

EDUCATION & SECOND CHANCES

Everyone deserves the opportunity to seek higher education. Currently, anyone with a felony conviction – whether they are incarcerated or have served their sentence – is banned from utilizing Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) money.

WHAT IS KEES?

KEES is a scholarship available to Kentucky high school students, home school students, and GED graduates

KEES is funded by proceeds from the Kentucky Lottery and administered by the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority.

Scholarships are awarded to people who have earned a GPA of 2.5 or higher; score reasonably well on standardized tests; are within 5 years of graduation from high school. People can apply to use funds for apprenticeships and qualified workforce training.

EFFECTS OF THE FELONY PROHIBITION:

This prohibition affects hundreds of thousands of Kentuckians and is holding our commonwealth back.

Excluding people with felony convictions makes it harder for them to gain employment, fully invest in their communities, and become productive members of our economy.

More than
300,000
Kentuckians have a past felony conviction

More than
40,000
Kentuckians are currently on probation or parole

More than
20,000
Kentuckians are currently incarcerated, including 1,839 under the age of 25

RACIAL DISPARITIES:

8% of Kentucky's population is Black, yet 22% of those incarcerated are Black. **This prohibition disproportionately sets Black Kentuckians back.**

GENDER DISPARITIES:

Women's incarceration continues to rise. This prohibition is compounding with other factors (i.e. childcare) and making it harder for women to seek education.

Ending this prohibition will open doors for thousands of Kentuckians. Education leads to meaningful employment, self-worth, and will allow formerly incarcerated people to fully reintegrate into their communities, support our economy, and provide for their families.