

CEO Helps State Deliver Employment Services to Thousands of Justice-Impacted Individuals

SNAPSHOT

WHO  California Workforce Development Board (CWDB), statewide network of reentry service providers	WHAT  CEO distributed funds directly to justice-impacted Californians through a network of community based organizations as part of California's Helping Justice-Involved Reenter Employment (HIRE) initiative.	WHEN  2022–Present
		WHERE  California (22 counties statewide)

BACKGROUND/OPPORTUNITY

Each year, more than 35,000 Californians return home from incarceration seeking income and housing. Employment is one of the strongest predictors of successful reentry, however, many motivated justice-involved individuals face significant barriers to finding work. Recognizing these challenges, reentry organizations, including the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) and partners, successfully advocated for a historic state investment in reentry workforce development of more than \$50 million. CEO Received \$6.9 of this investment.

THE CHALLENGE

California has a robust network of reentry organizations. However, many providers operate on a smaller scale and lack the infrastructure to carry our mass infusions of direct cash support into California's returning population. For individuals returning home from incarceration, even relatively small financial barriers can prevent engagement in employment opportunities such as transportation costs and clothing for job interviews.

These challenges have become increasingly urgent as California's reentry funding landscape shifted in 2024's with the passage of Prop 36, which eliminated funding revenue to reentry services.

THE RESULT



\$50 million +

Invested through the HIRE initiative

2,400 +



Californians connected to services through CEO and its partner network

81



organizations funded across California

≈ \$1.5 million



in direct cash assistance distributed through CEO's HIRE activities

≈ 7,200



justice-impacted Californians served across **22 counties**

+ \$10 million

secured in California's FY26 budget to further the initiative



CEO'S STRATEGY AND INTERVENTION

To maximize the impact of HIRE funding, CEO established and coordinated the California Reentry Employment Opportunity Network (CREON), a model that connected eight reentry services providers across the state. CEO's existing infrastructure distributed funds to local organizations who delivered direct services and maintained relationships with participants

CEO also provided technical assistance to its partner organizations, developed implementation resources and program guidance, managed data collection and reporting processes, and oversaw the distribution of approximately \$2 million in needs-based participant payments for transportation, housing, work-related expenses, and other essential needs.

VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

“

That helped me regain some independence upon returning to society. It was taking me six hours using public transportation just to get to and from one appointment daily. Now I have no trouble getting around and can continue to be a productive member of society.”

Heather, HIRE participant

“

I caught up on my car payments, bought groceries and things we needed at home, and I was able to save the apartment that we live in today after falling behind on the rent for months.”

Dina, HIRE participant

“

Without the money from the reentry cash assistance to buy my car, I don't know if I would have been able to finish the work for my pre-apprenticeship.”

Vianca, HIRE participant

“

If I didn't have cash assistance, I may have been forced to go back to my old ways to survive.”

Karen, HIRE participant