

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE  
Pursuant to PA 107 of 2017  
Article V, Section 409  
Workforce Development Program Results

Sec. 409. (1) The department shall engage with the talent investment agency within the department of talent and economic development and local entities to design services and shall use appropriations provided in part 1 for reentry and vocational education programs. The department shall ensure that the collaboration provides relevant professional development opportunities to prisoners to ensure that the programs are high quality, demand driven, locally receptive, and responsive to the needs of communities where the prisoners are expected to reside after their release from correctional facilities. The programs shall begin upon the intake of the prisoner into a department facility.

(2) The department shall continue to offer workforce development programming through the entire duration of the prisoner's incarceration to encourage employment upon release.

(3) By March 1, the department shall provide a report to the senate and house appropriations subcommittees on corrections, the legislative corrections ombudsman, the senate and house fiscal agencies, and the state budget office detailing the results of the workforce development program.

**Sec. 409. (1)**

Beginning at intake, all prisoners not serving a life sentence receive recommendations to complete Employment Readiness, Vocational Counseling and the WorkKeys assessment. Prisoners who are serving 2 years or less receive Vocational Counseling and complete the WorkKeys assessment while at the intake facility. For prisoners serving more than 2 years, they receive Vocational Counseling and WorkKeys when they are within 4 years of release. The results of the Vocational Counseling session determine if a prisoner receives a recommendation for Career and Technical Education.

The Department utilizes Labor Market Information from the Department of Technology, Management and Budget to ensure vocational programs provide training that is responsive to employer needs. Vocational program curriculum is consistent with what is offered in public sector Technical Education Centers and all programs lead to State and/or nationally recognized credentials upon completion. The Department has implemented two Vocational Village programs where student's complete intensive Career and Technical Education programs. The student's day is designed to replicate what a typical work day will be like when employed upon release. In addition to the hard skills taught in the program, students participate in Employment Readiness programming that focuses on soft skills, financial literacy and basic computer use.

The Department's Workforce Development Specialist in coordination with other MDOC staff meet with workforce partners to provide information on the Vocational Village Training Programs. Relationships are built directly with employers to create a pipeline for qualified returning citizens to obtain employment. Thus far, relationships have been built with 201 employers statewide.

Representatives of the Department have presented to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) regional management teams to educate them on the Vocational Village Programs and the returning citizen talent pool. They are in turn sharing the information with their local employers so that they are becoming familiar with the returning citizen talent pool and their skill set. The Department has been involved with the Workforce Development Agency (WDA) in regards to the Community Ventures Program. The MDOC has referred several candidates to the Community Ventures Program to be enrolled and referred for employment opportunities.

**Sec. 409. (2)**

During incarceration, as early as 4 years from release, prisoners are given the WorkKeys Assessment which measures their real world skills and career readiness. They also participate in Careerscope which is an interest and aptitude assessment and that is followed by Vocational Counseling. Vocational Counseling gives prisoners and Employment Counselors the opportunity to discuss whether a trade recommendation is needed and to collaboratively choose a trade. There are many factors used for the recommendation of a trade, including the prisoner's interest and aptitude, the types of job available in the county of parole, and previous work history and experience. Vocational training is one component prisoners need in order to qualify for the Certificate of Employability (COE). The COE is a tool that offenders can use to show they have skills necessary to be a successful employee and the MDOC stands behind them.

All prisoners receive Employment Readiness which is a core program that focusses on soft skills, financial literacy, and basic computer skills. In addition, agency representatives and employers are brought in to assist with conducting mock interviews to give the prisoners experience.

As prisoners near their release, Employment Counselors work 1:1 with them to help seek employment prior to release and provide necessary resources, including connecting them with local agencies that can help with the process. Some agencies we have partnered with are Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Team Wellness, Michigan Works, and Detroit School of Digital Technology.