

**Capital Region Ex-Offender Support Coalition
Workforce Development Committee Update
January 17, 2013**

1. The WIB offered to promote the hiring of ex-offenders during the county-by-county employer needs assessment report out. Each county has meetings where employers find out about their overall needs identified through a scientific survey. The potential for the hiring of ex-offenders to meet some of those needs will be promoted at these meetings.
 - a. (12/20/12 Update) There were no county meetings since the last committee meeting.
 - b. (01/17/13 Update) Again, there were no county meetings since the last committee meeting.
2. The United Way offered to promote the hiring of ex-offenders during their interactions with employers (CEOs and other employer representatives) during the year. They would like this committee to help them craft the message to include things like the overall lowering of criminality in the community by the hiring of ex-offenders by employers.
 - a. (12/20/12 Update) Discussions have been held with Tim Whelan at the United Way but specific language has not been developed yet.
 - b. (01/17/13 Update) Committee still has not developed language.
3. The WIB will attempt to encourage the registration of ex-offenders in the overall Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program via the PA CareerLinks because many of them will qualify to receive training under the "adult" portion of the program. A project for this committee could be to follow-up on this effort.
 - a. (12/20/12 Update) The WIB was requested to provide the number of ex-offenders receiving services at the PA Career Links (see below). These are the number of ex-offenders WIA eligible and receiving intensive services: Adams County: 7 participants had a criminal record; Cumberland County: 8 participants had a criminal record; Dauphin County: 49 participants had a criminal record; Franklin County: 4 participants had a criminal record; Lebanon County: 6 participants had a criminal record; York County: 25 participants had a criminal record.
 - b. (01/17/13 Update) The WIB provided a list of activities performed for each ex-offender listed above. The Committee discussed how to encourage ex-offenders to get WIA registered at each PA CareerLINK in order to become eligible for extra services like training. WIB thinking about how to register ex-offenders prior to release.
4. One project for this committee should be to quantify the overall costs associated with incarceration (including things like the impact of the loss of the main breadwinner of a family). The UW offered its research group to help explore this issue. The Chair will develop a draft research question and get feedback from committee members before submitting it to the UW for review.
 - a. (12/20/12 Update) The United Way is in the process of working with its Research Group on this issue.
 - b. (01/17/13 Update) Committee working with Dept. of Corrections to identify previous research.

5. The Chair agreed to call the President of EDSI to request information on the Ex-offender project they have going on in Philadelphia. It could be a model for an effort in this area.
 - a. (12/20/12 Update) The Chair talked to the President of EDSI who:
 - i. Instructed local EDSI representative to attend CRESC monthly meeting.
 - ii. Instructed EDSI Central staff to make a presentation at an upcoming CRESC meeting.
 - iii. Put the Chair in touch with a Judge Milton Lee who works with EDSI in NY to discuss an Fathering initiative that has some success.
 - b. (01/17/13 Update) EDSI is scheduled to address 01/17/13 CRESC meeting.
6. A project for this committee could be to create an infrastructure for employer to use to fill out the paperwork for federal bonding. Many times this "red tape" gets in the way of an employer willing to hire an ex-offender and get the tax credits. The UW may have the resources to sponsor such activity.
 - a. (12/20/12 Update) Committee members Tim Whelan and Bob Garraty met with Gary Shirk who is in charge of the Tax Credit and Federal Bonding Program for the PA Department of Labor & Industry. Here are some of the discussion items. Gary Shirk agreed to attend employer breakfast to provide information to employers. It was agreed that employers should be able to fill out the forms without assistance given recent changes which permit information over the internet. Gary Shirk will come to a future meeting of the CRESC to explain program. It was agreed that the ideal would be for ex-offenders when they are being released to have the tax credit and bonding paperwork they could then provide the potential employer.
 - b. (01/17/13 Update) The ex-offender's tax credit for employers was extended until December 31, 2013 with the recent fiscal cliff legislation passed by the Congress and sign by the President.
7. Another project to be considered for this committee would be to create a model that is currently being used in Hazelton, Pa and other areas where an entity could be an employer-of record and could hire ex-offenders for maintenance and other types of jobs. The Chair will research Transitional Jobs Networks and bring back the results to the committee.
 - a. (12/20/12 Update) Alternative Staffing Organizations (ASOs) are community-based, fee-for-service temporary staffing programs that place job seekers in temporary and temp-to-perm jobs that meet the needs of customer businesses, and also help ensure access to supportive services that overcome barriers to employment. Many low-income workers in this country face barriers to work, such as homelessness, access to affordable childcare and transportation, and limited educational attainment that are outside the service scope of most mainstream temporary staffing agencies. There are a couple of web sites you may want to check out on this concept: <http://www.altstaffing.org/>
 - b. (01/17/13 Update) Based on CRESC Board approval, this concept will be part of a grant proposal to PCCD for a recently released JAG Grant. Chair developing White Paper.

8. It was noted by KCS that the Commonwealth, through its Department of General Services, has a no hiring of ex-offenders policy for contractors. UW will research these types of contracts to see if an effort could be made to encourage a change in regulations.
 - a. (12/20/12 Update) Progress was made in that Tim Whelan gathered examples from contracts that the full committee will explore in their January meeting.
 - b. (01/17/13 Update) The Chair has to follow-up and provide examples to the full committee. The January meeting focused on another subject.
9. KCS and the WIB decided to convene a regional multi-community correction center (CCC) symposium where the Worldwide Interactive Network (WIN) skills builder software would be able to be used by the CCCs at no charge from the WIB for ex-offenders.
 - a. (12/20/12 Update) Correspondence was forwarded to the PA Department of Corrections to explore this concept. As of this date we have not heard back. We do know that one community correction center has received permission for the use of WIN gratis from the WIB.
 - b. (01/17/13 Update) Awaiting word from PA Department of Corrections.
10. New Item - 01/17/13 – Offender Employment Specialist (OES) Training opened up for local agencies personnel – Announcement at meeting of CRESC.
11. New Item – 01/17/13 – January 21, 2013 Access and Opportunity Career Fair has a CRESC booth.