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# From the Correctional System to the Workforce: How State Policies Can Support Reentry

Webinar

May 18, 2017

# Today's webinar

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- Overview of opportunities under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- Correctional education (State example: Kansas)
- WIOA planning (State example: Pennsylvania)
- WIOA Title I funding (State example: California)
- Resources for state policy advocacy



# Using WIOA to Support the Employment of Adults with Criminal Records

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**Sherri Moses**

Council of State Governments  
Justice Center



# About the Council of State Governments Justice Center

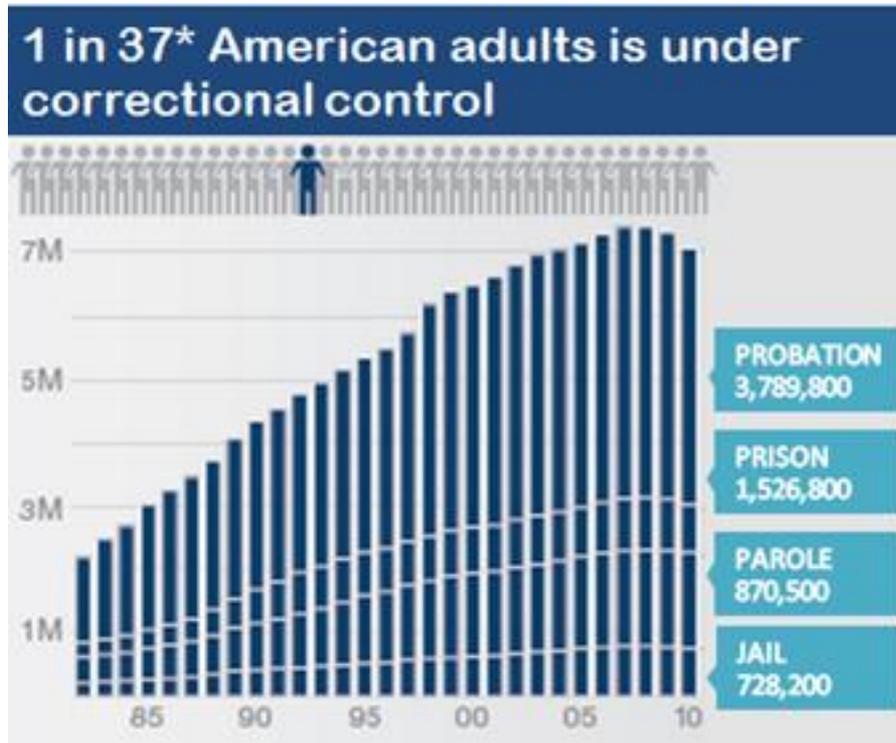
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- National nonprofit, nonpartisan membership association of state government officials from three branches of government
- Provides practical, nonpartisan advice informed by the best available evidence on criminal justice topics

[www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org](http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org)



# Reentry is a major challenge for communities across the country



**10 million adults** in the U.S. return from incarceration each year\*

**74 million adults** nationwide have a criminal record

\* 600,000 people released from state and federal prisons, plus 9 million people released from jails

SOURCES: National Employment Law Project (2013) *"The Business Case – Minimizing Risk, Maximizing Talent: Hiring People with Records"*; The Pew Charitable Trust (2010) *"Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility"*; Bureau of Justice Statistics (2016), *"Annual Probation Survey, Annual Parole Survey, Annual Survey of Jails, Census of Jail Inmates, and National Prisoner Statistics Program, 2000, and 2005–2015"*; The Council of State Governments Justice Center (2015) *"Reentry Facts & Trends"*

# 87 percent of employers conduct criminal background checks

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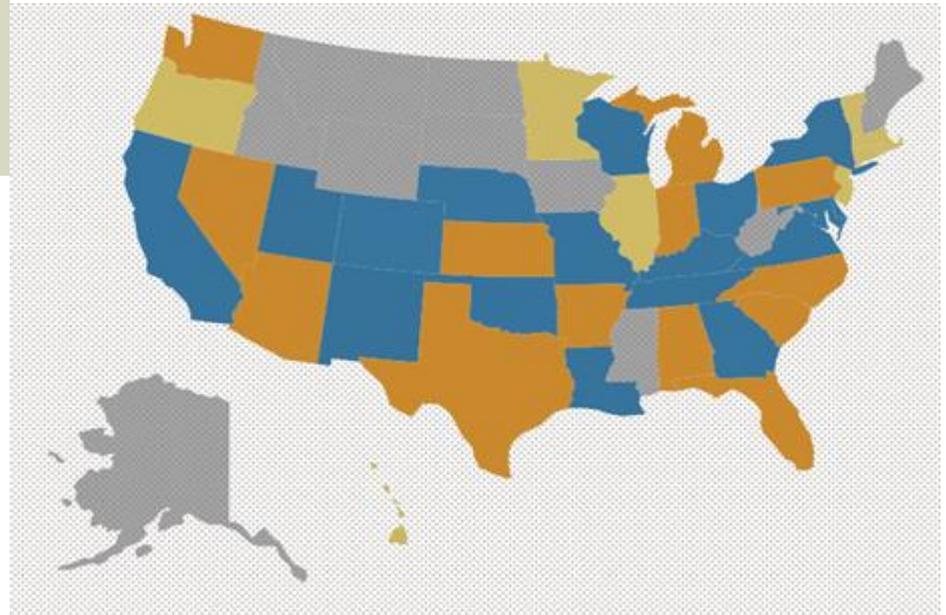
# EEOC guidance prohibits blanket bans on hiring people with criminal records

## Employers must consider:

1. Nature and gravity of offense
2. Time elapsed since offense
3. Nature of the job sought

**26 states and over 150 cities and counties have fair hiring policies**

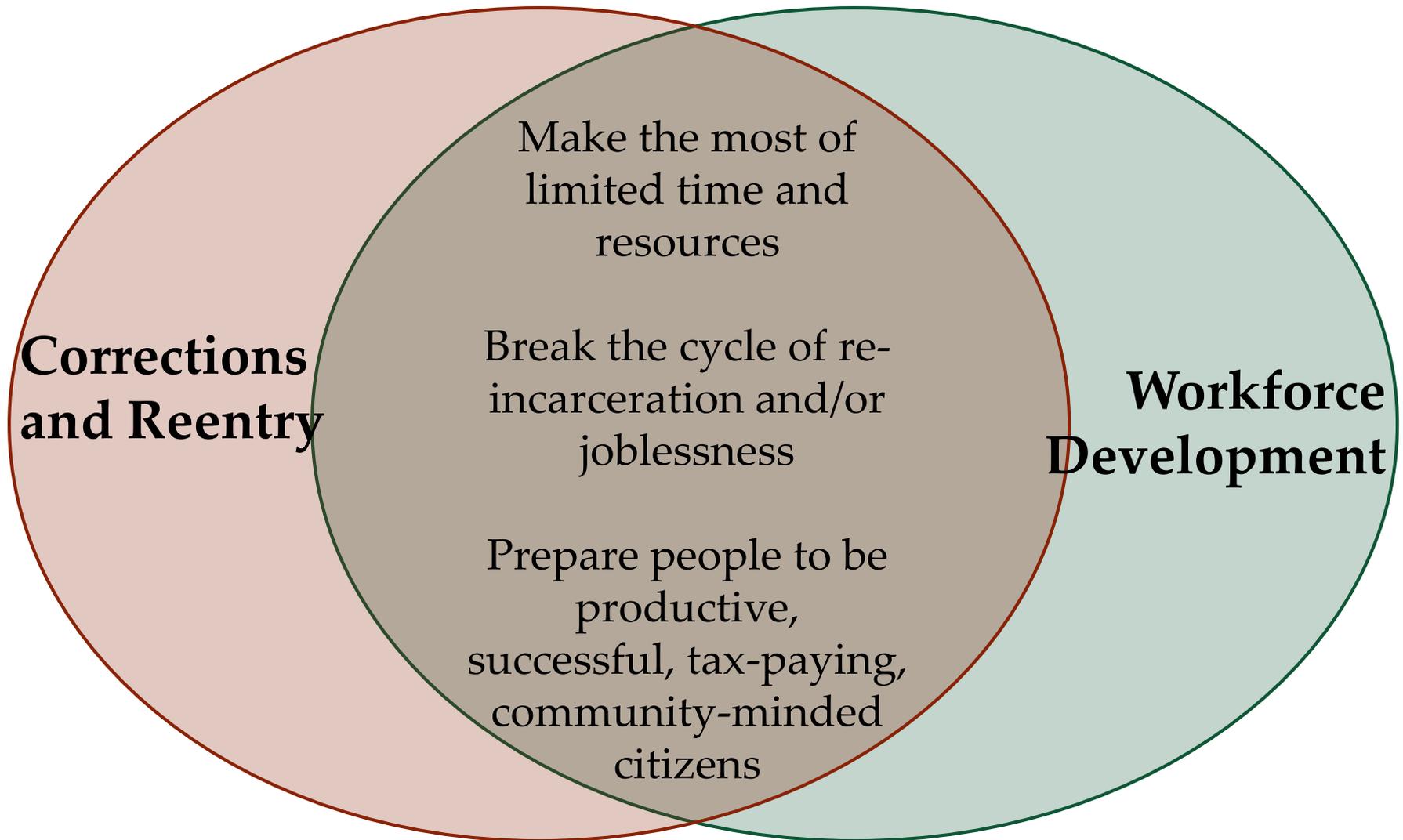
-  State covers public employers
-  State covers private employers
-  Other local policies, no state law or policy
-  No state or local policy



SOURCE: The National Employment Law Project (2016) *“Ensuring People with Convictions Have a Fair Chance to Work”*

# Corrections and workforce development systems have overlapping populations and goals

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# State plans are required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

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**The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA\***

*\* “Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; **ex-offenders**; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers....”*

- ▶ SOURCE: Required Elements for Submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Plan Modifications under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 2015

# Opportunities to leverage WIOA for adult correctional and reentry programs via:

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One-stop  
centers  
(American  
Job Centers)

Correctional  
education

Special  
initiatives



# Delving deeper into WIOA: One-stop centers (American Job Centers)

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- ▶ What resources are available?
- ▶ Do referral systems exist?
- ▶ How do job centers encourage access for people with criminal records?



# Correctional education (WIOA Title II)

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- ▶ Allowable categories of education under the WIOA statute include:
  - ▶ Adult education/literacy
  - ▶ Special education
  - ▶ Secondary school
  - ▶ Integrated education and training\*
  - ▶ Career pathways\*
  - ▶ Concurrent enrollment\*
  - ▶ Peer tutoring\*
  - ▶ Transition services\*

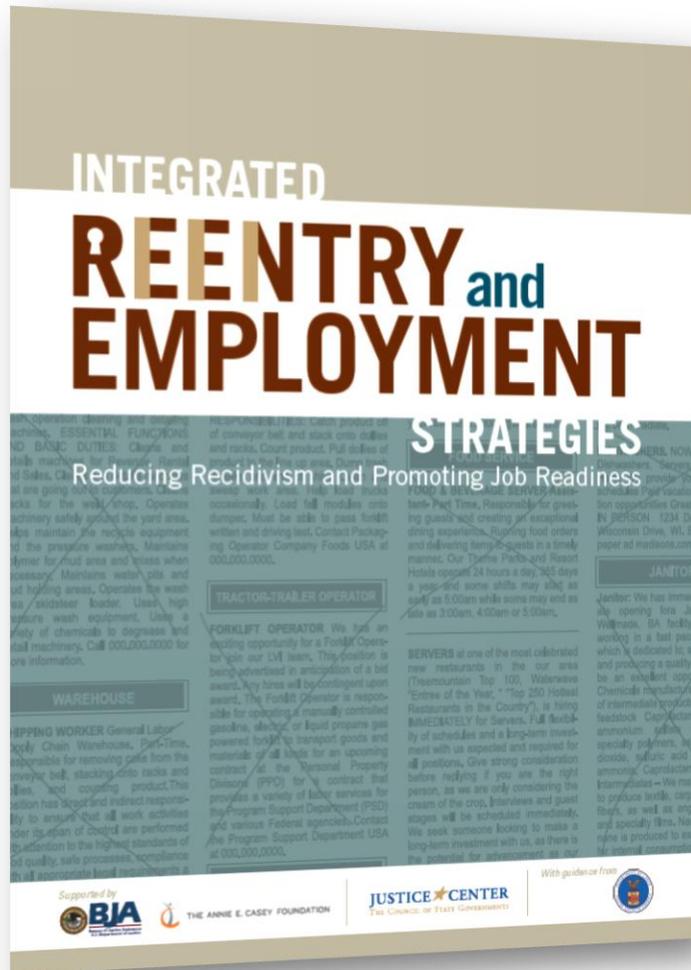
*\*new in WIOA*

# Funding special initiatives through governor's 15% "set aside" in WIOA

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- ▶ Expand successful programs
- ▶ Adapt existing workforce strategies to the needs of people with criminal records
- ▶ Test innovative strategies

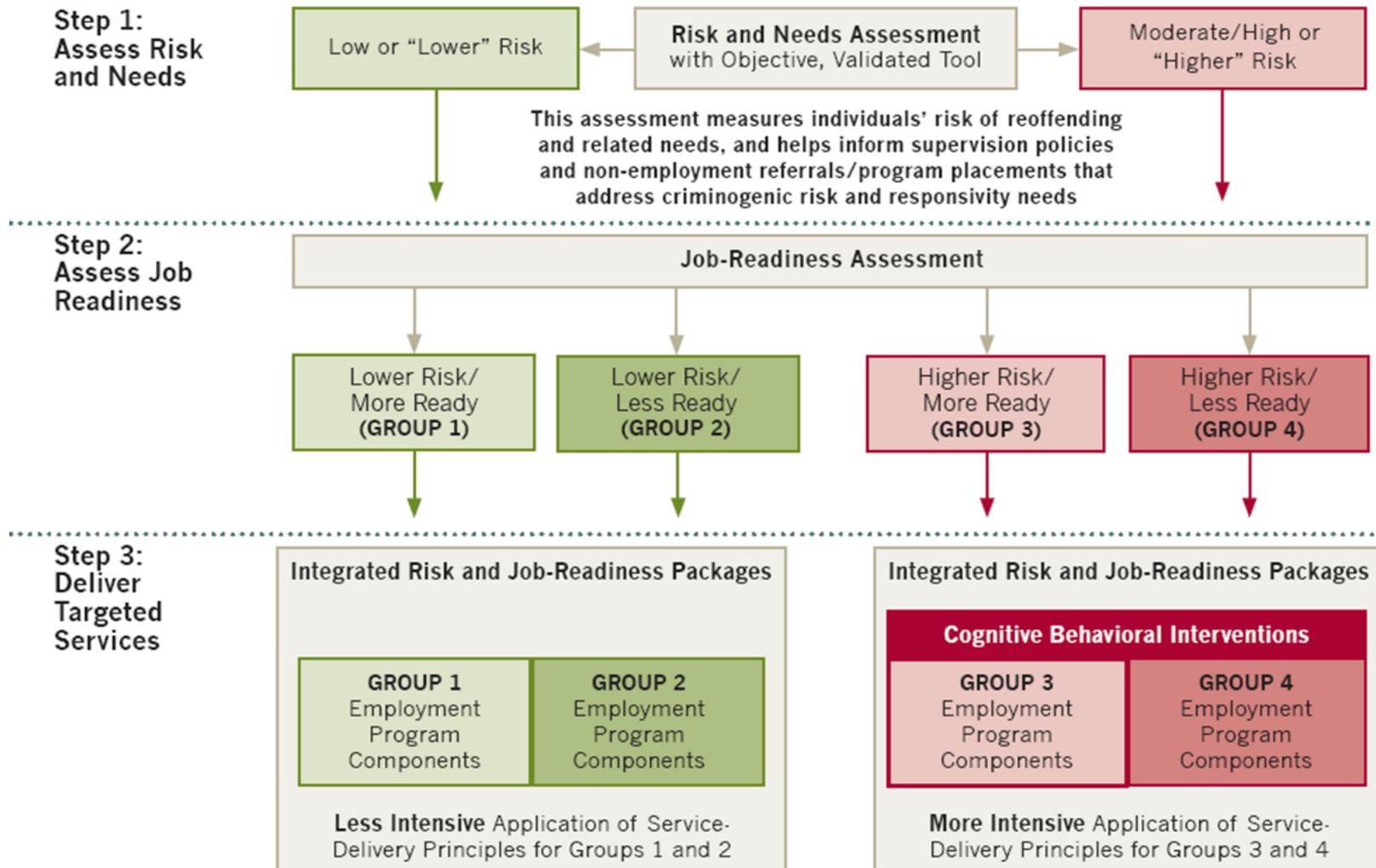
# Resource: Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies 2013 white paper



- ▶ Supported by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, with guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor
- ▶ **Purpose:** Bridge and integrate best practices from the **reentry, corrections, and workforce development** fields

[www.bja.gov/publications/csg-reentry-and-employment.pdf](http://www.bja.gov/publications/csg-reentry-and-employment.pdf)

# By sorting people based on risk and job readiness, we can connect them to appropriate workforce services



# Collaboration is key to successful outcomes

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- ▶ Establish systems to share information across agencies
- ▶ Share best practices across fields
- ▶ Create referral system across agencies



# Engaging the business community to promote employment opportunities

- ▶ Educate businesses on benefits and legal requirements about hiring people with criminal records
- ▶ Partner with chambers of commerce or other business organizations
- ▶ Share employer and employee success stories

Derek Bottoms, VP of Associate Relations, The Home Depot;  
Daniel Hardiman, CEO, True North Companies, Inc.



“Getting ahead of workforce issues like [reentry and employment] is part of what the Birmingham Business Alliance does to foster economic development.”

- Brian Hilson, President and CEO



# Thank you

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[www.csgjusticecenter.org/subscribe](http://www.csgjusticecenter.org/subscribe)

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*The presentation was developed by members of the Council of State Governments Justice Center staff. The statements made reflect the views of the authors, and should not be considered the official position of the Justice Center, the members of the Council of State Governments, or the funding agency supporting the work. Citations available for statistics presented in preceding slides available on CSG Justice Center web site.*

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# Accelerated Career Training in the Topeka Correctional Facility for Women

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**Dr. Gillian Gabelmann**  
Project Director, Grants Facilitator  
Washburn University  
Institute of Technology



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# Topeka Correctional Facility (TCF)

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- Only women's state correctional facility in KS
- Program started in October 2014
  - Second Chance Act funding from US Dept. of Justice (1 year)
  - Extended to 18 mos. By using equipment from TAACCT grant
- Improved Reentry Education (IRE) grant from US Dept. of Education
  - September 2015-September 2018
- Some state funding comes from Accelerating Opportunities in KS (AO-K)



# Preparing women for release

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- Average stay at TCF = 90 days
- We work with those who are primarily 12 mo. to 24 mo. from release
- Work with the facility staff to add program to their release plan
- Initially program ran about 8-10 weeks – all students had a GED
- Under IRE grant we are also serving GED students



# Educational attainment of inmates

- [PIACC](#) study data that was recently released.
  - The data also show that on average women inmates have lower numeracy and literary skills than men.
- Even those who *do* have a GED often have low basic skills

Data from PIACC study			
	TCF	Inmates	US Household
Less than HS diploma	46%	30%	14%
Low Literacy			
HS diploma		21%	20%
No HS diploma	49%*	48%	48%
Low Numeracy			
HS diploma		43%	33%
No HS diploma	70%*	79%	62%
	*all students TABE scores		



# Program model – technical program

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- Certified Production Technician – credential through MSSC
  - Safety, Process, Quality, Maintenance awareness
  - OSHA-10 and Forklift certification
  
- I-BEST Model came to Kansas in 2010 as the Accelerating Opportunities grant - we call it AO in KS or AO-K
  - Blend Basic Skills, GED preparation with technical skills
  - Team teaching - 25% overlap of time with both instructors in classroom
  - Case Management of participants



# Program model - soft skills

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- Job Readiness Coach
  - Communication Skills
  - Resume
  - Conviction Statement
  - Mock interviews
  - Case management
- Work Ethics Curriculum – *Bring your “A” Game to Work* – [The Center for Work Ethic Development](#) in Denver, CO
- Alternative Workforce Specialist – Department of Commerce/Corrections
  - liaison to Workforce Centers across the state
  - liaison to felon-friendly employers



# Nonprofit collaboration with state policymakers

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Will Heaton

Director of Public Policy and Advancement  
Center for Employment Opportunities



CENTER FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES  
CHANGE THAT WORKS



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# CEO'S MISSION

The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) is dedicated to providing **immediate, effective, and comprehensive employment services** to men and women with recent criminal convictions.

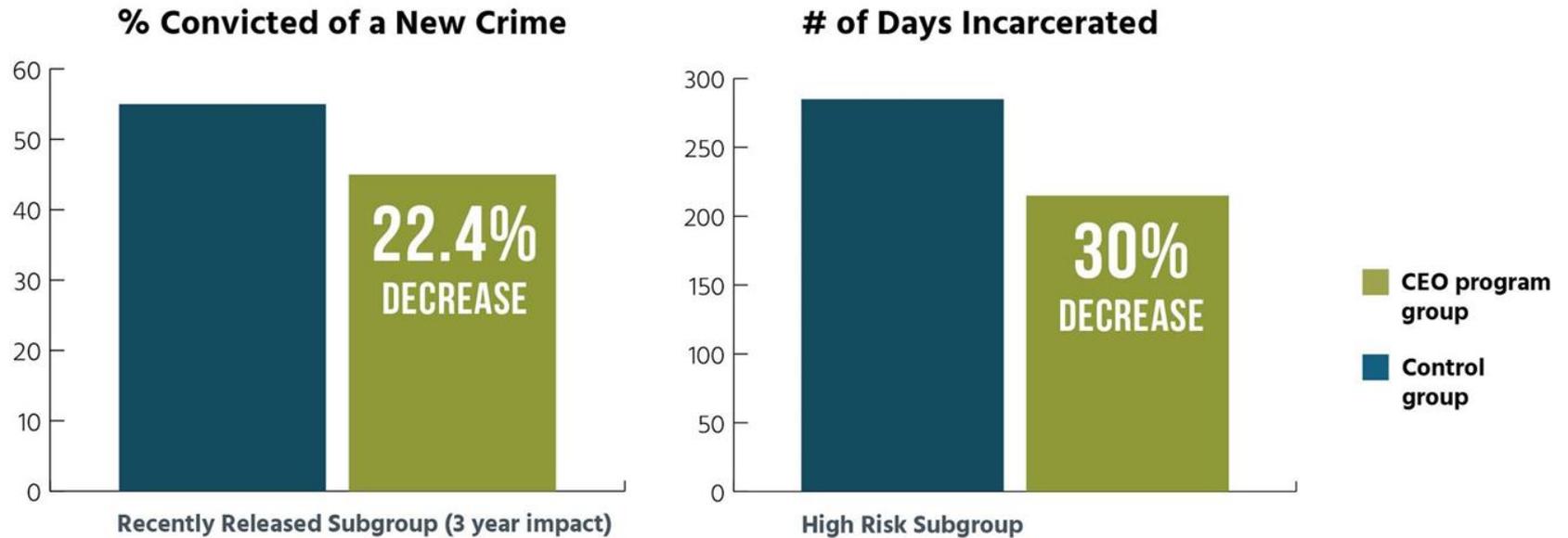
Our highly structured and tightly supervised programs help participants regain the skills and confidence needed for **successful transitions to stable, productive lives.**



# CEO'S PROGRAM MODEL



# THIRD PARTY EVALUATION

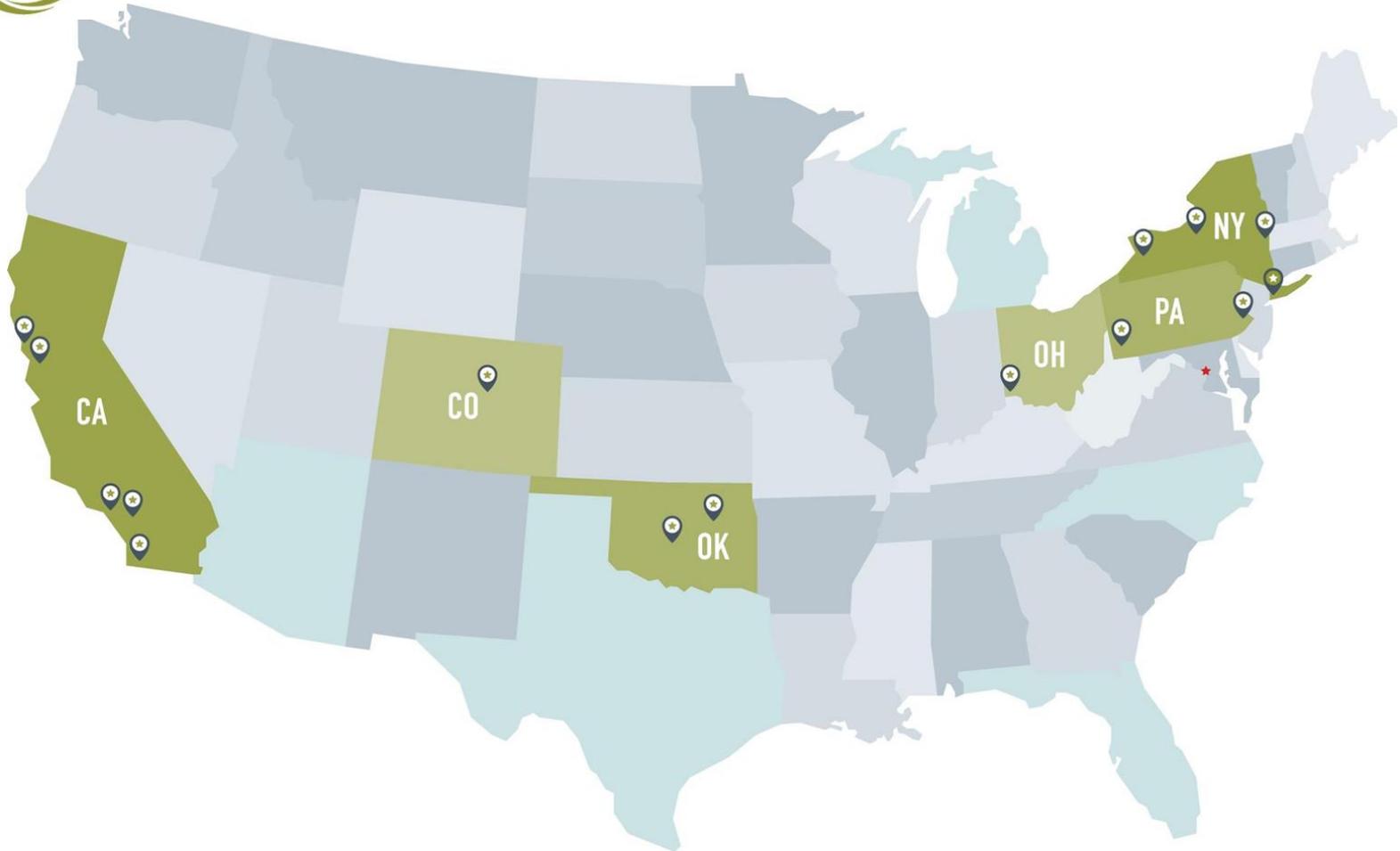


## BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS

For every **\$1 spent** on recently released and high risk subgroups, CEO generates **\$3.30 in savings**, or **\$8,336 per person**.



# Workforce Partnerships



# Pennsylvania: Engagement through WIOA planning process

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- Included Department of Corrections at the table for state planning
- State plan informed local planning



# California: Multiple avenues for engagement

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- WIOA governor's reserve (aka "set-aside")
- California State Workforce Board Accelerator grants
- Partnership with community college to develop tailored certification courses for formerly incarcerated people



# When you're ready to act...

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...NSC is here to help.

Technical assistance:

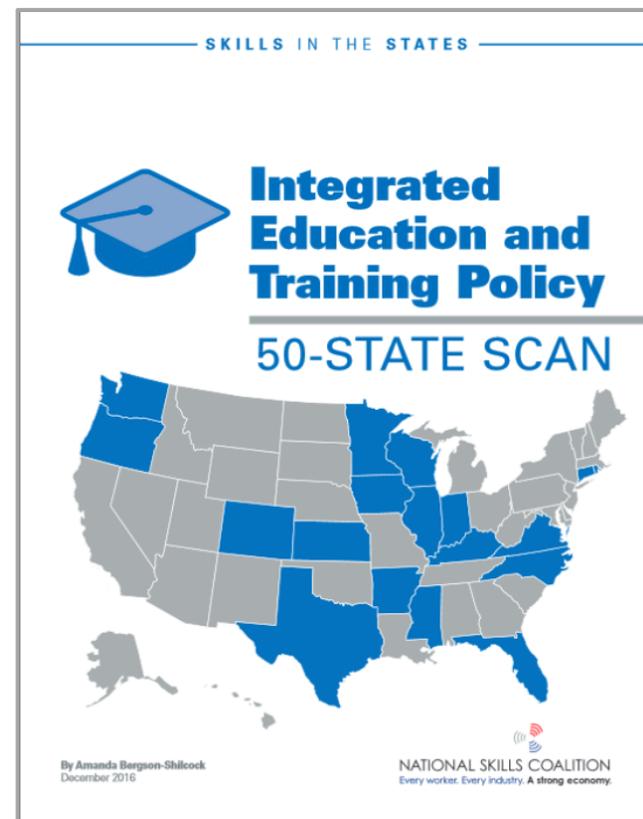
- Policy identification
- Policy development
- Coalition-building
- Strategic communications
- Network mobilization



# Resource: Skills equity scans

- NSC members helped identify five “skills equity” policies that help low-skilled adults, including those who are re-entering the workforce after incarceration
- Our **50-state scans** show where your state stands on each policy
- Among those is **Integrated Education and Training**

[www.nationalskillscoalition.org/skillsequity](http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/skillsequity)



# Resource: Skills equity toolkits

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- Our skills equity **policy toolkits** showcase examples of states with strong policies & provide a sample legislative template for you to cut and paste



[www.nationalskillscoalition.org/skillsequity](http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/skillsequity)

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# Additional publications to help bolster your case.

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- *Foundational Skills* report highlights basic skills gaps among service-industry workers
- *Adult Education & Middle-Skill Jobs* fact sheet emphasizes foundation for career-path jobs

[www.nationalskillscoalition.org/  
resources/publications](http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications)



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# It's time for your questions!

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- Please type them in the chat box at right.