



Department of  
**Labor & Workforce  
Development**



Tennessee  
**Office of Reentry**

# Meet the Tennessee Office of Reentry (TOOR)



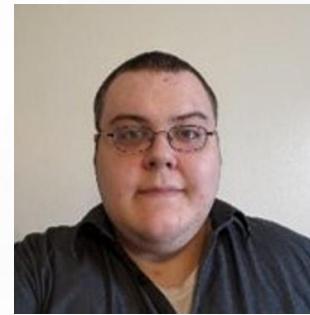
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- Established July 1, 2021
- Nation's first statewide reentry office in a Department of Labor and Workforce Development
- Focus on overcome employment barriers by collaborating with state agencies, community organizations, other stakeholders
- To ensure safer communities and assist in reducing recidivism

### TOOR Goals:

- Increase awareness of the value *Justice Involved Individuals* (JII) bring to the workforce
- Advance the efforts in assisting JIIs overcome barriers to employment
- Improve the data tracking involving JIIs

# The Why?

## ***In Tennessee:***

- 95% of incarcerated persons will return home
- Currently over 110,000 Tennesseans are on active supervision or incarcerated
- 1 in 3 Tennesseans is justice involved
- 1 in 2 Tennesseans has a family member that has been incarcerated
- Current unemployment general population rate is 3.5%, for JII that rate is estimated 27%
- Recidivism rate dropped to 29.6% for first time since 2015

# American Job Centers (AJC)- TOOR's Front Door



Career Specialist across the state are willing and able to provide JII with specialized assistance

# TOOR Media Campaigns



# SECOND CHANCES WORK



# Reentry Simulation: The ULTIMATE Experiential Tool

- Our simulation has a focus on getting back to employment
- Educational Outreach Experiential Tool
  - 2.5 hours in the life of a JII post-incarceration
  - Highlights struggles and challenges
  - Hands-on, Immersive learning experience

- 23-Reentry Simulations to date
  - 8-Local Workforce Boards
  - 10-Government Agencies
  - 1-National Agency
  - 1-Largest Private Prison Company
  - 3-Non-Profit Agencies

- Over 1,000 participants
- 322 volunteers
- Over 50 employers



# Capacity Building Training for Staff and Employers



## Employer Engagement

- NRWC's Employer Engagement Training
  - Empowers workforce professionals, job developers, and community partners with effective tools and strategies to build strong employer partnerships
- The program enhances Fair Chance Hiring networks, boosts employment outcomes, and fosters sustainable talent pipelines for justice-impacted job seekers

## Reentry Specialist Certification

- TOOR funded Workforce Development Professionals statewide to complete NRWC's Reentry Specialist Certification
- Certified Specialists gained enhanced knowledge to support justice-involved individuals through reentry, including improved case management strategies

# Linking Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP)

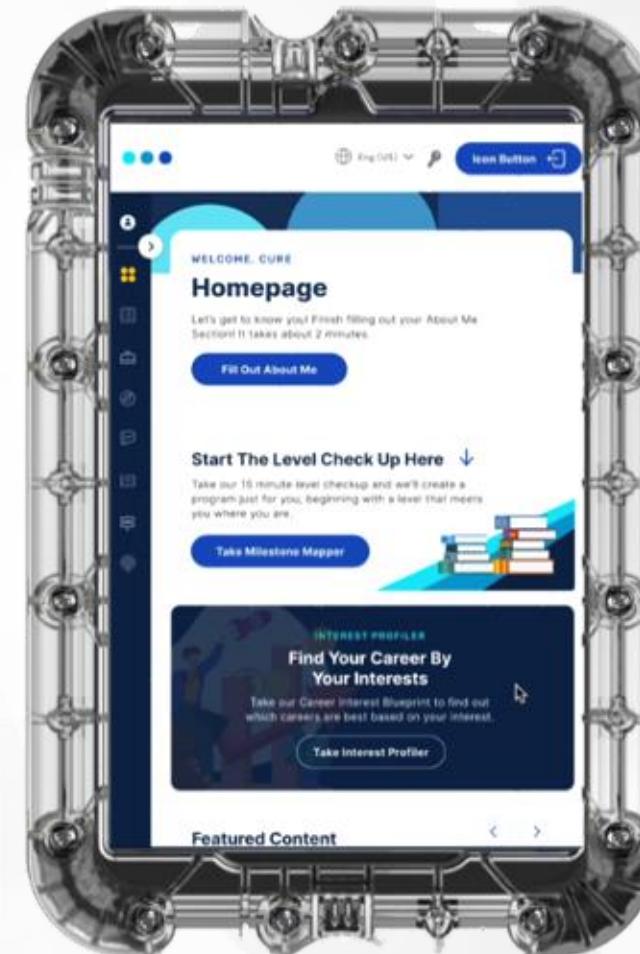
- Phase-One: While participants are incarcerated:
  - Resume Writing Assistance
  - Interviewing Skills
  - Job Readiness Training
  - Soft Skills
  - Career Planning
  - Job Search Assistance guided by Labor Market Information
- Phase-Two: After release employment services at the local American Job Centers (AJC)
- Partnerships include local county jails, state prisons, and federal facilities.

## VOUCHER PROGRAM

- Partnership with TOOR and the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security
- LEAP participants also qualify for a voucher for duplicate license or State ID free of charge to the participant

# Workforce-Reentry Tablets

- First ever statewide free tablet program for county jails
- Has a workforce and personal development component
- Fully customizable Learning Management System
- 322 learners have obtained employment who used tablets



# TN Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD)



- Federally funded 3-stage competitive grant program
  - Only in 17 other states
  - \$6.7 Million until 2027
- Enroll and serve federally justice involved individuals
- Training that meets local labor market needs
- Participant must operate in at least two consecutive stages
- Provides supportive services
- Includes partnerships and employment focused peer mentoring

# Community Reentry Reinvestment Grant (CRRG)

- \$1M Dollar Investment of state funds
- Innovative partnerships with non-profit, for profit, faith-based, government & Non-Government Organizations
- 1-year reimbursement-based grant program
- Program Focuses:
  - Pipeline Partnership Required
    - Specialty court, Halfway house, etc.
  - American Job Center and/or Adult Education
  - Labor-Market Information
  - Employer partnership

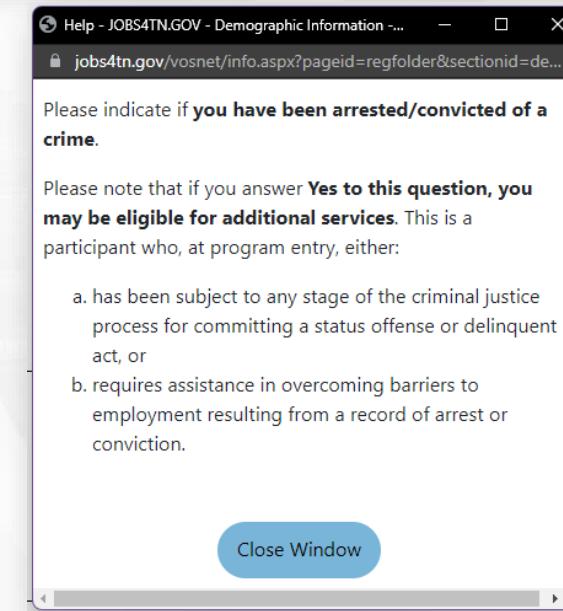
- 1,297 participants have been served through this grant
- 522 have gained employment through this grant

# The “Button” in JOBS4TN

- Officially launched April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Located within a user's demographic information on their profile on Jobs4TN.gov (VOS)
- Allows an individual user on Jobs4TN.gov to identify themselves as having been involved with the criminal justice system in some form

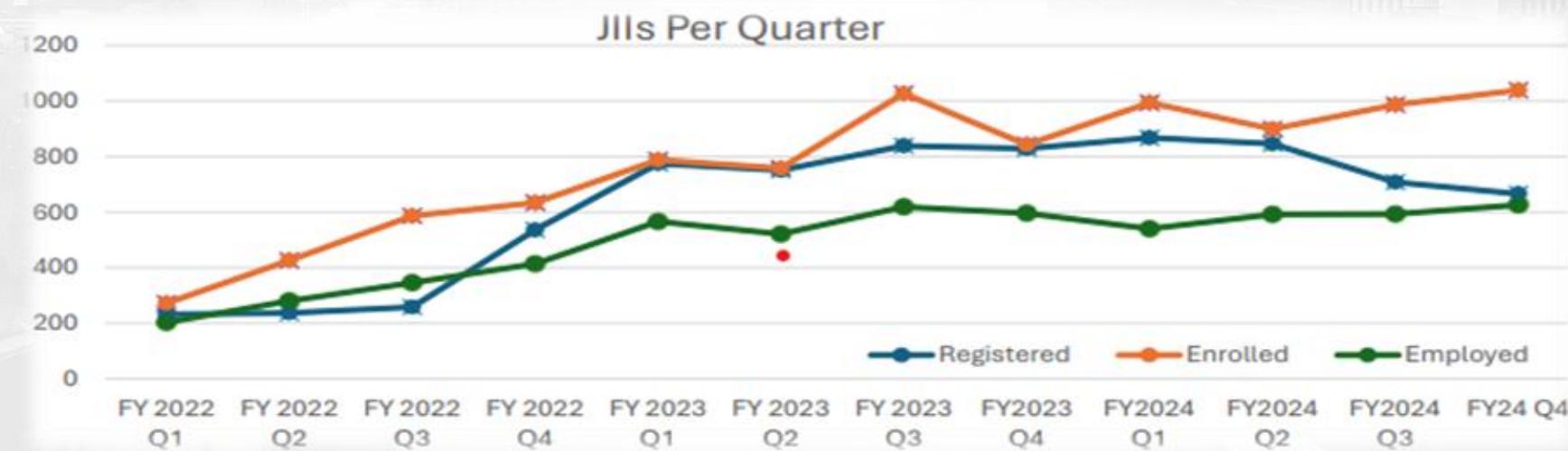
**\* Have you been arrested/convicted of a crime? If so, you may be eligible for additional support services and programs.**

Yes  
 No  
 I do not wish to answer.



# TOOR Impact Through Data

- Workforce Services Division (July 1, 2021 – March 31, 2025):
- Increased the JII registrations per quarter average by twice the rate as Non-JIIs
  - 7,545 total JII registrations since office founded
- Increased the JII enrollments per quarter average by four times the rate as Non-JIIs
  - 9,523 total JII enrollments since office founded
- Increased the JII entered employment per quarter average by eight times the rate as Non-JIIs
  - 6,547 total JII employments since office founded (663 in most recent quarter, which is highest so far)





Employer Guide PDF  
QR Code



TOOR sincerely thanks you for the honor of being selected as a State Transformation in Action Recognition Award finalist