

# Improving Workforce Outcomes for Persons Currently Incarcerated

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Strategies, Challenges, and Opportunities

Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT)  
Program for State Prisoners

Training and Technical Assistance Resource

*This project was supported by grant No.15PBJA-22-GK-01132-RSAT awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the SMART Office, and the Office for Victims of Crime. Point of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not represent the official position or policies of the United States Department of Justice.*



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# Today's Speakers



**Kweilin Waller**

*Senior Program Manager II/  
Workforce Development Specialist*  
Advocates for Human Potential, Inc.



**Dr. Luis S. Garcia**

*Senior Program Manager/  
BHCIP Implementation Specialist*  
Advocates for Human Potential, Inc.

# Learning Objectives

**Upon completion of this presentation, participants will be able to:**

**Recognize the potential of incarcerated individuals to contribute to the workforce.**

**Review the components of strategic workforce development.**

**Understand the need for comprehensive assistance, from skills training to job matching.**

# Agenda

- 01 Inclusive Workforce Development**
- 02 Understanding the Challenge**
- 03 Personal Story: Dr. Luis S. Garcia**
- 04 Strategies for Success and Exploring Promising Practices**
- 05 Next Steps**



# **Inclusive Workforce: Embracing the Incarcerated Population's Potential**

# U.S. Workforce Demand and Participation

**There were  
9.61 million  
job openings in  
August.<sup>1</sup>**

**For every  
individual who was  
unemployed,  
there were 1.51  
positions available.<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> [Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary - 2023 M08 Results \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jobopenings/20230801.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [US job openings post largest increase in two years; quits rate unchanged | Reuters](https://www.reuters.com/business/economy/us-job-openings-post-largest-increase-two-years-quits-rate-unchanged-2023-08-01/)

# Training, Education, Reentry, and Reduced Recidivism

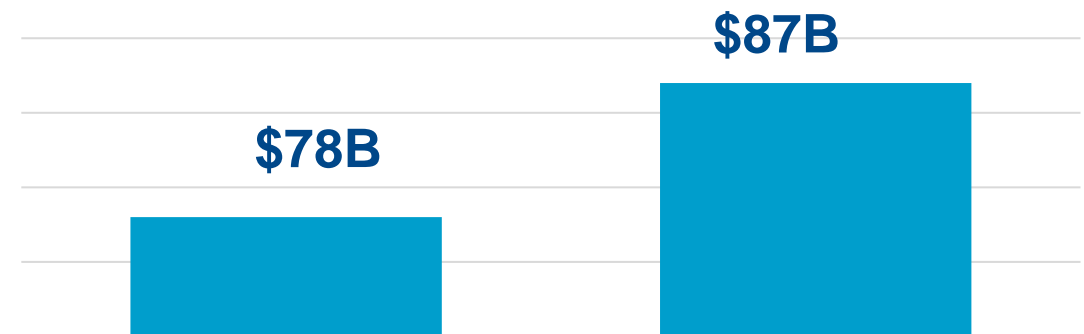
**1.7 to 1.9  
million**

Annually, individuals who remain jobless due to their criminal backgrounds<sup>3</sup>

**Employment  
Penalty Faced**

Overall employment rates being 0.9 to 1.0 percentage points lower.

Losses of \$78 to \$87 billion  
in gross domestic product  
(GDP).<sup>3</sup>



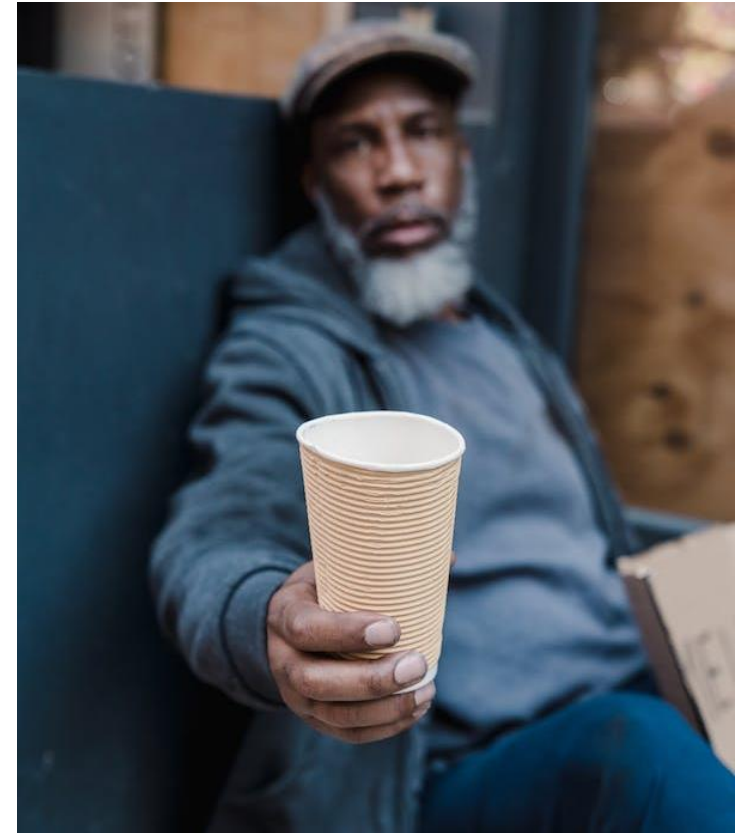
<sup>3</sup> [The Price We Pay: Economic Costs of Barriers to Employment for Former Prisoners and People Convicted of Felonies \(cepr.net\)](http://cepr.net)

# Training, Education, Reentry, and Reduced Recidivism

- Training and education for people who are incarcerated can lead to sustainable jobs post-release.<sup>4</sup>
- Those in postsecondary programs are 48% less likely to return to prison.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [Bolstering the Prison-Based Apprenticeship and Workforce Training System – Third Way](#)

<sup>5</sup> [US News, 2023](#)



A background image showing a group of medical students in blue scrubs, some looking at papers, overlaid with a blue gradient. The text is centered over this image.

# **Understanding the Challenge: From Statistics to Stories**

# Luis's Story



*Photo courtesy of Luis Garcia*

## Chat Chase

What do you anticipate being the biggest challenge or barrier to successful reentry planning in your facility?

A group of healthcare students in blue scrubs are seated in a classroom or lecture hall, looking towards the front. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

# **Workforce Development:** Strategies for Success and Exploring Promising Practices

# Key Components of Successful Reentry Programs

## Career Readiness

- Self- and career assessments
- Soft and foundational skills
- Job search planning and techniques
- Resume writing support
- Interviewing and networking skills

# Project Overcome

## Goodwill Industries International Partnership with Accenture

- **Purpose:** Aid justice-impacted people in workforce reintegration.
- **Key Features:**
  - Virtual reality job interview simulations and coaching.
  - Real stories from six individuals who secured jobs post-incarceration.
  - Interactive narratives for exploring various scenarios and results.
- **Implementation:** Launched in 10 Goodwill organizations in areas with large justice-impacted populations.<sup>6</sup>



<sup>6</sup> [Goodwill And Accenture Are Using VR To Help Former Prisoners - VRScout](#)

# Key Components of Successful Reentry Programs

## Career Readiness

## Supportive Services

- Recognition of multifaceted internal and external barriers
- Referrals to agencies for assistance
- Addressing wider personal, social, and environmental challenges

# New Freedom Behavioral Health

- **Purpose:** Assist justice-impacted people in rejoining the workforce.
- **Key Features:**
  - 90-day program offering temporary housing and essentials.
  - Comprehensive case management covering finance, health relationships, work experience, and job placement.
  - Collaboration with the local workforce board for tailored career guidance, educational needs, and support services.
- **Results:**
  - 135 participants served.
  - 100% maintaining employment.
  - \$137,738 in support services and occupational skills training funded.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> L. Whitehead on behalf of ARIZONA@WORK, personal communication, March 17, 2023



# Key Components of Successful Reentry Programs

## Career Readiness

## Supportive Services

## Education and Training

- Postsecondary education
- Upskilling initiatives
- Mentorship programs
- On-the-job training and apprenticeships

# Ladies Empowerment & Action Program (LEAP)

## In-Prison Education Program

- **Purpose:** Prepare women in Florida for reentry and supports post-release transition.
- **Key Features:**
  - 50-60 women engaged annually at Homestead Correctional Institute for Women.
  - Includes modules on “entrepreneurship, workforce readiness, trauma informed addiction and extensive cognitive behavioral work.”
- **Results:**
  - Less than 6% recidivism rate for LEAP graduates compared to 50%+ nationally.<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> [In-Prison Education - Leap for Ladies](#)

# Key Components of Successful Reentry Programs

**Career Readiness**

**Supportive  
Services**

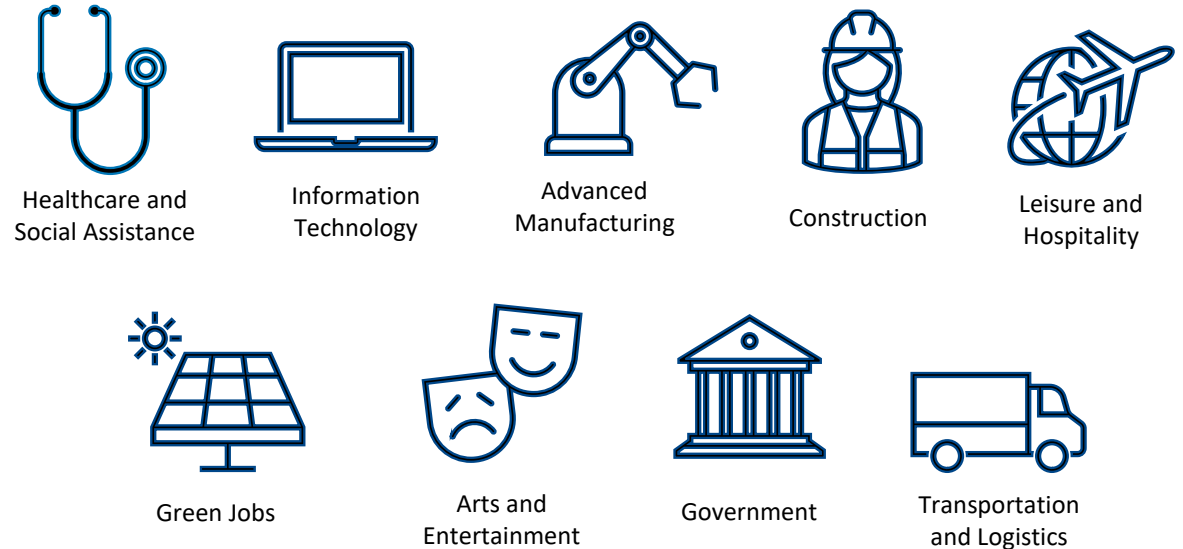
**Education and  
Training**

**Partnerships and  
Collaboration**

- Cooperation among organizations, employers, and support agencies
- Resources and opportunities for successful reintegration

# Skills and Experience for the Careers of Tomorrow (SECTOR) Program

- **Purpose:** Offer job training in growing sectors to support justice-impacted people in achieving stable careers.
- **Key Features:**
  - Skill training with paid work opportunities in promising sectors.
  - Career guidance from peer mentors.
  - Assistance in addressing behavioral health, housing, and other non-job-related concerns through peer support.<sup>9</sup>



<sup>9</sup> [1103163\\_SECTOR\\_Flyer\\_Final\\_Color.pdf \(lacounty.gov\)](#)

# Developing Opportunities and Offering Reentry Solutions (DOORS) Community Reentry Center

- **Purpose:** Streamline support services to decrease recidivism among justice-involved people and their communities.
- **Key Features:**
  - Joint initiative between community and county partners.
  - Centralized location for service providers.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> [Doors-LA-Fact-Sheet-Regular\\_English.pdf \(lacounty.gov\)](#)

## Community Reentry Center Services



Housing



Benefits  
Establishment



Employment Support  
and Placement



GED or High School  
Equivalency



Self-Help (i.e., Anger  
Management and Parenting)



Substance Abuse Assessment  
and Treatment Linkage



Mental Wellness  
Linkage/  
Medical Support



Legal Aid  
Support



Visitation  
Monitoring



Intensive Case  
Management



Healing through Arts



Computer Lab



Ancillary Services  
(i.e., hygiene and  
wellness kits)

# EMPLOY (Minnesota)

- **Purpose:** Boost post-release employment to cut down on recidivism.
- **Key Features:**
  - Uses skills from MINNCOR Industries.
  - Helps participants find and maintain jobs post-release.
  - Prepares participants for post-release work scenarios.
  - Offers a year of community support after prison.
- **Results:**
  - 72% of participants find a job within a year post-release.
  - Recidivism rate is 63% lower than for non-participants.<sup>11</sup>



<sup>11</sup> [Program Profile: EMPLOY \(Minnesota\) | CrimeSolutions, National Institute of Justice \(ojp.gov\)](#)

# Essential Skills for the Workforce (ESW) Pilot

## California Prison Industry Authority (CALPIA) Soft Skills Training for Incarcerated Individuals

- **Purpose:** Prepare inmates with essential life and job soft skills for smooth workforce reentry.
- **Key Features:**
  - Self-driven, introspective learning method.
  - Emphasis on broad workplace standards suitable for all careers.
  - Mentoring and progress tracking via case management.
  - Pilots in several institutions.
- **Results:** CALPIA participants show fewer rearrests, reconvictions, and reincarcerations than eligible non-participants.<sup>12</sup>



<sup>12</sup> [UC Study: CALPIA participants less likely to return to prison](#)

A group of healthcare students in blue scrubs are seated in a classroom or lecture hall, looking towards the right. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

# **Next Steps: Workforce Development Planning**

# Wrap-Up Poll

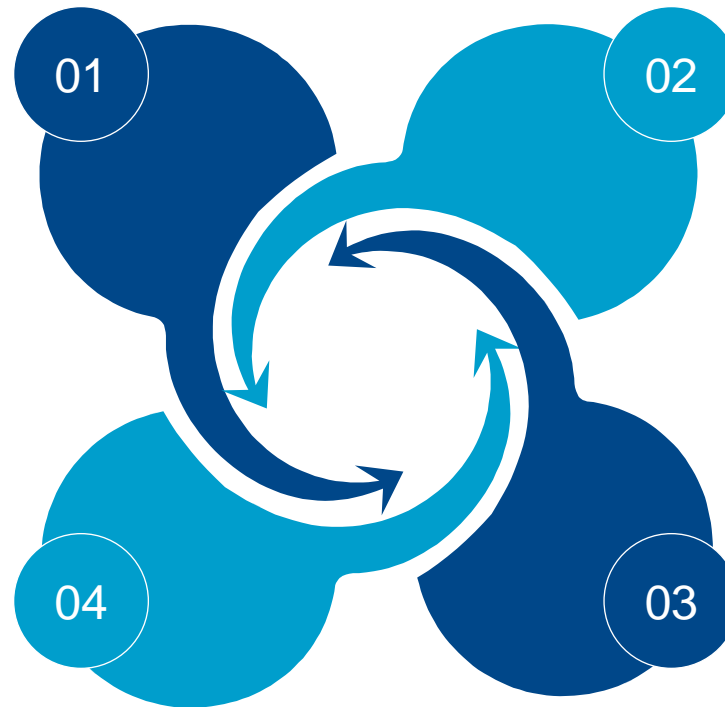
**Given your facility's strengths and potential areas of influence, which strategy do you feel could be your starting point? Please share your perspective.**

**Career Readiness**

**Supportive Services**

**Collaborations and Partnerships**

**Education and Training**



# Resources

- [Normalizing Education Resource Center \(jff.org\)](http://jff.org)
- [How Employers Can Set Formerly Incarcerated Workers Up for Success \(hbr.org\)](http://hbr.org)
- [Incarceration-to-Employment-Strategy.pdf \(whitehouse.gov\)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/04/29/15-04-29-prison-to-work-report)
- [How Corrections Departments Are Preparing People for In-Demand Careers That Support America's Infrastructure | Vera Institute](http://vera-institute.org/publications/how-corrections-departments-are-preparing-people-for-in-demand-careers-that-support-americas-infrastructure)
- [Expanding Access to Public Employment for People with Criminal Records - CSG Justice Center](http://csgjusticecenter.org/expanding-access-to-public-employment-for-people-with-criminal-records)

# Resources, con't.

- Additional resources on this topic are available through the National Reentry Resource Center (<https://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org>).
- [Second Chance Act](#): The Second Chance Act (SCA) supports state, local, and tribal governments and nonprofit organizations in their work to reduce recidivism and improve outcomes for people returning from state and federal prisons, local jails, and juvenile facilities.
  - [Second Chance Act Program Tracks](#)
  - [Second Chance Act Funding Opportunities](#)
- [Recovery-Ready Workplaces](#): A program of the U.S. Department of Labor, Recovery-Ready Workplaces adopt policies and practices that expand employment opportunities for people in or seeking recovery.

# References

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# QUESTIONS

▶ Type your questions in the Q&A box on your screen.

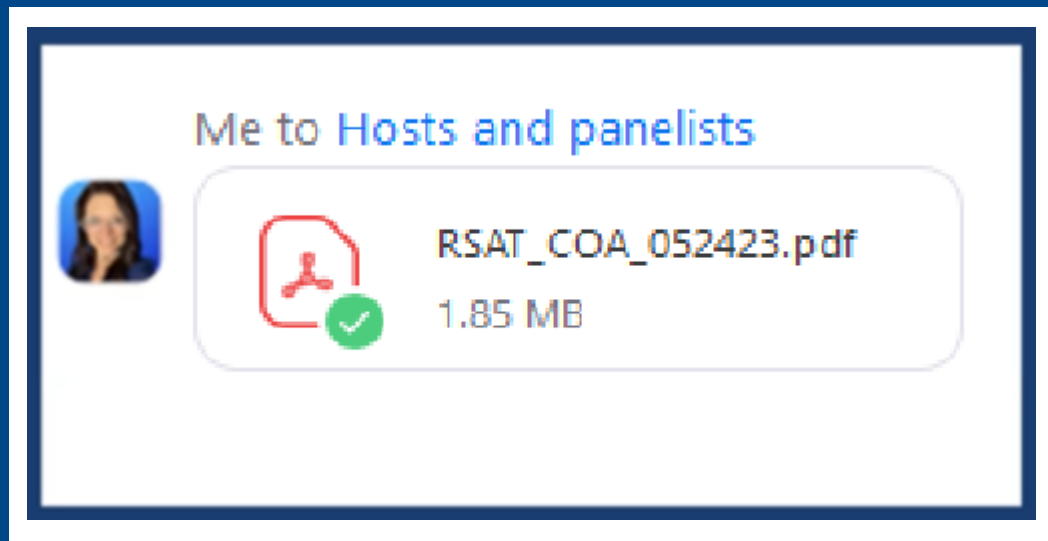


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You can download the certificate of attendance from the chat.





# CERTIFICATE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION



1 Continuing Education Hour (CEH) approved by NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals



Pass 10-question quiz with 7 correct answers



Download certificate upon completion of the quiz

**October 25, 2023** RSAT webinar CEH quiz link:

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7581972/October-25-2023-RSAT-Webinar-CEH>

# CONTACT



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