

Second Chance Hiring Alliance

Empower. Uplift. Connect.



The Second Chance Hiring Alliance (SCHA) is a coalition of D.C.-area employers and employment support providers, working together to create more job opportunities for justice-impacted individuals. By strengthening relationships and facilitating collaboration between prospective employers and the organizations that work directly with justice-impacted job seekers, and by raising awareness around the importance of second chance hiring, we believe we can significantly increase the numbers of justice-impacted individuals who are able to find sustainable-wage jobs and fulfilling careers. Learn more by visiting www.scha-dc.org.

Why Second Chance Hiring?

In the District of Columbia, one in seven adults has a publicly available criminal record; and while overall employment in the District hovers around 90%, the employment rates for justice-impacted residents are estimated at 30-50%. At the same time, roughly 90% of those currently incarcerated in D.C. are Black – even though Black residents make up less than half the District’s population. This means that second chance hiring represents a way not only to address chronic and persistent labor shortages, but also a tool to combat racial disparities in our workforce.

Our Approach

Unlike earlier fair chance campaigns, we aspire to “go beyond the pledge” by focusing on employer needs, and by increasing the level of collaboration between employers and the organizations supporting justice-involved job seekers. Convened by the Council for Court Excellence and supported by the Georgetown Pivot Program, the SCHA engages stakeholders who touch every piece of the second chance hiring process. By bringing together these diverse perspectives, the SCHA is able to address both the challenges employers face when hiring justice-impacted people, and the barriers justice-impacted people face when seeking employment.

Justice-impacted people are those with past arrest or conviction records. Because of these records, many of these individuals struggle to find meaningful employment. Second chance hiring is the practice of adopting more inclusive hiring policies that do not automatically exclude those who have been justice-impacted.



Our evidence-based, person-centered approaches focus on four areas:



Educating employers on the business case for second chance hiring, and on the resources and incentives available to support second chance hiring initiatives and practices.



Providing employers with toolkits, tips, and technical advice on how to overcome common obstacles to hiring people with criminal records, thus increasing the pool of candidates that are eligible for employment.



Building and sharing knowledge about the needs and concerns of key stakeholders (justice-impacted job seekers, employers, and employment support providers) through focus groups, surveys, and other forms of research, while staying up-to-date on important policy initiatives.



Creating opportunities for dialogue between D.C.-area employers and employment support providers, to share ideas, foster greater collaboration and connection, and ultimately create change.

Removing traditional barriers to hiring provides employers all across the spectrum with access to a pool of hard-working and enthusiastic employees, while increasing economic security and mobility for justice-impacted DC residents. It also helps to lower recidivism and build safer and more prosperous communities – a win for all.



If you are interested in learning more or joining SCHA, please visit our website www.scha-dc.org, or email Gene Downing at gene.downing@courtexcellence.org.