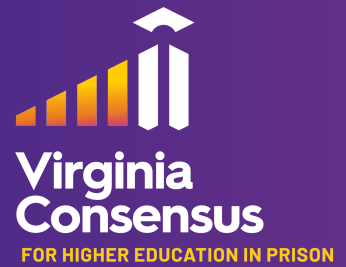


UNTAPPED TALENT:

Second Chance Hiring in Virginia

The Virginia Consensus for Higher Education in Prison is a multi-sector initiative focused on expanding postsecondary education for Virginians during incarceration, promoting academic and skill development to grow Virginia's talent pipeline and economic competitiveness. The Virginia Consensus welcomes business sector collaboration to advise on alignment of educational offerings with industry needs.



Roughly one-quarter of all Americans have a criminal record, and in extremely competitive national and regional economies, states that seek to win can no longer afford to miss out on the untapped potential of this ready pool of candidates. The nearly universal use of unnuanced background screens for criminal records is causing employers to overlook talent opportunities proven to deliver for companies across a range of industries, when their needs are great and growing. Many Virginians who have a history of conviction may become valued contributors in business settings if given a second chance.

The Case for Second Chance Employment

Second chance employees offer an untapped solution for companies to address worker shortages and enhance overall performance.

Worker shortages are related to birth rate declines, and optimizing workforce participation among untapped groups is likely to be a smart strategy for the foreseeable future. *(Source: [Untapped Talent](#); Author Jeff Korzenik)*

Virginia has a labor market deficit, with only 47 workers available for every 100 jobs available. *(Source: [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#))*

About 10,000 workers enter the Virginia labor market from the Virginia Department of Corrections every year – a cohort the size of our largest state university's graduating class.

Second chance employment has proven to be an effective talent strategy across a variety of industries.

85% of human resource professionals and 81% of business leaders report that individuals with criminal records perform the same as, or better than, employees without criminal records. *(Source: [SHRM](#))*

82% of managers and 67% of HR professionals report that the value second chance employees bring to their organization is as high as, or higher than, that of workers without records. *(Source: [SHRM](#))*

Growing and customizable college and credential programs in Virginia prisons and jails increase the talent proposition of second chance hires.

Supports and incentives exist for employers who practice second chance employment.

For new hires, the Federal Bonding Program provides \$5,000-\$25,000 fidelity bonds for six months, at no cost to employers, mitigating against theft, forgery, larceny or embezzlement. *(Source: [The Federal Bonding Program website](#))*

Businesses may qualify for tax credits through programs like the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) for hiring individuals with criminal records.

Second chance candidates make loyal and productive employees who contribute to business bottom lines and cultures without adding meaningfully to risk.

- Second chance employees had a 73% lower turnover rate compared to those without records, leading to retention-related employer cost savings. *(Source: Johns Hopkins Hospital study)*
- 66% of employees would be proud to work for a company that offered career opportunities, training, and support to facilitate successful reintegration of people overcoming criminal histories. *(Source: SHRM)*
- Perceptions of risk outstrip actual risk – in a ten-year study, 75% of people with one conviction never had another. The risk of criminal behavior declines reliably with age and interval since conviction, so older candidates with a non-recent record may, in fact, represent a lower risk than younger applicants who have no criminal record at all. *(Source: RAND)*

“I have people who [have criminal records] who work for me, and I embrace them the same as I would those who don't. I start by getting to know a person. I would encourage any employer to join an effort that is building bridges between need and opportunity. Businesses everywhere need employees, and as an employer, being open to second chance hiring is an obvious choice.”

– Mark Smith, Owner, Midas of Richmond

SECOND CHANCE HIRING:

You don't have to go it alone!

Participate in a self-paced, e-learning event during April, Second Chance Month, with the Virginia Consensus and Richmond SHRM, at no cost to you. **Getting Talent Back to Work** is a 10-module online overview for HR professionals and anyone seeking to learn about second chance employment.

The national Second Chance Business Coalition offers an **On-Ramps Guide** and many excellent resources on their website.

Virginia reentry programs, workforce development organizations and community colleges can facilitate access to vetted candidates with employment supports. Find local resources mapped on the **Second Chance Business Coalition website**.

The Virginia Consensus partnered with Richmond-SHRM for a free eLearning module on second chance employment practices.



CLICK HERE OR SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER

Join the Virginia Consensus

Create meaningful opportunities, strengthen your workforce and community, and join the growing number of Virginia businesses leading the way in second chance employment and alignment of educational programs in prisons.

Go to www.vchep.org/join-us today to become a Virginia Consensus member.

