



The State Bonding Coordinators' Blog

OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS

Welcome to the State Bonding Coordinators' Outreach & Communications Blog. Consistently communicating the effectiveness of this easy-to-use hiring tool is perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of managing bonding efforts. We've spent time over the last year talking about how to complete this task more effectively and efficiently, given the realities of a State Bonding Coordinator's responsibilities. Take a look at the suggestions below, designed to make your job easier. These "3M's" come from you, answers to questions posed during our *Listen & Learn* sessions:

Messages

Methods

Materials

Feel free to contact the FBP Program Manager, Tom Villanova at Tom@Bonds4Jobs.com if you have questions and/or if you have other issues you'd like us to address. We look forward to hearing from you.

Messages

What messages highlight the benefits of participating in the Federal Bonding Program?

State Bonding Coordinators should feel free to incorporate the following messages when discussing the success and low risks associated with Federal Bonding Program participation.

- Since their inception, dishonesty claims have been filed on 1% of bonds.
 - The Federal Bonding Program has introduced talented, dedicated, and passionate employees to their employers.
 - Employers who participate in the Federal Bonding Program gain access to candidates who want to work, they obtain worker skills without risk to their businesses and these new employees, who may otherwise not be given a chance, are afforded opportunities to prove themselves.
 - If issues arise, employer assets are protected by the Federal Bonding Program – protection that employers are obtaining at no cost to them. In addition, there are no deductibles, so employers would have no out-of-pocket expenses should a loss occur.
 - Try the Federal Bonding Program! There is NO special application form for employers or job seekers to complete; NO bond approval process; NO Federal regulations covering bonds issued; NO paperwork for employers to submit or sign; NO required follow-up;
-

NO deductible in bond insurance amounts if dishonesty was to occur; NO bondee age requirements (other than legal working age in State).

- Bonds can be applied to ANY job; ANY state; ANY employee dishonesty committed on or away from a worksite; ANY full- or part-time employee paid wages (with Federal taxes automatically deducted from pay), including individuals hired by temp agencies.

Methods

Given the limited budget for this program, are there funding sources that can be applied for to cover marketing, outreach and other costs?

Collaborating with your state's workforce programs that are responsible for assisting hard-to-serve customers – including but not limited to the U.S. Department of Labor's (USDOL) Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) grantees, American Job Centers and youth, veteran and women's employment programs – is worth considering. You want to align your program with those that address the employment needs of the same or similar customers as you serve. Perhaps they have funds to help promote the FBP as they reach out to customers and employers. The Federal Bonding Program is a value-add for them and could ultimately have a positive impact on their placement numbers. Likewise, your support of their efforts provides consistent and comprehensive entry points for hard-to-serve customers who need help securing and maintaining employment. In other words, identify Workforce Investment Opportunities Act (WIOA) or Wagner-Peyser funds to promote the FBP. When in doubt, contact the USDOL Workforce Analyst Derrick Williams at Williams.derrick.d@dol.gov or 202.693.3931.

How do you promote this program in regards to workers other than those who have been previously incarcerated?

While the FBP typically focuses on justice-involved individuals, other hard-to-serve job seekers also benefit from the use of fidelity bonds. State Bonding Coordinators can influence how the FBP is promoted among state and local workforce systems. It could be as simple as adding targeted messaging into brochures, websites, presentations and employer pitches.

What are additional ways to get the word out about the FBP?

Interestingly, while the FBP is a win/win for jobseekers and employers, its promotion requires consistent and persistent attention. The *Listen & Learn* April 27, 2017 participants offered the following strategies that State Bonding Coordinators can add to their toolbox:

- Utilize the FBP for juvenile justice involved young people within the first year of their release.
 - Collaborate with your Governor's office and request that he or she proclaim Federal Bonding Program Awareness Month.
 - Promote the use of fidelity bonds among employers, service providers, American Job Centers, Chambers of Commerce and other trade associations, temporary staffing agencies and small to large-size businesses.
 - Consider area industries that haven't traditionally integrated the program. This could include healthcare, automotive, retail, hospitality, public works and utility companies.
 - Collaborate with your state and local unemployment offices, and ensure that they include collateral about the availability of the Federal Bonding Program when they work with employers and jobseekers.
-

What can State Bonding Coordinators do to help close the gap between initial employer interest and their eventual commitment to the program?

Many State Bonding Coordinators express this frustration, particularly given the fact that administering the Federal Bonding Program is one of many responsibilities. During the February 2, 2017 *Listen & Learn*, State Bonding Coordinators provided insight about the importance of local contacts “closing the sale.” You affirmed that consistent follow-up emails and phone calls to employers are key to successfully moving an employer from, “we’ll deal with this later,” to “yes, I’m ready to sign up today.”

How does Florida make contact with employers?

Florida has 24 regional workforce boards and a little over 100 American Job Centers. All of these entities have business services representatives (BSRs) who go out and introduce employers to employment services. Bonding is just one of the services which the BSRs talk about with employers. The regions also have unique employer events, and the FBP is *always* on the agenda. Sometimes State Bonding Coordinator Diane Vacca receives calls from employers who have heard about the FBP. She answers their questions, clears up misconceptions and directs them to the nearest job center. “Anywhere I go to speak, I manage to plug the Federal Bonding Program,” says Vacca, “I provide training sessions to our workforce boards and do a workshop for our annual Workforce Summit.” Additionally, the State Bonding Coordinator counsels job seekers to always introduce the FBP as a hiring incentive when they go on interviews by first sitting down with a job counselor who can help them with their 30-second elevator speech to employers. This is essential to building their confidence with employers.

Do you have some employers who bond many of their employees or are they spread out among a variety of employers? Is bond usage congregated in specific areas of the state?

Ms. Vacca tracks employer and job location information on a spreadsheet. Unfortunately, she has no way of knowing what percentage of employees are bonded through the FBP.

Most bonds are written in Florida’s higher population centers, most notably West Palm Beach, Ft. Lauderdale, Jacksonville, and Miami in the southeast portion of the state; Tampa in western Florida; and Gainesville in the center of the state, but north of Orlando. The 2017 employers who are utilizing the FBP the most are a wholesaler, painting and repair shop, major hotel chain, restaurants, and home builder. In past years, a cruise line, landscape company and house-keeping businesses topped the list.

Are there plans to nationally advertise to get the word out about the FBP?

No. There are no plans to implement a national FBP promotional campaign. However, now that the Federal Bonding Program’s website has been revised and new content is being added, State Bonding Coordinators are urged to integrate the website into their outreach efforts.

Materials

The Federal Bonding Program's *Employers and Job Seekers* brochure seems to only focus on justice-involved individuals. It would be nice to highlight other eligible populations.

The brochure entitled, [*The Federal Bonding Program, Employers and Job Seekers*](#), does actually refer to other populations who would benefit from Federal Bonds. Please see the panel entitled, "The Federal Bonding Program WHAT IS IT?" The second paragraph states that: "This unique hiring tool targets individuals whose backgrounds can pose significant barriers to securing or retaining employment including:

- Previously incarcerated men, women and youth
- Individuals in recovery from substance use disorders
- TANF recipients
- Individuals with poor credit records
- Economically disadvantaged youth and adults with little or no work histories
- Individuals dishonorably discharged from the military"

May I add my contact information on to the brochures?

Yes. Contact information can be added to the blue space bar located on the bottom of each page of the [*Federal Bonding Program, Employers and Job Seekers brochure*](#).

Do you have testimonials that State Bonding Coordinators can integrate into outreach activities?

Yes. There are testimonials listed on the website. State Bonding Coordinators and others should pass forward testimonials to Tom Villanova at Tom@Bonds4Jobs.com. Below are two State Bonding Coordinator testimonials that you can integrate into your employer and job seeker outreach activities and materials:

- "When I say the Federal Bonding Program is a government initiative without red tape, people are amazed!" (Kristi Judkins, Iowa Bonding Service Coordinator)
 - "I've been with the State Workforce Development Division for over two decades, and the FBP is the simplest tool in our workforce development toolkit to operate; in terms of cost, time and paperwork, it's a win/win/win for State staff, employers and clients." (Mark Olds, Hawaii Bonding Service Coordinator)
-