



Governor’s Council of Second Chance Employers Minutes

March 6, 2026; 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm ET

IN-PERSON: Kentucky Chamber of Commerce 464 Chenault Road Frankfort, KY 40601
Virtually via YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmjvH3mCZm0>

2:01 pm - Call to Order

Chair Natalie Burikhanov, Executive Director of the Team Kentucky Office of Reentry Services, welcomed everyone and thanked Ryan Bowman and LaKisha Miller for hosting the meeting at the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

Roll call took place and quorum attained.

Governor’s Council of Second Chance Employers Member Roll Call:

Member	Sector	Present/Not Present
Governor Andy Beshear (Designated Chair: Natalie Burikhanov)	Government	Present
Secretary Jamie Link	Government	Present
Secretary Keith Jackson (Proxy: Ann Blaylock)	Government	Present
Secretary Steven Stack (Proxy: Tracie Jackson)	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: Ryan Bowman, Phil Neal, Chris Crumrine, Larry Ferguson, Ann Blaylock, Alisher Burikhanov, Debbie Dennison, Elishah Taylor, LaChrista Ellis, Sara Jagers

Minutes (Voting Required)

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

Employer Spotlight: Kentucky Chamber Second Chance Hiring

Ryan Bowman, Associate Director of Partnerships at the Kentucky Chamber Foundation, provided an overview of the Workforce Recovery Program and Fair Chance Hiring initiatives. These are designed to

increase workforce participation by connecting employers with individuals facing employment barriers, including those in recovery or with criminal records.

The Fair Chance Hiring Campaign incorporates structured cohort training, one-on-one consultation, and ongoing employer engagement, creating a feedback loop with the Kentucky Department of Corrections to align training and skills development with workforce needs. Strengthening employer relationships with correctional facility programs was emphasized as critical to expanding employment opportunities for those with criminal records.

Reentry simulations have proven to be an eye-opening experience for individuals who have never experienced incarceration, helping to identify the barriers that exist for those reentering the workforce. These simulations provide employers with a practical understanding of these challenges, highlighting the need to adjust expectations and implement supportive workplace practices.

These programs have demonstrated the value of deepening partnerships, identifying gaps, and supporting ongoing workforce development and reentry initiatives in Kentucky.

Governor's Reentry Initiative Update

Chair Burikhanov provided an update on the Governor's reentry initiatives, as well as the recent announcement a decrease in the state's recidivism rate for the second consecutive year, reflecting sustained improvement over the past four to five years.

The Kentucky Department of Corrections offers 35 programs across the state prison system focused on skills, credentials, and certifications. Several were developed in partnership with the Education and Labor Cabinet and Kentucky Community & Technical College System (KCTCS). To date, 1,779 inmates have earned at least one credential. These programs, including Jobs on Day One partnerships with the Painters Union and Iron Workers, have contributed to positive employment outcomes for individuals leaving incarceration.

Chair Burikhanov also talked about the 2026 Regular Session House Bill 5 which developed a framework for a new prison education program as part of a proposed reentry campus in Burgin, KY in partnership with KCTCS. The campus would serve up to 400 inmates annually, providing in-demand credentials, intensive reentry services, dedicated dormitories, and interview spaces to support professional development and direct employer engagement.

The Council discussed its first annual report as required by the establishing executive order which included a review of the past year's initiatives, a highlight of successes, member spotlights, case studies, and recommendations. The report emphasized building infrastructure to recruit untapped talent pools and

outlined objectives for the coming year: increasing the number of committed second chance employers and expanding wraparound services to support successful employment upon release.

The Council discussed the development of a PowerPoint presentation to help with second chance employer recruitment. Council members were asked to provide feedback and recommendations for the development of a presentation.

Group Discussion

The Council discussed ongoing efforts to ensure meaningful second chance employment. The connection between employment, recovery programs, and recidivism reduction was emphasized, highlighting the importance of integrating treatment centers and local jails into employment pathways.

Recommendations included increasing visibility of partners and their contributions, establishing mentorship networks to guide employers and program participants, and creating incentives for individuals in recovery, such as employment, housing, and skill certifications. Sustainability of second chance employment initiatives across administrative changes was identified as a key priority.

3:32 pm - Adjournment

Chair Burikhanov reminded the council of the next meeting, which is scheduled for Thursday, June 4th, 2026, at More Than a Bakery in Versailles, Kentucky.

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