

# Fair Chance Housing

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May 23, 2017



**Seattle**  
Office for Civil Rights

# The Issue

- Over the last two decades, there has been a rise in the use of criminal background checks to screen prospective tenants.
- Increased number of landlords with rental advertisements that indicate “no felons” or “clean record required”.
- Approximately **30%** (173,714) of Seattle residents over the age of 18 have an arrest or conviction record and **7%**, or 43,428 people, have a felony record.
- Each year, an average of **1,400** women and men return home to King County once released from the Washington State Department of Corrections.

# Barriers to Housing

## Family Reunification

**Problem:** Nearly half of all children in the U.S. have one parent with a criminal record.

## Addressing homelessness

**Problem:** 1 in 5 people who leave prison become homeless soon thereafter.

## Racial equity

**Problem:** Racial disparities in the criminal justice system and racial bias in tenant selection lead to compounded impacts for communities of color.

## Public safety

**Problem:** Housing instability leads to increased recidivism.

# Community-Driven Call to Action

2010

Sojourner Place Transitional Housing and Village of Hope call on City to address barriers to rental housing and employment.

2011

Over 300 people participate in 2 community forums. Two-thirds are in support of City taking action to address barriers.

2013

City Council passes Job Assistance Ordinance, now called Fair Chance Employment.

2015

Community groups bring issue to HALA process.  
FARE Coalition holds community forum to raise awareness.

2016

City convenes Fair Chance Housing Stakeholder Committee.

# Fair Chance Housing Committee

Hana Aličić, Tenant's Union

Marcel Baugh, Seattle Human Rights Commission

Derrick Belgarde, Chief Seattle Club

Rod Brandon, Seattle Housing Authority

Cameron Carl, Seattle Goodwill

Augustine Cita, Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle

Eric Ellman, Consumer Data Industry Association

Mahnaz Eshetu, Refugee Women's Alliance

Sean Flynn, Rental Housing Association of Washington

Andrew Kashyap, Racial Disparity Project

Marcenia Milligan

Joe Puckett, Washington Multifamily Housing Association

Sue Selman, Bellwether Housing

Nick Straley, Columbia Legal Services

Hilary Young, Pioneer Human Services

Kira Zylstra, AllHome

# Fair Chance Housing Committee

## **Meeting 1. January 2016**

Overview. What is your current experience with criminal record screening?

## **Meeting 2. August 2016**

Racial equity and Ban the Box disparity study

## **Meeting 3. September 2016**

Building a legislative framework. What should be included?

## **Meeting 4. October 2016**

Building a legislative framework. What should be included? (continued discussion)

## **Meeting 5. December 2016**

OCR shared draft proposal for feedback/response.

## **Meeting 6. January 2017**

OCR shared updated draft proposal for feedback/response.

# **Community Voices**

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