

**U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
Funding Opportunity Number FOA-ETA-15-03
CFDA Number 17.270**

Linking to Employment Activities Pre-release Specialized American Job Centers (AJCs)

Abstract

Applicant: Monterey County Workforce Investment Board (WIB), based in Salinas California

Partners to application: Monterey County Sheriff's Department, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara County Workforce Investment Boards

Area Served: Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara Counties

Project Name: California Central Coast New Start Transition Job Centers

Funding level: \$500,000

Description of Proposed Project: What if our inmates, newly released from jail, had in their toolkit the understanding and soft skills needed to go on that interview and wow the employer right from the start? We believe this could be the result of developing an in-house, jail-based, specialized America's Job Center in each of our community jails.

Currently in California, the recidivism rate is 61%. Our goal is to bring that percentage down significantly for our region through an in-jail, transition job center. Holding a job is one of the best predictors of parole success. Numerous statistics demonstrate that a parolee who finds and maintains a steady job is more likely to avoid subsequent offenses and to successfully complete his or her term on parole. Therefore, the bridge from in-prison rehabilitation to post-release employment is critical.

Some of California's prisons have an inmate transition program supporting inmates with job readiness and job seeking skills prior to their release from prison. The local program for our local jail system will be designed to deter individuals from recommitting offenses that land them in the state and federal systems. The WIB, in partnership with the Sheriff's Department, propose to design and implement a jail-based, specialized AJC to enable transitioning offenders to prepare for employment before release, and to continue with individual development and service plans in the community, after release. Our goal is to improve the workforce outcomes for transitioning offenders by offering in-jail AJC services and connections to AB109 services post-release. This will create greater opportunity for individual success, thereby reducing the recidivism rate in Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara counties.

Inmate education about the labor market and available jobs in the community will be one aspect of the program. Inmates will also be offered in-prison vocational training options; in-prison employment skills and development of documents needed to secure a job; Kick Start week-long workshops; and how-to's on transitioning from in-prison job center services to community job centers in our communities. We will monitor and evaluate results in order to demonstrate the return on investment to our participants and funders.

The integrated service delivery approach will help to ease the reentry transition, increase participant employment prospects, and reduce recidivism by successfully transitioning offenders. The pre-release center will provide pre-release employment and career services to support timely post-release employment. It will also link directly to the comprehensive workforce development services offered post-release by our local AJC, including follow-up services leading to gainful employment and career advancement.