



STATE OF NEW YORK | EXECUTIVE CHAMBER

ANDREW M. CUOMO | GOVERNOR

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GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES MORE THAN 9,400 HIRED THROUGH WORK FOR SUCCESS PROGRAM

New York Program Leads the Nation in Employment Opportunities for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that more than 9,400 formerly incarcerated individuals have been hired through the Work for Success program since its implementation in February 2012.

“By helping formerly incarcerated people find jobs, this program is growing the workforce and strengthening families across the State,” Governor Cuomo said. “Gainful employment is imperative for people to begin rebuilding their lives, and the Work for Success program brings that opportunity to those who often lack adequate means to support themselves otherwise – and that means safer and more prosperous communities for all New Yorkers.”

It costs taxpayers \$25,000 per year on average to house someone in a prison. By providing training and employment opportunities for the formerly incarcerated, the likelihood of recidivism decreases, which decreases the burden on New York taxpayers as well.

Piloted on February 17, 2012, Work for Success was conceived as a jobs initiative aimed at reducing the high unemployment rate among the thousands of New Yorkers returning home from prison. Setting a national precedent, the Governor’s office brought together the New York State Departments of Labor and Corrections and Community Supervision, and collaborated with other state agencies, policy makers, and practitioners. This group worked together to develop the best possible strategy for finding employment for the formerly incarcerated population, which faces special challenges in the workforce.

Today, individuals leaving state prisons are assessed to identify those who have a low risk of recidivism and those who have a greater risk. Lower risk individuals go to one of New York’s 101 Career Centers, where they see an employment counselor. The State Labor Department now has trained “Offender Employment Specialists” in all of their full-time locations. These staff members are versed in the unique challenges that this population faces. Formerly incarcerated individuals who are identified as being at a high risk of recidivism are provided with more

intensive services through one of Work for Success' nonprofit partners that serve this population full time.

New York is now piloting a program that will require low risk individuals being released from state facilities to work with a career counselor prior to their release to develop a training and job placement plan. This plan can be implemented immediately with the Department of Labor upon their return home. The pilot is up and running for such individuals in the Fishkill and Queensboro correctional facilities who are returning to the Bronx or Brooklyn, and is on schedule to be expanded to people returning to Peekskill, Albany, Syracuse, Buffalo and Nassau County by April 2015.

Placement Success

“Governor Cuomo’s Work For Success program is strengthening communities by helping the formerly incarcerated support themselves and their families,” said Acting Labor Commissioner Mario J. Musolino. “As important, this effort is providing businesses with qualified, highly motivated employees who want to work and build a successful career.”

The State Labor Department works with businesses to cultivate positions appropriate for Work for Success clients. Department of Labor staff have contacted over 15,000 businesses in the state, seeking to engage them in the Work for Success program. These businesses have hired a total of 9,448 formerly incarcerated individuals. By matching clients with the best possible employment prospects, New York businesses gain qualified and appropriately trained applicants and access to federal bonding, at no cost to them.

Education and Outreach

To bolster the program’s participation and raise awareness of the issue in general, both statewide and targeted campaigns were launched. Presentations to business and other interested organizations are made throughout the state. Advertisements were run on public transportation and public service announcements were aired in targeted markets. The Department of Labor used its existing outreach capacity to speak to businesses about hiring. This outreach, and businesses receptivity to the message, has resulted in these increases in hiring.

Vocational Training

The first program of its kind in the nation, the State Labor Department identifies in-demand occupations and the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) is implementing training programs. For example, culinary skills programs have been set up in seven DOCCS facilities: Collins, Coxsackie, Downstate, Eastern, Great Meadow, Watertown and Woodbourn.

In addition, programs in Information Technology are underway. DOCCS has established computer training labs and educational labs that allow inmates to train on modern computer principals in a controlled and secure setting – not on the live web – to limit security risks. Recently, DOCCS was able to train 200 people in industry-recognized computer certifications that taught basic computer skills as well as skills in providing technical service and support to other users in a help desk function.

“The past two years has seen an incredible shift in the numbers of formerly incarcerated people we have been able to both place and help,” said Marta Nelson, Executive Director of the Governor’s Re-Entry Task Force. “Businesses are recognizing that people coming home from prison can be assets to our workplaces and our communities.”

For more information on Work for Success, please visit the New York State Department of Labor Work for Success website [here](#).

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