

Public Transit, Driver Shortages, Returning Citizens, + Employee Retention



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she/her

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Who we are

- In 1981, the Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA) was formed under a 28E agreement with the 7 counties in central Iowa.
- Region 11, better known as HIRTA, was established to provide public transit services in the counties of Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Story and Warren.

Facebook: @RideHIRTA

Twitter: @RideHIRTA

YouTube: HIRTA Public Transit

Website: www.RideHIRTA.com



Change how jobs are advertised

Don't let someone eliminate themselves because of the language you use

- Consider making being an **EEO Employers statement** more important **by what you state and where you place** this statement in your ads.
- Put the qualities **you need in the person**, not the duties they will perform
- The **most important part** you want the potential applicant to see **should be at the top of the ad**. Flexible Hours – No experience needed or Must have CDL or Will train if you have a permit.
- **Eliminate background check** required
- **Flexibility or Assistance in applying**

SAMPLE JOB AD

Full-Time Driver (Day Shift)

HIRTA is an EEO, where we value diversity and strive to expand representation at all levels in our workforce.

\$Pay/hr. Need a **Full-Time** (8hr day shift)
If you like to Drive and Help Others - Come join the HIRTA Team! Class C/ Passenger Endorsement required. **We will train.** We are looking for a friendly, reliable person who brings a can-do attitude and a welcoming smile.

We serve a diverse population of people including the elderly, those with disabilities, children and general public. Interviews being scheduled now.

If you need assistance completing our online application, contact us 1-877-686-0029.

Where are you Advertising?

<p>MAKE AN IMPACT</p> <hr/> <p>DRIVE HIRTA</p>	<p>Work in your own town.</p>
<p>Help serve your community and make a positive impact on others.</p>	<p>Work the hours and days you want!</p>
<p>www.RideHIRTA.com/careers 1 (877) 686-0029</p>	<p>No prior experience is needed. We will train you!</p>
	

- Job Sites like Indeed?
- Local Newspaper?
- Flyers posted around town?
- Website?
- Job Fairs?
- Back/Side of your Vehicles?

<p>WHY YOU SHOULD DRIVE FOR HIRTA</p>	<p>Work in your own town.</p>
<p>Help serve your community and make a positive impact on others.</p>	<p>Work the hours and days you want!</p>
<p>www.RideHIRTA.com/careers 1 (877) 686-0029</p>	<p>No prior experience is needed. We will train you!</p>
	

 <p>BECOME A HIRTA HERO</p>	<p>Work in your own town.</p>
<p>Help serve your community and make a positive impact on others.</p>	<p>Work the hours and days you want!</p>
<p>www.RideHIRTA.com/careers 1 (877) 686-0029</p>	<p>No prior experience is needed. We will train you!</p>
	

Negatives of Help Wanted Signs?

- Risk of damaging brand image
- Appear understaffed, and therefore unable to provide the service needed
- Perceived as poor working conditions and/or not a good place to work

We're Hiring

Thursday
September 30
11:00AM - 1:00PM
North Grand Mall
Ames, IA

THIS COULD BE YOU!



 @rideHIRTA
  @rideHIRTA
  www.rideHIRTA.com
 

Make applying as Easy as Possible



Simplify your Job Application Process

- Ask for minimal information.
- Don't require someone to enter info that is already on a resume.

If you need a complete application for HR purposes, it can be completed upon hire.



SAMPLE JOB APPLICATION

Position applying for? Driver - Floater

First Name Last Name
Phone Number E-Mail Address
Street Address City, State, Postal Code

Check the driver license you possess.

Class C (Non-commercial) Class A
Class B Class D (chauffeur)

Is there any additional information you would like to share with us?

If you would like to upload your resume, please do so here.

APPLICANT CERTIFICATION & AGREEMENT:

I certify that this information contains no willful misrepresentation or falsification and that the information given by me is true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that if employed, misleading or falsified statements on this application may be considered cause for dismissal. Enter your name in the text box below to sign your application and agree to these terms.

Interviews

- First contact Applicant for a phone interview.

This is **NOT** the time to ask about background. That should be saved for an in-person interview.

- Make it easy and comfortable for the applicant to tell you about their past history, without fear of it being an automatic NO in getting the job.



Review and Change Background Reviews

- Limit information in background checks to recent, *occupation-related information*
- Eliminate bans that automatically disqualify applicants with criminal records.

It is more helpful to understand **WHY** an applicant has a criminal record, than simply knowing **THAT** an applicant has a record

- Don't make gaps in employment an immediate **red** flag.

Someone incarcerated will have gaps, however, so will a stay at home parent who didn't work outside the home while children were babies, and often those who work temp jobs can look like they have multiple jobs or gaps.

SAMPLE Background Check Policy

If you receive a conditional offer of employment, HIRTA will conduct a background check. The resulting report will be used to conduct an individualized assessment to determine if the nature of any prior conviction conflicts with the specific duties and responsibilities of the job for which you have been selected. If a conflict exists, you will be asked to present any evidence of rehabilitation that may mitigate the conflict, except when federal or state regulations bar employment in specific circumstances.

The following criteria **will NOT** be considered, when evaluating the results of a background check:

- Any conviction for decriminalized conduct
- Arrests that did not lead to a conviction
- A conviction that has been dismissed, expunged, or sealed
- A conviction that is more than 5 years old, unless there are legal requirements tied to the role

Convictions under 5 years old will be reviewed through the individualized assessment process.



Transit Driver Shortages +
Returning Citizens =
A Winning Solution

MYTH

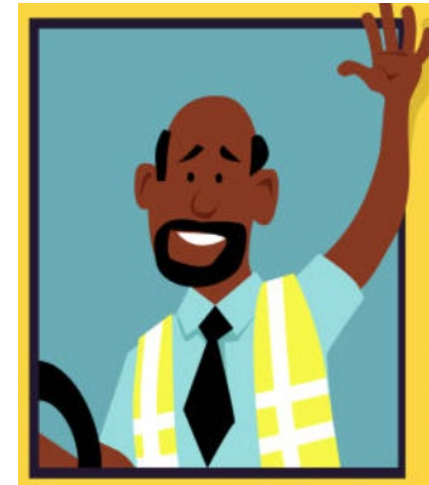
Once a Criminal, Always a Criminal



A person who's been in the criminal justice system, can't be a trustworthy worker

FACT

Research shows that after a period of time a criminal record doesn't predict future re-offending and offering those with a record, reduces the recidivism rate by more than 10%.



Nationally recognized employers, like Johns Hopkins, Goodwill hire people with past records and have found them to be loyal, committed workers.

Previously Incarcerated does NOT mean "unskilled"

MYTHS

More “cream of the crop” workers will come back to transit.

They will not be reliable and will increase turnover.

It's not safe to hire someone that has a criminal record.



FACTS

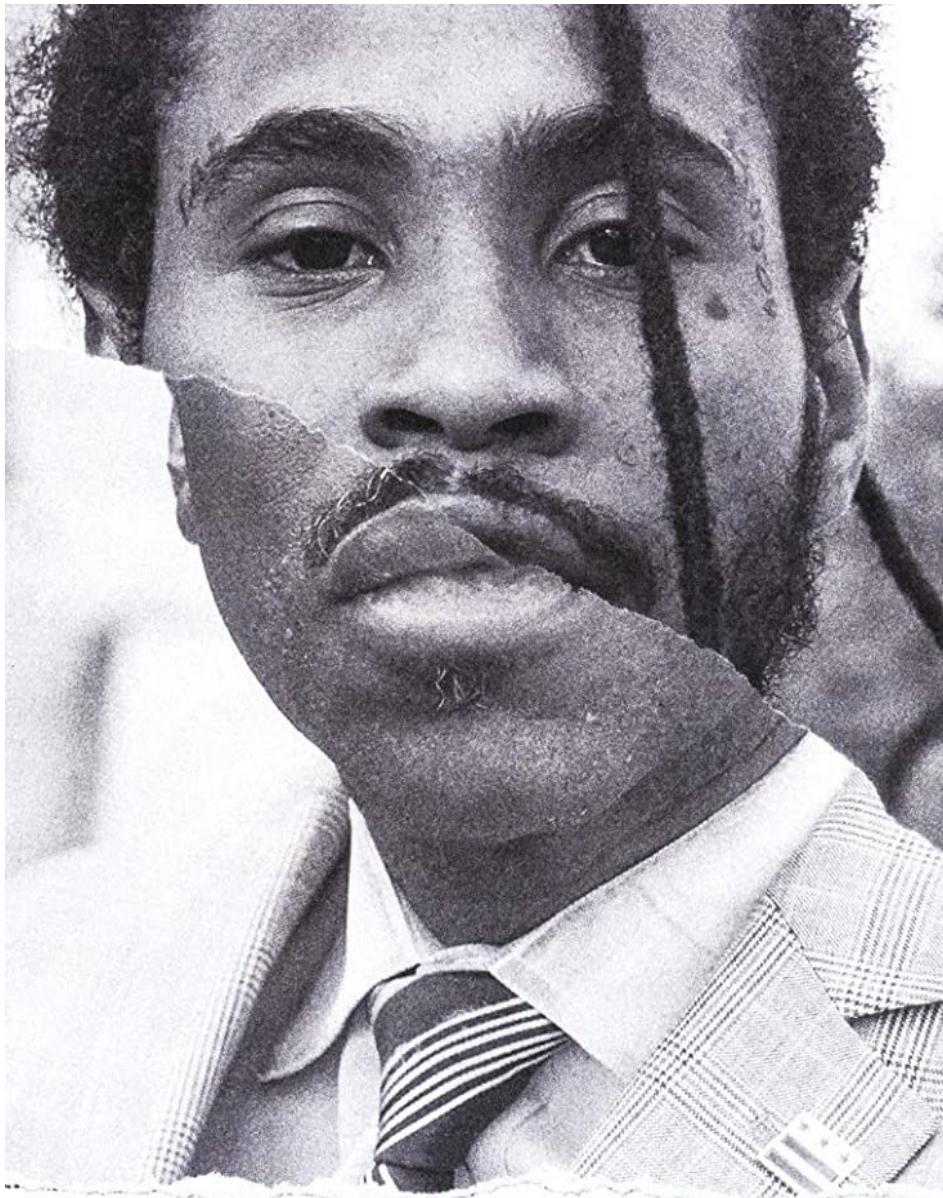
By age 25, 1 in 3 in the US have been arrested
Some highly successful people are felons:
Martha Stewart, Judge Greg Mathis, Junior Johnson, Robert Downey Jr., Michael Vick, Marion Jones



Due to the scarcity of opportunities for returning citizens, many employers that hire them have lower turnover than with conventional hires.



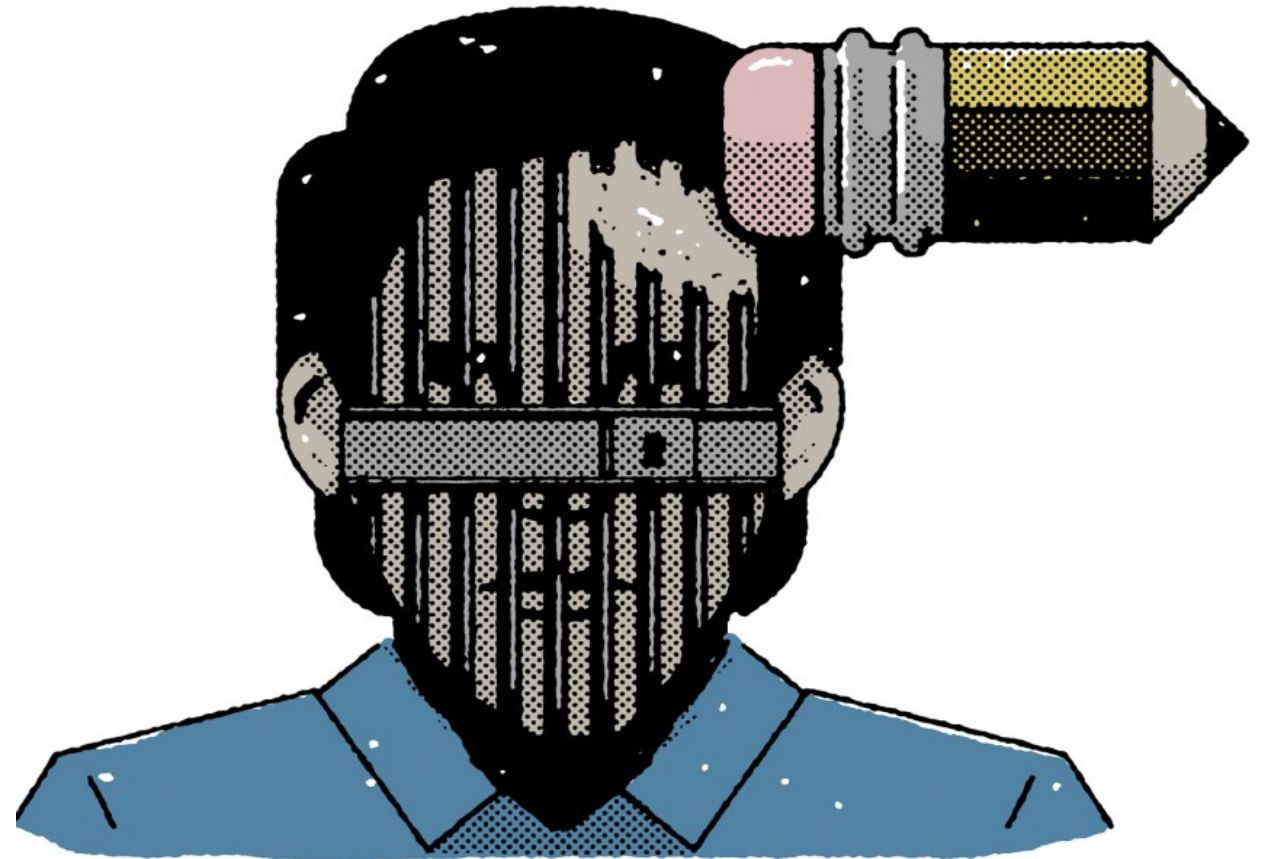
Employees with criminal backgrounds are less likely to quit and generally work harder because they know their options for hire are limited.



RETURNING CITIZENS

THEY'RE LOOKING FOR A SECOND CHANCE -
OR A CHANCE THEY NEVER HAD TO BEGIN WITH.

Returning Citizens should not
have to carry a mistake(s)
around with them the rest of
their lives.



Why Returning Citizens?

Many must comply with the court-ordered special conditions of their probation or parole and maintain employment, so they have an extra layer of accountability for staying employed.

Giving people a fair chance to be considered for jobs, employers can help keep their communities safer and potentially reduce crime rates by reducing recidivism.

Research shows that employees with criminal histories are often reliable, productive, and positive members of their workplace.

Helps create a more diverse and inclusive workforce.



Why Returning Citizens? (continued)

Many must comply with the court-ordered special conditions of their probation or parole and maintain employment, so they have an extra layer of accountability for staying employed.

Employers can make a considerable difference in transforming a criminal liability into a community asset.

Unemployed ex-felons are at greater risk of re-offending compared those ex-felons who are employed.

Employers with second chance hiring found that individuals with a criminal record were less likely to quit, generating cost-savings related to turnover.



Talented workers are available due to being ignored by the broader workforce.

A few other things to remember

- We have all terminated drivers we hired with a clean background check, so remember....

EVERY Hire is a RISK!

- Make sure you are not violating **any** State or Federal laws that apply to your agency or services.
- Check contracts for language that may prohibit hiring Returning Citizens. If you do have such contracts, have conversations in how that section, or wording can be removed or changed.
- Ensure YOU control the narrative so it stays positive! Let others know what, why and how the community will benefit, calm any fears of safety and/or reliability. Be proud of any program you begin and keep the public informed.
- Check to see if you qualify for the Federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

MBA Service Learning Project



Transit Driver Shortages and Returning Citizens

Community Perspective

The Project Scope

- HIRTA / Transit Agencies in Iowa

Impact on Society

- Driver Shortage
- Reentering Citizens
- Perception Survey

Road Map to Implementation

- Key Players
- Limitations
- Stages

ISU PRESENTATION AWARD



Ivy MBA students in the [Iowa State University - Ivy College of Business](#) presented their final presentations from their Service Learning Consulting course. In partnership with [ISU Pappajohn Center for Entrepreneurship](#) and [CyBIZ Lab - Iowa State University](#), students in my (Sarah Wilson, Ph. D.) course serve as consultants to non-profit organizations who need support on projects such as branding best practices, project management, marketing and outcome assessments, and more.

All our students made great contributions to their partner organizations. Congratulations to the winning teams!

1st Place: [HIRTA Public Transit](#): [Cale Nelson](#), [Jordan Poppe](#), [Hector Rivera Hernandez](#), and [Samuel Smith](#)



Cale Nelson • 1st

Concurrent MBA and Industrial Engineering Student at Iowa State University

3mo • 🌐

Over the past 12 weeks, my team members [Hector Rivera Hernandez](#), [Jordan Poppe](#), [Samuel Smith](#), and I worked with the non-profit organization, [HIRTA Public Transit](#), as part of our Service Learning Consulting class. We are thankful to have worked with the executive director at HIRTA, [Julia Castillo](#), who shared her knowledge and guided us through this incredible learning experience.

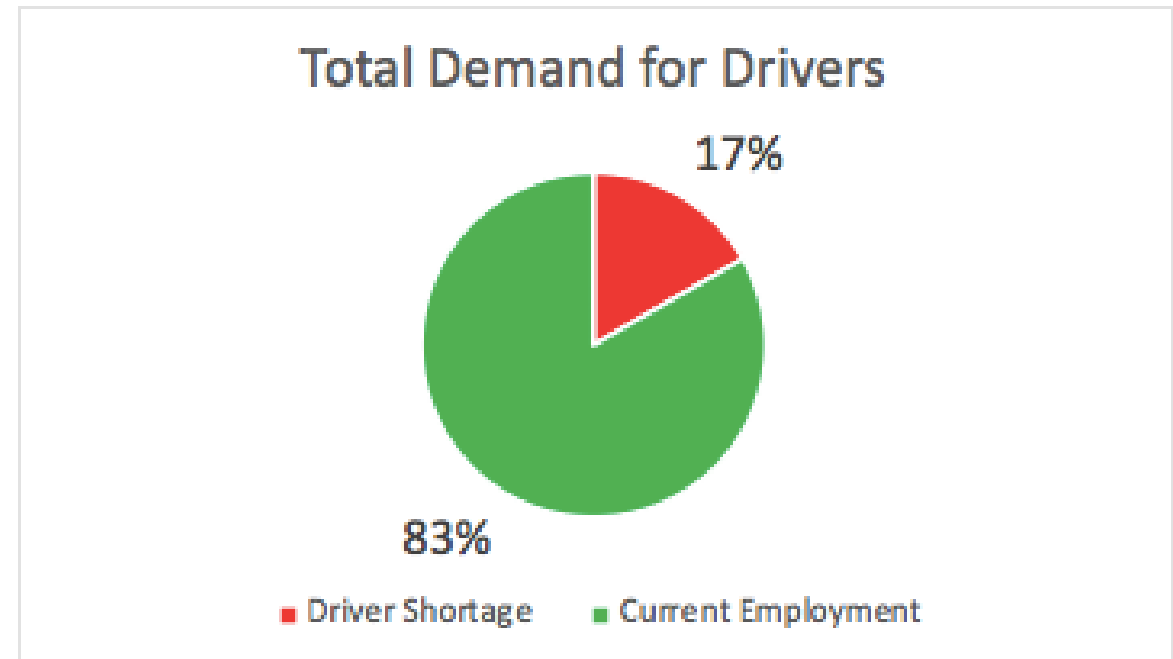
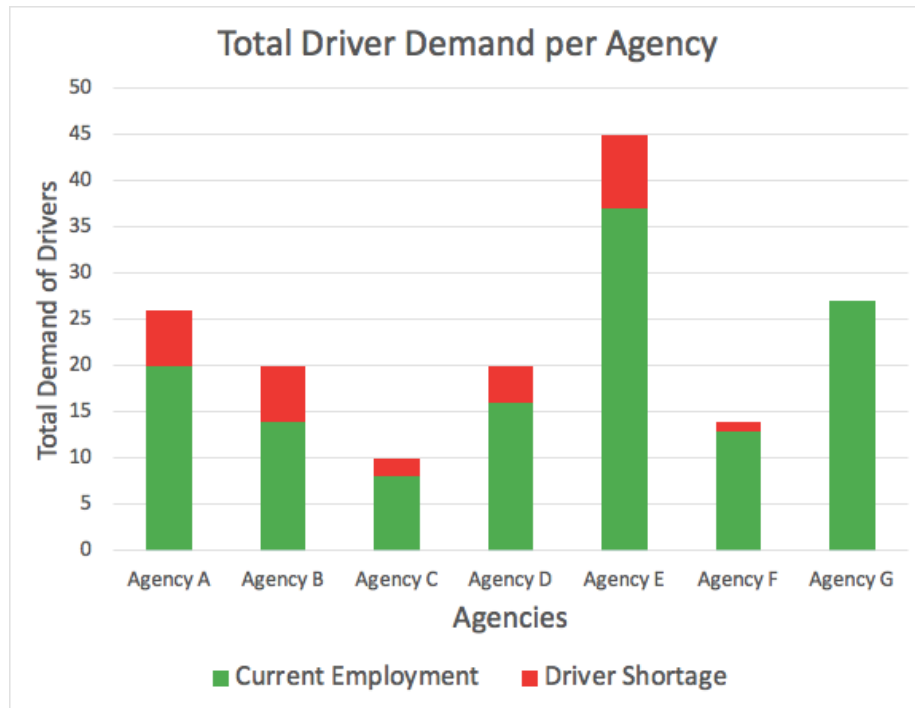
Last Friday marked the end of our first year in the [Iowa State University - Ivy College of Business](#) MBA program with final presentations of our project. My team and I were fortunate to be able to receive 1st place, and I am excited to see how our work will benefit HIRTA and the amazing goals they have planned.



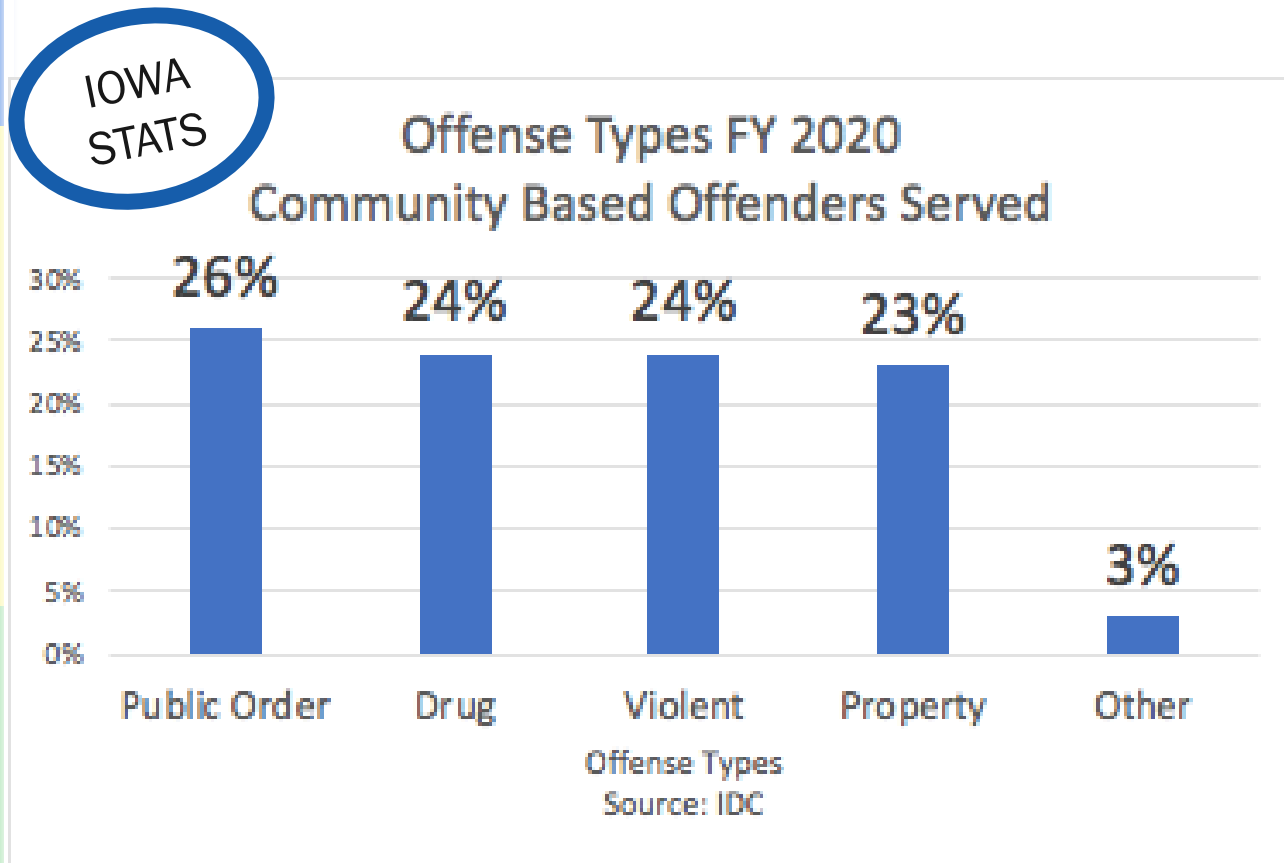
Driver Shortages

In the U.S., 3 out of 4 transit agencies have shortage issues

In Iowa, there's a 17% shortage in drivers failing to meet demand



Returning Citizens Data



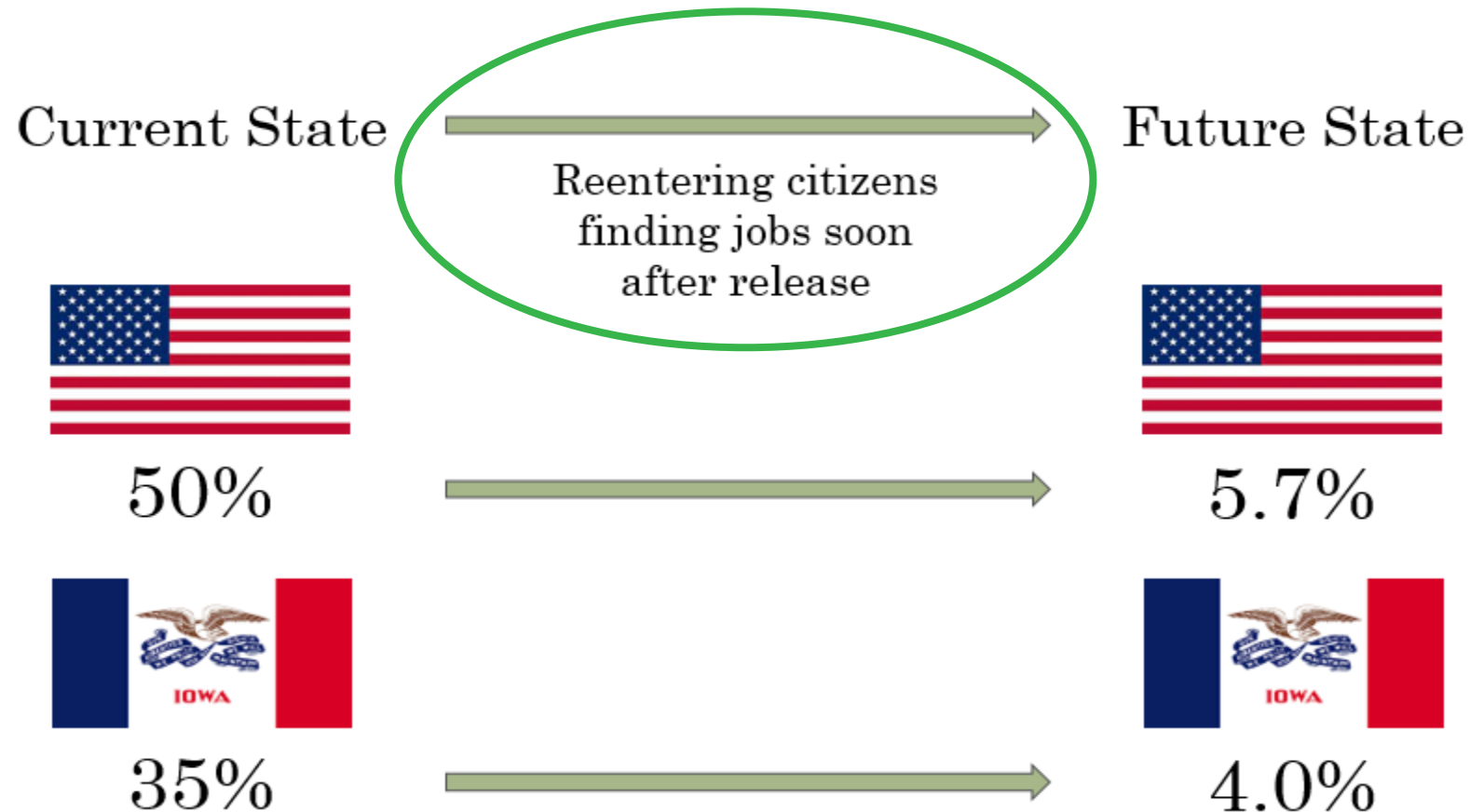
In the U.S. 55% of the current population are violent offenders

On a national level, the prison population is aging (violent offenders are the largest portion of this population) that means non-violent offenders released would be younger

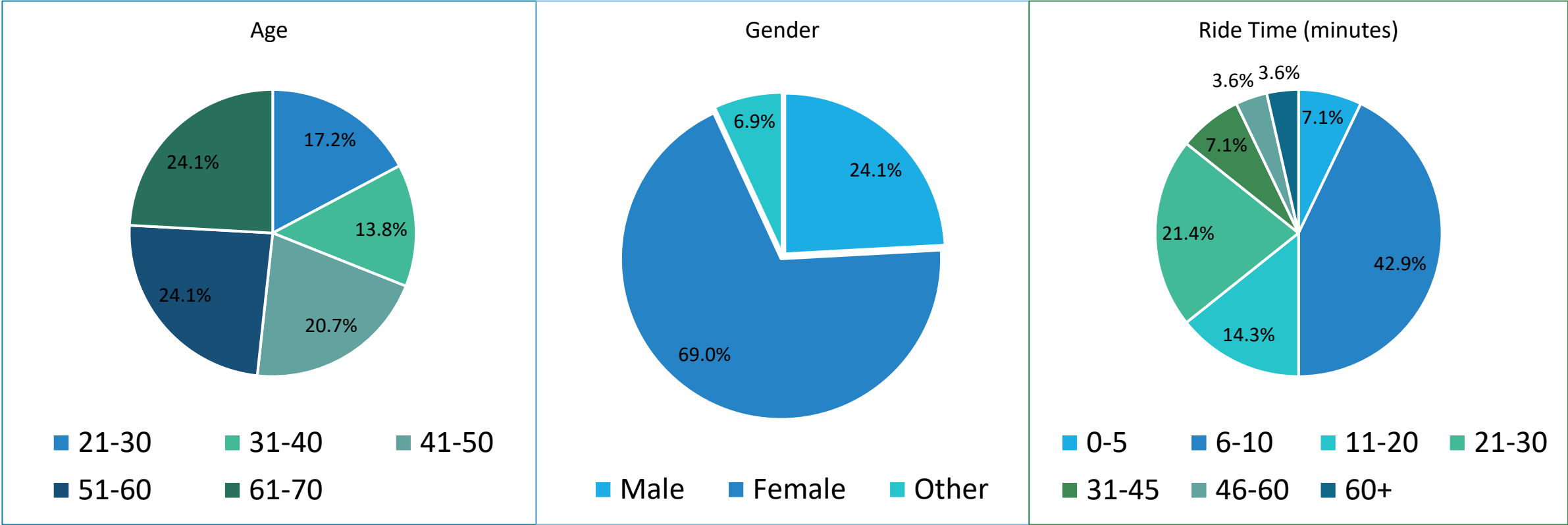
In Iowa, 73% of the released would be non-violent offenders and would qualify for as potential hires.

Be the Change and Make a Difference!

Reducing Recidivism Rates for Reentering Citizens



Community Perspective



Demographics of those surveyed

Community Perspective

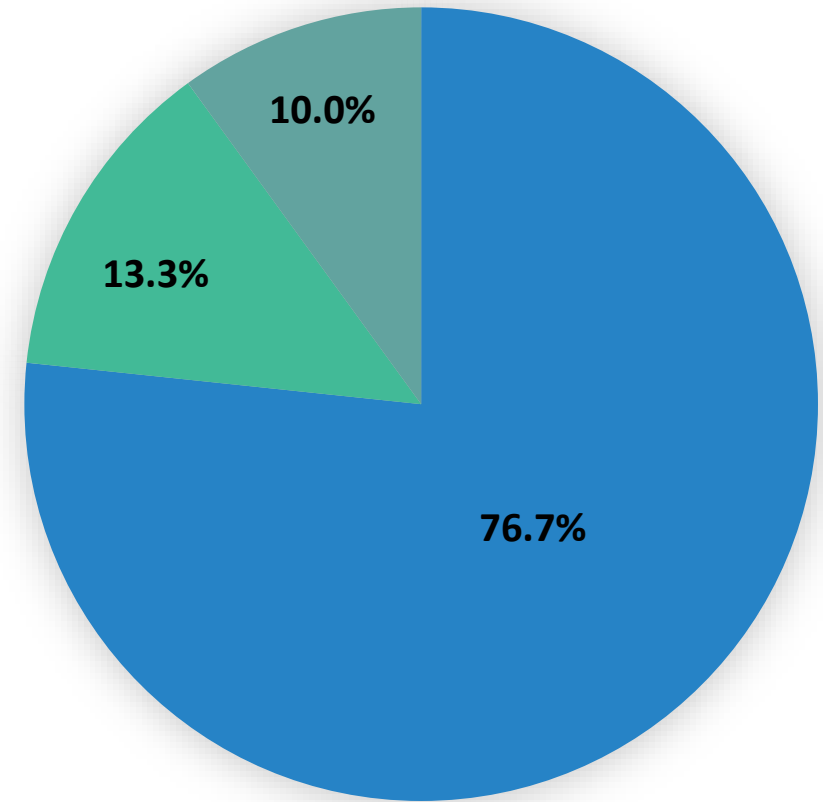
Question: What is your general opinion with regards to hiring reentering citizens as transit drivers?

Agree, Neutral, or Disagree

- **76.7% - Agree**
- **13.3% - Neutral**
- **10.0% - Disagree**

POINTS to NOTE:

- 1) Personal Safety was #1 concern among those who disagree
- 2) Those who disagree were also riders in remote areas traveling longer distances



■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

The background of the image shows the interior of a bus. It features yellow handrails and blue seats. The text "Lower Employee Turnover" is overlaid on a blue rectangular background that is tilted. The text is white and in a bold, sans-serif font.

Lower Employee Turnover

Keep Good Employees



- It is important to have the right people in the right positions.
- It is energy draining and time consuming (for employee and employer) to try and build on a persons weaknesses. Use that energy and time to promote, value and build on their strengths.
- Make sure each employee feels valued and part of the “TEAM”.
- Provide training/opportunities for the job they want to advance into
- Money spent upfront to keep good employees is a better investment and costs less than advertising, hiring and training to replace a vacant position.

Keep Good Employees continued

What is your agency leadership doing to make employees feel valued?

- Flexibility?
- Mental wellbeing?
- One-on-one meetings for goal setting?
- Giving them training/learning opportunities outside of their typical job?
- Allowing them to ride the bus? Attend an event to meet the public they help serve?
- Cross-training?
- What else?

Talented Employees stay because they are:

- ✓ **Appreciated**
- ✓ **Listened to**
- ✓ **Promoted**
- ✓ **Involved in Decisions**
- ✓ **Mentored**
- ✓ **Challenged**

Happy Employees Stay

Have FUN!

The transit industry can be stressful – Make sure you allow everyone time to take breaks, both mental and physical when needed.

Employees who have fun while working feel more motivated, relaxed, and connected with the rest of the team and experience less stress while at work.

Happy Employees are the Best Employees!



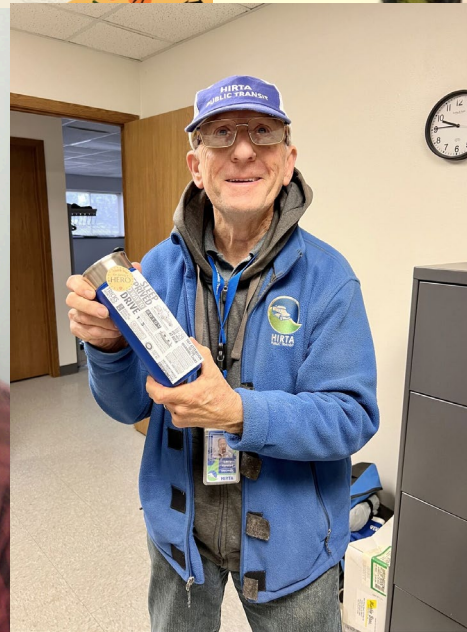
Featured Driver



Congrats to Karen Dont!

As part of her life-saving efforts, Karen Dont has been awarded for her outstanding dedication to her community. We recognize her for going the extra mile and showing what it's like to be a HIRTA hero. View the story by clicking the link above.

Thank a HIRTA Hero



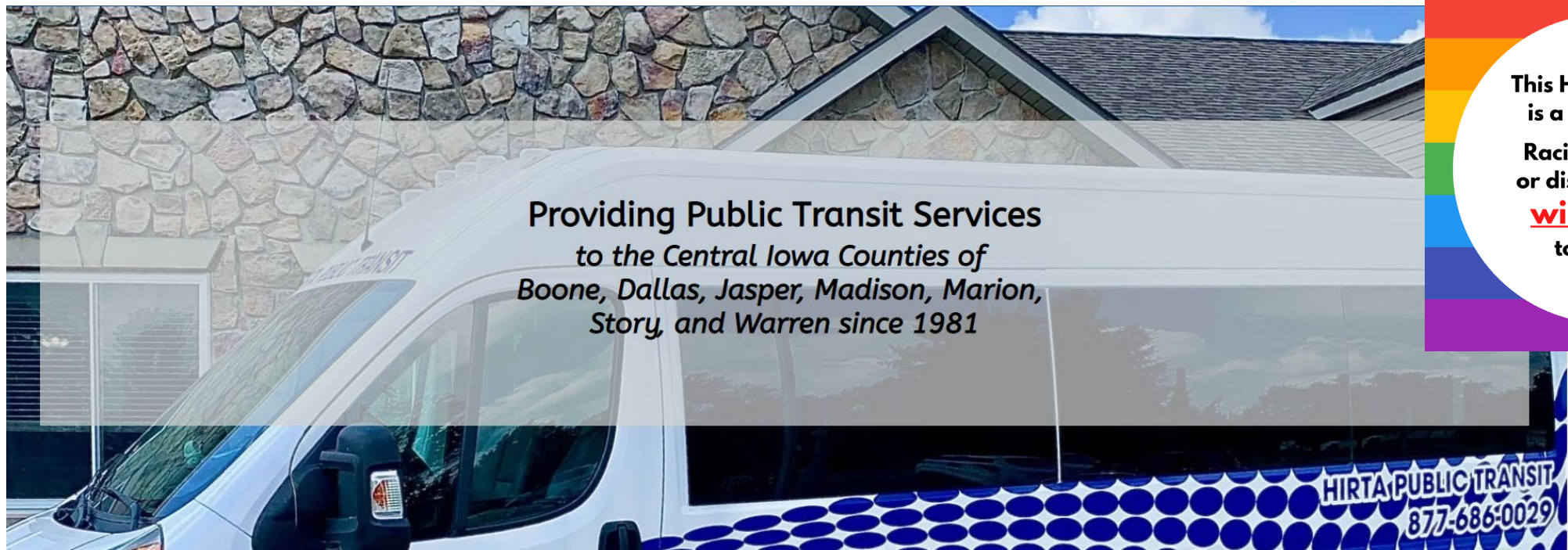
HIRTA Holiday Cookie Exchange

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2022

Join in on the fun and bring 2-3 dozen of your favorite holiday cookies for a cookie exchange!



THE ONLY WAY TO SURVIVE THE HOLIDAY season is to be creative! TEXT WHAT'S HOT FOR THIS YEAR! BE AN EXPLORER! DO MORE! HAVE NO EXCUSES! Turn work into play!



This HIRTA vehicle
is a safe space.
Racism, bigotry
or discrimination
will not be
tolerated.

As an Equal Opportunity Employer, HIRTA values diversity and strives to expand representation at all levels in our workforce.

We welcome applicants of diverse background and hire without regard to race, color, gender, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, disability, age, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Thank you!

Julia Castillo, Executive Director
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