



# PUT JUSTICE-INVOLVED RESIDENTS BACK ON THE ROAD

"People in my neighborhood who've done crimes in the past are being held back by their records. They're labeled. They can't get jobs. So how can they move forward?"

-Brian, Detroit

## THE ROAD AHEAD

To help people involved in the justice system get back on track, Michigan must:



Remove barriers that keep workers with felony records from gaining occupational credentials.



Expunge certain crimes from an individual's record after a period of time.



Stop requiring information about criminal history on initial job applications.



## TIME FOR A TUNE-UP

Becoming employed and economically mobile greatly reduces the likelihood of recidivism, yet Michigan does not use all of the tools available to help justice-involved individuals get and keep good jobs. Many private and public employers ask the question "Have you ever been convicted of a felony?" on their employment applications, attaching a stigma to the applicant without providing a chance to explain in person the circumstances of the conviction. Background checks often reveal minor or long-ago crimes that stigmatize applicants and jeopardize their employment chances. And some occupational licensing laws continue to obstruct opportunities for employment based on convictions that have nothing to do with the performance of the job duties or the population interacted with.



## ABOUT THE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR MICHIGAN

We all agree Michigan needs a major tune-up. And like the real vehicles we all depend on, it takes a lot of components and tools to make our state go. Without good jobs and training, reliable healthcare, quality education, strong families, and a safe environment, our state can't run properly. That's why we've created a clear and comprehensive plan to help lawmakers on the road ahead—the Owner's Manual for Michigan.

# REPAIRING THE PROBLEM:



## HOW TO HELP JUSTICE-INVOLVED RESIDENTS THRIVE

- 1. Continue to build on and fine-tune the previous governor's removal of felony questions on occupational licensing applications.** The state must work to ensure that those who continue to be barred from certain professions due to the nature of the crime committed will have full knowledge of this before beginning a training program in that profession.
- 2. Expunge certain types of convictions and reduce burdensome paperwork and processes for the applicant on the remaining types.** Some crimes, particularly those that involved a victim, cannot be automatically expunged, but the process through which an individual can seek expungement can be made less burdensome.
- 3. Remove criminal history questions on initial job applications.** Questions about criminal history should be removed from government job (and government contractor and vendor) applications and be prohibited on private sector applications. Michigan removed such questions from state employment applications, but many cities and counties (and their contractors and vendors) continue to include the question. Furthermore, a law prohibiting local and county governments from adopting "ban the box" ordinances covering private employers should be rescinded.

## SHARING THE ROAD

**Equity is of utmost importance when it comes to building a better Michigan.** There are glaring racial disparities in criminal justice sentencing and incarceration: African Americans are incarcerated at more than five times the rate of Whites, and Michigan ranks 13th-highest in the proportion of black males who are incarcerated at any given time. This means that a disproportionate number of justice-involved jobhunters are people of color. As a matter of racial equity, Michigan must take proactive steps to reduce employment barriers for those reentering society.



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