



**Center for
Employment
Opportunities**

CEO'S POLICY AGENDA

Increase government investment in reentry employment.

The COVID-19 crisis exposed and compounded racial inequity in access to employment. CEO participants and other justice-involved individuals, many of whom have been essential workers throughout the pandemic, rely on programs like CEO that support them and their families during the pandemic, economic recovery, and beyond.

More government investment is needed to expand access to jobs for these individuals, particularly those that create an immediate on-ramp to employment.

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Invest government funds in transitional jobs.

Transitional jobs can uniquely address goals for both reducing incarceration and workforce investment. The immediate support for people when they come home is a critical bridge, helping them address their immediate financial needs, and create a pathway to permanent employment.

Government agencies can dedicate a portion of their contracted services budgets to provide transitional work opportunities for individuals coming home from incarceration, and can also allocate workforce funding to support transitional jobs programs.

Create a Justice-Impacted Individuals Program.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the nation's signature workforce development investment. Since justice-impacted individuals have unique barriers to employment, creating a WIOA program exclusively for this population will allow more opportunities for state and local workforce entities to prioritize and better serve these individuals. We must also replace the derogatory language in WIOA with "justice- or system-impacted individuals" to prioritize language focused on the workforce potential of this population rather than further stigmatizing them based on their conviction history.

Add WIOA formula funds for workforce programs designed for

A portion of WIOA formula funds must be spent on transitional jobs, pre-apprenticeship and training opportunities to bridge participants to more advanced training. Trainings must offer an entry point for lower-skilled individuals and provide financial support, strong employer partners, and instruction and credentialing targeted to the needs of the individuals coming home from incarceration.

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Expand access to the SNAP E&T program.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) is one of the few federal benefits that can directly reach most of the 600,000 individuals returning home from incarceration, providing food security as well as vocational training, work experience and support services.

Remove barriers to SNAP enrollment.

States and Congress must remove all restrictions that limit people with drug convictions from accessing SNAP. In addition, states must immediately implement new SNAP E&T regulations that allow subsidized employment and Congress must exclude subsidized employment income from SNAP eligibility tests. Additionally, FNS should allow E&T participants to automatically co-enroll in WIOA programming,



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