

Ex-offender Employment in Dakota County – Fact Sheet

Adapted from a February, 2015 report

- In a Dakota County survey, “Lack of Employment or Money” was the #2 response for “Factors that Led Inmates to Recidivate” (31 respondents); #3 response for “Challenges for you to keep housing” (35 respondents) (Programs et al. 20, 24)
- **“Job Training or Career Options” was ranked as the #1 response for “What Type of Information would be Helpful?” (47 respondents)** (Programs et al. 35)
- One Dakota County client’s experience: “The only jobs available are low-paying, and they don’t hire full time, so you can’t buy or rent a place” (Inmates 12/30/2014)
- **Ex-felons are restricted (local, state, and/or federal bans) from some 800 occupations across country** (Raphael 13)
- “[O]ver 90% of employers surveyed are willing to consider filling their most recent job vacancy with a welfare recipient, while only about 40% are willing to consider doing so with an ex-offender” (Holzer, Raphael and Stoll 11)
- **“White offenders received only half as many offers as their non-offenders counterparts—34 percent vs. 17 percent; while blacks offenders received two-thirds fewer offers—14 percent vs. 5 percent”** (Holzer, Raphael and Stoll 12)
- Already low employment and earning among the incarcerated is further exacerbated by time spent in custody, and **“A large, three-state recidivism study found less than half of released prisoners had secured a job upon their return to the community.”** (Reentry Facts & Trends)
- **Work is a “turning point,” especially for older offenders – an opportunity to turn lives around.** Also, the impact of employment upon recidivism is strongest when recidivism is more likely (Uggen 1-3) – **meaning that a shot at employment makes the most difference directly following release from jail**
 - Critical period for recidivism: within 3 years (>40% offenders reoffend after this window) (Reentry Facts & Trends)

In Dakota County, **Employment and Financial problems** are the #2 greatest challenge facing correctional clients (inmates) upon release, just behind **Housing**. Overall, lacking employment means a lack of structure, little to no means of making money honestly, and less investment in the community. On the other hand, creating opportunities for ex-offenders to work and make use of their often extensive skill sets benefits individuals, employers, and the community. Please consider this when deciding whether to interview clients of the Dakota County Jail.