TECHEQUITY COLLABORATIVE

SYSTEM RESET:

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

SYSTEM RESET

System Reset is a guide for tech companies to recruit, hire and retain people returning from incarceration.

TECHEQUITY COLLABORATIVE

BACKGROUND

At TechEquity Collaborative, our mission is to mobilize tech workers and companies to advance structural change that addresses economic inequity at its roots. We do this in three ways:

EDUCATION

We create educational spaces in which the tech community can deepen their understanding of structural inequities, the history behind them, and the solutions we can enact together.

PUBLIC POLICY

We advocate for public policy that addresses structural inequity in our economy. We work on issues that have a nexus with tech and the economy, with a focus on housing and workforce & labor.

CORPORATE PRACTICE

We research, develop, and promote equitable corporate practices that build equity and opportunity in the broader economy.

As part of that mission, we developed System Reset. System Reset began as a conversation between tech companies and community organizations, who were eager to find ways for returning people to benefit from the massive growth and opportunities created by the tech industry.

A working group of tech and community stakeholders identified significant barriers to hiring formerly incarcerated employees in tech companies. Research showed existing tools and frameworks for successful hiring and retention of returning people are not tailored to the tech sector. Existing guides target specific industries such as food service or advanced manufacturing. To provide the tech sector with relevant tools to support the hiring of formerly incarcerated job seekers, we developed a tech-focused System Reset Implementation Guide.

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

The System Reset Guide uses people-first language to align with the goals and leadership of activists within the movement. Throughout the guide we use the term 'returning people' to discuss those impacted by the carceral system. In some areas we use the terms 'people with conviction histories' or 'previously incarcerated individuals or employees' to provide specificity about a specific statistic or experience. We know that no term is perfect or agreed upon by all leaders and activists working within this movement. Our language is intentional and guided by the steps below, as provided in an Open Letter written by Eddie Ellis the Founder of The Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions.

Be conscious of the language you use. Remember that each time you speak, you convey powerful words, pictures, and images.

Stop using the terms offender, felon, prisoner, inmate, and convict. Substitute the word PEOPLE for these other negative terms.

Encourage your friends, family, and colleagues to use positive language in their speech, writing, publications, and electronic communications.

In addition, we are grateful to those who have advised and helped to shape language within the System Reset Guide; including Bill Murphy at Slack, Root & Rebound, and the readings and resources available through The Marshall Project and Underground Scholars at Berkeley.

OVERVIEW

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The System Reset Implementation Guide illustrates how systemic racism affects employment and incarceration, which intersect to exclude Black and brown people from the workplace. This guide provides a path for tech companies to disrupt this dynamic and develop a plan for both hiring returning people and developing a supportive and welcoming culture.

Hiring formerly incarcerated people helps reduce economic inequities that impact communities of color in particular, caused in part by mass incarceration. More inclusive hiring and retention practices bolster anti-racist statements with concrete results.

While the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has upended the corporate status quo, research suggests that companies that adopt System Reset will also increase the efficiency of their people operations by expanding a limited labor pool, increasing retention, improving innovation and resilience efforts through increased diversity, and potentially benefiting from governmental financial incentives.

Importantly, some companies have already begun to take initiative in increasing pipelines for returning people who are interested in technical roles. Early adopters have forged pathways for people to redefine their lives after incarceration, partnering with prison computer programming training programs like The Last Mile, re-entry organizations such as Code Tenderloin and boot camps and programs like LaunchCode and Next Chapter.

We hope the addition of the System Reset Implementation Guide will amplify these early actions, spur the proliferation of programs and opportunities across classifications and job types, and increase equity in the tech industry. Our goal is to build a tech company ecosystem that views returning people as any other candidate or employee—across a variety of roles and job types. Expanding the scope of tech company hiring and retention helps ensure that there is meaningful, widespread, and sustainable impact for tech companies and the community.

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JOHN JONES III

Previous Director of Community and Political Engagement, Just Cities

> " *"It's one thing to know or to think 'okay, they got this question on the application, they're not going to give me a chance.' But it's something else to discover that that was actually sanctioned by our society. Why are we upholding things that really preclude a person like me from having an opportunity?"*

INCARCERATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND SYSTEMIC RACISM IN THE UNITED STATES

Over the last 40 years, the carceral system in the United States has expanded at an exponential rate—greater than any other period in the nation's history—increasing 500% since the 1970s.[1] Despite modest declines, the United States still has the highest incarceration rates in the world.[2] Today, the U.S. correctional system spans nearly 7 million, including 2.3 million people incarcerated in jails, state, and federal prisons—and an additional 4.4 million people on probation or parole.[3]

State correctional costs have quadrupled over the past two decades with over $60 billion spent annually.[4] The rise of incarceration is due to a variety of factors, including changes in sentencing laws and over-policing in Black and brown communities—not an increase in crime rates or policing. The change in sentencing laws increased the likelihood of a person being sent to prison and increased lengths of prison terms.[5]

This section examines the specific impact of mass incarceration on communities of color and the ways in which the stigma of a criminal record bars people from meaningful employment and other opportunities to re-enter society. As a result of mass incarceration, the United States has created a new caste of second-class citizens and social conditions that Michelle Alexander referred to in 2012 as "the New Jim Crow."[6]

THE IMPACT OF MASS INCARCERATION ON COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

The changes in sentencing laws over the past 40 years disproportionately impacted communities of color, a fact reflected in the racial disparities within the corrections system.[7] Today, over 60% of incarcerated people are people of color, with Black men six times as likely to be incarcerated as white men, and Hispanic men 2.7 times as likely as white men to be incarcerated. So significant is this disparity that the U.S. Department of Justice estimates that one in three Black men born in 2001 will be incarcerated in their lifetimes, a figure that rises to 60% among high school dropouts.[8]

The economic impacts of incarceration are devastating. Hourly wages of people who have experienced incarceration, compared to those who have not, fall by 11 percent. The total number of weeks worked, annually, is reduced by nine weeks, and annual earnings decrease by 40 percent. By the time a person who has been incarcerated turns 48, they will have lost $179,000 that they would have earned in wages if they had never served time.[9]

Incarceration also blocks access to credit markets and lending institutions; since people are unable to pay bills while imprisoned, their credit scores are severely impacted. Formerly incarcerated people are therefore less likely to build wealth and to experience economic mobility: just two percent of returning people who began in the bottom 20 percent of the economy made it to the top 20 percent twenty years later, compared to 15 percent of people who were never incarcerated.[10]

The economic consequences of incarceration reverberate to the family members and the broader communities of those incarcerated. More than half of all incarcerated people were the primary sources of income in their families and this economic support is eliminated once their sentence begins.[11] Incarceration has been shown to reduce household assets by 64 percent and increase household debt by 85 percent.[12]

Furthermore, because family income is so closely tied to economic mobility, the economic consequences of incarceration are intergenerational. Parental incarceration also impacts cognitive and non-cognitive outcome measures in children, including higher instances of mental and physical health problems and gaps in school achievement.[13] The racial disparity is obvious, with one in nine Black children and one in 28 Hispanic children having an incarcerated parent compared to one in 57 white children with an incarcerated parent.[14] Incarceration rates are geographically concentrated in underresourced communities of color and research has shown that high levels of imprisonment in these areas impact relationships, family connections, housing, and more.

JAY JORDAN

Vice President of Alliance for Safety and Justice

" *"We are essentially saying that a large portion, disproportionately Black and brown people, will permanently be disenfranchised in this country and it will affect their kids. Doesn't make any sense."*

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INCARCERATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Each year, 600,000 people are released from state and federal prison, eager to work.[15] Ninety-three percent of all recently released individuals are either employed or actively looking for work, compared to 84 percent of the general population.[16] Yet people released from prison encounter steep barriers to employment that all but prohibit their successful transition to society.

First, while many people who enter prison have a background with technical training and jobs, some do not. Due to a dearth of professional development resources while incarcerated, many people leave prison undertrained and underprepared to enter the 21st century workforce. However, research shows that when available, incarcerated people will utilize training opportunities to improve their job skills and education.[17]

Second, legal and regulatory restrictions prohibit people with conviction histories from obtaining occupational licenses or employment in specific roles. The National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Incarceration, a database established by the American Bar Association, estimates that up to 10,000 such laws dealing with occupational licenses exist throughout the country.

Finally, when returning people are not expressly barred from employment, they face the compounded stigma of racism. In 2003, a study found that returning people are one-

half to one-third as likely to receive initial consideration from employers when compared with equivalent applicants without criminal records. Perhaps most striking, the results show that even Black people without a criminal record fare no better—and perhaps worse—than do white people with criminal records.[18]

Today, little progress has been made in lowering unemployment rates for returning people. The national unemployment rate for formerly incarcerated people is about 27 percent— higher than the worst years of the Great Depression. These outcomes are exacerbated by race and gender: formerly incarcerated Black women are unemployed at rates of 47 percent.[19] Furthermore, when employment does become available, it is often in the form of the lowest-paid, most insecure position with substandard workplace conditions.

IMPACT OF EMPLOYMENT ON RECIDIVISM

The difficulty of re-entering the labor market affects the degree to which people can successfully transition to society after incarceration. Gainful employment is necessary for one's material well-being, the avoidance of poverty, and supporting children and family.

Individuals without the opportunity to work are more likely to recidivate. Research by the Bureau of Justice Statistics shows that nearly half (44 percent) of all individuals released from prison are arrested in the first year after release. An additional study focused on California's prison system has shown that a large percentage of recidivism is due to parole violations and administrative and technical violations—resulting in an average of six out of ten people admitted to California prisons due to parole violations.[20] However, employment mitigates the return to incarceration.

Data from the Urban Institute shows that people who found work within six months of prison release were half as likely to be reincarcerated after the first year as those who did not find work.[21] In addition, they found that people with higher wages were less likely to be reincarcerated. Having an

opportunity to develop highly sought-after technical skills and receive a competitive wage in the technology industry may bolster these outcomes further: of the 240 graduates of the Last Mile, a prison computer programming training program—none have returned to prison after release. Last Mile graduates credit the program with being a transformative and life-changing opportunity and express pride in and dedication to working in technology roles after prison.

YOU CAN READ STORIES FROM GRADUATES OF THE LAST MILE HERE

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR THE HIRING OF RETURNING PEOPLE IN TECH

Embracing previously incarcerated individuals into the workplace has profound implications for a company's brand resilience and asset utilization. For tech companies facing an ongoing and evolving barrage of criticism from several key stakeholders, hiring returning people is an impactful way to demonstrate responsible tech growth. It resonates with consumers' innate value of fairness in second chances and economic self-sufficiency while disrupting the cycle of release, unemployment, and recidivism.

Furthermore, hiring people who were formerly incarcerated helps to reduce the economic inequities in communities of color that have been exacerbated by mass incarceration. Addressing these societal issues in such a tangible way enables companies to exhibit a commitment to values beyond rhetoric—cultivating trust with consumers and building long-term brand resilience. Hiring formerly incarcerated people is not just the right thing to do from the eyes of a consumer—it directly contributes to the success of companies in the ways discussed in the following pages.

EMPLOYING RETURNING PEOPLE CAN IMPROVE PERFORMANCE THROUGH INCREASED DIVERSITY

Research has consistently shown that diverse workplaces outperform more homogenous workplaces. For example, a recent McKinsey study finds that workplaces with the highest levels of gender diversity outperform workplaces with lowest levels of gender diversity by 25 percent.[22] Workplaces with the highest levels of racial diversity outperform workplaces with the lowest levels of racial diversity by 36 percent.

In a study specific to the technology industry, Intel found that increasing racial diversity could increase revenue by $300-370 billion annually, and increasing gender diversity could increase revenue by $320-390 billion annually. Combined, these efforts could contribute to a 1.2-1.6 percent increase in national GDP.[23] With 69 percent of returning residents identifying as Black or Hispanic,[24] hiring from this labor pool will contribute to the technology industry's racial diversity—a critical step for the technology workforce where Black employee representation sits in the low single digits in mega-cap companies like Alphabet, Apple, Facebook, Microsoft, and Twitter.[25]

HIRING RETURNING PEOPLE WILL EXPAND A LIMITED LABOR POOL

Every year, technology companies must contend with a gap of almost 500,000 unfilled technology positions.[26] The lack of available workers drives up salaries and limits productivity, directly impacting profitability. This gap will compound in the coming years with the number of current technology occupations expected to increase from 7.9 million in 2019 to 8.8 million in 2028.[27] The difficulty in filling these positions is evidenced by findings from the firm iCIMs that only six in ten tech occupation roles were filled between 2016-2019.[28] Furthermore, this crunch has not eased much, if at all, in the wake of the coronavirus-induced recession: net IT employment in July 2020 remained up by more than 203,000 positions. The IT unemployment rate held at 4.4 percent after dipping from 4.7 percent in February—less than half of the overall U.S. unemployment rate of 10.2 percent.[29]

With over 600,000 people released from prison every year, returning people could be an important source of talent to bridge this gap.[30]

COMPANIES THAT HIRE RETURNING PEOPLE WILL SAVE ON COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

Returning people demonstrate high levels of dedication with strong employee performance. One study from Kellogg found employees with criminal records had a 13 percent lower turnover rate than employees who did not have a record; their high retention rates save on costs associated with employee turnover.[31] This is especially important given the increased length of time required to fill a technical role—from 66 days in 2016 to 80 days in 2019.[32] When companies factor in hiring and onboarding, the length of time to fill a position increases to 100 days, costing $680 in lost revenue each day.[33]

HIRING RETURNING PEOPLE IS A GOVERNMENTAL PRIORITY AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTNERSHIP

Several types of governmental programs and financial incentives may be available to companies that employ people returning from incarceration. These include the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, wage subsidies for on-the-job training, and various state-specific tax credits such as the New Employment Tax Credit in California.

WORKFORCE OPPORTUNITY CREDIT

The Workforce Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a program sponsored by the United States Department of Labor to promote the hiring of people from specific target groups that experience barriers to employment. It applies to previously incarcerated individuals hired no later than one year after conviction or release from prison. The WOTC can provide an employer up to $2,400 (25% of the first year's qualified wages of up to $6,000) in tax relief for each qualifying hire who works for at least 400 hours and up to $4,000 (40% of the first year's qualified wages of up to $10,000) for long-term family assistance recipient hires. Employers may claim a tax credit on an unlimited number of qualifying new hires.[34]

BRITANNIA BLOOM

"*"Programs to bring in nontraditional talent are so important because we know that talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not.*"

IMPLEMENTING FAIR CHANCE EMPLOYMENT IN TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES

Technology companies that invest in implementing an intentional and well-planned hiring strategy will reap the most reward from hiring returning people. This section informs what this strategy might look like from the perspective of an HR professional tasked with implementing it. It provides guidance for beginning the conversation and generating understanding and commitment amongst staff and leadership, incorporating formerly incarcerated populations into strategic workforce planning efforts, and executing on the recruitment, hiring, and retention of these workers into a company.

It also integrates suggestions for engaging other key stakeholders such as DE&I Directors and hiring managers throughout the process. While these steps may provide a first start in hiring formerly incarcerated people, lasting change in an organization requires a change management plan should be implemented that includes employee ambassadors, team engagement, and ongoing metrics to ensure success.

STEPS TO IMPLEMENT HIRING OF RETURNING PEOPLE

STEP 1. OBTAIN BUY-IN AND COORDINATE WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS (DE&I DIRECTORS, TEAM LEADS, COMPANY INFLUENCERS) TO INTEGRATE FAIR CHANCE HIRING INTO ONGOING DISCUSSIONS ABOUT DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE.

Opening the workplace to returning people is a bold action to promote diversity in the workplace and equity in communities. Therefore, contextual conversations about mass incarceration and the importance of hiring formerly incarcerated people should be raised in ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion discussions and planning. Such conversations can serve as an important first step in creating buy-in among employees and executive leadership and can help dispel stigma in the workplace once returning people have been hired. By coordinating with DE&I directors or other appropriate staff responsible for facilitating conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace, HR directors can develop an approach that is tailored to the unique culture of the company.

STEP 2. INCLUDE FORMERLY INCARCERATED POPULATIONS INTO STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLANNING EFFORTS.

A strategic workforce planning effort, informed by a company's organizational strategy, will determine future workforce challenges throughout a company. Formerly incarcerated populations make up a sizable pool of applicants that can help meet those challenges. The following strategies may be pursued to link formerly incarcerated applicants to anticipated workforce challenges, depending on the type of positions in demand and the resources available to fill them:

Filling technical roles: apprenticeship programs and internal reskilling of non-technical employees.

Apprenticeship programs may be designed specifically for people entering the workplace after incarceration, allowing them to apply technical skill sets learned in prison to a preliminary on-site role. Apprenticeships allow companies to develop talent that is tailored to their needs; though the practice is still young, outcomes have been encouraging so far. Of the 240 people who have returned to society after their training with The Last Mile, a prison rehabilitation coding and technology training program, none have recidivated. Additionally, of the (now six) apprentices enrolled in early apprenticeship programs with Slack, all were hired to full-time positions within the company.

Another strategy to fill technical roles within a company involves the reskilling of non-technical employees, including formerly incarcerated employees who have demonstrated an interest, aptitude, and/or experience with utilizing technical skill sets. Human resources departments may encourage employees to complete third-party training programs with professional development stipends and structured opportunities to practice

their skill sets and advance to the needed positions. This strategy may be less resource demanding than establishing an apprenticeship program, which may require considerable resources, expertise, and commitment from executive leadership.

Filling non-technical positions: an entry-point for many formerly incarcerated applicants.

In the absence of an apprenticeship program, many people recently released from incarceration may seek entry level jobs in a company with the hopes of professional advancement later on. This strategy allows returning people to acclimate to the company and assess fit; additionally, this strategy is compatible with any plans an organization may have to upskill existing talent. It requires few additional resources—however, companies are encouraged to partner with workforce development boards and other reentry organizations that provide support to returning people as they transition to the workplace. Code Tenderloin is a workforce development nonprofit in San Francisco that provides technical and soft skills training and other supportive services to people that have barriers to work, including returning people. Organizations like Code Tenderloin support workers at every phase of the hiring process and throughout their employment.

Notably, many returning people developed managerial skills before—and for some, during—incarceration. Many will apply for entry-level roles that they are overqualified for because of their record. It is important to assess skills across a variety of experiences—some that returning people may not list on an official resume. Additionally, returning people may apply to specialized business positions with guidance from an intermediary

> **From a participant in Next Chapter:**
>
> *"Without buy-in from management, it will be a rough—if not impossible—situation for the returning citizen. The returning citizen absolutely should not be placed under a manager unless there is buy-in from that manager."*

organization. For example, Strively is an organization that prepares previously incarcerated people for employment in technology sales positions.

Many former students of the Last Mile's computer coding program may prefer to use the technical knowledge they have learned to move into a sales, customer experience, or technical support position.

Once a general strategy for hiring returning people has been determined, HR directors should work within departments to identify and train managers that are open to bringing prospective employees onto their team. Research shows that returning people are more likely to experience success when their supervisors demonstrate cultural competence in their interactions with them and are able to connect them to resources in the community.

HR directors can work with these managers to identify specific hiring goals and other metrics to measure progress in meeting the needs of the department. Metrics should also be developed that contribute to the evaluation of returning people, including data that supports the business case for hiring additional employees who were formerly incarcerated.

STEP 3. DESIGN INTENTIONAL RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES THAT REACH TALENT WHERE THEY ARE AT.

Recruitment of returning people will be mostly geared towards people applying to non-technical positions; due in large part to many of the technical positions being sourced through apprenticeship programs or the development of internal employees. Recruitment best practices identified by Checkr include crafting job descriptions from a strengths-based perspective. Companies should focus on identifying the core competencies required to perform in the position as opposed to emphasizing prior experience and the unnecessary use of technical language. In addition, Checkr advocates for "throwing away the golden resume" and committing to evaluating resumes based on core competencies instead of resumes with prestigious educational backgrounds or familiar previous experiences.

Once the job description has been written, recruiters can widen their scope of practice by attending job fairs that promote inclusionary practices or partnering with organizations specializing in preparing formerly incarcerated people for positions in the technology space. For example, local workforce development or reentry organizations like Code Tenderloin or Strively should be engaged to post job notices and recommend talent within their networks. Companies can also encourage formerly incarcerated people to apply by using inclusionary language on their careers page, for example:

- This position is not subject to a background check.

- We consider all qualified applicants irrespective of criminal records.

- This position is subject to a background check for any convictions directly related to its duties and responsibilities. Only job-related convictions will be considered and will not automatically disqualify the candidate (from the National Employment Law Center's Model Language for Fair Chance Hiring).

STEP 4. ALIGN THE APPLICATION AND HIRING PROCESS WITH FAIR CHANCE GUIDANCE.

While the business case for hiring returning people is compelling, it is important to acknowledge that employers are subject to negligent hiring liability. Negligent hiring liability results when "an employer is liable for harm its employees inflict on third parties when the employer knew or should have known of the employee's potential risk to cause harm, or if the risk would have been discovered by a reasonable investigation." [35]

While recent laws have been passed in dozens of states to limit negligent hiring liability, approaches are not consistent across the board. Therefore, the best way to mitigate risk due to negligent hiring liability is to apply established best practices specific to the hiring of returning people. These best practices derive primarily from two main sources:

- Ban-the-box laws were originally developed and advocated for by All of Us or None, a grassroots civil and human rights organization made up of formerly incarcerated people. Ban-the-box requirements remove questions about criminal convictions from job applications, delaying the background check stage to later in the interview and/or review process—usually until a conditional offer of employment has been made; and

- 2012 U.S. Equal Employment and Opportunity Commission guidance that imposed specific standards and procedures to promote accuracy and transparency during the background check process.

Taken together, these pieces form the basis of comprehensive fair chance legislation—laws that have been designed to protect returning people from discrimination in the hiring process. To that end, 36 states, over 150 cities and counties, and the federal government have enacted some form of fair chance hiring laws pertaining to jobs in the public sector. An additional 14 states required private-sector employers to remove questions about criminal convictions from job applications. Twenty localities enacted other forms of fair chance hiring laws that pertain to private sector employers. According to the National Employment Law Project, over three-quarters of Americans live in a jurisdiction with a fair chance hiring law on the books. Hiring managers and HR professionals must therefore mitigate risks associated with negligent hiring liability while simultaneously understanding and complying with all applicable fair chance hiring laws in their jurisdiction.

Incorporating the most rigorous fair chance hiring practices will ensure compliance with any jurisdictional mandates and will also ensure that each application is reviewed fairly and thoroughly. These include:

- Removing criminal history questions from all job applications and delaying background checks until a conditional offer of employment has been made.

- Evaluating background checks in accordance with EEOC guidance which mandates individualized assessments be conducted that consider evidence of rehabilitation and whether the conviction is relevant to the role.

- Because background checks often contain errors, background check companies should be selected with caution. Furthermore, copies of the background check must be provided to the hiring manager and the applicant. The applicant should be given the opportunity to dispute any negative results.

STEP 5. RETAINING FORMERLY INCARCERATED EMPLOYEES.

Once formerly incarcerated employees have been successfully hired, efforts should be taken by their managers to understand and support their experience as they transition to the new environment. Some formerly incarcerated employees may have limited work experience in an office setting and may lack important soft skills such as communicating with supervisors and colleagues. They may also require flexibility with scheduling to attend required appointments with probation or parole officers, and may face challenges with housing or transportation. Finally, they may struggle with self-doubt or low self-esteem. Research has identified five areas that may help address these challenges:

CULTIVATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF STABILITY AND STRUCTURE

HR professionals and managers should focus on defining regular work hours and consistent duties.

BUILD A CULTURE OF UNDERSTANDING AND TEAMWORK

Connecting to peer supports in the workplace is an important aspect of a person's ongoing sense of support in the workplace. Providing each employee a mentor that they meet with regularly is another way to build understanding and teamwork. A mentor can provide trust and a safe place to ask questions and talk things through—both specific to the job and to the culture of the company. Stigma surrounding a criminal conviction history may interfere with this dynamic. While training all employees to help build an inclusive company culture, employers must also respect the personal autonomy of returning people in disclosing or not disclosing their history to other staff.

OFFER SUPPORT AND COMPASSION BALANCED WITH SAFETY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Structured onboarding protocols and orientation, additional time to ramp up, and extra chances to succeed may provide the right balance between support and accountability. Returning people should be encouraged to reach out to other team members and introduce themselves in a quick meeting (or schedule peer check-ins as a standard onboarding for all employees). For returning people who may be hesitant around the company culture and norms, establishing this practice allows them space to build their network and to learn informal norms of the company.

MAKE RESOURCES READILY AVAILABLE

Connecting individuals to counseling, housing, and/or legal services outside of work will help ensure returning people are best equipped to bring their full potential to work each day. In addition, providing a variety of mentors who can support employees with technical guidance and/or cultural support is a critical resource for returning people. Employees with technical guidance and/or cultural support are a critical resource for returning people.

REQUIRE MANAGERS AND MENTORS TO COMPLETE TRAINING

Managers should be trained on how to best support returning people in the workplace. Conducting regular check-ins to develop communication habits, understand employees' needs, connect them to outside resources when necessary, and build their self-esteem are critical to successfully managing returning people. HR should regularly follow up with employees and monitor company-wide retention rates.
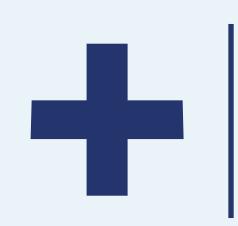
SHELLEY WINNER

Restorative Justice Activist and Product Specialist at International Tech Firm

" *"When rehabilitated people are given the opportunity to successfully re-enter our community, our society wins too."*

CONCLUSION

System Reset provides a clear, tangible opportunity for tech companies to expand their labor market, grow their employee retention, and have a positive impact on the community. As evidenced throughout the guide, fair chance hiring—for a variety of roles and levels of experience—is a scalable and sustainable method for bringing in new voices and ending the unnecessary stigma of former incarceration in the workplace.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There are a variety of tools available to augment this guide and support tech companies in expanding their hiring and development of returning people. Including:

- Root & Rebound Fair Chance Hiring Toolkit for California Employers
- Slack's Next Chapter Program Blueprint for Change
- SHRM Foundation's 'Getting Talent Back to Work' Initiative
- Dave's Killer Bread Foundation Second Chance Hiring Playbook

ENDNOTES

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APPENDIX

METHODOLOGY

A landscape analysis of comparable hiring guides across industries was conducted to determine common themes and identify gaps pertaining to the hiring of formerly incarcerated people in the technology sector. A literature review and informant interviews of industry professionals and formerly incarcerated technology employees was then performed to better understand the nuances within the field.

A draft of the hiring guide was reviewed by corporate partners and suggested changes were incorporated into the final document. Two final reviews were conducted by Bill Murphy, a graduate of Next Chapter and a full-time employee at Slack, and by Root & Rebound.

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