

FACE TO FACE

Connecting Policymakers to People Involved with the Correctional System

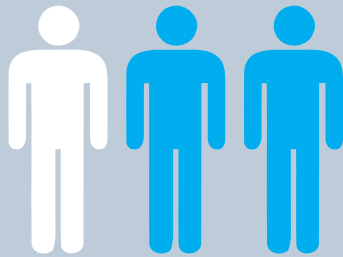
Improving Employment Prospects for People with Criminal Records

There are an estimated 70 million adults in the U.S. with a criminal record, many of whom face a range of related challenges to securing and maintaining employment. Research shows that these barriers create economic burdens for the people with records, their families, and their communities at large. Despite recent advances and increased attention to this issue, there continue to be significant barriers to employment for people with criminal records.

~\$78–\$87 billion

Annual loss in GDP due to unemployment or underemployment of people with criminal records¹

**NEARLY
1 in 3**
U.S. adults have
a criminal record²



**NEARLY
50%**
of U.S. children have
at least one parent with
a criminal record³



Barriers to Employment

Securing employment can be a critical part of successful reentry for the nearly 10 million people returning to their communities from prison and jail each year, who represent just a fraction of people in the U.S. with criminal records.⁴ However, there are several fundamental challenges for people returning from incarceration that prevent them from finding or keeping a job, such as:

- 1** Prohibitive statutes and collateral consequences
- 2** Restrictive hiring policies
- 3** Limited or diminished skills
- 4** Minimal work experience



15%

EFFECTS ON FAMILIES

The incarceration of a parent can have significant, long-lasting financial effects on the entire family. In the year after a father is released, for example, family income is 15% lower than it was the year before the father was first incarcerated.⁵



1. Cherrie Bucknor and Alan Barber, *The Price We Pay: Economic Costs of Barriers to Employment for Former Prisoners and People Convicted of Felonies* (Washington, DC: Center for Economic and Policy Research, 2016), <http://cepr.net/images/stories/reports/employment-prisoners-felonies-2016-06.pdf>.

2. Maurice Emsellem and Michelle Natividad Rodríguez, *Advancing a Federal Fair Chance Hiring Agenda: Background Check Reforms in Over 100 Cities, Counties, and States Pave the Way for Presidential Action* (New York: National Employment Law Project, 2015), <http://www.nelp.org/content/uploads/2015/01/Report-Federal-Fair-Chance-Hiring-Agenda.pdf>.

3. Rebecca Vallas et al., *Removing Barriers to Opportunity for Parents with Criminal Records and their Children* (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, 2015), <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/09060720/CriminalRecords-report2.pdf>.

4. E. Ann Carson, *Prisoners in 2015* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2016), [bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p15.pdf](https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p15.pdf); Allen J. Beck, “The Importance of Successful Reentry to Jail Population Growth” (paper presented at the Urban Institute’s Jail Reentry Roundtable, June 27, 2006), urban.org/sites/default/files/beck.ppt.

5. The Pew Charitable Trusts, *Collateral Costs: Incarceration’s Effect on Economic Mobility* (Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010), http://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs_assets/2010/collateralcosts1pdf.pdf.

6. Megan Kurlychek, Robert Brame, and Shawn D. Bushway, “Enduring Risk? Old Criminal Records and Predictions of Future Criminal Involvement,” *Crime & Delinquency* 53, no. 64 (2007): 83; Alfred Blumstein and Kiminori Nakamura, “Redemption in the Presence of Widespread Criminal Background Checks,” *Criminology* 47, no. 2 (2009): 339.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2016-MU-BX-K011 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.