Fair Chance Employment
Fair chance hiring refers to policies that help people involved in the criminal justice system—formerly incarcerated people and individuals with arrest or probation records—find and secure jobs for which they are well-qualified.

Removing questions about criminal history from job applications, known as "banning the box," allows employers to judge applicants on their qualifications first, without the stigma of a record.

Fair Chance employment does not require an employer to hire someone unfit for the job—rather, it provides opportunities for hard workers who are often overlooked. This increases the talent pool and boosts economic growth.
A Business Case for Fair Chance Employment

In 2016, ten thousand Arkansans were released from incarceration and faced with the challenge of finding employment.

Access to employment opportunities and case management are critical to staying out of the criminal justice system.

A combination of family support, community assistance, and economic opportunity lower the systemic barriers experienced by returning citizens.

Looking past the stigma of a criminal history expands the applicant pool and provides a company with motivated workers.

Benefits of Fair Chance Hiring

Public Safety

Employment reduces the risk of re-offending. Just 30 days of employment lowers the recidivism rate to 20 percent. Finding a job keeps returning citizens off the streets.

Jobs for 100 formerly incarcerated persons

Increases lifetime earnings by $55 million
Increases income tax contributions by $1.9 million
Boosts sales tax revenue by $770,000
$2 million saved by keeping people out of prison

Larger Applicant Pool

Nearly one in three adults have an arrest or conviction on their criminal record. Workers with records have been found to be more productive, have less turnover, and be promoted faster.
Restrictive Background Check Policies are bad for Business

1 out of 3
One out of three working individuals has an arrest appear on a background check. When a business has a blanket background check policy, this restricts the applicant pool.

83%
Blanket background policies contribute to recidivism. 83% of people who violate their parole are unemployed during the month of arrest.

Title VII
May violate Title VII Regulations. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits employment discrimination. People of color are disproportionately affected by background policy disqualifications.

Best Practices for Creating a Fair Chance Policy

- A background check may be unnecessary for a position. Most jobs do not involve unsupervised access to sensitive populations or information.

- If a background check is necessary, only consider convictions with a direct relationship to job duties and consider the length of time since the offense.

- Remove self-reporting questions about conviction history. Discrepancies between self-disclosed information and background checks are often caused by workers’ misunderstanding of their own records.

- Conduct the background check after the best candidate is selected for the position.

- If a background check yields concerning information, engage the applicant in a conversation about their personal situation.

- Give the applicant an opportunity to review the background check and present information regarding inaccuracy, mitigating circumstances, and rehabilitation.
Applicants from the Our House Career Center are ready and determined to find stable employment.

Each individual attends classes in four focus areas: Health and Wellness, Employment and Training, Financial Empowerment, and Education.

Applicants with a criminal background follow a specific track that strengthens their workforce skills and support systems.

Reentry clients receive individualized case management, employment coaching, goal setting and job retention assistance.

Ex-offenders who spend more time with case managers show a higher likelihood of finding and keeping employment after release.

402 individuals have found employment through the Our House Reentry Program.
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