



HTL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



GEORGIA SECOND CHANCE EMPLOYMENT GUIDE

EMPLOYERS • INDUSTRIES • CAREER PATHWAYS • REENTRY SUCCESS



SECOND CHANCES
STRONGER COMMUNITIES



REAL OPPORTUNITIES
REAL CAREERS



BUILD SKILLS
BUILD CONFIDENCE



BUILDING GEORGIA'S
WORKFORCE TOGETHER

HTL Workforce Development

Georgia Second Chance Employment Guide

Section 1 – Welcome

Building Careers. Restoring Hope. Creating Opportunities.

At **HTL Workforce Development**, we believe employment is more than earning a paycheck—it is a pathway to stability, dignity, financial independence, and long-term success. Every individual deserves an opportunity to rebuild their life, demonstrate personal growth, and contribute positively to their family and community.

The **Georgia Second Chance Employment Guide** was developed to help justice-involved individuals navigate today's employment market with confidence. Whether you are returning from incarceration, completing probation or parole, participating in a recovery program, or simply seeking a fresh start, this guide is designed to connect you with industries and employers that have demonstrated a willingness to consider qualified applicants with criminal records.

This guide is intended to be a practical workforce resource—not simply a list of employers. Throughout these pages you will learn:

- Which industries are most receptive to hiring individuals with criminal records
- Georgia employers with significant hiring opportunities
- How different conviction types may affect employment opportunities
- How to confidently discuss your criminal history during interviews
- Commercial Driver's License (CDL) opportunities and restrictions
- Career planning strategies that build long-term employment success
- Georgia workforce resources designed specifically for second-chance job seekers

Our objective is to equip participants with realistic expectations, professional job search strategies, and the confidence necessary to compete successfully in today's workforce.

Our Philosophy

Employment is one of the strongest predictors of successful community reintegration. Research consistently demonstrates that stable employment contributes to:

- Reduced recidivism
- Increased financial stability
- Improved mental health
- Stronger family relationships
- Increased community engagement
- Greater long-term independence

At HTL Workforce Development, we focus on developing both technical skills and professional behaviors that employers value, including:

- Reliability
- Accountability
- Communication
- Professionalism
- Problem-solving
- Adaptability
- Teamwork
- Continuous learning

These qualities often become more important to employers than past mistakes when demonstrated consistently over time.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is organized to support participants through every stage of the employment process.

You will find:

Industry Overviews

Learn which industries offer the greatest opportunities for individuals with criminal records and understand the hiring expectations within each sector.

Employer Directory

Review Georgia employers organized by industry, including hiring trends, typical job roles, policy notes, and conviction considerations.

Career Planning Resources

Develop an effective employment strategy that includes resume preparation, interview skills, conviction disclosure, and career advancement.

Workforce Resources

Connect with Georgia workforce agencies, career centers, apprenticeship programs, and community organizations that provide employment assistance.

Important Disclaimer

This guide should be used as a starting point—not a guarantee of employment.

Employer hiring practices vary by:

- Individual hiring manager
- Job location
- Position applied for
- State and federal regulations
- Nature of the criminal conviction
- Time since conviction
- Evidence of rehabilitation
- Professional certifications
- Employment history

A company that hires individuals with criminal records in one Georgia location may apply different hiring practices at another location.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the local hiring office to verify current hiring policies before applying.

This approach reflects the guidance in the source document, which emphasizes that hiring practices vary by location, manager, and conviction type and recommends researching individual locations before applying.

HTL Workforce Development Commitment

HTL Workforce Development is committed to helping participants:

- Develop marketable workforce skills
- Build competitive resumes
- Improve interviewing confidence
- Connect with second-chance employers
- Identify career pathways
- Increase long-term earning potential
- Build financial independence
- Successfully transition into sustainable employment

Our mission extends beyond helping individuals obtain employment—we strive to help participants build careers.

Section 2 - Understanding Second Chance Employment in Georgia

What Is Second Chance Employment?

Second Chance Employment refers to hiring practices that provide qualified individuals with criminal records an opportunity to compete fairly for employment.

Many employers recognize that:

- People can change.
- Rehabilitation is possible.
- Work history often becomes a stronger predictor of future success than past convictions.
- Reliable employees come from many different backgrounds.

Second chance hiring does not mean employers ignore criminal records. Instead, many employers evaluate applicants individually by considering:

- Nature of the offense
- Time since conviction
- Job responsibilities
- Evidence of rehabilitation
- Employment history
- Professional references

- Educational achievements
- Certifications earned

This individualized approach aligns with the principles presented in the source guide, which notes that conviction type and rehabilitation significantly influence hiring decisions.

Why Employment Matters

For individuals returning to the workforce after involvement with the criminal justice system, employment creates opportunities far beyond income.

Employment helps individuals:

- Establish financial stability
- Build new professional relationships
- Develop confidence
- Demonstrate responsibility
- Support their families
- Secure housing
- Qualify for financing
- Reduce the likelihood of future justice involvement

Employers also benefit through access to motivated workers during a period of workforce shortages across many industries.

Understanding Conviction Types

Not all criminal convictions affect employment equally.

According to the source guide, employers commonly evaluate convictions differently depending on the type of offense. Drug-related convictions are often viewed more favorably than theft, fraud, violent offenses, or sex offenses, with retail, finance, and certain licensed professions generally applying stricter standards.

Drug Offenses

Many employers consider:

- Completion of treatment
- Length of sobriety
- Recovery participation
- Time since conviction

Warehouse, manufacturing, food service, construction, and staffing employers frequently review these convictions on an individual basis.

Theft and Fraud

Employers often exercise greater caution when positions involve:

- Cash handling
- Financial transactions
- Inventory control
- Customer property
- Banking
- Accounting

Applicants may still qualify for warehouse, production, construction, or other positions that do not involve direct financial responsibility.

Violent Offenses

Employers typically evaluate:

- Time elapsed
- Circumstances
- Rehabilitation efforts
- Job environment
- Customer interaction
- Safety concerns

Many construction, manufacturing, and warehouse positions continue to consider qualified applicants with older convictions.

Sex Offenses

Many industries—including education, childcare, healthcare, and positions involving vulnerable populations—are subject to statutory or licensing restrictions. The source guide notes that these convictions face near-universal exclusion from most standard employment settings.

Georgia's Growing Opportunities

Georgia continues to experience workforce demand in several industries where employers frequently seek entry-level and skilled workers.

Examples include:

- Distribution and logistics
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Commercial transportation
- Hospitality
- Food service
- Skilled trades
- Warehousing

For many participants, these industries provide practical entry points into long-term careers.

Building a Competitive Employment Profile

Employers often evaluate more than a criminal record. Strengthening your overall profile can improve employment opportunities by demonstrating reliability and readiness to work.

Helpful steps include:

- Maintaining consistent employment
- Completing workforce training
- Earning industry certifications
- Obtaining reliable transportation
- Developing strong professional references
- Participating in volunteer service
- Completing recovery or educational programs
- Practicing interview skills

The HTL Workforce Development Approach

Our workforce development model emphasizes five core areas:

Employment Readiness

Preparing participants to compete successfully in today's job market.

Skills Development

Building technical, digital, and workplace competencies.

Career Pathways

Helping participants pursue careers rather than short-term jobs.

Employer Partnerships

Connecting participants with businesses committed to expanding employment opportunities.

Long-Term Success

Supporting participants as they advance beyond entry-level employment into sustainable careers.

Section 3 - Georgia Industry Overview

Understanding Georgia's Employment Landscape

Georgia has one of the fastest-growing and most diverse labor markets in the Southeast. Major industries—including logistics, manufacturing, construction, food service, hospitality, and transportation—continue to experience workforce shortages, creating opportunities for qualified applicants seeking a second chance.

For justice-involved individuals, selecting the right industry can significantly improve employment outcomes. Some sectors routinely evaluate applicants on an individual basis, while others face regulatory, licensing, or safety requirements that limit hiring flexibility.

The source guide emphasizes that industries differ substantially in their willingness to hire individuals with criminal records, with staffing agencies, warehousing, construction, and food service generally offering the greatest opportunities, while finance, healthcare, and education face more restrictive legal and licensing barriers.

Georgia Second-Chance Industry Rankings

Industry	Opportunity	Georgia Outlook	Career Growth	Recommended Starting Point
Staffing & Temporary Employment	★★★★★	Excellent	High	Excellent
Warehouse & Logistics	★★★★★	Excellent	High	Excellent
Manufacturing	★★★★★	Excellent	High	Excellent
Construction & Skilled Trades	★★★★★	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Food Service & Hospitality	★★★★★	Excellent	Moderate	Excellent
Commercial Transportation (CDL)	★★★★☆	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Retail	★★★★☆	Good	Moderate	Good
Delivery & Gig Economy	★★★☆☆	Good	Moderate	Good
Healthcare Support	★★☆☆☆	Moderate	High	Limited
Banking & Finance	★☆☆☆☆	Limited	Moderate	Limited
Education & Childcare	★☆☆☆☆	Limited	Moderate	Limited

1. Staffing & Temporary Agencies

Why This Industry Works

Staffing agencies are often the fastest pathway back into the workforce. Many employers use staffing firms to evaluate workers before offering permanent employment.

According to the source guide, temporary employment helps applicants build recent W-2 employment history, one of the strongest indicators of employability after justice involvement.

Typical Positions

- Warehouse Associate
- Machine Operator
- Forklift Operator
- Administrative Assistant
- General Laborer
- Manufacturing Associate
- Shipping & Receiving
- Production Technician

Georgia Outlook

Excellent

Large staffing markets include:

- Atlanta
- Savannah
- Augusta
- Columbus
- Macon
- Gainesville
- Dalton

Hiring Considerations

Many staffing agencies evaluate applicants individually and match workers with employers based on assignment requirements.

Applicants should expect:

- Drug screening
- Background check
- Employment verification
- Safety orientation

2. Warehouse & Logistics

Georgia is one of the nation's largest logistics hubs.

Major distribution centers support:

- Amazon
- Home Depot
- Walmart
- UPS
- FedEx
- DHL
- Coca-Cola
- Target
- Kroger

The source guide identifies warehousing as one of the most accessible industries because of high-volume hiring and limited look-back periods for many positions, while noting that theft and safety-related convictions receive closer review.

Typical Positions

- Order Picker
- Forklift Operator
- Shipping Clerk
- Inventory Associate
- Package Handler
- Loader
- Distribution Associate
- Receiving Clerk

3. Manufacturing

Manufacturing continues to expand throughout Georgia, particularly in automotive, food processing, paper products, flooring, aerospace, and packaging.

Many manufacturers value reliability, attendance, and safety over previous criminal history.

The source guide notes that production environments often have straightforward screening processes, with safety violations and recent violent offenses receiving the greatest scrutiny.

Examples include:

- Automotive Manufacturing
- Food Production
- Packaging
- Textile Manufacturing
- Industrial Equipment
- Consumer Products

Typical Jobs

- Production Associate
- Assembly Technician
- Machine Operator
- Material Handler
- Maintenance Technician
- Quality Inspector

4. Construction & Skilled Trades

Construction remains one of the strongest second-chance industries.

Employers generally prioritize:

- Dependability
- Work ethic
- Skill level
- Certifications
- Safety

The source guide explains that skilled trades often value demonstrated ability over criminal history, although project-specific security requirements and certain safety-sensitive positions may involve additional screening.

Typical Careers

- Carpenter
- Electrician Apprentice
- HVAC Helper
- Painter
- Roofer
- Concrete Laborer
- Heavy Equipment Operator
- Plumbing Apprentice

5. Food Service & Hospitality

Restaurants and hotels continue to hire large numbers of entry-level workers.

Advantages include:

- Flexible schedules
- Rapid hiring
- Advancement opportunities
- Management training

The source guide identifies food service as a high-turnover industry with broad accessibility, while cautioning that cash-handling roles and jobs in hospitals or schools may have stricter screening.

Typical Jobs

- Cook
- Dishwasher
- Prep Cook
- Housekeeper
- Server
- Banquet Staff
- Maintenance
- Kitchen Manager

6. Commercial Transportation

Commercial driving remains one of the highest-paying opportunities for individuals without a college degree.

The guide notes that most felony convictions do not automatically prevent obtaining or using a CDL, though DUI, drug trafficking, and certain offenses involving commercial vehicles may be disqualifying under federal rules or carrier policy.

Typical Careers

- CDL Driver
- Yard Driver
- Delivery Driver
- Fleet Technician
- Dispatcher
- Dock Worker

7. Retail

Retail employment offers numerous entry-level opportunities, although employers often exercise additional caution for positions involving cash handling or financial responsibility.

The source guide recommends avoiding cashier-focused roles when an applicant has theft or fraud convictions and notes that stockroom or warehouse roles are often more accessible.

Industries That May Require Additional Planning

Some occupations are regulated by state licensing boards or federal law.

These may include:

- Healthcare
- Banking
- Childcare
- Education
- Law Enforcement
- Security
- Certain Government Positions

The source guide identifies healthcare, finance, and education as industries with comparatively low tolerance because of statutory and licensing requirements.

HTL Workforce Development Recommendation

For most participants, the recommended progression is:

1. Staffing Agency
2. Warehouse or Manufacturing
3. Construction or Skilled Trade
4. Permanent Full-Time Employment
5. Industry Certification
6. Career Advancement
7. Supervisory or Skilled Position

This pathway enables participants to establish a consistent work history while developing transferable skills and increasing long-term earning potential.



HTL WORKFORCE
— DEVELOPMENT —

GEORGIA SECOND CHANCE EMPLOYER DIRECTORY



INTRODUCTION

This directory highlights employers with significant operations in Georgia that have documented or well-reported histories of considering qualified applicants with criminal records.

As emphasized throughout the source guide, hiring practices vary by company, location, manager, position, and conviction type; applicants should always verify policies with the specific hiring location before applying.



**BUILDING CAREERS.
RESTORING HOPE.
TRANSFORMING LIVES.**



SECOND CHANCES
STRONGER COMMUNITIES



REAL OPPORTUNITIES
REAL CAREERS



BUILD SKILLS
BUILD CONFIDENCE



STRONG PARTNERSHIPS
LASTING IMPACT

**YOUR PAST DOES NOT DEFINE YOU.
YOUR FUTURE STARTS NOW.**

READY TO WORK. READY TO GROW.



For more details, feel free to contact
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or call
404-500-3726

Staffing & Temporary Employment

Company	Georgia Roles	Policy Notes	Watch: Conviction Types	Georgia Careers
Adecco	Warehouse, Production, Clerical	Corporate fair-chance commitment; branch execution varies.	White-collar convictions may affect office placements.	https://www.adecco.com
Aerotek	Manufacturing, Engineering, Skilled Trades	Skilled trades experience valued.	Manufacturing placements generally more flexible than office roles.	https://www.aerotek.com
Express Employment Professionals	General Labor, Office, Industrial	Franchise model; policies vary by office.	Contact local office regarding eligibility.	https://www.expresspros.com
PeopleReady	Construction, Events, General Labor	Documented second-chance hiring practices.	Most convictions reviewed individually.	https://www.peopleready.com
Manpower	Clerical, Production, Warehouse	National agency; local branch discretion.	Industry-specific screening.	https://www.manpower.com
Kelly Services	Office, Industrial, Technical	EEOC-compliant screening.	Theft may affect clerical placements.	https://www.kellyservices.com
Staffmark	Industrial, Clerical	Fair-chance language in corporate policy.	Drug convictions generally acceptable; other offenses reviewed individually.	https://www.staffmark.com
Labor Finders	General Labor	Branch managers have discretion.	Client requirements determine placement.	https://www.laborfinders.com
Spherion	Light Industrial, Clerical	Fair-chance language noted.	Case-by-case evaluation.	https://www.spherion.com
EmployBridge	Warehouse, Office, Logistics	Parent company of multiple staffing brands with fair-chance representation.	Manufacturing assignments generally more flexible.	https://www.employbridge.com

Warehouse & Logistics

Company	Georgia Roles	Policy Notes	Watch: Conviction Types	Georgia Careers
Amazon	Fulfillment Associate, Sortation, Warehouse	Individual felony review; distribution centers often more flexible.	Older non-violent convictions generally receive individual review.	https://www.amazon.jobs
UPS	Package Handler, Warehouse, Loader	Warehouse entry frequently recommended; driving roles require additional screening.	DUI affects driving positions.	https://www.jobs-ups.com
FedEx	Package Handler, Sorter	Ground operations often provide more flexibility than Express.	Driving positions require clean motor vehicle records.	https://careers.fedex.com
DHL Supply Chain	Warehouse Associate	U.S. warehouse roles generally more accessible than driving positions.	Security-sensitive facilities may have stricter requirements.	https://careers.dhl.com
Ryder	Warehouse, Logistics	Warehouse positions are generally more flexible than commercial driving.	DUI primarily affects driving roles.	https://ryder.com/careers
Penske Logistics	Warehouse, Driver, Logistics	Clean MVR required for driving positions.	Driving and safety violations receive additional review.	https://penske.jobs
XPO	Dock Worker, Warehouse	Large-scale logistics operation with regional hiring practices.	Theft, fraud, and violent offenses reviewed closely.	https://jobs.xpo.com
Lineage Logistics	Cold Storage, Warehouse	High-volume hiring for warehouse operations.	Safety and drug-related considerations.	https://www.lineagelogistics.com/careers

Construction & Skilled Trades

Construction remains one of the strongest career pathways for individuals rebuilding their employment history. Georgia's rapid residential, commercial, transportation, and industrial growth continues to create demand for skilled and entry-level workers.

Company	Georgia Roles	Policy Notes	Watch: Conviction Types	Careers
Holder Construction	Construction Laborer, Carpenter, Superintendent Assistant	Large Atlanta commercial contractor. Project requirements vary.	Security-sensitive projects may require enhanced screening.	https://www.holderconstruction.com/careers
Brasfield & Gorrie	Laborer, Concrete, Equipment Operator	Skilled trades experience valued.	Drug testing standard.	https://www.brasfieldgorrie.com/careers
D.R. Horton	Framing, General Labor, Construction Assistant	Subcontractor hiring varies by project.	Safety violations reviewed.	https://careers.drhorton.com
Lennar	Construction Assistant, Warranty, Field Operations	Hiring standards vary by subcontractor.	Individual review.	https://careers.lennar.com
Fluor	Industrial Construction	Site-specific screening requirements.	Security-cleared projects stricter.	https://www.fluor.com/careers
Kiewit	Heavy Civil Construction	Skilled trades prioritized.	Safety-focused screening.	https://www.kiewitjobs.com
Rosendin Electric	Electrical Apprentice	Apprenticeship opportunities available.	Safety and drug screening.	https://www.rosendin.com/careers
Comfort Systems USA	HVAC Apprentice, Installer	Trade certifications valued.	Customer access positions reviewed more carefully.	https://www.comfortsystemsusa.com/careers
Quanta Services	Utility Construction	Field experience preferred.	Drug testing standard.	https://www.quantaservices.com/careers

Company	Georgia Roles	Policy Notes	Watch: Conviction Types	Careers
MYR Group	Utility Construction	Electrical construction focus.	Safety-sensitive work.	https://www.myrgroup.com/careers

Manufacturing

Georgia is home to one of the fastest-growing manufacturing sectors in the Southeast, including automotive production, aerospace, food processing, packaging, flooring, and paper products.

Company	Georgia Roles	Policy Notes	Watch: Conviction Types	Careers
Kia Georgia	Assembly, Production, Maintenance	High-volume automotive manufacturing.	Safety-sensitive positions receive additional review.	https://www.kia-georgia.com/careers
Hyundai Motor Group Metaplant America	Production Associate, Logistics	New automotive manufacturing facility.	Safety standards emphasized.	https://careers.hyundai.com
Georgia-Pacific	Production, Warehouse, Maintenance	Fair-chance language through Koch subsidiaries.	Safety-focused environment.	https://www.gp.com/careers
Mohawk Industries	Production Associate	Large Georgia employer with plant operations.	Safety violations reviewed.	https://careers.mohawkind.com
Graphic Packaging International	Packaging Production	Production roles accessible.	Drug testing standard.	https://careers.graphicpkg.com
Pilgrim's Pride	Poultry Processing	High-volume hiring.	Food safety and drug screening.	https://jobs.pilgrims.com

Company	Georgia Roles	Policy Notes	Watch: Conviction Types	Careers
Tyson Foods	Production, Packaging	Large employer with nationwide operations.	Food safety focus.	https://www.tysonfoods.com/careers
Koch Foods	Poultry Processing	Plant hiring throughout Georgia.	Non-violent convictions commonly reviewed individually.	https://kochfoods.com/careers
International Paper	Manufacturing	Industrial production environment.	Safety standards emphasized.	https://careers.internationalpaper.com
Pratt Industries	Paper & Packaging	Production and warehouse opportunities.	Manufacturing experience helpful.	https://www.prattindustries.com/careers

Retail

Retail offers many entry-level opportunities, particularly in stocking, fulfillment, warehouse support, and customer service. Applicants with theft or fraud convictions may find stockroom or warehouse positions more accessible than cashier roles, consistent with the source guide's recommendations.

Company	Georgia Roles	Policy Notes	Watch: Conviction Types	Careers
Home Depot (Headquartered in Atlanta)	Sales, Lot Associate, Warehouse	Individual manager discretion.	Theft reviewed for tool-access positions.	https://careers.homedepot.com
Walmart	Stocker, Fulfillment, Distribution	Distribution centers often more flexible.	Theft reviewed for cashier roles.	https://careers.walmart.com
Lowe's	Sales, Loader, Warehouse	Manager discretion significant.	Theft reviewed.	https://talent.lowes.com
Target	Fulfillment, Stocking	Individualized review.	Theft may affect cash-handling positions.	https://corporate.target.com/careers
Dollar General	Store Associate	High turnover hiring.	Cash-handling reviewed.	https://careers.dollargeneral.com
Goodwill of North Georgia	Retail, Warehouse, Donations	Mission-driven second-chance employment.	Most convictions considered individually.	https://goodwillng.org/careers
Salvation Army	Retail Associate	Reentry-focused mission.	Individual review.	https://careers.salvationarmy.org
Costco	Warehouse Associate	Higher screening standards.	Theft and violence reviewed carefully.	https://www.costco.com/jobs.html
TJ Maxx/Marshalls	Stockroom Associate	High-volume hiring.	Stockroom positions often more accessible.	https://jobs.tjx.com
Five Below	Sales Associate	High turnover environment.	Cash-handling positions reviewed.	https://careers.fivebelow.com

Food Service & Hospitality

Restaurants, contract food service providers, hotels, and hospitality companies frequently provide entry-level employment opportunities with advancement potential.

Company	Georgia Roles	Policy Notes	Watch: Conviction Types	Careers
Waffle House (Georgia Headquarters)	Cook, Server, Grill Operator	High turnover; strong opportunity.	Reliability emphasized.	https://www.wafflehouse.com/careers
Chick-fil-A	Team Member, Kitchen	Individual franchise hiring.	Varies by owner/operator.	https://www.chick-fil-a.com/careers
McDonald's	Crew Member, Kitchen	Corporate fair-chance support with franchise variation.	Kitchen roles generally more accessible.	https://careers.mcdonalds.com
Burger King	Crew Member	Franchise hiring.	Owner discretion.	https://careers.bk.com
Subway	Sandwich Artist	Small franchise flexibility.	Local owner policies.	https://www.mysubwaycareer.com
Domino's	Kitchen, Delivery	Driving requires acceptable MVR.	DUI affects delivery.	https://jobs.dominos.com
Compass Group	Food Service	Large contract food service provider.	Hospitals and schools have stricter screening.	https://careers.compassgroupcareers.com
Aramark	Food Service, Facilities	Entry-level food service accessible.	Sensitive facilities require additional checks.	https://careers.aramark.com
Sodexo	Food Service	Site-dependent hiring.	Healthcare sites have stricter standards.	https://jobs.sodexo.com
Darden Restaurants	Kitchen, Server	Large restaurant operator.	Cash-handling positions reviewed.	https://careers.darden.com

Georgia Nonprofit & Community Employers

Mission-driven organizations often provide employment opportunities while supporting long-term career development.

Organization	Roles	Notes	Careers
Goodwill of North Georgia	Retail, Warehouse, Career Services	Workforce development and employment support.	https://goodwillng.org
Habitat for Humanity ReStore	Retail, Warehouse	Employment and volunteer opportunities.	https://www.habitat.org
Salvation Army	Retail, Warehouse, Social Services	Mission-based employer with reentry experience.	https://careers.salvationarmy.org

HTL Workforce Development Career Strategy

To maximize employment opportunities, participants should prioritize applications in the following order:

1. **Staffing & Temporary Agencies** – Build recent work history quickly.
2. **Warehouse & Logistics** – Gain stable employment with advancement opportunities.
3. **Manufacturing & Construction** – Develop specialized skills and increase earnings.
4. **Transportation or Skilled Trades** – Pursue certifications and long-term career growth.
5. **Supervisory or Technical Roles** – Advance through demonstrated performance and continued training.

Use temporary employment to establish a recent W-2 work history before transitioning into long-term career roles.

Section 5 - How to Discuss Your Conviction

Turning Your Past into Your Strength

One of the most challenging moments in the employment process is discussing a criminal conviction with a potential employer. While many applicants fear this conversation, employers are often more interested in **how you respond** than in the conviction itself.

According to the source guide, applications frequently fail during the interview—not because of the background check—but because applicants become defensive, dishonest, overly emotional, or attempt to minimize what occurred. A clear, factual, and accountable response is generally more effective.

The goal is **not to relive your past**—it is to demonstrate that you have grown from it and are prepared to become a dependable employee.

The HTL Four-Step Response Method

When discussing a conviction, remember these four steps:

Step 1: State the Facts

Be honest and direct.

Avoid:

- Making excuses
- Blaming others
- Minimizing the offense
- Providing unnecessary details

Instead, clearly state:

- The conviction
- The year
- That you accept responsibility

Example

"I have a felony conviction from 2020."

Simple.

Professional.

Honest.

Step 2: Accept Responsibility

Employers appreciate accountability.

Avoid statements like:

- "It wasn't really my fault."
- "Everyone else was doing it."
- "The police targeted me."

Instead say:

"I made a poor decision, and I take full responsibility for my actions."

This demonstrates maturity.

Step 3: Explain What Changed

Employers want to know:

Why won't this happen again?

Talk about:

- Recovery
- Counseling
- Education
- Training
- Faith
- Family
- Employment
- Community service

Examples:

- Completed treatment
- Earned certifications
- Finished probation
- Obtained a GED
- Graduated from a workforce program
- Volunteered
- Maintained sobriety

Show evidence—not promises.

Step 4: Redirect to Your Strengths

Finish by returning the conversation to your qualifications.

Talk about:

- Dependability
- Attendance
- Skills
- Certifications
- Work ethic
- Teamwork
- Desire to build a career

Example:

"I'm ready to work, learn, and become a valuable member of your team."

This four-step structure reflects the formula in the source guide: state the fact, take responsibility, explain what changed, and redirect to your capabilities.

Sample Interview Responses

Drug Conviction

"I have a felony drug conviction from 2021. During that time I struggled with addiction and made poor decisions. Since then, I've completed treatment, maintained my recovery, and focused on rebuilding my life. I've earned workforce certifications and I'm committed to being a dependable employee. I'm excited about this opportunity because I enjoy physical work and want to build a long-term career."

This mirrors the approach recommended in the source guide while expanding it into a workplace-ready response.

Theft Conviction

"I have a theft conviction from 2019. I accept responsibility for my actions and understand how serious they were. Since then I've completed all court requirements, maintained steady employment, and worked hard to rebuild trust. I'm looking for an opportunity to demonstrate that I'm dependable, accountable, and committed to doing quality work."

Assault Conviction

"I have an assault conviction from 2018. It resulted from poor judgment during a difficult period of my life. Since then I've completed all required programs, stayed out of legal trouble, and focused on personal growth. I'm committed to maintaining professionalism and treating everyone with respect."

This follows the same interview framework illustrated in the source guide's violent conviction example.

Fraud Conviction

"I have a fraud conviction from several years ago. I fully accept responsibility for that decision. Since then I've worked to rebuild my reputation by completing training, maintaining stable employment, and demonstrating honesty in every position I've held. I'm seeking an opportunity to continue moving forward."

Questions Employers May Ask

"Can you tell me about your conviction?"

Keep your answer under two minutes.

"What have you learned?"

Focus on:

- Accountability
- Growth
- Responsibility
- Better decision-making

"Why should we hire you?"

Return the discussion to:

- Your work ethic
- Attendance
- Skills
- Reliability
- Positive attitude

"Can we trust you?"

Answer with actions—not opinions.

Example:

"I understand trust has to be earned. That's why I've completed my obligations, maintained steady employment, continued my training, and focused on proving myself through my actions."

Questions You Should Never Ask

Avoid asking:

- "Do y'all hire felons?"
- "Will my background stop me?"
- "Will you overlook my record?"

Instead ask:

- "Can you tell me more about the position?"
- "What qualities make someone successful here?"
- "What opportunities are available for advancement?"
- "What training do new employees receive?"

What Employers Want to Hear

Employers consistently look for applicants who demonstrate:

- ✓ Honesty
- ✓ Accountability
- ✓ Stability
- ✓ Reliability
- ✓ Respect
- ✓ Professionalism
- ✓ Willingness to Learn

What Employers Do NOT Want to Hear

Avoid statements such as:

- X "It wasn't my fault."
- X "Everybody does it."
- X "I shouldn't have been arrested."
- X "The system was against me."
- X "I don't want to talk about it."
- X "You can believe whatever you want."

When Should You Discuss Your Conviction?

The source guide provides clear recommendations on timing:

On the Application

If the application asks about criminal history, answer truthfully. Falsifying an application can result in termination even years later if discovered.

During the Interview

Do not volunteer your conviction before you are asked. If the topic arises, use the four-step response method and keep your explanation brief and focused.

After a Conditional Offer

Some employers conduct background checks only after extending a conditional offer. At that stage, you have greater leverage because the employer has already determined that you are qualified for the position.

Do Not Include It On

- Your résumé
- Your cover letter
- An unsolicited email
- An initial phone inquiry

The source guide specifically advises against disclosing a conviction before it is requested during the hiring process.

HTL Interview Success Checklist

Before every interview, ask yourself:

- ☐ Can I explain my conviction in under two minutes?
- ☐ Have I accepted responsibility without making excuses?
- ☐ Can I describe the steps I've taken to improve my life?
- ☐ Am I prepared to discuss my current skills and qualifications?
- ☐ Have I researched the company and position?
- ☐ Am I ready to end the conversation by focusing on what I can contribute?

HTL Workforce Development Key Takeaway

Your conviction is **part of your story—not your identity**. Employers hire people who demonstrate honesty, accountability, and readiness to work. By preparing a concise, professional response and emphasizing your skills and growth, you can shift the conversation from your past to the value you bring as an employee.

Section 6 - CDL With a Felony - Georgia Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Quick Reference Guide

Driving Your Future Forward

A Commercial Driver's License (CDL) can be one of the most valuable credentials for individuals seeking long-term, high-paying employment after involvement with the criminal justice system. Georgia serves as a major transportation and logistics hub, with interstate highways, ports, rail systems, and distribution centers creating strong demand for qualified commercial drivers.

Many people mistakenly believe that **a felony conviction automatically prevents them from obtaining a CDL**. In reality, federal regulations identify only certain offenses that disqualify applicants, while many other convictions are evaluated by individual employers.

The source guide emphasizes that **most felony convictions do not automatically prevent someone from obtaining or using a CDL**, although specific federal disqualifiers and company policies apply.

Why Consider a CDL Career?

Commercial driving offers:

- Competitive starting wages
- Career stability
- High demand across Georgia
- Opportunities for advancement
- Paid training with many employers
- Opportunities to become an owner-operator
- Nationwide employment opportunities

Typical Georgia CDL occupations include:

- Tractor-Trailer Driver
- Local Delivery Driver
- Tanker Driver
- Flatbed Driver
- Food Distribution Driver
- Construction Hauler
- Utility Driver
- Fuel Transport Driver
- Bus Driver (additional requirements apply)
- Dump Truck Driver

Georgia's Transportation Industry

Georgia is home to one of the nation's largest freight networks, supported by:

- The Port of Savannah
- Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport
- Interstate 75
- Interstate 85
- Interstate 20
- Interstate 16
- Thousands of distribution centers throughout the state

Major employers include:

- UPS
- FedEx
- Amazon Freight
- Penske Logistics
- Ryder System
- XPO Logistics
- Schneider National
- Werner Enterprises
- Swift Transportation
- Old Dominion Freight Line
- McLane Company
- Coca-Cola Consolidated
- Publix Distribution
- Walmart Transportation

Federal CDL Disqualifiers

The following convictions generally result in federal disqualification from obtaining or maintaining a CDL, as summarized in the source guide.

Conviction Type	CDL Eligibility	Notes
Drug trafficking involving a commercial vehicle or qualifying felony	No	Federal disqualifier.
DUI/DWI (within applicable federal/state disqualification periods)	Generally No	Can result in CDL denial or suspension.
Leaving the scene of a felony accident	No	Federal disqualifier.
Using a vehicle to commit a felony	No	Federal disqualifier.

Convictions That May Still Allow CDL Employment

According to the source guide, these convictions are **not automatic federal CDL disqualifiers**, although individual trucking companies may establish stricter hiring standards.

Conviction	Typical Employer Review
Theft/Burglary	Case-by-case review
Weapons Charges	Company policy varies
Non-violent Felonies	Frequently reviewed individually
Drug Possession (non-trafficking)	Carrier policy varies
Older Convictions	Often viewed more favorably with evidence of rehabilitation
Property Crimes	Depends on employer and position

These distinctions are consistent with the quick-reference table provided in the source guide.

Common Employer Hiring Considerations

In addition to criminal history, trucking companies often evaluate:

Motor Vehicle Record (MVR)

Employers review:

- Speeding violations
- Suspensions
- Reckless driving
- Accidents
- DUI history

Employment History

Companies look for:

- Stable work history
- Attendance
- Reliability
- Safety awareness

Drug & Alcohol Testing

Federal regulations require:

- Pre-employment drug testing
- Random testing
- Post-accident testing
- Reasonable suspicion testing

DOT Physical

Applicants must meet U.S. Department of Transportation medical requirements before operating commercial vehicles.

Georgia Employers That Frequently Hire CDL Drivers

Company	Typical Positions	Training Available	Notes
Schneider National	OTR Driver	Yes	Individual review of many non-DOT-related convictions.
CRST International	Team Driver	Yes	CDL training program available; background reviewed individually.
Werner Enterprises	Regional Driver	Yes	Individual review process.
Swift Transportation	OTR Driver	Yes	Large training program; DOT standards apply.
Prime Inc.	Refrigerated Driver	Yes	Reviews applicants individually.
Roehl Transport	OTR Driver	Yes	Background reviewed individually.
Marten Transport	Refrigerated Driver	Limited	Individual review for qualified applicants.
Old Dominion Freight Line	Dock Worker / Driver	Limited	Dock positions may provide a pathway to driving roles.

HTL Workforce Development Recommendations

Before pursuing a CDL career:

Step 1: Obtain Your Motor Vehicle Record (MVR)

Know exactly what employers will see before applying.

The source guide recommends obtaining your MVR in advance to avoid surprises during the hiring process.

Step 2: Gather Court Documentation

Maintain copies of:

- Sentencing orders
- Completion of probation or parole
- Certificates of rehabilitation or treatment
- Driving history documentation

Step 3: Build Recent Employment History

Even six to twelve months of reliable employment in warehousing, logistics, or manufacturing can strengthen future CDL applications.

Step 4: Complete Professional Driver Training

Employers value applicants who have:

- Completed CDL school
- Maintained safe driving records
- Demonstrated professionalism
- Passed DOT physicals
- Passed drug screening

CDL Interview Tips

When discussing your background:

- Be honest.
- Keep your explanation brief.
- Emphasize rehabilitation.
- Highlight your commitment to safety.
- Focus on reliability and professionalism.
- Explain what has changed since your conviction.

HTL CDL Career Planning Checklist

Before applying, verify that you can answer **Yes** to the following:

- ☐ I understand which convictions may affect CDL eligibility.
- ☐ I have reviewed my Motor Vehicle Record.
- ☐ I have completed or enrolled in CDL training.
- ☐ I understand DOT drug and alcohol regulations.
- ☐ I can explain my conviction professionally.
- ☐ I have recent employment references.
- ☐ I am prepared to work safely and responsibly.

HTL Workforce Development Key Takeaway

A felony conviction does **not** automatically end your opportunity to build a successful commercial driving career. Understanding federal CDL requirements, preparing your documentation, maintaining a clean driving record, and demonstrating consistent employment can significantly improve your opportunities with Georgia trucking and logistics employers.

Section 7 - Your Next Steps - The HTL 90-Day Employment Success Plan

Moving from Job Seeker to Career Builder

Finding employment after involvement with the criminal justice system is a process—not a single event. While it is natural to want immediate results, long-term success comes from developing consistent habits, building work history, and creating a career plan. The original Second Chance Employer Guide recommends a practical sequence that begins with understanding your background, preparing your conviction statement, working with staffing agencies, obtaining W-2 employment, and then transitioning into your long-term career goals.

HTL Workforce Development expands that roadmap into an actionable 90-day career plan designed to help participants move beyond simply finding a job and toward building a sustainable career.

Phase One

Week One - Prepare Before You Apply

Many applicants spend more time applying for jobs than preparing for them. Preparation increases confidence and reduces avoidable setbacks.

Goals for Week One

- ☐ Obtain a copy of your criminal background report.
- ☐ Obtain your Motor Vehicle Report (if pursuing transportation careers).
- ☐ Gather identification documents.
- ☐ Update your résumé.
- ☐ Create a professional email address.
- ☐ Record voicemail with a professional greeting.
- ☐ Obtain at least three professional references.
- ☐ Practice your conviction statement.

The source guide recommends obtaining your own background report and MVR, understanding what employers will see, and preparing a concise conviction statement before beginning the application process.

Week One Daily Goals

Monday

Resume preparation

Tuesday

Research employers

Wednesday

Create online job accounts

Thursday

Practice interviewing

Friday

Visit staffing agencies

Phase Two - Begin Applying

HTL recommends focusing your efforts rather than submitting hundreds of random applications.

Weekly Goals

Apply to:

- 5 Staffing Agencies
- 10 Warehouse Positions
- 5 Manufacturing Positions
- 5 Construction Positions
- 5 Food Service Positions

Follow up with every employer within five business days.

The source guide recommends selecting several staffing agencies first and then applying to employers within your target industry.

Networking Goals

Each week:

Meet:

- One recruiter

Connect with:

- One workforce specialist

Attend:

- One hiring event

Visit:

- One Georgia Career Center

Speak with:

- One employer in person

Phase Three - Days 30–60

By this stage you should begin building:

Employment Stability

Focus on:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Positive attitude
- Reliability
- Teamwork

Remember:

Your reputation starts over on your first day.

Professional Growth

Continue developing:

- OSHA Certifications
- Forklift Certification
- CPR
- First Aid
- CDL Permit
- NCCER Construction Training
- Lean Manufacturing
- Microsoft Office Skills

Phase Four - Days 60–90

The source guide notes that after approximately 60 days of stable W-2 employment, an applicant's employment profile becomes significantly stronger for future opportunities.

At this stage you should begin applying for:

- Higher-paying positions
- Permanent employment
- Skilled trades
- Apprenticeships
- Supervisory opportunities
- CDL careers
- Manufacturing technician roles

Weekly Success Scorecard

Goal	Target	Completed
Applications Submitted	25	_____
Interviews	5	_____
Employer Follow-Ups	10	_____
Networking Contacts	5	_____
Certifications Completed	1	_____
Hours Worked	40+	_____

HTL Job Search Tracker

Company Position Date Applied Interview Follow-Up Status

Interview Preparation Checklist

Before every interview:

- ☐ Company researched
- ☐ Job description reviewed
- ☐ Professional clothing prepared
- ☐ Résumé printed
- ☐ References available
- ☐ Conviction statement practiced
- ☐ Transportation confirmed
- ☐ Questions prepared

The HTL Career Ladder

Step 1

Temporary Employment



Step 2

Full-Time Employment



Step 3

Industry Certification



Step 4

Skilled Position



Step 5

Lead Worker



Step 6

Supervisor



Step 7

Management



Step 8

Career Professional

Daily Success Habits

Successful employees consistently:

- Arrive early
 - Stay off their phones
 - Ask questions
 - Volunteer to learn
 - Accept feedback
 - Work safely
 - Help teammates
 - Demonstrate professionalism
-

HTL Success Principle

"Your first job after incarceration is not your destination—it is your foundation."

Every day of dependable work strengthens your résumé, expands your professional network, and opens the door to better-paying opportunities.

Section 8 - Georgia Workforce Resources & Career Development Directory

Building Your Career Support Network

No one succeeds alone. Georgia offers a wide range of public agencies, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and workforce development partners dedicated to helping individuals prepare for employment, gain new skills, and achieve long-term career success.

This section provides participants with trusted resources to support every stage of the employment journey—from job readiness to career advancement.

Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL)

Services

- Job search assistance
- Résumé development
- Career counseling
- Labor market information
- Hiring events
- Unemployment services

Website:

<https://dol.georgia.gov>

WorkSource Georgia

Services

- Career coaching
- WIOA training opportunities
- Tuition assistance
- Employment workshops
- On-the-job training
- Employer recruitment

Website:

<https://worksourcegaportal.com>

Georgia Career Centers

Career Centers provide:

- Computer labs
- Job postings
- Interview preparation
- Hiring events
- Career counseling
- Skills assessments

Participants should locate the Career Center nearest their residence and establish a relationship with a workforce specialist.

Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG)

Georgia's Technical Colleges provide affordable workforce training in high-demand industries.

Popular programs include:

- Welding
- HVAC
- Electrical
- Commercial Truck Driving
- Industrial Maintenance
- Logistics
- Healthcare
- Information Technology

Website:

<https://www.tcsq.edu>

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA)

Eligible participants may receive assistance with:

- Employment services
- Career planning
- Assistive technology
- Job placement
- Skills training

Website:

<https://gvs.georgia.gov>

Goodwill of North Georgia Career Centers

Goodwill offers:

- Career coaching
- Résumé assistance
- Interview preparation
- Digital literacy training
- Job placement
- Financial coaching

Website:

<https://goodwillng.org>

Georgia Justice Project

Georgia Justice Project provides legal and employment-related support to eligible justice-involved individuals.

Services may include:

- Record restriction guidance
- Employment counseling
- Legal assistance
- Reentry support

Website:

<https://gjp.org>

Federal Bonding Program

The Federal Bonding Program helps employers reduce perceived hiring risk by providing fidelity bonds for eligible job seekers with barriers to employment, including justice involvement.

Benefits include:

- No cost to the employer
- Coverage against employee dishonesty
- Increased employer confidence
- Support for second-chance hiring

Participants should ask a WorkSource Georgia representative or Georgia Department of Labor Career Advisor about eligibility.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

The WOTC is a federal tax incentive that encourages employers to hire individuals from targeted groups, including certain justice-involved individuals who meet program requirements.

Participants should mention eligibility when appropriate and encourage employers to consult with their tax professional or workforce representative.

Apprenticeship Opportunities

Many registered apprenticeship programs welcome applicants who demonstrate commitment, reliability, and a willingness to learn.

Examples include:

- Electrician
- HVAC
- Plumbing
- Carpentry
- Heavy Equipment Operation
- Ironworker
- Utility Lineworker
- Industrial Maintenance

Apprenticeships combine paid employment with classroom instruction, allowing participants to earn wages while developing industry-recognized skills.

Community Reentry Organizations

Participants should also seek support from local organizations that provide:

- Housing assistance
- Transportation support
- Mental health services
- Substance use recovery services
- Financial literacy
- Mentoring
- Clothing closets
- Food assistance

A strong support network improves employment retention and long-term career success.

HTL Workforce Development Resource Checklist

Before beginning your job search, confirm that you have connected with:

- ☐ Georgia Department of Labor
- ☐ WorkSource Georgia
- ☐ Local Career Center
- ☐ Technical College (if training is needed)
- ☐ Goodwill Career Center
- ☐ Transportation assistance (if applicable)
- ☐ Professional references
- ☐ Updated résumé
- ☐ Valid identification
- ☐ Reliable communication methods (phone and email)

HTL Workforce Development Closing Thought

Employment is not simply about getting hired—it is about building a future. By combining the practical guidance in this manual with Georgia's workforce resources and your own commitment to growth, you can create a pathway to long-term stability, financial independence, and meaningful career advancement. Each step you take today lays the foundation for tomorrow's opportunities.