

Second Chance Hiring

A criminal record for a minor offense can be a sentence to a life of poverty. Second chance hiring can alter the narrative, helping people move past their mistakes, enhancing the workforce, strengthening businesses, saving taxpayer dollars and promoting a more prosperous state.

The Numbers Are Big, But the Crimes Often Small

- Over **1.7 million** North Carolinians have a **criminal record**.¹
- In 2019, North Carolina issued **1.9 million criminal charges**; **1.6 million were for misdemeanors**; 1 million were for traffic offenses, like speeding and expired registrations.²
- The vast majority of all charges in North Carolina are for non-violent conduct.³
- The criminal justice system **disproportionately impacts people of color**. In North Carolina, Black people are **incarcerated at over 3 times** the rate of white people.⁴
- Almost **half of all children** in the U.S. **have a parent with a criminal record**.⁵

A Record Makes It Harder to Get a Job

- In 2017, the **employment rate** for North Carolinians leaving prison was **16 percentage points lower** than the general population.⁶
- North Carolina Probation and Parole Officers estimate that only **15% of those under supervision were employed full-time**.⁷
- An estimated **87%** of employers check for criminal records; when employers check, those without a record are **63%** more likely to get a call back than those with a record.⁸
- Unemployment rates for Black people leaving prison are **nearly double** rates for white people.⁹

Jobs for Those with Records Are Low Paying & Hard to Find

- In 2017, the **real median wage** for North Carolinians leaving prison was **< \$6,000 a year**—that's **21%** of the median wage of the general population.¹⁰
- Those with a record previously might find employment in North Carolina's "blue-collar" sector, but since the 90's that **sector has shrunk significantly**.¹¹

Second Chance Hiring Successes

- Studies show that people with criminal records have **longer tenures** and **lower turnover rates** than those with no records.¹²
- One study showed that military enlistees with felony records were **promoted more quickly** and with **no difference in attrition rates** due to performance, as compared to those without a record.¹³
- Most human resource managers and employees are **willing to work with people who have a record**.¹⁴

Notes

¹ BECKI R. GOGGINS & DENNIS A. DEBACCO, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, [SURVEY OF STATE CRIMINAL HISTORY INFORMATION SYSTEMS, 2016: A CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION POLICY REPORT](#) Table 1 (2018).

² JESSICA SMITH, ROSS HATTON, & CHRISTOPHER TYNER, [DETAILED NORTH CAROLINA STATEWIDE & COUNTY-LEVEL CRIMINAL CHARGING DATA](#) (2020).

³ *Id.*

⁴ VERA INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE, [INCARCERATION TRENDS IN NORTH CAROLINA 2](#) (2019).

⁵ JESSICA SMITH, [NORTH CAROLINA CRIMINAL JUSTICE SUMMIT, REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS 13](#) (2019).

⁶ Andrew Berger-Gross, [The State of Reentry: An Update on Former Offenders in North Carolina's Labor Market](#), NCCOMMERCE.COM (Oct. 29, 2019) (45% vs. 61%).

⁷ NORTH CAROLINA SENTENCING AND POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION, [STUDY OF EMPLOYMENT COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES IN NORTH CAROLINA](#) 11 (2018).

⁸ *Id.*; AMANDA AGAN & SONJA STARR, [BAN THE BOX, CRIMINAL RECORDS, AND STATISTICAL DISCRIMINATION: A FIELD EXPERIMENT](#) 4 (2016).

⁹ Lucius Couloute & Daniel Kopf, [Out of Prison & Out of Work: Unemployment Among Formerly Incarcerated People](#), PRISONPOLICY.ORG (July 2018). Among formerly incarcerated individuals, the unemployment rate for Black women was 43.6%, for Black men was 35.2%, for white women was 23.2%, and for white men was 18.4%.

¹⁰ Andrew Berger-Gross, *supra* note 6.

¹¹ Andrew Berger-Gross, [The Labor Market for Former Offenders in North Carolina](#), NCCOMMERCE.COM (Feb. 25, 2019); Andrew Berger-Gross, [Out of Prison, Out of Work: A New Normal for Ex-Offenders in North Carolina?](#), NCCOMMERCE.COM (Oct. 22, 2018).

¹² Lucius Couloute & Daniel Kopf, *supra* note 9.

¹³ Jennifer Hickee Lundquist, Devah Pager, & Eiko Strader, [Does a Criminal Past Predict Worker Performance? Evidence from One of America's Largest Employers](#), 96 SOCIAL FORCES 1039, 1039 (2018).

¹⁴ SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT & CHARLES KOCH INSTITUTE, [WORKERS WITH CRIMINAL RECORDS](#) 1 (2018).