



# FAIR CHANCE BUSINESS PLEDGE

Since President Obama took office, this Administration has been committed to reforming America's criminal justice system. In July 2015, the President highlighted the importance of reducing barriers facing people who have been in contact with the criminal justice system and are trying to put their lives back on track. He emphasized that a smarter approach to reducing crime and enhancing public safety must begin with investing in all of our communities. A broad array of coalitions have come together to support the reforms needed to bring about this change.

The White House is building upon these efforts by issuing a challenge to businesses to take on the “**Fair Chance Business Pledge**.” This pledge represents a call-to-action for all members of the private sector to improve their communities by eliminating barriers for those with a criminal record and create a pathway for a second chance.

Many leading companies, including some of the largest retailers and manufacturers in the country, have stepped up to lead in these efforts by providing employment opportunities through actions like adopting “ban the box” policies. By delaying questions about criminal history until later in the hiring process, these employers provide applicants with a fair chance to get their foot in the door and be considered based on their qualifications. Companies have also supported workforce development programs that have trained individuals to be strong contributors to the economy. Others in the private sector have helped support technology and education that create pathways for individuals with a criminal record to reconnect back to their family and community. Some have also provided assistance to children with incarcerated parents.

This call to action represents a targeted effort to convene leaders, identify effective strategies, and work together to accomplish the shared goal of creating a stronger set of opportunities for people who have been impacted by the criminal justice system. This does not represent a new federal program. Pledge participants are encouraged to reach out with questions or ideas by emailing **[FairChancePledge@who.eop.gov](mailto:FairChancePledge@who.eop.gov)**.

# Fair Chance Business Pledge

## ✓ TAKE THE PLEDGE

The **Fair Chance Business Pledge** will represent the nationwide effort to take action.

“[INSERT NAME OF COMPANY] applauds the growing number of public and private sector organizations nationwide who are taking action to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to succeed, including individuals who have had contact with the criminal justice system. When almost 70 million Americans – nearly one in three adults – have a criminal record, it is important to remove unnecessary barriers that may prevent these individuals from gaining access to employment, training, education and other basic tools required for success in life. We are committed to providing individuals with criminal records, including formerly incarcerated individuals, a fair chance to participate in the American economy.”

## ✓ EXAMPLES OF WAYS TO TAKE ACTION

In addition to signing on to the pledge language above, we ask your company to make company-specific commitments that demonstrate the type of action your company will take to achieve the goal of promoting opportunity for all, eliminating barriers to reentry, and providing meaningful opportunities to succeed for reentering individuals. Examples include:

- 1) **Promote Fair Chance Hiring Practices:** The most important contribution businesses can make to this effort is to give a fair chance to all applicants, to ensure that information regarding an applicant’s criminal record is considered in proper context, and to engage in hiring practices that do not unnecessarily place jobs out of reach for those with criminal records. Specifically, you can commit to:
  - Banning the Box by delaying criminal history questions until later in the hiring process;
  - Training human resources staff on making fair decisions regarding applicants with criminal records and reporting data on the number of applicants hired;
  - Ensuring jobs, internships and job training are available to individuals with criminal records;
  - Using reliable background check providers to help ensure accuracy;
  - Hosting a Fair Chance and Opportunity Job Fair.
- 2) **Taking Action in Your Local Community.** While the focus is on fair chance opportunity, there are other important ways for businesses to contribute this effort, such as:
  - Supplying tools for success (business clothing, cell phones, internet service, transit cards, or child care services);
  - Offering support to regional reentry facilities;
  - Providing mentors to children of incarcerated parents.

**We welcome any additional commitments** that achieve the goal of promoting fair chance hiring, eliminating barriers to reentry, and providing meaningful opportunities for all to succeed.

## ✓ SHARE BEST PRACTICES AND SUCCESS STORIES

By taking the Pledge, you are joining a community of local, state, and national partners that believes in providing second chances. We encourage you to share best practices and success stories with other employers.

### **White House Point of Contact:**

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