



California Legislature's Budget Proposal Includes Funding for Critical Employment Services Program for People Formerly Incarcerated

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SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The state legislature on Monday released a proposed budget that includes \$23 million for a critical program aimed at helping people formerly incarcerated successfully transition into gainful employment upon their release.

The Helping Justice-Involved Reenter Employment, or H.I.R.E., program, allows community-based organizations and other non-profits to seek grants through the California Workforce Development Board for the provision of employment services to individuals with a history of incarceration, with the goal of increasing employment stability and safety in communities up and down the state.

The following can be attributed to Saun Hough, director of partnerships for Californians for Safety and Justice, the state's leading public safety advocacy organization:

"Programs like H.I.R.E. and other programs that help folks who formerly were incarcerated get and maintain good jobs that help them support their families and regain economic security are a key part of any comprehensive safety strategy. Accountability is important, but decades of research and lived experience make clear that simply responding to crime and harm after they've already occurred will never be sufficient in terms of achieving the safety that every community and neighborhood in this state desires and deserves. Programs like H.I.R.E. are proven to reduce unemployment, homelessness and recidivism, and they are more cost-effective and produce superior safety outcomes than simply relying only on incarceration alone. We commend the legislature for recognizing just how important the H.I.R.E. program is and we urge the governor to ensure its funding remains in the final 2025-2026 fiscal year budget."