Since 2001, the Council of Advisors to Reduce Recidivism through Employment (CARRE) has been the engine to reduce and remove systemic barriers to employment for people with criminal records in Illinois. CARRE is comprised of more than 100 individuals, groups, organizations and institutions committed to developing and implementing strategies that advocate for policy change that will increase access to employment for people with records.

CARRE has made significant impact over the past 15 years. The council has a proven track record in reducing administrative and legislative barriers to employment, housing, and education for people with criminal records. During this period, CARRE has led or supported more than 55 legislative initiatives that have become public acts, laws or ordinances at the local, state and federal levels. They include the federal Second Chance Act; statewide expansion of expungement/sealing of felony convictions; Certificates of Rehabilitation; City of Chicago and Chicago Public Schools hiring standards; “Ban the Box” on state and private employment applications; and occupational licensing reform that reduces licensing barriers for people with records.

To ensure that the voices of people with criminal records are heard from directly, they are a vital part of a team of Safer Advocates who engage in CARRE’s direct-action and letter writing campaigns, meet face-to-face with public officials, and provide testimony at public forums and Illinois General Assembly committee hearings.

CARRE Spreads the Word

Since its inception in 2001, CARRE has produced a number of informative policy papers for county, state, federal, and community stakeholders. These include:

- The Need for Public Policy and Advocacy to Reduce Barriers to Employment of Ex-Offenders, April 2002
- Reducing Barriers to Employment for Women Ex-Offenders: Mapping the Road to Re-Integration, June 2002
- Government Personnel Policies Impacting the Hiring of Ex-Offenders, July 2002
- Certificates of Relief from Disabilities Implementation and Tracking, 2006
- A Summary of the State of Illinois Professional and Occupational License Statutes with Restrictions to Access to Licensure for Individuals with Selected Criminal Conviction Records, 2008
- Recommendation for the Obama-Biden Transition Team, 2009
- The National Employment and Reentry Committee: Federal Policy Recommendations to Increase Job Opportunities for Justice-Involved Workers (A policy brief submitted to the White House Domestic Policy Council), May 2014