

GETTING GEORGIANS BACK TO WORK

Opening Access to Occupational Licenses

1 in 7 jobs require an occupational license. Because **40%** of adult Georgians have a criminal record, they may be barred from these jobs.



Unemployment rate for people with criminal records is **five times higher** than the state-wide unemployment rate.

Occupational licenses can be a barrier to well-qualified individuals obtaining good jobs and long-term careers. Every licensing applicant with a criminal record risks denial because of their record, even if it is old, pardoned, or expunged.



Common sense solutions can open opportunities, reduce recidivism, fill employee shortages, and boost communities.

GJP's PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- 1 Licensing boards **should only consider recent and relevant** convictions or pending cases.
- 2 All licensing boards **should recognize criminal record expungement** and pardons.
- 3 ALL agencies **should make a common-sense evaluation of whether a conviction is still relevant.** Georgia law requires 42 licensing boards and agencies to consider whether a criminal record is relevant to the profession at issue. But 9 are not required to do so.
- 4 Boards and agencies **should provide guidance on how records are evaluated** to allow Georgians to make informed decisions. Lack of clarity/guidance discourages motivated people with records from investing time and money in pursuing their dream careers.
- 5 Applicants **should receive written explanations** of denials and the **opportunity to appeal.** When people are denied licenses, they should know why and be given the chance to explain themselves.
- 6 Licensing boards **should collect and release data about how applications are handled.**

Want to learn more? Contact Wade Askew, GJP Supervising Attorney at Wade@GJP.org or 404.827.0027 ext. 214

About GJP

For 35 years, Georgia Justice Project (GJP) has served Georgians impacted by the criminal legal system. GJP approaches social change in three ways: through legal and social services - including holistic criminal defense, early termination of probation, criminal record clearing, and other reentry services; by advocating for a better Georgia, resulting in 21 changes to Georgia law so far; and by educating communities statewide on criminal justice and reentry issues. These approaches advance GJP's goals to lower the number of Georgians under correctional control and reduce barriers to reentry.