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LA County Launches Fair Chance Hiring Campaign to Raise Awareness of the Benefits of Hiring Justice-Involved Workers

(LOS ANGELES) — Today, members of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors joined business leaders and community partners to announce the launch of an awareness campaign to promote the Fair Chance Hiring Initiative, which encourages businesses to actively hire members of the justice-involved community.

“Today, we challenge employers to think outside the box when making their hiring decisions,” said Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, who authored the motion to establish the Fair Chance campaign. “Studies clearly show that hiring rehabilitated people with past records is a smart business move: they work harder, stay longer, and promote faster than other employees. LA County also offers incentives and support to businesses that hire individuals who have been justice-involved. Everyone deserves a fair chance to get back on their feet – and when they do, everyone benefits.”

As part of the campaign, business executives will be asked to sign the Fair Chance Hiring Pledge, which is a commitment to provide justice-involved individuals a fair chance to participate and to thrive in our economy by promoting fair chance hiring practices. The pledge is available at fairchance.lacounty.gov. Companies that sign the pledge will receive guidance from County Business Services Representatives who will work with them to recruit and keep qualified candidates. The County connects businesses to tax credits, training reimbursement, and other resources when they hire qualified workers who were once incarcerated.

“Hiring justice-involved individuals is not only good for business, but provides an opportunity to transform lives,” said Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. “Stable employment can help individuals reenter society with the tools they need to lead healthy and productive lives, leading to greater safety in our communities.”

The Fair Chance Hiring initiative is a key component of the County’s overall efforts to expand employment opportunities for justice-involved individuals and to reduce recidivism. Research shows that approximately one in three working-age Americans has a felony criminal record and up to 65 percent of individuals released from incarceration are unemployed a year after release.

“There is a great need for work opportunities among members of the reentry community,” said Vincent Bragg, who founded the advertising agency ConCreates after leaving prison. “Too many of us have been undervalued and overlooked because of complex circumstances. It is vital to have programs like this that can help move the needle toward meaningful change.”

“We have been hiring reentry individuals for several years and can attest to the dedication, reliability and incredible work ethic of our justice-involved employees,” said Ken Wiseman, Chief Workforce Development Officer at AMS Fulfillment. “It is great to see the County offering incentives to businesses that hire from this pool of qualified, talented people.”

The Fair Chance Hiring Campaign also seeks to raise awareness of the State’s Fair Chance Act, which went into effect in January 2018. The law generally prohibits businesses with more than five employees from asking about a job candidate’s criminal record before tendering a conditional job offer.
About LA County Fair Chance Hiring
The Countywide Fair Chance Hiring campaign is designed to raise awareness among businesses of the benefits of adopting Fair Chance Hiring practices. The campaign is a collaborative effort that includes multiple County Departments, under the leadership of the Board of Supervisors, as well as businesses and employers. Partners include: Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS), the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), the Probation Department, the Department of Human Resources (DHR), the Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR), the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce. To learn more, visit fairchance.lacounty.gov.