



Felons and Homelessness

As someone who's sat through a criminal justice class and takes a special interest in criminal justice you tend to see how hard it is for ex-cons and newly released felons to make a life for themselves outside of the jail cell and how it's almost set up for them to tumble downwards.

After you get released from jail you are expected to be able to find a home and get a steady job and still make it to your meeting with your counselor. Forgetting that most apartments won't let you in if you are freshly out of jail or if you even have any felonies on your record. This makes it harder for ex-cons to be able to fully get control of their lives again when they're not given the proper help or steps to complete it. When it gets to these points where ex-cons aren't able to get a job or find a place to live and present it, they may be faced with the option of continuing to try or going back to their old ways.

In these times I don't blame them for going back to their old ways, the system isn't exactly the most friendly place for ex-convicts. It's the reason I choose the career path I choose because I believe if you can try and reform the system from one part like the domino effect another part will fall upon the doorsteps of reform. To add to what I said before most homeless shelters also don't allow ex-cons, at most shelters will allow you to stay 3 to 4 days but 30 days is standard. Emergency shelters will only allow ex-cons to stay for a short period of time, it's also known that people who have been incarcerated more than once are 13 times more likely than the general public to experience homelessness, whereas people who have been incarcerated once are 7 times more likely according to Urban.org.

These just prove just how much harder it is for people who are released from jail to make a way for themselves again because if they're not locked up for being the perfect citizen then they are subjected to the streets and if it's not hard enough to get any opportunities with their backgrounds being on the street takes away other ones for them. There are other factors

that may lead to an ex-con being homeless without the proper help. One of them being mental health, mental health is something that affects everyone differently. I can only speak for America but our mental health system and jail system are not hand and hand when it comes to the mental health and well-being of our inmates. Without the proper help though you can have a great job and be lucky enough to find a place to stay your mental health and wellbeing can drive that all done if they're not taken care of and correctly addressed.

This isn't the end though for ex-cons that still want to regain control of their life and not be subject to the jail cell or the sidewalk. Below I've listed some jobs and after jail systems, ex-cons can go to for help and be able to get back on their feet.

- Simple mall jobs such as AT&T, Walmart, and Comfort Inn & Suites. Just of the jobs that you first applied for as a teen those are the jobs that hire, it's not guaranteed you'd get the job but it's a good start.
- <https://helpforfelons.org/reentry-programs-ex-offenders-state/> This website has a whole list of state-by-state recovery programs for ex-cons and they are committed to helping everyone get back on their feet.

I hope that if you are an ex-con reading this, things get better for you, I truly believe that if you are actively trying to correct your future and fix the things you can fix about your past that I hold nothing against you and you will succeed. Just remember to put in the time and dedication and good things will come your way, don't let anyone say or do anything to stray you off of your path to controlling your life again, you got this.

Until next time, Niah (they/she)