

Published by the National HIRE Network  
A project of the Legal Action Center

Friends,

We are a quarter of the way through 2013 and I hope that you are well on your way to accomplishing the goals you have set for yourself this year. Here at the National H.I.R.E. Network (HIRE), we've been hard at work, and I'm so excited to share with you what's been happening.

Last year HIRE began developing a strategic vision for ensuring that every qualified applicant with a criminal history is fairly considered for employment based on the merits of his or her credentials and ability to do the job. We identified five ways to accomplish that vision: 1) leadership on research; 2) technical assistance and training; 3) public policy advocacy; 4) coalition building; and 5) promoting model policies and best practices. This visioning work was critical, and helped set the stage for three primary activities that will drive our work in 2013.



- **Employer engagement and education:** We will conduct outreach to the business community to identify and respond to their need for a work force that is skilled, productive, and loyal. We will develop and disseminate information that will inform their ability to minimize liabilities, conduct fair and appropriate background checks, be compliant with state and federal laws that govern the hiring of people who have conviction records, and make appropriate employment decisions that will get them the best candidates, with or without a conviction history.
- **Advocacy:** We will continue to lead efforts to eliminate barriers to employment and other collateral consequences of convictions by working directly with federal agencies to modify or create policies that will promote opportunities for people with criminal histories to succeed. We will also continue to promote state and local level policy reform, since these levels of government control what really happens in communities—what funds are spent, for what, and for whom! Our focus on regional coalition building is a major strategy for accomplishing these goals.
- **Creating opportunities in high demand jobs:** While we work to create a labor market that is fair in its application of competition, we believe it is important to identify where there are real opportunities for people to get work now and in the immediate future. Therefore, we will work to develop and promote research that will better inform stakeholders — that's you — about industries that will need skilled workers and how to overcome criminal record barriers in those industries.

It's an ambitious agenda, but the help of our members and supporters I know we can get it done. I'm looking forward to working with you!

Warmest Wishes,

**Roberta Meyers,**  
Director, National H.I.R.E. Network

## IN THE NEWS

*"If [people] want to put in the work to rehabilitate themselves and develop themselves personally... it's our job to make sure the opportunities are there."*

*Roberta Meyers, Director  
National H.I.R.E. Network*

["Locked Out of Jobs, Formerly Incarcerated Struggle to Reintegrate"](#)

*(February 25, 2013, In These Times)*

The National H.I.R.E. Network's Director weighs in on employment challenges faced by many formerly incarcerated individuals and the use of the transitional jobs employment program model to connect or reconnect people with criminal histories to the labor market.

["Unfair Punishments"](#)

*(March 17, 2013, New York Times)*

This editorial discussed the real impact the drug felony ban on TANF & SNAP benefits has had on public health and safety in communities across the country. HIRE was approached as an expert for the piece and provided valuable insight about how states across the country help or hurt communities by opting in or out of the federal ban. Congratulations to our friends at All of Us or None for their work on the [study referenced in the editorial](#).

## ON CAPITAL HILL

### EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION GUIDELINES FOR HIRING

#### *Background*

In December, HIRE was one of two social justice advocates called to testify before the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights regarding the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's conviction records policy. Since their latest update in April 2012, there has been a significant amount of push-back from employers — whole industries, in fact — that feel that the [new EEOC guidelines](#) are overreaching the government's bounds. HIRE Director Roberta Meyers addressed this and made recommendations for further educating the business community about fair hiring standards for considering qualified applicants with criminal histories.

#### *Next Steps*

Immediately following the hearing, HIRE was asked to work in partnership with a group of Civil Rights organizations with input from two large commercial reporting agencies to develop best practice standards for employers that would further direct and explain how they can comply with the EEOC's Guidance, be fair in their hiring, and secure qualified workers. Look out for its release as well as the release of the transcript from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights hearing discussed above.



**Visit our website,  
[www.hirenetwork.org](http://www.hirenetwork.org)  
to read the full  
testimony online.**

# AROUND THE COUNTRY

## SPOTLIGHT ON THE NEW SOUTHERN STRATEGY COALITION



HIRE is a founding member of the New Southern Strategy Coalition (NSSC), which was created in 2011 to organize southern-based advocates, people who are directly affected by the criminal justice system and their families, and national allies to remove barriers faced by people with criminal records that limit their full participation in society. The NSSC will build power and capacity for direct services, organizing, advocacy, and litigation efforts that accomplish this goal.

In February, the NSSC met in Durham, NC for its second meeting. What was fascinating about this regional meeting was it brought together reformers across social justice fields – harm reduction, drug policy, collateral consequences, and racial equality– to strengthen advocacy partnerships by educating each other on the interrelatedness of their work. The conference was a huge success!

To learn more about the NSSC and to stay up to date on what's happening, visit <http://www.gjp.org/advocacy/new-southern-strategy/>.

## SUPPORT HIRE

The National H.I.R.E. Network was founded on the belief that **a person's criminal history should not keep** them from getting jobs, having a place to live, or reconnecting with and supporting their family.

**Your support is critical to HIRE's future.**

**Please donate today at**

<http://www.hirenetwork.org>

## ABOUT US

Established by the Legal Action Center in 2001, the National **H**elping **I**ndividuals with criminal records **R**e-enter through **E**mployment (H.I.R.E.) Network is both a national clearinghouse for information and an advocate for policy change. Its mission is to increase the number and quality of job opportunities available to people with criminal records by changing public policies, employment practices and public opinion.

*HIRE Happenings is a quarterly publication of the National H.I.R.E. Network provided free of charge to our membership. To learn more, or to subscribe, please visit [www.hirenetwork.org](http://www.hirenetwork.org) and register to become a member of the National H.I.R.E. Network.*

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