also remember to include only the skills that might be relevant to the job you are seeking. If you're applying for a job selling stereo equipment, the employer might not care about the Mustang you restored.

For Additional Help

The professionals at the Job Service Workforce Centers can provide you with resources and assistance to help you identify your skills. Additionally, your local Job Service Workforce Center can provide you with access to the MCIS Network's Micro-SKILLS assessment. This program can help you to match your skills to occupations where you can use them. It will also help you identify which skills you'll need to learn for certain occupations. (For more information on Job Service Workforce Centers, see pages 13-14).

JOB SERVICE WORKFORCE CENTERS

Your Montana Department of Labor & Industry is an excellent resource for employment leads and opportunities. There are many Job Service Workforce Centers throughout the State of Montana ready to help you with a variety of services (see listing of centers on pages 20-21).

Services offered:

- Register for Part- or Full-Time Employment
- Basic Skills
- Interview Preparation
- Cover Letter and Resume Writing
- Employment Counseling
- Training Opportunities
- Federal Bonding
- WORC Opportunity Tax Credit
- And many more

Job Service Workforce Centers also offer a variety of other services, such as career counseling for individuals not sure of their future employment plans, and clerical and aptitude testing. Special services are offered to individuals needing accommodations and to Veterans.

Because the rules and regulations change so quickly, the Job Service Workforce Center staff cannot assist you with information about unemployment insurance. However, they can provide phone numbers for the Unemployment Telephone Claims Center nearest you, where customer service representatives can answer your specific questions.



JOB SERVICE WORKFORCE CENTERS: BEING PREPARED

Once at the Job Service Workforce Center, you can use the resource center or meet with an Employment Consultant for more intensive services. The consultant will explain the services offered and quickly assess how best to help you with your career search. At this time you will probably be asked to register for employment. You and the interviewer will discuss your education, skills, and any special interests you may have. Your information will be entered into a computer database where your knowledge, skills, and abilities will be matched with employers who need them.

When you arrive at the Job Service Center be PREPARED - treat this like a job interview. You can expect to fill out a job application or register on the web, so bring along the information you'll need.

Information to Bring with You:

- Your current address
- Your phone number
- Social Security number
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of previous employers
- Dates of previous employment
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of three references
- Other relevant information such as your driver's license number, union cards, copies of transcripts, or military discharge papers

Remember, the consultants at the Job Service Center are there to help you, but you have to help them by being able to provide information about yourself and your employment history. The consultants will be interviewing you to determine if you meet the requirements for a number of jobs as qualifications have been outlined by the employers.

Based upon your interview and qualifications, the Job Service consultant may determine whether or not the employer will see you or consider your application or resume. Depending on the availability of positions, you may be sent on a job interview directly from the Job Service Center. Dress appropriately for the jobs you are seeking.

JOB SERVICE RESOURCE CENTERS

The Department of Labor seeks ways to be more responsive to the needs of our customers. In many cases, we've found the best service we can provide for our customers is to simply provide access to our tools and information. Through our Job Service Resource Centers we can provide a place where job seekers can have access to the equipment and information they need. The Montana Department of Labor has centers located throughout the state for your convenience, and provides the following resources:

Job Search Publications Library

Most Job Service Resource Centers have an excellent selection of state and national publications with information on job openings, job search tools and techniques, wage statistics and other items of interest to job seekers.

TV-VCR and Video Library

Use the TV-VCR and job search videotapes to get job-hunting tips from the pros. Video subjects include: filling out a state application, interviewing for a state job, handling stress on the job, and using the phone effectively to get the job you want.

Telephone and Fax

Use the phone and faxes to get in touch with potential employers to send your resume or set up job interviews.

Printers and Copiers

Most offices offer free access to laser printers and photocopying machines for printing resumes, cover letters, and related materials.

Personal Computers

Personal computers are available for your job hunt or computerized occupational exploration. Various software programs allow you to learn more about colleges, occupations, employers, and jobs. Special resume writing software can help you prepare your resume and cover letters. The Montana Career Information System includes a skills assessment and information about schools, financial aid, military service, and self-employment. These computers also provide on-line access to thousands of job listings on Montana Job Source, America's Job Bank, or a number of other sites.

Professional Career Guidance

If you need assistance getting started with an application, resume or the Internet, or general advice on how to get back into the job market, you'll find trained staff to assist you.

MONTANA JOB SERVICE WORKFORCE CENTER DIRECTORY

Anaconda Job Service

307 E. Park
Anaconda, MT 59711
Telephone (406) 563-3444
Fax Number (406) 563-7827
E-mail: AnacondaJS@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/anaconda>

Bozeman Job Service

121 North Willson
Bozeman, MT 59715
Telephone (406) 582-9200
Fax Number (406) 582-9210
E-mail: BozemanJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/bozeman>

Cut Bank Job Service

501 East Main Street
Cut Bank, MT 59427
Telephone (406) 873-2191
Fax Number (406) 873-5393
E-mail: CutBankJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/cutbank>

Billings Job Service

2121 Rosebud Drive Stop B
Billings, MT 59102-6274
Telephone (406) 652-3080
Fax Number (406) 652-0444
E-mail: BillingsJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/billings>

Butte Job Service

2201 White Blvd.
Butte, MT 59701
Telephone (406) 494-0300
Fax Number (406) 494-5481
E-mail: ButteJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/butte>

Dillon Job Service

730 North Montana, Ste. #4
Dillon, MT 59725
Telephone (406) 683-4259
Fax Number (406) 683-2903
E-mail: DillonJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/dillon>

Montana Job Service Workforce Center Directory (continued)

Glasgow Job Service

74 - 4th Street N.
Glasgow, MT 59230
Telephone (406) 228-9369
Fax Number (406) 228-8793
Job Hot-Line (406) 228-9523
E-mail: GlasgowJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/glasgow>

Glendive Job Service

211 S. Kendrick
Glendive, MT 59330
Telephone V/TTY (406) 377-3314
Fax Number (406) 377-5831
Job Information Line (406) 377-5823
E-mail: GlendiveJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/glendive>

Great Falls Job Service

1018 7th Street South
Great Falls, MT 59405
Telephone (406) 791-5800
Fax Number (406) 791-5889
Job Hot-Line (406) 453-5556
E-mail: GreatFallsJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/greatfalls>

Hamilton

Bitterroot Job Service
274 Old Corvallis Road, Suite D
Hamilton, Montana 59840
Telephone V/TTY (406) 363-1822
Fax Number (406) 363-1823
E-mail: HamiltonJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/hamilton>

Havre Job Service

160 First Avenue
Havre, MT 59501
Telephone (406) 265-5847
Fax Number (406) 265-1386
Job Hot-Line (406) 265-1587
E-mail: HavreJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/havre>

Helena Job Service

715 Front Street
Helena, MT 59620-1505
Telephone (406) 447-3200
Fax Number (406) 447-3224
Job Hot-Line (406) 447-3222
E-mail: HelenaJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/helena>

Kalispell

Flathead Job Service
427 First Avenue East
Kalispell, MT 59901
Telephone (406) 758-6200
Fax Number (406) 758-6290
TTY (406) 758-6296
E-mail: KalispellJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/kalispell>

Lewistown Job Service

300 First Avenue North
Lewistown, MT 59457
Telephone (406) 538-8701
Fax Number (406) 538-7249
E-mail: LewistownJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/lewistown>

Libby

Kootenai Job Service
417 Mineral Ave. Suite 4
Libby, MT 59923
Telephone (406) 293-6282
Fax Number (406) 293-5134
Job Hot-Line (406) 293-6282 Option #1
E-mail: LibbyJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/libby>

Livingston Job Service

220 East Park Street
Livingston, Montana 59047
Telephone: (406) 222-0520
Fax: (406) 222-1593
TDD: (406) 222-1593
E-mail: LivingstonJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/livingston>

Miles City Job Service

12 North 10th Street
Miles City, MT 59301
Telephone V/TTY (406) 232-8340
Fax Number (406) 232-6270
Job Hot-Line (406) 232-6350
E-mail: MilesCityJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/milescity>

Missoula Job Service

539 S. Third Street W
Missoula, MT 59806
Telephone/TTY (406) 728-7060
Fax Number (406) 721-7094
E-mail: MissoulaJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/missoula>

Polson

Lake County Job Service
417 B Main Street
Polson, MT 59860
Telephone (406) 883-7880
Fax Number (406) 883-4564
Job Hot-Line (406) 883-3311
E-mail: PolsonJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/polson>

Shelby Job Service

202 Main Street
Shelby, MT 59474
Telephone (406) 434-5161
Fax Number (406) 434-2351
E-mail: ShelbyJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/shelby>

Sidney Job Service

211 North Central
Sidney, MT 59270
Telephone (406) 433-1204
Fax Number (406) 433-7453
Job Hot-Line (406) 433-6665
E-mail: SidneyJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/sidney>

Thompson Falls

Sanders County Job Service
2504 Tradewinds Way, Suite #1
Thompson Falls, MT 59873
Telephone (406) 827-3472
Fax Number (406) 827-3327
Job Hot-Line (406) 827-4562
E-mail: ThompsonFallsJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/thompsonfalls>

Wolf Point Job Service

201 Main Street
Wolf Point, MT 59201
Telephone (406) 653-1720
Fax Number (406) 653-1196
Job Hot-Line (406) 653-1194
E-mail: WolfPointJSC@mt.gov
<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/wolfpoint>

JOB SEARCH METHODS

There are many different ways to look for employment, and staff at the Job Service can help you determine which will work for you. It is best to try several methods to find employment. If one doesn't work, try something else. Remember, the harder you work and the more people you contact, the more likely you are to find work.

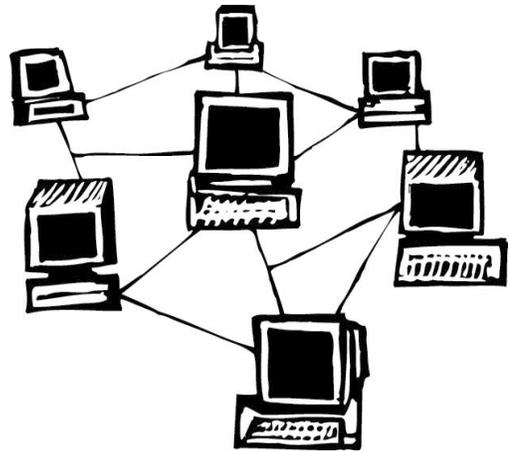
Direct Contact:



The direct approach is a good idea. Develop a list of businesses that usually need people with your skills and try to get a job interview. The Montana Department of Labor produces several publications that can help you out in this area (see page 38). Go to the personnel office of the businesses on your list and ask to speak with the personnel director. They will know when a job becomes available and may be able to set you up with an interview. If you cannot schedule an interview, be sure to leave your resume and a cover letter. After you leave, continue to follow up with the personnel director or another company contact on upcoming job openings.

Internet:

One of the most powerful tools in the hands of employers and job seekers is the Internet. The Internet offers an ideal way to bring employers and employees together because information can be shared so quickly and easily. There are thousands of web sites on the Internet where you can look for work. One of your best sources is the Montana Department of Labor and Industry homepage at <http://dli.mt.gov>. Here you will find labor market information, listings of Job Service Workforce Centers throughout the state, Montana's Job Bank – Montana Job Source and links to other Department of Labor and Industry services.



Direct References:

Be sure to tell your friends, family and other job seekers about your job search. They may have inside information about a job opportunity, or know someone who does. Ask them to let you know if they hear about job openings. This method can sometimes be one of the best sources of job leads.

Government Jobs:

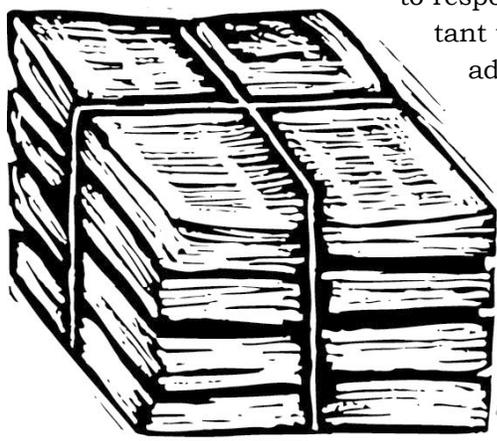
A large percentage of jobs in Montana are government employment. Information about federal government job openings can be found at www.usajobs.opm.gov or by calling (912)757-3000.

Montana State Government

You can find State of Montana government job openings at Montana Job Source <https://jobs.mt.gov/jobs/login.seek> or at JobLinc www.mtjoblinc.mt.gov. To apply for a State of Montana job you must submit a State of Montana Application for Employment. The form may be different for some agencies (State Fund, Universities, i.e.), so check carefully on the job vacancy announcement. These forms are available at Job Service offices or can be downloaded from the web sites listed. Remember to attach supporting documentation with your application (transcripts, certificates, DD214 if you are a veteran). When filling out your application, keep in mind that you can use work history from paid work, volunteerism, or any jobs you have held, including work while you were incarcerated. The vacancy announcement may also state that you need to submit answers to supplemental questions, a resume, transcripts, typing test results or other documentation, so read the announcement carefully and submit all necessary documentation. It is also very important that you sign and date the application. The applications are due by 5 p.m. on the closing date and can either be mailed to the respective agency or dropped off at any Job Service Workforce Center. Remember to allow time for the mail to be delivered, as they do not accept postmarks unless stated. It generally takes a few weeks before you will hear anything, so don't expect a call within a day or two.

Newspaper "Help Wanted" Ads

Check out the help wanted ads in the newspaper. Answer any ads that fit your interests and abilities, even if you do not meet all of the qualifications, since some companies tend to exaggerate the necessary qualifications. Also, the employer may not find anyone who fits all of the qualifications or the employer may like qualities that you possess. Most ads will indicate how



to respond—by phone, by mail, or in person. It is very important to do as the ad says. Do not delay—follow up on each ad quickly. From time to time, you will find good jobs advertised in the newspaper, but don't overestimate your chances of finding a job there. Keep in mind that some listings are not employment opportunities, but companies seeking to build a resume base or to gather information about the job market. Also, beware of "no experience necessary" ads. While these ads promise high pay, they may indicate commission work or an investment of money to secure a dealership, franchise sales kit, or other business venture. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

PERSISTENCE PAYS - KEEP TRYING AND YOU'LL BE HIRED.

If one method doesn't work for you, try another. If you thought your interview went really well and you did not get the job, you might consider contacting the interviewer and asking if there was a particular area during the interview where you could make improvements.

JOB APPLICATION FORMS

Most employers will ask you to complete an application form. These forms are critical to your job search because employers use them to choose people for interviews. Employers often complain that applicants do not properly complete application forms.

Bring the following information with you:

- address and phone number where you can be contacted - if you do not have your own phone, provide a number where you can receive messages
- social security number
- names, addresses and telephone numbers of previous employers with dates of employment, and starting and ending wages
- list of school subjects which may help you qualify for the position
- names, addresses and telephone numbers for at least three references - ask each individual for permission to use them as a reference
- driver's license number, union cards, copies of transcripts, military discharge papers and other relevant information

Keep this information up to date and bring it with you during your career search. It will save you a lot of time and show excellent organizational skills.

TIPS FOR COMPLETING APPLICATION FORMS

- **Read and follow all directions carefully.**
- Review the whole form before starting.
- **Ask questions** if you are not sure about anything on the form.
- **Neatly print** the information requested in black or blue ink, or if given the opportunity to return the form, have the information typed.
- Check spelling and grammar.
- **Do not leave any blank spaces.** If an item does not apply to you indicate "none," "not applicable," or "N/A" in the blank provided.
- **Be specific** about the job or jobs for which you are applying.
- **Be honest, don't stretch your qualifications.** Most applications require your signature declaring that the information you have provided is accurate. Applications are frequently verified and **lying on a job application form is usually grounds for dismissal.**
- **Be reasonable** if asked to provide your salary expectations. You may want to write "negotiable" to avoid under-pricing or over-pricing yourself before you even get an interview.

SAMPLE JOB APPLICATION

Personal Information		
Your name, address, and telephone number. If you do not have a telephone, you will need to give a number where you can receive messages.		
Name:		
Home Address:		
City, State, Zip:		
Home Phone		
Message Phone:		
Social Security Number:		
Employment Objective:		
Emergency contact name and phone:		
Work History		
List work experiences. You will need the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of any previous significant employers, the dates you worked for them, your supervisor's names, your job titles, starting and ending salaries, and a brief descriptions of your duties or accomplishments. Begin with your most recent employer. You may want to include summer, temporary, part-time, and volunteer work that show you have skills or interests that relate to the job you are seeking. You will need the same information for previous employers.		
1. Employer		Phone
Address:	Start date through end date:	Title
	Start pay\$/End pay\$	Supervisor
Duties and responsibilities (Emphasize duties and responsibilities that apply to jobs for which you are applying).		
Highlights (Include recognition you have received, projects completed, and results of your work).		
		Reason for Leaving
2. Employer		Phone
Address:	Start date through end date:	Title

	Start pay\$/End pay\$	Supervisor
Duties and responsibilities (Emphasize duties and responsibilities that apply to jobs for which you are applying).		
Highlights (Include recognition you have received, projects completed, and results of your work).		
		Reason for Leaving
3. Employer		Phone
Address:	Start date through end date:	Title
	Start pay\$/End pay\$	Supervisor
Duties and responsibilities (Emphasize duties and responsibilities that apply to jobs for which you are applying).		
Highlights (Include recognition you have received, projects completed, and results of your work).		
		Reason for Leaving
<p>Education and Training</p> <p>List the schools, colleges, trade schools, business schools, and adult education programs you have attended. You may want to list diplomas you have earned at each school, as well as the relevant course work, activities, and awards. Begin with your most recent education.</p>		
1. School Name and Address	Start date through end date	
	Major	
	Degree	
Activities, athletics, accomplishments, awards, honors, and memberships.		
Courses		
2. School Name and Address	Start date through end date	
	Major	
	Degree	

Activities, athletics, accomplishments, awards, honors, and memberships.	
Courses	
3. School Name and Address	Start date through end date
	Major
	Degree
Activities, athletics, accomplishments, awards, honors, and memberships.	
Courses	
<p>Military Service</p> <p>If you have had military service experience, include the branch of service, highest rank achieved, and type of discharge. Be sure to list all other duties or training that relate to the work you are seeking. Make copies of your DD-214 and give it to employers who request it. It is very important to have a list of your transferable skills from military work into the civilian work force.</p>	
Branch	Highest Rank
Job Titles	Start Date
	Discharge date and status
Training	
<p>Skills and Accomplishments</p> <p>List special skills such as typing or computer and software knowledge, foreign languages you speak or write, equipment or machines you can operate; transferable skills, such as directing the activities of others, selling or writing technical manuals; special certificates you have to operate machines, equipment, or vehicles; and current health and safety cards.</p>	
Office Equipment	
Other Equipment	
Special Skills	
Licenses	
Interests or hobbies	
Languages	
Memberships	

Training and Workshops		
List Training, seminars, and workshops you have attended. This may include former employers' training programs and workshops.		
Title	Sponsor	Date
Training		
Certificates		
Title	Sponsor	Date
Training		
Certificates		
Title	Sponsor	Date
Training		
Certificates		
References		
List the names, titles, and telephone numbers of three people (who are not your relatives) who have known you for more than one year, preferably people who know your skills and abilities as they relate to work. Be sure to get permission before releasing their names and telephone numbers. Talk to them about your job search and get a feel for the recommendations they will give you. Do not list relatives.		
1. Name		
Title		
Employer		
Address		
Phone		
2. Name		
Title		
Employer		
Address		
Phone		
3. Name		
Title		
Employer		
Address		
Phone		

COVER LETTERS

Always write a cover letter when sending your resume to a prospective employer. Cover letters are, in some ways, more important than resumes. While resumes summarize your qualifications, cover letters should sell you to the employer. You want the letter to convince the employer to take action on your resume and invite you for an interview.

- The cover letter should be addressed to a specific person. If you don't know the person's name and title, call and ask.
- The cover letter should briefly explain why you are interested in the company and what you can contribute to the team.
- Reference your enclosed resume.
- The cover letter should be brief and to the point.
- Don't use jargon or be too technical.
- A cover letter has three sections: the introduction, middle, and ending. Normally each section is limited to one brief paragraph.
- The most important point to get across in the introduction (first paragraph) is your reason for writing. (See sample cover letter.)
- The middle (second paragraph) covers your main qualifications and accomplishments, and the reasons you are interested in the job.
- The ending (last paragraph) is a request for an interview. One option is to restate your interest in the job or that you will call next week to see about setting a time for an interview.
- It is always important to follow up your letter with a phone call to make sure they received your application packet and to see where they are in the hiring process.
- Before calling, plan what you are going to say.
- Pay attention to the time of day you are calling; for example don't call a restaurant manager at lunchtime.
- The more calls you make, the more comfortable you will become.

A SAMPLE COVER LETTER IS INCLUDED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

March 29, 2004

Mr. Kenneth D. Wilson
Personnel Manager Kwick Litho Service, Inc.
1405 Bridge Street
Missoula, MT 59851

Dear Mr. Wilson:

Yesterday, I talked with Mark Andersen, your representative at the Missoula job fair. From our conversation, I became very interested in applying for the offset press operator position. Kwick Litho Service, Inc. is a leader in the full-service printing operation and I am eager to offer my skills in graphic design and production.

Currently, I am enrolled in graphic production classes at The University of Montana. My course work has included a full range of printing tasks including design, three-color offset and web press operation, and the use of pre-sensitized and direct-image plates. After completing these courses next month, I would like the opportunity to put my training into practice in a position such as the one that you have advertised.

Would it be possible to schedule a time when I might visit you? I would like to talk with you about my qualifications and my interest in working for Kwick Litho Service.

Sincerely yours,

(skip four spaces for your signature)

Daniel Heidelberg
304 Newbury Street
Missoula, MT 598512
Phone: 406-555-6789

RESUMES

The resume is often the first contact the employer has with you, so your resume should be effective and attractive to make a good first impression. Resumes are a brief snapshot of your skills and experiences. Remember the main purpose of the resume is to land an interview.

- Your resume should include your name, address, telephone number, work qualifications and a job objective. List them in an order that best fits your goals and the job in question.
- Give a single goal or objective. Be aimed at one job or employer. If you have many job objectives, you should write a new resume for each type of job.
- Be skills specific. Don't list vague qualities such as "good work ethic," but describe actual achievements such as "reduced company deficit by 50 percent." Use specific figures when possible.
- Your resume should highlight the areas of your experience and training that match the job requirements. One page of well-organized information will say more good things about you than two or three pages of unnecessary details.
- Your resume should emphasize your strengths and minimize your weaknesses.
- Information should be arranged in a format that allows a prospective employer to learn a lot about you in a short period of time.
- Many times an employer has to look at a lot of resumes before selecting a "few resumes" to interview. Your resume should have good eye appeal and sell the employer on you.
- Have white space showing. If the information is too densely written, readers may miss your key points.
- Give your resume the time and effort to make it PERFECT not just good. This will give employers the impression that you pay attention to details.
- If you get an interview without sending a resume in advance, be sure to take a resume to the interview with you for the interviewer to keep.
- Consider the types of skills and experience your potential employer will be looking for, and emphasize those in your resume.
- Employers check the dates on your resume looking for gaps in employment. Be prepared to explain any breaks in employment.
- If you have large employment gaps, use a functional resume rather than chronological. By giving dates, gaps of employment are more noticeable and also can reveal age, which has no bearing on abilities.
- Titles held and employer's names are selling points.
- Try not to use the expression "responsible for" and "duties included" or even "self-employed." Tell what you did using action verbs such as "assisted customers," or "repaired engines."
- List achievements. Work experience should not be one long statement of qualified accomplishments. Keep sentences short and to-the-point.
- Print your resume on a high quality, 8 ½ x 11-inch, white or ivory paper.
- Resumes should be no more than two pages in length. One is preferable. Remember, this is a snapshot, not a biography.
- Experiment with the spacing of headings, text, and margins to see what is most appealing. Be consistent with spacing and punctuation.
- Resume should be typed with no typographical, misspelling or grammatical errors.
- There is no one right way to write a resume. Your final product will depend on you, your background, and the type of position you are seeking.
- Save your resume in a computer file or disk, if you can. This will allow you to easily change the resume to fit each job you apply for.

TYPES OF RESUMES

Resumes come in several types. The two most commonly used resumes are chronological and functional.

Chronological Resume

The chronological resume lists work experience in reverse chronological order, listing your most recent experience first. This is the most popular type of resume, and employers are familiar with this style. This style is good to use when you have a steady work history and your work experience is relevant to the job you are seeking.

Functional Resume

Functional resumes summarize and stress your skills and abilities, rather than your work history. This type of resume is good if you have little work experience, do not have a steady work history or want to change careers. *(Pages 35-36 show examples of chronological and functional resumes.)*

Whichever style you choose, your resume needs to convince the employer that you can do the job. Start sentences with action verbs such as: created, developed, and achieved. Don't be afraid to "toot your own horn." However, remember to be honest and don't exaggerate, because employers generally check references. If you are hired on false statements, you could be fired when they are discovered.

It's best not to put the date on your resume, so you can continue to use it for a length of time. Include any personal interests or professional memberships that might indicate use of skills related to the job or demonstrate good character.

If you have no work experience, list summer jobs, extracurricular school activities, honors and awards; and describe outside activities that indicate talents and abilities. Do not forget about volunteer work or military experience.

References

At the bottom of your resume include one line that says, "References available upon request." References are important. They are people who can vouch for your skills, abilities, and character. Choose people who know you well and will speak highly of you. Once an employer has come this far, they must be considering you seriously for the job. Your references can make the difference whether you are hired or not.

Prepare a list of references on a separate sheet of paper to give out when requested. Put your name at the top of the page (like your resume and cover letter) and include the names, titles, addresses, and phone numbers of your references.

If you have work experience, former supervisors make excellent references, as do teachers if you were recently in school. Personal friends make good character references.

Always contact the person before using them as a reference and bring them up to date on your recent work and education experiences.

SAMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

GAIL BELL CAMP
212 Maple Lane
Helena, MT 59624
(406) 555-2377 (home)
(406) 555-2389 (message)

OBJECTIVE

Full-time work as an Assistant Accountant.

EXPERIENCE

Accounting Clerk I, Helena College of Technology, February 1998 to present.

- Maintain accounts payable and receivable, general ledger, and payroll for an operations budget of \$700,000.
- Implement new ledger process and management procedures that save employee and management time.

Machine Forming Operator, ABC Company, September 1990 to October 1998.

- Read complex blueprint specification to assemble, install, and align dies in press.
- Inspected work for conformance to specifications and made necessary adjustments.
- Received Zero Percent Error Award, 1996, 1997.

Machine Tool Cutting Operator, ABC Company, March 1986 to September 1990.

- Observed, regulated and controlled all phases of operation.
- Planned work process and sequence of operations using blueprints and layouts.
- Set up and operated automated cutting machine to cut metal stampings.

Set-Up Operator, ABC Company, February 1978 to March 1986.

- Monitored gauges and dials to assure machines ran properly.
- Set up and operated a variety of machine tools, such as lathes, milling machines, and drill presses, on a custom basis.
- Performed routine maintenance, decreasing breakdowns by 40%.

EDUCATION

- Associate of Applied Science, Accounting Technology, July 1989 to December 1989.
- Montana State University, Billings, MT. COMPUTER SKILLS Lotus 1-2-3, Excel.

REFERENCES

Available upon request.

SAMPLE FUNCTIONAL OR SKILLS RESUME

JAN MOSSIER
1140 Franklin Boulevard
Gardiner, Montana 59030
Home Phone: (406) 555-3773
Message Phone: (406) 555-2224

OBJECTIVE

To gain a technician assistant position in computer manufacturing.

SUMMARY OF SKILLS

- Able to solve and repair electronic equipment.
- Contribute to teams and create good work relationships.
- Energetic, hardworking, willing to learn.
- Basic understanding of IBM.

EXPERIENCE

ELECTRICAL SKILLS

- Built a TV scrambler from a circuit board in electronics class.
- Rewired lamps, repaired plumbing and appliances in home maintenance projects.
- Operated power tools (saws, drills, sanders) to cut and help frame buildings.

BUSINESS SKILLS

- Tracked and priced inventory with team to improve product availability to customers in grocery store.
- Greeted customers and helped them to find hard-to-locate items. Cashiered and calculated cash flow at the end of each shift.

COMPUTER SKILLS

Set up and entered personal budget on Excel, using IBM computer.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

- Stock Clerk/Cashier. Sunny's Market (1999-Present)
- Construction Helper. The Builder's Group (Summers 1996-1998)

EDUCATION

Gardiner High School, Gardiner MT (1999)
 Related courses: drafting, basic electronics, management

THE JOB INTERVIEW

The interview is your opportunity to personally convince the employer **you are the best person for the job**. Remember to volunteer information about law violations only when you are asked. If you have large gaps in employment because of imprisonment, it is best to deal with these gaps **honestly**.

Be prepared to be turned down many times before receiving an offer. Even when you are not chosen, **remain polite** and ask that they keep you in mind for any future openings. It's possible the person they choose will turn the position down, or after a short time just won't work out.

So always keep the door open, and **remember that persistence pays**. If you feel that you would really like to work for an employer, check back with them from time to time. Try to find out as much as possible about the company before the interview. Call the company and ask for the receptionist to send you a company brochure, a product catalog, or a corporate statement if one is available.

- First impressions are important. People often make up their minds whether or not they will hire a person in a very short period of time.
- As a general rule, dress for the interview in the type of clothing worn by the better-dressed employees holding similar positions.
- Wear something that you will be comfortable in, making sure your clothing is neat, clean, pressed, and fits you well.
- Your fingernails should be trimmed and clean, and it is always a good idea to use a breath freshener.
- Avoid perfume, cologne, or after-shave.
- Take a copy of your resume, a notebook, and a pen with you.
- You may be asked to fill out an application, so have all the necessary information with you. A sample application is provided in this book. You can complete it and take it with you.
- Plan to arrive 10-15 minutes early. Allow time for traffic or getting lost. Even if your excuse for being late is legitimate, your interviewer may see you as someone who makes excuses.
- If something does go wrong, call and let the interviewer know that you will be late.
- Be courteous to everyone you meet. Good manners show respect for yourself and others.
- Wait for an invitation to be seated.
- No smoking or chewing gum.
- If you are nervous, remember that they may be nervous too.
- Sit up straight and maintain good eye contact.
- Be confident and enthusiastic. Let them know that you really want the job.

As much as possible, **present negative information in a positive manner**. Stress that you have made the best of your situation and that you have a good attitude about your experience.

A good attitude is important for any job hunter, but it is particularly important for a person with a history of problems with the law. Tell them you are willing to work hard.

Try to convey confidence and enthusiasm. If you are nervous, take a deep breath and figure the worst that can happen is you just won't get **this** job.

THINK POSITIVE!

Employers value an employee with a **positive work attitude**. According to employers, promising employees are those who are enthusiastic, friendly, motivated, and willing to accept tasks pleasantly. Put yourself in a positive frame of mind before you meet with an employer. Figure out a way to turn your weaknesses into strengths!

Attitude – Whether or not you enjoy a job often depends on your attitude toward it. Remember, your attitude is contagious. A **positive attitude** can make your work more enjoyable, and can make your coworkers feel good. On the other hand, a negative attitude can make a job miserable for you, and for everyone around you.

Respect - Treat other people like you want them to treat you. Remember you have to earn respect from others. It is **not automatically given**. When you are working, make sure that good ideas are credited to the people who created them. If you make a mistake, admit it.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Try to anticipate the types of questions the interviewer might ask you and rehearse your answers. If the subject of your criminal record comes up, do not go into great detail or use legal terms to describe any offenses. Stress what you have learned from your experiences and that you have changed. A possible response to a question about prison time might be:

Yes, I spent some time at the _____ correctional facility. I was young, and I did some dumb things that I regret now. I did a lot of growing up in prison. I met some people who helped me a lot and received some good job training there. While I never want to go back, it was a good learning experience for me.

If you don't understand a question, ask the interviewer to clarify. If you don't know an answer, be honest and just say so. Also think about questions you might like to ask the interviewer, as it shows a genuine interest in the company and the position you are seeking. Learn as much as possible about the company before you interview and know what kind of position you are seeking.

After each interview, think about what you did right and wrong so you can improve in the future. The more you interview, the more comfortable you will be with your next interview. **Send the interviewer a short thank you note immediately after the interview.**

Other typical questions may be something like:

“What are your strengths/weaknesses?”

“What are your long range career goals?”

“Why are you interested in working for this company?”

Sample interview questions and answers can be found in the Job Search section of the MCIS website, which can be accessed at your local Job Service Workforce Center.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTING

Some employers may require you to complete a test or a series of tests. Testing can provide employers with information about your aptitudes, interests, and personality. Some companies test for general technical knowledge or skill in a particular area such as typing or math. Test results are usually one of many qualifying factors employers look at when deciding who to hire.

Drug Screening

Many employers are concerned about the effects of illicit drug use on safety, productivity and related issues. As a matter of policy, some companies test job applicants and current employees for drug use. Employers may or may not tell you in advance that drug testing is required. Some application forms will include statements, information, or questions about alcohol and drug use. If you refuse to take a drug test, the employer may reject your application.

CAREER GOALS

In the past, companies were committed to helping their workers develop the skills they would need to advance. Today, this responsibility is left up to you, the employee. You should think of yourself as working for “My Career, Inc.” You need to ensure that your product (that is, **you**) has the best competitive advantages available. Your success depends on your willingness to learn new skills and to set goals for yourself.

Setting Goals

The first step in turning any dream into a reality is to set specific goals. Think about what you want to be doing in one year, in five years, in ten years, in twenty years. If you’re not sure what you want to do, start by listing your skills and experience.

Identify Your Skills

To help you identify your skills, you may want to write a “super” resume with detailed descriptions of every job you have held. These jobs can be paid jobs, volunteer jobs, or activities at home. List all the skills you learned and used in these jobs. Mark which jobs and skills you like the best with a highlighter or pen. Remember this “super” resume is for you alone, so don’t worry about impressing anyone.

List Potential Jobs

Look at the “super” resume you have completed. You marked the activities and skills you like the best. Use these marked skills to make a list of jobs you would like to hold. Some jobs will require skills that you possess, others will require you to improve your skills or learn new ones entirely. Based on the types of jobs you want, mark those skills you would like to improve (with a different color highlighter or pen). Be honest with yourself on what skills you do have and how well you can do them.

The Plan

Now that you have an idea of which jobs you’d like and which skills you’ll need to improve, you can begin to plan how you’ll get there. Find out which skills are required for each job and where you can learn these skills. Generally, you can learn these skills at colleges, vo-tech centers, at private training providers, on your current job, from your current employer and/or from your supervisor and coworkers.

WHERE CAN I GET THE TRAINING I NEED?

So far you have looked at the skills you now hold and the skills you need to improve or obtain. Now you need to decide where to get the training. Some jobs require a degree, a certificate, a license, or a grade from a required course. You should consider both the time and money your training will take when deciding where to obtain such training.

Many community colleges, universities, and other providers, offer courses that can help you learn more skills for your job. Continuing education courses are often scheduled in the evenings or on weekends. Many computer equipment and supply stores offer computer software courses. Make sure your training courses are legitimate and accredited. It's your time, money, and effort; make sure it pays off. Remember, many colleges now offer on-line courses. If the training you need is not offered locally, you might be able to take classes at home on your computer.

Remember that any training depends on your attitude. Be open to learning and you can surprise yourself with the new skills and abilities you obtain. Remember the teacher, as well as your classmates, can also be resources for you.

The Montana Career Information System is available at all Job Service Centers and on the Internet, and can be used in many ways.

- Look up the occupations you want to explore and find out the skills needed and the programs of study related to each occupation.
- Find a list of the schools and training providers in your state offering that particular training.
- Use the School Sort to develop a list of two- and four-year colleges that offer training in the program of study you want.
- Use the Occupation Sort component to find a list of occupations that match your preferred work setting and needs.
- Build/Create a resume.
- Job hunting tips, tools, and resources to assist you in obtaining training and employment

OTHER CAREER PREPARATION OPPORTUNITIES

Adult Basic Education (ABE)

Adult Basic Education is a program which provides educational services to adults who lack basic literacy skills (reading, writing, language, math, and other skills). Adults age 16 or older who are not full-time students for the purposes of Montana public school ABE computation are eligible to receive ABE services.

Most communities offer instructional programs for adults beyond the age of compulsory school attendance who want to improve their basic skills. Some ABE students study to complete the General Education Development (GED) test requirements. The GED can lead to a high school equivalency certificate or diploma which is generally accepted in place of a high school diploma.

OTHER CAREER PREPARATION OPPORTUNITIES (CONTINUED)

Apprenticeship Training Program

Apprenticeship is an organized, formal training system in which workers learn a skilled trade through a combination of on-the-job training and related technical instruction. One advantage of apprenticeship over other types of vocational training is that the apprentice gets paid while learning. The average apprentice starts at 50% of the skilled worker rate, and works on a progressive pay schedule, earning at least 85% of the skilled worker rate by the last six months of the apprenticeship. Apprenticeships last from two to five years, depending on the trade.

To find out which occupations are apprenticeable in Montana, and for information on working conditions, wages, current and projected employment, visit: <http://mcis.dli.mt.gov/apprentice.asp>. Or contact the Montana Apprenticeship Training Program at:

**P.O. Box 1728
Helena, MT 69624
(406) 444-3998**

The Montana Apprenticeship Training Program is not a hiring agency. They can provide you with information on local sponsors, wages by geographic area, apprenticeship hours required and pay increase rates, but they cannot get you a job. To find out about specific apprenticeship opportunities, contact your local Job Service Workforce Center (listed on pages 13-14).

Distance Learning

Colleges nationwide are beginning to offer fully-accredited courses via telecourses and the Internet. The main difference between distance learning and a "regular" course is that you learn by watching television programs or accessing data on the Internet rather than attending on-campus lectures. You register with a college just as you would for a regular course. The advantage is that you decide how to fit study time into your busy schedule. Distance learning offers flexibility, making a college education possible even if you have a full- or part-time job, can't make it to campus, or have family responsibilities.

GED Program

The GED Testing Program was established in 1942 by the American Council on Education, a private, nonprofit association of colleges and universities, to provide adults who left school for a variety of reasons a reputable, fair, and cost effective means of documenting they have achieved high school level academic skills and knowledge. The GED Testing Program is a cooperatively administered and delivered program between the American Council on Education (ACE)/GED Testing Service (GEDTS), state/provincial departments of education, and local test centers which are established following ACE/GEDTS guidelines.

Job Corps

Job Corps is a federally-funded, residential training program for young people. More than 100 Job Corps Centers nationwide offer youth an opportunity to increase their basic skills. Montana residents are eligible to attend training at one of the regional centers which offer programs in a wide variety of occupations. To be eligible for the Job Corps program, you must be between the ages of 16 and 24.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation is a state/federal partnership which has been working successfully for more than 76 years in helping eligible persons with disabilities obtain and maintain employment and live independently in their communities. The Vocational Rehabilitation program has enjoyed strong bipartisan support because of its positive impacts upon the lives of persons with disabilities and upon society in general.

For more information on any of these programs, contact your local Job Service Workforce Center.

TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR JOB

CONGRATULATIONS! NOW THAT YOU HAVE A JOB - HANG ON TO IT.

Your employer expects you to:

- **Be on time** - every day.
- Display a **positive** and **cooperative attitude**.
- Do the extra things - **give 110%**.
- Be **flexible**, work with your employer if situations change.
- **Work at work** - leave your personal life at home.
- Use your sick leave only when you are **really sick**.
- Keep learning, **look for opportunities** to advance yourself.
- If you will be late or miss work, **call your employer**.
- Wear the **proper clothing – if you don't know, ask!**
- **Ask questions** - if you don't understand something, ask for a better explanation.
- **Respect Others** - Coworkers will respond by respecting you.
- **Admit your mistakes** - You will learn more and be better at your job. People respect those who own up to their mistakes.
- **Use appropriate language** - Don't risk offending others and creating a hostile work environment.

OTHER RESOURCES

Unemployment Insurance Office

Unemployment compensation is a social insurance program designed to provide benefits to most individuals out of work, generally through no fault of their own, for periods between jobs. In order to be eligible for benefits, jobless workers must demonstrate they have worked, usually measured by amount of wages and/or weeks of work, and must be able to, available for, and actively seeking work.

The unemployment compensation program is based upon federal law, but administered by states under state law.

All unemployment insurance services in Montana are provided by phone through local Unemployment Insurance Centers.

Unemployment Insurance Telephone Centers

Billings
406-247-1000

Helena
406-444-2545

Veteran's Benefits

Veterans with service-connected disability income continue to receive benefits unless and until convicted of a felony and incarcerated for 60 days or more. Veterans with non-service-connected disability lose benefits if convicted of either a felony or a misdemeanor and incarcerated for 60 days or more. Veterans' health benefits are not available while incarcerated, but are available to someone who is on probation, parole, work release or a halfway house, or in a state hospital.

Will your benefits be automatically resumed when you get out of prison?

Your award for compensation or pension benefits shall be resumed on the date of release from incarceration if the Department of Veterans Affairs receives notice of release within one year following release. Depending on the type of disability, the VA may schedule you for a medical examination to see if your disability has improved. The Veterans Administration (VA) requires written proof that the individual is no longer incarcerated to restart benefits. This can be supplied to one of the 58 VA Regional Offices when requesting reinstatements. For more information call your local Veteran's office at 1-800-827-1000 or visit your Veteran's representative at your local Job Service Workforce Center. See office listings on pages 23-24.

Montana Department of Corrections Resources

5 South Last Chance Gulch
P.O. Box 201301
Helena, MT 59620-1301

Ph: 406-444-3930
Fax: 406-444-4920
Website: www.cor.mt.gov

MT Dept. of Corrections - Prison Industry Program

Montana Correctional Enterprises (MCE) provides work and training, through vocational education classes, for more than 325 eligible inmates. MCE operates four programs, including employment in ranch industries, dairy industries, canning industries and the production of license plates, signs, furniture and upholstery manufacturing, as well as telemarketing, printing, and laundry services.

Contact: Sharon Sager

Montana Correctional Enterprises
350 Conley Lake Road
Deer Lodge, MT 59722
406-846-1320 ext 2323
406-846-2957 fax
e-mail: ssager@mt.gov
Website: www.cor.state.mt.us

Contact: Judy Little

Adult Community Corrections Division
Montana Department of Corrections
5 South Last Chance Gulch
Helena, MT 59620
406-444-4910
e-mail: judy@mt.gov
Website: <http://www.cor.mt.gov/commcor/default.mcp>

Work Release Program/Pre-Release Program

Adult Community Corrections, a division of the Montana Department of Corrections, supervises the Adult Pre-release Unit. The unit contracts with five non-profit pre-release centers for housing, treatment, and supervision of both male and female inmates. Inmates are expected to work in the community after their transfer to this unit. The Montana Department of Corrections has the authority to assign any inmate to community supervision, including placement in a pre-release center, after an administrative review by the department.

Division of Adult Community Corrections

The Probation and Parole Bureau, also under the auspices of Adult Community Corrections, supervises more than 8,700 adult probationers and parolees. Adult Community Corrections administers the Intensive Supervision Program (ISP), a specialized form of adult probation and parole lasting 6 to 9 months. ISP uses a heightened level of supervision, monitoring devices, and close scheduling. ISP offenders live at home, hold or seek jobs, and live under greater supervision than other probationers and parolees.

**Contact: Ron Alsbury,
Probation and Parole
Bureau Chief**

1535 11th Avenue
P.O. Box 201301
Helena, MT 59620-1301
406-444-9529
e-mail: ralsbury@mt.gov

Contact: The State Bar of Montana Legal Assistance

P.O. Box 577
Helena, MT 59624
406-442-7660
406-442-7763 fax
e-mail: mailbox@montanabar.org
Website: montanabar.org

Free or low-cost legal resources, both in civil and criminal law, are helpful to individuals with criminal histories in learning about relevant state laws governing the expungement or sealing of criminal histories or addressing other legal issues resulting from having a criminal history.

USING LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

www.ourfactsyourfuture.org

The Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau is YOUR source for timely and accurate labor market information. Use the listings below to take advantage of the publications available in print or on the web. If you don't find what you need, give us a call and we'll do our best to help you find the labor market information you need to help make your workforce related decisions.

Career Related Information:

Montana Career Guide – Designed for high school seniors and graduates, this publication provides information about colleges and universities, financial aid for school, occupational outlook and wages, and a variety of career planning information.

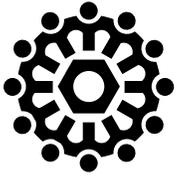
Online Career Information:

Apprenticeable Occupations in Montana – Lists all occupations with active apprenticeship programs in the state as well as current employment, wage and job outlook information. Available on the Career Resource Network website at <http://mcis.dli.mt.gov/apprentice.asp>

Licensed Occupations in Montana – Lists licensing information for all occupations in Montana requiring licensure. Includes current employment, wage and job outlook information. Available on the Career Resource Network website at http://mcis.dli.mt.gov/licensed_occupations.asp

Informational Wage Rates by Wage and Occupation – Summarizes average hourly and annual pay for nonfarm private and public sector occupations and also shows U.S. average.

Job Projections for Montana's Industries and Occupations – Information on where jobs are and where they'll be in the future. Based partly on past employment trends and the likelihood that those trends will continue. Includes both U.S. and Montana projections.



Montana Department of
LABOR & INDUSTRY
Career Resources

Research and Analysis Bureau

P. O. Box 1728

Helena, MT 59624-1728

Phone: (406) 444-2430

Toll-free: (800) 541-3904

www.careers.mt.gov

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