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“Banning the Box” on Employment Applications

November 03, 2014

- *Questions on criminal convictions delayed until later in process*
- *Arlington joins 50+ jurisdictions around the country*
- *Fair hiring practice lowers barriers for those with criminal records*

ARLINGTON, Va. --- Arlington County is “banning the box” on County employment applications, eliminating questions about criminal convictions. While these questions do not necessarily automatically disqualify applicants, they can be a barrier to employment for anyone with a criminal record, negatively impacting millions of Americans. An estimated 65 million adults in the U.S. currently have a criminal record.

More than 50 jurisdictions around the country and at least ten states already have “banned the box,” choosing to ask the question later in the interview and hiring process. Arlington joins Virginia localities such as the City of Alexandria, Newport News, Norfolk, Petersburg, Portsmouth and Richmond in this initiative.

“Taking this step reinforces our commitment to fair hiring practices,” said Marcy Foster, director, Department of Human Resources. “And ‘banning the box’ will help ensure that happens.”

Beginning today (Nov. 3, 2014), Arlington will move forward with the following initiatives:

- Eliminating the question regarding criminal convictions on the initial application, for positions not related to public safety.
- Eliminating the question regarding a DWI (Driving While Intoxicated) or DUI (Driving Under the Influence) conviction on the initial application, provided the position does not rely on driving as a part of the job, such as a CDL (commercial) driver or public safety.

Questions regarding criminal convictions may still be asked at the time of the interview. Non-public safety candidates may be required to sign a statement that they have had no convictions in the last three years, or if they do have a conviction, they may provide a written explanation regarding the offense. Safety remains a top priority for Arlington County, and all applicants will be informed that a background check is conducted on all applicants selected for a job prior to employment.

Allowing these candidates to proceed further into the process creates opportunities that may otherwise have been lost, and provides candidates with a more level playing field during the application process. Arlington County is committed to being an equal opportunity employer, and to attracting, developing and retaining a diverse workforce to serve the community.

Arlington, Va., is a world-class residential, business and tourist location that was originally part of the "10 miles square" parcel of land surveyed in 1791 to be the Nation's Capital. Slightly smaller than 26 square miles, it is the geographically smallest self-governing county in the United States, and one of only a handful with the prized Aaa/AAA/AAA bond rating. Arlington maintains a rich variety of stable neighborhoods and quality schools, and has received numerous awards for Smart Growth and transit-oriented development. Home to some of the most influential organizations in the world -- including the Pentagon -- Arlington stands out as one of America's preeminent places to live, visit and do business.

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