



NEWS RELEASE

Workforce Development Board

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Successful job placement program early-release inmates expands to Rialto

Workforce Investment Board teams up with local police to help inmates re-enter the workforce

San Bernardino, CA (August 21, 2014) – San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) programs have helped more than 250 former prison inmates on the path to employment and re-integration through an initiative launched in 2012 with the Fontana Police Department. Based on the success in Fontana, the San Bernardino County WIB is now expanding the program to Rialto-area parolees and probationers who are re-entering the workforce.

San Bernardino County, the largest geographic county in the continental U.S., is home to approximately 20,000 adult offenders. The implementation of new court decisions and AB 109 have changed the way that the County of San Bernardino houses and releases individuals who have been convicted of crimes. Instead of housing prisoners at the state level, more offenders have been sent to County jails. The influx of individuals into the County jail system has led to a larger number of early releases and individuals placed on parole and probation.

Police departments have come up with innovative ways to assist early-release prisoners and probationers with successful re-assimilation into society. Recidivism is an on-going problem in dealing with the re-integration of previously incarcerated individuals. Nationally the rate at which this population re-offends and goes back into prison has been a staggering 75% or more. Based on assessment of this population, the biggest issue, above food, medical care, substance abuse treatment, and housing, was lack of employment.

Keeping in mind the importance of employment as the means to self-sufficiency and successful re-integration, the Fontana Re-entry Support Team, part of the Fontana Police Department, reached out to the San Bernardino County WIB to provide the employment services, job coaching, job search assistance and reconnection to the workforce that participants needed.

The WIB's collaboration with the Fontana Re-entry Support Team has shown encouraging initial results with 256 clients completing the 3-day workshop and 106 job placements.

"The Fontana Re-entry Support Team has been successful in helping offenders find jobs and rebuild their lives, and I'm glad to see this model being replicated in Rialto with the support of the County's Workforce Investment Board," San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Chair Janice Rutherford said.

Like the Fontana program, the Rialto Police Department will hold monthly resource fairs for clients on active probation or parole. Attendees will receive referrals to services administered by many different agencies to address substance abuse, housing and medical care. Employment assistance services will be delivered through the San Bernardino County Department of Workforce Development. Clients who register for the program will be invited to enroll in a 3-day workshop at the San Bernardino County WIB's East Valley America's Job Center of California (AJCC) in San Bernardino.



The workshop is designed to encourage the participant's re-entry and reintegration into the community through job skill enhancement. Clients learn critical skills needed to obtain employment in the ever-changing workplace. The workshop assists them with handling a felony conviction during the application and interview process, as well as how to effectively address gaps in employment. It covers all aspects of the job search, from computer assistance to mock interviews.

A Workforce Development Specialist teaches the workshops and provides services such as one-on-one counseling, assessment, resume assistance, interview advice, and individual employment plans.

"The Workforce Investment Board is proud to offer programs to decrease recidivism and assist participants to become self-sufficient," said Sandy Harmsen, Executive Director of the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board.

Employers and job seekers who are interested in the Workforce Investment Board programs may call: (800) 451-JOBS or visit www.csb-win.org.