

## Second-Chance Hiring Checklist

*Practical Tools for Employers Ready to Open the Door to Opportunity*

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### Introduction

Hiring justice-impacted individuals doesn't require overhauling your entire business — just thoughtful planning, internal alignment, and a commitment to inclusive hiring practices. This checklist is designed to help employers prepare, implement, and support a successful second-chance hiring program, whether you're hiring one person or building a broader initiative.

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#### ✓ 1. Assess Internal Readiness

- Review your company's existing hiring policies to identify potential barriers for candidates with criminal records
  - Gain leadership buy-in and designate a point of contact or champion for inclusive hiring
  - Train HR and hiring managers on fair chance hiring principles, language, and processes
  - Set clear expectations around support, accountability, and performance
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#### ✓ 2. Define the Hiring Strategy

- Determine which positions are appropriate for second-chance candidates
  - Outline any legal restrictions or regulatory concerns for specific roles
  - Decide if your company will participate in programs like Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) or local workforce incentives
  - Establish a fair background check process and consider individualized assessments instead of blanket exclusions
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### ✓ 3. Create Inclusive Job Descriptions

- Use language that welcomes all qualified candidates — avoid unnecessarily restrictive phrasing
  - Highlight your company’s commitment to diversity and inclusion
  - Focus on skills, responsibilities, and growth opportunities
  - Include any training or onboarding support your company offers
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### ✓ 4. Update Your Application & Interview Process

- Remove questions about criminal history unless legally required (“Ban the Box” compliant)
  - Train interviewers to evaluate potential, not just history
  - Provide structured interview formats to reduce bias
  - Clearly communicate next steps and offer feedback when possible
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### ✓ 5. Establish Support Systems for Success

- Develop a formal or informal mentorship or buddy system
  - Identify community partners for wraparound services (housing, transportation, counseling)
  - Allow for flexibility during onboarding (e.g., adjusting schedules for court obligations or support meetings)
  - Provide consistent, strengths-based supervision and growth opportunities
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### ✓ 6. Track Outcomes and Improve

- Collect internal feedback from managers, peers, and new hires
- Monitor retention, performance, and engagement of second-chance employees



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- Celebrate wins — individual success stories are powerful for company culture and external messaging
  - Be willing to refine policies and practices based on what works
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#### **Bonus: Local and Federal Incentives to Explore**

- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC): Up to \$2,400 per eligible hire
  - Federal Bonding Program: Free bonding insurance for high-risk applicants
  - Local workforce boards: Many offer funding, training reimbursement, and supportive services
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#### **Ready to Take the Next Step?**

Hiring justice-involved individuals is a tangible way to live your company's values and make a lasting difference. Your Path Back is here to support you through every stage — from planning and outreach to onboarding and beyond.

 Website: [yourpathback.org](https://yourpathback.org)

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