



The Manufacturing Institute

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# Second Chance Hiring Toolkit for Local Communities

Second Chance Hiring



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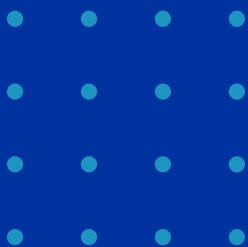
This toolkit is structured as a guide for local organizations and coalitions that would like to implement second chance hiring initiatives in their communities.

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**We have to be part of the change in order for us to see the change we need across the country. It starts with companies like us giving people the opportunity to do better.”**

– Ken Kuwamura, Manager of Talent Acquisition Strategic Partnerships, Union Pacific Corporation





## THE RATIONALE FOR SECOND CHANCE HIRING

There is a strong base of national evidence demonstrating the value of recruiting and hiring candidates with past convictions. These candidates are a frequently overlooked talent pool. A recent study showed their unemployment rates were five times the national average.<sup>1</sup> Second chance employment helps companies do the following:

- + **Expand talent pools:** Tens of millions of Americans have an arrest or conviction record.<sup>2</sup> By expanding access to jobs for this population, employers are reaching a diverse and motivated talent pool.
- + **Decrease turnover:** Research has indicated that employees with past convictions stay longer and advance faster than their peers.<sup>3,4</sup>
- + **Stay competitive:** Economic trends point to decreasing labor market participation, higher turnover and a looming talent shortage.<sup>5</sup> Rehiring costs make employee retention particularly critical.
- + **Access incentives:** There are a number of resources available to companies to encourage second chance hiring. Examples include the Work Opportunity Tax Credit,<sup>6</sup> Federal Bonding<sup>7</sup> and discretionary grant programs, such as The Good Jobs Challenge, which awards grants to industry-led, employee-centric training partnerships and systems across the country.<sup>8</sup>

**+ Research has indicated that employees with past convictions stay longer and advance faster than their peers.<sup>9,10</sup>**




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1 Couloute, L. & Kopf, D. (2018). Out of Prison & Out of Work: Unemployment among formerly incarcerated people. The Prison Policy Initiative. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/outofwork.html>

2 Aumand III, F. & Came, S. (2012). Survey of State Criminal History Information Systems, 2012: A Criminal Justice Information Policy Report. The U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/bjs/grants/244563.pdf>

3 Minor, D., Persico, N., and Weiss. (2018). Criminal Background and Job Performance. IZA Journal of Labor Policy. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40173-018-0101-0>

4 Lundquist, J., Pager, D., & Strader, E., (2018). Does a Criminal Past Predict Worker Performance? Evidence from One of America's Largest Employers. Social Forces, Volume 96, Issue 3, Pages 1039–1068. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sox092>

5 Korzenik, J. (2020). Untapped Talent: How Second Chance Hiring Works for Your Business and the Community. Harper Collins Leadership.

6 Employment & Training Administration. (2021). Work Opportunity Tax Credit. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wotc>

7 The Federal Bonding Program. (2022). About the FBP. <https://bonds4jobs.com/>

8 U.S. Economic Development Administration. (2022). Good Jobs Challenge: Getting Americans Back to Work. <https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/american-rescue-plan/good-jobs-challenge>

9 Minor, D., Persico, N., and Weiss. (2018). Criminal Background and Job Performance. IZA Journal of Labor Policy. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40173-018-0101-0>

10 Lundquist, J., Pager, D., & Strader, E., (2018). Does a Criminal Past Predict Worker Performance? Evidence from One of America's Largest Employers. Social Forces, Volume 96, (Issue 3), Pages 1039–1068. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sox092>



In addition, trends indicate growing support for inclusive practices. With one in two adults in the U.S. having had a family member incarcerated, it is unsurprising that Americans support expanding career opportunities for people with past convictions.<sup>11</sup> Recent surveys estimate the following:

- + **80% of Americans** support expanding second chance hiring practices.<sup>12</sup>
- + **85% of HR professionals** believe that employees with criminal records perform their jobs as well or better.<sup>13</sup>
- + **64% of millennials** will not take a job without a connection to corporate social responsibility.<sup>14</sup>
- + **91% of millennials** would switch to a brand with a cause.<sup>15</sup>

According to a Manufacturing Institute (MI) study with Deloitte, manufacturers will need to fill 4 million jobs by 2030, 2.1 million of which could go unfilled if more people do not pursue modern manufacturing careers.<sup>16</sup> Manufacturers are well-positioned to lead in welcoming people into their workforce who are ready and willing to develop their skills and seize the second chance for a promising career.



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**Giving people a fair and honest opportunity is something we are embracing and embedding into our hiring practice.”**

– Brian Cooksey, Director of Workforce Development,  
Shaw Industries Group, Inc.

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Second chance hiring can also be an important part of a community’s overall economic development, public safety and racial equity strategies. Quality employment is among the most significant factors in lowering re-arrest and re-incarceration rates and can have a generational impact on families.<sup>17</sup>

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12 Justice Action Network. (2020). Case Study: Fair Chance Hiring. Justice Action Network. <https://www.justiceactionnetwork.org/case-study-fair-chance-hiring>

13 Society for Human Resources Management. (2021). 2021 Getting Talent Back to Work Report: A Workplace Survey on Hiring and Working with People with Criminal Records. Society for Human Resources Management. [https://www.gettingtalentbacktowork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021-GTBTW\\_Report.pdf](https://www.gettingtalentbacktowork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021-GTBTW_Report.pdf)

14 CONE Communications. (2015). 2015 Cone Communications Millennial CSR Study. CONE. <https://conecomm.com/2015-cone-communications-millennial-csr-study/>

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17 For a literature review, see: Yu, TY. (2018, January). Employment and Recidivism: Continued Evidence-based Education. EBP Society. [https://www.ebpsociety.org/blog/education/297-employment-recidivism#:~:text=The%20researchers%20found%20that%20employment,646%2D647\).](https://www.ebpsociety.org/blog/education/297-employment-recidivism#:~:text=The%20researchers%20found%20that%20employment,646%2D647).)



## DID YOU KNOW?

- + The unemployment rate for people in their first year out of jail or prison is estimated to be at least **60%**.<sup>18</sup>
- + Children of incarcerated parents are **six times** more likely to be imprisoned themselves.<sup>19</sup>
- + States that lower recidivism by just **10%** can save up to \$635 million annually.<sup>20</sup>
- + African American adults are **five times** more likely to be imprisoned than white Americans.<sup>21</sup>

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19 Cox, M. (2009). The Relationships Between Episodes of Parental Incarceration and Students' Psycho-Social and Educational Outcomes: An Analysis of Risk Factors. [Doctoral Dissertation, Temple University].

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20 The Economist. (2011). They all come home: Effective re-entry programmes can keep ex-prisoners out of jail.

<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2011/04/20/they-all-come-home>

21 Nellis, A. (2021). The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons. The Sentencing Project.

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/app/uploads/2022/08/The-Color-of-Justice-Racial-and-Ethnic-Disparity-in-State-Prisons.pdf>

22 Visit <https://www.envoy.us/> to learn more.



## INTENDED AUDIENCE

This toolkit provides steps and resources for state and local manufacturing associations, chambers and other locally based organizations to build and implement a place-based second chance employment pilot program. Early experience has shown that a local **“hub organization” with strong relationships in a given sector is the best organizer of a multiemployer second chance hiring initiative.** As nodes in local industry networks, these types of organizations are uniquely positioned to convene employers for structured learning and peer-to-peer best practice sharing, as well as to serve as catalysts for companies that have been wanting to start an initiative but may not know where to begin. We recommend the hub organization surround itself with a motivated group of employers, one or more workforce-focused reentry organizations directly serving and referring jobseekers with past convictions and content experts, such as Envoy,<sup>22</sup> to drive programming and technical assistance.

Our model centers on an employer cohort structure, informed by the outcomes of the MI’s Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education ([FAME](#)) program, which was founded by Toyota in 2010. FAME has helped hundreds of companies address skills gap issues in advanced manufacturing by implementing an intensive workforce development and education program for candidates in a cohort model. This pilot combines key elements of FAME with an employer-led, collaborative learning approach focused on helping employers meet shared workforce needs.

Hub organizations should be prepared to engage and inform employers, facilitate shared learning and establish sustaining relationships between companies and community partners that build candidate pipelines for justice-impacted people that lead to high-quality jobs and careers.

This toolkit is designed to take hub organizations and local second chance leaders through the five major steps of building and launching a second chance hiring initiative:



**The toolkit also spotlights key resources and employer programs that illustrate best practices and includes a resource library to help employers get started. We hope this offers a practical road map to use, adapt and contextualize as regional leaders establish their second chance initiatives.**

## MANUFACTURERS' ROLE

Manufacturers are encouraged to harness the guidelines in this toolkit to reach out to an organization in their community that could serve as a hub for a cohort-based pilot or directly launch their own second chance hiring pilot. Many manufacturers are engaged in second chance hiring as individual employers and have found success with the right resources and tools. If you are engaging in second chance employment, consider:

- + [Reviewing human resource policies](#) to incorporate best practices in inclusive hiring;
- + [Developing partnerships](#) with community-based organizations serving people with past justice-involvement; and
- + [Building retention and advancement strategies](#) to maximize success.

Employers can contact the MI to learn about resources and individualized advisory services available.



## EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT: SHAW INDUSTRIES GROUP, INC.

When talent acquisition leaders at Shaw Industries Group, Inc. registered to participate in the MI's 2022 second chance hiring employer cohort initiative in Atlanta, Georgia, they were facing hiring challenges and, at the same time, wanted to learn more about second chance hiring. Shaw wasn't unique among its peers; monthly manufacturing jobs openings have averaged more than 800,000 nationally over the past year.<sup>23</sup> Shaw learned that it had something else in common with its peers: like many manufacturers, it had been informally practicing second chance hiring for years.

Throughout the program, Shaw acquired the training and tools to build upon the inclusive traditions it already had in place to ultimately integrate a formalized second chance hiring program into its talent strategy and company identity. This process included reviewing its background check process to identify and renegotiate potential barriers to accessing qualified but justice-impacted job seekers. It included establishing referral pipelines with strong reentry community partners and connecting with other community stakeholders such as smaller nonprofits, local rehabilitation programs, accountability corps and the Georgia Department of Corrections. Shaw also created an internal second chance advisory council to oversee progress, collaborate with its communications teams to design a second chance company logo and create a corporate narrative around second chance hiring as well as public communications materials for its website. The advisory council also held discussions over learning materials like Jeffrey Korzenik's *Untapped Talent*. By collaborating with the MI and the Georgia Association of Manufacturers to plan, partner, equip, implement and sustain, Shaw shifted from being a silent supporter to being a proud second chance employer.

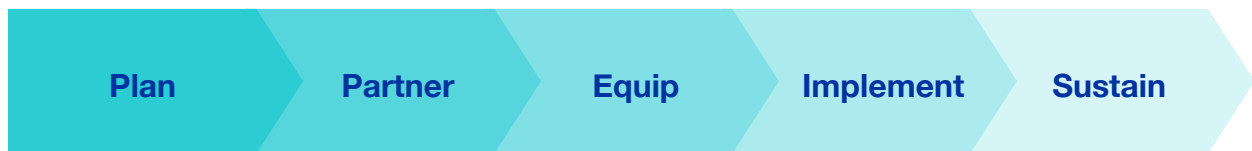


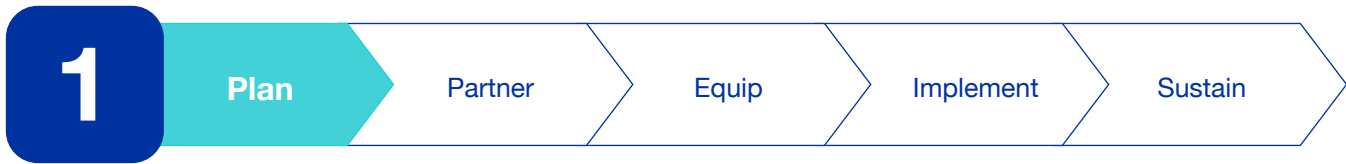
23 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, January 1). Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey. Retrieved March 30, 2023, from <https://data.bls.gov>



## THE TOOLKIT

In early 2022, the MI launched a place-based second chance hiring initiative in Northern Georgia to invite local manufacturers to consider candidates with past justice involvement as a greater part of their talent pool. The pilot included nine companies and several local and national partners, delivering a foundational curriculum, shared learning opportunities and implementation support to help drive second chance hiring in the region's manufacturing sector. The Georgia initiative was also designed to be a learning opportunity for the MI to identify key elements of an effective place-based second chance employer cohort model. Through interviews with employers, partners and local stakeholders, as well as a review of other efforts across the country, the MI has developed a toolkit to support local leaders—or “hub organizations”—to design and implement multiemployer second chance collaboratives in their region. While local context will vary, the toolkit offers a blueprint, highlighting the key building blocks:





Laying a foundation for a local second chance hiring initiative is critical. In the planning stage, the hub organization will focus on establishing employers' goals and desired outcomes for the program, developing an understanding of the local environment and creating a partnership framework.

### SETTING GOALS

Establishing goals at the beginning is necessary for the success of your program. Defined goals will clarify the direction of the program for everyone involved and dictate how all the partners define success.

Take inventory of the resources available to you at this initial stage. Doing so will allow you to establish a baseline, assess your organizational, financial and structural needs and anticipate when and where challenges may arise.



**It was really helpful to meet with other employers to hear what they were thinking about and what worked for them when rolling this out at their own facilities.”**

– Amber Stonestreet, Senior HR Manager, Georgia-Pacific LLC



### TIP FOR SUCCESS

As hub organizations and collaborators begin setting goals, a few important questions to consider include the following:

- + What is the current state of second chance hiring in our area and industry?
- + What do we want this program to accomplish?
  - > For our employer cohort?
  - > For our industry?
  - > For our community?
- + What do employers want this program to accomplish?
- + What are the desired indicators of success along the way?
- + Which local or national organizations may be strategic partners to this initiative?
- + How will the goals inform the work of each party involved with the program?
- + How will we measure success during the program and after its completion?



Once these core goals are established, hub organizations will be well-equipped to communicate these goals to employers and partners, driving alignment and consensus.

## UNDERSTANDING THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Each community has a unique set of social, political and economic realities, as well as its own ecosystem of organizations and service providers that will impact the implementation of a second chance hiring initiative. In the planning stage, gain an understanding of the nuances of the local market and identify partners to consider for outreach.



### TIP FOR SUCCESS

Before launching a regional initiative, conduct a thorough landscape analysis to fully understand the following:

- + Key industries driving job opportunities in your market and talent demands facing those employers
- + State and local laws impacting second chance employment
- + The regulatory environment for the industries you expect to target
- + Employers and other organizing entities (associations, chambers, workforce organizations) that may already be leading second chance efforts
- + Public sector efforts or commitments to incentivize or drive second chance employment
- + The community-based organizations serving people with past convictions
- + Potential barriers to success for candidates with past convictions, such as:
  - > Access to transportation, housing and health care;
  - > Conditions of parole or probation; and
  - > Training and credentialing restrictions or barriers.

### IDENTIFYING PARTNERS

Second chance initiatives should determine several key partners to include in the hub organization's convening and leadership efforts. These partners should consist of the following:

- + **Employers:** Consider a cohort of four to eight motivated employers to launch the initiative.
- + **Community partners:** Include one or more organizations directly supporting justice-impacted candidates with job placement and retention.
- + **Content experts:** Ensure there is a partner that can address key questions about HR, legal, communications, etc., and provide direct training, facilitation and implementation support to cohort companies.



### THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. *Establish concrete and achievable goals for the initiative to align with key partners on expected outcomes.*
2. *Conduct a local landscape assessment to understand the laws, leaders and overall dynamics surrounding second chance employment in the region.*
3. *Identify partners that include employers, local workforce and reentry organizations ("community partners") and content experts.*



Once hub organizations have assembled the preliminary components of the program, they can begin engaging partners that have been identified—including employers, community partners and content experts. The employer cohort will seek to develop and deepen second chance opportunities at their companies. Community partners will be responsible for providing career-readiness training to job seekers and ultimately for making referrals to employers and supporting successful hires. Content experts will simultaneously work with the hub organization to provide educational materials and training, as well as individualized consulting to ensure both the employers and community partners are set up for sustained success.

**RECRUITING EMPLOYER PARTICIPANTS**

Finding a group of employers with sufficient interest, institutional support and resources to participate in the program can be labor-and time-intensive, so it is important to be strategic and allot ample time for securing employers for the program.

A **sector partnership model** for employer recruitment can be helpful in identifying companies for your cohort. Using this model, hub organizations can identify a group of employers working in the same sector/ industry that faces a common challenge and is passionate about finding a solution to the skills gap challenge. These “hubs” can harness their unique position in industry networks to disseminate information to employers, mobilize sector partnerships and sustain change.



**So many companies are experiencing shared skills gaps. The cohort model brings these companies that are in the same region together to talk through what they’ve tried and what’s worked.”**

– Pooja Tripathi, Director of Workforce Initiatives, The Manufacturing Institute





## TIP FOR SUCCESS

Aim for employer participants that:

- + Are part of the same geographic region (e.g., accessible via the same public transit system);
- + Utilize a sector-specific state or local association;
- + Are experiencing staffing shortages; and
- + Have a stated commitment to DE&I and community involvement.

Once employers are engaged, hub organizations should be sure to understand their goals for the program, including job vacancies to fill, number of hires, growth opportunities and cultural and community impact.



## SPOTLIGHT #1:

### SAN ANTONIO EMPLOYER COLLABORATIVE

In San Antonio, employers have built a program that gives individuals with a prior conviction an opportunity for employment and provides them with tools that will help them achieve longer-term success.

The Greater San Antonio area has a robust manufacturing sector that creates \$40.5 billion in annual economic impact and employs more than 51,000 individuals. In south San Antonio, a 2.2 million square-foot Toyota truck campus houses many on-site suppliers that collaborate on workforce development programs and has allowed the area to serve as a workforce program laboratory of sorts. This work is amplified by a community that values investment in individuals with prior convictions, with a focus on finding stable and sustainable employment opportunities for these individuals.

Toyotetsu Texas led the way with second chance hiring in 2018. From the start, they worked to implement a holistic approach to recruitment and retention, while incorporating supportive services, to increase the likelihood of success. Examples of the support and services provided to second chance hires include uniform assistance, transportation assistance and twice-weekly meetings with a job coach.

Participating employers and service providers meet twice monthly with interested individuals at the Bexar County Reentry Center to provide information on the program. Since 2018, Toyotetsu Texas has received more than 150 applications to the program and enrolled more than 80 individuals into the program. Of those participants, 20 have remained employed long term at Toyotetsu Texas. While data on new employers is preliminary, indications are that many of their participants will shortly convert to permanent full-time employment at these companies. [Learn More -->](#)



## IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Hub organizations should engage one or more community partners with high-quality workforce development and job-readiness programming that prepares job seekers with past convictions for success in the labor market. These organizations will be key partners to implementing second chance initiatives and ensuring high-quality hires and long-term retention of great employees.

Hub organizations can identify potential partners by doing preliminary market research, including the following:

- I. Speaking with market experts, such as workforce boards, local foundations, reentry coalitions and corrections leaders
- II. Speaking with employers about past successes with local partners
- III. Conducting desk research based on key factors identified in the Community Partnership Scorecard



## SPOTLIGHT #2: COMMUNITY PARTNER SCORECARD

There are several key criteria to consider when engaging lead community partners. Utilizing the MI's [Community Partnership Scorecard](#) during your vetting and recruitment processes will help you assess prospective partners' resources and overall readiness to serve your employer cohort.

When researching and interviewing partners, a few key considerations include the following:

- I. Do prospective partners have experience working with justice-impacted communities?
- II. Do partners provide work-readiness training?
- III. Do partners have experience vetting candidate job readiness in partnership with employers?
- IV. Do partners provide ongoing retention support?
- V. What does their referral process entail?
- VI. Does the partner have job coaches who will support candidates throughout the hiring, onboarding and retention processes?
- VII. Does the partner assist with transportation needs?
- VIII. Does the partner offer wraparound services, such as assistance with housing, child care supports, access to basic needs, legal services, etc.?
- IX. Can they provide employer references to confirm past experience?



**We saw this as an opportunity to move from being silent supporters already involved in this space to being loud and proud and deepen our understanding in the process.”**

– Amber Stonestreet, Senior Human Resources Manager, Georgia-Pacific LLC

## ENGAGING CONTENT EXPERTS

Second chance employment requires unique expertise to successfully implement. Hub organizations should consider partnering with experienced leaders who can assist with:

- + Training and facilitation of shared learning;
- + Direct technical assistance to support HR policies and practices, revisions and program implementation;
- + Internal and external communications and culture-building support.



### THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. *Recruit employers with common characteristics including sector and geographic proximity;*
2. *Engage high-quality community partners that meet the criteria of the Community Partnership Scorecard; and*
3. *Partner with content experts to ensure employers have support to implement their internal initiatives.*



**EQUIPPING EMPLOYERS WITH FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE**

Training for employer cohorts should include core foundational knowledge about why and how to create an effective second chance initiative. This information will help employers make the internal case about the value of second chance employment and ensure they have the resources needed to begin implementing key practices. Hub organizations should consider both the content of this employer education and the mechanism for delivery.

**CONTENT**

There are several elements of second chance hiring readiness that employers have cited as particularly important to developing internal initiatives. These fall into three major categories:

**1. Case-making:** Employer cohorts should learn about the business case and community impact of second chance employment and be equipped to educate and persuade company leadership and key implementation staff at their companies about the value of this work. This includes learning the basics of the justice system, accessing research and data about second chance employee outcomes, hearing stories of peer company success and understanding who needs to be involved within the company to develop and launch an effective second chance initiative.



**Hearing it is one thing, putting it into practice is another. Learning what other people have done in the past, gave us a strong foundation to build upon.”**

– Colton Taylor, Workforce Development, Shaw Industries Group, Inc.







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**Hearing different perspectives and personal testimonies of what other people have gone through really helped connect the message for me.”**

– Jessica Baxter, HR Business Partner, Georgia-Pacific LLC

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## **2. Human Resource Policy and Practice:**

Local second chance initiatives should provide expertise on how to review and possibly revise certain HR practices to maximize inclusiveness and talent. This includes best practices on job postings and applications, interviewing, background checks and individualized review. Based on these learnings, employers should be able to review their own practices thoughtfully and determine if they are aligned with their second chance goals.

**3. Recruitment and Retention:** Lastly, foundational knowledge should include content on effective recruiting strategies in partnership with local reentry, workforce and social service partners. This may include how to select a high-quality partner and how to collaborate on vetting, referrals and interviews. In addition, employers should learn about retention and support strategies to ensure the long-term success and advancement of employees.

Foundational learning should also integrate sector-specific content where relevant, such as training and readiness for the specific work conditions and competencies in the industry. It may also include geographically specific content like local laws and policies, unique resources and partnership opportunities or employer incentives for second chance adoption.





## DELIVERY AND INTEGRATED LEARNING

There are several ways hub organizations can deliver foundational content. They can use or adapt existing curricula or develop customized modules, and they can deliver in a number of formats—virtual versus in-person, together as a cohort versus asynchronous. Based on experience and feedback from employers, hub organizations should consider the following integrated model:

**1. Leverage existing content.** Curricula like the MI’s second chance hiring training Video Resources, The Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM)’s Getting Talent Back to Work (free and virtual) and Dave’s Killer Bread Foundation (DKBF)’s cohort model (paid and facilitated) offer foundational learning without creating entirely new content. Hub organizations should attend trainings first to understand their relevance and fit and adapt as needed.

**2. Create shared learning opportunities.** Employers deeply value hearing from their peers about successes and challenges. If employers are participating independently in a curriculum like SHRM’s, ensure they have several opportunities during their learning to discuss and reflect as a group, and consider a final presentation where companies present their second chance strategies to each other.

**3. Integrate learning with implementation.** During the curriculum, create opportunities for companies to begin engaging with community partners and local experts, and discussing internal policies and practices. Consider an onsite session with community partners where companies get to meet staff and participants. Foundational learning should be part of a practical strategy to encourage second chance hiring rather than an end unto itself.



## SPOTLIGHT #3: GETTING TALENT BACK TO WORK

In 2020, The Society for Human Resource Management released its “Getting Talent Back to Work” certification. This 10-module curriculum is designed for human resource leaders to learn and adopt second chance employment as a key part of their talent strategy. The free online training offers a strong foundation in second chance hiring and includes best practices on internal policies and processes, as well as for recruiting and retention strategies. SHRM’s course can be taken as a self-paced education and comes with an industry recognized certification. Hub organizations can integrate the SHRM curriculum alongside facilitated and practical modules with employer cohorts to prepare companies to implement second chance initiatives.

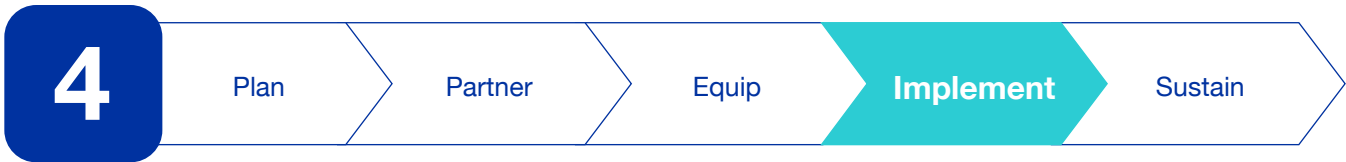
### SHRM Curriculum Structure

- **MODULE 1:** A Call to Action
- **MODULE 2:** Criminal Justice System 101
- **MODULE 3:** Building Buy-In and Initiating a Culture of Change
- **MODULE 4:** Talent Acquisition
- **MODULE 5:** Interviewing
- **MODULE 6:** Hiring and Onboarding
- **MODULE 7:** Talent Development
- **MODULE 8:** Retention and Mobility
- **MODULE 9:** Employers as a Force for Social Change
- **MODULE 10:** Conclusion



### THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. *Ensure all cohort employers have a baseline knowledge about the key tenets of second chance employment;*
2. *Consider using and adapting existing curricula such as SHRM’s Getting Talent Back to Work; and*
3. *Integrate learning with practical implementation support, local partnership building, and peer-to-peer discussion.*



Each component of the local second chance employer cohort program should be preparing employers to recruit, hire and support employees with past justice involvement. The implementation stage is designed to provide direct, targeted assistance to employers to work through policy updates and build a robust and sustaining candidate pipeline. In the implementation stage, hub organizations’ engagement with employers will transition from cohort-based learning to individualized support in partnership with content experts. While shared learning is still important during this stage, each employer will be navigating a unique set of issues as they begin to recruit second chance candidates. Hub organizations should keep a few key considerations in mind at this stage including the following:

- + **Create individual implementation plans** with employers to set goals and create concrete targets.
- + **Be prepared to meet employers where they are.** Each person/employer will come to the cohort with their own interests, barriers, biases and sensitivities to second chance hiring and justice-impacted people. Some may be looking for a high-volume talent pipeline, while others may be looking for one or two employees to continue to slowly pilot second chance practices.
- + **Continue the shared learning experience.** Cohort members will learn and retain more when they can connect and collaborate with peers during the implementation process. Hub organizations should provide plenty of opportunities for employers to interact and share their experiences with fellow companies. Most employers report that they value the shared learning experience as much as the content of the initiative.
- + **Facilitate in-person sessions, tours and meetings where possible.** Employers value the opportunity to meet community partners, job candidates, experts and peers to make the process more tangible.



**Building relationships is a process. It takes time to get there. It never happens as fast as you want. So be open and flexible.”**

– Sarah Horton, Director of Business Engagement, Goodwill Industries of the Southern Rivers



## NAVIGATING FREQUENT ROADBLOCKS

While every employer's implementation process is different, there are several common challenges which hub organizations should be prepared to help employers address:

- + **Deciding how to consider background checks:** employers that are working to be more inclusive may need support in determining which convictions are relevant to their specific job categories—and how long is appropriate to look back into a candidate's conviction history. Some companies may develop or adapt a matrix to help HR staff know which convictions are allowable and which require further review.
- + **Building an individualized assessment process:** for convictions deemed job relevant, employers will likely need support in developing a secondary review process to consider the context of candidates' past convictions and their evidence of work-readiness.
- + **Internal and external communications:** employers may seek support in framing their second chance initiative within the company and to their external audiences. Common requests include talking points and FAQ's for staff and recruitment language to successfully attract second chance candidates.
- + **Managing and tracking candidate referrals:** Employers and community partners often benefit from tools to help track candidates from multiple partners and review their status and success through the application, interview, hiring process and ultimately onboarding and retention.

## SPOTLIGHT #4: GOODWILL NORTH AMERICA

Effective community partners are a key component to recruiting, hiring, and supporting candidates with past justice involvement. In many communities, Goodwill North America is a great starting point. Goodwill is a national organization comprising more than 150 individual nonprofits, each governed by local boards. The organization serves as a bridge partner between companies looking to address employment gaps and justice-impacted people seeking to reenter the workforce.

Each Goodwill, including the Southern Rivers and North Georgia locations involved in the MI's Northern Georgia pilot program, offers a range of no-cost services and training programs to both employers and job seekers. While the offerings can vary between locations, most Goodwill sites provide certification training programs (e.g., OSHA, CNA, etc.) and work readiness training that helps candidates build their résumés, and develop their communication, time management and interview skills. The organization facilitates job placement for justice-impacted individuals as well.

Goodwill also provides post-placement retention support and works with supervision officers to help employees and employers navigate challenges that may arise in the process. Goodwill of North Georgia and Goodwill Southern Rivers are currently working with several thousand employers and have helped more than 20,000 people find employment in the past year.

## FOSTERING CONNECTION BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Since the community partners and employers will work together to identify, vet and hire candidates, it is important that they are well-acquainted and aligned with one another.

Hub organizations should help ensure employers are equipped to communicate their needs to community partners, including the number and type of positions they are hiring for, job responsibilities and required skills and/or certifications. In addition, if there are constraints such as challenging transportation to the workplace, frequent travel, abnormal scheduling or particular convictions likely to be deemed job-relevant, it is important to share these with community partners to maximize the likelihood of finding qualified and prepared candidates.

Hub organizations should set aside ample time for employers and community partners to interact, including conducting site visits to employer facilities for community partners. Site visits will help partners better understand the work environment and the positions they will prepare candidates for, and ultimately to make more successful referrals. The more familiar each party is with the other, the better they can anticipate and plan for each other's needs.



### THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. *Local initiatives should be prepared to help employers navigate unique implementation challenges;*
2. *Effective local community partners will be critical to meeting goals for candidate referral and hiring; and*
3. *Hub organizations can help ensure effective communication and relationship building between employers and community partners to help foster long-term success.*



**Learning where to go in the community to find this talent group was a big takeaway for us.”**

– Lamar Wood, HR Manager,  
Milliken & Company





**It is critically important for successful second chance employers to actively share their journey with other employers and encourage them to start their own initiative. We need to engage in mentorship-like partnerships, highlight what we learned along the way, and pass on our best practices. These types of collaborations will help strengthen our industry, community and impact the lives of so many.”**

– Leslie Cantu, Assistant Vice President of Administration, Toyotetsu Texas

### WHAT COMES NEXT?

Once employers have established sustainable community partnerships and begun to recruit and hire second chance candidates, hub organizations will be well-positioned to build upon their success. Sustaining second chance initiatives means both providing ongoing support for cohort companies to learn and grow as well as opening up opportunities for new employers.

**Identifying champions:** Hub organizations should work to recruit employers successfully implementing second chance practices to serve as spokespeople. This may include participating in case studies or media stories, supporting their peers who are adopting more slowly or engaging with new prospective employers.

**Ongoing shared learning:** While the cohort companies may not need regular assistance or training after the initial program, hub organizations can create regular opportunities for continued support including peer learning sessions or “office hours” with experts.

**Onboarding new cohorts:** If successful, the cohort model can become a regular occurrence with a new set of companies joining annually. This cycle will continue to strengthen the local ecosystem with hub organizations gaining deeper efficiency through established community partnerships and support from alumni.

**Cost considerations:** While hub organizations will likely incur an ongoing cost, consider collaborating with local foundations, workforce boards or city/county offices to explore grant opportunities. Many of the resources cited in this toolkit are free and publicly available, supporting the long-term success and sustainability of a local second chance ecosystem.



## CASE STUDY: GEORGIA MANUFACTURING COHORT

### Summary

In 2021, the MI launched a pilot place-based initiative in Georgia to engage local manufacturers in second chance employment practices. Companies were recruited in partnership with the Georgia Association of Manufacturers and Stand Together Trust. Each is based in the northwest quadrant of Georgia—nearby, though representing several distinct regions. The companies engaged in the cohort for nine months, beginning with comprehensive training on second chance employment and transitioning to targeted implementation support.

### Partners

The MI brought together several partners to lead the cohort, including the following:

- + **Envoy:** An expert in second chance implementation to provide strategic support and targeted technical assistance to cohort members;
- + **Dave's Killer Bread Foundation:** A training partner to provide and facilitate curriculum;
- + **Goodwill of Northern Georgia and Southern Rivers:** Our primary community partners to support employers on referrals, hiring and support of justice-impacted candidates; and
- + **Georgia Association of Manufacturers and Metro Atlanta Exchange:** Regional business partners to provide local content and connections and be positioned for longer term leadership of the local initiative.



### SPOTLIGHT #5: GEORGIA EMPLOYER COHORT

The Georgia pilot included a range of local and national manufacturing companies with a strong presence in the state. They shared sector alignment and a common interest in expanding opportunity and driving new talent pipelines:

1. Shaw Industries Group, Inc.
2. Georgia-Pacific LLC
3. Milliken & Company
4. CHEP
5. SRG Global



## Integrated Curriculum

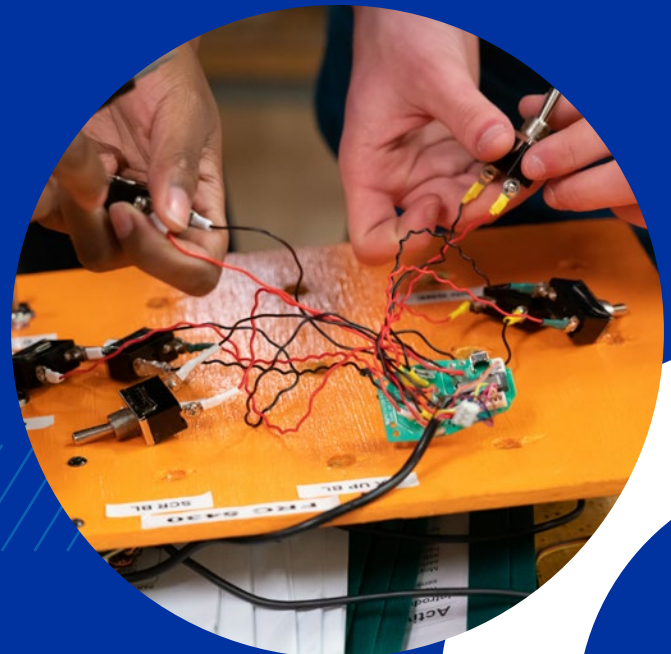
The Georgia initiative was anchored in the Dave's Killer Bread Foundation curriculum, which provided a strong foundation for employers and opportunities to engage with peer companies. Several practical connections were made during the learning sessions. In the section on recruiting candidates, the staff from both Goodwill Northern Georgia and Southern Rivers joined to discuss opportunities to collaborate on candidate vetting, readiness and long-term success. Additionally, the final session of the curriculum was held in-person at Goodwill and included employer presentations about their strategies, a tour of the Goodwill North Georgia job readiness facility and individual meetings between employers and local Goodwill job coaches to kick off their partnership.

## Implementation

As employers began to put their learnings into action, the MI hosted regular “office hours,” where employers could speak with the experts from Envoy to talk through HR policy updates, recruiting challenges and questions and communications strategy. Companies also received an implementation planning document to set near- and long-term goals and help the MI provide targeted support based on their objectives and potential roadblocks they identified.

## Learnings from the Pilot

1. **Geographic proximity is important.** It is optimal to have a specific region where participating employers are located based on transportation availability and local supportive services to gain efficiencies from local community partners.
2. **Foundational learning and practical implementation should happen concurrently** to keep employers centered on the ultimate goal of hiring and retaining talent.
3. **Human connection matters.** Employers consistently cited the chance to connect in-person with each other and the Goodwill partners as the most valuable aspect of the pilot.







## RESOURCES TO GET STARTED

Whether you are a manufacturer or a hub organization, your second chance initiative can benefit by bringing together other employers in your area to collaborate, identify local reentry and workforce development organizations that address shared skills gaps and organize cohort-based learning to share best practices as well as align local resources. Below are resources to get started. Contact the MI at [secondchance@nam.org](mailto:secondchance@nam.org) to learn more and get started.

### RESOURCES TO GET STARTED

#### Employer Education & Readiness

##### The Manufacturing Institute

- + [Second chance hiring training videos](#)

##### Society for Human Resources Management

- + [Getting Talent Back to Work](#)

##### Dave's Killer Bread Foundation

- + Dave Killer Bread Foundation's employer education program, used for the pilot and referenced in this toolkit, now lives in Jobs for the Future's Center for Economic Advancement. Visit [cjea.jff.org](http://cjea.jff.org) to learn more.
- + [Second Chance Playbook](#)

##### Reboot & Rebound

- + [Minnesota Fair Chance Toolkit](#)

##### Aspen Institute

- + [Rework Reentry Playbook](#)

##### Envoy

- + [Implementation Plan Template](#)

##### National Employment Law Project

- + [Fair Chance Hiring/Ban-the-Box Toolkit](#)
- + [Ban-the-Box Laws by State](#)

#### Examples of Regional Second Chance Initiatives

- + [Kentucky Comeback](#)
- + [Colorado](#)
- + [LA Fair Chance](#)
- + [Chicago](#)

#### Community Partners

##### The Manufacturing Institute

- + [Building Community Partnerships](#)
- + [Community Partnerships Scorecard](#)

##### Second Chance Business Coalition

- + [Community Partners Map](#)

##### National Workforce Reentry Coalition

- + [Fair Chance Hiring Employer Engagement Training Guide](#)

#### Content Experts

- + [Envoy](#)
- + [National Workforce Reentry Collaborative](#)

#### Case-Making & Engagement

##### The Manufacturing Institute

- + [Second Chance Initiative Resource Guide](#)

##### Second Chance Business Coalition

- + [The Business Case for Second Chance Employment](#)
- + [Onramps Guide](#)

##### Jeffrey Korzenik

- + [Untapped Talent](#)

##### Envoy

- + [From Pilot to Companywide Strategy with Ken Kuwamura, Union Pacific](#)
- + [Employee Retention and Culture Building with Joe DeLoss](#)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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