



START A CONVERSATION

**Let's Get Talent
Back to Work**

#GettingTalentBacktoWork
gettingtalentbacktowork.org

Getting Talent Back to Work is a call to action for the business community to build more inclusive workplaces for people with criminal records, and recruit, hire, and invest in this untapped pool of talented potential workers.

To create better workplaces, first we must improve the cultures that fuel them. So let's talk about confronting the barriers to employment for people with criminal records.

- 1.** Invite a colleague to have coffee, either in person or virtually.
- 2.** Use these cards to start a conversation.
- 3.** Listen and ask thoughtful questions.
- 4.** Use insights gained to start making true workplace change.

The average person with a criminal conviction faces over 44,000 barriers and restrictions once released from incarceration. These barriers are called collateral consequences. For example, a collateral consequence may mean that someone may face unfair housing restrictions.

Q1.

How can employment be a tool to help someone overcome collateral consequences?

Q2.

Criminal conviction questions on a job application are another example of collateral consequences. If you had to check this box, how would you feel?

There are over 4 million people on supervised parole or probation in the U.S., meaning they have to report regularly to an officer and pay fees.

Q1.

How do you think being supervised upon release from incarceration affects a person's employment?

Q2.

How can employment be used as a tool to help someone be successful on probation or parole?

Communication, multitasking, and teamwork are common transferable skills that most employers desire. While some transferable skills are learned through employment, people gain transferable skills through other experiences as well.

Q1.

While incarcerated, people often work and learn skilled trades, but are also often unable to be credentialed while incarcerated or even after they are released—how do you think this affects their post-release employment opportunities?

Q2.

What is one transferable skill that you learned outside of work that makes you a great employee?

A strategic diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) management plan can help an organization make the most of its diversity by creating an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable culture and work environment.

Q1.

Does your company have a DE&I statement? In which ways does your company's DE&I statement address hiring people with criminal records?

Q2.

In which ways do you feel your company's DE&I statement can be improved to be more inclusive of people with criminal records?

Several organizations provide job training and vocational services to people with criminal convictions in their history.

Q1.

How can your business take advantage of a similar program in your region to advance its DE&I initiative?

Q2.

What kind of specialized services do you think people returning from incarceration are in need of most to help their return to the workplace?

Black people are incarcerated at more than 5 times the rate of white people.

Q1.

How do you think the higher incarceration rate impacts Black people's ability to find employment and achieve economic mobility?

Q2.

How inclusive do you feel your workplace is of not only Black people, but also Black people with criminal records?

Research shows that hiring people with past criminal records leads to higher retention rates and that they are no more likely to be fired for misconduct than those without a record.

Q1.

Knowing this information, does this change your perspective on hiring people with a criminal record?

Q2.

How would you change your organization's hiring practices to be more inclusive of people with criminal records?

Reentry describes the process of someone returning from incarceration, often in need of external supportive services. Recidivism is the rate at which people return to incarceration.

Q1.

How might employment help people avoid recidivism?

Q2.

How does your employment allow you to thrive and provide for others?

Between 1980 and 2019, the number of incarcerated women increased by more than 700%, rising from a total of 26,378 in 1980 to 222,455 in 2019.

Q1.

What are some potential implications for business and the workplace from the increasing number of women being incarcerated?

Q2.

What does this statistic make you think about overall incarceration rates and how they may be affecting the job market?

There are 77 million Americans with a criminal conviction. That means there are millions of talented people with criminal convictions, many of whom are looking for employment.

Q1.

How could you change your application process to encourage talented job seekers with convictions to apply?

Q2.

Beyond a job posting, how could you intentionally recruit job seekers with criminal convictions?

Research has shown that creating a more human, caring workplace ultimately leads to improved customer service, better health outcomes, and all-around satisfaction.

Q1.

How does your workplace align with this statement?

Q2.

How can your organization use this statement to create a more inclusive workplace?

People with criminal histories are referred to using a variety of dehumanizing labels, such as “inmates,” “prisoners,” “convicts,” “felons,” and “offenders.”

Q1.

How do these two words feel different to you: convict vs. person with a criminal conviction?

Q2.

More broadly, how can you be more careful about the language you use in the workplace to reduce stigma and create a more inclusive environment for people with criminal records?

Creating a dialogue is the first step toward creating change. We hope these conversation cards lead to productive conversations and meaningful improvements in your workplace for people with criminal records. For more resources, visit **gettingtalentbacktowork.org**.



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