

# *Social Equity* LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



JUNE 5 - 7, 2013 - NC STATE UNIVERSITY, RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

## Policing and Corrections

---

### ***Criminal Records Background Checks in Employment: A Critical Economic Development Issue***

**Friday 8:00 am; Panel 3**

Scott Nolen, *New Jersey Institute for Social Justice*

**Abstract:** New Jersey Institute for Social Justice has worked to create a nationally relevant state model to reduce employment barriers for the 65 million Americans with criminal records; individuals highly concentrated and marginalized in urban labor markets like Newark and Camden. Those with records, often for nonviolent drug offenses, face illegal employment discrimination (for convictions and even arrests) and/or legal but irrational bars to working long after release from incarceration and engaging in serious rehabilitation efforts. Not only are these individuals demonstrably impoverished by their criminal records, their families and communities also suffer. Policymakers and businesses are beginning to recognize what has been labeled a criminal justice issue as an unaddressed urban economic development problem and an untapped labor resource.