

FORMER OFFENDERS AND TROUBLE FINDING WORK



There was a time during his life in which Tim Baker believed death was the best way for him to improve his current situation. Baker points out that people who are depressed often feel like suicide is the best answer. In the past, Baker had his share of trouble with the law, which led to some felony convictions based on charges that he was driving while he was intoxicated. Baker ended up in jail for eight years and after serving his time, he was released as a new man. He was happy to be able to reunite with family and friends and then got the job working as a heating technician. Shortly after he got the job, he ended up being let go from the company because they were now working for the school district and the school district does not allow convicted felons to be on school grounds. Because of this, Baker ended up on the streets. He felt as though the vast majority of people around him did not care. He says he knows he did some bad things in the past and was once a convict, but he insists that he is a changed man yet feels as though he is put in a bubble, in which he is always going to be considered a convict. Baker, who is 52 years old, is living at the Salvation Army located in Fort Worth. Most of his days consist of sending resumes to different companies in effort of finding employment that he needs. He is not alone, as Brian Shaw, who also is currently looking for employment, usually runs into Baker at the Texas Re-Entry Services. The services tries to help individuals like Baker and Shaw who need the skills that will help them find employment, as well as housing. They are not the only inmates dealing with such fate. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice releases nearly 75,000 inmates per year and many of them have a hard time adjusting and finding employment, especially because they have marks on their record. After being released, within the span of three years, nearly 24 percent of the entire prison population ends up back in jail. It is a vicious cycle that never seems to end. The problem is that when these individuals are released from long prison sentences, they often have a hard time finding employment, especially because their past can easily be found on any criminal background check performed by a company. This means they are left unemployed and homeless, often leading them to live a life of crime, which lands them back in jail eventually. And, when these individuals are re-incarcerated, the taxpayers have to pay too. It is important to help these individuals find employment and housing as soon as possible, to help them break the cycle and get back in the swing of things with society. There has been a lot of effort going on to help these individuals, along with the EEOC making adjustments to its guidelines in hope that more ex-convicts will be able to find employment.