



## Governor's Council of Second Chance Employers Minutes

September 4, 2025; 2:00 – 3:30 pm ET

IN-PERSON: DV8 Kitchen, 594 East Third Street, Lexington, KY 40508

VIRTUAL: <https://www.youtube.com/live/5PjLWIOsSSw>

### 2:03 pm EDT, Call to order

**Chair Natalie Burikhanov**, Executive Director of the Team Kentucky Office of Reentry Services, welcomed everyone and thanked Rob Perez with DV8 Kitchen for hosting.

**Roll call took place and quorum attained.**

### **Governor's Council of Second Chance Employers Member Roll Call:**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Present/Not Present</b>
Governor Andy Beshear (Designated Chair: Natalie Burikhanov)	Government	Present
Secretary Jamie Link (proxy: Michael Yoder)	Government	Present
Secretary Keith Jackson	Government	Present
Secretary Steven Stack (proxy: Taban Herrington)	Government	Present
Barbara Aker	Business	Present
Nick D'Andrea	Business	Not Present
John Estus	Business	Present
Stephen Johnson	Business	Not Present
LaKisha Miller	Business	Present
Tyler Stegall	Business	Not Present
Tami Wilson	Business	Not Present
Rob Perez	Business	Present
Steve Powless	Business	Present
Chad Mills	Trades Union	Present
Ryan Quarles	Education	Present

**Guests and staff:** Ann Blaylock, Alisher Burikhanov, Debbie Dennison, LaChrista Ellis, Sarah Hail, Sara Jagers, and Elishah Taylor

### **Minutes (Voting Required)**

**Chair Burikhanov** called for a motion to approve the June 5, 2025 minutes as presented. *Steve Powless made the **motion**, which was **seconded** by Chad Mills.* A vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously with no opposition voiced.

### **Employer Spotlight: DV8 Kitchen**

**Rob Perez, Owner of DV8 Kitchen**, welcomed everyone and shared DV8 Kitchen's initiatives as a platform for second-chance employment, focusing on individuals in early recovery from substance use disorders.

DV8 Kitchen has seen success in being a second-chance employer through partnerships with recovery houses which provide critical supports through housing, accountability, community, and drug testing. These partnerships have resulted in dramatically improved retention

DV8 also adopted relational employment by addressing root causes of issues like tardiness instead of resorting to termination. As a result, turnover is now 30% lower than the national average, and average tenure exceeds one year. This model demonstrates how recovery support and relational employment can turn second-chance hiring into a sustainable workforce strategy.

### **Update on Governor's Reentry Initiative**

**Chair Burikhanov** provided updates on the Governor's Reentry Initiative, including a recent visit to Michigan Department of Corrections' Vocational Villages. These prison sites provide inmates with vocational and technical certifications prior to release through targeted and structured education onsite. Employers are engaged directly through job developers at each village, and Michigan found that the most effective ambassadors are businesses that have hired second-chance individuals successfully.

Additional updates included:

- New infographics on prison programs, reentry services, and tax credits, with plans to make them available on [secondchance.ky.gov](https://secondchance.ky.gov).
- The development of an employer-focused presentation to be coordinated with the council.
- The preparation of the annual report, with consideration of including member case studies to showcase lessons learned, outcomes, and employer perspectives.

### **Next Steps: Council Workgroups Updates**

**Taban Herrington, Kentucky Cabinet for Health & Family Services (CFHS)**, reported that the Public/Private Engagement workgroup reviewed the Kentucky Department of Corrections 2024 Annual Report with Director of Reentry Services, Kristin Porter, highlighting that 12,000–13,000 individuals are released annually in Kentucky. Pre-release services include life skills training, resumé support, assistance with IDs, and a reentry needs checklist, along with job fairs and Reentry Employment Program Administrators (REPAs) to aid in transitions. Discussion also focused on employer engagement, emphasizing the importance of sharing credential and training information to showcase qualifications, addressing power imbalances in hiring, and building confidence in justice-involved individuals. The group also noted the value of Second Chance success videos and testimonials in promoting reentry opportunities.

**John Estes, Amazon**, reported that the Second Chance Success workgroup is focused on the value of hearing directly from employees and how to scale that approach across different types of businesses. Members discussed the importance of involving a diverse range of employers – from highly specialized operations to those with thousands of job categories – to evaluate and expand second chance hiring

opportunities. The group agreed to brainstorm additional businesses and connections to bring into the conversation, with an emphasis on showcasing stories and insights from employees themselves.

**Barbara Aker, More Than a Bakery**, reported that the Industry Resources workgroup received an update on the Kentucky Chamber Foundation's Fair Chance Hiring Campaign, a partnership with Team Kentucky Office of Reentry Services and the Department of Corrections, to connect employers with qualified candidates who have been incarcerated. Building on the Fair Chance Academy and related workshops, the initiative began as a small pilot and has grown to include about 35 employers, resulting in roughly 25 hires.

### **3:30 pm EDT, Adjournment**

**Chair Burikhanov** reminded the council of the next meeting on Thursday, December 4, 2:00 pm ET. The meeting location is still to be determined.

**Chair Burikhanov** called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ryan Quarles *made the motion, which was **seconded** by Chad Mills*. A vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously, with no opposition voiced.