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bond if people are felons to alleviate some of that risk."

According to the North Carolina Department of Commerce, employers who hire former inmates have the opportunity to apply for federally funded bonds to cover the risks associated with theft or dishonesty. The bonds insure the employers for up to \$5,000 for a span of six months after hiring the at-risk employee.

Still, Kandra believes the bonds may reduce the business owner's responsibility to hire qualified employees, especially in cases where employees are expected to engage with the public.

"I don't know if the person who has the small business is the best judge about whether or not a particular individual should be hired or not and be that gateway through," Kandra said.

Education and opportunity

As the Ban the Box movement continues to grow among employers, some advocates have shifted focus to another area where former inmates face discrimination: college campuses. Former inmates also encounter the question of criminal conviction on many university and community college applications.

Dean of Students at UNC Asheville Jackie McHargue said while the college requires applicants to disclose their criminal history, unlike employment applications, applications of individuals with

criminal backgrounds submitted to UNC system schools undergo a rigorous review process.

"It's a process that the leadership of that group is representatives from academic and student affairs and we are looking for an understanding of what happened in that situation," McHargue said.

McHargue said the admissions review process allows UNCA faculty to examine areas such as growth, ownership, rehabilitation, as well as examples of academic, employment or service-based work during and after incarceration.

"We look at everything. What we have to review is what kind of incident it was, does that person potentially pose a risk to the campus, could that individual's presence on campus be disruptive and is there evidence that that person has the ability to be successful from a social, personal and academic perspective," McHargue said.

Despite intentions from UNCA faculty to provide a fair opportunity to the formerly incarcerated, merely having the question on the application may be enough to deter potential students. A report from the Center for Community Alternatives found the presence of the criminal conviction question on college applications might inadvertently create a chilling effect toward individuals with criminal backgrounds. Almost two out of every three applicants who checked the box never finished the application.

Regardless, Senior Director of Admissions and Financial Aid at

UNCA Steve McKellips said the university will continue to make efforts to work with former inmates once they choose to disclose their criminal history.

"We really don't think education is something that should be permanently taken away from somebody," McKellips said. "I could understand the reservation on the front end for sure, but I think those who go through the process genuinely feel like they were legitimately considered and I think anytime we even say 'No' to somebody, I think people hear that they were heard through this process."

Finding the balance

Perhaps the biggest issue surrounding the Ban the Box movement for both employers and universities involves safety. McHargue said most colleges and universities include the criminal conviction question in their applications as a means of protecting students.

McHargue cited a 2004 incident in which a student who never disclosed an extensive criminal record was admitted into the UNC Wilmington. The student was later charged for killing a fellow student on campus.

"Sadly, it came about after a student who had moved between a couple of UNC system schools, who did not disclose his previous disciplinary history, went to Wilmington and was involved in a double homicide. So that is really where that came from," McHargue said.

Kandra said employers also may find the lack of criminal history in-

formation unsettling.

"If I was having a new roof put on my house, it might not matter to me that much whether the person installing my roof had a record. If I was having an HVAC system installed in my home, where I have things of value, I have my family, I have things that I care about, would I want someone who was a once or twice convicted burglar or a felon to be in my home? I might choose a different construction company," Kandra said. "I'm not sure if I would make my decision based on that alone, but certainly I would want to choose a company that I felt was insured and was responsible and knew who their employees were."

While Williams said she understands the concern, employers who choose to ban the box should use common sense approaches such as careful job placement and probation periods as precautions. Williams also encouraged the use of background checks if employers decide to make a substantial offer of employment.

"They have a set, Mission does, of policies and procedures of how this is supposed to be done. They're not going to hire you if you're a felon and you've just come out of prison for murder and you've been out 60 days. That's not going to happen," Williams said. "But people who have been working on themselves and have kept themselves out of trouble, wherever these folks can fit in, they need to be put in and given an opportunity."

DONUT**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6**

"It's very important to us to not only provide yummy, delicious donuts, but also to give back to the community of Asheville," McGee said. "Duck Donuts has a campaign, the Quack Gives Back, and every month we take pride in giving back to our local community."

Since its opening this summer, Duck Donuts has used Quack Gives Back to donate to several elemen-

tary schools in the area as well as partner with the Hendersonville police station for their annual motorcycle ride. In September, they donated close to \$1,200 to Mission Hospital for children's cancer through the organization Gabe's Chemo Duck.

"I want this to be a community thing; I want this to be something that the community enjoys and we get to give back," Smith said.

The business aims to be a welcoming and friendly place for both

customers and workers.

"It's very important to Terry and I to hire a team to work with, not a staff to work for us," McGee said. "We roll up our sleeves and we're right there alongside our team members."

Smith added the team itself has been her favorite part about working at Duck Donuts.

The Asheville location has quickly gained interest within the community and hopes to become a go-to spot for families.

"We want this to be a family oriented business where people can come have fun, whether it's with their children on a Saturday, after a game, or on their birthday," McGee said.

Overall, Duck Donuts hopes to become a family-favorite for the community.

"We get a lot of kids coming with their parents before school, teachers coming in to get donuts for their kids and people coming to get donuts for the office," said Smith.