


THE BUSINESS CASE

Minimizing Risk, Maximizing Talent: Hiring People with Records

Our broken criminal justice system's dire effects on California's economy and communities may be minimized by expanding good job opportunities.

70 million
or almost 1 in 3
adults



An estimated 70 million U.S. adults have prior arrests or convictions.¹

\$62,396
spending
per
inmate

\$9,200
spending
per
student

The state spends far more to incarcerate inmates than to educate students (2014-15).²

“Nothing stops a bullet like a job.” — Father Greg Boyle, Founder and Executive Director of Homeboy Industries

\$57–65 billion

Our economy loses billions when people with records can't work.³

unemployment

offenses

Employment is the single most important influence on reducing re-offending.⁴

A 1% drop in unemployment rate causes a 1–2% decline in offenses.⁵



jobs for 100

=

\$55 million lifetime earnings
\$1.9 million income tax
\$770,000 sales tax

Jobs for 100 formerly incarcerated people will save millions.⁶

“We need to move beyond the two prongs of ‘bottom-line’ and ‘growth’ as companies, and understand that we all will thrive when we include the third prong of ‘investing in the community.’”⁷ — Local business owner

Ready to become part of the solution? Become a Fair Chance Employer.



- 1. Put a policy and practice in place.** Develop a fairer process that gives your hiring managers guidance on how to consider conviction records. Remove any blanket bans against hiring a person with a conviction.
- 2. Take the conviction question off the job application.** When “yes” is marked on the conviction check-box, it too easily leads to an automatic rejection.
- 3. Wait to run a background check on a top candidate.** If you decide to pay for background checks before you hire someone, wait until you’ve made your top choice to run the check. That way, you’ll truly consider the person’s qualifications and get a sense of the person as a whole.
- 4. Talk to the job candidate about the conviction.** If your top choice for a job has a conviction, and that conviction may be related to the duties of the job, have a conversation. Background checks can be misleading and inaccurate. Give the worker a chance to discuss it.
- 5. Contact a public agency or local workforce development organization to see if there is a pool of candidates from which you can hire.** Many local agencies have programs in which individuals with prior conviction records are preparing to be successful employees.

Need more information or legal counsel drafting your personnel policy?

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1 NELP (2014).
2 CBP (2014).
3 CEPR (2010).

4 Bert & Huebner (2011).
5 Raphael & Winter-
Ebmer (2001).

6 Economy League of
Greater Philadelphia
(2011).

7 Derek Barrett, founder and
CEO of D and B Painting
Co., Inc.

