



ceo

CENTER FOR EMPLOYMENT  
OPPORTUNITIES

# FISCAL YEAR REPORT 2023

FY23 July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

At the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO), we work to provide job seekers coming home from incarceration the support they need to achieve social and economic mobility.

We believe that in order to undo the harm of mass incarceration, we must invest resources back into the communities that have been most affected through our policy, advocacy, and advanced training initiatives. Not only has CEO led the way in shifting policies to remove barriers for individuals coming home, but we also continue to pioneer training and certification opportunities that result in higher-paying jobs.

Your support of CEO has had a direct impact on the accomplishments of our formerly incarcerated participants – we look forward to your continued support over the coming year.

## CEO BY THE NUMBERS

**6,500** Individuals in **Transitional Work** gained hands-on, paid work experience and job coaching

**\$17,595,373** in **Daily Pay** for participants to support themselves and their families

**3,951** **Job Placements** in unsubsidized full-time roles with **2,000+** employer partners

**95** **Commercial Driver's Licenses** obtained

**400+** Participants engaged in systems and policy change through **CEO Advocacy Councils**, organizing training and elected official visits

**10,000+** **Employment Professionals** Trained on fair chance hiring practices

*\*Data from July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023*

# CELEBRATING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

## *A Note from Sam Schaeffer*

Supporters, Partners, and Friends,

I am delighted to present the 2023 fiscal year report for the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO). CEO continues to provide hope and opportunity for individuals who have recently returned home from incarceration. The success CEO has achieved is made possible by our diverse and dedicated staff and their unwavering commitment to our participants. The contributions of CEO colleagues and board members with lived experience have been central to our success.



Over the past year, CEO expanded its reach and impact, serving a total of 7,433 individuals across 30 cities in 12 states. By addressing the immediate and long-term income needs of people impacted by the justice system, CEO helps them develop the skills and confidence needed to secure and maintain meaningful employment.

We are excited about the future at CEO. For the last several years, our strategy has been to amplify our core programming by creating pathways for formerly incarcerated individuals to obtain quality careers. We are already seeing progress in helping CEO participants achieve economic mobility through several new initiatives: apprenticeships with local unions; educational opportunities that lead to high-paying commercial driving and IT jobs; and a program that prepares CEO participants for human services jobs.

Additionally, we are working to remove barriers to employment broadly for workers with past convictions. At the state and federal level, CEO is advancing policies that increase investment in reentry workforce initiatives and programs. These efforts seek to increase financial support for justice-impacted people engaged in credentialed training and transitional work that helps them to access quality jobs and career advancement. We are also working to support employers and industry associations in shifting their talent practices to achieve greater success in hiring, retaining and growing their workforce of justice-impacted talent.

As we reflect on the past year's achievements, CEO is compelled by the strength of the individuals we serve to dream bigger and push harder for a more just and inclusive society.

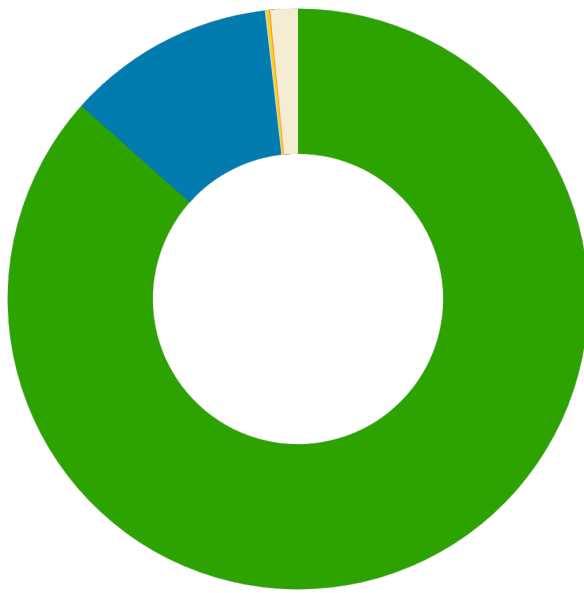
None of this is possible without the invaluable support and collaboration from our dedicated supporters. On behalf of the entire CEO team, I extend a heartfelt thanks for your support and partnership. Together, we are making a real difference in the lives of formerly incarcerated individuals, helping them build brighter futures and transform their communities.

*To change that works!*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam Schaeffer'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

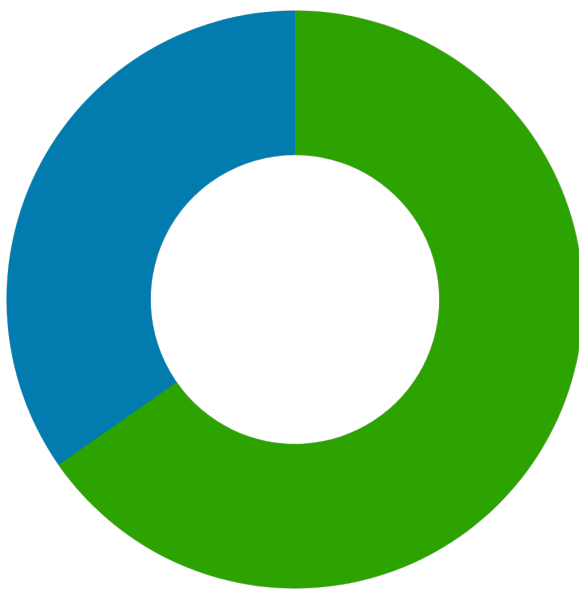
Sam Schaeffer  
Chief Executive Officer

# CEO PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS



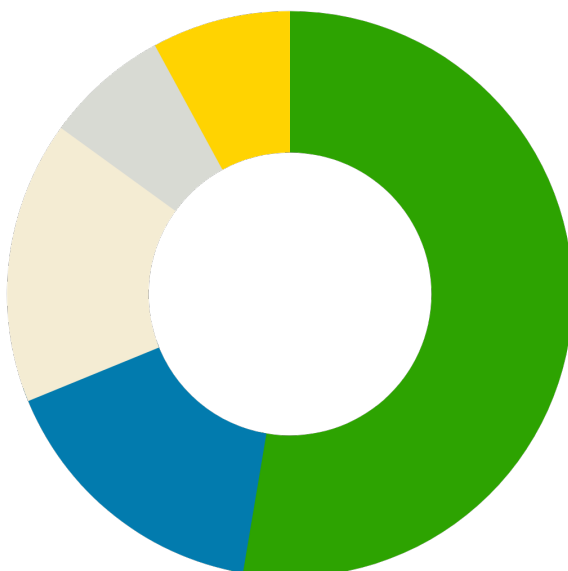
## Participant Gender

- 88.6% Male
- 11.6% Female
- 0.1% Trans Man
- 0.1% Trans Woman
- 0.1% Gender Nonconforming
- 1.5% N/A



## Participant Age

- 65.3% Adult (31+)
- 34.7% Young Adult (18-30)



## Participant Race

- 52.7% African-American
- 16.2% Latino or Hispanic
- 16.2% White
- 7.1% Other
- 7.9% N/A

*\*Data from July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023*





# ADVANCED PATHWAYS

## *to Social Economic Mobility*

### Commercial Driving

By obtaining a commercial driver's license (CDL), CEO participants are better equipped to find employment within the transportation industry and operate large or heavy vehicles, including trucks, buses, and trailers. CEO provides extensive supportive services before, during, and after a participant's 4-12 week training program experience.



**300+**

Participants referred to CDL training across 30 cities



**95**

CDLs obtained in FY23 – with a 74% completion rate



**22**

Jobs secured that require a CDL – average wages of \$23/hr



**58**

Participants completed CompTIA IT training courses

### Union Partnerships

CEO connects participants with pre-apprenticeship construction programs and/or local construction unions. Opportunities are available to learn on the job while getting paid as a union apprentice. This gives people access to an accelerated career path in an environment that puts worker needs and safety as a top priority. CEO brokers relationships directly with unions and facilitates selecting and supporting participants interested in a union career.



**21**

CEO participants completed a construction pre-apprenticeship course in NYC



**5**

CDL trainees obtained union driving positions through a CEO partnership in NYC

*\*Data from July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023*



## PARTICIPANT TESTIMONY

### *Rodney Finds Success in Trucking*

Rodney has come a long way in life in a short time. With CEO's support, Rodney enrolled in a local truck driving school in Tulsa, OK. He was able to attend the four-week CDL course tuition-free with the help of CEO. During his CDL training, CEO provided weekly stipends and case management, critical assistance that allowed him to take the time to complete the course.

He graduated in late May 2022 and started his first position soon after. Rodney said one of his favorite highways to drive is I-80 because of the scenery. He also enjoys driving in Florida – he loves when he can see bodies of water from the road.

"I'm so grateful that CEO gave me this opportunity to get into the trucking industry and get this CDL," says Rodney. "I can't thank them enough for what they've done."

## Emerging Leaders Program

The Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) provides training and direct work experience to equip CEO participants for career pathways at high-impact nonprofit organizations. The 12-week apprenticeship uses CEO as a learning environment. ELP members receive on-the-job learning at CEO, training & professional development, and coaching & mentorship. ELP unlocks job opportunities in nonprofit, government, and human services careers. It also serves as an avenue for careers at CEO.



**82**

ELP graduates across 31 locations



**75%**

Job placement rate for ELP graduates



**94**

Participants enrolled for FY23

*\*Data from July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023*







# INCLUSIVE HIRING

Our Inclusive Hiring mission is to work with businesses and trade associations to promote hiring individuals with past convictions. This effort opens career pathways, promotes racial equity and provides economic mobility for justice-impacted individuals. CEO's Inclusive Hiring improves the hiring landscape nationally. This year, we:



Partnered with **LinkedIn** to create the first of its kind course on LinkedIn Learning titled: **"Job Seeking with a Criminal Record."** Within six months after the course's launch, over 10,000 learners have actively participated in it.



Partnered with **Indeed** to support them in meeting their mission of unlocking jobs for **30 million justice-impacted job seekers** with barriers by 2030.



Partnered with multiple nationwide companies to **revise their talent practices**, ultimately paving the way for them to hire justice-impacted job seekers.

## EMPLOYER TESTIMONY

**Jimmy Parker**

*Founder, CEO, and President of  
STAT Overnight Delivery*

"I don't want to ever be the kind of company that doesn't allow people a second chance," Jimmy Parker said of his medical delivery company, "because we've all been there. There's nothing worse than wanting to support your family and not being able to."

Parker, an advocate for inclusive hiring practices, highlighted that 30% to 40% of his employees have been impacted by the criminal legal system. A notable example is Shannon, a CEO participant, who initially joined as a contract driver and swiftly ascended the corporate ladder to regional manager.

Parker emphasizes the importance of embracing inclusive hiring as an integral step toward increasing the organization's retention rates and enhancing the quality of its talent pool.

"I would say that hiring formerly incarcerated people is one of the best things we've ever done as an organization," Parker said. "We treat them with respect, and they excel exceptionally faster than your common worker."





## 2023 POLICY, ADVOCACY & ORGANIZING

### Food Security and Quality Jobs Access

The bipartisan **Training and Nutrition Stability Act (H.R. 3087)** resulted from CEO's advocacy to improve food security and training access during reentry. **It's our first federal bill!** The bill allows individuals to keep their food benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) while earning an income from a training program, like CEO. In April, Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY-13) [introduced H.R. 3087](#) with three original co-sponsors, Reps. Max Miller (R-OH-7), Marcus Molinaro (R-NY-19), and Alma Adams (D-NC-12). The bill now has the support of 10 bipartisan co-sponsors (5 Republicans, 5 Democrats) and more than [100](#) reentry and workforce organizations. This bill fixes a "catch-22" in workforce training that reduces food security and access to SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) before individuals complete training. Nearly 200 participants contacted their federal lawmakers in support of the legislation across nine states. To contact your lawmakers in support of H.R. 3087, [click here](#).

Also, on improving SNAP access, Yasmeen from CEO Charlotte championed the Drug Policy Alliance's **RESTORE Act (H.R. 3479)** to a repeal policy that bans an individual with a prior drug conviction ban from accessing SNAP - for their whole lifetime. You can see her Congressional briefing presentation [here](#)!

Advocates making up the **CEO Participant Policy Committee** [published their own brief](#) defining quality jobs for policymakers looking to further reentry employment investment!

CEO launched the **JustUs Coordinating Council** with JustLeadershipUSA (JLUSA) and called for \$10B in new federal expenditures in [Building the Table](#) to increase justice-impacted people's economic mobility. See our Organizing Director, Simone Price, at the press conference unveiling this effort [here](#). Our Cleveland Director, Devon Hickman, leads the JCC as well!





# LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZING

## Participant Advocate Council

The **Advocacy Leadership Committee (ALC)** teaches participants about policymaking and the policy development process at the state, local, and federal levels. The program creates a space for participants to build a sense of self-empowerment that allows them to share, and be heard, see that they are not alone, and affirm that their stories connect to a larger efforts need for system reform.

**CEO's Advocacy Fellows** support advocacy campaigns and lead cohorts of the Advocacy Leadership Committee (ALC). They engage participants outside of ALC by conducting regular presentations at our sites to introduce CEO's organizing and advocacy work. In addition to their ELP training, Advocacy Fellows earn a Certificate in Social Justice and Community Organizing through the University of Michigan.

**400+** participants engaged in organizing (including leadership development, coalition engagement, grassroots and direct lobbying)

**6** advocacy fellows represented CEO's advocacy team in coalitions external coalitions



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# LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZING

## California

California advocacy leadership committee members lobbied in support of Senate Bill 94 (Cortese), a bill which will enable judicial review for people sentenced to death or life without parole in special circumstances. The bill now heads to the Assembly public safety committee.

## Colorado

Colorado PAC members successfully testified Colorado advocacy leadership committee members successfully testified in support of House Bill 1037, or Earned Time for College Completion bill. The bill will allow individuals currently housed in Colorado prisons the opportunity for earlier parole as they pursue higher education. Savings garnered from the reduction in the prison population will be reinvested 100% from the department of corrections to the department of education. The bill was signed into law in July, 2023.

In August, Colorado Sens. James Coleman and Julie Gonzales joined participant advocacy leaders, our Denver program staff, and peers in the community to [announce](#) their intention to introduce legislation to create a reentry cash pilot program.

## New York

CEO's NY organizers mobilized over 150+ people to sign on in support of a call to increase gate money, the amount of money received upon being released from incarceration, in the state of New York. Currently, in New York, that amount is \$40.

## Michigan

Michigan advocacy leadership committee alumni testified in support of the [Returning Citizens Initiative](#), a package of bills which will require the Michigan Dept. of Corrections to provide vital identification documents to all individuals prior to release from state custody.



In April, the CEO Board and Executive team visited Washington, DC to speak with federal lawmakers about increasing access to quality jobs for individuals returning from incarceration. Sam Schaeffer and Katie Fallon relayed the value of food security coupled with job training for CEO participants to Majority Leader Schumer as Congress considers TNSA/H.R. 3087 and making further changes to SNAP and SNAP E&T in this year's Farm Bill.

# CEO IN THE NEWS

## The New York Times

[The New York Times](#) reports value and impact of CEO's Returning Citizens Stimulus (RCS) that distributed over \$24 million in reentry cash assistance to more than 10K released during the pandemic

## PBS NEWSHOUR

[PBS NewsHour](#) spotlights CEO's RCS work in coverage of California looking to raise 'gate money' for people returning from incarceration

## THE CRIME REPORT YOUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE NETWORK

[The Crime Report](#) publishes an opinion piece by Dane Worthington, Head of Mobility Programs at CEO, and Courtney Fong, CompTIA's Chief Operating Officer, on the impact of a joint IT training initiative

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## ABOUT THE CENTER FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) provides immediate, effective, and comprehensive employment services exclusively to people recently released from prisons and jails. Operating in 30 sites across 12 states, CEO is the largest provider of transitional employment services to justice-impacted people in the United States.

CEO's vision is that anyone with a recent criminal history who wants to work has the preparation and support needed to find a job and stay connected to the labor force. Our program provides participants with immediate employment with daily pay, skills training, job placement, and ongoing career support. CEO is dedicated to ensuring that justice-impacted job seekers have opportunities to achieve social and economic mobility.

For more information, please visit: <https://ceoworks.org> or email us at: [info@ceoworks.org](mailto:info@ceoworks.org)

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