



Reentry Supportive Workplaces

Person-Centered Language

Person-centered language puts people first. Using person-centered language is about respecting the dignity, worth, unique qualities and strengths of every individual.

This table includes some suggested person-centered language to use when working with people who are incarcerated or formerly incarcerated. We understand that everyone has different language preferences and encourage employers to ask individuals about their language preferences.

Say This	Not This
incarcerated people	inmate
people in prison	convicts
people incarcerated in prison/jail	offenders, felons
reentrant	ex offender
formerly incarcerated person	ex felon
justice-involved individual	inmate
person impacted by the justice system	criminal
person under parole supervision	parolee

Be specific when using person-centered language. For example, at the workforce investment board we say "jobseekers with records." The Marshal Project offers additional information about person-centered language in their article, [People-First Language Matters. So Does the Rest of the Story.](#)