

## Dealing with a conviction history?

For ex-offenders, dealing with a conviction history is the most important part of any interview.

To prepare for this conversation, it's important to be aware of what will appear on a criminal background check. If there is any question, you can obtain a criminal record check from the Texas Department of Public Safety (Texas convictions only), which will show what the criminal background check will show an employer.

While there are different thoughts on completing the conviction question on an employment application, checking *yes*, noting "Will discuss during interview," and being honest and forthright is the best approach.

If you can control the timing of this discussion, later is better than sooner.

First, discuss your strengths:

- Motivation
- Ability to take direction
- Ability to get along with people
- Job-specific skills, knowledge, and abilities

Discussion of your conviction history must be a well-scripted and practiced presentation. Take the time to write out the things you are going to say and then practice the presentation with a trusted individual.

Even if an employer does not inquire into your conviction history, 75 percent of employers will run background checks. If you miss the opportunity to put your "spin" on your contact with the criminal justice system, it will likely end your consideration for employment.

When in doubt, disclose and address your conviction.

## Fidelity Bond Program



The Fidelity Bonding Program was created to assist certain at-risk, but qualified, job seekers who have bona fide offers of employment. Some employers view ex-offenders and other individuals who have questionable backgrounds as high-risk job seekers and possibly untrustworthy workers.

## What is a fidelity bond?

A fidelity bond is a business insurance policy for employers that hire and employ certain at-risk job seekers. It is purchased to protect an employer against loss due to employee dishonesty, including theft, forgery, larceny, and embezzlement.

The Fidelity Bonding Program offers a business insurance policy from the Travelers Insurance Company. It protects an employer against employee theft, forgery, larceny, and embezzlement committed by a covered employee. A covered employee is any worker currently bonded by the Fidelity Bonding Program.

## How does the fidelity bond work?

- Bonds are issued up to \$5,000 for at-risk applicants.
- Bonds are issued at no cost to the employer, with no deductible.
- Fidelity bonds serve as an incentive to encourage employers to hire job seekers who might otherwise be denied employment.
- Fidelity bonding indemnifies a single, specific employer-employee relationship.
- Bond insurance becomes effective on the employee's first day of employment.
- The fidelity bond is mailed directly to the employer.
- Free fidelity bonding coverage is provided for a six-month period; thereafter, if no claim is made against the bond, it can be renewed through the regular commercial network.

## Eligibility for bonding services

At-risk applicants eligible for fidelity bonding services include the following:

- Ex-offenders, including individuals with records of arrest, probation, or any police record
- Individuals with poor credit histories, including bankruptcy
- Veterans dishonorably discharged from the military
- Public assistance recipients
- Individuals with a substance abuse history
- Disadvantaged youth who lack a work history
- Anyone who cannot secure bonding through the regular commercial system

## Requests for fidelity bonding

Either the job applicant or the prospective employer can request bonding through any Workforce Solutions Office.