Appendix C
Breaking Down the Barriers

"By investigating strategies that lead to prevention of incarceration or recidivism, identifying problems and creating solutions, and promoting efforts that have positive outcomes — we will make a difference."

- Stephanie Welch, COMIO Executive Officer

### Education

The US Department of Education launched a Second Chance Pell Pilot Program for Incarcerated Individuals. This program began in July 2013. This program is being tested during the 2013-17 school year. It allows incarcerated individuals who meet all Title IV requirements and are eligible for release to have access to Pell grants to use towards postsecondary education and/or training while in custody.

### Veterans

The Veterans Resource Exchange Service (VRES) is a fast and efficient program that identifies incarcerated individuals with a record of military service so that reentry planning and connection to veteran services can start early. VRES is now active in 214 jurisdictions across 30 states and the District of Columbia, including California.

### Employment

As of January 1, 2014, California Senate Bill 530 prohibits employers from asking an applicant to disclose, or from utilizing as a factor in determining any condition of employment, information concerning a conviction that has been judicially dismissed or ordered sealed. The legislation adds protection for criminal convictions that have been expunged or judicially set aside but there are exceptions based on the conviction.

### Education

In 1998, an application bar was amended to make sure that any offender with a misdemeanor or felony drug conviction was ineligible to receive federal financial aid. The ban was then modified in 2006 to only prevent the distribution of financial aid to those who committed a drug offense while already receiving federal financial aid. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) was also modified so that it no longer asks about past criminal convictions.

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COMIO: Building bridges to prevent incarceration at http://www.cdr.ca.gov/COMIO/