



THE  
**REDEMPTION<sup>®</sup>**  
PROJECT

*Redeeming Inmates Back Into Society  
Through Meaningful Employment*



## *Our Vision*

We believe a significant reduction in recidivism (the tendency of a convicted criminal to re-offend) will occur when those convicted of a crime are redeemed back into society and given a chance to become productive members of their communities through meaningful employment with a livable wage.

## *Our Mission*

We partner with employers to provide inmates with mentoring opportunities while incarcerated and meaningful employment upon release.

# A Letter from the President

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Prior to my incarceration at a federal prison in July of 2016 I had no exposure to the prison system within the United States. I entered prison with biases and preconceived notions only to find that many of my perceptions were wrong.

I expected to find hardened criminals lacking compassion and hope, interested only in their personal well-being. To be sure, such individuals exist within prison walls. I found however, that there are many incarcerated individuals who yearn to put past mistakes behind them. They are seeking redemption to become reliable, contributing members of their communities. I found individuals wanting to return to their families and provide their spouses and children with stability, love, and hope for the future. I found individuals seeking guidance and mentorship to help them walk forward toward these goals. I also learned the numerous challenges felons face as they seek to reenter society.

Research and personal experience has led me to believe that the road to redemption must be built on the foundation of the dignity and self-worth that comes from working hard each day and earning a sustainable living wage. While other obstacles exist, without stable employment and a chance for a better future, it is difficult for an individual not to become part of the statistic which shows a 67% national recidivism rate within our country. I've also learned from my personal experience that redemption can be found with the help of compassionate mentors willing to offer a hand up, not a hand out.

Thank you for your interest in The Redemption Project. I invite you to learn more about our mission and goals in the following pages. Your support of this mission can change lives.

Peace and Blessings,



Tim Owens  
President and Co-founder  
The Redemption Project



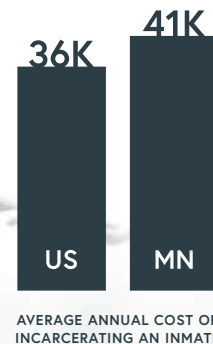
# THE CHALLENGE

In 2018, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, a department of the United States Department of Justice, released an update to their ongoing study of recidivism rates.<sup>1</sup> From their study sample they found:



## THE COST OF INCARCERATION

The average cost of incarcerating an individual in the Federal Prison system was just over \$36,000 per year<sup>2</sup> while the average cost of incarceration for a state prisoner in Minnesota was slightly more than \$41,000 per year<sup>3</sup>.



The data shows a cycle of prisoner “release and return” that is costly to the taxpayer and demonstrates a breakdown in the social and spiritual values of the United States.

Research indicates that high recidivism rates in the U.S. are a result of:



Many organizations address various aspects contributing to recidivism rates in the United States, but none focus on finding Employment Partners to mentor inmates while they’re incarcerated and provide meaningful employment upon their release.

<sup>1</sup>“2018 Update on Prisoner Recidivism: A 9-Year Follow-up Period (2005-2014).” *The Bureau of Justice Statistics*, May 2018, [www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/18upr9yfup0514.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/18upr9yfup0514.pdf).

<sup>2</sup>“Annual Determination of Average Cost of Incarceration.” *Federal Bureau of Prisons*, April 30, 2018, [www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/04/30/2018-09062/annual-determination-of-average-cost-of-incarceration](http://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/04/30/2018-09062/annual-determination-of-average-cost-of-incarceration).

<sup>3</sup>“The Price of Prisons.” *Vera Institute for Justice*, May 2017, [www.vera.org/publications/price-of-prisons-2015-state-spending-trends](http://www.vera.org/publications/price-of-prisons-2015-state-spending-trends).

# OUR SOLUTION

We give hope to inmates for a better tomorrow and reduce the hesitancy of employers to hire former inmates by using our **three-stage program**:



## **EDUCATE** Virtues for Success™

Through the study of the four cardinal virtues espoused by Aristotle and other ancient philosophers, Virtues for Success™ focuses on the development of good character and integrity needed to be a great employee, spouse, parent, and friend. This method stands in contrast to other training models that focus solely on right or wrong actions without examining the inner faculties that produce them.



## **ADVOCATE** The Inmate Advocacy Program™

After completing Virtues for Success™ and a rigorous application and review process, an inmate may be accepted into The Inmate Advocacy Program™ and become a Redemption Project Fellow. The Redemption Project then helps match an Employment Partner with a high quality Fellow to begin a mentoring relationship (of up to 24 mos.) to build trust which may result in a formal job offer prior to their release from prison.



## **SUPPORT** The Virtue Advantage™

The Virtue Advantage™ is the third and final stage of our program. The transition from prison to the routine of daily life can be a difficult one for inmates. Although our mission focuses on the employment process, we help bridge the gap between incarceration and life after prison by connecting Fellows to organizations that can assist them with other re-entry issues like transportation, housing, and addiction.



# 6

## UNEXPECTED QUALITIES FROM THE UNEXPECTED

What our program participants have to offer might surprise you

### 1 LOYALTY

Employment opportunities upon release are limited for inmates. They're grateful for the chance to work and tend to stay with employers longer than other employees.

### 2 DEDICATION

Our participants have worked 12-18 months to secure a job through our program. They're motivated to set goals, stick with them, and do things right!

### 3 EXPERIENCE

Inmates come from diverse backgrounds and often have existing skills valuable to employers.

### 4 INTEGRITY

Through virtue-based education, our participants learn to value and embody: courage, self-control, wisdom, and justice. These virtues are the foundation of character and integrity.

### 5 TRUST

Trust is not easily earned from an employer. Our participants understand that and are eager to build relationship and earn trust through mentorship.

### 6 IMPACT

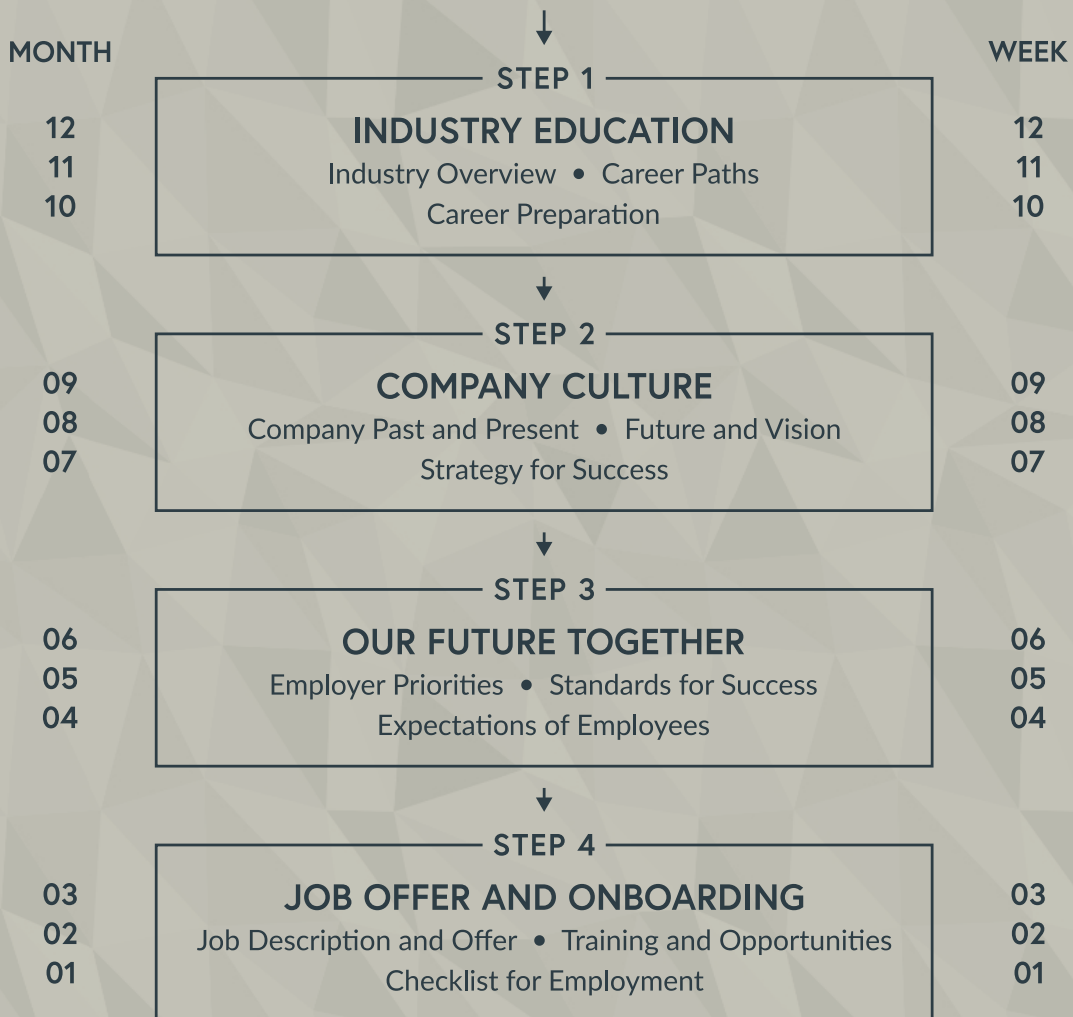
When our participants are mentored and employed by our partners, they have a second chance to reunite with their families and positively impact their communities.

# MENTORSHIP:

## A TIMELINE TO TRUST

We believe trust is built through relationship and is essential for a healthy employer-employee relationship. Our mentorship timeline helps build that essential trust in 12 months or as little as 12 weeks.

### MENTORSHIP BEGINS






INMATE RELEASE

# THE COST OF OUR SOLUTION

As of 2017, incarcerating an individual in the Federal Prison system cost over **\$36,000 per year**. Through The Redemption Project's three-stage program, we can provide an individual with virtue-based soft skills and employment mentorship to increase their likelihood of getting a job—and keeping it—upon their release from prison for a **one time cost of \$2,326**.

## 2020 PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS

	5 PARTNER PRISONS	2 CLASSES PER PRISON/YR	16 INMATES PER CLASS	160 INMATES SERVED PER YEAR
	COST PER			
	 INMATE	 CLASS	 PRISON	
Stage One <b>EDUCATE</b> Virtues for Success™	\$1,298	\$20,766	\$41,532	
Stage Two <b>ADVOCACY</b> The Inmate Advocacy Program™	\$679	\$10,871	\$21,742	
Stage Three <b>SUPPORT</b> The Virtue Advantage™	\$349	\$5,579	\$11,158	
Stages One-Three <b>SUMMARY</b> Total Program Expenses	\$2,326	\$37,216	\$74,432	

Through the generosity of concerned donors like you, we will secure significant savings for taxpayers, while positively impacting the lives of the men and women we serve.



# THE OUTCOME

Research has shown that training programs, designed to quickly and effectively connect former inmates to meaningful employment upon release from prison, reduce the likelihood they'll return.<sup>4</sup> It's why we believe so passionately in our comprehensive program that encompasses virtue-based education, relational mentorship, and holistic support.

Additionally, we are committed to quantifying the success of what we believe through these, easy to understand, metrics:



Metrics and cost savings will tell a part of our story, but not its entirety. Ultimately, we want to change the lives of people—from inmates to their families to our communities and beyond. **We believe this chain reaction starts with a good job and the character and integrity to keep it!**

<sup>4</sup>"PRISON-TO-WORK: The Benefits of Intensive Job-Search Assistance for Former Inmates." *The Manhattan Institute*, March 2015, [www.manhattan-institute.org/sites/default/files/cr\\_96.pdf](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/sites/default/files/cr_96.pdf).



OUR  
NATION

— In 2018, First Step legislation passed with overwhelming bi-partisan support in both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate. Reducing recidivism (the likelihood that an inmate will reoffend once released) is an issue that all sides can embrace, support, and work together on. Organizations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Society for Human Resource Managers (SHRM) have current initiatives to open the workforce to ex-felons.

OUR  
STATE

— Minnesota, like the rest of America, has an incarceration problem. The state's prison system houses almost 10,000 inmates and supervises an additional 46,000 individuals on supervised release. The Department of Corrections budget to oversee these nearly 56,000 people is projected to cost Minnesota tax payers over \$588 million dollars in 2019. This doesn't include the cost of judiciary, inmates housed in county and local jails, or the devastating social and cultural impacts to Minnesota families and communities. On both state and national levels this issue impacts us all.

OUR  
HOPE

— Minnesota businesses have always had a strong sense of community pride and have been willing to become part of the solution when our state and communities are confronted with difficult problems such as recidivism.

THE  
HOW

— The Redemption Project is focused on reducing recidivism by providing businesses with a pool of dedicated and loyal employees. We believe this will result in less crime, make communities safer, and help reunite families.

JOIN MFSBC AND SHOW YOUR SUPPORT BY

TAKING THE  
**PLEDGE**

BECOMING AN EMPLOYMENT  
**PARTNER**

BECOMING A  
**MENTOR**

BECOMING A  
**DONOR**



*Reducing Recidivism is Good for*

## MINNESOTA BUSINESS COMMUNITIES

Reducing recidivism saves tax payers money and positively impacts countless lives making for a stronger state.

There is a labor shortage in Minnesota and it's projected to grow. Hiring ex-felons can help address this need.

Meaningful employment has been shown to reduce recidivism resulting in less crime, safer communities, and stronger families.

### THE PLEDGE

We applaud the growing number of public and private sector organizations nationwide who are taking action to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to succeed, including individuals who have had contact with the criminal justice system. When approximately 70 million Americans—nearly one in three adults—have a criminal record, it is important to remove unnecessary barriers that may prevent these individuals from gaining employment, training, education, and other basic tools required for success in life. We are committed to providing individuals with criminal records, including those formerly incarcerated, a fair chance to participate in the American economy.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW BUSINESS CAN IMPACT RECIDIVISM AT  
**[WWW.REDEMPTIONPROJECT.ORG](http://WWW.REDEMPTIONPROJECT.ORG)**

THE MINNESOTA FIRST STEP BUSINESS COALITION IS AN INITIATIVE OF THE REDEMPTION PROJECT, A 501(C)3 NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE REDEMPTION PROJECT AT  
**WWW.REDEMPTIONPROJECT.ORG**

REDEEM

The Redemption Project is a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to assisting individuals, who have felony convictions, with employment mentoring opportunities while incarcerated and meaningful employment upon their release from prison.

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8011 34th Avenue South, Bloomington MN 55425 | (952) 388-0839