

Improving Public Safety by Positively Changing Lives

Workforce Development

Fact Sheet
October 2024



Summary

The Workforce Development (WD) team provides meaningful community partnerships and learning opportunities for Correctional Industries (CI) workers so they can successfully reintegrate into society and rapidly engage with employment, training, or education.

Program Overview

Priorities

CI Workforce Development's strategic plan boasts three ambitious and impactful objectives. The first is to ensure every qualified CI participant is work-ready and employable upon release. The second is to achieve post-release employment as part of a unified employment plan developed by the program specialists in collaboration with the participants. Our final objective is to develop partnerships with community providers on job readiness, job placement, and training and education. Rapid attainment of gainful employment is critical for those released to be successful.

Major Accomplishments

Correctional Industries instills and promotes positive work ethics. While incarcerated individuals working for CI are gaining real work experience, they may lack the interpersonal skills required to make a positive decision when faced with basic workplace issues. To enhance soft skills, CI offers a special 20-hour class called Makin' It Work (MIW). The class is designed to help people understand what employers are looking for and to develop the necessary thinking that will help ensure a successful transition into the workforce in the community. In addition to the on-the-job training that occurs daily at their various operations, CI provides mock interview opportunities to help individuals experience real-world interviewing scenarios. This effort brings employers and community organizations inside prison walls to help workers practice their interviewing skills. Mock Interviews are a culmination of the Job Hunter series, an Employment Security Department curriculum designed to offer job readiness training for job seekers, such as developing interviewing skills and techniques and targeting resumes to specific jobs/employers.

In support of CI's mission, the Community Employment Services (CES) specialist works with incarcerated individuals pre- and post-release to fine-tune and document their work experience and skills in preparation for gainful employment. The CES specialist then links these skilled workers with employers and businesses in the community, matching their skills, abilities, and experience with employers. The specialist is uniquely positioned to connect employers with qualified workers in a wide range of technically skilled or entry-level positions. Additionally, the community employment specialist will remain in contact with and provide continuous support to each participant for up to 3 years after release.

For a year, the WD team also focused on providing Cognitive Coaching classes statewide to 245 CI staff to support more mission-driven work happening across all CI operations. Cognitive Coaching is the flip side of the Makin' it Work (MIW) soft skills class for incarcerated individuals and is meant to complement principles taught in MIW by promoting the development of thinking and learning processes that align with coaching and mentoring.

Finally, a half-day Financial Literacy class was added as a Workforce Development learning resource. The class is facilitated workshop style with modules that are specific to reentry. Topics such as "Getting through the Month," "Dealing with Debt," "Understanding Credit Reports and Scores," and "Understanding Your Paystub," are covered, and participants are given assistance as they fill out worksheets like a spending tracker and cash flow scenario analysis. Additionally, participants are provided many helpful tools/handouts including on how to save at tax time and how to request free credit reports by mail from a correctional facility. The class is popular and well-received, with participants feeling grateful for all the useful information they received during the course.

Strategic Priorities for Upcoming Year

- Pursue post-release employment as part of a unified employment plan i.e. targeted employer outreach in key communities of release.
- Facilitating Mock Interview experiences in each major facility and exploring virtual mock interviews for smaller facilities as a way to provide additional opportunities for those who are releasing before a scheduled event.
- Regular rotation of Financial Literacy and MIW classes across all facilities.
- Yearly goal of providing CI staff soft skill Cognitive Coaching training, which is a companion to the MIW course attended by CI incarcerated workers.

CES REPORT	SEPT. 24
Washington State	
Total Caseload	680
Pre-Release	258
GRE/WR	51
Post Release	370
Currently Employed	328
Secured Employment	7
% Employed	78
Released & Entered Community	13
Average Rate of Pay	\$19.98
Highest Rate of Pay	\$48.00
Avg Days to Employment from first date in community	28
Avg Days to Employment from CES Activated Date	21
Total of Individuals Contacted	10

For more information:

<https://www.washingtonci.com>

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