

**Government of the District of Columbia
Executive Office of the Mayor**



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District Unveils Employment Readiness Center for Inmates

Mayor Fenty highlights new job training initiative for DC Central Detention Facility inmates

Washington, DC—Mayor Adrian M. Fenty, Department of Corrections (DOC) Director Devon Brown and Department of Employment Services (DOES) Acting Director Joseph Walsh, today announced a District initiative that assists the city's incarcerated population to become job-ready through the new Employment Readiness Center located in the Central Detention Facility (DC Jail).

The Employment Readiness Center, which began providing services on December 1, 2008, is a joint project between the Department of Corrections and the Department of Employment Services that prepares inmates, who are 45 to 60 days from release, with job readiness training. As a part of DOES, the office of Project Empowerment manages the center and has provided approximately \$21,679 for supplies and equipment.

“The Employment Readiness Center reflects the District's strong commitment to providing the resources critical to facilitating the reentry process for inmates on the cusp of release,” said Mayor Fenty. “Being equipped with the skills necessary to apply for and land a job increases the likelihood that these returning residents can become self-sufficient and make positive contributions to the community.”

The center provides inmates with an array of occupational development services that encourage and support their desires to seek and secure meaningful employment. The job training services are designed to mirror those offered through the DOES One-Stop Career Centers throughout the District.

The Employment Readiness Center provides the following services:

- Career assessment
- Career information about jobs in demand in the Washington metropolitan area
- Job counseling and guidance
- Interviewing and resume preparation workshops
- Life skills/job readiness workshops
- Personal computer training
- Occupational skills training and apprenticeship opportunities

In addition, participants have full access to all of the self-service employment resources in the center's resource area.

“The Department of Corrections continues to provide individuals with opportunities to become more constructively oriented while in custody, while at the same time preparing them for their subsequent return to society,” said Director Devon Brown. “This center is a part of our comprehensive reentry services program that begins at intake through release.”

“Our returning ex-offenders face tremendous barriers to employment, and we want to help give them the skills and opportunities they need to return to the workforce.” said Acting Director Joseph Walsh. “The kind of effective employment services provided by the center will help people contribute to the economic success of their families and their communities here in the District.”

Inmates who demonstrate a commitment to transitioning into the community by successfully completing the program will receive:

- A certificate of achievement of important job readiness skills
- A written referral to a DOES case manager to help ensure successful transition to the community and employment
- Vocational guidance and access to other available supportive services, such as immediate job placement assistance/referrals for job interviews, on-the-job training, enrollment in occupational skills training, educational courses, or apprenticeship training

“At the office of Project Empowerment, we help individuals overcome the challenges posed by unemployment and poverty,” said Director Charles Jones. “Our efforts at the DC Jail uplift inmates in a meaningful way by preparing them to work and helping them build a sustainable livelihood when they reenter the community.”

The Employment Readiness Center serves up to 30 participants Monday through Friday from 9 am to 3 pm. The program is divided into five week intervals, and is currently in its second program cycle--which began Jan.12.

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