



Office of Correctional Job Training and Placement

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OCJTP

Annual Report to Congress

Fiscal Year 2000

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Office of Correctiona

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Fiscal Year 2000

John E. Moore, Administrator
Office of Correctional Job Training and Placement

August 2001

This report covers activities undertaken by the Office of Correctional Job Training and Placement during fiscal year 2000.

**U.S. Department of Justice
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The Office of Correctional Job Training and Placement is a component of the National Institute of Corrections, Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Foreword

The latest available figures indicate that more than 500,000 offenders were released from state and federal prisons and returned to the community in 1999. These offenders generally require substantial assistance, in both finding jobs and keeping them. Providing such assistance is in the public interest, since research indicates that unemployment is a key predictor of initial criminality and a primary component of recidivism.

Entering the labor market can be a confusing, and sometimes overwhelming, experience for offenders, as global competition, changing technology and business practices, and shifts in the demands for goods and services continue to reshape America's job market. Advancements in computer technology contribute to the perplexing problem of accessing labor market information. Offenders need to have this information to make informed decisions about jobs, licensing or bonding requirements, working conditions, and educational and training requirements and opportunities.

Bold new steps must be taken to ensure that offenders are adequately prepared to compete in today's job market. We should use the time offenders spend in prison to address their employability needs by providing them with more training and work opportunities while incarcerated. We must also commit to creating correctional systems that make workforce development issues an integral part of every offender's experiences from before trial to after release. Workforce development should be the "glue" that holds the various roles and functions of the correctional system together. As offenders make the transition from prison to the community, they should have access to a network of agencies and needs-based services, including substance abuse treatment, transportation, and childcare. These are just a few of the issues that affect their job stability and retention.

We must assist offenders in entering the world of work by helping them match their abilities, aptitudes, and interests to potential career paths. We must create partnerships to develop a seamless web of offender accountability, supervision, and support. This may include a system that begins, in many instances, before incarceration and continues after the offender leaves prison and reenters the community. Through these efforts, we can support offenders by broadening their horizons, helping them discover their strengths and talents, and teaching them how to make informed decisions about jobs and career choices.

The Office of Correctional Job Training and Placement (OCJTP), established in 1995 as a result of the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, has become a primary source of information, training, and technical assistance to federal, state, and local government agencies and nonprofit organizations in their efforts to plan, develop, and improve offender job training, placement, and retention services. Training seminars and workshops developed and sponsored by this Office have become some of the most sought-after training opportunities in the history of the National Institute of Corrections. The overwhelming demands that have arisen from the national movement to provide job training and placement services for unemployed and underemployed people, including offenders, have exceeded the limited funding available through the Institute. This has resulted in lost opportunities for the field of corrections to capitalize on a movement that is high on the national agenda and supported by the field of corrections and the general public.

OCJTP's Annual Report to Congress for fiscal year 2000 highlights the accomplishments of this Office and the status of correctional job training and placement across the nation. To achieve its mission of

enhancing offenders' ability to enter and remain in the labor market, OCJTP has focused its limited resources on developing and providing competency-based training programs to offender employment service providers who can help offenders make informed career decisions. This will reduce recidivism, the cycle of poverty, and the expectation of

failure and lack of empowerment among offenders. Attacking these problems and devising creative solutions to these issues will ultimately lead to safer streets and communities for us all.

John E. Moore

Administrator

Office of Correctional Job Training and Placement

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Introduction

As mandated in its enabling legislation, the National Institute of Corrections' Office of Correctional Job Training and Placement hereby submits its annual report to Congress on its activities during fiscal year (FY) 2000 (October 1, 1999, through September 30, 2000).

Background

The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 directed the U.S. Attorney General to establish an Office of Correctional Job Training and Placement (OCJTP) within the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). OCJTP was created as a vehicle to encourage, support, and advance job training and job placement programs that provide services to offenders and ex-offenders.

OCJTP was established in March 1995 within the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), an organization whose primary purpose is to assist state and local corrections agencies by providing technical assistance, training, and information services. NIC's

service delivery system provides the necessary organizational support and field contacts to carry out the functions of OCJTP.

As defined by its enabling legislation (P.L. 103-322), OCJTP's functions include:

- Coordinating efforts of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), DOJ, and other federal agencies in the areas of correctional job training and placement.
- Providing training to develop staff competencies needed by state and local agencies to assist offenders and ex-offenders in gaining marketable occupational skills and job placement.
- Providing technical assistance related to the development of offender employability to state and local training and employment agencies.
- Collecting and disseminating information about offender job training and placement programs, accomplishments, and employment outcomes.

Activities and Accomplishments

Office Coordination

Since its inception, many federal, state, and local agencies have come to depend on OCJTP for its leadership, support, and coordination of government and private efforts to provide job training and placement for offenders and ex-offenders. NIC continues to explore options to increase its resources to meet the need for services.

From August 2000 through August 2001, OCJTP is being assisted by a full-time student trainee from Niagara University's Graduate Program in Criminal Justice Administration and Management. This student trainee program offers graduate students experience in working at the national level on initiatives that support offender job training and placement programs.

Interagency Coordination

In FY 2000, OCJTP worked actively to coordinate activities with other concerned agencies, as described below.

Meeting with DOL's Welfare-to-Work Program.

The purpose of this December 1999 meeting, hosted by DOL's Welfare-to-Work Program and attended by representatives of DOJ's Office of Justice Programs and the OCJTP Administrator, was to develop a working relationship among the three agencies. The meeting centered on the agencies' initiatives and a brief discussion of their mutual interest in jointly sponsoring initiatives that may affect the dependence of offenders and their families on public assistance, including efforts to work with noncustodial parents (including offenders) to encourage responsible fatherhood and increase noncustodial fathers' financial and emotional involvement with their children.

Meeting with National Youth Employment Coalition. This December 1999 meeting, hosted by NIC's

Division of Community Services and OCJTP at the request of the deputy director of the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC), was held at NIC's central office in Washington, D.C. NYEC is a network of more than 120 youth employment and development organizations dedicated to promoting policies and programs that help youths become lifelong learners, productive workers, and self-sufficient citizens. The purpose of the meeting was to share information with NYEC on NIC technical assistance and training programs for offender job training and placement service providers. NIC and NYEC have a mutual interest in improving job training and placement service programs for young offenders. By capitalizing on the offender employment specialist (OES) and offender workforce development specialist training programs developed by OCJTP and taught through NIC's Training Academy, NYEC may be able to develop programs tailored to meet the employment needs of youthful offenders. The deputy director was encouraged to follow up with NIC's technical assistance coordinator, NIC's Training Academy, and DOJ's Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to determine whether training could be made available through an interagency agreement with OJJDP.

Meeting with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), National Office of Psychosocial Rehabilitation, and the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals. The OCJTP Administrator organized an introductory meeting in January 2000 with the administrators of the VA's National Office of Psychosocial Rehabilitation and the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP) to collaborate on ways to share information with workforce development service providers nationwide on services provided to veterans through the VA's psychosocial rehabilitation programs. As a result of this meeting, it was agreed that

the VA could submit articles describing these services to NAWDP's newsletter and set up booths and make presentations at NAWDP's national conferences.

Meeting with DOL's Welfare-to-Work Program.

A second meeting, hosted by DOL's Welfare-to-Work Program and attended by representatives of the Office of the Attorney General, the Federal Bureau of Prisons' (BOP's) Inmate Placement Program Branch, and the OCJTP Administrator, was held in February 2000 for the purpose of collaborating on initiatives to reintegrate offenders, who face significant barriers to job placement and sustained employment, into society. Several proposals were discussed, but the attendees were particularly interested in identifying four to eight jurisdictions where it could coordinate a concentrated effort at providing technical assistance and training while documenting the process and outcome for successful replication in other jurisdictions. Additional meetings are being scheduled to discuss this and other initiatives both departments wish to pursue.

Meeting with BOP's Inmate Placement Program Branch.

A meeting was held in March 2000 between the OCJTP Administrator and staff of the Inmate Placement Program Branch to provide an overview of each office's activities and coordinate services as needed. As a result of the meeting, BOP employees providing job training and placement services to offenders will be included in the NIC-sponsored Offender Employment Specialist Distance Learning Training Program. In addition, OCJTP offered to train a five-person BOP team on the Offender Workforce Development Specialist/Facilitator Training Program being developed by NIC. This training program is a 3-week intensive train-the-trainer curriculum for workforce development specialists that will lead to certification. The Inmate Placement Program Branch has also agreed to be a referral source for OCJTP in assisting offenders, ex-offenders, and their families seeking job counseling services.

Meeting with the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Division of Research and Demonstration.

This meeting in March 2000 between the OCJTP Administrator and the chief of the Research and Demonstration Division of DOL's Employment and Training Administration was held to discuss the ongoing research efforts of DOL and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in the area of job retention and NIC's interest in studying offender job retention factors and predictive instruments to be used in targeting those offenders most in need of specialized workforce development services. The chief of the Research and Demonstration Division has agreed to provide assistance to an NIC workgroup on offender job retention and to provide insight into the research efforts of the DOL and DHHS and their applicability to the offender population. This initial meeting may lead to collaboration on joint research efforts between DOL and DOJ's National Institute of Corrections and National Institute of Justice.

Meeting sponsored by DOJ's Office of Justice Programs.

This meeting, sponsored by the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) and held in April 2000, included representatives from nine jurisdictions participating in a Reentry Courts Initiative. This initiative, shaped by the successful drug court model used throughout the country, looks to the court to apply sanctions and incentives to increase the likelihood that ex-offenders will become law-abiding, contributing members of their communities. The focus is on increasing public safety through more effective monitoring and coordinated services. OJP is committed to supporting this initiative through a combination of cluster conferences, information resources, and technical assistance. The OCJTP Administrator provided participants with information about the Office and the availability of technical assistance to support their efforts.

Meeting with the director of graduate educational programs in counseling at Loyola College of Maryland, the executive director of the Career Development Leadership Alliance, and a workforce and career development consultant with Rutgers University's John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development. This meeting was held in April 2000 to discuss the latest advances in the paraprofessional Career Development Facilitator (CDF) training curriculum originally developed in 1995 by the National Career Development Association, the Career Development Training Institute at Oakland University, and its sponsor, the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee. OCJTP is currently developing a new curriculum and instructor training program based on a newly revised CDF curriculum.

Meeting of BOP's Correctional Education and Training Discussion Group. The purpose of this group is to share information that will advance BOP's provision of offender education and training. This meeting, held in April 2000, centered on the Reading Is Fundamental initiative, which, in addition to providing literacy programs for offenders, donates books to correctional systems for offenders' children and promotes inmates' involvement in the education of their children through parent-child reading programs. Strategies are being explored to promote this program more aggressively in federal, state, and local prison systems. The group also discussed the need for research (possibly funded by a foundation) that would increase understanding of public attitudes toward the provision of correctional education. The assistant director of BOP's Division of Industries, Education, and Vocational Training announced an effort to have UNICOR (Federal Prison Industries, Inc.) refurbish used computers. As a followup to this meeting, the OCJTP Administrator and the assistant director of BOP's Division of Industries, Education, and Vocational Training agreed to work out arrangements in which organizations that employ offender workforce development specialist/trainers who have successfully completed

NIC training would receive refurbished computers on an as-needed basis, to be dedicated to use with offenders in the area of workforce development.

Meeting with DOL's Welfare-to-Work Program. This meeting, hosted by DOL's Welfare-to-Work Program in August 2000 and attended by representatives from numerous organizations, was held to plan a National Welfare-to-Work Conference called Welfare-To-Work Beyond 2000: Building The Future that was held October 17–19, 2000, in Phoenix, Arizona. OCJTP offered to conduct a training program at the conference that would address offender-related issues for service providers who need to know how to work with clients who have criminal records.

Meeting with the National Career Development Association. A meeting was held in August 2000 with the National Career Development Association (NCDA), a nonprofit organization of approximately 10,000 national and state career development professionals. The organization provides career development facilitator (CDF) training for CDF instructors and maintains a registry of CDF instructors. NCDA, which publishes the *Facilitating Career Development* (2000) curriculum, has given NIC permission to modify this curriculum for training offender workforce development specialists. This meeting was held to discuss NCDA's capability and interest in providing training to offender workforce development specialists under a cooperative agreement with NIC using a NCDA curriculum tailored by NIC to meet the needs of corrections.

Public Presentations

International Community Corrections Association (ICCA). In January 2000, the OCJTP Administrator spoke about offender job training and placement from a national perspective and the services provided by OCJTP at ICCA's sixth annual Washington, D.C., Advocacy Forum. ICCA is a professional organization dedicated to improving community corrections programs, whose membership consists

primarily of halfway house administrators and other correctional leaders.

Correctional Education Association Leadership Conference. In March 2000, the OCJTP Administrator spoke about offender job training and placement from a national perspective at a workshop called The Professionalization of Offender Job Training and Placement Services, held at the Correctional Education Leadership Conference in Baltimore, Maryland. The administrator described OCJTP training initiatives to increase the skill level of OESs and future plans to develop an intensive, 3-week, competency-based training for offender workforce development specialists that will lead to certification and possible college credit. Approximately 30 people attended the workshop.

National Committee on Community Corrections. In May 2000, speaking before members of the National Committee on Community Corrections, the OCJTP Administrator described the Office's activities to support the development and improvement of offender job training and placement programs, provide technical assistance and training to such programs, disseminate information on such programs, and coordinate and collaborate with other federal agencies involved in such efforts. The administrator discussed OCJTP activities that support the professionalization of those working directly to provide the offender population with job counseling, training, placement, development, and retention services.

NAWDP 11th Annual Conference. In May 2000, as a member of a panel called Washington Update, the OCJTP Administrator spoke about current legislation affecting workforce development—including Public Law 103–322, which established OCJTP to encourage and support offender job training and placement programs—and information cited by the Legal Action Center on employment, public assistance, and housing laws affecting individuals with criminal convictions. Approximately 200 people attended this general session.

Minnesota Department of Corrections, Corrections Education. In June 2000, the OCJTP Administrator met with a team headed by Minnesota's Director of Correctional Education to discuss the support services available to Minnesota in its development and improvement of offender job training and placement programs. The director of correctional education will follow up with a request for technical assistance from NIC to support Minnesota's efforts to improve the delivery of job training and placement services.

National Telecast

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General. In August 2000, the Attorney General, at NIC's request, provided a taped statement that provided the lead into a national-level training program for offender reintegration service providers. The initial distance learning training program for OESs was provided on September 25–28, 2000, and focused on reintegration and transition issues; offender assessment and programming; pre-employment and job readiness skills; and job development, placement, and retention strategies.

Information Exchange Activities

State of Maryland, Department of Budget and Management, Council on Management and Productivity. In November 1999, a followup meeting was held with members of Maryland's Department of Budget and Management, Council on Management and Productivity, to discuss plans and strategies to enable more inmates to gain productive employment on release from the Maryland prison system. The Public Safety and Correctional Services Project: Inmate Post-Release Opportunities, chaired by Judge John F. Fader, is gathering information on national models suited to Maryland, identifying current operating or pilot programs in Maryland that contribute to improved employability of inmates

upon release, and exploring efforts with the private sector to provide job opportunities for offenders.

Followup meetings have been held between council members and the OCJTP Administrator for additional assistance at the federal level.

General Accounting Office (GAO) study on reintegration. In May 2000, the OCJTP Administrator participated in a meeting organized by DOJ for GAO on a study of offender reintegration needs and programs initiated by GAO and directed at state and federal correctional systems. GAO—whose interest in this area is driven primarily by the trends and projections for the number of prisoners to be released from federal and state prisons, characteristics of the population, reintegration programs, and recidivism studies—is studying the availability of offender reintegration programs, their content, and the systems implemented to measure their performance.

BOP-sponsored Correctional Education and Training Discussion Group Meeting. In June 2000, the OCJTP Administrator met with the assistant director of BOP, the director of its education program, and other invited guests to discuss the advancement of correctional education and training. Research efforts to understand public reluctance to improve correctional education and training were also discussed, as were proposals to provide Reading Is Fundamental resources and services to corrections systems as part of enhanced literacy efforts.

State of Maryland, Department of Education, Correctional Education Division. In July 2000, the OCJTP Administrator met with staff of the Correctional Education Division of the Maryland Department of Education to determine their perception of the need for and knowledge of employability assessment instruments, job retention strategies, and career facilitator training. This provided an opportunity to gain additional input from the field on initiatives proposed by OCJTP to improve offender job training and placement services nationally.

Cooperative Agreements

Offender Job Retention Project. In January 2000, NIC entered into a cooperative agreement with a technical resource provider, Ms. Melissa C. Houston, LMSW, to direct the activities of the Offender Workforce Development and Job Retention Project, which is designed to support alternatives to incarceration by developing the capacity of offender service providers nationwide to implement initiatives that lead to an increase in offenders' job retention. Studies have shown that unemployment is a major predictor of initial criminality and a major contributor to recidivism. By conducting studies, developing curriculums, and providing training opportunities, information services, and technical assistance, this project endeavors to provide support to those who assist offenders in obtaining gainful employment, including job stability and job retention. This multiyear funding initiative will result in plans, strategies, and interventions at the national level to meet program needs for offender job retention initiatives. During the first 12 months of the project period, project staff—

- Provided training on offender employment and retention issues to 126 OESs from across the nation.
- Conducted two indepth focus groups of professionals on retention and relapse signs and two offender-only focus groups for national survey development.
- Presented an 8-hour training workshop in Rhode Island and a 4-hour training workshop in Maryland.
- Trained 1,200 practitioners via distance learning in offender job retention issues, research, and strategies to improve retention.
- Administered 2,000 surveys to the field on job preparation, loss, and retention.

- Developed a working definition of job retention based on focus groups, survey responses, and feedback from practitioners and administrators.
- Created and facilitated the meetings of a five-member advisory group of national experts on offender employment, research, and criminal justice.
- Initiated a dialog and potential partnership with Canada on assessment, offender employment, and job retention efforts.

The Offender Workforce Development and Job Retention Project anticipates that the next 12 months will result in the creation and piloting of a 5-day distance learning curriculum devoted exclusively to offender job retention, improvement of the offender workforce development specialist training program through the addition of a new and expanded job retention module, and implementation of promising job retention strategies at a pilot location, possibly to include the delivery of a job retention curriculum directly to offenders via distance learning.

Offender Workforce Development Specialist/Career Development Facilitator Curriculum Development Project. In June 2000, NIC entered into a cooperative agreement with the Career Development Leadership Alliance, Inc. (CDLA) to assist OCJTP in developing a customized competency-based, train-the-trainer program and curriculum that would include 108 hours of classroom instruction plus specifications and materials for practical activities upon trainees' return to their jurisdiction. CDLA will design a curriculum to meet the specific needs of offender workforce development specialists, including labor market analysis, employment needs assessments, job counseling, job search and placement strategies, and job retention strategies. A pilot for this new curriculum is projected to take place in February, March, and April of 2001.

Technical Assistance

Onsite technical assistance. Through NIC's technical assistance program, the Community Corrections Division provided a 2-day onsite consultation in Ohio at the request of the Community Connection for Ohio Offenders, Inc., which provides postrelease services under contract with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections. Through the Post Release Center, 6 full-time staff members serve approximately 300 offenders each month. The assistance provided the Center with new strategies for the reintegration of offenders into society, particularly in the areas of job retention and career development.

NIC's Prisons Division provided onsite offender job training and placement technical assistance to the Oregon Department of Corrections, identified as a pilot site for implementing an inmate work program to develop a statewide resource directory. This program was modeled after an industry program developed for Washington State Corrections Industries by the Washington State Corrections Clearinghouse. This self-directed, interactive software program, which states can replicate with a limited amount of technical assistance through NIC, was supported through a cooperative agreement with the Washington State Corrections Clearinghouse and OCJTP.

Workshops through technical assistance. NIC's Community Corrections Division provided two workshops on offender job training and placement through the technical assistance program.

- A 1-day workshop was held in Virginia at the request of Opportunities, Alternatives and Resources of Fairfax County, Inc. (OAR), for its National Staff Training Conference, with emphasis on upgrading the knowledge and skills of an expected 100 attendees in job development and employment issues.
- A 2-day offender job training and placement workshop was conducted in Rhode Island at the request of the International Community Corrections

Association for its regional conference and training program. Most of the 27 participants, who included 6 job developers, 4 placement counselors, 4 job readiness counselors, 10 administrators, 2 probation or parole officers, and 1 life skills teacher, had 5 or more years of experience in the field of offender employment. The nine training topics counted as continuing education units for the trainees.

Training

Approximately 1,300 OESs were trained in academy-based, distance learning, and partnership training programs in FY 2000. Those attending came from BOP, Federal Probation, county jails and sheriff's departments, state departments of labor, state probation and parole departments, state prison systems and prison industry programs, county prisons, regional prisons and detention facilities, city and county probation departments, state departments of vocational rehabilitation, state departments of education (including community colleges), and private for-profit and nonprofit agencies and organizations.

OES Academy based training. NIC conducted three OES training programs in FY 2000 at its academy in Longmont, Colorado. Each program was primarily conducted for two-person teams from the same jurisdiction who represent public corrections and either another government agency or the private sector and who work together cooperatively, contractually, or statutorily in providing offenders with job skills training and placement services. For evaluations of these training programs, see the appendix.

OES distance learning. In September 2000, OCJTP presented a 32-hour live, interactive satellite/Internet training program for OESs. This program offered training in offender assessment, pre-employment, job readiness, community resources, marketing, job placement, and job retention strategies. The broadcast was viewed by approximately 1,200 practitioners representing 44 training sites in 24 states. For an

evaluation of this training program and impact statements from participants, see the appendix.

OES partnership training. In March 2000, OCJTP collaborated with the state of Washington to provide its first regional OES training. The training was offered in Tacoma, Washington and attended by 27 participants from the state of Washington who represented the State Department of Corrections, state employment agencies, state social and health services, community colleges, county corrections, jails, and private and nonprofit agencies. For an evaluation of this training program, see the appendix.

Other training activities. OCJTP conducted offender employment training workshops at national conferences for the following associations:

- **American Correctional Association (Phoenix, Arizona, January 10, 2000).** The workshop was called Preparing Offenders for Jobs in the Community. OCJTP staff moderated a panel presentation on successful models and programs that prepare offenders for obtaining jobs while incarcerated to increase the likelihood of a successful transition into the job market after release.
- **National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (Reno, Nevada, January 10, 2000).** This 6-hour workshop for 100 participants, called I Could Get Them a Job If . . . They Didn't Have a Criminal History, focused on skills in dealing with felony convictions, gaps in work history, and lack of references. Client manipulation, employer fears of hiring ex-offenders, and tools to address employer concerns were also discussed.
- **International Community Corrections Association (Newport, Rhode Island, June 5-6, 2000).** This 8-hour workshop for 27 participants included skills training in assessment, pre-employment and job readiness, job development, employer fears of hiring ex-offenders, marketing, job retention strategies, community resources, information on the Workforce Investment Act, and the bonding of offenders.

Clearinghouse/Information Services

OCJTP clearinghouse services are housed within the NIC Information Center, which is operated by a contractor and located in Longmont, Colorado. The Information Center helps OCJTP fulfill its congressional mandate to collect and disseminate information on offender job training and placement programs, training accomplishments, and employment outcomes, and provides a user-friendly, centralized resource for practitioners and policymakers to access information that supports the integration of offenders and ex-offenders into the workforce.

Collection development. The NIC Information Center has 750 items on offender job training and placement, 57 of which were added to the collection during FY 2000. These materials cover a wide range of subjects, including offender job counseling, training in job readiness skills, vocational education, inmate industries, job placement, job retention, career development, and related services for offenders. Formats include training curriculums, program descriptions and evaluations, and self-help materials for offenders. Prominent in the collection are unpublished materials developed by practitioners.

Annotated bibliography. The Information Center continued to disseminate its 1999 annotated bibliography, which lists nearly 400 OCJTP-relevant titles available from the NIC Information Center or on the Internet. Documents are listed in five major categories: vocational education, inmate industries, employment for offenders or ex-offenders, multidisciplinary materials, and videotape resources. Subgroups within these categories steer readers to particular types of material, such as outcome studies and evaluations and curriculum materials. An evaluation form included with the bibliography invites users to rate its usefulness. Of the evaluations received during FY 2000, 73 percent rated the bibliography as “excellent” and the remaining 27 percent rated it as “good.”

Information requests. Between October 1, 1999, and September 30, 2000, the NIC Information Center received requests from 465 persons seeking materials on correctional job training and placement and related topics, more than double the number recorded in FY 1999.

News Articles

***Corrections Today*, “NIC Develops New Comprehensive Training Program for Offender Workforce Development Specialist.”** This article in the June 2000 issue of the American Correctional Association’s magazine *Corrections Today* provided information on the 120-hour competency-based Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) training program being developed by NIC. The program includes individual skill development in such areas as labor market analysis, employment needs assessments, job counseling, job search and placement strategies, and job retention. This training will consist of training for trainers, thereby providing opportunities for teams of trainees to return to their jurisdictions to train others. The OWDS training will satisfy the course requirements for career development facilitators, as established by the National Career Development Association and the Center for Credentialing and Education, which is affiliated with the National Board for Certified Counselors. Upon successfully completing the OWDS training course, trainees may apply for career development facilitator certification and college credit.

***The Washington Times*, “Ex-cons Find Job Hunt Easier in Tight Market.”** This article, which appeared in the *Washington Times* on July 9, 2000, featured Montgomery County, Maryland’s prerelease center and its work in helping offenders make the transition back into the workforce. The OCJTP Administrator was quoted in the article as saying that by arranging employment for offenders, OESs provide a service to small business as well.

Public/Private Ventures, “Getting Back to Work: Employment Programs for Ex- Offenders.” In fall 2000, Public/Private Ventures published “Getting Back to Work: Employment Programs for Ex-Offenders,” which acknowledges OCJTP’s contribution to the development of the publication.

Purchase of Copyright Release Privileges

In June 2000, NIC purchased the copyright release of the “Facilitating Career Development: Student

Text,” “Facilitating Career Development: Instructor Manual,” and “Facilitating Career Development: Electronic Support System” curriculum materials from the National Career Development Association so it could use, reproduce, transmit, disburse, distribute, or prepare derivative works of these products. These products are critical to the development of offender workforce development specialist and career development facilitator training programs, which can lead to trainee certification by the National Career Development Association, Center for Credentialing and Education (see “Cooperative Agreements”).

Status of Correctional Job Training and Placement Programs in the United States

Preparing offenders for the workforce and helping them obtain employment gained increased focus as programs continue to evolve and improve at the federal, state, and local levels. A Public/Private Ventures publication, "Getting Back to Work: Employment Programs for Ex-Offenders," by Maria Buck, which was published in fall 2000 (and is available online at <http://www.ppv.org/content/reports/gettingback.html>), provides an excellent historical perspective on offender employment initiatives. It includes insightful information on employment programs for ex-offenders, including five recommendations from practitioners, policymakers, and researchers that should strengthen these programs and increase the likelihood of a smooth and productive transition from prison back to communities. These recommendations follow:

- Practitioners need opportunities to learn from one another to improve their programs.
- Although it is important to help ex-offenders find immediate employment to meet their need for income, longer term success in the labor market will depend on their ability to develop skills and contacts.
- Representatives of state-led initiatives and non-profit organizations expressed concern about a lack of continuity between pre- and postrelease services.
- Programs were found to be constrained by the limited public resources available.
- Across the board, practitioners described the dearth of knowledge about what makes effective employment programs for ex-offenders as a major impediment to the future growth of the field and stressed that more research is needed on the connection between employment and recidivism.

Highlights of federal, state, local, and private offender job training and placement activities are given below:

Federal Bureau of Prisons. BOP's Inmate Placement Program Branch continued its mission to develop and implement programs designed to enhance the employability of federal prisoners. The branch's accomplishments in FY 2000 included the following:

- Holding 100 mock job fairs in 59 federal correctional institutions. Approximately 5,500 inmates have participated in these job fairs since their inception in 1997, and some 2,000 companies and educational and community service agencies have partnered with the prisons to provide these programs.
- Preparing employment folders for exiting inmates that include Social Security cards, academic and occupational education certificates earned while incarcerated, resumes, certified copies of birth certificates, and other documents required by employers.
- Posting job openings on prison bulletin boards. Currently, more than two dozen companies post job openings on federal prison bulletin boards for inmates to use when searching for jobs.
- Establishing employment resource centers in federal prisons, where inmates can learn to write résumés and access employment information, including the American Labor Market Information System (ALMIS).
- Providing 40 hours of training for approximately 120 BOP staff to serve as OESs to assist inmates in all aspects of the BOP employment enhancement program.

- Offering clearinghouse services that provide online assistance to offender employment specialists seeking inmate employment program information, including “A Mock Job Fair Handbook,” three independent evaluations of federal mock job fairs, and other user-friendly information that can be downloaded from UNICOR’s Web site (<http://www.unicor.gov/placement>).

Minnesota Department of Corrections. The Minnesota Department of Corrections offers incarcerated offenders opportunities to participate in education or work programs that provide valuable, marketable labor skills. Offenders receive certificates or diplomas from partnering Minnesota state colleges and universities. Additionally, the department has received the support of the AFL–CIO to offer apprenticeship programs through the prison industry and education programs. If offenders are unable to complete the apprenticeship while incarcerated, the department seeks employment that will permit them to continue the apprenticeship through completion.

Colorado Department of Corrections. In response to the growing social and economic impact of an expanding prison population and unacceptable recidivism rates, the Colorado Department of Corrections has instituted a 3-year expansion of the Community Reintegration Program with the ultimate goal of providing effective reintegration programs and services

to at least 80 percent of the offenders released from state correctional facilities. Colorado provides reintegration programs both inside Department of Corrections facilities and in local communities based on the philosophy that a continuum of services is the most effective method of preparing inmates for the transition process and reducing recidivism.

Pros & Cons—A Program of the Job Center (Columbia, Missouri). On finding out that approximately 40 to 70 percent of their clients had some kind of criminal conviction, the Job Center (a division of Advent Enterprises) decided that a specific program needed to be developed for this population. Pros & Cons includes a 40-hour job-readiness training (JRT) component as well as placement assistance and a 1-year followup period to help promote retention. In an effort to make the classes as comprehensive as possible, Pros & Cons covers subjects that range from résumé writing and interviewing techniques to anger management and relapse prevention. Pros & Cons also offers placement assistance, attempting to help clients secure good jobs that pay a living wage, offer benefits, and have some room for advancement. Since the first JRT in November 1999, Pros & Cons has placed more than 165 ex-offenders with good companies (a placement rate of approximately 88 percent, most of whom are placed within 2 weeks of the completion of JRT), completely bypassing, for instance, fast-food and low-paying janitorial employment.

Appendix: Evaluation of OES Training Programs

Academy-Based Training

Self-Report Questionnaires. Academy-based training provided an opportunity for 110 OESs from 34 states and Guam to increase their knowledge and skills. After each academy-based training course, participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire on which they estimated how much their skill base had increased in several areas. The results of this evaluation show that participants in these training courses increased their overall skill base by 24 percent in FY 2000. See exhibit 1 for the primary skill areas measured and the average percentage increase in skill base from the first to the last day of training for all three training courses combined.

The first academy-based OES training program, held on October 17–22, 2000, resulted in participants increasing their overall skill base by 22 percent. Exhibit 2 presents the primary skill areas measured

and the average percentage increase in skill base from the first to the last day of this training session.

The second academy-based OES training program, held on February 6–13, 2000, resulted in participants increasing their overall skill base by 20 percent. Exhibit 3 presents the primary skill areas measured and the average percentage increase in skill base from the first to the last day of the second training program.

The third academy-based OES training program, held on April 2–7, 2000, resulted in participants increasing their overall skill base by 25 percent. The primary skill areas measured and the average percentage increase in skill base from the first to the last day of this training session are presented in exhibit 4.

Followup questionnaires. Followup questionnaires were sent to participants of the academy-based training programs approximately 4 months after each session. The questionnaires sought information on the success of and barriers to implementation of the

Exhibit 1. Self-Evaluation of Academy-Based OES Training (All Three Sessions Combined)

| Skill Area* | Percent Increase |
|---|------------------|
| Job development | 28 |
| Coordinating use of community resources | 25 |
| Job placement | 23 |
| Providing pre-employment and job readiness skill programs | 23 |
| Marketing offenders in the community | 22 |
| Providing job retention skill programs | 21 |

*Skill areas are listed in descending order of self-reported improvement.

Exhibit 2. Self-Evaluation of Academy-Based OES Training (Session 1)

| Skill Area* | Percent Increase |
|---|------------------|
| Job development | 30 |
| Coordinating use of community resources | 23 |
| Job placement | 23 |
| Marketing offenders in the community | 20 |
| Providing pre-employment and job readiness skill programs | 20 |
| Providing job retention skill programs | 18 |

*Skill areas are listed in descending order of self-reported improvement.

Exhibit 3. Self-Evaluation of Academy-Based OES Training (Session 2)

| Skill Area* | Percent Increase |
|---|------------------|
| Coordinating use of community resources | 26 |
| Job development | 24 |
| Job placement | 24 |
| Marketing offenders in the community | 24 |
| Providing pre-employment and job readiness skill programs | 21 |
| Providing job retention skill programs | 19 |

*Skill areas are listed in descending order of self-reported improvement.

Exhibit 4. Self-Evaluation of Academy-Based OES Training (Session 3)

| Skill Area* | Percent Increase |
|---|------------------|
| Job development | 29 |
| Providing pre-employment and job readiness skill programs | 29 |
| Coordinating use of community resources | 25 |
| Providing job retention skill programs | 25 |
| Marketing offenders in the community | 22 |
| Job placement | 21 |

*Skill areas are listed in descending order of self-reported improvement.

action plans developed during the training program, the extent of the post-training collaboration between participants and other agencies, changes experienced as a result of attending the training, and the resources at their disposal. Of the sample of respondents to the followup questionnaire, 100 percent identified one or more steps that they had taken to improve offender job training and placement services as a result of an action planning process initiated at the training program.

Results of the training most frequently cited by participants included:

- (1) Development of new relationships outside their own organizations.
- (2) Increase in job-related skills and knowledge.
- (3) Sharing of new skills and knowledge learned in the training program within their own organizations.
- (4) Sharing of new skills and knowledge learned in the training program *outside* their own organizations.
- (5) Development of working partnerships *outside* their own organizations.
- (6) Contact with peers from the training course.

The most frequently identified barriers to implementing improvements were:

- (1) Lack of funding.
- (2) Inadequate staffing levels or allocations.
- (3) Lack of peer support for plan.
- (4) Time constraints.

When asked about the most significant benefits they derived from OES training, participants gave the following answers:

- “It empowered staff to explore other resources, strategies, and initiatives.”
- “Networking/sharing ideas—hearing what other agencies are doing that have had a positive impact.”
- “Getting people in corrections on the same page.”
- “Expanded confidence and personal goals to utilize OES training daily.”

Distance Learning Training

Self-report questionnaires. The first distance learning training program for offender employment specialists, held on September 25–28, 2000, resulted in participants increasing their overall skill level by 29 percent. Exhibit 5 shows the primary skill areas measured and the average percentage increase in skill base from the first to the last day of training, based on a self-report questionnaire.

Impact statements. The following organizations were asked to describe the impact that the OES distance learning training program had in their respective jurisdictions.

- *New York State Department of Correctional Services.* The New York State Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) is pleased to report that the Offender Employment Specialist Training Conference, held on September 25–28, 2000, at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City, was a huge success. The highlight of the training was the information provided on exit interviews and portfolios for offenders upon release. As a result of this training, the DOCS Transitional Services Program was given approval

and oversight for the coordination of this venture in our State. We have expanded the portfolio to include certificates of achievement, assessments and evaluation results, birth certificates, Social Security cards, DD214 forms for veterans, referrals to local community agencies, résumés, picture identification, clothing, and release funds. The conference was so successful . . . that Deputy Commissioner Headley asked that a followup conference be coordinated within 6 months of the training.

- *Boone County Workforce Transportation Coalition.* During the action-planning phase of the Offender Employment Specialist training program provided by the National Institute of Corrections, representatives of eight organizations from Boone County, Missouri formed the Boone County Workforce Transportation Coalition. . . . This coalition was formed because each member agency is experiencing the same barriers to offender employment transportation. Although an abundance of employment opportunities exist in our area, affordable transportation limits access to living-wage positions. With a focus on possible solutions, the Coalition assessed agency and public resources available in the community to our clients. We have also assessed client access based on available resource eligibility criteria. Attending city, county, and State transportation meetings to advocate the needs of this population has helped build awareness of the community problem. In addition, we offer our population as part of a solid solution to the labor shortage consistently reported by the business sector. Researching the funding sources and model programs utilized in similar communities for a collaborative non-profit workforce transportation system has been another important part of our work. Our current efforts are focused on advocacy of the creation of a joint partnership between city and county governments to create an extended public-transit system that would provide 24-hour transportation to viable employment sites.

Exhibit 5. Self-Evaluation of OES Distance Learning Training

| Skill Area* | Percent Increase |
|---|------------------|
| Marketing offenders in the community | 34 |
| Providing job retention skill programs | 30 |
| Coordinating use of community resources | 28 |
| Job development | 28 |
| Providing pre-employment and job readiness skill programs | 27 |
| Job placement | 27 |

*Skill areas are listed in descending order of self-reported improvement.

Partnership Training

Washington state was selected for partnership training partly because of the relatively high skill level of the average service provider. This was a deliberate attempt to challenge the curriculum and its trainers to train to the high end of the skill level of service providers. Participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire on which they estimated how much the partnership training had increased their skill base in several areas. This is relatively low compared with the overall increase in skill level of 24 percent for academy-based training found in a more representative sample of service providers from across the nation. The primary skill areas measured and the average percentage increase in skill base from the first to the last day of training are listed in exhibit 6.

Exhibit 6. Self-Evaluation of OES Partnership Training (Tacoma, Washington)

| Skill Area* | Percent Increase |
|---|------------------|
| Coordinating use of community resources | 28 |
| Job development | 20 |
| Providing job retention skill programs | 16 |
| Providing pre-employment and job readiness skill programs | 14 |
| Job placement | 13 |
| Marketing offenders in the community | 10 |

*Skill areas are listed in descending order of self-reported improvement.
