
ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL 1747

State of Washington

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By Representatives Ortiz-Self, Berry, Scott, Obras, Fosse, Goodman, Farivar, Taylor, Fitzgibbon, Reed, Gregerson, Ormsby, Parshley, Cortes, Hill, Pollet, and Ramel

Read first time 01/30/25. Referred to Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards.

1 AN ACT Relating to expanding protections for applicants and
2 employees under the Washington fair chance act; amending RCW
3 49.94.005, 49.94.010, and 49.94.030; creating a new section; and
4 prescribing penalties.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 49.94.005 and 2018 c 38 s 1 are each amended to read
7 as follows:

8 The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter
9 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

10 (1) "Adult conviction record" means any record of or information
11 about criminal conduct resulting in an adult criminal conviction,
12 finding of guilt, or other finding adverse to the subject, including
13 an acquittal due to a finding of not guilty by reason of insanity, a
14 dismissal by reason of incompetency, or a dismissal entered after a
15 period of probation, suspension, or deferral of sentence. It also
16 includes information related to the conviction or other finding
17 adverse to the subject including, but not limited to, any citation,
18 arrest record, or probable cause statement.

19 (2) "Arrest record" means any record of or information about an
20 arrest or pending charge for criminal conduct without a conviction,

1 adjudication, finding of guilt, or other finding adverse to the
2 subject.

3 (3) "Criminal record" includes any record of or information about
4 a citation or arrest for criminal conduct, including records relating
5 to probable cause to arrest, and includes any record about ((a)) an
6 adult criminal or juvenile case filed with any court, whether or not
7 the case resulted in a finding of guilt.

8 ((+2)) (4) "Employer" includes public agencies, private
9 individuals, businesses and corporations, contractors, temporary
10 staffing agencies, training and apprenticeship programs, and job
11 placement, referral, and employment agencies.

12 ((+3)) (5) "Juvenile conviction record" means any record of or
13 information about a juvenile adjudication or other finding of guilt
14 pursuant to Title 13 RCW or other juvenile court system. It also
15 includes information related to the conviction or other finding
16 adverse to the subject including, but not limited to, any citation,
17 arrest record, or probable cause statement.

18 (6) "Legitimate business reason" means that, based on information
19 known to the employer at the time the employer makes the decision
20 regarding a tangible adverse employment action, the employer believes
21 in good faith that the nature of the criminal conduct underlying the
22 adult conviction record will:

23 (a) Have a negative impact on the employee's or applicant's
24 fitness or ability to perform the position sought or held; or

25 (b) Harm or cause injury to people, property, business
26 reputation, or business assets, and the employer has considered the
27 following factors, and documented as such in accordance with RCW
28 49.94.010:

29 (i) The seriousness of the conduct underlying the adult
30 conviction record;

31 (ii) The number and types of convictions;

32 (iii) The time that has elapsed since the conviction, excluding
33 periods of incarceration;

34 (iv) Any verifiable information related to the individual's
35 rehabilitation, good conduct, work experience, education, and
36 training, as provided by the individual;

37 (v) The specific duties and responsibilities of the position
38 sought or held; and

39 (vi) The place and manner in which the position will be
40 performed.

1 (7) "Otherwise qualified" means that the applicant meets the
2 basic criteria for the position as set out in the advertisement or
3 job description without consideration of a criminal record.

4 (8) "Tangible adverse employment action" means a decision by an
5 employer to reject an otherwise qualified job applicant, or to
6 terminate, suspend, discipline, demote, or deny a promotion to an
7 employee.

8 **Sec. 2.** RCW 49.94.010 and 2018 c 38 s 2 are each amended to read
9 as follows:

10 (1) An employer may not include any question on any application
11 for employment, inquire either orally or in writing, receive
12 information through a criminal history background check, or otherwise
13 obtain information about an applicant's criminal record until after
14 the employer initially determines that the applicant is otherwise
15 qualified for the position (~~((. Once the employer has initially~~
16 ~~determined that the applicant is otherwise qualified, the employer~~
17 ~~may inquire into or obtain information about a)) and makes an offer~~
18 of employment conditioned on obtaining the applicant's criminal
19 record.

20 (2) An employer may not advertise employment openings in a way
21 that excludes people with criminal records from applying. Ads that
22 state "no felons," "no criminal background," or otherwise convey
23 similar messages are prohibited.

24 (3) An employer may not implement any policy or practice that
25 automatically or categorically excludes individuals with a criminal
26 record from (~~(consideration prior to an initial determination that~~
27 ~~the applicant is otherwise qualified for the)) any employment~~
28 ~~position. ((Prohibited policies and practices include rejecting)) An~~
29 employer may not reject an applicant for failure to disclose a
30 criminal record prior to (~~(initially determining the applicant is~~
31 ~~otherwise qualified for the position)) receiving a conditional offer~~
32 of employment.

33 (4) (a) An employer may not carry out a tangible adverse
34 employment action based on an applicant's or employee's arrest record
35 or juvenile conviction record.

36 (b) This subsection does not apply to an adult arrest in which an
37 individual is out on bail or released on their own personal
38 recognizance pending trial.

1 (5) (a) An employer may not carry out a tangible adverse
2 employment action solely based on an applicant's or employee's adult
3 conviction record, unless the employer has a legitimate business
4 reason for taking such action.

5 (b) Before carrying out any tangible adverse employment action
6 under this subsection, the employer shall notify the applicant or
7 employee and identify to the applicant or employee the record on
8 which the employer is relying for purposes of assessing its
9 legitimate business reason. The employer shall hold open the position
10 for a minimum of two business days to provide the applicant or
11 employee a reasonable opportunity to correct or explain the record or
12 provide information on the applicant's or employee's rehabilitation,
13 good conduct, work experience, education, and training.

14 (c) If an employer makes a tangible adverse employment decision
15 following the reasonable opportunity under (b) of this subsection,
16 the employer shall provide the applicant or employee with a written
17 decision, including specific documentation as to its reasoning and
18 assessment of each of the relevant factors, including the impact of
19 the conviction on the position or business operations, and its
20 consideration of the applicant's or employee's rehabilitation, good
21 conduct, work experience, education, and training.

22 (6) An employer may not carry out any tangible adverse employment
23 action against any employee because the employee, or a person acting
24 on behalf of the employee, makes a good faith report, orally or in
25 writing, to the employer, the attorney general, a labor organization,
26 or others of a violation or suspected violation of this section or
27 otherwise informs others of the requirements of this section.

28 (7) This section does not apply to:

29 (a) Any employer hiring a person who will or may have
30 unsupervised access to children under the age of eighteen, a
31 vulnerable adult as defined in chapter 74.34 RCW, or a vulnerable
32 person as defined in RCW 9.96A.060;

33 (b) Any employer, including a financial institution, who is
34 expressly permitted or required under any federal or state law to
35 inquire into, consider, or rely on information about an applicant's
36 or employee's criminal record for employment purposes;

37 (c) Employment by a general or limited authority Washington law
38 enforcement agency as defined in RCW 10.93.020 or by a criminal
39 justice agency as defined in RCW 10.97.030(5) (b);

40 (d) An employer seeking a nonemployee volunteer; ((e))

1 (e) Any entity required to comply with the rules or regulations
2 of a self-regulatory organization, as defined in section 3(a)(26) of
3 the securities and exchange act of 1934, 15 U.S.C. 78c(a)(26); or

4 (f) Any employer with respect to a position entailing work under
5 a federal contract that specifically prohibits people with criminal
6 records from working under that contract.

7 (8)(a) Nothing in this section prohibits:

8 (i) An employer from accurately disclosing to the applicant that
9 the position is subject to a background check after a conditional
10 offer of employment; or

11 (ii) An applicant from voluntarily disclosing, without
12 solicitation by the employer, information about the applicant's
13 criminal record during an interview.

14 (b) If an employer or an applicant makes a disclosure under (a)
15 of this subsection, the employer must immediately:

16 (i) Inform the applicant in writing of the requirements of
17 subsections (1), (3), (4), and (5) of this section; and

18 (ii) Provide the applicant the attorney general's Washington fair
19 chance act guide for employers and job applicants.

20 **Sec. 3.** RCW 49.94.030 and 2018 c 38 s 4 are each amended to read
21 as follows:

22 (1) The state attorney general's office shall enforce this
23 chapter. Its powers to enforce this chapter include the authority to:

24 (a) Investigate violations of this chapter on its own initiative;

25 (b) Investigate violations of this chapter in response to
26 complaints and seek remedial relief for the complainant;

27 (c) Educate the public about how to comply with this chapter;

28 (d) Issue written civil investigative demands for pertinent
29 documents, answers to written interrogatories, or oral testimony as
30 required to enforce this chapter;

31 (e) Adopt rules implementing this chapter including rules
32 specifying applicable penalties; and

33 (f) Pursue administrative sanctions or a lawsuit in the courts
34 for penalties, costs, and attorneys' fees.

35 (2) ~~((In exercising its powers, the attorney general's office~~
36 ~~shall utilize a stepped enforcement approach, by first educating~~
37 ~~violators, then warning them, then taking legal, including~~
38 ~~administrative, action.)) (a) For purposes of administrative
39 sanctions, the attorney general's office may waive penalties for~~

1 first time or de minimis violations of this chapter, and instead
2 provide education and a warning to deter future noncompliance. The
3 attorney general's office may impose administrative sanctions and
4 pursue appropriate legal action for second and subsequent violations.

5 (b) Maximum monetary penalties for administrative sanctions are
6 as follows: ((A notice of violation and offer of agency assistance
7 for the first violation; a monetary penalty of up to seven hundred
8 fifty dollars for the second violation; and a monetary penalty of up
9 to one thousand dollars for each subsequent violation.))

10 (i) \$1,500 for the first violation, except where a waiver has
11 been granted under this section;

12 (ii) \$3,000 for the second violation;

13 (iii) \$15,000 for each subsequent violation.

14 (c) A penalty under (b) of this subsection must be imposed per
15 aggrieved job applicant, employee, or party for each violation. The
16 penalty accrues for the benefit of and is payable to the job
17 applicant, employee, or other aggrieved party. If there is no
18 identifiable job applicant, employee, or aggrieved person for the
19 violation, the penalty is retained by the attorney general.

20 (d) The attorney general may pursue legal action to obtain unpaid
21 wages, unpaid administrative penalties, damages, and reasonable
22 attorneys' fees and costs.

23 NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. (1) This act applies to employers with 15
24 or more employees beginning July 1, 2026.

25 (2) This act applies to employers with fewer than 15 employees
26 beginning January 1, 2027.

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