

Fair Chance

The FAIR CHANCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE team partners with impacted people, congregations, concerned community members, advocacy organizations, and decision-makers to change local and state policies and make the criminal legal system more fair—from arrest to reentry.



OUR 2025 PRIORITIES

Restore the Opportunity to Drive

- Continue expanding driver's license restoration work and helping to draft and advance bills to discontinue the suspension of a driver's license for unpaid traffic court fees/fines.
- Promote our information and resource website, ResolveTrafficDebtNC.org.

Promote Recovery for People with Drug-Related Convictions

- Help draft and advance a bill eliminating the NC Felony Drug SNAP ban, which bans food assistance for people with drug felony convictions and increases the risk of overdose.
- Execute robust public education about the current law and its impact on people and their families.



Advance Fair Chance Employment and Housing Opportunities

- Educate fair chance employers and advocate with state agencies to adopt fair chance hiring policies.
- Highlight fair housing practices and policies in community education and outreach events.
- Advise and support community-based groups, including tenant organizing efforts, in advocating for fair chance housing admission policies.

OUR RECENT WINS

In 2024, we continued to utilize policy advocacy, public education, and storytelling to bring change.

Direct Litigation and Legal Advocacy

- Secured a \$68,000 settlement with Legal Aid of North Carolina for a client wrongfully denied housing because of a 30-year-old conviction. The property management company also agreed to update its tenant screening policies.
- Successfully advocated for a bill expanding automatic expunctions for individuals with “not guilty” verdicts or dismissed charges.



Public Education and Legal Forum Presentations

- Presented about fines and fees in lectures attended by new public defenders and more than 200 attorneys.
- Presented to Probation Officer managers about the consequences of unpaid probation fees and using waivers as a remedy.
- Organized and co-led the 2024 Second Chance Lobby Day, with over 500 attendees.
- Supported the Fifth Annual Vigil for Freedom and Racial Justice, including hosting virtual community

conversations on clemency, Hurricane Helene prison conditions, and policy reform.

Policy Reform Campaign Development

- Led coalition efforts to end driver’s license suspensions due to unpaid fines and missed court dates.
- Continued advocacy for reform on issues such as mugshot regulation, expungement, and access to SNAP benefits for people with felony records.
- Amplified reports on the impacts of debt-based driver’s license suspensions and criminal court fees.
- Continued promoting the NC Get Back to Work Campaign, advocating for policies around driver’s license suspension, mugshot regulation, and expungement.
- Developed a Spanish-language version of the [ResolveTrafficDebtNC.org](https://www.ResolveTrafficDebtNC.org) website to help individuals facing debt-based license suspensions.

Core Strategies and Approaches

- **Advocate for fair policies** for people with criminal records to ensure they can access essential opportunities and resources.
- **Build coalitions** between directly impacted individuals, decision-makers, and stakeholders on the barriers to prosperity.
- **Identify and raise awareness** of best practices, programs, and policies.
- **Provide research and technical assistance** to decision-makers to ensure effective implementation of reforms and more equitable systems.



LET’S WORK TOGETHER to end poverty, build power, and share prosperity across North Carolina!

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