

Ohio Justice and Policy Center

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://ohiojpc.org/2020/04/14/second-chance-month-2020/>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

by [Marais Jacon-Duffy](#) | Apr 14, 2020 | [Blog](#), [Second Chance](#)

I used to interview people, mostly teenagers, to work in food service at a local amusement park over the summer. I had to ask everyone about their criminal history and let them know that a disclosure would not prevent them from becoming employed. Only one person ever disclosed their criminal history to me. He was fifteen-years-old and had a juvenile adjudication for felony possession of cocaine. His frantic explanation But since I moved in with my Dad, I've been staying out of trouble and doing well in school!

After finishing the interview, I offered him a position. Later on, I checked on his status with a fellow trainer. She explained that human resources was handling his application and despite being told that his record would not negatively affect his chances of employment, he would not be hired.

[OJPCs Second Chance Project](#) helps Ohioans remove barriers they face as a result of prior contact with the criminal justice system. We do so through [record sealing](#), [expungement for human trafficking survivors](#), Certificates of Qualification for Employment (CQEs), and other forms of advocacy.

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The quickest and most accessible solution to the barriers caused by criminal records is record sealing hiding the records from most background checks. The problem is that everyone does not qualify to clear their background check and in certain fields, even sealed records are still accessible meaning that there are citizens who live with the shame and collateral consequences of their criminal records for decades. What does it say about our justice systems priority for redemption when there are people who have completely transformed themselves but are unable to find good employment or housing and left unable to support themselves and their families?

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April is Second Chance Month. Our mistakes should not dictate how we live the rest of our lives. I hope that you will reflect on the possibility of a country where people who have been to jail or prison can transform themselves and accomplish whatever they want in life. Here are some things you can do to make an impact:

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Register for one of OJPCs virtual legal clinics [here](#).

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