

Restoration Academy Design

Purpose:

A recent Greensboro City Council resolution was passed in which the City and Staff are to present a proposal for a “Restoration Academy”, a City initiated ex-offender employment program that is a community collaboration led through the City’s Human Resource and the Workforce Development Departments.

The purpose of this proposal is to establish a plan for the creation, funding and implementation of a program designed to support the successful re-entry of local ex-offenders into the Greensboro and Triad Area community.

The following Program design will become the basis of a local “Restoration Academy”.

Program Goals and Objectives:

Establish a former offender’s workforce program:

- To increase the likelihood of successful re-entry into society through appropriate work experiences with the City and other public entities.
- To reduce the number of ex-offenders who repeat offenses and return to incarceration.
- To enhance the experience of this targeted audience as citizens by: providing support services, employability development, and skills upgrade as a pathway to stable employment.
- To provide appropriate transitional employment for former offenders where they learn skills that are transferable to other positions inside and outside of the City.

Target Population:

- The targeted population will be for Former Offenders. The following factors will be considered when determining whether an applicant is suitable for placement:
 - the nature of the crime;
 - the time elapsed since the crime;
 - the nature of the position sought;
 - the facts surround the conviction;
 - the number of offenses for which the applicant was convicted;
 - the applicant’s age at the time of conviction or release from prison;
 - the applicants work history before and after conviction;
 - the applicant’s rehabilitation efforts;
 - the applicant’s employment or character references; and
 - whether the applicant is bonded under a government sponsored bonding program.
- Prerequisites:
 - 18 and older (18-24 priority)
 - Drug-Free (Drug testing prior to placement into transitional employment)
 - Guilford County residence
 - Background Check (prior to placement in transitional employment)
 - NCWorks Registration
- Proposed Number Served: 45 Former Offenders
 - Operate 3 cohorts of 15 participants each
 - Cycles would run 6 months with overlap
 - Program entirety is 14 months

Proposed Program Elements:

- Recruitment and Outreach :

The NC Works Career Centers and the NCWorks Partners Network of Guilford County will conduct on-going outreach to ex offenders through their various services. Activities will be planned and conducted on a regular basis such as the Resource Fair conducted on November 5, 2015.

A pipeline of ex-offenders will be developed as the Project is implemented, so that individuals are screened and identified prior to the beginning of each cycle.

- Assessment and planning will be **key** to participant's success. Assessments may include:
 - TABE (Test for Adult Basic Education)
 - Key Train Assessment
 - Career Interest Profiler
- Career Guidance/Planning:
 - A Career Facilitator will be assigned to each Group of 15 Participants
 - Will assist in creation of individual employment plan (IEP) that will include steps necessary to reach long and short term goals
 - Include activities such as: foundation skill upgrades, skills training options, transitional employment, and support services
 - Clearly defined steps to unsubsidized employment
- Attendance and completion of Work Readiness/Work Preparation Training:
 - Participants will engage in a minimum three (3) week/25 hours a week series of employability workshops that may include :
 - **Straight Talk** – group forum identifying and removing barriers; expungment; and accepting responsibility
 - **Making it Work** – classroom training dealing with problem solving, job retention, and life skills
 - **Breaking Free of Barriers** –group and individual meetings to discuss barriers that participants are experiencing; occupations of interest; and/or coping strategies.
 - **Pathways to Employment** – job search and job retention skills training
- Subsidized Employment and Work Reinforcement Workshops
 - (Four (4) days Transitional (subsidized) Employment and one (1) day developmental/support activities
 - Total 30-35 hours of activities
 - Placements within the local government structure will be given priority
 - Jobs will be matched to the assessed skills of individuals as closely as possible
 - To the extent the job assignment allows, flexibility in the employment hours so individuals can complete other elements of their IEP.
 - The project calls for an up-front commitment from employers and local governments to provide supervision and support, yet maintain same expectations as with other employees.
 - Maximum of 400 hours at a rate of \$9.50 per hour (maximum of 30-35 hours per week)

Career-Building Activities and Projected Outcomes

- Attainment of Career Readiness Certification through the WorkKeys Assessment system. The WorkKeys is a nationally recognized achievement credential
- Skills Training: Participants will be given the opportunity to take training courses in order to upgrade specific skills or to develop new skills based on interest and aptitude.
- Unsubsidized Employment
 - It is anticipated that participants will make application and be considered for employment in the latter phase of the transitional employment. The overall objective for employment would be full-time at a minimum of \$10 per hour.
- Retention Goal
 - Participants will retain employment for a minimum of six (6) months from the time of exit from the program.

Individuals who are not selected to participate or do not successfully complete all steps will be referred to the NCWorks WDB services available to all citizens.

Budget:

Budget projections that will need to be considered are:

- Staffing: three (3) roster positions not to exceed 1000 hours. Each position has the responsibility for a cycle of 15 individuals
- Staff Support: Mileage
- Staff Professional Development: staff training will include certification to implement the Readiness Training.
- Workbooks and supplies: participant workbooks and supplies would be purchased for each participant. A very small budget would be considered for staff supplies.
- Participant wage subsidies: we propose that participants be provided subsidized employment opportunities at a rate of pay of \$9.50 per hour, not to exceed 400 hours. This is consistent with the current local area Transitional Employment Policy.

Summary

In summary, we are proposing a project to serve 45 ex-offenders in 3 overlapping cycles. Participants will be involved in required work readiness training prior to placement in transitional employment with some of the slots being developed within the City of Greensboro. Please note that we are proposing a wage of \$9.50 per hour for a not-to-exceed 400 hours. We are also building in three roster positions, each of which will have responsibility to complete a cycle of by managing a group of 15 participants. These positions will be capped at 1000 hours and a pay rate of \$16.00 per hour.

Projected Outcomes include:

REV. 11/30/15

45 participants complete Work Readiness Training
36 (80%) complete 400 hours of Transitional Employment
30 of 36 participants enter unsubsidized training
20 of 45 participants enroll in skills training to upgrade or develop new skills

Total anticipated “bare-bones” budget is an estimated \$250,000.

Additional services may be provided to participants to include Support Services, Training, Training Scholarships and Tools/Work Supplies. These costs will be absorbed by Adult, Dislocated Worker or Youth funding as appropriate.

Developed in Coordination of City of Greensboro
Human Resources & Workforce Development Departments