

Columbia, Missouri Joins “Ban the Box” Trend

Article By:

Katharine H Parker

Daniel L. Saperstein

Columbia, Missouri is the latest jurisdiction to “ban the box” by prohibiting private employers from **making criminal inquiries on an employment application**. The law, which took effect on December 1, 2014, only allows employers to ask about an applicant’s criminal history after the applicant has received a conditional offer of employment.



Despite these prohibitions, the law carves out exceptions:

- where federal, state, or local law or regulation requires the employer to exclude applicants with certain convictions;
- for convictions that would disqualify an applicant from obtaining a required standard fidelity (or equivalent) bond; or
- where the employer employs individuals licensed under the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Systems Act.

The law also “encourages” employers to not “automatically ban jobseekers with a criminal history,” but to consider the “frequency, recentness and severity of a criminal record as well as rehabilitation efforts against the duties and responsibilities of the position.”

For violations of the new law, employers face a fine of no more than 1,000 dollars and/or

imprisonment not to exceed 30 days.

Columbia employers immediately should remove any inquiries concerning an applicant's criminal history from their employment applications, and should wait to commence a criminal background check until after making a conditional offer of employment. When permitted to make criminal inquiries, employers should remember to conduct individualized assessments of candidates when possible, and to adhere to any other applicable federal, state, and local requirements.

© 2025 Proskauer Rose LLP.

National Law Review, Volume IV, Number 343

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/columbia-missouri-joins-ban-box-trend>