

# Reentry Employment Opportunities Programs

## REO

The Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) program's mission is to inform the public workforce system on how best to serve justice-involved young adults and adults who are currently or formerly incarcerated. Grants are awarded through Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs). Approximately 100 active DOL REO grantees operate throughout the year.

### REO Appropriation by Program Year

PY 2021	\$100,079,000
PY 2020	\$98,079,000
PY 2019	\$93,079,000

REO is authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), and tests the effectiveness of service delivery models found in community, faith-based organizations, and government systems for their adoptability in assisting the reentry population enter the workforce. REO projects also promote collaboration and coordination between community-based organizations, foundations, state and local justice agencies, community colleges, and the workforce system. Annually REO allots approximately \$25,000,000 to national and regional intermediaries for activities that prepare young ex-offenders and school dropouts for employment with a priority for projects serving high-crime high poverty communities.

**Core Services Provided for Young Adults:** Young adult projects focus on post-release services that include: *apprenticeships; case management; credit retrieval; diversion from adjudication; expungement of juvenile records; follow-up; high school diploma equivalency preparation; job placement; mentoring; occupational skills training; staff and leadership development activities; restorative justice opportunities; tutoring; work experience; and other supportive services.*

**Core Services Provided for Adults:** Adult projects focus on pre- and post-release services that include: *apprenticeships; case management; career exploration through work experience and internships; employer connections; high school diploma equivalency preparation; job placement; legal assistance; mentoring; needs assessments; occupational training in in-demand industries; and pre-employment skill-building services.*

**Eligibility/Target Population:** Participants in young adult programs range in age from 18 to 24 years old and are at risk or have had involvement the juvenile or adult criminal justice system. Up to ten percent of young adult participants who left high school without graduating and have no involvement in the criminal justice system. Adult reentry programs focus on service to individuals 18 years old and older who were convicted and imprisoned as an adult.

ETA and the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) conducts evaluations on the impact and implementation of REO programs. REO changes the program design of its grants every two to three years. The use of evidence and evaluation is needed for continuous learning and program improvement on the ground to build up the evidence base in the reentry field. It is important to test theory and practice in the field to understand its impact on those REO serves. Evaluation results have the opportunity to inform future workforce development policy.



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These evaluations can be found at:

- <https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/currentstudies/Reentry-Employment-Opportunities-Evaluation.htm>
- <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasp/evaluation/completedstudies>

## **CURRENT INITIATIVES:**

- Pathway Home
- Young Adult Reentry Partnership (YARP)
- Reentry Projects

## **PREVIOUS INITIATIVES:**

- Face Forward Intermediary & Community Grants
- Job ChalleNGe Grants
- Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP)
- Pathways to Justice Careers
- Reentry Demonstration Project
- Training 2 Work Grants

## **FEDERAL BONDING PROGRAM**

Through the Federal Bonding Program (FBP), the Department provides fidelity bonds to employers to help remove the risks of hiring individuals whose backgrounds pose significant barriers to securing or retaining employment. The FBP was developed in 1966 by DOL to help place ex-offenders and other at-risk individuals in private sector jobs. Fidelity bonding is insurance that indemnifies employers for loss of money or property sustained through the dishonest acts of their employees (i.e., theft, forgery, larceny, and embezzlement) with no deductible amount to become the employer's liability (100% coverage). The FBP has a 99% success rate, with only 1% of claims processed. In 2019, DOL greatly expanded the program by providing grant funds to 23 states and one outlying area and in December 2020 DOL announced the availability of an additional \$3.3 million to states to expand their use of fidelity bonds to cover employers hiring persons with criminal records, including individuals recovering from opioid and other addictions. The bonds cover the first six months of employment at no cost to the job applicant or the employer. For more information, please visit [www.bonds4jobs.com](http://www.bonds4jobs.com).

