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Department of Labor and Department of Corrections and Community Supervision Announce Labor, Criminal Justice and Community Partnership to Reduce Recidivism and Improve Job Placement

The State Department of Labor and Department of Corrections and Community Supervision today announced a partnership that will bring their agencies together with leaders in the community and non-profit sector to create paths to jobs for people returning from incarceration. This partnership, an extension of the "Work for Success" initiative which has led the way in curbing recidivism, will help reduce poverty and joblessness for formerly incarcerated New Yorkers so they stay out of prison.

The program helps the formerly incarcerated with two different approaches. Formerly incarcerated individuals assessed as "low risk of reoffending" and having "low barriers to employment" will be sent to Department of Labor Career Centers for job training and placement assistance. At the same time, higher risk individuals with higher barriers to employment will receive more intensive employment services through existing programs in the nonprofit community that specialize in serving people with criminal convictions.

"The figures are staggering - it costs taxpayers more than \$40,500 per year to incarcerate someone," said State Labor Commissioner Peter M. Rivera. "Getting a job after being incarcerated dramatically increases the chances that an individual will stay out of prison. By sending low risk individuals to Department of Labor Career Centers, our staff, workforce development programs and partnerships are helping to ensure that finding work and re-joining society becomes a reality."

For the first time, the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision is using new, innovative tools to identify people by their levels of risk of reoffending, and by their levels of need for employment services. Partnering with the Department of Labor's

Career Centers is a critical first step toward ensuring that people receive the employment services that best meet their needs so that they return to work and become productive neighbors.

Department of Corrections and Community Supervision Acting Commissioner Anthony J. Annucci said, "We are always mindful of the often difficult journey back from incarceration. Jobs programs like this help provide the motivation and confidence to keep the offender moving forward and becoming a valuable member of the community."

Over the past year, Work for Success has begun an extensive approach to improving employment services for formerly incarcerated individuals, including training for targeted staff to become "Offender Employment Specialists" in New York State Career Centers. Efforts also include developing a comprehensive client matching system that better matches individuals' needs with services, improving prison vocational services and connecting trained formerly incarcerated job candidates with employers.

In addition, Work For Success and this partnership include a public education campaign for employers on the federal tax credits, human resource support, bonding and other business services and benefits available to employers who hire formerly incarcerated New Yorkers.

For its leading success, New York's Work for Success achievements, including the new partnership were highlighted last week at a national reentry and employment event in Washington, DC, hosted by the United States Department of Labor, the United States Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. New York State Deputy Secretary for Civil Rights Alphonso David, Deputy Secretary for Public Safety Thomas Abt and Center for Employment Opportunities CEO Mindy Tarlow highlighted Work for Success as a national model for partnerships between corrections, workforce development, and community organizations.

"There has never been a collaboration of criminal justice and labor that matches individuals exiting prisons to employment services specifically targeted to their risks and needs," said Mindy Tarlow, co-chair of the Work for Success initiative. "We are developing this forensic approach to ensure that the right people get to the right services at the right time to reduce recidivism and increase employability among individuals coming home from incarceration."

For more information about Work for Success, please visit: www.workforsuccess.ny.gov.
