

GETTING TALENT BACK TO WORK

Creating Employment Opportunities for
People with Criminal Records Benefits
Employers, Individuals, and Communities



People with criminal records—especially the formerly incarcerated—face enormous employment barriers despite being talented, loyal, and eager to work. Too often, employers deny a fair opportunity and miss out on valuable workers due to deeply rooted biases and misconceptions.

The SHRM Foundation's Getting Talent Back to Work initiative aims to reduce these barriers by empowering HR professionals with resources, tools, and case studies to create and foster inclusive, supportive workplaces for people with criminal records.



One-third of working-age U.S. adults have a criminal record,¹ 2.3 million are currently incarcerated,¹ and at least 5 million are formerly incarcerated.²



26% of managers and 14% of HR professionals are unwilling to hire people with criminal records.



Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 27% of formerly incarcerated people were unemployed.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND REDUCING EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS

The SHRM Foundation's Getting Talent Back to Work initiative consists of a comprehensive suite of educational resources, training opportunities, and a certificate program to help HR professionals and workplaces breakdown biases and misconceptions to better recruit, hire, train, support, and invest in people with criminal records.



SELF-ASSESSMENT

A tool to help employers assess their knowledge, personal biases, and common misconceptions related to hiring people with criminal records

GETTING TALENT BACK TO WORK DIGITAL TOOLKIT

An easily accessible and digestible resource for employers with helpful reminders and tips for every stage of an employee's journey in the workplace

GETTING TALENT BACK TO WORK PLEDGE

The first step to join a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to giving opportunities to qualified people with criminal records

GETTING TALENT BACK TO WORK CERTIFICATE

A multi-faceted education program to help employers eliminate biases and misperceptions in the workplace to expand employment opportunities for people with criminal records

SUPPORTING WORKERS WITH CRIMINAL RECORDS EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

Creating a more inclusive workforce requires holistic changes to policies and practices, well beyond recruitment and hiring. Employers must consider every step in the employee life cycle to improve opportunities and work experiences for people who have criminal records.



RECRUITING AND INVESTING IN WORKERS WITH CRIMINAL RECORDS PAYS OFF

When organizations work to eliminate barriers to hiring workers with criminal records, they gain access to an untapped pipeline of qualified and eager workers. Often, incidents that lead to criminal records have no impact on a person's ability, quality, or desire to work. When they find

gainful employment, they benefit by being able to provide for themselves and their families, society benefits from reduced recidivism, and employers benefit from exceptional workers ready to make the most of their opportunity. It's a win-win-win for all.

82% OF MANAGERS AND 67% OF HR PROFESSIONALS think that the value new employees with criminal records bring to the organization is as high as or higher than that of workers without records.³



LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP GET TALENT BACK TO WORK

Visit gettingtalentbacktowork.org or email shrmfoundation@shrm.org

Sources:

1. [SHRM/CKI Workers with Criminal Records Survey](#) (SHRM, 2018)
2. [Out of Prison & Out of Work: Unemployment among formerly incarcerated people](#) (Prison Policy Initiative, 2018)
3. [Research: Employers Willing to Overlook a Criminal Record to Hire the Right Person](#) (SHRM, 2018)