

BE A FAIR CHANCE EMPLOYER

BACKGROUND

Approximately 70 million people in the United States have criminal records, representing one-third of working age adults. About 19 million have a felony conviction which often poses a significant barrier to re-entering the workforce. People who are formerly incarcerated have a far higher rate of unemployment because of obstacles they face when returning home. This leads to wasted human capital, additional burdens for families impacted by the justice system and recidivism.

“Fair chance” hiring offers inclusive employment opportunities for the 600,000 citizens who return from prison each year, a win for everyone. People who are formerly incarcerated experience the dignity of work and ability to provide for themselves and their families. Employers have access to a valuable talent pool. And communities are safer. Alternatively, when background checks and discriminatory hiring practices are used, those coming home are stymied in building a stable life and all of us suffer.

TAKE THE PLEDGE

Our organization (*insert name of workplace*) _____ believes that every person is more than the worst thing they've done. We support giving people who are formerly incarcerated a fair chance and commit to being an inclusive employer as outlined in the steps listed below. We promise to use targeted recruitment and supportive employment practices. We recognize that an economy where we all have access to fair chance employment is how we can build a safe and healthy future for everyone. We / I pledge to:

1. Create a fair-chance culture by cultivating buy-in from staff, board, and trustees; engaging people with records early in the process; mobilizing all stakeholders within the organization; and being an outspoken, public supporter of fair-chance hiring.
2. Develop skills-based job announcements that do not automatically disqualify people with records, but instead, focus on the skills needed to perform the job and signal openness to hiring people with arrest and conviction histories.
3. Recruit and hire at all levels of responsibility and leadership recognizing that people with records span multiple fields of knowledge and expertise.
4. Eliminate or delay inquiries into conviction history by banning the box on employment applications, not inquiring (if at all) until the conditional offer stage of the hiring process.
5. Limit the use and scope of background checks to only those job positions where they are legally mandated, narrow the scope of the inquiry, and consider the age of the offense and its job relevance.
6. Provide notice and an opportunity to respond to background-check results if there is a potentially disqualifying offense, identify its relationship to the job and provide an adequate opportunity to submit evidence of rehabilitation before a final decision.
7. Establish clear goals, audit outcomes, and continually innovate for success. *

*Recommendations are taken from <https://prisonerswithchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Fair-Chance-Hiring-Philanthropy-Guide.pdf>