

**Nebraska Department of Correctional Services
Vocational & Life Skills Program
Quarterly Report**

DATE: July 1, 2015
TO: Pete Ricketts, Governor
Patrick J. O'Donnell, Clerk of the Legislature
FROM: Dawn-Renee Smith, Reentry Administrator 
RE: Vocational & Life Skills (VLS) Program

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Statute 83-904, the following provides a report on aid distributed under the Vocational & Life Skills Program.

The following community organizations have received funding under the vocational and life skills grant program:

Goodwill Industries – RESTART; Western Alternative Corrections, Inc.; Center For People In Need; Metropolitan Community College; Released and Restored, Inc.; Mental Health Association of Nebraska; Prairie Gold Homes; ResCare Workforce Services

Funding was awarded in January and programs could begin program design and hiring, effective February 1, 2015. All programs are fully staffed and providing services to the target population.

Number of Individuals Receiving Programming	382
Types of Programming	See attached flyers
Cost per Individual	Unknown*
Number of Individuals Successfully Completed Programming	21

*Determining the cost per individual at this juncture will not provide an accurate picture to the true cost per client as the programs are in the beginning stages with startup costs causing an exaggerated cost per individual.

Funds not expended:

The grant cycle includes the five months of FY 2014-2015 and all of FY 2015-2016. All available funds were awarded to eight organizations. Any funds not reimbursed will be known at the end of FY 2015-2016 and, per statute, will be carried into the next fiscal year.

cc: Scott R. Frakes, Director
Senator Bob Krist, Chair, Executive Board of the Legislature
Roselyn Cotton, Chair, Board of Parole
Cathy Gibson-Beltz, Deputy Director
Levi Bennett, VLS Administrator
File

ReStart

ReStart serves citizens with a criminal record as they return to the community by preparing them for work.

Paid transitional jobs provide opportunity for individuals to:

- experience the world of work
- learn workplace customs/routines
- acquire job skills
- establish an employment record
- obtain employer references

Case Managers provide supports when dealing with transportation, housing and work attire. Readiness Workshops will assist with basic computer skills, work on developing a resume, and guidance on how to talk with employers about their criminal records.

Peer Mentoring groups will address soft job skills and family support issues such as child support. Retention and Advancement Services are also provided by ReStart staff to ensure any issues that arise are addressed immediately. This is critical to maintaining unsubsidized employment.

See reverse side for program admission criteria.



Locations:

Heartland Workforce
Solutions- American
Job Center
5752 Ames Avenue
Omaha, NE 68104

Juan Diego Center
5221 S. 31st Street
Omaha, NE 68107



ReStart

ReStart Admission Criteria

- Nebraska state inmate, parolee, or felony probationer

OR

- Former state inmate or felony probationer up to 18 months after discharge from state prison, parole, or state probation
- Willing to work to develop an Individual Employment Plan that identifies short term and long term goals
- Attend life skills and job readiness workshops
- Participate in peer mentoring sessions
- Participate in a transitional job opportunity, when appropriate, to gain basic employability skills
- Maintain contact with ReStart staff to ensure any issues with employment or support services are addressed in a timely manner

Contact Jana Dye at (402) 934-2728, Garry Kern at (402) 934-2805 or Kevin Lytle Jr. at (402) 505-2294. You can also visit www.goodwillomaha.org for more information.



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Re-entry program

Re-entry services are available at Metropolitan Community College for incarcerated individuals as well as individuals transitioning from facilities across the state (up to 18 months after discharge). MCC will help make a successful transition into college or a career. These services include:

- Skill and interest assessments
- Career and educational goal setting
- Work readiness and life skills training (credit and noncredit classes)
- Transition preparation
- Credit analysis and transfer
- Registration assistance
- Introduction to MCC locations and resources
- Transportation
- Job search, placement support and early work experience
- Referrals to community agencies
- Continuous coaching and tutoring
- Financial aid and scholarship assistance

Contacts

Metropolitan Community College
Attn: Re-entry Program, MCC Express
P.O. Box 3777
Omaha, NE 68103-0777

or

Re-entry program manager
Diane Good-Collins
402-738-4059
dgood@mccneb.edu

Locations

Incarceration

Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility
Omaha Correctional Center
Community Corrections Center - Omaha

or

Re-entry

Metropolitan Community College
MCC Express, 24th and Vinton
Fort Omaha Campus, 30th and Fort

Opportunities

Tuition assistance is available for work readiness and life skills training. Space and funding are limited.

Credit classes are bundled into fast-track options for career training:

- college and career preparation
- business and entrepreneurship
- trades
- information technology

These career pathways lead to stackable credentials and include courses such as:

- College Success Strategies
- Financial Literacy
- Customer Service
- Introduction to the Trades
- Business Office Communications

Noncredit classes include:

- Basic Skill Building
- Tutoring
- Employability Skills
- Résumé Writing
- Interviewing
- Career Exploration and Planning

Funding for this project comes from a grant award from the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services Reentry Initiative (Award #201502-GA04). Authorized by Neb. Rev. State 83-904 and Nebraska Administrative Code Title 71, Chapter 1, Vocational and Life Skills Programs.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE AT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

We will help you navigate the systems at MCC



You may receive assistance with GED completion, program determination, placement testing, financial aid (FAFSA) completion, registering for classes, transportation, scholarship information, obtaining student identification, accessing electronic student information and referral for tutoring services.

If you are interested in pursuing an educational goal, contact us for additional information.

Metropolitan Community College
Attn: Transition/Reentry, MCC Express
P.O. Box 3777
Omaha, NE 68103 -0777

Diane Good-Collins
402-738-4059
dgood@mccneb.edu



METROPOLITAN
Community College

mccneb.edu | 402-457-2400

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Prepare to Get Out and Stay Out



The Life Skills/Re-entry Prep program offered by Released and Restored prepares you to do just that!

The Life Skills/Re-entry Prep program targets 2 key areas for success:

JOBS and MONEY MANAGEMENT

This intensive two-week program will PREPARE you to:

- OBTAIN and MAINTAIN gainful employment by:
 - Teaching you how to properly fill out job applications;
 - Teaching you how to create and update your resume;
 - Preparing you to conduct a job interview with Confidence and Skill;
 - Teaching you the work attitudes employers are looking for in their employees;
 - Teaching goal-setting and problem-solving skills;
 - Teaching team-building and appropriate conflict resolution skills;
 - Creating an open and honest cover letter addressing your felony conviction; and
 - Discussing the federal income tax credits and federal bonding available to employers who hire felons.
 - MANAGE your money and income well so you do not enter the black hole of debt by:
 - Teaching you an easy system for paying your bills on time;
 - Teaching you a simple way to save money from each paycheck;
 - Teaching you how to keep your checking account balanced; and
 - Teaching you how to obtain and maintain good credit history.
- ❖ Class size is strictly limited to 12 individuals;
- ❖ Class meets Monday – Friday 11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (Lunch is provided)
- ❖ Class location: 2400 S 11th (11th & Lake) Lincoln

To enroll, complete the application and send it to:

Released and Restored
Attn: Life Skills/Re-entry Prep Program
P O Box 22962
Lincoln NE 68542

Once your application is reviewed, you will receive notification of your acceptance into the program, and the class to which you are assigned.

Mental Health Association of Nebraska

HONU HOME / KEYA HOUSE



Who Qualifies?

Honu Home/ Keya House is for adults at least nineteen years old with a behavioral health diagnosis.

What we offer

- *Peers helping peers with crisis prevention and diversion from psychiatric distress that may lead to hospitalization and or reoffending.
- *A comfortable, clean, and furnished house in a quiet and safe neighborhood.
- *Self help and proactive recovery tools to regain and maintain wellness.
- *Trained peer companions who are compassionate, understanding, empowering, and available twenty-four hours a day.

How it's done

- *This program is strictly voluntary and free of charge. You can self-refer or be referred by a professional or family member/friend. There is a registration process to ensure the appropriateness of the program for each individual as well as for the comfort of other guests.
- *We offer a stay of up to ninety days.
- *Peer companions staff the house twenty-four hours a day.
- *Staff can maintain contact and support at your request after your stay.

Guidelines

- *You must have transportation to and from the house.
- *You must be able to maintain acceptable personal hygiene.
- *You must be responsible for preparing your own meals and cleaning up after yourself.
- *You must follow the house rules which will be fully explained when you enter the house.

Mental Health Association of Nebraska

Funding provided by the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services shall provide the necessary resources to expand the capacity of Mental Health Association of Nebraska (MHA-NE) programs and services to individuals recently released from state correctional facilities. Participation in all MHA-NE programs and services is voluntary and require the individual to take a leading role in the type and scope of services they receive, thereby “owning” their recovery and making success the likely outcome.

Programs and services to be provided are CARF accredited, and include:

Employment Support Services

The HOPE Program now provides targeted supported employment services to individuals recently released or currently on probation/parole from state correctional facilities. Adhering to the SAMHSA/Dartmouth Individual Placement and Support (IPS) fidelity model, the HOPE Program provides job development and on-going employment support services to adults living with severe behavioral health issues. Employment specialists help participants find jobs that exist in the open labor market and that pay at least minimum wage, including part-time and full-time jobs. Employment positions are found based on the participant’s individual preferences, strengths, and work experiences rather than “sculpting perfect workers” through extensive prevocational assessments and training.

In addition to IPS activities, the HOPE Program also provides comprehensive benefits analysis services, providing program participants with the information they need to make informed choices regarding the potential impact employment and increased wages could have on the benefits (SSI/SSDI, Medicaid, Medicare, housing assistance, etc.) they receive. For eligible individuals not yet enrolled in disability benefit programs, program staff also provide expedited enrollment assistance through the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access & Recovery (SOAR) program.

Crisis Respite

Modeled after MHA-NE’s highly successful KEYA House, the new facility will provide program participants with crisis respite and transitional housing for up to 90 days. Services are designed to help people break the cycle of correctional system recidivism through twenty-four hour peer support, self-advocacy education and self-help training. Program staff and work directly with participants in wellness and recovery activities including Wellness Recovery Action Plans (WRAP) and in developing individual problem solving skills. In addition to direct peer support services, the House also hosts a 24/7 “warm line” where persons seeking assistance can call and talk directly to trained peers as needed. The Warm Line is a peer-run, friendly phone line through which people with behavioral health concerns receive support and appropriate referral to community services they need.

Crisis Diversion, Outreach and Referral

The REAL Program will provide pro-active support services to former inmates that have been identified as being in need rapid and intensive support services before they make bad decisions that could lead to re-incarceration. This program is community based, with peer support workers meeting people in the community, rather than a formal office.



Prairie Gold Homes, Inc. (PGH) is based in Lincoln, NE. PGH is a non-profit corporation whose mission is to provide construction training skills to Community-level inmates, giving them employable talents, to better re-integrate into the community and become productive citizens.

Initially formed in 2002, based on a similar program in the South Dakota prison system. Originally named Bar None Housing, the program began as a way to build efficient single-family modular homes at a low cost, given the minimal labor costs.

In 2009, in collaboration with the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA), Bar None Housing became Prairie Gold Homes, obtaining a 501(c)(3) status. Since, the program has evolved into a certified training program for inmates. The program now combines classroom instruction with hands-on skills training. Graduates receive a nationally-recognized construction industry certificate.

PGH is run by a volunteer Board of Directors and partners with a wide variety of public and private organizations to provide it's educational and job training program and facilitate the successful reentry of program graduates. In addition to the Board of Directors, PGH is provided a liaison from the Department of Corrections to aid in relations and communications with NDCS. PGH currently employees an Executive Director, an Office Manager, an HR Manager and a Construction Manager. With expansion plans now taking place, the staff will consequently expand as well. Income to support the organization's work is provided through the sale of homes, grants, and private donations.

Students for the program are methodically selected through an interview process by the Executive Director and DOC liaison. Requirements for selection include: an interest in construction industry; possession of a High School Diploma or GED; High School or higher Test of Adult Basic Education (T.A.B.E) results; minimal Misconduct Report History; crime committed must not be one of a violent or sexual nature and they must be eligible for Community Custody.

Prairie Gold Homes constructs both modular homes and on-site builds. Modular homes are built at the PGH classroom, located on the grounds of Cornhusker State Industries. Those homes are later transported to the owner's property. We use high-quality, name-brand materials, purchased locally. The homes are energy-efficient & low maintenance.

Despite having a waiting list of 100+ inmates, PGH class size is typically kept to a count of 6-10 students in order to maintain close on-on-one instruction parameters. Classes normally last 10 weeks, with the first half being mostly classroom academia related to basic construction skills and construction safety. The students also participate in a 10 hour OSHA Certification, as well as receiving a certified First Aid and AED. Beginning in 2015, in collaboration with another local Vocational Skills organization, graduates of the program will also attend a 2-week Life Skills class. This class will provide those much needed skills of writing resumes, interviewing, etc.

Prairie Gold Homes Contact Information:
Office Phone: 402-434-3904

Renee Bauer, Executive Director
rbauer@prairiegoldhomes.org

Mark Wentz, DOC Liaison
mark.wentz@nebraska.gov

Janice Jillson, Office Manager
janice@prairiegoldhomes.org

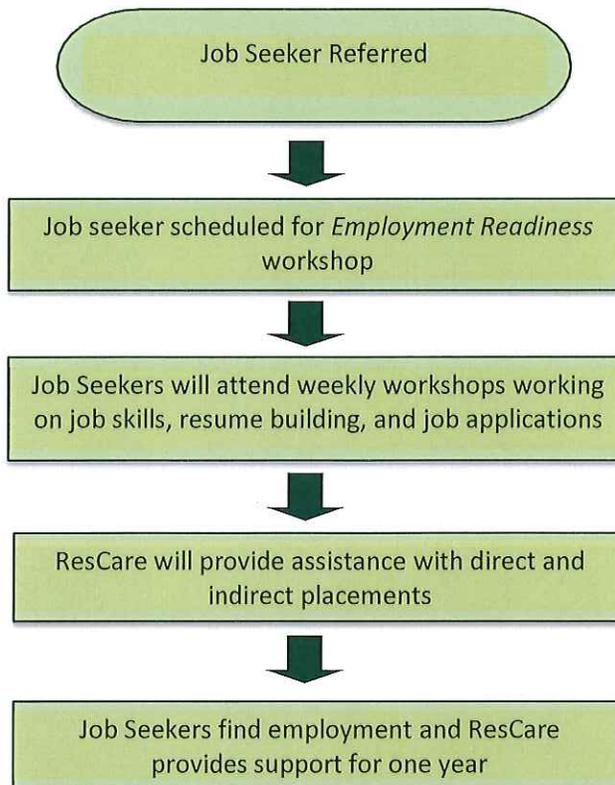
Michael Capehart, Human Resources Manager
michael@prairiegoldhomes.org



ResCare Workforce Services offers job preparation and job retention services that include employment readiness workshops, supplemental online learning, one-on-one engagement, independent job search and job retention support at the following Reporting Center (RC) “Hubs”:

- Omaha (which will serve via tele services Papillion RC)
- Grand Island (which will serve via tele services Kearney RC, Hastings Service Center (SC), Holdrege Probation Office (PO) and Lexington RC)
- Gering (which will serve via tele services Sydney PO, and North Platte RC)
- Norfolk (which will also via tele services Columbus RC, Beatrice SC, Nebraska City RC and Falls City PO)

An Example of our Work Flow



Contact Information:

Greg Agena, Supervisor
gregagena@rescare.com
402-314-6205

Cherisa Price-Wells, Project Director
cherisapricewells@rescare.com
402-314-6026