Fact: Nearly 1 in 3 adults in the U.S., an estimated 70 million, have been arrested or convicted of a crime. In Alaska, over 210,000 people have a criminal record, which is 34% of our population.

Fact: U.S. anti-discrimination laws prohibit employers from practicing a blanket bans against hiring any person with a record.

Fact: Major employers such as Walmart, Target, Starbucks, and Koch Industries have removed prior conviction inquiries from their initial hiring process.

People unable to work because of their records equals an approximately $80 billion loss to the U.S. GDP

(Center for Economic and Policy Research, 2014)

Consider This:

- Not hiring individuals with records narrows your applicant pool of qualified workers, even in cases where a prior conviction has no relevancy to the job.

- We all benefit when individuals who have exited the criminal justice system can take advantage of employment opportunities. Employment can be a significant factor in reducing recidivism rates.

- Supporting fair chance employment opportunities for individuals with prior convictions bolsters our economy and strengthens our communities.
What Can Employers Do?

- Remove questions related to prior convictions from your application, and delay such inquiries or background checks until later in the hiring process.

- Limit the information sought during hiring to what is relevant to the scope of work for the position.

- Consider each applicant on a case-by-case basis.

- Ensure your hiring policies are aligned with federal law.

- Limit overly broad criminal record inquiries; national databases may not reflect if charges were dropped or did not result in convictions.

- Limit the “lookback” period considered when inquiring about past crimes. Instead of a lifetime lookback, focus on set period such as the past 5-10 years.

- Promote transparent guidance regarding what types of past offenses could result in disqualification from employment.

Visit http://labor.alaska.gov/employer to learn more about ways the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development is assisting employers of those with past convictions such as:

- Work Opportunity Tax Credits
- Fidelity Bonding
- Employment After Incarceration Workshops

This Fact Sheet was created by the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB). Learn more about the AWIB by visiting labor.alaska.gov/AWIB