



California Civil Rights Department v. Ralphs Grocery Company

FAQ

On December 20, 2023, the California Civil Rights Department (CRD) filed a first-of-its-kind lawsuit in California Civil Rights Department v. Ralphs Grocery Company (Ralphs), case no. 23STCV31213 (Superior Court of California, Los Angeles County). This is a case brought under California's Fair Chance Act. The Fair Chance Act was passed by the Legislature to lower barriers to employment and support community inclusion for people who have been previously involved in the criminal legal system. The lawsuit alleges that Ralphs denied jobs to otherwise qualified job applicants in California on the basis of criminal histories that do not have an adverse relationship with the job duties. The lawsuit also alleges that Ralphs has failed to perform individualized assessments of applicants' criminal histories, provided inadequate notification about the grounds for the withdrawing a conditional job offer, and unlawfully included questions in its job application form seeking the disclosure of an applicant's criminal history.

1 **What is the California Civil Rights Department (CRD)?**

The California Civil Rights Department (CRD), formerly known as the Department of Fair Employment and Housing, is the California state agency tasked with investigating and prosecuting violations of the Fair Chance Act and other civil rights laws.

2 **What is the Fair Chance Act?**

The Fair Chance Act, which went into effect in 2018, is a California law that aims to reduce unfair barriers to employment for people with criminal convictions. In passing the Fair Chance Act, the Legislature recognized that "employment is essential to helping formerly incarcerated people support themselves and their families" and reduces the likelihood of an individual reoffending. The law generally bars employers with five or more employees from asking about a job applicant's conviction history before making a conditional job offer, requires specific procedures for considering an applicant's conviction history after a conditional job offer, and limits convictions that employers can consider disqualifying to those that have a direct relationship with job responsibilities.

3 **Who is the Defendant?**

Ralphs Grocery Company (Ralphs) operates a chain of grocery stores throughout California, primarily in Southern California. Ralphs has over 25,000 employees and over 185 stores in California.

4 When was the lawsuit filed?

The lawsuit was filed in the Los Angeles County Superior Court on December 20, 2023.

5 What does CRD allege in the lawsuit against Ralphs?

CRD alleges that Ralphs has ignored and continues to ignore the law's requirements, including by screening out otherwise qualified applicants on the basis of criminal histories that do not have any adverse relationship with the job duties.

6 Who is included in the lawsuit's claims?

CRD has brought this government enforcement action on behalf of the state in the public interest. CRD also brings the lawsuit on behalf of all applicants with a criminal history who, on or after April 3, 2019, applied to, were terminated from, or had a conditional offer rescinded for positions at Ralphs in California. CRD also brings the lawsuit on behalf of all individuals with a criminal history who, on or after April 3, 2019, would have applied to positions at Ralphs in California, but were discouraged from doing so because of the inclusion of questions asking about criminal history on its employment application.

7 Whom do I contact to provide information or ask questions about the lawsuit and Ralphs discriminatory practices?

You can call CRD at (916) 818-3902 or email CRD at ralphslitigation@calcivilrights.ca.gov