

Summary of January 15th, 2023, Report on Incarcerated Individual Workforce and Education Programs Report

In accordance with Section 6 of Act 183 of 2022

From Sec. 6 of S. 11:

- In the fiscal year 2023, \$420,000 appropriated from General Fund to the Department of Corrections.
- To address educational and vocational enhancement needs of incarcerated individuals.
- Development and implementation of facilities-based trainings and education programs.
- Provide continuity of services for incarcerated individuals S.11

Two sections of the report that over current and proposed efforts to support incarcerated individuals' reintegration as well as proposed policy changes. Second over identifiable disparities of outcomes and recommends solutions specifically for BIPOC individuals.

Section one: Current and Proposed Efforts

Department of Corrections "DOC", most notable effects for reintegration and employment:

1. Adult Reentry and Employment Strategic Planning Grant

- a. (ARES) DOC in year 4 of this 5-year federally funded planning effort. The goal is to assess challenges to reentry and a plan to support reentry.
 - i. Use of vocational assessment called WorkKeys that measures workplace skills and eliminates need to re-assess a person after release.
 - ii. DOC will pilot vocational training/enhancement program. Plan to integrate facility jobs into pilot that is currently focusing on kitchen jobs.
 - iii. DOC will adopt national standards in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Common Career Technical Core (CCTC). This effort reflects positive relationships and emotional connections during the learning process.
 - iv. DOC will increase data sharing and communication.
 - v. Pilot partnership with HireAbility Coordinator and Two Probation/Parole Officers to provide one point of contact.
 - vi. DOC to establish a Workforce Development Coordinator position.
 - vii. DOC will implement a dedicated wireless network.

2. Partnership with Community College of Vermont

- a. College readiness and/or credit-bearing courses.

3. Second Change Pell Grant

- a. 2023 incarcerated students will be eligible for Pell grants to pay for college. No longer restrictions based upon sentence length.

Proposed and Planned Efforts to Support Reintegration

- 4. "Community Transition Pilot" – Vermont Works for Women, Contracted
 - a. Regional consulting
 - b. Gender responsive employment training
 - c. Work with employers to develop enrichment workshops
 - d. Assist in transition phase

5. Vermont Offender Work Program

- a. DOC will transition this program to a skills-based training program, current funding structure limits success.

6. Proposed Policy Changes

- a. DOC proposes a modification to the statute that governs the Vermont Offender Work Program “VOWP” (28 V.S.A. §751b) in order to:
 - i. Direct revenue from VOWP to vocational training partners directly
 - ii. Create option for partnership with community non-profit/for-profit industries to make vocational training more available.
- b. Transition of the “Corrections Education Advisory Board” to “Risk Intervention Services Advisory Panel.” (28 V.S.A. § 121)
 - i. Members should include:
 1. Adult education experts
 2. Post-secondary ed. Specialist
 3. Community reentry services expert
 4. Vocational training expert
 5. Forensic intervention expert

Section two: Disparities and Updates

Updates:

6 facilities total in VT, only 3 have facilities based vocational training. Major cause of inequity and disparity for BIPOC individuals.

1. Update on DOC’s Use of Education and Vocation Enhancement Funding 2023

- a. DOC will use \$420,000 from Act 183 over fiscal years 2024 and 2025 to develop mobile labs and train staff to deliver services.
 - i. Mobile labs are a cost-effective solution and allows for delivery of training at facilities that lack permanent space.
 - ii. Travel to correctional facilities

2. Recommendations on Replicating Aspects of the Pilot Program

- a. Next two years will be used to evaluate success of the Culinary Pilot program.
- b. Model for the integration of facility jobs, vocational training, and community support that has potential to be expanded to other facility jobs in the future.
- c. Development and implementation of mobile training labs
- d. DOC currently surveying to gauge interest in vocational training that will inform planning.