



# IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

*"Protecting You and Your Community"*

GOVERNOR DIRK KEMPTHORNE

DIRECTOR THOMAS J. BEAUCLAIR

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Transmittal # 9

April 19, 2006

**To:** Workforce Development Council

**From:** Gail Cushman, Education Program Director, Idaho Dept of Correction

**Subject:** Offender Reentry

**Action Requested:** None—information only

**Attachment:** Update on Reentry for Idaho Dept of Correction

**Current Status:**

The Idaho Department of Correction is continuing to develop programs and partnerships in accordance with its need. In the past year it has collaborated with:

- Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to provide assessment and services to offenders before they leave incarceration.
- Department of Health and Welfare, Easter Seals-Goodwill (District 3), SL Start Work First (Districts 1 & 2) and Arbor Education & Training (District 4 & 5) to provide:
  - Pre-release services
  - Re-entry services
  - Coordination between contractors and Community Corrections
  - Link to public assistance
  - Employment

IDOC is continuing with the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative through the US Office of Justice Program (the Going Home Grant) and assisting with the Access to Recovery Program.

**What IDOC Needs:**

- Districts 6 & 7 contacts for employment information and job placement.
- Additional Workforce Skills training through community/college collaboration.
- Family reunification programs.
- State/private industry Incentives for hiring ex-offenders.
- Additional partnerships and coalitions with the private sector and community and state agencies that will support offenders, families, and children of offenders as offenders are released and return to work.

**Update on Reentry for Idaho Department of Correction  
April 2006**

**The Problem: A Community/State Issue**

- **Prison Growth:** **1996:** 3662 offenders; **2005:** 6526 offenders. This is an annual increase of 7.3% nearly doubling of the incarcerated population in 10 years. **New Commitments in 2005: 1457**
- **Drugs:** 82.5% of incarcerated offenders have a drug/alcohol problem; ½ indicate that methamphetamines have been a cause of their incarceration.
- **Education:** 45% enter incarceration without a high school education. 45% of 2005 new incarcerations (1457) is 655...the largest high school freshman class in Idaho.
- **Employability:** Lack of education, including low reading/writing/math skills, combined with past drug use condemns offenders to entry-level jobs, if they are employable.

**The Solutions—What IDOC is doing now:**

1. **Workforce Readiness Program:** The offender involvement in the Workforce Readiness Program has steadily increased from 211 students in July 2004 to 729 in March 2006. During the past year, we have stabilized the Workforce Readiness Program that includes soft skill classes, such as communication skills and work ethics, as well as work skills, including plumbing, carpentry, computers, and landscaping. It is taught at all nine institutions. All students must have achieved a GED in order to be accepted into the Workforce Readiness curriculum. Idaho Department of Correction was responsible for 576 offenders earning their GED's in 2005.
2. **Current Collaborations:**
  - Idaho Vocational Rehabilitation has assigned counselors to work in the prison complex south of Boise, Pocatello, and District 4 to prepare offender for VR services prior to release
  - A partnership between IDOC, the Department of Health and Welfare, Easter Seals-Goodwill (District 3—Nampa/Caldwell area), SL Start Work First (Districts 1 & 2 North Idaho) and Arbor Education & Training (District 4 & 5 South-West/Central Idaho) They provide employment information (and job placement) to offenders leaving the institutions.

**Program Successes, September 2005—February 2006**

	# screened	# employed	% employed through this program	Average Wage	Days to Placement*
Re-Entry from Prisons	36	19	53%	\$9.15	17
Probation/ Parole	93	46	49%	\$8.77	10

\* Reducing the days to placement reduces amount of time the offender is dependent upon other Idaho public services, such as Health and Welfare, Idaho Commerce and Labor.

3. **IDOC Reentry Teams:** The IDOC has Reentry Teams in North, Southwest, and Eastern Idaho. Team members include reentry officers, case managers, Parole Commission hearing officers, prison and district office management, and other stakeholders who cooperate to develop release plans for offenders.
4. **Access to Recovery Idaho ATR-I:** IDOC in cooperation with many other agencies, private treatment providers, cultural organizations and the faith-based community cooperate with each other to deliver substance abuse services through a 22 million dollar grant received by Health and Welfare.

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