

Vocational Education

The Department of Corrections is revising its vocational education programming to incorporate all aspects of the system into a successful model that includes comprehensive employment focused curriculum.

Research from the 2013 RAND meta-analysis shows that individuals who release from prison with employment related vocational education have a 28% higher chance of success. We are looking to impart labor market skills, support programs that provide workforce ready credentialing, connect individuals directly with prospective employers, thus improving job placement outcomes. Our goal is that this population of individuals may potentially have job offers before they walk out the door.



Previously, DOC had 5 vocational education programs in place at the Mike Durfee State Prison (MDSP) in Springfield: welding, construction technology, auto mechanics, auto body restoration, and landscape/horticulture. The last class for the landscape/horticulture program was September 25, 2017.

Our target population for this group of inmates is those within 1-2 years of potential release from prison. The inmates must have a verified high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED); preference will be given to those who received their GED while incarcerated in the DOC. Inmates will also have to have completed the National Career Readiness exam. Individuals seeking to get into the vocational program will need to have the scores compatible with that program.

Additional program requirements include completion of the "Bring your 'A' Game to Work" certification program (required to receive a 90% on final exam to be certified), participation in an on-site job fair, completion of resume and either mock or real job interview, and completion of a workforce safety course.

The welding, auto mechanics, and auto body programs will start January 1, 2018. The plan is to start Construction Technology in March. The new welding program will be 240 hours compared to 110 which it was before. Construction Technology will be 1,080 hours with the goal of being able to build a house similar to what the career and technical education programs in the community do. Auto mechanics will be 240 hours in duration and the inmates will complete by taking the ASE certification exam. Inmates can earn certification in up to 9 areas and for each area they certify in they receive a certificate from ASE. Auto Body basic will be 120 hours in duration and inmates will also take the ASE student certification exam. Auto body advanced is 1,560 hours in duration and has an advanced knowledge based test.