

Veterans' Newsletter
July 2008

Volume 4

Welcome to the July edition of the Jefferson County Workforce Center's **Veterans' Newsletter**. If you have a subject you would like to see covered here, please email either Dave Alred at dalred@jeffco.us or Del Atencio at datencio@jeffco.us.

Job matters most, when it keeps ex-offender free by Doug McPherson

(from: The Denver Post, Sunday, July 6, 2008)

Getting a job and keeping it is especially important today. It is even more critical for an ex-offender to find and keep work.

"Jobs are crucial," said Tina Yankee, executive director of Turnabout Inc., a nonprofit in Denver that provides career and education services for ex-offenders. "We know that between 36 and 50 percent go back to prison when they are without jobs", she said. Using these percentages, joblessness could return to jail up to 4,480 of the 8,954 inmates released by the Colorado Department of Corrections from July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006.

Carol Peoples is re-entry coordinator for the Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition (CCJRC), a Denver nonprofit that works to stop prison growth, and reform drug and parole laws. She agrees that jobs are very important to an ex-offender's success outside jail.

There are attitudes and actions that can help former offenders get to work to stay jail free, according to Pam Clifton, a CCJRC outreach coordinator:

Network with everyone to ask about job opportunities, family, friends, neighbors, etc.

Never give up no matter how bad it gets or how down you get.

Settle for something. Don't hold out for the best job. Take what you can get, then work your way up.

Call back employers after interviews, and write a thank you note restating your interest and qualifications.

Watch for companies that report they are hiring or check with companies in your area, even if they haven't said they are hiring.

There are more ideas in CCJRC's book, **Getting On After Getting Out: A Re-entry Guide for Colorado** including how to find work. It costs \$10 plus shipping. Get it online at www.ccjrc.org or by calling 303 825-0122.

More help available

It is suggested that ex-offenders start their job hunt with organizations like the ones listed below, instead of going straight to employers. These agencies prepare them on how to present a favorable image and how to talk about their past. The agencies often have their own lists of employers, so when people are ready, they can send them.

A few of these area organizations are:

DenverWorks 303 433-0300, www.denverworks.org. It is a program for past offenders, free workplace clothing, workshops, and job placement help.

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The Road Called STRATE 303 360-9176, www.theroadcalledstrate.com. It offers job prep classes, list of felon-friendly employers, food and clothing banks.

Turnabout Inc. 303 813-0005, www.turnaboutprogram.org. It offers career and education programs.

Other Items of Interest

VA Raises GI Bill Payment Rates

The Department of Veterans Affairs has announced that the Montgomery GI Bill will soon be increased by 20 percent – a total increase of nearly \$220 a month over last year's rate. The full time student payment rate of \$1,321 multiplied by the 36 months brings the GI Bill to over \$47,500. If you are GI Bill eligible and have benefits remaining, you get this increase no matter when you became eligible or when you began using it. Read more on **Military.com**

Uncle Sam's on a Hiring Spree

Despite the grim job forecast, the nation's largest employer – Uncle Sam, is on a hiring spree, looking to bring on hundreds of thousands of the nation's best and brightest, according to the Partnership for Public Service.

Two key factors are driving the federal government's hiring projections, according to the organization's research:

- The brain drain. Nearly one-third of the federal workforce, 530,000 employees, is expected to retire or leave in the next 5 years.
- The need to keep American's safe, 193,000 mission critical jobs must be filled by September 2009, including scientists, medical personnel, lawyers, accountants, IT experts and a variety of security positions, including: border patrol agents, customs officers, immigration agents, food inspectors, criminal investigators and airport screeners. Read more on **Military.com**

Veterans interested in working for the federal government can be turned off by the federal application process, but there is help for those wishing to pursue a federal job. Local Veterans Employment Representative Del Atencio at the Jefferson County Workforce Center facilitates a **Federal Job Search Workshop** on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Some of the topics covered include:

- **Becoming familiar with the Federal hiring process
- **Where to look for openings
- **Assessing your soft skills
- **Analyzing keywords in vacancy announcements
- **How to write a Federal resume
- **How to write KSA statements
- **How to apply for Federal jobs
- **How to follow up on your applications.

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An overview of veteran's preference is also presented during this workshop. If you wish to attend this workshop, please call the Workforce Center main reception desk at 303- 271-4700 or 4701 to register.

For Yahoo.com users only

Please be advised that the State of Colorado's **ConnectingColorado.com** job search site cannot send emails to your accounts. We advise you to switch to some other free email service, such as Hotmail.com.

We are here for you!

The US Department of Labor and the Jefferson County Workforce Center place great emphasis on service to veterans, especially to recently separated veterans and to those with a service-connected disability or some other barrier to employment.

If you feel you have a situation that is limiting your job readiness or hindering your job search **or would just like some assistance with your job search**, please call one of the Jefferson County Workforce Center Veterans Employment Representatives at 303 271-4787 or 4728 or send an email to Del Atencio at datencio@jeffco.us or to David Alred at dalred@jeffco.us. We are located at the Laramie Building, 3500 Illinois Street, in Golden, CO.

