

SECOND CHANCES

The Benefits of Hiring
Returning Citizens



KHALIL
OSIRIS

Second Chances The Benefits of Hiring Returning Citizens

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Second Chances: The Benefits of Hiring Returning
Citizens

by Khalil Osiris

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Second Chances

The Benefits of Hiring Returning Citizens

Other works by Khalil Osiris:

Psychology of Incarceration: A Distortion of the
State of Belonging

A Freedom That Comes From Within

Second Chances
The Benefits of Hiring Returning Citizens

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Testimonial

Khalil Osiris is an exceptionally captivating speaker. His story is true, raw, and emotional. He ties it back to the audience and helps us become the best version of ourselves. Khalil is a terrific orator!

Here's an [excerpt](#) of Khalil speaking to prove my point.

Roy Baladi
Executive Director
[Jobs for Humanity](#)

Second Chances The Benefits of Hiring Returning Citizens

Introduction

Imagine a world where everyone is given a second chance to rebuild their lives, contribute to society, and make a positive difference.

Welcome to "Second Chances: The Benefits of Hiring Returning Citizens". I'm Khalil Osiris, the author of this eBook. My journey from a 20-year prison sentence to a successful professional is what inspired me to write this book. I'm one among the staggering 80 million Americans with a criminal record.

This ebook serves as an eye-opener, a call to action for businesses to consider the untapped potential in hiring returning citizens like myself, backed by empirical evidence. By giving us a second chance, you're not just doing good; you're doing good business.

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I believe that:

- Everyone deserves a second chance: Past mistakes don't define one's future. Offering opportunities to returning citizens promotes inclusivity and compassion in our community.
- Hiring returning citizens is a win-win: Businesses tap into untapped talent and foster diversity, loyalty, and gratitude in their workforce. By providing opportunities, businesses make a positive impact while boosting their bottom line.
- Empathy and understanding are key: Cultivating empathy and understanding is crucial for embracing second chances. Recognizing the challenges faced by returning citizens creates a supportive environment for growth and success.

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- Evidence-based hiring practices reduce bias: This eBook provides readers with concrete data and real-life stories that demonstrate the positive impact of second chances in hiring returning citizens
- Transformation is possible: My journey from a 20-year prison sentence to professional success showcases the transformative power of second chances. With the right support and opportunities, anyone can turn their life around.

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The Impact of Hiring Returning Citizens



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The decision to hire returning citizens has a profound and lasting impact on individuals, communities, and the economy alike. By providing stable employment, businesses can help break the cycle of poverty and crime that often plagues justice impacted individuals.

Furthermore, hiring returning citizens can contribute to economic growth by tapping into a diverse and skilled workforce that may have previously been overlooked due to their criminal backgrounds.

JPMorgan Chase, for example, has demonstrated its commitment to leveling the playing field for all new hires, including formerly incarcerated individuals, by “banning the box” and actively supporting legislation that helps more people access rewarding careers in financial services.

Returning citizens are known to be highly motivated, often taking on extra shifts and going the extra mile compared to those without a criminal record. This dedication stems from their gratitude for the opportunity they have been given and their determination to overcome their past.

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By hiring returning citizens, businesses can benefit from their hard work, loyalty, and productivity while also making a positive impact on society.

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty and Crime

Second chance hiring, also known as second chance employment, plays a crucial role in breaking the cycle of poverty and crime by providing returning citizens with opportunities to rebuild their lives and contribute to society.

With an alarming 27 percent unemployment rate among justice-involved individuals, partly due to the requirement to disclose criminal records during the hiring process, it is evident that these individuals face significant barriers in securing stable employment. By offering them a chance to work, businesses can help put tens of millions of returning citizens on the path to a brighter future.

Google has taken an inspiring initiative in June 2022; it established a fund worth \$4 million for non-profit organizations. This funding is used to provide digital skills courses to justice-involved people, helping them improve their job market readiness.

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Programs like these not only provide education and resources to returning citizens, but also raise awareness about their potential as valuable employees and contributing members of society.

Boosting the Economy

By actively hiring returning citizens, businesses have the remarkable opportunity to make significant contributions to economic growth. Firstly, by providing job opportunities to individuals who may face challenges in finding employment due to their criminal records, businesses can help combat the issue of unemployment on both an individual and societal level. This in turn promotes social inclusion and fosters a sense of belonging within communities.

Secondly, embracing this pool of talent allows businesses to tap into a diverse and skilled workforce. The unique perspectives and experiences that returning citizens bring can lead to a more innovative and well-rounded organization. By capitalizing on this diversity, businesses can enhance their ability to navigate through a rapidly changing economy and ultimately achieve long-term success.

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When businesses create an environment that welcomes and supports returning citizens, not only do they contribute to individual growth and success but also to overall societal well-being. By promoting reintegration and providing career opportunities, we can pave the way for increased productivity, improved quality of life, and ultimately, a stronger economy for all.

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The Business Advantages of Second Chance Hiring



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Companies that embrace second chance hiring can experience numerous benefits, such as higher employee retention rates, access to untapped talent, and a more inclusive company culture.

Returning citizens are often highly motivated and loyal, resulting in lower turnover rates and increased productivity. Furthermore, by hiring returning citizens, businesses can tap into a diverse talent pool that may have been overlooked due to their criminal backgrounds.

In addition to these benefits, government financial incentives through such programs as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), the Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act, and the Federal Bonding Program can make hiring and training justice-involved citizens more cost-effective.

By capitalizing on these incentives and the advantages of hiring returning citizens, businesses can create a more successful and productive workplace.

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Higher Retention Rates

One of the most significant benefits of hiring returning citizens is their higher retention rates.

Their appreciation of the opportunity they have been given and their determination to overcome their past make them highly loyal, motivated, and more likely to stay with the team.

In fact, Verizon's data reveals that second-chance hires are incredibly dedicated, grateful for the chance they have been given, and performing exceptionally well. Reduced turnover costs are an essential advantage for businesses, as employee turnover can be expensive and time-consuming.

By hiring returning citizens, businesses can not only save on these costs, but also build a more stable and committed workforce that contributes to the company's success.

Access to Untapped Talent

Second chance hiring allows businesses, such as those in the Second Chance Business Coalition, to access a diverse pool of talent that may have been overlooked due to their criminal backgrounds.

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By embracing returning citizens, businesses can unlock the potential of a workforce with valuable skills and unique perspectives that can help them grow and succeed.

Accessing untapped talent has several exciting benefits, including addressing talent shortages, contributing to greater diversity hiring, improving company image and reputation, gaining access to high-quality talent, raising awareness of accessibility and inclusivity, and decreasing skill shortages.

By tapping into this talent pool, businesses can strengthen their workforce and enhance their competitive edge in the next labor market.

Building an Inclusive Company Culture

By hiring returning citizens, companies can foster an inclusive and supportive work environment that values diversity and equal opportunity.

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Actively promoting equal opportunities for all employees, celebrating diversity, and offering support and resources to returning citizens can help businesses build a more inclusive company culture.

Fair chance hiring practices, such as banning the box and conducting individualized assessments, can provide returning citizens with a much-needed opportunity to compete for jobs and demonstrate their worth.

By implementing these practices, businesses can create a welcoming and supportive environment where all employees, regardless of their past, can thrive and succeed.

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Government Programs &
Incentives for Second
Chance Employers



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To encourage the hiring of returning citizens, the government offers attractive tax breaks, reduced insurance premiums, and other financial incentives that help make hiring and training justice-involved citizens more cost-effective.

These programs and incentives not only support the reintegration of returning citizens into the workforce, but also provide businesses with financial benefits that can contribute to their overall success.

In the following sections, we will discuss three key government programs and incentives that can help businesses benefit from second chance hiring: the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), the Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act, and the Federal Bonding Program.

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Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit available to employers who hire individuals from certain targeted groups, including returning citizens who face significant barriers to employment. By taking advantage of the WOTC, businesses can save money on taxes while making a positive impact on their community by providing employment opportunities to those in need.

To apply for the WOTC, employers need to submit the necessary forms to the IRS. By participating in this program, businesses can not only enjoy financial benefits, but also contribute to a more inclusive and prosperous society by offering opportunities to individuals who may have been overlooked in the past.

Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act

The Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act is designed to provide employers with a remarkable opportunity to benefit from a payroll tax exemption.

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This exempts them from paying taxes on wages given to qualified individuals who have been jobless for a minimum of 60 days. By embracing this tax incentive, businesses are encouraged to hire and retain returning citizens, fostering long-term job prospects and successful integration into the workforce.

By actively participating in the HIRE Act Program, businesses have the chance to both save money on payroll taxes and enhance their overall profitability. At the same time, they are extending a valuable opportunity to returning citizens, enabling them to secure employment and achieve financial independence.

Federal Bonding Program

The Federal Bonding Program offers employers a free safeguard against potential employee dishonesty or financial losses in the form of fidelity bonds. These bonds, which can be up to \$5,000 with no deductible, provide a secure start in the first six months of a new employee's employment.

This program is available to employers who are committed to providing returning citizens who have been convicted of a crime with a second chance.

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By participating in the Federal Bonding Program, businesses can decrease their risk of hiring returning citizens from prison while also enjoying financial security and peace of mind.

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Collaborating with Jobs for Humanity & Second Chance Advocate Organizations



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Collaborating with organizations like Jobs for Humanity and second chance advocate organizations can provide employers with valuable resources, training, and support for hiring returning citizens. These organizations help businesses understand the benefits of second chance hiring and best practices for effective implementation.

Partnering with these organizations allows employers to access job training, support services, networking, and resource sharing opportunities. Such collaborations not only successfully reintegrate returning citizens into the workforce but also foster a more inclusive and prosperous society.

Jobs for Humanity: Returning Citizens Employer Training

Jobs for Humanity offers employer training programs that help businesses understand the benefits and best practices of second chance hiring.

These training programs provide guidance on creating an inclusive hiring process for returning citizens, ensuring that they are given a fair chance to compete for jobs based on their qualifications and skills, and effectively hiring people with diverse backgrounds.

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Participating in these training programs allows businesses to learn how to effectively hire and support returning citizens. It also benefits the community and economy, fostering a more successful and productive workplace where all employees have the opportunity to thrive.

Job Training and Support Services

Partnering with job training and support service organizations can help returning citizens develop the skills and resources needed for successful employment.

These organizations provide invaluable resources and unwavering support to help returning citizens create a brighter future for themselves.

Training, other education programs, and resources can provide formerly incarcerated people, also known as returning citizens, with the tools they need to start and expand their own businesses.

By collaborating with these organizations, businesses not only support the reintegration of previously incarcerated people into the workforce, but also contribute to the growth and success of their own company.

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Networking and Resource Sharing

Networking and resource sharing among employers, advocacy groups, and returning citizens can facilitate connections and promote successful reintegration into the workforce.

Employers can stay connected and share resources through online platforms, job fairs, and other events. They can also work together on projects and initiatives, and share useful resources such as job postings, training materials, and more.

By actively participating in networking and resource sharing, business leaders can not only find talented returning citizens for job openings, but also help returning citizens locate employment opportunities and access resources that can help them successfully transition back into the workforce.

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Implementing Fair Chance Hiring Practices



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Implementing fair chance hiring practices, such as banning the box and conducting individualized assessments, can help businesses create a more equitable and inclusive hiring process for returning citizens.

These practices not only provide returning citizens with a much-needed opportunity to compete for jobs and demonstrate their worth, but also contribute to a more successful and productive workplace.

By embracing fair chance hiring practices, businesses can ensure that they are making the most advantageous decision for their company while also making a positive impact on society by offering opportunities to individuals who may have been overlooked in the past.

Joining a fair chance business coalition can further support these efforts and create a network of like-minded companies.

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Banning the Box

Banning the box on job applications refers to the movement and policies that aim to remove the checkbox that asks applicants about their last criminal conviction or history. The goal is to give individuals with criminal records a chance to demonstrate their qualifications first, without the stigma of their past convictions.

This movement has been enacted in several states across the United States to ensure everyone has a fair chance to get a job.

By banning the box, businesses can provide returning citizens with an opportunity to be considered based on their qualifications and skills. For example, Verizon has welcomed 60% of the people with criminal records who applied to the company, offering them jobs.

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Conducting Individualized Assessments

Conducting individualized assessments is an effective way to ensure fair hiring decisions. It involves reviewing past criminal conduct on a case-by-case basis to give applicants a chance to demonstrate their qualifications for the job.

This process allows employers to make informed decisions by considering the specific circumstances and relevance of the former criminal record and history to the job.

By conducting individualized assessments, employers can ensure that they are making the most advantageous decision for their business while also further public safety and helping to combat the stigma associated with hiring returning citizens.

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Conclusion

Second chance hiring offers numerous benefits for businesses, communities, and the economy as a whole. By hiring returning citizens, businesses can enjoy higher retention rates, access untapped talent, and foster an inclusive company culture. Government programs and incentives, such as the WOTC, HIRE Act, and Federal Bonding Program, further encourage second chance hiring. Collaborating with organizations like Jobs for Humanity and implementing fair value second chance hiring practices can help create a more equitable and inclusive hiring process for returning citizens. By giving these individuals a second chance, we can create a more prosperous and compassionate society for all.

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Frequently Asked Questions

What are the benefits of hiring returning citizens?

Hiring returning citizens can provide employers with a highly dedicated and committed workforce. These individuals are often eager to make the most of their second chance, which can translate into high levels of motivation and productivity in the workplace.

How can second chance hiring lead to higher employee retention rates?

Second chance hiring can provide a motivated, extremely loyal and grateful employee with an opportunity for growth, leading to lower turnover rates and increased productivity.

This can be beneficial for both the employer and the employee. Employers can benefit from having a more experienced and dedicated employee, while the employee can benefit from having a second chance to prove themselves and gain valuable work experience.

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Why are small businesses important for returning citizens?

Small businesses offer valuable opportunities for returning citizens. They often provide supportive work environments where returning citizens can showcase their skills, rebuild their professional identities, and contribute positively to the business.

What government programs and incentives are available for second chance employers?

Federal incentives such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act, and Federal Bonding Program make it easier for businesses to give returning citizens a second chance.

These incentives provide employers with tax credits, wage subsidies, and bonding insurance to help offset the cost of hiring and training returning citizens. This helps to reduce the risk associated with hiring individuals with criminal records and encourages employers to give them a second chance.

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How can businesses collaborate with job training and support service organizations to help returning citizens succeed?

Businesses can collaborate with job training and support service organizations like Jobs for Humanity to provide resources, training, and support to returning citizens, enabling them to develop the skills necessary for successful employment.

These organizations can help returning citizens gain access to job opportunities, develop the skills needed to succeed in the workplace, and provide support to ensure their success. They can also provide mentorship and guidance to help returning citizens transition back into the workforce.

By collaborating with these organizations, businesses can establish meaningful partnerships and work together towards common goals.

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Book Bonus! Employer
Training for Hiring
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Meet your trainer, Khalil Osiris

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1. Who is considered a returning citizen?



“Returning citizen” and “justice impacted individual” are terms used to describe people who have been impacted by the criminal justice system.

These terms reflect a positive and holistic understanding, highlighting their potential for redemption and meaningful participation in society.

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Poverty pre-incarceration

The median pre-incarceration income of people in state prisons is \$19,185 and federal prisons is \$25,844 per year. This is significantly lower than the median household income of \$67,521 in the United States.

Unemployment post-incarceration

Returning citizens have difficulty finding employment after they are released from prison keeping them in poverty. This is due to a number of factors, including a criminal record, lack of education, and lack of job skills.

80 million Americans have a criminal record That's 655 people per 100,000 residents, the highest rate in the world. Among unemployed individuals, the statistics reveal that 67% of Black men, 58% of Hispanic men, and 65% of white men have been arrested by age 35. These findings suggest that while racism can impact hiring decisions, discrimination based on criminal records may have an even greater impact.

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So many excel when given a second chance. For example:

- Robert Downey Jr, Academy Award Nominee
- Les Brown, Politician & Motivation Speaker
- Martha Stewart, Businesswoman
- Shelley Winner, Sales Exec at Microsoft
- Snoop Dogg, World Renowned Rapper
- Marcus Samuelsson, World Renowned Chef
- Nelson Mandela, President of South Africa

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2. What are the top 3 challenges they face and their solutions?



1. Finding stable employment

Problem: Many employers are hesitant to hire people with criminal records, even if the crime was non-violent and happened years ago.

This can make it difficult for formerly incarcerated people to find a job and support themselves and their families.

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Solution: Make it explicit that you welcome returning citizens in your organization. Further, offer a inclusion training like this one to your employees.

2. Securing Housing

Problem: Many landlords are hesitant to rent to people with criminal records, even if they have a good credit history and can afford the rent. This can make it difficult for formerly incarcerated people to find a safe and affordable place to live.

Solution: Organizations like Corporation for Supportive Housing, Community Solutions, and The Fortune Society, are nonprofit organizations that create and preserve affordable housing for people with special needs.

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3. Rebuilding social connections

Problem: Returning Citizens often face social isolation. They may have lost touch with friends and family while they were incarcerated, and they may find it difficult to make new friends after they are released. This can lead to loneliness, depression, and other mental health problems.

Solution: Businesses can develop mentorship programs to foster positive relationships.

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3. What stigmas do employers have when hiring returning citizens?



1. Stereotyping

Problem: People often stereotype people with criminal histories as being dangerous, untrustworthy, and lazy.

This can lead to making assumptions about a person's character based on their history, rather than getting to know them as an individual.

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Solution: Be aware of it. Take some time to think about your own beliefs and attitudes about people with criminal histories. Once you are aware of your biases, you can start to work on overcoming them.

2. Fear

Problem: People may be afraid of people with criminal histories, especially if they have been the victim of a crime themselves. This fear can lead to people avoiding people with criminal histories or treating them with suspicion.

Solution: Get to know the person as an individual. Don't make assumptions about a person based on their criminal history. Get to know them as an individual and learn about their strengths and weaknesses.

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3. Judgment

Problem: People may judge people with criminal histories for their past mistakes. This judgment can make it difficult for people with criminal histories to move on with their lives and find employment, housing, and other opportunities.

Solution: Be respectful and non-judgmental. Treat everyone with respect, regardless of their background. Avoid making assumptions or stereotypes about them. On the contrary, be supportive of them and offer them encouragement.

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4. What skills and virtues are you like to find in returning citizens?



Skills that returning citizens likely develop as a result of their incarceration include:

Resilience: Returning citizens have often faced significant challenges in their lives, including incarceration.

This can lead to the development of resilience, which is the ability to bounce back from setbacks.

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Hard Skills: A returning citizen who has taken a carpentry class in prison may have developed the hard skills necessary to work as a carpenter.

Motivation: Returning citizens often have a strong motivation to succeed. They may have missed out on opportunities during their incarceration, and they may be eager to make up for lost time.

Discipline and Time Management: Incarceration requires a high degree of discipline. Returning citizens have often had to follow rules and schedules.

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5. Building an inclusive interview process



Should I know about their criminal history?

The best hiring process is blind. But be direct and honest. Put the candidate at ease.

Employers cannot refuse to hire someone because of their criminal history if the conviction is for a crime that is not related to the job, or if their conviction is more than seven years old. Interviewing without knowing the candidate's personal information is key to reducing bias.

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Let the candidate know if you are aware of their criminal history and that you are not asking about it because you are judging them. Explain that you are asking about it because you want to understand how it might impact their ability to do the job.

Best practices for an Inclusive Interview:

Ask candidates about accommodations that may be required to the interview schedule before work, during lunch, or after work. Start by building rapport.

Take some time to get to know the candidate. This will help them feel more comfortable, open, and honest during the interview.

The candidate may want to share their story with you. Listen with an open mind and without judgment.

Focus on their skills and experience. Don't let their criminal history overshadow their skills and experience.

Ask them about their qualifications and how they would be a good fit for the job.

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6. Reasonable accommodations they may need



Reasonable Accommodations

1. Technical Upskilling: when in prison, people don't have easy access the internet or computers. Providing them access with modern technologies we routinely use would be helpful.
2. Flexible work hours and Telework: Returning citizens may need flexible work hours to accommodate child care, transportation, or other obligations.
3. Workplace support: Returning citizens may need support from their employer, such as mentorship or counseling.

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7. Onboarding best practices



Follow these Onboarding Best Practices

- Be welcoming and supportive
- Provide clear expectations

- Provide training and development opportunities
- Be flexible with work arrangements
- Provide access to resources
- Be patient and understanding

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8. If you don't hire them, how can you still help?



Be understanding and compassionate. Returning citizens may have faced a lot of challenges in their lives, and they may be feeling vulnerable. Let them know that you are there to help.

Be patient. It may take some time for returning citizens to adjust to their new life. Be patient and don't expect them to be perfect right away.

Be positive. Returning citizens may need some encouragement. Be positive and supportive, and let them know that you believe in them.

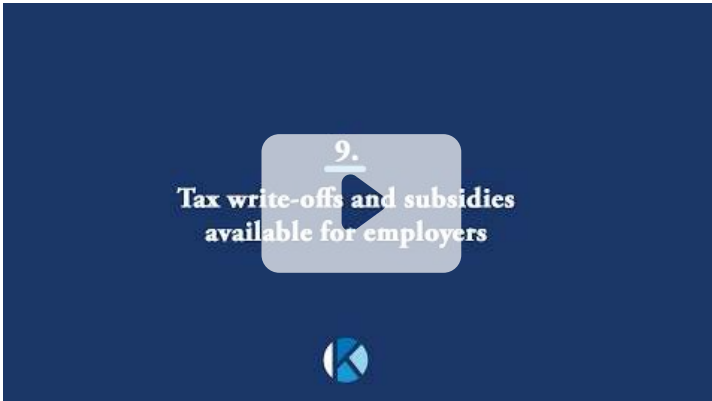
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Be a resource. Offer to help the person find a job that is a better fit for their skills and experience. You can also offer to provide them with feedback on their resume or interview skills.

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9. Tax credits and subsidies available to employers



Here are some of the federal tax breaks that are available to employers:

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC): The WOTC is a federal tax credit that is available to employers who hire individuals from certain targeted groups, including returning citizens.

The amount of the credit is equal to 40% of the first \$6,000 of wages paid to the individual during the first year of employment. For example, if an employer hires a returning citizen and pays them \$15,000 in wages during the first year of employment, the employer can claim a WOTC of \$3,600.

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The Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act for Small Businesses: The HIRE Act is a federal tax credit that is available to small businesses that hire new employees who have been unemployed for at least 60 days. The amount of the credit is equal to 50% of the first \$6,000 of wages paid to the new employee.

In addition, there are state tax breaks that can be leveraged. Some include:

California offers a tax credit of up to \$2,000 for employers who hire returning citizens.

Florida offers a tax credit of up to \$1,000 for employers who hire returning citizens who are also veterans.

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Illinois offers a tax credit of up to \$1,500 for employers who hire returning citizens who are also single parents.

New York offers a tax credit of up to \$2,500 for employers who hire returning citizens who are also members of a minority group.

Texas offers a tax credit of up to \$1,000 for employers who hire returning citizens who are also certified as homeless.

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Thank you for investing your time in understanding the benefits of second chance hiring. Your decision to read my book and watch my presentation is a significant step toward changing lives and empowering returning citizens like me. By reconsidering preconceived notions and offering opportunities, you have the power to create a ripple effect that restores futures, redeems lives, and strengthens communities. Don't underestimate the impact of your decision. Let's rewrite the story for millions of returning citizens and build a more inclusive society together.

If you liked my book, please take a couple of minutes to write a review on Amazon. Your feedback is highly appreciated.

Thank you!

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7. [Incarceration, criminal background checks, and employment in a low\(er\) crime society](#): This paper discusses the impact of incarceration and criminal background checks on employment.
8. [Federal Bonding Program](#): A U.S. Department of Labor program that provides fidelity bonding insurance for high-risk job seekers.
9. [Work Opportunity Tax Credit](#): A Federal tax credit available to employers who hire individuals from eligible target groups with significant barriers to employment.
10. [Fair Chance Business Pledge](#): A government initiative encouraging businesses to provide fair chances to all job applicants, including those with a past criminal record.

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11. **Ban the Box Campaign:** A campaign by the National Employment Law Project advocating for removing the check box that asks if applicants have a criminal record from hiring applications.

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Discover the transformative power of second chances with author Khalil Osiris as he explores the unique employment challenges faced by returning citizens. In "Second Chances: The Benefits of Hiring Returning Citizens," Osiris provides actionable solutions and valuable insights for employers, business leaders, and HR professionals interested in offering opportunities to returning citizens seeking a fresh start.

"Second Chances" offers practical solutions and serves as an indispensable reference for companies interested in hiring returning citizens. This step-by-step framework challenges biases and stigma, enabling companies to cultivate diversity and inclusivity while positively impacting lives and contributing to a safer society.



About the Author

Khalil Osiris is a pioneer and thought leader in education, restorative justice, and social impact. He authored *Psychology of Incarceration*, a widely taught curriculum in prisons and universities nationwide. With personal experience of incarceration, he provides valuable insights on the benefits of second chance hiring. Discover more at khalilosiris.com

