

Second-Chance Hiring Best Practices

Creating Opportunity, Building Loyalty, Strengthening Communities

Why Best Practices Matter

Second-chance hiring is not simply about checking a box — it's about building sustainable employment strategies that unlock human potential while meeting your company's workforce needs. Employers who adopt thoughtful, structured approaches see stronger retention, team loyalty, and a measurable positive impact on their communities.

This guide offers a practical overview of how to structure and maintain an effective second-chance hiring program in your organization.

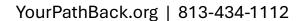
1. Adopt a Fair, Skills-Based Hiring Approach

- Focus on skills and qualifications relevant to the role rather than past offenses.
- Use structured interviews and objective criteria to avoid unconscious bias.
- Consider eliminating blanket exclusions related to criminal records unless directly relevant to the job duties.

* Tip: Use a job-specific matrix to assess candidate eligibility and ensure consistency in hiring decisions.

2. Delay Background Checks Until Later in the Process (Ban the Box)

- Give candidates a chance to showcase their skills before considering criminal background history.
- Comply with applicable laws that regulate when and how background checks can be conducted.





• Ensure candidates receive a copy of their background check and have an opportunity to dispute any inaccuracies.

3. Partner With Reentry-Focused Organizations

- Build relationships with nonprofits (like Your Path Back) that prepare and refer qualified candidates.
- Tap into training programs, certification assistance, and wraparound services that support long-term success.
- These partnerships can reduce your onboarding costs and improve employee readiness.

4. Create a Supportive Onboarding Experience

- Assign a peer mentor or point of contact to help the new hire navigate the first few weeks.
- Provide clear expectations, workplace policies, and performance benchmarks.
- Encourage feedback from second-chance employees to improve future onboarding processes.

5. Train Managers and Staff

- Offer inclusion and stigma-reduction training to all supervisors and teams.
- Educate managers about the realities of the criminal justice system and the power of employment in reducing recidivism.
- Normalize support: create a workplace culture where asking for help is encouraged, not penalized.



6. Utilize Incentives and Protective Programs

- Take advantage of available tax credits, bonding programs, and training subsidies:
 - Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
 - Federal Bonding Program
 - Local training incentive programs
- These programs reduce risk and can help fund onboarding or training costs.

7. Maintain Privacy and Respect

- Treat second-chance employees with dignity and confidentiality.
- Avoid unnecessary disclosure of past records beyond what's legally or operationally required.
- Focus conversations on the future not the past.

8. Evaluate, Improve, and Celebrate Success

- Track retention, performance, and feedback metrics for second-chance hires.
- Use this data to refine your approach and identify areas for growth.
- Celebrate your team's success stories to inspire internal buy-in and external visibility.

The Bottom Line

When done with intention and care, second-chance hiring doesn't just give someone a job — it gives them a future. It strengthens your team, reflects your company's values, and drives long-term success.



YourPathBack.org | 813-434-1112

Your Path Back is here to support you every step of the way — from candidate referrals and onboarding assistance to training resources and best practice guidance.

Vour Path Back

• Website: yourpathback.org

**** Phone: 813-434-1112