Frequently Asked Questions

Employment Letters

What is an Employment Letter? It’s simply a written offer of employment that explains to the Board of Pardons and Paroles that you are willing to provide a potential parolee with a job upon their release.

Who Can Write One? Anyone who is in a position with the power to hire at your organization (offenders can not write one for themselves).

Why Should I Write an Employment Letter? One of the primary factors considered before an offender is granted parole is employment. A written job-offer helps solidify the fact that an offender is employable, and is very positive in the eyes of Board Members.

Can I Handwrite a Letter? Yes you can, but it should be on your company’s letterhead.

Can I Write One for a Relative? Yes, but you may wish to take additional steps to prove that your offer is real (such as include a copy of your EIN, or a business license). Too often people have tried to submit fake offers.

What if I Change My Mind? Texas is an at-will State. An employment offer is not a binding contract to hire. You can always change your mind without any adverse effects to you or your company.

What Should Be in the Letter? The letter should state (1) the name and TDCJ ID# of the person you’d like to hire; (2) position for which you’d like to hire them; (3) type of employment (full or part time); (4) the number of hours per week you expect them to work; (5) the rate of pay, or a pay range you expect to hire at; (6) the best time to reach you; and (7) your contact information including your title/position.

Where Should I Send It? You should send a signed copy to the offender, and an additional copy to:

TDCJ-Board of Pardons & Parole
8610 Shool Creek Blvd
Austin, TX. 78757

Useful Contacts

In order to take advantage of the financial benefits state and Federal programs offer employers for the hiring of parolees and former felons, contact the following agencies:

Federal Bonding Program
Union Insurance Group
303 W. Erie, STE 310
Chicago, IL. 60654
www.bonds4jobs.com
1-800-233-2258

US Department of Labor (Federal Tax Credits)
200 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC. 20210
www.dol.gov
1-866-487-2365

Texas Comptroller (Work Opportunity Tax Credits)
Texas Workforce Commission
WOTC Unit
101 East 15th Street, Room 202-T
Austin, TX. 78778-0001
www.twc.state.tx.us
1-800-695-6879

Disclaimer: This document is being provided as a guide to assist in the preparation of Employment Letters. Even when these items are submitted, there is no guarantee of parole. We are not lawyers, and offer no legal advice on any matter.
Writing Employment Letters for Parole

When an offender in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice is eligible for parole, one of the primary factors considered by the Board of Pardons & Paroles is whether or not the offender is employable. One of the most important things an offender can do is to provide the Board with an employment letter (job-offer) from an employer. Here we will answer some Frequently Asked Questions regarding employment letters; let you know the benefits to hiring a parolee or prior felon; and give you simple guidelines, with a sample letter to follow so you can write an effective employment letter.

Benefits to Employers

There are many benefits to hiring Parolees and former felons. Some of these include, but aren’t limited to:

**Federal Tax Credits**-The federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program gives employers of felons up to $2,400 in tax credits for each parolee/felon who qualifies. For more information, contact the U.S. Department of Labor.

**State Tax Credits**-Texas offers a Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program that provides state income tax credits to employers for each, qualified, employee with a criminal record. For more information, contact the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

**Federal Bonding**-Many businesses purchase Fidelity Bonding to cover dishonest acts of their employees. Often, former felons are denied jobs as they were considered un-bondable. The Federal Bonding Program not only bonds former felons, it’s done at no cost to the employer, and immediately. For more information, contact the U.S. Department of Labor, or their bonding agent, Union Insurance Group.

**Dedicated Workers**-Parolees have more to lose, and more to prove. Parolees don’t want to have their parole revoked, and most want to prove to you that they’re good workers and that you made the right choice in hiring them.

**Trained Staff**-Many Parolees and former felons have extensive vocational training in areas such as Plumbing, Electrical, HVAC Repair, Automotive Repair, Construction Carpentry and many other fields. Much of this training is through college vocational programs, and some parolees have received certification from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Apprenticeship Programs.

**Drug & Alcohol Free**-Anyone on parole is required to be drug & alcohol free. They are subject to random drug/alcohol testing, and often, as part of parole, saving employers the expense of doing the same.

You have access to a large work pool of educated and dedicated employees for virtually any field. Now all you need to do is take advantage of these well trained men and women, as well as the federal and state tax benefits to your organization. One way you can do this is with an employment letter for a potential parolee.

---

*SAMPLE EMPLOYMENT LETTER*

Wright & Thompson, LLC
123 Main Street
Kemp, Texas 75241
(214)-555-5555
JFSmith@WT.com

September 1, 2016

TDCJ-Board of Pardons and Paroles
8510 Shoal Creek Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78757

Re: John Doe, TDCJ ID# 1234567

Dear Board Members:

I am the Center Manager for Wright Thompson, LLC. I understand that John Doe is under review for parole. I would like to offer him a position with our company upon his release. I am prepared to hire Mr. Doe as a Service Representative. I am offering him full-time employment. He will be scheduled to work forty (40) hours a week, at $12 per hour. If his work performance is acceptable, he will be given a raise within ninety (90) days.

If you have any questions regarding my offer, feel free to contact me Monday-Friday at my office. The best times to reach me are in the mornings, before 11:00am.

I thank you for your attention in this matter, and look forward to having John work for us soon.

Sincerely,

John F. Smith
Center Manager

---

What To Include In Your Employment Letter

1. Your Company Letterhead With Contact Information
2. Date You Wrote the Letter.
3. Name & TDCJ ID# of the Offender For Whom You’re Writing.
4. Your Position at This Company.
5. The Offer (with expected number of hours and rate of pay).
6. Best time to Contact You.
7. Your Signature.