



Nominate a White House Champion of Change for Expanding Reentry Employment Opportunities

Source: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/03/19/nominate-white-house-champion-change-expanding-reentry-employment-opportunities>

The deadline for nominations is Friday, April 4, 2014 at noon.

Stable employment – like stable housing, family and community support, and access to substance abuse and mental health treatment – is critical to the rehabilitation, stability and successful reentry of individuals who have been incarcerated and are returning to our communities. Research shows that those who have been employed even for a year or less are far less likely to commit another crime. That is why the innovative work of local and state community leaders to help those with criminal records re-enter society with dignity and viable employment opportunities is so important. Their leadership is improving public safety and giving individuals who have paid their debt to society a real second chance to support their families and contribute to our economy.

For individuals who are returning to their communities and working hard to stay on the right track, limited access to employment can present insurmountable difficulties for them and their families, but the impact is even more far-reaching. For example, the potential effect on our economy and job growth is substantial. Individuals with criminal histories are thought to lower employment rates for men by 1.5 to 1.7 percentage points, resulting in a loss of output between \$57 and \$65 billion over the span of a year. The overall loss of productivity and purchasing power is a drag on our economy; so, if reentry fails, we all pay the price.

In light of this reality, and as part of its overarching efforts to restore the economy and get Americans back to work, the Administration is working to reduce barriers to employment for individuals with past criminal involvement, so that these individuals – once their debt is paid – can compete for appropriate work opportunities in order to support themselves and their families, pay their taxes, and contribute to the economy. For example, the Federal Interagency Reentry Council, chaired by Attorney General Eric Holder and comprised of 20 federal agencies, was launched in 2011 with one main goal – to make communities safer by facilitating successful reentry for the formerly incarcerated, including in the area of employment. The Department of Justice and the Department of Labor (DOL) have provided substantial funding under the Second Chance Act and Workforce Investment Act for workforce development and support services to the formerly incarcerated; and the Department of Education has implemented programming to support successful reentry from adult and juvenile correctional facilities into education, employment and community programs. And recently, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, DOL and the Office of Personnel Management have provided guidance to employers on how to navigate employment decisions involving job applicants with criminal

histories. Taken together, these developments provide important supports for those who have served their time and seek to re-join their communities as contributing citizens.

Today, we are asking you to help us identify and honor extraordinary individuals who are enabling employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals. These leaders will be invited to the White House to celebrate their accomplishments and showcase their actions to support stronger and safer communities. Please nominate a Champion of Change **by noon on Friday, April 4, 2014**. Nominees may include individuals who are:

- Providing job opportunities to individuals with a criminal record and/or creating and implementing model screening or hiring policies,
- Personally demonstrating an exemplary record of employment or entrepreneurial success after incarceration and in turn providing employment opportunities and mentorship to the reentry population,
- Creating effective education, training, mentoring and other transitional programs to help individuals with a criminal record improve employment outcomes,
- Advocating for policy and legislative changes that lead to increased employment opportunities for individuals with a criminal record; and/or
- Leveraging technology to increase access to employment-related reentry services or education and skills-building for individuals with a criminal record.

Click on the link below to submit your nomination (be sure to choose Reentry Employment Opportunities in the “Theme of Service” field of the nomination form).

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/champions/nominate>

We are looking forward to hosting this event and to highlighting the great work communities across the country are doing to advance the health, safety and well-being of the American people.

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