



SECOND-CHANCE HIRING IN FLORIDA

A Step-by-Step Guide for Employers

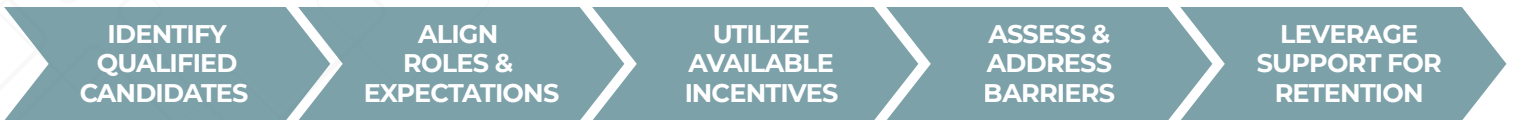
*How Second-Chance Hiring Policies Strengthen Businesses
and Communities & How to Put Them into Practice*



The Case for Second-Chance Hiring

Nationwide, employers face ongoing labor shortages, supply chain disruptions, and retention challenges, while millions of formerly incarcerated individuals struggle to secure much needed stable employment after reentering the community.

Florida's employers are uniquely positioned to bridge this gap by meeting workforce needs and creating meaningful opportunities for motivated, trained talent. This guide supports second-chance employment implementation and highlights it as a practical, manageable process with the right framework.




TALENT & RETENTION:

The Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) in collaboration with the Florida Foundation for Correctional Excellence (FFCE) are playing a pivotal role in strengthening Florida's workforce pipeline. FDC currently operates 154 training programs across 51 locations supporting 41 different trades, equipping returning citizens with industry-recognized skills, certifications and job readiness training that aligns with employer needs as identified by the Florida Chamber Foundation's Future of Work Initiative.





Those leaving Florida's correctional facilities carry with them a wealth of knowledge, hands-on training, and a renewed sense of purpose and drive for success. This offers an innovative and often untapped solution and strategic opportunity for businesses looking to improve retention with talented and qualified employees.

BY THE NUMBERS

 It costs roughly \$28,000 per year to incarcerate one person in Florida

 90% of Florida's 80,000 inmates will reenter society

 Nearly 1 in 3 will be re-incarcerated within 5 years, however...

 75% of individuals who successfully complete probation and parole are employed

VALUE & OPPORTUNITY:

Second-chance hiring generates value by helping individuals overcome common barriers to employment and long-term stability. At the same time, it delivers measurable benefits to employers and communities by strengthening the workforce, improving public safety, and supporting broader social and economic stability.

Benefits include:

- Improved public safety and access to education/training
- Reduced recidivism and crime
- Cost savings and increased tax revenue
- Reduced turnover
- Increased loyalty and commitment
- Improved community relations
- Increased social stability with reintegration and financial stability
- Diversified workforce

Second-chance employment helps overcome:

- Unemployment
- Financial obligations
- Housing restrictions
- Substance abuse/mental health issues
- Strained family relationships
- Restriction of professional licenses
- Transportation limitations

Pathways to Opportunity & a Changed Life

FDC, alongside community organizations and educational institutions, delivers statewide career and technical education (CTE), workforce training, and reentry programs. These pathways prepare returning citizens for sustainable employment and long-term success. The following is a high-level overview of the education and training participants receive.



JOB ASSIGNMENT TRAINING:

- Barbering Trainee
- Beekeeper Trainee
- Canine Obedience Trainee
- Construction Worker
- Construction Worker HVAC
- Electrical Worker
- Farm Worker
- Grounds Keeper
- Horticulture Worker
- Kitchen Help Trainee
- Office Specialist
- Orderly & Caustics Worker
- Plant Growth & Development
- Plumbing Worker
- Small Engine Repair
- Store Keeper
- Textile Repair Worker
- Warehouse Trainee

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS:

- Adult Basic Education
- Continuing Education
- Art Therapy
- GED
- ITA Program
- Special Education
- Title I Services
- Youthful Offenders

CTE & WORKFORCE PROGRAMS:

CONSTRUCTION & SKILLED TRADES

Carpentry, Construction, Electrical, Energy/Solar, HVAC, Machine Technology, Masonry, Plumbing, Roofing, Welding, Graphics & Printing

AGRICULTURE & LAND MANAGEMENT

Landscaping, Irrigation, Ranching, Farm Operations, Equine Care, Environmental Services

TRANSPORTATION, LOGISTICS & SUPPLY CHAIN

Manufacturing & Logistics, Global Logistics, Commercial Driving, Diesel Services, Heavy Equipment Operations, Warehouse & Logistics

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & DIGITAL SKILLS

Information Technology, CompTIA, Coding, Drawing & Modifications, Digital Design

AUTOMOTIVE & MECHANICAL

Auto Collision Technology, Diesel Services, Marine Services, Power Equipment Technology, Small Appliances

HOSPITALITY & PERSONAL SERVICES

Barbering, Cosmetology, Culinary, Building Maintenance & Management

BUSINESS, ENTREPRENEURSHIP & FINANCE

Entrepreneurship & Small Business, Marketing & Management Principles, Personal Finance

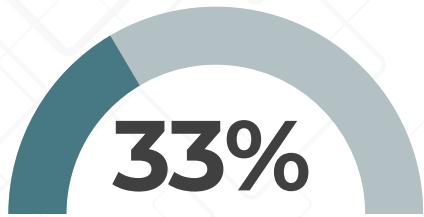
EMPLOYABILITY/WORKFORCE PREPARATION

Employability Skills, NCCER Core, Workforce Readiness



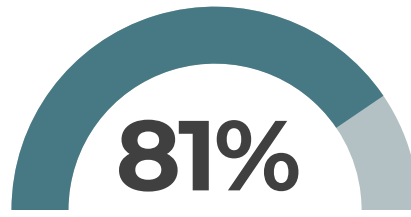
The Competitive Advantage for Employers

Hiring justice-involved individuals who have received training through FDC CTE credentialing programs delivers measurable ROI for employers. Businesses gain access to skilled, motivated talent while benefiting from tax credits and bonding protections that reduce hiring risk. Employers report these employees often show strong retention and reliability, helping lower turnover costs and build a more stable, resilient workforce that drives long term, sustainable value.



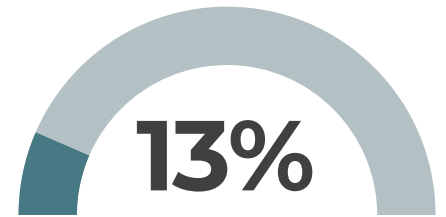
33%
of the the available U.S. workforce has a criminal record.¹

Roughly one in three adults is justice impacted, meaning companies that exclude second chance candidates overlook a significant portion of potential talent.



81%
of business leaders are satisfied with employee performance.²

Business leaders and HR managers agree that individuals with criminal records perform as well as or better than those without records.



13%
lower turnover rates are reported among justice-impacted employees.³

Second-chance employees often show strong loyalty and lower turnover rates than the general workforce, motivated to prove their reliability.



With low turnover through second-chance hiring, retention rates can save companies up to **60%** of an employee's annual salary in replacement costs. With total productivity losses included, this can reach up to **200%** of an employee's annual salary.⁴

Salary	Turnover Costs
\$40,000	\$20,000-\$80,000
\$50,000	\$25,000-\$100,000
\$75,000	\$37,500-\$150,000

WHY WE BELIEVE IN SECOND-CHANCE HIRING:

"There is a lot of fear to try to meet people where they are, but I think that's where the biggest rewards are. For us to give people a job, a meaningful job, a job that can support their family, I don't think there's a bigger way of helping someone."

Denver Stutler
US Submergent Technologies

"We're honored to partner with the Florida Foundation for Correctional Excellence. The men and women who come through this program bring determination, gratitude, and a real desire to build a better future. It's an honor to give people a chance to grow in this industry and strengthen the communities we're proud to serve."

CWR Contracting

We believe one of the most powerful, innovative workforce solutions has been largely untapped — incarcerated individuals who are actively earning industry-recognized training and certifications in preparation to reenter the workforce.

Ryan Stallings
Ring Power

1. Melhorn, S. F., et al. (2024, September 18). *The workforce impact of second chance hiring*. U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Melhorn, Stephanie Ferguson, et al. "The Workforce Impact of Second Chance Hiring." U.S. Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 18 Sept. 2024, www.uschamber.com/workforce/data-deep-dive-the-workforce-impact-of-second-chance-hiring-3.
2. Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). (2021). *Getting talent back to work: Results of a workplace survey on hiring people with criminal records*. SHRM Foundation.
3. Minor, D., Persico, N., Weiss, D. M., & Röper, L. (2017, February 3). *Should you hire someone with a criminal record?* Kellogg Insight, Northwestern University. <https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/should-you-hire-someone-with-a-criminal-record>
4. Allen, D. C. (2008). *Retaining talent: A guide to analyzing and managing employee turnover*. SHRM Foundation. <https://www.shrm.org/content/dam/en/shrm/topics-tools/news/Retaining-Talent.pdf>

Managing Risk & Mitigating Concerns

It's understandable that some employers considering second-chance hiring practices may have concerns related to liability, workplace safety, compliance, and performance. These concerns can be mitigated through clear policies and practices, including structured onboarding, the use of available tax incentives, and federal bonding programs. When combined with ongoing support through community partnerships, these strategies reduce risk while providing employers access to a reliable, committed workforce.

INCENTIVES & BENEFITS:

Both state and federal incentives and benefits are available to provide employers with greater confidence and assurance when engaging in second-chance hiring:

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

A federal tax credit that can provide 40% of qualified wages for individuals who work 400+ hours in their first year of employment. Credit may range from \$2,400 to \$9,600 depending on hours worked.

Federal Bonding Program (FBP)

A business insurance policy that covers up to \$5,000 with no deductible and indemnifies employers hiring at-risk job applicants.

Florida On-the-Job Training (OJT)

Reimburses the employer up to 50% of the employees wage rate to reduce training and supervision costs related to onboarding a new-hire.

Florida Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)

Grant funding for existing Florida businesses that provides a reimbursement of up to 50-75% for pre-approved education and training costs of incumbent employees.



EASILY COMPLY WITH LAWS & REGULATIONS:

US EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission)

- Implement these guidelines for screening applicants and considering arrest and conviction:
 - Ensure the applicants record is relevant to the position
 - Consider the nature of the crime, the time that has passed, and job responsibilities
 - Do individualized assessments rather than blanket policies that exclude all records

Clean Slate Clearinghouse

- Online resource for state statutory information related to criminal record clearance policies in all 50 sets and U.S. territories:
 - Understand record sealing and expungement
 - Develop screening policies that comply with old or minor convictions

Fair Chance Reporting Act (FCRA)

- A federal law outlining how employers obtain and use background checks in hiring:
 - Obtaining written consent for background checks
 - Awareness of the the seven year reporting limit for most non conviction records
 - Following action steps before denying employment

Employer Strategies

Recognizing second-chance employees may bring unique life experiences that shape how they navigate the workplace. Participating employers tell us that thoughtful flexibility and clear support structures often further enhance performance, retention, and overall team effectiveness.

PROVIDE TRAINING & COACHING:

Create opportunities for employees to build confidence, strengthen skills, and succeed in their roles through training and mentorship:

- Pair employees with experienced team members who model standards.
- Offer shadowing and hands-on training to reinforce skills in real-world settings.
- Use practical demonstrations to build confidence and competence over time.

DEVELOP CLEAR WRITTEN POLICY:

Explain the criteria for eligibility and identify steps for hiring individuals with records to ensure employee and customer safety:

- Define eligibility criteria and factors considered in hiring decisions.
- Specify disqualifying offenses that relate directly to the responsibility of the position
- Evaluate each individual case by considering the offense, time elapsed, and rehabilitation efforts.
- Set probationary attendance expectations that account for legal obligations.

CREATE A SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT:

Help employees feel valued and positioned to succeed by promoting positive teamwork and preparing supervisors to address re-entry challenges:

- Prioritize skills & qualifications over past history.
- Communicate to your entire workforce your commitment to second-chance hiring.
- Use flexible scheduling practices that support productivity and retention across your workforce.

EVALUATE JOB PERFORMANCE REGULARLY:

Provide consistent and structured feedback to reduce uncertainty and build confidence:

- Create incentives such as advancement opportunities to motivate continued improvement.
- Offer regular check-ins to address challenges early-on and recognize strengths.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT



Florida Foundation for Correctional Excellence

Strengthen second-chance hiring through collaboration



Florida Chamber Foundation

Receive second-chance hiring resources & workforce insights



CareerSource

Gain support with employer incentives and hiring qualified talent



Operation New Hope

Access employment consulting & career development training



Better Together

Connect with second-chance employers and job-ready talent



Collaborative Efforts

Developed by the Florida Foundation for Correctional Excellence (FFCE) and the Florida Chamber Foundation, with review from BlueWind Technology, the Second-Chance Hiring Step-by-Step Guide offers employers practical strategies for hiring and supporting justice-involved individuals.

By removing barriers, leveraging available incentives, and implementing consistent, equitable practices, employers can access a strong talent pool that strengthens their workforce while also supporting successful re-entry and contributing to safer communities.



The Florida Chamber Foundation is dedicated to advancing and strengthening the state's talent pipeline through major initiatives such as the Florida 2030 Blueprint and Future of Work Florida. As Florida continues to grow and will need approximately 7,000 new jobs by 2030, second-chance hiring offers a practical way to help meet that demand and strengthen the state's workforce.

This work naturally supports second-chance hiring by assisting employers in understanding the value of tapping into overlooked labor pools, including returning citizens, and demonstrating how this population can help close gaps in the workforce and contribute to stronger economies. Through data provision and highlighting successful strategies for both business and community leaders, the Foundation helps create an environment where second-chance hiring is viewed as a strategic approach to addressing talent needs.



The Florida Foundation for Correctional Excellence (FFCE) is a nonprofit direct support organization (DSO) designed to serve DOC by bringing together private partners to increase investment in transition programs and workforce training to further expand re-entry efforts. FFCE is committed to supporting opportunities identified by FDC as priority needs for program enhancement across the state.

FFCE aims to reduce recidivism and improve public safety by expanding career readiness, training, and re-entry programs. The organization works to initiate and support job training opportunities, partner with businesses, nonprofits, and community leaders to strengthen the economy through workforce expansion, and further broaden access to both online and classroom-based academic and wellness programs.



BlueWind Technology is a Pensacola-based advanced manufacturing company specializing in composite components for high-performance applications, including wind turbine nacelle covers used across renewable energy and industrial sectors. The company has experienced rapid growth and has supplied thousands of nacelles, supporting U.S. clean energy infrastructure and advanced manufacturing capacity.

BlueWind has demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusive workforce development through successful second-chance hiring practices that support retention, performance, and internal advancement. This experience has also informed practical guidance for second-chance hiring and encouraged broader employer adoption of inclusive practices.

Engage Untapped Talent to Fulfill Your Workforce Needs



Take the next step in second-chance hiring:

Click [here](#) or scan the QR code to connect directly with the Florida Foundation for Correctional Excellence to learn more, take the next step in your hiring efforts, or explore how your business or organization can get involved.

