

# Tennessee Office of Reentry (TOOR) Reentry and the New Face of Workforce



# Key Terms

- **Reentry**

- The transition from incarceration—life in prison, jail or juvenile justice facilities—to life in the community.

- **Recidivism**

- The act of continuing to commit crimes even after having been punished.

- **People First Language**

- Refers to choosing and using words that recognize and refer to individuals – first and foremost - as people

- **Justice Involved Individuals (JIIs), Returning Citizens, or People with Records**

- Those people who are currently or have been involved with the criminal justice system.

- **Including those who are:**

- Arrested or Charged
- Convicted of a crime
- Probation or Parole
- Under home confinement
- Incarcerated in jail or prison
- Under community residential supervision

# The Tennessee Office of Reentry (TOOR)

- Created July 1, 2021, as part of Governor Bill Lee's plan of true criminal justice reform
- 100% State Funded and 100% Statewide
- Provide level of structure and support to American Job Centers and county jails
- Partner with Government Agencies, Employers, Faith-Based Organizations and Non-Profit Stakeholders
- Advocate for better Second Chance Hiring practices
- Address barriers to employment and enhance Workforce Development
- Leading to more opportunities, stronger communities and better economic development

# Why a Tennessee Office of Reentry?

- 95% of incarcerated persons will return home
- 30,000 people incarcerated in TN county jails
- Approximately 20,000 people incarcerated in TN prisons
- 60,000 people on probation or parole in TN
- 1 in 3 Tennesseans is justice involved
- 1 in 2 Tennesseans has a family member that has been incarcerated
- Recidivism rate of 46%----29.6%
- 1 in 3 African American men have a felony
- Memphis has the largest population of people with a felony
- General Population Unemployment rate of 3.5%
- JII Unemployment rate of 27%

## TOOR Goals

- Advance the efforts in assisting JIs overcome barriers to employment
- Improve the data tracking involving Justice Involved Individuals
- Increase awareness of the value JIs bring to the workforce

## Lesson 1:

# Some Common Aspects of the Justice Involved Population

- **Higher percentages of:**

- Mental Illness
- Substance Use and Behavior Disorders
- People of Color are disproportionately affected
- People with Disabilities are disproportionately affected
- Illiteracy and Learning Disorders
- English as a Second Language Learners are disproportionately affected
- Homelessness
- Poverty
- Personal Traumatic Incidents

## Lesson 2: Reentry Barriers

- **JII Specific:**

- Housing
- Identification Documents
- Probation/Parole Requirements
- Employment
- Social Support
- Distrust of Systems
- Lower self-advocating

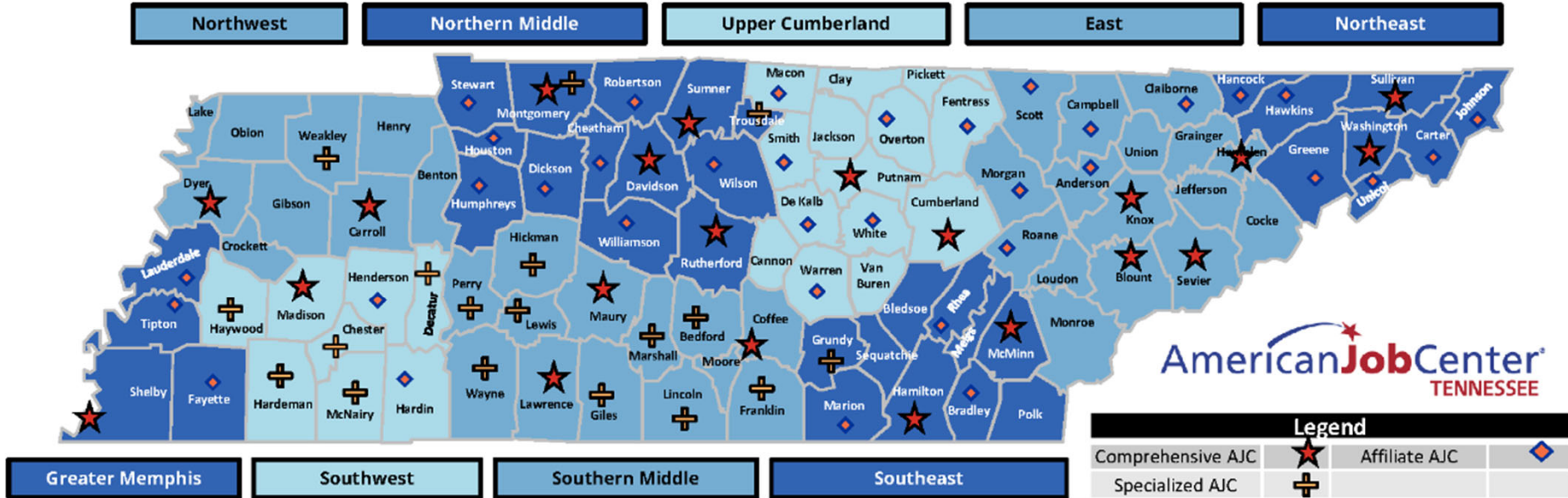
- **General lack of:**

- Food
- Clothing
- Transportation
- Physical Health
- Behavioral Health
- Child Care

# Where the work happens!!



## Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) and American Job Center Locations





## Lesson 3: Approaches to the work (Best Practices)

- **Holistic**
  - Looking at the whole person Understanding needs and overlap
- **Person-Centered**
  - Individualized for their needs
  - Priorities will vary
- **Strength Based**
  - Identifying and using strengths
  - Helps with motivation!
- **Trauma Informed**
  - Higher rates of trauma and PTSD
  - Understand, recognize, and respond appropriately
- **Collaborative**
  - Research and develop connections with resources in community, particularly other state agencies
  - Develop contacts and connections for referral
- **Culturally Responsive**
  - Marginalized groups will be overrepresented
  - Adapting your behaviors and attitude

## Lesson 4: Connections to make

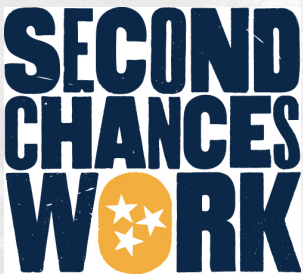
- **Corrections Related:**

- Jails
- Prisons
- Day Reporting Centers
- Community Resource Centers
- Probation Offices
- Parole Offices
- Tennessee Reentry Collaborative

- **Non-Corrections Related:**

- Non-Profits
- Faith Based Organizations & Initiatives
- Government Agencies
- Title 1 Staff within American Job Center
- Other Reentry Focused Organizations
- One Stop Operator

# TOOR Media Campaigns



## It's Okay

- Public Facing
- Statewide Campaign normalizing reentry
- Drawing Awareness to the American Job Centers
- Reducing stigma for justice-involved individuals
- Educating the public that "It's Okay" to be justice involved

## Second Chances Work

- Employer Facing
- Provides guidance on becoming a Second Chance Employer
- Second Chances Work Rack card provided to you
  - Digital Employer Guide QRC with more information

# Reentry Simulation

- Educational Outreach Experiential Tool
- Highlights struggles and challenges
- Insight and understanding of reentry obstacles
- Hands-on, Immersive learning experience
- “I think this training should be available to businesses....and people need to understand just how hard and exhausting this experience is for the JII’s.” –Reentry Simulation Participant



# Community Reentry Reinvestment Grant

- One year state funded cost reimbursement competitive grant program for up to \$100K
- Open to for profits, non-profits, local government and other non-governmental entities
- Use Labor Market Information to map participants to in demand industries
- Establishes a pipeline using populations through a partnership with: Local Jails, Diversionary Courts, TDOC facilities including prisons, Day Reporting Centers, Community Resource Centers, Halfway/Transitional Housing
- Required to have direct support provision for upskilling, certified work attainment, vocational education, etc.
- Must establish an ecosystem of wraparound support as participants integrate into the workforce
- Grantees require employment partners that agree to offer a fair chance opportunity and some consideration for employment

# QUESTIONS??

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TN Office of Reentry presentation  
for TBF

