

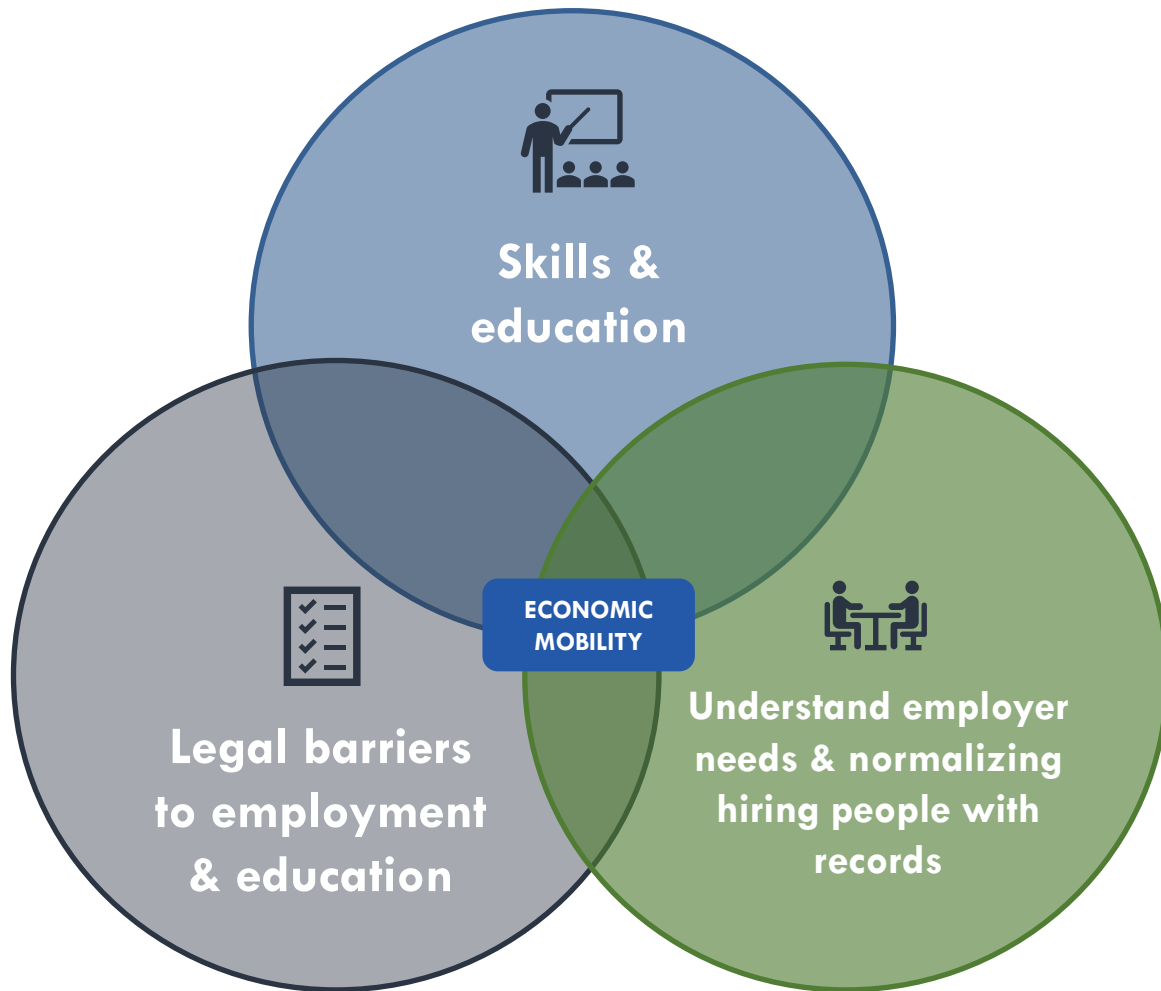


Justice Center

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

Improving Educational Opportunities and Outcomes

Nina Salomon

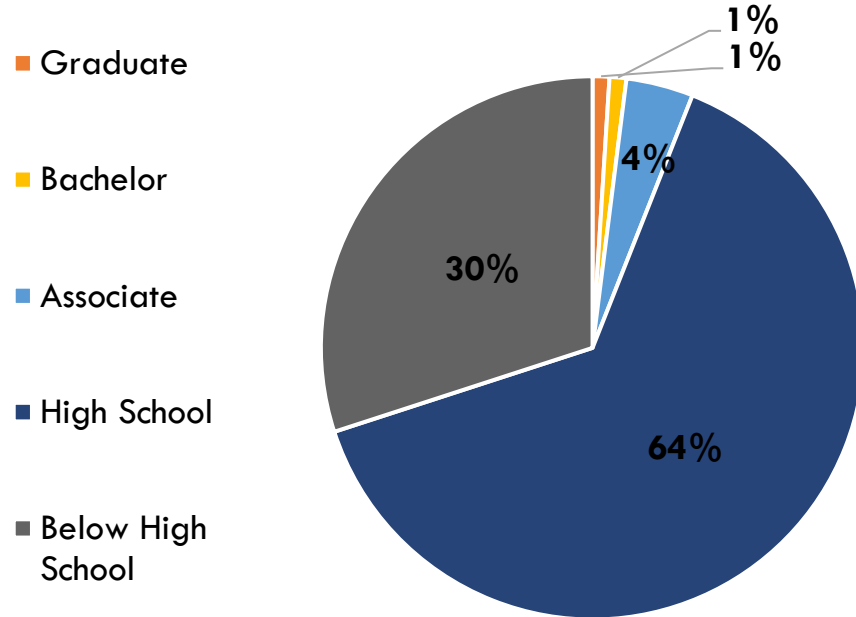


It is impossible to separate economic opportunity for people with records from economic opportunity for all.

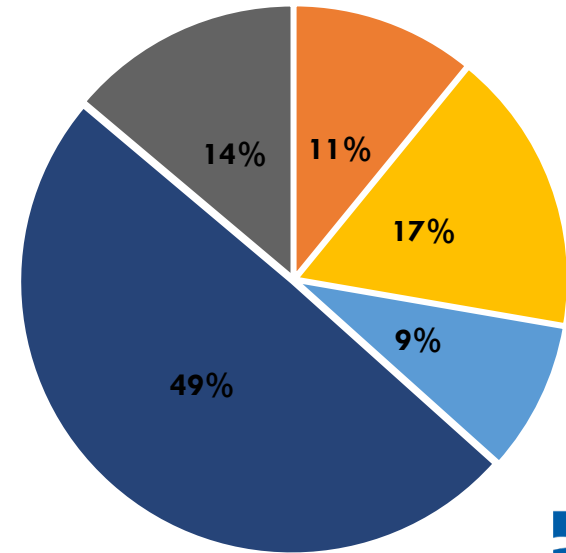
- Approximately 8–10 percent of adults have a felony criminal record.
- An estimated 6,410,000 persons were held in prisons or jails or were on probation or parole in 2018.
- At least 95 percent of people in state prisons will return home to their communities.

Adult Education Levels: Prison Population vs. General Population

U.S. Prison



U.S. Household



Workforce development and educational services are increasingly important for youth and young adults in the justice system as well.

- Poor Outcomes: Approximately 50% of youth on probation and 65% of youth returning from incarceration are re-arrested within one year.
- Aging Population: In 1997, 62% of youth in facilities were 16 and older; in 2015, it was 69%.
- Higher Needs: Youth in facilities are more likely to have a higher risk of reoffending, have fewer social supports, and be over-age and under-credited. As a result, the transition to independence and paid employment for these youth is increasingly important to their successful reentry.
- Economic Opportunity and Gaps: There is a low unemployment rate; growing need for high-skilled labor; but unemployment rates for young adults remain high (16-19 is 4 times the rate for 20+).

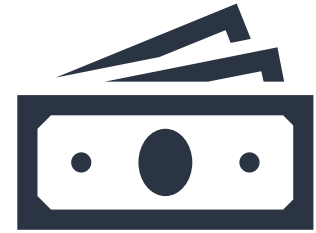
Economic opportunity for people with records is important for a thriving economy.



Family income is 22 percent lower while a father is incarcerated, and it remains lower even after release.



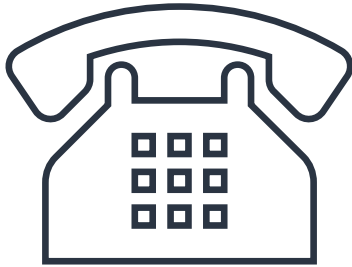
Annually, the economy loses approximately \$78 billion to \$87 billion in GDP when people with criminal records are unemployed or underemployed.



Only 55% of formerly incarcerated people report any earnings in the first full calendar year after their release, with the median earnings being \$10,090.¹

Incarceration can cause lifetime earnings to fall by up to 50%.²

Economic opportunity for people with records is important to advance racial equity.

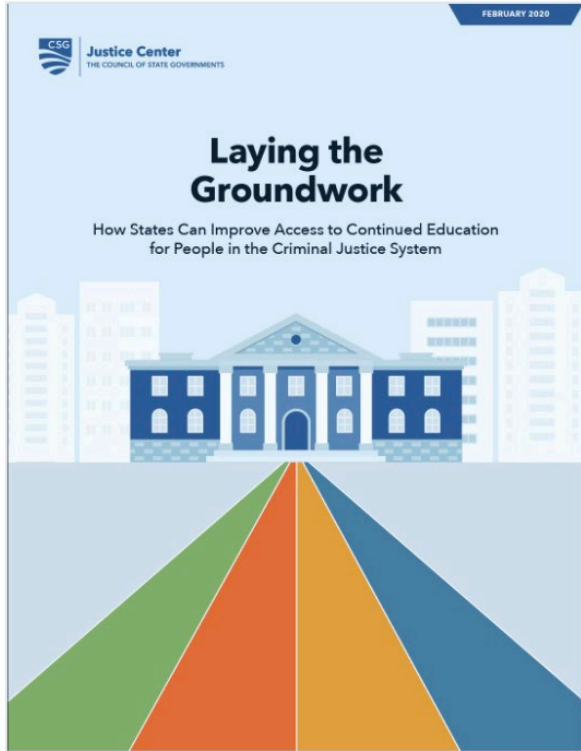


Black applicants *without* a criminal record are called back at lower rates than white applicants *with* a criminal record.



Black applicants with criminal records have a callback rate of only **5 percent.**

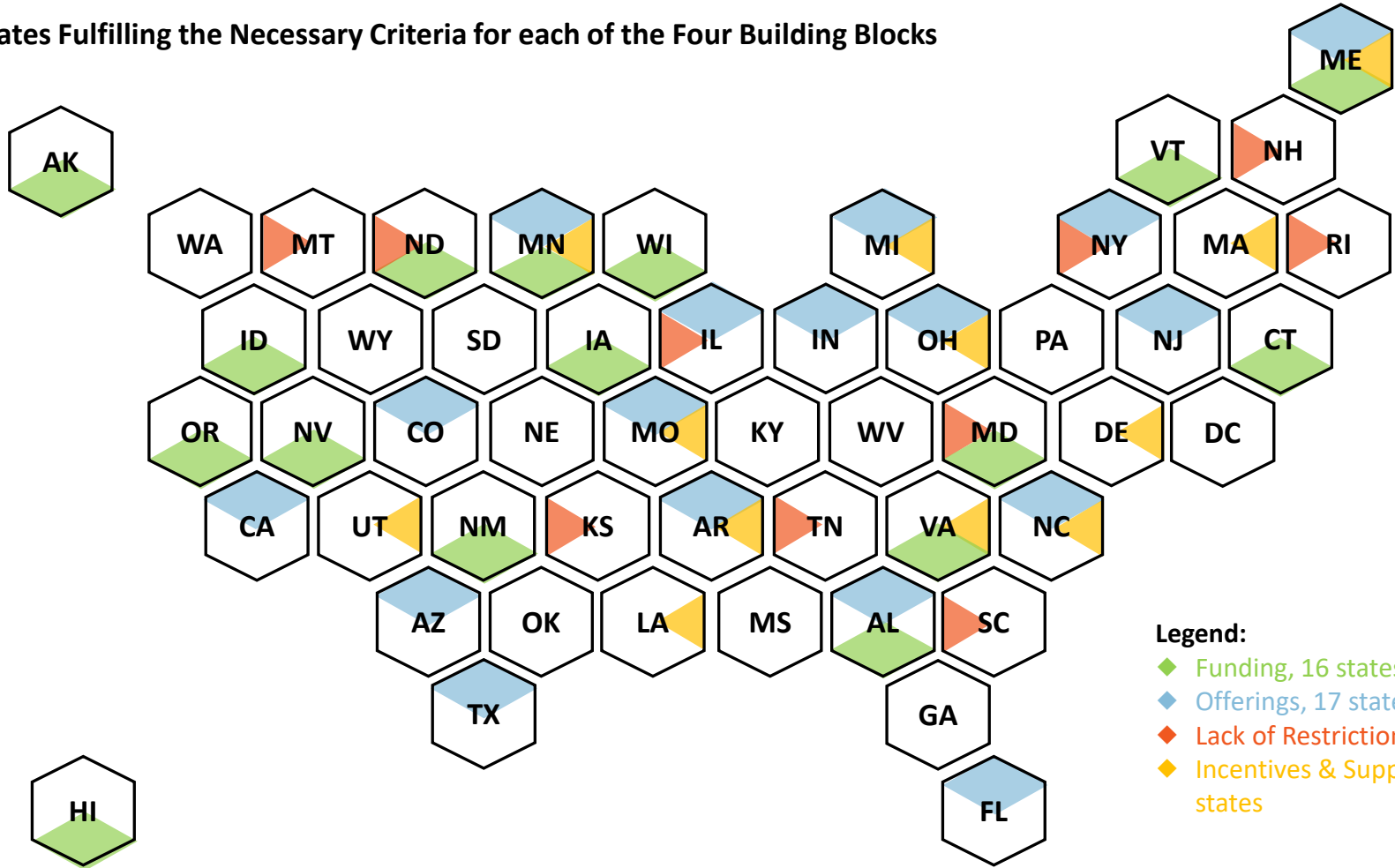
Barriers to Education



In 2020, the CSG Justice Center conducted a 50-state analysis of postsecondary education policy and practices. The study examined four fundamental building blocks to provide high-quality postsecondary education programs and services:

- Funding
- Offerings
- Lack of restrictions
- Incentives and supports

States Fulfilling the Necessary Criteria for each of the Four Building Blocks



Barriers to Employment

1. **Legal Barriers** or “collateral consequences” limit the types of occupations, licenses, and housing people with convictions can access - Nationally, 72 percent of all collateral consequences impact employment opportunities.
2. **Limited skills education** makes people returning home less attractive to prospective employers
3. **Bias** is an ongoing issue faced by people returning from incarceration when seeking employment – especially if they are Black.

Many states around the country are addressing these barriers and increasing educational opportunities for people with records.

- **Michigan** offers a range of CTE, associate, and bachelor's programming designed to prepare incarcerated individuals to earn credentials and obtain employment in high-demand fields in the community.
- **New York** does not have any statutory or administrative restrictions on postsecondary participation for incarcerated individuals, and all state universities have eliminated questions related to an applicants' criminal history and protects students from admission biases or unnecessary disclosures.
- **Wisconsin** has an inclusive state financial aid policy, with the Wisconsin Higher Education Aids Board explicitly seeking to promote educational opportunities for people in the criminal justice system by limiting restrictions for applicants who have drug-related convictions, and/or are incarcerated, and/or may be in default on a federally guaranteed student loan.

States are also expanding access to work for juveniles and adults with records.

- **Ohio's** law incorporates nearly all national best practices, including placing limits on the age of convictions that can be considered, prohibiting denial absent a “direct relationship” between a conviction and the licensed activity, and providing robust procedural protections.
- **Vermont** enacted clear standards for considering whether to deny a license based on criminal history, including the relationship between the crime and profession, evidence of rehabilitation, and passage of time since the commission of the offense.
- **Oregon** state leaders launched a new initiative in late August to improve connections to education and employment opportunities for people with criminal and juvenile records. A working group with representatives from a diverse range of stakeholders, including district attorneys, occupational licensing boards, defense bar, law enforcement, higher education, the Bureau of Labor & Industries, and the judicial department is tasked with leading this effort.
- CSG Justice Center created state playbooks to remove structural barriers to employment: <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/removing-structural-barriers/>

LEGAL BARRIERS

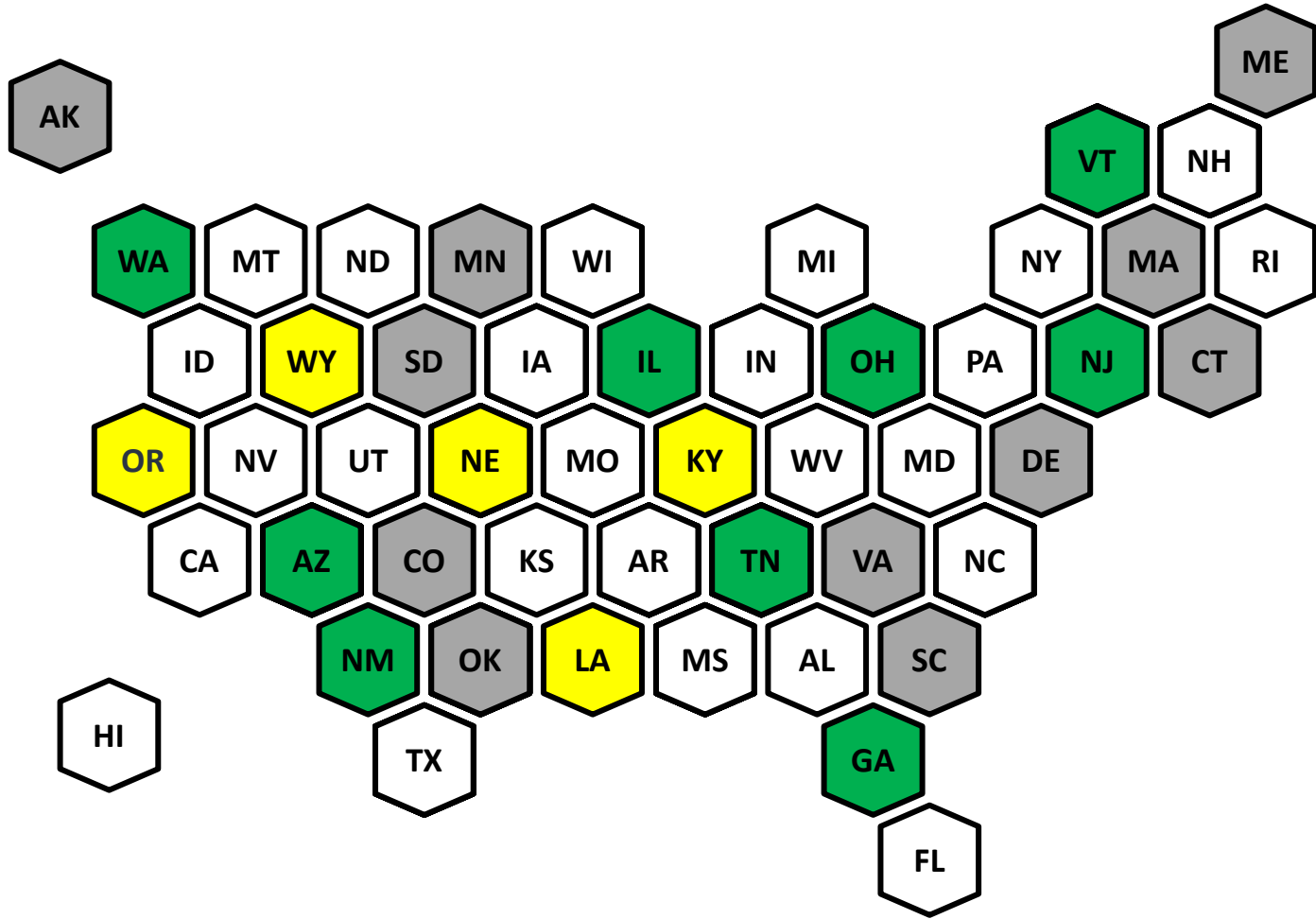
States that addressed legal barriers to work in

2021

 Passed Fair Chance Licensing Legislation (9)

 Passed Resolutions to Study the Issue (5)

 Legislative Champions Identified for 2022 (11)



Additional Resources

- <https://csgjusticecenter.org/projects/fair-chance-licensing/>
- <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/american-rescue-plan/>
- <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/juvenile-consequences/>
- <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/after-the-sentence-more-consequences/national-snapshot/>



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