



What is National Second Chance Month to Us

All In Community means that regardless of what you've done, what a loved one has experienced, or what has been done to you or a loved one, we are here for ALL of you IN this COMMUNITY.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, National Second Chance month proclaims our common belief that everybody has dignity and potential. Since 2017, National Second Chance month has become a rally cry within states, government agencies, coalitions, and faith communities do justice and love mercy in ways that truly provide over 80 million people living with the stigma, shame, and barriers of an arrest or conviction a second chance. National Second Chance Month is about better opportunities for people coming home. It is, also, about making our communities more just and safe for all citizens.

With 1 in 3 Americans living with a criminal record, chances are someone, or someone's loved one, in your congregation is in need of a second chance. The best way to free people from the shame and stigma of justice-involvement is to acknowledge this reality. This month, All In Community encourages you to pick one Sunday in April and lift up our justice-involved members and neighbors. Below are resources, including a downloadable video to make your Second Chance Sunday meaningful and impactful.

In addition, here are a few other ways you can be a person of hope, change narratives, get proximate to, tell the truth, and do something that is uncomfortable or inconvenient that lets justice-involved persons know that they do have a second chance:

Help returning neighbors in your community in practical ways: volunteer at a halfway/transition house; help them complete a resume or application process; give them a job connection or job; rent to them at a reasonable rate.

Be a social support: sit and listen to them; provide life wisdom, not solutions; invite them to a community event; love on their children.

Change your language to reflect human dignity [formerly incarcerated person, returning neighbor, person in recovery] instead of dehumanizing labels [felon, convict, ex-offender, addict].

Become informed of local laws or court practices that promote incarceration over effective diversion practices and opportunities.

Press lawmakers to address unreasonable laws that hold people back.

Inform your congregations about upcoming events that support successful reintegration. Below is a list of Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction events for family members, servants, and service providers.

By recognizing National Second Chance Month, you are saying to those burdened with marginalizing stigma and shame: *We see and hear you.... We want good things for you and to carry your burdens, too.... We want to be proximate to you in this journey....We welcome you in this community.*