

Reentry Mythbusters



Myth: A person that has been arrested or convicted is “once a criminal, always a criminal.”

Fact: Research shows that a criminal record doesn’t predict future re-offending after a certain time period passes (typically within a two year time frame from release). In fact Dane County only has a 19% re-incarceration rate.

Myth: “I only want to hire the ‘cream of the crop’ – that can’t be a person with a criminal record”

Fact: With an estimated 70 million U. S. adults with a record, or **1 in 4** adults, anyone can have an arrest or conviction record. Some of the most successful people in the world have a record including Martha Stewart, George W. Bush, Bill Gates, Sir Richard Branson (founder of Virgin Group), Robert Downey Jr., Mark Wahlberg, Wynonna Judd, Mickey Rourke and Keanu Reeves.

Myth: Individual who has been convicted of a crime is “banned from public housing”.

Fact: Public Housing Authorities have great discretion in determining their admissions and occupancy policies for ex-offenders. While PHA’s can choose to ban ex-offenders from participating in public housing and Section 8 programs, it is not HUD policy to do so. In fact, in many circumstances, formerly incarcerated people should not be denied access.

Myth: An individual with a felony conviction can never vote

Fact: Nearly every state has a restoration process to regain voting rights. Only a few states do not allow re-enfranchisement and those restrictions only apply to a few specific offenses. Generally, it is not a matter of whether one can vote, but how and when one can vote.

Myth: People with criminal records are automatically barred from employment

Fact: An arrest or conviction record will NOT automatically bar individuals from employment. Employers may use a criminal offense as a way to discriminate against someone who has a criminal history, but this background does not ban someone from employment.