

## Greetings from H.I.R.E. Network Staff

**Roberta Meyers-Peebles**

Greetings National H.I.R.E. Network members! Thanks to all of you, the H.I.R.E. Network membership has grown to approximately 500 members from all across the country since January 2003. Our goal is to have 1,000 members by 2004! Our members represent direct service providers, corrections officials, researchers, legislators, and concerned citizens. We are so proud and excited that so many of you continue to tell your colleagues, clients, friends, and families about our wonderful network of stakeholders who are committed to increasing the number and quality of job opportunities available to individuals with criminal records. As a courtesy to our newest members, we would like to give a brief overview of some of the important information we have shared with the membership since January.

We have kept you up-to-date on four pieces of federal legislation that are relevant to our stakeholders: Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Reauthorization; Temporary Assistance for Need Families (TANF) Reauthorization; the Personal Responsibility, Public Safety Ex-Offender Self-Sufficiency Act of 2003; and Higher Education Act Reauthorization. We have also kept you informed about states that have or are considering legislation to create certificates of rehabilitation to remove

[continued on page 2](#)

## H.I.R.E. Network Sends Letter to Senate HELP Committee

**Alexa Eggleston**

The Workforce Investment Act, signed into law in 1998 to replace the Job Training Partnership Act, is currently being reviewed for reauthorization by Congress. The current WIA system is an untapped resource for assisting people with criminal records, as they attempt to reconnect with their families and enter the workforce. One of the articulated goals of WIA is to lead its consumers to self-sufficiency. WIA reauthorization will be enhanced if it incorporates methods and strategies designed to improve job training, employment and supportive services for hard-to-serve individuals with one or more barriers to employment, including people with criminal records. More specifically, we are interested in the adoption of language that acknowledges the increasing number of labor force participants who begin their job searches facing multiple barriers to labor market success and that encourages policy and programmatic innovations designed to alleviate those barriers and increase employment opportunities for “hard-to-employ” job seekers. Our priorities for reauthorization of WIA include:

- Require States to reserve a percentage of the funds dedicated to statewide activities to create innovative programs that provide services to hard-to-serve populations with particular barriers to long-term employment.
- Require States to include in their plans specific statements and strategies addressing how employment, training and supportive services will be provided to individuals with criminal records, individuals in treatment or recovery for alcohol and other drug addictions, homeless individuals, or other identified hard-to-employ populations.
- Require State and local Workforce Investment Boards to include representatives who serve a

[continued on page 2](#)

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Greetings from H.I.R.E. Network Staff
- 1 H.I.R.E. Sends Letter to Senate HELP Committee
- 2 From the Media to Practice
- 3 Upcoming Conferences of Interest
- 4 Meet the H.I.R.E. Network Staff: Susan Hallett

occupational bars.

If you missed any of our updates, please check out all of our important informational documents available on our web-site, [www.hirenetwork.org](http://www.hirenetwork.org). Here a few of the documents you will find: [Are Employers Permitted to Ask Applicants About Arrests on Job Applications?](#); [Employer Use of Consumer/Credit Reports to Obtain Criminal Record Information](#); [Model Practices to Promote the Employment of People with Criminal Records](#); [The Use of Honesty Tests](#); [Federal Bonding](#); and [People with Criminal Records Working in Financial Institutions](#).

Remember, we value your input and suggestions. If there are any topics you would like us to cover, please contact us at [info@hirenetwork.org](mailto:info@hirenetwork.org).

Thank you for your support.❖

### **National H.I.R.E. Network Staff**

**Debbie Mukamal, JD**  
Co-Director  
[dmukamal@hirenetwork.org](mailto:dmukamal@hirenetwork.org)

**John Jeffries, PhD**  
Co-Director  
[jjeffries@hirenetwork.org](mailto:jjeffries@hirenetwork.org)

**Roberta Meyers-Peeples**  
Field Educator and Organizer  
[rampeeples@hirenetwork.org](mailto:rampeeples@hirenetwork.org)

**Susan Hallett**  
Program Analyst  
[shallett@hirenetwork.org](mailto:shallett@hirenetwork.org)

**Glenn Martin**  
Policy Analyst  
[gmartin@hirenetwork.org](mailto:gmartin@hirenetwork.org)

**Alexa Eggleston, JD**  
Policy Associate  
[aeggleston@lac-dc.org](mailto:aeggleston@lac-dc.org)

**Gwen Rubinstein, MPH**  
Director of Policy Research  
[gwenr@lac-dc.org](mailto:gwenr@lac-dc.org)

**Michelle Harrison**  
Membership Coordinator/Webmaster  
[mharrison@hirenetwork.org](mailto:mharrison@hirenetwork.org)

cross-section of hard-to-serve individuals, including people with criminal records, in their board membership.

- Provide financial rewards to states that employ a certain number of people with more serious barriers to employment, such as individuals with criminal records and alcohol and drug addictions.

Funds for the WIA program are authorized through September 30, 2003. While timing on the reauthorization process is still unclear, the full Senate H.E.L.P. (Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions) Committee is expected to hold a hearing in July, which is also when the legislation is expected to be introduced in the Senate. However, it is still possible that the Senate will not consider the WIA legislation until September, after it returns from August recess.❖

## **From the Media to Practice**

*This is the first of a series in which we will highlight an issue raised by a recent press article.*

**Glenn Martin**

A recent article in the *New York Daily News* entitled "[Checks of Staff to Keep Ex-Cons from Elder Care](#)" highlighted Governor Pataki's push for "sweeping reforms" in the regulations that govern criminal background checks for applicants of jobs in the nursing home and home care industry. The article cites the need for stringent regulations by highlighting sensational cases where those being cared for have been abused by their caregivers. While there are legitimate public safety needs for this type of legislation, it is also important to ensure that language included in proposed legislation provides qualified people with criminal histories with opportunities to find employment and requires they be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Many other states have passed similar legislation in this and other fields. In fact, there are a growing number of occupations that are closed to people with criminal records, even when the conviction happened a long time ago or is relatively minor.

Here is a list of standards that should be included in existing and proposed laws and regulations to ensure states meet the twin goals of promoting public safety and promoting the employment of qualified people with criminal records:

- \$ Bills should contain language that limit the reporting of criminal history information to pending criminal charges and criminal convictions that are not vacated or reversed. Arrests that resulted in the defendant's favor should not be used against an applicant for a job or license. In addition, if the state has a mechanism for lifting occupational bars such as a certificate of

*continued on page 3*

## Upcoming Conferences of Interest

**July 20-24, 2003**

**National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice  
30<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference & Training Institute:  
"30 Years: Maintaining Tradition, Effecting Change"**  
St. Louis, MO  
Contact: [www.nabcj.org/events.html](http://www.nabcj.org/events.html)  
Tel: 866-U4-NABCJ  
Fax: 919-667-9822

**July 28-30, 2003**

**National Institute of Justice Annual Conference on  
Criminal Justice Research and Evaluation**  
JW Marriot Hotel  
Washington, DC  
Contact: <http://nijpcs.org/RE/RE2003//index.htm>

**Aug. 24-27, 2003**

**American Probation and Parole Association 28<sup>th</sup>  
Annual Training Institute  
The Rising: A New Generation of Community Justice**  
Cleveland Convention Center  
Cleveland, OH  
Contact: APPA Institute  
[www.appa-net.org](http://www.appa-net.org)

**Sept. 14-17, 2003**

**National Conference on Addiction & Criminal  
Behavior**  
Marriott Pavilion Hotel  
St. Louis, MO  
Contact: [www.gwcinc.com](http://www.gwcinc.com)

**Oct. 8-10, 2003**

**21<sup>st</sup> Annual Governor's Conference on Workforce  
Development: "Increasing Missouri Business,  
Advancing Workers, Business & Economic Growth"**  
Tan-Tar-A Resort  
Osage Beach, MO  
Contact: Sue Sieg  
Tel: 573-751-3106  
Fax: 573-526-8204  
Email: [ssieg@wfd.state.mo.us](mailto:ssieg@wfd.state.mo.us)  
[www.ded.state.mo.us/wfd](http://www.ded.state.mo.us/wfd) (go to bottom of page)  
*Presentation bids currently being accepted.*

**Oct. 19-22, 2003**

**10<sup>th</sup> National TASC Conference on Drugs & Crime  
Partnerships for Building Safer Communities: Candid  
Conversations, Effective Responses**  
Sheraton Raleigh Capital Center Hotel  
Raleigh, NC  
Contact: [www.nationaltasc.org](http://www.nationaltasc.org)

*[continued on page 4](#)*

rehabilitation, the authorized employer should be furnished with evidence of the issuance of any certificate which may restore statutory rights to occupational licensure and help exhibit a presumption of rehabilitation by the state.

- \$ Because of the stigma attached to criminal histories, and the potential for ostracization in the workplace, employers should be required to maintain the privacy of the applicant's past by limiting the disclosure of the criminal history information to designated employees within the company.
- \$ So that the prospective applicant understands the scope of the disclosures being made by the criminal justice repository, he/she should be required to sign an informed authorization form. He/she should be made aware that the criminal justice information will be used for employment purposes only and will be held confidential. Furthermore, because there is a tendency for criminal justice information to be incorrect or incomplete, the prospective employee should be given written notice on his/her right to review the information and seek correction of the information if necessary.
- The strengthening of laws governing background checks should be coupled with legislation that require public and private employers and occupational licensing agencies to consider each applicant on a case-by-case basis. Several states, including Hawaii, Kansas, New York, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, forbid employers and occupational licensing agencies to have flat, across-the-board policies and instead require them to consider whether the applicant's conviction history is job-related or whether that individual would, because of his/her criminal history, pose an unreasonable risk to the public, fellow employees or property. These laws ensure protection from discrimination for the applicant with a criminal history, while maintaining the employer's ability to preserve public safety and conduct business in a safe environment. ❖

**Oct. 20-22, 2003**

**4th Annual Centerforce Summit “Inside-Out: New Directions for Integrating Services for the Incarcerated and Their Families”**

Westin Hotel  
 Millbrae, CA  
 Contact: RDL Enterprises  
 Tel: 916-443-0218  
 Email: [Karl@RDLEnt.com](mailto:Karl@RDLEnt.com)  
 Or visit: [www.centerforce.org](http://www.centerforce.org)

**April 14-16, 2004**

**Center for Mental Health Services & Criminal Justice Research First Biennial Conference: “Reentry to Recovery: People with Mental Illness Coming Home From Prison or Jail”**

The Sheraton Society Hill Hotel  
 Philadelphia, PA  
 Contact: Kristen Gilmore  
 Tel: 732-932-1225  
 Email: [cmhs&cjr@ihhpar.rutgers.edu](mailto:cmhs&cjr@ihhpar.rutgers.edu)

Contact us:  
 National H.I.R.E. Network  
*A Project of the Legal Action Center*  
 153 Waverly Place  
 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 New York, NY 10014  
 (212) 243-1313 (P)  
 (212) 675-0286 (F)  
[info@hirenetwork.org](mailto:info@hirenetwork.org) E-mail  
[www.hirenetwork.org](http://www.hirenetwork.org) Website

**Meet the H.I.R.E. Network Staff:**

**SUSAN HALLETT**

My name is Susan Hallett and I am the Program Analyst for the National H.I.R.E. Network. I want to introduce myself and the goals of my position as a way of encouraging you to contact me when necessary.

I am responsible for maintaining information for our clearinghouse, our 50-state database of state and community-based resources (it is featured prominently on our website under “Resources and Assistance”). It is important to all who rely on the information in the clearinghouse that it be clear, concise and, above all, accurate. It is also very important that new information be added when it is discovered. New information is gathered in several ways, the most obvious being Internet research. However, not all organizations have an available website, nor are they easily found. Our members have been an excellent resource for new organizations and agencies to be added to our clearinghouse. I also welcome feedback from visitors to our website about inaccurate or outdated information. Corrections in information will be made as soon as I become aware of their need.

My responsibilities also include responding to requests for assistance about a range of questions related to the employment of people with criminal records. This may include providing legal information, identifying local or state resources, or relaying information about new initiatives. Information that I have come across may not be appropriate for the clearinghouse, but may be of assistance to an individual researcher, service provider or policy advocate. I hope to be able to foster collaborations among the many people across this country working to assist individuals with criminal records.

On a closing note, I am a person with a criminal history. I know the value of the information contained in the clearinghouse. I have benefited from the many dedicated individuals who work in this field and I hope to be able to assist them in their endeavors, as well as extend a helping hand to those who will follow me. If I, or any of my colleagues, can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me at [shallett@hirenetwork.org](mailto:shallett@hirenetwork.org).