

TLS WEBINAR 16: SESSION TAKEAWAY

Employer Perspectives on Education and Training

Building pathways to employment for justice-impacted individuals requires aligning education, training, and human services with real employer needs. These strategies help reentry practitioners better equip job seekers and build deeper partnerships with employers.

Key Strategies to Improve Alignment Between Training Programs and Employer Needs

- **Prioritize Foundational Education and Digital Literacy**
 - Justice-impacted job seekers often face significant skill gaps that limit their employment options.
 - Begin with digital literacy to ensure individuals can navigate modern workplaces (e.g., Zoom, email, online forms).
 - Connect individuals to GED, adult literacy, and numeracy programs to prepare them for certifications or post-secondary learning.
- **Reframe “Soft Skills” as Essential Skills**
 - Employers consistently report that success depends more on behaviors than technical skills. These are not “nice to have”—they’re essential.
 - Use mock interviews, coaching, and mentoring to reinforce these core competencies.
- **Expand Access to On-the-Job Learning Pathways**
 - Apprenticeships and work-based learning models help participants earn while they learn.
 - Support employer partners in developing registered apprenticeships tailored to returning citizens.
 - Promote shoulder-to-shoulder training and mentorship models to build confidence and job-specific skills.
- **Encourage Transparency and Honesty in the Hiring Process**
 - Trust is a two-way street. Both employers and job seekers benefit from clear expectations.
 - Support job seekers in disclosing their background appropriately, early enough to be transparent, but with context.
 - Encourage employers to review background checks with nuance, not through blanket exclusions.