



**Future
Skills
Centre**

**Centre des
Compétences
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**FSC Skills Horizon Final Report:
Advancing Fair Chance Opportunities for Justice-Involved Individuals: A Strategic
Intervention with Employers**

Funded by the
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Future Skills Program

| **Canada** 

Advancing Fair Chance Opportunities for Justice-Involved Individuals is funded by the Government of Canada's [Future Skills Program](#).

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Executive Summary

Canada is experiencing a labour market shortage, with the unemployment-to-job-vacancy ratio reaching historic lows across all provinces. As labour shortages intensify due to changing workforce expectations, declining interest in certain trades, and the anticipated departure of 240,000 temporary foreign workers, sectors including healthcare, construction, food services, and finance face growing staffing pressures. At the same time, individuals with a criminal record represent a significantly underutilized labour pool, particularly Black and Indigenous people who are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system because of systemic racism and colonial legacies. This study examined how Canadian employers across six industries (i.e., healthcare, finance, construction trades, manufacturing, retail, and food services) perceive and make hiring decisions about applicants with criminal records, with particular attention to race-based disparities and opportunities to advance fair chance hiring.

The study investigated two overarching research questions:

1. What industry-specific employment trends help explain the key barriers to fair chance hiring?
2. How can more inclusive hiring practices be promoted, especially for Black and Indigenous applicants with criminal records? Specifically, can employer education reduce biases, negative attitudes, and concerns related to hiring justice-involved individuals?

A mixed-method design was used. Quantitative data were collected from a nationally representative survey of 600 individuals involved in hiring or interviewing decisions within their organization, distributed evenly across the six sectors of focus: healthcare, finance, construction trades, manufacturing, retail, and food services. Participants completed demographic questions, responded to a randomized mock hiring scenario involving applicants of different races and offence histories, and evaluated detailed offence disclosures. The survey also incorporated an experimental educational intervention delivered either at the beginning or end of the survey to test its influence on hiring attitudes. In addition, semi-structured interviews with 60 respondents (10 per industry) provided in-depth qualitative insights into employer reasoning, industry norms, organizational practices, and perceptions of risk and job fit.

Findings reveal substantial variability in how industries approach criminal record checks. Highly regulated sectors such as healthcare and finance almost universally require background

checks due to regulatory obligations and the sensitive nature of their work. In contrast, industries like construction, retail, food services, and manufacturing use background checks more selectively, often based on role-specific responsibilities. These patterns suggest that while criminal record checks are normalized in certain sectors, others exercise greater flexibility that could open opportunities for fair chance hiring.

The mock hiring experiment demonstrated that race and offence type interact to influence hiring decisions. Across most industries and crime types, Black applicants were selected at lower rates than White and Indigenous applicants—specifically driven by offences involved with assault or fraud. Outcomes for Indigenous applicants varied by sector, with lower selection rates in manufacturing and comparatively higher consideration in retail positions. In contrast, for substance-related offences, racial differences in selection were minimal. These results indicate that racial disparities are amplified for certain offences and vary systematically across industry sectors.

The study also examined whether providing detailed contextual information about an applicant's offence could reduce stigma. Quantitatively, detailed disclosures decreased willingness to hire for assault and substance-related offences and had no effect on fraud, suggesting that additional context may increase concerns and stigma rather than reduce it. Yet interview participants frequently emphasized the importance of understanding offence circumstances—such as self-defence in assault cases or outdated cannabis charges—highlighting a disconnect between stated reasoning and actual selection behaviour.

Similarly, the interactive educational intervention did not increase willingness to hire overall. In fact, participants who received the intervention at the beginning of the survey were generally less likely to select applicants with a criminal record. These results suggest that digital, survey-based interventions may lack salience in shifting entrenched attitudes and that more immersive, industry-specific approaches may be required to support fair chance hiring efforts.

Qualitative findings identified three central themes shaping employer decision-making: (1) general support for reintegration grounded in beliefs about second chances; (2) conditional openness based on crime severity, relevance to job duties, and contextual factors; and (3) job-related hiring considerations focusing on reliability, job performance, and organizational risk. Employers expressed particular concern about violent offences and crimes closely related to job

responsibilities, but many emphasized that a candidate's ability to perform the job effectively remains the primary consideration.

Collectively, this research underscores that fair chance hiring cannot rely on one-size-fits-all strategies. Industry norms, regulatory environments, offence-specific stigma, and racial biases interact to shape employer behaviour. For policy and practice, this means that effective interventions must be industry-specific, culturally informed, and designed to meaningfully shift entrenched perceptions, especially those that disproportionately disadvantage Black and Indigenous applicants. Future work should test interventions in real-world hiring environments and explore longitudinal impacts of actual workplace exposure to justice-involved employees. Strengthening employer education, refining policy approaches, and improving industry-specific interventions will help reduce barriers, advance equitable hiring practices, and support a more inclusive Canadian labour market.

Introduction

Canada continues to face a significant labour market shortage, with the unemployment-to-job vacancy ratio reaching a historic low across every province (Statistics Canada, 2025). This shortage stems from several factors, including shifting workforce expectations and a declining willingness to work in certain industries, such as construction trades (Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 2023; Mahboubi & Zhang, 2025). The upcoming loss of 240,000 temporary foreign workers is expected to further threaten the labour shortage, disrupting critical sectors such as healthcare, food services and construction (Causa et al., 2025; Stinson, 2024). With this evolving labour market, there is an opportunity for skilled workers from marginalized groups, who have historically faced employment barriers, to gain more equitable access to job opportunities.

Research on organizational inclusion highlights developing equitable environments in which diverse identities are respected, valued, and empowered to thrive (Mor Barak, 2015; Randel, 2023; Shore et al., 2011; Shore et al., 2018). Inclusive practices are usually understood to involve consideration of multiple identity dimensions, including race, gender, ability, religion, and sexual orientation (Ha-Redeye, 2019; Jones et al., 2000). However, justice-involved individuals are rarely acknowledged within inclusion discourse. This exclusion reflects a critical oversight both in literature and practice, as justice-involved persons represent a vulnerable group

disproportionally comprised of Black and Indigenous populations (Cotter, 2022; Galley et al., 2021; Walker, 2022).

Having a criminal record is a significant barrier to gaining and maintaining employment (Agan & Starr, 2017; Cerda-Jara & Harding, 2024). This is particularly concerning seeing that employment is a critical component of reintegration and provides justice-involved individuals with a sense of self-esteem, personal responsibility, and financial stability, while also reducing the likelihood of reoffending (Anazodo et al., 2017; Ricciardelli & Mooney, 2018). Given that nearly 4 million Canadians have a criminal record, addressing barriers to employment for this population is critical (Public Safety Canada, 2020).

Unfortunately, Black and Indigenous Peoples are overrepresented in the Canadian criminal justice system (Department of Justice Canada, 2023; 2025). Since racialized individuals already experience racial bias and discrimination, it is not surprising that they tend to face significant barriers to employment, (i.e., lower callback rates, assumptions of incarceration), regardless of whether they have a criminal record (Cerda-Jara & Harding, 2024; Owusu-Bempah & Wortley, 2013; Stelzner, 2022). The intersection of race and justice involvement creates unique challenges for Black and Indigenous job seekers with a criminal record, further limiting access to employment and economic inclusion (Cook et al., 2024; Novick, 2023; Streuli, 2021).

Ongoing labour shortages across Canada underscore the urgent need for workforce integration strategies. Supporting the reintegration of justice-involved individuals by promoting their employment within critical industry sectors could serve as an effective solution to help alleviate these shortages. This study therefore aims to identify the factors that influence hiring decisions for applicants with criminal records, with specific attention to the additional barriers faced by Indigenous and Black job seekers. Understanding these barriers is essential for developing more inclusive strategies that promote equity and opportunity in the labour market, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive economy.

The report is structured to provide a comprehensive exploration of hiring decisions involving individuals with criminal records. The paper begins with a literature review that situates the research within existing scholarship and explores key issues such as stigma, industry-specific willingness to hire people with criminal records, and intersecting factors such as race that compound barriers in accessing employment. The research design section follows, detailing the survey and interview methods used for data collection, as well as highlighting the studies

integration of an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion lens. The findings section presents the key results of our study, including industry requirements for record checks, patterns in mock hiring decisions based on race, crime type, industry, and disclosure, as well as the influence of timing for an educational intervention on hiring outcomes. Finally, the report concludes with a discussion of implications and future directions, highlighting practical applications and areas for continued research.

Literature Review

The stigma associated with having a criminal record plays a significant role in limiting individuals' access to employment opportunities (McAleese, 2022; Pager, 2003; Uggen et al., 2014). Justice involvement often becomes a socially stigmatized aspect of identity, shaping both how individuals are perceived by others and how they perceive themselves. As a result, people with criminal records encounter substantial employment barriers arising from external stigmas as well as internalized negative self-evaluations and beliefs (Anazodo et al., 2019; Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010). Although legal protections exist to reduce discrimination on the basis of criminal history in some provinces, discrimination based on a criminal record remains a legal form of discrimination in most of Canada.

Evidence also indicates that the willingness to hire individuals with a criminal history varies significantly across industries with sectors such as manufacturing, construction, trade, mining, technology, customer service, and retail are generally more open to hiring individuals with past criminal involvement. In contrast, industries like finance, insurance, scientific and technical services, public administration, and healthcare tend to be less receptive. Different types of criminal offences have different employment related biases as well (Vuolo et al., 2017). Vague occupational licensing requirements such as “good moral standing”, coupled with outright bans within various industries such as cosmetology or healthcare (National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction, 2023), further prevent justice-involved individuals from accessing higher wages and employment stability.

Employers frequently interpret a criminal record as an indicator of untrustworthiness or a heightened likelihood of problematic behavior, and these assumptions strongly influence hiring decisions (Hickox & Roehling, 2013; Holzer et al., 2001). Many employers also cite concerns

related to workplace safety, liability, or the perceived costs and time associated with training as reasons for not hiring justice-involved individuals (Griffith & Young, 2017). Importantly, evidence suggests that employer willingness to hire individuals with criminal histories varies widely across industries. Sectors such as manufacturing, construction, trades, mining, technology, customer service, and retail tend to demonstrate greater openness to hiring individuals with prior criminal involvement, whereas industries including finance, insurance, scientific and technical services, public administration, and healthcare are generally less receptive (Lichtenberger, 2006; Nally, Lockwood, & Ho, 2011). Employment-related biases also differ by the type of criminal offence (Vuolo et al., 2017).

Beyond employer attitudes, structural barriers further constrain labour market access. Vague occupational licensing requirements such as mandates for “good moral standing”, and outright bans in fields like cosmetology and healthcare (National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction, 2023) restrict pathways to stable employment and higher wages. Collectively, these stigmas and institutional barriers create persistent disadvantages for justice-involved individuals seeking meaningful and long-term employment.

Despite persistent stigma, research consistently demonstrates that individuals with criminal records are strong contributors to the workforce. Multiple studies find no significant differences in job performance between employees with and without criminal histories (Lundquist et al., 2018; Maurer, 2021). Evidence further shows that employees with a criminal record are less likely to quit their job voluntarily and remain employed for longer periods. This aligns with findings that retention rates are higher, turnover is lower, and employees with criminal records often demonstrate greater loyalty to their employers (American Civil Liberties Union, 2017; Minor et al., 2018; Society for Human Resource Management & Charles Koch Institute, n.d.). Collectively, these findings suggest that justice-involved individuals may represent a valuable and underutilized source of talent.

However, many organizations maintain policies and hiring practices that indicate continued resistance to employing people with criminal records. Background checks are a particularly common screening tool. For example, in a study of 128 business representatives, 73 percent reported conducting background checks prior to making hiring decisions, even though only 18 percent had a formal policy prohibiting the hiring of applicants with a criminal record

(Swanson et al., 2012). This discrepancy illustrates a gap between stated organizational policies and the practices that shape real-world hiring outcomes.

In response to these barriers, a variety of policy interventions and hiring strategies have been developed to reduce the automatic exclusion of applicants with criminal histories. One widely adopted approach is Ban-the-box, which requires employers to delay inquiries about criminal history until later in the hiring process. The goal of this strategy is to ensure that applicants are first evaluated on their qualifications rather than their criminal background (Doleac & Hansen, 2020; Heydon & Naylor, 2017). Although intended to reduce discriminatory screening, Ban-the-box has raised additional concerns. Research indicates that delaying access to criminal history information can lead some employers to rely on racial stereotypes when making assumptions about applicant backgrounds, which results in lower callback rates and fewer interview opportunities for applicants of colour (Agan & Starr, 2017; Doleac & Hansen, 2020). This finding highlights the need for comprehensive and equity-focused approaches to fair chance hiring. Systemic racism within the Canadian legal system significantly contributes to the employment barriers experienced by Black and Indigenous peoples with criminal records. These groups are disproportionately represented across Canada's legal and correctional systems. Black individuals account for 9.2 percent of the federal incarcerated population despite comprising only 3.5 percent of the national population, and Indigenous peoples make up 32.7 percent of those incarcerated while representing approximately 5 percent of Canadians overall (Correctional Service Canada, 2025a; Correctional Service Canada, 2025b). This overrepresentation reflects long-standing inequities in the legal system, including racial profiling, differential policing practices, and unequal treatment at various stages of the criminal justice process (Advincula, 2023; Tetrault, 2022). These systemic inequities extend into the labour market and contribute directly to the limited employment opportunities available to justice-involved individuals (Cook, 2024; Gaddis et al., 2021; Stelzner, 2022).

A robust body of research demonstrates that the combination of racial discrimination and criminal record stigma results in particularly severe employment disadvantages for Black job seekers. Studies have shown that being Black and having a criminal record presents a substantially greater barrier to employment than being White with a similar record (Pager, 2003; Pager, 2005). In contrast, relatively little research has examined how criminal record stigma affects Indigenous job seekers, even though Indigenous peoples experience lower labour force

participation, reduced earnings, and higher rates of reliance on social assistance (Babchishin, 2021). A contributing factor to this gap is that much of the existing literature groups all racialized individuals together and compares them collectively to White individuals. This approach implies that findings apply uniformly across racialized communities and does not account for the distinct barriers faced by specific groups (Carter-Rogers, 2025).

Addressing these disparities requires a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the factors that shape employment barriers for justice-involved individuals, particularly those who belong to racialized communities. While current research documents broad patterns of criminal record stigma and racial inequity, important gaps remain in understanding the specific experiences and needs of Black and Indigenous job seekers with criminal records. There is also limited knowledge about how these patterns vary across Canadian industries. Developing stronger industry-specific insights and identifying practices that promote equitable hiring outcomes for Black and Indigenous applicants with criminal records is therefore a critical step toward reducing systemic exclusion and supporting fairer labour market participation.

Research Design

The aim of this study was to deepen our understanding of industry trends while educating employers on the benefits of fair chance hiring. The research was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) What employment trends in specific industries may help explain the key barriers to fair chance hiring?
- 2) How can we promote more inclusive hiring practices in general, and for Black and Indigenous applicants in particular? Specifically, can employer education help reduce biases, negative attitudes, and concerns about hiring individuals with a criminal record?

A mixed method design was used to address these questions. Quantitative data were collected through a large-scale national survey, while qualitative insights were gathered through semi-structured interviews with a subset of participants. The purpose of the quantitative survey was to yield more general insights of the patterns of employer attitudes and hiring behaviors across industries, that may be identified in qualitative inquiries. Whereas the in-depth semi-structured interviews were used to explore these findings in greater depth and to strengthen the data by capturing detailed accounts of employers' experiences, reasoning, and organizational

practices. Overall, combining these two approaches provided a comprehensive understanding of the individual, organizational, and societal influences on fair chance employment.

All data collection was conducted in coordination with Canadian Viewpoint Inc., a professional research firm that specializes in online data collection and participant recruitment across Canada. Contracting Canadian Viewpoint Inc. allowed us to obtain a large, diverse, and nationally representative sample while ensuring that participant privacy and anonymity was maintained. A sample of 600 participants who are involved in interview or hiring decisions within their organization was recruited to complete the survey. This sample was comprised of 100 participants from six different industry sectors, including healthcare, finance, construction trades, customer service and food services. Additionally, 60 of these participants also took part in a follow up interview, with 10 participants representing each industry sector. All participants were required to be 19 years of age or older and be English-speaking Canadian residents.

Survey

The survey was created and administered using Qualtrics and took approximately 30 minutes to complete. It was designed to examine employer attitudes, perceptions, and decision-making processes related to fair chance hiring. First, participants completed a demographic questionnaire before being presented with a mock hiring scenario, which served as the primary experimental task. During this scenario, participants were asked to assume the role of a hiring manager and were provided with a job description outlining the responsibilities and qualifications of a position within their respective industry (see Annex A for samples). Participants were then randomly assigned to review one of three resumes from qualified applicants (i.e., White, Black, or Indigenous; based on names and racially stereotyped activities) applying for the position (see Annex B for samples). Following resume review, participants were further randomized into one of six initial disclosure conditions indicating that the applicant whose resume they reviewed had a criminal record, with details limited to the type of offence and crime recency (see Annex C). After reading the initial disclosure, participants were asked whether they would consider the candidate for the position. They were then provided with additional contextual information describing specific details of the conviction (see Annex D) and asked, "After learning the details of the conviction, would you consider this candidate for the job?". The mock hiring scenario allowed us to evaluate how applicant race, initial criminal record disclosure (i.e., offence type and recency), and the inclusion of detailed contextual

information about the conviction influenced participants' hiring decisions. This approach allowed us to examine whether providing additional context about a conviction could be a crucial strategy to shape employer perceptions and positively influence hiring decisions.

After completing the mock hiring scenario, participants responded to a series of survey measures assessing their redeemability beliefs, general attitudes and stereotypes toward individuals with a criminal history. Participants also provided information about their organizations hiring practices, particularly their screening practices for background and police checks (see Annex E for all measures).

Additionally, the survey incorporated an interactive educational intervention designed to encourage employers to reflect on and improve their decision-making related to fair chance hiring (beyondtherecord.ca/). The intervention was designed to raise awareness of implicit bias and provides evidence-informed guidance to support more equitable and informed hiring practices for individuals with criminal records. To evaluate its impact, participants were randomly assigned to complete the intervention either at the beginning or end of the survey, creating experimental and control groups. Unlike the mock hiring scenario, the intervention consisted of several brief hiring exercises in which participants evaluated candidates with criminal records. Throughout the activity, participants were presented with research-based insights depicting how employers across Canada have responded to similar hiring exercises, allowing them to compare their own choices and reactions with broader national patterns. This design allowed for comparison between participants who completed the intervention before the rest of the survey and those who completed it at the end, to determine whether exposure to the intervention influenced responses throughout the mock hiring scenario and subsequent measures.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to complement the survey findings and provide a deeper understanding of the factors shaping employer attitudes and organizational practices related to fair chance hiring. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was conducted via Zoom using audio only, to maintain participant anonymity. All interviews were audio-recorded and automatically transcribed using Zoom's transcription feature.

The interview guide was divided into two main sections: personal perspectives and organizational/industry considerations. The first section explored participants' personal views, attitudes, and experiences regarding individuals with criminal records. For example, participants

were asked questions such as, “How do you feel about formerly incarcerated individuals reintegrating into society?”, “If you hypothetically owned your own company, would you consider hiring someone who has a criminal record? Why or why not?”, and “What factors might you consider when evaluating a candidate with a criminal record?”.

Whereas the second section focused on gaining insight into how hiring decisions are shaped within the organizations and industries in which participants work. Questions examined company policies, expectations, and broader industry norms that influence hiring practices. For example, participants were asked, “From your organization’s perspective, are they generally open to hiring individuals with a criminal record? Why or why not?”, “In your organization, are you aware of a process or policy that directs you on how to move forward when you come across a positive police background check?”, and “Is your organization’s hiring influenced by any professional or regulatory bodies (e.g., licensing boards, accreditation bodies)?”. For the complete interview guide, see Annex F.

Supporting the Advancement of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

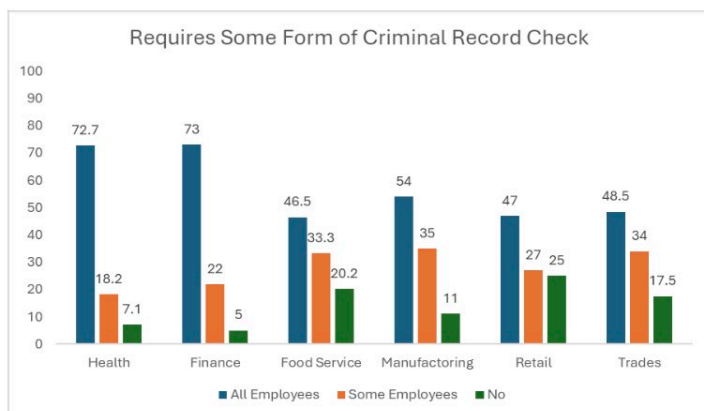
We explore employers’ perceptions of justice-involved individuals, a stigmatized and disadvantaged group. Given that Black and Indigenous people are disproportionately represented in the Canadian criminal justice system due to systemic racism and colonialism, it is not surprising that they experience even higher unemployment rates (Babchishin et al., 2021; Department of Justice Canada, 2023; 2025). Therefore, a core objective of this research is to mitigate barriers to employment for individuals with a criminal record, particularly Black and Indigenous people. By gaining a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence employer decision-making toward individuals with a criminal history, the results of this study can inform policies and initiatives that support inclusive hiring practices and promote equitable employment opportunities.

Findings

This study examined the criminal record check policies and procedures across industries, explored how employers’ perceptions and hiring decisions toward individuals with criminal records change following record disclosure and targeted educational intervention, and analyzed how crime type, applicant race, and information provided during disclosure jointly shape employers’ willingness to hire. Collectively, these findings situate employer decision-making

within the broader goals of stigma reduction, fair chance employment, and the promotion of evidence-informed educational strategies to support more equitable hiring practices in Canada.

Record Check Requirements by Industry



It was found that criminal record check requirements differ by industry. Figure 1 shows the proportion of employers across the six different sectors who require criminal record checks for all, some or none of their employees. Overall, criminal record check requirements differ substantially by sector. The health (72.7%) and finance (73%) sectors have the highest proportions of employers requiring some form of criminal record check for all their staff. Although all sectors show “all employees” as the most common response, food services, manufacturing, retail, and trades demonstrate greater variability in their record check requirements. These results suggest that criminal record checks are consistently required for all employees within sectors involving access to sensitive information (e.g., health or financial records) or contact with vulnerable populations (e.g., youth, elderly, or medically ill individuals). In contrast, requirements in sectors such as food service, manufacturing, retail, and trades may be dependent on the specific role or level of responsibility within the organization.

Qualitative responses further support how criminal record check policies vary by sector and organizational positions. Employers in highly regulated industries, such as finance and healthcare, emphasized mandatory checks for all employees due to regulatory compliance and the sensitive nature of their work. One finance employer explained background checks are standard because of federal and provincial rules and the responsibility of handling financial information:

“At the bank, background checks are required. I work for one of the big five banks, and we have to follow both federal and provincial regulations. We can’t discriminate based

on a criminal record; however, we also cannot hire someone with a criminal record—so it becomes an impasse because of federal rules. I’m not sure about smaller independent firms, but I’d assume they also do background checks, since it’s standard when handling money and investments.” (*TS0724, Finance*)

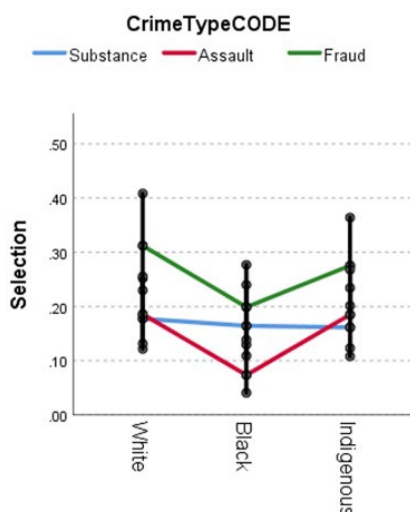
Similarly, an employer from the healthcare sector noted that record checks are due to being in a position of trust:

“Yes, [our organization] does require a police background check. The main reason is that, regardless of level—entry, mid, or executive—employees are in positions of trust, especially given the information and populations we work with. So that’s the biggest concern, ensuring we hire the best possible person for a position of trust.” (*JD0730, Healthcare*)

In contrast, employers outside highly regulated sectors, described a more flexible approach, where record checks are only required for specific roles and positions, rather than universally across the organization:

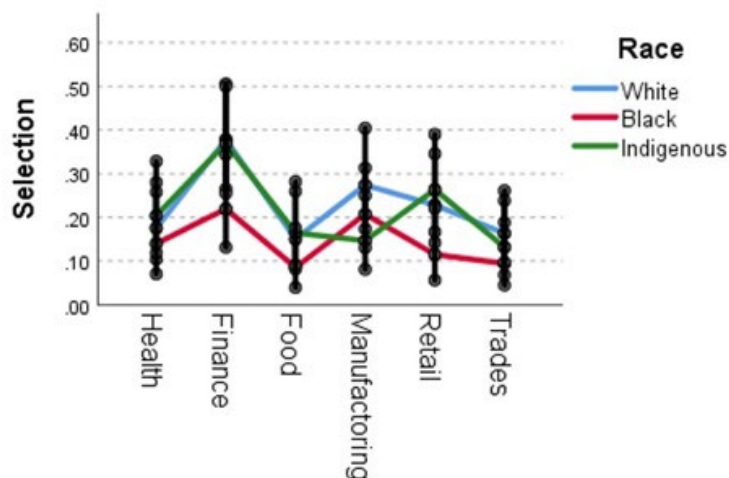
“For labor jobs, [a background check] is not required. It’s mainly for higher-level or contracting positions... it’s just a risk assessment kind of logic. If you’re hiring someone to hold a stop sign on the street, even if they do have a serious criminal record that’s not as big of a risk, as hiring someone higher up. Plus, background checks can take anywhere from one to two weeks, but sometimes we need to hire someone for three days or two months, so it’s not practical to mandate checks in this case.” (*FP0710, Construction*)

Hiring selection by race and crime type



The mock hiring scenario revealed that race effects emerge by crime type. As shown in Figure 2, hiring decisions varied across applicant race and the crime for which they had a criminal record. For assault, Black applicants were least likely to be selected compared to White and Indigenous applicants, indicating that assault convictions have the most negative employment consequence for Black individuals. A similar pattern emerged for fraud, with Black applicants again receiving the lowest selection rates compared to White and Indigenous applicants. Note however that the racial disparity for fraud was less pronounced than for assault. In contrast, when the crime was possession of a controlled substance, selection rates were relatively similar across racial groups, suggesting that race did not influence hiring decisions for substance related record disclosure. Together, these findings indicate that the effect of a criminal record on hiring decisions is not uniform; rather, racial disparities in employer willingness to hire justice-involved individuals are amplified for certain offenses, most notably violent crime.

Hiring selection by race and industry

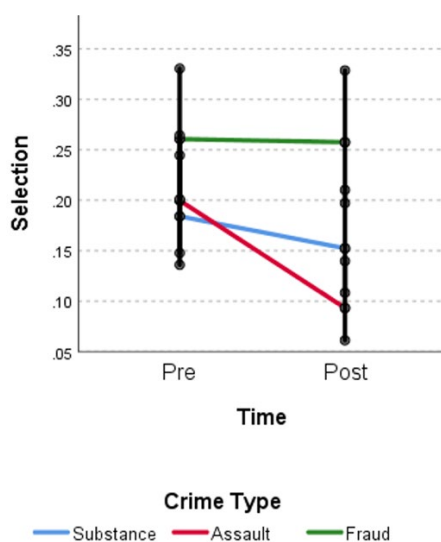


The mock hiring scenario also demonstrated that applicant race influenced hiring decisions across industry sectors. It is important to remember that in these scenarios, race was not explicitly stated – only applicant interest were manipulated to have them engaging in activities that were stereotypical for that race. This was a very subtle manipulation.

As depicted in Figure 3, selection varied by both the hypothetical applicants race and the industry in which participants were employed. Across most industries, Black applicants were

selected at lower rates than White and Indigenous applicants. This pattern likely reflects the broader negative perceptions toward Black applicants with assault convictions, as outlined previously (Figure 2). Additionally, in manufacturing, Indigenous applicants had a lower rate of selection compared to White and Black applicants, suggesting employers within this sector hold more negative perceptions towards Indigenous applicants within this study context. In contrast, within retail, Indigenous applicants were selected at a higher rate than both White and Black applicants, indicating comparatively more favorable hiring attitudes in this context. Notably, industries such as finance showed the widest racial disparity, with Black applicants receiving substantially fewer selections compared to other racial groups. Overall, these findings suggest that the impact of an applicant's race on hiring selection is not uniform across industry sectors. Rather, some industries appear more willing to consider justice-involved applicants from certain racial groups, whereas others demonstrate stronger exclusionary tendencies.

Hiring selection general vs detailed disclosure



The mock hiring scenario also allowed us to assess hiring selection before and after providing participants with the circumstances surrounding an applicant's criminal record. Figure 4 illustrates participants' willingness to select applicants for the position before and after receiving detailed offence information, separated by crime type. In other words, "pre" refers to participants having been provided an initial general disclosure stating that the applicant had a record for either assault, possession of a controlled substance, or fraud, whereas "post" refers to

participants having received a detailed disclosure describing the extenuating circumstances surrounding the conviction (see Annex D for details).

Results indicate that selection rates decreased following the detailed disclosure for assault and substance-related convictions but remained relatively unchanged for fraud. Specifically, willingness to select applicants with assault convictions dropped at the general disclosure stage after participants learned more about the offence details. For possession of a controlled substance, selection decreased only slightly. In contrast, selection rates for applicants with fraud convictions remained stable across both disclosure stages. These results suggest that learning about the contextual details of the offence altered participants' perceptions, reducing willingness to select applicants with assault or substance-related convictions, while attitudes toward applicants with fraud convictions were largely unaffected.

While the quantitative results showed differences in selection patterns across offence types before and after receiving detailed offence information, interview responses did not necessarily align with these trends. Instead, these quotes illustrate how participants may have reasoned through each type of offence, offering possible insight into how additional context surrounding a conviction is perceived.

When discussing assault one participant emphasized that circumstances matter and that not all cases are the same, stating: "When it comes to assault... I think of assault as there's so many different factors. I think of [assault] as a man hitting his wife, but it could have been someone defending themselves. So it really depends." (*JR0710, Construction*)

In contrast, when discussing substance-related offences, participants described frequently encountering applicants with cannabis-related convictions obtained prior to legalization, implying that some individuals continue to experience consequences for behaviours no longer considered illegal. One participant noted:

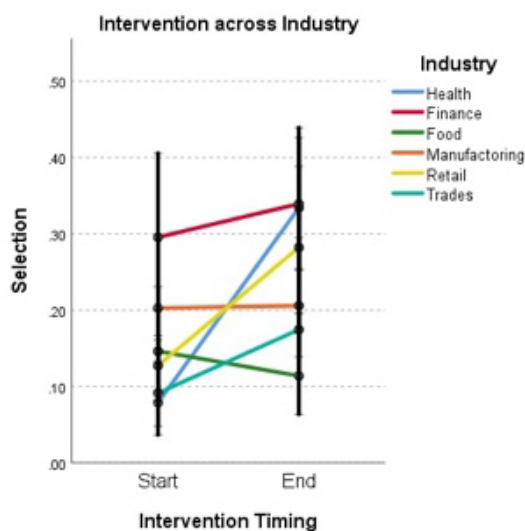
"I've had a lot of pre decriminalization of cannabis. I had a few, there's a little roach left in their ashtray, in their car and then they found a couple other joints and they got a record for that. I had, I think, of three or four like that. And, you know, that's an interesting one in the sense that if someone did that now, that's completely fine. Society and the laws have changed so it's deemed fine, whereas there was a time when it wasn't. So that's more of a depending on the timing. And then you could argue, now that it's legalized, was it ever really a crime?" (*JP0718, Food Services*)

Fraud was consistently viewed more negatively by participants relative to other crimes.

One participant offered reasoning for this view, explaining:

“I mean, you want to hire an honest, genuine person, right? Someone who's hardworking, so fraud is something I wouldn't risk recruiting. Somehow, I feel like fraud is kind of your personality —if you're honest and straightforward, you wouldn't have done that. But if you have done [fraud] in the past, there are chances that you might do it in the future. So, I'm a little skeptical about people with fraud [charges].” (II0703, *Healthcare*)

Timing of Educational Intervention



As mentioned, participants were randomly assigned to an experimental or control group. Those in the experimental group completed the educational intervention at the start of the survey, while those in the control group completed it at the end of the survey. This design allowed us to test whether completing the intervention influenced employers' willingness to hire individuals with criminal records. As shown in Figure 5, selection rates differed by intervention timing and by industry sector.

Overall, completing the intervention at the start of the survey did not increase willingness to hire across industries, and in fact seems to have reduced willingness to hire people with criminal records in some conditions. Specifically, compared to our control group (i.e., those who received the intervention at end), participants who completed the intervention at the start were less likely to select applicants with a criminal record. In most sectors, including healthcare,

finance, retail and trades, selection rates were higher among those in the control condition, suggesting that the educational intervention did not produce its intended effects of promoting more inclusive hiring practices. Note however that, food services were the only industry to move in the expected direction, showing higher selection rates among participants who completed the intervention at the start compared to those who completed it at the end. In contrast, manufacturing remained relatively unchanged regardless of intervention timing, indicating consistent hiring attitudes, not impacted by the intervention. In conclusion, these findings suggest that the educational intervention had limited (and potentially a boomerang) impact on employers' willingness to hire individuals with criminal records.

Attitudes and Beliefs Toward Hiring Individuals with Criminal Records

Analysis of the interview data revealed several key themes reflecting participants' attitudes and beliefs toward hiring individuals with criminal records. These themes captured both general beliefs about reintegration and more specific considerations influencing hiring decisions.

One emerging theme, belief toward reintegration, specifically the idea that everyone is deserving of a second chance. Several participants conveyed the belief that all individuals, regardless of their past offenses, should have the opportunity to rebuild their lives and participate fully in society. For instance, one participant explained:

“No, I have no issues [with hiring someone with a criminal record] because everyone deserves a second chance. We are human, we can make mistakes. I make mistakes. If they have a criminal record and they've done their punishments, they feel guilty about it and they are ready to work hard, meet the organization's goals, as well as their own goals, why not?” (VS0703, Finance)

Many participants indicated conditional support for reintegration and employment, emphasizing that their comfort level depended on the nature of the offence. Concerns were particularly common regarding high severity or violent crimes, with participants indicating hesitation to hire individuals convicted of offences such as murder, rape, assault or physical abuse. One participant stated:

“I feel like anything extremely violent is a no go. Murder, manslaughter, even like vehicular manslaughter, let's say any dangerous driving or impaired driving and [any crime] causing bodily harm. It's not that it makes you a bad person, so to say, but

[crimes] that show you have poor judgment... And it's hard to have somebody with poor judgment in the workplace.” (*JD0718, Retail*)

Within the theme of conditional support, participants also discussed concerns when a candidate’s criminal history is directly related to the job role. For example, one participant mentioned:

“We had an individual that was applying for a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) position, [who was] convicted of theft and fraud in the past, at her previous job. So that was quite a deal-breaker for us, because we were hiring LPNs for a geriatric unit and it was important that whoever was taking that position was not in a position of power to potentially take advantage of the elderly staying on that unit. So unfortunately, we had to discard that application and move on with another individual because it was just too big of a risk.” (*DB0704, Healthcare*)

In addition, considering context also emerged as a subtheme of conditional support. Several participants expressed that support for an individual with a criminal record depended on the specific circumstances surrounding the offence. One participant noted: “It depends on what they did. Let's say, the person steals something even from my grocery store—maybe the person stole because they were hungry.” (*AN0723, Retail*)

The last prominent emerging theme was hiring considerations, specifically an applicant’s potential to perform, as participants emphasized assessing whether candidates could meet job expectations and demonstrate reliability rather than focusing on their criminal record. One participant stated:

“Well, the ability to do the job is the main thing. Can they do the job? Will they show up? Do I need to replace them fast because they know it's not going to work out? Am I taking a chance? And that's the same whether they have a criminal record or not.” (*CJ0709, Manufacturing*)

Overall, the qualitative findings suggest that while many employers are open to hiring individuals with criminal records, their support was often accompanied with concerns about crime severity and its relation to job responsibilities. Participants also highlighted the importance of assessing the circumstances surrounding the conviction and factors related to making practical, informed hiring decisions.

Implications & Future Directions

The findings of this study offer important insight into how sector-specific engagement and evidence-based employer education shape employers' perceptions and willingness to hire individuals with criminal records. Together, the quantitative and qualitative data highlight how factors such as organizational policies, industry-sector differences, individual attitudes, offence-specific stigma, and race-related disparities interact to create complex barriers to employment for people with criminal records. These results provide meaningful implications for policy development, employer education, and sector specific inclusive hiring initiatives, while also identifying areas for further research to strengthen evidence-informed fair chance hiring strategies.

A key contribution of this study is that it identified how industry-sector intersect with applicant race to impact hiring decisions. Across the majority of the sectors, Black applicants, were hired at lower rates than White and Indigenous applicants, indicating that racial disparities vary across industry. This finding strengthens the evidence that efforts to reduce employment barriers for justice-involved individuals must explicitly address the experiences of racialized applicants and to account for how different industries contribute to unequal hiring outcomes.

The study also provides important insight on strategies to reduce stigma and promote inclusive hiring practices. The findings on disclosure showed that providing additional details surrounding the circumstances of one's offence often reduced willingness to hire, particularly for assault and substance-related convictions, suggesting that providing context does not reduce stigma and is therefore an ineffective strategy for improving hiring outcomes. Notably, the qualitative data demonstrated the opposite pattern as participants emphasized the importance of considering context and extenuating circumstances when hiring individuals with a criminal record. In contrast, evaluation of the educational intervention indicated no effect on increasing willingness to hire applicants with a record. This suggests that survey-based delivery may not be sufficiently salient or immersive to shift deeply held attitudes. Collectively, these results emphasize the importance of ongoing efforts to identify evidence-based strategies that effectively change employer attitudes and improve hiring outcomes for justice-involved people.

Several limitations of the present study should be acknowledged. These limitations do not diminish the value of the findings; however, they do help define their scope and applicability. First, while the mock hiring scenario allowed examination of employer decision-making, real hiring environments involve multiple stages, interpersonal cues, and contextual pressures not

captured in an online survey. As a result, the external validity of these findings may be limited when applied to real-world hiring settings. Second, the delivery of the intervention as a digital interactive within a survey may have reduced its salience compared to an immersive, in-person, or workplace-environment approach. Third, although the national sample enhances generalizability, the study relied on self-reported attitudes and hypothetical decisions, which may not fully reflect actual hiring behaviour, especially in regulated industries where legal or safety considerations are heightened. Thus, subsequent studies involving in-person implementation or high-fidelity simulated hiring environments, may yield stronger, more ecologically valid effects that better capture true employer behaviour.

Several directions for future research warrant consideration. First, interventions may need to be tailored to specific industries rather than applied as a uniform solution. The present findings highlight meaningful differences across sectors, suggesting that industry-specific education or training may be more effective in shifting employer perceptions. Second, future studies could incorporate longitudinal designs to assess how employer attitudes evolve following actual workplace experience with fair chance hires. For instance, implementing a pre–post design in which employers hire an applicant with a criminal record for a probationary period would give employers direct insight into the often-overlooked talent and contributions these workers can offer, while also allowing researchers to examine how such exposure shapes employer attitudes and hiring intentions over time. Finally, given the distinct disadvantage experienced by Black and Indigenous applicants, future work should continue to prioritize developing and evaluating solutions that address the unique barriers these groups face. This could include examining culturally informed employment supports and employer-focused interventions that explicitly target racialized stereotypes and systemic discrimination within hiring processes.

Overall, this study provides actionable insights for improving fair chance hiring across industries and contributes to Future Skills Centre’s broader efforts to build a more inclusive economy. By identifying the industry-specific factors that shape stigma and hiring decisions, as well as evaluating interventions designed to promote more inclusive hiring, these findings offer a foundation for targeted policy reform, enhanced employer education, and multi-stakeholder collaboration aimed at reducing barriers for justice-involved individuals, particularly those from Black and Indigenous communities.

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Supporting Materials

Biographies

Dr. Kemi Anazodo — Principal Investigator, University of Windsor

Dr. Kemi Anazodo is an Assistant Professor of Management at the Odette School of Business, University of Windsor. She is the Director of *The CUBE: A Student Talent Incubator for Indigenous and Black Students*, and Faculty Lead for the partnership between the Odette School of Business and the John Howard Society of Ontario. Through her research, Kemi explores the employment challenges millions of Canadians and Americans face with criminal records, focusing on the barriers they encounter in securing and sustaining meaningful employment. Her research also explores employers' attitudes toward hiring individuals with criminal histories. Through her work she advocates for the adoption of more inclusive, fair chance hiring practices.

Dr. Steven Smith — Co-Investigator, Saint Mary's University

Dr. Steven Smith is a Professor of Psychology at Saint Mary's University and President of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA). He has previously served as Dean of Science, Associate Vice-President Academic & Enrolment Management, and Registrar. His expertise spans social and forensic psychology, including cross-race identification, confession evidence, and hiring biases. His work has been published in journals such as *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Law and Human Behavior*, and *Psychology, Public Policy and Law*. Steven has integrated equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) principles into his research, teaching, and leadership responsibilities and has done so for over a decade.

Dr. Katelynn Carter-Rogers — Co-Investigator, St. Francis Xavier University

Dr. Katelynn Carter-Rogers is an Assistant Professor of Indigenous Business at St. Francis Xavier University. She is actively working on several project topics including: 1) Intersectionality within institutions and organizations, 2) Removing barriers within the prison system for Indigenous women, 3) Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility interventions within retail and organizations, and 4) Hiring and selection of minorities with criminal records. Katelynn is proud to have collaborated on various community initiatives including Building Resilience through Anti-Violence Education, the Center for Women in Business, and Public Safety Canada. She is committed to ensuring that Indigenous voices and perspectives are incorporated in business, education and research.

Dr. Vurain Tabvuma — Co-Investigator, Saint Mary's University

Dr. Vurain Tabvuma is the Associate Dean (Undergraduate and Professional Graduate Programs) and Professor of Management at the Sobey School of Business, Saint Mary's University. His research examines intrinsic motivation, employee and student onboarding, job satisfaction, organizational change, adaptation, student success, public service motivation, and pro-social motivation. Dr. Tabvuma's work focuses on how individuals adapt to new roles and environments and how organizational design supports meaningful engagement. His research has appeared in journals such as *Human Resource Management*, *Journal of Public Administration: Research and Theory*, and *Population Research and Policy Review*.

John Howard Society of Ontario — Community Research Partner

The John Howard Society of Ontario (JHSO) is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting evidence-based policies while providing education, programs, and services for justice-involved individuals. Through research, advocacy, and direct service delivery, JHSO supports

rehabilitation, community reintegration, and safer communities. The organization's Centre of Research & Policy collaborated on this project with contributions from Aileen Simon (Manager of Education and Community Engagement), Reza Ahmadi (former Director of Research and Evaluation), Hannah Cook (former Research and Evaluation Analyst), and Emma Jewell (Research Analyst). Their collaboration strengthened the link between academic research and actionable community impact.

Brooke MacFadyen — Senior Research Assistant, Saint Mary's University

Brooke MacFadyen earned a BSc (Honours) in Neuroscience from Dalhousie University (2024) and is currently pursuing her MSc in Applied Psychology (Forensic Psychology) at Saint Mary's University. Her thesis examines the use of certificates from reputable organizations as a strategy to mitigate criminal record stigma and improve employment outcomes for individuals with criminal records, particularly racialized individuals. As Senior Research Assistant, Brooke contributed to all stages of the project, from survey and interview development to report writing.

Rachel McGeer — Research Assistant, Saint Mary's University

Rachel McGeer completed her BA (Honours) in Psychology at Saint Mary's University in 2025. Her honours thesis explored the influence of gender, immigration status, and substance use on stigma toward individuals experiencing homelessness. As a Research Assistant, Rachel conducted interviews with participants and assisted with qualitative data coding and analysis.

Methodological Supplements

Annex A: Job Descriptions

Description 1: Healthcare Industry

Imagine you are a hiring manager at a hospital hiring for a **Medical Receptionist** position. Please read the following job description carefully as you will be reviewing an applicant's resume shortly to determine whether they are a suitable fit for the role.

Job Title: Medical Receptionist

Location: Toronto, ON (preferred)

Job Type: Full time

Salary: \$35,000 to \$50,000/year

Experience: Administrative support or customer service - 1 year (preferred)

Language: English (required); French (preferred)

Job Description

Responsibilities:

- Greet and register patients, confirm appointments, and verify patient information.
- Answer phone calls, respond to inquiries, and direct calls to the appropriate departments.
- Schedule, reschedule, and cancel appointments as needed.
- Manage patient files and update electronic medical records (EMRs).
- Process payments and prepare billing information.
- Maintain office supplies and ensure a clean and organized reception area.
- Assist with administrative duties such as filing, data entry, and report preparation.
- Handle sensitive information with confidentiality and professionalism.

Requirements:

- Completion of high school is required.
- Completion of a medical office administration program or equivalent experience in a healthcare setting is preferred.
- Experience using electronic medical record (EMR) systems is an asset.
- Strong communication and customer service skills.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Outlook).

Description 2: Construction Industry

Imagine you are a hiring manager at a construction company hiring for a **Construction Labourer** position. Please read the following job description carefully as you will be reviewing an applicant's resume shortly to determine whether they are a suitable fit for the role.

Job Title: Construction Labourer

Location: Toronto, ON (preferred)

Job Type: Contract (6 to 12 months)

Salary: \$40,000 to \$55,000/year (pro-rated based on contract length)

Experience: 1 year of construction or general labour experience (preferred)

Language: English

Job Description

Responsibilities:

- Load, unload, and transport construction materials.
- Assist with site preparation, including clearing debris and setting up equipment.
- Operate hand and power tools safely and effectively.
- Mix, pour, and spread materials such as concrete and asphalt.
- Assemble and disassemble scaffolding and temporary structures.
- Follow health and safety guidelines to maintain a safe work environment.
- Assist skilled tradespeople, such as carpenters, electricians, and plumbers, as needed.
- Perform basic measurements and calculations.
- Clean and maintain construction sites.

Requirements:

- Completion of high school is preferred.
- Experience working on a construction site or in general labour is preferred.
- Knowledge of construction safety practices and regulations.
- Strong teamwork and communication skills.
- Valid driver's license and access to reliable transportation are an asset.

Annex B: Resumes

Resume 1: Healthcare, White

Daniel Walker

Location: Toronto, ON

Work Objective: To obtain a full-time medical receptionist position where I can apply my administrative experience and strong organizational skills to provide efficient and professional patient support.

Education

Diploma in Medical Office Administration, George Brown College, Toronto, ON (2011–2012)
High School Diploma, Central Technical School, Toronto, ON (2007-2011)

Work Experience

Reception Coordinator, Westline Medical Group (2018–Present)

- Coordinate front desk operations in a multidisciplinary medical clinic
- Register and check-in patients, confirm insurance, and update EMRs
- Schedule appointments and follow-ups for six physicians
- Process payments and organize billing submissions
- Train junior administrative staff and ensure compliance with privacy regulations

Customer Service Supervisor, Lakeside Pharmacy (2014–2018)

- Oversaw daily operations and team schedules at a busy retail pharmacy
- Handled patient intake, prescription pick-ups, and front counter support
- Maintained records, insurance documents, and basic medical filing
- Assisted with community health campaign coordination

Sales Associate, MetroMart Toronto (2012–2014)

- Delivered in-person customer service in a high-traffic store
- Operated the register, managed inventory, and assisted in training seasonal staff
- Developed skills in scheduling, organization, and front-line communication

Skills

- EMR systems (Telus Health, Oscar)
- Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Outlook)
- Appointment scheduling and insurance handling
- Fluent in English; conversational in French

Volunteer Experience

Toronto Men's Shelter – Administrative Volunteer (2020–2021)

Hobbies & Interests

- Cycling and woodworking
- Weekend hockey games with friends
- Gardening and DIY home repairs

Resume 2: Healthcare, Black Applicant**Malik Johnson**

Location: Toronto, ON

Work Objective: To secure a medical receptionist role where I can contribute my administrative knowledge and commitment to quality care in a supportive clinic environment.

Education

Certificate in Medical Office Practices, Humber College, Toronto, ON (2011–2012)

High School Diploma, Eastern Commerce Collegiate Institute, Toronto, ON (2007–2011)

Work Experience**Medical Office Assistant, Downtown Health Network (2017–Present)**

- Register patients, manage intake forms, and schedule appointments
- Operate Accuro EMR system and support front desk administrative flow
- Coordinate medical billing, insurance processing, and reporting
- Provide support to visiting practitioners and handle sensitive information

Administrative Coordinator, Pathways Youth Centre (2014–2017)

- Led front desk operations and managed scheduling for youth mental health services
- Maintained contact logs, filed case notes, and supported health workshops
- Handled confidential documents and intake protocols

Retail Associate, Value Mart Convenience (2012–2014)

- Provided reliable customer service in a downtown retail store
- Supported cash handling, inventory control, and display merchandising

Skills

- EMR Software: Accuro, OSCAR
- MS Office (Outlook, Excel, Word)
- Excellent communication and client-facing skills
- Fluent in English, basic French

Volunteer Experience

Mentorship Program – Youth Administrative Volunteer (2019–2020)

Hobbies & Interests

- Performing spoken word and local poetry readings
- Pickup basketball and weekend fitness training
- Caribbean cooking and trying new recipes

Resume 3: Healthcare, Indigenous Applicant**Nolan Capay**

Location: Toronto, ON

Work Objective: To join a healthcare team as a medical receptionist, using my years of administrative experience and commitment to inclusive patient care.

Education

Medical Office Assistant Certificate, Centennial College, Toronto, ON (2011–2012)

High School Diploma, Sir Winston Churchill High School, Calgary, AB (2007–2011)

Work Experience**Receptionist & Program Support, Urban Indigenous Health Centre (2018–Present)**

- Greet clients, manage appointments, and update medical records via Telus PS Suite
- Process billing and prepare reports for health programs
- Support administrative needs for workshops and cultural events
- Assist in managing community partnerships and promotional materials

Office Assistant, Healing Lodge Society – Toronto Chapter (2014–2018)

- Provided front desk and clerical support in a culturally safe environment
- Scheduled counseling and support sessions, tracked attendance, and maintained supplies
- Handled sensitive intake data and worked closely with health workers

Customer Service Clerk, Turtle Station Convenience (2012–2014)

- Delivered friendly customer service and maintained a clean store environment
- Managed inventory, cash handling, and financial reconciliation

Skills

- EMR Systems: Telus PS Suite, Accuro
- Microsoft Office proficiency
- Culturally sensitive and client-focused communication
- Fluent in English

Volunteer Experience

Native Canadian Centre of Toronto – Front Desk Support (2020–2021)

Hobbies & Interests

- Beadwork, carving, and cultural workshops
- Community drumming and ceremony involvement
- Outdoor camping and wilderness photography

Annex C: Initial Record Disclosure**Condition 1:**

When told the position would require a criminal record check, the applicant whose resume you reviewed discloses that they have a criminal record. The applicant shares that they were convicted of **Possession of Controlled Substance one year ago**.

Condition 2:

When told the position would require a criminal record check, the applicant whose resume you reviewed discloses that they have a criminal record. The applicant shares that they were convicted of **Possession of Controlled Substance 10 years ago**.

Condition 3:

When told the position would require a criminal record check, the applicant whose resume you reviewed discloses that they have a criminal record. The applicant shares that they were convicted of **Assault one year ago**.

Condition 4:

When told the position would require a criminal record check, the applicant whose resume you reviewed discloses that they have a criminal record. The applicant shares that they were convicted of **Assault 10 years ago**.

Condition 5:

When told the position would require a criminal record check, the applicant whose resume you reviewed discloses that they have a criminal record. The applicant shares that they were convicted of **Fraud one year ago**.

Condition 6:

When told the position would require a criminal record check, the applicant whose resume you reviewed discloses that they have a criminal record. The applicant shares that they were convicted of **Fraud 10 years ago**.

Annex D: Detailed Record Disclosure**If condition 1 or 2 was seen:**

The candidate shares that they were convicted of possession of cannabis. The candidate explains that this occurred at a gathering in a residential neighbourhood. Police were called because of noise and other related complaints from neighbours. The candidate was in the front of the house with some cannabis and was charged and convicted of personal possession. The individual plans to apply for a record suspension since cannabis has now been legalized and there is an expedited record suspension process for certain cannabis related records, but they have not done so yet.

If condition 3 or 4 was seen:

The candidate worked as a bouncer at a bar in university. They often got into altercations with patrons of the bar who were causing a disturbance and did not want to leave when asked. One day while dragging someone out, there was an altercation, and the patron fell down some stairs and broke their nose. The candidate reported the incident to the police, and they were charged and convicted of assault.

If condition 3 or 4 was seen:

The candidate had indicated that they had made charitable donations to an organization double what they actually contributed. When audited donation receipts revealed the discrepancy. When considered in relation to all other charitable donations for the tax period, the candidate would have been shy of the minimum amount necessary to receive a tax break without doubling this donation.

Annex E: Survey Measures

E1. Dispositional Attributions Scale (Maruna & King, 2009)

For the following items please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1.	Crime is mostly the product of a person's circumstances and social context.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Crime is a choice — a person's social circumstances aren't to blame.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	People commit crime because they want to.	1	2	3	4	5

E2. Belief in Redeemability – Version 2 (BiR-2) Scale (O’Sullivan et al., 2017)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1.	Having committed a crime should be no obstacle to becoming a valued member of society again.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	People who have committed crimes deserve the opportunity to regain the respect of the community.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	People who commit a crime still deserve the opportunity to build the best life they can have.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	In general, it's possible for people who commit crime to change and lead a law-abiding life.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	It's possible for someone who commits crime to change dramatically for the better.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	People who have committed crimes have as much control over their future as anyone else.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	After committing a crime, changing your life is more about personal effort than luck.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	It's not really worth spending time trying to rehabilitate justice-involved persons.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Despite their best efforts, most people who commit crimes just can't manage to go back to living straight.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Once a criminal, always a criminal.	1	2	3	4	5

E3. Familiarity with Individuals Who Have a Record (adapted from Dean et al., 2022)

Please answer the following questions:

		Yes	No
1.	Do you know someone with a criminal record?		
2.	Do you know someone in a friend's network with a criminal record?		
3.	Have you ever <i>knowingly</i> interviewed someone with a criminal record?		
4.	Have you <i>knowingly</i> hired someone with a criminal record?		
5.	Have you <i>knowingly</i> worked with someone with a criminal record?		

E4. Abbreviated Stereotypes Questionnaire (adapted from Fiske et al., 2002)

Please answer the following items using the 5-point scale where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "extremely". We are not interested in your personal beliefs, but in how you think they are viewed by others.

As viewed by society...

Not at All				Extremely
1	2	3	4	5

1.	How competent are people with a criminal history?	1	2	3	4	5
2.	How confident are people with a criminal history?	1	2	3	4	5
3.	How warm are people with a criminal history?	1	2	3	4	5
4.	How sincere are people with a criminal history?	1	2	3	4	5
5.	How well educated are people with a criminal history?	1	2	3	4	5
6.	How economically successful are people with a criminal history?	1	2	3	4	5
7.	If people with a criminal history get special breaks, this is likely to make things more difficult for people like me.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Resources that go to members of this group are likely to take away from the resources of people like me.	1	2	3	4	5

E5. Potential Concerns About Hiring Individuals with Criminal Records

To what extent do you agree or disagree that you take the following into consideration in your decision to hire an employee with a criminal record? Please rate each consideration on a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Liability	1	2	3	4	5
Safety	1	2	3	4	5
Trust	1	2	3	4	5
Reputation of the organization	1	2	3	4	5
Public perception	1	2	3	4	5
Personal reputation	1	2	3	4	5
Concerns about attracting staff	1	2	3	4	5
Protecting employees and/or clients	1	2	3	4	5
Working with vulnerable persons	1	2	3	4	5
Exposure to sensitive information	1	2	3	4	5
Their mental health	1	2	3	4	5
It is against company policy/standards	1	2	3	4	5
It is not in line with industry standards	1	2	3	4	5
Other, please specify:	1	2	3	4	5

E6. Factors Considered When Hiring Individuals with Criminal Records

To what extent do you agree or disagree that you consider the following factors when considering a candidate with a criminal record? Please rate each consideration on a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Relevance of the crime to the job	1	2	3	4	5
Timing since the offence	1	2	3	4	5
First time offence	1	2	3	4	5
Offence Category* <i>*If yes, what offence categories of concern come to mind?</i> _____	1	2	3	4	5
Severity of the crime	1	2	3	4	5
Age at the time of the crime	1	2	3	4	5
Labour market trends	1	2	3	4	5
Expression of remorse	1	2	3	4	5
Participation in self-development programming	1	2	3	4	5
Good/trust referral	1	2	3	4	5
Other, please specify:	1	2	3	4	5

E7. Reasons to Support Hiring Individuals with Criminal Records

The following statements reference positive reasons to hire a job applicant with a criminal record. Please identify whether you disagree or agree with any of the following.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

It is important to give people a chance	1	2	3	4	5
If supply of available labour is low	1	2	3	4	5
If they have relevant experience	1	2	3	4	5
If I hear their story	1	2	3	4	5
I would rather not know about their criminal history at all	1	2	3	4	5
Other, please specify:	1	2	3	4	5

E8. Perceptions of Workers with Criminal Records (Cook, 2024)

For the following statements indicate whether you agree or disagree.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1.	Compared to other workers, people with criminal records generally are less reliable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Compared to other workers, people with criminal records generally put in as much or more effort on the job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Compared to other workers, people with criminal records generally have lower credentials	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	Compared to other workers, people with criminal records generally are a greater risk/liability.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	Compared to other workers, people with criminal records generally are challenging employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6

E9. Willingness to Hire Individuals with Criminal Records

Please describe your willingness to hire people with a criminal record.

Not at all Willing	Slightly Willing	Neutral	Mostly Willing	Completely Willing
1	2	3	4	5

1.	People with mild criminal records can contribute in a positive way to our business	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I see that there are work tasks a person with a criminal record can do in our business	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The work we do here is not suitable for people with criminal records	1	2	3	4	5
4.	If the necessary financial support is included, our company will consider hiring people with criminal records in the near future	1	2	3	4	5
5.	If the necessary guidance is included, our company will consider hiring people with criminal records in the near future	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Our company is willing to facilitate work assignments and job descriptions to create job opportunities for people with criminal records	1	2	3	4	5

E10. Perceived Willingness, Comfort, Trust, and Safety When Working with Individuals with Criminal Records

The following questions pertain to your level of willingness, comfort, trust and concern to work with individuals who have committed a criminal offence but have served their punishment and are now legally allowed to work.

Willingness is defined as a quality or state of being happy to do something if needed.

Comfort is defined as a state of physical ease or relaxation.

Trust is defined as the assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone.

Concern for safety is defined as worries regarding dangers and risks.

For each statement indicate your level of willingness, comfort, trust and concern for each using a scale from (1) not at all to (5) a great deal.

Not at all				A Great Deal
1	2	3	4	5

1.	How willing would you be to work with someone who has been convicted of a crime?	1	2	3	4	5
2.	How comfortable would you be to work with someone who was convicted of a crime?	1	2	3	4	5
3.	How trusting would you be toward someone who was convicted of a crime?	1	2	3	4	5
4.	How concerned would you be for the safety of yourself and others, if you worked with an individual who was convicted of a crime?	1	2	3	4	5

E11. Schwartz Value Scales (Schwartz, 2012)

The following statements pertain to human values.

For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Self-Transcendence

BENEVOLENCE

- 12. It's very important to you to help the people around you.
- 18. It is important to you to be loyal to your friends.
- 27. It is important to you to respond to the needs of others.
- 33. Forgiving people who have hurt you is important to you.

UNIVERSALISM

- 3. You think it is important that every person in the world be treated equally.
- 8. It is important to you to listen to people who are different from you.
- 19. You strongly believe that people should care for nature.
- 23. You believe all the world's people should live in harmony.
- 29. You want everyone to be treated justly, even people you don't know.
- 40. It is important to you to adapt to nature and to fit into it.

Conservation

SECURITY

- 5. It is important to you to live in secure surroundings.
- 14. It is very important to you that your country is safe.
- 21. It is important to you that things be organized and clean.
- 31. You try hard to avoid getting sick.
- 35. Having a stable government is important to you.

CONFORMITY

- 7. You believe that people should do what they're told.
- 16. It is important to you to always behave properly.
- 28. You believe you should always show respect to your parents and to older people.
- 36. It is important to you to be polite to other people all the time

TRADITION

- 9. You think it's important not to ask for more than what you have.
- 20. Religious belief is important to you.
- 25. You think it is best to do things in traditional ways.
- 38. It is important to you to be humble and modest.

E12. Stigma towards people with criminal records

The following questions pertain to your perceptions about people with criminal records. For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1.	Most people with criminal records are dangerous.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Most people with criminal records cannot be trusted.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	People with criminal records are cold and mechanical, like robots.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	People with criminal records lack self-restraint, like animals.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	People with criminal records are unsophisticated.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Most people with criminal records committed crimes because they have little to no self-control.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Most people with criminal records committed crimes simply because they have bad moral character.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Most people with criminal records committed crimes simply because they are selfish people.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Most people with criminal records committed crimes simply because they are just too lazy to get a job and earn money	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I would be afraid to be around someone who has a criminal record.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I would be upset if a person who has a criminal record moved into my neighborhood.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I feel disgusted by people who have a criminal record.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I would not want to work with a person who has a criminal record.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I would not want to live near a person who has a criminal record.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I would not want to be friends with a person who has a criminal record.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I would never be willing to date a person who has a criminal record.	1	2	3	4	5

E13. Industry and Background Check Items

1. What is the size of your organization?
 - Small (1-99 employees)
 - Medium (100-499 employees)
 - Large (500+ employees)

2. Are you involved in the interview and selection process at your organization?
Small (1-99 employees)

- Yes
- No

[IF YES], please describe your involvement in the interview and selection process.

3. Does your organization require any form of police background check for new employees?
 - Yes, for ALL new employees
 - Yes, for SOME new employees
 - No
 - Unsure

[IF YES]: What level(s) of police background check does your organization require?
(check all that apply)

- Criminal record check
- Criminal record and judicial matters check
- Vulnerable sector check
- My work is federally regulated and the PRCRA does not apply
- Unsure

[IF YES]: What is the purpose of asking for a police background check? (check all that apply)

- Funding requirement
- Legal requirements for Vulnerable Sector Check
- Insurance requirement
- Liability/risk management
- Bill 168 (health and safety for employees)
- Company policy
- Other, please specify: _____
- Unsure

4. When hiring for a position, which of the following is part of the standard screening process? (please select all that apply)
 - Interview(s)

- Resume and cover letter
 - Reference checks
 - Orientation sessions
 - Police record checks
 - Job shadowing periods
 - Other, please specify: _____
 - Unsure
5. Has your company or organization where you work hired individuals with a criminal record?
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
6. When an applicant fails a pre-hire screening, how does this generally affect hiring decisions at your organization? (please select all that apply)
- Don't hire
 - Hire depending on type of position
 - Hire depending on type of offence
 - Hire depending on the age of record
 - Hire with workplace assignment altered
 - Hire depending on time since offence or conviction
 - Hire but place the information in the person's HR file depends on the individual
 - Hire regardless
7. After a person is hired are periodic police background checks required for their file?
- No
 - Yes, for all employees who are screened at the hiring stage
 - Yes, for some employees who were screened at the hiring stage
8. If a police background check came back such that an existing employee has a criminal record, what would be a typical response in your organization?
- Keep employee with warning
 - Keep employee – penalize – reduced responsibility etc.
 - Key employee and refer to counselling/social service agency
 - Depends on individual
 - No action
 - Terminate
 - Other, please specify: _____

Annex F: Interview Guide

“Please be advised that the interview will feel very repetitive, especially if you answer questions we have yet to ask. Since this is a structured interview, we do have to ask the questions in the exact same order for every participant. That said, even if you feel you have answered a question please repeat and expand on your thoughts when asked”.

1. What industry do you work in?
2. What is your role in your organization?
3. In what way are you involved in the hiring process? Please explain in detail.
 - What levels do you typically hire for within your org.? (e.g., entry-level, mid-level, supervisory, skilled trades, management, etc.)

“The next set of questions pertain to **your personal perspectives**. I ask that you please answer these questions using your own thoughts and opinions until I instruct you otherwise. To clarify, you are answering based on your own perspective NOT your company’s.”

4. Do you have any general perceptions about people with criminal records?
 - Does anything at all come to mind when thinking of an individual with a record?
 - How would you feel if you were informed someone with a record lived in your neighbourhood or worked somewhere you go regularly?
5. How do you feel about formerly incarcerated individuals reintegrating into society?
 - Do you have any concerns regarding reintegration specific to employment?
 - Do you think these individuals should be provided resources to make their reintegration easier?
6. In your day to day, would you hypothetically be comfortable working alongside an individual with a criminal history?
 - What concerns (if any) would you have?
7. In general, what are your perceptions/attitudes about people with criminal records being hired in the workplace?
 - Do you generally feel comfortable with the idea of hiring an individual with a CR? Why or why not?
 - Do you have any specific concerns with the idea? [if yes, ask what]
8. If you hypothetically owned your own company, would you consider hiring someone who has a criminal record? Why or why not?
 - Would you be concerned about your organization in any way?
 - Would you be concerned about yourself in any way?
9. During the hiring process, have you ever encountered an applicant with a criminal record (whether at your current or past job)?
 - [If yes] Would you be able to share a few experiences where this did occur?
 - o How did the record affect your hiring decision? (end result?)

- [If not] how might a criminal record affect your hiring decisions?
10. What factors might you consider when evaluating a candidate with a criminal record? (e.g., circumstance/context, self-disclosure of CR before police check, guilt/remorse, self-presentation, body language, etc.)
 11. In your personal opinion, does the crime one committed impact your assessment of a candidate? (e.g., violent crimes, sex offences, murder, or non-violent crime such as drugs, DUI, fraud, minor altercations, theft)
 - Which crimes would make you immediately reject the candidate?
 - What crimes would you not be bothered by?
 - Does it make a difference if someone was incarcerated vs on house arrest?
 - o [If yes], why? What does it suggest?
 - Length of time served?
 12. In your personal opinion, does the amount of time since the crime was committed impact your assessment of a candidate? (e.g., year vs. 10 years vs. 20 years)
 - What about their age at time offence? (e.g. 19yo vs 30yo)
 13. In your personal opinion, does the number of offences impact your assessment of a candidate? (i.e., first offence vs repeat offender)
 - How about the frequency of offence? (i.e., 5 offences in 2 years vs 5 offenses in 5 years)
 14. In your personal opinion, does the relevance of the offence to the job position influence your assessment of a candidate? (e.g., Fraud for bank teller position, DUI for driving-involved position)
 15. Would you be more likely to hire an individual with a criminal record if they have taken steps to prepare for employment?
 - What are these “steps” you would personally consider as positive or beneficial? (e.g. educational upgrading)
 - If not mentioned:
 - o What if they completed employment or skills training programs?
 16. Is there anything we haven’t touched on that would prevent you from hiring someone who has a criminal record?
 17. Do you personally have any concerns about hiring someone with a criminal record into your specific organization?
 - If so, what are your concerns?

“Moving on to the next set of questions – these questions will focus on the policies, practices, and expectations within your **industry OR organization** regarding the hiring of individuals with a criminal record.”

18. From your **organization's** perspective, are they generally open to hiring individuals with a criminal record? Why or why not?
- What are your organization's most significant concerns?
 - Is there anything that might encourage **your organization** to be more open to employing individuals with a criminal history?
19. From your **industry's perspective**, is [insert industry, ex: healthcare] generally open to hiring individuals with criminal records? Why or why not?
- What are the most significant concerns for the _____ industry?
 - Is there anything that might encourage your industry to be more open to employing individuals with a criminal history? (e.g., probationary periods, pull from above examples)
20. Are there any stakeholders (e.g., customers, clients, etc.) your organization needs to consider when making hiring decisions in regard to individuals with a criminal record?
21. Does your organization require a police background check for new employees? Why/Why not?
- To your knowledge, is this requirement consistent across organizations within the _____ industry?
22. Has your organization had internal discussions or meetings about its police background check policy and/or processes? (only when comes up?)
- Is training provided? When & how often? (initial training, annual meeting, meeting when comes up)
23. In your organization, are you aware of a formal policy around the collection and use of police background checks?
- At what point in the hiring process is this done? (upon applying vs after initial interview?) NOTE: get them to situate in process (resume review à interview à CR check à meeting à 2nd int?)
 - Are record checks only for new employees or are existing employees required to complete them periodically (ex: every 5 years)?
 - How is this done (record provided by applicant, consent obtained to get from RCMP, vs 3rd party check?)
24. In your organization, are you aware of a process or policy that directs you on how to move forward when you come across a positive police background check?
- [If yes]: What is that process/policy?
 - [If not]: Is it simply an informal, unwritten process that everyone typically does?
25. In your organization, are you aware of a formal policy that **addresses what factors** should be considered when evaluating a candidate with a criminal record?
26. Is your organization's hiring influenced by any professional or regulatory bodies (e.g., licensing boards, accreditation bodies)

- [If yes] what are they and how do they impact your hiring decisions?
 - How did you become aware of them?
 - What are the most significant challenges in implementing them?
- 27.** What potential ethical issues or moral dilemmas arise during evaluations of applicants with criminal records? (ex from healthcare: discrimination due to record (DEI) vs safety/security of vulnerable ppl such as kids & the elderly)
- How does this relate to the industry you are working in?
 - Can you think of any policies that may alleviate them?
- 28.** Is there anything related to hiring individuals with criminal records **that you think** is important to highlight, which we have yet to discuss?
- 29.** From the perspective of your industry or organization, is there anything about hiring individuals with criminal records that you think is important to highlight that we have yet to discuss?