



Center for
Employment
Opportunities



BUILDING WHAT'S NEXT»

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



MISSION

CEO's mission is to provide immediate, effective, and comprehensive employment services exclusively to individuals who have recently returned to society from incarceration.

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SIZZLE REEL

ceo

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A NOTE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

DEAR PARTNERS AND FRIENDS,

Safety nets are under threat. Costs are rising. Inequality is deepening. And for the 600,000 people returning home from incarceration each year, opportunity itself is under attack.

For decades, there has been broad agreement that reentry support is essential — **but America has never built a real public reentry system.** We've had consensus, but never the funding, structure, or infrastructure to match it.

At CEO, we meet these moments not with hesitation, but with resolve. While many organizations are scaling back, **CEO is scaling up** — leading with the same courage, clarity, and innovation that have defined us for almost 30 years.

When public systems fail, we build new ones. When the economy contracts, we expand access. When others wait for permission, we lead with proof. This is a moment for courage, innovation, and scale, and **CEO is built for it.**

In 2025, we strengthened the evidence behind our model and advanced policy reforms that show what a real reentry system can deliver for individuals, communities, and local economies.

Two landmark evaluations reaffirmed what decades of CEO practice have demonstrated: **meaningful opportunity yields measurable, scalable results.**

MDRC's study of our Returning Citizens Stimulus Program showed that timely, flexible support provides powerful early stability — leading to a

41% reduction in parole violations, a 64% decline in violent violations, and early signs of reduced reincarceration.

In Colorado, the Colorado Evaluation & Action Lab found that immediate work and personalized coaching produced a **65% increase in average quarterly earnings in just three months**, with median earnings more than doubling.

Evidence continues to show that **when people are connected to real work and real support quickly, economic mobility follows.**

This growing body of evidence fuels CEO's broader systems-change agenda. In 2025, we advanced significant policy reforms — including the Reentry Assistance Bill, CA HIRE, We Can't Wait/TNSA, and AB247 — each strengthening financial stability and fair hiring nationwide.

Campaigns like *At What Cost* continued to elevate the economic argument for reentry investment: **when we invest in opportunity, entire communities benefit.**

Innovation also accelerated our work this year. We launched **voice-enabled AI job coaches** that gave participants 24/7 access to skills practice and confidence-building. More than 500 people have already used the tool, and we are now extending access into prisons and jails so that **reentry can begin before release.**

Looking Ahead: Opportunity 2030 — Building the Reentry Infrastructure America Needs

As we look ahead, our commitment is clear: **to build the reentry infrastructure our country has long needed but never invested in.**

Opportunity 2030 is our national blueprint to do exactly that.

By 2030, CEO will:

- **Reach 127,000 people returning home** — through direct services, partnerships, and systems change
- **Expand from 12 to 20 states**, strengthening reentry ecosystems nationwide
- **Unlock \$750 million in public investment** — shifting resources toward stability, work, and opportunity

We are advancing what works — and **building what's next.**

With evidence as our guide and innovation as our engine, we are laying the foundation for a national system in which every person returning home has access to income, stability, and dignity on day one.

Thank you for your partnership, your belief in this work, and your commitment to expanding opportunity across the country.

Sincerely,
Sam Schaeffer
Chief Executive Officer



ABOUT CEO

Our vision is that anyone with a criminal record who wants to work has the preparation and support needed to find a job and stay connected to the labor force. We believe that everyone, regardless of their past, deserves the chance to shape a stronger future for themselves, their family, and their communities.

CEO explicitly serves individuals 18 years of age or older returning to society from incarceration. Under these requirements, we welcome all individuals regardless of their gender identity, mental health, substance use history, geographic area of residence, housing situation, or criminal conviction(s).

Our mission is grounded in the theory of change that if individuals are provided paid work opportunities shortly after they are released from prison or jail, they are more likely to break the cycle of recidivism and build a positive foundation for themselves and their families.



PROGRAM MODEL



Job-Readiness Training

We prepare people for success in the workplace.



Transitional Employment

We provide immediate paid work experience.



Job Coaching & Placement

We connect talented employees with quality employers.



Advanced Training

We offer opportunities to increase our participants' earning potential.



Retention Services

We provide ongoing support to ensure our participants succeed.



CEO's evidence-based program model consists of employment-focused activities and pathways specifically designed to enable justice-impacted individuals to enter the labor market successfully. By following the roadmap provided by the model, participants are equipped to achieve the ultimate goal of remaining attached to the workforce while maintaining their freedom. The CEO program model also encourages participants to progress at their own pace, accounting for differences in needs, skills, and experience.

PROGRAMS

Orientation and job-readiness training

CEO's program begins with our paid orientation, which prepares participants for workforce reentry and enrolls them in public benefits.

Transitional employment

The foundation of our program model is paid transitional employment, connecting justice-impacted individuals to work experience and income stability to develop successful workplace habits and strengthen their employment history.

Job coaching services

Participants meet weekly with a Job Coach to address employment barriers and develop job-readiness skills.

Job development and placement services

Once individuals are ready to obtain and sustain employment, participants work with a Job Developer to secure permanent, full-time job placement.

Advanced training and credentialing

Participants can access opportunities for long-term economic mobility through CEO's internal apprenticeship program, training to obtain industry-recognized credentials, and policy & advocacy committees. These pathways lead to higher-paying jobs and increased security.

Job retention services

Once placed in employment, participants receive a year of job retention services with the goal of building long-term attachments to the workforce.



A YEAR OF PROGRAM IMPACT

ADVANCED TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS

2025 PROGRAM IMPACT



Total active
participants:

7,893



Total job
placements:

3,398



Average wage
received at placement:

\$18.48



Total new
enrollments:

6,662



Total transitional
crew wages
earned:

\$19.8 Million



Short-term
training certificate
completions:

1,940



Advanced training
completions:

199



ELP
graduates:

40



CDL licenses
obtained:

90



Skilled construction
completions:

74



Other pathways
(manufacturing, welding,
solar installer, fiber optic, IT):

35

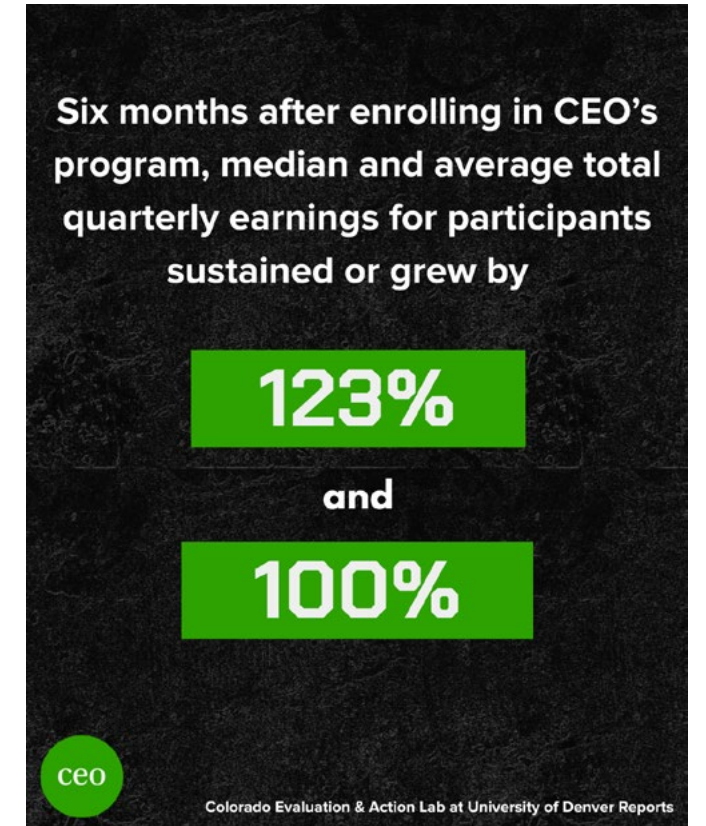
EVIDENCE REPORTS: SCALING WHAT WORKS

MDRC

The Returning Citizens Stimulus (RCS) program provided up to \$2,750 in rapid, milestone based cash assistance across 28 cities. Using a quasi-experimental design, an evaluation of the RCS program among participants in California found strong evidence that this model significantly reduced short-term parole violations. Within six months post-release, only 8% of RCS participants had a violation compared to 14% of the control group (a 41% reduction), with violent violations dropping 64% and young adults demonstrating a 33% reduction in violent parole offenses at 12 months. Impacts persisted through 12 months, suggesting a trend toward reduced reincarceration at 18 months. Program engagement was high, with 80% of participants completing all milestones, and funds were primarily used for basic needs such as food, housing costs, transportation, and bills.

These findings are a major success for CEO: the RCS program can reduce supervision violations, strengthen participant engagement, and remove immediate barriers that often derail early employment and program participation during the high risk period of early reentry. Scaling the model should include continued rigorous evaluation, attention to local contexts such as cost of living, and monitoring of employment, housing, and long-term legal outcomes. As CEO aims to advance economic mobility and reduce justice system involvement, these findings validate that quick, flexible cash assistance is an effective way to align with this mission.





COLORADO EVALUATION & ACTION LAB

The Colorado Equitable Economic Mobility Initiative and University of Denver partnered to provide a longitudinal analysis of CEO participants' earnings before and after program enrollment using statewide payroll records. They found that participants experienced substantial economic gains after participation with CEO, with average quarterly earnings rising 65% within a year and doubling within two. Earnings declined leading up to enrollment, indicating financial instability, but rebounded sharply after participation, demonstrating CEO's immediate impact. Median earnings increased even more (123%), showing strong wage growth for participants in the middle of the distribution. Participants moved into accessible industries such as Administrative & Support Services, Food Services, Construction, and Social Assistance. These findings underscore how CEO's combination of immediate employment and ongoing support drives meaningful economic mobility for justice-impacted individuals.

POLICY AND ADVOCACY IN ACTION

OPPORTUNITY 2030

Over the past year, CEO’s advocacy and campaigns have achieved meaningful, measurable change — advancing landmark policies, increasing financial stability for justice-impacted people, strengthening fair chance hiring protections, and elevating the economic case for investing in reentry. These wins demonstrate what is possible when evidence, lived experience, and bold ideas come together to influence how systems serve people returning home.

But now, we are going further.

Opportunity 2030 calls for bold systems change — and our advocacy and campaigns are the engine driving it. By advancing evidence-backed reforms and shaping public investment at the state and federal levels, we’re ensuring that proof translates into policy — and that catalytic, long-term public resources reach the people and communities who need them most.

This next phase isn’t just about changing programs — it’s about redesigning the policies, incentives, and public systems that will one day support all 600,000 people returning home each year. Advocacy is how Opportunity 2030 becomes not only possible, but lasting.

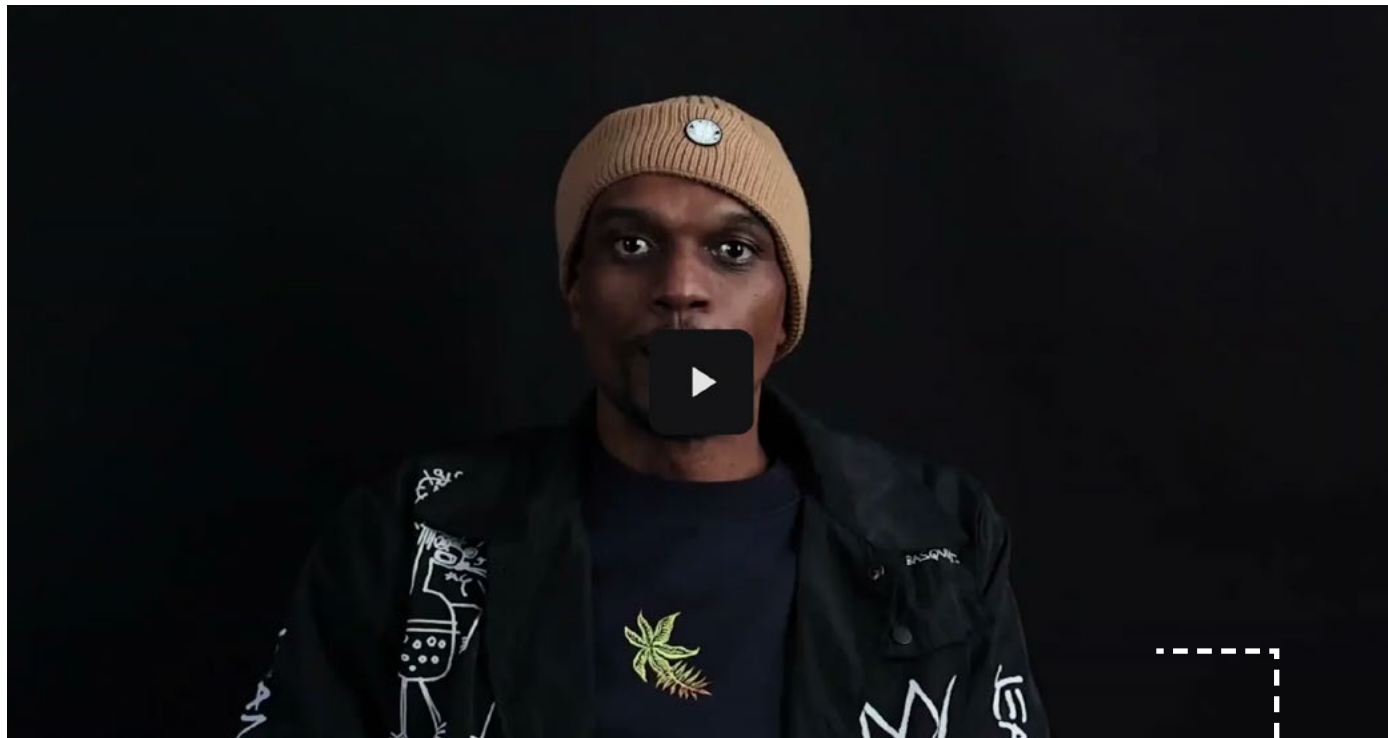
Looking back, here’s how we got here:



CAMPAIGN SPOTLIGHT: AT WHAT COST?

This year, during Fair Chance Month, we launched our national campaign **At What Cost?: Invest in People, Break the Cycle**. The campaign highlights the enormous financial and social costs of incarceration and shows that investing in reentry services is a smarter, more effective use of public resources. Through data, stories, and advocacy, At What Cost? makes a clear case that redirecting resources from incarceration to evidence-based programs like CEO can reduce recidivism, strengthen communities, and create lasting economic value.





Evidence and Impact:



A **10% reduction in recidivism** could save states an average of **\$635 million** each year.



The total **long-term cost of incarceration** in the U.S. is estimated at **\$1.2 trillion annually**, including lost wages, health impacts, and effects on families.



Employment after incarceration significantly increases the likelihood of avoiding rearrest and achieving long-term stability.

CLICK IMAGE
TO WATCH

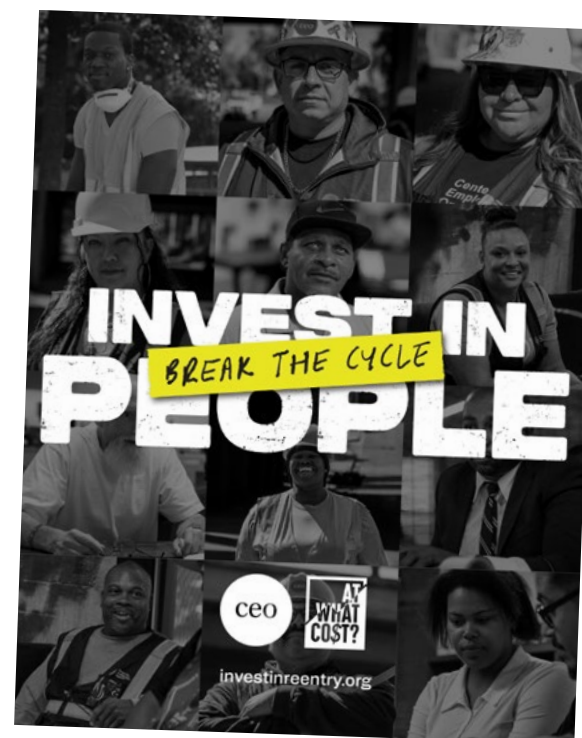
100 fewer PEOPLE

REINCARCERATED PER YEAR
WOULD SAVE MORE THAN

\$5.2 MILLION

Being Employed
Cuts Recidivism
IN HALF.

INVEST IN REENTRY AND DIRECT SUPPORT
FOR PEOPLE RETURNING FROM INCARCERATION.



INVEST IN PEOPLE → BREAK THE CYCLE.

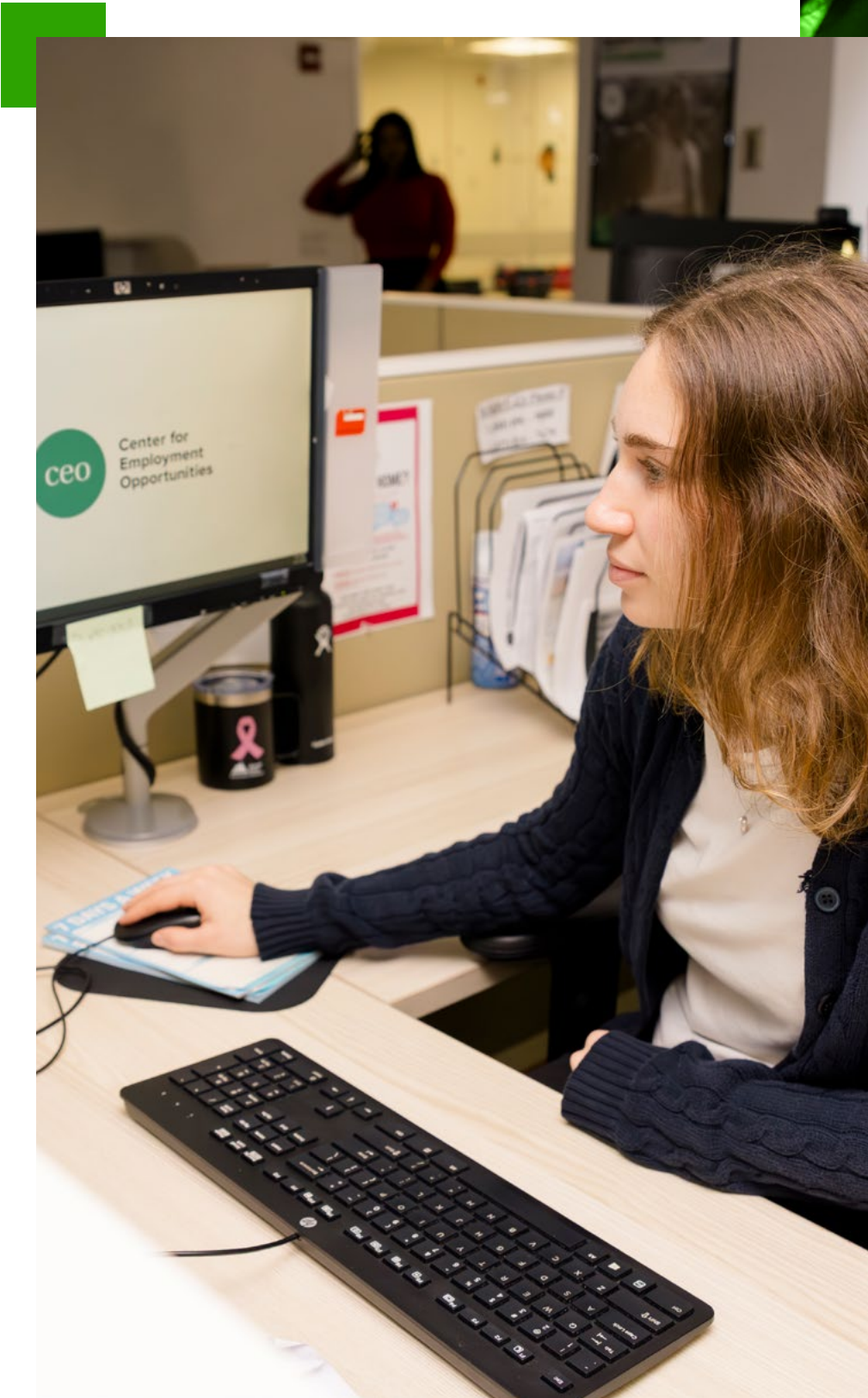


ADVOCATING FOR CASH ASSISTANCE WITH THE NY REENTRY ASSISTANCE BILL

This year, CEO staff and participants joined partners in Albany to advocate for the Reentry Assistance Bill (A.6990), a policy that would dramatically expand financial support for people returning home from incarceration. The bill proposes replacing the current one-time \$200 gate money payment with \$425 per month for up to six months. This investment would provide essential stability during the earliest stages of reentry when individuals are most vulnerable to financial insecurity and setbacks.

Our team met with lawmakers across both chambers to underscore the bill's potential to reduce recidivism, strengthen communities, and generate cost savings for New York State. The most powerful voices came from CEO participants who shared firsthand accounts of the challenges they faced upon release and how basic financial support could have changed their trajectory.

The day culminated in a press conference and rally that brought together advocates, allies, and directly impacted individuals in a unified call for a more equitable and effective reentry system. This collective effort reflects CEO's commitment to advancing policies that remove barriers, promote stability, and expand opportunity for people returning home.





California Invests in Reentry Success through the HIRE Initiative

This year, we secured a major reentry victory in California: ten million dollars in the FY26 state budget to sustain the Helping Justice-Impacted Reenter Employment (HIRE) program. In one of the most challenging budget cycles the state has faced, we made the case that reentry support is central to public safety and long term economic stability. Since launching in 2022, HIRE has helped more than **7,200 people across 22 counties** access employment services, advanced training opportunities, and nearly **six hundred thousand dollars in direct cash assistance** delivered by CEO and our partner organizations. These supports provide critical stability in the first months after release and help people build the foundation for lasting employment and reintegration.

We secured this investment through coordinated advocacy with justice-impacted leaders and more than forty coalition partners across the state. Our efforts were reinforced by new evidence, including a 2025 MDRC study showing that CEO's Returning Citizens Stimulus significantly reduced parole violations and reincarceration even months after payments ended. Through HIRE, we are also helping people transition into higher wage careers like commercial driving through funded training and stipends. We will continue working with lawmakers to establish a permanent funding stream for HIRE because when people return home with stability, opportunity, and real pathways to mobility, California's communities grow safer and stronger.



These supports provide critical stability in the first months after release and help people build the foundation for lasting employment and reintegration.

Impact of HIRE Initiative

Congressional Testimony in Action

As part of the We Can't Wait Coalition, we brought the voices of justice-impacted people directly to Congress this year. William Lewis, a former participant who spent twenty years incarcerated and now serves as a Senior Site Supervisor with CEO, joined our CEO Sam Schaeffer to provide in-person testimony before federal lawmakers. William spoke powerfully about navigating reentry and the catch-22 many people face when pursuing paid advanced training. Programs like CDL or IT certification can reduce or eliminate SNAP food benefits, creating a barrier for people trying to move into higher wage careers. His testimony made clear that these bureaucratic penalties undermine stability and long term success.

Our advocacy helped build bipartisan support behind the Training and Nutrition Stability Act (TNSA), which would ensure people can participate in SNAP Employment and Training programs without losing essential food assistance. The bill was reintroduced this year by champions from both parties, reflecting growing agreement that access to nutrition and access to opportunity must go hand in hand. Through the We Can't Wait Coalition, we are working to reshape federal policy so that justice-impacted people can pursue training, build careers, and return home with real pathways to stability.



From \$1/hr to Minimum Wage



This year we saw an exciting policy milestone for California that underscores CEO's continued leadership in advocating for justice-impacted individuals. This summer, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill 247, state legislation that ensures that individuals who risk their lives to fight fires will now earn the federal minimum wage while on active duty (up from \$1/hr). Many CEO participants fought fires while incarcerated and were leading advocates for this bill, which was covered in the [Los Angeles Times](#) and [Sacramento Bee](#), (featuring Sergio our advocacy team member, who fought fires while incarcerated and was a leader in this effort).

This victory builds on our broader mission to ensure that everyone coming home from incarceration has the preparation, opportunity, and support needed to achieve economic mobility. Through our organizing work, we're amplifying the voices of directly impacted individuals and advancing policies that create lasting change.

AI INNOVATION: TRANSFORMING EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

VOICE-ENABLED AI COACHING

With support from the GitLab Foundation, CEO developed voice-enabled AI coaches that supplement in-person coaching and allow participants to practice essential employment skills simply by calling a phone number. This voice-only design intentionally reduces the digital divide by removing barriers such as smartphones, apps, or strong WiFi.

Early Evidence of Impact

- 500** participants used the voice coaches in the initial pilot
- 84%** said the role-play experience was very helpful
- 80%** said the scenarios felt realistic
- 76%** reported feeling much more confident navigating a real job interview or workplace conversation

Next Steps

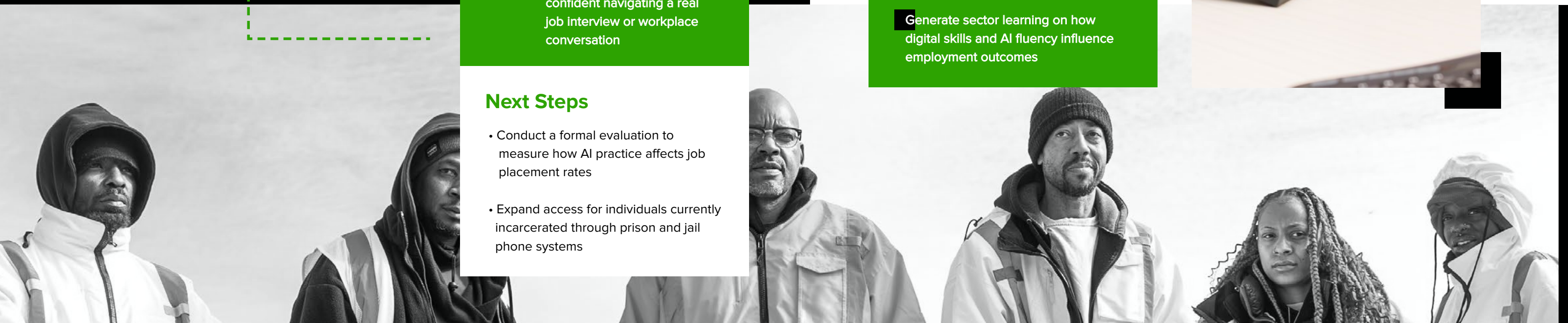
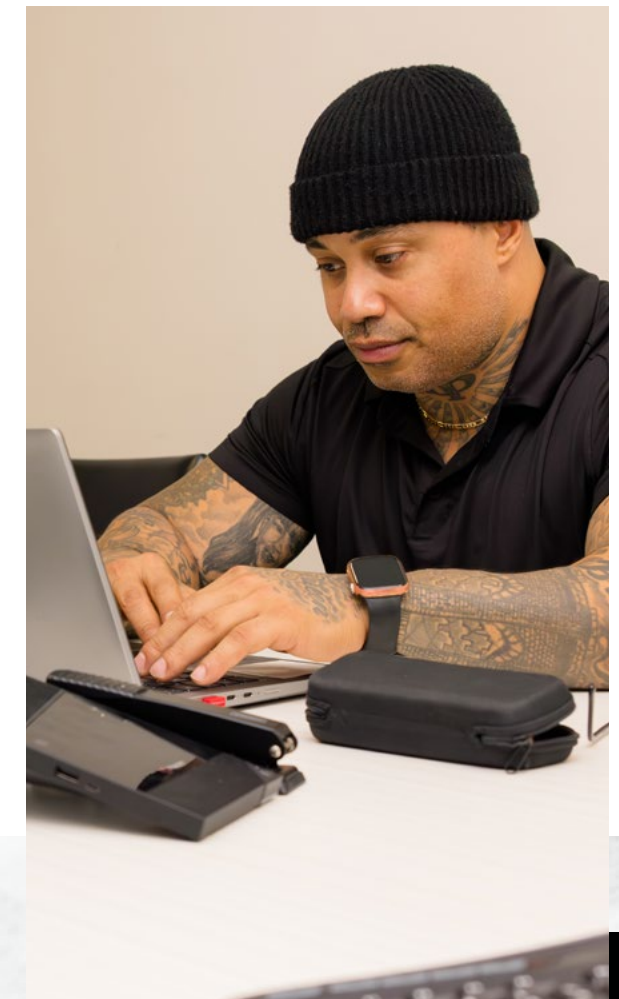
- Conduct a formal evaluation to measure how AI practice affects job placement rates
- Expand access for individuals currently incarcerated through prison and jail phone systems

STATEWIDE AI AND WORKFORCE TRAINING IN OKLAHOMA

With support from Google.org, CEO is launching a statewide initiative in Oklahoma to expand access to high-quality, tech-enabled workforce training for people returning from incarceration. Participants will build in-demand vocational skills including commercial driving, welding, machining, and skilled trades along with the digital fluency needed to succeed in an AI-driven labor market. They will also receive hands-on training, stipends, career coaching, and wraparound supports that strengthen engagement.

What We Aim to Achieve

- Enroll **75 justice-impacted Oklahomans** in advanced vocational training
- Engage **700 to 900 individuals** in foundational AI training
- Increase employer engagement through statewide job fairs with partners such as the Oklahoma City Thunder and Oklahoma State University
- Build long-term digital equity by equipping participants and staff with AI literacy
- Generate sector learning on how digital skills and AI fluency influence employment outcomes



ENHANCING JOB DEVELOPMENT WITH AI

In partnership with Anthropic, CEO launched a community of practice for 20 Job Developers to pilot the use of Claude Enterprise with dedicated technical assistance. Through this pilot, Job Developers are testing how AI can support employer outreach, labor market research, participant-facing materials, and communication that more clearly conveys participant strengths.

Intended Outcome

- Increase staff capacity by streamlining repetitive tasks and freeing time for direct participant and employer engagement
- Improve the quality and consistency of job development through data-informed, polished communications
- Expand employer networks through quicker and more targeted outreach



Across these initiatives, CEO is demonstrating how AI can enhance coaching, expand access to high-quality training, strengthen staff capacity, and support economic mobility for people returning from incarceration while keeping equity and human connection at the center.

ADVANCED TRAINING PATHWAYS

The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) continues to strengthen its core program through **Advanced Training Pathways**, designed to expand economic mobility and reduce recidivism. These specialized training opportunities connect participants to career-track industries that offer stability, growth, and long-term success.

SUCCESSFUL HIGHLIGHTS

CDL Training	Achieved an 64% job placement rate , with graduates earning on average \$21.83 hour.
Emerging Leaders Program (ELP)	Reached a 97.5% placement rate , recognized as an approved apprenticeship model , and strengthened participants' leadership and career growth.
Union Training Pathways	Achieved a 40% placement rate into high demand skilled trades, with participants earning on average \$26.65 per hour in union roles.

PROGRAM CRITERIA

CEO's Advanced Training Pathways focus on careers that offer **high wages (above \$20/hour)**, **strong growth potential**, **fewer conviction barriers**, and **defined training pathways** that lead to employment within one year.



NFL INSPIRE CHANGE PARTNERSHIP

The **NFL's Inspire Change** initiative is dedicated to reducing barriers to opportunity—particularly in communities of color—and highlighting how the entire NFL family, from players to team leadership, is working together to create lasting social impact.

As a **grant partner since 2024**, CEO is proud to be recognized through the NFL's Inspire Change Grant for its leadership in expanding economic opportunity for people returning home from incarceration. This partnership strengthens our shared commitment to fair chance hiring and workforce inclusion.

CLICK IMAGE
TO WATCH

NFL Funding Supports

- Equipping justice-impacted individuals with the skills, mentorship, and hands-on experience needed for economic mobility and long-term success
- Empowering participants in CEO's Emerging Leaders program to build sustainable careers in human services, advocacy, and related fields
- Addressing systemic barriers to workforce inclusion by creating pathways to meaningful employment and economic advancement

PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHT: DAVID – EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM GRADUATE

David’s story is a powerful example of what’s possible through CEO’s **Emerging Leaders Program (ELP)**—a paid internship that helps justice-impacted individuals build professional skills and take steps toward long-term economic mobility.

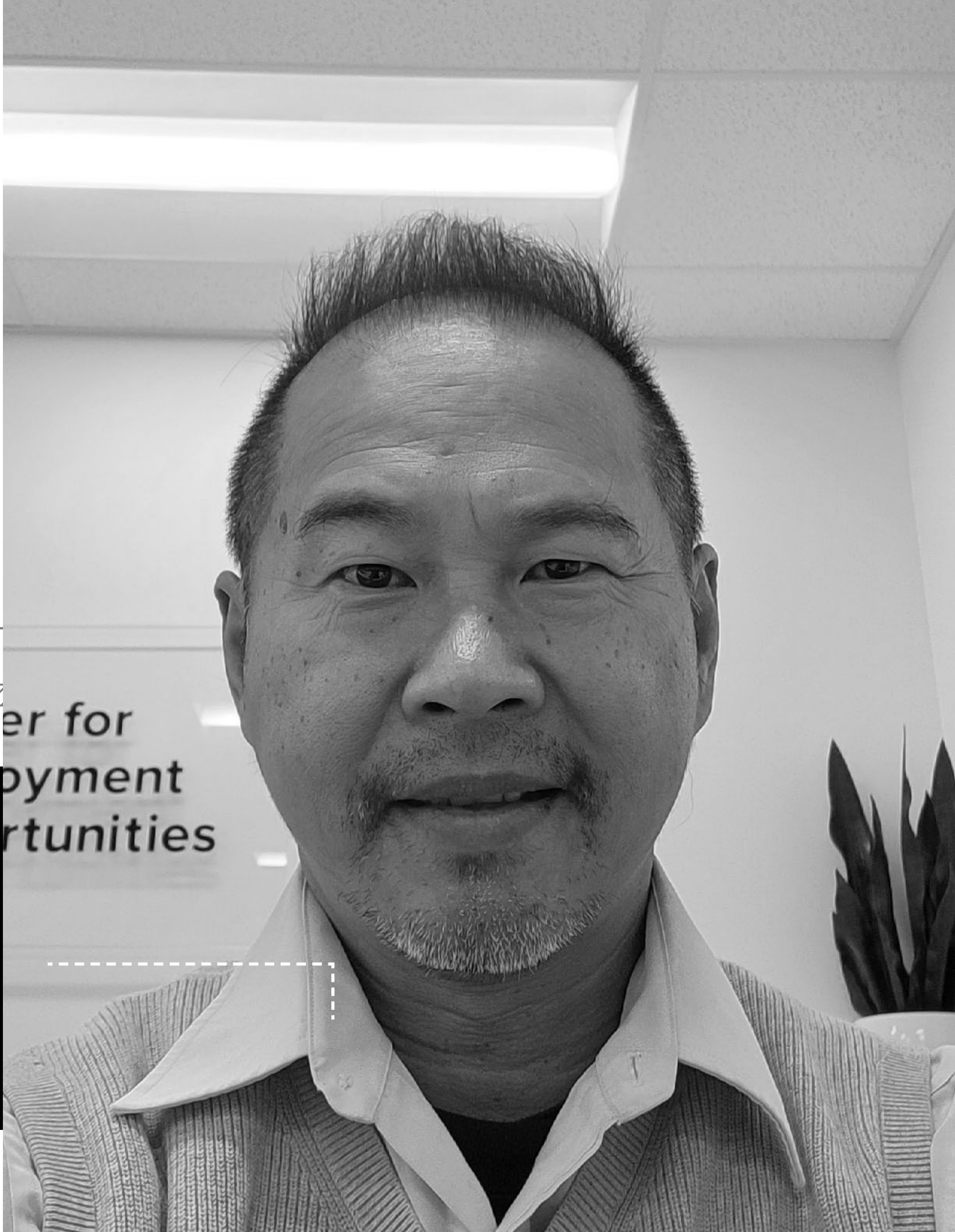
Before joining CEO Sacramento, David hadn’t written a resume or interviewed for a job in over 20 years. With encouragement from his probation officer, he joined CEO’s transitional work crew, where he began rebuilding his confidence and skills. When the ELP internship opened, he applied, interviewed, and was selected—his first interview in two decades.

As a vocational intern, David helped participants prepare for jobs, led orientations, and supported staff with training referrals and data tracking. During his internship, he earned **28 professional certificates**, from leadership communication to small business development.

Today, David proudly serves as a **Site Supervisor** at CEO Sacramento and runs three small businesses of his own. His journey reflects the power of a fair chance—and how mentorship, structure, and paid opportunities can help people unlock their potential and build lasting careers.

His journey reflects the power of a fair chance—and how mentorship, structure, and paid opportunities can help people unlock their potential and build lasting careers.

David – Site Supervisor at CEO Sacramento



INCLUSIVE HIRING INITIATIVES

ADVANCING FAIR CHANCE EMPLOYMENT AT SCALE

CEO's Inclusive Hiring (IH) team goes beyond direct service to build long-term infrastructure that supports fair chance employment nationwide. By pairing deep employer engagement with targeted outreach to justice-impacted communities, the team designs equitable workforce solutions that strengthen recruitment, hiring, and retention for people with past convictions.

Advisors conduct comprehensive assessments of employer practices, identify actionable steps to reduce barriers and mitigate risk, and provide hands-on support through implementation. At the same time, the IH team expands outreach to justice-impacted individuals through scalable tools, rights education, and learning events that prepare people for employment and increase access to high-quality opportunities.

Together, these strategies foster a sustainable ecosystem for inclusive hiring—one that advances racial equity, supports economic mobility, and opens career pathways for people returning home from incarceration.



2025 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Strengthening Workforce Knowledge and Readiness

- 145,000 job seekers and HR professionals received training content
- Expanded access to our [LinkedIn course *Job Seeking with a Criminal Record*](#) through our partnership with Edovo, and produced **three additional in-prison courses** on job readiness, knowing your rights and fair chance hiring, now accessible to up to 1 million incarcerated learners nationwide

Deep Employer Engagement

- Partnered with LA County's Department of Economic Opportunity to educate **nearly 3,000 employers and 1,200 job seekers** on the [Fair Chance Ordinance](#)
- **Eight employers** received direct advisory services to improve inclusive recruitment, hiring, and retention practices
- Partnered with [Villanova University](#) to launch a [reentry resource page](#) for in-prison Bachelor's program alumni

Expanding Access to Tools and Resources

- Launched the [Impact Hiring Hub](#), a digital resource center offering tailored tools for employers and job seekers

National Leadership and Field Building

- Presented at **three sessions** during the [National Reentry Workforce Collaborative Conference in Pittsburgh](#), reaching **450 workforce stakeholders**
- Delivered **A Reentry Simulator** at the [National Returning Citizens Conference](#) in Columbus, engaging **75 attendees** in an immersive learning experience

DID YOU KNOW?

Replacing an employee can cost up to two times their annual salary

Cost of New Hire



CEO MORE THAN A BACKGROUND

LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS

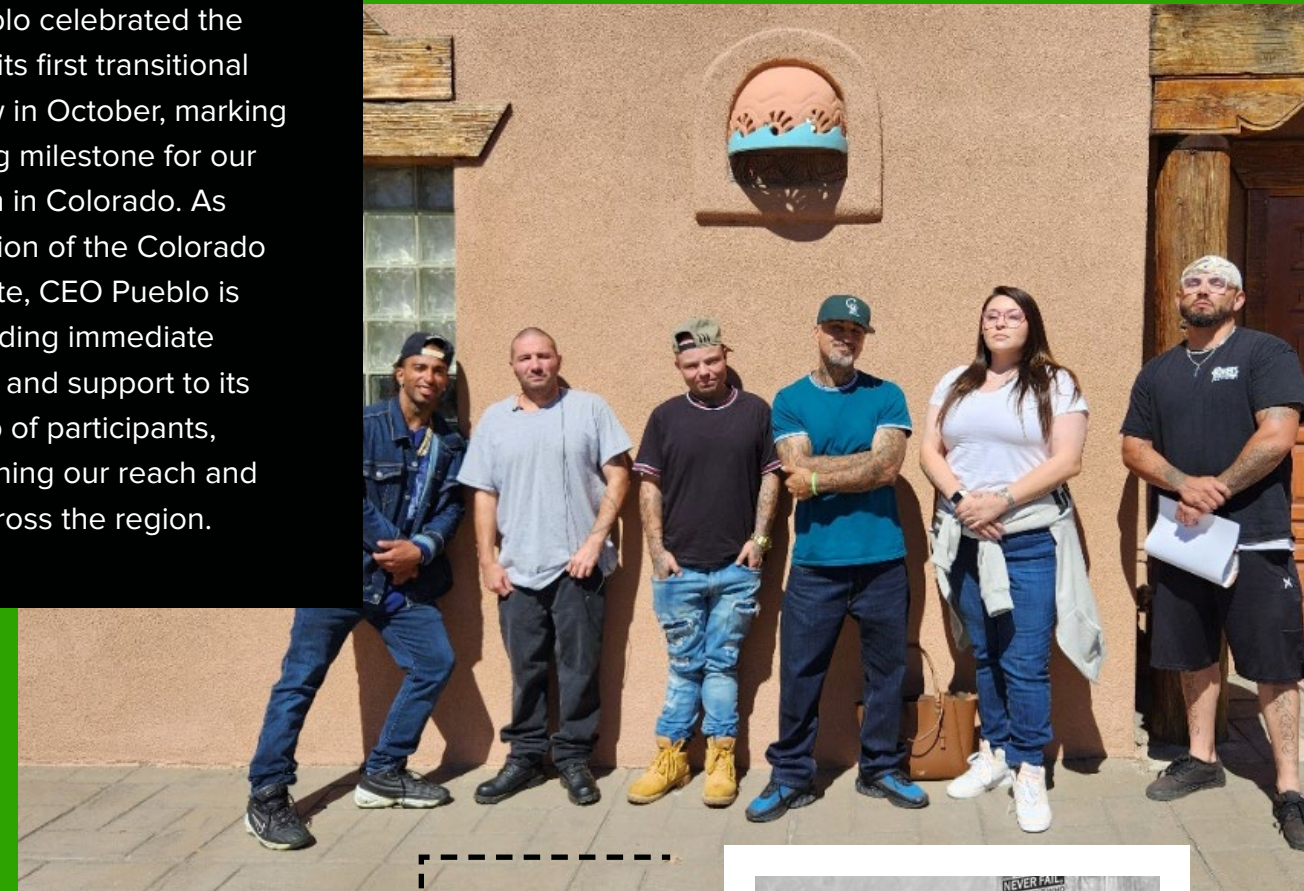
PITTSBURGH DECLARES CENTER FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES DAY



In January, the City of Pittsburgh officially proclaimed January 28 as Center for Employment Opportunities Day in recognition of CEO's longstanding commitment to people returning home from incarceration. Since launching in Pittsburgh in 2016, CEO has enrolled more than 500 participants and supported over 300 job placements in partnership with more than 50 local employers. This honor highlights the city's appreciation for CEO's impact and its role in expanding economic opportunity for justice-impacted residents.

CEO PUEBLO LAUNCHES ITS FIRST WORK CREW

CEO Pueblo celebrated the launch of its first transitional work crew in October, marking an exciting milestone for our expansion in Colorado. As an extension of the Colorado Springs site, CEO Pueblo is now providing immediate paid work and support to its first group of participants, strengthening our reach and impact across the region.



CEO PARTNERS WITH LA COUNTY DEO TO EXPAND HIGH ROAD TRAINING PARTNERSHIPS

CEO was selected as one of 20 awardees in Los Angeles County Department of Economic Opportunity's (DEO) \$17.8 million High Road Training Partnership Fund, an initiative designed to connect more than 1,800 residents to quality careers in high growth industries. Through this partnership with the LA County Department of Economic Opportunity, CEO will launch **CEO LA's Careers for Change: Construction and Landscaping Advanced Training Pathways**, offering worker centered training, strong employer partnerships, and supportive services that help justice impacted Angelenos build skills, secure quality jobs, and advance in resilient career fields.



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

THE 19TH

How temporary cash assistance helps mothers reclaim their lives — and families — after prison

Guaranteed income programs, even for just a few months, can provide the stability for formerly incarcerated parents to rebuild relationships with their children.



The majority of incarcerated women are mothers and studies show that receiving temporary cash assistance after release from prison helps parents reconnect with their children. (GETTY IMAGES)

When Carmen Ortega left prison in 2018, she knew that she needed a major life change. For more than five years, Ortega struggled with addiction and cycled in and out of incarceration, unable to secure a steady job or housing that would help keep her afloat.

"In between me coming out, coming in, coming out — I was, for four years straight, homeless. Every time I got out, I was back in."

Candice Norwood
Reporter
Published July 31, 2025, 4:04 p.m. ET
Republish this story

Daily Newsletter
A smart, reliable digest of our latest news and top stories affecting women and LGBTQ+ people.

ROLLING STONE

THIS NEW YORK BILL AIMS TO GIVE MONTHLY PAYMENTS TO PEOPLE GETTING OUT OF PRISON

Advocates say New York's Reentry Assistance Bill will help lower recidivism among formerly incarcerated people and offer genuine aid

By ANDRE GEE
FEBRUARY 27, 2025



Photo of the New York State Capital Building in Albany, New York, on February 25, 2024.
THOMAS A. FERRARA/NEWSDAY KIM GETTY IMAGES

Criminal legal reform advocates in New York state are pushing for the Reentry Assistance Bill, which would provide increased financial support for citizens returning from jail. Currently, New York offers citizens a one-time \$200 stipend upon their release from state prison. The assistance

Los Angeles Times

LA TIMES

California's incarcerated firefighters are about to get a hefty raise



AD AGE

11 creative campaigns to know about today



Gatorade knows you don't always play like a pro even if you wear the jersey. (Gatorade)

By Tim Nudd
By Sabrina Sanchez
April 01, 2025 10:45 AM EDT

Among today's creative highlights, Supercell and the WWE strike up an extensive partnership around Clash of Clans; Heineken opens "Excuses Bars" in Spain for the culmination of the Champions League; and Gatorade celebrates sports fans who persevere even though they aren't quite as skilled as their idols.

CEO achieved 9,237,629,733 in total audience reach across more than 1,800 media mentions.

Media Reach Numbers

TRUTHOUT

CA Relies on Incarcerated Firefighters. They Finally Federal Minimum Wage.

It took a grassroots push to win the legislation that offers more pay and an opportunity for reduced prison sentences.

By Sarah Kuttish
Truthout
October 24, 2025



Incarcerated firefighters from the Antelope Conservation Camp wait for their next assignment as they work to contain the Dixie Fire among burning trees on August 16, 2024. Pumas National Forest near, Janesville, California.
PATRICK T. FALLON / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Truthout's December fundraiser is our most important of the year and will determine the scale of work we will be able to do in 2026. Please support us with a tax-deductible donation today.

California relies heavily on incarcerated firefighters to protect life and property, but pays them a pittance. Recently, a major grassroots and legislative push to improve working conditions for incarcerated firefighters enjoyed some success. On October 13, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed AB 247 into law, raising their base pay and doubling the amount by which they can reduce their sentences.

Stateline

HEALTH CARE DEMOCRACY EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY CRIMINAL JUSTICE

don't have a paywall because we want to make sure everyone can access the information they need. Your donation supports that mission.

DONATE

STATELINE

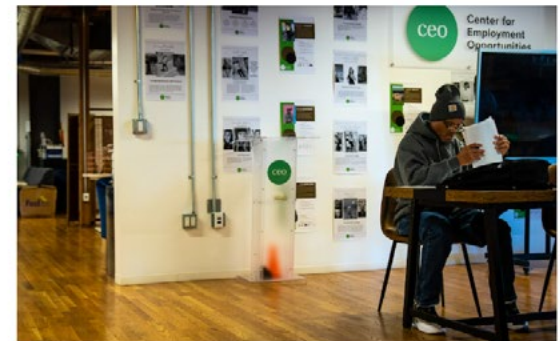
CRIMINAL JUSTICE JUSTICE SOCIAL ISSUES SOCIETY

Cash assistance may curb recidivism among people leaving prison, study says

The aid can help pay for basic expenses, but not everyone thinks it's money well spent.

BY: AMANDA WATFORD - MAY 14, 2025 5:00 AM

Twitter X Facebook LinkedIn Email RSS



A participant in California attends a Pathway to Employment orientation offered by the Center for Employment Opportunities, which runs a program that provides cash assistance to those recently released from prison. A new study suggests that direct financial aid reduces prison recidivism and eases reentry.



A person holds coins in their hands with a piece of paper reading "Make a change." (Photo: Kati Yukawa on Unsplash)

I Returned Home From Prison With Nothing; Here's What Helped Me Rebuild

Programs like the Returning Citizens Stimulus don't just improve lives; they reduce unnecessary incarceration and save public funds.

In April of 2020, one of us was navigating reentry during a global pandemic, while the other was working to implement the largest-ever cash assistance program specifically for people returning from incarceration. With the publication of groundbreaking research, five years later, we know that cash assistance has a positive impact on public safety. It's time to scale this proven strategy to California's recidivism challenges.

By KARINA LARIZ | SAM SCHAEFFER
Apr 23, 2025
Common Dreams

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Twitter

NATIONAL MEDIA REACH & VISIBILITY

Over the 2025 calendar year, CEO achieved **9,237,629,733** in total audience reach across more than **1,800** media mentions. Coverage appeared in top-tier outlets including *Rolling Stone*, *Stateline*, *Yahoo*, *the Los Angeles Times*, *The 19th*, and *Fast Company*, significantly expanding national visibility for fair chance employment and reentry solutions.

FY2025 FINANCIALS

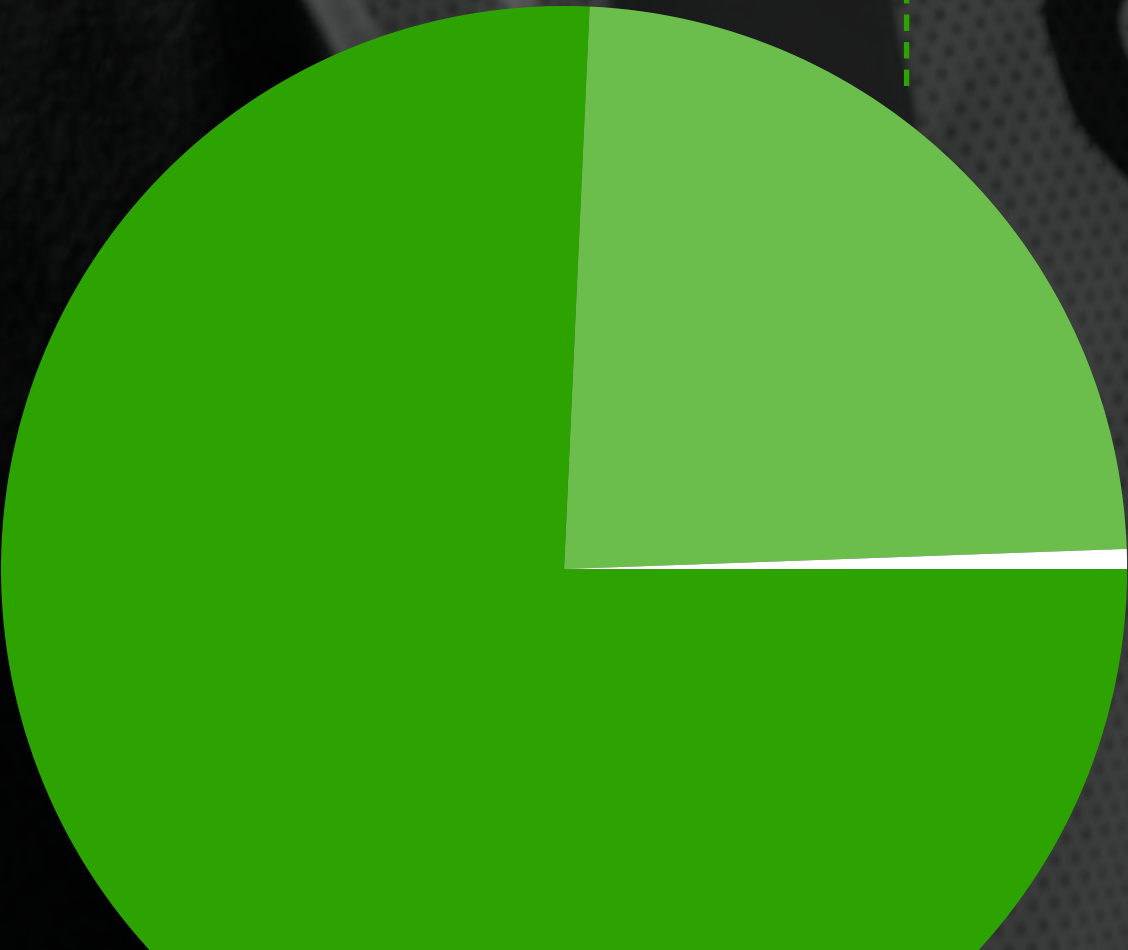
July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

TOTAL
REVENUE: **\$116,745,170**

\$88,397,206
Program Services

\$27,683,653
Contributions

\$664,311
Interest & Other

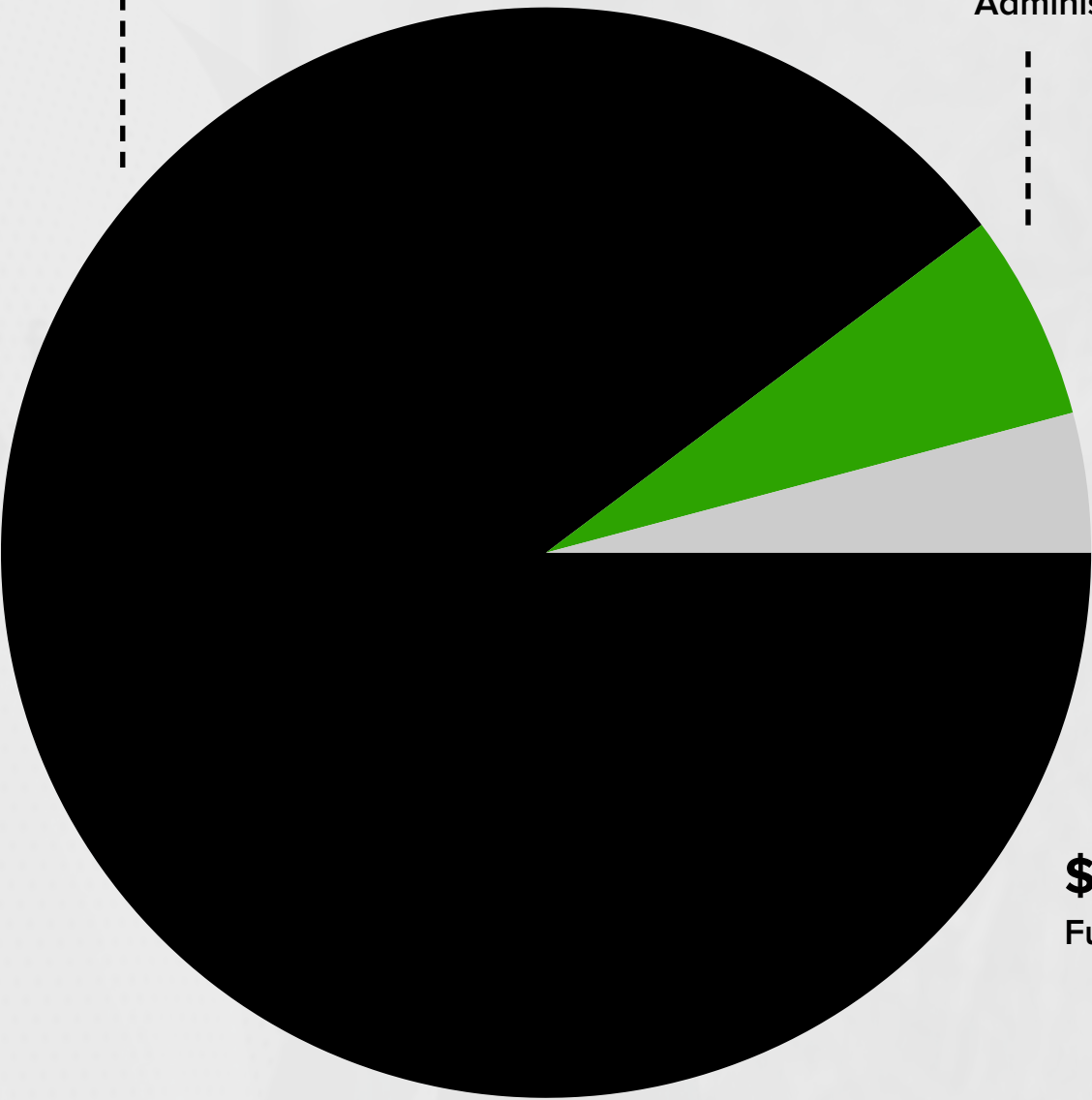


TOTAL
EXPENSES: **\$123,081,461**

\$109,620,741
Program Services

\$8,409,674
General &
Administration

\$5,051,046
Fundraising



WAYS TO GIVE



Online Donations

Visit our donation page: ceoworks.org/donate



Checks

Please make all checks payable to: **Center for Employment Opportunities, Inc.**

Mailing address for checks

If sending by U.S. Postal Service:
Center for Employment Opportunities, Inc.
PO BOX 2432
Hicksville, NY 11802-2432

All other forms of mail (FedEx and UPS):
Center for Employment Opportunities
Attn: Lockbox Operations
PO Box 2432
400 White Clay Center Drive
Newark, DE 19711



Contact Us

For assistance with any of the following options, please email: gifts@ceoworks.org

Matching Gifts

Many employers match employee donations. Retirees and spouses may also qualify. Check [here](#) to see if your employer participates.

Legacy Giving

Include a gift to CEO in your will or estate plan to make a lasting investment in our mission.

Stocks and Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs)

Maximize your impact by making a gift of stock or through a donor-advised fund.

Host a Fundraiser

Create a peer-to-peer fundraiser by setting up a page [here](#).

In-Kind Donations

Donate goods through in-kind contributions. Complete our [online form](#) to get started.

REIMAGINING THE FUTURE OF REENTRY

LEADING WITH EVIDENCE, BUILDING WITH COURAGE

I know firsthand how difficult reentry can be, and how much it matters to have a real opportunity at the right moment. Programs like CEO create that opportunity by pairing immediate support with stability and long-term direction. I've seen how access to work, coaching, and consistency can change the trajectory of someone's life, including my own. What makes the difference is not just the program itself, but the belief that people deserve the chance to move forward with dignity.

Serving on CEO's Board has given me a broader view of how lived experience and evidence can reinforce each other. I've watched data and outcomes confirm what many of us already understand: when people returning home have income, strong guidance, and clear pathways to careers, they are better positioned to succeed. For me, the evidence is personal. It reflects people I know, communities I care about, and futures that are still being shaped.

As CEO advances its Opportunity 2030 strategy, the organization is taking on work that requires

both ambition and care. The goal is not just to grow programs, but to strengthen the systems that support reentry across the country. In the years ahead, CEO plans to expand its reach, deepen its partnerships with states and communities, and help direct greater public investment toward approaches that work. That kind of growth matters because it connects individual success to broader community impact.

CEO's work has always been about more than jobs. It's about helping people rebuild stability, confidence, and momentum. Through collaboration with staff, partners, and supporters, the organization continues to translate evidence into practice and opportunity into lasting change.

Thank you for your continued support and for believing in solutions that give people returning home a fair chance to build their futures and strive.

Khalil Cumberbatch

Board of Directors

Center for Employment Opportunities





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