

Patrice Funderburg Reflects on 2020, Highlights Path for CCT's Future



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Executive Director Patrice Funderburg Reflects on 2020, Highlights Path for CCT's Future

When I joined CCT as the agency's first Black Executive Director in January 2020, I was excited about the symbolic transition after Myra Clark had successfully led the organization for over three decades.



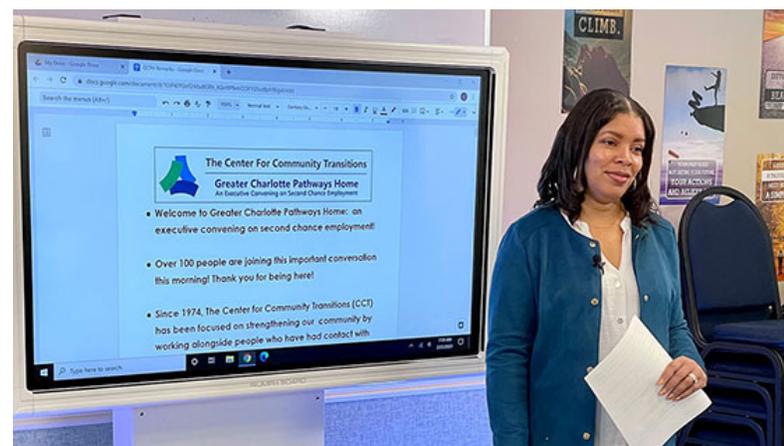
Patrice Funderburg

With an increasing national focus on criminal justice, I anchored my leadership focus on meeting the team and learning about and assessing the operational infrastructure. This was my first step toward preparing the agency for growth.

Accordingly, my 90-day plan included stakeholder engagement, program immersion, talent assessment and financial analysis — most of which were off to a good start through the end of February. When COVID-19 rattled the world by mid-March, so began the process of drilling down into the agency's financial health, scenario planning and managing staff uncertainty.

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Ending Economic and Social Inequalities Takes Collective Community Effort



If Charlotte wants to become a city without economic and social inequalities, the whole community – both public and private sectors – must disrupt the cycle of incarceration by reevaluating hiring practices and supporting second chance employment.

That was the consensus among the 100-plus employers, workforce development professionals, hiring managers, local and state leaders, and business community members who gathered virtually on Feb. 25 for "Greater Charlotte Pathways Home: An Executive Convening on Second Chance Employment."

Hosted by the Center for Community Transitions and sponsored by Bank of America, the online summit highlighted the collective effort that's required to pave the way for a healthier economic future for formerly incarcerated individuals.

- [Watch the 90-minute summit](#)
- [Read the highlights](#)

Chief Economist: Hiring Second Chance Employees is Worthwhile Business Community Investment



As birth rates decline and the labor market tightens, the "richest pool of potential" in the economy are people who have been touched by the justice system, according to Jeff Korzenik, chief economist at Fifth Third Bank.

Korzenik, a national advocate for second chance employment and author of

"Untapped Talent: How Second Chance Hiring Works for Your Business and the Community," was the keynote speaker for our virtual summit.

While there's a compelling community case for justice-involved people to be able to become productive and engaged members of society, he said, it's also in the interest of the business community – collectively and individually – to invest in this viable talent pool.

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Charlotte Mayor Vi Lyles Proclaims Feb. 25 as "Ramona Brant Day"



It's no coincidence we chose Feb. 25 as the date for our virtual summit on investing in and hiring workers with criminal records. That day marked three years since the unexpected death of Ramona Brant, a City of Charlotte employee who was making the most of her "gift" of a second chance after spending nearly half of her life behind bars.

In 1995, Ramona was sentenced to life in prison for a first-time nonviolent drug conspiracy offense. President Obama pardoned her in 2015 after she served 21 years in federal prison. Our online gathering of second-chance employers, workforce development professionals, hiring managers and business community members was a fitting opportunity to celebrate and honor Ramona.

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