

Jail Collaborative and Partner4Work aim to reduce recidivism through Training to Work project

The Department of Human Services, as part of the Jail Collaborative, is supporting Partner4Work in implementing a grant-funded project designed to connect people in the criminal justice system to meaningful training and employment opportunities. This funding provides individuals in alternative housing or an electronic monitoring program the opportunity to learn a trade or skill during their final months in the corrections system, with the goal of preparing them for employment at the end of their sentence. To qualify for the program, the client must be within nine months of release.

Participants are paired with a case manager who completes assessments and creates service plans focused on the client's needs outside of employment. Concurrently, employment specialists from PA CareerLink® work with participants to find career training and employment opportunities appropriate for the participant's skills and desires. Training programs may include masonry, CDL (Commercial Driver's License), culinary arts or office skills. Participants' training costs are covered under the grant, and they may be eligible for a bus pass to and from training sites. After completing the program, there is a nine month follow up period to offer additional support.

"This grant is important because it fills a gap in both the correction and workforce industries, allowing them to learn more about each other and create programs designed to better serve those involved with the justice system," stated Molly Morrill, Jail Collaborative coordinator. "Our ultimate goal is to reduce recidivism by giving people careers in high-demand occupations so they can support themselves and their families."

Since the project began in February, approximately 50 people have been served. It aims to serve 170 clients in its first two years.