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How to Partner With Your CRA

Implement Fair Chance Hiring in Your Business

As you start to think about implementing fair chance hiring into your business, you might see your background check provider (also known as a Consumer Reporting Agency or CRA) as an unlikely ally. This is due, in large part, to the fact that many fair chance employers tend to skip background checks altogether as a way to avoid the extra administrative work and inherent bias that comes with screening candidates with records. **But what if your CRA could serve as a resource throughout the process?**

Here are a few strategies to help you choose, and effectively partner with, a CRA to implement or improve your fair chance hiring program.

Does the background check process provide a positive experience for the applicant?

There are two primary stakeholders in the world of background checks: (1) The employer that requests a background check on someone and (2) The applicant who the report is run on. How background check vendors treat applicants throughout the process is arguably the most important factor when it comes to selecting a vendor. Fair processes aside, the background check is often the first official interaction a company has with a prospective employee and having a vendor that is not user friendly can have a detrimental impact on the hiring process.

Things to look for:

- ✔ Applicant portal or dedicated resource for applicants to have a transparent interaction with their report
- ✔ A dedicated Applicant Support team in the US to field questions, help with disputes, and conduct investigations on behalf of the applicant

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Does the background check provider follow compliance guidelines and are they a legitimate organization?

Any vendor you consider should be certified by the National Association of Professional Background Screeners (NAPBS), which is the trade association for professional background screeners. NAPBS sets standards for best practices in the industry, and certification requires a rigorous onsite audit. Certification is important not just on the compliance end, but also in terms of data security, applicant experience, and best-of-breed product. Being certified with NAPBS also means your CRA is aware of their responsibilities to you, is knowledgeable on the various laws governing background reports, and is able to provide you with the most complete and up-to-date information possible.

Things to look for:

- ✔ Proof of NAPBS accreditation (with individual employee certifications being an added bonus)
- ✔ A dedicated compliance team that communicates regulatory updates, as well trends and best practices in the industry in the industry

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Does the background check provider leverage up-to-date technology to improve fairness?

In addition to leveraging software to improve efficiency and compliantly provide faster turnaround times, your background check product should also have a suite of features that improve fairness within the process. This can be as simple as the provider having accessible, easy to maneuver tools to filter out charges that aren't relevant to your business or having a dashboard that makes it easy for you to conduct a "nature-time-nature" test when you're adjudicating.

Things to look for:

- ✓ Features that make it simple to conduct documented individualized assessments
- ✓ A thoughtful adjudication matrix. Setting criteria upfront around what charges your adjudicators deem irrelevant can streamline the assessment process early-on and also provide for a fairer assessment process
- ✓ Is your vendor mobile-friendly? Mobile-friendly systems serve applicants on the devices they use most, and self-service portals create fewer data entry mistakes and less time wasted playing phone tag or completing cumbersome paper forms

Is the background check provider an advocate of fair chance hiring, and do their business values match yours?

The final indicator that you've chosen a CRA that is working with you on fair chance hiring comes down to their business values. Many traditional background check providers are unable to accommodate fair hiring practices and may even oppose efforts to encourage fair hiring. This approach ends up decreasing community safety by contributing to lower employment rates and also increases your potential liability for discriminatory hiring practices.

We all know that community safety is important to every business. Partnering with a CRA who knows how to fairly assess a candidate's employability without making blanket bans on the 70 million+ working age Americans with records is key to fair hiring.

Things to look for:

- ✓ Is the CRA you're considering a fair chance employer themselves? Do they openly support fair chance hiring?
- ✓ Does the messaging around their products and services leverage fair assessment of candidates without compromising safety?
- ✓ Does the product itself make it easier to screen candidates with records and do they have educational resources available to guide you?



Want to learn more about fair chance hiring?

Visit checkr.com/company/mission to see more resources and learn how to build your fair chance hiring program.