


Date: April 26, 2024

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: Teresa Chandler, Deputy City Manager 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Equity and Human Relations Commission Recommendations to Decrease Recidivism in the City of Long Beach**

During its March 6, 2024, meeting, the Equity and Human Relations Commission (EHRC) discussed recommendations to decrease recidivism in the City of Long Beach, focusing on workforce development. Additionally, the EHRC approved recommendations for the Mayor and City Council's review.

Please find the EHRC's recommendations to the Mayor and City Council enclosed below.

If you would like any further information regarding this communication, please contact Alanah Grant, Equity Officer, at (562) 570-6656 or Alanah.Grant@longbeach.gov.

ATTACHMENT

CC: DAWN MCINTOSH, CITY ATTORNEY
DOUGLAS P. HAUBERT, CITY PROSECUTOR
LAURA L. DOUD, CITY AUDITOR
APRIL WALKER, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
TERESA CHANDLER, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
MEREDITH REYNOLDS, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
GRACE YOON, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
TYLER BONANNO-CURLEY, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
KEVIN LEE, COMMUNITY INFORMATION OFFICER
MONIQUE DE LA GARZA, CITY CLERK
DEPARTMENT HEADS

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Commissioner

April 16, 2023

Honorable Mayor Richardson and Members of the City Council
City of Long Beach
411 W. Ocean Blvd, 11th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

Honorable Mayor Richardson, Members of Long Beach City Council,

The mission of the Equity and Human Relations Commission (EHRC) is to inspire and support social justice and equity in the City of Long Beach and foster mutual understanding and respect for all, with a vision that Long Beach is a just and equitable community, free of discrimination and violence, where all people are valued and have the resources to reach their full potential. It is in this context that the Equity and Human Relations Commission submits this letter and recommendations to reduce recidivism among justice-impacted residents, with a hope that our city continues to embrace values of justice, equity, respect, and dignity for all its residents.

Background

In September 2023, aligned with the [Racial Equity & Reconciliation Initiative's](#) Goal 2, Strategy 3: *Increase coordinated reentry networks to support formerly justice-involved individuals and reduce recidivism*, the EHRC convened an ad-hoc committee to explore solutions to decrease recidivism in the city of Long Beach. The ad-hoc committee convened community members with lived experiences and reentry serving organizations, such as Ronnie's House, that informed recommendations in the areas of employment and workforce development, housing, and mental health support. This letter is Part 1 of 3, focused on opportunities around employment and workforce development.

The Problem

The statistics by now are numbingly familiar. A quarter of the world's population behind bars is in the United States—though we comprise but five percent of the world's population. Today, Black and Latino people are overrepresented in the prison system due to systemic racism at every level of the criminal legal system, from policing to prosecution to sentencing¹. And while there have been efforts to reform the criminal justice system in recent years, mass

¹ <https://www.sentencingproject.org/reports/report-to-the-united-nations-on-racial-disparities-in-the-u-s-criminal-justice-system/>

incarceration's vast hold on public resources (costing \$30B per year), its imposition of financial burdens and the obstacles erected for justice-impacted individuals further erode economic and social buffers against crime, leading to high rates of recidivism.

The collateral consequences of a criminal conviction often amount to lifelong disadvantage, particularly for African Americans. In 2010, one in three (33%) African American adult men had a felony conviction on their record, compared to 13% of all adult men². Employers discriminate against job candidates who have criminal histories, especially against those who are Black. One study found that in 2017, nearly half of unemployed men had a criminal conviction³. In addition, nearly one-third of U.S. jobs require an occupational license, and many licensing boards bar or impose cumbersome obstacles for people with criminal records.

As of 2020, about 46% of offenders released in California are reconvicted within three years of release and even more are rearrested⁴. Limited re-entry support and barriers to securing steady employment and housing make it very challenging to break the cycle of incarceration. Without an ecosystem of support or the financial security to participate in workforce development pathways, many formerly incarcerated people return to criminal activity out of economic necessity as a means of survival.

Current Efforts

On January 1, 2018, the California Fair Chance Act, also known as the Ban the Box law, was enacted to address the issue of employment discrimination against individuals with criminal records. The law prohibits employers with five or more employees from asking job applicants about their criminal history until after a conditional offer has been made.

During the Summer of 2020, in response to the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis Police Officers, and the national public reckonings around racial injustice that followed, the City implemented the Framework for Racial Equity and Reconciliation (The Framework) and embarked on a listening tour to gather insights and solutions to make Long Beach a more just and equitable place. As a part of the initiative, a [reentry roundtable](#) was hosted in partnership with Ronnie's House to inform the reentry goals for The Framework.

In May 2022, as a part of The Framework, the Long Beach Health Department formed the Long Beach Reentry Advisory Council (LBRAC), whose mission is to establish and maintain solutions for recidivism reduction rooted in collaboration to create a system of accountability for community members, community-based organizations, educational systems, and government agencies. The LBRAC hosted their [inaugural symposium](#) in October 2022, focused on "Strengthening the Reentry Landscape".

On May 5, 2023, the Long Beach Department of Human Resources submitted a [memorandum](#) providing an overview of the Fair Chance Act, the City's current background check process, legal requirements, and potential actions that will be taken to help remove hiring barriers that

² Shannon, S. K. S., Uggen, C., Schnittker, J., Thompson, M., Wakefield, S., & Massoglia, M. (2017). The growth, scope, and spatial distribution of people with felony records in the United States, 1948–2010. *Demography*, 54(5), 1795–1818. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-017-0611-1>.

³ Bushway, S. D., Cabrerros, I., Welburn Paige, J., Schwam, D., & Wenger, J. B. (2022). Barred from employment—more than half of unemployed men in their 30s had a criminal history of arrest. *Science Advances*, 8(7). <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abj6992>.

⁴ <https://www.bsa.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2018-113.pdf>

may prevent qualified candidates from being considered for employment due to prior offenses. Additionally, Human Resources engaged the LBRAC on opportunities to enhance Fair Chance Hiring Initiatives including steps to better market the City as a Fair Chance Employer and building partnerships with reentry organizations to promote City job opportunities.

In September 2023, the LBRAC hosted a [series of symposia](#) focused on issues and challenges faced by community members after being released from jail or prison. Topics included HR Professionals and the Reentry Workforce, Reentry Housing Services and a Reentry Service Provider Forum.

Most recently, in Jan 2024, the City announced a [proposal](#) to explore a Civil Service Reform Charter Amendment that would be decided by Long Beach voters in November 2024. While the proposed charter amendment does not explicitly include fair chance hiring criteria, there is an opportunity to establish fair chance hiring pathways and principles into the preference goals of the proposed amendments.

Recommendations

Building off the efforts of the Long Beach Reentry Advisory Council, the EHRC recommends the following steps to strengthen the ability for justice-impacted individuals to be supported in finding gainful employment, a foundational component to successfully reintegrating back into the community after incarceration:

1. **Establish an Office of Violence Prevention** to expand violence prevention and reentry services, policies and protocols and oversee the implementation of the recommendations below.
2. **Establish a Community-based Reentry Collaborative and Resource Center** to support a more coordinated and connected reentry ecosystem within the city of Long Beach and to create a safe, one-stop location for reentry with services related to mental health, housing, substance abuse, legal services, counseling, advocacy/leadership development, and workforce development.
3. **Adopt a Fair Chance Ordinance** that affirms fair chance hiring pathways and principles within the localized preference, educational preference, and apprenticeship preference goals of the Civil Service Charter Amendment.
4. **Request a status update from the Department of Human Resources** on the progress of the implementation of the Fair Chance Hiring Act including data on number of applications received from previously incarcerated individuals, conditional offers made, revoked offers, and how hiring discretion has been utilized in the context of the Fair Chance Act.
5. **Implement a Fair Chance Hiring Challenge** to incentivize local businesses to hire justice-impacted community members and to educate employers on the benefits of hiring justice-impacted individuals.

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6. **Promote Inclusive Entrepreneurship by removing barriers to contracting** found in City Contracts Clause 1 & 2 (see appendix) to give justice-impacted entrepreneurs an equal opportunity to compete for City contracts.
7. **Partner with Philanthropic Institutions to expand the City's Guaranteed Basic Income program** to support justice-impacted individuals who are participating in vocational training programs.
8. Partner with federal, state, and local partners to **expand sustainable, long-lasting reentry and violence prevention funding** to support the recommendations above.

As stated in Article 8, Section 2 of the Commission's bylaws, the Commission requests staff to transmit their recommendations to the Mayor and City Council with the following statement, and thus, it is also being transmitted.

The Commission kindly requests staff to transmit the written recommendation with the following message to the City Manager:

- I. A request to the City Manager that the Commission's recommendation to the City Council is transmitted to the City Council for its consideration within thirty (30) days or sooner after the recommendation is adopted and/or finalized; and*
- II. A request that the original recommendation from the Commission is transmitted to the City Manager unaltered and if staff and/or the City Manager has a recommendation that is different from that of the Commission, the staff and/or City Manager recommendation is presented to the City Council separately for its consideration.*

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Clauses

Contract Clause 1 (updated in 2022)

Each Proposer must include in its proposal a complete disclosure of any alleged significant prior or ongoing contract failures, any civil or criminal litigation or investigation pending which involves the Proposer or in which the Proposer has been judged guilty or liable. Failure to comply with the terms of this provision will disqualify any proposal. The City reserves the right to reject any proposal based upon the Proposer's prior history with the City or with any other party, which documents, without limitation, unsatisfactory performance, adversarial or contentious demeanor, significant failure(s) to meet contract milestones or other contractual failures.

Contract Clause 2 (updated in 2022)

OWNERSHIP OF DATA. All materials, information and data prepared, developed, assembled or recorded by Contractor or furnished to CONTRACTOR in connection with this Agreement, including but not limited to documents, estimates, calculations, studies, maps, graphs, charts, computer disks, computer source documentation, samples, models, reports, summaries, drawings, designs, notes, plans, information, material, memorandum, binary files (e.g. user-submitted attachments), all tabular data, data gathered/generated during the course of CONTRACTOR providing end-user support, helpline phone recordings, and grant applicant/beneficiary information ("Data") shall be the exclusive property of City. Data shall be given to City, in a form identified by City, and City shall have the unrestricted right to use and disclose the Data in any manner and for any purpose without payment of further compensation to CONTRACTOR. Copies of Data may be retained by CONTRACTOR but CONTRACTOR warrants that Data shall not be made available to any person or entity for use without the prior approval of City. This warranty shall survive termination of this Agreement.