



## Civil Rights Department

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March 18, 2026

For Immediate Release

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### Tehama County Agrees to Hiring Reforms After State Investigation

*Settlement requires county to take steps to comply with Fair Chance Act and compensate individual job applicant*

**SACRAMENTO** – The California Civil Rights Department (CRD) today announced reaching a \$50,000 settlement with Tehama County over alleged violations of the Fair Chance Act. The Fair Chance Act aims to reduce barriers to employment that can prevent people with past arrests or convictions from successfully reintegrating into their communities. As a result of the settlement, the county will take steps to ensure compliance with the Fair Chance Act and compensate an individual job applicant.

“A steady job is a key path to a steady life,” **said CRD Director Kevin Kish.** “When people have a fair chance to make a living, we all benefit. As a result of our team’s work, Tehama County is taking important steps to comply with California’s protections for workers.”

#### **Job Application Denied**

In 2024, CRD received a complaint against Tehama County alleging that the county unlawfully revoked a conditional offer for an information technology job. The applicant said they got through an initial interview for the position but never heard back until they followed up and were told that they were disqualified after completing a background check. According to the complaint, the county failed to follow clear rules under the Fair Chance Act, including a requirement to notify an applicant of a preliminary decision and to provide the applicant with an opportunity to provide evidence of rehabilitation. The job applicant also alleged that the county failed to conduct an individualized assessment regarding whether their criminal history would have any negative impact on the specific duties of the job.

## Getting Back to Work

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 prohibits 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 criminal history after a conditional job offer, limits the types of convictions or arrests that employers can consider, and only allows employers to disqualify someone based on convictions that have a direct and adverse relationship with the duties of the job. The Fair Chance Act helps ensure everyone has an opportunity to get back to work.

## State Secures Policy Change

After conducting an initial investigation, CRD determined that Tehama County violated key protections under the Fair Chance Act and provided the county with an opportunity to resolve the allegations through mediation. As a result of the settlement, Tehama County, without admitting liability, will:

- Update its policies and procedures regarding background checks to ensure compliance with the Fair Chance Act.
- Submit its updated policies and procedures to CRD for review by the state.
- Provide training to all county personnel involved in reviewing applicant background checks.
- Report to CRD on any adverse employment actions related to criminal history information for a period of three years.
- Pay \$50,000 in compensation to the complainant.

If you or someone you know has experienced employment discrimination, CRD may be able to assist you through its [complaint process](#). The department also [provides general information and factsheets online](#) about civil rights protections, including [easy-to-use resources on the Fair Chance Act](#) for employers and job applicants.

The settlement announced today was secured by Staff Counsel Irene Meyers, Senior Staff Counsel Jacy Gaige, and Assistant Chief Counsel Asaf Orr. It was mediated by Senior Attorney Mediator Yu-Yee Wu.

You can learn more by [reading a copy of the settlement](#).

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*The California Civil Rights Department (CRD) is the state agency charged with enforcing California’s civil rights laws. CRD’s mission is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state-funded programs and activities, and from hate violence and human trafficking. For more information, visit [calcivilrights.ca.gov](http://calcivilrights.ca.gov).*

