

GETTING AHEAD:

An Ex-Con's Guide to Getting Ahead in Today's Society

Published by SJM Family Foundation, Inc.

Dear Reader,

I am happy that you have a second chance at life, no matter how bad the tables have turned. You still have another chance at getting your life back on track.

I hope the resources in this booklet help you as it did for me and many others.

Much thanks to my family, my companion, 'Kells' and my friend, Dr. Jon Marc Taylor.

Take Care!

J. Blount
Former Inmate, Federal Bureau of Prisons

Tips

Don't Believe the Hype. I too listened to the horror stories while incarcerated. I was somewhat scared and nervous about being released back into society. However, it was nothing at all like I was told by the staff of my correctional institution.

Get a library card. I love libraries. It is a key to the door that opens up information to you. Libraries are non-discriminative.

Be Around People with Like Minds. My mother always told me "Birds of a feather flock together." You must be around people that have the same vision as you.

Don't Get Side Track. We felons have a devised plan prior to being released back into society. Stick with your plan.

Do Your Research. Research is so important. Research is knowledge.

Have a back-up plan. Sometimes, things don't go as plan.

Try, Try & Try again. If the door closes, dust yourself off and try again.

Education

➤ Junior/Community Colleges

In my opinion, Community Colleges are the best and most inexpensive way to go when you have accumulated less than 45 college credits.

Community colleges are a vital part of the postsecondary education delivery system. They serve almost half of the undergraduate students in the United States, providing open access to postsecondary education, preparing students for transfer to 4-year institutions, providing workforce development and skills training, and offering noncredit programs. These programs can range from English as a second language, to skills retraining to community, enrichment programs, or cultural activities.

41% of public community colleges offer degrees entirely online and 92% of all institutions offer at least one Internet-based course.

There are nearly 1200 community colleges in America with the average annual tuition of \$2,361.

The American Association of Community Colleges offers a '**Community Colleges Finder**' on their website at <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/>. They can also be contacted at

AACC - American Association of Community Colleges

One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 410

Washington, DC 20036

➤ **Tuition-Free Schools**

Tuition-free colleges—also known as full-scholarship colleges—remain one of higher education’s best-kept secrets. True to their name, they are institutions that guarantee to cover the entire student-body’s tuition.

Students and parents obsessing over how they are going to pay for college might want to consider one of higher education’s greatest secrets: tuition-free colleges. Although these schools are few and far between, they remain an attractive option for students looking to walk away from college debt-free. Most were founded nearly a century ago and are able to offer students zero tuition because of hefty endowments and magnanimous donors. These colleges range from liberal arts schools to ones that specialize in engineering, art, and music. Some come with unusual work-study requirements—such as requiring students to put in time on the school’s dairy farm—or mandatory campus activities. Students who attend these schools can save as much as \$32,000 or more in tuition each year, savings that can add up to more than \$120,000 over a four-year period. Not surprisingly, some of these schools are among the most competitive to get into in the U.S.

-Alison Damast, Business Week

✓ **Alice Lloyd College**

Alice Lloyd College, a private coeducational senior institution with a required self-help Student Work Program, will provide high quality educational opportunities primarily for students with outstanding leadership potential for effective service to the surrounding mountain region regardless of the students’ ability to pay.

Tuition is guaranteed to full-time students residing in Alice Lloyd College’s 108-county Central Appalachian service area. Students attending Alice Lloyd College do not need thousands of dollars for a college education – all they need

is a desire for learning and self-improvement.

Located in Pippa Passes (a city named by Alice Lloyd), you'll find yourself surrounded by the most splendid scenery that southeastern Kentucky has to offer. Lakes, trails, and wildlife spread across the horizon in this mountain town. If the cool mountain rain washes away your outdoor plans, you are less than three hours from Lexington, Kentucky, Huntington, West Virginia, or Knoxville, Tennessee.

Applicants must score at least a 17 on the ACT or 430 verbal and 400 math on their SAT. They must have at least a 2.25 GPA (grade point average) in pre-college curriculum courses.

Estimated annual value of tuition: \$7,000.

For more information, contact Alice Lloyd College, Pippa Passes, Ky 41844, 1-888-280-4ALC

✓ **Berea College**

Berea College is distinctive among institutions of higher learning. Founded in 1855 as the first interracial and coeducational college in the South, Berea charges no tuition and admits only academically promising students, primarily from Appalachia, who have limited economic resources. Berea's cost of educating a student exceeds \$23,000 per year.

Berea offers rigorous undergraduate academic programs leading to Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees in 28 fields. All students work at least 10 hours per week in campus and service jobs in more than 130 departments.

Most students score between 20 and 30 on the ACT or between 1410 and 1980 on the SAT. Applicants are expected to have a GPA of at least 3.0. The majority of applicants have limited financial resources and come from Appalachia.

Berea College, Office of Admissions, CPO 2220, Berea, KY 40404 Phone: 859-985-3500, Toll-Free: 800-326-5948, Fax: 859-985-3512

✓ **College of Ozarks**

College of the Ozarks is looking for good students who have financial need. If you fit that bill, you might be a good candidate for admission! The mission of this unique institution focuses on providing a Christian education to those who are found worthy (from the Ozarks region), but who are without sufficient means to obtain such training.

Ninety percent of each entering class must demonstrate financial need. Ten percent of the class does not have to show need; there are limited positions for students who do not qualify for financial aid.

Students should be in the top half of their graduating class and obtain our preferred score of 19 on the ACT or a 910 on the SAT. We pay particular attention not only to these factors, but also to the types of courses taken in high school and their levels of difficulty. It is to your advantage to have above average grades, especially in English classes.

Estimated annual value of tuition: \$15,900

For more information, contact: College of the Ozarks®, PO Box 17, Point Lookout, MO 65726, 1-800-222-0525
www.cofo.edu



Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art

Founded in 1859 by Peter Cooper, industrialist and philanthropist, The Cooper Union offers public programs for the civic, cultural and practicable enrichment of New York City.

Through outstanding academic programs in architecture, art and engineering, The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art prepares talented students to make enlightened contributions to society. The College admits undergraduates solely on merit and awards full scholarships to all enrolled students. The institution provides close contact with a distinguished, creative faculty and fosters rigorous, humanistic learning that is enhanced by the process of design and augmented by the urban setting.

Applicants need to submit a portfolio and complete a home test of six or seven projects. Architecture applicants are accepted based on their academic achievement and a home test evaluation. Engineering students are admitted based on their high school average, SAT scores, and other math or science exams. No special consideration is given to children of alumni or residents of particular areas in the United States. Students who are offered admission may request deferment of enrollment for a period of one year.

Estimated annual value of tuition: \$31,500

For more information, contact The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, Cooper Square, New York, NY 10003-7120. 212-353-4100 www.cooper.edu



Curtis Institute of Music

The Curtis Institute of Music trains exceptionally gifted young musicians for careers as performing artists on the highest professional level.

One of the world's leading music schools, Curtis provides full-tuition scholarships to all of its students, ensuring that admissions are based solely on artistic promise.

Admission is highly selective, and enrollment is small--about 160 students per year, based on the musicians needed for a symphony orchestra, opera department, and select programs in piano, organ, harpsichord, composition, and conducting.

A Curtis education is uniquely tailored to the individual student, with personalized attention from a celebrated faculty and unusually frequent performance opportunities. This distinctive "learn by doing" approach to musical training has produced an impressive number of notable artists over the school's 84-year history.

Enrollment is purposely kept very limited, with just enough students to complete a full orchestra and a select opera department, plus a small number of keyboard, composition and conducting students. The enrollment for 2006/2007 is 167

Estimated annual value of tuition: \$32,500.

For more information, contact **The Curtis Institute of Music**, 1726 Locust Street , Philadelphia, PA 19103 phone: 215-893-5252 fax: 215-893-9065 www.curtis.edu

✓ **Deep Springs College**

Deep Springs is an all-male liberal arts college located on a cattle-ranch and alfalfa farm in California's High Desert. Electrical pioneer L.L. Nunn founded the school in 1917 on the three pillars of academics, labor, and self-governance in order to help young men prepare themselves for lives of service to humanity. The school's 26 students, along with its staff and faculty, form a close community engaged in this intense project.

Deep Springs operates on the belief that manual labor and political deliberation are integral parts of a comprehensive liberal arts education.

Each student attends for two years and receives a full scholarship valued at over \$50,000 per year. Afterwards, candidates for admission are required to take the SAT or ACT and complete a two-stage application. The deadline for Part One of the application, which includes an official transcript and three essays, is November 15; all applications must be postmarked by this deadline. If due to unusual circumstances you feel you will have difficulty meeting the deadline, please contact the Applications Committee (apcom@deepsprings.edu).

Once applications arrive at Deep Springs, they are read and rated by a number of readers, some of whom sit on ApCom and some of whom are recruited from the wider community. Readers include staff, faculty, and students. ApCom meets to discuss and vote on each application individually and decide which applicants will be invited to the valley during the spring term for an interview.

During the second week in December, applicants will find out if they have been invited to Round Two of the applications process. Those invited must submit Part Two of the application, which includes two letters of recommendation and an additional four essays, by January 15. They also must schedule a three to four day visit and

interview by March.

During the applicant's visit, he has the opportunity to participate in labor, to observe academics and self-governance, and to see what life at Deep Springs is really like. He is also asked to discuss his application in an interview with ApCom.

Final decisions are mailed out by April 15.

Estimated annual value of tuition (includes room and board): \$50,000

For more information, contact Deep Springs College, HC 72 Box 45001, Deep Springs, CA via Dyer, NV 89010-9803. 760) 872-2000 www.deepsprings.edu

✓ **Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering**

At Olin, we welcome students with diverse educational backgrounds, including homeschooled students. We do not have separate requirements for homeschooled applicants – like all of our applicants, they are considered within their unique context.

The school looks for students with a strong calculus and physics foundation. Applicants are asked to take either the SAT or ACT, along with two SAT subject tests in math and science. In the absence of a traditional high-school transcript, you must provide documentation of the material you studied and the level of academic performance you achieved.

Olin College has **no formal transfer policy**. We generally review all transfer applications on an individual basis and anyone applying for transfer admission applies through *our regular admission process* with the *same requirements* (including standardized testing like the SAT or ACT and a strong background in calculus and physics). The faculty would need to review previous coursework to determine how much, if any, credit would be given. Transfer applicants in the past have generally not received credit due to the structure of our program, specifically our **Integrated Course Block** – a key part of our the curriculum that is a project focused, interdisciplinary group of courses in math, physics and engineering science. All students spend four full years at Olin, since each year of the curriculum builds upon the previous year. Several students have attended a year of college elsewhere, but they have applied with the understanding that if admitted, they would begin as first-year students at Olin. At this time, the only transfer credit granted is for courses taken via cross-registration at Olin’s academic partner institutions – Brandeis University, Babson and Wellesley Colleges.

Programs:

Undergraduate Engineering - Electrical and Computer Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, and Engineering

Scholarship Policy:

Every admitted student receives a four-year, full tuition scholarship valued at approximately \$130,000

For more information contact: Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering
Olin Way, Needham, MA 02492 Phone: 781.292.2300

✓ **Webb Institute**

Unique in the world of colleges, Webb Institute has its own special approach to admissions. For instance, we look

at the whole student: his or her abilities, attitudes, motivation, and previous performance, both scholastic and extracurricular.

Given the highly focused nature of the curriculum, all students enter as freshmen, even if they're transferring from another college. Also, Webb does not offer credits for advanced placement examinations or courses taken elsewhere. It is total immersion: At Webb, students live and study on the shore of the Long Island Sound. They learn both the practical and theoretical aspects of naval architecture and marine engineering. They work in the industry every winter. They sail, water ski, and sail board in their spare time. And when they graduate, they have great jobs.

Admission is open to U.S. citizens or to non-citizens who live in and are attending or have attended secondary school in the United States or its possessions or territories. Applicants who are not U.S. citizens must apply from a domestic address and must hold a Green Card showing permanent residency. Typically our students are unmarried and between the ages of 16 and 24 on the date of admission. Selection is made without regard to race, religion, creed or gender.

The school looks for applicants with a strong engineering background. Students must have at least a B average in physics, chemistry, and mathematics, as well as strong grades in other subjects. The average SAT score for students is 1370 out of 1600.

Estimated annual value of tuition: \$28,000

For more information, contact Webb Institute, 298 Crescent Beach Road, Glen Cove NY 11542-1398, 516-671-2213, 866-708-WEBB www.webb-institute.edu

TIP: Don't let admission criteria deter you from applying, even if you receive a GED. My advice is to attend community college for at least a year and make good grades. Take your SAT/ACT and then apply for admission.

➤ **Other Special Deals on College Tuition**

A handful of big-name public and private colleges offering free tuition for families whose incomes fall below certain levels, usually between \$25,000-\$75,000.

These schools include: University of Pennsylvania, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Rice University, Miami University-Ohio, University of Texas at Dallas, Dartmouth College, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Virginia, University of Maryland, Harvard, Soka University of America, Stanford University, Michigan State University, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Princeton University, John Carroll University, Rowan College School of Engineering formerly Glassboro State College, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and University of Texas at Arlington.

Similar statewide programs for scholarly students can be found in Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, and West Virginia, while Indiana and Oklahoma have statewide free-tuition programs for families with financial need.

For additional information, please read the online article, "Colleges that Offer Free Tuition" on the Liberal Arts Grad Blog at <http://liberalartsgrad.blogspot.com/2006/09/colleges-that-offer-free-tuition.html>

Also, there are community colleges, public state colleges, and universities that offer free in-state tuition to residents of their respective state. However, state residents are still responsible for additional fees which can run up to several thousands of dollars. Therefore, you must apply for financial aid (scholarships, grants or loans) or pay out of pocket to cover these fees plus the cost of your books and supplies.

Washington, California, Colorado, Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico are some of the States that offer free in-state tuition for residents.

Note: In order to take advantage of the “free tuition” at the above institutions, you must apply and get accepted into the school.

➤ **Other Tuition Free Programs**

The Odyssey Project is founded on the premise that liberal education is education to make people free, and it proceeds on the conviction that engagement with the humanities can offer individuals a way out of poverty by fostering habits of sustained reflection, skills of communication, and critical thinking. It provides a college-level introduction to the humanities through text-based seminars led by professors at top tier colleges and universities in order to help low-income adults more actively shape their own lives, as well as the lives of their families, communities, and nation.

The Odyssey Project offers college-level courses in philosophy, literature, art history, and history for men and women living below 150% of the poverty level. Its anchor program is the first-year course, which is offered in partnership with the Bard College Clemente Course in the Humanities and for which students may receive six units of college credit. Faculty members are largely from the University of Chicago, the School of the Art Institute, DePaul University, and other first-rate universities.

First-year Course

The first-year course provides a broad introduction to the humanities. Students study philosophy, art history, literature, U.S. history, critical thinking and, writing. Texts might include Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave,” Camus’ “The Myth of Sisyphus,” Shakespeare’s sonnets, Christopher Columbus’ diaries, Sappho’s poetry, the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, or Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” Students also have the opportunity to participate in selected adult education activities with the University of Chicago’s Graham School of General Studies as well as see plays, visit museums, and attend outside lectures. Classes are held in both Chicago and Champaign.

Classes meet twice a week from September to May, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tuition is free, and the Illinois Humanities Council provides free childcare, free books, and transportation. Six units of credit from Bard College, our academic partner, are fully transferable to other colleges and universities.

Courses in Chicago are offered at the Howard Area Community Center in Rogers Park (7648 N Paulina St) and at the Donoghue School in Oakland (707 E 37th St). Courses in Champaign/Urbana are offered at the Douglass Branch of the Champaign Public Library (504 E Grove St).

Applications for the first-year English courses will be available at this site beginning in **June 2008**.

Bridge Course

The Bridge Course is open to students who have successfully completed the first-year course and are interested in studying the humanities further and going on to a four-year college. Students take semester-long classes in philosophy and literature. Classes are held at Columbia College in downtown Chicago.

There are two discrete semesters: September to January and January to May. Classes meet once a week. Tuition, books and bus cards are provided at no cost to students. Those who complete the course successfully receive four fully transferable units of credit per semester from Bard College, our academic partner.

Students who are applying for admission to the Bridge Course should see the academic coordinator from their first-year course or contact the Illinois Humanities Council. Only students who have successfully completed the first-year course qualify.

Spanish Language Course (El Proyecto Odisea , Fundamentos de Educación en Humanidades)

Taught in partnership with the **Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)**, this course serves native Spanish speakers and is offered at **Gads Hill Center** in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood. Students take classes in literature, philosophy, Latin American history, and other humanities subjects. All reading assignments are in Spanish, as is class discussion. Classes meet twice a week from November to March. Tuition is free and all books are provided free of charge.

Applications for the Spanish course must be received by **December 3, 2007**. (Late applications may be considered at the discretion of the coordinator.) Applications may be downloaded using the '**Application & Forms**' link to the right and **mailed** to Irena Cajkova, Illinois Humanities Council, 17 North State St., Suite 1400, or **emailed** to iac@prairie.org. Please call Irena Cajkova with questions at (312) 375-2541.

Odyssey Seminars

Offered to and through social service agencies for free, these enhancement seminars are eight-session classes in the humanities that are designed collaboratively between the host organization and the Illinois Humanities Council. The topics are tailored to the needs and interests of the organization. The host agency is responsible for recruiting students (which may include clients and staff), and the Illinois Humanities Council provides the faculty and books.

Classes generally meet twice a week for four weeks. The level of instruction, quality of texts, and faculty are similar to those in the first-year course. However, these courses are not offered for credit. Examples of past courses are "The Good and Its Corruption: Ancient and Modern Perspectives" and "Love and Friendship: Ancient and Modern Perspectives." Texts included sections from Plato's "The Republic," Marx's "Alienation and Its Overcoming," Aristotle's "Three Kinds of Friendship," and C. S. Lewis' "Friendship vs. Eros."

The Odyssey Project is funded in part by the **Polk Bros. Foundation**, **The Field Foundation of Illinois**, and **[Powell's Books](#)**.

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities (IPRH), The University of Chicago's Civic Knowledge Project, and **Northwestern University** are contributing partners.

For more information about *The Odyssey Project*, please call Amy Thomas Elder at (773) 550-9406 or visit <http://www.prairie.org/OdysseyProject/>

➤ **Free Tuition for Adults 60 and over**

Some colleges and universities offer free tuition to senior citizens for select courses on a space basis. Check with your local college or university to see if they offer this program.

➤ **Financial Aid/Scholarships and Grants**



Student Aid on the Web is the U.S. Department of Education's site for free information on preparing for and funding education beyond high school.

The site offers a wealth of information and publications. It helps you make informed decisions regarding all phases of a college, technical, or trade school education and career choice.

Note: You are not eligible to receive federal financial aid if you have been convicted of a drug-related offense. You

still may be eligible for state financial aid, scholarships, and other grants. Check with the financial aid office at your college or university to discuss other options.

For more information visit : <http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/index.jsp>

✓ **State Higher Education Agency**

Each state has a higher education agency that provide information on your state's education programs, colleges and universities, financial aid assistance programs, grants, scholarships, continuing education programs, and career opportunities.

Texas Higher Education Board offers a Texas Public Education Grant (TPEG) which I was awarded through the Dallas County Community College District for continuing education/workforce training classes.

I had an unlimited number of courses that I could take using my grant. Courses ranging from business office specialist, health careers, pharmacy technician, construction, diesel mechanic, air/heating, web design, floral marketing and design, business management, truck driving, welding, project management, etc.

It was a simple front and back application in which I attached my prison release papers showing that I had no income because I was recently release from federal prison. In about 2 weeks, I was awarded a \$500 grant each for the Spring and Summer semesters.

I am proud to say that I am expected to graduate with a college-level certificate in Nonprofit Management this August thanks to my Texas Public Education Grant.

TIP: Only use grants for classes in which you can seek employment with your felony conviction once you have completed training.

Please visit the U.S. Department of Education's website at <http://www.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html?src=gu> to locate the contact information for your state's higher education agency.

➤ **Scholarship Scams**

If you have to pay money to get money, it's probably a scam.

Every year, several hundred thousand students and parents are defrauded by scholarship scams. The victims of these scams lose more than \$100 million annually. Scam operations often imitate legitimate government agencies, grant-giving foundations, education lenders, and scholarship matching services using official-sounding names containing words like "National," "Federal," "Foundation," or "Administration."

This section provides advice on how to identify such scholarship scams, how to distinguish between legitimate and fraudulent organizations, how to protect yourself from scholarship scams, and what to do if you are scammed. In general, be wary of scholarships with an application fee, scholarship matching services who guarantee success, advance-fee loan scams, and sales pitches disguised as financial aid "seminars".

Source: FINAID: The Smart Student Guide to Financial Aid

For more information on Common Scholarship Scams, visit <http://www.finaid.org/scholarships/scams.phtml>

➤ **Training**

Locate free or low cost training resources through your State's Labor Department, Local Welfare offices, and technical and community colleges.

State Labor Offices

http://www.dol.gov/esa/contacts/state_of.htm

State and Local Human Services Offices

<http://www.aphsa.org/Links/links-state.asp>

American Association of Community and Technical Colleges

http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCommunityColleges/CommunityCollegeFinder1/CommunityCollege_Finder.htm

Regional Occupational Program at Grossmont College - ROP is a career and technical education program that offers career and technical skills training for entry level, upgrading existing skills, or preparing for advanced training. It is state funded through the San Diego County Department of Education. ROP is tuition free and is also available for college credit

<http://www.grossmont.edu/rop/>

SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc. is a private, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) corporation established in 1965 as a project to address employment and economic concerns and inequities among Hispanics in America. As part of the nation's community organizing agenda to win the "War on Poverty"; SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc. was designed into

the legislative agenda as an example of an effective community based employment and training project that could effectively address these issues. For 40 years, SER had played a key role in the nation's workforce investment system, and is today recognized by the US Department of Labor as the "premier community-based organization serving the employment needs of the Hispanic Community."

<http://www.ser-national.org/>

✓ **Goodwill Industries**

Many local Goodwills train people for jobs in IT, healthcare, retail, food services, banking, manufacturing and more. They also help people learn office and computer skills. Local Goodwills work closely with area businesses to understand what type of jobs they have, and then tailor job training to meet the requirements of those positions.

Every 56 seconds of each workday, Goodwill places someone in a good job.

Local Goodwill career professionals regularly contact local employers to learn about jobs that are available, and then they connect job seekers with these employment opportunities.

Goodwill provides job seekers with resources that help them conduct job searches, write resumes and practice their interviewing skills.

Local Goodwills also help people earn a paycheck while they're getting ready for permanent jobs by placing them in temporary jobs or in jobs at Goodwill. Many job seekers find work in Goodwill retail stores or at one of their many business or government contract work sites.

After placing someone in a job, the local Goodwill may follow up on a regular basis to find out if they are continuing to do well on the job, or if they need more training, on-site job coaching or additional services.

www.goodwill.org

✓ **National Urban League**

National Urban League has 102 affiliates in 36 states. NUL provides job placement and training to ex-offenders.

Locate the nearest affiliate at <http://www.nul.org/affiliatelist.html>

✓ **Louisiana Reconstruction Team/Louisiana Community and Technical Colleges**

Because you need a career and Louisiana needs you. With the rebuilding efforts of the Gulf Coast, skilled construction workers are in higher demand than ever. Becoming a skilled construction worker will help you earn a great salary and be a part of the rebuilding of Louisiana. All you need is the training...and, the Louisiana Reconstruction Team needs you.

Who is eligible to participate?

Everyone is eligible to participate in the training program.

Mandatory requirements:

If male, you must be registered with Selective Service.

Must have drivers license or official identification card and social security card.

**Many employers in this industry require pre-employment drug screening.*

How much does the training cost?

The training is absolutely FREE. Simply fill out our online enrollment form and you'll be contacted very shortly about the details of your training.

What is the training like?

Many individuals can complete the entry level training in 2 ½ weeks if they go full-time. Typical training lasts about four to six weeks. You will receive specialized classroom instruction and practical shop experience in basic safety, construction math, the use of hand tools and power tools, blueprint reading, basic rigging, basic communication skills, and basic employability skills. You may also choose to continue your education and train in the areas of carpentry, electrical, pipefitting, and welding.

Currently, classes are meeting Monday through Friday for 8 hours a day. Part-time, evening, and weekend classes will be offered as needed. When you are contacted about your training, you will receive more information on training schedules.

Enrollment in our free training program is just a click away!

If you'd like information right away, Visit <http://reconstruction.lctcs.edu/> or call 866.310.1586 - Toll-free, Available 24/7

✓ **SCSEP**

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a community service and work based training program for older workers. It was authorized by Congress in Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 to provide

subsidized, part-time, community service work based training for low-income persons age 55 or older who have poor employment prospects. Through this program, older workers have access to the SCSEP services as well as other employment assistance available through the One-Stop Career Centers of the workforce investment system.

In addition to providing community services and part-time work based training, the program has a goal of placing into unsubsidized jobs the number of participants equal to 30 percent of the authorized positions. Program participants work an average of 20 hours a week, and are paid the highest of Federal, State or local minimum wage, or the prevailing wage. They are placed in a wide variety of community service activities at non-profit and public facilities, including day-care centers, senior centers, schools and hospitals.

http://www.doleta.gov/seniors/html_docs/AboutSCSEP.cfm or www.experienceworks.org

✓ **Trade/Career Schools**

Please beware of trade and career schools that offer specialized diplomas without completion of college level English and math courses. These schools offer diploma in medical assisting, pharmacy technicians, graphic design, computer technician, etc.

It's imperative that you perform background checks on the schools and its owners. Most of the schools are for-profit schools that charge outrageous tuition.

In Texas, Texas Workforce Commission is closing these schools down for fraud on a daily basis. The diplomas and degrees that are awarded by these schools are not worth the paper it printed on. PLEASE BEWARE!!!!!!

Most community colleges offer the same types of program in which you can finish in 2 years or less at a fraction of the course.

The U.S. Department of Education created the following questionnaire for students interested in career colleges and technical schools:

Career Colleges and Technical Schools - Questions to Ask Before Enrolling

Finding Schools That Match Your Interests and Goals

- What kind of career and technical training do you want?
- Which schools offer the training or program you need?
- What preparation do you need for a particular job?
- Will employers accept the training as preparation for employment?

Choosing a School

- Is the school you are considering accredited and licensed?
- What are the requirements for admission?
- Will your coursework transfer to another school?
- Is crime at the school a problem?
- Should you visit the school?

Paying For Your Education

- How much will you pay for the program or training?
- Is financial assistance or student aid available?

Will you have to sign an enrollment contract?
What is the school's refund policy?

Special Considerations

Will your program be delivered by distance education?
Does the school offer job placement assistance?
How can you avoid diploma mills and unaccredited colleges?
Have students filed complaints against the school?

For more information, visit U.S. Department of Education's website at <http://www.ed.gov/students/prep/college/consumerinfo/index.html>

➤ **On The Job Training**

On-the-job training (OJT) is one of the best training methods because it is planned, organized, and conducted at the employee's worksite. The best sources to locate on the job training are at your local workforce commission, technical college, and welfare office.

Here is a sample ad:

*When Caring begins
and Continues...*

LVN's
ALL SHIFTS
**CNA Classes
NOW FORMING**

Get Paid While You Learn!
Training And Test Are Paid For.

Must have previous experience

**Benefits Package
Available**

PLEASE APPLY WITHIN TO:
Human Resource Department
Trinity Mission Italy, L.P.
220 Davenport, Italy, Texas 76654

972-483-6369

- **More Great Educational Secrets**
- ✓ **Go to Harvard....**

Harvard Extension School is a branch of the prestigious Harvard College and University in Cambridge, MA.

Their open-enrollment courses and academic programs offer nontraditional students a challenging academic experience at tuition rates that rank among the lowest in Boston.

Harvard Extension School's wide range of courses is open admission, which means no application, transcripts, or letters of recommendation

are required. The tuition rates (charged per course and listed in course descriptions) range from \$650 to \$1,975 for undergraduate- and graduate-level courses and are among the lowest in Boston. Courses run primarily in 15-week fall and spring terms.

Courses and Programs

Explore a subject that interests you. Build skills to advance your career. Enroll in a degree or certificate program. With 620 courses, the Extension School offers a range of possibility.

- **100 online courses, including 23 Harvard College courses**
- Vital subject areas such as environmental management, information technology, and biotechnology
- Liberal arts degrees
- Professional graduate certificate and degree programs
- English as a second language through the Institute for English Language Programs
- Career and study skills workshops

Faculty

Whether you study biology or music, you learn from experts.

- 60 percent are Harvard affiliates
- Harvard professors offering their Harvard College courses at the Extension School
- Leading faculty from local universities
- Community and business leaders

Students and Alumni

Our population of nearly 13,000 students is diverse. All students share a common goal to challenge themselves and satisfy their intellectual curiosity.

Our alumni have gone on to attend prestigious graduate programs and become leaders in fields such as business, medicine, education, and law.

- Students range in age from early teens to 80s; average age is 33.
- They come from 118 countries and 46 US states.
- Seventy-five percent have bachelor's degrees; 25 percent have graduate degrees.

There are financial aid options for students admitted to degree, certificate, and health careers programs, as well as for students who are taking courses but are not in a program.

Contact: Harvard Extension School 51 Brattle Street Cambridge, MA 02138-3722 USA +1-617-495-4024; extension@dcemail.harvard.edu; <http://www.extension.harvard.edu/>

✓ **Fast, Cheap College Credits**

The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) offers free online, self-paced courses designed for people who have emergency management responsibilities and also for the general public.

FEMA's Independent Study Program offers about 65 free courses that support the nine mission areas identified by the National Preparedness Goal.

Incident Management Operational Planning Disaster Logistics Emergency Communications Service to Disaster Victims	Continuity Programs Public Disaster Communications Integrated Preparedness Hazard Mitigation
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Once you have completed the free ISP course, you have the opportunity to receive college credit for your work from Frederick Community College (FCC). You can even earn an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Emergency Management!

FCC offers one college academic semester hour for most FEMA Independent Study courses for a fee of \$60 per semester hour. Since FCC is fully accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges, your college credit will really mean something in the future. The rewards are endless...

- College Degree - Transfer the credits to the college of your choice as electives in a program of study leading to an associate or bachelor's degree, or apply them towards the Associate of Applied Science at FCC.
- Job Advancement - Thousands of employers nationwide now use college credits as a major consideration for promotions.
- Performance Appraisals - Show employers evidence of initiative and potential by accumulating college credits for your FEMA independent study courses.
- Personal Satisfaction - Perhaps most importantly, you have the satisfaction of having additional job knowledge and college credit through the FEMA Independent Study Program.

<http://www.emergencymanagementstudy.com/content/default.asp> or
http://www.frederick.edu/courses_and_programs/degree_emermgtreq.aspx

For information about the A.A.S –Emergency Management degree, contact:
Robert McDaniels
Program Manager, Emergency Management Associate Degree Program

Frederick Community College

7932 Opossumtown Pike,
Frederick, MD 21702
301-471-0400

Also, the free ISP courses are evaluated and awarded CEUs in accordance with the standards established by the International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET). The number of CEUs for each course is listed on the website.

Enrollment Qualification: Official enrollment in the courses, scoring of final exams, issuance of certificates, and maintenance of student records is **limited** to United States (US) residents with a US deliverable postal address including APO and FPO addresses.

To enroll in the free ISP courses, contact:

FEMA/Emergency Management Institute, 16825 S. Seton Ave., Emmitsburg, MD 21727
(301) 447-1000; Admissions Fax: (301) 447-1658; <http://www.training.fema.gov/IS/>

My own personal story: I was a federal prisoner housed at FCI Tallahassee when I enrolled and completed nearly 30 ISP courses from FEMA/U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

I was awarded and mailed a PDS Certificate of Completion for completing the required FEMA fundamental courses. Back then, FEMA provided courses via US Postal mail. They have ceased mailing the courses and are now available only via the Internet.

After completing the courses, I did some research and found that Thomas Edison State College of Trenton, NJ also provided credit of FEMA ISP courses through their Credit Banking Service.

Since I took so many free FEMA ISP courses, Thomas Edison State College was a perfect choice because they gave me 26 college credits for only \$350.00.

You do the math!

I was able to use all 26 college credits as electives towards my Bachelor degree in Management.

For more information on Credit Banking Services:

Thomas Edison State College

101 W. State St.

Trenton, NJ 08608-1176

1 (888) 442-8372

E-mail: info@tesc.edu

www.tesc.edu

Note: Thomas Edison State College is also regionally accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

✓ **Rescue College**

Rescue College was established in 1998 as the Internet-based distance education training program of the [Association of Gospel Rescue Missions](#), based in Kansas City, Missouri. In 2008, the association deeded the college to [TechMission](#) and it was renamed "[City Vision College](#)." Still, the mission and vision of the college, along with curriculum, faculty, and administration has stayed essentially the same.

The AGRM was established in 1913 as the "International Union of Gospel Missions" and is made up of 300 rescue missions and other inner city ministries. Preparing Christian workers for services has always been a major focus of the association with both the "On the Job" training program and the Leadership Training Program operating from the mid 40's. The direction of formal academic training began in 1990 with the development of a joint degree program in Rescue Ministry with Grace College of the Bible (now called [Grace University](#)).

The college has been accredited by the [Distance Education and Training Council](#) and the Certified Fund Raising Executive International (CFRE International). Its mission is to prepare men and women for successful careers with rescue missions and other nonprofit organizations, particularly those working with the homeless and needy. With enrollment open year round, students may participate in programs leading to a certificate or Bachelor of Arts degree in Missions (Ministry), Nonprofit Management and Addiction Studies. Individual courses may also be taken for personal enrichment and professional development.

A degree or certificate from City Vision College, coupled with appropriate experience in the field, can open the door

to employment in a variety of administrative and direct care positions with rescue missions and similar organizations. These positions include executive director, assistant director, department head, program director, chaplain, caseworker, and various other administrative positions.

NOTE: Tuition is inexpensive-only \$450.00 per 3 college credit course. In addition, City Vision College offers 50% scholarship for tuition and materials to low-income and needy students for their certificate and degree program.

www.cityvision.edu

Contact: City Vision College, PO Box 280046, Kansas City, MO 64128-0046

Excelsior College

Excelsior College, formerly Regents College, is America's first Virtual University. At Excelsior College you can earn a degree at your own pace in your own place. Excelsior College is the world's largest educator of Nurses at a distance. With Excelsior College you can earn a respected degree at home, apply past college credit to your Excelsior College degree and apply military and corporate training to your Excelsior College degree. The perfect degree programs for busy, working adults. Excelsior College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, 215-662-5606. Excelsior College is eligible for a number of financial aid programs and provides numerous scholarships.

With more than 120,000 alumni worldwide, the College currently serves over 35,000 enrolled students who are engaged in independent learning programs at a distance. Located in Albany, New York, the College is in the heart of New York State's Capital Region. The population of the metropolitan area, which includes Troy, Schenectady, and

Saratoga Springs, is approximately 850,000. New York City, Boston, and Montreal are within a three-hour drive from Albany.

Contact: Excelsior College, 7 Columbia Circle, Albany, NY 12203-5159, 518-464-8500. www.excelsior.edu.

NOTE: I recommend this college to ex-offenders who have at least 15-30 college credits under their belt. Tuition is affordable. Excelsior offers several scholarships. I was personally awarded an \$875 Presidential Scholarship from Excelsior College.

- **Money Management**
- ✓ **Free Bank Accounts**

Banks offer free checking as a way to save you money. They usually require that you make a small deposit in order to open the account, and you qualify for free checking. This usually means that there is no annual fee or low balance fee on a free checking account. Some banks also offer free checks for life with free checking. To make sure you get the good deal on a free checking account, I suggest you look for a free checking offer that has the following:

- No Low Balance Fees
- Free ATM and/or [Debit Card](#)
- No charge for ACH and [Direct Deposit](#) transactions
- Free online access to your account
- Unlimited monthly checkwriting
- No minimum checkwriting amount

In order to open an account, you must provide some information to the bank. They do not open bank accounts without certain details about you. This is to protect them against risk and comply with a variety of regulations. You'll need to provide simple details like your name and birthday, as well as identification numbers (in the U.S. this is most likely your Social Security Number). You may also need to provide a government ID or Driver's License number

Citibank, Bank of America, Washington Mutual, Compass Back, Wachovia, Wells Fargo and Capital One are a few banks that offer free checking accounts. However, each bank has a min. deposit requirement.

Source: About.com: Banks and Loans: Free Checking

➤ **Free Credit Report**

Annualcreditreport.com is the official central site allows you to request a free credit report, once every 12 months from each of the nationwide consumer credit reporting companies: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.

To Request your Credit Report by Phone:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Call 1-877-322-8228• You will go through a simple verification process over the phone.
<i>Your reports will be mailed to you within 15 days. Please, allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.</i>

To Request your Credit Report by Mail:

1. Download the [request form](#) (You need an Adobe viewer to view the requested form.
Download the [free Adobe viewer](#))
2. Print and complete the form
3. Mail the completed form to:

Annual Credit Report Request Service
P.O. Box 105281
Atlanta, GA 30348-5281

Your reports will be mailed to you within 15 days. Please, allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.

NOTE:

Please use the request form authorized by the Central Source only.

Only the Central Source, and its members - Equifax (www.equifax.com), Experian (www.experian.com) and TransUnion (www.transunion.com), have been authorized by law and the government (www.FTC.gov) to provide free credit reports as described on this site.

➤ Credit Cards

There is NO positive side to credit card use. **You will spend more** if you use credit cards. Even by paying the bills on time, you are not beating the system! But most families don't pay on time. The average family today carries \$8,000 in credit card debt according to the American Bankers' Association.

Cash vs. Credit Cards

When you pay cash, you can "feel" the money leaving you. This is not true with credit cards. Flipping a credit card up on a counter registers nothing emotionally. If you use credit cards instead of cash you will spend **12-18% more**. This is money you could have saved.

If you "have to" use plastic, I suggest a debit card. I use them for travel and the occasional convenience of ordering something over the Internet or phone. Other than that, I use cash.

Personal finance is 80% behavior. You need to cut out habits that make you spend more. You do not build wealth with credit cards. Use common sense. When you play with a multi-billion dollar industry and you think you're going to win at their game, you are naive. **You cannot beat the credit card companies.**

Source: The Truth About Credit Card Debt at *DaveRamsey.com*

➤ Prepaid Debit Cards

Prepaid debit cards (not to be confused with disposable prepaid gift cards) are a great option. No credit check. Everyone is approved (pending identity verification).

You can use it at an ATM, purchase items like a credit card, and even have your payroll directly deposited on the card.

These types of debit cards are available from Western Union, Walgreens, Wal-Mart, Rushcard.com and your local check cashing business.

I have one that I purchase from my local check cashing business. I love it. I can purchase gas from the pump, items at the store, and items from the Internet without using cash.

➤ **Jobs**

Indeed.com

Indeed.com is great to use because it is a job search engine that searches job sites, newspapers, associations, and company career pages in seconds. Just type in the kind of job you're looking for and your city/state or zip code.

Craigslist.org

Craigslist.org is a free online classified for nearly 600 cities in the world.

I recommend this website for all ex-offenders. I have found a number of jobs using this site. You can even post a free ad about the type of job that you're seeking.

In addition to jobs, you can search for housing, goods, services, local activities, and advice - just about anything really.

TIP: I would not recommend websites such as Careerbuilder.com or Monster.com if you're being released from prison, even if you have a college degree.

✓ **Federal Bonding**

In 1966, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) created the Federal Bonding Program (FBP) as an employer job-hire incentive that guaranteed the job honesty of at-risk job seekers. Federal financing of Fidelity Bond insurance, issued free-of-charge to employers, enabled the delivery of bonding services as a unique job placement tool to assist ex-offenders, and other at-risk/hard-to-place job applicants (e.g., recovering substance abusers, welfare recipients, poor credits, etc.) The various State Employment Services (ES) comprised the national delivery system for issuing to employers the bonds that USDOL had purchased from the Aetna Casualty and Surety Company (now owned by and operated as Travelers Casualty and Surety Company of America; referred to hereafter as TRAVELERS).

Job seekers who have in the past committed a fraudulent or dishonest act, or who have demonstrated other past behavior casting doubt upon their credibility or honesty, very often are rejected for employment due to their personal backgrounds. Their past life experience presents an obstacle to their future ability to secure employment. More specifically, employers view these applicants as being "at-risk" and potentially untrustworthy workers. This fear is further heightened by the fact that Fidelity Bond insurance commercially purchased by employers to protect against employee dishonesty usually will not cover at-risk persons because they are designated by insurance companies as being "NOT BONDABLE." As a result, these job applicants are routinely denied employment.

Ex-offenders, including anyone with a record of arrest, conviction or imprisonment, and anyone who has ever been on probation or parole, are at-risk job applicants. When you combine figures for the U.S. inmate population and the

offender population in the free community who are now on probation or parole, the total number of persons “under correctional supervision” approaches 7 million individuals (1 in every 32 U.S. adults). More than 600,000 inmates are released from prison or jail annually. Past experiences reveal that 67% of them will be recidivists (i.e., return to crime and incarceration within three years of their release). Failure to become employed after release is a major factor contributing to the high rate of recidivism. Having a record of arrest, conviction or imprisonment functions as a significant barrier to employment since employers generally view ex-offenders as potentially untrustworthy workers and insurance companies usually designate ex-offenders as being “not bondable” for job honesty.

Similarly at-risk and NOT BONDABLE are recovering substance abusers (alcohol and/or drug abuse), welfare recipients and other persons having a poor credit record or who have declared bankruptcy, economically disadvantaged youth who lack a work history, and individuals who were dishonorably discharged from the military. Others searching for work also can be classified as at-risk if the barrier to their employment can be eliminated by making them bondable.

Fidelity Bonding is insurance purchased to indemnify employers for loss of money or property sustained through the dishonest acts of their employees (i.e., theft, forgery, larceny, and embezzlement). This “employee dishonesty insurance” is generally considered a good business management practice, and is purchased by most employers. However, while other types of commercially purchased insurance set premiums that vary according to the degree of risk (e.g., life insurance), Fidelity Bond premiums are always low due to being based upon taking low risk. As a result, insurance companies usually will not cover at-risk persons under commercially purchased Fidelity Bonds, a practice that has created a special barrier to employment for the very large and growing number of individuals who have encountered the criminal justice system in the U.S., as well as other persons whose personal credibility is questionable.

With the great expansion of database creation and access through computer use in the past 20 years, employers now can almost instantly do a “background check” to determine if a job applicant has any criminal record or has a

poor personal financial credit history (80% of employers now make such checks according to the Society of Human Resources Management). The use of background checks on job applicants has increased significantly since the terrorist events on September 11, 2001. Since ex-offenders are not bondable under commercial employee dishonesty insurance policies (i.e., Fidelity Bonds) usually purchased by employers, an increasing number of persons seeking work are being routinely denied jobs due to being confronted with bonding as a barrier to employment. Only through their participation in the FBP can they become bondable.

The bonds issued by the FBP serve as a job placement tool by guaranteeing to the employer the job honesty of at-risk job seekers. Employers receive the bonds free-of-charge as an incentive to hire hard-to-place job applicants as wage earners. The FBP bond insurance was designed to reimburse the employer for any loss due to employee theft of money or property with no deductible amount to become the employer's liability (i.e., 100% bond insurance coverage). The USDOL experiment has proved to be a great success, with over 42,000 job placements made for at-risk job seekers who were automatically made bondable. Since approximately 460 proved to be dishonest workers, bonding services as a job placement tool can be considered to have a 99% success rate.

Fidelity Bonding service delivery has been streamlined to take only a few minutes time, and efficiently serve the operational needs of local staffs who are already burdened by other paperwork and processing delays. The "user friendly" character of the FBP is reflected in its key operating features as follows:

- NO special application form for job seeker to complete
- NO bond approval processing – local staff instantly issue bonds to employers
- NO papers for employer to submit or sign to obtain free bond incentive for job hire
- NO follow-up and NO termination actions required by bond issued
- NO deductible in bond insurance amount if employee dishonesty occurs

- NO age requirements for bondee (other than legal working age in State)
- NO other U.S. program provides Fidelity Bonding services
- NO Federal regulations covering bonds issued

Bond issuance can apply to any job at any employer in any State, and covers any employee dishonesty committed on or away from the employer's work facility. Any full or part-time employee paid wages (with Federal taxes automatically deducted from pay) can be bonded, including persons hired by "temp. agencies." However, self-employed persons cannot be covered by these Fidelity Bonds. While assisting job seekers in securing employment is the main goal of the FBP, bonds are also issued to cover already employed workers who need bonding to prevent being laid off or to secure transfer or promotion to a different job at their company. Service delivery efficiency is inherent to bonding because its cost occurs only when a job placement is generated or maintained for an individual whose background is a significant barrier to securing or retaining employment.

For a directory of State Bonding Coordinators, visit <http://www.bonds4jobs.com/index.html>

✓ **Careers To Consider**

Biomedical equipment technician, hairstylist/cosmetologist, machinist (manufacturers report a shortage), electrician/electronics tech (above-average pay, and it's easier on the body than many other blue-collar careers), ghostwriter, mediator, paralegal, health care worker, licensed chemical dependency counselor, food service manager, telemarketer, fitness trainer, Social and Human Service Assistants (my favorite), make-ready technicians, production worker.

Sources: U.S. News & World Report, msnbc.msn.com

✓ Careers to Stay Away From

REALITY CHECK: Stay away from jobs dealing with children, elderly people, or anything related to your offense. For example, if you have been convicted of an offense dealing with alcohol drugs and pills OR have a history of substance abuse, DO NOT try to obtain a nursing license or become a pharmacy technician.

➤ **Business Start-Up**

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) was created in 1953 as an independent agency of the federal government to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation. We recognize that small business is critical to our economic recovery and strength, to building America's future, and to helping the United States compete in today's global marketplace. Although SBA has grown and evolved in the years since it was established in 1953, the bottom line mission remains the same. The SBA helps Americans start, build and grow businesses. Through an extensive network of field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations, SBA delivers its services to people throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the U. S. Virgin Islands and Guam.

SBA offers free online training.

<http://www.sba.gov/index.html>

➤ **SCORE**

Do you need a clear idea of how much money you will need to get started and how much you will be able to make?

SCORE “Counselors to America’s Small Business” is a nonprofit association dedicated to educating entrepreneurs and the formation, growth and success of small business nationwide. SCORE is a resource partner with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

SCORE is headquartered in Herndon, VA and Washington, DC and has 389 chapters throughout the United States and its territories, with 10,500 volunteers nationwide. Both working and retired executives and business owners donate time and expertise as business counselors. SCORE was founded in 1964.

SCORE’s 10,500 volunteer counselors have more than 600 business skills. Volunteers are working or retired business owners, executives and corporate leaders who share their wisdom and lessons learned in business.

SCORE can provide you with **FREE & CONFIDENTIAL** business advice. SCORE offers 26 online training courses on starting, managing and marketing your business.

Contact:

SCORE Association

409 3rd Street, SW, 6th Floor

Washington, D.C. 20024

1175 Herndon Pkwy., Suite 900

Herndon, VA 20170

Phone 1-800/634-0245 or 703/487-3612

Fax: 703/487-3066

Find the nearest SCORE chapter at www.score.org

➤ Voting

State Disenfranchisement Laws

- 48 states and the District of Columbia prohibit inmates from voting while incarcerated for a felony offense.
- Only two states - Maine and Vermont - permit inmates to vote.
- 35 states prohibit felons from voting while they are on parole and 30 of these states exclude felony probationers as well.
- Two states deny the right to vote to all ex-offenders who have completed their sentences. Nine others disenfranchise certain categories of ex-offenders and/or permit application for restoration of rights for specified offenses after a waiting period (e.g., five years in Delaware and Wyoming, and two years in Nebraska).
- Each state has developed its own process of restoring voting rights to ex-offenders but most of these restoration processes are so cumbersome that few ex-offenders are able to take advantage of them.

SOURCE: Felony Disenfranchisement Law in the United States by The Sentencing Project

✓ **ACLU**

Through a strategic combination of litigation, advocacy and public education, the American Civil Liberties Union challenges these restrictions and sparks reforms to facilitate restoration of the right to vote to persons with criminal convictions.

<http://www.aclu.org/votingrights/exoffenders/index.html>

TIP: If you are lucky to parole out to a State that allows you to vote, exercise your right and VOTE!

➤ **Free Medical Care**

ClinicalTrials.gov offers up-to-date information for locating federally and privately supported clinical trials for a wide range of diseases and conditions. A clinical trial (also clinical research) is a research study in human volunteers to answer specific health questions. Interventional trials determine whether experimental treatments or new ways of using known therapies are safe and effective under controlled environments. Observational trials address health issues in large groups of people or populations in natural settings.

ClinicalTrials.gov currently contains 56,090 trials sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, other federal agencies, and private industry. Studies listed in the database are conducted in all 50 States and in 155 countries ClinicalTrials.gov receives over 40 million page views per month 50,000 visitors daily.

These clinical trials provide free medical care, doctor visits, placebos and medications. Some clinical trials even provide financial compensation for time and travel.

Also, you can find clinical trials in your area at www.craigslist.org (look under the following columns: ETC, Volunteers, and Part-time) and www.backpage.com (select your city, click on 'focus group/studies').

Sample Clinical Trial Ad:

OVERACTIVE BLADDER?

- ▶ RUSHING to the bathroom?
- ▶ FREQUENT TRIPS to the bathroom?
- ▶ WORRYING about having an accident when you're out with friends?



If so, you may qualify for a research study.

Qualified participants will receive:

- Study-related medical care and doctor visits at no charge.
- Investigational medication or placebo provided at no charge.
- Financial compensation for time and travel.



For more information,
contact the Research Coordinator:
(972) 354-1520
www.DFWStudy.com

✓ **Volunteering/Internships**

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is an opportunity to make a big difference in your life and in the lives of those around you. It's a chance to apply your skills and ideals toward helping others and meeting critical needs in the community.

Each year, AmeriCorps offers 75,000 opportunities for adults of all ages and backgrounds to serve through a network of partnerships with local and national nonprofit groups. Whether your service makes a community safer, gives a child a second chance, or helps protect the environment, you'll be getting things done through AmeriCorps!

AmeriCorps members address critical needs in communities all across America. As an AmeriCorps member, you can:

- Tutor and mentor disadvantaged youth
- Fight illiteracy
- Improve health services
- Build affordable housing
- Teach computer skills
- Clean parks and streams
- Manage or operate after-school programs
- Help communities respond to disasters
- Build organizational capacity

As an AmeriCorps member, you'll gain new skills and experiences—and you'll also find the tremendous satisfaction that

comes from helping others. In addition, full-time members who complete their service earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award of \$4,725 to pay for college, graduate school, or to pay back qualified student loans; members who serve part-time receive a partial Award. Some AmeriCorps members may also receive a modest living allowance during their term of service.

You can search and apply for positions in your area at www.americorps.org

NOTE: Americorps does have ex-offender reentry programs.

✓ **Catholic for National Volunteers in Service**

Catholic Network of Volunteer Service (CNVS), established in 1963, is a non-profit membership organization of 200 domestic and international volunteer and lay mission programs. Currently, more than 10,000 volunteers and lay missionaries serve in these programs throughout the U.S. and in 108 other countries.

CNVS publishes and distributes RESPONSE, the most comprehensive handbook of lay mission volunteer opportunities. RESPONSE is distributed free of charge to persons interested in faith-based service and those who promote such service. To request hard copies of RESPONSE, you may call toll-free 1-800-543-5046 or e-mail cnvsinfo@cnvs.org

Most CNVS volunteer opportunities provide room and board, monthly stipend and an Education award that must be use to pay for college.

Contact:

Catholic Network of Volunteer Service (CNVS), 6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 820
Takoma Park, MD 20912-4423, Phone: 301-270-0900, Fax: 301-270-0901

SJM Family Foundation, Inc.

Information Research Network

P.O. Box 167365

Irving, Texas 75016
