

Jim Doyle
Governor

Rick Raemisch
Secretary



Mailing Address

3099 E. Washington Ave.
Post Office Box 7925
Madison, WI 53707-7925
Telephone (608) 240-5000
Fax (608) 240-3300

State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections

October 2, 2009
For Immediate Release

Contact: John Dipko (608) 240-5060

DOC Reentry Initiative Receives \$1.5 Million Boost

Expanded 'Windows to Work' Model receives \$750,000 federal Second Chance grant, along with additional funding support by The Annie E. Casey Foundation

MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) Secretary Rick Raemisch today announced the DOC has been awarded a \$750,000 grant by the U.S. Department of Justice to expand its collaborative “Windows to Work” program – already serving areas covered by the Bay Area Workforce Development Board – to areas covered by the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board as well. Local match funding, including support by The Annie E. Casey Foundation, will bring the total investment to \$1.5 million.

“Thanks to this grant and in partnership with the Bay Area Workforce Development Board and the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, we will further enhance the already strong connections that are in place to assist inmates as they transition from prison into the community,” Secretary Raemisch said. “The Windows to Work program is a great strategy we have in place to promote the successful reentry of prisoners back into the community, which means fewer new crimes, fewer new victims, and safer Wisconsin communities.”

Funds from the grant will enhance reentry services for inmates being released from Oshkosh Correctional and Racine Correctional institutions (OSCI and RCI) – both of which are among the DOC’s largest prisons – into communities in Brown, Manitowoc, Milwaukee and Sheboygan counties. Reach-in services focused on employment and independent living will begin for participants six months prior to release, and will continue for a minimum of one year following release. A primary goal of the grant is to reduce one-year recidivism of participating offenders by 50 percent over five years.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private charitable organization based in Baltimore, is providing \$118,500 of matching funds, of which \$70,000 has been awarded to The Center for Self-Sufficiency in Milwaukee. The Center for Self-Sufficiency will assist with planning and coordination of inter-departmental and community stakeholders activities and relationships in the implementation of reentry initiatives. In-kind match is being provided by the Bay Area and Milwaukee Area workforce boards and the Department of Corrections.

The project will build off the existing Windows to Work program that is in place at OSCI, coordinated by Dawn Fofana, Corrections Unit Supervisor, through an ongoing collaboration with the Bay Area Workforce Development Board. The project will increase service capacity from 40 to 240, including 160 who will be released to Milwaukee County. The grant will introduce additional reentry components, such as

(over)

comprehensive pre- and post-release planning, and community services that cover housing, job readiness skills, employment and other areas that are critical to the success of prisoner reentry.

“I’m pleased to see this collaborative effort expanded,” Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman said. “This Windows to Work program is in the best interests of all in providing vital services to offenders who have completed their sentences. It assists them in returning to the community, it meets the needs of employers, and it helps keep neighborhoods safe.”

James M. Golembeski, Executive Director of the Bay Area Workforce Development Board, said, “We’ve been doing Windows to Work for over 10 years now and it has been a very successful program. We are very excited about the opportunity to expand the program here and especially in the Milwaukee area.”

Don Sykes, President and CEO of the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, said, “I am so pleased that we have this opportunity to address a very critical issue facing the Milwaukee area. This is a needed and essential element to providing a successful reentry for many of our citizens reentering our community.”

The federal Second Chance Act Prisoner Reentry Initiative provides financial support for projects designed to promote the safe and successful reintegration of incarcerated individuals back into the community.

###