

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD OF SOLANO COUNTY
Request For County 2011-12 Appropriation

Reentrants Employment Project

A Four-part Effort to Develop Appropriate Job Opportunities
And Secure Employment for "109" Ex-offenders
in the

Solano County Community Corrections Realignment Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The WIB of Solano County (County Unit 7201) requests that the Community Corrections Partnership Council review, consider and approve a recommendation to the Solano County Board of Supervisors to appropriate \$75,370 in 2011-12 Realignment funds to the WIB for the activities/services described here-in. The Project will run for March-June 2012, serving 60 pre-release and 50 enrolled participants.

The "Reentrants Employment Project" will provide those Realignment Program ex-offenders (aka "109s") with the necessary skills and intensive support necessary to compete in the difficult, competitive labor market. A four-part effort will provide:

- Meaningful connections with local/regional employers;
- Ex-offender navigation services in order to access a wide array of workforce preparation services;
- Intensive "work readiness" instruction and support; and
- Dedicated "boots on the street" job development for appropriate, current job openings (where employers are known to hire ex-offenders.)

Team case management will be provided. Enrolled, active job seekers will be placed in front of employers, with the best-possible prospects for hiring.

The Project leverages the resources of the Solano Employment Connection, the local U.S. Dept of Labor-funded One Stop Career Center system. Additionally two community "touch points" are incorporated, including: 1) the County Jails (for pre-release workshops); and 2) the Day Reporting Center (for delivery of certain Project services.)

The Project incorporates the following "best practices" (or evidence-based approaches), based on the WIB's experience providing pre-/post-release services for State parolees.

- √ "Engagement, engagement, engagement"- as a positive means to change peoples lives and successfully prepare for the competitive labor market;
- √ Intensive one-to-one provision of services, by a consistent team of professional staff, coupled with a gradual "mainstreaming" in to the job seeking public; and
- √ Pro-active job development efforts targeting realistic job opportunities within industries/occupations where ex-offenders are known to be hired.

Due to funding constraints the Project does not include full vocational classroom training or subsidized transitional employment opportunities.

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD OF SOLANO COUNTY

REENTRANTS EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

Basic Schematic – A Four-Part Initiative

Probation Department

Assess and Refer “Job ready” 109s
For Project Enrollment



Workforce Investment Board

**Making the
Employer
Connection**

**Navigating
the
Workforce
Development
System**

Team Case
Management*

**Enhancing
Work
Readiness**

**Developing
Appropriate
Job
Opp'ties**

Critical Community “Touch Points” (for satellite service delivery)

- **County Jails** – for brief prerelease services (open to all 109s)
- Planned **Day Reporting Center** – for introductory services

Adjunct benefits of Project:

- “Myth-busting” and “Interest-building” with employers
- Leveraging resources of the U.S. Dept of Labor-funded One Stop Career Center systems (i.e. Solano Employment Connection)
- Providing exceptional one-to-one services for enrolled jobseekers
- Assuring a fast-paced continuum of services

* Team composed of Ex-offender Navigator and dedicated Job Developer, supported by Workshop Specialist



WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
OF SOLANO COUNTY

REQUEST FOR COUNTY 2011-12 APPROPRIATION
Revised Presentation of February 8, 2012

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And Secure Employment for Ex-offenders
in the
Solano County Community Corrections Realignment Program

Proposed Realignment Budget
Workforce Investment Board - Unit 7201
3/1/12 - 6/30/12

IFAS		
1110	Personnel	\$48,698
2028	Telephone	800
	Office	
2200	Expense	2,000
2235	Accounting	1,250
2295	Rent & Utilities	4,472
2355	Personal Mileage	1,800
3137	Program Supplies	1,500
3141	Skills Training Fees	3,600
	Vocational	
3142	Training	6,250
3145	Transportation	5,000
	TOTAL	
	EXPENDITURE:	\$75,370

Requested Action of the Solano Community Corrections Partnership Council

Review, consider and approve a Council recommendation to the Solano County Board of Supervisors to appropriate \$75,370 in 2011-12 Realignment funds to the Workforce Investment Board (Unit 7201) for the activities/services described here-in.

This initial Project offering will serve a target of 60 pre-release workshop participants (in the County Jail setting) and 50 participants enrolled for intensive Project services.

☐ **North-county Office**
320 Campus Lane
Fairfield, CA 94534
(707) 864-3370 FAX (707) 864-3386

☐ **South-county Office**
1440 Marin Street
Vallejo, CA 94590
(707) 649-3604 FAX (707) 649-3619

Due to funding constraints the Project does not include full vocational classroom training or subsidized transitional employment opportunities for the "109s"

Overview

The Workforce Investment Board (WIB) of Solano County, Inc. puts forth a "Reentrants Employment Project" proposal based on its proven capability to access the region's employers, and provide job readiness and employment-related services for the adult ex-offender (community reentrant) population of Solano County.

This capability is based on a 28-year history of providing such services, professionally administering U.S. Department of Labor grants, operating a 22-member One Stop Career Center system (known as the Solano Employment Connection, or SEC), and administering these very same services for State parolees (under contracts with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.) The WIB is uniquely qualified to provide such services, having developed "best practices" in the field.

The initial 4-month funding of \$75,370 is required to provide dedicated services for 60 workshop and 50 enrolled participants. Broader collaboration efforts will open certain existing WIB services for the universal group of reentrants, with no set participation cap.

Performance Parameters

This Project is being established so as to offer the following initial levels of service.

- Once-per-month, ½ day workshops for 109s in the Jail setting – providing an estimated minimum of 60 participants in the March-June 2012 period (or upwards of 180 to 240 annualized); and
- Provision of 50 slots for an initial 50 participant enrollments in the March – June 2012 period (or upwards of 100 to 150 annualized – with average duration the program set at 4 - 8 months, i.e. the "churn" rate.)

The planned level of job placement outcomes is as follows.

50 % entered employment rate at point of Project exit (of all enrolled.)

NOTE: This figure respects the multiple barriers faced by jobseekers, the difficult labor market, and the real possibilities of participants "dropping out" due to lack of follow-through, sanctioning, health relapses, recidivism, etc.

Proposed Services

This project would meld existing resources/capabilities with an emphasis on both pre-release and post-release/community supervision interventions. A continuum of services would be established, leading participants to:

1. Focus on successful, sustainable employment as a principle means to positively change their life circumstance(s);

2. Be aware of available educational, training, and employment services;
3. Freely access such services (with a warm, welcoming, human-to-human approach);
4. Actively engage in rewarding, positive skills-building activities;
5. Receive dedicated employment preparation assistance tailored to their needs;
6. Be placed directly in front of local employers which are recruiting and hiring – with each participant best prepared and matched for that opening; and
7. Receive continuing support so as to succeed on the job and prepare for advancement and/or increased earnings opportunities.

An emphasis would be placed on developing each job seeker's "soft skills" in those job-related and inter-personal skill areas which employees say are critical. Resources would be devoted not just to getting a job, but as importantly to retaining and advancing on that job (or the next "stepping stone" job.)

Delivery of services would focus on "engagement, engagement, engagement" in a quick-paced delivery manner - so that reentrants: have a plan; are motivated to participate and follow through on that plan; remain busy; keep active connections to those who are helping them (with positive influences); and most importantly do not fall back in to old habits, old associations, and various negative influences.

Initial services would be offered (through the WIB's satellite presence) at the County Jail and planned Day Reporting Center (DRC.) Intensive services would be provided out of the WIB's two locations, in Fairfield (320 Campus Lane) and Vallejo (1440 Marin Street.)

The Four Parts

This Project will provide for the following four components.

1. **Engagement with local/regional employers**, in order to:
 - a. Assess labor market opportunities, and target specific industries/occupations/employers;
 - b. Perform some "myth-busting" and "interest-building" around hiring of ex-offenders; and
 - c. Perform specific, active job development with targeted employers
2. **Provision of "Ex-offender Navigator" services for job seekers** (through a dedicated Navigator staff person), in order to:
 - a. Provide a single point of contact (SPOC) for both ex-offenders and agencies serving ex-offenders, in order to more readily access and be engaged in: 1) this Project; 2) the existing local One Stop Career Center system; 3) the planned Day Reporting Center; and 4) other community providers;
 - b. Extend a "warm handshake" reception, and provide ongoing support;

- c. Provide “coaching” and a light degree of case management;
 - d. Have staff serve as a critical part of the “team service approach.” (See accompanying description of team approach.)
3. **Provision of a Series of Work Readiness Workshops and One-to-One Instructional/Reinforcement Services** (as both a pre-release activity in the County Jail, and a post-release/community supervision activity in the Day Reporting Center and One Stop sites) in order to:
- a. Develop jobseekers’ “soft skills” as required by employers;
 - b. Promote full concept of “getting a job, keeping a job, and advancing on the job”;
 - c. Provide a continuum of positive, job-focused services, with active engagement and no “gaps” for a job seekers to be diverted;
 - d. Introduce the concept of “stepping stone” jobs, and “work hardening” – where one would progress from basic introductory jobs once productivity and reliability are demonstrated;
 - e. Provide “frank talk” on labor market prospects and employer expectations;
 - f. Address some basic skills remediation needs (e.g. math) and/or introductory computer skills needs; and
 - g. Provide repetition/reinforcement/encouragement – as first efforts may fail but renewed/continued efforts are called for; and
 - h. Have staff serve as part of the “team service approach”
4. **Provision of dedicated Job Development for Project participants**, in order to:
- a. Contact and develop longer-term business relationships with specific employers in industries and with occupations where ex-offenders are most likely to be hired;
 - b. Gain specific feedback from employers, regarding successes/challenges of individuals hired, and overall perspectives on the Project. Gain testimonials where possible; and
 - c. Have staff serve as part of the “team service approach.”

The “Team Service Approach”

The WIB will employ a new service delivery mode for this Project, and its population. This is offered out of respect for the multiple employability barriers faced by these job seekers and the extraordinary needs to coordinate service delivery (including certain “compliance” aspects) with many community partners.

A three-party team of professional staff will oversee a caseload of enrolled participants with the express purpose of providing intensive engagement/engagement/engagement, avoidance of gaps in services/activities, and developing/maintaining a sharp focus on employment success.

This Team will include:

- The Ex-offender Navigator
- The Project-dedicated Job Developer; and
- The assigned Workshop Specialist

NOTE: Additional WIB staff resources will provide Project support for the Employer Engagement component; and day-to-day supervision, intake, reporting, fiscal records keeping/invoicing, etc.

The Team will be physically housed in proximity, and will provide very interactive oversight of an assigned caseload of project participants. The team will conduct employability assessments, develop and carry out an employment plan, provide positive reinforcements, trouble-shoot issues, and coordinate services with other providers.

The WIB's Placement Performance with Ex-offender Services/Projects

The WIB operates with a demanding set of 9 federally-established "Common Measures." These focus on job placements, job retention, and increased earnings for adult participants. For the most-recent 2010-11 year the WIB met or exceeded all 9 of 9 Measures – a level achieved by only 2 other WIBs out of 49 in California.

The specific levels of performance for ex-offenders include the following, based on available data collection/tracking systems.

General WIA Services – Both Adult and Youth Offenders

July '08 – December 2011

Ex-offender Applicants		566
Ex-offender Enrollments		140
Ex-offender Exits		126
Employed	48	38.1%
Returned to School	<u>44</u>	34.9%
Positive outcomes	92	73.0%

Special CDCR-funded "Community Employment Program" (CEP)

July '09 – December '11

Navigator services in SEC		813
Ex-offender Enrollments (Goal: 30)		12
Ex-offender Exits		7
Employed	4	57%%

Special CDCR-funded "Transitions" Program at CSP Solano

(Formal 70-hour Job Search Instruction Workshops at Vacaville prison for soon-to-be-released inmates - who disburse throughout California)

(Continued)

	October '10 – Current
Attendees	343
Completers	232
(No tracking system in place for outcomes back in communities throughout California.)	

Project Service Delivery Chart

Please see attached chart for graphic representation of service delivery.

Project Funding:

The Project will: 1) capitalize on much that is in place via the WIB's U.S. Department of Labor-funded programs (most notably the One Stop Career Center services/expertise); and 2) supplemental Community Realignment funding, in order to provide targeted, prioritized services for ex-offenders.

Accessing In-place Resources: Many needed services would be readily available at no cost to the County or the reentrant job seekers; however these are "mainstream" offerings for the general job seeking population, or those with fewer employment barriers. As Project participants progress and are able to participate in such mainstream efforts they would be referred to and enrolled in these broader One Stop activities

Specially-Needed/Dedicated Resources: In order to customize certain services and be most responsive to reentrants needs and employability barriers certain staff/activities need be provided for this project. In brief this special funding support would focus primarily on the Navigator, Job Developer and Workshop Specialist activities.

The resultant special request for funds is for \$75,370 for 60 workshop and 50 enrolled participants, for a 4 month project period.

Contact

Robert L. Bloom
President/Executive Director
Workforce Investment Board of Solano County
rbloom@solanowib.org
(707) 863-3501

Attachment

Project participant flow chart

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD OF SOLANO COUNTY **“Reentrants Employment Project”** **Draft Participant Flow Chart**

