



Maximize Your Talent Pool, Minimize Risk: Fair Chance Hiring Practices & Second Chance Initiatives

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Getting Talent Back to Work Pledge

In the immediate wake of the First Step Act becoming law, improving rehabilitation and re-entry opportunities for thousands of incarcerated men and women, leaders in the business community are uniting and **Getting Talent Back To Work**.

*Joining a coalition of diverse businesses that represents a major portion of the American workforce, I **pledge** to getting talent back to work. I commit to give opportunities to qualified people with a criminal background, deserving of a second chance.*

Because of this commitment, I will have access to SHRM's **Getting Talent Back to Work Toolkit** to refine and enhance our organizational hiring policies. I commit to creating opportunity and successful outcomes for everyone — including employers, all employees, customers, and our communities.

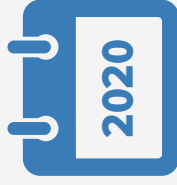
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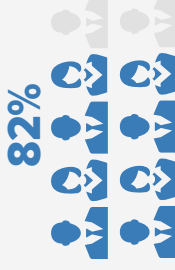
A job is the best way to find fulfillment and turn one's life around. Yet, with **1 in 3 adults in the U.S. having a criminal record**, many can't secure one.



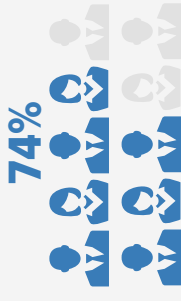
95% of people in prison today will eventually be released — more than **650,000 people** every year.



U.S. employers continue to experience talent shortages at an alarming rate with **more than 7.8 million jobs that must be filled by 2020**.



More than **82%** of hiring managers indicated **workers with a criminal history are at least as effective** in their jobs as those without a criminal history.



74% of those same hiring managers went even further, indicating that **diminished costs associated with hiring from this population — coupled with effective risk mitigation — provide extreme value** for their organizations.

Photographs are not intended to imply that the models pictured have a criminal record.

www.GettingTalentBackToWork.org

Problem

Whether an individual has completed a period of incarceration or just has a criminal record, unnecessary barriers persist and create a societal problem where productive citizens are deprived of employment opportunities and organizations are deprived of qualified talent, creating harmful downstream consequences for millions of people's lives.

Opportunity

Historic commitments to criminal justice reform – particularly with the recent passage of the First Step Act – provide the business community with an opportunity to help people re-enter society by joining the Getting Talent Back to Work movement.

By embracing best practices, employers can identify a diverse pool of qualified applicants, improve opportunities for those deserving of second chances, and have a direct positive impact on their communities – strengthening them and keeping them safe.

Hiring managers and HR professionals see 3 benefits of hiring workers with a criminal background:

1 the hiring of most-qualified candidates from a truly diverse pool

2 the intrinsic value of giving people second chances at employment

3 the opportunity to improve the community around them

Guiding Principles and Insights of the Getting Talent Back to Work Toolkit

Koch Industries, Total Wine, Walmart, and thousands more have worked to advance hiring practices through voluntary measures to “ban the box” or by limiting background checks. Employers can continue to refine and enhance their hiring practices through the Getting Talent Back to Work Toolkit.

✓ Learn the research and legal factors around hiring workers with a criminal background.

✓ Apply evidence-based best practices for both hiring and integrating employees with a criminal background. This includes access to numerous sample policies, practical guides, and checklists.

✓ Get practical guidance from industry leaders in acquiring, developing, and promoting talent including workers with a criminal background.

By implementing the toolkit into existing practices, employers can be a major force for good in their communities, grow the number of opportunities for workers with a criminal background, and address talent shortages affecting key business outcomes.

Source: Recent research conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and Charles Koch Institute (CKI)

CT REENTRY COLLABORATIVE

The CT Reentry Collaborative is made up of ten active reentry roundtables located in Bridgeport, Danbury, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Southeastern CT, Stamford, Torrington, Waterbury, and Windham. Each roundtable is a collaboration of state and local organizations working together to identify needs and address gaps in services for individuals returning home from incarceration. Individuals with lived experience are encouraged to join this network and work alongside these providers to find real solutions. This collaborative builds relationships with organizations and agencies across Connecticut to foster successful reentry, eliminate barriers, reduce recidivism and increase public safety. It is coordinated by Andrew Clark, Director of the Institute of Municipal & Regional Policy (IMRP) at Central Connecticut State University. Here is their schedule:

CITY	DAY	TIME	PLACE	CONTACT
Bridgeport	3 rd Thursday	9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	The Burroughs Center, 2470 Fairfield Ave. Bridgeport, CT	Rob Hebert hebert@careerresources.org Terri Williams twilliams@workplace.org
Danbury	4 th Wednesday	10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Danbury City Hall, 155 Deer Hill Ave. Danbury	Phyllis Kinlow pkinlow@fordham.edu Ryan Murphy rmurphy@theconnectioninc.org
Hartford	1 st Thursday	1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	CT Nonprofits 75 Charter Oak Ave. Building 1 Hartford, CT	Sue Gunderman cthireone@gmail.com Tiffany Bell tbell@csimail.org
New Britain	2 nd Tuesday	10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Advocacy Unlimited 114 West Main Street, New Britain, CT	Dana Smith dsmith@advocacyunlimited.org Kayla Hendrickson khendrickson@cmhacc.org Char Dornne Bussue cbussue@advocacyunlimited.org
New Haven	3 rd Wednesday	11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Church on the Rock 95 Hamilton St. New Haven, CT	Earl Bloodworth Earl.bloodworth@bridgeportct.gov Don Robinson drobinson@workplace.org
Southeastern CT	3 rd Friday	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Montville AJC 601 Norwich New London Turpike Uncasville, CT	Kia Baird sectreentry@gmail.com John Duca jpduca@theconnectioninc.org
Stamford	2 nd Thursday	10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	DOMUS Kids 83 Lockwood Avenue, Stamford, CT	Jeremy Kosbob jkosbob@domuskids.org Greg Brunson gbrunson@domuskids.org
Torrington	4 th Thursday	12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Torrington City Hall, 140 Main Street, Torrington, CT	Dave Ferreira, Ed.D. DFerreira@nwcc.commnet.edu Rick Dalla Valle rdallavalle@csimail.org
Waterbury	1 st Tuesday	9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Wellmore 402 East Main St. Waterbury, CT	Beth Hines bhines@cpa-ct.org Heather Francisco hfrancisco@safehavenofgw.org
Windham Regional	3 rd Tuesday	1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	American Job Center, Tyler Square, 1320 Main Street, Willimantic, CT	Shannon Klock Shannon.klock@perceptionprograms.org

www.ctreentry.org

As Connecticut's prison population continues to decline, reentry supports become an integral part of one's successful reintegration back into the lives of their children, families and communities. Reentry is complex as it touches on every aspect of a person's life. Once an individual is released from prison, challenges can arise with finding assistance around basic needs, housing, employment, mental health and substance abuse supports, and other necessary resources. Identifying these resources, in a timely fashion, is critical to one's overall success.

The purpose of this website is to centralize reentry resources here in Connecticut to make it easier for someone to navigate the system, find support and be successful when they return home to their families and communities. Start by joining a local roundtable near you or simply search through the resources listed on this website to find a supportive network of providers as well as a second chance.

Resettlement “SAMHSA” Reentry

Program Advisory Committee

- ◆ Community Partners in Action
- ◆ Capital Workforce Partners
- ◆ City of Hartford
- ◆ CT Department of Correction
- ◆ Connecticut Talent Assistance Cooperative (CONNTAC)
- ◆ Greater Hartford Legal Aid
- ◆ InterCommunity, INC
- ◆ Judicial Department: Court Support Services Division (CSSD)
- ◆ Mercy Housing and Shelter Corporation
- ◆ The Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR)

This program is funded by:

SAMHSA

Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration



About

Community Partners in Action

Community Partners in Action focuses on behavioral change and advocates for criminal justice reform.

Together, our reentry, employment, basic needs and recovery services make a positive impact on lives.

Our programs help reduce recidivism and enhance public safety at a fraction of the cost of prison.

CPA Program Locations:

Hartford, CT - Manchester, CT
Waterbury, CT - Hamden, CT

cpa-ct.org



Community Partners in Action is committed to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action, complying with all applicable state and federal law.



Resettlement “SAMHSA” Reentry Program

This program provides pre and post release peer-to-peer case management, treatment and support services to Individuals diagnosed with a Substance Use Disorder and/or Co-occurring Mental Health who are returning to the Greater Hartford Community.

Location: Reentry Welcome Center

Hartford City Hall
550 Main Street, Ground Floor
(Prospect Street Entrance)

Hartford, CT 06103

(860) 263-8476

Hours: Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



What is the Resettlement “SAMHSA” Reentry Program?

Community Partners in Action (CPA)

was awarded a five-year reentry grant from The Department of Health and Human Services (SAMHSA). This SAMHSA grant will serve 275 citizens (55 annually) returning to the Greater Hartford community.

The Program is a Greater Hartford based collaborative which addresses reentry obstacles through the provision of comprehensive reentry services. The participants are recruited from two CT DOC Institutions:

- ◆ York Correctional Institution (Women-Niantic, CT)
- ◆ Cybulski Community Reintegration Center (Men-Enfield, CT)

The program provides long-term pre and post release peer-to-peer case management and recovery support services to participants with a substance use disorder and/or co-occurring substance use and mental disorder. CPA has partnered with InterCommunity to provide the substance abuse and mental health treatment for all participants.

Who is Able to Utilize the Services & Supports?

Program Eligibility includes women and men 18 yrs. of age and older who:

- Have been assessed/diagnosed as having a Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and/or co-occurring substance use and mental disorder;
- ◆ Are incarcerated at York Correctional Institution or Cybulski Community Reintegration Center
- ◆ Are sentenced to and serving at least three months in prison or have violated parole and serving at least one month in prison;
- Are within four months of release to the community; and
- Are willing to actively engage in peer-to-peer case management and intensive treatment services pre & post release from prison.

Overall Program Goals:

- ◆ To increase access to and utilization of treatment for 275 individuals (55 annually) returning to Greater Hartford with SUD and/or co-occurring substance use and mental disorders.
- ◆ To provide pre and post release peer-to-peer Case Management (CM) to enhance and strengthen treatment access and services.
- ◆ To increase recovery/treatment service engagement and decrease recidivism of program participants.
- ◆ To implement Evidence Based Practices for individuals with SUD/co-occurring disorders and recovery/ wraparound support services.

For More Information or to Make a Referral, Please Contact:

* Virginia Lewis, Program Manager

Office: (860) 937-5969

Email: vlewis@cpa-ct.org

OR

* Deborah Rogala, LCSW

Clinical Program Operations Director

Office: (860) 796-8222

Email: drogala@cpa-ct.org

Please note: All referrals must come from CT Department of Correction (CT DOC).

***This program is located at the CPA’s Reentry Welcome Center in Hartford’s City Hall**



Hartford City Hall, Ground Floor, Prospect Street Entrance




CONNECTICUT EMPLOYER SURVEY

Practices and Attitudes Regarding the Hiring of
Formerly-Incarcerated Persons and
Recommendations for Driving Better Outcomes

December 2016

Sponsored by: The Malta Justice Initiative Inc.
Underwritten by: The Tow Foundation
Administered by: Harris Poll

Malta Justice Initiative 

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Employer Survey

HIGHLIGHTS OF MALTA'S CONNECTICUT EMPLOYER SURVEY REGARDING THE HIRING OF THE FORMERLY-INCARCERATED

Why This Survey?

- Prior research strongly suggests that holding a job during the first year following release is the single most important factor as to whether a releasee ends up back in prison.
- In Connecticut, well over half of releasees end up back in prison within three years, thereby costing the taxpayers as much as \$51,000 per inmate per year.
- It is estimated that as many as 60% of ex-offenders do not hold a legitimate job one year after release.
- Significantly, research indicates that 93% of those who found and held jobs during their period of supervised release avoided a return to prison.
- If we are serious about giving second chances, promoting reintegration, reducing recidivism and saving money for taxpayers, we must do whatever can practicably be done to enhance the job prospects of those with a past criminal record.

Key Findings

- Nearly 95% of respondents agree that hiring an ex-offender has the potential to turn them into a productive member of society and 97% agree that those with a non-violent criminal record deserve a second chance.
- The Malta survey found a strong willingness among Connecticut employers to hire formerly-incarcerated persons under certain circumstances, particularly if the perceived risks are mitigated and/or incentives are provided:
 - if the ex-offender is trained for a job the employer has difficulty filling (77%);
 - if the applicant has been drug- and crime-free for at least three years (63%);
 - if tax credits are made available and/or healthcare costs are underwritten for up to two years (73%);
 - if salary or training costs are subsidized (76%);
 - if immunity is provided for the conduct of the ex-offender while on the job, thereby insulating employers from suits for negligent hiring or supervision (77%); and
 - there is support (52%) for making it unlawful to discriminate against ex-offenders without sufficient justification (particularly if no private right of action is available to job applicants, thereby minimizing the threat of a spate of additional employment lawsuits).

Specific Recommendations

- Minimize risks for employers through immunity protection.
- Use savings from right-sizing our prisons to incentivize employers with grants and vouchers.
- Expunge criminal records after 3-5 years if an ex-offender stays clean.
- Enact an anti-discrimination law, but with no private cause of action.

To See the Entire Survey Results Click on the Link Below:

[Malta Justice Employer Survey Report PDF](#)

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The Adult Reentry and Employment Strategic Planning Program Grant (ARES) Project Summary¹

Grant Summary

- A one year planning grant was awarded in October 2018 from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to the Connecticut Department of Correction (CTDOC). The grant that was extended up to one year due to the Federal government work stoppage.
- Purpose is to develop a statewide Connecticut Adult Reentry and Employment Strategic Plan for establishing policy and programmatic frameworks that build upon existing and future resources for reentry services, education and vocational training, and employment.
- Connecticut was one of eleven locations selected for this grant program. These locations will be invited to apply for additional grant funds during the 2020-2021 Federal fiscal year to implement the recommendations brought forward during the planning process.
- Support for this project is being provided by the Council of State Governments and the National Reentry Resource Center

Need For This Project

- 95% of people incarcerated in state prisons will be released
- Nationwide, 68% of people released from prison will be rearrested in 3 years
 - *In Connecticut, 60% are rearrested, 45% convicted of a new offense, and 34% are returned to prison for a new term of incarceration.*
- About 70 million adults in the U.S. have a criminal record, which creates barriers to employment
- 87% of employers conduct criminal background checks
- A criminal record reduces the likelihood of receiving a job offer by nearly 50%.

Why the Focus on Employment?

- It is difficult for people leaving prison to find gainful employment
 - *Over 90% of people leaving Connecticut prisons had less than 5 years of employment history prior to going to prison*
 - *People with job skills prior to going to prison have had their skills deteriorate over time.*
 - *Once released, many people lack access to prosocial networks that could help them obtain and maintain gainful employment.*
 - *Employers are hesitant to hire people with criminal records and/or are restricted by company hiring practices or federal/state regulations.*
 - *Many jobs have legal barriers that do not allow for hiring people with criminal records.*

¹ Prepared by Stephen M. Cox, Ph.D., Susan Koski, LP.D., Lyndsay Ruffolo, and Chris Moccio, Institute for the Study of Crime and Justice at Central Connecticut State University

- Research has found that simply connecting someone to a job does not usually reduce recidivism
Many people may not be ready for gainful employment due to other criminogenic needs related to their original criminal behavior (e.g., education, mental health, substance use, housing, etc.).
- People who leave prison are less likely to be rearrested if their criminogenic needs have been met during and after their prison stay followed by institutional and community employment services that increase their job readiness.

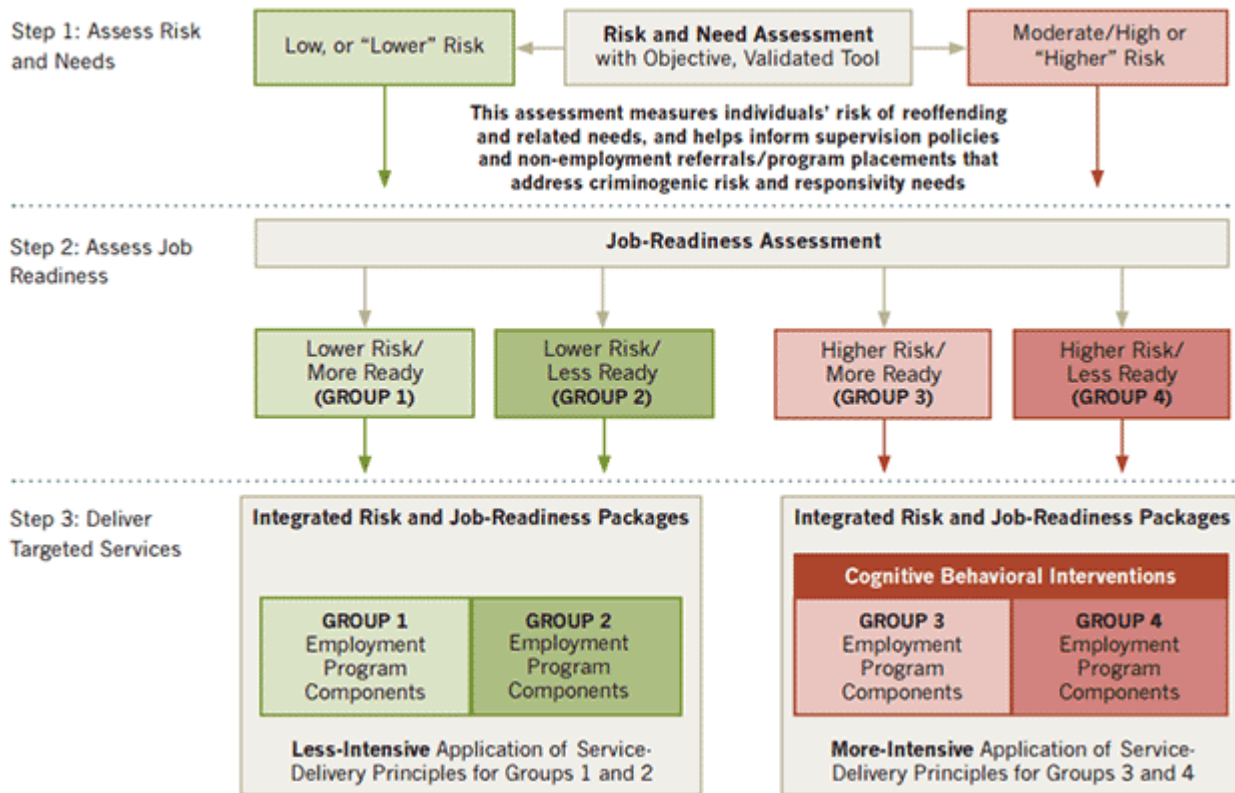
Key Project Personnel

- William Murphy, CTDOC, Director of Programs and Treatment
- Maria Simmons-Pirro, CTDOC, Superintendent, Unified School District #1
- Carol Meglio, CTDOC, Project Coordinator
- David McCluskey, CTDOC, Legislative Liaison
- Christine Fortunato, CTDOC, Grant Manager
- Eleanor Michael, CT Office of Policy and Management, Policy Development Coordinator
- John Santa, Chair, Industry/Business Advisory Group for the ARES project
- Stephen Cox, Central Connecticut State University, Professor
- Susan Koski, Central Connecticut State University, Associate Professor
- Erica Nelson, Technical Assistance Provider, Council of State Governments

Reentry and Employment Strategies Framework

The Council of State Governments developed the Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies (IRES) framework so that resources can be better used to connect the right people to the right programs and to assess criminal risks and job readiness prior to finding employment for them.

While people who are lower risk for committing new crimes and are ready for employment can be placed in jobs upon release from prison, people having a higher criminal risk and are not ready for employment need to be given extensive cognitive behavioral therapy programming prior to obtaining employment.



Criminal Risk and Job Readiness of People Leaving Connecticut Prisons

We collected data on all people released from Connecticut prisons during the 2018 calendar year to determine their criminal risk and job readiness. Criminal risk was determined with an in-house CTDOC assessment (Treatment and Program Assessment Instrument, or TPAI) and job readiness was measured with the CTDOC Vocational Training/Work Skills classification assessment.

The table below summarizes these data. Of the 7,846 people released from Connecticut prisons and jails, the majority had high criminal risk (56%) and had low (22%) or medium (29%) job readiness. It is important to point out that 58% of people leaving prison had medium job readiness and 8% (or 590 people) had high job readiness.

Job Readiness by Risk of Reoffending for People Released from a DOC Facility in 2018*				
Criminal Risk		Job Readiness		
		Low	Medium	High
Criminal Risk	Low Risk	395 (5%)	936 (12%)	84 (1%)
	Medium Risk	611 (8%)	1,312 (17%)	146 (2%)
	High Risk	1,710 (22%)	2,292 (29%)	360 (5%)
	<i>Total</i>	<i>2,716 (35%)</i>	<i>4,540 (58%)</i>	<i>590 (8%)</i>
*The percentages represent the total percentages (out of 7,846).				

Identified Barriers Relevant to Obtaining and Maintaining Employment

As part of the planning process, Drs. Cox and Koski conducted interviews and attended various meetings/functions with employers, American Job Center staff, work release halfway house staff, CTDOC staff, and returning citizens to identify common concerns and barriers to employment for returning citizens. Below are the concerns/barriers most relevant to employers. These concerns are categorized by Individual Barriers, Criminal Justice Barriers, and Legal Barriers.

Individual Barriers

Lack of “Soft Skills”: One of the most commonly identified concerns was that people leaving prison have a lack of soft skills that impede their ability to obtain employment and often lead to their dismissals from jobs. Examples of these soft skills are interpersonal communication, reliability and punctuality, ability to accept on-the-job feedback, and understanding of teamwork and roles. Several employers stated that finding people with these skills is often more challenging than finding people with specific skill sets and qualifications.

Unmet Basic Needs: Many returning citizens lack basic needs that prevent them from maintaining employment such as stable housing, clothing, hygiene, transportation, and child care.

Difficulty Adjusting to Life Outside of Prison: Many returning citizens, especially those who have been in prison for several years, suffer from culture shock and have difficulty navigating life outside of prison. This culture shock is exacerbated by immediately being placed in a job.

Returning Citizens Lack Detailed Information that can be Given to Employers: While in prison, many inmates participate in treatment, education, and employment programs but are not able to provide the details of this information to potential employers. For example, offenders who participate in Correctional Enterprises typically learn specialized skills that are directly relatable to specific industry jobs. However, the offender is not provided any information upon release that can be given to employers showing exactly what job skills were obtained while in prison.

Little or No Distinction between Getting a Job Versus Having a Career: Some returning citizens simply want a job with no immediate interest in a career while others are interested in

pursuing careers. The CTDOC does not account for this and its halfway house and reentry decision-making is based upon obtaining any type of employment.

Criminal Justice Barriers

Global Suspension of Work Release and Furlough Programs: Employers are reluctant to participate in CTDOC employment programs over concerns of widespread suspensions of work furlough and education programs that take offenders out of the workplace on short notice and for extended periods of time. These suspensions can cause significant worker shortages and lead to lost production and revenues for employers.

CTDOC Community Supervision Reporting Requirements: Returning citizens who are being supervised in the community by CTDOC parole officers are required to meet with them and/or attend programs during normal business hours. This requirement causes offenders to miss work on a regular basis and also requires that returning citizens inform their work supervisors they have been formerly incarcerated.

Lack of Licensing and Certification Programs in Prisons: The CTDOC currently has no mechanism for creating and offering industry licenses and certification programs.

Employers have No Ability to Access Inmates who may be Qualified for Jobs: Employers have no consistent ability to recruit individuals prior to their prison release. While some prisons host job fairs and provide some employment services, these are inconsistent and uncoordinated.

Legal Barriers

Licensure Restrictions: There is general confusion as to what types of licensures are restricted for people with criminal records.

Tax credits: Most employers of returning citizens do not apply for tax credits. Many employers stated that there is a long lag time between when they apply and when they get the tax credit. In addition, employers who hire formerly incarcerated individuals are not eligible for tax credits if the person was hired through a temporary employment agency.

Job Site Restrictions: Several employers noted that federal and state job policies/practices do not permit employees with criminal records on certain job sites.

Federal Contracting Requirements: Employers who have federal contracts are limited in hiring people with criminal records, regardless of whether the employee is actually doing work on the contract.

Employer Barriers

Corporate Policies: Many national corporations have restrictive policies against hiring people with felony convictions.

Lack of Understanding and/or Use of Certificates of Employability: Connecticut State Statutes provides the Board of Pardons and Paroles (BOPP) and the Judicial Branch with the authority to issue “certificates of rehabilitation” to persons with criminal convictions whose employment prospects would be helped with the certificate. Preliminary research found that only 293 certificates were granted from 2015 through 2016 out of 572 applications. Additionally, very few employers had any knowledge of the certificates nor did they understand their usefulness.

Employers Lack an Awareness of Community Resources and Services: Many employers expressed interest in helping employees overcome individual barriers to maintain employment but were unsure of what community resources were available.

All Convicted Felons are Viewed the Same: When conducting backgrounds checks, most employers automatically disqualify people with any felony convictions.

Best Practices for Hiring People who are Formerly Incarcerated

The Connecticut NAACP hosted an event on October 8, 2019 at Southern Connecticut State University to introduce their “1,000,000 Jobs” initiative for people who were formerly incarcerated. The event featured Yariela Kerr-Donovan, the Senior Director of Human Resources at Johns Hopkins Hospital, who spoke about how Johns Hopkins has become a leader in hiring people with criminal records. Ms. Kerr-Donovan shared several best practices during her presentation that are presented below.

Key Recommendations:

- Review the job specifications and determine whether work experience is necessary to perform this job. Is work experience something the business would like to have but is not a requirement?
- Leadership should consciously decide the purpose of the background check. Is the person conducting the background check simply looking for a hit or does this person have the knowledge and ability to truly assess the applicant’s risk to the company?
- There should be an informed risk assessment used for hiring decisions that is related to the work being performed and the workplace.
- There should be a pathway to grow if the person is interested in a career.
- The company should establish partnerships with local job programs (such as the American Job Centers) so that hiring managers have an easier time identifying job-ready people.
- The company should have a resource guide for services in the community that are available to employees.
- The company should consider having job coaches or mentors for employees who are formerly incarcerated. These people can help navigate life in a work environment.

Johns Hopkins’ Hospital Hiring Practices:

- No “box” on the application.
- All applicants are processed through the normal application/interview process.

- There are reviews conducted to determine if adopted guidelines for criminal background checks are relevant and appropriate.
- Independent review by their security/safety personnel who work with human resources to ensure appropriate and successful placement of employees.
- The background file is kept in human resources and is not readily available to the supervising manager. Human resources will provide information to the supervising manager if needed.
- Job coaches are assigned to support an employee's transition when needed.

Johns Hopkins Assessment of Criminal Records:

- Identify the job and duties and determine the relevancy of criminal convictions
- Consider the time, nature and number of convictions
- Understand the circumstances and relationship between convictions
- Assess employment before and after to see the extent of rehabilitation
- Look at applicant's attempts at rehabilitation
- Consider the applicant's age at the time of conviction
- Assess the impact of conviction and relevance to security and safety of employees and clients
- Observe whether the applicant disclosed this information

Johns Hopkins Success Factors Involving External Programs:

- Have support of security/safety staff
- Screen carefully for success
- Help referrers build pre-hire curriculum to meet company's specific needs
- Interview candidates prior to training programs as if they are being considered for a permanent position
- Use internships as workforce development to hire opportunity
- Use job coaches to support transition

