

## Job Possibilities for Ex-Offenders

As soon as possible after release from prison, a man or a woman must have a job. Everyone needs some source of income to provide for food, clothing, housing, etc.

Some men have come back to prison; and told me that they just couldn't find any kind of employment in the free world. They had preferred to do any kind of honest work rather than return to the life of crime they wanted to avoid at any cost. They needed to acquire some money in order to provide for food and shelter for themselves; so they resorted to the dishonest activities they engaged in in the past which led them back to prison again.

Hopefully, we can put some helpful suggestions in this book, and add to them on the website [www.hopeforeveryone.com](http://www.hopeforeveryone.com), so that ex-cons will be able to find employment and never do anything again which will lead them back to prison.

In a telephone conversation on May 13, 2010, Father Harold Paulsen was encouraged by Mr. John L. Ownby of Workforce Policy and Development to publicize as much as possible the work they do to help ex-offenders find employment. To show his enthusiasm, Mr. Ownby sent a letter and much written material (too much to be included in this book or on the website) to Father Paulsen on the same day on which they had agreed to work together to help ex-offenders find employment as soon as possible after their release from prison.

The following is being included in the book (copied from the Project Rio website) because inmates who will receive the book "You Visited Me" do not have access to computers. Their wives or husbands or even children can look at the Project Rio Website on their computers and inform the inmate of any changes which might help him or her to prepare while in prison for possible employment after release.

### **Project RIO**

(Re-Integration of Offenders) -Look for this on the Internet

The program is designed to reduce recidivism through employment. Numerous Project RIO is administered by the Texas Workforce Commission in collaboration with Local Workforce Development Boards, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), the Windham School District and The Texas Youth Commission (TYC). The project provides a link between education, training and employment during the incarceration with employment, training and education after release. Studies have shown reduced recidivism rates for employed ex-offenders. Even when one takes into account other factors such as age, risk score, race/ethnicity and type of previous offense, post-release employment reduced rearrests and incarcerations.

Services are offered to program participants pre-and post-release. An individualized treatment plan is developed to identify a career path for the offender and to guide placement decisions. Prior to release, a comprehensive evaluation is conducted to assess the needs of the offender and assist in the selection and placement in Windham, college, TDCJ and TYC programs. The evaluation process is a multi-step approach that includes information gathering, goal-setting,

program placement and offender self-assessment.

Project RIO staff encourage participants to take advantage of educational and vocational services and assist offenders in obtaining documents necessary for employment. Unit or facility staff also provide placement services to give offenders practical work experience in their areas of training.

*“He told me he’d prove himself in a short period, and he was 100% right... He is probably our lead guy in the shop” -David Wendt, owner of Nailhead Spur in Llano, quoted in Texas Workforce Solutions, July 2005, speaking about his Project RIO employee.*

After release, TWC Project RIO staff provide ex-offenders with individualized workforce development services including job preparation and job search assistance. RIO participants attend structured job search workshops that focus on basic skills such as completing a work application, preparing a resume and performing in a mock interview. However, the most important aspect of the TWC Project RIO program is ex-offender employment as soon as possible after release

Project RIO staff ensure that potential employers are aware of and take advantage of special incentives for hiring releasees. TWC Project RIO staff certified prospective employees for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program which provides tax incentives to employers for hiring economically disadvantaged ex-offenders. Project RIO also makes available free fidelity bonding services to the employer community, making the employment of ex-offenders and adjudicated youth more attractive.

For additional information call: 1-800-453-8140

or write to:

Texas Workforce Commission  
Project RIO Staff  
101 E. 15<sup>th</sup> St.  
Austin, TX 78778

**Texas Work Force** -Look for this on the Internet

Has many offices around Texas. Works closely with **Project Rio** to find employment for ex-offenders.

We are building a website to help inmates and their families have a realistic hope to find employment quickly after release. We would like to be a good source to help ex-cons and parolees to find employment.

We must respect the privacy of prospective employers for ex-offenders. We will list the names of employers who give us **written authorization** to place their names, addresses, telephone numbers and other helpful information for ex-offenders to apply for jobs with their businesses. To be listed as employers willing to hire ex-offenders on our website [www. hopeforeveryone.com](http://www.hopeforeveryone.com) write to us at:

Eternal Truth Network, Inc.

P.O. Box 1671

Palestine, TX 75802-1671

I, Father Harold Paulsen, had much experience in my life looking for jobs. I entered religious life at age 41, and had many jobs before that time. No job was ever as difficult for me as looking for a job; and I never had to overcome the handicap or stigma that an ex-offender must overcome.

Construction work, truck drivers, warehouse work, and restaurant work are good kinds of work to look into for unemployed ex-offenders.