

Resources for Supporting CUNY Students with Conviction Records

Publications

[**The New York State Back to School Guide: Pursuing College After Incarceration**](#) is a guide for people who wish to pursue a college education in New York State after their release from incarceration. This guide is also useful for college-in-prison providers, correctional education and counseling staff, community-based reentry organizations, and case managers seeking to support the educational goals of the adult learners with whom they work.

[**Getting the Record Straight: A Guide to Navigating Background Checks**](#) is a guide designed to help people with conviction records navigate the individual, institutional, and systemic barriers erected by background checks. This guide will help readers understand what appears on a conviction record, prepare for a background check, be ready to respond to questions, and more.

[**Getting to Work with a Criminal Record: New York State License Guides \(2020 Expanded Edition\)**](#) is a guide that explain the process for obtaining licenses in 25, high-demand occupations and professions for people who have conviction records. These guides aim to dispel the myths and misinformation that may discourage people with convictions from pursuing employment and career pathways that are actually available to them.

[**Beyond the Record: A Justice-Oriented Approach to Background Checks**](#) is designed to help employers, educators, education and employment program operators, licensing bodies, and housing providers better understand the individual, institutional, and systemic barriers erected by background checks.

Note: All publications are available electronically on the Institute's website:
<https://justiceandopportunity.org/research-and-publications/>

Trainings

[**Unlocking Employment: How to Partner with Job Seekers Impacted by the Legal System**](#), is a free 90-minute, online course designed to enhance skills and build capacity for working with job seekers who have legal-system involvement. The course includes four (4) self-paced modules, featuring interactive exercises and case studies, as well as a resource library. Emphasizing a strengths-based approach, the course is filled with key insights on legal protections for those with criminal convictions, ways to reduce stigma, and proven strategies to support the job search. If you have questions about **Unlocking Employment** contact Elena Sigman esigman@jjay.cuny.edu, Director of Collaborative Learning.

Legal Services Referrals

The Institute contracts with the Community Service Society of New York (CSS) to offer free legal services to Institute program participants and CUNY students with conviction records. Legal services include Know Your Rights Workshops and free one-on-one legal services:

About the *Know Your Rights* workshops: *Know Your Rights* workshops are focused on rights and legal protections for people with conviction records who are pursuing education and employment opportunities. If you are interested in attending an upcoming Know Your Rights Workshop, visit the Institute Events Page

About One-on-One legal services: Institute program participants and CUNY students with convictions are eligible to receive free legal services through the Institute's partnership with CSS. One-on-One legal services are outlined below. To receive these legal services complete the Institute's [One-on-One Legal Services Referral Form](#):

- Requesting copies of your official criminal record in New York, all other states, and the federal system
- Correcting errors on your official criminal record
- Applying for certificates of rehabilitation including certificates of relief from disabilities and certificates of good conduct
- Sealing eligible conviction records
- Legal guidance and representation to fight discrimination based on conviction records in employment and public housing
- Legal guidance about applying for employment and professional licenses/certifications with a conviction record
- Referrals for other legal services i.e., housing, immigration

Note: One-on-One Legal Services are available to Institute program participants and current CUNY students/alumni with conviction records. If you are not an Institute program participant or a CUNY student/alumni but are in need of legal services visit contact the CSS Free Legal Hotline.

About the CSS Free Legal Hotline: For those in need of immediate legal services and support, contact the CSS Free Legal Hotline, available to all New Yorkers with conviction histories:

- CSS Free Legal Hotline hours: Monday-Friday 9am-5pm
- CSS Free Legal Hotline contact information: 212-614-5441
- CSS Free Legal Hotline website: [Click here](#)

[About the John Jay College Institute for Justice and Opportunity](#)

The John Jay Institute for Justice and Opportunity (“the Institute”) is a research and action center at John Jay College of Criminal Justice that serves as a champion of institutional, structural, and personal transformation for people who have been involved with the criminal legal system. The Institute opens doors and eliminates barriers to success, including by creating access to higher education and pathways to meaningful careers as well as advocating for the rights to higher education and employment, and other human rights that are too often denied people with criminal conviction records. The Institute also serves as a hub for activities and efforts across the 25 City University of New York (CUNY) campuses to support people with criminal convictions in obtaining a CUNY education. Visit our website at justiceandopportunity.org.

[About the CUNY Justice Learning Collaborative](#)

The CUNY Justice Learning Collaborative is cross-university community of CUNY faculty, staff, administrators, and students who share a commitment to creating a more welcoming CUNY that's

inclusive of the lived experiences of students impacted by the criminal legal system. The CUNY Justice Learning Collaborative meetings virtually 4-5 per year, and is convened by the Institute. Join the CUNY Justice Learning Collaborative listserv cuny-justice-learning-collab@jj.listserv.cuny.edu or email Tommasina Faratro tfaratro@jjay.cuny.edu, Special Projects Manager, to learn more. You can also visit the CUNY [Supports for Students with Convictions Records](#) webpage to learn more about programs and services across CUNY available to people with conviction records.

[About the Community Service Society of New York \(CSS\)](#)

CSS has worked with and for New Yorkers since 1843 to promote economic opportunity and champion an equitable city and state. CSS powers change through a strategic combination of research, legal services, and advocacy to make New York more livable for people facing economic insecurity. Visit the CSS website at cssny.org.