

Sec. 6. JUSTICE-INVOLVED INDIVIDUALS; WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; PILOT PROGRAM

(a) Findings.

(1) Justice-involved individuals are persons who hold a conviction record and may or may not have served time in a corrections facility.

(2) 95 percent of incarcerated individuals will be released to their communities and between 78–83 percent of those released are between 25 and 54 years of age, which is prime working age.

(3) 63 percent of incarcerated individuals in the Vermont Southern State Correctional Facility reported job training as the most helpful program to meet their needs.

(b) Policy; appropriations.

(1)(A) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$417,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Corrections to address vocational enhancement needs.

(B) The Department shall use funds to transition vocational training space within existing correctional facilities to support continued education and vocational training and placement in the community.

(C) The Department may allocate funds over three years, consistent with the following:

(i) \$267,000 for transition development, to include equipment, renovation of vocational space, and/or mobile lab in one or more sites.

(ii) \$100,000 for training partner support.

(iii) \$50,000 for development of curriculum.

(2) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$300,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Corrections to subgrant to the Vermont Works for Women, which may be allocated over not more than three years, to establish a community-based pilot reentry program

at the Chittenden Correctional Facility that will provide continuity of services for justice-involved women and:

(A) expand VWW's current employment readiness program within the Chittenden facility by building pathways for coordinated transition to employment;

(B) focus on the first six months after individuals are released from the facility;

(C) coordinate with local community resources, parole and probation offices, and supports to ensure successful transition into the community;

(D) assist individuals in successfully transitioning into new jobs; and

(E) work with employers to support successful hiring and best practices to support justice involved employees.

(c) Report. On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Corrections shall create and submit a report on Workforce and Education Training Programs in Correctional Facilities to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee; the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions and on Commerce and Economic Development; and the Senate Committees on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Judiciary. The report shall:

(1) identify program design, logistical needs, and policy changes to current Department of Corrections facility-based training and educational programs necessary to successfully support justice involved individuals' reentry into their communities, including changes to programs that better support individuals' skill development, knowledge, and support needed to qualify and secure a position in a critical occupation in Vermont;

(2) identify disparities of outcomes for justice-involved BIPOC individuals in facility-based training and educational programming and

successful reentry into the community and solutions for addressing the disparities;

(3) provide an update on the Department of Corrections Vocational Enhancement work funding in FY23; and

(4) provide an update on what aspects of the Reentry Pilot Program could and should be replicated in other correctional facilities in Vermont