

# Federal Bonding Program 101 NAWB Podcast



*Federal Bonding Program 101* introduces the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL)’s Federal Bonding Program (FBP), a cost-saving initiative, designed to help employers hire the individuals they need while protecting their assets. The podcast, created for NAWB members, workforce agencies, employers and others who work with justice-involved and other hard-to-place job seekers, is organized into six short segments. Listen to those who have integrated the FBP into their hiring practices, and learn how *your* state or community can take advantage of this easy, successful job placement tool!

Interview	Time
1. <a href="#">Welcome to the Podcast</a> – <i>Derrick Williams, USDOL Reentry Employment Opportunities Programs</i> : Describes the importance of the Federal Bonding Program when it is combined with the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and training.	5:05
2. <a href="#">Introducing the Federal Bonding Program</a> – <i>Tom Villanova, Federal Bonding Program</i> : Familiarizes listeners to the Federal Bonding Program – an easy and accessible job placement tool that is provided free-of-charge to employers and potential employees.	5:10
3. <a href="#">Employers Benefit from the Federal Bonding Program</a> – <i>Gwen Crawley, Blake Home Health Agency and Charles Maymon, American Ambulance Service Florida</i> : Introduces listeners to employers who have integrated the Federal Bonding Program into their hiring practices.	6:57
4. <a href="#">The Federal Bonding Program &amp; the Workforce System</a> – <i>Wendi Bowen and Vanessa James, North Carolina Department of Commerce</i> : Acquaints listeners with how the Federal Bonding Program is integrated across a state workforce agency’s re-entry program.	12:10
5. <a href="#">Jobseekers Benefit from the Federal Bonding Program</a> – <i>Carla H., American Ambulance Service Florida</i> : Explores how the Federal Bonding Program can impact a job seeker’s success in the workplace.	4:59
6. <a href="#">Closing and Thank you</a> – <i>Derrick Williams, USDOL Reentry Employment Opportunities Programs</i> : Provides a conclusion to podcast and how to obtain additional information about the Federal Bonding Program and other U.S. Department of Labor initiatives.	1:24

You can choose to listen to this Podcast in its entirety or listen to segments of interest.

For more information about the Federal Bonding Program and to learn how you can encourage its use in your state, please contact Tom Villanova, Federal Bonding Program Coordinator, 312.316.0336 or [tom@bonds4jobs.com](mailto:tom@bonds4jobs.com), [bonds4jobs.com](http://bonds4jobs.com).

## **TRANSCRIPTS – NAWB FEDERAL BONDING PROGRAM 101**

### **1. WELCOME TO THE PODCAST**

#### **Interview with Derrick Williams, USDOL Reentry Employment Opportunities Programs**

**Derrick Williams** - On behalf of the US Department of Labor, I'm Derrick Williams, Workforce Analyst with REO - Reentry Employment Opportunities Programs. I'd like to welcome NAWB members to the *Federal Bonding Program 101* – a podcast that introduces you to the Federal Bonding Program, an easy-to-integrate US Department of Labor initiative that bonds some of the hardest-to-place job seekers.

We'll be highlighting employer, employee and workforce advantages of participating in the Federal Bonding Program by talking with businesses that have integrated the program into their hiring practices, as well as Workforce Development Professionals who are involved in promoting its use in their state and communities.

You'll also be hearing from an employee who has benefited directly from the Federal Bonding Program as well.

Why NAWB? As Workforce Board Members you:

- Represent your community's business leaders;
- Are tasked with improving employment outcomes; and
- Are positioned to support policies and strategies which are beneficial to businesses *and* job seekers.

The Federal Bonding Program, an employer-driven program:

- Protects business assets;
- Improves employment outcomes; and
- Is beneficial to businesses *and* job seekers alike.

As you'll hear, the Federal Bonding Program, combined with such programs as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and your training, the Federal Bonding is part of, "a triple play" – a win/win for employers and your most-challenged job seekers who need a little bit of extra help in order to secure and maintain employment.

My colleague from Coffey Consulting, Barb Cooper will be guiding our discussion. Take it away, Barb!

**Barb** - Hello Derrick. We've heard a lot about the Federal Bonding Program and how it's been used to help justice-involved individuals – those men, women, and youth who have been incarcerated – as well as others who, given the chance really perform beautifully on the job, but just need that little bit of extra support in order to get there. From the U.S. Department of Labor's perspective, why is the Federal Bonding Program important?

**Derrick** - Barb, our Department is very enthusiastic about the Federal Bonding Program because it provides an essential tool for those hardest to employ. It gives them a leg-up when it comes to changing the minds of employers. It's almost like a mind-set change for them. So by using this dynamic tool in the workplace, it increases employment and gives a vital tool for those who need it most.

**Barb** - When you introduced the podcast, you mentioned the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, and I'd like you to talk a little more about it. What exactly is the Workforce Opportunity Tax Credit or WOTC?

**Derrick** - The Work Opportunity Tax Credit, better known as the WOTC, is a Federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups which include justice-involved individuals who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. Each year, employers claim over a billion dollars in tax credits under the WOTC program.

**Barb** - How much money can employers claim annually under the WOTC?

**Derrick** - That goes to the benefits of the WOTC. It reduces an employer's cost of doing business, requires little paperwork, and applying is very easy. WOTC can reduce an employer's tax liability by as much as \$9,600 per employee hired. There's no limit on the number of individuals an employer can claim under the tax credit.

**Barb** - Can you give us an example of how the WOTC works?

**Derrick** - Sure! For WOTC certified new hires working at least 120 hours, employers can claim 25% of the first year's wages, paid up to \$6,000 for a maximum credit of up to \$1,500 per person. Or for example, a WOTC certified new hire working at least 400 hours or more, employers can claim 40% of their first year's wage up to \$6,000 for a maximum tax credit of up to \$2,400 per person.

**Barb** - Great! So how can employers take advantage of the WOTC, and who do they contact on the local level or the state level to learn more?

**Derrick** - Well the best way to learn more about the WOTC is to go to the website [www.doleta.gov/WOTC](http://www.doleta.gov/WOTC). Again that's [www.doleta.gov/WOTC](http://www.doleta.gov/WOTC).

**Barb** - And do they contact someone on the state level to actually begin participating in the program?

**Derrick** - Yes, they'll have all of the contact information at that point.

**Barb** - Thank you, Derrick. I really appreciate your insight. Employers who utilize the U.S. Department of Labor's Work Opportunity Tax Credit, the Federal Bonding Program and training are increasing possibilities to save money and gain access to the employees who they really need.

**Derrick** - Definitely.

## **2. INTRODUCING THE FEDERAL BONDING PROGRAM**

### **Tom Villanova, Project Manager, Federal Bonding Program – Union Insurance Group**

**Barb Giniger Cooper** - Hello, this is Barb Giniger Cooper from Coffey Consulting, representing the U.S. Department of Labor. I'd like to introduce Tom Villanova, Union Insurance Group Program Manager for the Federal Bonding Program who has served in this capacity for a year and a half. He comes to this position with decades of experience, starting in 1972 when he was an electrical apprentice with local 134 IBEW. Tom has also served in a variety of capacities such as President to Advisory Board member with such organizations as the Chicago and Cook County Building and Construction Trade Council, the Italian American Labor Council, the Governor's Commission on Opportunities in State Public Construction, the Governor's State Labor Advisory Board, and more. Welcome Tom. Thanks for describing components of the Federal Bonding Program and what makes it unique.

**Tom Villanova** - The Federal Bonding Program started with the US Department of Labor in 1966 to provide fidelity bonds for at-risk, hard-to-place job seekers. Bonds cover the first six months of employment. There is no cost to the job applicant or the employer. The Department of Labor program reduces barriers for people who have been in contact with the criminal justice system to get and to keep a job after returning home to restart their lives. The Federal Bonding Program bonds at-risk job seekers and just to name a few, it's justice-involved men, women, and youth, individuals in recovery from substance abuse disorders, individuals with poor credit records, economically disadvantaged youth and adults who lack work histories, and individuals dishonorably discharged from the military.

**Barb** - Can you tell us what is the program's track record over the past 50 or so years?

**Tom** - Over 50,000 job placements have been made in industries like hospitality, retail, construction, transportation, auto repair, healthcare, and many more, and as far as employers are concerned, in the last year-and-a-half that I've been here, we've only had one claim on a bond.

**Barb** - That's excellent. And in your opinion, how does the Federal Bonding Program open doors for job seekers?

**Tom** - Anybody who gets denied because of their history or their past, this wipes that out because it gives the employer an incentive to hire somebody that has worker skills but just has a problem with their history, and with the bond, the employer pays nothing, and also one of the big parts of the program is the employer gets the fidelity bond, it's a zero deductible bond.

**Barb** - Can *any* employer take advantage of the Federal Bonding Program?

**Tom** - Absolutely, any employer can take advantage. The only one stipulation that an employer cannot, is if somebody is self-employed. It's just common sense that they'd be able to put a claim in against themselves then. So that's the only barrier that we have, somebody that is self-employed is not eligible for this bond.

**Barb** - How much bonding coverage is available, and for how long?

**Tom** - The bonding coverage that is available is between \$5,000 and \$25,000, and it's available for six months, and the way that the Department of Labor and Union Insurance Group figures things, that if there's going to be some kind of a mistake with an employee, it'll happen in the first six months.

**Barb** - Can the bond be renewed after that time period?

**Tom** - Yes, it can be renewed for another six month period. So actually, the bond is free to the employer and the employee for a full year.

**Barb** - Excellent. And what's the process for accessing bonds, and how quickly can employers acquire them?

**Tom** - It's a very, very simple procedure. Actually the State Coordinator does 99% of the work which is done online. The employee just needs a letter of promise of employment, and the employer does nothing to fill out paperwork. The State Bonding Coordinator does all of that.

**Barb** - Workforce board members are very interested in helping their workforce program succeed, particularly for job seekers who experience significant challenges securing employment. Whom should organizations contact within their states to secure bonds?

**Tom** - Each state has a State Bonding Coordinator. They are the contact. If you go to our website, [www.bonds4jobs.com](http://www.bonds4jobs.com) and you click on State Coordinator; it'll ask you to put your state in, [and your State Bonding Coordinator's contact information will be provided]. That's who they should be getting in contact with.

**Barb** - Tom, thank you so much for providing this overview on the U.S. Department of Labor's Federal Bonding Program. It's a really easy and innovative program that opens doors to individuals who need that help moving their lives forward.

**Tom Villanova** - Thank you.

### **3. EMPLOYERS BENEFIT FROM THE FEDERAL BONDING PROGRAM**

#### **Interviews with Gwen Crawley, Blake Home Health Agency & Charles Maymon, American Ambulance Service**

**Barb Giniger Cooper** - This is Barb Giniger Cooper, and I'm pleased to welcome two employers to our podcast. First up is Gwen Crawley who is the Assistant Director at Blake Home Health Agency which services the Richmond and the Tidewater Newport News areas of Virginia. Gwen has been working in the health field for 12 years combined with 13 years of experience in subsidized housing. Charles Maymon, the Regional CEO of American Ambulance Florida also joins us today. Charlie has been with American Ambulance Service since 1998 and has been in the healthcare field since the 1970s. Thank you both for carving at the time from your busy schedules to talk about your experiences with the Federal Bonding Program. Gwen

we're going to start with you. Tell us about Blake Home Health Agency, your service to the community, the type of employees you look for, and the number of employees you have.

**Gwen Crawley** - Blake Home Health Agency is dedicated to providing quality, compassionate care for elderly and disabled individuals in the comfort of their own homes. Our employees are CNAs, PCAs, LPNs, and RNs. And we go into people's homes, and help them. We help them as far as organizing their finances, organizing their doctor's visits, making sure their medications are taken properly, and work well with the families so that they can have peace of mind leaving, having their loved ones at home.

**Barb** - How long has the Blake Home Health Agency been utilizing the Federal Bonding Program, and also what compelled your agency to say "yes"?

**Gwen** - Blake Home Health has been using it approximately for a year. I came to Blake Home Health and they were not utilizing it. I had learned about the Bonding Program through another company that I was working with, and I thought it would be a good opportunity for Blake, and so I introduced it to the Blake Home Health Company.

**Barb** - How often do you use the Federal Bonding Program, and what positions is the program most ideally suited?

**Gwen** - We use the program with our in-home health aides, our CNAs and PCAs, and I would say we have 60 employees and probably 10% of our employees are bonded.

**Barb** - The Federal Bonding Program has experienced over 50 years of success. We learned a few minutes ago that it's only been utilized 1% of the time. Based on your experience with the program, how is it helped your company first of all, and what impact has it made on your community in general?

**Gwen** - The Federal Bonding Program allows small businesses like ours to offer more jobs to people in our community by filling our ranks, and we're able to help more individuals in the community as far as our clients because we can hire the CNAs, PCAs, and LPNs to go into their homes.

**Barb** - Thank you Gwen, and now I'm going to be moving on to you Charlie. You know it's really great talking with you again. I know we've interviewed you a couple of times about the Federal Bonding Program. Tell us about American Ambulance Florida, the service that you provide to the community and the type of employees you look for and also the number of employees that you have.

**Charles Maymon** - Focusing on our South Florida operations, American Ambulance Service provides inter-facility ambulance service which is hospital to hospital, hospital to nursing home. We do not do any 911 work in the South Florida market. However, we do handle very critically ill patients on a hospital-to-hospital basis with our critical care paramedic. The type of employees that we utilize and look for are EMTs, paramedics, people who would work in our

communication center, and people who work in our accounts receivable center who do our billing.

**Barb** - How long has American Ambulance Service Florida been utilizing the Federal Bonding Program, and what motivated you to say "yes" to it?

**Charles** - Well, we've been using the Bonding Program now for about 10 years. I was motivated to say "yes" to it when I met the very first employee who I'm proud to say has been with us now for that 10-year period. He was an extremely interesting young gentleman at the time. Of course, he is 10 years older now, and we sent him to school to become an emergency medical technician. He got certified, and he is now one of our community paramedics who is out in the community working directly, linked with physicians to keep patients at home. But just meeting him on the front end and hearing his story is really what got the ball rolling for us.

**Barb** - I remember that story and it is really, really compelling. How often do you use the Federal Bonding Program, and what positions is the program most ideally suited?

**Charles** - We've used the program in all three areas of the business that I've mentioned. We've hired to date over the last 10-year period 21 EMTs and/or paramedics. I think we've had five people in our communication center, and more recently I think we've hired an additional five people that we put into our accounts receivable area. So we feel that we've utilized the program extensively over the last 10 years.

**Barb** - Finally, based on your experience with the Federal Bonding Program, how is it helped your company, and what impact has it had on your community in southern Florida?

**Charles** - You know the economy has changed over the last few years. It's become very difficult to recruit the staff, so utilizing the Bonding Program for EMTs and paramedics has been very helpful for us, and then the retention is always a problem for us because we're the private sector. So we become a stepping stone to fire service and other areas. And the same thing in the communications area as well as accounts receivable. So the folks that come from the Bonding Program tend to stay with us for much longer periods of time. And staff retention is important to us, as well as the fact that we found over the years that through the Bonding Program, the folks that come through the program are deeply grateful for the opportunity that we provide them and again that creates that retention for us.

**Barb** - Thank you again for sharing your insights, Gwen and Charlie, The U.S. Department of Labor and the Federal Bonding Program really appreciate your commitment to this program. Both of you have a wonderful day.

**Charles** - Thank you

#### **4. THE FEDERAL BONDING PROGRAM & THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM**

**Interview with Vanessa James and Wendi Bowen, North Carolina Department of Commerce**

**Barb Giniger Cooper** - This is Barb Giniger Cooper, and we're ready to gain perspective from those on the front lines regarding employer outreach and Federal Bonding Program administration on the state and local levels. I would like to introduce Wendi Bowen and Vanessa James from the North Carolina Department of Commerce. Wendi holds the dual role of State Bonding Coordinator and State Former Offender Program Coordinator and has been with the North Carolina Department of Commerce since 2008, and Vanessa is the Regional One Former Offender Specialist and has served in this capacity since 2013. Wendi and Vanessa shared that the program's success really heavily depends on communication and collaboration with the workforce system and other partners. Wendi, let's start with you. What office does your State Bonding Program originate from and why?

**Wendi Bowen** - So our State Bonding Program originates with the Department of Commerce Workforce Solutions Administration office here in Raleigh, North Carolina. However, I will add that any of our N.C. Works Career Centers have the ability to write up the bond, and that gets sent to me. I process the bond and then send that on to Union Insurance Group to be processed.

**Barb** - Excellent, and is there a primary audience that your program serves?

**Wendi** - Being that I'm the Coordinator of our Former Offender Initiative Program, we do a lot in promoting the Federal Bonding Program through that initiative. So one of our primary audiences would be someone who has been justice-involved and has a criminal record. But when we are promoting the program, we also promote those who are recovering from substance abuse, rehabilitation from alcohol or drug use, people with poor credit or individuals who have been dishonorably discharged from the military or individuals who lack a proper work history for the employer.

**Barb** - Should our listeners talk with their State Bonding Coordinators to confirm whether there are specific audience requirements?

**Wendi** - Yeah, you definitely want to talk to your State Coordinator to make sure that they're not focusing just on one audience. As far as I understand, Federal Bonding can be written for any of those individuals.

**Barb** - What is the most outstanding features of North Carolina's activities?

**Wendi** - I think one advantage that North Carolina has is that we have the Former Offender Initiative Program, and we have six regional staff - Vanessa being one of those - who are able to go out and promote the program, so we have kind of a marketing arm to it which maybe other states may or may not have. But those Regional Specialists are able to market it to our clients who are looking for jobs, as well as the employers to promote it. In North Carolina we also have an integrated workforce system, so we have the Department of Commerce Workforce Solutions in partnership with some private agencies that are run through the workforce board. So we have both of those entities in our NC Works Career Centers that collaborate on these different programs.

**Barb** - How have job seekers benefited from your efforts across the state?

**Wendi** - Again, going back to the marketing. We market this not only to the employers, but we also market it to the job seekers because we believe that information is powerful, knowledge is power. So job seekers are able to gain information about the Federal Bonding Program and then use that as they're applying for jobs, as their filling out applications, and even in the interview process. We do have a letter that we can give them that states that they're eligible for the program, and they can use that in their interview and ultimately they gain employment.

**Barb** - Thank you Wendi, and now I'm going to turn to you Vanessa. The first question I have for you is that given your role in reaching out to employers, what part of your pitch resonates most with them? In other words, what motivates them to include the Federal Bonding Program into their hiring practices?

**Vanessa James** - Thank you Barbara. Federal Bonding offers employers both insurance and assurance. It works in a way that the employer realizes that someone has their back, even though they are considering taking a risk with someone, now someone is supporting their efforts, even financially, and it's no cost to them, and they find that incredible. And in addition to the no cost being incredible, employers seem to be amazed that there's no paperwork for them. All they need to do is call myself as a regional representative or the Federal Bonding Coordinator, Wendi. A call, an email, and then just like that the insurance is in place. It's that easy.

**Barb** - Can you talk about your collaboration with the workforce system in facilitating the Federal Bonding Program's success in your region?

**Vanessa** - As Wendi explained, the Former Offender Initiative we collaborate with the NC Works Career Centers and also the Workforce Development Boards. With the Career Centers, we've made an effort to go to each one of them, offering them a training, and in that [staff] training [we introduce] how they're going to work with the job seekers as well as the employers; [and] we go over Federal Bonding in detail. We provide for them the paperwork and promotional information to give to the employers, job seekers, [and] Workforce Development Board [members]. We make ourselves available for presentations and workshops and also [provide] our contact information.

**Barb** - In North Carolina the thing that I'm most impressed with is how comprehensive your program is. It just seems like you guys have thought of everything along the way from doing employer outreach, to the training that's involved in implementing the program on the ground, so really, congratulations to both of you. Another question for you, Vanessa. In North Carolina, are there specific industries that are more prone to participation in the Federal Bonding Program than others?

**Vanessa** - I would say not necessarily. I've had employers from the food industry, both small town restaurants to restaurants with multiple locations. I've also worked with the warehouse manufacturing furniture industry, and they have pursued the Federal Bonding, and most recently the auto parts industry has reached out to me to put some bonds in place.

**Barb** - When you promote the use of the Federal Bonding Program, do your efforts involve packaging it with other initiatives such as training or the Work Opportunity Tax Credit?

**Vanessa** - For sure! We promote the Federal Bonding in many different ways and each time on our written material, our emails that I send, workshops, we have Federal Bonding, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, and something called the 100-day no fault here in North Carolina. When I am just cold calling businesses, we have a folder in hand or one page info. sheet, [and] our brochures so that if someone is not available when we make that cold call, then we can leave the materials with them. And also if we can get an email of the HR person, then we actually follow up with an email that contains [information about] the WOTC, the 100-day no fault, and Federal Bonding. And if it's a scheduled visit, we definitely highlight Federal Bonding, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, and 100-day no-fault and also again with workshops, with presentations, the Federal Bonding is coupled with those things. As Wendi mentioned, when I'm working with the justice-involved individual, be that in an appointment or in a workshop, [the information I share] includes Federal Bonding.

**Barb** - How about a success story? How have you seen the Federal Bonding Program make a difference for your job-seeking customers and the employers who hire them?

**Vanessa** - For the employers with the employment rate being low, some of the businesses have had to consider individuals that initially were not their first choice. But Federal Bonding has made a difference. All of a sudden it enlarges their options of hire because now here's an individual that skills-ready and qualified. With the Federal Bonding, now some of my employers have said, "Wow, I can hire, and that's going to help my bottom line." I'm thinking specifically of a company, most recently who had an excellent worker, and circumstances happened, and that person had to be let go. But this company really saw great potential in that worker, and time passed, and they wanted to consider hiring this person again; they recalled something about the Federal Bonding. They called me up and said, "Hey this person we know that some things happened, but time has passed and we remember you telling us about Federal Bonding. Could this be an incident where, with a new hire date, we could use the Federal Bonding? With that Federal Bonding they were able to get their excellent worker back.

**Barb** - I have a question for both of you. What guidance would you give those listening as they learn how to take advantage of the Federal Bonding Program in their states? And Wendi, why don't we start with you?

**Wendi** - Okay. Again I'll say knowledge is power. Getting this information out there and educating both the job seekers and the employer is one of the most important pieces in this process. If you're an employer, I would encourage you to examine your hiring policy for compliance with the equal Employment Opportunity Commission's guidance about hiring individuals with a criminal record and discrimination and then utilize the Federal Bonding Program and tax credit programs and any other programs that are available in your state to help protect and benefit your business.

**Barb** - And Vanessa what about you?

**Vanessa** - I agree that promotion and awareness on all levels is important. When we are presenting the WOTC, 100-day no-fault, and the Federal Bonding, the Federal Bonding is the one that both the employers and the job seekers and even the community agencies have not even heard of; and so we promote the Federal Bonding as a priority to the individual that's job seeking – be they justice-involved or otherwise – to the businesses, to the workforce staff, and also to the community agencies.

**Barb** - People have often said that the Federal Bonding Program could be considered a best kept secret. Both of you are absolutely right to get the word out about this really innovative and easy initiative. On behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Federal Bonding Program, we thank you for your commitment to the job seekers with whom you work, the employers who you support, and your collaboration with the workforce system. Your role is incredibly vital to many people who need that extra edge in order to be successful on the job.

**Vanessa** - Thank you.

**Wendi** - Thank you.

## **5. JOBSEEKERS BENEFIT FROM THE FEDERAL BONDING PROGRAM**

### **Interview with Carla H., American Ambulance Service Florida**

**Barb Giniger Cooper** - I'd like to introduce Carla Hepburn, a transport coordinator from the American Ambulance Company located in Florida. She's served in this capacity for a little over a year now. Carla had the opportunity to take advantage of the Federal Bonding Program, and she's agreed to talk with us about her experience. Welcome Carla, and thanks again for joining us today.

**Carla Hepburn** - Thank you for having me.

**Barb** - How did the use of the Federal Bonding Program impact your employment prospects?

**Carla** - It helped me dramatically when it came to talking about my background; and presenting the Federal Bonding Certificate to the employers which let them know that there was a benefit for them as well as benefiting me. [Program participation] actually weighed heavy on the decision to pick me as candidate for employment.

**Barb** - It essentially made the offer a little bit sweeter than for the employers who were interested in you, but [who] might have been a little bit reluctant initially.

**Carla** - Exactly.

**Barb** - How did you find out about the program?

**Carla** - I was incarcerated when I received a letter from a program that's here in South Florida. It's called the OIC program and they actually mailed me a letter stating that they offered the Federal Bonding Program, and that when I got out, that I could visit them. So that's how I found out about the Federal Bonding Program.

**Barb** - So when you got out, what was your role in integrating the Federal Bonding Program into your job search? In other words, how did you do it?

**Carla** - After I obtained the Federal Bonding Certificate, when I went out on job searches and I went on interviews, I kind of kept it kind of in my back pocket. And I would basically go interview, and when I noticed that the employer was kind of, reluctant or kind of hesitant once I mentioned [my background] – they asked the question about being a convicted felon - I kind of like showed them and explained to them the whole situation about the Federal Bonding Program, and they really seemed to be more receptive to picking me as a candidate.

**Barb** - And how long did you take advantage of the Federal Bonding program?

**Carla** - I only used it just to kind of basically get my foot in the door. Being that I have such a gap from being incarcerated, once I used it to obtain maybe my first couple of jobs, it then showed employers that I had like a work stability, like a history. So that's kind of like the Federal Bonding Program gives the first couple of employers' security that, "Okay you know this person

is not going to defraud my company. If so, I would be reimbursed.” And then I didn't need it anymore because I had a long work history that showed consistent job [performance].

**Barb** - That's great. It's interesting when you think about how the Federal Bonding Program is positioned, that essentially it's a win-win for the employer *and* for you because it can essentially help guarantee that you will come to any new employment situation with the track record. So that's great. And last question: What advice would you give other job seekers with a similar background to yours in terms of using the Federal Bonding Program?

**Carla** - Many, many of us convicted felons don't work to our full potential because of our fears. We're afraid of people saying, “No” because you're going to hear a million no's, but having the Federal Bonding Program helps the employers to say "Yes". So my advice to people that are in the same situation to me is, “Don't allow people's opinions to become your reality. You know, life has the only limitations that you put on it. So you have to utilize every opportunity such as the Federal Bonding Program to help you, you know get your feet back into society.”

**Barb** - I agree with you. I think that's great, and one last question. What are your career aspirations from here?

**Carla** - I currently work here as a Transport Coordinator, but working here has really opened the doors for me. I would like to become an EMT which is the beginning part and then probably proceed onto a paramedic. So I can also utilize you know what I've learned up here in the Dispatch Center as well as being on the road personnel.

**Barb** - Knowing you and what we've heard from your employer, Carla, I have no doubt that you will be successful in reaching your goals. On behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Federal Bonding Program, we thank you for your participation today. We wish you the best as you continue growing your career with the American Ambulance Service South Florida.

**Carla** - Thank you. Thank you for having me.

## 6. CLOSING AND THANK YOU

### **Derrick Williams, USDOL Reentry Employment Opportunities Programs**

**Derrick** - This is Derrick Williams again with the US Department of Labor and the Federal Bonding Program would like to thank you for your participation today. We would also would like to give a special thanks to Tom Villanova, Union Insurance Group Program Manager of the Federal Bonding Program, Gwen Crawley, Assistant Director of the Blake Home Health Agency, Blake Educational Center in Virginia, and Charles Maymon, Regional CEO of American Ambulance Service South Florida, Wendy Bowen and Vanessa James who joined us from the North Carolina Department of Commerce. And Carla H., American Ambulance Service Florida employee who has benefited directly from the Federal Bonding Program. We appreciate their knowledge, sharing their expertise, and carving out time to talk to us. And thanks to our listeners who tuned into the *Federal Bonding Program 101*. For more information, please visit [www.bonds4jobs.com](http://www.bonds4jobs.com). You should also feel free to contact Tom Villanova, the program's manager, at [tom@bonds4jobs.com](mailto:tom@bonds4jobs.com). Again, that's [tom@bonds4jobs.com](mailto:tom@bonds4jobs.com) to learn how your state and community can take advantage of this program, training, and the WOTC.