

Arkansas Reentry Stats/Talking Points

Employment

Stats: According to a report from Brookings and the American Enterprise Institute, having a job has been shown to reduce recidivism, and individuals are less likely to commit crimes when they have stable, full-time employment (Brookings, n.d).

Stats: Also, according to the Institute of Corrections, 85% - 89% of formerly incarcerated people who are rearrested are unemployed (National Institution of Corrections, n.d).

Stats: Consequently, an academic research study of the formerly incarcerated found that employment was the single most important factor in decreasing recidivism (Berg & Huebner, 2011).

Stats: Lastly, another study found that, Employing 100 previously incarcerated people will save millions of dollars annually by keeping them out of the criminal justice system (Economy League of Greater Philadelphia, 2011).

Reforms: "We should start by banning the box on employment applications. This will give people a chance to get more jobs that pay a livable wage. We can also continue to build off the work that the legislature did in 2021, and expand record sealing. We could join states like Pennsylvania and Michigan and make this process automatic. This would help a lot of people be able to enter the workforce and become productive citizens."

Education

Stats: Roughly two-fifths of the people entering prison do not have a high school degree or General Educational Development (GED) credential, a rate which is three times higher than for adults in the U.S. The disparity for postsecondary education is even greater. The general public has a 4x higher rate of having an associate's degree than those who are formerly incarcerated. (Brookings, n.d).

Stats: Few evidence-based reforms have as much untapped potential as postsecondary education in prison. Incarcerated people who participate in such programs are 48 percent less likely to recidivate than those who do not. The odds of recidivism decrease as incarcerated people achieve higher levels of education (Bozick, Steele, Davis, & Turner, 2018).

Reforms: "Based on these statistics & the fact that education is so important to families, individuals and communities, we should expand educational opportunities for those incarcerated by adding more postsecondary education courses and vocational training. We should also make

sure that individuals who are helping folks before leaving incarceration prepares them to continue their education & helps start them on the path to get their licenses in some fields.”

Fines & Fees

Stats: The Brennan Center published that one study found that about half of families with convicted members cannot afford to pay fees and fines (Menendez, & Eisen, 2019).

Reforms: “We should continue the work that the legislature has started on fines and fees. We should make sure that these fees are waived for at least the first 6 months after someone reenters, along with other reforms, so that we can make sure that they can get on their feet and help to provide for their families.”

References

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