

OPPORTUNITY & PROSPERITY FOR ALL

Fair Chance

The FAIR CHANCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROJECT partners with impacted people, congregations, concerned community members, advocacy organizations, and decision-makers to make a fairer criminal justice system, from arrest to reentry.

Get to know **OUR PROJECTS**

OUR WORK, OUR IMPACT:

Our core goals are to improve the procedures, practices and policies of the criminal justice system so that people are treated more fairly and to ensure people exiting the criminal justice system are able to successfully reintegrate into their families and communities.

- **Passed the Second Chance Act**, which drastically expands access to criminal record expungement relief and is arguably the most progressive bill passed by the NCGA in decades.
- Partnered with District Attorneys across North Carolina to begin and publicly commit to the process of **DA-initiated mass expunctions for approximately 100,000 youthful misdemeanor and felony convictions** eligible for relief under the Second Chance Act.
- Partnered with District Attorneys in Durham, Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Pitt, Pender, Rockingham, and Caswell Counties to **eliminate more than \$5 million in long-term traffic debt** for more than 25,000 people.
- Successfully proposed and helped establish a process between the NC Department of Information, North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC), and local district attorneys by which minor pending charges facing people in prison are efficiently resolved to **facilitate early release and/or successful reentry**.
- **Helped draft and pass a provision providing for limited driving privileges** for people with driver's licenses suspended due to unpaid traffic fees.
- Partnered with North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services and District Attorneys in Durham and other counties to **amend the sentences of 21 incarcerated people** to facilitate their early release from prison and protect them from COVID-19.

THE PROJECT'S WORK CONSISTS OF: (1) identifying unfair policies and practices used by public and private institutions to exclude people with criminal records from essential opportunities and resources; (2) facilitating high-quality dialogue among and between directly-impacted people, decision-makers, and other stakeholders regarding the devastating impact of these barriers to prosperity on individuals, families, and communities; (3) identifying and raising awareness of best practices, programs, and policies; and (4) providing research and technical assistance to private and public decision-makers throughout the consideration, adoption, and implementation of reforms to ensure relief reaches communities experiencing inequitable systems.



- Proposed and helped develop a **standard NCAOC form** for the waiver and/or remittance of fees, fines, and other legal financial obligations.
- Helped host the 58-day sunrise-to-sunset Vigil for Freedom and Racial Justice (www.DecarcerateNowNC.com).
- Helped draft the Governor's Executive Order on Fair Chance Hiring for Public Employment.

MOVING FORWARD

Ensure people with criminal records can access resources and opportunities that promote successful reentry.

- Work with Second Chance Alliance members and other partners to advocate for funding of reentry services and early release efforts, and ensure the state continues to fund existing local reentry councils and supports the establishment of additional local reentry councils.
- Provide support for a bill to reform structured sentencing laws, shorten the maximum length of active sentences, eliminate mandatory minimums and habitual offenses, and reinstate the broad use of parole.
- Continue expanding Driver's License Restoration work, and helping to draft and advance bill to discontinue the suspension of a driver's license for unpaid traffic court fees/fines. Execute education and advocacy campaign targeting district attorneys, relevant state agencies, impacted people, and North Carolina Legislature.
- Increase and promote access to expunction and certificate of relief opportunities in collaboration with local court officials and advocates, and pursue mass expunction relief. Help draft and advance bill to expand eligibility for criminal record expungement and ensure the efficacy of criminal record expunction, as well as a bill to automate the expunction for those who are eligible.



- Promote prison and jail conditions and practices that protect the physical, emotional, and mental health of people in prison and facilitate successful reentry. Advocate to eliminate solitary confinement, improve access to health care and mental health treatment, and increase prison programs supporting reentry prior to release.
- Promote adoption of "fair chance" policies and practices and otherwise support Fair Housing efforts. Advocate with state agencies to adopt Fair Chance Hiring Policies, highlight fair housing practices and policies in community education and

outreach events, and advise and provide support to community-based groups, including tenant organizing efforts, on advocacy for fair chance housing admission policies.

- Partner with Campbell School of Law to staff the Blanchard Community Law Clinic. Supervise law students providing direct legal services to individuals with low incomes pursuing expunction relief and debt relief/driver's license restoration, facilitate expunction clinics, and develop information sessions for community advocacy organizations.



- Ensure recent Occupational Licensing law is being implemented and allies and Second Chance partners know and understand the expanded rights of individuals with a criminal record.
- Support coalition and working group efforts to ensure bail is not keeping poor people in jail who do not pose an unreasonable risk of injury, flight, or destruction of evidence.
- Eliminate the NC Unauthorized Substances Tax (the "Drug Tax"), by helping draft and advance bill eliminating NC Drug Tax and terminating any outstanding tax liability.
- Limit exploitive use of mug shots, working with local sheriffs to end the practice, promoting Durham's practices in terms of access to mug shots, and providing support for legislation that limits the use and the harm of mug shots in coalition with conservative groups.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER to end poverty, build power, and share prosperity across North Carolina!



P.O. Box 28068 | 224 S. Dawson Street | Raleigh, NC 27611-8068
(919)856-2570 | www.ncjustice.org

Consumer, Housing, & Energy | Education | Fair Chance Criminal Justice
Healthcare | Immigrant & Refugee Rights | NC Policy Watch | Workers' Rights

Scan here to support policies
that promote a fair chance -
or visit:

ncjustice.org/fairchance

