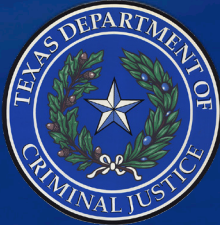




Reentry and Integration Division launches Website for Work



Texas Department of Criminal Justice **WEBSITE FOR WORK**



For offenders reentering society, a critical component for their success is the ability to find and keep a job. To achieve its core mission to reintegrate offenders, TDCJ has implemented a new web-based service called “Website for Work” to help connect parolees who possess work experience and skills with potential employers.

While incarcerated, many offenders gain valuable work experience and learn skills which are transferrable to jobs in our communities. The Website for Work matches potential Texas employers with appropriate applicants based on criteria such as education, vocational training, work certifications and experience.






“The Website for Work provides a mechanism for employers who recognize the value of job skills and quality training,” said April Zamora, director of TDCJ’s Reentry and Integration Division. Zamora noted that “Employers who take advantage of this program benefit from hiring well-trained, experienced employees, and demonstrate their willingness to help reintegrate offenders in their communities by offering them a ‘second chance’ through employment.”

Website for Work matches parolees with employers, arranges for the parolee to con-

tact the employer, and records whether the offender was successful in finding employment. Employers who hire a program participant within a year of their release from prison will qualify for the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

“There are approximately 85,000 parolees currently under supervision,” said Zamora, adding, “Employment is a significant component in helping them get back on their feet and reducing their chances of returning to prison.”

HOW IT WORKS

-  Complete the online Employer Registration form.
-  A TDCJ staff member will contact you to confirm that you want to participate.
-  Search our database for potential employees.
-  TDCJ staff will regularly scan our databases for parolees matching your needs.
-  When a match is found, we will contact you to initiate the hiring process.

Intuitive navigation tools on the Website for Work page help employers find potential employees who match their criteria.

To participate, employers fill out an online form indicating the location and number of positions available, the skills and experience required to do the work, and any other important information. After a Website for Work Specialist confirms the employer’s participation, they will regularly scan the website database for parolees whose training and experience fill the employer’s needs. When a match is found, the Website for Work Specialist contacts the employer to schedule an interview with the job candidate.

Pamela Thielke, director of TDCJ’s Parole Division, underscored the value of post-release employment, noting that “Individuals on supervision now have a greater opportunity to secure employment as a result of Website for Work. This population often has many barriers that they struggle with upon release from prison; reducing those barriers with a mechanism to help employers find and hire former offenders is a significant step forward in their reintegration back into society and in becoming self-sufficient.” ▲