



The **CAMPAIGN** for the
FAIR SENTENCING
of **YOUTH**

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NEW ‘HIRE ICAN!’ WEBSITE CONNECTS EMPLOYERS WITH FORMERLY INCARCERATED JOB SEEKERS

The project offers companies and businesses an opportunity to meet a pool of skilled candidates and expand capacity for fair chance hiring

Tuesday, June 22, 2021, Washington, DC — Today, the [Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth \(CFSY\)](#) announces the launch of [Hire ICAN!](#), which will connect employers with a nationwide network of job seekers who were incarcerated as youth. The website houses resources for both employers and candidates alongside an easy-to-use portal through which recruiters can search for and connect with job seekers.

[ICAN \(the Incarcerated Children's Advocacy Network\)](#) was launched in 2014, and is a national network of individuals who began periods of incarceration when they were under age 18 and have since been released. [Hire ICAN!](#) is launching in a moment when many employers are confronting a labor shortage and simultaneously seeking to diversify their workforce and support racial justice.

This project provides part of the solution -- like all formerly incarcerated populations in the United States, the majority of ICAN members are from diverse communities and those showcased on the project site are all enthusiastically looking for work. Employers who hire people with criminal records report lower rates of absenteeism and turnover, and believe the value these employees bring is “as high as or higher than that of workers without records.”

“Fair chance hiring is part of Checkr's DNA,” says Lauren Bell, Fair Chance Program Manager at [Checkr](#). “We are a technology company that conducts millions of background checks every year. We find every opportunity we can to integrate fairness tools into our platform, as we deeply understand the impact that past records have on professional ambitions. The [Hire ICAN!](#) site will make a world of difference, and Checkr looks forward to using it to expand career opportunities for people who are formerly incarcerated.”

ICAN members serve as national spokespersons and advocates for incarcerated youth, are held to a high standard of conduct and morality, and are charged with representing ICAN with integrity and professionalism. They are also living proof of the innate capacity for change that

justice-involved children have, and of the unique leadership that often comes with being directly impacted by the system. The entire candidate pool featured on the [Hire ICAN!](#) website is from this group of exceptional individuals who are already making a difference within their communities and look forward to extending their excellence and unique life experience into the workplace.

The CFSY is itself a fair chance employer and has seven formerly incarcerated people (all ICAN members) on its staff including co-executive director Xavier McElrath-Bey. McElrath-Bey was incarcerated at 13 years old and when he came home at age 26, was given an opportunity by Starbucks that began his illustrious career.

“My first night out of prison, I found myself laying on a thin blue mat in a homeless shelter, clenching my college degrees, diplomas, and parole conditions, with my mind racing in every direction,” says CFSY co-executive director Xavier McElrath-Bey. “It wasn’t until months later, when Starbucks gave me a chance, that I was truly able to restart my life. As someone who now leads an organization with seven formerly incarcerated staff members and has been both the employee and an employer, I can confidently say the benefits to using a platform like [Hire ICAN!](#) are tremendous for all involved.”

To learn more about how you can find your next great employee through [Hire ICAN!](#), contact Anna Melbin at amelbin@cfsy.org. If you would like to arrange a media interview with a member of the CFSY staff about the project, please contact Karmah Elmusa at karmah@cfsy.org or 202-341-9500.

[The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth](#) is a nonprofit that leads efforts to ban life-without-parole and other extreme sentences for children, and supports those incarcerated as children who are released after serving long sentences.