

Reducing the Recidivism rate



Abstract:

There is a problem in Justice, there is an average Recidivism rate of 75% in the US Prison system and both State and their taxpayers are frustrated.

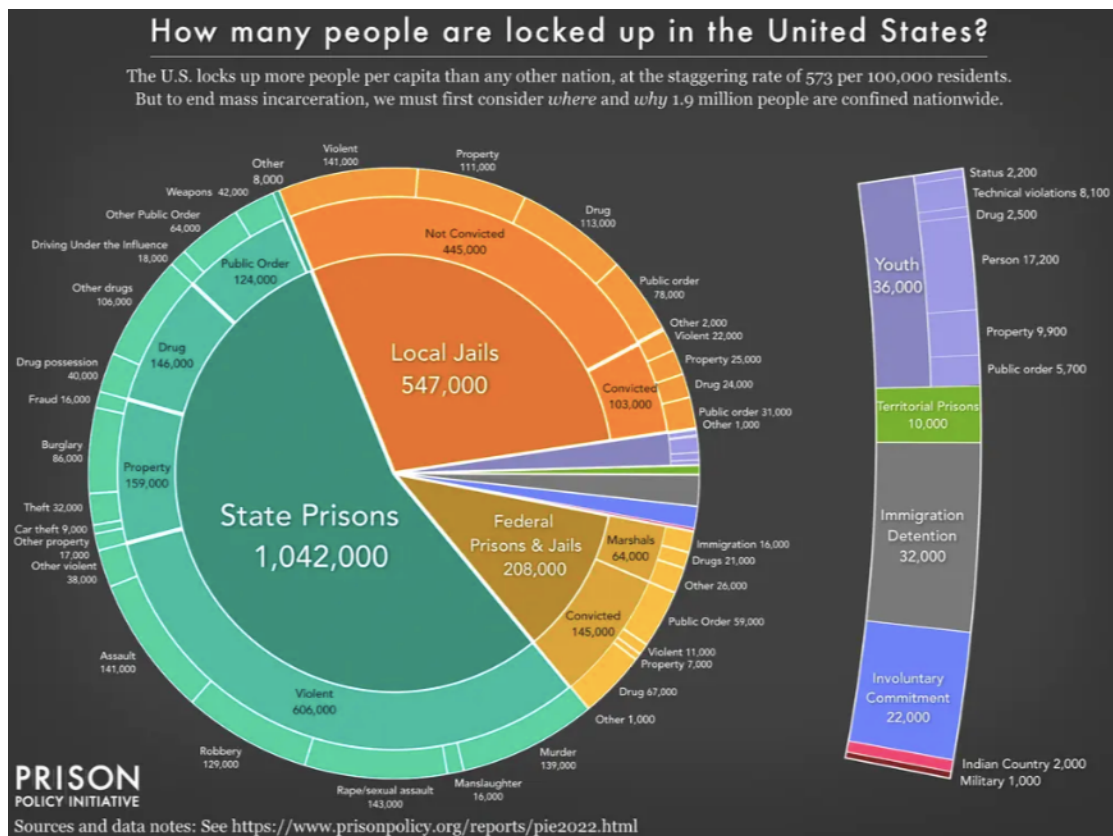
That is until today, there is now an online tool where Inmates (6,12,18 months out from release) can be matched to 1-3 Careers and shown to path to be upskilled for their matched Career accurately in under a minute.

TokuOra's tool can be used in other markets such as helping Students Veterans, Homelessness and WorkForce.

Introduction:

The United States is the world's leader in incarceration. There are 2 million people in the nation's prisons and jails—a 500% increase over the last 40 years. Changes in sentencing law and policy, not changes in crime rates, explain most of this increase.

Not only does the U.S. have the highest incarceration rate in the world; every single U.S. state incarcerates more people per capita than virtually any independent democracy on earth. To be sure, states like New York and Massachusetts appear progressive in their incarceration rates compared to states like Louisiana, but compared to the rest of the world, every U.S. state relies too heavily on prisons and jails to respond to crime. (*Prison Policy*)



As a result, America's recidivism crisis is far more alarming than any other democratic country in a similar economic bracket. If prison were teaching the "lessons" corrections workers claim it does, it is concerning that so many of the same prisoners end up back behind bars. The country's high recidivism rate alone demonstrates that our prisons are as ineffective as they are inefficient, a sobering reality which calls for a reimagined criminal justice system.

The causes of Recidivism

Social Interactions While Incarcerated: While incarceration is focused on punishing and rehabilitating prisoners, one of the most detrimental factors to proper rehabilitation can be the social interactions that inmates have while incarcerated. When someone first gets incarcerated, they may have been associated with a limited social circle of amateur criminals, but prison offers a network of career criminals that could further their criminal prowess. If an inmate isn't actively resisting criminal tendencies and trying to rehabilitate themselves, they may learn more about how to become a better criminal and, upon release, return to a life of crime.

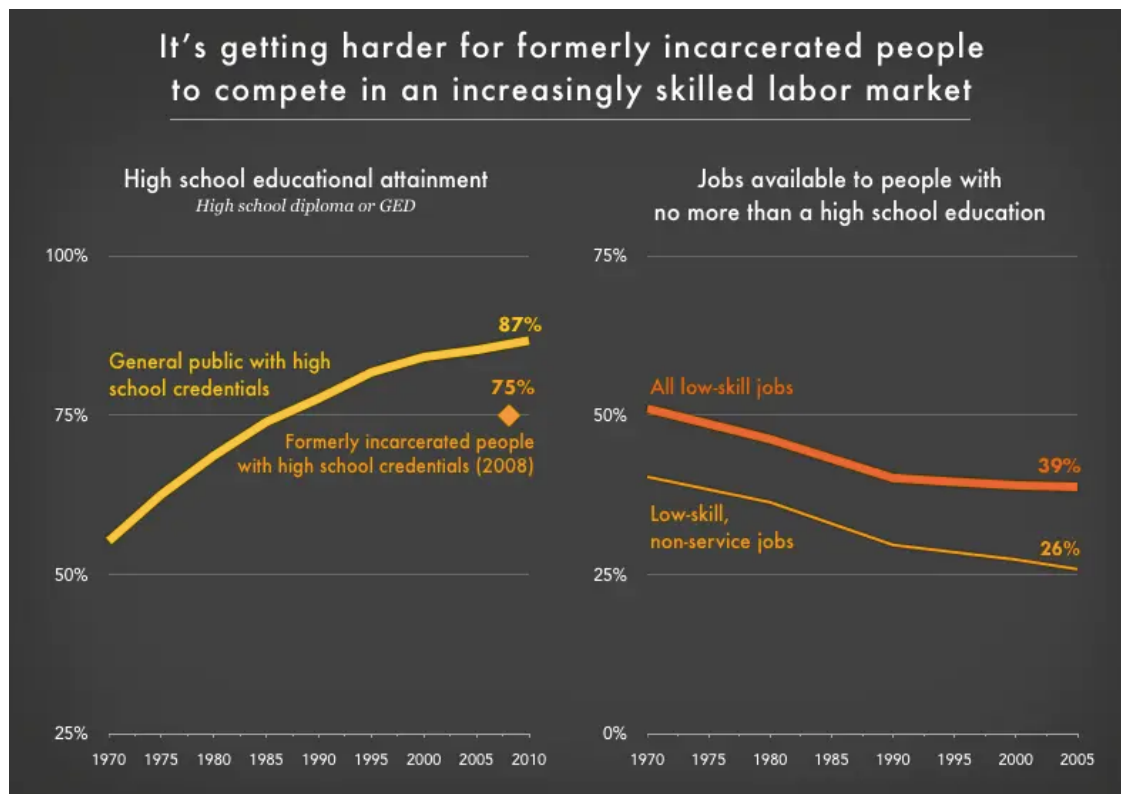
Lack of Employment: When someone finally gets released from prison, even if they want to live a normal life and be a productive member of society, their employment options are severely limited. It's estimated that an individual who has a felony on their record reduces the likelihood of getting a call back from employers by 50%. We feel that this is a conservative estimate as our own website, as a page on our other website specifically focused on jobs for felons accumulated over 700,000 pageviews in 2018 alone. With all those website visitors, we've anecdotally heard hundreds of stories about individuals who are desperate for work but can't seem to get a chance. Lack of employment leads to lack of finances, which can cause an individual to act out of desperation and do whatever is necessary to survive, including committing another crime.

Incarceration Doesn't Treat the Problem: While many institutions state that their goal is to treat inmates and rehabilitate them, anecdotal evidence from our community suggests that most inmates don't feel rehabilitation is part of the experience. In addition to the lack of proper rehabilitation, 2 million people every year are added to the jail system that have a mental illness. The National Center of Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University estimates that of all incarcerated individuals with substance abuse issues, only 11% of those that need treatment actually receive it while incarcerated. Mental illness and rehabilitation need to be the focus in prison, not just punishment for crimes.

Depression and Desperation: With all of these mental issues abound in prisons, where certain studies have estimated 31% of females and 14.5% of males have a serious mental issue, without proper treatment these issues will carry over into when the inmate is released. The lack of employment, negative social stigmas, and lack of support upon release can put inmates into a deeper state of depression and lead to desperate attempts to get the things that they want such as drugs to escape their reality.

Being Overwhelmed by Society: For those that have served long sentences in prison, it's not surprising that some inmates are intimidated and overwhelmed upon released. Being incarcerated forces an individual into a rigid schedule and they are required to follow rules every single day. Once they are released, they have much more freedom and this can lead to them feeling overwhelmed and full of anxiety. This feeling may lead to substance abuse to cope with these issues, which can lead to additional crimes.

Not Changing Lifestyle/Social Circle Upon Release: Part of a successful rehabilitation is for individuals to distance themselves from negative influences upon release. Unfortunately, though, this is much easier said than done. Many times, former inmates will go back to the same crowd of people they used to associate with because finding a new group isn't easy to do. Further, if gang activity is involved, it might be very difficult to leave their old group for fear of retribution.



Lack of Rehabilitation Programs: While most State/Private Prisons have some rehabilitation programs, it's most likely they have not kept-up with what Careers are growing or reducing in the outside world.

How can we best prepare the formerly incarcerated for reintegration into life outside of prison and ensure they don't recidivate? The simple answer — rehabilitation on the inside.

By shifting the goal of incarceration towards rehabilitation, we can work to lower the recidivism rate by investing in mental health care, by devising personalized education plans for prisoners, and by connecting prisoners with job opportunities and valuable skills to aid in creating a prison-to-work pipeline.

Ideas from former Inmates:

'One of the things that would help reduce recidivism is to offer Reentry classes and courses on the inside of prison. Individuals need to be preparing for their release the day they enter the prison system. It's not enough to wait until a person is being released to begin the process of rehabilitation.'

Rehabilitation is a lifelong process therefore it needs to be taken seriously. When a person or individual don't know their purpose, they will abuse themselves. They will find themselves indulging and involved in things that don't serve them well. Therefore, knowing one's purpose is vitally important.'

Michael Monroe - formerly incarcerated: North Carolina and fed time in Edgefield, SC and Bennettsville SC

'To reduce recidivism, it will start with education/vocational programs on the inside of prisons. Programs that give them a skill, trade, certification and/or degree. That way they have a base they can build on. It's a big plus for the educators of those programs be formerly incarcerated to instill hope and inspiration on a daily basis as an example'

Another part to what it would take to reduce recidivism is having a direct line to resources after incarceration. It should be a line of communication between Institutional case workers and parole officers to the parole officer on the outside who has a direct connection to housing resources, mental health resources, employment resources, recovery resources, clothing resources, food resources, transportation resources, support groups, mentors and education resources.'

There should be an app that no matter what state you're in, that when a person walks out of prison they can download the app, set up a account and know where all of the above mentioned is located in their area and contact information with hotline to those resources as well.'

With the acquisition of knowledge, a trade and/or skill along with seeing the hope through formerly incarcerated educators will create a mindset shift and sense of purpose. To be connected from the inside out and know once you get out you have access to all these available resources too it furthers that sense of purpose. The impact of having a purpose on the outside is enormous because that purpose will have the individual raising expectations for themselves and prioritizing their values.'

Kardell Sims - formerly incarcerated: Missouri(Moberly Correctional Center, Jefferson City Correctional Center, South Central Correctional Center, Western Reception Diagnostic Correctional Center) and 1 Federal Prison(Leavenworth United States Penitentiary).

'Firstly, an accepting society of justice impacted individuals. It would be helpful if employers and policy makers worked in unison to end permanent punishment which impedes on the progress of so many formerly incarcerated men/women

As it relates to housing and adequate employment. Secondly, justice impacted individuals need to see success stories after incarceration. These positive role models provide hope and inspiration. This tactic can be accomplished by offering more programming and engagement with successful -formerly incarcerated people.

Having purpose is the catalyst for anyone, however it's imperative for the formerly incarcerated. A deep desire to know you are having impact provides hope and motivation to assist in sustaining a positive result driven mentality. This mindset trickles down to our sphere of influence and ultimately the community at large.'

Aaron Smith - Formerly Incarcerated: Sandstone federal correctional Sandstone, Mn 2009-Feb 2019

Reducing Recidivism can be successful if Inmates are given programs that are matched to them, here are some examples:

A) Penn State

By tailoring a program to meet their motivations and skills they are provided with the resources to help them. (Lee, 2012). The Exodus program has helped 400 participants with only 9 of these returning back to prison and in 2011 at least half had a job with the average pay of \$10.40 per hour (Lee, 2012).

<https://sites.psu.edu/aspsy/2016/03/06/reducing-recidivism/>

B) BARD

Administrative corrections data indicated that nearly 80 percent of these reentering men were not reincarcerated in state prison within 24 months of release.

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation

<https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/private/pdf/255886/reentrysuccessbrief.pdf>

C) US DOJ

Inmates that participate in academic and occupational training programs are 43 percent less likely to return to prison.⁸ Employment after release is 13 percent higher among prisoners who participated in either academic or vocational programs and 28 percent higher for those who participated in vocational programs alone.⁹

<https://www.justice.gov/archives/dag/page/file/914026/download>

D) Rand Corporation

After examining the higher-quality research studies, we found that, on average, inmates who participated in correctional education programs had 43 percent lower odds of recidivating than inmates who did not.

https://bja.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh186/files/Publications/RAND_Correctional-Education-Meta-Analysis.pdf

If Bard can reduce recidivism by 80% by putting inmates into College courses without being matched to them, then imagine how much more we can reduce recidivism by matching Inmates to a Career first and setting on a path they like.

This is where TokuOra comes in:

- TokuOra uses AI/ML/Psychology to inmates to 1-3 Careers (in under 40 seconds)
- Shows them a video of the Careers
- Presents a list of skills needed for the matched careers
- Provides links to courses/programs to be upskilled

TokuOra is in Pilot inside the California Dept of Corrections and Rehabilitation, this is the result of 1,900 inmates going the tool:

Business benefits on using TokuOra:

- 1) Reduce recidivism saving the State billions of dollars and possibly reducing the number of prisons. Let's do the math, if you are releasing 7,000 inmate a month being 84,000 a year costing \$8,000 a month each and 80% of them never returned, that's a saving of \$6.4B.
- 2) By knowing what skills your current inmates need to succeed on the outside in your rehabilitation program, you can achieve an 80% reduction in recidivism easier.
- 3) By having this Data, you can show Legislators, Assemblymen, Senators and Governors how successful you are at reducing recidivism.

Call to action (CTA):

If you are a Director of Rehabilitation or someone working with inmates etc. and would like TokuOra to help your Inmates, be Career Ready and skilled upon release, please contact sales@tokuora.com with your Dept name, email and DDI, we will be in touch within 24hrs.

