

SECOND CHANCE

BUSINESS
COALITION

Onramps Guide

*Starting points and pathways to build
second chance employment into your
talent strategy*

Spring 2022

Acknowledgements

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Letter from the Coalition

Dear Second Chance Partners,

Thank you for investing the time to explore and implement strategies that expand opportunities for jobseekers with criminal records. We hope you will find as we have that investments in second chances are a way to drive positive impact in your company and in your community.

During the first year of the Second Chance Business Coalition (SCBC), we learned that there is a diverse array of approaches and actions our member employers are taking to expand access and opportunity. These strategies stretch across all aspects of the company, from human resources to communications to corporate social responsibility.

This guide offers a series of starting points and pathways to help drive the conversation about second chance practices. Some readers may be at the very beginning of their journeys, looking for places to gain traction, while others may be leading the field and considering what comes next in their trajectory.

Of the 100 actions detailed in this guide, some are specific to second chance employment, others are internal practices that may benefit a broad range of employees with particularly value for recruiting and retaining candidates with criminal records. This guide also describes actions outside of employment processes that can drive community-wide progress toward second chance opportunities.

We hope that employers large and small will reference this guide and select actions that align with their internal strategies and goals. Thank you for your commitment to inclusivity and second chances.

Sincerely,

Second Chance Business Coalition

Overview of the Second Chance Business Coalition

The Second Chance Business Coalition (SCBC) is a cross-sector coalition of large, private-sector firms committed to expanding second chance employment and advancement practices within their companies.

Founded in April 2021, the SCBC leverages the support and expertise of its five partner organizations and works to equip coalition member companies with best practices, technical assistance and support to increase the number of employees with criminal records they hire and put them on a path to greater upward mobility.

The SCBC promotes the benefits of second chance employment and provides major employers with a set of tools, relationships and expertise to allow them to successfully hire and provide career advancement and greater economic opportunities to people with criminal records.

The SCBC has designed and developed a set of public-facing tools and resources on its website, including a map of prospective community partners and a roster of employer-facing resources from the field.

For more information visit: secondchancebusinesscoalition.org

SCBC Partners



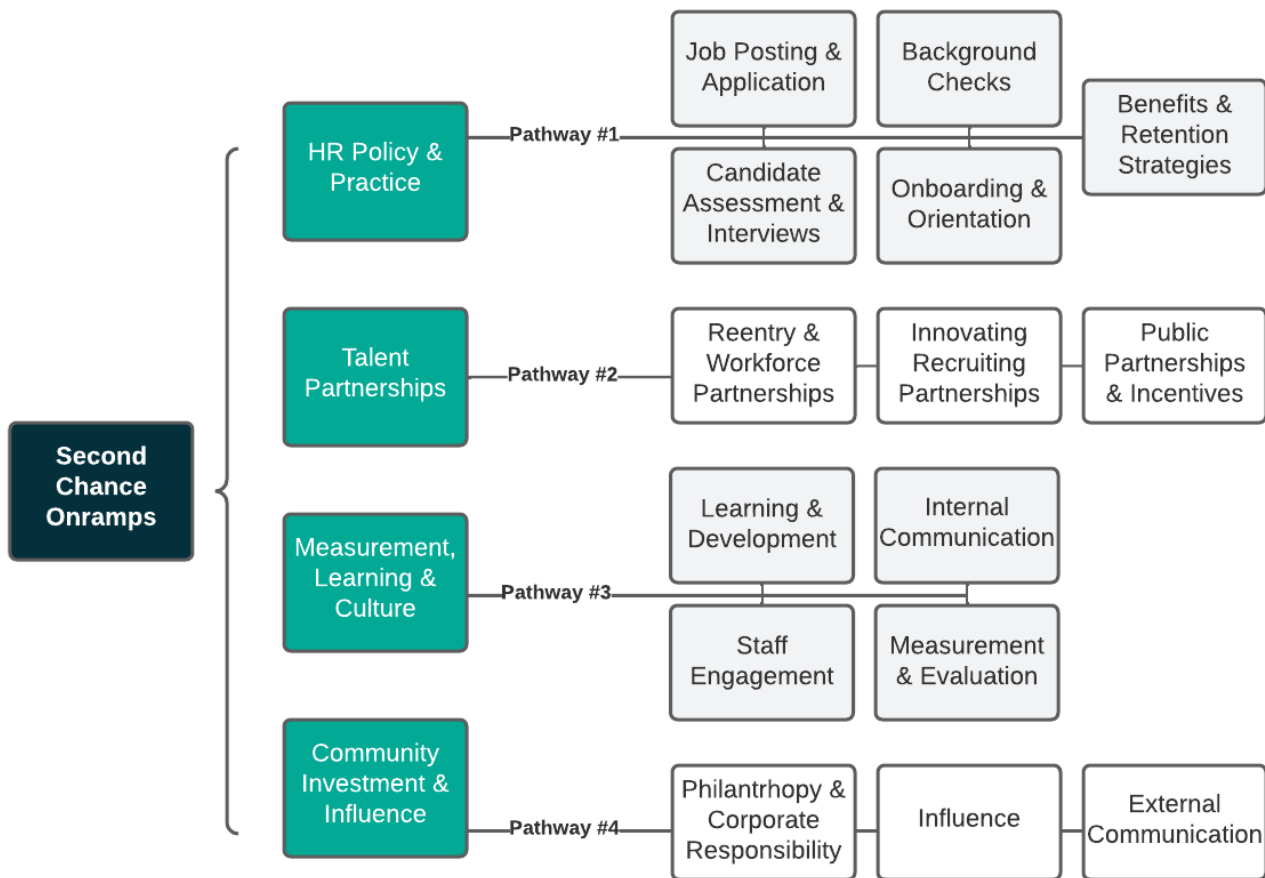
SCBC Member Companies (as of December 2022)



How to Use This Guide

The Onramps Guide is designed as a series of pathways illustrating a diverse array of ways to engage in second chance employment. We expect employers will read this guide at different stages of their exploration and implementation, as these pathways offer both starting points and growth trajectories to advance second chance goals.

The Onramps Guide begins with a menu of 100 actions organized across four pathways. **Readers are encouraged to identify areas where they have already made progress and consider where momentum and opportunities may exist to take further action.** Employers can also use the menu as a planning tool to set goals and engage the right leaders across various aspects of the company who can help make progress along each pathway.



In addition to the menu, the Onramps Guide includes a deeper explanation of each pathway and spotlights companies that have adopted certain highlighted practices. For additional guidance, each section includes a set of resources and links to deepen knowledge and provide resources for implementation. The Onramps Guide should be read as illustrative rather than prescriptive and all aspects of the guide should be considered in the context of relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

We hope the Onramps Guide will be a resource to employers large and small, from companies just getting started to second chance employers planning to expand and grow their commitments.

100 Onramps to Second Chance Employment

A menu of practices for self-assessment and planning

Pathway #1: HR Policy & Practice

JOB POSTING & APPLICATION

- We use inclusive application language that is accessible to diverse audiences
- Our job descriptions clearly state relevant requirements
- Our job descriptions focus on qualifying skills and competencies
- Our job descriptions do not require candidates to disclose past convictions (we "Ban the Box")
- If we conduct background checks, we notify candidates on our applications (in a manner consistent with applicable law)
- We state on our job posting that we are a second chance employer

CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT & INTERVIEWS

- Our hiring managers are trained in implicit bias
- Our hiring managers are trained if, when, and how it is appropriate to discuss conviction history during the interview process
- Our interview process is structured to ensure consistency for all candidates
- Our interview process is strengths-based and focuses on candidates' relevant skills
- Our commitment to second chance employment is articulated during every interview
- If we conduct background checks, at the appropriate time, we disclose to candidates what is reviewed and how many years into their past we review

BACKGROUND CHECKS

- If we conduct background checks, we do so after a conditional offer is made
- We do not consider arrest records as part of the background check
- We have assessed which job categories should require a background check and removed checks for irrelevant positions
- We have assessed the relevance of specific convictions to the requirements of each position
- We instruct our background check provider to only return convictions deemed relevant to the position
- We limit how long we look back into candidates' conviction history
- We instruct our background check provider to only return convictions within a prescribed timeframe
- We conduct individual assessments for each candidate, regardless of the conviction
- We proactively invite candidates to discuss any past convictions that may disqualify them
- We use a standardized framework to conduct individual assessments and consider the circumstances of the conviction and evidence of successful reintegration
- We provide individual assessments for any promotions requiring an additional background check
- We do not consider credit history as part of the background check
- We take steps to ensure the privacy of all background check results

BENEFITS & RETENTION STRATEGIES

- We have reviewed our benefits package with a lens of inclusivity
- We offer transportation options and subsidies for employees
- We provide flexible and transparent scheduling opportunities
- We support candidates and employees with expungement or record sealing
- We provide benefits that help employees build toward goals such as home ownership and further education
- We offer milestone incentives to reward retention and ongoing training
- We facilitate ongoing professional development and credentialing opportunities for employees
- We are able to provide letters and references to support probation and parole hearings, record sealing, pardons and other justice-related issues

ONBOARDING & ORIENTATION

- We have a comprehensive and consistent orientation for new hires
- Our managers have regularly scheduled check-ins with all employees
- We offer new employees a platform for feedback and concerns
- We provide opportunities for new employees to connect with our company culture
- We provide resources and referrals for potential challenges such as housing and transportation during orientation
- We pair each new hire with an onboarding buddy or mentor

Pathway #2: Talent Partnerships

REENTRY & WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIPS

- We are listed as a second chance employer on job sites that offer the designation
- We have identified job categories that are most accessible to candidates with past convictions
- We have contacted workforce, corrections, and job placement agencies to inform them of our commitment to second chance employment
- We provide clear information to workforce partners on our background check policies
- We collaborate with reentry organizations to recruit, refer, and support candidates
- We offer onsite interviews and regular application cycles with reentry partners
- We have set targets or commitments for the number of candidates we aim to recruit and hire through second chance channels

EXPANDED PARTNERSHIPS

- We partner with organizations offering financial counseling, legal assistance, or other supports
- We invest in specialized training, skill-building and apprenticeship programs that recruit second chance candidates in partnership with community colleges and vocational programs
- We partner with transitional work programs for people who have recently exited the justice system
- We engage staffing agencies who recruit candidates with past convictions
- We engage in work-release programs in partnership with local correctional facilities

PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS & INCENTIVES

- We utilize federal subsidies supporting second chance employment such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
- Our company utilizes the Federal Bonding program to address potential losses
- We leverage on-the-job training funds that make jobs more accessible
- We have explored and considered local and state incentives in each of our service markets
- We have explored or developed partnerships with our local workforce systems
- We have explored or developed partnerships with local jails, prisons, probation/parole agencies or reentry offices

100 Onramps to Second Chance Employment

A menu of practices for self-assessment and planning

Pathway #3: Measurement, Learning & Culture

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

- We have reviewed our industry's policy and regulatory environment in relevant jurisdictions
- We participate in learning communities to support second chance employment
- We encourage staff and managers to review content and toolkits on second chance employment
- We encourage staff and managers to participate in relevant certification opportunities, such as SHRM's "[Getting Talent Back to Work](#)" course
- We provide educational opportunities to staff and managers on the impact of justice-involvement and its collateral consequences
- We invite thought leaders and speakers on second chance employment to lead seminars, webinars and town hall events
- We have engaged experts to implement best practice policies and partnerships

STAFF ENGAGEMENT

- Staff can engage in second chance initiatives through shared learning experiences, peer mentoring, or referring second chance candidates
- We have created an Employee Resource Group for those interested in justice-related issues
- We identify and recruit internal champions to share their experience and interest in second chance employment
- We have assembled a diverse second chance employment working group that includes leaders in key areas such as human resources, legal/compliance, operations, executive management, communications and corporate social responsibility
- We regularly convene the working group to design and execute a second chance implementation strategy
- We invite community partners and people with lived experience to inform our second chance strategy

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- We have conducted a full review of our communications to ensure inclusive, human-centered language
- We have developed and disseminated guidance that promotes strengths-based language
- Our CEO or leadership team has articulated a commitment and rationale for second chance employment to staff
- We use internal newsletters and portals to promote success stories and second chance champions

MEASUREMENT & ASSESSMENT

- We benchmark our policies and practices against peer employers
- We have defined goals and performance indicators for second chance employment
- We create feedback opportunities for employees to share their experiences with second chance employment
- We have systems in place to measure the experience and success of candidates hired through second chance initiatives

"This group is ready to work and deserves a second chance — an opportunity to fill the millions of job openings across the country."

-Jamie Dimon, New York Times, August 2021

Pathway #4: Community Investment & Influence

PHILANTHROPY & CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- We include second chance employment and criminal justice investments in our corporate social responsibility strategy
- We participate in coalitions and working groups to learn about and share high impact grantmaking practices in the criminal justice field
- We use our corporate philanthropy to fund programs supporting people who are justice-impacted
- We facilitate volunteer or mentorship opportunities for staff to support people impacted by the justice system
- We develop strong lines of communication between community engagement teams and hiring teams to maximize learning and partnerships
- We have channels to broadcast our philanthropic commitments to staff and learn from our grantees

INFLUENCE

- We have reviewed the hiring policies of our staffing agencies to ensure alignment with our second chance goals
- We have built second chance employment standards into our vendor selection process
- We purchase goods and services from second chance companies and social enterprises
- We have asked relevant insurance providers to articulate their stance on second chance employment
- We leverage our company's public affairs teams to advocate for public policy that supports second chance employment
- We partner with industry associations to support campaigns for second chance policies
- We facilitate lines of communication with probation/parole agencies to support employees on supervision
- We encourage local probation and parole agencies to ensure reporting schedules do not interfere with work schedules
- We encourage local parole and probation agencies to minimize intrusive practices like employer visits and electronic monitoring

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- We have incorporated second chance employment into our overarching DEI strategy and statement
- We have published a statement articulating our second chance employment commitments and their alignment with our company values
- Our careers page describes our commitment to second chance initiatives
- Our company captures and promotes second chance success stories
- We leverage social platforms to promote second chance employment through all relevant communication channels
- We advocate for second chance employment through speaking opportunities
- We engage the media to promote second chance employment

Pathway #1: Human Resource Policy & Practice

Overview

Second chance employers often choose to begin by reviewing their internal policies and processes to identify areas where they can make jobs more accessible to candidates with criminal records. Research shows that nearly nine in 10 employers require applicants to undergo a background check, and a criminal record can reduce the chances of a second interview by 50 percent. By deepening second chance practices, companies can strengthen their own workforce and expand their culture of diversity, equity and inclusion. Proactive and well-informed employment practices help to expand and diversify candidate pools, improve retention and advancement outcomes, and contribute to building stronger communities. Updating human resources practices does not always mean a wholesale overhaul of corporate policies. Simple changes to targeted areas can raise job seekers' awareness of opportunities and present qualified candidates with a clear path into the workforce and up the career ladder.

The job posting

As the universal point of entry for candidates, job postings and application language should encourage, not dissuade, applicants from presenting their qualifications. Removing conviction disclosures and clearly identifying a company's commitment to second chance employment can encourage a previously untapped candidate pool to consider the position.

Candidate assessment and interviews

Candidates who have experienced justice involvement may be apprehensive about discussing past convictions or time incarcerated. However, offering clarity and context about your company's second chance employment commitments and training recruiters and hiring managers on consistent interview practices enables candidates to fairly present their qualifications and make their strongest case for employment.

Background checks

Second chance employers have a wide range of opportunities to ensure their background check process does not unintentionally disqualify great candidates. The timing and scope of the background review can have a significant impact. Many companies have moved the background check to the end of the hiring process and informed their providers to only return job-relevant results within a defined timeframe. Intentionally narrowing the scope of the background check can provide broader access to opportunity.



Eaton Corporation PLC is a founding member of the Second Chance Business Coalition and believes in second chances for its employees. Eaton has applied ban-the-box policies for many years, and 10.4% of their 11,000 new hires in the past three years have had prior convictions.

Eaton publicly shares its commitment to second chance employment on its careers page, stating "We believe that it is incumbent upon us...to remove barriers to employment and advancement by allowing individuals with prior criminal records to fairly compete for job opportunities. We do not automatically deny employment based on a candidate's prior conviction."

Instead, Eaton uses an individual review process and works to mitigate hiring biases through a standardized framework used across their human resources team. These policies and practices ensure that Eaton's company values are consistent at every level, while also maintaining compliance with EEOC guidelines.

In addition, Eaton encourages all staffing and vendor agencies to mirror their policies.

Pathway #1: Human Resource Policy & Practice

Onboarding and orientation

Second chance employment initiatives often surface opportunities for broader changes in practice that create a more welcoming and supportive environment for a broad range of candidates and employees. The onboarding and orientation process offers a chance to purposefully engage employees in company culture, set clear expectations and build channels for feedback, mentorship and support.

Creating a positive and adaptable employee experience in the early weeks is an important part of successful second chance employment and can mitigate scheduling challenges, absences, and competing priorities as employees return to the workforce. Moreover, all employees can benefit from accelerated acclimation to company norms and immediate opportunities to integrate into the workplace community.

Creative benefits and retention strategies

For candidates with past justice involvement, balancing personal obligations and expenses can make reentry particularly challenging, especially in the first several months on the job. Employers can offer various benefits to bridge this transition and alleviate financial pressures. These may include transportation support, flexible scheduling, or partnership for housing support or financial counseling. These measures can help employees maintain stability and solvency through transitional challenges. Companies can expect to see a high return on their investment in sustained retention efforts, including milestone incentive structures and ongoing professional development opportunities.



SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Hot Chicken Takeover (HCT), an Ohio-based quick service restaurant chain founded in 2014, has designed its people strategy to maximize inclusion and opportunity. As it states on its *People* page, “No matter the circumstances — homelessness, previous incarceration, or other barrier to employment — HCT is focused on the future.”

HCT has developed creative retention strategies to meet the unique needs of employees returning to the workforce. HCT offers benefits such as the 1:1 Matched Milestones, a matched fund for housing, education, transportation and more. Similarly, HCT offers professional development, counseling, flexible scheduling, cash advances and 0% interest loans to avoid run-ins with predatory lenders. These benefits create a prosperous work environment and allow employees to tackle the overwhelming barriers they face when reentering the workforce. This strategy has also helped keep HCT’s annualized employee turnover below 50% in an industry that regularly cites rates of 125-150 percent.

Five Ways to Learn More

- [SHRM's Getting Talent Back to Work Toolkit](#) offers resources to identify a diverse pool of applicants
- [The Dave's Killer Bread Foundation Playbook](#) offers free video content designed for business leaders and HR professionals looking to adopt this talent philosophy
- [The National Employment Law Project](#) has a variety of resources, publications and campaigns that focus on second chance employment through a legal lens
- [Watch an interview](#) with Eaton Legal Counsel, Stan Ball
- [Watch an interview](#) with Hot Chicken Takeover CEO, Joe DeLoss

Pathway #2: Talent Partnerships

Overview

While incorporating second chance policies and practices is an effective way to widen the net of candidates, employers can also broaden their talent pools by developing partnerships with organizations that place and support people with past justice involvement into high-quality jobs.

Partnering with reentry and workforce organizations can offer unique advantages and incentives and become an excellent source of talent. These organizations often provide work readiness programming to help candidates adjust to the expectations and routines of work before rejoining the labor force. Community organizations can help pre-assess candidates based on a company's individual needs and constraints and offer more efficient application and interview processes. Many organizations also provide upfront incentives to candidates, such as transportation stipends or ongoing training/certification opportunities, to help them successfully transition and sustain their engagement. Many also provide ongoing retention support to both the employee and employer, encouraging candidates' advancement and managing challenges as they arise.

Reentry and workforce partnerships

Second chance employers can establish a wide range of community partnerships, from light touch information sharing to deep strategic partnerships. As a starting point, employers can contact workforce, reentry, corrections and training organizations to let them know they are open to considering candidates with past convictions and communicate their background review process.

As a next step, employers can collaborate closely with these organizations to share available positions and relevant skills and even offer on-site interviewing at community partner locations to drive access and interest. Jobseekers can often receive retention supports and incentives provided by community partners to help address obstacles and ensure a successful transition. Lastly, many community partners offer vocational training and industry-specific certifications, which can help generate a consistent talent pipeline into higher-skill positions.

JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.

JPMorgan Chase is a founding member of the Second Chance Business Coalition and is committed to giving people with criminal backgrounds in the US a second chance by supporting their reentry into the workforce, community and local economies. Bringing together a multi-pronged approach that includes hiring, public policy and philanthropy, the firm is focused on reducing barriers to employment for people with arrest or conviction histories. In addition to proactively 'banning the box' on job applications, the firm launched a community hiring model in Chicago in 2019 to diversify the talent pipeline. Working closely with community-based organizations such as the Safer Foundation, Skills for Chicagoland's Future, Cara Collective and Cabrini Green Legal Aid, job seekers have access to wraparound support and key resources, such as legal services, job search support and mentorship. The pipeline model has since expanded to Columbus, OH, Phoenix, AZ, and Wilmington, DE. Though JPMorgan Chase operates in a highly regulated industry, the financial services company hired 4,239 employees with criminal records in 2021, about 10% of the firm's overall new hires.

Given the firm's multi-faceted approach, they have also established an internal Second Chance Steering Committee that brings together a cross-department cohort to align efforts, troubleshoot difficulties and share best practices. Advancing opportunity for more people is a collective effort, and working closely with community organizations, government officials and legislators, and business leaders across various industries are key to driving a lasting impact.

Pathway #2: Talent Partnerships

Expanded partnership models

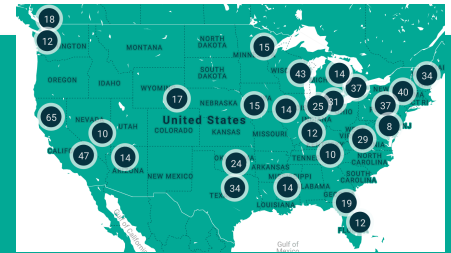
In addition to working with reentry and workforce partners to refer and support candidates, employers can develop a range of creative staffing and talent collaborations. Second chance companies can work with transitional work programs, which place jobseekers on the worksite to gain experience and on-the-job training while contributing directly to employers. They can work with staffing agencies that focus on recruiting and preparing candidates with criminal records, and serve as the employer of record during temporary work assignments. In many states and counties, employers can serve as a host site for work-release programs, which offer job opportunities to currently incarcerated candidates – typically as they are approaching their release date.

Community partnerships are not always about finding new employees. Many employers collaborate with local nonprofit partners to offer financial counseling, housing, legal aid or other supports that can impact personal and professional success. While some of these organizations may focus specifically on employees with criminal records, others may be a resource for a much broader cross-section of the workforce.

Public funding and subsidy

Second chance employers can access a range of public subsidies and incentives designed to encourage inclusive employment practices. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) offers a one-time credit to employers for each new employee facing pre-identified barriers, including criminal records. The Federal Bonding Program is a free insurance product to protect against losses that may result from hiring candidates with criminal records. State and local governments and workforce boards also have targeted incentives designed to further motivate private-sector employers to engage in second chance employment.

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In April 2022, the Second Chance Business Coalition released an interactive map to help employers identify and connect with community-based organizations supporting people with criminal records through job readiness programming, reentry services, and skills training. This map facilitates partnerships between employers and workforce organizations that open doors to new talent pools and connect people with criminal records to meaningful career opportunities.

This map currently includes over 600 organizations across 45 of the top job markets in the United States. The Second Chance Business Coalition is actively researching additional community organizations and adding new markets to the map.

Five Ways to Learn More

- Utilize the [Second Chance Business Coalition Partnership Map](#)
- Explore the [Community Partnerships Scorecard](#)
- Read an article on the [JPMC / Safer Foundation Partnership](#)
- See a [case study](#) of a community partnership model in the Manufacturing Industry
- Visit the [National Workforce Reentry Collaborative](#)

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Pathway #3: Measurement, Learning & Culture

Overview

Second chance employment thrives when there is a shared culture of inclusivity and opportunity. Creating that common understanding often means working closely with organizational leaders, managers, and employees to communicate a vision and rationale for these efforts – and creating safe venues for learning and voicing questions or concerns.

Staff appreciate a clear articulation of the organization's rationale, enthusiasm, and commitment to second chance employment. They can also be empowered to support these initiatives, participating in training or shared learning, acting as mentors, or assisting during onboarding of new employees. Second chance employment can be part of a broader commitment to idea sharing and continuous learning and help drive inclusive cultures.

Learning and development

The justice system directly or indirectly affects nearly every community and family, and second chance employers can help create forums within the company to drive learning, proximity and understanding. As second chance practices take shape, managers overseeing employees impacted by the justice system can be trained to understand the collateral consequences of a criminal record. Managers can also be trained on the benefits and resources offered by the company or its partners to address challenges that may arise for employees returning from incarceration.

Staff engagement

As second chance initiatives become more embedded in company culture, employers can develop cross-functional working groups to align areas such as HR, legal, communications, social impact, policy and more. These working groups help create an integrated strategy and utilize resources from across the company.

Employees can also drive adoption of second chance practices through establishment and participation in Employee Resource Groups or ad hoc committees and events that encourage education and forums to share personal experience.



Walmart's commitment to Second Chance employment has been driven internally by both leadership and many passionate Walmart associates. Years before the "ban the box" movement even started, the company removed from its job application questions about a candidate's prior criminal record. In 2020, Walmart launched four Shared Value Networks (SVNs) to help address the root causes of racial inequities in our nation's criminal justice, education, finance, and health systems. As the largest employer in the United States, SVNs are an important part of Walmart's efforts to build a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The work of the Criminal Justice SVN varies by state and region, as the programming is curated to be relevant to the community that it seeks to serve. One focus of the SVN is to help enable returning citizens to reintegrate into society in meaningful ways. This includes piloting new ideas to increase second chance hiring within Walmart's own workforce and the communities it serves. In addition, Walmart's Criminal Justice SVN shares its resources and learns from others through participation in Community of Practice meetings, where associates engage with community organizations that are working with the justice-impacted population. Walmart believes that this work can't be done alone, and strategic partnerships are vital to creating lasting change in communities.

Pathway #3: Measurement, Learning & Culture

Internal communication

Second chance initiatives often begin with a clearly stated rationale and motivation, communicated by leaders in the company. There is no shortage of data demonstrating that second chance practices can help expand candidate pools, improve retention and advancement, and create meaningful community impact, but proactively communicating these facts in a language that aligns with company values can help lay a strong foundation for initiatives large and small.

Second chance employers often strive to develop a shared vocabulary for second chance initiatives that uses human-centered, asset-based language. This may mean removing labels such as "felon" or "convict" and leading by example with language that does not define job candidates and employees by their experience in the justice system. As employers launch and grow second chance initiatives, they can use internal communications like newsletters and employee portals to tell stories of success and highlight volunteerism, philanthropy, and positive impacts of the work.



verizon^v The CAMPAIGN for the FAIR SENTENCING of YOUTH

In deep collaboration with the Campaign for Fair Sentencing of Youth (CFSY), Verizon has developed an engagement trajectory for employees that includes learning, proximity, and opportunities for volunteerism and mentorship with people returning from the criminal legal system. Through this robust partnership, Verizon has elevated the issue of extreme sentencing of children and underscored the importance of providing previously incarcerated people with a path to employment.

By partnering with CFSY, Verizon has established a company-wide engagement pathway from education and awareness to mentorship, pro bono representation, fair chance hiring advancements, and systemic policy change.

Measurement and assessment

Using quantitative and qualitative methods, second chance employers can reflect at regular intervals on the successes and learnings from their initiatives. This may include measuring the impact on candidate pools, company culture, and the longer term outcomes and experiences of candidates hired through second chance initiatives.

Employers focused on continuous learning can implement tools to survey staff and new hires and review performance, retention and advancement data to assess the trajectory of candidates with past convictions. Employers can also regularly review the practices of other second chance companies to benchmark practices and continue to grow.

Five Ways to Learn More

- Take the [SHRM Foundation's free Getting Talent Back to Work certification course](#)
- Visit the [Manufacturing Institute's second chance employment site](#)
- Explore [the Levelset Fair Chance Learning Center](#) and [self-assessment](#)
- Visit Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth's [Hire ICAN resource page](#)
- Participate in the [Dave's Killer Bread Foundation cohort program](#)

Pathway #4: Community Investment & Influence

Overview

There are many ways that employers can promote second chance employment beyond their own company footprint – from philanthropic investment to procurement to corporate communications and advocacy. Companies have a diverse array of tools when it comes to influencing the second chance discussion, and each individually can make an impact. By aligning on a comprehensive strategy, employers can play a leading role in moving the field forward.

Philanthropy and corporate social responsibility

Most large employers have a team and budget centered on community investment and social responsibility. These efforts can be a great place to begin or augment second chance strategies by supporting community-based organizations focused on reentry from the justice system and workforce preparation for people with criminal records.

With 1 in 2 Americans immediately impacted by the justice system, investments in successful reintegration can make a significant impact in the communities where companies operate, and support a stronger workforce, healthier neighborhoods and safer communities. Grantmaking can pair with volunteerism and support for company-wide learning opportunities to expand the culture of second chance employment inside the company.

Public communications

Communicating your commitment to Second Chance employment provides a valuable opportunity to articulate your company's broader social impact goals. Second chance employment – and improvements to the justice system more broadly – are increasingly embraced by Americans, and employers can help drive public sentiment by telling stories of success and sharing their motivation.

Companies can leverage a wide range of channels including social media, advertising, public relations, and industry associations. Through employer platforms and influence, second chance companies can broadcast their inclusive practices and strengthen the case for broader employer adoption, better policy, and public support for second chances.

Bank of America

Over the last decade, Bank of America has provided more than \$50M in philanthropic support for national and local nonprofits that provide returning citizens with second chances across four pillars: workforce social enterprises, educational support, entrepreneurship/job creation, and systemic reform. Many are past Neighborhood Builders grant recipients.

Employee engagement is an important part of how Bank of America lives its values of bettering the financial lives of people through the power of every connection. Its volunteerism includes expungement and legal aid assistance from its legal pro-bono team, resume writing, interview assistance, and financial coaching and mentoring from BMH Volunteer Champions. It also empowers employees to leverage their 2 hours of paid time off every week, 1:1 employee matching gift, and volunteer grants to help address social justice and racial equality.

Bank of America works equally hard to raise awareness of criminal justice issues. It has a longstanding partnership with award-winning documentary filmmaker Ken Burns, who served as executive producer for *College Behind Bars*, a four-part documentary series on PBS that told the story of incarcerated men and women earning college degrees through a prison education program. And, through its internal *Courageous Conversation* series, Bank of America invites employees to hear from leaders driving criminal justice reform and racial equity, and works to encourage a culture of learning and inclusivity. Bank of America leverages its philanthropy, communications, and employee volunteerism to help ensure people returning from the justice system have access to careers and economic mobility. This is a deeply rooted commitment tied to the bank's overarching focus on responsible growth.

Pathway #4: Community Investment & Influence

Influence

Beyond their talent, philanthropy and communications channels, second chance employers can engage company resources to affect broader adoption and policy decisions that create more opportunity for candidates impacted by the justice system.

Employers can engage their policy and government relations teams to encourage policies that maximize the success of second chance initiatives. At the local level, employers can be advocates to ensure that parole and probation policies and practices do not impede on community members' ability to attain and keep gainful employment. Employers have advocated for flexible supervision schedules, minimizing electronic monitoring, and reducing employer visits – all practices that facilitate successful reintegration into the workforce.

More broadly, employers can participate in campaigns to expand record clearing and expungement and reduce barriers to employment. Employers have also leveraged their policy teams to discourage restrictions on occupational licensing or federal and state regulations that disqualify groups of candidates from certain industries and positions.



SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Dave's Killer Bread has been incorporating second chance employment into their business model since the company's founding in 2005. One-third of the DKB team have felony convictions, and they have leveraged their influence in this space through the Dave's Killer Bread Foundation (DKBF), which works to inspire and equip other businesses to adopt second chance employment. Through a variety of programs designed for businesses of all sizes, such as their flagship eight-week Corporate Cohort Program, DKBF works with employers to create meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities for candidates with conviction histories.

Finally, employers can leverage their procurement process to encourage second chance employment practices among their vendors. Many employers sub-contract positions in food service, maintenance, construction, and security, or use staffing firms to fill high demand positions.

These firms may be unintentionally limiting access to their positions. By simply sharing commitments to second chance employment or including a few relevant questions in the procurement and contracting process, employers can communicate to vendors an openness and interest in more inclusive practices.

Five Ways to Learn More

- Visit JPMorgan Chase's [second chance policy platform](#)
- Explore Criminal Justice Grantmakers like [Stand Together](#), [Arnold Ventures](#) or [Blue Meridian](#)
- Explore the [Collateral Consequences database](#)
- Review Levelset's [Fair Chance Vendor and Supplier Scorecard](#)
- Read Dave's Killer Bread's [Statement of Purpose](#) on second chance employment

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