

# RESCUE Foundation

## Steps to Help Put Ex-Offenders Back to Work

1. **Know where you spend your money!** Being a customer is the single most important way you can influence corporate policy. Ask your store owner or manager if they hire ex-offenders. If not, you can let them know that you prefer to spend money with more progressive companies.
2. **Support organizations like The Rescue Foundation financially.** Influencing policy, lobbying, spreading information and promoting ideas can be very expensive. Donating money to non-profits that engage companies and policy makers about putting ex-offenders back to work is a social investment.
3. **Empathize** - Ex-offenders live in a very different world than most of us. The challenges ex-offenders face are often unbeatable. This fact leads to apathy and a lack of hope that is often times believed to be laziness. It is not.
4. **Advocate** - reach out to your local municipal, county, state, and federal elected officials and advocate for policies that eliminate structural discrimination against those with former criminal records.
5. **Educate** - education goes in many directions. Educate yourself on the facts about the ex-offender world. Visit [TheRescueFoundation.org](http://TheRescueFoundation.org) for more information. Also, lobby for and support efforts to expand and enhance educational opportunities in underserved neighborhoods. Further support for adult education programs and support groups can have a substantial impact.
6. **Taxes** - believe it or not, taxes are the single biggest threat to ex-offenders in the workplace. The more expensive it becomes to do business, the less likely companies will be to make risky hires. A business environment that is vibrant and robust creates opportunity for all workers, including ex-offenders. When businesses close, reduce staff, or freeze hiring, ex-offenders being labeled "high risk" are the first to be let go, and the last to be hired. Do what you can to keep property taxes, sales taxes, and specialty taxes from chasing businesses out of your town.
7. **Mentor** - Ex-offenders benefit by having personal mentors or coaches that can help them accomplish goals, or give them needed wisdom. If you are interested in mentoring an ex-offender, go to [TheRescueFoundation.org](http://TheRescueFoundation.org) for more information.
8. **Interrupt** - interrupt the cycle of stigmatization against ex-offenders. People make mistakes, especially when facing insurmountable challenges. Forgive people and accept that with the right opportunity, support, and experiences, they can be productive community members. Most important is where someone is going, rather than where they have been.