



STATE OF NEW YORK | EXECUTIVE CHAMBER

ANDREW M. CUOMO | GOVERNOR

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**GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES THAT "WORK FOR SUCCESS" INITIATIVE IS PROVIDING MORE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FORMERLY INCARCERATED**

*Nationally Recognized Program Has Incentivized More Than 1,000 Businesses to Hire Nearly 2,000 New Yorkers Who Have Served Their Time*

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced updated placement numbers and other significant accomplishments in connecting formerly incarcerated men and women to jobs since launching the Work For Success program two years ago. The successful pilot program, which has had 1,015 businesses hire a total of 1,646 formerly incarcerated people to date, will now transition to a standard state-wide model for how public safety and employment agencies engage the formerly incarcerated.

“Under the Work for Success initiative, we are developing stronger, safer communities while encouraging economic and job growth,” said Governor Cuomo. “Providing training and jobs to formerly incarcerated New Yorkers not only reduces rates of recidivism, but also strengthens families, stabilizes local communities and jumpstarts local economies. The success of our pilot program has set a strong foundation for future participants, and we will continue to work with employers across the state to provide opportunities for those New Yorkers working to rebuild their lives.”

Since its inception in 2012, Work For Success has worked to improve the process by which those who have served time in prison are trained and are connected to businesses looking to hire. The initiative matches selected higher and lower risk individuals to the right employment program after incarceration. In turn, New York businesses gain qualified and appropriately trained applicants, at no cost to them, along with tax credits and access to federal bonding for those that hire. Additionally, preparing and connecting formerly incarcerated individuals to jobs saves businesses and taxpayers’ money and helps local and regional economies thrive. The overall goal is to curb recidivism by reducing poverty and joblessness among the formerly incarcerated.

**Accomplishments TO DATE**

Since he took office, Governor Cuomo’s top priority has been getting more New Yorkers back to work, with particular focus on helping people who are often harder to employ, including veterans, at-risk youth, the long-term unemployed and the formerly incarcerated, find

employment. He launched Work For Success in February 2012 to identify strategies to promote productive employment for formerly incarcerated people. The Governor tasked the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision and the Department of Labor to work directly with community based organizations led by Center for Employment Opportunities to develop a comprehensive state-wide approach that provide job skills and other training to the formerly incarcerated.

At the 2-year anniversary of the program, Work For Success has led to a paradigm shift in how New York State assists the formally incarcerated and connects them to jobs. It has specifically:

- **Developed and Implemented Client Matching.** As a result of an extensive examination of the capabilities of individuals who are incarcerated, the State developed and implemented empirically-based tools to assess offender risks and needs which enabled the State to begin matching the right offenders to the right programs. As of May 2013, a risk/needs instrument has been deployed in all reception centers and community supervision field offices, providing the Department of Corrections & Community Supervision with an Evidence Based tool for identifying vocational training and other needs to be addressed during incarceration and in the community. In addition, the State is now developing Case Plans for all offenders allowing them to identify specific employment goals they can work towards while incarcerated. The information on the Case Plan is transferred to the community upon release allowing parole officers to make the appropriate referrals.

- **Launched an Offender Employment Specialist Program (OES).** All of the state's 96 Career Centers now retain an Offender Employment Specialist, who specifically is trained in employment services for formerly incarcerated individuals. Formerly incarcerated individuals assessed as "low risk of reoffending" and having "low barriers to employment" are 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 receive more intensive employment services through existing programs in the nonprofit community that specialize in serving people with criminal convictions.

- **Created a Partnerships to Identify Key Job Openings.** The Center for Employment Opportunities, on behalf of Work for Success, received a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to work with the Governor's Regional Economic Development Councils to map projects across key regions, identify job openings that are suitable for formerly incarcerated job seekers, and understand the skills and abilities necessary to perform the jobs so that the proper vocational skills and training programs are provided to individuals both while they are in prison and when they return to the community. The Departments of Corrections and Community Supervision and Labor are similarly engaged in a partnership to refer high-risk parolees as part of the Pay for Success project, which engages recently released offenders to an employment program, the Center for Employment Opportunities. Approximately 102 offenders have already been identified as potential participants; DOCCS will client-match and refer 2,000 offenders to the program over the next four years.

- **Launched Inter-Agency Vocational Training.** State Labor Department teamed up with State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision to train and place people exiting the

state corrections system in employment. The first program of its kind in the nation, the State Labor Department has identified demand occupations for which DOCCS is implementing training programs.

- **Created Resume Templates for All Applicants.** The State has developed a resume template for select formerly incarcerated people to assist them in translating the vocational skills they learned during incarceration into employment skills.
- **Improved Accessibility of Vital Records.** Since individuals require proper identification to secure employment, the State embarked on an effort to ensure that formerly incarcerated people can more easily obtain vital identification documents.
- **Launched a State-wide Public Education & Outreach Program.** The State engaged in a state-wide public education and outreach program to inform businesses about the benefits of hiring formerly incarcerated individuals in their neighborhoods. The outreach included mailings to employers, presentations to chambers of commerce and public service announcements.
- **Increased Accessibility of Services.** As a result of extensive marketing and revamping of services, there was a 50% increase in the number of formerly incarcerated individuals (i.e. 3,000 individuals) seeking career placement and training services offered by State.

State Labor Commissioner Peter M. Rivera, said, “Working with our partners at the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision and in the community, we have built a successful infrastructure to help formerly incarcerated individuals find a job. A job is vital to dramatically reducing the risk that these individuals will return to prison. We recommend that business owners and hiring managers to explore how Work For Success can help their business.”

Department of Corrections and Community Supervision Acting Commissioner Anthony J. Annucci, said, “When an inmate enters our system we begin the mandatory evaluation to determine the programs, education and training that will best prepare them to return home under supportive supervision and less likely to revert to criminal behavior. When they are successful it is a win for the offender and for the state.”

Sam Schaeffer, CEO of the Center for Employment Opportunities, said, “Work for Success marks a profound change on how the public and private sectors help formerly incarcerated men and woman find employment. This initiative represents the very best of government, non-profits and outside experts working together to solve a common challenge. I applaud co-Chair Deputy Secretary Alphonso David as well as former co-Chair Mindy Tarlow for taking on this critical agenda.”

In 2013, New York was recognized for its groundbreaking work pairing the formerly incarcerated with employment 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 at a national conference on bridging reentry and workforce development.

Michael Thompson, Director, Council of State Governments Justice Center, said, “We are excited about the pioneering efforts underway in New York State because they take the most recent science about what we know works to reduce the likelihood of someone reoffending and what works to improve employment outcomes and translate those concepts into policy and practice. We will be tracking progress closely because we think state and local governments across the US, and the reentry field generally, will learn a lot from what New York is doing.”

### **Moving Forward**

New York State maintains its dedication to helping all individuals connect to jobs – especially those who face barriers to employment. Employed citizens are responsible citizens who contribute to our communities. This is particularly true for formerly incarcerated individuals, whose recidivism can cost the state more than \$40,500 per person per year.

As part of the transition from a series of pilot efforts into a new standardized and statewide program of matching the right individuals to the right programs, the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision and the Department of Labor are now working together to ensure that inmates and parolees have the skills they need to obtain jobs and the opportunities they need to find jobs in the community.

Further, New York State was awarded one of six grants nationally to upgrade and improve its vocational culinary arts programming and its computer support training programs. A culinary arts program is now underway in seven prison facilities focusing on employment skills needed to work in the Accommodations and Food Services sector and a program to train inmates in computer services is now operational in five facilities. Efforts will focus on offenders who are considered at higher risk for recidivism and have an identified need for both employment services and an interest in these types of jobs.

Employers interested in learning more about the tax credits and the hiring program should visit [www.workforsuccess.ny.gov](http://www.workforsuccess.ny.gov) or call 1-888-469-7365.

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