Returning Citizens Workgroup

Career pathways for target populations (CPTP)

Date: December 6, 2022

Time: Noon-1pm

**Location:** Zoom

**Chair:** Mark Lohman

Members Present: Mark Lohman, Kylin Fisher, Jayme Frey Figueroa, Kraig Kistinger, Jennifer Harris, Dan Kuehnert, Pete Leonard, Mike Massie, LaMonica Pruitt, and Jasmine Williams

Members Absent: Ben Endress, Antoinette Golden, Jeff Horvath, and Jennifer Parrack

**Workgroup Support:** Sarah Blalock and Molly Cook

| Time | Item | Presenter |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 12:00pm | Welcome and Introductions  Mark Lohman welcomed the group and Molly Cook conducted role call via reading the Zoom participant list. | Mark Lohman |
| 12:02pm | Success Story  Mark Lohman introduced Pete Leonard to share a success story with his company, I Have a Bean, coffee roasting company in Wheaton Il, founded in 2007. In 2009 I Have a Bean began to hire post-prison employees. A little over 60 returning citizens have been employmed since 2009.  The story that Pete shared was about person named Lewis. Pete met Lewis 4 months post release. Lewis was arrested for attempted murder. Lewis grew up in East St. Louis. Lewis was sentenced to life in prison and while in prison was convicted of two additional crimes then totaling three life sentences plus 100 years. Lewis was first sent to a holding prison, while at this location Lewis was determining how to posture his strength and a fellow prisoner gave him a box of necessities and amenities. Pete stated that Lewis did not want to owe any person, so Lewis determined to kill this person. The attempt was not successful due to the fellow inmate being accompanied with others while reading religious material. These other inmates gave Lewis some religious material and Pete notes Lewis’ life changed from that moment. Pete met Lewis four months after his release, which was great timing for Pete. Lewis began roasting and then moved into sales. Lewis then moved onto another position working within the prison system and has started a non-profit organization to help house post release people. | Pete Leonard |
| 12:07pm | Review of Workgroup Charges, Priorities, and November Meeting  Mark Lohman noted the Community Agreement and encouraged the group to review. Mark Lohman then read the workgroup’s charge and priorities and the recap of the November workgroup meeting. | Mark Lohman |
| 12:10pm | Presentation on Top Occupations for Returning Citizens  Mark Lohman introduced Jasmine Williams, a senior policy analyst for LWIA 7. Jasmine stated her mission was to understand where returning citizens become employed. Jasmine reviewed WIOA Title I participant data, noting that 9.1% are Certifiable employed post release. Jasmine discussed the following data:  1,416 returning citizens employed are employed in Illinois.  1,077 credential rate  19.47 per hour  Jasmine discussed the following Retention rates-  1,378- 1 quarter after exit  962- 2nd quarter after exit  907 3rd quarter after exit  867 4th quarter after exit  Jasmine discussed the demographic breakdown for race, gender, and educational backgrounds for returning citizens. Jasmine also discussed the data of high violence communities and employed WIOA returning citizen participants.  Jasmine discussed the top industries for returning citizens with Manufacturing and Transportation ranking the highest. Jasmine also discussed the top employers and the job titles that were reported alongside the participant data.  Jayme Frey Figueroa asked if Returning Citizens can participate in WIOA If they are on parole. Jasmine responded that people who are on parole can be in WIOA, but the job may have restrictions based on their personal and criminal background.  Kraig Kistinger asked what percentage of the 2000 individuals represent those released in the service area.  Jayme Frey Figueroa noted in the chat she was interested in replicating Jasmine’s method. Dan Dan Kuehnert also noted he would like to see data for St. Louis Metro East Area. Jasmine also noted that she used the North American Industry Classification System, which is used by Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) as well. Kraig Kistinger noted that standard occupational codes (SOCs) code is also used by BLS.  Kraig noted that finding this data may be a request for the state level for advocacy, suggesting that this could be a research project for a consulting college.  Jennifer Harris stated the retention rate was important and valuable. Jasmine did also note that retention in this system does not mean at the same job. Jennifer replied that regardless, this shows a person has the ability and to stay employed for a year.  Dan Kuehnert noted that criminal records sealing is also impacted by workforce programs because a person who post custody often have to wait a year to seal their criminal record unless they have completed a workforce program.  Mark Lohman also noted that workforce programs also keep in mind when people will be released so they are able to use their new skill close to the time of release. | Jasmine Williams |
| 12:25pm | Finalize Barriers and Solutions List  Mark suggested that the barrier list become a living document. He then read through the current barrier list and proposed solution list.  Mark asked if the workgroup agrees that on slide “Finalize Order of Addressing List”, if the list represents the group’s sentiments. Kraig Kistinger and Jennifer Harris noted that policy also needs to be amended. Mark Lohman also noted that this message needs to be repeated, but it will take time. Mark noted that ensuring the internet within prison facilities took over a year and a half.  Jayme Frey Figueroa asked if there is any member of the group from the Illinois Department of Corrections, possibly a retired guard. Mark Lohman responded that Jennifer Parrack is from IDOC and is approachable and responsive, but busy. Mark further noted that a retired guard is an interesting point as they do have lived experience. Kraig Kistinger noted in the chat that a parole officer may be an interesting perspective. | All |
| 12:35pm | Discuss adding a member with Lived Experience | All |
| 12:45pm | Review Workplan and Provide Feedback  Mark Lohman noted that Molly will email the group with a workplan for feedback. Mark asked the group I if any has any suggestions for a member with lived experience. | Molly Cook |
| 12:55 pm | Conclude/Next Steps   * Next meeting is January 3, 2023, at noon   Mark Lohman stated that these meetings are set on a regular basis. Mark also reiterated the Returning Residents Clean Energy Jobs Training Program.  Kraig noted that Mod Pizza hires our CPTP target populations. | Mark Lohman |
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