Challenges Faced by Job Seekers:

1. **Barriers to Entry**
   - Test requirements in applications
   - Background checks
   - Gaps in employment
   - Lack of opportunities

2. **Digital Divide**
   - Lack knowledge about navigating the job market in the digital era

3. **Discrimination**
   - Ageism
   - Nepotism
   - Favoritism
   - Language barriers

4. **Education Disparity**
   - Higher education requirements for traditionally non-academic jobs
   - Education requirements beyond skill levels

5. **Criminal Backgrounds**
   - Past convictions continue to hinder employment prospects

6. **Limited Jobs in Area**
   - Lack of access to good jobs often leads to relocation
   - Higher-paying jobs are located outside city limits

7. **Transportation**
   - Limited and unreliable transportation options restrict job accessibility
   - Public transportation is unreliable and has restricted hours
   - Distance between bus stops and homes exacerbates transportation issues
   - High auto expenses prevent ownership for some individuals
   - Lack of dependable vehicles affects transportation in rural areas

8. **Health**
   - Mental health stigma impacting job seekers

9. **Childcare**
   - High costs and waitlists for limited availability of childcare facilities
   - Limited hours of childcare facilities add stress for working parents
   - Lack of safe childcare options affects job search and retention

10. **Housing**
   - Housing discrimination and high costs affect job accessibility
   - Lack of stable housing

11. **Bureaucratic Hurdles**
   - Difficulty navigating bureaucratic systems adds to job search frustrations
     - DMV, social services, job readiness, etc
   - Lack of coordination between services and job opportunities
   - Trust issues due to broken promises and unmet needs

Solutions to Address Challenges:

Identified Areas for Improvement:

1. **Support Services**
   - One-Stop Programs
     - Comprehensive support programs centralize resources for easier access.
     - Support organizations offer training, interviewing skills, and supportive services
   - Vocational Training
     - Trade programs and short-term courses provide alternative paths to employment.
   - Childcare Support
     - Providing stipends and sliding scale options help alleviate childcare burdens.
   - Mentorship Programs
     - Guidance and support aid in gaining and retaining employment
     - Mentoring programs aid in gaining and retaining employment
2. **Utilizing AI**
   - Matching skills with job opportunities can help streamline the hiring process.
3. **Accessibility of Training**
   - More accessible training and education programs needed at community centers, colleges, and libraries.
   - Offering trade training and short-term courses.
4. **Employer Engagement**
   - Highlighting the benefits of employing individuals from marginalized backgrounds to businesses.
   - Efforts to make jobs more "friendly" and accessible, especially for formerly incarcerated individuals.
5. **Resource Awareness**
   - Greater efforts needed to inform individuals of available resources and opportunities.
6. **Mental Health Support**
   - Addressing mental health issues and improving accessibility to support services.
7. **Community Outreach**
   - Pop-up events and outreach increase awareness of available resources.
8. **Policy Advocacy**
   - Pushing for policies to remove barriers like felony conviction questions from job applications.
   - Providing childcare stipends and sliding scale options

Current Initiatives:

1. **Organizations providing support services**
   - HHOPE
   - Starting Over
   - Centers for Employment (CEO)
   - Project Rebound

- ○ Underground Scholars Initiative
- ○ Salvation Army
- ○ Boys & Girls Club
- ○ Desert Best Friend's Closet
- ○ Road to Redemption
- ○ Lighthouse Social Services
- ○ CDCR's STOP program aims to aid reentry efforts

2. **Community Building**
   - ○ Successful efforts in fostering supportive communities
   - ○ Mini Campuses
     - ■ Potential for dedicated spaces to support marginalized groups in transitioning to education and employment

Raw Notes:

Low paying jobs

- Test requirements

- background

-Making the connection between skills & Job availability

- gaps in employment

- pre-application testing are barriers

- PPL are unaware how to seek jobs in the digital era

-Ageism & nepotism

- Lack of access to good jobs forces people to relocate

- Criminal Background still a barrier

- Higher education for jobs that shouldn't necessarily require it

- All higher paying jobs outside of city limits

Transportation Access to

- bus passes for FI & regular

- Minimum transportation options

- No dependable vehicle

- no transportation in rural area

- Public Trans unreliable hours of operation

- Preventing from getting to one location to another safely

-Bus stops to far from homes

-Auto expenses to high (i.e. maintenance, insurances, registration, etc)

Childcare

- Cost

- Wait list for afford

- Need programs, to build youth, sports, science

-Hours only available until 6pm

-Stressful for parents when child are not safe

Solutions:
- Organization to help job seekers
- Training
- Interviewing
- Supportive services (gas, clothing, bus)
-Peer support
- Assigned mentor to help gain/retain employment
- Use AI to connect jobs to skills
- Employ buss. to work on training for low-paying jobs
- Improve warm handoff
- Inform different pathways to employment
- More community outreach (ie. pop-up, etc)
- Build social network/community before release
- One-stop program/database that provide resources
-An abundance of trade centers throughout the IE
- Some training before being release
- Allow formerly incarcerated to create in-reach relationships for a supported transition through reentry
- Educating employers on the positivity and benefits of hiring FI
- Short-term training at colleges
- Daycare workers can work on a sliding scale
- Childcare stipends
- Use legal approach/enforce anti-discrimination employment laws
- Probation/Parole should offer support services
- Job assessments before released from prison
- Readily available training for peer Support Specialist

Barriers
- Lack of connections between services and jobs
- CDCR Connection
- lack of technology or abilities
- Systems are hard to navigate (ie.g. DMV, resources, etc)
- Trust; Broken or unmet promises
- Language
- Education barrier, employees looking for higher educated
- Agism
- Housing discrimination
- Housing cost central to accessible jobs
- Remove "have you been convicted of a Felony" from application (e.g. enforce AB1008)
-lack of job training

- Mental Health
- Lack of motivation
-Being homeless
- Depression, negative self-image especially if you are making low-wages
- Job interview more focus on past then skill set
- No childcare near jobs
-Not aware of transportation resources
- Funding for the organization(s) that are willing to do the work
- Center of Development Training
- Universal stipend to all low-income people (e.g. $500 a month)
- More funding for marketing and outreach
- Mandated Uber resources
-The adjustment of being out of prison is a process.
- Lack of stable housing
- Job seekers turn down jobs because of reliable transportation
- Forced to stay home with children, or full time work and no childcare
-Stigma about mental health

<u>Organization Inventory</u>
- HHOPE
-Thrive
-Starting Over
- Desert Best Friends Closet
- Desert Sands Unified School District
- Boys & girls club
- Project Rebound
-Centers for Employment Opportunity
- Life to Rise
- Path2SEED
- Road to Redemption
-Salvation Army
- Workforce
-Lighthouse
- STOP program by CDCR

Live Notes:
1. Open Discussion: Addressing Solutions & Barriers for an Inclusive Economy in the Inland Region (15 mins)
    1. Training not accessible, more funding for outreach
    2. Warehouse jobs, barely survivable job employments

3. Inaccessibility on testing for jobs; can there be training/education at community centers, colleges, libraries, how do we support people getting ready for these tests
4. Gaps between organizations and residents, unaware that there are services for them
5. Support for in reach before being released, how to support all communities struggling
6. Need live resources, some jobs are not "friendly" need more accessible jobs
7. Formerly incarcerated folks have transferable skills and trades that are more accessible
8. New graduates and those with degrees are also having issues getting jobs
9. Business owners don't necessarily see advantages of employing system impacted folks-have obligations, highlighting to employer that dedication
10. Starting Over Inc and New Life, some people going back to their activities, competing with people with degrees and those who can pass background check
11. Need more resources and opportunities, not awarded same opportunities because they don't know about available resources e.g. some folks have issues with mental health and accessibility

What's Working and what's not?
- Community building is working
- An idea: mini campuses that can help formerly incarcerated, substance issues, facing homelessness, pipelines from incarceration to education and how do we get the word out there
- Issues of systemic and institutional barriers