



# SECOND CHANCE OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING REFORM IN KENTUCKY

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In Kentucky, state law often prevents ex-offenders from working in occupations that require a license, even if they have served their time and the crime was nonviolent.

NEARLY

**38%**



of Kentuckians have a criminal record. Kentucky's incarceration rate is the 8th highest in the United States.

MORE THAN

**13,000**

Kentuckians are released from prison each year and reenter society.



As of 2022, Kentucky's recidivism rate is



**29.17%**

As of 2019, Kentucky's criminal justice system costs the public

**\$620**



million annually.

Former inmates who **stay employed for one year** after their release are

**35%**

LESS LIKELY



to commit another crime compared to those who don't have a job.

NEARLY

**1 in 5**



workers in Kentucky must get an occupational license to do their job.



**9%**

States with **more barriers** to occupational licensing experienced a **9% increase** in recidivism rates.

States with **fewer barriers** experienced a **2.5% decrease** in recidivism rates.<sup>7</sup>

**2.5%**

## State Solutions

Kentucky policymakers should support occupational licensing reforms that create a path for ex-offenders without a history of violent felonies or sexual offenses to earn a license, such as:

- ★ Allowing ex-offenders to petition a licensing board to see if they are disqualified from the license before they complete training, education, or exams.
- ★ Preventing licensing boards from denying a license based on vague "good moral character" or "moral turpitude" requirements.
- ★ Preventing licensing boards from denying a license to an ex-offender due to a crime committed many years ago for which the threat of recidivism is low.
- ★ Preventing licensing boards from denying a license to an applicant based on an arrest that did not lead to a conviction of a crime.