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Workforce Investment Council receives \$1.5 million grant to support ex-offenders in job training and placement

Making the transition from jail inmate to productive citizen will be easier for 300 adults in Clackamas County thanks to a major grant announced today.

The U.S. Department of Labor announced nearly \$12 million in grant funding to nine non-profit organizations across the country to provide assistance for ex-offenders as they make the transition back to their communities.

Locally, \$1.5 million is awarded to the Workforce Investment Council of Clackamas County.

The Workforce Investment Council will use grant funds to provide job training that leads to credentials in high-demand industries, employment preparation, and mentoring, along with a connection to services such as housing, substance abuse and mental health treatment. Assistance with parenting and child reunification will also be offered and funded with the grant.

The funds will help up to 300 individuals leaving incarceration and returning to Clackamas County. The program will target ex-offenders with a history of sexual and physical abuse, family turmoil, learning disabilities and mental health or substance disorders. While both men and women will be recruited for the program, the emphasis will be on recruitment of female ex-offenders.

Recruitment for the program will include referrals from parole and probation officers, judges, service agencies and self-referral. Case managers will also go into the Clackamas County Jail on a weekly basis to provide orientation to eligible participants.

“In normal economic times, it is a challenge to move ex-offenders from prison to work. But clearly it is a win-win if we can keep people from returning to jail by helping them get a job,” stated Kim Parker, Executive Director of the Workforce Investment Council. She added “Clackamas County partners have been talking about increasing services to this population for a couple of years - this grant application came at the perfect time.”

The Workforce Investment Council is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building a strong workforce in Clackamas County. Through public-private partnerships, we attract funding to help local businesses proactively address a key challenge to their success—a skilled, competitive workforce.