

WORKFORCE & JUSTICE ALLIANCE BUSINESS MEMBER BOOKLET

WJA MEMBERS



WORKFORCE & JUSTICE ALLIANCE

The Workforce & Justice Alliance (WJA) is a community of businesses committed to using their platforms, networks, and leverage to advance systemic change in the justice system, to share best practices with their peers, and to increase the number of companies taking steps to remove workforce barriers for justice-impacted individuals.

WJA PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

WJA Members agree to the following principles:

- Systems of criminal justice should not create unnecessary obstacles to employment.
- No one should permanently lose the right to access meaningful economic mobility because of a criminal record, incarceration, or the incarceration of their family members.
- People of color are disproportionately affected and economically disenfranchised by the justice system. Redressing systemic failures in the justice system is essential to advancing workforce diversity, economic inclusion, and racial equity.
- We will use our platforms to support policies, legislative change, communications campaigns, and other initiatives that are designed to remove unnecessary barriers to employment and other services for justice-impacted individuals.
- We will also use our voices to educate our peers about the barriers and inequity created by our justice system and encourage them to join this campaign.

By joining the Workforce and Justice Alliance, members align themselves with other companies and partners committed to creating a fairer, more inclusive, and more productive workforce.

WJA FORMAT

Membership in the WJA includes:

- A dedicated [WJA website](#) and strategic communications campaign designed to amplify the voices of businesses speaking out about workforce and justice issues and inspire other companies to follow suit.
- Opportunities for members to join policy reform campaigns at state and federal level, always on an opt-in basis.
- Opportunities for members to learn more about inclusive hiring practices and how to become fair chance employers.
- Opportunities for members to access policy and communications experts to help them educate stakeholders (including peers and employees) on the principles and values of the WJA.
- Regular member events (virtual and in-person).

Companies can express their interest in joining the WJA by completing [the form on this page](#), which will be reviewed by RBIJ.

COMMITMENT

Each business member commits to:

- The principles and values of the WJA.
- Identify one or more points of contact to work directly with RBIJ staff. (Appropriate representatives include those responsible for: (a) advocacy/social impact; (b) government affairs; or (c) communications/public affairs).
- Give permission for your company to be identified as a WJA member on the WJA website; through social media tagging; and in any press release or media comment about the membership of the WJA.
- Provide your logo to be displayed on the WJA website.
- Inform RBIJ staff of your company's interest in participating in strategic communications opportunities, including press, social media, conferences, and events. (RBIJ will conduct all supporting activities.)



WHAT IS OFFERED TO WJA MEMBERS?

RBIJ will:

- Vet and assess opportunities for strategic engagement in criminal justice reform campaigns. We will work with our partner campaign organizations and experts to review opportunities for engagement, triage for the highest impact, and equip WJA Members for associated communications and advocacy.
- Provide technical assistance and guidance on becoming an inclusive employer of justice-impacted individuals and their families.
- Provide strategic communications guidance, including a [social media and communications toolkit](#), that you can use to identify yourself as a WJA member on your company website, intranet, and social media channels.
- Work to raise the profile of your C-Suite and department leadership to position you as a leader on creating positive change for justice-impacted individuals. This will include opportunities to speak at high-value conferences and events.
- Provide opportunities to network and connect with like-minded peers.
- Provide access to experts from RBIJ's network to support you in your journey to become a Justice Champion.
- Provide access to the latest social science research to help educate your employees on why you have joined the WJA, ensuring that you can internally communicate the value of the WJA and bring your broader workforce with you on the journey.

WHY IS THE WORK OF THE WJA ESSENTIAL?

One in three adults in the US has some form of criminal record – more than 70 million people. For many this creates huge barriers to employment – even for those who have minor convictions or only an arrest record. Mass incarceration is one of the biggest drivers of social inequality: the justice system disproportionately impacts people of color, as well as those suffering from mental illness and poverty. This impact is borne out in the community: those who have experienced the justice system are more likely to be unemployed, experience homelessness, and end up back behind bars.

We recognize that businesses have exceptionally influential voices when it comes to educating and changing the perspectives of those in power. They also have communications platforms that can be effectively used to educate the public and challenge existing public narratives around formerly incarcerated individuals.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE WJA?

The WJA is designed to:

- Lift the public narrative that businesses are committed to creating inclusivity in the workplace, including advocating for systemic changes that remove barriers for justice-impacted individuals.
- Ensure business advocacy is closely tied to the community's needs via consultation and direct dialogue with members of the justice reform movement and those with lived experience of the justice system, thereby improving the effectiveness and value of business interventions.
- Encourage sustained activity by businesses, rather than one-off statements.
- Increase the number of businesses committed to removing workforce barriers for the formerly incarcerated through peer inspiration.
- Create a space for like-minded businesses to connect and network.

WHO IS BEHIND THE WJA?

The WJA is coordinated and staffed by the Responsible Business Initiative for Justice (RBIJ), a nonprofit that works with companies to champion solutions that promote public safety, deliver justice, and strengthen communities.



WHY IS THE WJA NECESSARY?

First, businesses increasingly recognize that it is essential that their engagement on justice issues be guided by those working on the ground, especially those with direct experience of the justice system. Without this partnership, businesses who engage in criminal justice initiatives will be open to claims of inauthenticity or performative allyship. The WJA is designed to provide a practical solution to this problem.

RBIJ serves as the central point and secretariat for the WJA. RBIJ was founded within the US criminal justice reform movement and our work is informed and directed by system-impacted individuals and the campaigners, advocates, and organizers on the ground.

Second, maximizing business impact in the justice space requires an approach that makes it easy for companies to engage at the most strategic moments. WJA will provide a practical mechanism for companies to focus their time and resources on catalytic opportunities, relying on RBIJ to source and present such opportunities to them. The WJA will make it simpler and less time consuming for companies to react quickly to emerging opportunities and create impact.

Third, WJA will provide businesses with opportunities for joint action. The WJA will support information sharing across the membership group and create a peer network that is greater than the sum of its parts.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF WJA ACTIVITIES?

WJA business members may be invited to participate in reform campaigns on relevant workforce and justice issues, such as automatic eligible criminal record sealing (Clean Slate legislation), professional licensing reform, and driver's license reform. WJA business members are also provided guidance and technical assistance around internal policy change to facilitate inclusive hiring and best practices around including justice-involved individuals in the workforce.

Activities may include:

- Media engagement. E.g., RBIJ helped draft and place an oped by MOD Pizza CEO, Scott Svenson, to announce the launch of the WJA. The piece ran in the Puget Sound Business Journal, the leading business publication around MOD's headquarters.
- Signing onto joint statements or letters. E.g. Over 30 Colorado businesses, including multiple WJA members, [co-signed a statement of support](#) backing automatic expungement in the state. This was then presented to key legislators and Clean Slate was signed into law in May 2022.
- Speaking at conferences or events. E.g., WJA members Flagger Force and GenPak spoke at the 2023 North Carolina Second Chance Symposium on why second chance hiring is critical to a fair and inclusive economy. A number of WJA members also participated in RBIJ's 2023 American Workforce & Justice Summit, including a panel focused exclusively on the WJA.

IS THERE A FINANCIAL OBLIGATION?

Not an obligation but an ask. Although there is no membership fee or financial commitment for joining WJA, RBIJ is a nonprofit organization, and we ask members to consider making a donation to support the activities of RBIJ and the WJA. We can work with you directly to determine the best way to structure such a donation to ensure it fits within your existing corporate giving strategy. In addition, you can make a donation directly through our website [here](#).

CAN THE WJA MAKE COMMITMENTS ON MY COMPANY'S BEHALF?

No. The WJA is a group of individual companies who can make their own determinations about endorsements, activities, and campaigns. Opportunities will be brought to WJA members, but engagement will always be on an opt-in basis. We simply ask that you allow us to identify you as a WJA member for as long as you remain part of the Alliance.

CAN I LEAVE THE WJA?

You can withdraw your company membership at any time by notifying the RBIJ team.



APPENDIX

WJA FOUNDING MEMBERS

180 Demo
Checkr

CleanTurn
Georgia Pacific
Honest Jobs
Kelly Services
MOD Pizza

Small Business Majority
Televerde

WJA MEMBERS

Aspen Institute
AVAAS Career Academy
Change Finance
Coffee for a Cause
Corrisoft
Crewz
Defy Ventures
DreamSpring
Easy Expunctions
Edovo
Fair Chance Alliance
Flagger Force

Flikshop
Frontier Co-op
Genpak
Hot Chicken Takeover
Ibotta
InnerCity Weightlifting
I Have A Bean
Jobs for the Future
LG Training
NRAEF
Nia Impact Capital
NLADA Mutual Insurance Co.

Pioneer Human Services
Rasa Legal
Remerg
SKLLD
Social Purpose Corrections
SugarBot Sweet Shop
The Ladies of Hope Ministries
Untapped Solutions
U.S. Rubber Recycling
Virgin Hotels
Wash Cycle Laundry
Zevin Asset Management

