



Legislation Text

File #: 24-0226, **Version:** 1

Resolution in Support of Strengthening the City of Ann Arbor's Fair Chance Hiring Practices

The attached resolution seeks to strengthen the City's Fair Chance hiring practices by requiring the City to undergo a review of jobs to determine which jobs require a criminal background check and which may not. It also directs the City to research best practices and report back to Council with recommendations to further strengthen the City's Fair Chance hiring practices.

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor recognizes the fundamental right to employment and the importance of reintegrating all citizens, including those with past criminal convictions, into the workforce as a vital component of a thriving community;

Whereas, Research has demonstrated that stable employment is a key factor in reducing recidivism, thereby enhancing public safety and community well-being in Ann Arbor;

Whereas, In 2014, Council passed a resolution titled "Resolution to Remove All References to Past Felony Convictions on the City of Ann Arbor Employment Application" otherwise known as "Ban the Box";

Whereas, The City's "Ban the Box" initiative can be strengthened by ensuring the City complies with the most up-to-date Fair Chance Hiring practices and policies;

Whereas, This "Strengthening the City's Fair Chance Hiring Practices" resolution aligns with the City of Ann Arbor's commitment to social justice, equity, and the elimination of discriminatory practices in employment;

Whereas, Individuals with past criminal records often face unfair barriers to employment, which can perpetuate cycles of poverty, inequality, and social exclusion;

Whereas, Low-income individuals often face compounded difficulties in securing employment, and removing barriers such as prior conviction inquiries can significantly improve their job prospects and economic stability;

Whereas, The persistent linkage between poverty and criminal history underscores the need for initiatives like "Strengthening the City's Fair Chance Hiring" to level the playing field for low-income job seekers in Ann Arbor;

Whereas, Employment is a critical stepping stone towards breaking the cycle of poverty, and fair hiring practices are essential to providing low-income residents with equal opportunities to improve their livelihoods;

Whereas, Fostering equitable access to jobs for low-income individuals through the “Ban the Box” initiative is a crucial part of the City of Ann Arbor’s commitment to reducing economic disparities and promoting inclusive growth;

Whereas, Black and Brown communities are disproportionately affected by the criminal justice system, and as a result, face greater challenges in the job market due to past convictions;

Whereas, The “Strengthening the City’s Fair Chance Hiring” initiative is a critical step towards addressing the systemic inequalities and biases that Black and Brown returning citizens face in the employment process;

Whereas, Ensuring fair employment opportunities for Black and Brown returning citizens is vital for the City of Ann Arbor’s efforts to promote racial equity and social justice;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor recognizes that supporting the successful reentry of Black and Brown citizens into the workforce is not only a matter of fairness but also essential for the well-being and diversity of the community;

Whereas, Ensuring that all citizens, regardless of their past, have equal access to job opportunities is essential for fostering a diverse, inclusive, and dynamic workforce;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor acknowledges that employment is a crucial step in the rehabilitation process and successful reintegration into society for returning citizens;

Whereas, The “Strengthening the City’s Fair Chance Hiring” initiative supports the City’s broader goals of reducing unemployment, improving economic stability, and building a resilient community;

Whereas, Embracing fair hiring practices demonstrates the City of Ann Arbor’s leadership in human rights and sets a positive example for other cities and employers;

Whereas, “Strengthening the City’s Fair Chance Hiring” contributes to the creation of a more equitable labor market in Ann Arbor, ensuring that skills and qualifications are the primary factors in hiring decisions;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor is committed to upholding the dignity and potential of every resident, and recognizes that past mistakes should not be an insurmountable barrier to future opportunities;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor is committed to fair hiring practices and reducing barriers to employment for all citizens, including those with past criminal convictions; and

Whereas, The “Strengthening the City’s Fair Chance Hiring” initiative aims to create equitable employment opportunities for all, including returning citizens;

RESOLVED, Employability certificates issued by courts or parole boards will be utilized as valid indicators of work readiness and considered as mitigating information as part of the background check review process;

RESOLVED, When conducting Background checks, the City will continue to restrict consideration to convictions only, ensuring that non-conviction information does not unfairly influence hiring decisions;

RESOLVED, The City will undergo a review of each position to determine which positions require background checks and, when required, background checks will be tailored to be job-specific and/or comply with statutory duties, rather than being universally applied to all positions;

RESOLVED, Applicants will continue to be given the opportunity to review and challenge inaccurate criminal history information before an offer of employment is rescinded, safeguarding their right to fair consideration for employment;

RESOLVED, The City will conduct an annual review to ensure adherence to the 2012 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines and state regulations regarding the use of arrest and conviction records in hiring;

RESOLVED, A recruitment strategy will be developed that includes partnerships with Michigan Works!, parole boards, Supportive Solutions, and other agencies dedicated to aiding returning citizens;

RESOLVED, The City will research best practices to further strengthen its Fair Chance Hiring policies and practices and report back to City Council with recommendations within 120 days;

RESOLVED, The City will monitor the implementation of these measures, ensuring compliance with the principles of equity and fairness, and providing annual reports on the effectiveness of the “Strengthening the City’s Fair Chance Hiring” initiative; and

RESOLVED, this initiative reflects the City of Ann Arbor’s commitment to promoting inclusive and equitable employment practices, thus fostering a diverse and thriving community.

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Harrison, Ghazi Edwin, and Eyer