

Job Search Tips If You Have a Criminal Record

Seeking employment



- There are employers who will hire those with criminal histories. They are fewer and harder to find, but they do exist.
- Know up front that you will have to submit many more resumes than someone who does not have a criminal history.
- Smaller, private employers may be more likely to hire persons with criminal histories than state offices and larger companies.
- Pay attention to how your record reads to an employer. If you have a theft charge on your record, position that requires handling money or small merchandise may not be a strong option, whereas warehouse, food service, or construction may be more open to you.
- Be willing to go door to door rather than relying on the internet to submit applications.

Completing the application



- Take with you: information (names, addresses, and phone numbers of previous employers and references), pen, and white-out to correct any mistakes.
- Dress professionally, speak politely, and be on time. Be confident.
- Answer every question. If the question does not apply to you, you can put "N/A (not applicable)."
- Read over your application and answers carefully before giving it to the potential employer. Make sure it is neat and easy to read.
- Ask how you can check on the status of your application. You may need to be persistent.

Answering the criminal background question



- Get a copy of your criminal history and review it to be sure it is correct before applying for jobs.
- Generally, convictions **DO NOT** “come off” your record.
- Do not write “will discuss at interview.” Many employers may consider this a waste of their time and will not consider your application.
- Answer everything asked but **ONLY** what is asked. If they only asked about convictions, do not give information about any arrests that **DID NOT** result in convictions.
- Be truthful. Always assume that the employer will run a background check before hiring.
- Remember that you **DO NOT** need to include juvenile cases.
- Even charges that have been restricted (expunged) need to be reported if the application asks for all arrests.

Job Search Tips If You Have a Criminal Record

Writing a separate statement



- If the application asks about your criminal history, consider writing a statement that outlines the nature and circumstances of your criminal history.
- Submit this statement on a separate piece of paper from the application, résumé and cover letter.
- Consider beginning with, “I would like to explain the information you will see on my criminal background check.”
- Keep it brief and simple and focused on you. Show how the person who was arrested is different from the person applying for the job. Include information about lessons learned, treatment programs and how you are taking responsibility for your life. Do not discuss how you may feel you were treated unfairly. Employers are looking for people who take responsibility.
- You can also attach relevant court dispositions, like documents showing that a case was dismissed. This is especially helpful if your record shows that a pending arrest has been resolved with a dismissal.
- Only use this extra sheet when you feel comfortable or feel that it will help you.
- Have letters of recommendation.

Employment Services and Agencies	Area	Address	Phone Number
Workforce Development Office	Atlanta	818 Pollard Blvd, Atlanta	404-658-9675
	Fulton	115 MLK Jr. Dr. Suite 400, Atlanta	404-730-4751
	DeKalb	774 Jordan Lane Decatur	404-687-3400
GA Department of Labor	Fulton (South Metro)	2636 14 MLK Jr. Dr., Atlanta	404-699-6900
	Fulton (North Metro)	774 Jordan Lane Decatur, GA 30033	404-687-3400
Atlanta Urban League	Atlanta	100 Edgewood Ave. Suite 600, Atlanta	404-659-1150
The Center for Working Families	Fulton	477 Windsor Street Suite 101, Atlanta	404-230-3303

*Updated 2/5/18



Job Search Tips If You Have a Criminal Record

Sample Letter to Potential Employers Explaining Your History

You must write a letter that fits your specific situation and criminal history. This sample may be helpful if you do not have an extensive criminal history.

(Date)

(Name of hiring manager)

(Company)

(Address of company)

Dear (Name of hiring manager):

I have applied for a position as a XXXXX with your company. I anticipate that you may have some concerns about my criminal history, so I wanted to explain the report to you. I have obtained a copy of my official criminal history from the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC), and I am willing to provide you with a copy. I was arrested in 2000 for two misdemeanor charges. The charges were Giving False Name and Willful Obstruction. Both charges were nolle prossed, which means that the charges were dismissed. I am in the process of having this charge expunged (restricted) from my record.

I do have one misdemeanor conviction. In 2002, I pled nolo contendere (no contest) to misdemeanor Simple Battery. I received 12 months of probation for this charge and attended anger management counseling, which I successfully completed. I made a mistake, but I have moved on with my life.

In summary, I have only been convicted of one misdemeanor and that incident occurred over ten years ago. I have worked hard on moving forward with my life in a positive manner. Thank you for considering this information. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

XXXXX XXXXX



Job Search Tips If You Have a Criminal Record

Sample Letter to Potential Employers Explaining Your History

You must write a letter that fits your specific situation and criminal history. This sample may be helpful if you have an extensive history.

(Date)

(Name of hiring manager)
(Company)
(Address of company)

Dear (Name of hiring manager):

I have applied for a position as a XXXXX with your company. I anticipate that you may have some concerns about my criminal history, so I wanted to provide you with some explanation.

From the time I was 18 years old until I turned 25 I was arrested many times, primarily for drug-related crimes. Twice I was convicted of felony offenses, once in 1998 for Drug Possession and once in 2001 for Theft by Taking. *(Don't go into extensive detail, just state the facts)*

I regret this period of my life and I take full responsibility for my actions. At that time, I struggled with addiction. After my 2001 conviction, I entered a residential drug treatment program for 18 months. I successfully completed the program and have not used drugs for 11 years. *(Speak to your specific situation)*

I have also moved forward in other areas of my life. I obtained my high school diploma and a degree in XXXXXX from Atlanta Technical College. *(What have you done to improve yourself?)*

Thank you for considering this information. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX .

Sincerely,

XXXXX XXXXX