



Annotated Bibliography: Employers and Justice-Involved Veterans

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Albright, S., & Demo, F. (1996, June). Employer attitudes toward hiring ex-offenders. *The Prison Journal*, 76, 118-137.

Abstract: The purposes of this article are to determine: (a) employer attitudes toward hiring ex-offenders, and (b) how these attitudes are affected by the level of training the ex-offender received while incarcerated, government incentives to hire, type of offense committed, and the relationship of the crime to the job to be filled. Eighty-three Houston and Dallas employers were surveyed about their attitudes toward hiring ex-offenders. In general, although the initial willingness to hire ex-offenders was low among employers, other findings indicate that the level of education, government incentives, and the relationship of the crime to the job increase employer willingness to hire an ex-offender. The type of offense, however, when disclosed, appears to have a negative effect on employers' willingness to hire, especially toward those with violent and sexual crimes as well as crimes against children. Limitations and policy applications of the findings are also discussed.

Atkin, C. A., & Armstrong, G. S. (2013, January). Does the concentration of parolees in a community impact employer attitudes toward the hiring of ex-offenders? *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 24:1, 71-93.

Abstract: Finding legitimate employment upon release from prison is an important, yet daunting, aspect of offender reentry. Researchers have argued that negative employer attitudes toward hiring ex-offenders act as a barrier during the job search process. This study explored existing attitudes of employers in their willingness to hire ex-offenders in the current labor market and determined whether these attitudes were dependent on the concentration of ex-offenders in the surrounding geographical community. Mail surveys and follow-up telephone contacts with a random sample of businesses that typically employ ex-offenders within 12 Texas ZIP-codes (six high parolee concentrations, six low parolee concentrations) were conducted. Respondents indicated a general willingness to hire ex-offenders, which did not vary

by concentration of parolees in the surrounding area but was found to vary by the conviction offense. Other significant predictors included the respondent's age and arrest history, whether their business was currently hiring, and whether the business had previously hired an ex-offender.

Brown, C. (2011, August). Vocational psychology and ex-offenders' reintegration: A call for action. *Journal of Career Assessment, 19*, 333-342.

Abstract: Failure to find steady and rewarding employment and stabilizing economic resources are key contributors to recidivism among ex-offenders. Within 3 years of their release, almost two thirds of ex-offenders return to prison. Ex-offenders face formidable barriers to employment, including legal limitations and those specific to their skills, education, and training. In addition to these real barriers and the stigma associated with having a criminal record, the ex-offender's prospect of securing employment is further complicated by the high national unemployment rate that is characteristic of our current economic downturn. Furthermore, due to limited and or restricted hiring opportunities, ex-offenders may be unable to pursue jobs that best fit their interests. Discussion of the role of work in the lives of ex-offenders has been scarce in the vocational psychology literature. Hence, this article illuminates the ex-offender's reintegration process and the vocational implications of having a criminal record. The author argues that the field of vocational psychology is distinctively qualified to assume a greater presence in the scholarly literature relevant to the vocational needs of ex-offenders.

Rade, C. B., Desmarais, S. L., & Mitchell, R. E. (2016). A meta-analysis of public attitudes toward ex-offenders. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 43*(9), 1260-1280.

Abstract: Ex-offenders face barriers to community reintegration, including negative attitudes held by members of the public. This meta-analysis summarizes the extant research on the correlates of public attitudes toward ex-offenders—namely, public, ex-offender, and community characteristics—and the moderating effects of sexual offense history. A systematic search of four databases (PsycINFO, Web of Science, National Criminal Justice Reference Service [NCJRS], and ProQuest Dissertation & Theses) identified 19 records, consisting of 9,355 participants. Results revealed small associations between correlate variables and attitudes, suggesting that people are more similar than different in their attitudes toward ex-offenders. Indeed, only political ideology, interpersonal contact, and sexual offense history emerged as significant correlates. Moderation analyses revealed differences in public attitudes toward ex-offenders based upon the year a record was produced. Findings reveal the need for additional research examining moderators of public attitudes toward ex-offenders and suggest that interventions should explore ways to incorporate interpersonal contact and reduce stigma related to criminal histories.

Giguere, R., & Dundes, L. (2002, December). Help wanted: A survey of employer concerns about hiring ex-convicts. *Criminal Justice Policy Review, 13*(4), 396-408.

Abstract: The majority (53%) of 62 Baltimore area employers surveyed were willing to hire an ex-offender described in a hypothetical scenario. Employers' greatest apprehensions concerned ex-offenders' people skills and their customers' discomfort if customers knew that an ex-convict worked for them. Also, the data show that employers' willingness to take advantage of a program with subsidized wages and their fear of being victimized were related to their degree of social contact with ex-convicts. These findings suggest that ex-offenders would benefit from programs enhancing people skills and that employers with greater familiarity with ex-convicts can more easily dismiss negative stereotypes about this population.

Graffam, J., Shinkfield, A. I., & Lavelle, B. (2014). Recidivism among participants of an employment assistance program for prisoners and offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 58*, 348-363.

Abstract: The voluntary 12-month program operated from 17 Victorian correctional locations, 7 prisons, and 10 community corrections locations, targeting participants at moderate to high risk of reoffending. Recidivism outcomes included simple rates of reoffending for the whole program ($N = 3,034$ registered participants) and analyses of rate and seriousness of reoffending and extent of poly-offending for a random sample of 600 program participants and 600 nonparticipants. Offending among program participants' pre- and post-registration was also investigated. Results showed a very low rate of reoffending (7.46%) for the entire program participant group while engaged in the program. As well, program participants had significantly lower levels of recidivism than nonparticipants, and post registration offending was significantly lower than preregistration offending. Findings indicate that long-term post release employment support programs provide positive benefits in terms of reduced reoffending.

Graffman, J., Shinkfield, A. I., & Hardcastle, L. (2008). The perceived employability of ex-prisoners and offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 52*, 673-685.

Abstract: A large-scale study was conducted to examine the perceived employability of ex-prisoners and offenders. Four participant groups comprising 596 (50.4%) employers, 234 (19.8%) employment service workers, 176 (14.9%) corrections workers, and 175 (14.8%) prisoners and offenders completed a questionnaire assessing the likelihood of a hypothetical job seeker's both obtaining and maintaining employment; the importance of specific skills and characteristics to employability; and the likelihood that ex-prisoners, offenders, and the general workforce exhibit these skills and characteristics. Apart from people with an intellectual or psychiatric disability, those with a criminal background were rated as being less likely than other disadvantaged groups to obtain and maintain employment. In addition, ex-prisoners were rated as being less likely than offenders and the general workforce to exhibit the skills and characteristics relevant to employability. Implications for the preparation and support of ex-prisoners and offenders into employment are discussed, together with broader community-wide initiatives to promote reintegration.

Harris, P. M., & Keller, K. S. (2005). Ex-offenders need not apply: The criminal background check in hiring decisions. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, 21*, 6-30.

Abstract: Many legal barriers exist that prevent ex-offenders from obtaining lawful employment, a principle means for reintegration. This article explores the scope and utility of these laws, which aim ostensibly to reduce the prospective employee's likelihood of engaging in workplace crime. Irrelevance of the provisions to the effective assessment of job applicants' risks of offending, shortcomings of criminal background checks, lack of empirical evidence linking ex-offenders to workplace crime, and the availability of viable alternatives underscore the need to scale back these significant obstacles to ex-offender reentry. The article concludes with recommendations for reasonable uses of risk assessment in employment screening laws.

Lukies, J., Graffam, J., & Shinkfield, A. I. (2011). The effect of organisational context variables on employer attitudes toward employability of ex-offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 55*, 460-475.

Abstract: The authors tested the premise that organizational context variables (i.e., size of organization, industry type, location, and respondent's position in organization) had significant effects on employer ($N = 596$) attitudes toward employability of ex-offenders. They also examined whether organizational context variables had an equivalent effect on employer attitudes to that of job-seeker's criminal history and employer personal characteristics (e.g., respondent age and gender). Using linear regression (HLM 6.02a), organizational context variables were shown to have a significant effect on employer attitudes. In addition, organizational context variables had a significantly greater effect on employer attitudes than did employer personal characteristics. However, job-seeker criminal history contributed more to respondent ratings of ex-offender employability than did organizational context variables. The finding that judgements of employability are influenced by organizational context variables has implications for future research relevant to reintegration. Stakeholder attitudes toward the reintegration success of ex-offenders may be generally influenced by context variables.

Society of Human Resource Management. (2012, July 19). Background checking—The use of criminal background checks in hiring decisions. *Survey Findings*. Retrieved from <http://www.shrm.org/research/surveyfindings/articles/pages/criminalbackgroundcheck.aspx>

Abstract: Approximately two-thirds (69%) of organizations reported that they conduct criminal background checks on all of their job candidates. Roughly one-half of organizations conduct criminal background checks to reduce legal liability for negligent hiring (52%) and to ensure a safe work environment for employees (49%). The top two convictions that are very influential in the decision not to extend a job offer are violent felonies (96%) and nonviolent felonies (74%). However, about three-fifths (58%) of organizations allow job candidates to explain the results of their criminal checks before the decision to hire or not to hire is made.

Varghese, F. P., Hardin, E. E., Bauer, R. L., & Morgan, R. D. (2010). Attitudes toward hiring offenders: The roles of criminal history, job qualifications, and race. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 54*, 769-782.

Abstract: Occupational functioning is an important factor in the success of offenders reentering society. Yet few studies have empirically examined the factors influencing job obtainment of offenders. This study endeavors to begin to fill this gap by examining attitudes in hiring applicants charged with a crime. To accomplish this goal, 275 college students read a job description for a cashier position and then read 1 of 12 descriptions of an applicant, varied by criminal history, qualifications, and race. Participants rate the applicants across dimensions relevant to hiring decisions. Results indicate that applicants with drug possession charges and low qualifications were less likely to be referred for hire. Severity of charges influences employability. Among applicants with a misdemeanor, qualifications increase employability, but qualifications have no influence for applicants with a felony. Implications of these findings for policy and vocational rehabilitation programming are discussed.