

Empowering Justice-Impacted Citizens for Successful Job Interviews

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Connections. Communities.
Opportunities.

Learning Goals

Understand the unique challenges justice-impacted individuals face seeking employment

Gain insight into teaching practical communication techniques

Guidance in how to articulate their post-incarceration journey as a story of resilience, determination, and positive transformation

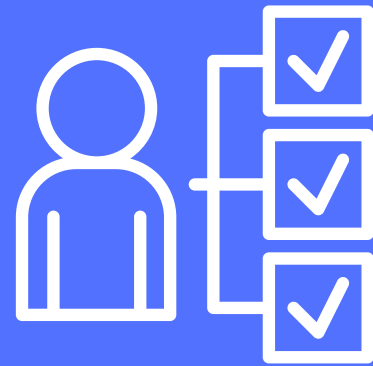




America's Reentry Crisis



■ Employment



Structure &
Responsibility



Self-reliance



Reduce Recidivism
& Desistance

Justice-involved citizens that find stable work are less likely to commit new offenses and return to prison

Barriers to Employment

Internal Barriers

- Job readiness, education, skills
- Criminal thinking, prosocial networks, self-identity
- Mental and physical health, substance abuse
- Family support, professional contacts
- Defensive Individualism

External Barriers/Collateral Consequences

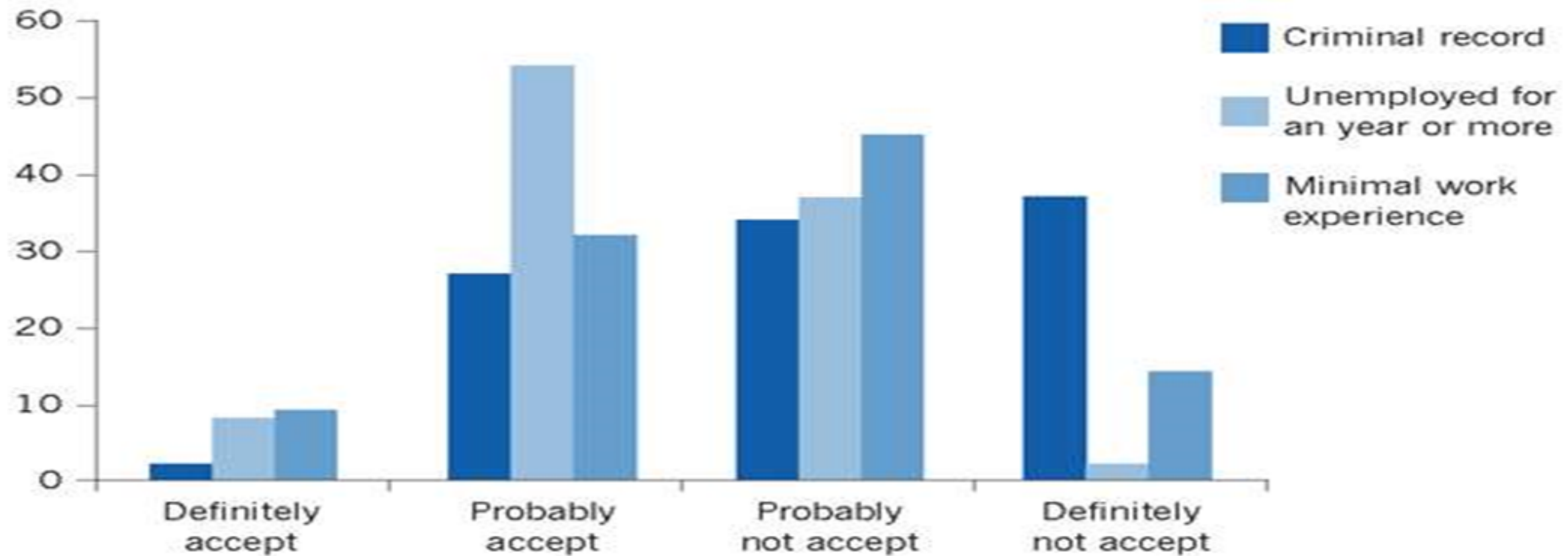
- Legal & racial employment discrimination
- Stigma
- Housing + transportation
- Extreme poverty
- Blanket bans



"Leaving incarceration is most often a transition from prison to poverty..." the median annual income is about half the federal poverty line, a striking level of extreme disadvantage."
Bruce Wester, Homeward

Employer Willingness

Figure 3. Employer willingness to consider different types of applicants (in %)



Source: Raphael, S. *The New Scarlet Letter? Negotiating the US Labor Market with a Criminal Record*. Kalamazoo, MI: Upjohn Press, 2014; Figure 4.1. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. Available at: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/legalcode>

Employer Fears

1 Employer perceptions are shaped by personal experience and media reporting

2 Employers adopt a probing interview approach when considering hiring justice-involved citizens

3 Employers note the following fears about hiring justice-involved citizens

- Need help integrating into society
- Not work ready
- Lack soft-skills
- Lack trustworthiness
- Have a high risk/cost
- Fear of violence



Top Reasons Employers Hired Justice Involved Citizens

Matched job requirements

Interviewing skills

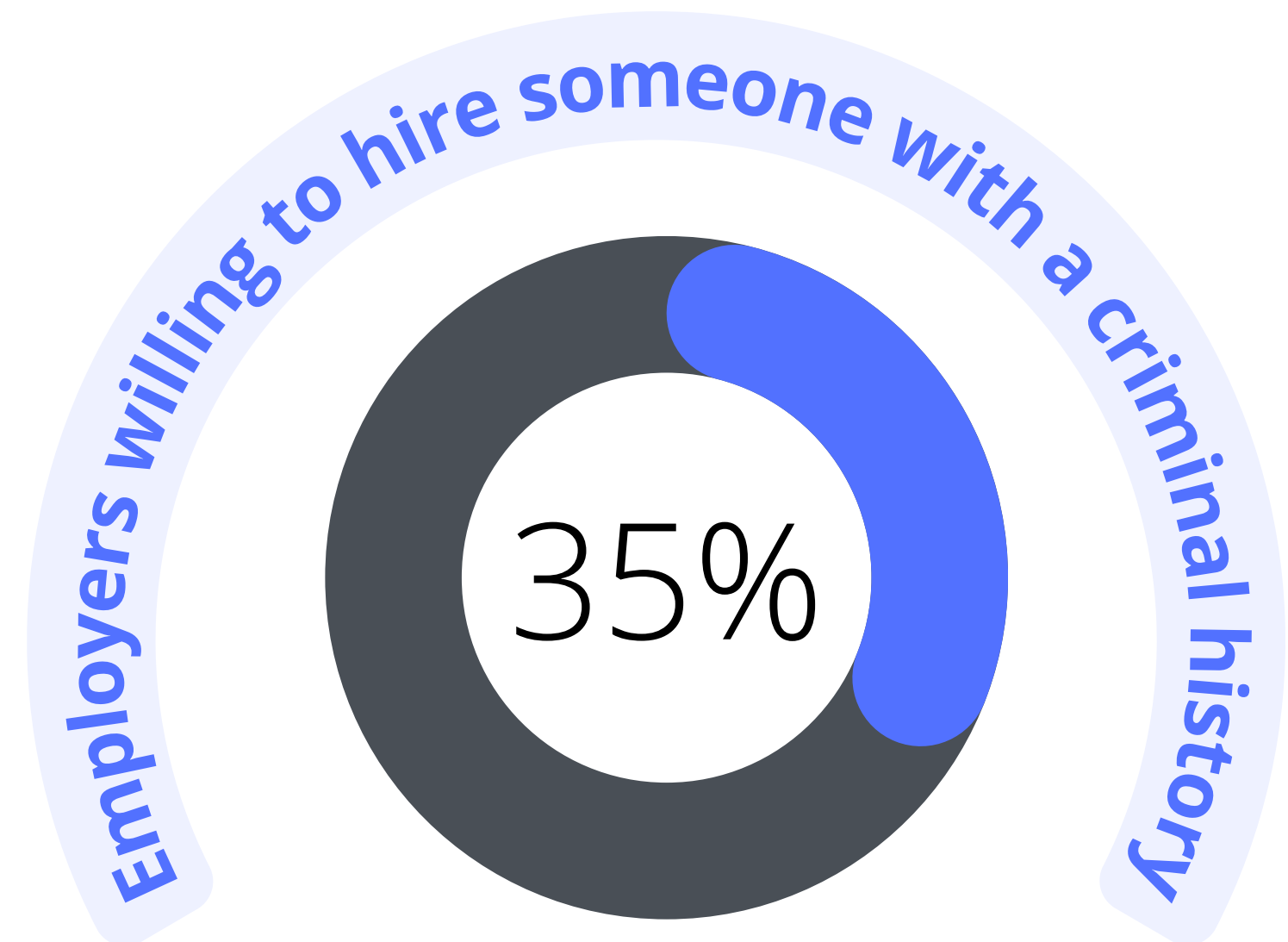
Affiliation with an
employee

Belief person had changed

Examination of last
conviction

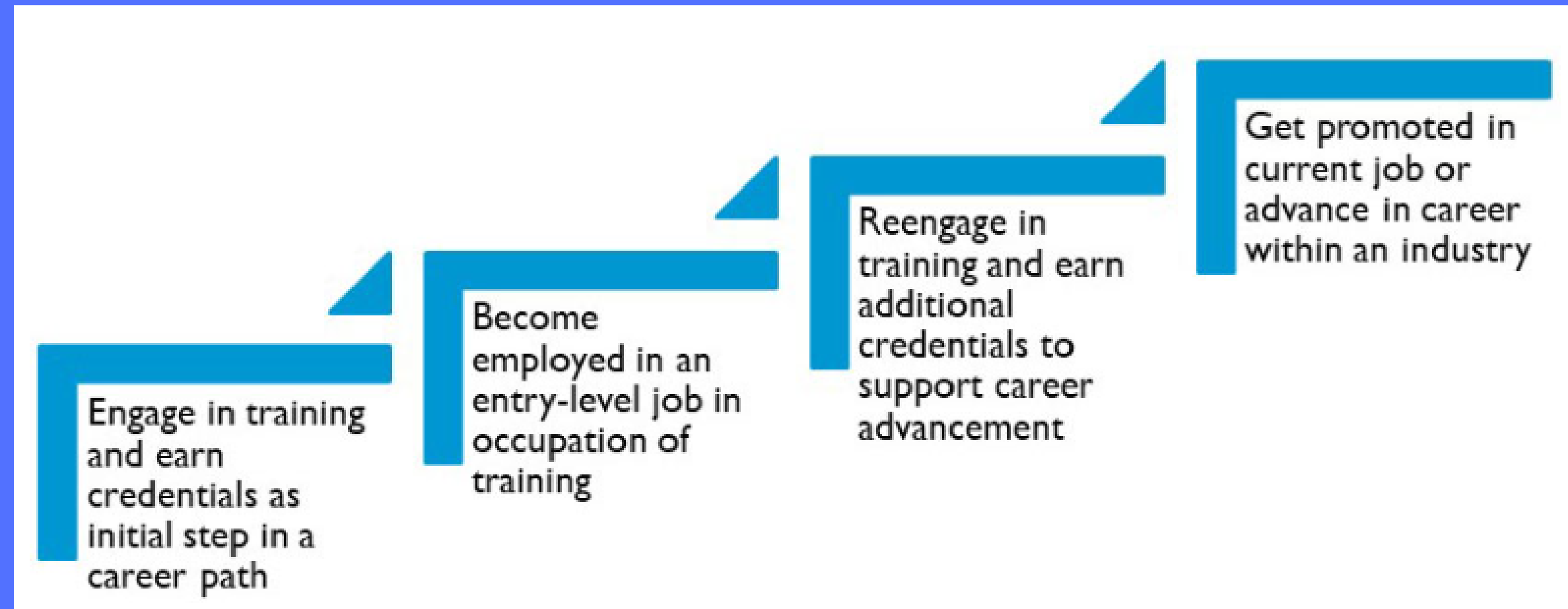
Transparency & sincerity
of disclosing conviction

Prior interactions with employees
with criminal histories



Career Pathways

Empowering justice-involved citizens to set and work toward employment goals instead of taking "any job" helps increase their likelihood of long term employment and desistance.



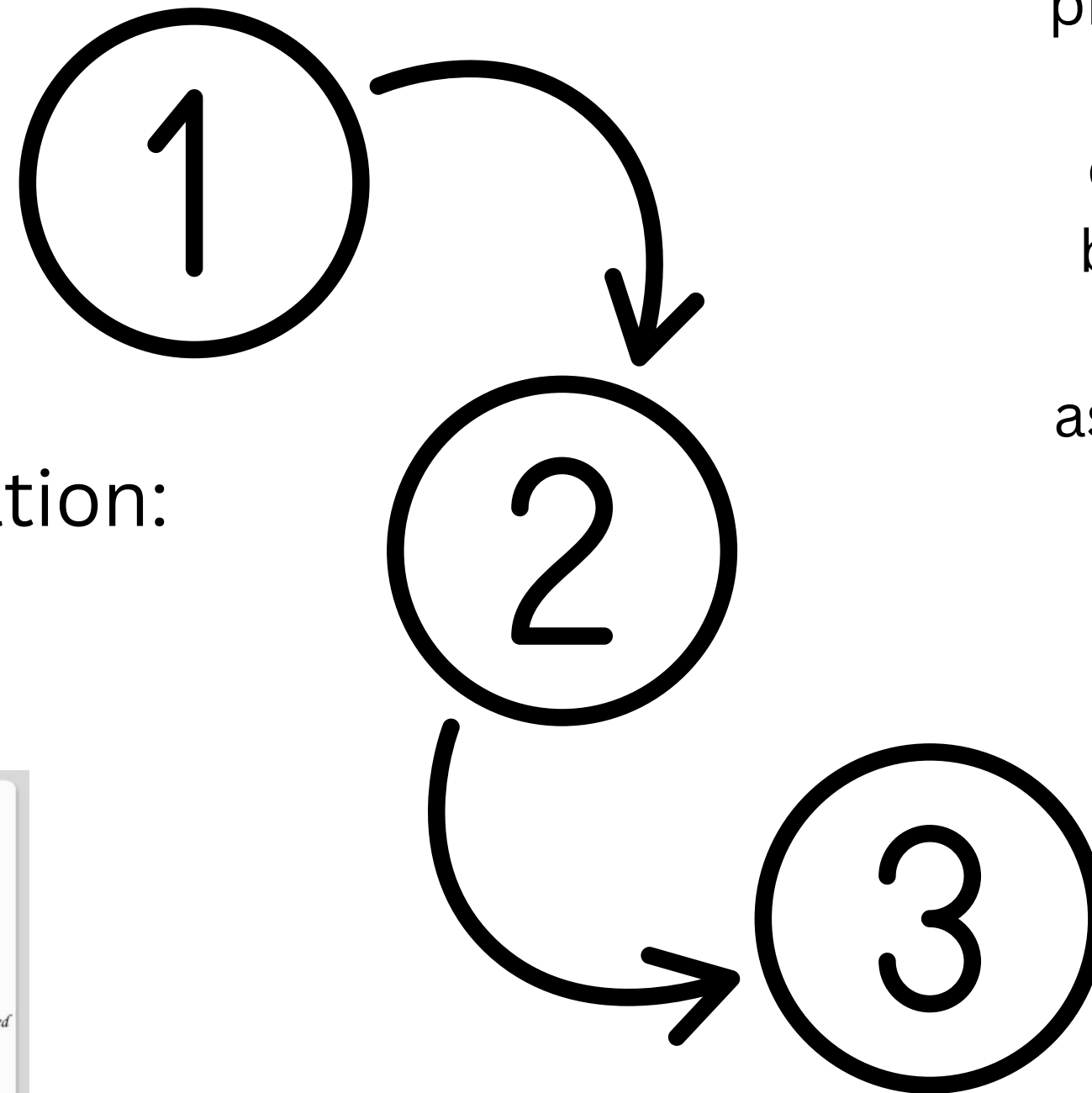
<https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/cross-center-initiatives/building-americas-workforce/projects/how-career-pathways-can-support-career-advancement>

Certificate of Qualification for Employment

CQEs turn a mandatory rule prohibiting occupational licensure based on certain criminal convictions into a discretionary bar. This allows licensing boards and employers to individually assess the person's fitness for the license and/or job in question.

Create an account at:
www.drccqe.com

Complete the Application:
Submit online



After approval, print & submit to Clerk of Courts Office/ Watch mail for hearing notice

Starting the Process

1. Realism (it might not be easy)
2. Persistence
 - a. Self-Starting –a willingness and motivation to look for work
3. Overcome technological and skill barriers
 - a. Computer Access
 - b. Voicemail
 - c. Appropriate Email Address
 - d. Resume

Finding Jobs:

Felony Friendly employer list

Prior employers

Temp agencies

Personal Network

OMJ

Remind: Don't lie on applications, if asked about criminal history check "Yes" and include "will discuss during interview"

■ Preparing for the Interview

Do:

Look one's best

Look alert/Stay off phone

Do:

Go alone

Be on time

Bring:

Bring resume

Bring references

Know:

Know one's qualifications

Learn about the company

Say:

Don't look for sympathy

Practice reentry pitch

During the Interview



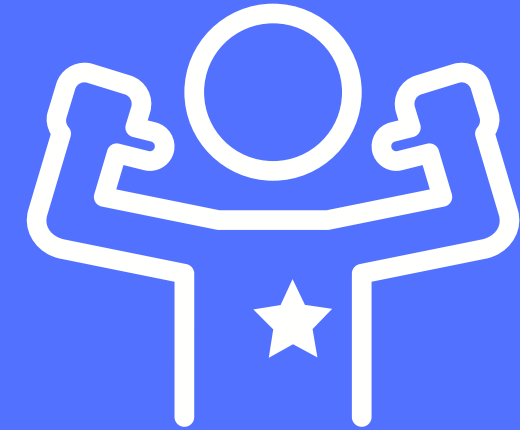
3 Rs

Responsibility
Regret
Redemption



Signaling

Discuss training,
education, counseling,
etc. to demonstrate
employability &
positive transformation



Address employer
fears & concerns

Need help integrating into
society
Not work ready
Lack soft-skills
Lack trustworthiness
Have a high risk/cost
Fear of violence

Reentry Pitch: Have you ever been convicted of a crime? Tell me about it?



Poor Answer

“ Well, I was using drugs and I was not thinking right. My boyfriend was selling drugs and asked me to hold some. The police said I was part of a conspiracy, but I didn't do anything except trust the wrong person. They gave me two years.”

Reentry Pitch



Better Answer

"I'm glad you asked me, because I want you to feel comfortable hiring me. I want to assure you that it had nothing to do with my previous employment. In my past, I was involved with drugs. I made some poor decisions and as a result was convicted of distribution of a controlled substance. While incarcerated, I took the opportunity to enroll in a drug treatment program. I took classes and maintained employment. I have two years of experience in food service. I want to stay in the industry and learn as much as possible."

- Addresses concerns
- Stays positive
- Takes **responsibility**
- Notes **regret**
- Demonstrates efforts of **redemption**
- Comes back to qualifications

Share Benefits with Employer



Federal Bonding Program

Provides a bond worth \$5,000 that lasts for 6 months



Federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit

Provides federal income tax credits when hiring individuals with certain barriers to employment.



If you have additional concerns, I can obtain Federal bonding insurance, which would protect you as my employer. Are you familiar with this program?



As a result, when you hire me, your company may be eligible for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program, which can save you \$2,400. Are you familiar with this program?



Question Session

If you have any questions,
you are welcome to ask

Thank You



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