

# Introduction: A New Start

**N**early 2.4 million offenders will reenter society within the next 5 to 10 years. Of those, nearly half will find themselves back in prison within three years of their release. Those who make a successful transition do so through the support of family, friends, and community and government organizations. But they mostly succeed through their own will power and hard work.

Those ex-offenders who quickly find steady employment are the ones most likely to stay out of prison and make a new life for themselves. This guide is designed to help you make that transition successfully by getting a job fast.

It is true that ex-offenders face more barriers to employment than other people. Sometimes they lack a positive attitude or self esteem. Often they lack knowledge about their skills and interests and about the job search process. Limited work experience or education, substance abuse, and other physical and mental health problems present barriers to employment. Then there is the reluctance that some employers have towards hiring ex-offenders.

The good news is that all of these obstacles can be overcome with enough effort. There are numerous resources available that can help reduce, if not eliminate, many of these barriers. Job placement and apprenticeship programs, rehabilitative services, and community support groups can all help you stay focused on what's most important: getting a job and getting on with your life.

Don't be afraid to ask for help, but also realize that it is your responsibility to find a job and manage your life. It will require careful planning and determination. It will likely result in some rejection and discouragement. But if you keep at it, and use the methods outlined in this book, you will find a job.