

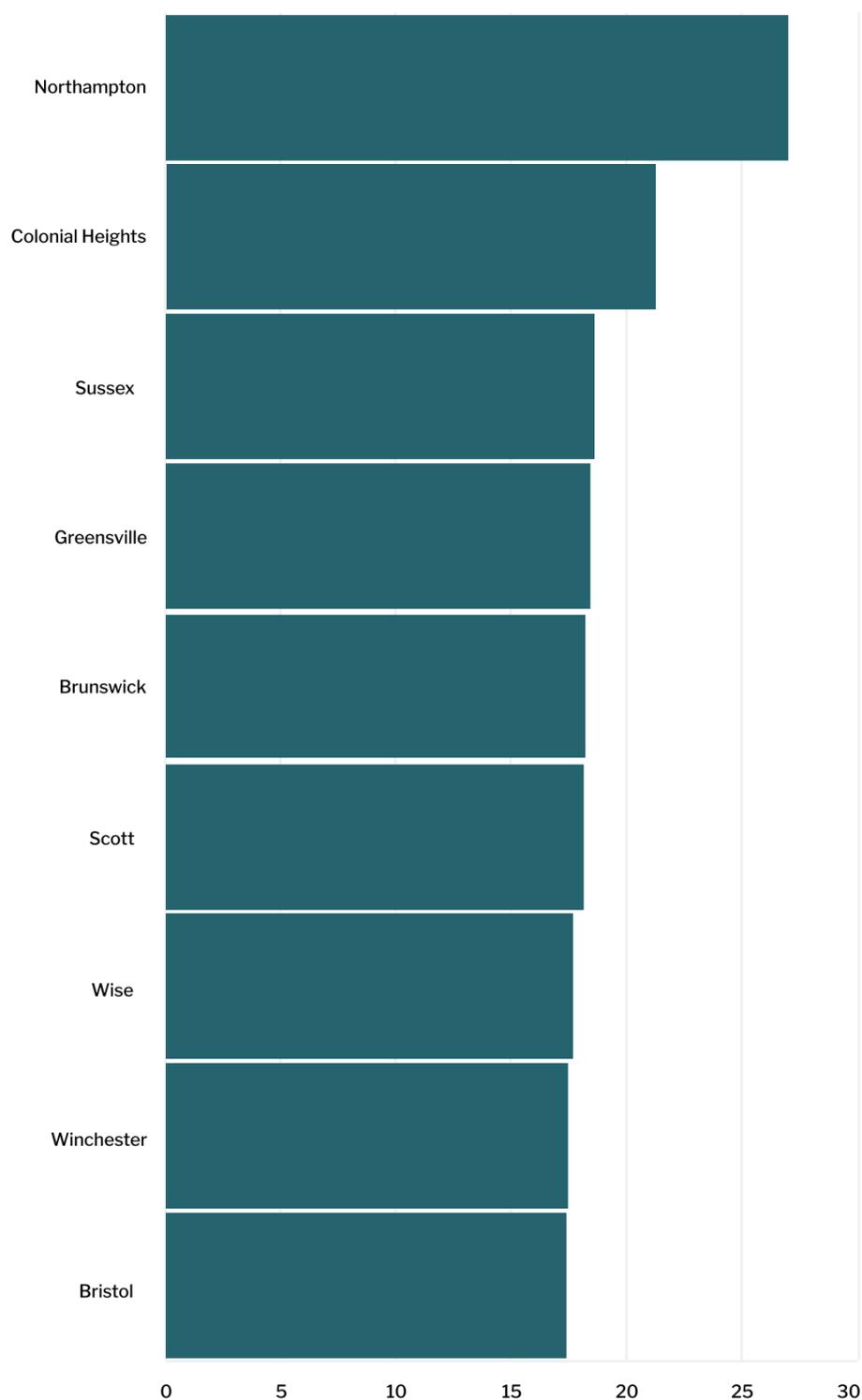
Occupational Licensing Reform

Virginia / January 2022

489,642

Number of individuals potentially eligible to benefit from this legislation.

Counties with the highest potential number of beneficiaries per 100 people



The opportunity

In Virginia, an occupational license can open the door to a variety of opportunities for employment. Overall, 20% of the state's workforce is licensed - the 19th highest percentage in the nation. Although a criminal record can significantly limit a person's employment options, paradoxically, employment has been shown to significantly decrease the risk of recidivism. According to one study, states with fewer licensing restrictions see, on average, a 2.5% decline in recidivism compared to states with stricter licensing laws. Additionally, increasing pathways to occupational licensing for those with criminal records has the possibility to strengthen Virginia's economy. One study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research estimated that employment barriers for the formerly incarcerated costs the national economy up to \$87 billion in annual Gross Domestic Product.

Impact of similar policies at the state level

► North Carolina

In 2013, North Carolina passed a non-discrimination in licensing law that prohibits occupational licensing boards from automatically disqualifying individuals based on a criminal record. In 2019, HB 770 significantly amended this law by increasing protections for applicants and requiring the board to report how many applications are received annually from individuals with criminal records and how many were granted or denied.

► Indiana

Indiana law provides the most opportunities for those with a criminal record to successfully apply for occupational licensing. In 2018, HB 1245 instituted far reaching protections for formerly incarcerated individuals by requiring licensing boards to explicitly state which convictions disqualify an individual from receiving an occupational license and how such a conviction directly affects the ability to perform the duties of an occupation.