

One Minnesota Budget

PATHWAYS FROM PRISON TO EMPLOYMENT

Data and research over several decades confirm that **when people find stable, meaningful employment upon release from prison they are less likely to reoffend and return to prison.** The Department of Corrections (DOC) proposes investments that would build and expand connections to public and private employers, the trades, community colleges, and other post-secondary institutions to connect incarcerated individuals with jobs upon release.

This request increases the use of evidence-based employment practices to increase employment outcomes of participants. It will also strengthen community partnerships and stretching our reach across the state in interventions that matter and work. These investments will result in significant increases in enrollment in higher education and technical/vocational training by incarcerated and released individuals, as well as long-term placement in employment. The investment includes:



Economic Opportunity and Public Safety Unit

\$1.25 million per year ongoing to create an Economic Opportunity and Public Safety unit, an interagency unit to develop and strengthen relationships in the community and between the state and employers to connect individuals leaving prison with employment. The unit would be funded through the DOC in close coordination with DEED to coordinate the work, including employment navigation, data collection, and community engagement with public and private employers, the trades, and post-secondary institutions across Minnesota.

EMPLOY Program Capacity

\$1.3 million per year ongoing to invest in and expand the current DOC EMPLOY Program, making it available to all persons released from state prison facilities. EMPLOY is a data-driven, evidence-based program to increase employment readiness among the incarcerated, and connections to and maintaining living wage jobs for those released from facilities. This proposal would expand the work and provide program funds for participant supplies necessary to be work-ready and gainfully employed. Through an internal program evaluation, it is proven that EMPLOY Program participants worked more hours, had higher hourly wages, earned more total wages, and reduced recidivism by 27-66%.

Community-Based Employment and Vocational Services

\$1 million per year in community-based programming and services for pre- and post-release employment and vocational services including Cognitive Behavioral Intervention Employment training, job readiness and career laddering. These programs help to change problem thinking and workplace behaviors that lead to terminations.