

THE JOB GAP ECONOMIC PROSPERITY SERIES

JOBS AFTER JAIL

Ending the prison to poverty pipeline





ALLIANCE FOR A JUST SOCIETY

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The Job Gap Economic Prosperity series

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JOBS AFTER JAIL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are nowhere near enough living wage jobs to go around in the United States; workers are trapped in low wage work and unable to make ends meet. It is even more difficult for those who have been incarcerated to find work that pays a living wage, as institutionalized barriers to employment limit the types of jobs available to those with conviction records.

This third report in the 2015-2016 Job Gap Economic Prosperity Series looks at the barriers those with conviction records face in finding high-paying jobs and attaining a measure of financial stability.

In many states and cities, both public and private employers can include a question on application materials requiring applicants to disclose whether or not they have a conviction record. While there is growing momentum to “Ban the Box,” in most cases these efforts only ban the box for public employment.

Additionally, there are thousands of regulations across the country restricting or banning those who have been incarcerated from employment in specific occupations and industries. Commonly restricted fields include health care, law enforcement & security, and legal services – all industries that can provide relatively high pay and job stability.

For the 70 million adults with a serious misdemeanor or felony arrest or conviction record and the hundreds of thousands more each year released from prison, their record can be a life sentence of poverty and low wages.

Legislation banning employment in specific occupations only serves to make it more difficult for those with records to rebuild their lives after leaving prison.

On average, states have 123 mandatory bans and restrictions for would-be workers with felony convictions per state from employment in occupations or industries, from obtaining certain types of occupational licenses, and/or from obtaining certain types of business or property licenses. 10 states have more than 160 of these regulations, including 248 in Texas, 258 in Illinois, and 389 in Louisiana. Only nine states have fewer than 75 regulations.

Examples of restricted occupations include relatively high paying jobs like pharmacists, police officers, veterinarians, security guards, and secondary school teachers.

There are additional regulations for other types of offenses, and non-mandatory bans and restrictions. For example, while many states have begun decriminalizing marijuana and revisiting the severity of sentences for other drug-related crimes, state

regulations that restrict employment for controlled substance crimes continue as barriers for many who have been caught up in the criminal justice system.

Besides being barred from many job opportunities, other related collateral consequences of having a conviction record, including restrictions from access to government-subsidized housing, food stamps, and other assistance programs. While not direct barriers to employment, these restrictions can make it even more difficult for those without good jobs to get by.

For the 630,000 prisoners released from state and federal prisons each year, these restrictions only exacerbate the struggle to make ends meet faced by workers in states across the country. With minimum wages falling far short of what a single adult needs to make ends meet, and not nearly enough jobs to go around that pay a living wage, these additional barriers can make it impossible for those who have been incarcerated to find a good paying job.

With disproportionate arrest rates and longer and harsher sentencing, people of color are more likely

to be impacted by these barriers than are their white counterparts. Along with a resurgence of debtors' prisons and the criminalization of poverty, these additional barriers serve to reinforce and continue the existing racial wealth gap, making it even more difficult for people of color to make ends meet.

There are a variety of tools that can give people with conviction records a fair shot at making ends meet. Ban the Box policies banning inquiries into conviction records on employment applications can help prevent discrimination in hiring; reviewing and removing mandatory bans on employment and licensing for specific occupations can broaden access to more types of jobs for those with records. Expanding safety net programs to those with records will also help those unable to find a living wage job to get by.

When those with convictions are released from prison after serving their time, they should not be consigned to a lifetime of low wages and poverty. Everyone should have the chance to make a better life for themselves and their families.



INTRODUCTION

An estimated 70 million people in the United States have a serious misdemeanor or felony arrest or conviction record that could impact their ability to find a job.¹ Additionally, each year about 630,000 people, on average, are released from state and federal prisons across the country after completing their sentence,² and at the end of 2014 about 4.7 million people were on parole or probation under community supervision.³ All must find a way to make ends meet.

It's hard enough for those who have not been incarcerated to find a good paying job. For people with conviction records, finding a good job can be impossible.

At \$16.87, the national weighted average living wage is significantly higher than any minimum wage in the country.⁴ Even in the states with a lower living wage, minimum wage is not enough to allow a single adult to make ends meet.

As noted in earlier reports in the Job Gap Economic Prosperity Series, there are not enough good jobs to go around. This leaves seven job seekers for every one job that pays at least \$15 per hour.⁵ In some states, there are even more job seekers for each job opening that pays a living wage in that state.

Those people with a conviction records, though, have further barriers to employment. Though the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission declared that blanket bans on hiring people with a criminal record are a civil rights act violation,⁶ every state in the country has regulations restricting employment opportunities for those with a conviction record. On average, states have

123 mandatory restrictions for those with felony records, in addition to discretionary restrictions and restrictions for non-felony records. Several states have more than two hundred restrictions on the books, and Louisiana has almost 400 restrictions.

Additionally, in many states restrictions bar employment in occupations and industries that provide good paying jobs, like health care, law enforcement and security, and legal services. Without the ability to gain employment in better paying jobs such as those in these occupation categories, those with a felony conviction have even less chance of making ends meet.

A conviction record can also restrict other areas of life that impact one's ability to get by. When a person with a conviction record who cannot attain employment is unable to qualify for affordable housing or food stamps, making ends meet becomes impossible.

There is a growing awareness that burdensome restrictions make it nearly impossible to rebuild a life and make ends meet after release. The Commonwealth Court in Pennsylvania, for example,

found that a lifetime ban against working in facilities such as nursing homes and home health care agencies was unconstitutional.⁷ Reviewing and removing such mandatory employment bans, putting policies like Ban the Box in place to prevent hiring discrimination,

and ensuring that people with conviction records have access to important safety net programs are just some of the tools that can help give people with conviction records a fair shot at making ends meet.



BACKGROUND

While all job seekers in the United States face steep odds of finding a living wage job, those with a conviction record face additional barriers. Those with conviction records make up a sizable portion of the country's population, with disproportionate rates in communities of color. Disparities in convictions and sentencing for controlled substances and a resurgence in the criminalization of poverty make it more likely for people of color to have a conviction record, and therefore even more difficult to find a job that pays enough to make ends meet.

According to estimates, approximately 70 million adults in the United States – or about one in three – have a felony or serious misdemeanor arrest or conviction record that could be found on a background check or otherwise be a barrier to employment.⁸ Additionally, each year an average of about 630,000 people are released from state and federal prison,⁹ often with few resources or contacts to help find employment.

While these figures alone are staggering, communities of color have higher rates of incarceration and therefore have even higher rates of adults with a conviction record than the population overall. Though people of color make up only about 39 percent of the total population,¹⁰ they make up approximately two-thirds of all state and federal prisoners.¹¹ In fact, while about one in 87 white men are currently incarcerated, black men and Latinos have significantly higher rates of one in 12 and one in 36, respectively.

Not only do people of color make up a disproportionate share of the prison population, they are also more likely to have harsher and longer sentences. As ACLU notes, “Black and Latino offenders sentenced in state and federal courts face significantly greater odds of incarceration than similarly situated white offenders and receive longer sentences than their white counterparts in some jurisdictions.”¹² And, in 2009, though blacks represented only about 13 percent of the country's total population, they represented nearly a third of those sentenced with life in prison and more than half of those serving life without the possibility of parole.¹³

As the ACLU notes, “Race matters at all phases and aspects of the criminal process, including the quality of representation, the charging phase, and the availability of plea agreements, each of which impact whether juvenile and adult defendants face a potential [life without the possibility of parole] sentence.”¹⁴ High rates of imprisonment lead to high rates of people of color with a criminal record that could impact their employment prospects, as well.

One area in which people of color have especially been targeted and seen harsher sentencing is controlled substances. While white adults are more likely “to have used most kinds of illegal drugs, including cocaine, marijuana and LSD,” people

of color are more likely to be arrested for drug possession.²² Though blacks represent only 12 percent of drug users, they comprise more than one-third of those arrested for drug offenses and more than half of those in state prison for a drug offense.²³ Additionally,



BAN THE BOX

Throughout the country, those with conviction records are required to check a box noting their criminal history when applying for jobs. This box has had significant consequences for the employment prospects of formerly incarcerated people.

As the National Employment Law Project notes, many prospective applicants are discouraged from even applying for work due to the box, and employers often arbitrarily toss out any applications with the box checked.¹⁵ This is despite the fact that blanket bans on hiring those with criminal records is a Civil Rights Act violation.¹⁶

This discrimination compounds existing discrimination in hiring. As reported in the American Journal of Sociology, “while the ratio of callbacks for nonoffenders relative to ex-offenders for whites is 2:1, this same ratio for blacks is nearly 3:1. The effect of a criminal record is thus 40% larger for blacks than for whites.”¹⁷

Campaigns across the country for fair chance hiring and “Ban the Box” legislation aim to help eliminate at least this initial barrier to employment for those with conviction records. Over 100 cities and 20 states have enacted fair chance and “Ban the Box” legislation, and President Obama recently took a first step toward changes at the federal level.¹⁸ These policies eliminate the inquiry into a person’s criminal history during the initial application phase, when it is most likely to impact employment decisions.¹⁹ Some jurisdictions do not check a person’s criminal history until a conditional offer is made, and other jurisdictions go a step further and only conduct a background check for certain positions.

However, the majority of legislation applies only to public employees. Only 21 jurisdictions out of over 120 that have adopted this policy apply this employment practice to private employers within that jurisdiction.²⁰ The majority of locations that have enacted these policies have only applied it to government positions, leaving many of the private employers able to discriminate against those with a conviction record.

Additionally, some ban the box laws have exemptions for certain jobs. For example, Jacksonville, Florida, exempts positions that require a physician’s license, positions that require membership in the state bar, and law enforcement or corrections positions²¹ — many of which may be high paying positions.

Even with these limitations, though, fair chance hiring and “Ban the Box” legislation can be an important step in removing barriers to employment for those with convictions.

“for nonmarijuana felony drug offenses, Latinos were 14 percent more likely than whites to receive plea offers including jail or prison time.”²⁴

The War on Drugs has exacerbated the problem, with higher sentences for the types of drugs more likely to be used by communities of color²⁵ and three strikes laws that leave judges with little to no discretion in sentencing.²⁶ Even misdemeanor drug offenses can restrict employment options, and these offenses can also bar access to food stamps, subsidized housing, and other support programs.²⁷ So, disproportionate convictions and harsher sentences for people of color not only impact their time in the criminal justice system, but restrict their ability to make ends meet years later.

The criminalization of poverty and resurgence of debtors’ prisons can also lead to convictions that impact employment and benefits, and like controlled substance arrests, disproportionately impact people of color. As discussed in the recent Alliance brief “Debtors’ Prisons Redux,” low-income communities

and communities of color are targeted for low-level citations, and those citations can quickly lead to high levels of debt to the courts.²⁸

In turn, these debts can lead to suspended drivers’ licenses and jail time. Additionally, some offenders may turn to other illegal activities to acquire the funds to pay off their court debts,²⁹ which can lead to more serious consequences and employment restrictions. And, as most offenders leave prison with some level of debt from fines, fees, restitution, and/or interest,³⁰ the ability to make ends meet is especially important to avoid a cycle of debt and prison.

INDIRECT EMPLOYMENT CONSEQUENCES OF CONVICTION RECORDS

While employment-related consequences of conviction records directly restrict employment through bans on employment or on specific licenses, there are also other consequences of having a conviction record that restrict a person’s ability to make ends meet. For example, a controlled substance conviction can cause a person to have his or her driver’s license revoked,³¹ preventing that person from getting to work, as can unpaid court fines and fees.³²

In addition, access to public housing and other public benefits can prove to be difficult to obtain. For some individuals, these benefits provide the stability they need in order to obtain and maintain employment.

In November 2015, the Department of Housing and Urban Development announced that arrest records cannot be used to deny affordable housing.³³ However, individuals can be barred from public housing programs including the Section 8 housing choice voucher program and Section 8 project-based rental assistance programs for certain convictions. Under federal law, a person who is subject to lifetime registration on a sex offender registry in any state is prohibited from all federally funded housing programs.³⁴ Drug and

alcohol use and abuse, as evidenced by, among other things, a recent controlled substance conviction or a pattern of controlled substance convictions, may also affect a person's ability to obtain housing.³⁵ In fact, entire families can be denied housing or evicted if one member has a drug conviction.³⁶

Research analyzing “the alcohol, drug, and criminal history provisions governing access to public housing”³⁷ of 40 housing authorities found that 37 ban applicants for drug-related activities for various lengths of time, 37 ban applicants for alcohol abuse or nonviolent criminal activity for various lengths of time, and two directly mention incarceration (without reference to the reason for incarceration) as a reason to exclude that applicant.³⁸

In addition to housing, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and food stamps (SNAP) benefits may be unavailable to individuals convicted of certain crimes. Federal law prohibits individuals who have been convicted for certain felony drug offenses from receiving these benefits.³⁹ However, states are allowed to modify or opt out of this lifetime ban policy.⁴⁰ Twelve states have adopted a lifetime ban for TANF benefits for individuals who have been convicted of a felony for possession, use or distribution of illegal drugs including Texas and Virginia; 27 states have modified disqualifications including California, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, Pennsylvania; and only 11 states and the District of Columbia have opted out of the ban entirely including Washington, Oregon, and New York.⁴¹ SNAP benefits are unavailable on a lifetime basis to individuals in 12 states including Virginia and 18 states have modified disqualifications including Connecticut, Idaho, Louisiana, Michigan, and Montana.⁴²

People coming out of prison also face hurdles in obtaining health insurance. Most states terminate Medicaid eligibility for people in prison,⁴³ so those who are eligible must begin the process anew once they are released, making it more likely there will be a gap in coverage. However, states can suspend coverage, instead of termination. Additionally, as is the case in legislation passed in New Mexico, Medicaid-eligible inmates can “be given the opportunity to apply before release.”⁴⁴ Such actions can help ensure that those leaving prison who are Medicaid-eligible have no gap in coverage.



NATIONAL FINDINGS

In addition to discrimination and barriers put in place by employers such as the criminal record check-box on employment applications, those with conviction records are often banned from employment in certain occupations and industries, many of which provide high-paying jobs.

All 50 states and Washington, D.C. have legislation restricting employment for those with felony conviction records (for any type of felony), as well as restrictions on employment for non-felony

convictions including controlled substances. These are in addition to mandatory restrictions for other types of misdemeanors, and discretionary restrictions for felonies and for specific types of misdemeanors,

DEFINITIONS

MANDATORY RESTRICTIONS ON EMPLOYMENT

In this report, mandatory restrictions on employment include three types of regulations: mandatory bans on types of employment; mandatory bans on professional licenses and certifications needed to access specific types of employment; and mandatory bans on business and related licenses needed to access specific types of employment. Restrictions are often on specific fields or places of business, such as nursing homes, but can also include specific occupations such as dentists or police officers.

OCCUPATION CATEGORIES

Because many regulations restrict fields rather than specific occupations, all regulations for 16 states and Washington, D.C. were coded with general occupational categories, rather than specific occupations. These categories are similar to those from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, with some differences to occupations in similar fields that would otherwise be in separate categories.

More information can be found in the Technical Notes section of this report.

which are not analyzed in this report. In total, there are over 6,000 mandatory employment restrictions for felonies, with an average of 123 restrictions per state.⁴⁵ Every state has at least 41 mandatory restrictions on record, and several states have more than two hundred restrictions. Louisiana far exceeds the number of restrictions in any other state, with 389 mandatory restrictions.

In addition to these restrictions, there are also 112 mandatory federal restrictions. These regulations restrict employment in a number of different occupations, such as employment as a nuclear power security personnel, employment requiring a loan originator license, employment or contract with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), and employment as a passport acceptance agent, among others.

TABLE 1

REGULATIONS RESTRICTING EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH A FELONY CONVICTION, BY STATE

JURISDICTION	RESTRICTION CATEGORY			TOTAL*
	EMPLOYMENT	OCCUPATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSE AND CERTIFICATION	BUSINESS LICENSE AND OTHER PROPERTY RIGHTS	
Alabama	93	52	34	101
Alaska	62	54	18	75
Arizona	113	88	45	133
Arkansas	115	56	33	120
California	94	94	67	171
Colorado	81	41	22	97
Connecticut	51	30	23	57
Delaware	114	83	37	129
District of Columbia	72	35	21	75
Florida	147	102	67	168
Georgia	86	59	48	147
Hawaii	37	16	19	41
Idaho	128	57	43	145
Illinois	143	77	122	258
Indiana	138	102	43	160
Iowa	50	28	37	74
Kansas	80	28	40	91
Kentucky	135	72	22	141
Louisiana	300	84	127	389
Maine	79	28	25	88
Maryland	87	40	35	109
Massachusetts	61	26	32	70
Michigan	64	34	32	94
Minnesota	62	34	33	78

TABLE 1 - CON'T

REGULATIONS RESTRICTING EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH A FELONY CONVICTION, BY STATE

JURISDICTION	RESTRICTION CATEGORY			TOTAL*
	EMPLOYMENT	OCCUPATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSE AND CERTIFICATION	BUSINESS LICENSE AND OTHER PROPERTY RIGHTS	
Mississippi	89	49	41	104
Missouri	100	48	31	110
Montana	57	35	19	61
Nebraska	100	62	37	112
Nevada	57	28	25	88
New Hampshire	222	128	95	240
New Jersey	96	53	51	125
New Mexico	43	39	35	88
New York	96	58	63	149
North Carolina	102	71	40	120
North Dakota	35	24	11	41
Ohio	220	118	65	224
Oklahoma	179	86	46	193
Oregon	88	47	38	100
Pennsylvania	72	34	43	119
Rhode Island	30	28	35	74
South Carolina	52	31	38	83
South Dakota	44	31	20	52
Tennessee	152	87	50	172
Texas	226	133	81	248
Utah	101	61	48	115
Vermont	39	19	21	41
Virginia	80	40	55	127
Washington	38	48	40	96
West Virginia	133	90	42	143
Wisconsin	100	83	88	161
Wyoming	79	27	13	83

*Because many regulations include restrictions in multiple restriction categories, totals do not reflect the sum of the three categories.

Source: American Bar Association Criminal Justice Section

While occupations that are banned vary some from state to state, there are some categories of occupations that come up in many states. Health care, law enforcement, and legal services – all relatively high-paying fields – are some of the most commonly restricted occupation categories.

These categories also include occupations in the top 60 occupations with the most projected job openings, like licensed vocational nurses, police officers, and lawyers.⁴⁶ Restrictions in these occupations can impose a significant burden and restrict higher-wage employment for those with conviction records.

TABLE 2

COMMONLY RESTRICTED OCCUPATION CATEGORIES

CATEGORY	AVERAGE WAGE*	NUMBER OF OPENINGS**	PERCENT OF OPENINGS WITH MEDIAN WAGE LESS THAN \$15 PER HOUR
Law Enforcement & Security	\$19.66	114,710	41.5%
Health Care	\$24.60	508,900	34.7%
Legal Services	\$42.72	33,390	0.0%

**Weighted average of median wages in all occupations within the BLS category most closely matching the Occupation Category

**Total number of projected openings in all occupations within the BLS category or categories most closely matching the Occupation Category

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Total number of
RESTRICTIONS
6,392





STATE FINDINGS

While every state in the country restricts employment in some way for those with felony convictions, specific restrictions vary by state. Additionally, non-felony convictions including those for controlled substances can also be cause for restriction from employment.

The following provides a more detailed look at the restrictions faced by those with felony convictions and controlled substance convictions in 16 states and in Washington, D.C. Additionally, stories from individuals with conviction records illustrate the difficulties faced when a conviction record stands in the way of making ends meet.

CALIFORNIA



Each year an average of nearly 93,000 people are released from prison in California. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In California, there are 171 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 67 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in California is Health Care, with 34 mandatory restrictions for any felony. Occupations restricted in that category include good-paying jobs like Licensed Vocational Nurses, which has a median wage of \$24.86 per hour.

Total number of
RESTRICTIONS

171



TABLE 3

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in California

CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Health Care	34
Gaming	14
Legal Services	13
Law Enforcement & Security	11
Transportation	5

CONNECTICUT



Each year an average of nearly 6,000 people are released from prison in Connecticut. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In Connecticut, there are 57 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 31 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in Connecticut is Law Enforcement & Security, with nine mandatory restrictions for any felony. Occupations restricted in that category include jobs like Security Guards, which has a median wage of \$13.35 per hour.

Total number of **RESTRICTIONS**

57



TABLE 4

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in Connecticut

CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Law Enforcement & Security	9
Gaming	6
Bail Bonds	5
Government	3
Charitable Organizations	3
Legal Services	3

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



Regulations in the District of Columbia make it nearly impossible for many people with conviction records to find good paying employment.

In the District of Columbia, there are 75 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 53 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in the District of Columbia is Health Care, with 13 mandatory restrictions for any felony. Occupations restricted in that category include good-paying jobs like Pharmacists, which has a median wage of \$55.19 per hour.

Total number of **RESTRICTIONS**

75



TABLE 5

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in District of Columbia

CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Health Care	13
Law Enforcement & Security	7
Legal Services	5
Government	4
Education	4

FLORIDA



Each year an average of nearly 33,000 people are released from prison in Florida. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In Florida, there are 168 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 77 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in Florida is Banking, with 19 mandatory restrictions for any felony. Occupations restricted in that category include good-paying jobs like Mortgage Brokers, which has an average salary of \$49,995 per year in Florida, according to PayScale.⁴⁷

Total number of
RESTRICTIONS
168



TABLE 6

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in Florida

CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Banking & Financial Services	19
Health Care	17
Legal Services	15
Insurance	15
Law Enforcement & Security	12



“People weren’t judging me based on who I was at the time, but instead on who I had been – over a decade prior.”

CHARLES MCKINNEY | EATONVILLE, FLORIDA

In 1972 I ended my first and only period of incarceration. When I walked out of prison I brought a life sentence of limited opportunities with me. Back then people referred to men like me as ‘jailbirds’, and as a ‘jailbird’ I knew it would be tough to find someone willing to take a chance on employing me.

My expectations were low and I set my sights on entry level, manual labor jobs where the need for workers was great enough for them to overlook a prior conviction. I was able to find a job working in construction, and was given an interview on the spot, never having to fill out an application or have a background check done.

The wages were low and the work was hard, but I was happy to have an opportunity to work. I saw every opportunity, no matter how small, as a reward from God for not turning back to the lifestyle that got me in trouble.

Several years in the construction field began to take a toll on my body and I began to look for a job where I could get off my feet. It was during this transitional period that I first encountered the criminal conviction question on job applications and began to understand what everyone in prison had warned me about. People weren't judging me based on who I was at the time, but instead on who I had been – over a decade prior.

After several rejections and having countless applications ignored, I was finally able to land a job as a truck driver. The company I drove for was willing to take a chance on me and they never regretted it.

In 2011 I had the opportunity to take over our family business from my parents and I now own Trinity Laundry in the small town of Eatonville, Florida. Eatonville is the oldest African American town in the nation and the childhood home of author Zora Neale Hurston. While the town is rich in history, it is severely lacking in opportunities.

With over a quarter of the town living below the poverty line, running a business in Eatonville is about more than making money. I want to provide a service that my community needs at a reasonable price and offer a friendly ear to my customers and neighbors. Every time I unlock the doors of the Laundromat in the morning, I am reminded that while I made a big mistake 40 years ago, good things can still happen to me.

IDAHO



Each year an average of more than 4,000 people are released from prison in Idaho. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In Idaho, there are 145 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 24 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in Idaho is Health Care, with 71 mandatory restrictions for any felony. Occupations restricted in that category include good-paying jobs like Veterinarians, which has a median wage of \$37.98 per hour.

Total number of
RESTRICTIONS

145



TABLE 7

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in Idaho

CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Health Care	71
Child Care	16
Food & Beverage	7
Law Enforcement & Security	5
Accounting	5

ILLINOIS



Each year an average of more than 30,000 people are released from prison in Illinois. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In Illinois, there are 258 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 88 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in Illinois is Law Enforcement & Security, with 29 mandatory restrictions for any felony. Occupations restricted in that category include good-paying jobs like Police Officers, which has a median wage of \$34.43 per hour. Additionally, there are 43 regulations restricting employment with government agencies and serving on commissions and other elected offices, such as serving on the fire protection district board.

Total number of
RESTRICTIONS

258



TABLE 8

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in Illinois

CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Law Enforcement & Security	29
Health Care	22
Gaming	20
Education	12
Banking & Financial Services	8

LOUISIANA



Each year an average of more than 17,000 people are released from prison in Louisiana. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In Louisiana, there are 389 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 102 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in Louisiana is Health Care, with 58 mandatory restrictions for any felony. Occupations restricted in that category include good-paying jobs like Registered Nurses, which has a median wage of \$28.29 per hour. Additionally, there are 151 regulations that restrict serving on commissions and other elected offices, such as serving on the Veterans' Affairs Commission.

Total number of
RESTRICTIONS

389



TABLE 9

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in Louisiana

CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Health Care	58
Gaming	14
Government	12
Law Enforcement & Policing	12
Notary Services	4

MAINE



Each year an average of nearly 1,000 people are released from prison in Maine. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In Maine, there are 88 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 33 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in Maine is Health Care, with 34 mandatory restrictions for any felony. Occupations restricted in that category include good-paying jobs like Chiropractors, which has a median wage of \$30.22 per hour.

Total number of
RESTRICTIONS

88



TABLE 10

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in Maine

CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Health Care	40
Law Enforcement & Security	7
Education	3
Banking & Financial Services	3
Animal Control	3

MASSACHUSETTS



Each year an average of nearly 3,000 people are released from prison in Massachusetts. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In Massachusetts, there are 70 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 22 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment categories with the most restrictions in Massachusetts are Gaming and Law Enforcement & Security, with nine mandatory restrictions each for any felony. Occupations restricted include good-paying jobs like Police Officer, which has a median wage of \$29.14 per hour.

Total number of **RESTRICTIONS**

70



TABLE 11

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in Massachusetts

CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Gaming	9
Law Enforcement & Security	9
Government	5
Health Care	5
Education	3

MICHIGAN



Each year an average of more than 12,000 people are released from prison in Michigan. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In Michigan, there are 94 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 74 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in Michigan is Health Care, with 14 mandatory restrictions for any felony. Occupations restricted in that category include those involving employment or contract work at a nursing home, county medical care facility, hospice, hospital, home for the aged, or home health agency, many of which pay good wages. Additionally, there are 14 regulations that restrict serving on commissions and other elected offices, such as serving in the state legislature.

Total number of **RESTRICTIONS**

94



TABLE 12

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in Michigan

CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Health Care	14
Legal Services	9
Law Enforcement & Security	9
Gaming	6
Transportation	5

MONTANA



Each year an average of more than 2,000 people are released from prison in Montana. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In Montana, there are 61 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 46 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in Montana is Law Enforcement & Security, with nine mandatory restrictions for any felony. Occupations restricted in that category include good-paying jobs like public safety officers, including Police Officers,⁴⁸ which has a median wage of \$22.79 per hour.

Total number of **RESTRICTIONS**

61



TABLE 13

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in Montana

CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Law Enforcement & Security	9
Transportation	5
Gaming	4
Food & Beverage	3
Legal Services	3
Health Care	3
Child Care	3



The most difficult moment I faced checking ‘The Box’ was on my college application.

MELISSA SMYLIE | GREAT FALLS, MONTANA

Montana has “The Box” – and I am all too familiar with it. I am one of the jobseekers required to check that box every time I apply for a job. I am a formerly incarcerated, returning citizen.

The most difficult moment I faced checking “The Box” was on my college application. Most

people don’t even bother applying for college – a felony conviction makes it nearly impossible to get into college.

I had to provide three letters of recommendation; a complete criminal background report – including traffic tickets – and I had to meet with the dean for

an interview to size me up. I was finally accepted and I am proud to say that I am a top student. I will graduate this year with a degree in paralegal studies and a minor in political science.

I've been out of prison for six years and work hard to be an example to my two daughters: one is grown and one is in middle school. Both know that their mom is hard working, serious, and firmly dedicated to justice and registering people to vote – especially parolees, low-wage workers and low-income single parents like myself.

In Great Falls, there are employers who hire only parolees because they can take advantage of them. Wage theft is a big problem. One employer regularly changes workers' hours at the end of the week, even though employees punch a time clock. Sometimes, they are told to punch out early, but finish their work – which can take another hour or so.

Even though I was promised an assistant manager position, I was passed over twice because I refused to work off the clock. By under-reporting hours, the store manager makes his labor costs look better and he enjoys a larger profit-sharing bonus – at a cost to his employees.

Most returning citizens are unaware of their voting rights. I help register voters at the prerelease center. In Montana, you can vote as long as you're not in prison. The center director scolded me once for helping people understand their rights. She said: "We have to supervise these people. Why would we advocate for them?" That is easy to answer: "Because it's the law and they are eligible!"

People need to know the facts and the challenges of being a returning citizen. My suffering was a sacrifice I needed to make to improve the lives of others.

NEW YORK



Each year an average of nearly 24,000 people are released from prison in New York. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In New York, there are 149 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 643 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in New York is Health Care, with 16 mandatory restrictions for any felony. Occupations restricted in that category include good-paying jobs like Pharmacists,¹ which has a median wage of \$57.10 per hour.

¹ The regulation restricting those with felony convictions from pharmacist-related employment is not limited to Pharmacists, nor does it include all Pharmacists. The regulation only pertains to employment with manufacturers or distributors of controlled substances not intended for human or animal consumption.

Total number of
RESTRICTIONS

149



TABLE 14

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in New York

CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Health Care	16
Law Enforcement & Security	15
Legal Services	10
Gaming	10
Education	5
Hazardous Materials	5



I have probably applied for well over 100 jobs in the last year. I know that at least 40 of them turned me down because of my race – and my record.

EARL T. EDWARDS, SR. | KINGSTON, NEW YORK

I am a 43-year-old African American man born in Harlem. I have been living in Kingston since 2004. I was just a year away from earning my business degree from Marist College in Poughkeepsie when I had to serve a one-year sentence at Adirondack Correctional Facility. I was released last September, and have been struggling since to regain my employment stability – and my life.

I have probably applied for well over 100 jobs in the last year. I know that at least 40 of them turned me down because of my race – and my record.

I live in a studio apartment and work as a self-employed event coordinator. I love working with people, and this job makes good use of my business skills – but the work is sporadic and I have to scramble to make ends meet financially.

On nights when I don't have events I work as a security guard at our local bars. I try to do some landscaping work during the day when possible. Sometimes that means I get to bed at 3 a.m. and have to be up at 7 a.m. to get a ride to the landscaping job. I don't have a car, so I have to rely on walking, rides, and borrowing cars from friends and family to get to my jobs. Working nights also puts me at risk of violating my curfew – and my parole.

I can make up to \$800 a night working events, and

\$120 a night on the security jobs. The landscaping work pays about \$10 or \$15 an hour. It sounds like a good income, but I can't count on the availability of work.

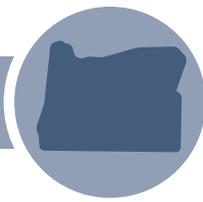
A good portion of my income goes to child support for my four children. The rest goes to rent and utilities, then whatever little bit is left goes for hygiene items and laundry. As a single man and formerly incarcerated, I don't qualify for Section 8 housing, however, I do get about \$400 a month toward rent – which is about half of the total cost per month. I get Medicaid and food stamps as well.

It's impossible to save for emergencies – sometimes just making it through to the next day is an emergency. I'd love to continue my education and become a substance abuse counselor, but tuition is impossible.

Just to have a single, consistent job that pays a living wage and lets me get home earlier would really help bring some stability into my life, relieve the stress and depression I feel, and let me provide more financial security for my kids.

We are dealt these cards in life and the system is fixed, so you have to figure out how to work around it. You have to put yourself into a better position to win.

OREGON



Each year an average of nearly 5,000 people are released from prison in Oregon. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In Oregon, there are 100 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 77 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in Oregon is Health Care, with 23 mandatory restrictions for any felony. Occupations restricted in that category include good-paying jobs like Mental Health Counselors, which has a median wage of \$24.25 per hour.

Total number of
RESTRICTIONS
100



TABLE 15

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in New York	
CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Health Care	23
Transportation	10
Child Care	6
Gaming	5
Law Enforcement & Security	4
Insurance	4
Legal Services	4

It's been more than 10 years since I was incarcerated and returned to society and it's been a real struggle finding employment.

EMANUEL PRICE | PORTLAND, ORE.

My name is Emanuel Price and I live in Portland, Ore. When I was 19 years old and just finishing up my sophomore year in college, I did something stupid, got caught, and went to prison. I served four-and-a-half years in Oregon prisons before being released. Even though this crime was 19

years in my past, it still haunts me today.

I work so hard now, to take responsibility for what happened, and to also make the best of my life after my conviction. It's been years since I was incarcerated and returned to society and it's been

a real struggle finding employment. Not because I'm ill-equipped or not qualified, but because my background inhibits my forward progress.

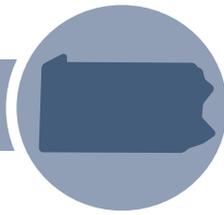
Even after I continued my education and was trained in conflict resolution, my criminal record held me back from finding a job that even paid minimum wage, much less the living wage I needed to support my family.

There were so many times when I would fill out a job application and as soon as I turned it in, I could read the body language when they saw that

I had a criminal record. I could see the look on their face. I knew that look—I wasn't going to get that job – I wasn't even going to get an interview. And this cycle repeated over and over for ten long, challenging years.

Eventually I decided to start my own non-profit, Second Chances Are For Everyone. I know my experience isn't unique, and that everyone who has served their time is just looking for a fair chance to find a job with a decent wage that allows us to take care of ourselves and our families.

PENNSYLVANIA



Each year an average of more than 18,000 people are released from prison in Pennsylvania. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In Pennsylvania, there are 119 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 73 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in Pennsylvania is Law Enforcement & Security, with 20 mandatory restrictions for any felony. Occupations restricted in that category include good-paying jobs like Police Officer, which has a median wage of \$28.92 per hour.

Total number of
RESTRICTIONS

119



TABLE 16

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in Pennsylvania	
CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Law Enforcement & Security	20
Gaming	19
Transportation	16
Government	10
Legal Services	5

TEXAS



Each year an average of nearly 73,000 people are released from prison in Texas. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In Texas, there are 248 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 75 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in Texas is Health Care, with 55 mandatory restrictions for any felony. Occupations restricted in that category include good-paying jobs like Optometrists, which has a median wage of \$46.82 per hour.

Total number of
RESTRICTIONS

248



TABLE 17

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in Pennsylvania	
CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Health Care	55
Law Enforcement & Security	15
Legal Services	11
Education	10
Government	8

VIRGINIA



Each year an average of more than 12,000 people are released from prison in Virginia. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In Virginia, there are 127 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 76 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in Virginia is Education, with 34 mandatory restrictions for any felony. Occupations restricted in that category include any public or private school employment, which includes good-paying jobs like Secondary School Teachers, which has a median wage of \$27.78 per hour.

Total number of
RESTRICTIONS

127



TABLE 18

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in Virginia

CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Education	10
Child Care	9
Transportation	9
Law Enforcement & Security	8
Real Estate	6
Legal Services	6



I'm qualified to do more, but the job market and the way it's set up – your background can affect employment.

KOREY JOHNSON | PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA

I am an African American husband and father. I have a wife and four children – three boys and a girl. I have lived in Prince William County, Virginia for 25 years -- my mom and brother live here, and my family is settled here. But, it has been difficult for me to find work here because of my criminal history.

I plan to eventually go to law school and get a degree in either civil law or constitutional law. But for now I work at a restaurant in Maryland where I'm the assistant general manager. I'm qualified to do more, but the job market and the way its set up – your background can affect employment.

My first experience with the law came over a bounced check of \$19. I paid off the fines, but I missed my court date. Since Virginia has “mandatory minimums,” I was given a 10-day sentence. It was the first time I came in contact with the system.

I had more trouble later. I ended up with three convictions of Driving While Intoxicated within 10 years, which is an automatic felony in Virginia. My driver’s license was suspended because I couldn’t pay child support, which I couldn’t pay because I was unemployed, in part because of my existing criminal record.

I’ve done my time, but I still have issues with background checks; some employers used Lexus Nexus or Insight to check my background, which has prevented me from getting a lot of jobs.

I also still have a very restricted driver’s license; I can only drive an hour in the morning to get to work and an hour at night to go home. I have an hour commute from Virginia to Maryland, so there aren’t any options to go anywhere else. It would be great if I could take public transportation to work, but it’s just not feasible.

The people in this community are great – but the over-policing is a huge problem. I have been stopped 56 times by the police since I have lived here. Every time I get in the car, I fear that I’m going to be stopped or harassed. It’s a huge stress factor.

We even had to put cameras in my van because of the constant harassment. I’m not sure why they do it, maybe it’s retaliation because I’ve filed complaints.

I speak out about issues. What’s the point of having a light if you keep it under the table? If you have a light you have to bring it to the top of the hill and let it shine on everything.

We need to speak out about the need to ban the box on job applications. Our governor in Virginia has taken good steps for state job applications, but we need all employers to follow that lead.

We need our candidates and our elected officials to be confronted with those issues and speak up about them – along with racial profiling and better wages – or nothing is ever going to change.

WASHINGTON



Each year an average of more than 18,000 people are released from prison in Washington. State regulations make it nearly impossible for many of them, and others with conviction records, to find good paying employment.

In Washington, there are 96 mandatory restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions. People with controlled substance convictions are subject to 65 mandatory employment restrictions.

The employment category with the most restrictions in Washington is Health Care, with 15 mandatory restrictions for any felony. In that category, people with felony convictions are ineligible for temporary practice permits for a variety of good-paying jobs, including Optometrists, which has a median wage of \$50.12 per hour.

Total number of
RESTRICTIONS

96



TABLE 19

Categories of Employment with the Most Restrictions in Virginia

CATEGORY	# OF RESTRICTIONS
Health Care	15
Banking & Financial Services	7
Legal Services	6
Law Enforcement & Security	6
Transportation	6



Some places I applied to were direct in their rejection, others were more subtle.

GREGORY BORIS | SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

When I was released from prison last August, I was determined to turn my life around. I had served for the last 12 years and had resolved to learn from past mistakes and make something of myself. I knew it would be hard, especially for me

because I have gang tattoos on my face and on one hand.

I was upfront with potential employers, mostly because my tattoos generally bring up certain

questions. But also, I didn't want to hide my past. Some places I applied to were direct in their rejection, others were more subtle.

In all, I applied to dozens of jobs for weeks without anything to show for it. Some who leave prison would have given up by this time and returned to their old ways. That's how so many people end up right back where they started: behind bars.

I'm estranged from my family. I still speak to them and they know that I'm out of prison, but I let them down so many times their trust will have to be regained. For now, I am on my own.

Luckily my story is on its way to having a happy ending. I found someone who was willing to give me a chance and let me prove myself. I cook on a Hawaiian food truck. They liked me so much I also cook in the same owner's restaurant. Both the truck and the restaurant are full-time jobs so all I do is work. It's exhausting, but I'm happy to be looking at a better future.

It is still very much an uphill battle, as it is for so many people who have served time, because of the way the system is set up. It's a battle I am taking one day at a time.

RECOMMENDATIONS



In states across the country, the consequences of a conviction record continue long after release from prison. The following tools can help ensure that those with a conviction record have a fair chance at finding a living wage job.

Eliminate lifetime legislative bans to employment.

Lifetime bans to employment in specific occupations only serve to keep people with records from rebuilding their lives, especially when the bans have no connection to the offense and there have not been repeated offenses. Eliminating lifetime bans would give people with records a better chance at reintegrating into society and eventually finding a good paying job.

Review and/or remove other mandatory legislative restrictions to employment.

Mandatory bans, especially those that ban anyone with a felony conviction, can significantly impact the ability of people with conviction records to find stable, high-paying employment. This is especially true for bans that apply to all felonies, regardless of whether the felony has any relation to the occupation in question. Eliminating mandatory bans would, at minimum, give employers more discretion and allow those who have served their time a fair shot at making ends meet.

Ban the Box: remove inquiries into convictions for public and private employment at the state and federal level. Eliminating the conviction history checkbox on employment applications can significantly increase the chance of those with records receiving interviews

and, ultimately, jobs. While Ban the Box policies do not prevent employers from using background checks to influence hiring decisions, such policies can help ensure that those with records are not discriminated against from the beginning of the employment process. Eliminating the conviction history checkbox from applications for employment with the federal government and for federal contractors would be a significant step in eliminating employment discrimination for those with conviction records.

Implement strong enforcement of Ban the Box policies.

Without enforcement and a structure for processing complaints, many employers will continue to discriminate against those with records by including an inquiry into conviction records on employment applications. Consequences should be strong enough to deter employers from violating the ordinance. Such consequences can include things like cancellation of government contracts, lawsuits (if the ordinance applies to private employers), and/or significant fines.

Reform legal financial obligation (LFO) policies.

Legal financial obligations, including court fees and fines as well as fees assessed during incarceration, can be a significant financial burden upon release

from prison. Reforms including limiting the amount of LFOs, including automatic fees; capping interest rates applied to outstanding LFOs; and establishing clear criteria for determining ability to pay⁴⁹ could help ensure that such fines and fees do not serve as an additional barrier for those with conviction records to making ends meet.

Increase the minimum wage to at least \$15 per hour and eliminate the tipped minimum wage. Nearly half of all jobs in the country pay less than \$15 per hour, so increasing the minimum wage and eliminating the tipped minimum wage will help workers in any job. Until other policies are amended to ensure that those with conviction records are not barred from employment in traditionally higher-paying jobs, a higher base wage would help those who find a job stay out of poverty.

Invest in businesses that pay high wages and employ those with criminal records. Federal, state, and local contracts should be tied to wages and ensure that contracted workers are paid enough to make ends meet. Additionally, though, subsidies should go to

companies that either make an explicit effort to hire those with conviction records or that have structures in place to prevent discrimination against those with conviction records. Contracted companies that do not meet wage requirements and/or are found to discriminate against those with conviction records should lose their contracts.

Ensure that those with conviction records are eligible for safety net programs. While some people with conviction records have family or other support structures to help them get by until they find employment, many have no support upon release. Additionally, because many can only find low-wage employment, additional supports like subsidized housing are still necessary. When safety net programs like housing vouchers and food stamps exclude those with conviction records, it can make it impossible for those with records to even scrape by, let alone find any measure of financial security. Additionally, those who are eligible for benefits such as Medicaid and food stamps should be able to enroll prior to release.

CONCLUSION



For the 70 million adults with a serious misdemeanor or felony arrest or conviction record and the hundreds of thousands more each year released from prison, their record can be a life sentence of poverty and low wages. Legislation banning employment in specific occupations only serves to make it more difficult for those with records to rebuild their lives after leaving prison.

Instead of pushing those with conviction records to the margins, and preventing them from making ends meet, policies should help give all workers, including those who have been incarcerated, a fair shot at financial stability.

TECHNICAL NOTES

EMPLOYMENT RESTRICTIONS ANALYSIS

Restricted occupation categories was completed based on data from the American Bar Association Criminal Justice Section's National Inventory of the Collateral Consequences of Criminal Convictions.⁵⁰ Counts of restrictions by state and detailed analyses were based on mandatory restrictions for all felonies in the following database categories: Employment; Occupational and professional license and certification; and business license and other property rights.

OCCUPATION CATEGORY ANALYSIS

Occupation categories were developed from the employment restriction data for 16 states and Washington, D.C. Occupations were coded by field, rather than by activity to produce broad categories that differ from other occupational or industry categories, such as those from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For example, security guards, police officers, and security alarm technicians are in the same category (Law Enforcement and Security).

JOB OPENINGS ANALYSIS

Job openings include the following:

- Job openings due to growth — the result of new jobs being created by new or existing firms.
- Job openings due to replacement — the result of people retiring, entering school or the military, moving across state boundaries, changing occupations, or otherwise leaving the occupation in which they currently work.

The analysis does not include job openings that result from people changing employers but remaining in the

same occupation, since these are largely invisible to the average job seeker. Also not included, for similar reasons, are job openings for unpaid family workers and self-employment.

Though occupation categories in this report do not exactly match those by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of job openings for Law Enforcement & Security, Health Care, and Legal Services are based on the most comparable categories from Occupational Employment Projections 2012-2022 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

AVERAGE MEDIAN WAGE ANALYSIS

Wage analysis for Law Enforcement & Security, Health Care, and Legal Services are based on the weighted average - based on number of projected openings - of median wages for occupations in the most comparable categories from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Allyson Fredericksen is a Senior Policy Analyst at the Alliance. Allyson has produced state and national reports on living wage standards, student debt, Medicaid expansion, women's access to healthcare, and the foreclosure crisis. Her research has been featured in local and national media outlets including the New Yorker, Bloomberg BNA, the Huffington Post, Seattle Times, Puget Sound Business Journal, Portland Business Journal, and more. Allyson holds an M.A. in Policy Studies from the University of Washington with a focus on racial justice and the safety net. Her prior experience includes advocating for increased affordable housing and a strengthened safety net, and research on training outcomes for child care workers in Washington State.



Desiree Omli is a Policy Intern at the Alliance. Desiree is a graduate student in the Master of Public Administration program at Seattle University. Her focus is on public policy within the criminal justice system, specifically reentry, juvenile justice, and eliminating racial disparities. Desiree holds a B.A. in political science and communications from the University of Washington, and graduated cum laude from California Western School of Law. Prior to transitioning to public policy, Desiree worked at the San Diego Office of the Public Defender and at the Northwest Defenders Division in Seattle.



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