

From Records to Reentry: Working with Ex-Offenders



FRONTLINE FOCUS
THE CHICAGO JOBS COUNCIL
TRAINING INSTITUTE

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Presented by Liz Czarnecki, Senior Policy Associate

Frontline Focus Training Institute

Chicago Jobs Council

CJC moves people out of poverty through employment using on-the-ground expertise, advocacy, and capacity-building.

- Member-based non-profit organization
- 2 main areas of work:
 - Policy/advocacy
 - Capacity building (Frontline Focus Training Institute)

www.cjc.net

Frontline Focus Training Institute

FFTI delivers **trainings and resources** to help **frontline workforce professionals** build their capacity to better meet the employment needs of disadvantaged job seekers, low-income workers and employers.

www.cjc.net/frontline-focus

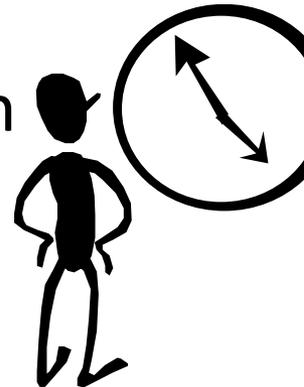
Our Goal Today . . .

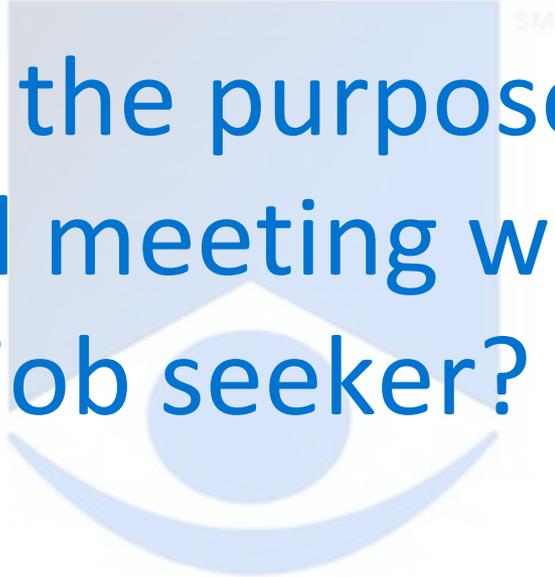
Learn strategies to
more effectively serve **job
seekers with criminal records.**



Agenda

1. **Initial meeting** with a job seeker and **quality intake assessment**
2. Help job seekers to **access and understand their criminal record**
3. Coach clients to **explain their criminal record** in an interview
4. Additional strategies—**Resumes, referral partnerships, legal remedies**





What is the purpose of the
initial meeting with a
job seeker?

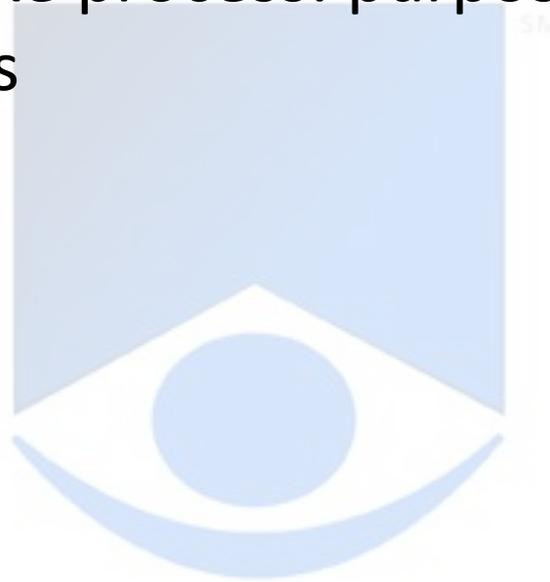
4 Objectives for the Initial Meeting

1. Set expectations for the relationship
2. Information gathering & assessment
3. Establish rapport & build trust
4. Develop self-efficacy in the job seeker



Objective 1: **Set Expectations for the Relationship**

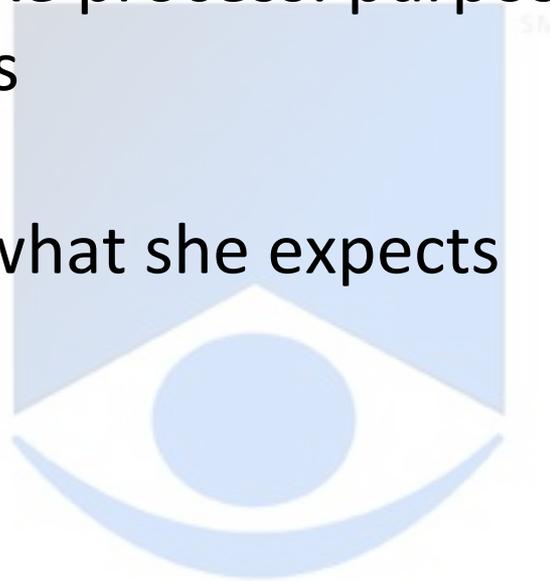
- Explain the intake process: purpose, length, why asking questions





Objective 1: **Set Expectations for the Relationship**

- Explain the intake process: purpose, length, why asking questions
- Ask job seeker what she expects





Objective 1: Set Expectations for the Relationship

- Explain the intake process: purpose, length, why asking questions
- Ask job seeker what she expects
- Establish and discuss roles

Objective 2: Information Gathering-

- Gather key areas of information to effectively assist job seeker

❖ Work History

❖ Interests

❖ Education & Training

❖ Support Services

❖ Skills

❖ Criminal History

Objective 2: Information Gathering

- Gather key areas of information to effectively assist job seeker
- Vary questioning- open-ended and close-ended
- Ask follow-up questions to elicit additional information

Objective 3: Establish Rapport & Build Trust



- Create a positive & professional environment
 - Meet away from distractions
 - Use clients' names and make your name visible
 - Minimize interruptions

Objective 3: Establish Rapport & Build Trust



- Create a positive & professional environment
- Listen “actively”
 - Reflect or restate what job seeker is expressing
 - Match job seekers affect

Objective 3: Establish Rapport & Build Trust



- Create a positive & professional environment
- Listen “actively”
- Listen for feeling and content
 - Tone, facial expressions, mannerisms
 - Is body language aligned with words?

Objective 4: Develop Self-Efficacy in Job Seeker

- Help job seeker to recognize their assets
 - Skills, abilities, experience, attitude
 - Utilize skills and interest assessments



Objective 4: Develop Self-Efficacy in Job Seeker

- Help job seeker to recognize their assets
- Assist job seeker with establishing realistic goals
 - Short-term and long-term goals
 - Steps to achieve goals
 - Be up front about expectations





JUVENILE SUMMARY REPORT

ORI/LCPD0000

IR Number: 1641949

Criminal History of:

Most Recent Identification Information:

Sex	Race	Date of Birth	Age	Height	Weight
FEMALE	BLACK	19-MAY-1990	13	5'07"	112
Eye Color	Hair Color	Hair Style	Complexion	Scars, Marks, and Tattoos	
BROWN	BLACK	MEDIUM	MEDIUM		
Place of Birth	Drivers License Number	State	Social Security Number		
ILLINOIS					

Key Historical Identifiers:

ID	Date of Birth	Social Security Number
	19-MAY-1990	

Criminal Justice Summary

Total CPD Arrests: 1
Total CPD Convictions: 0

JUVENILE-----ARREST-----JUVENILE

Arrest Name: _____ Arrest Date: 10-MAY-2004 Residence: _____
 Date of Birth: 19-MAY-1990 Dist. of Detention: DISTRICT 024 LOCKUP CHICAGO, IL 60626
 CB No: 015816222 IR No.: 1641949 Y No.: 364633
 Officer: HEIN J No.: _____ Arrest Charges
 Star No: 13684 [1] A M 720 ILCS 5.0/12-3-A-1 BATTERY - CAUSE BODILY HARM
 Unit: 011

Seq. #	Statute	Charge	Case #

Court Charges/Dispositions
CPD Charges/Dispositions

Disposition: FORMAL ADJUDICEMENT (RELEASED TO PARENT) 10-MAY-2004
Sentence:

*** End of Record ***

Knowledge of Criminal Record

Why is it important?

Access Criminal History Records



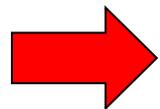
Illinois State Police Statewide Background Check

In Chicago: Access and Review, 3510 S. Michigan Ave.; Mon-Fri. 8am-12pm
Costs \$16, Requires 2 Trips; Typically Takes 7-10 days

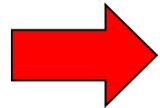
Outside Chicago: Municipal police departments, licensed fingerprint vendor agency

Knowledge of Criminal Record

Job seeker should be familiar with:



Date(s) of disposition/outcome of case



Disposition or manner in which case settled (i.e. conviction, acquittal, dismissal)

Knowledge of Criminal Record

Job seeker should be familiar with:

- ➔ Date(s) of disposition/outcome of case
- ➔ Disposition or manner in which case settled (i.e. conviction, acquittal, dismissal)
- ➔ Specific offense (felony/misdemeanor)

Knowledge of Criminal Record

Applicant should be familiar with:

- ➔ Date(s) of disposition/outcome of case
- ➔ Disposition
(i.e. conviction, acquittal, dismissal)
- ➔ Specific offense (felony/misdemeanor)
- ➔ Sentence and date completed

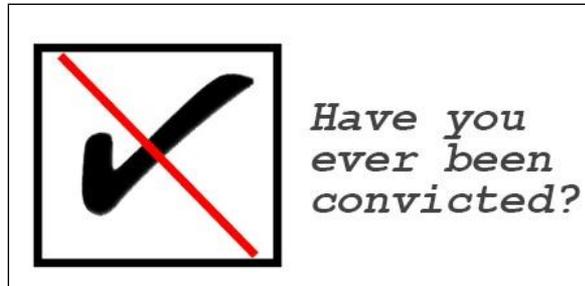
Legal Rights of Job Seekers

Employers in Illinois can legally ask on a job application if the applicant has “ever been convicted”.

True

False

Ban the Box on Applications

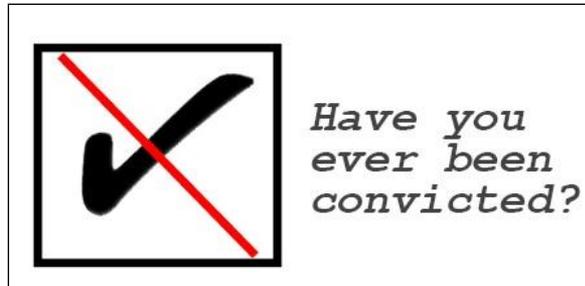


In Illinois, employers with 15 or more employees can NOT ask if you have ever been convicted

In Chicago, NO employer (not matter the size) can ask if you have ever been convicted

EXCEPT.....

Ban the Box on Applications



EXCEPTION = If the employer has a law governing who they can and cannot hire.....

- ✓ *State or federal laws*
 - ✓ *Park districts*
 - ✓ *Schools*
 - ✓ *Banking*
 - ✓ *Healthcare*
 - ✓ *Law enforcement*

Coach Clients to Discuss their Criminal Record



“Tell me about your criminal history..”

Common mistakes candidates make when discussing their record:

- Lie, and get caught during background check
- Say too much about the offense and scare employer
- Say too little and let the employer’s imagination run wild
- Declare innocence



Craft the 4-Step Response

1. **State what conviction was and when it occurred.** (specify if conviction non-violent, non-felony, non-theft)
2. **Acknowledge previous mistakes and accept responsibility.**
3. **Tell the employer that you've changed.**
4. **Tell the employer how you've changed.**

1. State when conviction(s) occurred, whether it was a felony or misdemeanor, and if possible, that it was non-violent/non-theft related:

- For a marijuana possession in 2010: “ I was convicted of a non-violent, non-theft related misdemeanor 4 years ago.
- For multiple convictions: “I have been convicted of 3 misdemeanors, the last one in 2011.”
- For assault in 2012: “I was convicted for a non-theft felony 2 years ago. “

2. Acknowledge previous mistakes and accept responsibility:

“It was a bad time in my life. I fell in with the wrong people, made some poor choices and I paid the price.”

“I regret the actions I took in the past and accept full responsibility.”

3. Tell the employer that you've changed.

“I really regret what happened, especially because the conviction does not reflect who I am today. Today I am a different person who values my family and friends and living a positive life.”

“I am more mature now and my top priority is to focus on my family and career.”

4. Tell the employer how you've changed.

“Since successfully completing my sentence in 2014, I have worked hard to turn my life around. I have successfully completed a food service training program at Inspiration Corporation. I subsequently gained valuable hands-on experience at Inspiration Kitchens in Garfield Park. I am excited about continuing my work in the restaurant industry.”

Background Statement Worksheet

What to Include . . .	Key Phrases to Use	Example
1. State what the conviction was and when it occurred. (Specify if crime was non-violent or non-felony)	<p>“I was convicted of . . .”</p> <p>“I was charged with . . .”</p>	
2. Acknowledge previous mistakes and accept responsibility	<p>“I deeply regret . . .”</p> <p>“I regret the actions I took in the past and accept full responsibility....and I’ve moved on.”</p>	
3. Show you’ve changed.	<p>“Since my release, I have . . .”</p> <p>“I’m committed to doing xxxx”</p> <p>“I have accomplished xxxx since my release”</p> <p>“I’m more mature now and my top priority is to focus on my career/employment...”</p>	
4. Show how you’ve changed	<p>Mention relevant skills/interests developed.</p> <p>“I volunteer with . . .”</p> <p>“I have completed . . .”</p> <p>“I have earned a certification in...”</p> <p>“I am involved with . . .(church, recovery, school, training, etc.)</p>	
<p>IF APPLICABLE, END WITH: “I have not had any contact with the police/justice system since my conviction.” OR “I have been successfully meeting parole requirements, and I will complete parole ____.”</p>		

Sample Background Statement

I was convicted of a felony, non-violent offense in 2014. I deeply regret the actions I took in the past, and have made significant positive changes in my life since then. Next month, I will successfully complete a food service training program at the Urban League and during this program I've gained valuable hands-on work experience at a local cafe. Additionally, I volunteer at my church teaching cooking classes for teens because I want to share my passion with my community. I am excited about continuing my work in the restaurant industry and am confident that I can be an asset to your company.....”

Strategies to Answer the Conviction Question



- Client-driven
- Concise, straightforward, and factual
- Focus on positive changes, lessons learned, and accomplishments
- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!!!



Resume Strategies

- Resume development dependant on several factors
 - Incarcerations, prior employment, skills and educational attainment
- Hybrid resume
 - Delineates work experience
 - Lists specific skills
- Include volunteer opportunities, trainings, certifications

Resume Strategies

- List work assignments and training in correctional facility
- Reference letters

Experience

Pivotal Staffing Neighborhood Cleanup Program

02/2015 – 10/2016

Crew Member

- Participated in community beautification projects
- Removed debris from aqueducts, streets, and alleys.

State of Illinois, Lincoln, IL

01/2014 -11/2014

Laundry Specialist

- Collected laundry bags from various individuals.
- Used the washing machine to sanitize and wash the clothes and then moved the clothes to the dryer on a daily basis.
- Delivered the folded clothes back to the client.

ABM, Lincoln, IL

2003-2013

Floor Maintenance

- Swept, mopped, and buffed hard surface floors and vacuumed carpeted area on a daily basis.
- Picked up any debris or trash from the surroundings.

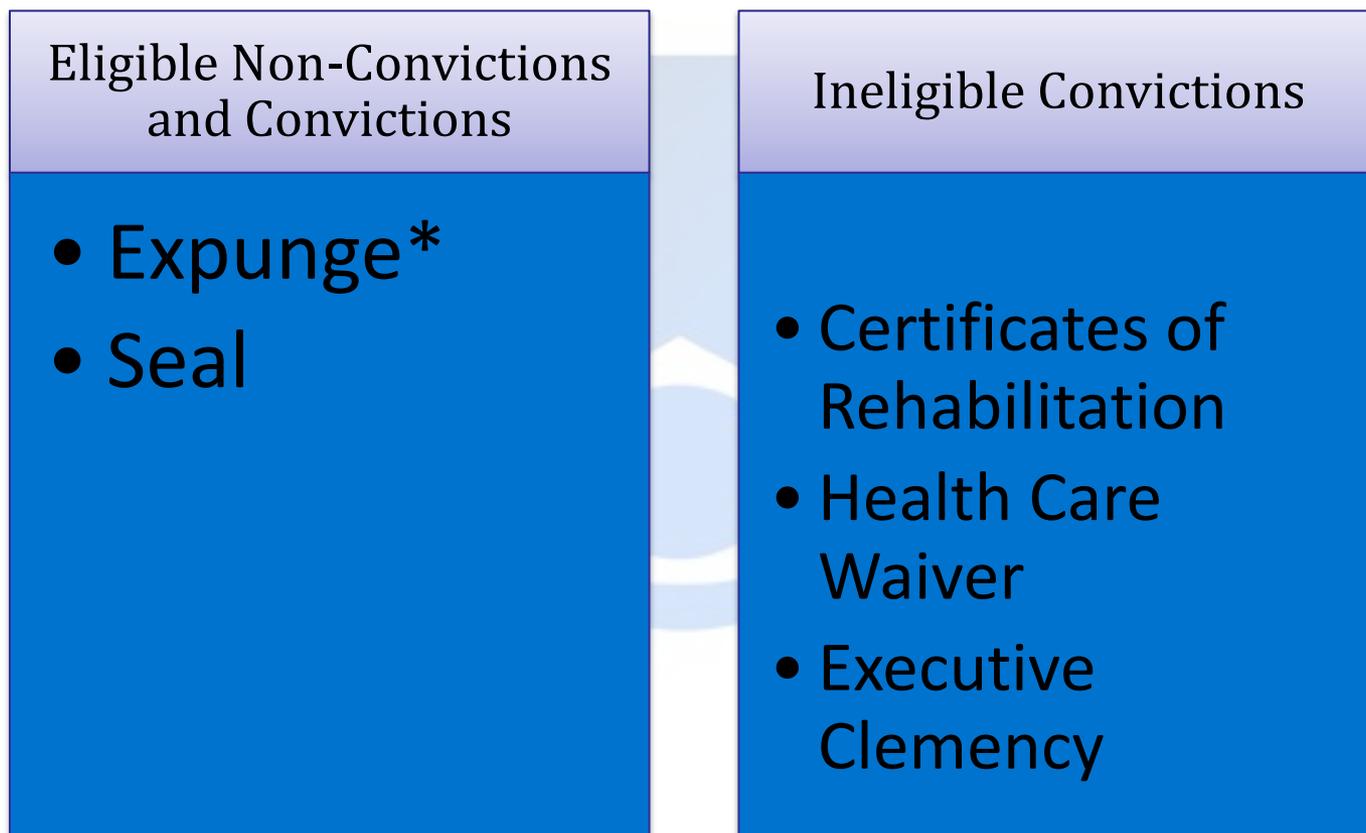
Partnerships with Workforce

- Make connections with workforce providers
 - Illinois workNet Centers– Illinois workNet Service Finder
 - Community-based providers
 - Community colleges
- Invite workforce providers to present at your site
- Determine mutual benefits
 - Support services, e.g. transportation
 - Cross-referrals

Steps for Effective Referrals

- ✓ Review website for program information
- ✓ Establish reliable contact at organization
- ✓ Eligibility requirements & suitability
- ✓ Orientation; Open enrollment vs. Cohort
- ✓ 'Soft hand off' of participant

Legal Remedies Options



*Expungement only for those who have *never* been convicted.

Sealing Eligibility



- ✓ Most misdemeanors can be sealed
- ✓ Limited number of class 3 & 4 felonies

When

Waiting Periods for Sealing

Supervision
– *Sealing*

- 2 years from completion of sentence

Convictions
and
Qualified
Probation –
Sealing

- 3 years from completion of LAST sentence

Certificates of “Rehabilitation”:

Good Conduct & Relief from Disability

Certificates of Good Conduct

- Removes specific statutory employment barriers- e.g. schools, park districts
- 2 years from completion of felony sentence
- 1 year from completion of misdemeanor sentence

Certificates of Relief from Disability

- Removes discretionary licensing barriers
- No wait period

- ✓ Granted by the courts after a “rehabilitation hearing”
- ✓ Can be used to aid in job searches, provides immunity from negligent hiring.

Health Care Waiver

- ✓ Removes statutory barriers to working in health care facilities for individuals with “disqualifying convictions”
- ✓ Available for non-licensed health care workers and any other employee with “access” to patients
- ✓ Wait periods vary by type and # of “disqualifying convictions”, 1- 10 years
- ✓ Granted by the Illinois Dept. of Public Health

THANK YOU!

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