

Governor's Re-entry Council

November 29, 2011

Oregon Department of Transportation
4040 Fairview Industrial Drive SE
Salem, Oregon

Diamond Lake Conference Room

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Council Members: Patrice Altenhofen, Aaron Felton, Bruce Goldberg, Ginger Martin, Tom McClellan, Jerry Moore, Colette S. Peters, Mark Royal, Ross Shepard, Paul Solomon, Margaret Van Vliet, Laurie Warner

Steering Committee Members: Cindy Booth, Val Conley, Phil Cox, Debra Giard, Greg Hamann, Tim Moore, Sharrice Pendergraft, Evelyn Roth, Patrick Vance

Interested Observers: Leroy Benham, Nichole Brown, Janet Byrd, Barbara Cannard, Amy Cook, Sharon Darcy, Sandra Dugan, Kevin Engelen, Allen Evans, Jim Keller, Craig Keyston, Matt Meier, Karen Meurer, Alex Nelson, Anne O'Malley, Ted Salter

Ginger Martin: Welcome and Introductions

Ginger Martin welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. She is chairing the meeting in Max Williams' absence and explained why Max Williams was not able to attend today. Last night a Corrections Officer on his way to work in Eastern Oregon was murdered by a motorist he stopped to help. Mr. Williams and Deputy Director Morrow left Salem just hours after learning of the incident to be with the officer's family and speak to the officer's co-workers at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution.

Review of Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved and will be posted to the council's website.

Public Input

No one from the public requested to speak.

Announcements and Information Sharing

Ms. Martin reported that Max Williams wanted the council to know that Oregon has been working with the Oregon delegation in Washington to garner support for the Second Chance Act Reauthorization bill.

Cindy Booth reported that DOC and ODOT/DMV have been working to develop a process for inmates nearing release to obtain a state-issued ID card or renewed driver license. The rule administering using a state-issued photo ID is under review and will go out for a 90-day public review in January. Expectation is that implementation will be in April or May 2012. The current administrative rule covers Oregonians who are out of the state/country either traveling or serving with the military. They can renew their driver license or ID card by mail, as long as they have a valid photograph on file and the required documentation has been presented to the DMV. The rule change will enable inmates who have an Oregon driver license, either expired or about to expire, and who have a current photograph on file with DMV, to apply for a state identification card or a renewal of license while still in prison. DOC will be coordinating these efforts. This will assist with the inmate's transition. DOC continues with the program at Santiam Correctional Institution and Deer Ridge Correctional Institution that transports 10 inmates from each institution each month to a local DMV office along with their required documents to get a state-issued identification card prior to release.

Paul Solomon reported that the Criminal Justice Commission recently held a hearing to receive testimony from various providers from drug courts, drug task forces and re-entry service providers. Each year Byrne Grant money is allocated in those 3 areas. This year there is a significant reduction in this grant funding. The intention of the providers' testimony was to impress upon the CJC the need for continued funding of re-entry services.

Ginger Martin reported that DOC received nearly \$1 million in Second Chance Act Grant funding. There are 4 proposals for demonstration projects that will be funded. The 4 unique programs are in Lane, Marion, Washington and Jackson counties and while different, each is a comprehensive project. There is a pre-release component and a post-release component with wrap-around services. The contracts are currently being drafted.

Re-entry Messaging Project Proposal

Janet Byrd, Executive Director

Neighborhood Partnerships

Ms. Martin introduced Janet Byrd, who talked about the impact and importance of understanding messaging in gaining support for re-entry. The steering committee's workgroups on housing and employment have been working to change the attitudes of employers and housing providers with some success. Ms. Byrd is well versed in how to talk about and build support for particularly difficult topics. We have a proposal from a company that is going to help us with this effort and we are planning to raise funds from the private sector for this project. Ms. Byrd distributed a document outlining the goals for the effort and the plan proposed by a company and what would be accomplished during the different phases of the project (attached). Once the money is raised, it will take 8 to 10 weeks to complete the study. Ms. Byrd has committed the support of Neighborhood Partnerships. The only cost to the state would be coordination, travel time and staff participation.

Back to Work Oregon and Job Training During Transition

Evelyn Roth, Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development

Nichole Brown, DOC Workforce Development Unit

Cindy Booth, DOC Transition and Release Unit

Evelyn Roth distributed a handout (attached) that explains the Back to Work Oregon initiative and the partnership established by the 2011-2013 legislative session budget note.

Oregon Employer Attitudes and Practices: Survey Results **Patrice Altenhofen, Cascade Employers Association**

Patrice Altenhofen reported that Cascade Employers Association distributed the results of the survey which was developed by the Employment Workgroup. Ms. Altenhofen's goal was to answer every question an employer could ask about hiring someone with a conviction history. Her association administered the survey and distributed it statewide to approximately 3,000 contacts with the assistance of SEDCOR, Salem Area Chamber of Commerce and Oregon Career Council. Four hundred sixty responses were received, which is a phenomenal response rate. The results are attached. The survey results were recently compiled and no analysis has yet been done. This is simply data and information.

A few highlights:

- 83% of respondents said they are willing to hire someone with a conviction history if the crime is not relevant to the position being filled.
- 49% of respondents are open to participating in a program in which applicants are pre-screened.
- Pre-screening was the top incentive for an employer participating in a hiring program.
- The second most popular incentive is follow-up drug testing that is free to the employer.
- Tax credits were the least popular option.
- Approximately 50 employers self-identified as being interested in receiving follow-up information about any program that may come out of this survey.

Ms. Altenhofen thanked the council, the steering committee and workgroup members who worked with her on the survey. Debra Giard said this survey validates the work we are doing and how we are helping individuals find employment and helping employers find qualified candidates. This can be used to demonstrate to those with a conviction history that there are many employers willing to hire them. Cindy Booth said that in just the last two days since the survey results have been available, the DOC transition coordinators are providing some of this information to the individuals they are assisting in preparation for release.

Unlocking Potential: Results of National Survey of Post-secondary Education in State Prisons

Greg Hamann, President
Linn-Benton Community College
Re-entry Steering Committee Member

Mr. Hamann presented information contained in the issue brief (attached) prepared by the Institute for Higher Education Policy in Washington, DC. He said 80% of jobs require more education than a GED or a high school diploma. Mr. Hamann believes society should level the playing field for those serving time in prison. That does not mean giving inmates more opportunity for higher education, but allowing them equal access to further their education prior to re-entry. Page 15 contains a summary of key findings. Removing barriers can facilitate achieving post-secondary education prior to release making re-entry successful while reducing recidivism. The post-secondary education system is eager to help. Corrections could provide access, but not the education. Discussion resulted in decision to

discuss this at the next steering committee meeting before taking the issue to the governor's office.

Progress on Goals

1. Addressing Barriers to Sex Offender Re-entry: Recommendations from Workgroup

Ginger Martin reminded the council that a priority was established to address the barriers to successful re-entry for sex offenders. The attached Goals to Improve Sex Offender Re-entry was reviewed. A group of experts from the Sex Offender Supervision Network, Oregon Association of Community Corrections Directors, the Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision and DOC Transition and Release Unit met and discussed how we might address the three recommendations. As it happens, the legislature had called the Offender Registration Workgroup to work on this issue. Changes will require proposed legislation and will affect adults. Many other stakeholders need to be brought into the discussion before legislation can be written. It is expected legislation will be submitted during the 2013 session. The council's workgroup will continue working on areas not being addressed by the legislative workgroup.

Addressing Barriers to Re-entry in the Juvenile Justice System: Re-entry Mapping Project

Phil Cox said a review of the gaps and strengths listed on the mapping document was discussed at length by a group at OYA in August and is being revised as we go. Ms. Martin added that the Steering Committee (with OYA well represented) has closely reviewed the document and found that a number of gaps could be addressed by procedural changes and will continue to be modified as the council and steering committee, along with the workgroups address the issues.

Action Planning for Youth Convicted as Adults

Phil Cox explained the differences in juveniles convicted and sentenced to OYA and those juveniles sentenced as adults. The youth sentenced as adults begin their intake process with the DOC. The juveniles sentenced to OYA are assigned at intake a juvenile parole and probation officer from the county of conviction. That JPPO follows the youth throughout their incarceration and subsequent release. DOC and OYA are now working to create an experience more consistent with the OYA youth for the youth sentenced as an adult. The collaboration between OYA, DOC and Community Corrections is enhancing electronic communications between the agencies with the goal of maximizing the success of the youth once they leave custody.

Cindy Booth added that one area that DOC has known needed attention is the electronic information sharing between the agencies. Community Corrections statewide agencies use the DOC Offender Information System for all inmates. DOC enters information about the youth that we eventually send to OYA, but no information comes back. The Juvenile Justice Information System houses literally all the information about that young inmate's world while housed at OYA. DOC is legally responsible for them and the hand-off to community corrections, so we need to do a better job at developing some crosswalks for information sharing or significant data downloads that will help community corrections stay better informed over the long haul. We are also working to make sure the DOC youth housed at OYA have the same opportunities to obtain birth certificates, Social Security card, state

issued ID cards and pre-qualify for health care and mental health care benefits prior to release.

Ms. Booth said that the council's assistance in developing a policy for legislation in the 2013 session that would make some changes to the statutory release planning timelines for Second Look. These timelines are problematic for everyone involved in these cases: the courts, DOC, OYA and community corrections agencies.

Ms. Booth said there is a need to work with the Board to discuss appropriate conditions of supervision for younger offenders who are supervised by adult community corrections.

Ms. Martin said that she does not know who will chair the council with Max Williams' departure to private employment. The schedule for 2012 will be determined after a director is named for DOC and the council chair is determined.

The Common Sense of Second Chances: Oregon Communities Speak Up

As the next step in our work in Oregon, we are hoping to launch a coordinated communications effort aimed at improving the success of individuals as they leave the Oregon prison system and return to their home communities.

We have the following goals:

- Increase support by decision makers, elected officials, and leaders at all levels (community, local, and state) for the allocation of public and private resources in support of successful re-entry. We will move state policy, create passionate legislative and community advocates, and support partners in their work to site local facilities.
- Create a strong message for compassionate and effective support of individuals re-entering communities post-incarceration that will counter fears and overcome resistance to community based housing and employment solutions.
- Engage and train advocates, partners, and allies in the strategic use of our message to advance policy priorities and build the support of decision leaders.

We propose to work with Topos, a nationally recognized researcher in the field of strategic communications. They have proposed the following design for the effort, and submitted a proposed budget. It is possible to do the work in phases.

Phase 1 – Exploratory

This stage of work is designed to uncover the current cultural dynamics on the issue, including the current "common sense" that is standing in the way of progress.

Media Review to Examine Current Narratives (Liana)

Expert and Advocate Roundtable

On-the-Ground (Ethnographic) Research

The research would involve conversations with five categories of individuals – including open-ended exploration of their thinking about relevant topics, as well as their responses to various narratives. The five are: Public (neighbors/co-workers); Employers; Landlords; Previously incarcerated individuals; Social workers / Probation officers.

The conversations would happen in a number of communities around the State, not focusing on the Portland area.

Exploratory Focus groups

Participants typically meet an "engaged citizen" profile, meaning people who are active in volunteerism or political involvement, for instance, and are comfortable expressing their views to others. For this project we would envision 6 groups.

Phase 2 – Developing A New Narrative

The goal for the second phase would be development and testing of new ways of talking about the issue, that have proven ability to shift perspectives and conversations in more constructive directions. This phase goes back and forth in an iterative way between two techniques.

TalkBack Testing

Topos projects typically include “talkback” testing of individual messages. The core of the talkback approach (which can include Internet, phone and in-person testing) is that people try to repeat a message back as though they were passing it along to a friend (as in the children’s game of Telephone). Talkback testing also includes exploration of how well an idea “sticks,” how effective it is at shifting perspectives, how strong it is as an “organizing idea” for discussion, and how comfortable people are talking about it (in a way that can allow it to enter public discourse and create a “new common sense”).

Participants would include a diverse group of 250+ subjects, drawn primarily from Oregon, but also from other states to be determined in consultation with the clients, based on similar geography, demographics or other factors.

Decision Leader/ Legislator interviews

One of the important purposes of the project would be to develop narratives that help leaders and legislators make the case for reform to their colleagues and constituents.

Video

One of the most effective tools for both illustrating the resulting narratives and building buy-in among key constituencies of communicators, is brief videos illustrating how people talk when primed with a new narrative, as opposed to their default views of the issue.

Phase 3 – Dissemination

A new narrative is only effective if communicators are comfortable using it and understand the best ways to employ it. Dissemination work would typically begin with development of a set of materials reflecting communicators’ actual needs – e.g. speech, community presentation, op-ed, talking points, responses to challenging questions – as well as a set of meetings with key players on the issue, such as advocates and community groups.

<u>TOTAL BUDGET</u>	\$202,000
<i>Phase 1</i>	<i>\$97,000</i>
<i>Phase 2</i>	<i>\$65,000</i>
<i>Phase 3</i>	<i>\$20,000 to \$40,000</i>

Back to Work Oregon

Background

The Back to Work Oregon program is one of Governor Kitzhaber's first five initiatives to get Oregon's economy back on track. The program is resourced with a \$3.4 million investment from Oregon's general fund to place 663 Oregonians into long term jobs matched by Local Workforce Investment Boards putting an additional 662 unemployed Oregonians back to work using local federal and non-federal resources. The Program consists of two components:

- *On-the-Job Training (OJT)* which is a "hire-first" program that reimburses a company for the cost of training a new employee. A rigorous training plan is put in place by the company which leads to employee retention in the job. The employee becomes a taxpayer, by drawing a paycheck during training, and beyond.
- *Oregon's National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)* which demonstrates that an individual has the foundational skills necessary to succeed in the training plan and on the job, and provides the individual with a portable credential for future career growth.

The Department of Community Colleges and Workforce (CCWD) will oversee and manage the program from the state level and Oregon's seven Local Workforce Investment Boards will operate the program locally. This program is intended to help recovering Oregon companies open more job vacancies while helping Oregonians get back to work sooner. It addresses both the needs of business for skilled workers and the needs of Oregonians to have job-specific certified transportable skills.

Program Overview

The intent of this program is to place unemployed Oregonians who are of at least age 18 into long-term permanent job positions. Trainees are hired into full-time long-term employment with a portable certificate and receive employer provided training. The trainee is a paid employee of a company.

The trainee will be given an opportunity to earn an NCRC prior to placement in the OJT, or during the training period. Since some employers may "prefer" OJT candidates with an NCRC, the opportunity to earn an NCRC prior to OJT placement may be a benefit for the trainee.

Partnership between CCWD and Department of Corrections (DOC)

CCWD received a 2011-2013 session budget note requiring coordination with DOC to assure that persons released from prison are included as a target population for OJT training funds for the purpose of expanding job opportunities for this population. The Re-Entry Employment and Education Workgroup is developing an implementation plan to facilitate the connections between Local Workforce Development Boards and state and community corrections staff in placing persons released from prison into OJTs in Marion and Multnomah counties through the Back to Work Oregon program.

Statewide Contacts:

- Evelyn Roth, Community Colleges and Workforce Development, 503.947.2431, Evelyn.M.Roth@state.or.us
- Agnes Balassa, Oregon Workforce Partnership, 541.485.6956, info@oregonwfpartnership.org



Cascade Employers Association

2011 Employer Perception Survey Results

Governor's Re-Entry Council

Submitted By:

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Introduction

This report includes:

- A summary of numerical ratings
- A written statements topic summary
- Written feedback

How to gain value from this report

Survey ratings are objective data, which provide a different perspective than day-to-day, face-to-face communication. In conjunction with the written comments, these ratings are a useful way to gain insight into workplace perceptions. Even if inaccurate, perceptions are part of the perceiver's reality and therefore must be treated with regard.

In the long run, the only sound way to improve perceptions is through constructive communication, individual initiative, and collaborative problem solving.

Summary

- In November 2011, 460 organizations participated in this Employer Perception Survey conducted for the Governor's Re-Entry Council.
- The Oregon Governor's Re-Entry Council is a statewide leadership group designed to improve the chances of a successful transition of individuals from incarceration back into society.
- This survey was conducted to give the Council an accurate perspective on employer perceptions and practices regarding employing individuals with criminal histories.
- This report allowed employers to share their perceptions regarding hiring a person with a conviction history through scaled responses to specific statements and written comments.
- The survey was anonymous to allow participants to freely express their thoughts and concerns. All the comments made are listed as written, correcting for obvious mechanical errors.

Results

2011 Employer Perception Survey

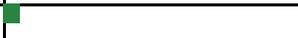
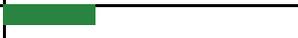
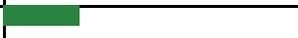
1) Do you have difficulty finding qualified employees?		# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes:		247	54%
No:		211	46%

2) Does your application for employment ask applicants to disclose felony convictions and/or criminal history?		# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes:		391	85%
No:		67	15%

3) Do you conduct criminal background checks on applicants for employment?		# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes, for all jobs:		260	57%
Yes, for those jobs where a conviction history would be relevant:		103	23%
No:		96	21%

4) What is your policy regarding hiring applicants with a conviction history?		# of Responses	% of Responses
We do not hire anyone with a conviction history:		55	12%
It depends on the nature of the crime; generally, we do not hire anyone with a conviction history that relates to the functions of the open position:		377	83%
We do not consider conviction history when making employment decisions:		23	5%

5) Is your business or industry subject to regulations that preclude you from hiring applicants with a conviction history?		# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes:		157	35%
No:		297	65%

6) What is your general perception of applicants with a conviction history?		# of Responses	% of Responses
Prone to alcoholism and drug addiction:		74	17%
Motivated to succeed:		65	15%
Likely to reoffend:		97	22%
Unable to change no matter what happens:		18	4%
Willing to work hard:		102	24%
Not trustworthy or able to hold positions of responsibility:		83	19%
Grateful for employment:		162	37%
Prone to having a bad attitude, disrespectful, trouble-maker:		63	15%
Other:		206	47%

<i>Other sub categories listed below. Response details are located in appendix.</i>		
Depends/Individual/Crime		113
Chance/No Preconception		41
Liability/Risk/Behavior		35
Restrictions/Limited Exposure		17

2011 Employer Perception Survey

7) Your top concern about hiring applicants with a conviction history is:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of training/potential:	33	7%
Safety of my clients and employees:	162	36%
Lack of trust:	82	18%
Liability if the person reoffends:	105	23%
Other:	72	16%
<i>Other sub categories listed below. Response details are located in appendix.</i>		
Depends/Individual/Crime		21
Chance/No Preconception		0
Liability/Risk/Behavior		25
Restrictions/Limited Exposure		17
Miscellaneous		9

8) Would you be more likely to hire qualified applicants with a conviction history if they applied through a program where they were pre-screened and matched for jobs based on their training and experience?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes:	280	63%
No:	166	37%

9) Which of the following would be an incentive for you to hire a qualified applicant with a conviction history?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Financial incentives from Federal/State resources:	131	29%
Pre-screening and job matching provided by outside resources:	220	49%
Job coaching and supervision provided by outside resources:	190	42%
No cost (to employer) random drug screenings for a certain timeframe:	145	32%
None of the above:	140	31%
Other:	58	13%
<i>Other sub categories listed below. Response details are located in appendix.</i>		
Depends/Individual/Crime		13
Chance/No Preconception		3
Liability/Risk/Behavior		0
Restrictions/Limited Exposure		14
Miscellaneous		28

10) "If customers or employees found out that one of my employees had a conviction history they would leave my business."	# of Responses	% of Responses
Agree:	33	7%
Do not agree:	221	49%
Believe it's a possibility:	202	44%

2011 Employer Perception Survey

11) Do you have other concerns about hiring applicants with a conviction history?	
<i>Comment sub categories listed below. Detailed responses are located in the Written Comments section.</i>	
Depends/Individual/Crime	51
Chance/No Preconception	31
Liability/Risk/Behavior	106
Restrictions/Licensing	29
Miscellaneous	15

12) How could providing employment to people with a conviction history benefit your business and the community?	
<i>Comment sub categories listed below. Detailed responses are located in the Written Comments section.</i>	
Lower recidivism	53
Lower cost for Business/Government	24
Helping individuals reform	107
Miscellaneous	32

13) Would you like to share an experience you have had employing a person with a conviction history?	
<i>Comment sub categories listed below. Detailed responses are located in the Written Comments section.</i>	
Positive	61
Negative	36
Miscellaneous	20

14) Were you aware that the following types of information is available for many applicants with conviction histories?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Name & number of probation / parole officer:	151	88%
Work program participation & work safety record while incarcerated:	79	46%
Educational achievements while incarcerated:	99	58%
Work skills certifications received and/or maintained while incarcerated:	96	56%
Disciplinary record while incarcerated:	56	33%

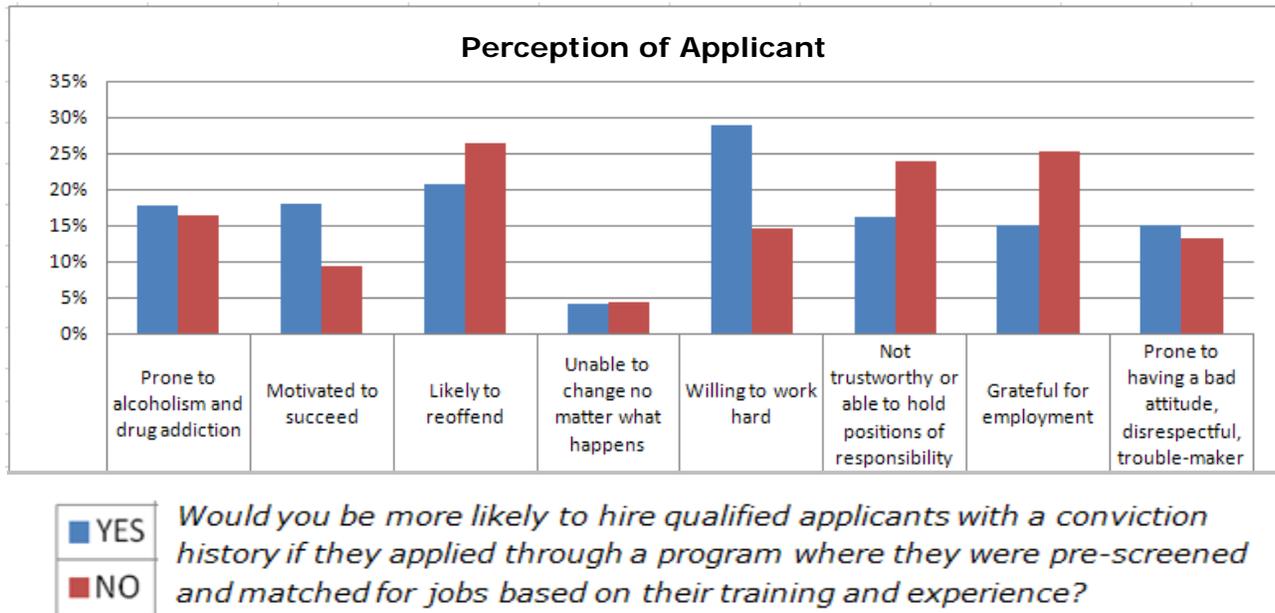
Divide and Review

Based on whether participants responded yes or no to question eight; ***“Would you be more likely to hire qualified applicants with a conviction history if they applied through a program where they were pre-screened and matched for jobs based on their training and experience?”***, we re-summarized all responses to include only those who responded the same way (yes or no).

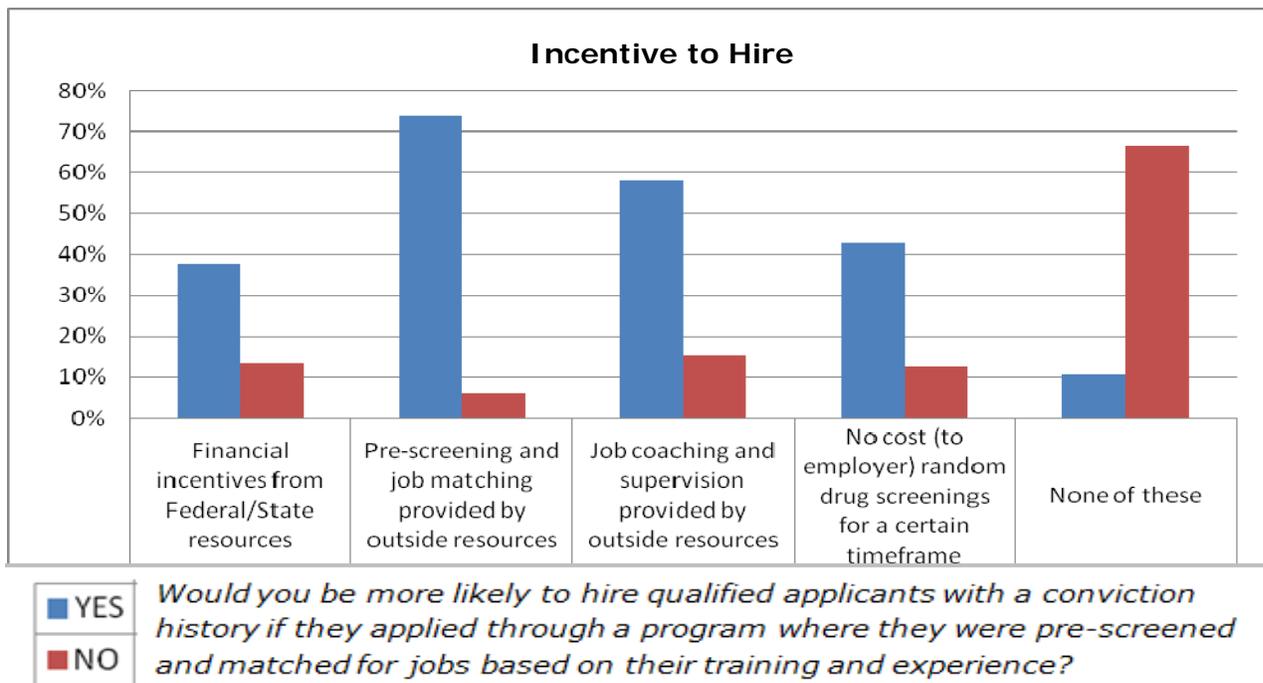
Additionally, charts are provided for the two questions with the biggest variance in response values (questions 6 and 9). Immediately following these charts, you will find the survey results by response (yes or no).

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Survey question #6: *What is your general perception of applicants with a conviction history?*



Survey question #9: *Which of the following would be an incentive for you to hire a qualified applicant with a conviction history?*



2011 Employer Perception Survey

MORE LIKELY TO HIRE - YES

Number of Respondents = 280

1) Do you have difficulty finding qualified employees?		# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes:		154	55%
No:		125	45%

2) Does your application for employment ask applicants to disclose felony convictions and/or criminal history?		# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes:		238	85%
No:		41	15%

3) Do you conduct criminal background checks on applicants for employment?		# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes, for all jobs:		148	53%
Yes, for those jobs where a conviction history would be relevant:		59	21%
No:		73	26%

4) What is your policy regarding hiring applicants with a conviction history?		# of Responses	% of Responses
We do not hire anyone with a conviction history:		18	6%
It depends on the nature of the crime; generally, we do not hire anyone with a conviction history that relates to the functions of the open position:		243	87%
We do not consider conviction history when making employment decisions:		17	6%

5) Is your business or industry subject to regulations that preclude you from hiring applicants with a conviction history?		# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes:		83	30%
No:		195	70%

6) What is your general perception of applicants with a conviction history?		# of Responses	% of Responses
Prone to alcoholism and drug addiction:		47	18%
Motivated to succeed:		48	18%
Likely to reoffend:		55	21%
Unable to change no matter what happens:		11	4%
Willing to work hard:		77	29%
Not trustworthy or able to hold positions of responsibility:		43	16%
Grateful for employment:		117	44%
Prone to having a bad attitude, disrespectful, trouble-maker:		40	15%
Other:		112	42%

2011 Employer Perception Survey

MORE LIKELY TO HIRE - YES

7) Your top concern about hiring applicants with a conviction history is:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of training/potential:	28	10%
Safety of my clients and employees:	94	34%
Lack of trust:	50	18%
Liability if the person reoffends:	66	24%
Other:	40	14%

8) Would you be more likely to hire qualified applicants with a conviction history if they applied through a program where they were pre-screened and matched for jobs based on their training and experience?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes:	280	100%
No:	0	0%

9) Which of the following would be an incentive for you to hire a qualified applicant with a conviction history?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Financial incentives from Federal/State resources:	105	38%
Pre-screening and job matching provided by outside resources:	206	74%
Job coaching and supervision provided by outside resources:	162	58%
No cost (to employer) random drug screenings for a certain timeframe:	120	43%
None of the above:	30	11%
Other:	24	9%

10) "If customers or employees found out that one of my employees had a conviction history they would leave my business."	# of Responses	% of Responses
Agree:	9	3%
Do not agree:	156	56%
Believe it's a possibility:	115	41%

Note: Questions 11, 12, and 13 (open-ended questions) were not split by the question 8 "Yes" response.

14) Were you aware that the following types of information is available for many applicants with conviction histories?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Name & number of probation / parole officer:	106	88%
Work program participation & work safety record while incarcerated:	58	48%
Educational achievements while incarcerated:	74	62%
Work skills certifications received and/or maintained while incarcerated:	72	60%
Disciplinary record while incarcerated:	38	32%

2011 Employer Perception Survey

MORE LIKELY TO HIRE - NO

Number of Respondents = 166

1) Do you have difficulty finding qualified employees?		# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes:		87	52%
No:		79	48%

2) Does your application for employment ask applicants to disclose felony convictions and/or criminal history?		# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes:		141	85%
No:		25	15%

3) Do you conduct criminal background checks on applicants for employment?		# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes, for all jobs:		104	63%
Yes, for those jobs where a conviction history would be relevant:		39	24%
No:		23	14%

4) What is your policy regarding hiring applicants with a conviction history?		# of Responses	% of Responses
We do not hire anyone with a conviction history:		36	22%
It depends on the nature of the crime; generally, we do not hire anyone with a conviction history that relates to the functions of the open position:		123	75%
We do not consider conviction history when making employment decisions:		6	4%

5) Is your business or industry subject to regulations that preclude you from hiring applicants with a conviction history?		# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes:		66	40%
No:		98	60%

6) What is your general perception of applicants with a conviction history?		# of Responses	% of Responses
Prone to alcoholism and drug addiction:		26	16%
Motivated to succeed:		15	9%
Likely to reoffend:		42	26%
Unable to change no matter what happens:		7	4%
Willing to work hard:		23	15%
Not trustworthy or able to hold positions of responsibility:		38	24%
Grateful for employment:		40	25%
Prone to having a bad attitude, disrespectful, trouble-maker:		21	13%
Other:		90	57%

2011 Employer Perception Survey

MORE LIKELY TO HIRE - NO

7) Your top concern about hiring applicants with a conviction history is:	# of Responses	% of Responses
Lack of training/potential:	4	2%
Safety of my clients and employees:	63	38%
Lack of trust:	29	18%
Liability if the person reoffends:	37	23%
Other:	31	19%

8) Would you be more likely to hire qualified applicants with a conviction history if they applied through a program where they were pre-screened and matched for jobs based on their training and experience?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes:	0	0%
No:	166	100%

9) Which of the following would be an incentive for you to hire a qualified applicant with a conviction history?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Financial incentives from Federal/State resources:	22	13%
Pre-screening and job matching provided by outside resources:	10	6%
Job coaching and supervision provided by outside resources:	25	15%
No cost (to employer) random drug screenings for a certain timeframe:	21	13%
None of the above:	109	67%
Other:	32	20%

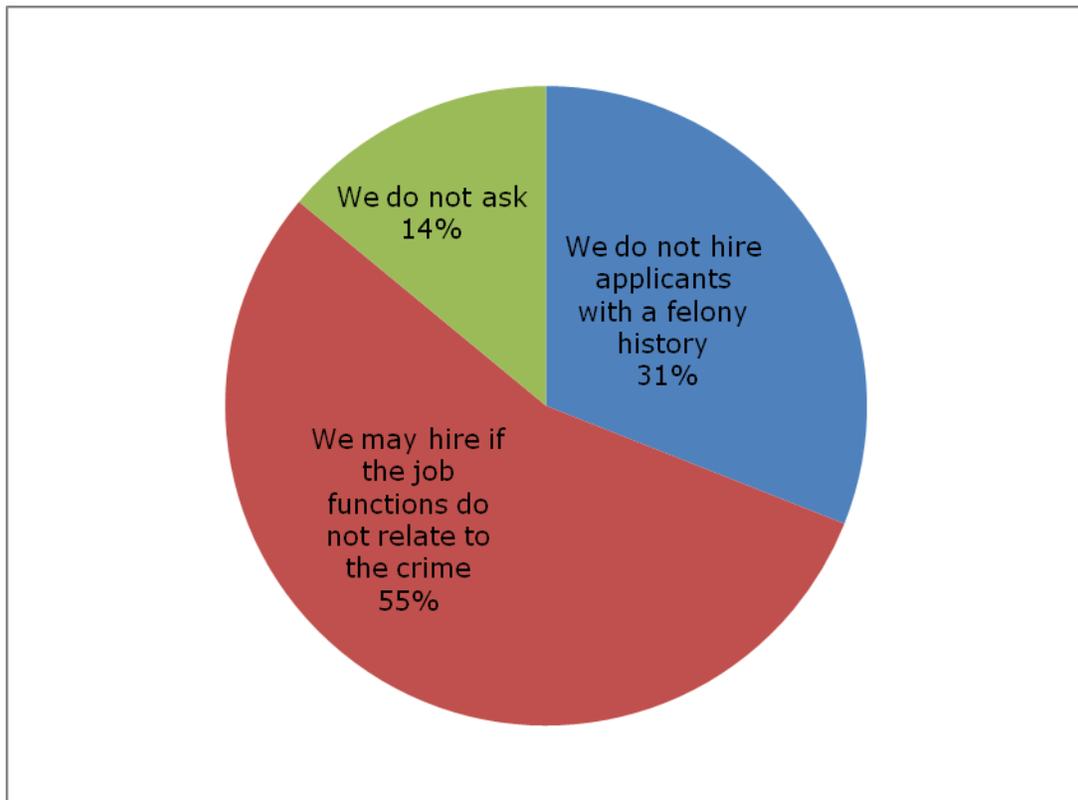
10) "If customers or employees found out that one of my employees had a conviction history they would leave my business."	# of Responses	% of Responses
Agree:	24	15%
Do not agree:	59	36%
Believe it's a possibility:	82	50%

Note: Questions 11, 12, and 13 (open-ended questions) were not split by the question 8 "No" response.

14) Were you aware that the following types of information is available for many applicants with conviction histories?	# of Responses	% of Responses
Name & number of probation / parole officer:	42	89%
Work program participation & work safety record while incarcerated:	20	43%
Educational achievements while incarcerated:	23	49%
Work skills certifications received and/or maintained while incarcerated:	22	47%
Disciplinary record while incarcerated:	17	36%

A Fresh View

The following chart reflects the data obtained in Cascade Employers Association Freshview Newsletter (Dollars and Sense) which asked; **“What is your policy for hiring an applicant with a felony history?”**



Written Comments

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #11: Do you have other concerns about hiring applicants with a conviction history?
DEPENDS INDIVIDUAL / CRIME
Concerns would center around the type of crime and criminal history (repeat offender). If the applicant was a first time offender of a crime that did not include drug use, or a felony crime, I would consider hiring that person.
Convictions can vary but felony convictions can be serious. We currently have an employee with felony convictions and served time. His convictions were older and were traffic related. My concern here was little. Robbery or injury type felonies would be difficult at best to overlook.
It would be according to the nature of the crime. I would not hire anyone convicted of a violent crime or any crime against children.
Trust issues are the top of my list. But again it depends on the history. We seek to hire the best qualified applicant and have hired someone with a criminal background but it was a probation situation and we did a lot of reference checks and talked with the probation officer etc.
We have hired individuals with previous convictions and often find them to be some of the best employees because they have learned from their mistakes. Our concerns would generally be around (1) the nature of the crime and (2) how recent the crime was committed
It depends upon the type of crime. Violent crimes cause more concern. Crimes involving dishonesty raise another level of concern. Each person has to be considered individually.
Level of concern would vary with nature of the crime. There are some crimes that would make me vary reluctant to hire i.e. sex crimes. Other crimes resulting from drug or alcohol abuse would be OK as long as individual successfully completed treatment.
Some depending on what the conviction was for and time of incarceration.
This depends on the nature of the crime. Hiring is based more on an applicants qualifications and ability/desire to do what is needed.
Depends on the position and exposures. No way to generalize.
The boxes above leave no grey area. What was the felony crime, how long ago did it occur, has the person reoffended, have they displayed stable work history for extended periods? If it was minor, no re-offense, they truly showed remorse, had a stable work history since the conviction, and had good skills we would at least consider hiring them.
This is totally dependent on what the conviction was for and what motivated the action. If it was murder from rage, I would have different concerns that someone who went joy riding.
The biggest concern is how much do I, as the employer know about the offense and the individual. We would want to give the offender a chance if we felt that the risk of re-offense was low and the individual qualified and desirous of being law-abiding.
Yes, especially with sexual or other assault convictions
It depends on the crime and the amount of time since the conviction. Have they shown a positive behavior change? Do they have the skills? Do they own their mistakes and can they illustrate how they have committed to make a change?
It just depends on the position and the conviction.
It would really depend on the position hiring for and clients that would work with them. We work with some vulnerable populations
Strictly depends on the nature of the crime.
Drug convictions can be a problem do to the availability of drugs in the workplace.
It depends on the conviction.
It depends on what the conviction was for i.e.: DUI or robbery. Sometime good people do dumb things and later regret what happened but now they are caught up in a cycle that is hard to break out of
Only if the conviction had to do with violence or abuse
If it were of a sexual nature, I would be concerned for the safety of some employees.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #11: Do you have other concerns about hiring applicants with a conviction history?

DEPENDS INDIVIDUAL / CRIME (continued)

Depends on the crime and the individuals drive to succeed. Other things should be checked about the individual to try to ascertain who the true person is. A history of problems would be a reason to not consider hiring while a first time offender for a non-violent crime would be someone to look at. Anyone convicted of theft, forgery, identity theft would not be considered.

Sure - tough to be specific. But, it would depend on the individual and frankly gut feel.

We will not hire conviction that are sexual

Abuse of any kind Financial i.e.. embellishment

We would have concerns about individuals with violence or theft related convictions. We serve the public and so we need to ensure their safety from our staff and we need to be good stewards of public funds, equipment and property. However, we also consider when the offense happened, did the candidate disclose, and what have they done since to ensure the offense doesn't happen again. Also, we do have some federal requirements around background checks for individuals needing unescorted access to physical and cyber assets. We couldn't hire someone with a felony conviction related to violence, drugs or theft and they'd be limited to the number of misdemeanors they could have as well.

Strictly dependent on the individual

In my field it is all about relationships and regulations. I feel if I can convey the trust in the employee to the people I deal with then it is not a problem. Yet part of that comes from the image we present the nameless people who do come out of the criminal justice system. As a business dealing with the public fair or not image is everything.

How long ago was the conviction? How have they been doing recently? Nature of the conviction vs. the job applied for. It depends very much on the individuals involved.

I think it would be best to allow the reformed individual their privacy and treat them as normal humans rather than labeling them into a category. Don't ask, don't tell can then work for trusted individuals.

As a temporary staffing agency we will place past offenders if the work site permits placements with criminal history.

For management employees, we take a very dim view of any prior convictions, and are likely to rule out an applicant very quickly. For the bulk of our workers, however, we use three factors when determining whether or not to hire someone with a conviction history: recency, the type of crime, and recidivism. No single factor outweighs the other, but are taken together with the work history to try to get a clear picture of the applicant and their suitability. Obviously, violent or person crimes are a concern regardless of the circumstance or recency. Crimes related to theft, particularly from a business, need to be examined for severity and recency. DUIs or drug possession convictions are of less concern, unless there are several of them in the recent past.

Depends on crime and how recent it was. Generally wary of applicants with criminal activity.

Only the "type" of conviction due to the people we serve (foster youth, mental health care recipients and adults with developmental disabilities).

For XXXXXXXX not likely but for Head Start YES. Safety of the children is #1. It would depend on the conviction, & the individual.

It completely depends on the nature of the conviction and whether or not it pertains to the role they are applying for.

Our only concern is the recency and nature of the offense. Applicants with recent convictions of violent crimes or drugs are unlikely to be considered. So are applicants with a long criminal history that indicates it has been a lifestyle choice.

We will not hire applicants with a conviction history involving violent crimes or sexual crimes. Convictions of other nature are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

My clients have and need to have high levels of trust with the staff at this company. Hiring applicants with a conviction history, unless it's in the far distant past would be itself likely violate that trust. Also, depends on the crime.

It depends on the conviction. I have employee who have been abused, so I avoid abusers and sex offenders.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #11: Do you have other concerns about hiring applicants with a conviction history?
DEPENDS INDIVIDUAL / CRIME (continued)
It really depend on what the conviction is. If it was embezzling I would have concerns if they were to apply for an accounting job or a job that handles cash. Any type of violence would concern me for the safety of my employees and my customers.
Yes. in the past we have hired a number of individuals with a criminal history. Some were excellent workers, some were not and some were in between. We have had problems with our reputation in the community but in many cases they filled less desirable positions off shifts(graveyard). Some have move up in our management and some have left in handcuffs. We have tried to consider each situation on its merits.
It totally depends on the nature of the conviction. Anything serious would prevent us from hiring the applicant, no matter what.
It depends on the length of time since the conviction. Trust, integrity, and responsibility are something that is only earned over a length of time.
It depends on where the individual works. If the employee has a history of theft we wouldn't want them to be employed in an area with minimal supervision where they would be tempted to steal.
Specific crimes (assault, sex offenses) are rule outs for me
My only concern would be spending tax dollars on financial incentives or "free" drug screening. I think enough tax money has been spent on them. I wouldn't want to hire a person for payroll or accounts payable, that had been convicted of embezzling. Nor would I want to hire a person who had been convicted of theft for running our tool yard. I think I would want to know specifics of their particular conviction prior to hiring them.
Question #11: Do you have other concerns about hiring applicants with a conviction history?
CHANCE / NO PRECONCEPTIONS
None
Because we are a Tribally owned Casino we are under many gaming regulations - we do hire applicants w/criminal background if the Gaming Commission grants a conditional license.
no
none
No particular other concerns
No
No
No
No
Not really. if they interview well and are the best candidate we'll hire them. we believe if they have paid their debt to society then the past is the past.
We DO hire applicants with a conviction history. They know that they get one chance - performance, attendance, drug/alcohol use. But we do hire them.
It is not something that we currently consider in our hiring process. If we were made aware of a conviction history it could impact our decision depending on the type of conviction (violent crimes, crimes against children)
Only concerns are the 2 specific ones identified in Q #7 above.
None other than already stated.
No
No
No

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #11: Do you have other concerns about hiring applicants with a conviction history?
CHANCE / NO PRECONCEPTIONS (continued)
We have a small shop with less than 10 employees. New employees must be able to perform their job and fit in well with the existing employees.
No
No
NO
None
No - We are open to this if the applicant shows improvement and desire to improve and make their life better. We are bound by the State of Oregon to not hire applicants that are on a list of do not hire criteria. We support adults with developmental disabilities.
No
No more than with any others; do they have the job skills and attitudes necessary to succeed?
We believe everyone deserves a second chance. They need to be honest and disclose it on the application and at the interview or we are much less willing to give that second chance.
My single best hire was in prison for 5 years for embezzlement. After I offered him the job, he told me about his situation with great references from the prison supervisors. He helped us put 'double/triple' checks in place on all financial management (he became our business manager) so we were all protected if anything went wrong. He is still our accountant (now with an MBA) 10 years later. (We also got state money to help pay his first year's salary...but that was just an unexpected bonus.)
No
No
No
Question #11: Do you have other concerns about hiring applicants with a conviction history?
LIABILITY / RISK / BEHAVIOR
The employer is a County government with the full range of services (public safety, health, etc..) & most positions are not suitable for individuals with a conviction history.
We have access to sensitive personal and financial information that could easily be used in the commission of crimes.
Our rate of Drug Abuse, Alcoholism, Theft, Motor Vehicle issues, Safety incidents, Lawsuits etc. has dropped DRAMATICALLY since we instituted background checks!
Safety of employees/customers (depending on conviction), past poor decision making (that led to conviction) may be indicative of future poor decision making
We are a child abuse assessment center with specific mission around safety of children. We have to be very careful with the safety of our families as well as the perception of our community about our hiring practices...
Trustworthy
Drug use
Liability if individual reoffends while employed with my company.
Our employees have keys to tenants' homes and access to financial records (apartment properties) and care for residents with dementia who are unable to advocate for themselves (assisted living). Too many unsupervised moments with access and opportunities to do harm.
Can't risk it due to accessibility of little children here at our CHILDREN's Museum..
We are a Pediatric Medical Clinic and parents would have many concerns to hiring anyone with a conviction.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #11: Do you have other concerns about hiring applicants with a conviction history?
LIABILITY / RISK / BEHAVIOR <i>(continued)</i>
Would not knowingly hire a sex offender or someone convicted of a violent crime. I believe my responsibility to provide a safe work environment for employees supersedes any other good that might be accomplished.
Only if they were not given support once they got out, and felt they were just dumped out, and did not know what to do for re-entry
Yes and no, but that should come out in an effective interview process. My company has a blanket approach to not hiring anyone with a conviction history and I am trying to change that. Everyone makes mistakes and although a conviction is a reflection of a poor decision that person may have made in their past, we cannot judge that as a reflection of the person. Just as we make mistakes, we also can change and improve ourselves. If an employer won't allow a person with a conviction to prove their self as a good, dependable employee, then we are at fault.
Liability, safety, concern for other employees/ customers
Not really.....not excited about hiring sex offenders for the sake of our women employees.....
I definitely have concerns about hiring applicants with a criminal history. Our goal is to hire the best qualified individual for the position. Our company's reputation in our community is extremely important and we strive to hire employees that will exemplify our company culture.
Contacts the person may have.
It really comes down to what the person did that ended in a conviction. How serious to public health and welfare was the crime?
Due to the type of business we conduct, we are extra careful with hiring. Some departments have access to private customer information (credit scores, credit cards, etc). Depending on the conviction, a person may or may not be hireable for employment with us.
Concerns for the welfare of the applicant. Privacy for the applicant.
Due to proprietary client information would be hesitant due to privacy of this information and obligation to our clients.
As a law firm with responsibilities to clients' confidentiality and related matters it is not realistic to hire applicants with a conviction history.
Trust and safety of our employees and customers would be my primary concerns.
We have hired ex-cons living at a halfway house. As soon as they are move from that transitional housing, their attendance declines and we loose the investment we have in training them.
As a business where our employees are public figures and regularly recognized, it is important that we maintain credibility to our community. Having an employee w/ a conviction history could put our reputation, therefore our business, in jeopardy.
My experience with this population is that they need a lot of support beyond the job to be successful. If those supports are not available to them, their success will be challenged.
Attendance concerns and ability to maintain consistency in performance. But depends on how long since the crime etc.
Lots of children enter our place of business - some without parents. Our reputation is such that most parents would give us the benefit of the doubt. Some would not.
We deal with confidential client information.
Other than the safety and welfare of my other employees the potential for theft from the company would be my only real concern.
Have done so numerous times before. Those with past drug convictions have eventually re-offended. Why bother?
Certain types of offenses could reasonably be perceived by co-workers as a potential threat to their safety. I think my biggest concern would be the safety of employees, their perception of their safety and willingness to work with/train and support a co-worker with a conviction as they would someone without.
Can't have them around sensitive financial information

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #11: Do you have other concerns about hiring applicants with a conviction history?
LIABILITY / RISK / BEHAVIOR (continued)
Wrongful hire lawsuits
Yes. In today's day and age of lawsuits, etc. it is tough to take a chance on someone when you have more than one option. How do I know I can trust them? We also work for numerous clients...on some projects we could have a convicted felon and others we can't. If I can get a person that can do both projects they are much more likely to keep working.
% of reoffending
working with minors thievery sabotage
lack of positive history in work force, or in society
Not all people with a conviction history are bad people, some have just made bad decisions. But a business that hires a person with a conviction history will be made to look like a villain if that person reoffends. The media has a tendency to blame the business, because " they should have known". The stigma and liability is just too great of a risk.
Employers really don't have a way of knowing how the applicant will act on the job. It is a wildcard. Some people change, some people don't.
we have a very small staff. I would not hire a convicted felon. Too much exposure to employees and tenants (commercial and residential tenants).
We deal with vital personal information about clients. Socials, Account and routing numbers, addresses, personal belongings. Someone who had anything to do with taking something from someone would be hard pressed to earn the trust of their peers.
In our industry trust is very important, and if you don't have it, it is down hill from there. Our reputation and our clients trust is very important.
Addl burden; you KNOW this person has had issues that may be a challenge for the work environment.
Difficulty providing adequate supervision, training and oversight.
Do I have all the information needed to protect the company, employees and customers?
our main issues involve the possibility of workplace violence and bringing domestic problems into the workplace
Employment liability is the chief concern so we avoid individuals with a history of violent or sexual assault crimes.
The potential for them to interpret legitimate and necessary disciplinary action as a prejudiced response to their history. (Why's everybody always picking' on me?)
Safety of employees and customers
Our biggest problem with hiring a convicted applicant is them telling the truth about their past history. A majority of our applicants with a conviction try to minimize their offense. If they would just tell the truth they most of the time they would be hired.
We have a large population of young women and generally the fears from them or parents are for safety. P.S. I do not work in HR office so did not provide contact info below...
My husband teaches in the trades program at Chemeketa who seems to get a lot of grant money to fund tons of schooling, cars, tools, etc. for people with a conviction record. After what I have seen with his program, I would not even let a daughter of mine attend that college with so many convicts hanging around the campus with so much time on their hands. They seem to require a lot of "babysitting" and need constant attention to accomplish anything. My business is a professional, grown-up business and it is enough of a struggle to be in business in Oregon with the business tax situation that I cannot take on babysitting for the convicts. I want to hire kids who have made better choices in life. They are the ones who deserve a chance at work.
We have tried them in the past through various programs and/or they NEVER end up working out
Concern that they may reoffend and cause permanent or long term damage to the company or other people.
Question 10 is my biggest concern.
Concerns: drugs/contraband substance identity theft lying image of business judgment for hiring convicted offenders
* Potential liability, depending on their conviction * Relevant skill sets

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #11: Do you have other concerns about hiring applicants with a conviction history?
LIABILITY / RISK / BEHAVIOR (continued)
Yes, especially ones with addiction issues.
Safety of employees.
Will they be reliable with attendance? Do they have poor judgment tendencies? What would make me think this won't happen again? Will they bring baggage to work (others associated with them calling, causing problems)
Our company's concern with applicants with a conviction history is violent crimes and drug crimes.
The possibility of relapse or reoffending is always a risk when hiring anyone (an offender or not). My biggest fear is crimes against the residents in my community (theft or abuse).
I am mildly concerned that we do not take conviction history into consideration at all. We have no application, people apply for open position with the submission of a resume. We have no way of asking or tracking such personal information as conviction history. My concern is that this leaves us open to any number of problems.
We have had issues with sex offenders and violent offenders prior to establishing a background checking policy.
Word on the street that we have felons working for us. We have tried working with felons in the past and have had no luck at rehabilitation.
Theft convictions would be difficult since most of our employees handle cash and credit card information. Drug convictions would make me nervous if they were recent.
We have an upscale clientele and we often enter customer homes for services. That would create a trust issue. I believe some businesses could be a candidate for hiring those with a conviction history but do not feel it is in the best interest of our retail business.
sex related crime is difficult for us because of our customer and employee demographic. we are retail so the honesty factor is also of great concern
We would be reluctant to hire someone who's history included inability to work in a team, i.e., poor interpersonal relationship skills.
Yes, for the safety of our employees, guests and property in addition to company reputation should someone offend again and be associated with our business.
We are a service business where we are in customers homes everyday sometimes when they aren't home - at their discretion. It would be very hard to allow someone with any criminal history to be in their home.
Yes. Child Molestation convictions wouldn't be a good match for a preschool classroom.
Re-offending or new offense that would leave our equipment and customers stranded
We won't usually consider a candidate with a conviction history for employment if there is not clear and plentiful evidence of demonstrated change in the choices that individual has made since the event leading to conviction.
Concerns about being responsible - Repeat or similar offenses - Possible liability
Attitude of "it doesn't matter if I follow procedures or break the rules" ... since that's what (assumption) got them convicted in the first place. Trust and teamwork is essential ...
They possibly are not telling all of the conviction history
Sexual predators working around kids and vulnerable adults is a concern for us.
Drug and/or alcohol relapse/use as it affects attendance, safety and productivity.
Yes, as a CPA firm owner that deals with personal and business information we could NOT risk it. Clients would not like it and to many other qualified applicants to bother with it.
Safety is our primary concern. This extends to not just our customers, employees but also our employee's families as we get together for company events on a regular basis. Cannot in good conscience allow a registered sex offender to attend children's holiday party, etc.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #11: Do you have other concerns about hiring applicants with a conviction history?

LIABILITY / RISK / BEHAVIOR (continued)

I've also given convicts a chance before and I've been burned. I hate to say one bad apple spoils it but in this case it can be really hard to get buy the fact. It would be nice if the person's PO would get involved with the employer right from the start. They have a lot of information about the person that would be helpful in the employment process. I believe the PO and the candidate should be working hand in hand in the process. Many employers don't even know they have access to that information and it should be open, up front public knowledge that the candidate brings to the table.

Yes. Some hot-shot attorney will represent a client or employee and sue me for everything if anything goes wrong!!

Safety and security of our employees, poor work ethic, theft of company property or products.

I would be concerned that they would associate with criminals and they would come around the office to see them.

Again, it all relates to safety of my employees, my customers and the work site employees where we may be working.

Typically there reasoning is flawed in making decisions for themselves and how they operate in all situations.

We handle private medical information, with more than enough detail to enable identity theft. The risk is very high if we hire those with a criminal background. A few clients specify mandatory background checks before any access to their information. Hiring a convicted person could violate contracts.

Our business has sensitive information and HIPAA related information. Afraid clients personal information could be released.

RE: Question # 10: As a public employer, our customers cannot leave our business. However, local media would make issue of it if person reoffends.

In the housing industry all employees have access to keys to clients apartments and if clients knew we hired people with felony conviction histories, they would think twice about their security.

Some positions in my firm require monetary instrument handling. Felony conviction conflicts with our policy in this area

We are a youth-based organization so the liabilities and public perspective of personnel with conviction history is heightened

If as a HR professional you okay the hire based on agency protocol and then something happened, there would be repercussions based on public demand and politics from the top down to the HR professional.

Individuals could be a bad influence on other susceptible employees

We don't hire applicants with conviction history unless it does not have anything to do with the job and they can legitimately explain the circumstances

Yes, because we are a financial industry, the exposure to confidential information, financial well being of our members, identify, money, embezzlement. We believe a very high risk or potential risk because of what is available on premises.

Actually, I do not have any employees and as a consultant who is privy to the inner workings of a business and in some instances, work with their financials, I would have a very hard time considering someone with a criminal background unless I could be convinced they would be reliable and ethical.

We do not hire, if the person should not be around minors.

Worksite safety, client safety, public perception of our service.

We are in health care and deal with disabled and elderly clients who are potentially vulnerable We are also concerned about an increased potential for identity theft of our client's information

The liability issue does surface frequently. If this person(s) were to re-offend and someone at work was hurt or violated and or/customer/client, it does leave you feeling like you could be found liable for damages as you knew the person you hired had a conviction history.

The perceptions of other persons in the workplace could create a hostile work environment, whether merited or not, the liability if a problem occurred, and we knew that there was a past history.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #11: Do you have other concerns about hiring applicants with a conviction history?

RESTRICTIONS / LICENSING

We are precluded by Oregon Revised Statute from hiring anyone with a felony conviction or illegal gambling conviction. No exceptions.

We run retirement homes, and are not allowed to hire convicted felons. The safety of our vulnerable residents is our highest priority.

Our industry has specific requirements that we must operate under in regards to applicants with a conviction history.

Due to the nature of my business as a staffing service my client's requirements often won't allow us to place people with a conviction history. Many of the clients we work with have corporate offices somewhere else that set the hiring requirements.

Unable to hire applicants with a conviction history due to state regulations that govern many of our positions, i.e., Human Services, Law Enforcement

As a school we are not allowed to.

We have not had much success in hiring such applicants. Applicants with felony criminal backgrounds are ineligible for employment here by policy. Those with other types of convictions (DUI, abuse, etc) have in most every case offended again.

We are required to follow the DHS statute on hiring people with a criminal history as we are a social service agency. Therefore we are limited on how we can hire by law.

By OAR, our agency has to follow certain guidelines with regard to criminal history background checks, prior to a person working with our clients. In our family business, we hire a number of people with conviction history - with multiple outcomes. Some have been incredible employees. Some have turned into repeat offenders. Some have found access to cash and to other people's credit cards to be too great a temptation - which has cost us in many ways: from loss of income, staff, and customers. We still give people a chance. We still hire from a pool of individuals in transition. Would be nice to know that they are getting enough support from "the system" as well as the local community. A system of checks and balances would be extremely helpful - having someone check in with them and with employers and managers to see how performance is going would be great.

We're probably not going to be able to license an individual who has a record of theft in many areas of our business, such as positions that deal with money or the Lodge.

State of Oregon requires us to run all new employees through DHS criminal background checks. Some non-violent convictions will not prevent an individual from working for us but anything with violence is not allowed - PERIOD.

Do not hire unless they meet requirements of State criminal background guidelines for healthcare workers

Concern for us in the staffing industries - we are governed by home office-which we have specific criteria - it is hard to tell a person no - but feel they deserve the knowledge "verbally" that we are unable to assist them.

We manage a Head Start program where Federal regulations are very strict about some criminal histories.

The nature of our business, installation, service and monitoring of security systems in all sorts of locations prevents us from considering folks with this history.

Due to our funding sources (State) we are unable to hire people who have had certain crimes within the past 5 to 10 years.

We have hired employees with a conviction history and they have had to miss quite a bit of work due to meetings etc required by the conditions of their parole. As an example, we currently have an employee that meets weekly with a PO officer, has group counseling, and also meets with some kind of a coach on a weekly basis. This has been disruptive and has caused us to wonder whether it would be better to hire someone without those restrictions.

Government contracts and defense contractor, may not be able to employ. Depends on nature of conviction.

We are a school, so we have to follow rules from the DHS around what types of convictions are allowed and for a certain length of time.

Our industry (working with vulnerable individuals) requires a criminal history check, and precludes us from hiring people with certain convictions.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #11: Do you have other concerns about hiring applicants with a conviction history?

RESTRICTIONS / LICENSING *(continued)*

We have actually hired several individuals with criminal records that meet the qualifications of the job. We do contract work for federal Gov't jobs and they are ones that don't allow employees with felony records to work on their property.

Being in a business related to the financial industry, we have to be very cautious of any criminal history relating to finances or theft - which often seems to go along with other crimes.

Quite a few of our contracts are with agencies that do not allow convicted felons on the job. i.e.. banks, FAA. Due to our size this would limit us on how we could respond to the work load and limiting our abilities

They cannot have a conviction of a fiduciary nature.

Not being able to get them insured or bonded.

Just don't think the state and local governments that we operate services for would permit us to employ anybody with a conviction. Seems like a situation where government has gotten into it's own way.

Again, working with school district that have regulations about convicts working on premises or around students.

Financial institutions have limited or no options to hire people with a conviction history.

Our Business is subject to DHS criminal history rules and most crimes disqualify someone from working in the Elder Care industry.

Question #11: Do you have other concerns about hiring applicants with a conviction history?

MISCELLANEOUS

They need to have a proven track record (other employment, community service, volunteer work) that shows me they have learned and grown from their prior problems.

Some job sites are very particular about criminal activity towards women and children

Yes, because the rate of recidivism is so high. If I am not mistaken statistics show that they are likely to re-offend.

It takes a tough program where control is strong from agencies with a no nonsense approach

I have hired many. Biggest problem can be a P.O. who sends my employee to jail for a traffic violation or other infraction and my business suffers. P.O.s should be more attuned to the needs of the employer if you want us to hire parolees.

Potential of changing the culture of the company

We are a small high tech manufacturing company with very little turnover. 99% of our positions require prior job skills or specific college degrees/education. It is unlikely we would benefit from the type of generalized training that could be provided to this group of potential employees.

I have not had difficulty finding qualified candidates without a conviction history.

I have a larger concern: what if no one hires applicants who have successfully served their time? Is no one owed a second chance? We as a society will pay \$35,000 - \$60,000 per inmate if we dismiss these people. Give them no jobs and no support and they will continue to reoffend. There is no way out of this conundrum other than to make certain county jails, and state and federal prison systems take the jail and prison out of their titles and reinvent themselves as "correctional" institutions

Yes, they would pose a scheduling problem as we expect all of our employees to be able to work on any or all of our projects

They probably would be put under a higher level of pre-hiring scrutiny.

Lack of machining skills

This isn't a concern, but an observation: Individuals who truly want to make a clean start can show their sincerity through their behavior while incarcerated.

Turnover due to lack of sufficient resources, support and stability in life.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #12: How could providing employment to people with a conviction history benefit your business and the community?

LOWER RECIDIVISM

It would help the community by cutting down on crime rates by helping the individuals to get out of the crime scene.

If the individual has been released and is free to gain employment, and is qualified for a job opening, then you are putting an individual to work which should benefit both the business and the individual!

While it certainly would benefit the community to employ those with a conviction history, in my area of work (healthcare) patient care and safety must take priority.

It seems that we have more and more individuals with felonies on their records. If Society is not going to give them a 2nd chance we will have more individuals on support. If a company can hire these individuals with reduced cost or risk then to do so would be advantageous to our company.

Understand the need for re entry individuals to find employment to avoid re offending and am willing to consider screened applicants for the right position

If successful, it would hopefully stop the bad pattern because they would be able to support themselves, feel better about themselves, realize this is a better life, etc.. BUT, it depends on the nature of the conviction. Some things I believe are not able to be overcome.

An opportunity to not re-offend benefits the entire community.

May help lower the recidivism rate for released prisoners

Keep them active (less time to consider reoffending), provide steady income

If a person truly wants to start again, they will benefit society through their contribution to goals of our company; through their contributions to tax rolls; through their staying employed and not offending again.

I believe it would reduce the crime rates.

Those who are employed are probably less likely to re-offend than those who are not.

Anytime a person is a contributing member of society it benefits all involved.

Get at risk people a steady job and income, maybe it would stop the cycle of illegal behaviors.

Fewer unemployed people is better for society!

Having employment opportunities for ex-offenders benefits the community by decreasing the chances that their circumstances will lead them to re-offend.

If a "convicted" applicant has "paid his/her debt to society", what do they do, if they are not given opportunities to work in the business community?

It is a moral and social benefit to bring these people back in the workforce

Cuts down re-offenders (saving tax dollars), the applicant becomes a more involved person in the community, and maybe their experiences would examples to those who are on the fence and we can keep a new group from going over the wrong side

Would potentially help someone get on a path where re-offending is much less likely because they have a means of financial support

Job opportunities are a must so that released inmates have a chance to be successful and not reoffend. It is difficult for them to find a job but it is also difficult for employers to hire since you don't know the details.

Giving them options for gainful employment would lead them away from crime and give them an alternative to their negative actions/lifestyle.

Supportive of rehabilitating people who want to be rehabilitated and merge back into society successfully. Less re-offending.

Could prevent future criminal acts.

It would empower the people with a conviction history and possibly deter them from engaging in criminal activities or relapsing due to being able to obtain and hold down a job.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #12: How could providing employment to people with a conviction history benefit your business and the community?

LOWER RECIDIVISM (*continued*)

Honestly it does not necessarily have a direct benefit to the business. All things being equal it would be easier to hire someone without the baggage. However, these guys need to get acclimated back into society and finding a steady job is key, in my opinion. We hire people with a conviction history because it does, in a small way, help solve a societal problem of helping these folks get back to a normal life. (we currently have three ex felons on staff)

They become tax payers Hopefully less likely to offend again Develop social skills

It would help them to be contributing members and not be put in a situation where they would likely get into trouble again.

In a controlled program, the person with the conviction history would be more likely to find their "niche" and may not reoffend (certain convictions only). They would have a steady income also, so any offenders involving theft may think twice about reoffending.

1. Would not benefit my business - its neutral. 2. To extent employment reduces recidivism, it would obviously benefit

Benefits the community by keeping people productively busy, giving opportunity for contributing member of society instead of falling back into criminal behavior. Fewer social services demand.

Hopefully get them employed and out the cycle of crime

Returning offenders to the workforce is critical. If they don't find employment I believe them much more likely to revert back to criminal activity.

Reduce incarceration expenses

Hiring a person with a conviction history in itself will not have a greater benefit for a business than hiring a person without a conviction history. instead it is a liability. However for the community, a person with a conviction history having a job, reduces the potential for reoffending and lowers crime rates which in turn lowers costs at the State and County levels for law enforcement, corrections and parole and probation. The biggest concern I would have is how can the governments justify financial subsidies to business for hiring a person with a conviction history when unemployed law abiding citizens are suffering.

Persons may be less likely to reoffend if they have a successful work experience.

Give them an incentive to improve and not re-offend; get them moving toward self-sufficiency and off public resources; restore confidence and long-term stability for themselves and their families

Allowing people to have the opportunity to learn skills and have a source of income and self-respect benefits everyone. Keeping people off the street and gainfully employed helps to deter repeat offenses, and the "necessity" to steal for a living.

The largest impact would be that with a income the offender will have a better chance in not re-offending.

I think it's important for people with a conviction to have another chance for meaningful work to get them out of the cycle of criminal behavior. If we had financial incentives it would make the risk worth it from a business perspective. We already do hire people who have a conviction for what we consider a more victimless crime (e.g., DUI if it was a misdemeanor)

If a person that has a conviction history holds a full time permanent position and is placed in an appropriate atmosphere, they are less likely to reoffend - this would keep the community 'safer'.

Help to give citizen an opportunity to support themselves and less likely to reoffend. Would be an asset to both.

Not sure that it would benefit my business since there are many qualified applicants that don't have a criminal history. The community may benefit because statistics show that many crimes are committed by those that are unemployed.

In my own research and experience (which happened separately) people with a conviction history that find meaningful work have an increased chance of long term success reintegrating into the community and a lesser chance of reoffending.

Not much business benefit, as we rarely see "skilled" applicant who we have to deny due to felony convictions. Obviously benefits community in that someone working is less likely to re-offend and cost the community

It would reduce the number of individuals that would re-offend. Also if they have a family, it would provide a more stable home to their children.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #12: How could providing employment to people with a conviction history benefit your business and the community?

LOWER RECIDIVISM (*continued*)

I don't really know but assume that employment is important for those with a conviction history as with others. Economic well being for all. And, less chance of crimes reoccurring

Convicted criminals that aren't given opportunity to succeed may be more likely to re-offend out of frustration and/or desperation.

Reduces possibility of reoffending.

It is the only way to provide people who have made mistakes a way back into society's "good graces." Employment, in some cases, will stop a person from further criminal activity.

The community would benefit by the gainful employment of the individual. They would be less likely to commit another crime if they have income and something to do.

Not sure - maybe just putting them to work and getting them off unemployment, might help keep them from becoming a repeat offender.

I suspect that employment may help some of those with a conviction history make better choices. A steady income may help stability, a job may provide motivation to not re-offend.

Reliable work helps keep them from reoffending.

Question #12: How could providing employment to people with a conviction history benefit your business and the community?

LOWER COST TO BUSINESS/GOVERNMENT

Tax credit

Obviously if the job worked they would be less likely to be on the public payroll either in prison or out which saves our money for more important things.

Employment creates productive, tax paying members of society and removes them from entitlement programs.

All employees are tax paying citizens which is a lofty goal, isn't it?

It adds to the labor pool, provides/enhances a trade skill, possibly removes a person from state subsidies.

As for the community, would get back in the mainstream and promote contributing tax paying/nonsupported government individuals.

Assuming this group is more likely to need public assistance, hiring them provides a larger societal benefit by preserving public resources better.

They will contribute to rather than withdraw from societal resources.

It would benefit by getting them off of tax payer programs and entitlements if they would change and become upstanding responsible citizens and workers

Make them into tax payers

Anytime someone can be a productively employed person, that lessens the drain on public dollars for unemployment, housing, etc.

Reengaging them back into society with hope and pride- it is always more cost effective to have a productive work force rather than one that cost the taxpayers

Same benefit as hiring any other employee. Perhaps removing an individual from public assistance. Increasing the self-worth of the individual hired.

If the person is well qualified to do the job and lives up to their resume, the business benefits with a contributor. The community gets a tax-paying, reformed citizen.

Putting a person to work with a conviction history means they are paying taxes and not relying on federal, state or local assistance programs to survive. This cuts cost to taxpayers, employers, etc...

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #12: How could providing employment to people with a conviction history benefit your business and the community?

LOWER COST TO BUSINESS/GOVERNMENT *(continued)*

It would give them an opportunity to become a contributing member to society and reduce their dependence on governmental programs and assistance.

Bring someone back into the fabric of the community as a stakeholder is always preferable to excluding them to the point they become a burden and liability.

Due to the fact that most businesses will not hire them, they have become a burden on society as they are unable to move forward and once again become productive community members.

Get people that are unemployed into the workforce so that they aren't on welfare.

It could help the applicant be on their way to trying to become a successful person with some accountability to give back to the community as a tax payer.

I have no doubt it would be pretty significant if previously non productive people were able to contribute (taxes, spending, social, emotional).

With today's economy it would be a plus is a company could receive a monetary benefit from the state - but only if the applicant is well qualified above all other applicants. I would rather hire locally then go out of state which we have had to do. Let's put our community back to work and help the businesses in our community. The State has to follow through though with follow up, perhaps counseling, and depending on the conviction then additional drug and alcohol testing that is done outside of the workplace.

Question #12: How could providing employment to people with a conviction history benefit your business and the community?

HELPING INDIVIDUALS REFORM

Giving the person a sense of worth and respect.

The breaks afforded by the program could lower costs. The individual would gain much needed skills for living appropriately in the community.

I suppose that it would potentially create better community members for those who have been reformed.

Everyone needs 2nd chances - we have several people who were convicted - they made bad choices, they are not bad people

They would add to the community rather than subtract from it.

Some of our best workers started as inmates and have been helping thousands in need through our organization for years while also contributing to society as taxpayers and active members of the community.

Everyone deserves a second chance however some industries are unable to provide that opportunity due to regulations or nature of the business that would expose a risk the company.

Provide diversity of experience as well as understanding of how our programs could change to better assist those in need.

It would benefit the community to assist people in getting back on track and helping them become a more productive member of society. They have some life lessons to share.

It would help them to be an asset instead of a problem

They are human beings with lives just like the rest of us. What else needs to be said. Human to human judgment and full disclosure is the key.

I believe there are a lot of jobs ex felons could do that would benefit the community. Any job where the offender does not have access to money, personal property, or drugs.

We need motivated, reliable people with a work ethic. All the rest can be taught.

Shows we are all inclusive and willing to help and Hire good people

It's better to have someone with a conviction history working and making a contribution to society if they are shown to be trustworthy.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #12: How could providing employment to people with a conviction history benefit your business and the community?

HELPING INDIVIDUALS REFORM *(continued)*

The benefit would be the same for everyone if one could have a business climate that is positive.

I'm all for hiring people who are trying to improve themselves and their family. This is typically a win win win situation for the employer, the employee and the community.

Help them to integrate into society.

It creates loyalty.

It would keep them busy and off the streets during working hours.

I believe they deserve a chance to be successful in life. By giving them a job they would be more likely to become involved in lawful activities outside of work as well.

It would benefit the community by hopefully turning these people into productive members of society.

I'm a big believer in second chances. If someone really wanted to move forward I would love to see XXXX supporting them in that effort. As long as clients/staff were safe in the process & that hiring those with a conviction history would not add to our already shrinking budget!

Giving meaningful work, giving second chances, honoring people for the good they can give, recognizing people make mistakes and they can overcome

Provide a living wage for an employee who can become a better citizen. Have an employee who is grateful for the job and therefore a loyal employee.

People with a conviction history are usually willing and able to learn a job, work hard to succeed, and want to make meaningful contributions to a workplace and society in general. I believe they are loyal to an employer who is willing to give them an opportunity to work.

In today's climate, a good employee is a good employee - period. We all have baggage, and sometimes the only difference between a convict and any other employee is that the convict got caught. With that in mind, there are obviously some tremendous people out there who could benefit our company, irrespective of their backgrounds. I also believe that we have all made mistakes, and most of us have had a mentor or friend pick us up and dust us off so we could learn and grow from those mistakes. We have an obligation to do that for others as well.

Helping those who want to do better get on the path as soon as possible will help with their sense of accomplishment and keep them on the right path. Becoming discouraged may add to hopelessness.

Give them a viable way to pay back and be a contributing member of society

By taking someone out of the system, and making them a productive member of our community

To demonstrate that one could make a wrong choice or more in their life yet can change and contribute to their community.

Employment generates self-worth and self-esteem. It gives people a reason to live and become productive members of society. Employment creates consumers. If prisons are punishment only vehicles, then no rehabilitation takes place. How do we expect relapsed inmates to act? Mannixizing low-level, non-violent offenders is the most profligate, wasteful expenditure of money I can think of. There is no end to the continuing higher amounts of taxes we will continue to pay following this approach.

We need drivers, they need work, and the community needs them to buy goods and services.

For the community, it's always better to have people gainfully employed rather than drawing on the social services. The benefit to the business is only as good as the skills, attitude, and integrity of the person with the conviction history.

If successful hire, benefits community by having one less individual drawing from community services and hopefully contributing to tax base.

Get them off public assistance and an asset to society.

I don't think having a job is the answer to everything, but my many years working in vocational rehabilitation proved that when people are employed, domestic problems, drug & alcohol problems, criminal problems all decline. This impacts everyone.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #12: How could providing employment to people with a conviction history benefit your business and the community?

HELPING INDIVIDUALS REFORM *(continued)*

We clearly need to employ previously incarcerated individuals if we expect them to be productive members of society. A job is a basic need for most of us and we all benefit.

People deserve a chance to rebuild their lives and everyone has something to offer.

It benefits the community by keeping the person actively engaged in life - not sitting by the sidelines with too much time on their hands.

In my line of work, we often recruit applicants who have a conviction history. It's an accepted norm in our industry (substance abuse counseling) that an applicant is highly likely to have a conviction history. It is beneficial because those with conviction histories who we have hired serve as a mentor and can inspire others who find themselves facing road blocks.

Our organization is supportive of initiatives to integrate those with conviction histories - be it in employment, housing or other opportunities. People who work and have a solid sense of self are the foundation of our communities and country. However, a larger issue looms: any number of preventive measures that could take place in the formative years: Forming strong structures and values in education. Community, church and whole family activities. Childhood and parenting courses. College and technical school opportunities for everyone.

Offer an opportunity of support and accomplishment

Helping them became productive members of society

Helps them become a contributing member of society. Gives them something meaningful to turn their attention and efforts to. Helps them support their family/children if they have them. Less likely they will reoffend, I'm guessing, because they wouldn't want to jeopardize their job/success.

The best idea is to reintegrate this population back into the workforce, it can be benefit the individual, the community and the business. Win-win for all involved if we can do this right.

It helps in their rehabilitation. It also helps with self-esteem and income.

If they bring a needed skill set, an strong work ethic, and are a dependable worker.....everyone wins.

Give people a second chance and to show that they can be productive citizens.

Allow people who really want an opportunity to provide for themselves a way to do that. Get people off assistance.

Successful rehabilitation and reintegration of a person with a conviction history is always and absolutely beneficial to the community as a whole. No matter their history, any person who is employed has more independence through financial stability.

Society is better off when as many people as possible are productive and involved members.

The hope would be restoration of a person and a positive influence in the community. We are mission ally focused on restoration of people.

Presuming I was hiring someone known in the community who 'deserves a second chance' then it would serve as a good example of the possibility of redemption. It's a long shot.

There seems to be a higher criminal history rate in Douglas County - which is sad, but the goal is to get the ex-offenders working and being a positive in the community rather than a negative.

If it represented somehow contributing to that redemptive history, then it could create a positive impression of who we are.

Gives them a chance to turn their lives around.

we have had some who are loyal and dedicated employees who work hard and are an example to others

Ways to help people be productive benefits the overall community - economically and socially.

If qualified, hard worker, and teachable, would be a contributing member to our company, the community, and society.

It would help people who have made bad choices in the past feel they have value, teach them skills, and help them become active, engaged, and productive citizens.

It could show that people make mistakes and have the opportunity and will to right their wrongs and turn their life around.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #12: How could providing employment to people with a conviction history benefit your business and the community?

HELPING INDIVIDUALS REFORM (continued)

giving them a second chance. raising their self esteem. getting them productive. not being a burden on society.
Aide in their readjustment to society.
It is a benefit to the community to re-integrate offenders, a job is an important part of that equation.
I'm a strong believer in redemption and grace... there's too little of it in this world, so it would be a good demonstration to the community.
If they are motivated, they could be a valuable employee.
Employment re-engages the individual to their community. They begin to have a stake in the health of that community. We have employees with records and they are great!
I have found that the ones you do give a chance and make the change are loyal employees and give back it the communities in may ways.
Give them a stream of income and help them gain skills and avoid getting into situations that might create problems.
In my limited experience, it builds loyalty. We've given people a chance and seen that faith repaid.
Hiring people with conviction histories could help us if they have the specific skills we need. Also, I think it is a benefit to that person and society in general if they can make a good living.
If a person with that history is a talented salesperson and is very upfront about his/her conviction (except in convictions regarding crimes against children)... there is every reason to believe he/she could be successful here.
Give those who have demonstrated a willingness to work and change their behavior local support to be a valid part of our community.
People with previous drug convictions can be very good in working in social services provided they are in full recovery and there has been considerable distance from their conviction.
Gives a person a chance to put their life back together
Their personal experience to be successful could be used to influence others in a positive way.
They could be a contributing member of society and have goals to keep them motivated.
If they become a good employee it would show others in the workplace that there is room for benevolence.
My business is based on relationships and trust. Employing someone with a conviction history shows my trust in the person and that they have the opportunity for a second chance.
My job would be filled and the applicant would become an asset to the community.
We are all messed up. Something about having compassion together unifies us all
Regardless of conviction history, the more employed people we have contributing to our society the better.
Provide hope and reentry into the community.
It would benefit XXXX if the employee was successful in job hired for. Would show XXXX's commitment and consciousness of community.
It would keep them from being jobless and homeless
Give a person the chance to succeed and become a contributing citizen.
If a person was convicted of theft because they didn't have funds to purchase what they, hopefully, employment would make that unnecessary.
It is desirable to get those with convictions gainfully employed so that they can support themselves. Also so that they become productive citizens who can give back to the community. We have hiring restrictions by law, however, per what I stated in #11.
Anytime we can assist an individual to be a productive asset to the community at large, everyone benefits.
Provide a second chance for a person

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #12: How could providing employment to people with a conviction history benefit your business and the community?

HELPING INDIVIDUALS REFORM *(continued)*

Ex convicts have made a mistake in their lives.....we all do. I see it as an opportunity to assist someone who wants to work, to straighten his or her life out. It is meaningful for them and society.

Giving someone a second chance.

We always need good people and even convicts deserve a chance to be a participant in our communities instead of burdens.

We like to offer second chances when possible. It's a gift of grace God has given to us and that we try to extend to others.

It would provide the community with the benefit of all the talents of these individuals and would provide opportunity for these individuals to be productive...

There is a significant economic benefit to the successful transition of those with conviction histories back into the community. This is good for everyone in the community.

Demonstrate we are good corporate citizens and willing to give someone a second chance.

Could support a new life path for a committed individual.

Gives offenders a fresh start.

Moving them from a taxpayer liability to a contributing member of society.

No specific benefit to my business. A living wage job would help the offender by building self esteem, by providing a feeling of belonging in society, and a feeling of contributing to the community. For the community benefited would include reducing costs of public assistance, and less crime since a person who is employed with a living wage job is generally less likely to be a repeat offender.

Providing a positive work environment to a positive minded person is a service to the community. As previously mentioned felonies can vary and everyone deserves at least a look at a second chance.

Question #12: How could providing employment to people with a conviction history benefit your business and the community?

MISCELLANEOUS

For our business I don't think it is likely to benefit us For the community it would be a boon to helping people make a contribution to our community

I am only looking at the best qualified for the position, not providing a person with a conviction an opportunity.

They could relate to some of our clients.

Some jobs are hard to fill, like journeyman diesel mechanics. Industry experience is hard to find.

Our hiring practices are intended to find the best person for the job and ultimately benefit the business -- conviction history is only an issue if it potential could impact job performance.

We are property managers. We hire maintenance people and apartment managers who have access to not only homes but confidential financial information, so we have a lot of exposure should an employee re-offend, whether through theft, rape, assault or child abuse. Employees often work alone, without supervision, so there is a lot of temptation.

I do understand that those that have been convicted deserve a chance, but with our current economic situation there are so many other deserving people who did not offend that need a job and services to assist them.

Not sure without having a problem

What is our choice: we can not continue to lock up and house non-violent drug offenders at \$40,000 per year. They receive very little mental health counseling or appropriate medication during their incarceration and for the most part are returned to society in worse shape. We need a solid, proven, best practices program that smoothes the reintegration process. The stigmas we attach to low level, nonviolent, offenders or those with mental illness are driving up our taxes and making our communities more unstable and more unsafe in the long run. The costs to the business community will continue to skyrocket. Our current approach to public health and safety is short-sighted, punitive and costly, not corrective or recovery oriented.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #12: How could providing employment to people with a conviction history benefit your business and the community?

MISCELLANEOUS (continued)

Unless the government changed their rules

I believe our society has such a bias against those viewed as "law breakers" that it's best to apply the "Don't ask Don't tell" policy to give the person trying to start a new life a better chance.

Many have had a huge impact on youth by telling their story.

I suppose it would depend on the nature of the crime and which job opening they were applying for.

Some questions difficult because it depends..... Financial institutions cannot hire anyone convicted of an act of dishonesty because they are not bondable.

Probably of no benefit to our business.

Increase pool of potential employees

Depending on the situation, could be good PR.

Not sexual

They cannot do tasks that would give them access to bank accounts, SSN, and other personal client information. I don't know what they can do in a law office. From the top position all the way down to the lowest position, there is the possibility to access whether it is taking out the trash or computer access to sensitive information. The only good thing is they know what the risks are. Sometimes I wish I could employ offenders, but insurance excludes it. It is people who have not yet committed a crime that are prone to it that could really clean our clock.

I see no way it would benefit my business. I'm disgusted by the way the state uses my tax dollars to fund programs without a basis in reality. I don't know what can be done to get jobs for convicts but I don't feel I should potentially sacrifice my safety and lab equipment (i.e. have it stolen for drug money) for them.

Figure a lifetime savings of aprox 2 million

Unable to based on bonding issues.

Not sure that there is any benefit other than finding someone that might work hard to make a difference

If the conviction is non-violent and does not disqualify the individual through the DHS criminal background check, we are more than happy to give a QUALIFIED applicant a chance. That is what our business is all about.

Qualified Journeyman machinists are very difficult to find anymore. If the applicant had the necessary skills and the desire to make a contribution to the company and society, everyone would benefit from their employment.

Hard to see a benefit

We currently hire people with felonies.

I believe the community would benefit tremendously if more convicts could find gainful employment. Our business, in particular, does just fine without hiring anyone with a criminal history.

We might get someone with a lot of experience, but the risk is not worth the reward

It wouldn't

Not allowed

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #13: Would you like to share an experience you have had employing a person with a conviction history?
POSITIVE
We have hired several convicted felons. These employees have been excellent hires for our company. They have been hard working, grateful for the opportunity, employees.
Applicant was honest about conviction, I was unable to hire in my area, but she worked hard and is currently a good employee in another dept.
I can think of 2 individuals specifically and both have turned out to be excellent workers. They made mistakes earlier in life and learned from them. They are happy to be able to work and make a contribution.
We've had good experience with convicted employees.
We have a number of ex convicts/felons who work here. To a man, they are hard working and trustworthy. They are thankful that they have been given a chance.
I have found most people with convictions are happy that you gave them a job opportunity and work hard to show their appreciation.
We hired a single women who had been convicted of embezzlement from a previous employer. She was committed to turning her life around, we gave her that chance, and she took advantage of it. She turned out great.
People make mistakes and usually end up regretting the poor choice they made. One conviction can shake up a person considerably and unfortunately they pay for that due to many employers using a blanket approach to not hiring anyone with a conviction. I have found that someone with a conviction history has actually turned the corner and can be potentially one of your best employees displaying respect, honesty, and dependability.
We have had a couple of individuals who have been in jail - both are great employees/
We have hired people with convictions and not had any issues. There was one person who had an anger problem and was terminated early on. One of our problems right now is what to do with our own employees who already work for us and who are getting arrested for both misdemeanor and felony crimes!
In my experience these people have too many "other" problems and don't stay long. They have mental issues, emotional or anger issues that make it hard for them to succeed.
We use a local supportive employment agency that places people with records, it has been nothing but positive the last 6
We hired a person many years ago who had been incarcerated for "cooking" meth. He had served his time and we hired him. His parole officer used to come here and check on him from time to time. He was very well liked by the other employees and everything was fine. He eventually left and went into business for himself.
We have not had any significant issues when employing individuals with felony convictions, however their ability to transfer and promote into other areas is limited by their license restrictions. Sex offenders can not work in the Front of House with access to our younger patrons, and individuals with recent theft convictions have a very difficult time getting licensed.
We hired a guy as a temp. 4 years ago. He was on parole at the time and I don't even know what for. He worked really hard for us and when he asked us for some flexibility to meet his parole terms we did so. He continued to work hard, display a good attitude and not miss work and we hired him. When we had to layoff people we kept him over others with more tenure because of his attitude and work ethic. I've always felt he appreciated the chance and he recognizes we appreciate his efforts.
I only hired part time, and he was honest and trustworthy to me. He needed a full time job. I have worked with delinquent youth all my life, and one can tell when they make life changing decisions and are hireable. Attitude plays a big part of this.
I have hired individuals who have been convicted of Felonies. One of these individuals was very hard working, and over a time I felt very trustworthy. We were careful not to put the individual in a situation where they could re-offend. Ultimately, I felt comfortable enough to promote the individual to supervisory levels and give a security code and access to the workplace.
Hiring someone who shoplifted at age 18 but was 26 when we hired her. Very good employee.
One person only... talented sales person but issues with authority.
We have many stories and without exception, they are hard working and among our best employees.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #13: Would you like to share an experience you have had employing a person with a conviction history?

POSITIVE (continued)

We have hired applicants with convictions. We consider whether or not they are currently on parole or probation and have a positive track record since the conviction. We also take a look at honesty in completing the employment application; did the applicant provide truthful information on their application? We have been successful in our hiring practices when it comes to people with convictions.

we have several, life turnarounds

We hired an employee who had been in prison for statutory rape he worked for us and retired from our business as a respected employee with a good work history

We have several. One has been with us for 10+ years, has been a supervisor/manager, and is a trusted and valued employee.

We have an employee that, in a previous lifetime, was imprisoned for drug and weapon charges and is a former Meth addict. That period of his life was not consistent with his upbringing or his character in general, but resulted (indirectly) from an injury and subsequent addiction to pain meds. If he did not openly discuss his past, you probably wouldn't have a clue. I believe such dramatic redemptive stories are rare, but they are out there. Employers need to be shrewd, but open-minded.

We employed a gentlemen who was recently released from prison. The only issue we really had was that he had excuses for everything any time something went wrong or he couldn't make it to work.

We've hired multiple felons. it becomes their responsibility to themselves, their employer and their community to make the best out of the opportunity they are given. most have been successful here. very few haven't.

We have accepted people with a prior felony conviction four years or more before, and who had no reconviction. In each case, the people involved were sincere about wanting to move ahead. They did a great job. We did discover that they were not at all clear about expectations in the workplace, and had to do a lot of coaching and guiding.

We have two positive experiences. The convictions were more than 5 years prior to being hired. The associates had demonstrated long-term employment histories (no "job hopping") with satisfactory performance (they supplied copies of their performance reviews and had strong work references). Both associates are thriving in their positions and have been recognized as role models for other associates.

One of my employees, was hooked on Meth at age 11, because of his parents, he spent many years in and out of trouble with the law. at 21 he turned his life around with help, he has a stable job, family and is paying his debt to society and is currently working on his 4th year for me. The problems young persons face is huge with regard to drugs, and poor parenting.

I will share two: The first was when we hired a relative of an employee that had just gotten out of prison. This person had difficulty adjusting, in fact it seemed he only wanted the job to appease his PO and we gave him several opportunities before finally having to fire him. He came back, stole one of the company vehicles, used it to commit some other crimes before he was arrested. The event cost us several thousand dollars. The second experience is a young man that again was the relative of an employee got out of prison after serving 8 years on a measure 11 offense. He immediately enrolled in classes at Chemeketa and over the course of the last year has worked diligently to put his past behind him and get on a path to lead a normal life. Though the interruptions caused by the parole requirements have been somewhat disruptive he has been very appreciative of the opportunity and has greatly exceeded our expectations. He has actually been one of the best hires we have made in the past 10 years.

I have an employee that committed a crime when she was 18. She was hired here almost 9 yrs ago and has worked every position in the building. She has risen from care giving, to running the building as a Director.

We have employed a number of people with histories of crimes (different types) and we have had some very successful outcomes, and some failures. It really depends on the individual and the open-mindedness of the business.

I've employed two people with convictions that didn't turn out good and one person who is still employed and doing well.

I worked with a person just out of prison and he was able to completely change his life around and to this day is still employed and not engaging in criminal activities.

I have - again depends on type and how recent - they can be more motivated than others to succeed.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #13: Would you like to share an experience you have had employing a person with a conviction history?

POSITIVE *(continued)*

Due to the nature of an individuals crime and the client being well aware of his conviction and him having outstanding work history prior and during incarceration we were able to work this gentleman for that particular client only. But he was a great employee, stayed in contact when needed, always had his time card in on time and was very respectful and appreciative. We may consider him for future assignments if he was available and still doing good.

Re-hired an ex-employee after he had been convicted of a crime (bodily injury); we actually offered this man an opportunity to turn his life around; he took responsibility and made it happen. He did a wonderful job for us.

We currently have an employee that spent 5 years in prison. He is a good employee and he works had. It has been a long time since he was released. We had another employee who was released and we hired him within 2 years of the release. He was not a good employee, did not want to work, felt he was entitled and caused issues with other employees.

People who we've hired that have conviction histories are carefully selected and we take several factors into consideration. Almost half of our staff have a conviction history - that is just the nature of our business. However, without their "hands on" knowledge of the criminal justice system and their own experience suffering from addiction, our clients would not benefit. They are working with individuals who are experiencing the exact things they did years ago. It's disheartening to see those who want to take steps in the right direction and change their lives for the better experience so many road blocks.

Although we have had a couple of successes in employing persons with a conviction history, we have also had a couple of bad experiences. However, we do not let those bad experiences taint future hiring's.

I worked for a staffing agency when I was first getting into HR and we employed men who were in the work release program. I had one gentleman I worked with in particular who was highly motivated, truly felt like he had made a mistake and wanted to turn his life around, worked hard at the companies we sent him too no matter what the job, and was ultimately hired permanently because of his excellent performance. Working with him really changed my perception of people with conviction histories. My father was a police officer, so I was very closed minded in my thinking (and young and inexperienced) -- but working with the individuals from the work release program really helped open my eyes and my mind. :-)

On two occasions we employed staff who had a felony conviction. In both cases, the person volunteered their conviction history to me. One work for us until our workload decreased and left when he was placed on part time/on-call status. The other person came with appropriate skills and had a very good recommendation from a former employer. He stayed with us about 2 years and left to relocate to another state.

We did hire someone who had been convicted under 3 strikes for drug crime. He was very up front with us about his role in the issue, all of the things he was trying to do to get beyond it. We even hired him into accounting which normally would not have been a place where we would hire someone with his background. however it was a paid student internship and he was currently enrolled with a high enough GPA for him to be considered a worthy candidate. He did perform well in his job functions and has been very successful in jobs in his field since that time.

The employee was so appreciative of being given a second change that they were 'top-shelf' producers for the organization.

I've hired two individuals with convictions for which they've served time in prison. Both were questioned thoroughly on what happened, why it happened, and what they've done to make things different. These candidates were successful in obtaining employment with us because they demonstrated a strength of character, integrity, ownership of their action, and demonstrated changes to their choices. This was on top of having a skill set required for the position.

We took a chance and now she is one of our most valued, loyal and trusted employees.

We have had both very positive experiences and not so good experiences. We currently have at least 2 employees in the manufacturing plant and one employee in the office who have been excellent employees for 2 to 5 years. We have had experiences where the employees had poor attendance and drug and alcohol issues.

We have employed several and we have always seen above and beyond work ethic. Ability to take and give feedback and most of all dedicated and grateful for an opportunity.

We have a few very valued employees here with extensive criminal histories.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #13: Would you like to share an experience you have had employing a person with a conviction history?

POSITIVE *(continued)*

I have two now that are doing very well. Again, it's (in my opinion) because they took full responsibility for their actions. One did falter and ended up back in jail for a short time and he was able to come back to work. Again, the lost productivity for his actions and the process we had to follow for the last chance agreement.

We hired a man who served 10 years in prison for driving while under the influence of alcohol resulting in an accident that killed his fiancé. Once released from prison, we hired him for our Production assembly team and he was an excellent, reliable employee. He rode his bike to work everyday and was never tardy. He was grateful for the opportunity and he showed it by his work and his positive attitude.

We hire employees with convictions histories as long as they are honest during the application process and they have demonstrated an effort to live a clean lifestyle.

One I had one who did really well I also had one who did not It totally depends on the individual

We've had one employed for 6+ years, one of the best employees in the company. She is a dedicated, hard working employee and has raised the bar for her co-workers.

Many of our staff come to us with a criminal history. Taking into consideration the actual crimes as they relate to the position being filled. What kinds of treatment did the person complete. How long ago were the crimes? Were there mitigating circumstances surrounding the criminal activity. We look at these types of issues and more before we approve or deny someone's employment based on their criminal history. My agency has many people working here who have some type of criminal activities in their past or may be on probation even as they work.

Have one employee with a previous felony conviction that joined our firm when we acquired the firm she worked for. She has been a good employee but we do suffer some consequence as she is unable to participate in all functions due to policy

Positive experience in the State of Texas hiring ex-cons through state funded programs to assist them getting reintegrated in society. The state paid about half the wages.

We have a few employees that have succeeded and it is a good feeling to know that we have been able to provide them with a second chance.

I hired one person with a criminal history. This person had been in a 12 step program for 7 years and had created a history of doing the right thing. He has been with my company for 7 years now. I would not have hired him if had had just been released with no recovery.

Just hired an individual and so far have been very satisfied with his performance and attitude. Hopefully he will become a long time employee. He is very thankful for the opportunity.

Question #13: Would you like to share an experience you have had employing a person with a conviction history?

NEGATIVE

Yes, they re-offended and caused us LOTS of money, time, and heartache!!

We have to let someone go if we find they have a criminal background record.

We've hired a few convicted felons. A couple of worked out. More have not.

Rare that we hire, but in almost every case we have had to terminate due to attitude, lack of ability to fit in, and failed drug tests.

Unfortunately they have all been discovered during selection process where conviction was not disclosed indicating that honesty and decision making skills are lacking.

I've never employed someone with a criminal history, but I worked with a bunch on a couple temp jobs many years ago. They were very poor workers with generally bad attitudes, however this was an unskilled job.

None that are very positive

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #13: Would you like to share an experience you have had employing a person with a conviction history?
NEGATIVE (continued)
Due to oversight on conviction on employee's job application a male employee was hired that had been convicted of rape. Somehow employees found out about it which caused a very uncomfortable work environment as the dept. was made up of all female employees.
We hired a CDL driver earlier this year. He wanted more pay and resigned. Three weeks later he is on the news having been busted for possessing an "arms cache of automatic weapons". That has prompted our criminal background check process.
I will honestly say that I have employed people with a conviction history and I have had very little success. The dependability is often the biggest issue.
An employee (who happened to also be married to one of the owners) had a son who was given a job so he could be paroled. It wasn't a good situation as he was found numerous times asleep on the job...or she "clocked in" for him when he wasn't at work. This ended up with him being dismissed...applying for unemployment...and getting it! Sort of a sticky wicket with him being an owner's stepson.
I could although I am not sure it would be helpful to other. That said there are a couple that make me smile.
I did and she "stole" \$\$ again from XXXXXXXX.
Before we utilized background checking (years ago), we unknowingly hired a convicted sex offender. Other employees discovered the conviction, and literally ran him off of the plant site. It created an environment of distrust and unease, something that is not remotely conducive to productivity.
We hired a person who was convicted over twenty years ago thinking that we would give them a chance because it had been a while and they had qualified experience since. We let that employee go in less than six months because her personal problems presented a danger to the residents. It wasn't related to the conviction itself, but hiring someone with that type of history still affected our company greatly in a negative way.
No, I have had a few very good employees with records, but I have had more that have quit after the company has invested time in their training.
Quit coming in to work, start having attendance problems, attitudes, tools and property start disappearing, work accidents/injuries
Hired a person who was convicted on drug use charges. Eventually that person went back to using drugs and was fired
Yes. We did on two occasions. With one, we took a chance; on the other, they lied on application. Both experiences failed.
1) had a felon who stayed far too long in entry-level job because he felt he could not get a different one. 2) Hired an ex-felon who was a very good employee but kept getting throw back in jail by his PO, and he ended up getting fired for alcohol-related misdeeds.
We hired a convicted rapist who lied on his application. When we found out, we had to let him go as he was working around women.
We have hired 2 men with felony convictions. The first one was pretty much a wreck. He was unreliable, not a good worker -- more of a personality issue. The second employee was a great employee, but received a DUI (his 2 or 3 one) and lost his license which was a needed requirement of the job. Young man that was very personable, worked hard, but didn't acknowledge that an alcohol problem was an issue to maintaining employment. He actually came to work for us after he had community service for a month -- we liked what we saw, but knew there was a risk involved due to his past employment history.
Over the years we have employed several individuals with some kind of conviction history. Only one has stranded our equipment out of state.
Went back to drug issues and used chemicals we had in the warehouse. He came back and threatened staff. We are very leery of this hiring process. We have since implemented a drug policy.
The person lied on his application and when he was inspected at a Port of entry by the weigh-master he was taken to jail. Lost revenue for the truck and we had to have another employee pick the truck up

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #13: Would you like to share an experience you have had employing a person with a conviction history?

NEGATIVE (continued)

Yes, several years ago we used to hire and employ people with conviction histories. We've since stopped hiring people with conviction history's because a several incidents involving violence, dishonesty, illegal drug use, and theft by these individuals. One instance involved a fist fight between two individuals with conviction histories, the police had to get involved in that case and both employee's were fired. Another instance was an individual we caught smoking marijuana in his car at break time (we do pre-employment drug testing, which he passed, and we do have a no tolerance policy when it comes to drug use). We had him drug tested and it came back positive for marijuana and he was fired.

At past employer we hired someone straight out of prison. We fired him when he stole equipment from us.

Before we instituted background checks, we hired an accounting person who turned out to be a convicted felon (embezzling funds). She had not disclosed the conviction on the application, so we fired her immediately. Subsequently we found that she had stole about \$1,000 from us (a lot less than the \$250,000 she got from the other guy.)

Any time I have hired someone for any job where that persons has serious flaws in his character, values or integrity, it worked out badly.

Generally the common thread is getting to work on time everyday, frequent sickness, family issues that inter fear with work and attitude problems with generally everything that touches them.

Hired a maintenance guy through a temp agency that said they screened. The guy was camping in one of the vacant apartments, unknown to us. The FBI came to our office, undercover and set up a sting to arrest him. Before we started screening we also had a maintenance guy who was an ex-con, he had to quit when we implemented our random drug screen program.

Had an employee with a white collar crime and as long as work had adequate QC all was well. He still had a tendency to blur the ethical line on others' behalf but there was no opportunity.

We have employed several. One reoffended a couple of times. The 4th time we gave up. Others are grateful and work hard.

One employee received two DUI's while working for us. We were notified by him as it affected his attendance and ability to be here on time, etc.. We gave him SO many chances and were huge supporters of his, but he never overcame his drinking addiction and we eventually let him go due to attendance issues. He was continually coming late and calling in sick and we just couldn't allow it any more. In the long run, it hurt morale and others didn't understand why he got so many chances. It wasn't fair, so we were burned and won't be as "understanding" in the future.

We had an employee with an undisclosed pedophile history. It was disclosed by another employee who found the information online, and created hostile workplace problems for the employee.

We have had 3 individuals w/ conviction history that have worked for us in the past, 2 long term and 1 for a shorter time. The 2 long term, one was convicted of killing someone (in self defense...3 years in prison) and the other convicted of gang related gun activity at the mall (6 years in prison). Both of these gentleman were hard workers for the most part. The issues we dealt w/ I do not feel were any different from our employees that had no record and they were just more normal employee/HR issues. The 3rd employee was a convicted sex offender and this made things a little more difficult when our jobs took us to locations where there were children. This employee also had difficulty with managing himself on a daily basis, attendance at work, level of motivation and effort. I think everyone is different and needs to be dealt w/ on an individual basis...some will work, some won't, just like employees you hire w/o a record.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #13: Would you like to share an experience you have had employing a person with a conviction history?
MISCELLANEOUS
I have not had an opportunity to employ a person with a conviction history.
I did share an existing experience in my answer to number 11.
No experience. Our industry precludes us from hiring as the state board and professional organizations require high ethical conduct including perception
I've never worked anywhere that this was permitted.
We have had employees that have been arrested and convicted of DUII. For those employees that are required to have a Commercial Drivers license the DUII results in employment termination and here's why: Did you know that if a person has a CDL and is cited for DUII, while driving a personal vehicle, they will lose their drivers license for 12 months? They are also not eligible for Unemployment. Plus most commercial auto insurers will not insure them for three years. I'm not saying that driving under the influence is OK under any circumstances, but I do believe that the punishment is too severe. A person loses his ability to earn a living and has no safety net. That's something our State Legislature should address. If the person was cited for DUII while driving a commercial I think the current penalty would be appropriate.
We are quite hesitant due to prior embezzlements. Also, we only employ 5 people fulltime so we have to rely heavily on each person who works here.
We've never hired anyone.
I don't think we have any.
No experience.
Don't have any experience hiring a convict.
I personally have worked with the Re-Entry program here locally and feel it is a great thing. I also have been a liaison between our local adult parole and probation officers - which shows a respect for our agency and P & P as well as the customer we are trying to place.
We participated in this program for seasonal employees with success in 2010. We have done minimal hiring during 2011 and have not sought employees from this program. We are unable to participate in our year-round division of our company due to contracts with customers.
I have no relevant experience. I hire mostly professional level staff, so it's very rare that an applicant has a conviction history. In most cases I wouldn't know anyway, unless the applicant tells me, or my HR staff reject a candidate for relevant criminal history.
None that I was aware
To many
My mom is a felon, however, she has been a productive citizen for the past 15 years. Everyone needs a second chance.
We have not had a person apply to our business with a conviction history.
I've never hired anybody with a conviction.
With respect to question number 3, we conduct background checks on finalists for all positions, because conviction history could be relevant to every single job within our organization, depending on the nature of the conviction.
I am unaware of any people we've hired with conviction histories.

Appendix

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #6: What is your general perception of applicants with a conviction history?
Depends/Individual/Crime
Varies widely
Totally depends on the individual
Depends on the crime
It would really depend on the individual - we would be comparing them to the entire pool of candidates - hardworking? Team worker? Reliable? Attention to detail?
Not unlike the general workforce...some are very motivated to succeed others not so.
Each person is different, generalizations would not be appropriate
Depends on the individual
Depend upon what their conviction was.
Depends on the person and situation
Totally depends on the issue and the person.
Depends a lot on the individual
They can be as good or as bad as any other employee
Depends on the crime
We try not to stereo type
It just depends
Depends on the individual
Do not have a specific attitude; would deal with on a case by case basis
Depends on amount of time since the offense. Have they stayed clean?
Some good, some bad We have had both types.
Depends on conviction
Dependent upon the nature of the conviction and the age of the conviction
Depending on the nature of the conviction, not necessarily different than anyone without a conviction
Depends on the individual
Entirely depends on the individual
Depends on the person, we are interested in how honest they are about the crimes. If honest and upfront we would consider hiring
Most have done well. A few were not trustworthy.
They need to be evaluated carefully
Conviction alone not an indicator of much
Varies with the individual, some are resistant to change and will default to old habits, others seek the challenge to improve.
We have an open mind about all qualified applicants
I look at people as individuals
This is a bad question. If I am inclined to interview someone with a conviction history, they must have written something on their application or letter of introduction which positively peaked my interest.
It varies from person to person. I've had good luck and I've those that didn't do well.
It depends--many that have old conviction histories have grown from the experience and become model employees. Some do not disclose and when felonies appear on background checks it is considered falsification of application.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #6: What is your general perception of applicants with a conviction history?
Depends/Individual/Crime (continued)
Depends on the individual
Depends on the nature of the offense
Depends on the person and the situation
Case by case as everyone is different.
It happens ... we look for the type of conviction (assault, sexual in nature, drugs) and how long ago. We are required to check through DHS.
Like all stereotypes, these are overly broad generalizations. Each person should be evaluated for his/her personal character traits
Each individual is different and any of the above may apply to an individual
Case by case
None - everyone is different
Dependent on time and crime
Impression of above based on interview content
Case-by-case basis perceptions
Each person must be considered individually.
Depends on the person
Depends on nature of position and conviction
Some are great others are not so great
Depends
Depends on the individual circumstance and whether there is remorse
Depends upon crime and time served
All of the above just depends on the individual
Depends on individual
It really depends on the person and the crime
Depends
I've seen applicants with all these attitudes.
Depends on the person
Depends on the applicant but based on my experience they're mostly motivated to succeed
Depends on crime
It depends on what the conviction is for and how long ago it was.
I form my opinions based on the interview, I don't believe there are any reasonable preconceptions about those with conviction history.
My perception is that there is a very broad range of behaviors and attitudes to include willing to work hard, grateful, and some that can have a bad attitude and trouble-makers. Each one is different and needs to be evaluated on their own merits.
Have experienced all
It really depends on the applicant. We have quite a few employees that have had criminal offenses in the past and we have seen that they are grateful for their employment and have turned their lives around. There are others we have hired that have not worked out due to relapse or violations.
Depends on nature of crime. We believe in 2nd chances.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #6: What is your general perception of applicants with a conviction history?
Depends/Individual/Crime (continued)
This varies from ready to work and make a difference and those that choose to "go through the motions"
An individual thing and can't categorize as a group
Depends on the individual
If course, it varies by the individual, just like with all other people.
It really depends on the person
Depends on the individual and the nature of the conviction
Depends on nature of conviction and amount of time since the conviction - old convictions may no longer be relevant.
Our experience has been that it varies from ex-con to ex-con.
Depends on the individual and the nature of the crime
Each individual situation is different
Depends on the offense
Each individual is unique
Strictly individual
We consider the offense and severity.
Personally, I would consider each applicant individually, and probably all of the above apply depending on the person and the circumstances. However, in our business, where we serve as fiduciaries for others, we believe it would be per se unreasonable to hire anyone with a known criminal history.
All of the above depending on the individual and their current circumstances
History and Record Needed
Have had experience with all descriptors above, therefore, no general perception. Each situation unique.
It really depends on the person, some do have negative behaviors they must still overcome.
It really depends on the person sitting in front of me and what their conviction was for.
Depends on the person and the conviction
Each person is different.
My perception of a convict vs. non is not applicable to hiring for any position. Each person is individually assessed regardless of criminal background.
There's good and bad in every "group" however given the choice between someone without a record and someone who has been convicted of a crime we choose the former.
Could be all of the above. It depends on when the conviction happened. If it was when the applicant was much younger and hadn't reoffended it wouldn't be that important.
That varies depending on the individual
There is no blanket statement - it depends on each individual
It depends on the type of crime for which they were convicted.
I avoid generalizations
No general perception
I can't generalize my perception on someone with a criminal history. My perception lies with the individual, not with what their actions.
Would look at on individual basis

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #6: What is your general perception of applicants with a conviction history?
Depends/Individual/Crime (continued)
Depends on the person
This category depends on the individual. Some are prone to reoffend while others are eager to put their past behind them and succeed. For this reason I choose only to mark other.
All or none of the above. Depends on the individual, although a felony conviction lends a more negative impression than a lighter conviction.
Combination
Depends, I would say we have a 30% success rate if convictions are escalated.
Depends on the individual, I have seen them do all of the above.
Some are willing to change, others are not. It depends.
depends on the offense
Depending on how dated the conviction, one time vs. multiple. Overall it is an indication of decision making abilities.
Depends on the history
Depends on the individual
Can be any of the above depending on the individual.
Depends on individual
Varies and not predisposed to one line of thinking, however, a person that has repeated involvement with the criminal justice system and makes no apparent effort to help themselves break the cycle usually has other barriers to successful employment including an unacceptable driving record or no ODL, lack of experience specific to the job or unsuccessful job history doing the same work and so on. If someone has demonstrated a willingness to change it makes all the difference.
Depends on conviction, frequency, how recent, etc.
Chance/No Preconception
All the above, some are ready for taking the next step.
Needing an opportunity for a life change
They are people.
Remorseful for past choices.
Will give opportunities and interview is completed
Just need one chance to prove they have value and can make meaningful contributions to an employer and society.
If given the regulations gave us an option then I would not prejudge the person
If they have served their time, and demonstrate they are motivated to succeed, I would certain give them an interview, and if they turn out to be the best qualified, I would hire them.
Some people need a second chance; most have already paid their debt to society.
Too easy to stereotype. Every situation is different
Often it is simply a one-time "error in judgment."
No stereotype of applicants with conviction history
Do not have a pre-conceived perception. Each applicant, each conviction, each position receive independent analysis.
Each individual stands on their own identity and convictions
Really try not to make judgments like these
Appreciative of a chance
No general perception, all proclaim willingness to work hard and are grateful for opportunity.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #6: What is your general perception of applicants with a conviction history?
Chance/No Preconception (continued)
No different than anyone else
No different than any other applicant. Made a mistake, may or may not have learned or changed.
Most of them are good workers for awhile as long as they have to report to their parole officer. Seems as that changes they slip back into their old habits. I will say we hire them know that their is one here and there that is ready to turn their life around and just need a chance.
I try not to classify people and put them in a "box". Everyone is different, and given new opportunities may or may not succeed which can be said for all employees regardless of criminal convictions.
I try not to judge
Treat each person as an individual. Cannot judge as a group.
Like everyone else
If we hire them we give them the benefit of the doubt, but we are also on guard a bit because of their past history
People make mistakes - we're all human
Open minded to situation
We try to give everyone an opportunity to explain their circumstances before making decisions about hiring/not
Appreciative of a second chance.
No perception
No opinion but when I have learned after of history, it was an applicant that didn't demonstrate excellent communication skills or positive attitude.
Everyone is unique
Open minded
As individual as we all are... can't generalize
Don't have a preconceived perception, evaluate it individual
No preconceptions
Really have no perception
Don't really have experience with employee's with convictions to form a definite perception.
Unsure
None of the above.
None
Liability/Risk/Behavior
Normally lacking in skills
Lack of work ethic
Bad criteria in decisions
Will be received unfavorably by our clients.
Attendance issues
Often haven't developed the skills/attitudes/good decision making abilities needed to be successful long-term in a job.
Need more support getting over criminal history
Mixed perceptions
General resentment of "the system"

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #6: What is your general perception of applicants with a conviction history?
Liability/Risk/Behavior (continued)
Typically not motivated.
This is too broad of a generalization to answer.
Often haven't developed the skills/attitudes/good decision making abilities needed to be successful long-term in a job.
Perception of the customer
It's like rolling the dice
Bring bad element to properties we manage
Hard time changing their habits
Some challenges controlling temper
Life situation can cause them to be unreliable in attendance
Many bad habits that are difficult to break or overcome. Some are rehabilitatable.
Willing to work hard, but can't seem to change destructive behavior
Don't generally turn into long term employees.
An unknown risk
Possibly reoffends
Some offenders do not receive treatment and are more likely to reoffend (but not all). It is of concern...
Suspicious of them. Would need a compelling reason to give them a chance.
Possibly could re-offend
Old habits are hard to break
Concern about others safety
Too risky
Violent crimes and crimes of theft, have been historically a repeat offender situation
We staff for other companies and we must meet their requirements
Can't risk it with children
Risky.
We need to protect our vulnerable senior residents
Negligent Hiring Risk
Restrictions/Limited Exposure
No previous contact to make an opinion.
We are a financial organization not seeing people apply with prior convictions.
Unknown as we do not hire
Non really, just can't hire
No prior general opinion
We have no perceptions.
No general perception either way.
I have no pre-conceived perceptions.
Can't

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #6: What is your general perception of applicants with a conviction history?

Restrictions/Limited Exposure (continued)

Don't see that many

We need to be able to have them bonded

Have not hired enough to form a perception

No preset perception, but as a law firm we don't hire these applicants

I don't have the experience have developed a perception

State won't let us hire convicts to work with dementia residents

Don't have personal experience

Minimal experiences to draw from

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #7: Your top concern about hiring applicants with a conviction history is:
Depends/Individual/Crime
Depends on the conviction. If a violent crime or a felony I would be concerned for safety of my employees.
Depends on the crime
Depends on what the crime was
Overall track record and whether a good match for the position responsibilities
Depends on type of offense
No different than anyone else
We really do not have a concern as stated above
Depends on the conviction and any risks specific to the position they are applying for.
We currently have no way of knowing about the conviction history of potential employees and thus do not factor it as a concern at this time.
Again, each situation is different
Each situation is different
I have no concerns about the class, I treat each case individually
Depends on individual
Depends on individual
Depends on what it is
Depends on the conviction
Depends on offense. Theft = lack of trust. Liability and safety if violent.
Nexus to the job and how recent the conviction as well as treatment opportunities they have accessed
Restrictions/Limited Exposure
Must be approved by the Gaming Commission, difficult to get some through and it is a significant investment on our side this is a loss if they can't get a gaming license.
Unable to be bonded by the insurance company
We follow the OARs for mental health agency
Exclusion from certain elements of our work, so have to hire around their limitations
We don't have the HR dept the handle training and supervision
Bonding
Bonding, ID security, and enough training
Government regulations
Medical office, insurance requires back ground check and potential exclusion from contracts
We work on government projects, schools and airports and would be unable to use such employees
HS is PreK so NO sex offenders or Violent offenders
Insurance provisions
Being able to be bonded
We work with school districts. Some state, regional, local governments restrict interaction of convicts with students, thus affecting our hiring practice.

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #7: Your top concern about hiring applicants with a conviction history is:
Restrictions/Limited Exposure (continued)
Confidentiality
We get direction from HR.
Liability/Risk/Behavior
All of the above however if asked to prioritize, Safety of clients and employees, then liability, then lack of trust
Liability
All the other barriers that they bring to the workplace
Public perception/concern
Possible public bias
Can they change their life styles to stay out of the system.
Can I change them?
Highly confidential information
Trust
Safety of clients & employees and drug use.
Liability
Drug and alcohol abuse
Committing another offense
Impact on company reputation if reoffends occurs or public learns of previous offense and would not trust the individual or organization.
Will not pick one - these 2 are equally important: 1. Safety of my clients and employees, and, 2. Liability if the person reoffends.
Unreliability - tendencies to reoffend
We have access to sensitive information. Liability is one issue. The issue for us is property crime and identity theft, not physical safety issues.
Safety of children and vulnerable adults in the congregation
Responsibility to clients do not allow me to take risks with staff.
Judgment abilities
Being accepted in the workplace
Lack of motivation, Do not like to follow direction.
Theft
Excuses for everything that they do wrong
Stealing money or ID of our members
Miscellaneous
Qualifications for the job
Attendance
Lack of experience
Lack of necessary skill sets
Finding available work for them.
Neutral
Necessary skills and abilities, as with any other job

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #7: Your top concern about hiring applicants with a conviction history is:

Miscellaneous (*continued*)

When comparing to other candidates - always look to past references and experiences to understand if good fit / person will be successful. I would imagine this might be difficult for someone with conviction history.

Commitment

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #9: Which of the following would be an incentive for you to hire a qualified applicant with a conviction history?

Depends/Individual/Crime

It's all about the person's willingness to be upfront and take responsibility for their actions. I want to know I'm getting a great candidate regardless of their background. The cost of the drug screening is minimal to the cost of the other issues that can arise. The items noted here are really surface issues surrounding this issue. What about the training for the existing people in the workplace who need to understand how to deal with people who have a background different than their own? How about training for the leadership team in how to deal with both sides of the employment issues? What about the training for the community where the person will be working? Will they have transportation? What happens if they don't succeed? Etc, Etc.

We only consider criminal history when the offense is related to the actual job. However, we do have some Federal standards we have to follow for certain utility related jobs that no amount of training/money/incentives would impact

I hesitate to choose one without knowing more about the options.

We base it off of an interview

If the applicant is qualified and the conviction isn't job related then it isn't a factor to consider.

A compelling redemptive history

Need more sales before able to hire ANYONE

Full disclosure of convictions

Depends on the person and the job being filled

We would use our selection process

Depends on the offense

Pre-screening so I can be reasonably assured that they are a good person

It depends on the conviction

Restrictions/Limited Exposure

Depends if they clear DHS regs

Prohibited by regulation

If they are the best qualified and we can work through a weigh test to see if their criminal history wouldn't disqualify them.

HR would need to change the policies.

Child Care Laws require criminal history check

Lift exclusions with govt contracts that our staff work on

As federally regulated financial institution policy precludes hiring person with conviction history

My business does not allow for us to hire most persons with criminal history backgrounds.

As a Social Service agency, we are precluded from hiring for most offenses. As a family business employer, financial incentives & drug screening would be very helpful - along with knowing they were giving training and coaching while incarcerated to prepare them for work after release.

As a staffing service my placements must meet the hiring requirements of my clients

Can't due to clientele

As a financial institution, all employees must be bondable. Conviction history would have to allow for bond ability.

All applicants must be able to obtain a Gaming License

Our organization is required to abide by ORS related to applicants with criminal history. The choice has been made for us.

Chance/No Preconception

We would probably lean toward giving someone a chance

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Question #9: Which of the following would be an incentive for you to hire a qualified applicant with a conviction history?

Chance/No Preconception (continued)

Don't think it would matter; if this is the most qualified person for the job, and the conviction is unrelated, nothing else is needed - these incentives would be bonuses.

We currently hire and don't need incentive

Miscellaneous

I do not believe that convicted felons should be provided any greater opportunity than anyone else. I certainly do not believe that tax dollars should be spent to help to pay for such opportunities and all of the above would require funding.

All of the above

All of the above

All of the above

All of the above

Not sure

Not sure

We drug screen everyone and also do random testing

Is drug screening the big issue?

Temp to Hire relationship for one year.

Having the tools to do the job.

A clean history since conviction and incarceration .

Relaxing of restrictions on pre-employment conversations so that we could have frank discussions with the applicant about convictions and how their specific situation relates to the job/workplace.

Choices 1 and 2; a job Coach available to the applicant, and resources of local community colleges

Protection from workman's Comp Claims for a 6 month period

Federal or state assumption of liability if employee screws up and company is held liable.

Incentives should be much higher for recent parolees. I feel like we are taking a higher rick vs. hiring some one who has been out 2+ yrs.

Life coaching and support to assist the offender from reoffending

We try to hire based on the candidates work history and experience (excluding Tribal Preference), it is difficult to license a candidate with a felony conviction however depending on the circumstance it can be done, however it would be unfair to other candidates to give them preference just because they are in a special program. If they are the best in the pool, we'll give them a try depending on the nature of the conviction and how long ago it occurred.

Making it a goal or requirement of a project like M/W/ESB is.

Job training relevant to the position available

Approval from the government

Follow up from the state

Ability to be certified

Reference from Prison Fellowship Ministries.

Positive reference from mutual friend or business acquaintance

Reliable references from prior employers

Additional pre-employment success indicators to prove job-readiness

2011 Employer Perception Survey

Commissioned by the Governor's Re-entry Council
Employment and Education Workgroup

Agencies, organizations and individuals represented on the Re-entry Employment and Education Workgroup include:

- Oregon Employment Department
- Oregon Department of Corrections
- Oregon Youth Authority
- Community Colleges and Workforce Development
- Cascade Employers Association
- Oregon Corrections Enterprises
- Personnel Source
- Sponsors, Inc.
- SEDCOR
- Linn/Benton Community College
- Salem Area Chamber of Commerce
- Marion County Sheriff's Office/Community Corrections
- Washington County Re-entry Council
- Multnomah County Department of Community Justice
- Oregon Workforce Partnership
- Partnership for Safety and Justice
- Department of Human Services
- Allain Enterprises
- Columbia Hospital
- Atlas Employment



ISSUE BRIEF

Unlocking Potential:
Results of a National
Survey of Postsecondary
Education in State Prisons

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IHEP, the reviewers, survey participants, or funder.

Executive Summary

An estimated 2.3 million people are incarcerated in the United States. On any given day, more than one in 100 adults are in jail or prison (Pew Center on the States [Pew] 2008; West 2010). Driven by the tripling of the incarcerated population over the past three decades, the United States has the highest prison population rate in the world (Walmsley 2009)¹ and one out of every 31 U.S. adults is under some form of correctional control (Pew 2008).²

The incarcerated population differs from the general population in important ways. Incarcerated persons are disproportionately likely to come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds; to be members of racial/ethnic minority groups; to have held a low-skill, low-paying job (if employed at all) at the time of arrest; and to be less educated than their counterparts in the general population (Harlow 2003). In short, the sizeable incarcerated population consists of people in critical need of education to improve their post-release opportunities for employment and participation in civil society.

In addition to their educational needs, large incarcerated populations impose significant financial burdens on state budgets. From 2005 through 2009 state spending on corrections grew at a rate faster than any other expenditure category, increasing 25 percent. In comparison, state spending on higher education increased 18 percent during the same period (National Association of State Budget Officers [NASBO] 2009). Taken together, states spend over \$52 billion annually on corrections and related activities (NASBO 2010), an amount that restricts discretionary monies available for other public outlays; one out of every 15 state discretionary spending dollars goes toward corrections-related costs (Pew 2008).

¹ Following the U. S. high-water mark of 756 incarcerations per 100,000 population are Russia (629), Rwanda (604), St. Kitts and Nevis (588), Cuba (531), U.S. Virgin Islands (512), British Virgin Islands (488), Palau (478), Belarus (468), Belize (455), Bahamas (422), Georgia (415), American Samoa (410), Grenada (408), and Anguilla (401).

² "Correctional control" captures persons in jail, in prison, on probation, or otherwise under criminal justice supervision.

Staggering rates of recidivism contribute to the high incarceration levels and associated financial costs. Recidivism occurs when a former inmate commits a criminal act that results in rearrest, reconviction, or return to prison within three years of release (U.S. Bureau

of Justice Statistics [BJS] 2009). Estimates vary, but research suggests that nearly seven in 10 formerly incarcerated persons will commit a new crime, and half will end up back in prison within three years (BJS 2009; Langan and Levin 2002). Given that roughly 95 of every 100 prisoners will eventually rejoin society (Harrison and Beck 2006), policy efforts to decrease the likelihood of recidivism are important on both social and economic grounds.

Focusing on Postsecondary Education in Prisons

In one approach to meet the educational needs of incarcerated populations and reduce levels of recidivism, policymakers have turned to postsecondary correctional education (PSCE). PSCE encompasses any academic or vocational coursework an incarcerated person takes beyond the high school diploma or equivalent that can be used toward a certificate or an associate's, bachelor's, or graduate degree. Though scholarship on the prevalence of PSCE is limited (owing mainly to a lack of systematically collected data comparable across states), research suggests that 35 percent to 42 percent of correctional facilities offer some form of PSCE (Erisman and Contardo 2005; Stephan 2008). Among those who have participated in PSCE, several positive post-release outcomes have been observed, including increased educational attainment levels, reduced recidivism rates, and improved post-release employment opportunities and earnings (Gaes 2008; Meyer et al. 2010; Winterfield et al. 2009).

Despite the positive outcomes associated with PSCE, discussion of postsecondary opportunity for the nation's prison population is notably absent from the top tier of state and federal

policy agendas. This lack of topline policy attention to PSCE is detrimental to the country—postsecondary education has a critical role to play in mitigating challenging social conditions exacerbated by high incarceration levels.

As policymakers consider ways to increase educational attainment, generate future economic growth, and reduce public expenditures, educational opportunity for the incarcerated population should be a meaningful component of policy strategies. Designed to increase knowledge about how states are providing postsecondary education to incarcerated individuals, this brief rests on results of a national survey of state correctional education administrators (CEAs), presenting unique policy relevant information on the availability, administration, and funding of PSCE in state prison systems. A central purpose of the brief is to elevate the policy attention paid to postsecondary opportunity for incarcerated persons.

Key Findings

The data for this brief were gathered from a 19-item Web-based national survey of correctional education administrators (CEAs). Forty-three states responded, for an 86 percent response rate.³ Findings and discussion of the survey highlight student enrollments and completions, instructional methods, eligibility requirements, and funding sources of postsecondary education programs in state prison systems. Key findings include these:

³ The following states did not respond to the survey: Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

- Participating states reported approximately 71,000 persons enrolled in vocational or academic postsecondary education programs in prisons for academic year 2009–10; 6 percent of the incarcerated population in these states.
- Thirteen high-enrollment states accounted for 86 percent of all incarcerated postsecondary students in the state prison systems included in this study.
- Incarcerated students are not earning two- or four-year postsecondary degrees in significant numbers. Findings illustrate that three out of every four students were enrolled in a vocational or certificate program. Although all types of PSCE are valuable, survey results indicate that most incarcerated students are not on an educational pathway likely to result in academic degree attainment.
- Postsecondary correctional education is delivered primarily through onsite instruction. Survey respondents reported logistical challenges associated with providing education in a prison and recommended technology as one way to improve the delivery of PSCE.
- Security protocols and state statutes were identified as significant barriers to expanding the use of Internet technologies to support the delivery of postsecondary education in prisons.
- A critical challenge facing CEAs is securing funding, a reality

that may worsen in coming years because of the financial constraints of state budgets.

- Incarcerated students continue to be denied access to federal and state-based financial aid programs.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, we offer three recommendations to facilitate effective policy innovations in the area of PSCE. Following these recommendations would advance public policy goals of increasing skill and educational acquisition for incarcerated persons and reducing unsustainably high recidivism rates.

1. *To address capacity challenges that limit access to postsecondary education in prisons, federal and state statutes and regulations should be revised to support the development and expansion of Internet-based delivery of such education.*
2. *To increase educational attainment, support economic development, and make efficient use of limited public funding, postsecondary correctional education programs should be closely aligned with state postsecondary education systems and local workforce needs.*
3. *To support increased access to postsecondary education in prisons, federal and state statutes should be amended to make specific categories of incarcerated persons eligible for need-based financial aid. ❧*

Introduction and Overview

Leaders of government, labor, business, and philanthropy are calling on the nation to increase post-secondary attainment levels so the United States can once again become the world's most educated country. Informed by this goal, postsecondary stakeholders are attempting to wring productivity gains out of institutions through innovations and reconfigured pathways into and through postsecondary education for today's students. And yet a sizeable and growing number of potential students from demographic groups critical to increasing national attainment levels (e.g., low-income youth and adults, racial/ethnic minorities, and persons in need of worker retraining and basic skills acquisition) are being locked out of educational opportunity and overlooked in postsecondary access and success discussions. Who are these potential students? Incarcerated persons.

An estimated 2.3 million people are incarcerated in the United States. On any given day, more than one in 100 adults are in jail or prison (Pew Center on the States [Pew] 2008; West 2010). Driven by the tripling of the incarcerated population over the past three decades, the United States has the highest prison population rate in the world (Walmsley 2009)³ and one out of every 31 U.S. adults is under some form of correctional control (Pew 2008).⁴

The incarcerated population differs from the general population in important ways. Incarcerated persons are disproportionately likely to come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds; to be members of a racial/ethnic minority group; to have held a low-skill, low-paying job (if employed at all) at the time of arrest;

and to be less educated than their counterparts in the general population (Harlow 2003). In short, the sizeable incarcerated population consists of people in critical need of education to improve their post-release opportunities for employment and participation in civil society.

In addition to their educational needs, large incarcerated populations impose significant financial burdens on state budgets. From 2005 through 2009, for example, state spending on corrections grew faster than any other expenditure category, increasing 25 percent. In comparison, state spending on higher education increased 18 percent during the same period (National Association of State Budget Officers [NASBO] 2009). Taken together, states spend over \$52 billion annually on corrections and related activities (NASBO 2010), an amount that restricts discretionary monies available for other public outlays; one out of every 15 state discretionary spending dollars goes toward corrections-related costs (Pew 2008).

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Despite the positive outcomes associated with PSCE, discussion of postsecondary opportunity for the nation's prison population is notably absent from the top tier of state and federal policy agendas. This lack of topline policy attention to PSCE is detrimental to the country—postsecondary education has a critical role to play in mitigating challenging social conditions exacerbated by high incarceration levels. As policymakers consider ways to increase educational attainment, generate future economic growth, and reduce public expenditures, educational opportunity for the incarcerated population should be a meaningful component of policy strategies.

Informing Conversations, Moving Policy Debates

Built on results of a national survey of state correctional education administrators (CEAs), this brief presents unique policy-relevant information on the availability, administration, and funding of PSCE in state prison systems, aiming to increase the policy attention paid to postsecondary opportunity for incarcerated persons. Findings and analysis highlight student enrollments and completions, instructional methods, eligibility requirements, and funding sources of postsecondary education programs in state prison systems. Decision makers need to understand this information as they design policies and practices to increase the educational attainment and market-relevant skill acquisition of the nation's prison population.

We begin by providing context for the study, including an overview of the federal policy environment for PSCE. Subsequent sections discuss survey results and key findings. The brief concludes with policy recommendations designed to improve delivery of and access to postsecondary education in state prison systems. ❧

Postsecondary Education in Prisons: A Federal Policy Lens

The federal policy environment for PSCE provides a context for an analysis of survey responses collected in support of this brief. Previous research into funding, administration, and use of PSCE suggests that federal policy significantly affects state provision of such programs. In our discussion, we highlight key federal policies that affect PSCE, emphasizing recent statutory adjustments to student eligibility and program funding structures.

Student Financial Aid Eligibility

As with postsecondary education generally, federal financial aid availability and eligibility requirements impact access to PSCE. Establishment of the federal Pell Grant program in 1972 had a dramatic effect on the fiscal accessibility of postsecondary education to the prison population (Welsh 2002). The Pell Grant program awards federal student aid for postsecondary education on the basis of financial need. Given the preponderance of low-income persons in the nation's penal systems (Harlow 2003; Harrison and Beck 2006), many people have been able to use Pell Grants while incarcerated to fund their postsecondary pursuits (Tewksbury and Taylor 1996; Zook 1994). These grants have allowed incarcerated students to be less reliant on private or state support as they pursued postsecondary education.

In the mid-1990s, changing attitudes and policies toward crime led to the elimination of Pell Grant eligibility for prisoners through a provision in the Violent Crime Control Act of 1994 (Ubah 2004; Zook 1994). This policy change was based on the idea that awarding Pell Grants to prisoners limited nonprisoner access to the grants (Erisman and Contardo 2005), as well as challenging political environments created by a hostile, anti-education, anti-inmate ethos in Congress and society at large (Gehring 1997).

Eligibility for student financial aid for incarcerated persons remains a politically charged issue—particularly in the midst of fiscal uncertainty—but the issue of prisoner access to traditional federal need-based financial aid programs is likely to remain on the federal policy agenda.

Federal Grant Aid to States

Four years after stripping incarcerated students of their Pell eligibility, Congress revisited the issue of federal support for postsecondary education in prisons, enacting the Workforce and Community Transition Training for Incarcerated Youth Offenders Program (IYO). The IYO grant program provided funding to cover the costs of postsecondary academic and vocational education for youth offenders, as well as employment counseling and other related services (U.S. Department of Education 2009). Eligibility for IYO grants required state PSCE programs to limit participants to persons 25 years and younger who had earned a high school diploma or GED certificate and were within five years of release. The IYO statute also limited per-student state spending on PSCE, effectively restricting the number of units a student could take at any one time and lengthening the time to program completion. Since their inception, IYO grants and successor programs have become the most commonly used source of revenue to support PSCE programming (Erisman and Contardo 2005).

BOX 1: Previous Investigation into Postsecondary Correctional Education Policy

In 2005, the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) published a significant report examining postsecondary correctional education and policy: *Learning to Reduce Recidivism: A 50-State Analysis of Postsecondary Correctional Education Policy* (Erisman and Contardo 2005). The authors conducted a broad survey of correctional education administrators from 45 states and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The survey asked specific questions regarding postsecondary education offered in each prison system; it collected data on eligibility requirements, enrollment patterns, graduation rates, instructional methods, and funding sources. Findings from the investigation revealed PSCE program offerings, delivery methods, funding sources, and barriers to participation.

Of the 45 state prison systems included in the analysis, 43 offered some form of postsecondary education. Notably the authors found that participation rates had returned to pre-1994 levels, when federal policy changes eliminated prisoners' eligibility for Pell Grants.

In 2005, funding sources were found to be diverse, ranging from federal and state funding to prisoner self-funding. The most commonly cited funding source was federal block grants administered through the Federal Incarcerated Youth Offender program.

Recommendations from the report focused heavily on funding; they included reinstating Pell Grant eligibility for prisoners; expanding federal grant programs aimed at PSCE; allocating additional state funds to the public colleges and universities that provide instruction for postsecondary correctional education programs; and allowing prisoners to be eligible for state need-based financial aid.

To access and download a copy of this report, go to the IHEP Web site at <http://www.ihep.org/publications/publications-detail.cfm?id=47>.

In 2008, Congress passed and President George W. Bush signed into law the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (P.L. 110-315) (HEOA 2008). HEOA 2008 renamed the IYO program the Workforce and Community Transitions Training for Incarcerated Individuals Program (IIP) and changed key components on the statute. For instance, the law adjusted eligibility requirements for participation in postsecondary education, including raising the age eligibility limit from 25 to 35 years. The statute also increased states' flexibility in selecting program participants, the maximum financial expenditure allowed per student, and the length of time students may spend in remedial education after receiving a high school diploma. These three changes increased policy flexibility for states and enabled more people to be eligible for PSCE funding (Linton 2009).

Although advocates of PSCE welcomed the expanded age eligibility and flexibility in delivery, certain provisions of HEOA 2008 placed new restrictions on eligibility for certain offenders and reduced overall federal financial support for PSCE initiatives. On the fiscal front, support for PSCE declined significantly; appropriations decreased from nearly \$23 million in 2008 to \$17 million in fiscal year 2009 (U.S. Department of Education 2010).

Turning to prisoner eligibility, sections of the HEOA 2008 Act required that states no longer provide funds for PSCE to individuals convicted of specified sexual offenses or murder. Moreover, the bill extended the ban on Pell Grant eligibility to individuals committed to involuntary civil commitment centers; these centers typically house released persons convicted of a

sexual crime. It is important to note, however, that the HEOA 2008 Act maintained Pell eligibility for individuals held in detention centers and halfway houses.

A second notable policy action was the 2008 adoption of the Second Chance Act (P.L. 110-199), which was designed to improve reentry prospects for incarcerated persons. The legislation authorized federal grants to government agencies and nonprofit organizations to provide a range of services, including education, aimed at reducing recidivism (Council of State Governments 2010). Nearly \$90 million was appropriated toward a wide range of education programming; a portion of this money went toward PSCE programs (Linton 2009). However, the recent fiscal climate has placed increasing pressure on state budgets, calling into question the ability of states to maintain funding commitments to PSCE in spite of federal grant funding (Scott-Hayward 2009).

Federal policy actions have provided funding for postsecondary education in prisons, defined age and other eligibility requirements, and structured (to varying extents) program administration and delivery. However, outside the federal prison system, state prison systems are responsible for implementing postsecondary education programs and policy.

To gain insight into how states administer, deliver, and fund postsecondary education for incarcerated persons, the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) conducted a national survey of state-level correctional education administrators (**SEE BOX 2**). ❧

BOX 2: Methods and Analysis

The data for this brief were gathered from a 19-item Web-based national survey of CEAs. Forty-three states responded, for an 86 percent response rate.* Using the Association of Correctional Education Administrators biannual membership publication, we identified the head CEA of postsecondary correctional education in each of the 50 states. When possible, names and contact information were cross-checked against the Department of Education's Education Resource Organizations Directory and through individual state department of corrections Web sites. Follow-up telephone calls were made to verify the names and contact information.

The survey was divided into five sections: (1) Respondent information; (2) postsecondary education offerings and funding structures; (3) program delivery methods; (4) program participation; and (5) observed outcomes of PSCE programs. Additional questions collected demographic and contextual information on responding states. See Appendix A for a copy of the survey instrument.

IHEP staff analyzed the survey results and secondary data drawn from national datasets, and wrote the findings. As a final step, key findings and policy recommendations were shared and discussed with external reviewers and decision makers whose work touches on PSCE delivery and policy implementation.

* The following states did not respond to the survey: Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

Postsecondary Education in Prisons: Results of a National Survey

As noted previously, recent changes to federal statutes have both restricted funding and enhanced access to PSCE for specific categories of prisoners. However, little is known about the effects of the current policy environment on state administration, funding, and delivery of postsecondary education in prison systems. Building on IHEP's previous work, we conducted a national survey of correctional education administrators to examine the details of postsecondary education programs in state prison systems.

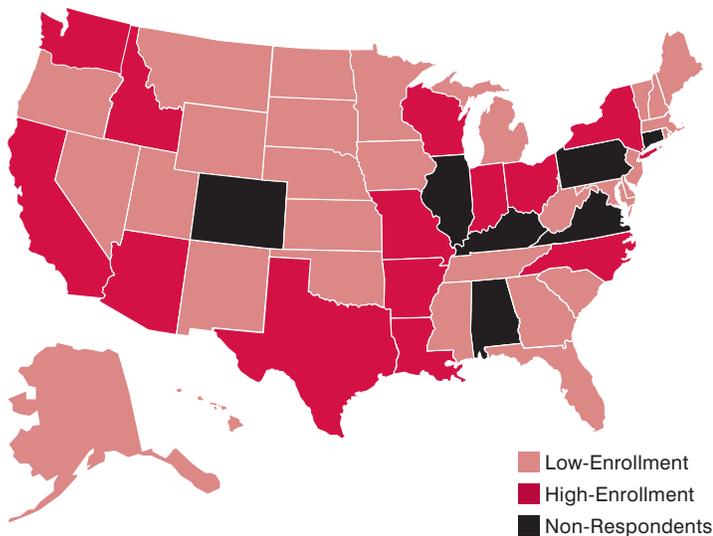
The survey collected information on student enrollments and completions, instructional methods, eligibility requirements, and funding sources of postsecondary education programs in state prison systems. The data suggest that despite key changes in policy and in the fiscal constraints on state budgets, postsecondary education remains available in state correctional facilities across the nation. However, we observed variation in all categories: Enrollments, completions, delivery methods, eligibility requirements, and use of various funding sources for PSCE programs.

Enrollments in Postsecondary Correctional Education

Of the 43 states that responded to the survey, all offer some kind of postsecondary correctional education: Academic, vocational, or a combination of the two. During the 2009–10 academic year, approximately 71,000 incarcerated persons were enrolled in some form of postsecondary education program, representing approximately 6 percent of the incarcerated population in the responding states (BJS 2009). The predominant form of education offered is vocational; roughly half of incarcerated students participating in PSCE were enrolled in vocational education programs.

FIGURE 1

U.S. States, by Enrollment Category, Academic Year 2009–10



SOURCE: INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY SURVEY (2010)

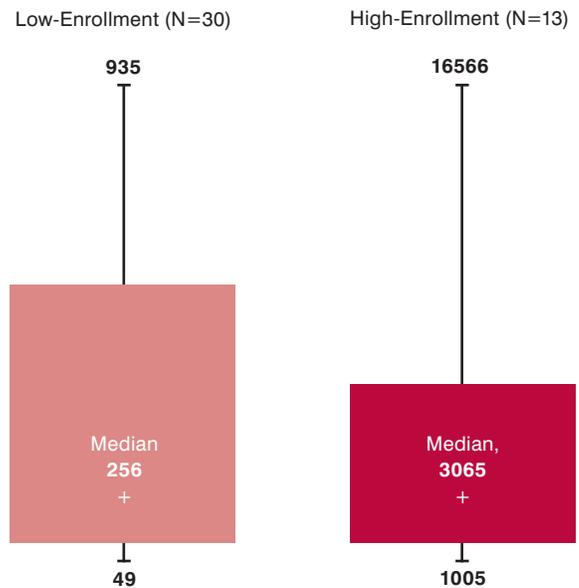
Among responding states, significant variation was observed in total enrollments. North Carolina, for instance, reported that approximately 16,500 prisoners were enrolled in some form of postsecondary education, while South Dakota reported an enrollment of fewer than 50 students. Prison systems that reported large postsecondary enrollments differ from those with a smaller student enrollment. Systems with large enrollments tend to have larger total prison populations, to focus on short vocational degree and certificate programs, and to benefit from state public funding for postsecondary correctional education.

As the first step in our analysis, we assigned the responding states to one of two categories: (1) Low-enrollment or (2) high-enrollment systems. State prison systems that enroll more than

⁵ We follow Erisman and Contardo (2005) in using this convention, so we are able to make comparisons in some areas between the two reports. Moreover, the split between low- and high-enrollment states in our survey responses was similar to that observed by Erisman and Contardo (2005), which found that 14 state prison systems enrolled more than 1,000 inmates; these states account for 89 percent of inmates enrolled in postsecondary education programs.

FIGURE 2

Range of Enrollments, by Enrollment Type, Academic Year 2009–10



SOURCE: INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY SURVEY (2010)

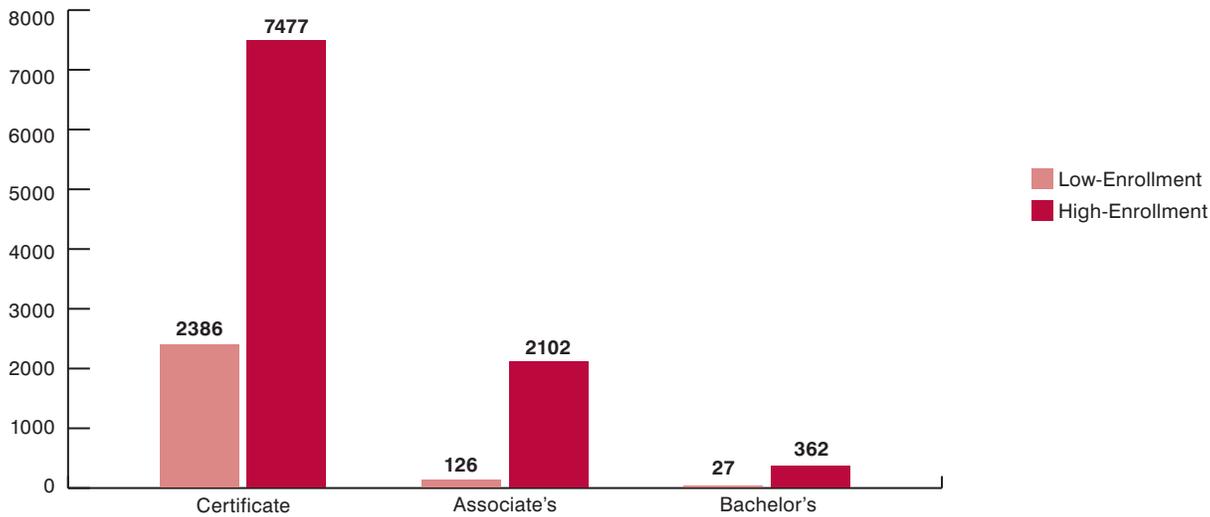
1,000 incarcerated students were deemed high-enrollment; those that enroll fewer than 1,000 were deemed low-enrollment.⁵ FIGURE 1 maps respondent states' prison systems according to these two categories.

Thirteen states served more than 1,000 students and were categorized as high-enrollment states for the purpose of analysis. These 13 states educated 86 percent (61,000) of the total incarcerated student population from responding states during academic year 2009–10. Thirty responding states enrolled fewer than 1,000 students annually.

Survey responses demonstrated considerable variation in the average number of students served. At the median, high-enrollment systems educated nearly 3,100 students annually, and low-enrollment systems educated approximately 250 students (SEE FIGURE 2). Because of these considerable differences in median enrollment, we report our results for both low- and high-enrollment prison systems.

TABLE 1

Total Degrees Awarded, by Degree Type and Enrollment Level, Academic Year 2009–10



SOURCE: INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY SURVEY (2010)

Educational Focus and Degree Completions

High-enrollment systems enroll the highest percentage of total incarcerated students in both academic and vocational postsecondary education programs. Survey results indicate that PSCE programs are not producing academic degrees in large numbers. Most incarcerated students earn certificates through vocational education, perhaps in part because of the short-term nature of both the certificate programs and the students' sentences. States reported that approximately 9,900 incarcerated persons earned a certificate in the 2009–10 academic year; 2,200 associate's degrees were awarded, and nearly 400 students earned bachelor's degrees (SEE TABLE 1). These results represent a slight increase over findings from the previous report.⁶

Delivery Methods of Postsecondary Education in Prisons

Survey respondents reported that the most common form of program delivery was onsite, in-class instruction; in fact, all 43

states offered onsite instruction (SEE TABLE 2). CEAs identified several challenges related to in-class instruction, including limited physical space for classroom facilities, security concerns, and an undersupply of qualified instructors. Finding qualified instructors is particularly difficult for facilities in rural areas, where local labor markets often lack properly trained instructors and recruiting individuals to commute from more metropolitan areas is difficult to sustain with consistency.

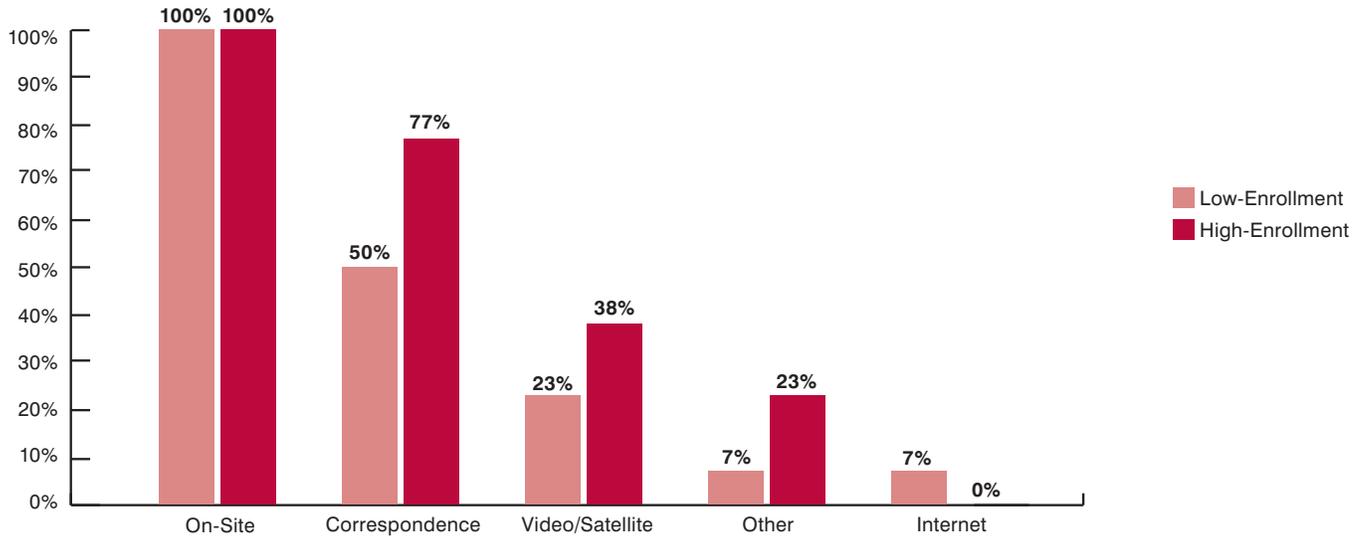
One way prison systems overcome some of these challenges is by relying on correspondence courses. Over three-quarters of high-enrollment systems offer educational programs through correspondence courses. In contrast, only half of low-enrollment systems offer correspondence courses (SEE TABLE 2). Corrections officials typically must approve the courses, and students bear the cost of these programs in most instances, which creates additional administrative and financial barriers to program participation that may be difficult for low-enrollment systems to overcome.

⁶ In their 2005 study, Erisman and Contardo reported that 1,748 students earned associate's degrees and 216 earned bachelor's degrees. Direct comparisons must be made cautiously; data in both cases were self-reported by correctional education administrators and could not be independently verified. Moreover, the states included in the two studies differ because different states participated, so comparisons across time are suggestive only.

States were less likely to use online or video/satellite instructional methods compared with in-class instruction. Overall, only 12 of the 43 states used this instructional method—38 percent of high-

TABLE 2

Types of Instruction Offered by Postsecondary Correctional Education Programs, by Enrollment Type



NOTE: "OTHER" INCLUDES COLLEGE LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM TESTS AND TAKING PRISONERS OFFSITE TO PARTICIPATE IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS ON POSTSECONDARY CAMPUSES.
 SOURCE: INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY SURVEY (2010)

enrollment systems and nearly a quarter of low-enrollment systems use these technologies for program delivery (SEE TABLE 2). These figures represent a decrease in distance learning and video/satellite instruction from the findings of Erisman and Contardo (2005).⁷

Despite the limited number of states currently using video/satellite instructional methods, CEAs look to technology as an innovative way to improve the delivery of PSCE and to increase access. A fifth of the states cited technology as a potential innovation to improve access to PSCE for prisoners. Distance learning through secured Internet access, video instruction, and hybrid courses that include both onsite teaching and a correspondence model were all suggested as ways states could expand their delivery of PSCE. However, nearly all states prohibit Internet use by prisoners, limiting technology-based access to educational opportunities; this reality is reflected in results that show negligible use of the Internet to deliver PSCE to incarcerated students.

⁷ Anecdotal evidence from the survey provided one possible explanation for this decrease: Elimination of a federally-funded distance-learning program called the Corrections Learning Network, which provided extensive video-formatted educational programs to prisons. For a discussion of expanding distance learning in prisons see Nick et al. (2009).

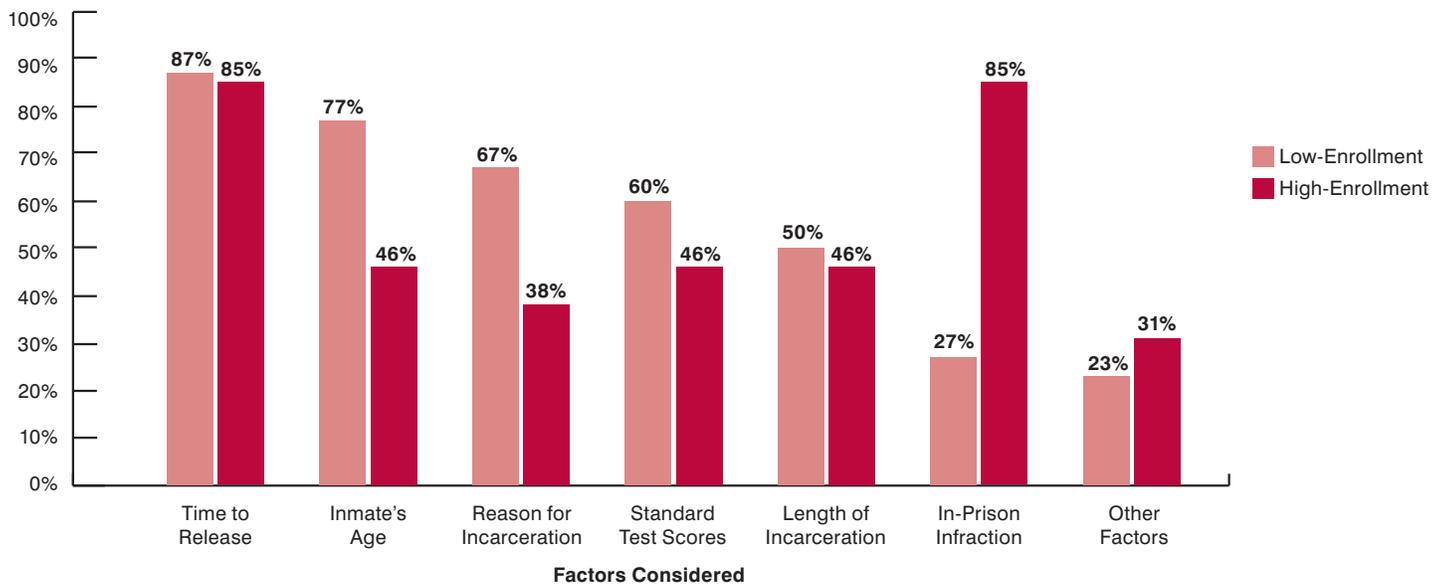
The ban on Internet use has strong implications for many aspects of PSCE, including access to course materials, study resources, student support information, and distance learning programming. Mirroring a transition in postsecondary education generally, many distance learning (or correspondence) courses have moved online, away from traditional paper and mail courses, further limiting prisoners' access to PSCE. Online education in prisons would require the provision of safe and secure Internet portals. However, prisons often lack resources for computers, Internet, and video instruction.

Eligibility Requirements for Participation

Participation in postsecondary education is dictated by a series of eligibility requirements beyond the high school diploma or GED credential. Some of these requirements are based on state statutes, while others are the result of participation in federal grant programs. The IIP, for instance, dictates that participation in postsecondary education be limited to persons 35 years of age or younger. The use of eligibility requirements reflects the prison system's assessment of who is most likely to benefit from participation in postsecondary education—an important consideration in justifying funding streams.

TABLE 3

Factors Affecting Prisoner Eligibility for Postsecondary Correctional Education, by Enrollment Type



SOURCE: INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY SURVEY (2010)

Low-enrollment systems reported using an array of criteria to define eligibility for participation in PSCE. With the exception of in-prison infractions and undefined requirements, low-enrollment systems were more likely than high-enrollment systems to consider all the eligibility factors included on the survey: Time to release, age, reason for incarceration, standardized test scores, and length of sentence (SEE TABLE 3).

The responses indicated that high-enrollment systems are more likely to tie participation in postsecondary education to behavior: Eleven of 13 high-enrollment systems reported using in-prison infractions to screen for participation in PSCE.

Noncategorized responses—captured in “other factors”—included ability to pay for a course, employability test scores, security status, college placement exam scores, and prisoner willingness to sign a role model agreement form.

Funding of Postsecondary Education in Prisons

Survey respondents reported using a variety of funding sources to support postsecondary education programs. The most common source was federal grant funding from the IIP (SEE TABLE 4). Ninety-five percent of responding states reported using IIP grants, including all the high-enrollment systems and 28 out of 30 of the low-enrollment systems.

A critical difference in funding between low- and high-enrollment systems was the availability of state funds to support postsecondary education in prison systems. Ten of the 13 high-

enrollment systems used state funds, compared with only seven of the 30 low-enrollment systems (SEE TABLE 4). The variations in state support for PSCE illustrate the importance of state appropriations for increasing access to education in prison.

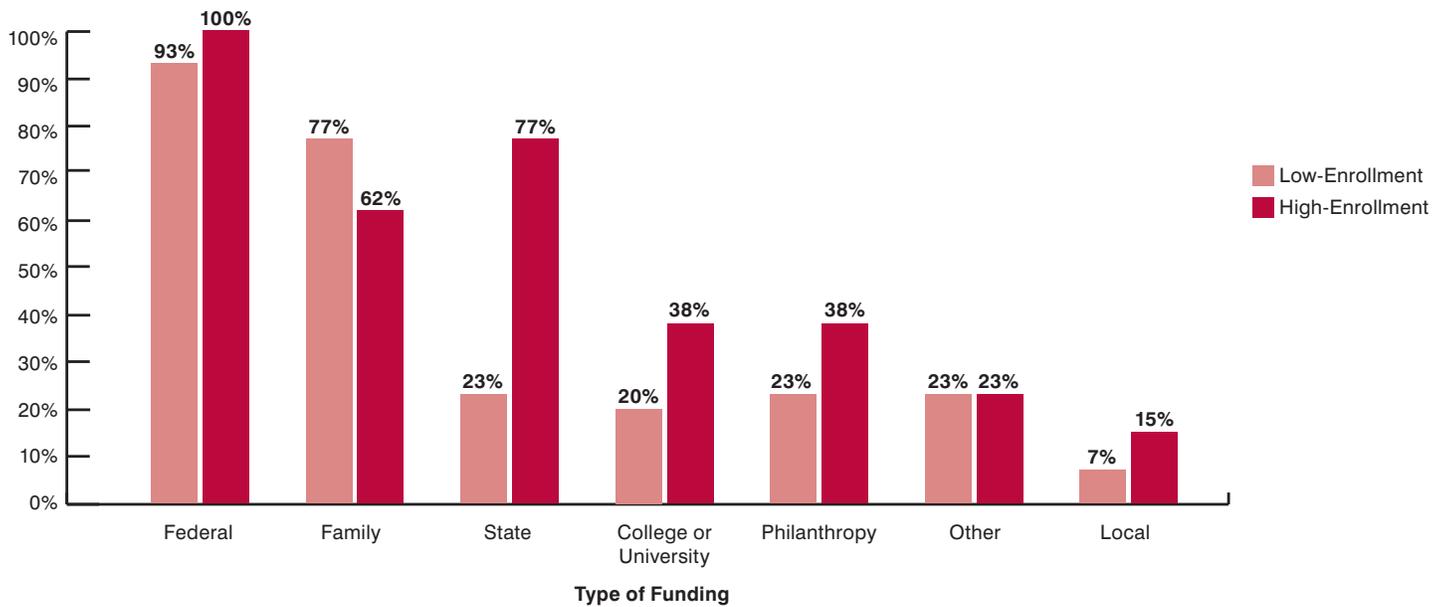
State support typically reflects a commitment to PSCE and a generally more supportive policy environment for providing postsecondary educational opportunities to incarcerated persons. In this environment, it may be easier for high-enrollment systems to garner support and resources to educate more incarcerated persons. Although the survey data do not include the amount of funding state prison systems receive, results suggest that the presence of state funding is a factor in the higher number of prisoners who participate in PSCE.

In addition to federal and state funding, incarcerated persons and their families can self-finance participation in PSCE. Seventy-seven percent of low-enrollment systems and 62 percent of high-enrollment systems use family funds to cover the costs of PSCE. The need to supply their own funding increases the difficulty of obtaining postsecondary education for a student population that is typically from a low-income background. Prisoner self-funding is limiting, because few incarcerated people earn enough money to cover the cost of PSCE courses. Their lack of eligibility for traditional federal need-based financial aid places an increased burden on prisoners who must self-fund their educational pursuits.

Not surprisingly, the key challenge to maintaining broad-based PSCE programs is financial. Nearly 90 percent of the survey

TABLE 4

Percentage of Prison Systems using Various Funding Sources for PSCE, by Enrollment Type



SOURCE: INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY SURVEY (2010)

respondents reported financial constraints and related funding policies as an acute challenge facing state correctional facilities.⁸ Many respondents indicated that a lack of funding is the primary barrier to enrolling additional students in PSCE. One CEA said, “The greatest challenge we face is financial. Logistically, we have the capacity to implement more programs than we currently have.”

Summary of Key Findings

The results of IHEP’s national survey of correctional education administrators reflect the prevalence of PSCE across the states. The survey results and analysis highlight student enrollments and completions, instructional methods, eligibility requirements, and funding sources of postsecondary education programs in state prison systems. There is considerable variation among the responding states, especially between low- and high-enrollment systems. The following are key findings from the analysis:

- Participating states reported approximately 71,000 persons enrolled in vocational or academic postsecondary education programs in prisons for academic year 2009–10; approximately 6 percent of the incarcerated population in these states.
- Thirteen high-enrollment states accounted for 86 percent of all incarcerated postsecondary students in the state prison systems included in this study.

- Incarcerated students are not earning two- or four-year postsecondary degrees in significant numbers. Data collected in the survey indicated that three out of every four students were enrolled in a vocational or certificate program. Although all types of PSCE are valuable, survey results indicate that most incarcerated students are not on an educational pathway likely to result in academic degree attainment.
- Postsecondary correctional education is delivered primarily through onsite instruction. Survey respondents reported logistical challenges associated with providing education in a prison and recommended technology as one way to improve the delivery of PSCE.
- Security protocols and state statutes were identified as significant barriers to expanding the use of Internet technologies to support delivery of postsecondary education in prisons.
- A critical challenge facing CEAs is securing funding, a reality that may worsen in coming years because of the financial constraints of state budgets.
- Incarcerated students continue to be denied access to federal and state-based financial aid programs, a policy choice that restricts incarcerated persons from financing participation in postsecondary correctional education programs. ❌

⁸ Eighty-eight percent of states that answered the question (32/36) cited fiscal challenges related to PSCE.

Moving Forward: Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Given that roughly 95 percent of incarcerated persons are expected to return to society, programs and initiatives designed to increase the likelihood of successful reentry are critical to individuals and to society at large. Postsecondary education has been identified as one factor that facilitates successful reentry. Positive post-release outcomes associated with participation in PSCE include increased educational attainment, reduced recidivism rates, and improved employment opportunities and earnings (Gaes 2008; Meyer et al. 2010; Winterfield et al. 2009)—all factors that support broader policy goals of increasing national educational attainment, broadening the tax base, and reducing public expenditures.

Despite the alignment of PSCE outcomes with national policy priorities and the known benefits of PSCE for individuals, our survey of correctional education administrators reveals that incarcerated persons have limited postsecondary education opportunities, primarily because of federal and state policy choices.

Incarcerated persons are ineligible for nearly all federal and state need-based financial aid programs; are overwhelmingly enrolled in vocational and other nonacademic certificate programs; and are prohibited from taking advantage of Internet-based educational programs and resources. Although the political and moral rationales for PSCE policies are diverse and complex, the outcome is that incarcerated persons have few options for education beyond the secondary level.

On the basis of the results and analysis of our survey, we offer three recommendations to facilitate effective policy innovations in the area of PSCE. These recommendations are intended to advance public policy goals of increasing skill and educational acquisition for incarcerated persons and reducing unsustainably high recidivism rates.

Recommendation 1:

To address capacity challenges limiting access to postsecondary education, federal and state statutes and regulations should be revised to support development and expansion of Internet-based delivery of postsecondary education in prisons.

The results of IHEP's survey indicate that access to postsecondary education in prison systems is dictated in large part by the ability of these systems to identify appropriate instructors for vocational and academic coursework; find classroom space where educational instruction can take place; and identify funding to support PSCE initiatives. In each area, program administrators face both logistical and financial challenges.

On the logistical front, CEAs report challenges in identifying and recruiting instructors; this problem is particularly acute in rural areas, where local labor markets often cannot support instructor requirements. Respondents also report difficulties finding classroom space for educational activities. On the financial front, survey results suggest that limited state support for PSCE is artificially capping enrollment; numerous respondents suggest that PSCE enrollments are restricted in their prison systems because of a lack of state funds.

Taken together, these access challenges reflect an overarching limit in the capacity of state prison systems to provide postsecondary educational opportunity to incarcerated persons. To address this capacity challenge, postsecondary education initiatives in prisons should emulate the general trends in postsecondary education and move educational content online to Internet-based platforms.

Allowing Internet-based course delivery would address the three challenges outlined above. Internet-based instruction allows a single instructor to deliver educational content to an unlimited number of incarcerated students across multiple prisons or even prison systems. Additionally, Internet-based coursework allows more students to be educated in a reduced space at their own pace—computer labs can accommodate terminals that allow students to progress through individualized educational programs while sharing a physical space; something that is difficult to accommodate in traditional classroom settings. Finally, the economies of scale of Internet-based instructional methods would reduce the per-student cost of providing education, allowing state prison systems to make more efficient use of limited federal and state financial support.

Moving toward Internet-based delivery of postsecondary education would require significant reforms in relevant statutes and regulations, as well as assurances that security concerns regarding Internet access in prisons could be adequately addressed. A useful first step toward designing and implementing such programs would be to establish a pilot program at the federal or state level. A pilot program could develop widely acceptable security protocols for Internet access that could serve as a model from which other prison systems could learn. Funding for a model Internet-based postsecondary correctional education program could be supplied through federal grant programs or philanthropic entities.

Recommendation 2:

To increase educational attainment, support economic development, and make efficient use of limited public funding, postsecondary correctional education programs should be closely aligned with state postsecondary education systems and local workforce needs.

Survey results indicate that vocational and certificate programs permeate postsecondary education in state prison systems. What is unclear from our results is the extent to which these programs are aligned with state or local labor market needs. Programs that enable incarcerated persons to acquire vocational skills are valuable in and of themselves. But because gainful employment is one predictor of a decreased chance of recidivism (Gaes 2008), PSCE programs should ensure that the skills are appropriate for state and local labor markets. Learning vocational skills that are quickly made obsolete by technological advances or that are irrelevant to local employment opportunities is a waste of money by funders and effort by students. Where possible, state policymakers, postsecondary CEAs, and local business interests should align to develop relevant vocational training programs for state prison systems.

Beyond vocational education programs, state postsecondary education systems could support PSCE by ensuring that program and course offerings are covered in statewide transfer and articulation agreements. The overwhelming majority of PSCE participants do not receive degrees while they are in prison (in some cases, because of state law), so most PSCE participants leave prison with vocational or academic credits. Ensuring that these credits are readily transferable to public state institutions would send a strong signal of support for PSCE and mark the beginning of a constructive pathway back into traditional postsecondary education for formerly incarcerated people.

Recommendation 3:

To support increased access to postsecondary education in prisons, federal and state statutes should be amended to make specific categories of incarcerated persons eligible for need-based financial aid.

A glaring conclusion from the survey results and a review of relevant literature is that incarcerated persons are rarely eligible for need-based financial aid programs. At the federal level,

policy withholds Pell Grant funding from incarcerated persons, and state need-based funds are not available on a large scale.

The outcome of these policies is a two-tiered level of access to postsecondary education. Excluding age, test scores, length of sentence, and other eligibility requirements, prisoners with financial means or private support are more likely to be able to participate, while those from lower-income backgrounds have fewer educational opportunities.

This differing level of access is counter to postsecondary policy for the general public, where federal and state need-based aid programs have been successful in providing at least some educational opportunity to the most financially disadvantaged students if they meet educational criteria. Current PSCE policy has not afforded the same benefits to low-income incarcerated persons.

Although there may be legitimate concerns regarding expanding the population of prisoners eligible for need-based aid funds, federal and state prison systems employ numerous nonfinancial eligibility requirements that serve to limit the number of persons

who qualify to enroll in PSCE. Additional eligibility requirements could be attached to need-based financial aid programs to control costs and ensure that the aid is reaching students who are most likely to successfully complete coursework or degree programs. For instance, eligibility could be limited to first-time offenders who meet certain time-to-release guidelines. Additionally, aid could be limited to persons who participate in academic coursework or vocational programs tied directly to post-release employment opportunities.

Moving forward, policymakers should explore the possibility of targeting a limited number of need-based financial aid awards to incarcerated persons who meet a predetermined set of criteria. Blanket bans on the provision of need-based aid to all prisoners represent a one-size-fits-all approach to policy that restricts access to education for some individuals who could benefit greatly from public support of their educational pursuits. Participation in postsecondary correctional education has been linked to a number of desirable post-release outcomes. Policymakers should find ways to leverage established need-based financial aid programs to induce these outcomes in an increasing number of people. 

Appendix A: Prisoner Access to Postsecondary Education Survey

Thank you for taking the “Prisoner Access to Postsecondary Education” survey for the Institute for Higher Education Policy. The questions in this survey focus on postsecondary correctional education and aim to understand its funding and organization, as well as gain insight about inmates’ access to postsecondary education.

Name of Person Completing Survey: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

State: _____

The following definitions are provided to assist you in answering the survey questions. Key terms include:

Adult Correctional Facility includes all confinement facilities administered by federal or state government or by private corporations primarily for federal or state government, which are intended for adults, but sometimes hold juveniles. This term includes prisons, penitentiaries, and correctional institutions as well as state-operated local detention facilities in Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, and Vermont

Postsecondary Education is defined as either traditional/academic or vocational/certificate coursework taken after a student receives a high school diploma or GED, for which a student can receive college credit toward a degree.

Traditional/Academic Coursework is defined as coursework for college credit that leads to an associate’s degree (e.g., A.A., A.S.), a bachelor’s degree (e.g., B.A., B.S.), or a graduate degree (e.g., M.A., M.S., J.D., Ph.D.).

Vocational/Certificate Coursework is defined as coursework for college credit that leads to an applied degree (e.g., A.A.S.) or a certificate (e.g., certificate in auto mechanics).

The following six questions focus on facilities:

1. How many adult correctional facilities in your state offered postsecondary education courses or programs during the 2009–10 academic year?

2. Please indicate the percentage of postsecondary education courses or programs offered during the 2009–10 academic year that are academic courses for college credit, vocational courses, or some other course type. Percentages should add up to 100 percent. If exact cannot be provided, please give your best estimate.

Academic _____%

Vocational _____%

Other _____%

3. Please list the names of the postsecondary educational institutions that provided instruction for any postsecondary education courses or programs offered.

4. What means were used to provide instruction for any postsecondary courses offered? Please check all that apply

- On-site instruction
- Video/satellite instruction
- Internet-based instruction
- Correspondence courses
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify _____

Video/satellite instruction

- One way
- Interactive

Internet-based instruction

- One way
- Interactive

5. What percentage of your state's overall adult correctional facilities population is believed to possess either a high school diploma or GED?

_____ %

6. In addition to possessing either a high school diploma or GED, what other factors influence inmates' eligibility to participate in postsecondary education programs? (Please check all that apply for all adult correctional facilities in your state, even if eligibility requirements vary among sites or programs)

- Inmate's age
- Reason for incarceration

- Length of incarceration
- Length of time to release
- Number of infractions while incarcerated
- Standardized test scores
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please specify _____

The following eight questions focus on inmates:

7. What is the total number of inmates who participated in institutionally-recognized postsecondary education courses or programs in your state during the 2009–10 academic year?

A. Total traditional/academic community college/associate's degree level _____

College or university/
bachelor's degree level _____

Graduate school/graduate
or professional degree level _____

B. Total vocational/certificate _____

8. Please indicate the number of inmates in your state who participated in the postsecondary education programs types listed below during the 2009–10 academic year. *This question is only concerned with inmates who took courses leading to college credit.* If exact numbers cannot be provided, please give your best estimate of the number of inmates who participated in each of the following programs types.

9. During the 2009–10 academic year, how many inmates who fulfilled the eligibility requirements were placed on postsecondary educational programming waitlists or were unable to participate?

Associate's degree (e.g., A.A., A.S., A.A.S.) _____

Bachelor's degree (e.g., B.A., B.S.) _____

Graduate degree (e.g., M.A., M.S., Ph.D.) _____

Vocational certificate _____

10. Can inmates in your state be awarded degrees for postsecondary coursework completed while incarcerated? (Please check one.)

- Yes, while incarcerated
- Yes, but only after release
- No

11. If inmates in your state can be awarded degrees, please indicate the number of degrees awarded to inmates in the 2009–10 academic year.

12. Does your state have a policy regarding inmate participation in postsecondary education via correspondence courses?

- Yes
- No

Please describe this policy:

13. Please estimate the percentage of inmates in your state whose postsecondary education was funded through the following sources. Percentages should add up to 100 percent. If exact percentages cannot be provided, please give your best estimate. If you don't receive funding from any of these sources, please enter 0 in each box.

Federal Incarcerated Youth Offender Grant _____%

State funding _____%

Local funding _____%

College or university funding _____%

Personal or family finances _____%

Private funding (foundation, religious/
community group, individual donation, etc.) _____%

Other funding source _____%

Please specify private funding source(s): _____

Please specify other funding source(s): _____

14. Please use the following spaces to provide any additional comments about access to postsecondary education for prisoners in your state. In particular, we would be interested to know more about the following topics:

What, if any, special funding sources exist to help provide postsecondary education for prisoners in your state?

What, if any, particular challenges do you face in providing postsecondary education for prisoners (financial, political, administrative, logistical, etc.)?

What, if any, innovative means are used to provide access to postsecondary education for prisoners in your state?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey by the Institute for Higher Education Policy. Your responses are important and if there is any additional information you would like to provide, please use the following space or submit any documents to psce@ihep.org

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The Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) is an independent, nonprofit organization that is dedicated to access and success in postsecondary education around the world. Established in 1993, the Washington, D.C.-based organization uses unique research and innovative programs to inform key decision makers who shape public policy and support economic and social development. IHEP's Web site, www.ihep.org, features an expansive collection of higher education information available free of charge and provides access to some of the most respected professionals in the fields of public policy and research.



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Examples from One State/Region: Massachusetts-Boston-Suffolk County

- **Suffolk County Sheriff's Department / BHCC**

<http://www.scsdma.org/divisions/education.shtml>

The Department offers a variety of social service and education programs to a diverse population of male and female offenders. Our professional staff work hard to help inmates and detainees build academic and life skills that better prepare them to become productive members of society as they reenter their neighborhoods. To help sustain its programs, the Department partners with agencies like Bunker Hill Community College, the Boston Public Schools, Boston Medical Center, the Boston Center for Youth and Families, the Phillips Brooks House at Harvard, Boston and Youth Options Unlimited Boston, which focuses on post-release services for younger inmates.

- **Bunker Hill Community College**

We partner with BHCC in order to offer college classes. Usually, two classes per semester are offered. These have included math, English, psychology, sociology and a seminar course that introduces students to the college experience.

- **Tutoring**

Tutoring services are provided during the day and in the evening by students from Boston College and Harvard University. Tutoring is mostly one on one and focuses on the individual needs and interests of the student.

- **Mass. Public Safety – Offender Education and Training Programs**

http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eopsterminal&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Law+Enforcement+%26+Criminal+Justice&L2=Prisons&L3=Offender+Programs&sid=Eeops&b=terminalcontent&f=doc_inmate_programs_education_and_training&csid=Eeops

The purpose of the Division of Inmate Training and Education is to provide comprehensive academic and occupational (vocational training) programs and services that will assist offenders in becoming more productive citizens upon release

- **Boston University Program**

This program is designed to meet the needs of the students who have accumulated a minimum of twelve transferable college credits. Students eligible to enter this program have an opportunity to achieve a Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Studies from BU's Metropolitan College. This program is donated in full by Boston University and operates at Bay State Correctional Center, MCI Norfolk, MCI Framingham and South Middlesex Correctional Center.

- **Mass. Public Safety – Boston Pre-Release Center**

http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eopsterminal&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Law+Enforcement+%26+Criminal+Justice&L2=Prisons&L3=Offender+Programs&L4=Programs+Offered+at+Each+Institution&sid=Eeops&b=terminalcontent&f=doc_inmate_programs_institution_specific_programs_boston_pre_release_center&csid=Eeops

- **Education and Training Release Programming**

The purpose of education and training release programs permit inmates within 18 months of parole eligibility or discharge, subject to approval of the Commissioner, to participate in programs of education and training outside of a correctional institution. Approved inmates may thus be granted access to suitable educational and training opportunities within the community. BPRC inmates have participated in educational and training classes at various sites within the Greater Boston area including Bunker Hill Community College, Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology, Wentworth Institute of Technology, Iron Worker's apprenticeship programs, Boston University, UMASS of Boston, Kaplan Institute and Massachusetts School for Barbering.

Governor's Re-entry Council Goals to Improve Sex Offender Re-entry

Transition and re-entry planning for sex offenders would be improved by differential supervision practices. "One-size-fits-all" approaches to sex offenders (that is, treating all sex offenders the same) results in over or under supervision and treatment and can create unnecessary barriers to successful community living.

- To maximize opportunity for pro-social support, restrictions on new relationships and community support such as library or church should be individually determined and enforced based on the risk profile of the offender.
- Predatory designation is lifetime. Barriers to community living would be reduced by creating criteria and/or pathways to end predatory designation for some offenders.
- Provide a full risk evaluation before release to determine who is the most dangerous and provide that information to community corrections. This information could be used to support individualized supervision practices and requirements.

Addressing the Barriers

Sex Offender Registration and Disclosure Workgroup

This workgroup has developed a set of recommendations that directly address the "one-size-fits-all" barrier to re-entry for those convicted of a sex offense, eliminates the predatory designation, and establishes criteria whereby a person would no longer have to register as a sex offender.

Based upon current research and national trends regarding registration and notification practices for sex offenders, it is being proposed that the current process of differentiating sex offenders as either predatory or non-predatory be replaced by a risk assessment guided level system.

The Level System would differentiate sex offenders into three risk categories based upon validated risk assessment tools.

- Level I (Low)
- Level II (Moderate)
- Level III (High)

A risk assessment-based level system for people convicted of a sexual offense would support differentiation between people while at the same time identifying more high risk offenders than the current system does. Specifically, a level system would:

- Capture all persons convicted of a sexual crime [ORS 181.594(5)], rather than just a portion of sex offenders;
- Provide more informative and recognizable information for the community;
- Allow professionals to identify an appropriate level of supervision which enables better allocation and use of limited resources;
- Provides guidance for law enforcement and registries about who should be focused on and why;
- Creates a consistent application of public information and notification
- It compliments SB 267

Based on research regarding sexual offense specific dynamic risk factors, it is recommended that override and downward departure factors are taken into consideration. Specific aggravating factors which would result in an override to a higher level (such as emotional identification with children, high level of psychopathic traits, unwillingness to control assaultive behavior) while specific mitigating factors (debilitating illness, 10+ years offense free in the community) could result in a downward departure to a lower level.

A person could also petition for relief from registration, depending on their level:

- Level I:
Relief from registration after successful completion of supervision. "Successful completion" is defined as a low risk on the assessments, compliant with treatment programming, 12 months violation free, passed polygraphs, etc.
- Level II:
May petition for relief from registration 10 years after supervision expiration
- Level III:
May petition for reassessment to Level II after 10 years

Risk Evaluation Information to Support Differential Supervision Requirements

Having more complete assessment information at the time of transition would support differential supervision. Restrictions could then be individually determined and enforced based on the risk profile of the person from the time of release. Currently, it may take six months or more before all the assessments are completed that support other than blanket restrictions on many potentially pro-social activities and relationships. While county practices regarding restrictions differ greatly, most jurisdictions do create an individualized supervision and monitoring plan once all of the assessments have been completed.

In the short term, the risk evaluation conducted for the Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision (the Board) is only available to a parole officer if an individual public records request is made. It is recommended that a legal means of releasing this information on all persons who have had an evaluation. OACCD, the Board, and the DOC should work together to address this barrier.

In the long term, it would be ideal if a full disclosure polygraph could be conducted prior to release to support an individualized supervision plan. It is also recommended that a risk evaluation be conducted on all sex offenders and not just those currently being considered for a predatory designation. Finally, it is recommended that a STABLE assessment be conducted on anyone scoring 3 or above on the STATIC-99. This second assessment identifies dynamic intervention and treatment targets. It would require specialized training and ongoing quality assurance for prison staff to be able to conduct this test. These three recommendations would require a financial investment.

Other Recommendations

Change the statutes that prohibit two people with sex offense convictions from living in the same house. In practice, POs routinely approve this living arrangement. If there is a reason to disallow it, the PO can take action individually.

Consider the idea of a nursing home setting that could be operated regionally and would take people with sex offense histories. This group is especially difficult to place.

Replicate the mentor program developed in Washington County to assist people with sex offense convictions transition from prison to the community more successfully.

Summary

1. Replace the current process of designating sexual offenders as either predatory or non-predatory with a risk assessment guided level system. A risk assessment system would eliminate the "predatory" label and would support different requirements and monitoring based on individual risk.
2. Create criteria and/or pathways to end those already designated as predatory and to end registration requirements for certain people with sexual offense histories.
3. Create a legal mechanism for routinely releasing the risk evaluation conducted for the Board to the community corrections agency that will be providing supervision post-release from prison.
4. Develop financial support to:
 - a. Conduct a full disclosure polygraph prior to release which would support an individualized supervision plan.
 - b. Conduct a risk evaluation on all sex offenders prior to release and make that information available to community corrections.
 - c. Conduct a STABLE assessment of dynamic intervention and treatment targets on higher risk releasees to aid in creating a transition and supervision plan.