

EMPLOYING ONTARIANS WITH CRIMINAL RECORDS

Policies to Correct Labour–Market Misconceptions

Renze Nauta | December 2023

Key Points

- Finding a job is a key step in helping people with criminal records desist from future crime. Yet having a criminal record is a major stumbling block for this same population in finding a job. The Government of Ontario can help to resolve this Catch-22 by implementing five policies to improve labour-market demand for people with criminal records.
- The first set of policies seeks to change the perspectives of employers toward this group. The government should (1) mandate police forces and other criminal-record providers to include positive and counterbalancing general information about the employability of people with criminal records, along with the record results; and (2) give people with criminal records the option of adding individual-specific information about the positive aspects of their interactions with the criminal justice system to the results of their criminal record checks.
- The second set of policies seeks to change the hiring decisions of employers. The government should (3) establish a provincial bonding program that would provide insurance to employers, at no cost to them, for some risks associated with hiring people with criminal records; and (4) introduce a general wage subsidy for employers who hire people with criminal records.
- The final policy concerns the importance of communication. The government should (5) actively promote the above policies, communicate the motivations behind the re-integration of people with criminal records, and actively encourage employers to hire them.



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