



# ACCESS TO JUSTICE

## DATA:

Ohio has the **12<sup>th</sup> highest incarceration rate** in the United States, with over **18,000** people held in jails alone.

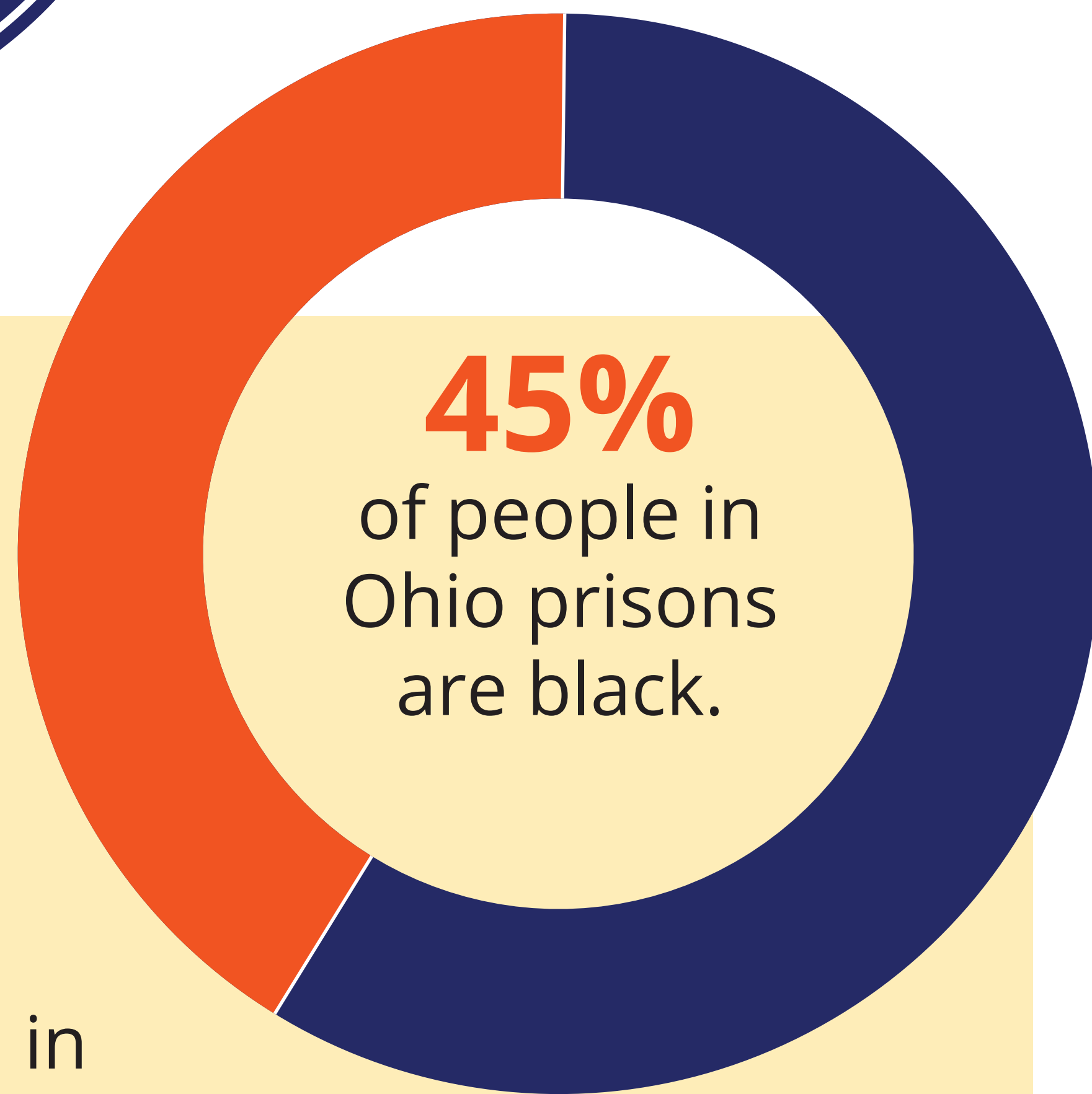
Black Ohioans, who make up 13% of Ohio's population and 45% of the people in Ohio state prisons, are incarcerated at **5.6 times** the rate of white Ohioans.<sup>1</sup>

People with serious mental illness and substance use disorder are much more likely to be arrested and booked multiple times, and less likely to have graduated from high school or have a steady income.<sup>1</sup>



**Over 79%** of Right To Counsel Cleveland residents were able to access legal representation in 2022.<sup>2</sup>

In Ohio, more than 850 laws and administrative rules limit job opportunities for Ohioans with convictions who have already served their time. **One in four Ohio jobs**, that's about 1.3 million jobs, is blocked or in some way restricted for Ohioans who have a criminal conviction.<sup>3</sup>



**45%**  
of people in Ohio prisons are black.

## POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

### Employer Practices

- Ban the box
- Collaborate with social service organizations to create pathways to employment for people with criminal records.
- Hold expungement clinics or collaborate with organizations who hold them for 2nd chance employees.

### Policies

- Cash Bail and Bond Reform
- Increasing services to individuals with either or both mental illness and substance abuse issues and standardizing mental health assessment forms.<sup>4</sup>
- Making courtrooms more accessible through videoconferencing.<sup>4</sup>
- Implementing technological upgrades to their court data management systems or digitizing all criminal records.<sup>4</sup>



## LOCAL SPOTLIGHT:

Diamond Metals began interviewing Access to Manufacturing graduates in 2020. To date, four Access grads work for Diamond Metals, one of whom has been with the company for almost 2 years. CFO, Sean Cwynar, and First Shift Supervisor, Alby Santos, believe in hiring individuals that need second chances and say Access to Manufacturing graduates are assets to the company, due to combination of soft skills and technical training received in the classroom. Diamond Metals' competitive wages, benefits, and opportunity to learn new machines, coupled with the ability to accommodate workers who need flex time to meet parole or probation commitments, communicates their commitment to second chance employees.



In April 2022, through a collaboration with the Governor's office, Diamond Metals began employing currently incarcerated individuals from a local prison. They are treated as team members and the goal, upon release, is that they continue employment. The program allows these individuals not only the opportunity to learn new skills, but also to make money and assist with their successful transition back into society upon release. The company is able to offer competitive wages for their skills and positions, in addition to other benefits offered to all employees.

<sup>1</sup> [policymattersohio.org/research-policy/quality-ohio/justice-reform/creating-a-care-response-model-in-cleveland-for-those-in-crisis](https://policymattersohio.org/research-policy/quality-ohio/justice-reform/creating-a-care-response-model-in-cleveland-for-those-in-crisis)  
<sup>2</sup> Stout Right to Counsel Cleveland Evaluation, 2022  
<sup>3</sup> [ideastream.org/community/2021-08-17/collateral-sanctions-create-roadblocks-for-formerly-convicted-in-ohio](https://ideastream.org/community/2021-08-17/collateral-sanctions-create-roadblocks-for-formerly-convicted-in-ohio)  
<sup>4</sup> [Summer-2022-Report-of-The-Cleveland-Foundation-Cuyahoga-County-Criminal-Justice-Change-Efforts-for-web.pdf](https://www.summer-2022-report-of-the-cleveland-foundation-cuyahoga-county-criminal-justice-change-efforts-for-web.pdf)